Comparative Outlook of State-Mosque Relations: Modern Turkey and
Iran

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Abstract

This thesis compares the relationship between the state and the mosque in Turkey and Iran. To this end, the paper investigates why Turkey and Iran have different political structures due to religion's role in government and politics. This difference is notable because Turkey and Iran followed similar paths towards modernisation under Mustafa Kamal Ataturk and Reza Shah, respectively.

The main method used in this thesis is a Comparative Historical Analysis methodology is the main method of the thesis. As part of this analysis, the author employs "Historical Institutionalism" to explore the relationship between the mosque and the state in Turkey and Iran.

In this vein, the historical continuity of institutions has been more continuous in Turkey than in Iran. Therefore, Turkey has subordinated the mosque to state authorities, whereas Iran has failed to do so. The tradition of continuity in Turkish state institutions has made these entities more resilient, inclusive, and flexible than Iranian institutions. These and other causes sparked Iran's 1979 Revolution, whereas Turkey did not have a similar crisis at this time.

Contents

Introduction

The role of religion in politics and government does not have clearly delineated boundaries. Thus, religions extend beyond private space since they include exegesis regarding formulations of social, political, and economic order. Therefore, the involvement of religions in these other sectors has long been debated, affected by each country's socio-political and economic circumstances.

Since its inception, Islam has played a crucial role in shaping Islamic societies. The teachings of Islam include political, social, economic, and moral prescriptions to achieve justice and equality in Islamic societies.[1] Through invasions and trade relations, Islam spread across the Middle East, North Africa, Central and South-Eastern Asia, and. The reach and prosperous Islamic culture had an impact on the European continent as well[2]

However, at the end of the 16th century, Islamic civilisation stagnated and gradually declined.[3]Through the Age of Enlightenment and the rise of the Industrial Age, European powers Islamic societies at the disadvantaged position[4]. Although these powers occupied and controlled many Islamic societies, Muslims considered these Europeans inferior to themselves. Thus, Turkey and Iran, once prominent empires in the Islamic world, took different paths to modernise their empires and avoid European colonisation.

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[1] DIEN, M. I. (2004). Islamic Law: From Historical Foundations to Contemporary Practice (p.3-32). Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
[2] DARLING, L. T. (1998). Rethinking Europe and The Islamic World In the Age of Exploration. Journal of Early Modern History, 221-246
[3] Ibid.
[4] Ibid.

Islam has been influential in both the Turkish and Iranian governments, a trend originating in the Turkish and Persian Empires,[5] when rulers were careful to ensure their religious legitimacy in the eyes of their people.[6] Consequently, the rulers of the Ottoman and Persian Empires co-opted the Ulama through carrot and stick methods.[7]

At the beginning of the 18th century, both the Ottoman Empire and the Qajar state were weakened and trying to prevent their demise. To strengthen the Empire, the Ottoman sultans enacted a modernisation program called the "Tanzimat" reforms,[8] while the Qajar dynasty struggled to implement modernisation policies.[9] However, these efforts by both the Ottoman Empire and the Qajar shared certain traits, which continued under the leadership of Mustafa Kamal Ataturk and Reza Shah Pahlavi.[10]

Despite these parallels, the political results of modernisation with respect to the role of religion in government and politics have been strikingly different. For instance, although religious rhetoric influences politics and autocratic tendencies in the Turkish Republic, the country's government is based on secular laws. In this vein, Turkish people choose their leaders through ballot boxes, although the electoral process contains illiberal elements[11].On the other hand, the Islamic Republic of Iran is ruled by a theocratic government with only a slight semblance of democracy[12]. Though

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[5] Calder, N. (1987). Legitimacy and Accommodation in Safavid Iran: The Juristic Theory of Muḥammad. Journal of Persian Studies, 25, 91-105.

[6] Karateke, H. T. (2005). Legitimizing the Ottoman Sultanate: A Framework for Historical Analysis. In M. R. Hakan T. Karateke, Legitimizing the Order: The Ottoman Rhetoric of State Power (pp. 13-52). Boston: Brill.

[7] Zilfi, M. (2006). The Ottoman Ulema. In S. N. Faroqhi, The Cambridge History of Turkey (pp. 209-225). London: Cambridge University Press.

[8] Çifci, Y. (2019). Modernisation in the Tanzimat Period and the Ottoman Empire:An Analysis of the Tanzimat Edict within the Scope of the Modern State. Maarif Mektepleri Uluslararası Sosyal ve Beşerî Bilimler Dergisi, II(2), 14-24.

[9] Behrooz, M. (2013). State, Religion, and Revolution in Iran, 1796 to the Present (P.11-29). New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

[10] Parhizkari, K. (2011). Comparing Modernization in Iran and Turkey. International Journal of Social Sciences and Humanity Studies, 3(1), 2007-215.

[11] Zakaria, F. (2023, May 19). Turkey points to a global trend: Free and unfair elections. Retrieved from https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2023/05/19/erdogan-turkey-autocrats-manipulation-elections/.

[12] Kurun, İ. (2017, January). Iranian Political System: "Mullocracy?". Journal Of Management and Economics Research, 15(1), 114-129.

elections held in Iran, an unelected group of clergymen have power to overrule the decisions of elected officials [13].

The main objective of the thesis is to investigate the transformation of the relationship between the state and religion in Turkey and Iran using "Historical Institutionalism" approach. This is because of the argument that Turkey could modernise and subordinate its religious bodies under its state bureaucracy due to its strong, continuous institutional tradition. On the other hand, Iran's institutions have experienced both internal and external interruptions. Consequently, the resilience, inclusiveness, and flexibility of institutions have been far greater in Turkey than in Iran.

Notably, this topic has a broad scope, and it summarises critical points for the explanation of the relationship between state and religion. This thesis begins with a literature review comparing state and religion relationship in Turkey and Iran. Next, the paper examines the history of the role of religion in Iran and Turkey since the 15th century. Finally, the conclusion illustrates comparisons and findings.

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[13]Ibid.

Chapter 1: Research Methodology

Although the relationship between the state and the mosque is often debated, it is obvious that the development and current status of this relationship began with the modernisation efforts of both Turkey and Iran. Furthermore, there have been periods of liquidity in this relationship during various crises However, tumultuous times generally lead to relative stability through new rules of engagement between different classes and institutions. Thus, this study required a research method that could cover the long development period the complicated, fluid relationship between state and religion in Turkey and Iran. As part of a new institutionalist approach, this thesis uses "Historical Institutionalism" to analyse the complex social phenomenon of state and mosque relationships in Turkey and Iran.

Beyond the research methodology, the author had to define a time frame to accommodate the chosen research methodology because historical institutionalism is a meso-level analysis of the development and changes of institutional frameworks and their impact on countries and societies. Therefore, this analysed the period from the 15th century until the fall of the Iranian Shah Regime. Although it appears to explain changing dynamics, this study investigates how differences between Turkey and Iran have created stark differences in the relationships between these countries and their religious establishments. That is, Turkey subordinated religious bodies, but Iran became controlled by religious establishments.

Historical Institutionalism

Historical Institutionalism is one of three new institutionalist approaches in the social sciences. According to the definition of the Oxford Handbook of Political Institutions, this method examines how temporal processes and events affect the origins and evolution of institutions by creating path

dependence to shape the long-term socio-political and economic behaviour of[14]. The other new institutionalist approaches are sociological institutionalism and rational institutionalism. Sociological institutionalism is a culturally oriented institutionalist approach, meaning cultural traditions of societies and institutions interact, shaping each other[15] whereas the rational institutionalist approach explores how interests shape and change institutional bases[16].

The historical institutionalism was used to analyse the state and mosque relationship in Turkey and Iran because this method can be applied to a long time involving complex events. Before exploring empirical analysis, one should note several noteworthy properties of historical institutionalism. First, 'path dependence' involves how socio-political and economic behaviour are shaped by the legacies of the previous institutions[17]. Next, critical juncture theory explains the importance of periods when institutional arrangements loosen and an interregnum period shapes new arrangements, influencing political and economic relations among actors for years to come[18]. Furthermore, certain aspects of the historical institutionalist approach must be explained to justify the selection of this methodology for this study.

Construction of Politics in Space and Time

One of the most powerful aspects of historical institutionalism is its usefulness in analysing politics through considering the impacts of time and space on structure political and economic affairs[19]. It is possible to view political changes as struggles within or between different groups with vested

[14] James G. March & Johan P. Olsen. (2016). Elaborating the ''New Institutionalism''. In S. A. R. A. W. RHODES, The Oxford Handbook of Political Institutions (pp. 3-23). London: Oxford University Press.
[15] Ibid.
[16] Ibid.
[17] Ibid.
[18] Giovanni Capoccia, R. Daniel Kelemen. (2007). The Study of Critical Junctures: Theory, Narrative, and Counterfactuals in Historical. World Politics, 59(9), 341-369.
[19] Sanders, E. (2016). Historical Institutionalism. In S. A. R. A. W. RHODES, The Oxford Handbook of Political Institutions (pp. 39-56). London: Oxford University Press.

interests. However, the rules, and consequences of the struggles for change or reconfiguration can depend on temporal and spatial contexts. Furthermore, it is difficult to delineate borders between time and space due how these two concepts interact, but these concepts require additional clarity.

In constructing politics across space, the ecology of social relations significantly impacts political and economic relations. For example, in comparing health insurance policies in the United States and the EU, there are stark differences. For example, the EU mandates health insurance even if it is paid by state tax revenues, but the United States does not nationally mandate health insurance coverage[20]. The differences between these two structures cannot be fully explained here, but the main difference in the construction of these two capitalist economies is considered the underlying cause of the differences between these health insurance policies[21].

Notably, time's impact on the construction of politics in these two regions must be considered. In this matter, the United States takes a less regulatory role than the EU, emphasising a market-oriented economic model. On the other hand, the EU is more interconnected regarding economic regulation and direction, including its social welfare framework, which exists to increase citizens' prosperity[22]. However, the American commitment to a market-oriented economic model has changed in times of crisis, such as the 2007–2008 financial crisis.[23] During this time, to protect its economy from collapse, the American government injected 700 billion dollars of liquidity into the economy, which was considered un-American at that time[24].

[20] Levy, M. (2023, May 15). Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act. Retrieved from Britannica: https://www.britannica.com/money/topic/Patient-Protection-and-Affordable-Care-Act.
[21] Ibid.
[22] Ibid.
[23] Congleton, R. D. (2009). On the political economy of the financial crisis and bailout of 2008–2009. Springer, 287-317.
[24] Ibid.

Both these examples demonstrate how space and time are important variables for analysing the behaviours of political actors. This characteristic of historical institutionalism is one of the several reasons why this method was chosen to compare Turkey and Iran's state and religion relations from the late 15th century until Iran's Islamic Revolution. Analysing politics through time and space allows one to explore similar efforts of modernisation with different implications and consequences of religion's role in politics. Specifically, it helps explain why Iranian modernisation efforts did not subjugate the religious establishment into its state institutions as occurred in Turkey, even though Iran, especially, Reza Shah's close following of Ataturk's reforms in its implementation in Iran[25].

Institutions and Institutional Stability

According to North, institutions are constraints devised by human beings to structure political, social and economic interactions. Institutions can be both formal, such as courts and constitutions, and informal, including customs, taboos and traditions[26]. In structural functionalism, institutions play significant roles in society, promoting stability and solidarity. However, the role of institutions is constrained to both its functionality and its evolution, in which critical junctures become relevant points. Generally, however, the role of institutions can be summarised as follows:

1. Institutions create foundations for societal rules of engagement.[27]
2. Institutions reduce uncertainty and increase predictability.[28]

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[25] Parhizkari, K. (2011). Comparing Modernization in Iran and Turkey. International Journal of Social Sciences And Humanity Studies, 3(1), 2007-215.

[26] North, D. C. (1991). Institutions. The Journal of Economic Perspectives, 5(1), 97-112.

[27] Sanders, E. (2016). Historical Institutionalism. In S. A. R. A. W. RHODES, The Oxford Handbook of Political Institutions (pp. 39-56). London: Oxford University Press.

[28] Ibid.

3. Institutions distribute power to actors to exercise authority, influence procedures, and engage in socio-economic activities, including business activities.[29]

4. Institutions use network coordination to help actors, especially coalition members of the arrangement, interact based on the institutional design.[30]

Institutional analysis produces the question of institutional stability and its causes. Overall, institutions are stable over a certain period of time, but they face severe disruptions in periods of strife and change. Even so, if institutions structure political, social, and economic relations, one may wonder who is responsible for institutional changes, leading to the subject of plasticity in the social sciences. Plasticity implies that it is challenging to change normative system regulating socio-political relations due to the challenge of change and reinterpretation, establishing new cognitive templates which bring new regulations in daily interactions in practical terms.[31] To resolve the paradox of plasticity, one could picture institutions as social coalitions in which the segments of each given society reaches consensus on the institutional design. However, questions remain regarding plasticity because institutions are sometimes quite resilient in times of crisis. For example, although most post-Soviet countries experienced uprisings and unrest, which significantly changed their political structures and institutional design, in the remaining post-Soviet countries, a diverse range of institutionalised designs have stood the test of time.[32] For example, Russia, Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, Azerbaijan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan consolidated autocratic regimes which had withstood the challenges of the spillover of revolutionary steams, such as the Orange Revolutions and the Arab Spring. Elsewhere, countries such as Kyrgyzstan,

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[29] Ibid.

[30] Ibid.

[31] Ibid.

[32] Hess, S. (2016). Sources of Authoritarian Resilience in Regional Protest Waves: The Post-Communist Colour Revolutions and 2011 Arab Uprisings. Government and Opposition, 51(1), 1-29.

Georgia, Ukraine, Armenia were rocked by revolutionary waves and switched from autocracy to electoral democracy.[33] However, these countries experiencing revolutions have rarely been able to establish stable regimes to address challenges of long-term stability and development. Thus, one may wonder how to explain these varying states of institutional stability in closely interconnected regions. Theoretically, variables such as natural resources explain diverse results across this spectrum, but there are other independent variables which explain an inability to consolidate. The latter is closely interconnected with collective behaviours of social coalitions, both within countries and abroad. Additionally, one should consider the structures of international and regional environments. However, to explore institutional stability, institutional designs must not only include social coalitions but also continuously interact with coalition members to perpetuate stability by implementing relevant domestic and foreign policies.

Another challenge of explaining institutional stability involves defections and both top-down and bottom-up reforms.[34]

First, one should explore why defecting from designed institutional structures is difficult for coalition members.[35] The obvious answer relates to the benefits that the existing structures provide for coalition members.[36] Benefits relate to both political, economic, and social benefits of certain segments and to all coalition members, especially ordinary citizens. For example, elderly people belonging to social coalitions in autocratic post-Soviet countries supported the existing regimes because of the social benefits they saw after the shock and chaos of transition period.[37]

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[33] Ibid.

[34] Sanders, E. (2016). Historical Institutionalism. In S. A. R. A. W. RHODES, The Oxford Handbook of Political Institutions (pp. 39-56). London: Oxford University Press

[35] Ibid.

[36] Ibid.

[37] Hess, S. (2016). Sources of Authoritarian Resilience in Regional Protest Waves: The Post-Communist Colour Revolutions and 2011 Arab Uprisings. Government and Opposition, 51(1), 1-29.

Second, one can explore uncertainties closely linked to social benefits. The members of social coalitions comprising institutions are usually not prone to abandoning existing structures and enter uncharted territories due to the cost of learning and adjustment.[38] Additionally, the insurance policy of continuing the benefits of the existing structures outweighs the promise of new institutional design since the structure does not guarantee long-term benefits. Psychologically, people are more inclined to keep benefits they already have than to engage in risky behaviours to gain new benefits.[39]

Furthermore, new institutional design implies changes in power distribution. The latter is far more important for members of social coalitions than immediate economic benefits because the power distribution is usually more fundamental in attaining benefits and changes.[40] For example, Syrian dictator Hafez Assad created a rentier system to co-opt the middle class from Sunni communities, but he strictly kept the heads of all powerful security services in the hands of few members of his clan.[41] When the Arab uprisings rocked Syria, Assad's son Bashar Assad benefited from the rentier system by subduing Damascus and most Aleppo elites and crushing the rebellious Sunni population, keeping his regime relatively intact.[42] That is, the distribution of power putting the members of social coalition in disadvantageous position within the new framework of institutional design discourage them to defect from day-to-day practices and structures of the established institutions.

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[38] Sanders, E. (2016). Historical Institutionalism. In S. A. R. A. W. RHODES, The Oxford Handbook of Political Institutions (pp. 39-56). London: Oxford University Press

[39] Ibid.

[40] Ibid.

[41] Balanche, F. (2018). Sectarianism in Syria's Civil War. Retrieved from The Washington Institute for Near East Policy,: https://shs.hal.science/halshs-01702640/document

[42] Sanders, E. (2016). Historical Institutionalism. In S. A. R. A. W. RHODES, The Oxford Handbook of Political Institutions (pp. 39-56). London: Oxford University Press

Another reason for non-defection is related to the established skill sets for investments of the members of social coalitions.[43] Institutional structures condition coalition members to develop skills to make investments and increase their shares of wealth. The skill sets for survival and expansion include manipulating competition laws to enter a market, effective lobbying, and adjusting to the established economic model. The design of new institutional structures implies that the actors of social coalition members should learn new skills to survive in the new environment which force to spend the existing resources in the process with a degree of uncertainty.

Finally, the spillover of the new institutional design is another source of hesitation to defect, assuring institutional stability.[44] Generally, a change in one set of institutional design leads to change across a spectrum of institutions. For example, adopting a new constitution affects political, economic, and social institutional spheres. Thus, the members of social coalitions are usually hesitant even if it does not directly affect them, because they fear collateral damage.

Choosing defections is fraught with a range of risks with no guarantee of success, but there are usually less risky methods of change in institutional design without rupture, which explain institutional stability for longer periods of time. Generally, reforms are considered less risky for the members of social coalitions.[45] Additionally, reform movement could originate as both a top-down and a bottom-up effort, and even the reasons behind these two reform types are diverse.

 Top-down reform efforts can be divided into two categories, autocratic and democratic regimes.[46] For both autocratic and democratic regimes, reforms are designed to keep leaders in power and

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[43] Ibid.
[44] Ibid.
[45] Ibid.
[46] Ibid.

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expand the privileges of the existing social coalitions. However, the goal of autocratic regimes generally differs from democratic regimes. That is, autocratic regimes can enact certain reforms to protect the power of certain groups clustered around one man, whereas democratic regimes generally accept the probability of losing power.[47] Notably, the real-world examples are located in a greyer zone than the simplified version of the given statement above. Although autocratic regimes enact reforms to prolong one person's rule (along with the power of that person's beneficiaries), the goal of democratic regimes enacting reforms is more complicated to explain.

Reform efforts through a bottom-up approach are as complicated as they are through a top-down approach. First, a bottom-up reform approach varies across regime types, meaning it is different in autocracies than in democracies. In the latter, bottom-up changes are slow, but they involve less violence since broad masses could channel their anger and frustration into force to influence policy processes. On the other hand, bottom-up efforts are complicated, involving clandestine activities to avoid repression and violence. For example, early waves of protests for change and implementing reforms usually involve masses demonstrating fealty towards autocrats to avoid harsh responses from security services. However, an autocratic regime's nature also produces bottom-up reform efforts' radicalisation and eventual rupture. For example, the 1906 revolution in Russia was an important step towards a more representative government, but the early protests involved fealty to the Czar, from whom peasants expected protection and support against cruel government officials.[48] When the masses saw indiscriminate repression, the protests became an open revolt against the Czar, who had previously been considered divinely appointed.[49]

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[47] Ibid.
[48] Mcdaniel, T. (1991). Autocracy, Modernization, and Revolution in Russia and Iran(pp.14-47). New Jersey: Princeton University Press.
[49] Ibid.

The power of historical institutionalism is increased by its ability to be imbued with the explanation of changes and the stability of institutions. As part of the application of the thesis, this method will help outline the modernisation process and its consequences in both Turkey and Iran, along with changes in both countries' institutional structures.

Change, Causality, and Time in Historical Institutionalism

As indicated earlier, institutions are designed to constrain and structure the behaviours of actors participating in political, social and economic affairs.[50] However, the role of institutions in constraining and structuring settings usually involves constraining factors for research analysis in the time framework. Particularly, to emphasise and explain the role of institutions, researchers investigate a time period in which a crisis occurred, exploring how these institutions mediated in this crisis. Thus, institutions can play an independent variable role in meso-level analysis in the social sciences. For example, the responses to the 2008 financial crisis in the United States and the EU were substantially different due to the institutional structures of these entities. While the American response came from the central government, the EU's response was incohesive since the region's institutional design allows individual states to veto policies they do not support.[51] Thus, the swift, unified American response allowed the country to recover faster than the EU recovered. This comparison allows one to emphasise the importance of institutions as players in structure and constrain policies, but the range of social changes may strain new institutionalist approaches since it questions the non-plasticity of institutions. That is, institutions constrain and structure the conduct of agencies and vice versa.

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[50] Sanders, E. (2016). Historical Institutionalism. In S. A. R. A. W. RHODES, The Oxford Handbook of Political Institutions (pp. 39-56). London: Oxford University Press

[51] Congleton, R. D. (2009). On the political economy of the financial crisis and bailout of 2008–2009. Springer, 287-317.

These interactions, whether long-term (gradual change) or short-term (critical juncture), significantly alter institutional design, making institutions dependent variables in the different context of time.[52] The question of what makes institutions change is partially answered by the causes of institutional stability, meaning the fracture or disappearance of factors in institutional stability could produce institutional change. However, Pierson (2004) emphasised 'gaps', underlying reasons for institutional changes, saying there are five essential gaps contributing to changes in institutional designs. These gaps are as follows:

1. Limits of institutional designs are the first gap. People who establish institutions cannot fully know the results of institutional design due to the complexities of cognitive templates of societies and the impracticability of attaining all the information from the ground.

2. The second gap is related to differences in ideational beliefs and realities on the ground. Politicians may strive to design ideal institutions, but the realities on the ground may confront their efficient application, or there may be a lack of actors who recognise or are willing to abide by the institutional regulations.

3. As mentioned earlier, institutions deliver not only socio-economic benefits but also power to their participants. However, both relative and absolute power dynamics may change over time, affecting institutional design. Even actors swept aside may regroup and challenge the status quo established by the institutional design.

4. The last gap mentioned by Pierson (2004) concerns time. According to him, institutional designs are made in certain times and contexts, so that as time elapses, one can reinterpret institutional design. For example, the Ulama of the Ottoman Empire experienced a string

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[52] I prefer using context of time instead of span of time because changes are not only dependent on time but also the context.

of heated debates over slavery and equality with other ethnic and religious minorities based on citizenship. The Ulama had to change interpretation, which affected institutional design of the state and how it saw its subjects.[53]

These gaps are important factors in institutional change, but there is still a need for investigating interactions between institutions that cause changes in institutional design. For example, a change in the party system or electoral system may automatically change the legislative process. That is, the aforementioned changes may entail the inclusion or exclusion of new actors in decision-making, causing changes in the legislative process. The following sections will further investigate institutional changes and their long-term impacts on structuring and constraining political, social and economic affairs.

Critical Juncture Theory and Path Dependence

Historical institutionalism investigates the origins, causes and timing of institutional changes throughout history. However, the ways changes occur include gradual change, punctuated equilibrium (change happens in stages of ruptures rather than in gradual stages) and critical juncture. Critical junctures are an important concept regarding institutional changes in historical institutionalism. Generally, critical juncture theory states that the waning constraints of institutions over a short time period allows powerful political actors to make substantial decisions. These decisions have a significantly high probability of constraining and structuring future political, social and economic affairs because they create path dependence, which is difficult to deviate due to its costs. One of the best descriptions of critical junctures was developed by Mahoney. In his book *The Legacies of Liberalism: Path Dependence and Political Regimes in Central America*,

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[53] ÇİFCİ, Y. (2019). Modernisation in the Tanzimat Period and the Ottoman Empire:An Analysis of the Tanzimat Edict within the Scope of the Modern State. Maarif Mektepleri Uluslararası Sosyal ve Beşerî Bilimler Dergisi, II(2), 14-24.

Mahoney explains how variations in 19th century liberal reforms in Central America created path dependency and were defining factors in varying regime types across the continent (2001).

The usefulness of critical juncture theory is particularly important in explaining differences in the relationship between the religious establishment and the state in Turkey and Iran. Especially after the catastrophic consequences of WWI in both these countries, the design of an institutional framework became crucial in defining the future of political, social and economic affairs. Thus, along with institutional designs and changes, critical juncture theory is useful in defining how differences in policy decisions at critical points have produced different outcomes in the relationship between the state and the mosque in both Turkey and Iran.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

The tradition of comparison in the social sciences dates back to Aristotle's time. Since then, intellectuals have compared different communities, political regimes and economic development paths to understand the causes and effects of various events. For example, Aristotle derives six constitutional regimes depending on the number of rulers, labelling them either 'correct' or 'deviant'.[54] Another famous example of comparative politics is Al-Farabi's 'Virtuous City,' which explores the best political regimes based on end aims and the common good of communities.[55] Other scholars, including Niccolò Machiavelli, Adam Smiths, David Ricardo, Alexis de Tocqueville and Karl Marx, have used comparative methods both to understand causes and effects and to offer their own theoretical frameworks.

As Turkey and Iran emerged as independent states at the end of World War I, both states initiated a period of reforms to modernise their institutions, societies and economies. However, these efforts produced similarities and varying results for both countries. Therefore, Turkey and Iran have become areas of scholarly interest for social scientists. Despite the use of comparative historical research methodology, it is useful to note Mill's method of induction, namely 'The method of Agreement' and 'The method of Difference' from his book *A System of Logic*.

In the Method of Agreement, 'If two or more instances of the phenomenon under investigation have only one circumstance in common, the circumstance in which alone all the instances agree is the cause (or effect) of the given phenomenon'.[56] For example, Turkey and Iran are two different

countries with vast cultural, linguistic and geographical differences, but these two states have historically followed similar paths of modernisation. Thus, modernisation could be considered a 'dependent variable'. In seeking 'independent variables', one could define the drivers of modernisation in both countries as people with military backgrounds which implicitly established a common sense of traditional societies among modernisation leaders. That is, the military institution is an independent common variable producing commonality between these two states regarding their similar paths of top-down modernisation.

On the other hand, Method of Difference is when 'an instance in which the phenomenon under investigation occurs, and an instance in which it does not occur, have every circumstance in common save one, that one occurring in the former; the circumstance in which alone the two instances differ, is the effect, or the cause, or an indispensable part of the cause, of the phenomenon'.[57] To improve the understanding of this method, it is assumed that Turkey and Iran adopted identical policies because historical research shows though with lapse of time in which Iran tracked Turkey. However, Turkey did not undergo a political revolution that entirely altered the country's regime structures, although the region is populated by both Muslims and other ethnic groups, causing intermittent political and intercommunal violence. Here it could be attached to the institutional strength of the political regime in Turkey compared with Iran as differentiating variable. It does not simply imply that Iran had weak institutions, but it was traditionally younger, less experienced, rigid and exclusionary, causing a large segment of an ethnically diverse society to revolt.

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[57] Ibid

After clarifying Stuart Mill's induction method, one can examine the existing literature comparing Turkey's and Iran's state–mosque relationships. This concept has been one of the most intriguing issues for scholars investigating the underlying causes of variation in both countries. Therefore, it produced a wide array of literature in various categories, which could be divided into four distinctive categories. The latter are essentialist religious-cultural literature, non-essentialist religious-cultural literature, modernisation literature and institutional-economics literature. Each piece of literature has its own methods for explaining the causes underlying discrepancies between Turkey and Iran. However, they have been criticised for shortcomings such as orientalist tropes contrary to their explanations. Thus, it is worth briefly analysing each piece of literature in separate sections.

Essentialist Literature on Cultural and Religious Aspects

Essentialism is an outlook claiming that each object category has an intrinsic essence which shapes its identity.[58] This philosophy has permeated different branches of science, ranging from the social sciences to biology. Typically, this kind of essentialism is divided into three main categories: sortal, causal and ideal. According to Aristotle, sortal essentialism argues that there are characteristics that only members of a certain category share.[59] For example, one could use this approach to describe the differences between male and female reproductive abilities, such as by noting that men can produce sperms necessary for fertilisation, while women have the physiological essence to give birth. Next, in causal essentialism, a property or quality produces identity and substance in members of this category.[60] Additionally, language is an example of this

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[58] Editors. (2023). Essentialism. Retrieved from Britannica: https://www.britannica.com/topic/essentialism-philosophy.
[59] Ibid.
[60] Ibid.

case because it is one of the most fundamental properties of nationhood, facilitating the reproduction of cultural norms, which is passed down through generations. Unlike sortal and causal essentialism, ideal essentialism is an abstract concept, such as justice or egalitarianism.[61] For example, it is not possible to achieve 100% justice, but this concept's abstract essences are guiding principles in organising order and stability within societies. However, essentialism's qualities and purposes are not exempt from the criticism of social scientists. For instance, the qualities of essentialist approaches have been criticised for reductionism, and these have been used to promote discriminatory and extremist lines of thought. In one such case, the incompatibility of Islam with democratic governance has long headlined debates on the lack of democratic development in the Middle East. However, if used cautiously, it could reveal information useful to further explaining societal particularities. Notably, cultural analysis helps explain the context of politics, linking and balancing individual and collective identities. Furthermore, cultural analysis is useful in ascertaining the framework and boundaries of political actions; motivating factors of political actions (for example, slaughtering cows is accepted among Muslims in India, but this practice has caused violence against those slaughtering cows among Indians practising Hinduism); and cultural bases of political organisations.

Studies on Islam's role in politics and its relationship with the state intensified after the Islamic Revolution in Iran. The country's leader, Ayatollah Khomeini, being cleric increased the span of attention the issue of state-religion relations in Islam. The nation's proximity to Turkey and the nation's political and societal instability have caused some parties to wonder whether Turkey could be the next Iran. Subsequently, increasing studies have been conducted on Islam's role in politics and the differences between Shiism and Sunnism. Among the notable scholars and their works

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[61] Ibid.

promoting an essentialist religious-cultural approach are Michael M.J. Fischer's *Iran: From Religious Dispute to Revolution*, Samih K. Farsoun and Mehrdad Mashayekhi's *Political Culture in the Islamic Republic*,[62] Taha Akyol's *Osmanlı ve İran`da Mehzep ve Devlet.*[63] As a result of such studies, the Sunni-Shia dichotomy emerged to explain the underlying causes of the Iranian Revolution. Generally, essentialist scholars believe that Shiism has rebelled against authorities from the beginning. As Fischer notes in his book *Karbala Paradigm,* meaning revolt against authorities conceived as unjust despite being weak is the essence of Shia theological thought.[64] The main narrative of *Karbala Paradigm* is the struggle of grandson of Prophet Muhammad, Huseyn Ibn Ali, against the unjust Ummayad Caliph Yazid I. His supporters were few compared with the army of Yazid I, but he refused to budge on. Thus, Huseyn Ibn Ali's bravery became a symbol of Shiism, and he was further lionised through ceremonies and rituals in the Shiite mosques. Another important dichotomous difference is identified by Taha Akyol, who claims that the Ottoman Empire and its religious policies are causal essence of difference between Iran and Turkey (Akyol, 2018). Furthermore, Shia ulama became increasingly autonomous from state authorities and established its own hierarchical structure, creating a culture of obedience within Shiism. However, Sunni ulama could not establish a culture similarly based on obedience. Taha Akyol does not see hierarchies as symptoms of politico-social or economic developments but as cultural phenomena superior to others. Beyond this, Taha Akyol is not alone in promoting an essentialist religio-cultural approach. For instance, even structuralist scholars such as Theda Skocpol have struggled to explain the Iranian Revolution through structural analysis. In *States and Social Revolutions: A Comparative Analysis of France, Russia and China*, she argues that a

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[62] It is an edited book.

[63] Literal translation: "Sect and State in the Ottoman Empire and Iran". It is semi-academic study with ideological inclinations.

[64] Fischer, M. M. (2003). Iran: From Religious Dispute to Revolution. London: The University of Wisconsin Press.

society's structure causes social revolutions.[65] However, her article 'Retier State and Shia Islam in the Iranian Revolution' argues in favour of the essentialist argument that Shiism creates a conducive environment for revolt and rebellion against authorities.[66] Thus, Shiism could be considered an underlying force to depose the Iranian Shah and make the Iranian revolutionary movement successful.

Despite its explanatory power, the essentialist religious-cultural approach using the differentiation of quietist Sunnism from Shiism fails to stand in historical accounts of when Shia ulama stood with oppressive regimes. Furthermore, accounts of the relationship between the state and religion demonstrate that there were cases in which Sunnis were more rebellious against perceived or actual injustices than Shias. Finally, the lack of hierarchical structures or their legitimacy in other Shia-dominated countries, especially Azerbaijan, provides counterfactuals against essentialist religious-cultural approaches. This circumstance supports the argument that hierarchical establishments are more epiphenomena to politico-social and economic developments.

Non-essentialist Religious-Cultural Approach

Contrary to essentialism, non-essentialism maintains that an entity does not have to have specific traits to have an identity or to belong to a certain category (Hazir,2014). As a legacy of colonialism, essentialist religious-cultural studies began drawing increasing criticism. One of the most prominent scholars leading the critique of 'essentialist religious-cultural' literature was Edward Said, who called out orientalist tropes in Western academia (Said,1978). Consequently, new approaches emerged to explain the role of religion in politics and its relationship with the state.

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[65] Skocpol, T. (1979). States and Social Revolutions: A Comparative Study of France, Russia and China. New York: Cambridge University Press.

[66] Skocpol, T. (1982). Rentier State and Shi'a Islam in the Iranian Revolution. Theory and Society, 265-283. Retrieved from https://www.jstor.org/stable/657269#metadata_info_tab_contents.

The 'non-essentialist religious-cultural' approach focuses on religion's role in cultural, economic and social life. This view does not necessarily claim that religion is superior to political, social or economic life. Instead, the approach argues for interactions among these fields and their results for positioning of religious forces within the socio-political environment. *Nikkie Keddie's Modern Iran: Roots and Results of Revolution* has been one of the most important works thus far on the Iranian Revolution and how religious clergy took a leading role in this conflict. In simple terms, the book explains that Shiism was founded on rebellion, but it was for long time pacifist waiting for the coming of Mahdi, Messiah in Shia theology (Keddie, 2006). However, beginning in the 19th century, due to Iran's weakness in foreign and domestic challenges, Shia Ulama positioned itself as an important political force, capable of influencing events (Keddie, 2006). This role in foreign interventions and widespread injustices helped this group become a powerful, autonomous force. Additionally, despite being relatively passive during the reign of Reza Khan, it again took a more politicised stance after World War II in public affairs. Furthermore, Keddie argues that religion became more politicised in Iran because of its unifying effect on multi-ethnic Iran and the destruction of the leftist movement (2006). However, even if the leftist movement had survived, its alien ideological core would not have survived in the Iranian population, failing to this society (Keddie, 2006).

Another book from the non-essentialist religious-cultural literature is *Islams and Modernities* by Aziz Al-Azmeh (1993). The book suggests that there are many Islams, depending on circumstances and context (1993). It further explains how various circumstances created different understandings of Islam among Muslim societies.

Another important study on the relationship between the state and religion and the politicisation of religion in Turkish history was conducted by Kemal H. Karpat. His contribution to academia is

an important source on the rise of religion in politics and the changing dynamics of religion and its relationship with state institutions in Ottoman modernisation. His book could be considered to be as structural analysis as well, but his studies is revealing how Islam became unifying and positioning force in the late Ottoman Empire. The book emphasises how Islam became a driving force against Western pressures. The politicisation of Islam was not meant rejecting industrialisation or scientific discoveries. However, this politicisation created new identities, such as the 'Ottoman Identity' (Karpat, 2001). Additionally, this effect influenced oppositional movements in search of soul for their political struggle to save the empire from the West. Furthermore, Karpat examines how Islam was politicised in the late Ottoman Empire. He argues that the late Ottoman state's efforts to centralise and modernise its territories politicised Islam to construct a national identity and control the region's diverse population (2001). Beyond this, Karpat examines how various groups, such as intellectuals, bureaucrats and Sufi leaders, have used Islam to further their own agendas.

Generally, the 'non-essentialist religious-cultural' approach provides powerful explanatory power to issues underlying the state's relationship with religion, religious forces and survival tactics in Turkey and Iran. However, critics of the approach have argued that 'non-essentialist religious-cultural' literature has explanatory power limited to explaining epiphenomenon to structural changes (Hazir, 2014).

Modernisation Literature

The emergence of modernisation literature coincided with the increasing fame of modernisation theory, which explains societal development and change. It uses the stages of development in Western societies as an example, arguing that other societies are destined to go through similar stages. According to the theoretical framework, traditional societies will progress through a series

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of stages, ultimately reaching the level of economic and technological development of Western societies. One of the most important books on modernisation theory is *The Stages of Economic Growth: A Non-Communist Manifesto* by economist W.W. Rostow in 1960. In this book, Rostow presents a theory on economic growth outlining the stages of economic development. He identifies five stages of economic growth: traditional society, preconditions for take-off, take-off, the drive to maturity and the age of high mass consumption (Rostow, 1991).

In the first stage of a traditional society, its economy is primarily agrarian and characterised by low productivity and limited technological development (Rostow, 1991). In the second stage, preconditions for take-off are met, and the economy begins to develop the necessary infrastructure and institutions to support industrialisation (Rostow, 1991).

In the third stage, take-off, an economy experiences a period of rapid industrialisation and economic growth. In the fourth stage, drive to maturity, the economy continues growing but at a slower rate as it becomes more industrialised and urbanised (Rostow, 1991). In the final stage, the age of high mass consumption, the economy is highly industrialised, and consumer goods become widely available (Rostow, 1991).

Rostow's theory emphasises the importance of government intervention and investment in infrastructure, education and technology to promote economic growth. Additionally, he argues that the process of economic growth is not linear but that some countries may get stuck in a particular stage and fail to advance to the next stage (Rostow, 1991). This book provides important contributions to the field of development economics and has been widely debated and discussed. However, this work has also been criticised for its focus on the Western experience of economic

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growth and its lack of attention to the roles of colonialism and globalisation in shaping economic development.[67]

Generally, modernisation theory has been widely criticised for its Eurocentric, linear perspective and for its lack of attention to the complex, diverse experiences of non-Western societies. As an alternative to modernisation theory, world-system theory and dependency theories were developed.[68]

Another work of modernisation literature is *Men of Order: Authoritarian Modernization under Atatürk and Reza Shah*, edited by Touraj Atabaki and Erik J. Zürcher. This book examines the authoritarian modernisation programmes implemented by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk in Turkey and Reza Shah Pahlavi in Iran during the 1930s and 1940s. The work explores how these leaders sought to modernise their countries by implementing economic and societal policies of secularisation, centralisation and modernisation. The editors argue that these modernisation programmes were primarily driven by a desire to create a sense of order and stability in the face of perceived threats from both internal and external forces (Touraj Atabaki, Erik-Jan Zürcher,2004). Furthermore, the book examines how these leaders used authoritarian methods to implement their modernisation programmes, including censorship, repressing political opposition and using the military and secret police to maintain control. Beyond this, the editors explore how these policies impact the lives of ordinary citizens, including displacing rural populations, suppressing ethnic and religious minorities and eroding traditional social and cultural institutions.

Overall, *Men of Order: Authoritarian Modernization under Atatürk and Reza Shah* provides a detailed examination of the authoritarian modernisation programmes implemented by Mustafa

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[67] Marsh, R. M. (2014). Modernization Theory, Then and Now. Comparative Sociology, 13, 261-283.
[68] Ibid

Kemal Atatürk in Turkey and Reza Shah Pahlavi in Iran during the 1930s and 1940s. This work covers these leaders' methods, goals and impact on society, comparing Turkey and Iran, analysing how these leaders sought to modernise their countries and the consequences of their actions.

The State and the Subaltern: Modernization, Society and the State in Turkey and Iran by Touraj Atabaki was published in 1996. This book examines the relationship between the state and subaltern groups in Turkey and Iran. Atabaki argues that modernisation in these countries has been shaped by the interactions between the state and subaltern groups, such as ethnic minorities, religious groups and rural populations (2007). The book is divided into three parts. The first part outlines the historical background of the relationship between the state and subaltern groups in Turkey and Iran, focusing on the period of modernisation in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The second part explores how the state has attempted to control and integrate subaltern groups through assimilation, integration, and repression. The third part of the book examines the resistance and counter-mobilisation of subaltern groups against the state. Atabaki argues that the state's attempts to control and integrate subaltern groups have frequently been met with resistance and counter-mobilisation (2007). Additionally, he contends that the state's policies towards subaltern groups have been shaped by the state's own interests rather than the needs or desires of the groups themselves (Atabaki, 2007). Overall, The State and the Subaltern provides a detailed, nuanced examination of the relationship between the state and subaltern groups in Turkey and Iran, an important contribution to Middle Eastern studies and comparative politics.

Modernisation literature provides a powerful explanation of the dramatic transformation of state structures and societies in Iran and Turkey. Comparing the states of these societies at the beginning of the 20th century with their states at the end of the century, it is not short of revolutionary transformations. However, the literature on the modernisation of Iran and Turkey has focused on

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top-down modernisation and transformations caused by leadership cadres. Generally, modernisation literature on the Middle East suffers from an exclusive focus on macro-level analysis; that is, these transformations are analysed exclusively through the eyes of the state. Thus, this body of work sometimes misses grassroots-level transformations, as occurred in the Iranian Revolution.

'Institutionalist Approach' Literature[69]

According to *The Oxford Handbook of Political Institutions,* an institution is a relatively enduring collection of rules and organised practices. The latter are embedded in structures of meaning and resources that are relatively immune to changes in the face of turnover of faces and idiosyncratic choices of individuals.[70] Institutions prescribe a set of sanctioned rules, meanings and interpretations to legitimise actors' behaviours. For example, security-related institutions should be impartial and responsible for the security of all citizens, whereas political parties may choose a set of policies variably benefiting citizens. Institutions are categorised into formal and informal institutions. Formal institutions include constitutions, written rules and state institutions, and informal institutions include taboos, customs and cultural perceptions (North, 1991). Approaches to institutional studies vary and could be categorised into three sections in terms of its aims to reveal: 1. The nature of institutions, such as being democratic or autocratic. 2. The processes that translate structures and meanings into political impacts. For example, each democratic regime has different structures and interpretations of rules to facilitate elections. Thresholds could be considered as such because it is impactful in political actions, including making alliances among political actors to gain influence in a country's governance. 3. The processes that translate human

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[69] Not to be confused with Institutional Economics
[70] James G. March & Johan P. Olsen. (2016). Elaborating the ''New Institutionalism''. In S. A. R. A. W. RHODES, The Oxford Handbook of Political Institutions (pp. 3-23). London: Oxford University Press

behaviour into structures, transformation, elimination and sustenance.[71] The 'new institutionalist' approach uses 'rational institutionalism', 'sociological institutionalism' and 'Historical Institutionalism'. These components reveal (a) the nature of institutions, (b) the processes that translate structures and meanings into political impacts and (c) the processes that translate human behaviour into structures, establishments, transformation, elimination and sustenance. 'Rationalist institutionalism' explores the behaviours of institutions through rational perspectives of those involved, whereas 'sociological institutionalism' analyses institutions through socio-cultural factors.[72] As mentioned above, 'historical institutionalism' analyses institutions through a complex array of factors, such as timing, critical junctures and path dependence in the study of institutions.

After the emergence of critique in 'modernisation theory', 'modernisation literature' comparing Turkey and Iran by using 'modernisation' approach lost its momentum. Thereafter, the research on institutional differences became more popular among scholars of the field to explain the differences in the relationships between the state and religion in Turkey and Iran. The general argument has been the strength of institutional legacy in Turkey compared with that in Iran, leading to discrepancies between the state–religion relationships in both countries. However, this argument was weakened by the dominance of Islamist politics in Turkey after the 1980s. Although not the focus of this thesis, the institutional strength argument seemed to lose its explanatory power after 1990s. Birol Baskan offered a different explanation in his book *From Religion Empires to Secular States: State Secularization in Turkey, Iran, and Russia* (2014). According to him, Turkish and Russian state secularisation were inclusive despite varying in nature and methods, while Iranian secularisation excluded religion (Başkan, 2014). In *Religion-state Relations in Turkey and Iran:*

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[71] Ibid.
[72] Ibid.

Ideologies, Institutions and International Influences (2018), Agha Hazir provided another institutionalist approach. He noted that religion was structured into state institutions in Turkey, whereas Iranian religious clergy had more autonomous power. Both these books offered explanations of why revolution occurred in Iran, while Turkey did not experience such a revolution resulting in the hegemony of clergy. However, both authors miss important causal lines in comparison efforts. It is true that Turkey had a strong, inclusive institutional legacy, but it is misleading to say that Iranian government did not attempt to subordinate or co-opt clergy and religious powers. For example, clergy, including Khomeini himself, supported the coup against the National Front leader Mosaddeq, the prosecution of Tudeh party members and Bahais[73]. Additionally, it could be misleading to say that the Iranian Revolution was purely religious in its nature because all segments of societies, particularly Bazaar communities and newly urbanised middle classes, were the dominant classes in the revolutionary period.[74] This explanation should not revolve around only the strength of institutions and their inclusiveness but also their flexibility, meaning an institutional capacity to adapt, transform, sustain and reproduce new structures. Thanks to electoral processes, Turkish institutions were more inclusive of all segments of society and offered more flexibility in change of its nature. On the other hand, Iranian institutional capacity revolving around one-man rule could not absorb or adapt to new changes. Thus, it is both about inclusiveness of institutions and their capacities to adapt, particularly in periods of radical economic and social transformations due to rapid top-down modernisation and global changes. Despite being the outside span of this thesis, one could argue that a strong institutional legacy helped Turkish leaders to be inclusive in powerful segments of society. Additionally, the country's electoral process adaptation allowed it to maintain its flexibility, but it began losing its ability to

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[73] Amanat, A. (2017). Iran: A Modern History(pp.707-750). New Haven & London: Yale University Press.
[74] Amanat, A. (2017). Iran: A Modern History. New Haven & London(868-880): Yale University Press.

be flexible and consensual for a long period of time. The main reason behind crises is to be considered the exclusive exclusionary approach of Turkish institutions clustered around imposing state ideology. The ideology of the state comprised Sunni Islam tailored to Turkish nationalism (Albayrak, 2019). This philosophy denied basic rights to other minorities or ideological approaches. Thus, the state institutions could co-opt minorities through a combination of violence and rewards, but they could not dominate the emerging shrewd, economically powerful class of Islamists in Turkey, producing the dominance of Islamist parties after 2000s. However, the electoral processes eased the transformation. However, Iranian institutional capacity was weaker, less flexible and inclusive and thus failed to include the emerging Bazaar, middle class urban and newly migrated segments of societies, culminating in the crisis of 1978.

Notably, the literature fails to explore psychological analysis, including social and political psychological aspects of discrepancies in the existing literature. However, Fathali M. Moghaddam has extensively examined the psychological aspects of the Iranian revolution, though it is not a comparative style in essence, leaving a void in this literature (2022).

Chapter 3: A Brief History of the Emergence of Islam and Its Expansion into Iran and Anatolia

The emergence of Islam and its global impact have been extensive. The religion's long, complicated history has drawn the attention of scholars since its expansion into the known world of that time. Islam brought political, social and economic transformation to the Middle East, where religion has played an important role in shaping domestic and interstate relations.

Muhammad is the prophet and most important figure of Islam. He was born to one of the powerful tribes of Mecca, Quraysh, in 570 C.E. Islam claims that God revealed the religion to Muhammad between 610 and 632 C.E. Earlier, Muhammad did not say anything about this experience to anyone except his wife, Khadija. However, after he became convinced that the revelations were from God and were not merely his own thoughts, he began to preach Islam to the people of Mecca in 613. The revelations were revolutionary for the socio-economic and political order of Mecca, and the merchants of Mecca considered Muhammad's preaching threatening to their power and wealth. Beyond this, Muhammad's call to strict adherence to monotheism challenged the cult preaching culture of the Meccans. Despite opposition to Muhammad's message, he was protected by his uncle, Abu Talib, the chief of the Hashemi clan of the Quraysh tribe, who guarded his nephew despite not sharing his faith. However, the death of Khadija and Abu Talib in 619, the 'Year of Sorrow' in the Islamic calendar, left Muhammad vulnerable to attacks and prosecution from the hostile clans of Mecca. These threats compelled Muhammad to migrate from Mecca to Yathrib (contemporary Medina), where he found numerous devoted followers. To neutralise the Meccan threat, a nascent community of Muslims raided trade caravans traveling from Mecca to Syria, forcing the Meccans to respond. After a series of battles, Muhammad was finally able to

take Mecca. Beyond battles and religious preaching, Muhammad established a proto state in Medina, a deal known as the 'Constitution of Medina' with Jews of Medina and other ethnic groups. His social and political actions consolidated its position as a guide for Muslims to build an Islamic state within their territorial boundaries. However, the interpretations of Muhammad's actions and context were usually interpreted differently based on the interests of the actors involved in.

Muhammad's death and lack of an heir furthered the number of interpretations concerning political debates among the Muslim community. In the aftermath of Muhammad's death, Muslims were divided over who his successor should be. Most Muslims agreed on the consensual election of Abu Bakr, while the minority, self-declared Shiites or followers of Ali, Muhammad's cousin, demanded Ali's leadership be accepted. The rationale of the Shiites was based on Ali's virtues and his kinship with Muhammad. Despite having his own reservations, Ali accepted the leadership of Abu Bakr. Over time, the reigns of Abu Bakr, Umar, Uthman, and Ali occurred during the expansion of the Muslim territories. However, each succession caused some degree of insurgency within the Rashidun Caliphate. Particularly, the reigns of Uthman and Ali were the most troublesome periods of the nascent Islamic state. Uthman was accused of nepotism and killed in the course of insurrections, and Ali encountered greater challenges, especially from the Prophet's beloved wife Aisha. Despite quashing insurrections, Ali was also killed, causing 'the First Civil War'.

After the Rashidun Caliphate was replaced by the Umayyads, it continued expanding in all directions. The main reasons behind this continued expansion were the longstanding wars between the Byzantines and Sassanids. The waged warfare weakened both the Byzantine and Sassanid Empires. Consequently, the nascent Islamic state encountered no obstacles to its expansion and final occupation of Iran during Umar's caliphate.

Despite the later success of the Umayyads' and Abbasids' expansion of the Islamic state, establishing a unified Islamic state seemed impossible for geographical, cultural, economic, theological and ethno-political reasons. The most salient example of the unfeasibility of a unified Islamic state was the establishment of two powerful Shiite states, Fatimids and Buyids, during a period called the 'Shia Century'.[75] As Shiite states exerted pressure on Sunni Muslims, both the rulers and ulama (scholars) of the Seljuks responded by creating Orthodox Sunni Islam during a period called the 'Sunni Revival'.[76] Thus, the 'Sunni Revival' played a critical role in the relationship between authorities and religion. That is, the Sunni Empire authorities established a quid pro quo relationship with the mosque. Consequently, Sunni Islam could not assert its full independence from the state authorities to establish their own hierarchical structures like the Shiite branch of Islam did. This difference may have played a critical role until now.[77] The collapse of the Seljuk Empire did not alter the logic by giving greater autonomy to religious figures.

Establishing Islam as the Official Religion in the Ottoman and Safavid Empires

The foundation of the Ottoman Empire followed a similar pattern. The state authorities had always been cautious about the role of the religion and the mosque. After the 16th century, the Ottomans established sophisticated structure of Madrassas and an employment regime for religious scholars.[78] For example, it was required to complete a given path to be admitted to the ranks of religious scholars in the Ottoman Empire after the 16th century.[79] Therefore, the religious figures were not different from the regular paid state employees. Even the environment was more

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[75] Hazir, A. (2014, December). A Comparative Analysis Of Religion-State Relations:A Case Study On Turkey And Iran. Ankara: Middle East Technical University.
[76] Ibid.
[77] Ibid.
[78] Zilfi, M. (2006). The Ottoman Ulema. In S. N. Faroqhi, The Cambridge History of Turkey (pp. 209-225). London: Cambridge University Press.
[79] Ibid.

restrictive for the ulama and other religious clerks than for normal state employees. For example, the activities of these religious figures were closely monitored and reported, and certain restrictive measures were established, such as trading to avoid the exploiting Islam for personal gain. This does not mean that the ulama did not exert influence in the Ottoman Empire, but exercising this influence depended on contextual environment and personalities. For example, it was natural for new Sultans to seek goodwill of the Ulama to expand their legitimacy and navigate the intrigues of the court. As the Sultans consolidated their power, they again curbed the power of the ulama. However, sometimes the ulama issued a fatwa on killing of the Sultan, but the ulama did not lead the revolt.[80] They were only executing orders demanded by putschists toppling the Sultan.

Unlike the Ottoman Empire, Iran had a different experience with Islam in the Sunni and post-Sunni periods. Iran was occupied and converted during the caliphate of Umar, and for centuries, the Persian populace followed the Sunni branch of Islam and produced numerous influential scholars of Islam. However, the rise of Qizilbashs ('Read Head' for the red ribbons worn by the members of the tribe) and the emergence of the Safavid Empire played another critical role.[81] As Ismail I of Safavids expanded his power, he decided Persia should convert from Sunnism to Shiism. To realise his goals, Ismail I brought Shiite scholars from Lebanon. These scholars supported Ismail I's aims due to the dwindling space for Shiite religious expansion in Lebanon after the Ottoman Empire took control of the Levant (Amanat, 2017). To show his decisiveness in this conversion, Ismail I decided the tone of addressing to the believers during the Friday praying ceremonies (Amanat, 2017). In crude term, imams were ordered to curse the first three caliphs of the Rashidun and

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[81] Hazir, A. (2014, December). A Comparative Analysis of Religion-State Relations: A Case Study On Turkey And Iran. Ankara: Middle East Technical University.

Prophet's wife Aisha (Amanat, 2017). Naturally, he lionised Ali as the second most sacred man on earth, second only to Prophet Muhammad (Amanat, 2017).

At the pinnacle of their powers, both the Ottomans and Safavids felt threatened by each other. Despite the initial successes of prevention, a war caused by the close relationship between the Sultan and Shah the reign of Sultan Selim brought an abrupt end to the relationships. This situation became so dire that the Shah and Sultan began personally attacking each other by using cursing words (Amanat, 2017). In 1514, tensions reached a breaking point. Both armies clashed at the Battle of Chaldiran, where the better equipped Ottoman army achieved a decisive victory. However, the Ottomans could not completely subjugate the Safavids, and the warfare between the two drained the Ottoman treasury, causing extensive destruction of the Safavid territory. Some historians have claimed that the war between the Ottomans and Safavids was the 'Vietnam' of the Ottoman in the Middle Ages (Amanat, 2017). In 1639, both sides reached a compromise, signing a treaty at Kashri Shirin castle. This treaty laid the foundation for the modern borders between Turkey and Iran, which remained largely stable for centuries.

Fall of the Safavid Empire and Expansion of the Influence of the Ulama

During the reign of the Safavids, the Shiite ulama gained social, economic and political power to a previously unseen extent (Amanat, 2017). The support of the Shah expanded the Safavids' reach and importance in the eyes of both the authorities and people. As the Safavids began experiencing internal crises, the Shiite Ulama gained more influence and autonomy. The city of Qom turned into the religious learning centre for the Shiite Ulama, who independently levied taxes on the Bazaar community and used waqfs (charity organisations) to expand their wealth by avoiding any scrutiny or taxation (Amanat, 2017). Towards the end of the 17th century, the Safavid Empire lost most of its outer lands and faced extreme difficulties in controlling its own territories due to

domestic challenges and foreign occupations. The weakness of the central authorities helped the Ulama establish greater autonomy and further develop its hierarchical structure. The fall of the Safavid Empire in 1736 brought extreme challenges for the Shiite Ulama in Iranian territories (Algar, 1980). Even before Nader Shah declared the fall of the Safavids and founded the Afshar Empire, he exercised extensive power in the Safavid Empire. Long-term warfare with the Ottomans, internal revolts and the pressure of the emerging Russian Empire had exhausted the Safavid army, leaving Nader Khan with the strongest army in the Safavid Empire. The Shah II Tahmasib tasked Nader Khan with achieving internal stability and securing the borders of the Empire. Khan achieved both goals but had plans to overthrow the Safavid dynasty and establish his own later. After declaring himself the Shah, he went onto the offensive against the Shiite Ulama. As a Sunni, Nader Shah bore grudges against the Shiite Ulama (Amanat, 2017). However, his position vis-à-vis the Shiite Ulama could not be explained by only religious and emotional dimensions. Nader Shah saw the Shiite Ulama as a danger to the legitimacy and expansion of his empire (Amanat, 2017), a concern that arose from his own circle. Because the Afshar tribe was Sunni, Nader Shah's commanding legitimacy could be jeopardised among his own people if he embraced the Shiite Ulama and gave them space to continue their functions. Regarding the expansion difficulties caused by the Shiite Ulama, if Nader Shah embraced the Shiite Ulama, it could depict him as an expansionist wishing to spread Shiism (Amanat, 2017).

To solve the problems arising from the Shiite Ulama, Nader Shah chose a compromise over outright assault on the Shiite Ulama (Amanat, 2017). He tried to reform Shiism and universalise the Ja`fari branch of Shiism in Iran. In an effort to implement his project, Nader Shah demanded that Shias of Iran discontinue cursing the caliphs and accept the legitimacy of three caliphs before Ali. Next, Nader asked the Ottoman delegation to accept the legitimacy of the Ja`fari branch of

Shiism as the fifth madhab of Sunni Islam and allow to erect the fifth column in Kaaba. The Ottomans had four conditions, including accepting the legitimacy of three caliphs, not cursing the second caliph Umar, accepting Prophet's companions, and discontinuing the practice of temporary marriage.[82] These conditions were accepted by Shiite scholars under the pressure of Nader Shah, but the Ottomans did not keep their promise to accept and legitimise the Ja`fari branch as a legitimate branch of Sunni Islam out of fear of Nader Shah's intentions.[83] The Ottomans suspected Nader Shah had expansionist goals, so the Ottoman leadership thought that it would be dangerous to accept the Ja`fari branch of Shiism as the fifth branch of Sunni Islam.[84] This move would boost the legitimacy of Nader Shah and help establish a strong Afsharid Empire to the east of the Ottoman Empire. Despite failing to convince the Ottoman scholars, Nader Shah continued his plan to gradually reform Shiism and return Iran to its original Sunni roots.[85] However, he relied on scholars who did not have sufficient influence with either the Shiite or Sunni establishments. After the death of Nader Shah in 1747, the process of reforming Shiism ended abruptly.

The collapse of the centralised state system ended the close relationship between the state and mosque.[86] This paradigm was an anomaly in Iranian history because the Ulama, including the Sunni Ulama, had maintained relative independence from the authorities throughout Iranian history. Until the Safavid Empire, the Shiite Ulama argued for distance from political affairs.[87] According to the theological thought, Mahdi went into occultation and there would be no just ruler

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[82] Avery, P. (1991). Nādir Shāh And The Afsharid Legacy. In The Cambridge History Of Iran: Volume 7 (Pp. 1-62). Cambridge University Press.
[83] Ibid.
[84] Ibid.
[85] Ibid.
[86] Ibid.
[87] Ibid.

and governance form until his resurrection. Thus, Shiites should not struggle for a just government in vain since such a system is not possible until Mahdi's coming.

However, the origins of the thoughts could be attached to the Shiite persecutions at the hand of Sunni rulers after the end of Shiite century[88]. The Shiite Century was the period between 945 and 1055, during which Shiite empires, most notably Fatimids and Buyids, dominated the Islamic world. The Sunni doctrine was formalised during this time, alternatively called the 'Sunni Revival' under the Abbasid Caliphate.[89] Formalising the Sunni doctrine included persecuting the Shiites and their political claims. The decline of the Shiite empires caused the Shiite Ulama to abandon political ambitions and become depoliticised until the rise of the Safavid Empire.

The Qajar State and Institutionalising the Ulama as an Autonomous Force

The period of the Qajar dynasty explains the institutionalisation and how the dynasty evolved into a world power. Establishing the Qajar state was an important milestone in the history of modern Iran, but this statehood could not be categorised in Weberian sense of state system (Behrooz, 2013). The structure of the Qajar state followed the idea of a centralised bureaucratic feudalistic state (as depicted below).
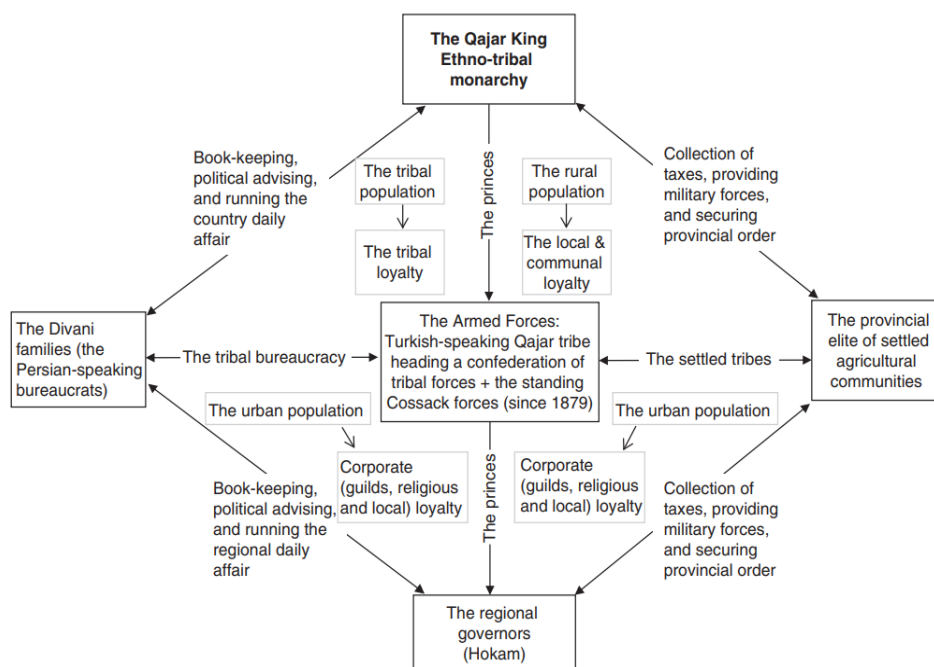
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[88] Ibid.
[89] Ibid.

Figure 2.1 The centralized, but fragmented rule of the protected kingdoms of Iran, 1796–1925

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This state had centralised bureaucratic structures, but the Qajar King relied heavily on autonomous clusters of powerful tribes, educated bureaucrats and provincial power brokers.[91] Managing this complex political system was difficult, but the Qajar Kings were relatively successful in governing Iran. The fragmented Iranian state structures produced different socio-economic and political groups in 19th century. This trend allowed the religious forces to emerge and become one of the clusters of power structures in Iran. The relationships between the Ulama and authorities were complex but mutually beneficial for both parties because they both wanted to amass maximum influence. That is, to achieve maximum influence within Iran, both sides needed each other. Particularly, the fragmented structure of the Qajar state caused the emergence of reformist and unorthodox Islamic groups. Esoteric claims of certain groups and their unorthodox thoughts

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[90] Behrooz, M. (2013). State, Religion, And Revolution In Iran, 1796 To The Present(pp.14). New York: PALGRAVE MACMILLAN.
[91] Ibid.

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challenged traditional Shiite theological thought, and these groups posed challenges to both the Ulama and the authorities. At this time, the Shiite Ulama faced two main challenges. The first challenge occurred within the Ulama because of Usuli and Akhbari division.[92] The Usuli and Akhbari are two schools of thought within Twelver Shia Islam. The Usulis believe that the clergy should use 'Taqleed' (imitation) and reason to derive new laws for regulating society, while Akhbaris argue against it. The Akhbari ideology is that reasoning should be used by only 'Hujja' (infallible people).[93] Since the Imam Mahdi had entered occultation, it was impermissible to use imitation and reasoning together because this strategy could produce laws contrary to Islamic guidelines. Consequently, the Akhbari school of thought supported non-interpretive, literal readings of the Quran and Hadith collections to regulate society.[94]

The Usuli-Akhbari division began in the 17th century with the writings of Mulla Muhammad Amin al-Astarabadi (d. 1627). He argued that the clergy should have a more active role in the societal and political affairs of the country, and he criticised the Akhbaris for their reliance on literal readings.[95] Al-Astarabadi's writings were influential, and they helped to popularise the Usuli position.

The Usuli-Akhbari division became more combative in the 18th century with the writings of Muhammad Baqir Majlisi (d. 1792). Majlisi was a leading Usuli scholar, and he wrote extensively in defence of the Usuli position.[96] Majlisi's writings were influential, and they helped to solidify the Usuli position as the dominant theological school of Twelver Shia Islam.

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[92] Behrooz, M. (2013). State, Religion, And Revolution In Iran, 1796 To The Present(Pp.55-61). New York: PALGRAVE MACMILLAN.
[93] Ibid.
[94]Ibid.
[95] Ibid.
[96] Ibid.

During the reign of the Qajar dynasty, the Usuli school of Twelver Shiite Islam gained influence in Iran due to their methodology of jurisprudence.[97] Generally, the Usuli method of deriving religious laws and their inclination to participate in the socio-economic and political affairs of Iran led them to have greater flexibility in their relationships with the authorities. Therefore, the Qajar dynasty preferred working with the Ulama belonging to the Usuli school of Twelver Shia Islam to working with the Akhbaris.[98] This arrangement was mutually beneficial since the Qajar dynasty bolstered its legitimacy among Iran's Muslim populace, whereas the Usuli Ulama expanded their influence, wealth and power in Iran. The expansion of the Ulama's power in Iran increased the institutionalisation of Qom Hawza (Seminary).[99] Historically, the Shiite learning centres were located in modern Iraq, but the rise of institutionalised Qom Hawza challenged the position of the Iraqi Shiite Ulama and their teachings, expanding Iranian Ulama's power beyond Iran's borders.[100] As time elapsed, Qom Seminaries became powerful learning centres, which religious scholars wishing to become more powerful chose to attend. That furthered the structuration and established hierarchical structures of the Ulama within Iran. Therefore, both the Qajar dynasty and power brokers in Iran felt obligated to collaborate with the Shiite Ulama.

The Shiite Ulama's power expansion manifested through emerging tensions between the Qajar central authorities and unorthodox religious groups. One such groups was the Babi movement in Iran. The central authorities felt threatened by the revolutionary, unorthodox nature of Babi's teachings. Its claim to be a different religion was rejected and considered apostasy within both the Sunni and Shiite schools of thought because Islam claims to be the last religion. Thereafter, clashes

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[97] Ibid.
[98] Ibid.
[99] Ibid.
[100] Ibid.

between followers of Babism and Shiites occurred in many places in the middle of the nineteenth century. Prime Minister Mirza Taqi Khan, better known as Amir Kabir, convinced that the Babi movement would threaten the Qajar statehood, so he ordered the execution of Bab (Amanat, 2017). After this execution, Babism evolved into the Bahai faith, but persecutions against followers of both Babism and Bahai faith continued. The Ulama fully supported authorities in their efforts to eliminate the perceived threat of both movements (Amanat, 2017).

The Ulama's influence in bolstering the legitimacy of the Qajar dynasty and their assistance in eliminating reformist and unorthodox religious forces strengthened the autonomous status of the Shiite Ulama in Iran. However, other factors that opened new avenues for expanding the influence of the Ulama. One of these factors was related to foreign intervention and the need to reform Iran to increase the country's ability to contain foreign intervention (Keddie, 2006). The collapse of the Safavid and Afshar Empires led to the emergence of small statelets, known as Khanates, within the areas of the former empires. The Khanates fought each other to assert dominance over the areas of former empires, but they failed to realise their goals. These events produced the Qajar dynasty, a coalition of numerous autonomous groups and structures. Despite establishing Qajar statehood and ending civil wars, Iran had to face rising Russian Czars and the British Empire alone. Russia was intent on expanding its borders southward at the expense of the Iranian territories, so the Qajar state had to fight two wars against the Russian Empire. The Qajar forces lost both wars and had to pay a high price for their defeats. The northern part of the Araks River and the Lankaran Khanate were ceded to the Russian Empire (Amanat, 2017). In modern times, these areas became the territories of Azerbaijan, Armenia and substantial parts of Georgia. This defeat sent shockwaves around Iran and forced the Qajar dynasty to initiate a period of

cautious reforms (McDaniel, 1991). In making reforms, the Qajar state studied the experiences of the Ottoman Empire, which was considered role model at that time.

However, the interests of the British Empire collided with those of Russian due to the infamous 'Great Game' and access to the crown jewel of the British Empire, the Indian colony. To walk a fine line between Russian and British interests, reform mostly rural and underdeveloped country seemed to tall order for the Qajar Dynasty (Amanat, 2017). Nevertheless, Naser al-Din Shah Qajar initiated a number of reforms to modernise the country's infrastructure, including building railways, introducing a more efficient form of taxation, establishing a modern army, curbing regional tribes and weakening the Ulama in judiciary (Amanat, 2017). Naser Al-Din Shah Qajar was the first ruler of Iran to visit European countries to see industrial and technological developments for himself (Amanat, 2017). However, his reforms were controversial and disliked by many people in Iran due to his concessions to the British Empire. Additionally, his nepotism and ruling style enraged many across the country, but his concessions on building railways, customs, lowering import tariffs, mining, tobacco, telegraphy and many other areas made the local Bazaar class vulnerable. For instance, the 'Reuters concession', given to Baron Julius de Reuter, was met with ferocious local protests, led by the Ulama.[101] Consequently, Naser Al-Din Shah Qajar had to annul the deal, but he signed the 'Tobacco Concession', granting growth, sales, and tobacco product exports in Iran. In response to this concession, Grand Ayatollah Mirza Hasan Shirazi issued a fatwa on prohibiting tobacco products (Amanat, 2017). Subsequently, the Ulama of Iran led and encouraged protests against this deal. The opposition, led by the Ulama, was again successful in aborting the concessions. Naser al-Din Shah Qajar's growing opposition and

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[101] Keddie, N. R. (2006). Modern Iran: Roots and Results of Revolution (58-72). New Haven & London: Yale University Press.

mismanagement increased attempts on his life. One of those attempts was successful and conducted by Jamal al-Din Al-Afghani's follower.[102] The tragic end of Naser al-Din Shah's reign was testimony to the influence of the Ulama in Iran (Amanat, 2017).

The Constitutional Revolution and Ulama

The collapse of the centralised state system and its replacement with a decentralised political system led to the strengthening of the autonomy of political forces at varying degrees.[103] The Qajar dynasty's ruling was based on Iran's feudalist bureaucratic system. Despite efforts at centralisation, defeats at the hands of Russian Empire, geographical challenges and interventions by the British and Russian Empires, revolts by centrifugal forces further weakened the monopoly of the Qajar state over the use of violence.[104] During the 19th century, Naser al-Din Shah Qajar attempted to reform the country, but this was an overwhelming task due to the complexity of challenges facing Iran.

Despite being chaotic and humiliating for most of Iranians, the Ulama stood to gain most from the developments of the 19th century. The Usuli branch of the Twelver Shia school of thought marginalised the Akhbari school. Next, the Usuli Ulama institutionalised its structure and hierarchy in Qom Hawza (seminary).[105] At this point, the Ulama emerged as the most organised, legitimate force in Iran and in the eyes of Iranians. The Ulama had been further strengthened in its periodical alliance with the Qajar Dynasty because the authorities needed to legitimise their crackdowns on Babism and Bahais.[106] The revolutionary ideology of Babism and the Bahai faith

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[102] Ibid.
[103] Ibid.
[104] Amanat, A. (2017). Iran: A Modern History (180-245). New Haven & London: Yale University Press
[105] Ibid.
[106] Ibid.

was seen as apostasy and threatening to the Ulama and Shiism, so they were pleased to grant legitimacy to the Qajar Dynasty to suppress revolts by the Babists and Bahais.

The second half of the 19th century witnessed the de facto alliance between the Ulama and Bazaar classes since concessions made to foreigners took a toll on the Bazaaris. This alliance provided the Ulama with financial provisions, while the weakness and dependence of the Qajar state on the Ulama furthered their political legitimacy (Algar, 1980). However, the Ulama was bold enough to challenge concessions made by the Qajaris to the Western companies.[107]

At the dawn of 20th century, the Qajar state had a new ruler and faced more complex challenges. The Ulama–Bazaar alliance was able to thwart concessions, including the Reuter and Tobacco concessions (Abrahamian, 2018). However, the British discovered oil, although they did have the latest technology to utilise Iran's hydrocarbon resources. D'Arcy concessions were made to Great Britain to have exclusive rights over the exploration, extraction and exportation of oil found in Persia (Amanat, 2017). Mozaffar ad-Din Shah Qajar signed the agreement in exchange for financing his court's extravagant lifestyle, but he faced protests by both locals and Russians (Amanat, 2017) because Russia felt threatened by the British presence. In turn, the Iranian people saw this concessions as a betrayal of national interests because Iran received very little in exchange for major oil concessions (Amanat, 2017). Additionally, intellectuals and nationalist members of the Dewan (aristocracy) were dismayed at these concessions because they pinned their hopes on capital coming from hydrocarbon resources to address the underdeveloped Iranian economy in the future (Moazami, 2013). These measures did not stop at oil concessions; the Western merchants were granted exclusive rights and access to Iranian markets. The Western-made goods disrupted

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[107] Ibid.

the Bazaar because the Western merchants could bring more sophisticated, durable and affordable goods to Iranians (Amanat, 2017). Furthermore, the Qajar state granted capitulations to Western countries which stipulated that tariffs would not exceed 5%, and their citizens could not be persecuted by Iranian courts (Amanat, 2017). These two points of concessions to foreign traders were rightly perceived as unjust and unfair by the Bazaar community. The impacts of the country's deficit and unfair trade practises were soon felt by Iranians, so the authorities imposed additional pressure on the Bazaar merchants to lower prices. In 1905, protests erupted in response to the authorities' humiliating treatment of the merchants of the Bazaar (Amanat, 2017), accusing them of price gouging and publicly whipping them. These events led to the closure of the Bazaar and widespread protests led by the Bazaar merchants, the Ulama, and reform-seekers. Jamal al-Din Isfahani delivered combative speeches and invited the Ulama to take the side of the Iranian people. The coercive ban on Jamal al-Din Isfahani by the state-appointed religious figures backfired, and he garnered stronger popular support from the populace and the Ulama based in Qom (Amanat, 2017).

Iran was thrown into full-blown civil crisis in 1906. The mounting pressure compelled Mozaffar ad-Din Shah Qajar to agree to a constitutional monarchy. This idea was inspired by the defeat of Russia by Japanese forces in the Russo-Japanese War (Amanat, 2017). Both intellectuals and most of the Ulama pointed out that, for the first time, an Asian power had defeated a European power, because Japan was a constitutional monarchy, whereas Russia was an autocracy (Amanat, 2017).

The Constitutional Revolution opened intense debates among the Ulama and secular intellectuals alike. Unprecedentedly, numerous religious scholars expressed their preference for just, irreligious rulers over despotic Muslim rulers (Amanat, 2017). Mozaffar ad-Din Shah Qajar adopted the Constitution of 1906 based on the Quran and Belgium's constitution (Algar, 1980). The

Constitution of 1906 oversaw the foundation of the Bicameral Parliament (Majlis) and electoral laws.[108] Additionally, the Ulama declared Twelver Shia Islam as Iran's official religion, despite opposition from secular intellectuals.[109] Furthermore, the Ulama was granted the privilege of overseeing the compatibility of laws made by the Majlis with the Islamic laws.

Despite these privileges, the Ulama began to disengage from the Constitutional Revolution of 1906 because the liberal environment threatened the Ulama's religious hold on Iranian society.[110] Majlis increased the anxieties of the Ulama and religious segments by adopting laws which threatened the Ulama's financial and economic interests (Amanat, 2017).

Next, the situation worsened for Constitutionalists because Russia and Great Britain resolved their differences to contain rising Germany, so Russia and Britain joined forces with Mohammad Ali Shah Qajar. Buoyed by this Russo–British support, Mohammad Ali Shah Qajar decided to bomb the Majlis and restore his absolute reign over Persia (Amanat, 2017). However, the Constitutionalists were able to beat back the Royalist forces. Subsequently, the Constitutionalists overthrew Mohammad Ali Shah Qajar and replaced him with eleven-year-old Ahmad Shah Qajar.[111] Despite challenges and a 1911 coup backed by Russia, the Constitution of 1906 remained in place. However, the Constitutionalists' troubles were not over yet.

The Great War and Reza Khan's Rise

On the eve of World War I, Iran declared her neutrality to protect its fragile borders. However, this declaration of neutrality was not backed by military power. Thereafter, Iran became a battle ground between the Ottoman Empire and Germany on one side and Russia and Britain on the other

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[108] Ibid.
[109] Ibid.
[110] Ibid.
[111] Ibid.

side. While the loss of the war by Germany and the Ottoman Empire decreased the intensity of competition, the British intervention into the Russian Civil War made Iran battle ground between Bolshevik Russia and the British forces. Amid the chaotic situation in Iran and an inclination to secessionism backed by Soviet Russia, Reza Khan claimed to be the solution for all Iran's problems (Amanat, 2017). He was supported by the British and staged a coup on 21st February 1921. Next, he appointed Zia al-Din Tabataba'i as the Prime Minister of the Qajar state, but Reza Khan remained in power (Amanat, 2017). After quelling tribal revolts and signing a treaty of friendship with the Soviet Union, Reza Khan pressured the Majles to depose the Qajar Dynasty and declare him the Shah of Persia (Amanat, 2017).

After this declaration, Reza Shah implemented a wide range of modernisation efforts. These efforts were carbon copies of Mustafa Kemal's modernisation attempts in Turkey (Amanat, 2017). These actions included establishing modern armed forces, transforming an underdeveloped economy into an industrial, commercially based economy, strengthening the state bureaucracy, building infrastructure to facilitate trade and economic development and reforming the education system. Beyond establishing this modernisation program, Reza Shah attempted to decrease foreign influences in Iran.

Even before declaring himself Shah, Reza Khan's reforms and centralisation efforts complicated his relationship with Iran's Ulama.[112] Initially, he was deferential to the Ulama due to his own weak position, even making pilgrimages to Qom and Karbala, holy sites of Shiite Islam, to confirm his devotion to Islamic traditions. However, Reza Khan's appeasing attempts came to a head in

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[112]Behrooz, M. (2013). State, Religion, And Revolution In Iran, 1796 To The Present(pp.32-55). New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

1924.[113] Inspired by Mustafa Kemal, Reza Khan intended to abolish the monarchy and replace it with a republic. However, his efforts were vehemently opposed by numerous political forces, including the British, Ulama, Bazaar and various tribes. The British were concerned that establishing a Republic would endanger capitulations signed by the Qajar Monarchy, whereas the Ulama were afraid their strongholds would be demolished. That is, both the British and Ulama were afraid of having their privileges openly discussed and eliminated by the popularly elected Majles and government.[114] Mustafa Kamal's abolishing the Caliphate after the establishment of the Turkish Republic furthered anxieties of the Ulama because they feared the Qom Hawza to suffer the same fate with the institution of the Caliphate (Hazir, 2014). The Bazaar community favoured abolishing capitulations to foreigners to increase profits from their trade activities, but they were anxious about establishing an egalitarian political regime and its impact on their interests (Hazir, 2014). Due to the Bazaar community's doubts regarding the Republican government's ability to abolish concessions and the political expediency of eliminating the Bazaar community's privileges in Iran, the Bazaar community stood by the Ulama and opposed the establishment of the Republic (Hazir, 2014). On the other hand, the tribes were against the Republic because it would further legitimise the central authorities and weaken the tribes' power in their communities (Hazir, 2014). Due to this overwhelming opposition, Reza Khan abandoned the idea of replacing the monarchy with a republic (Hazir, 2014).

Despite this 1924 crisis, Reza Shah continued courting the Ulama by protecting their privileges and exempting them from new laws. For example, he exempted them from the Conscription Law

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[113] Hazir, A. (2014, December). A Comparative Analysis Of Religion-State Relations:A Case Study On Turkey And Iran. Ankara: Middle East Technical University.
[114] Ibid.

of 1925.[115] However, the Ulama seemed to be discontent with the reforms and ruling style of Reza Shah because he used corruption, confiscated arable lands to increase personal wealth, eliminated potential rivals including his own Prime Ministers and disregarded traditions of the largely Muslim population (Hazir, 2014). Additionally, the support of the British forces to climb the ladders cast doubt on the legitimacy of Reza Shah throughout his reign (Hazir, 2014).

As he encountered criticism from the Ulama, Reza Shah became more aggressive in his dealings with the Ulama. He ordered unprecedented sanctions against the Ulama, and his troops raided holy shrines in Qom (Hazir, 2014). In 1936, Reza Shah copied clothing laws from Turkey and signed the 'Kashf-e hijab' decree.[116] Unlike Mustafa Kemal Ataturk's implementation method, Reza Shah was more despotic and forceful in his implementation of the decree. His method of ruling and implementing decrees antagonised tribes, the Bazaar merchants, former landowners, religious populace and the Ulama (Hazir, 2014). The shortcomings of Reza Shah's modernisation efforts caused Iran to unravel and weakened institutions once he was forced to abdicate the throne.

Ultimately, Reza Shah's reign ended when the Soviet Union and Great Britain decided to invade Iran and forced him into exile. However, his modernisation efforts radically transformed Iran and furthered the power of the Ulama through his efforts to regulate them (Hazir, 2014).

When the reign of Reza Shah ended, Iran became a semi-industrialised country with modern armed forces and viable state institutions (Abrahamian, 2018). However, Reza Shah's efforts were weakened by several factors.

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[115] Ibid.
[116] Ibid.

The first factor involved the inheritance of traditions and institutions by Reza Shah's Iran. As discussed earlier, the Qajar Dynasty attempted to reform the country and establish institutions, but the strength of the institutions it inherited were inferior to those of Turkey. The Ottoman Empire had begun reformation efforts earlier and possessed stronger institutions and statehood traditions of statehood than the Qajar state. Therefore, Ataturk's Turkey had an easier time implementing modernisation efforts in the country than Reza Shah's.

Another factor undermining the success of Reza Shah's modernisation efforts was related to his ruling style. From the start of his reign, his legitimacy was questioned due to the British role in his rise to power. He further eroded his legitimacy by personifying his ruling regime. Unlike Reza Shah, Mustafa Kamal Ataturk renounced monarchy and established a republican system. It is right that Ataturk employed an authoritarian governance style to implement modernisation efforts, but he respected the Constitution of Turkey and allowed powerful people like Ismet Inonu and Celal Bayar to participate in governing the country. Beyond this, he unsuccessfully attempted to establish a multiparty system in Turkey. Unlike Reza Shah, Ataturk never enriched himself at the expense of the population, nor did he alienate the religious populace by forcing them to wear European clothing.

The next factor eroding Reza Shah's modernisation attempts was the lack of institutionalisation. For instance, he did not allow institutions independent of himself to emerge. Though part of the state under the Ottoman Empire, Ataturk continued the tradition of subordinating the Ulama under the newly founded Directorate of Religious Affairs (Diyanet). On the other hand, Reza Shah temporarily used the Ulama to legitimise his rule but then excluded them from the institutional framework of the state through coercive measures.

Finally, Ataturk received a better education and became more experienced in the Ottoman Army than Reza Shah. Beyond this, Ataturk participated in intelligence activities in Libya, Palestine, Iraq and Syria and became experienced in both modern military affairs and global politics. Ataturk's experience as an intelligence officer could be considered one of his assets in modernisation efforts, building state institutions and commanding populations with numerous ethnic, socio-economic and religious backgrounds. Consequently, Reza Shah had less success in implementing his modernisation programme because his educational background was inferior to Ataturk's education.

Interregnum of Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi

The shortcomings of modernisation efforts at this 'critical juncture' led to the swift unravelling of Iranian institutions amid the chaotic environment of WWII. Reza Shah Pahlavi was forced into exile for his alleged ties to Nazi Germany, but his son Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi was declared the new Shah of Iran. The 21-year-old Mohammad Reza Shah was inexperienced and encountered a diverse range of centrifugal forces threatening his reign across the country (Amanat, 2017). These forces included the leftist Tudeh party, Islamists, National Front led by Mohammad Mossadegh and radical Islamists Fadaiyan-e Islam, which executed terrorist attacks against alleged enemies of Islam.

Beyond Fadaijan-e Islam, all other political forces enjoyed great popularity and sympathy across Iran. Mohammad Mossadegh came from the Divani background (the Persian speaking bureaucrats of the Qajar state) (Amanat, 2017) and had previously held different positions within the Iranian bureaucracy after the Constitutional Revolution. His disagreement with Reza Shah's governing style led to his early retirement from state affairs (Amanat, 2017). The invasion of Iran by the Allied Powers and their policies regarding Iran angered most Iranians. Furthermore, Stalin refused

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to withdraw Soviet troops and began sowing seeds of secessionism. According to Stalin's plans, ethnic Azerbaijanis and Kurds would be allowed to found their own states, but those states would be ruled by the communist regimes and have similar roles to Poland, Hungary, Czechoslovakia and the German Democratic Republic.[117] However, the Western pressure led by the United States compelled Stalin to pull Soviet troops back from Northern Iran.[118]

To restore its credibility, the Iranian Army used brutal force to repress the Kurdish and Azerbaijani populaces.[119] The Armed Forces of Iran hoped to inspire credibility among nationalists and fear among the secessionists.[120] From the beginning, the Iranian Armed Forces supported the Monarchy under Mohammad Reza Shah, but Reza Shah feared for his life and preferred to go abroad when the situation became volatile.

Despite the Armed Forces of Iran's restoring control, Iran was embroiled in political turmoil in which political forces vied for dominance. The National Front, led by Mohammad Mosaddegh, demanded an end to concessions and privileges for Great Britain.[121] When Mossadegh succeeded in passing a bill to nationalise the oil industry, Mohammad Reza Shah had to appoint him as the Prime Minister of Iran (Keddie, 2006). Abbas Amanat describes the reign of Mossadegh as the period of 'Chaotic Democracy' and 'Denied Hopes' because the popular Prime Minister of Iran encountered the pro-Shah Army, Reza Shah, Islamists and the leftist Tudeh party (2017). Mohammad Mossadegh made enormous efforts to assuage the British by compensating for their loss with nationalisation.[122] Meanwhile, the Tudeh Party increased its attacks on Mossadegh by

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[117] Amanat, A. (2017). Iran: A Modern History(pp.502-560). New Haven & London: Yale University Press.
[118] Ibid.
[119] Ibid.
[120] Ibid.
[121] Abrahamian, E. (2018). A History of Modern Iran(pp.92-102). New York: Cambridge University Press.
[122] Ibid.

painting him as a puppet of the United States.[123] Similarly, Islamists led by the traditional Ulama were not happy with the National Front government because its secular nationalist vision of Iran was perceived as a direct threat against Islam in Iran.[124]

In 1953, an American- and British-backed coup toppled the Mossadegh government, thus eliminating the strongest barrier blocking the Monarchy. As in the case of Reza Shah's rise, foreign interference helped Mohammad Reza Shah consolidate his power but also tainted his reign like it had his father's (Behrooz, 2013). The main difference between the rises of Reza Shah and Mohammad Reza Shah was that Reza Shah built his monarchy by replacing the Qajar dynasty, whereas Mohammad Reza Shah consolidated his power by eliminating popularly the elected Prime Minister of Iran, overruling the votes of millions of Iranians. Ultimately, this difference cost him his throne.

After dismantling the National Front and its leader, Mohammad Mossadegh, Mohammad Reza Shah built an alliance with the Ulama, led by Grand Ayatollah Sayyid Hossein Ali Tababataei Borujerdi.[125] Ayatollah Borujerdi was concerned about the revival of the Bahai movement because Reza Shah's removal and political instability made space for Bahai activities.[126] The revival of the Bahai movement threatened the Ulama, so they explicitly supported Mohammad Reza Shah to repress the National Front and the Tudeh Party.[127] Additionally, the elimination of the leftist Tudeh Party was advantageous to the Ulama because the Ulama faced competition from the party over the support of impoverished Iranians.[128]

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[123] Amanat, A. (2017). Iran: A Modern History(pp.502-560). New Haven & London: Yale University Press.
[124] Ibid.
[125] Ibid
[126] Ibid
[127] Ibid
[128] Behrooz, M. (2013). State, Religion, And Revolution In Iran, 1796 To The Present(pp.118-131). New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Despite the initial alliance between the Ulama and Mohammad Reza Shah, the Shah gradually sidelined the Ulama (Keddie, 2006). This process quickened under the modernisation program called the 'White Revolution'.[129] According to Mohammad Reza Shah, Islamists led by the Ulama were 'Blacks', while pro-communist forces were 'Reds'.[130] The modernisation efforts under the banner of the 'White Revolution' raised hopes but left the Shah with a coalition of disappointed classes (Behrooz, 2013). Furthermore, repression and political terror increased anger among the Iranian populace.

After the windfall of oil revenues, Mohammad Reza Shah felt free to pursue his own agenda more ruthlessly. He co-opted some members of the Ulama, but failing to subordinate Qom Hawza under the state bureaucracy allowed the Ulama greater autonomy than other classes of Iranian society. Mohammad Reza Shah's imprudent policy of modernisation, repression and exclusion of the opponents led to a personified political structure. At the end of 1970s, Mohammad Reza Shah's political system faced its greatest test. A combination of low oil prices, rising dissatisfaction among Iranians, elite decadence and bureaucracy and the Carter Administration's increasing focus on human rights and democracy promotion and ailing of the Shah began to take its toll on the political system of Mohammad Reza Shah.[131] Ultimately, the Ulama was the only organised and institutionalised political force in Iran, whereas the residue of the National Front and Tudeh Party was reeling from the decade's long repression by the infamous intelligence organisation SAVAK.[132]

[129] Amanat, A. (2017). Iran: A Modern History(pp.562-616). New Haven & London: Yale University Press.
[130] Ibid.
[131] Amanat, A. (2017). Iran: A Modern History(pp.703-742). New Haven & London: Yale University Press.
[132] Ibid.

As the only organised and institutionalised force in Iran, the Ulama, led by Khomeini, quickly gained popularity among the Iranian populace. Strong legitimacy and organisation helped Khomeini seize power.[133] In the ensuing conflict between Islamists led by the Ulama and seculars, nationalists, and leftists, the Ulama was victorious, gaining control of Iran, which has continued to the present day.

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[133] Keddie, N. R. (2006). Modern Iran: Roots and Results of Revolution(214-239). New Haven & London: Yale University Press.

Chapter 4: State–Religion Relationship from the Late Ottoman Era to Ataturk's Presidency

The relationship between the Ulama and the State have ranged from cooperation to outright opposition since the emergence of Islamic states. The Ulama's privileged status within Islamic societies allowed them to be financially independent and able to oppose subordination by the authorities. The founder of the Hanafi School of Islam, Abu Hanafi, was imprisoned by the authorities of the Abbasid Caliphate and later died in prison, and the founder of the Hanbali School of Sunni Jurisprudence was detained and tortured after refusing to comply with the demands of the authorities (Kuru, 2019). The founders of the Shafi and Maliki schools of Islam, Malik ibn Anas and al-Shafi were detained and persecuted by the state authorities for their refusal to subordinate (Kuru, 2019). Most of the religious scholars engaged in trade and commerce activities to be self-sufficient and independent of any influence on their works. According to the reliable sources of Hadith, Prophet Muhammad declared religious scholars his true successors. Therefore, the Ulama felt it was inappropriate to submit to the authorities, whom he found corrupt. However, as previously mentioned, the Ulama occasionally agreed to cooperate with state authorities. Particularly, the Sunni Ulama cooperated with the state authorities to establish coherent theological guidelines for the Sunni Muslims when the Islamic world faced unorthodox Islamic views or Shiite threats against the Sunni world.

The Ottoman Empire and Ulama

Since the foundation of the Ottoman Empire, this region has embraced the Sunni Madhab of Islam to legitimise the Sultans' reign and expansionism. Initially, the Ottoman Empire did not centralise

its religious activities or subordinate the Ulama. However, the expansion of the Ottomans increased the urgency of subordinating religious activities for three reasons.

First, the Empire faced challenges from rival Sunni and Shiite Empires,[134] making both the Sunnis and the Shiites question the legitimacy of the Ottoman Empire. Thus, the Safavid Empire posed enormous challenges to the legitimacy of the Ottoman Empire among its Shiite-leaning Turkman populace. The independence of the Ulama blocked efforts to resolve legitimacy challenges posed by the Safavids.[135]

Second, the expansion of the Ottoman Empire required vast resources and manpower. To recruit soldiers from Anatolia, Sultans needed to boost their legitimacy to conduct war. That is, the Ottomans required religious legitimacy to frame these expansionist wars as holy wars against the infidels and enemies of Islam.[136]

Finally, centrifugal forces of feudal lords challenged the legitimacy of central authorities. The feudal lords were capable of compelling the local Ulama to issue fatwas, casting doubt on the legitimacy of the Sultan and validating their claims to shun subordination to central authorities.[137]

All these challenges pushed the Sultans of the Empire to establish central institutions and subordinate the Ulama. However, the efforts of Bayazid I were interrupted by Timurid invasions, but Murad II continued those efforts by instituting Shayk al-Islam's position within the Empire[138]. Mehmed II further subordinated the Ulama, while Selim I empowered the Ulama to secure enough

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[134] Hazir, A. (2014, December). A Comparative Analysis Of Religion-State Relations:A Case Study On Turkey And Iran. Ankara: Middle East Technical University.
[135] Ibid.
[136] Ibid.
[137] Ibid.
[138] Ibid.

legitimacy to declare war against the Safavid Empire.[139] In turn, Selim I used the Ulama to legitimise his mass killing of the Alevi population of Anatolia.[140][141]

After defeating Safavids, Selim I waged war against the Mamluks and appropriated the title of Caliph from Mamluk Sultanate. This title newly confirmed the Sultan's religious legitimacy and consolidated his grip on religious affairs and groups, including the Ulama. By the end of the 16th century, the Ulama was fully subordinated to the state.[142] The Ulama evolved into employers of the state, so the state looked after their wellbeing and security in exchange for the Ulama's assistance in legitimising the Sultan's rule. However, there were still religious activities and scholars who refused to obey the authorities and preferred independence over privileges and special status.[143]

In the 18th century, the Ulama became a respected, privileged class of elites,[144] and the Sultans sought their counsel. The privileges of the Ulama attracted attention from the lower classes and peasants because they saw the religious classes as a way to climb the ladders of social and economic classes. Particularly, the Arabian Peninsula and eastern and southern Anatolia were considered backwater regions. Even so, the people from these regions found opportunities to gain influence and power through the religious institutional bodies. However, the privileges and power of the religious affiliates were threatened by the end of 18th century. The rise of threats coming

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[139] Ibid.

[140] Not to be confused with Alawism. Alawism is the offshoot of Shiite Islam, whilst Alevi consider themselves neither Sunni nor Shiite.

[141] Zilfi, M. (2006). The Ottoman Ulema. In S. N. Faroqhi, The Cambridge History of Turkey (pp. 209-225). London: Cambridge University Press.

[142] Ibid.

[143] Ibid.

[144] Ibid.

from Russia and the Habsburgs Empires compelled the Ottoman Sublime Port to restructure its administration and implement a modernisation program.

The modernisation of the Ottoman Empire begun with the modernisation of the Ottoman Army, which proved to be a tall order for Selim III. His attempts to disband and reform the Ottoman Army ended in revolt by the Janissaries.[145] The revolt of 1807–1808 was supported by the Ulama,[146] who validated the Janissaries' ousting and subsequent killing of Selim III.[147] The dethroning of Selim III forced Sultan II Mahmud to become cautious in his reform agenda. In 1826, Sultan II Mahmud disbanded the Janissary Corps and formed disciplined armed forces subordinated to himself. Consequently, the Sublime Porte forced the religious classes to be subordinated under the Sultan II Mahmud's reign.[148]

After halting the Janissaries' armed resurrection, Sultan II Mahmud embarked on a wide range of modernisation efforts under the name of 'Tanzimat'.[149] Laws regarding everything from the population's clothing to non-Muslims were radically transformed. Notably, Sultan II Mahmud implemented 'equality before the law' principles, which was revolutionary for the Ottoman subjects of other nationalities.[150] Despite the opposition from most of the Ulama and the heads of the non-Muslim communities, Sultan II Mahmud had considerable support from the lower classes of religious scholars and the ordinary non-Muslim populace.[151] The low-ranked religious scholars protested the unjust practices of the Ulama because people in high-ranking religious positions had

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[145] Stanford J. Shaw, Ezel Kural Shaw. (1977). Reform, Revolution, and Republic: The Rise of Modern Turkey 1808–1975(pp.1-54). London: Cambridge University Press.
[146] Ibid.
[147] Ibid.
[148] Ibid.
[149] Stanford J. Shaw, Ezel Kural Shaw. (1977). Reform, Revolution, and Republic: The Rise of Modern Turkey 1808–1975(pp.55-170). London: Cambridge University Press.
[150] Ibid
[151] Hazir, A. (2014, December). A Comparative Analysis of Religion-State Relations: A Case Study on Turkey And Iran. Ankara: Middle East Technical University.

numerous privileges, and certain religious scholars wanted to keep these privileges within their families or close-knit communities (Hazir, 2014).

The reformation program 'Tanzimat' continued under the reign of Sultan I Abdulmejid. One of the most important reformations was the foundation of Dîvân-ı Ahkâm-ı Adliyye under the authority of the Ministry of Justice. Dîvân-ı Ahkâm-ı Adliyye was the predecessor of the Court of Cassation of the Republic of Turkey.[152] It was not entirely secular body of the Ottoman Empire, but it marked the beginning of the secularisation of the law and its implementation.

The reign of Abdulhamid II was one of the crucial moments of the Ottoman modernisation because of his long reign. It would be misleading to interpret his reign through categorical concepts because the reign of Abdulhamid II involved rapid changes for the Europe and Ottoman Empire. Initially, Sultan Abdulhamid II embraced the reforms under Midhat Pasha, but he later dismissed Midhat Pasha in an effort to consolidate his own power within the elites and the bureaucracy (Hazir, 2014). Sultan Abdulhamid II could be considered paranoid because his predecessor Sultan Abdulmajid I was overthrown and killed. The fate of Abdulmajid I frightened Abdulhamid II, but Abdulhamid II did not derail the 'Tanzimat' modernisation program. Under the reign of Abdulhamid II, the Ottoman Empire intensified its centralisation efforts and built modern infrastructures in the country. This infrastructure building comprised public schools, administrative offices, the Hijaz Railway and furthering the modernisation of the Ottoman Army.[153]

The rising autocracy and pan-Islamist politics of Abdulhamid II hindered his modernisation programs, but this paradigm should be analysed within the context of that time. First, the decline

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[152] Aydin, M. Â. (2020). DÎVÂN-ı AHKÂM-ı ADLİYYE. Retrieved from https://islamansiklopedisi.org.tr/divan-i-ahkam-i-adliyye.
[153] Stanford J. Shaw, Ezel Kural Shaw. (1977). Reform, Revolution, and Republic: The Rise of Modern Turkey 1808–1975(pp.172-272). London: Cambridge University Press.

of the Ottoman Empire increased, and it posed an existential threat for the entire Empire.[154] Additionally, the flooding of the Empire with Western ideas, the opening of the missionary schools, and the rising opposition of the Arabian population made governing the Ottoman Empire difficult task. Second, the Ottoman Empire continued grappling with revolts in the Balkans and losing territories to the Russian Empire.[155] As a result of the revolts and territory losses, the Muslims in these areas were forced to flee to the areas under the direct rule of the Ottoman Army. The migration of large number of Muslims and their insertion into the army led to a rapid outflowing of Christians from the Ottoman Empire.[156] To ensure his legitimacy in the eyes of Islamised population, Sultan Abdulhamid II took increasingly pan-Islamic positions. Fearing the Christian invasion, the Ulama of the Ottoman Empire continued supporting the Sublime Porte, but the growing Wahhabi movement challenges the Sultan's legitimacy. Backed by the British missionaries, the Wahhabi Ulama became more hostile towards the Ottoman authorities and dubbed them as infidels due to the new practises arising from the modernisation efforts.[157] That did not bring fruits because Abdulhamid II paid special attention to the Hijaz Railway project to connect Istanbul with Mecca and Medina.[158] Additionally, he invested heavily in the infrastructure and social welfare of these cities to portray himself as a pious Muslim among the Arabs of the Ottoman Empire.[159]

Despite the complexities of Abdulhamid II's reign, his autocratic governing style further centralised the state and consolidated Islam into state. Furthermore, his pan-Islamist policies and

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[154] Ibid.
[155] Ibid.
[156] Ibid
[157] Ibid
[158] Ibid.
[159] Ibid.

rhetoric allowed some of the Ulama to feel comfortable enough to obey to the state authorities.[160]

However, several religious scholars, including Saidi Nursi, Mehmet Akif Ersoy, opposed the despotic governance style of Abdulhamid II.[161] In 1909, this coalition of Abdulhamid II's opponents finally ousted him from the throne. The Committee of Union and Progress (CUP) assumed the governance of the country, and the Ottoman Empire became a constitutional monarchy, but the CUP continued its pan-Islamist rhetoric to unify the Muslims of the Empire. Particularly, the Balkan wars and the new wave of Muslim migration towards Anatolia fundamentally altered the role of religion in politics (Karpat, 2001). Fleeing from the persecutions of Christians, Muslim migrants began clashing with local Christians (Karpat, 2001).

After the start of World War I, intra-ethnic violence wrought havoc on the Ottoman Empire's social fabric. The region's heartland switched from the Balkans to Anatolia, where more than 1 million Muslims fled from the persecution of Christian armies. Beyond this, Russian invasions of eastern parts of the Empire and an emerging alliance between local Christian ethnicities further angered the Muslim population. During this period, regular clashes occurred between Kurdish and Armenian ethnic groups.[162] The common denominator of Islam strengthened the alliance between the Turks and Kurds, which further solidified Islam as an important factor in the future Turkish Republic.[163]

Religion became increasingly important in the last days of the Ottoman Empire. Particularly, pan-Islamist undertones were utilised to discourage Muslims recruited from the British colonies to fight against the Ottoman armies (Hazir, 2018). However, using religious rhetoric did not discourage

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[160] Hazir, A. (2014, December). A Comparative Analysis of Religion-State Relations: A Case Study on Turkey And Iran. Ankara: Middle East Technical University.
[161] Ibid
[162] Ibid
[163] Ibid.

the Arab revolts against the Ottoman Empire because the Arab Streets were convinced that the title of the Caliph was stolen from the Arabs. Furthermore, the Arabs considered themselves superior in producing and disseminating religious knowledge, so Arab religious scholars did not accept the tutelage of the Turkish religious scholars.[164]

Mustafa Kamal Ataturk's Rise and Establishment of the Republic

Following the end of World War I, the Ottoman Empire was forced to sign the Treaty of Sevres, but the terms were unbearable for the Turks. Therefore, Turkish nationalists under the leadership of Mustafa Kamal Pasha began the War of Independence to drive away Greek occupying forces backed by the British, Italians, and French.

After the Turkish War of Independence, Mustafa Kamal became the de facto leader of the Turks. Compared with Reza Shah's rise to power with the support of the British, Mustafa Kamal's legitimacy was unparalleled in the eyes of the common people due to his ability to drive the occupying forces from Anatolia.[165] In the War of Independence and thereafter, Mustafa Kamal used religious rhetoric to encourage people to fight and garner support from Muslims around the world.[166] After signing the Treaty of Lausanne, Mustafa Kamal agreed to exchange Christian Greeks with Muslim Turks. The aim of the exchange was to further homogenise Turkey's religious landscape.[167] One of the conditions of this agreement was exchanging Christian Greeks speaking only Turkish with Muslim Turks speaking only Greek is revealing of the intentions of Mustafa

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[164] Ibid.
[165] Ibid.
[166] Ibid.
[167] Atabaki, T. (Ed.). (2007). The State and Subaltern: Modernization, Society and State in Turkey and Iran(pp.95-110). London&New York: I.B.Tauris.

Kamal for the future of Turkey.[168] Kamal aimed to establish a homogeneous religious landscape in Turkey to eliminate future challenges to the central government.[169]

One the Republic of Turkey was established, buoyed by the legitimacy and popularity of winning the War of Independence, Mustafa Kamal implemented a wide range of radical Westernisation programs.[170] Relying on a 100-year modernisation program, an uninterrupted statehood tradition, strong bureaucracy and his own popularity, Mustafa Kamal was determined to put his country on the path of Western style modernity. His reforms included abolishing the title of the Caliphate, establishing the Republic, changing the Arabic alphabet to the Latin alphabet, removing Islam as the official religion of the country and changing clothing styles.[171] During Mustafa Kamal Ataturk's presidency, he was invested in the country's education policy. The secular education system aimed to decrease the theological influence in society. However, Ataturk was not against the religion itself; he established the Turkish Directorate of Religious Affairs (Diyanet) to oversee the country's religious activities.[172] Furthermore, Ataturk intended to establish the Republican regime based on the notion of citizenship. His reforms were opposed in Kurdish areas due to objections to nationalism and secularism, but Ataturk succeeded in eliminating barriers to his reform agenda.[173]

Despite problems in practice, Ataturk founded the Republic of Turkey, comprising inclusive and flexible institutions. The inclusivity of the Republic's institutions allowed it to include powerful

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[168] Ibid.
[169]Touraj Atabaki, Erik J. Zurcher. (2003). Men of Order: Authoritarian Modernization Under Ataturk and Reza Shah(pp.44-65). New York: I.B.Tauris & Co. Ltd.
[170] Ibid,
[171] Ibid.
[172] Ulutas, U. (2010). Religion And Secularism in Turkey: The Dilemma Of The Directorate Of Religious Affairs. Middle Eastern Studies, 46(3), 389-399.
[173] Touraj Atabaki, Erik J. Zurcher. (2003). Men of Order: Authoritarian Modernization Under Ataturk and Reza Shah(pp.44-65). New York: I.B.Tauris & Co. Ltd.

actors to achieve stability, whereas its flexibility adjusted to prevent alienations. One of the most critical successes of the Republic was transforming Turkey from a one-party regime into a multi-party regime.[174] Though not upholding all democratic principles, incumbent elections by the general population allowed all actors of the Turkish Republic to participate in the future and wealth of Turkey. The strength of Turkish institutions prevented the religious class from dominating the country's political affairs, but their inclusive, flexible nature prevented ordinary people from flocking to religious scholars, causing ruptures or revolutionary moods in the Turkish Republic.

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[174] Hazir, A. (2014, December). A Comparative Analysis Of Religion-State Relations:A Case Study On Turkey And Iran. Ankara: Middle East Technical University

Conclusion

As explained in the introduction, the relationship between the state and religion is complicated. The complexity of this relationship originates from the dynamics of religious influence in societies and states. Islam is influential in Muslim-majority countries, including Turkey and Iran. However, the influence of religion and religious classes varies across different countries.

This author chose to investigate Turkey and Iran to examine how two different nations in close proximity to each other with converging historical and societal backgrounds ended up with strikingly different political regimes. Turkey is ruled by an illiberal democracy where elections are free and unfair, and Iran is governed by an unelected group of clergymen, and elections do not necessarily translate into real changes.

Regarding theoretical building, the thesis used deductive reasoning by focusing on historical institutionalism because this perspective explains continuity, changes and ruptures over a wide timespan, which could be problematic for a variety of reasons if other methods are chosen.

The main argument of this thesis is that Turkey and Iran followed similar paths towards modernisation and attempted to subordinate religion and religious activities to the central authorities. In Turkey, both the Ottoman Empire and the Republic of Turkey were able to protect the state from outright collapse, so the institutions achieved a degree of resilience, inclusiveness and flexibility. On the other hand, Iran's central statehood collapsed after the death of Nader Shah. In the following centuries under the Qajar dynasty, Iran achieved enough stability to implement reforms and strengthen its institutions. However, the state's central authority was further weakened by rough geographical realities, ethnic diversity and foreign interference from Russia and the UK.

The weakness of the central state institutions and their failure to subordinate the Ulama led to their power and influence growing over time.

After World War I, both countries encountered a critical juncture after experiencing massive transformations under Ataturk and Reza Shah. However, Ataturk had more capabilities, including the legacy of the Ottoman Empire's institutions and armed forces, while Reza Shah was unable to achieve higher efficacy in Iran's modernisation. Furthermore, Reza Shah failed to build a political structure like Turkey's Republican political structure under Ataturk. Consequently, Iran's institutions based on personalities could not overcome their vulnerabilities, whereas Turkey's institutions continued building up resilience, inclusiveness and flexibility.

Another critical juncture occurred after World War II. While Turkey began to transition to a democracy, Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi undermined the existing framework for his own gain. Consequently, Iran's institutions continued being vulnerable in times of crisis, whereas Turkey's institutions became more resilient, flexible, and inclusive.

The interruptions, ruptures and weakness of Iran's central authorities facilitated the emergence of the competitive institutional framework of religious scholars, the Ulama, in Qom. The exclusive, weak and rigid nature of Iranian political institutions pushed a coalition of Iranians towards the Ulama. At the same time, Turkish central authorities both subordinated the religious bodies but also prevented people from flocking towards them by providing them an alternative option through the ballot box.

Thus, historically continuous institutional frameworks in Turkey facilitate stability through a tradition of continuity, flexibility and inclusiveness in Turkey. On the other hand, the interrupted development of Iran's state institutions created rigidity, exclusiveness and vulnerability, which led

to failure to subordinate the religious class and prevented coalitions of people from moving towards them. Consequently, a historically continuous institutional framework with inclusive, resilient and flexible features prevented ruptures in Turkey, but the lack of the aforementioned features led to the Iranian Revolution of 1979.

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