

MODERNIZATION AND RELIGION: CASE STUDY OF ATATURK AND REZA SHAH

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Abstract- In the early decades of the twentieth century, semi-modern states emerged in Iran and Turkey. Mustafa Kemal Ataturk, who managed to establish Turkey on the remains of the Ottoman Empire, tried to modernize Turkey with Anti-religious approach. In Iran, too, Reza Khan successfully toppled the rotten Qajar Dynasty and took hold of the throne. He, likewise, believed in modernization through the process of Westernization. Foreign relations between two countries, and especially Reza Shah's historical visit to Turkey (1934), deepened linkage of theoretical approach of two rulers, so that when Reza Shah returned from his historical visit, he became more determined in his Westernization policy and particularly unveiling women. Despite similar theoretical approaches and the influence of Turkey on Iran, comparing the westernization of Ataturk and Reza Shah reveals many differences in their magnitude and range. Ataturk omitted religious ranking, religious schools and Sharia courts, and monasteries. He prohibited any religious signs and established civil law; he obligated to read Quran, Prayer and Azan in Turkish instead of Arabic and determined weekend vacation from Friday to Sunday, as the official holyday of week despite Reza Shah's attempts to do same works like Ataturk, he did none of these changes in Iran. Resistance in the two countries was different too. There was no social mobilization in Turkey and the resistance was regional and temporary. The question of this paper is: which factors, despite similar theoretical approach, did cause different results in Iran and Turkey? The main factor that can explain these differences (differences in the magnitude and the type of resistance) is "religion and the organization of clergymanship". Moreover, Turkey's neighborhood with Europe, strong bureaucracy remained from Ottoman Empire and finally Turkey's threatening by foreign threat (Greece) are other influencing elements.

Keywords- Turkey, Iran, Reza Shah, Ataturk, Religion, Islam, Westernization, Modernization.

I. INTRODUCTION

“Barrington Moore” explains three ways to reach modernization in his historical study and review: Democratic modernization method in USA, UK and France; communist modernization method or Totalitarian in China, Russia and Modernization and Revolution from above in Japan and Germany (Moore,1983: , 28-31); the method followed by Ataturk and Reza Shah is often called Etatism; Etatism or STATISM is one of the famous “from above” modernization in which state is defined as the pioneer and guider of development and progress (Aktan, 1999).

The comparison of Reza Shah's and Ataturk's activities reveals many similarities. Their activities can be put in the first modernization framework. Both selected Europe as the sample and followed westernization. Attempts to assimilation and uniforms show that they both believed in homogeneity-creating of modernization and emphasized on its acceleration; However, despite similar theoretical approaches and the influence of Turkey on Iran, comparing the westernization of Ataturk and Reza Shah reveals many differences in the Reza Shah's and Ataturk's activities` magnitude and range. In the post-Ataturk society, there was no sign of official and organizational Islam anymore. Removing religious hierarchy, dissolving religious schools and courts, closing monasteries, preventing the application of

religious symbols, setting civil law based on European and anti-Islamic law, changing alphabet, obligating to read Quran, Prayer and Azan in Turkish instead of Arabic and determining weekend vacation from Friday to Sunday, as the official holyday of week, canceling the sanctity of statue making, strengthening nationalism, preventing the teaching of Arabic language, and honoring wine was some of Ataturk's activities (Heydarzade, 1380: 52; Karpat 776, 2001). However, these activities were not implied in Iran¹. It seems that there were no ready and easy conditions in Iran to do these activities. Some of Ataturk's activities were enacted in Muhammad Reza Shah Period and after twenty years, but there was serious opposition and resistance. Oppositions to the bill of State and Provincial Associations and removing Quran Promise in house

¹ It shall be noted here that Ataturk's successors retreated from some of his anti-religious policies. For example, they issued the license for reading Azan, Eqame (adduction), Namaz (Prayer) and Quran in Arabic or they issued the license for formation of religious schools under state supervision (Nur-al Din, 1380: 210-225). To study the condition of Islamism in Post-Ataturk Turkey see: Nader Entessar, The Kemalists : Islamic Revival and the Fate of Secular Turkey, Library Journal, New York, Apr 15, 2005, vol 130, p.105; Ben Lombardi , the Turkish Labyrinth: Ataturk and the New Islam, Middle East Policy, Washington, jun 1998, vol 6, p188.

of representatives can be stated as examples (Husseinian, 1382: 383-385), while Ataturk had done these activities and more significant samples 20 years sooner on that period. Considering history makes it clear that activities done by Ataturk is a sign of rapid changes in Turkey. Why did Ataturk could apply his fundamental policies more severe and easier than Reza shah? Answering to this question rests in the kind of resistance in these two countries.

II. THE RESISTANCE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN IRAN AND TURKEY AGAINST WESTERNIZATION POLICIES

1- The Capacity of Social Mobilization: the kind of resistance against westernization/ modernization was different in Iran and Turkey. Traditional forces of Turkey had seriously oppositions with Ataturk policies, but there were no systematic and comprehensive social mobilization in Turkey and all oppositions like the rebellion of Sheikh Saeed, the rebellion in Rize, and the rebellion of Ararat were all Periodical and regional (Brocket, 1998: 55-57; Bayat 1374: 32-36). There were no central cohesion and cooperation among these resistance forces and they did not receive social support; this matter made the repression of forces so easy for Ataturk. While there were more systematic resistance in Iran in cooperation with clergymen of Najaf, Isfahan, Shiraz, Kashan and some other cities. However Kurd rebellion was highly coherent in Turkey and oppositions in different cities were connected to each other, but this had a major ethnic mode and as Reza Shah was successful in repressing tribes, Ataturk was also successful in this regard.

2- The Amount of Success: other difference in this resistance against westernization is rooted in the amount of success. To evaluate this factor three indices were used:

A- The Capability in Preventing Policies Implementation:

There was no such case in Turkey in which traditional forces could have prevented from policies implementation; while Clergymen and People opposition were obvious in Iran from the very start and democratization was fruitless (Beheshti Seresht, 1380: 365; Makki, 1362: 478-479). We shall consider this issue that lots of Ataturk activities was not even proposed in Iran at all.

B- Modification and Regulation: traditional forces in Turkey were even incapable of modifying and regulating policies while many policies were modified in Iran. General and Public Law acts in the first Civil Law of Iran was obtained from French Law, but Islamic orders were used in relation to personal matters (Qolfi, 1999: 132).

C- Delay: Ataturk overthrown Ottoman Empire and Caliph gradually, but after that other activities were done in a fast race and short time. Reza Khan

overthrown Qajar Empire gradually, but he also was forced to follow dilatory and gradual policies in other areas.

D- Caution in Implementation: Ataturk had followed his policies with total seriousness and severity and frustrated his enemies, but Reza Shah was very cautious during his early monarchy and tried to gain acceptance and legitimation particularly from clergymen part, although he leaved caution after strengthening his monarchy; however he were not fearless like Ataturk.

III. THE REASONS OF TURKEY SUCCESS:

1-Religious Differences in Iran and Turkey:

A- Religious convergence: Governing religion in Iran had been, was and is Shia. Tehran, Qom, Isfahan, Shiraz, Mashhad, and Tabriz which were among the important cities affecting Capital all believed and followed Shia. Cities clergymen and Sheikhs felt this duty that they should state their views and ideas with their contemporary Marāji• or Grand Ayatollahs; there were few and practically just two or three of them had Absolute authority. This matter decreased noncooperation and scattering.

However, guiding and directing people were the duty of Sunni clergymen and Authority and also different Sufism leaders. This matter increased noncooperation and scattering. According to these, it is clear that religious unity and convergence is much weaker in Turkey than Iran, and united leadership was not possible in Turkey at all. This also made it hard to form a unique mobilization to oppose Ataturk activities, but this was so easy and ready-made in Iran.

B- The amount of defiance: Imam Hussein's rise and his martyrdom has inseminated the dynamism of rise and combat in Shia religion, but in other hand Sunni Religion tends to peace and compromise based on the Law of antecedence and preference of order and security over rebellion and chaos, there is little, if any, psychological and sociological foundations in Sunni Religion.

2- Clergy Organization:

A- The Amount of Political Independence of Clergymen:

Clergy Organization in Shia is independent from government and its interventions. Educating clergies are officially separate and independent from State and is done under supervisions of Grand Ayatollahs. The Highest religious Position of Shia (which is Grand Ayatollah) is selected without interventions of government and based on people's trends, but Sunni clergy is dependent on State from the very beginning. Sheikh Al-Azhar or Sheikh-al Islam (The Highest Religious Authority in Egypt, was selected under supervision of Ottoman Empire and Government by King himself. Sheikh-al Islam would also appoint

other clergies for other cities. If Sheikh-al Islam position is deleted there is no substitute organization or person to organize and manage religious matters of people. It was due to these reasons that Ataturk could have easily made the Sunni clergies passive and inactive.

B- Financial Independence of Clergies: There is deferent meaning of Khums in Sunni and Shia religions. Sunnis believe that Khums is limited to war booty; therefore, Sunni Clergies income and related costs of education is dependent on state and endowments. Ataturk could financially support not the religious school and in this way they would close and clergies income would be cut, but Khums in Shia also includes taxes on annual profit. Clergies can preserve their financial independence and provide necessary costs of religious educating centers. Khums payment is separate and independent from government intervention. Every Muslim would give one fifth of his/her belongings directly to Grand Ayatollahs or his deputy at the end of financial year.

C- Experience of Opposition and Objection: Sunni Clergies were always present in government and were accustomed to impose power. During history, there is few, if any, cases in which government completely removed their presence from power and politics domain and therefore they had no experience of objection and opposition and due to this they could not establish and organize public objections; but Shia clergies had lots of experiences in this regard.

D- Social Influence: the amount of social influence of Shia Grand Ayatollahs is not comparable with Sunni Clergies. There are different factors in forming social influence and effectivity. Selecting Grand Ayatollahs is done upon Clergies recommendations and by people referring, while in Sunni religion Sheikh-al Islam is selected by Government (Algar, 1356).

3- Modernization precedence

Closeness and having mutual borders with Europe caused more modernization in Turkey and therefore modification was started so sooner in this country. Most changes occurred in Constitutional Period in Iran in which most ones were political and administrative; however modification in Ottoman Empire, known as "Tanzimat", involves different areas of Law, Finance, Administrative, Cultural and Religious. More Extension and antiquity of Modernization in Turkey was a better context for Ataturk westernization.

4- Bureaucracy

Republic of Turkey had an advantage over Iran's government: skillfulness gained by Ottoman Empire and one century of effective Modification (Atabaki, 1385: 119).

As Peter Evans stated: one of the most important factors in modernization success is the effective bureaucracy (Evans, 1380: 104). Ottoman Empire had

a better bureaucracy than Iran. Qajar period had not an ordered and efficient bureaucracy in contrary to Ottoman Empire.

Qajar kings resigned governing different provinces of Iran by feudalism and were satisfied with receiving pre-determined tax revenues.

5- Foreign Threats

Turkey was attacked by Greek and Armenians. Foreign threats and danger made a better context for promulgating Nationalism ideas; it should be noted that Turk people had historical disagreement and animosity with the Greek and Armenians particularly; but there were no such a foreign threat in Iran and Iran was under threat of internal factors and this was in form of feudalism. Ataturk had used of foreign threat in the best way.

CONCLUSION

New governors of Iran and Turkey started to fill the distance of their country undevelopment with western developed countries and considered and thought that the way of compensating this undevelopment is leaving traditional and religious beliefs; however, the comparison of activities followed by two governors shows brilliant differences in achieving their goals and purposes.

These activities were faced with different resistance and oppositions in view of kind and intensity and generally it can be said that Iranian resistance was more severe and deeper. Factors which can determine the amount of westernization / modernization success and difference in kind and intensity of oppositions include: religious difference in these two countries, the difference of Clergymen Organization in these two countries, more history and background of modernization in Turkey, relative efficiency of Ottoman Empire Bureaucracy in comparison with Qajar Bureaucracy, and the presence of Foreign Threat as unifying factor in Turkey. From article's point of view, the two first factors had more brilliant and effective roles.

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