

Wave of Modernization in Muslim World: Myths and Realities

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Abstract

The process of modernization or democratization in Europe was a result of lengthy, troublesome, committed and constant struggle for change continuing since centuries. It was not a product of overnight endeavors. The underdeveloped countries of the East were deeply attracted by the economic development, social liberalization and political emancipation of European states mainly Britain and France. These states were quick to replicate and implement the values, institutions and practices of West believing them to drive them towards speedy modernity, development and equal standing with the states that they were imitating. Hasty and miscalculated replication was always destined to failure and reaction. This paper discusses the process of modernization in Turkey, Iran and Afghanistan. The case studies of these countries are juxtaposed and draw the conclusion that the blind imitation of Westernization in these ultraconservative and traditional societies without addressing the most sensitized issues of religion and women resulted in the failure of these efforts.

Keywords: Modernization, Ataturk, Reza Shah, Amanullah Khan, Reforms

Introduction

During the interwar period, the ruling elite of three traditional Muslim countries—Iran, Turkey and Afghanistan—embarked on the process of modernization with the aim of attempting to break the shackles of traditionalism and achieve what they believed was remedy for all their social, political and economic ills: Modernity. They attempted to drastically modify and restructure both polity and society: introduced new laws, replicated and imported “foreign” political frameworks with mixed results and reshaped the deeply-rooted pattern of social life. The modernization drive was successful, initiated and led by strong leaders, in their quest of modernizing the traditional societies—efficaciously surmounting the opposition forces, however temporarily—with significant impact on all aspects of Society. Three Muslim countries in 1920s strove to bring modernization. Iran, under the Pahlavi dynasty, experienced massive socio-political transformation. Modernization in Ataturk Turkey, after the overthrow of Ottoman caliphate, was considered a model to be replicated in Iran and Afghanistan. The latter was ruled by Amanullah Khan, a radical reformist and admirer of Ataturk and his modernization in Turkey.

This paper attempts to explore the commonalities by juxtaposing the cases of three Muslim countries, Iran, Turkey and Afghanistan. By scrutinizing the pattern of modernization reforms and subsequent backlash, this research work will answer the questions regarding Modernization failing to establish successful modern civil societies and the causes of its reversal after the demise or overthrow of its initiators. It proposes that the outlandish drive of modernization was conceived as abhorred Westernization which contradicted with the societal sensitivities and resulted in its rebuke.

2 What is Modernization?

Modernization had become an attractive phenomenon¹ in the traditional Muslim societies, after their decline in prestige and power, in the beginning of twentieth century. However, this was known to a minor but powerful portion of these societies. The concept of Modernization was endorsed and solidified in the Western societies after a lengthy period of innovation and exploration especially the scientific revolution, the age of enlightenment and constitutionalism. In most third world countries, the relative expansion of education caused the emergence of an educated middle class which was exposed to the liberal ideas of western modernity.² The top echelon had desired to replicate these phenomenon in their own traditional, illiterate and conservative societies which backfired with

consequential implications. In order to fully understand the processes of modernization in the three countries of Iran, Turkey and Afghanistan, it is essential to present a comprehensive definition of modernization to clarify our understanding.

Modernization in its most banal usage is considered and associated with development. The concept of modernization is also encapsulated as the change in means of communication. Modernization is referred to “the introduction of modern scientific knowledge to increasing aspects of human life, first in western civilization, then to non-western societies, by different means and groups, with the final aim of achieving a better life as defined by the society concerned”.³ Moreover, Encyclopedia Britannica defines Modernization, in sociology, the transformation from a traditional, rural, agrarian society to a secular, urban, industrial society.⁴ These definitions are helpful but lack the substance catering comprehensive understanding.

Therefore, we will focus on the definition presented by Samuel P. Huntington in his book, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*. He says: “Modernization involves industrialization, urbanization, increasing levels of literacy, education, wealth, and social mobilization, and more complex and diversified occupational structures. These common elements may be present, even though the institutions that created them are not. Modernization can be borrowed or bought.”⁵ The effective realization of the traits stipulated in definition of Huntington can only be achieved by the establishment and maintenance of strong democratic institutions i.e. Westernization.

European modernization has culminated into its current form after experiencing massive corruption, horrible conflicts, resistance and revolutions, a sustained process of industrialization, reasoning and discovery. Modernization involved secularization which systematically challenged the religious institutions, practices and beliefs. Martin Luther, through his writings and struggle against the corruption of Catholic Church, inspired a revolution that resulted in the division of Church and ensuing European wars of religion between the Protestant and Catholic princes which reshaped the map of Europe. Luther developed his own theology called Protestantism, which turned against the papacy and shifted the focus of attention onto individual faith. Luther’s reformation provided major impulses in the field of education and created the foundations for social and political participation, as well as for active citizenship. The treaty of Westphalia, ending 100 years of European religious wars, further undermined the authority of papacy and Holy Roman Empire. The role of

Church was limited as the Treaty gave the princes of the territorial states the choice to endorse any ideology or religion. Religion became subordinated to the domestic jurisdiction of states. In case of Europe (West), Modernization yielded fruition of secularization, technological advancement and prosperity, however, replicating the Western model in the Muslim countries without the realization of due processes and especially the limitation of religion's role will certainly result in undesired implications and the three Muslim countries, discussed below, attempted to hastily replicate Westernization without first achieving modernization.

3 Ataturk's Modernization in Turkey

Mustafa Kamal Ataturk is known as the Father of Turkish nation due to his contribution during the war of independence before Turkey was declared a republic in 1923.⁶ Before Ataturk's inauguration of reforms in the first years of his ascendance into power, the Ottoman Empire had realized some progressive moves in respect to law and legislation. The promulgation of the Hatti-Sherif,⁷ inaugurating the Tanzimat⁸ (reorganization) period in 1839.⁹ The provisions of this law allowed the legislation of military, commercial, and fiscal reforms and established norms of legislation independent of the Sharia.¹⁰ A definite step had been taken in introducing a secular purpose for the state and defining that state in political rather than religious terms.¹¹ The Hatti Sherif paved the way for the introduction of new laws i.e. the death penalty for apostasy from Islam was abolished and Islamic punishments (Hadd) were no more applied. It was quickly followed by the introduction of secular penal codes (1840) and administrative (1846) codes then in 1856 a commercial code, 1858 code of land tenure, code of commercial procedure (1861) and maritime code of 1863 were adopted—all based on European especially French models. The Ottoman constitution of 1876—the first written constitution in Muslim world reflecting the culmination of 19th century reforms in Ottoman Empire i.e. modernization of armed forces and bureaucracy and introduction of modern taxation system—was revived by the Young Turks in 1908.¹² Ataturk had a clear motive of industrializing, modernizing, secularizing and westernizing the newly independent nation-state of Turkey. He despised the Ottoman past and strove to nullify the fact that Turkey, bequeathing the Ottoman Empire, was derided as the “sick man of Europe”.¹³ Ataturk wanted a newly determined path for his compatriots which would be characterized by respect, dignity, restoration of lost pride, industrial advancement and socio-political progress and centralization of authority. The secularization of the Kemalist ideology was not to mean the separation of Islam from the state

as much as the subordination of Islam to the state.¹⁴ The Ottoman Caliphate was abolished by Ataturk in 1924, moreover, Islam as state-religion was constitutionally discarded and the source of legitimacy, historically prerequisite for ruling, was vested in the will of people much to the disgrace and criticism of the religious scholars. Ataturk was not totally against Islam but he was conscious of its corrosive effects of strengthening traditionalism in the rural areas where 80% of Turks resided. Ataturk knew the deeply entrenched roots of Islam in the rural areas where Islam was strongly practiced and the clergy had occupied unchallenged support and authority in the decision-making. Ataturk was determined to undermine the existing structures which favored the clergy and believed that the monopoly of traditionalists, employing religion as a tool, was the primary reason behind the backwardness of his country.

Ataturk embarked on the journey of modernization—Westernization — by replacing all the existing traditions which he deemed as the causes of backwardness with replicating the norms and values of western nations with the belief of ensuring prosperity and development. He banned all the religious seminaries and Sufi orders. Civilians, except Imams, muftis and Hatips, were forced to avoid wearing the traditional gown and turban. They were forced to wear European hat and dress instead of Turkish fez. The call to prayer in Arabic was banned. The Ottoman alphabets of Arabic were replaced by Latin alphabets to make sure the new generations of Turks unable to read the history before 1926, especially the era of Ottoman Caliphate. Furthermore, the role of women in socio-political affairs were greatly encouraged: women were given the voting rights and representation in the Grand National Assembly, Turkish women were getting modern education and employed in technical and service profession and women could roam freely wearing Western attires.¹⁵ By 1934 they ensured complete political emancipation in a country where tradition impeded the progress of women and restricted their participation in the adjudication of civil, legal and political affairs.¹⁶

Ataturk had centralized power driving support not only from army, due to his military background, but also from his political party which enjoyed uncontested political power because of the constitutional one-party rule. He continued his dictatorial rule by suppressing the emergence of other political associations vying for political representation.¹⁷ The Republican people party which was led by Turkish president, Ataturk, as its chairman worked for the ideology of Kemalism which was characterized by Six Principles of Kemalism: Republicanism, Nationalism, Populism, Etatism,¹⁸

Secularism and Reformism.¹⁹ Economic etatism was adopted to ensure the growth of industrialization. In 1934, a Five-year Industrial development plan was adopted, supplemented by the 1937 Three-year and 1938 four-year industrial development plans resulting in the establishment of new economic enterprises which were funded and sponsored by the Sumerbank.²⁰ Ataturk formed state-run enterprises to pursue the agendas and objectives of his formulated economic plans.

Ataturk's reforms had a blowback reaction from the traditional religious forces of Turkey. The remarkable opposition came from the Kurdish leader, Shiekh Said Noursi,²¹ who amongst other reasons opposed Ataturk's reforms targeting the religion. The replacement of religion and ban on religious places was one of the main reasons that ushered in an armed rebellion from Kurds.²² The Kurds were offended by Ataturk's failure to keep his promises to the Kurdish ethnicity. The Kurds had put their lot in favor of Ataturk in the war of independence, however, the reforms of bolstering a national identity based on Turkish nationality and not religion was not well received by the Kurds. The Kurdish rebellion had forced Ataturk to employ 1/3 of his annual budget and more than 30,000 soldiers to quell the rebellion. The opposition leader was arrested and hanged.²³ Much of his reforms were strictly against the religious sentiments and long-held beliefs of Turks which could not secure a solid foundation to sustain the reforms that Ataturk had emulated from the western countries. The demise of Ataturk and subsequent decline of Republican Party was followed by the replacement and reversal of these social, legal and political reforms.²⁴ Nonetheless, the Ataturk legacy is still revered in Turkey because he was responsible for the embarking Turkey on the journey of modernization.

4 Reza Shah's Modernization in Iran

Reza Shah of the Pahlavi dynasty, during his rule as minister of war and Shah (1921-1941), is considered as the founder of modern Iran²⁵. He is known due to his endeavors of changing Iran from a traditional society to a modern state. Despite the fact that Iran had been going through the slow process of modernization even before that. The Constitutional revolution in 1906 was advocated and advanced by many reformists and intellectuals, especially the ideas of Malkom Khan, who formulated a comprehensive plan for the political modernization of Iran.²⁶ The revolution established Iran's first National Consultative Assembly, which became the political decision making center instead of the king and members of his court. It was in fact, a huge achievement of the Constitutional revolution.²⁷ Moreover, it gave Iran a written constitution and set the notions of freedom, rule of law, political

and civil rights in motion for the first time.²⁸ Even before that reformers like Abbas Mirza, Ghaem Magham Farhani and Amir Kabir had initiated this process by modernizing military and bureaucracy respectively.²⁹ Reza shah not only continued the progress of his predecessors but significantly expedited modernization with military might.³⁰

Reza shah's modernization drive transformed the socio-political relations of Iranian society. Reza shah successfully achieved what the constitutionalists and other reformers had failed.³¹ He modernized Iran by introducing radical changes in almost every aspect of human life. More specifically, he introduced radical changes through social reformation.³² The most important and often debated topic during Reza Shah's rule is undoubtedly his contribution to strengthening women rights, emancipating women from inhumane customs of child marriage, polygamy, temporary marriages, women exploitation and prostitution. The Shah was known as an ally of women reformers.³³ Since 1501, after Shah Ismail's forced conversion of Sunnis into Shiism and the dominance of Shia clergy in the affairs of Safavid empire, the role and social functions of women were solely dictated by the Shia scholars or clergy where women were subordinated to remain loyal to traditions and customs which were exploitative and violating their rights.³⁴ The Iranian civil code of 1928, codified by the parliament introduced new laws relating to women. It contained 100 articles which strengthened the position of women in family and in society.³⁵ The Marriage Act stipulated: increased marriage age from nine to fifteen for women and 18 for men, it required mutual consent for marriage, it made the husband responsible for wife's maintenance, and it discouraged child marriage.³⁶ Moreover, Reza Shah encouraged women to take greater part by joining professions of teachers, midwives, administrators and nursing. The Shah's state had established vocational training centers for women however, majority of women continued to work as agriculturalists in the rural areas. More girls' schools were established and administered by the leading women reformers. The inauguration of girls' schools sparked opposition from the clerics condemning them to stray the minds of Muslim youth.³⁷ In one instance, a fatwa was issued claiming girls' education against the Islamic Sharia.³⁸

The aforementioned development in women rights was largely due to Shah's support to the *Alam-e Nesvan*, a women's journal and supporter of the Shah's reforms. Nonetheless, the journal was largely popular among the urban and educated middle class and could not successfully penetrate the conservative tradition in the rural areas. Still, the journal was a significant

development by highlighting the issues of women, mentioned above, advocated women rights, pressed for legislation of laws supportive to women and encouraged women to voice their problems by writing to the journal.³⁹

Unquestionably, the most radical social change was the legislation about unveiling. Though, Reza Shah throughout his premiership had facilitated the unveiling of women in the urban centers with the indifference of state police allowing them to roam even without being veiled. The authorities had allowed a small number of women who willfully roamed in Tehran without their *Chadars*.⁴⁰ However, it was only in 1932 and after Shah's visit to Ataturk Turkey when he decided to abolish the centuries-old tradition of veiling. To ensure the implementation of law, he substantiated it with a royal edict which forced the law on women. It was an initiative from above, the ruling elite of Iran were the first to implement it on themselves wither willfully or unwillingly. Reza Shah tried to lure women with incentives. The top-notch government officials were forced to bring their wives unveiled to the mixed gatherings or risk their job securities.⁴¹

The unveiling was forced from above against the will of women igniting fierce resistance not only from the clerics but also religious women who had exercised veiling for centuries.⁴² The state had employed force to coerce these opposition which resulted in imprisonment and banishing of leading Shia scholars. The forced implementation of unveiling was supported by the fact that after the abdication of Shah in 1941 some women resorted back to veiling.⁴³

Moreover, Reza Shah after centralizing the bureaucracy attempted to secularize the judicial system by making the religious courts accountable to the secular courts. Reza Shah omitted the religious references from the penal codes⁴⁴ and forced clerics to discard their traditional turbans and assume civilian garb.⁴⁵ Moreover, Reza Shah in pursuit of modernizing the means and forces of production overdosed on economic etatism which resulted in modernization of economic activity more than during any other period.⁴⁶ In addition, the development of infrastructural projects especially constructing highways and road had strategic value for the modern absolute rule of Reza Shah which assisted quick outreach in quelling the tribal revolts.

The restructuring and modernization of army enabled Reza Shah to form a centralized state characterized by the monopolized authority of coercion and spending the national resources for fulfillment of personal objectives especially crushing tribal resistances threatening his power.⁴⁷ The

mandatory conscription was manipulated to undermine the power of tribes by employing the tribal soldiers away from their tribes and loyal to the service of king.⁴⁸ The establishment of a powerful modern army proved consequential for supporting his quest of modernity and reforms. He viewed the armed forces as the pillar of modern secularism and used them to subdue such foes as the Qajar aristocracy, marauding bandits, tribal warlords, leftist movements and Shi'ite clergy.⁴⁹

Mass education is the primary source for the transformation from a traditional society to a modern one. The expansion of western education generates critical minds which reject and questions the logic of traditional values and beliefs. Modernity is nothing more than salvation from mental captivity which is blindly believing whatever is injected into our minds and imitating the traditional values and practicing which sometimes make no sense but we follow it habitually.⁵⁰ In the education sector, Reza Shah modernized the educational system by introducing state-run primary schools and colleges and dismantling the clerical madrassas and maktabas.⁵¹ Furthermore, religious education was eliminated from the school curricula. The presence of an educated and modern intelligentsia was the core of the newly-emerged middle class who were educated in western countries. Upon their arrival they constituted the academic staff of the secular-oriented Tehran University which was established in 1934.⁵² This middle class, in its most extreme form, rejected and ridiculed the traditional values of Iranian society which had been practiced for centuries. Secular education meant disengagement from religion and traditional Iranian society, this view was largely held in the backward periphery of Iran, where tradition triumphed everything in the social and political spheres.

Reza Shah was a firm believer in the secular *raison d'être* of the state, the necessity of law and order, the importance of subduing tribal particularisms, and the indispensability of authoritative leader at the helm.⁵³ His preference for a secluding the role of religion from the affairs of state is obvious from his contemptuous view towards the clerics believing them to be fool status-seekers.⁵⁴ 'There is no doubt that religion and politics are two holy principles whose precise details should be known and observed by all enlightened leaders. However the mixing of these two is neither advantageous to religion nor to administrative politics since such a fusion weakens religion and leads to the decline of politics'.⁵⁵ Initially, Reza Shah's relationship with the clerics was that of cooperation and partnership. Shah had abandoned his campaign of Republicanism in exchange of securing the acclamation of leading religious scholars in dethroning the absent Qajar king

and proclaiming the crown. However, this marriage of convenience was short-lived.⁵⁶ The insult of Shah's wife at Qum, at the hands of religious clerics alleging her dress to be inadequate, marked the turning point in 1928.⁵⁷

5 Modernization of Afghan King Amanullah Khan

In 1919, Amanullah Khan, after winning the third Anglo-Afghan war of independence⁵⁸ was crowned as the king of Afghanistan. Amanullah was an educated young man⁵⁹ who took the charge of affairs with ambitious intentions and plans for the advancement of society and country. The Afghan king, even after a century, is still revered for his attempt at modernizing the backward country. The young king quickly outlined his future plans by publicly declaring the development, modernization, industrialization and securing independence as his priorities because he felt ashamed of Afghanistan's backwardness.⁶⁰ He proclaimed in a speech that 'Afghanistan would take its proper place among the civilized nations of the world'.⁶¹

The young Afghan king faced difficult challenges in a volatile multi-ethnic and ultraconservative religious country like Afghanistan. In order to implement his plans uncontested, he had to centralize his authority and administration. He introduced a *de facto* constitution called *Nezamnama*,⁶² the constitution declared in its first provisions the sovereignty of the newly independent Afghanistan, proclaimed Islam as the official religion, and designated Kabul as the official capital. Moreover, He formed the first cabinet and inscribed the basic code of the High state of Afghanistan with the assistance of Turkish legal experts.⁶³ The concepts of basic liberties, freedoms of speech, religion and press were floated. Moreover, in a courageous move he introduced constitutional monarchy which rested political legitimacy to rule on the will of people from religion. This move cut his dependency for legitimacy on the traditional forces of periphery which enjoyed uncontested prerogatives among the masses. In addition, judicial reforms were made by introducing secular codes i.e. the introduction of administrative, commercial and reconciliation courts led to the transfer of power from the mullahs to these tribunals, and laws which relegated Sharia into secondary role and mandated the employment of educated professionals thus removing the Mullahs from judicial posts who enjoyed incentives by resolving disputes.⁶⁴ Moreover, Amanullah restructured the army hoping to form a national army which will be highly devoted to the national cause of preserving law and order. By introducing changes in the army and making conscription mandatory, he greatly disturbed the sources

of tribal authority. Centralization of authority paved the way for the young king to reach his goals.⁶⁵

Industrialization could only help the new king to sponsor his modernization program. Afghanistan had very limited sources of revenue generation which were inadequate sustain state-run modernizing schemes. To generate revenues, the king levied back-breaking taxes by modifying the taxation systems and introduced land reforms to increase agricultural output.⁶⁶ “Over the ten years reign of Amanullah, the land tax increased fourfold, while livestock taxes increased two to fivefold.”⁶⁷ Furthermore, he planned improving the infrastructural connectivity by constructing roads, telegraphs, telephone lines and postal services.⁶⁸ Amanullah purchased equipment to establish a light industrial sector, including industries such as woodworking, textiles, and papermaking.⁶⁹ For the purpose of capacity-building, students were also sent abroad to work in industries and learn technical skills.⁷⁰

The main opposition to Amanullah’s modernization drive was the traditional forces of mullahs and tribal chieftains.⁷¹ The heroism in the war for independence had secured the love of religious forces in favor of Amanullah however his actions directed against these forces, in particular, censoring their political and economic powerbase fractured their bond. The young king, inspired by western values, considered these conservative mullahs as narrow-minded and targeted them to undermine their influence and rectify their negative impact on the society. He could not coopt or subdue the tribal chiefs and mullahs to submission or in a constructive cooperation which caused him deleterious consequences capable of having deep implications on his struggle for modernity. The actions of the young king were determined to weaken the mullahs and chieftains. Their privileges and stipends which they had enjoyed for many years were cut. The mullahs were fired from their jobs and forced to attend classes to learn about the new legal codes. They, along with the tribal leaders, were further embarrassed when they were mandated to wear European dress. The revenue sources of the local khans and tribal lords were dried up due to the saving policies. Amanullah’s actions had turned them to be uncompromising foes.

However, Amanullah’s policies about women empowerment and more specifically the ban on veil fueled the apprehensions of traditional forces into an ultimate crisis.⁷² Amanullah was not alone in his journey, he was supported by the intellectual Mahmood Tarzi⁷³ and Queen Soraya, his father-in law and wife respectively. Queen Soraya led by example by

introducing and advocating greater participation of women in statecraft.⁷⁴ The first ever girls school was opened in Afghanistan. Women were encouraged to attend vocational centers and join new professions. The opening of girls' schools faced opposition from the illiterate and backward areas. They were considered in contradiction to their customs. The ban on veil was, similar to Reza Shah, initiated from above. Ban on veil proved to be the turning point. The Afghan king was viciously criticized in the periphery to the extent that the mullahs had issued a fatwa declaring him infidel. The state failed to effectively propagate their plans about social change to the backward people, the king's actions were fundamentally misperceived by them. It must also be taken into account that Amanullah's lack of cautious pragmatism and gradual progression exacerbated the situation. Their comprehensions regarding the reforms were intentionally further distorted by the traditional mullahs and khans who wanted to antagonize the people against the king.

Amanullah's biggest mistake was his lack of attention to building a strong, united and centralized national army. His restructure of army backfired. He relinquished the ranks of experienced veterans with new graduates who lacked professionalism. The cut in the soldiers' pay further demoralized them⁷⁵, compelling them to look for other ways of earning. Amanullah had ignored the warning of his war minister and Atatürk when he advised him that the success of his modernization program depended on the support of a strong army to suppress resistance.⁷⁶ The army failed to quell the Khost rebellion in 1924 which ended after another tribe intervened to subdue the rebellion.⁷⁷ Amanullah's military reforms caused recruitment problems and mass dissertations, with the army shrinking from 60,000 men during the time of Abdur Rahman to only 11,000 by 1928.⁷⁸ The king had miscalculated his belief that he will be able to play the tribes against each other in case if crisis abrupt which was evident when a marauding bandit, supported by few, was able to overthrow and force him to abdicate his country.⁷⁹

The proposed measures of Amanullah were highly rational and democratic: he introduced modern education by opening new western-oriented schools, women were enfranchised, the constitution, slavery was abolished, improved transportation network, state actions were regulated and accountable, tribalism was weakened to centralize state authority and Afghanistan was put in transformation path from a backward and traditional country to a modern nation-state. Despite his all good intentions for the betterment of the country, Amanullah, by many analysts and

historians, is judged to failure in understanding the pulse of the society, especially beyond the capital. Some believe that the young king mismanaged his program of reforms, others condemn him for lending no heed to the advice of Ataturk that he received for strengthening the army. The lack of a strong modern armed forces followed by the decline in religious legitimacy is the contributing factors that led to the fall of young ambitious king of Afghanistan.

6 Failure of Promising Modernization Reforms

The greatest myth revolving the process of modernization in these countries was the pursuit of modernization without the preliminary groundwork which would always prove as a premature idea. Majority of the citizens of these states were completely ignorant of the progressive developments happening in the western countries. The unwavering practice of the religious commandments for centuries had made them unsusceptible and dismissive to the ideas of popular sovereignty, secularization of state, greater women participation and adopting Western lifestyle and values— they were believed to be foreign and innovation in Islam. The lack of necessary groundwork and mass awareness to subscribe to these Western, however rational, modernization reforms led the pioneers and ruling elite to implement them with force and coercion. An approach marked by moderation could have been the best way to replicate the positive aspects of Western society i.e. electoral processes, universal enfranchisement, legislative and judicial institutions for law and order, women rights and established norms for succession and transition of power. The process of modernization was imposed from above in all three cases. Ataturk and Reza Shah imposed their will, with the help of armed forces, on a religious and fundamentalist majority who were never interested in them. Amanullah hanged the mullahs⁸⁰ who opposed his reforms and humiliated the traditional women who denied putting away their veils.⁸¹

The modernization reforms were unsuccessful to penetrate into and break apart the communal structures of traditionalism beyond the major cities and capital. Despite the fact that the leaders of all three countries ruled autocratically with the legitimate coercion at their disposal, the still failed to disseminate their reforms wholly. The Afghan king could not implement his reforms beyond the capital, Kabul. The rebellions had started in the backward provinces Khost and present-day Nangarhar respectively. The former was suppressed with employing air power and the hanging of leading scholars while the latter deposed and abdicated the king. Moreover,

Reza Shah faced defiance, except some major cities of Iran, from majority of religious leaders and their traditional followers and Atatürk could only breathe freely after the religious leader of the Kurdish revolt was decapitated.

The reforms initiated and aimed to modernize the traditional societies were mismanaged by their pioneers. Their reforms started to decline when they failed to understand the sensitivities of these communities especially, women reforms and messing with religion. For centuries, the Eastern societies have had deeply sensitized the issues relating to women, connecting them with their family and personal honor and pride—extremely sensitive in traditional societies. Therefore, these reforms had activated fierce resistance especially in Afghanistan, people living outside the capital despised the king for being astray from his religion. Even the religious scholars had declared him an *infidel* by issuing a fatwa.⁸² The news of Amanullah forcefully dragging the headscarf of a woman had spread like fire in jungle, further antagonizing the masses with his reform policy. The reforms packages must have embraced the necessity to get religion on board. The outright isolation and dwindling down of religion was a grave blunder and should have been pragmatically pursued after other reforms had been cemented and strengthened enough to storm the weather from the reactionary forces.

Finally, the initiatives of reforms by the three strong rulers were more of a desire for and blind emulation of Westernization than modernization. Ismail Raji al Faruqi is also of the opinion that, “Modernization failed because it was Westernization, alienating the Muslim from his past and making of him a caricature of Western man.”⁸³ Westernization in Muslim countries should necessarily be preceded by comprehensive and sustained process of modernization. The vice versa was witnessed in both Iran and Afghanistan. They embarked on Westernization—replicating the fabulous characteristics of West, mainly the legal codes, economic development, constitutionalism, law-based rule and physical modernity—without first ensuring the key principles that are prerequisite for realizing modernization. They imitated the western institutions that they desired would ensure their progress. Moreover, they boarded on the mission of Westernization without the existence of any stable institutions mainly political and economic. Their economic conditions were dismal and mostly dependent on outside assistance. The deficiencies of these major requirements destined the reform programs to failure, which is why most of the reforms introduced during their rule were rolled back and reversed because they did

not entertain the communal sensitivities and will to subscribe to these ideas. However, it should also be noted these pilot initiatives set their societies onto the path of progression, development, modernization and Westernization, though with differing success rates. Moreover, these experiences served as guidelines for the future modernists and reformers who steered their states into unprecedented progress. Afghanistan experienced a decade of democracy in 1960s, the son of Reza Shah had a relative stable foundation to pragmatically continue further reforms and Turkey was able to secularize the state and nation.

7 Conclusion

The promising modernization process was bungled both in Iran and Afghanistan with Turkey, with relative higher success, being the exception. The process of modernization was forcefully imposed by the authoritarian rulers against the will of the majority of populace. The lack of pragmatism in regard to religion and women amongst other causes contributed to the imminent backlash from the reactionary forces. The incorporation of measures respectful to the dignity of religion and subscribing to the will of people could have influenced the consequences. The blind imitation of West, without the realization of required groundwork in advance to make the minds of traditional populace susceptible to the reforms, was not wholly received and subscribed by the majority leading to failure. Westernization should have been adopted only after the establishment of strong political and economic institutions— key requisites for modernization.

Notes and References

- ¹ The technological innovation and development of West was admired in the Eastern societies and other parts of the world. Western modernization was believed to be the remedy for all their social, economic and political ills and considered its replication as the need of the hour and path towards prosperity.
- ² During the period of Constitutionalism, from the mid to late nineteenth century, Arab, Ottoman and Persian thinkers and intellectuals had begun attending the western world. Their experiences led them to find the reasons for their underdevelopment and change the traditional ways of thinking. They were captivated by the Western values of democracy, constitutionalism, secularization, industrialization, urban culture and enlightenment. See: Zarei, Ali, Tagharobi, Kaveh. "Modernism in the Middle East and Arab World." *The Routledge Encyclopedia of Modernism.*: Taylor and Francis, 2016. Date Accessed 21 Dec. 2019 <https://www.rem.routledge.com/articles/overview/accomodating-an-unexpected-guest>. doi:10.4324/9781135000356-REMO14-1

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- ⁵ Samuel P. Huntington, *Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of New World Order* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1996) 68.
- ⁶ Malcolm Edward Yapp and John C. Dewdney, "Turkey", *Encyclopedia Britannica*, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Turkey> (Last Accessed on 23 December 2019)
- ⁷ Abdülmecid I, Ottoman sultan from 1839 to 1861 who issued two major social and political reform edicts known as the Hatt-i-Şerif of Gülhane (Noble Edict of the Rose Chamber) in 1839 and the Hatt-i-Hümayun (Imperial Edict) in 1856, heralding the new era of Tanzimat ("Reorganization"). For more detail, see: "Abdülmecid I", *Encyclopedia Britannica*, <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Abdulmecid-I> (Last Accessed on 23 December 2019)
- ⁸ Tanzimat was series of reforms promulgated in the Ottoman Empire between 1839 and 1876 under the reigns of the sultans Abdülmecid I and Abdülaziz. These reforms, heavily influenced by European ideas, were intended to effectuate a fundamental change of the empire from the old system based on theocratic principles to that of a modern state. The reforms included the development of a new secular school system, the reorganization of the army based on the Prussian conscript system, the creation of provincial representative assemblies, and the introduction of new codes of commercial and criminal law, which were largely modeled after those of France. For more detail, see: <https://www.britannica.com/event/Tanzimat> (Last Accessed on 23 December 2019)
- ⁹ Richard H. Pfaff, "Disengagement from Traditionalism in Turkey and Iran", *Western Political Science Association*, Vol. 16, No.1, (Mar 1963), pp 79-98, Available on https://www.jstor.org/stable/445960?seq=1&cid=pdf-reference#references_tab_contents (Last Accessed on 08-10-2019)
- ¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 87.
- ¹¹ Richard H. Pfaff, *Disengagement from Traditionalism in Turkey and Iran*, 87.
- ¹² *Ibid.*, 65.
- ¹³ The sick man of Europe was the label given to the Ottoman Empire in mid-nineteenth century. This term describes the economic impoverishment and decline of Ottoman Empire. The Empire was falling apart into pieces with the European powers trying to snatch territories from the crumbling Empire. For more See: Akbar Ahmad, *Discovering Islam making sense of Muslim history and society (revised edition)* (London: Routledge, 2002) 67. Available online <https://archive.org/stream/DIMMH#mode/1up> (last accessed on 25 October 2019)
- ¹⁴ *Ibid.*
- ¹⁵ Seçil Akgun, "Women's Emancipation in Turkey", *Turkish Studies Association Bulletin*, Vol. 10, No.1 (March 1986), 8. Available online at <https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/43384120.pdf> (Last Accessed on 23 December 2019)
- ¹⁶ *Ibid.*
- ¹⁷ Richard H. Pfaff, *Disengagement from Traditionalism in Turkey and Iran*, 90.

- ¹⁸ In the early 1930s, the Turkish government began to establish and operate economic enterprise of various kinds. The policy and measures connected with this new movement came to be known as Etatism. The word Etatism is derived from a French Etat (state) and denotes a situation in which a State take an active and permanent part in economic affairs. For more details, see: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/2229238.pdf> (Last Accessed on 23 December 2019)
- ¹⁹ *Ibid*, 90.
- ²⁰ Richard H. Pfaff, Disengagement from Traditionalism in Turkey and Iran, 91.
- ²¹ Said Nursi was a prominent Kurdish intellectual. He fervently supported constitutionalism and sought to improve the Kurds' condition during the late Ottoman Empire. After World War I and the consequent fall of the Ottoman Empire, Nursi founded the "Nurcu" ("Followers of the Divine Light") movement and sought to revive Islamic thought in a secular state. For more details, see: https://encyclopedia.1914-1918-online.net/article/said_nursi (Last Accessed on 23/12/2019)
- ²² Elif Ozcan, "Was there a 'Kurdish problem' in Turkey during Ataturk's lifetime? The Sheikh Said Rebellion", *Research gate*, (Last Accessed on 23 December 2019) https://www.researchgate.net/publication/335293551_Was_there_a_'Kurdish_problem'_in_Turkey_during_Ataturk's_lifetime_The_Sheikh_Said_Rebellion
- ²³ *Ibid.*, 5.
- ²⁴ Richard H. Pfaff, Disengagement from Traditionalism in Turkey and Iran, 96.
- ²⁵ See "Pahlavi Reza." *World Encyclopedia*, (December 18, 2019). <https://www.encyclopedia.com/environment/encyclopedias-almanacs-transcripts-and-maps/pahlavi-reza>.
- ²⁶ Kamyab Shariari, "Modernization Process in Iran: Historical Overview", *Journal of Social Science Studies*, Vol. 4, No. 1, Jan 31 2017, pp 269-282. Available on <http://www.macrothink.org/journal/index.php/jsss/article/view/10206/8579>
- ²⁷ Hameed Ramezani, *Roshanfekrane Irani Dar Asre Ghajar*, (Tehran:2003)
- ²⁸ See "Constitutional revolution", *Encyclopedia Iranica*, <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/constitutional-revolution-i> (Last Accessed on 22 Dec 2019)
- ²⁹ Shariari, *Modernization process in Iran*, 270.
- ³⁰ *Ibid.*, 273.
- ³¹ Mirza Taqi Khan 1807-1852, famously known as Amir-i- Kabir, is considered the most renowned reformer during the Qajar rule predecessor of the Pahlavi dynasty. Amir Kabir's efforts were aimed to create a prosperous and well-ordered country with undisputed authority exercised by the central government. His actions to curtail the power of *Ulama* exhausted his plans because the clergy had been disputing the legitimacy of state who had emerged an independent bloc. Amir Kabir faced strong opposition when he tried to prohibit the *ta'zia* and self-flagellation, Shi'ite religious rites enacted during Moharram. For details, See: "Amir Kabir Mirza Taqi Khan" *Encyclopedia Iranica*, linked here: <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/amir-e-kabir-mirza-taqi-khan> (Last Accessed on 22 December 2019)
- ³² G.N Khaki and Ashaq Hussain, "Socio-religious developments in Iran 1925-1979", *International Journal of Philosophy and Theology*, Vol. 2, No. 2, June 2014, pp. 253-276. http://ijptnet.com/journals/ijpt/Vol_2_No_2_June_2014/16.pdf (Last Accessed on 22 December 2019)

- ³³ Jasamin Rostam-Kolayi, "Expanding agendas for the New Iranian Woman" in *Making of Modern Iran: State and Society under Riza Shah 1921-1941* edited by Stephanie Cronin (Routledge: Oxfordshire, 2003) pp 157-181. Available online at <http://libgen.lc/ads.php?md5=9713ba4c284b7216cdea7ab885425887> (Last Accessed on 10 September 2019)
- ³⁴ During the Safavid dynasty, Shia clergy was the main cause behind the limitation on women. They did not have legal rights, individual freedom, personal ownership and access to wealth. They had to veil in public. Courtier women faced enormous exploitations. The founder of Safavid dynasty, Shah Ismail 1, had ordered to split 300 prostitutes dreadfully in Tabriz. Shah Abbas is reported to have ordered to burn 3 women of his harem who had refused to sleep with him. For more details, See: Mitra Jahandideh and Shahab Khaefi, "Women's Status during the Safavid Period", *Recent Researches in Social Science, Digital Convergence, Manufacturing and Tourism*, available online at http://www.wseas.us/e-library/conferences/2011/Lanzarote/SOSOMACTS/SOSOM_ACTS-22.pdf (Last Accessed on 22 December)
- ³⁵ Ali Akbar Mahdi, "The Iranian Women's Movement: A Century Long Struggle," *The Muslim World*, Vol. 94, Issue 4 (October 2004), pp. 427-448. Available online https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/pdf/10.1111/j.1478-1913.2004.00067.x?casa_token=_LSGEeQyXCsAAAAA:DDckTzhLrnoMZDt_CudDoVedwAyN8fE_tvSsFH16lBQFTjK1S5BchFZVnu9jfTXOsoyf-LoKqj7e7NTW (Last Accessed on 12 Dec 2019)
- ³⁶ Jasamin Rostam-Kolayi, *Expanding agendas for the New Iranian Woman*, 168.
- ³⁷ Shireen Mahdavi, "Reza Shah Pahlavi and Women a re-evaluation" in *Making of Modern Iran: State and Society under Riza Shah 1921-1941* edited by Stephanie Cronin (Routledge: Oxfordshire, 2003) 197.
- ³⁸ *Ibid.* 197.
- ³⁹ Jasamin Rostam-Kolayi, *Expanding agendas for the New Iranian Woman*, 167.
- ⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 178.
- ⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 180.
- ⁴² See, Jolaina M. Nasser, "History and evolution of the Hijab in Iran," *Academia*, Available online https://www.academia.edu/36561354/The_History_an_d_Evolution_of_the_Hijab_in_Iran (Accessed on 22 Dec 2019)
- ⁴³ Shireen Mahdavi, "Reza Shah Pahlavi and Women a re-evaluation" in *Making of Modern Iran: State and Society under Riza Shah 1921-1941* edited by Stephanie Cronin (Routledge: Oxfordshire, 2003) 199.
- ⁴⁴ In 1931 the scope of Shari'a law was restricted further by the adoption of a secular code for marriage and divorce. A secular commercial code was adopted in 1932, and a secular definition of penal crimes in 1936. See Richard H. Pfaff, "Disengagement from Traditionalism in Turkey and Iran", *Western Political Science Association*, Vol. 16, No.1, (Mar 1963), 87. Available on https://www.jstor.org/stable/445960?seq=1&cid=pdfreference#references_tab_contents (Last Accessed on 08-10-2019)
- ⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 88.
- ⁴⁶ Mehrzad Boroujeradi, "Triumphs and Travails of Authoritarian Modernisation in Iran" in *Making of Modern Iran: State and Society under Riza Shah 1921-1941*, edited by Stephanie Cronin (Routledge: Oxfordshire, 2003), 158.
- ⁴⁷ Stephanie Cronin, "Riza Shah and the Paradoxes of Military Modernization in Iran 1921-1941" in *Making of Modern Iran: State and Society under Riza Shah 1921-1941* edited by Stephanie Cronin (Routledge: Oxfordshire, 2003) 45.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 46.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰ Modernity has questioned the rationality of some beliefs and practices in traditional societies, especially cultural practices which are continually practiced because of their cultural attachments. For example, female genital mutilation, early marriages, traditional birth practices, and dowry price. For details, See: <https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Publications/FactSheet23en.pdf> (Last Accessed on 23 December 2019)

⁵¹ Before the constitutional revolution, education was largely traditional with maktabas (village schools) and madrasas (theological schools) being at the base of the educational system. See for details, Prof G.N. Khaki and Mohd Altaf Butt, "Pahlavi's the Pioneers of Education in Iran: a Study of Reza Shah", *International Journal of Education*, Vol.3, No.3 (Sep 2015) pp 45-50. Available on <https://airccse.com/ije/papers/3315ije05.pdf> (last accessed on 23 December 2019).

⁵² Rudi Matthee, "Transforming Dangerous Nomads into Useful Artisans, Technicians, Agriculturalists Education in the Reza Shah Period" in *Making of Modern Iran*, (Routledge: Oxfordshire, 2003) 135.

⁵³ *Ibid*

⁵⁴ Mehrzad Boroujeradi, "Triumphs and Travails of Authoritarian Modernisation in Iran" in *Making of Modern Iran: State and Society under Riza Shah 1921-1941*, edited by Stephanie Cronin (Routledge: Oxfordshire, 2003), 153. Available online <http://libgen.lc/ads.php?md5=9713ba4c284b7216cdea7ab885425887>

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

⁵⁶ Shireen Mahdavi, "Reza Shah Pahlavi and Women a re-evaluation" in *Making of Modern Iran: State and Society under Riza Shah 1921-1941* edited by Stephanie Cronin (Routledge: Oxfordshire, 2003) 197.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

⁵⁸ Afghanistan has fought three wars with the British Empire. The Third Anglo-Afghan War of 1919 was fought to secure complete autonomy over the foreign affairs which had been restricted and limited by the preceding two wars leading to signing of treaties which vested the control of Afghanistan's foreign affairs in British control. Amanullah Khan wanted to free Afghanistan from the foreign control and declared war on British Empire which was concluded with Brits agreeing to sign the peace treaty and declare Afghanistan's independence. See for more details, <https://www.britannica.com/event/Anglo-Afghan-Wars>. (Last Accessed on 23 December 2019)

⁵⁹ Amanullah Khan was the governor of Kabul, holding authority of treasury and the army. Amanullah received his early education at home. As a third generation dynastic ruler, Amanullah was raised in the tranquil palace surroundings with some exposure to secular schooling, nationalist sentiments and modernist thought.

⁶⁰ Leon B Poullada, *Reform and Rebellion in Afghanistan 1919-1929*, (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1973), 39

⁶¹ Hafizullah Emadi, *Repression, Resistance and Women in Afghanistan* (Connecticut: Praeger, 2002), 60.

⁶² M. Nazif Shabrani, "King Aman-Allah of Afghanistan's Failed Nation-Building Project and Its Aftermath (Article Review)", *International society of Iranian Studies*, Vol.38, No.4, (Last Accessed December 2005) pp. 661-675, Available

- online at <https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/4311768.pdf> (Last Accessed on 23 December 2019)
- ⁶³ Andrew Chua, "The Promise and Failure of King Amanullah's Modernisation Program in Afghanistan", *ANU Undergraduate Research Journal*, Vol. 5, (2014). 38, http://pressfiles.anu.edu.au/downloads/press/n1673/pdf/andrew_chua.pdf (Last Accessed on 19-12-2019)
- ⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 44.
- ⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 37.
- ⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 41.
- ⁶⁷ Asger Christensen, *Aiding Afghanistan: The Background and Prospects for Reconstruction in a Fragmented Society* (Copenhagen: NIAS Publishing, 1995), 19.
- ¹³ Andrew Chua, "The Promise and Failure of King Amanullah's Modernisation Program in Afghanistan", *ANU Undergraduate Research Journal*, Vol. 5, 2014: 35-49, http://pressfiles.anu.edu.au/downloads/press/n1673/pdf/andrew_chua.pdf (Last Accessed on 19-12- 2019)
- ⁶⁹ Leon B. Poullada, *Reform and Rebellion in Afghanistan 1919-1929 King Amanullah's efforts to Modernize a Tribal Society* (Newyork: Cornell University Press, 1973), 139-40
- ⁷⁰ Andrew Chua, "The Promise and Failure of King Amanullah's Modernisation Program in Afghanistan", *ANU Undergraduate Research Journal*, Vol. 5, (2014), 41. http://press-files.anu.edu.au/downloads/press/n1673/pdf/andrew_chua.pdf (Last Accessed on 19-12-2019)
- ⁷¹ Religious leaders and tribal chieftains constitute an important aspect of traditional Afghan society. Throughout the modern history of Afghanistan, they have enjoyed challenging capability if not monopoly over the power seats. Religious leaders enjoy unwavering allegiance from a large segment of society and have been the successful in mobilization of people against the ruling elites. For more details, see: Mohammad Attar Abkenar, "Resistance to the Governments in Afghanistan's Modern History: Case Study Approach". Available online at http://eprints.unife.it/1007/1/Resistance%20to%20the%20Government%20in%20Afghanistan%27s%20Modern%20History_%20a%20Case%20-%20Study%20Approach.pdf (Last Accessed on 10 September 2019)
- ⁷² The ban on veil served as the turning point during Amanullah's rule. His actions regarding women had led to his decline in popularity and religious legitimacy. Amanullah had found himself in crisis, struggling with loss of support and popularity. For more details, see: Mohammad Attar Abkenar, "Resistance to the Governments in Afghanistan's Modern History: A Case Study Approach". 57.
- ⁷³ Mahmud Tarzi was one of Afghanistan's greatest intellectuals. He is known as the father of Afghan journalism. He worked closely with King Amanullah to bring about reforms, and to modernize the nation. He was also the father-in-law of Amanullah and the leading figure of constitutional movement. He died in Istanbul Turkey in 1933.
- ⁷⁴ Queen Soraya encouraged women to get an education and opened the first school for girls in Kabul. She sent 15 young women to Turkey for higher education in 1928. Soraya was very instrumental in enforcing change for women and publicly exhorted them to be active participants in nation building.

- ⁷⁵ Andrew Chua, "The Promise and Failure of King Amanullah's Modernisation Program in Afghanistan", *ANU Undergraduate Research Journal*, Vol. 5, (2014), 39. http://press-files.anu.edu.au/downloads/press/n1673/pdf/andrew_chua.pdf (Last Accessed on 19-12-2019)
- ⁷⁶ Angelo Rasanayagam, *Afghanistan: A Modern History* (London: IB Tauris, 2003), 21.
- ⁷⁷ Barnett R. Rubin, *the Fragmentation of Afghanistan State Formation and Collapse in the International System* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002), 57.
- ⁷⁸ Ali A. Jalali, *Rebuilding Afghanistan's National Army* (Carlisle: US Army War College, 2002), 77.
- ⁷⁹ For more details, see: "Amanullah Khan", *Encyclopedia Britannica*, <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Amanullah-Khan> (Last Accessed on 23 December 2019)
- ⁸⁰ When Amanullah was on foreign tour, the Khost Rebellion erupted led by Mullah Abdul Rashid and Mullah Abdullah, known as Mullah-i-Lang or the limping Mullah. Abdullah was arrested and executed by the forces of Amanullah khan.
- ⁸¹ The king had ordered to install signs of "No woman with burqa can pass here" on a special road in Kabul. The King had enforced this programme by deploying police in the intersections. It resulted in women trying to stay at home and avoid the embarrassment.
- ⁸² The religious leaders of Khost Rebellion had denounced Amanullah. Their uprising had the support of religious sanction because they believed some regulations were inconsistent with Islamic Sharia. In the countryside, Amanullah was bashed with propaganda addressing him as an infidel who has gone astray from the true religion.
- ⁸³ Ismail Raji al-Faruqi, *Al Tawhid: Its Implications for Thought and Life*, 1992, p. xiv available on https://www.muslim-library.com/dl/books/English_Al_Tawhid_Its_Implication_for_Thought_and_Life.pdf (Last Accessed on 23 December 2019).