

THE RULES OF DYNASTIES TO SHAPE IRANIAN CULTURE, SOCIETY EDUCATION SYSTEM AND PEOPLE'S STRUGGLE TO INTEGRATE WITH INTERNATIONAL CULTURE AFTER MEDIEVAL AGE

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Abstract: This paper is a short review of cultural changes and development in Iran from a history point of view and effect of western improvement and its industrialization after medieval age, it also includes individuals who play an important role to shape Iranian culture and the process of modernization and improvement of new education system in Iran from safavid dynasty which ruled Iran from 1501 to 1736 all the way to the last monarchy (Pahlavi dynasty) until establishment of Islamic Republic of Iran in 1979.

Keywords: Iran, Persian culture, Iranian history, Cultural integration, Persia, medieval age.

I. Introduction

Iran as a country that has gone through major changes as most of countries in the region to adopt international culture and suit the society in such a way to be part of cultural exchange and globalization to improve and experience this modernization as well as process of adopting modern education system and education for both genders which in this study it has been notified majors it has gone through for the past 600 years after medieval age and how it struggled to integrate culturally all the way to the last monarchy of Iran.

II. Safavid Dynasty

A pivotal point in the creation of modern Iranian national identity and culture was the Safavid dynasty, After a mughul invasion, Iran was divided into few smaller countries, each of these ruling a part of Iran, but it wasn't until the Safavid dynasty, under the leadership of shah Ismail, when all of these smaller territories united under the national identity of Iran. At the same time, the Shah Ismail declared himself "king of kings" of the newly formed Iranian country, thus creating the environment from which most of the cultural developments of the modern Iranian identity stem from.

The Safavid dynasty heavily influenced the character and identity of the Iranian culture, affecting everything from the religious to the social aspects of the country. Not long after the establishment of the Safavid Empire, under the rule of Shah Ismail the 1st, a period of deep social and religious changes began which had far reaching consequences extending beyond the physical borders of the newly established country. One of the most influential steps taken by the dynasty, was the official decision to make Shia the state religion of Iran, a defiant move to the growing regional geopolitical and military influence of the Ottoman empire, who by this point in history had conquered the rest of the

middle east, leaving Iran as the last eastern power (in the area) with the power to stop their implacable advance. This religious declaration was not only viewed as a way to gain clearly differentiate themselves from the Sunni Ottomans , it was also the perfect opportunity to gain support and influence from a vast area of surrounding territories, which also refused to be engulfed by the Ottoman Empire. Communities from Anatolia (supporting alawit and shiaghezelbash which supported Safavid dynasty), Iraq, Caucuses and Kurdistan all quickly identified themselves with Iran's movement before the impending advance of the Ottomans, leading to a more unified front of Shia resistance.

There was another very important aspect which the new Safavid dynasty understood was of uttermost importance before they could truly stand up the Ottoman's power, they had to modernize their military power. In order to solve this, it was decided stronger ties with western powers, especially England and Spain, was the best way to obtain greater military knowledge. Both Spain and England also feared the growing Ottoman influence in the Middle East, specially their powerful and growing armies, it made a lot of sense to support Iran in the face of a common enemy. Through these ties, which were pursued by many kings, such as Shah Abbas, Iran achieved impressive military feats, including the recovery of many islands and ports across the Persian Gulf from Portuguese occupation. Furthermore, through the increased interaction with the international community, Iran managed to attract the opening of many embassies, business from around the globe started to flow into the country as nations across Europe (and as far east as India) started to gain great interest in Iran's resources and the fact it could act as a very effective bridge between central Asia and the middle east.

Apart from helping to modernize their military, The capital investment was put into developing the country's infrastructure, it went into building roads, buildings, with the main focus into art and education development, it wasn't a coincidence that during this time Iran became an undisputed leader in architectural developments, some of the structures built during this period still, to this day, remain some of Iran's most impressive touristic attractions. The far reaching consequences of Iran's opening to outside nations didn't stop there, another interesting result of this international interaction

was the cultural exchange that took place between Iran and its architecture flourished during these times (but all this started to fall as it gets to the end of Safavid dynasty, they paid a great attention into building roads, securing the roads, modernization of military, art, architecture (as in that time Iran one of the leading countries in architecture) some of the places that remains today from that time are considered to be the finest Islamic arts, places such as mosques and palaces , also as mughul rulers of India had Persian culture and used Persian language as the official languages of the royal family, Iran exported its culture further more and influence at certain level as well as central Asia,

III. Afsharid Dynasty

Though there were some conflicts that occurred during this dynasty, such as the sporadic wars that were fought with the Uzbeks from central Asia and greater khorasan and ottoman from Anatolia, the main force that brought down the Safavid dynasty came from within. Lack of discipline, mismanagement and a serious case of state corruption forced a decline that came to a conclusive end in 1736 by Nader shah Afshar which established Afsharid dynasty That said there was a short period of partial development, though it didn't include much art and culture instead in the military aspect of the country he spend most of his time to reclaim and securing Iran's borders and lands leading Iran for the opportunity of becoming an empire once again nader shah during his short rule had great military such as invasion of India which result into defeating the mugul empire and captured Delhi , after the occupation he brought back thousands of elephants camels gold and jewelry which till this day some of them are considered to be Iran's most valuable jewelries which all of this achieved under the leadership of Nader and in the name of the newly formed Afsharid dynasty. As it happened however, Nader was assassinated by one of his generals, bringing this time in Iranian history to an abrupt end, though a lot was achieved in the name of bringing the entire country united under "one flag".

IV. Zand Dynasty

Shortly after the death of Nader Shah, karim Khan Zand established the Zand dynasty. This period of time was marked by few wars outside of the countries', which wasn't a bad thing since during this period a lot of developing went into the road structure of the territories, technology was provided to increment the facilities in agriculture, the economy as a whole became stronger and wealthier, the fact that many bazaars opened countrywide during this time reflect the thriving conditions people found themselves living in this period in history . No better example exists of the prosperity during the Zand dynasty than the Zand Palaces, which to this day stand the test of time.

V. Qajar Dynasty

As the end approached for the rather peaceful and prolific Zand dynasty by the death of karim khan, the power of Agha Mohammad Khan increased exponentially until the Qajar dynasty was formed under his control. This time in history marks a very contrasting stage of development between Iran and the European Nations, while most of Europe saw a rapid increase in wealth through their plans of world colonization, efficient economies, fast developing technology and very solid

educational systems, Iran suffered under a leadership more interested in turning society into a consumer's society than developing the economy and education. It was a common sight to see the Qajar Shah during this period spend long period of time traveling through Europe not caring about much else than their hedonistic tendencies, all while the economy of their country slowly suffered under the pressure of a poor education system and an aging approach to technology. Overall, there was an increase in the amount of exchange that existed between Iran and Europe, goods were imported back and forth and many higher class Iranians travelled through the European nations, though these encounters failed to bring the industrial and technological growth the Iranian stagnating economy needed, they did influence certain positive changes. Western schools started opening during this period, thus offering a more updated way of looking at education than the traditional schools in Iran offered the youth at the time, books (though a very limited number of them) were translated into farsi allowing for a new source of modern knowledge.

VI. Modernization in Iranian society, education system and cultural integration

In general terms, this dynasty was not particularly marked by peaceful and prosperous times, yet another layer of chaos during this period was brought along by a lack of central government. This weakening political instability was brought along, in part after Safavid dynasty increased wave of Turkish immigrant tribes who introduced a federalist type of government, called Ilati, which focused control and decision making upon tribe leaders and this result into an issue because of the lack of strong central government, corruption ,miss management and to some stage wars between clans surprisingly enough, this type of governance did spread enough to directly affect the internal stability of the country. Even worse, through an open support of a consumer's society and a disregard for technological advance, education and infrastructure investment, the country entered a decent that turned Iran into a relatively poor country.

Even though it can be argued that through the increased interaction of the traveling higher classes of Iran across Europe, a lot of European culture and resources, such as books, were firstly introduced into the Iranian society, it wasn't until Abbas Mirza (crown prince of fathali shah) that real cultural exchange started happening. His trip to Europe and education there opened his eyes to countries weaknesses, he ensured the brightest students in Iran had the chance to pursue higher learning in many universities in countries like France and England, he even manage to put the focus back into the education system, and the intense need of one in order to achieve some sustained level of economic, academic and cultural development. He understood deeply that if Iran was to turn into a modern country it needed its people to know and understand the emerging technologic revolution, at the same time they embraced an open mind towards education and the need to innovate.

It was depressing for Iran that From 16 to 19 centuries European countries developed very fast by relying on human resource, education and cultural development and was on its way to industrialization,soon European countries were ahead of the world with new invention and technology and later on

established their colonies across the world in 19th centuries. Iran like many other Asian countries, suffered in economy, government, lack of modernization and the more educated people started realizing the gap between Iran and western countries. They sought reform and development which unfortunately wasn't very effective in the Qajar period. For the reform, many of the Iranian educated were inspired by the French Revolution and other external factors. In the beginning of the Qajar dynasty, we see chaos across the country as after the Safavid dynasty, many Turkic tribes migrated to Iran and they brought State federalism (it was called *ilati* system which in a way was very similar to federalism state as everything was controlled by the leader of tribes and this directly affected Iran as by early 18th centuries we see the rise of European empires and their interference in Iran. Those empires were sometimes friends or enemies of Iran and sometimes a model or symbol of development and modernization. Some of these empires were the British Empire, French Empire (later republic), Russian Empire, Ottoman Empire as all the above empires were looking for their own political, economical and cultural interest at the same time, it created a situation where the Iranian government couldn't create a good definition of Iranian culture which this result even more influence for foreign powers.

By the end of the Zand dynasty and the rise of Agha Mohammad Khan which established the Qajar dynasty, Iran started a new chapter in its history. During this sensitive time as Europe was developing very fast with many colonies across the world, inventing new technology, modern military and education system, efficient economy, at the same time lack of eastern countries, mismanagement, corruption leads most middle eastern countries slowly into depression, and Iran was one of these countries specially toward the end of the Qajar dynasty.

Although Iran had been in contact with western countries for centuries but this came into a new level in the Qajar dynasty which affected Iran into a huge cultural change, lack of central government in economy and modernization of a country turned Iran into a poor country depend on foreign power specially with Russia and British Empire at the same time improvement of western power widened this gap, most Qajar Shahs spent huge amount for their fun trip specially in Europe and unfortunately they didn't bring back any technology or educational system but turning Iran into a consumer market but at the same time had some minor benefit to the country particularly monarch and higher class people. In the Qajar time most kings and princes try to import European culture as they thought it might be turning the country into a modern and wealthy one but without building an infrastructure for the culture, it was simply impossible, as many of the princesses went to study in Europe, what they brought back at some level was encouraging, as Iran started having western schools, many western books were translated into Farsi, import new invention and technology, use western clothes and fashions, as mentioned before Prince Abbas Mirza (crown prince of Fathali Shah) sent students to England to learn modern science and went further to military modernization and sent military chiefs to France to re-structure and update Iranian military with western technology and techniques but unfortunately, nearly a decade

of war between Iran and Russian Empire opened Abbas Mirza's eyes to a century of stagnant and falling behind of other countries' development and reforms and after many sequential defeats he and many other educated men realized that bravery and dedication of Iranian soldiers isn't enough to win a war, it requires more than that it requires a modern military with well-trained soldiers familiar with new guns and technology, he realized that in order to turn Iran into a modern country people need to know and understand new technology, invention they need to understand more about what's going on around them in order to start development in the country this was a start he even thought further and wanted to open relations with foreigners in Iran for cultural exchange and building a better relationship between Iran and the West unfortunately his plan for development had many critics in the Iranian government, other princes and among religious leaders too and he died suddenly before pushing his development too far and his father Fathali Shah passed away a year after Abbas Mirza then the crown prince (Abbas Mirza's son) officially declared himself king in 1834, Mohammad Shah in his time he tried to continue his father's path, he started sending students to France and other western countries and invited many artists, scientists, professors to Iran but as Iran was under the influence of Russia from the north and Britain from the south and the central government power was weak at the time, he even went further and hired some French teachers to teach to the princes including the crown prince (Nasereddin Mirza) after Mohammad Shah's death his son became the king, Nasereddin Shah liked and admired western culture a lot and his Prime Minister Amir Kabir (he is known to be one of the few during the Qajar dynasty to continue remarkable changes) he took advantage of the king's interest in Europe and started some development, especially in the education system which this result into Iran's first modern higher learning school, Darolfonoon (the polytechnic school of skills) which this was a great change at a time as before that most of the schools in Iran were traditional schools and not updated to the world's new intention science and technology Darolfonoon was established near Tehran main bazaar and had many classes such as Math, physics, chemistry, military science, medicine, music and even languages such as French, Arabic, Farsi, Russian and he chose some of the best teachers in Iran and other countries (Austria and Italy) to teach there at the same time he provided students with a good service and condition (students received income and cloths) and the best amongst them were chosen to be teachers' assistants. Darolfonoon had one newspaper to publish the latest news about science, new invention and technology to the public, Amir Kabir paid a great attention into traditional art which this result into opening a new school the polytechnic of arts and crafts, Amir Kabir also established Iran's first weekly news paper with the name of Vaghyeetefaghiyeh (the newspaper), this was an important move toward information and modernization of the country later he was murdered at his refuge, this was mainly because of all his demonstration against corruption in the royal family.

When Mozafareddin Shah declared himself king at the age of 43 unfortunately he didn't do much to continue education development, he cut the fund of Darolfonoon and leave on teachers and students family, because of his weakness of political and cultural stability it encourages people to start

standing for their right for example women's start standing for equal education and school as men, until that time most middle class girls tutor at school by private teachers, when Safiyehyazdi start opening first women school a new chapter for justice and equality start in Iran, she invited women to join the school and enjoy the same right of studying a man and they even go further and establish freedom organization to defend women's right in 1868, du

During this time culture of people start to update itself with the rest of the world which this result to revolution of constitution movement.

In 19 century Iran was struggling between its traditional culture and to adopt western culture in order to turn the country into a modern and educated society and each of these had its own followers and supporter it result into adopting western technology and education system in certain level at the same time keeping their ancestor culture and tradition, in some way 19 century was a cultural revolution in Iran struggling to convert from the traditional culture into a modern culture with keeping the traditional element in it.

VII. Pahlavi Dynasty

By the end of Qajar dynasty and beginning of Pahlavi dynasty, Reza Khan he was an officer in Iran's military he later used his troop for the coup and to end Qajar dynasty

During Reza Shah rule, he started a new development for the country; his modernization in Iranian history is remarkable although there are critics in his rule but no one would deny certain industrialization, cultural and education development during his time

He established national public education system, build a strong centralized government he improved health care and build hospitals across the country

He also managed to send his son and many scientist and students for higher education in Europe with the hope that one day they could comeback with knowledge to develop the country

Reza shah form of dictatorship did caused some problem especially with religious leaders

He also changed Iran international name (Persia) to its local name Iran to be used officially and interchangeably.

As Reza shah understood in order to movetoward a modern society and become independent from foreign powers he needs to limit the power of Britain and union of soviet socialist republic he needs to find a third country to balance the power, that's why he moved toward building up a relationship with Germany, France, Italy which later on caused a series problem for Iran as in world warII Germany and Britain became enemy followed by soviet union allies with Britain against Germany and in August 1941 They decided to invade Iran and sent Reza Shah to exile, during his rule he was criticizeto banned hijab for Iranian women and tried to push Iranian society in the direction of a western society.

Western allied agreed to succeed his son to the power Mohammad Reza Shah did follow up his father's development plan, he sent thousands of students over sea, import new technology to start industrialization later on he

made himself an ally to west particularly united states, he wanted to promote Iranian culture with its ancient glory, he wanted Iran to remembered as it once it was an empire a super power under monarchy his cultural plan toward modernization and westernization of the country caused problems specially with religious authority in some of the Persian event he spent millions of dollars, while public criticize him to spend all that money without understanding the current situation of Iran, its poor health care system, poverty and other factors which certainly needed more investment rather than wasting millions of dollars for events and separation of Bahrain as an independent country a majority Shia province of Iran was another failure for government and monarchy later on this result to an end to 2500 years of Persian monarchy replaced by Islamic Republic with new government form and constitution, Iran's revolution not only effect Iran but effect the entire region and Muslim world.

Both Qajar and Pahlavi dynasties had number of reasons that facilitate ending their dynasties which include corruption, dictatorship, mismanagement but the key fact was that they tried to westernize Iranian culture rather than modernizing it, this missed integration toward international culture was the main reason they fell, a rich culture with thousands of years of history and national identity with strong religious society has the potential to integrate and share common values with western cultures to some degree rather than irritating to force western culture to substitute rich Iranian culture, a modern society is achievable with fundamental infrastructure in cultures and education system to be able to communicate and integrate to International cultures.

Summary: In this paper I reviewed the process of Iran's modern day cultural creation from a historical point of view the establishment of its modern education system, adoption of western style of school, the integration of Iranian culture to the western culture and Iran after medieval age, west relationship from Safavid dynasty to the last monarchy and how it affect Iran to shape its modern days.

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