

Iran

Rice

In 1919, Iran was a monarchy under the Qajar Dynasty. The Shah at that time, Ahmad had been in power since 1909. On 21 February 1921, Colonel Reza Khan, with a contingent of the Cossack Brigade, marched into Tehran and staged a coup against the current government sitting in the Majlis (Parliament). This is a SOLS change. Reza Khan became the Minister of War and the Commander of the Army, and, though he was not the Prime Minister, he basically took control of the government, leading to his being named Prime Minister on 28 October 1923, after which Ahmad Shah left the country. As Reza Khan retained his post as Minister of War, and spent much of the next few years consolidating the army and using it to cement the borders of the Iranian state. It should be noted that when the Fifth Majlis convened in 1923, it passed a bill adopting the use of European-style family names. At that point, Reza Khan's name became Reza Pahlavi.

We lack Geddes authoritarian regime type coding for Iran from 1920 until 1945. According to Morby (2002), Iran was ruled by the Qajar dynasty from 1795-1925. However, given the fact that the effective control under the Qajar dynasty ended in 1921 when Reza Khan took power, we code Iran as being monarchy until 1920 and a few years of no regime until 1925 when the Pahlavi dynasty was established. We code monarchy again starting in 1925 under the Pahlavi Dynasty.

Reza Pahlavi became increasingly popular in Iran and with the various political factions in the Majlis. In 1925, he was named commander-in-chief of the armed forces. Later, in October 1925, Ahmad Shah expressed interest in returning to Iran. In response, the Majlis deposed him and made Reza Pahlavi Head of State, while a Constituent Assembly was created to make arrangements for a new regime. On 12 December 1925, this Assembly voted to confer the monarchy on Reza Khan and his descendants, who then became known as Reza Shah Pahlavi. Reza Shah Pahlavi (now of the Pahlavi Dynasty) was in power until 1941.

In 1941, after the invasion of the USSR by Germany, the Allies demanded that Iran expel its German nationals and allow the use of the Trans-Iranian Railroad by the Allies. When Reza Shah refused, the British and the Russians invaded, setting up a British zone in the South and a Russian zone in the North. This led to Reza Shah abdicating on 16 September 1941. The British and the Russians decided to continue the Pahlavi Dynasty by installing Reza Shah's son, Mohammad-Reza Pahlavi on the throne (making him Mohammad-Reza Shah) (no solschange).

Mohammed Reza Shah ruled Iran until 1979 with only one short disruption in rule. From 1951 to 1953, the Shah fled to Rome and then Afghanistan when popular support was behind Mohammed Mossadegh, the Prime Minister (National Front – NF). The chief issue that surrounded Mossadegh's rise to power was the nationalization of Iranian oil; demonstrations in the street pushed the Shah to name Mossadegh PM after the former leader was assassinated. Mossadegh essentially gained "full powers in all affairs of government" for two six-month terms, and he successfully disbanded Iran's upper legislative body (SOLS change). However, the United States engineered a coup against Mossadegh due to his suspected communist ties in 1953, and the Shah came back to Iran and power at that time (SOLS change). Note that we follow Archigos instead of Geddes and code the Mossadegh interlude a break of the Pahlavi regime. This is an exception to our rules based on the fact that we believe that Mossadegh was really in power and that Geddes is coding the Shah's rule as a monarchy, not Mossadegh's.

In 1979, the Shah left the country, and his death triggered a revolution that united various factions of nationalists, students, Marxists, and Islamists all dissatisfied with the government. This obviously was a SOLS change, as the monarchy line of the Pahlavi dynasty was ended and the previously exiled religious leader Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini took power as the supreme leader of Iran. Since 1979, Geddes codes Iran as autocratic, but not fitting any of the personalist, military, or single party designations. Since this means that we consider Iran as a non-specified autocratic type, we code SOLS changes whenever a new leader takes power who is not a pre-designated successor. Our current coding reflects the use of the pre-designated successor rule.

When Khomeini died in 1989, his successor was Khamenei, who was chosen to be the new Supreme Leader by the Assembly of Experts. Later that year, after a constitutional change in Iran, Archigos codes the President, Rafsanjani, as leader.

Khamenei was a somewhat unusual choice for Supreme Leader because he did not possess the religious authority of Khomeini and, in fact, only became an ayatollah shortly before the latter's death (Sciolino 2000, p.86). According to Sciolino (2000), Khamenei had been a confidant of Khomeini's since the days of the revolution and he had held high positions in the regime (p.85). He was President under Khomeini between 1981-1989. Arjomand (2009) points out that when Khamenei became supreme leader, he received all of Khomeini's titles, minus the title of Imam. "This appears to have been in accordance with Khomeini's wish (Arjomand 2009, p.36)." Khomeini originally had pre-designated another cleric, Montazeri, as his successor, but in late March 1989, on his sick bed, decided otherwise. Khomeini met with Khamenei and the Vice President of the Assembly of Leadership experts and, during that meeting, "pointed to [Khamenei] as his successor (Arjomand 2009, p.36)". The Constitution actually foresaw a three-men leadership council, but the clerics voted in favor of just appointing Khamenei. "Constitutionality is not a mark of revolution, and the spirit of the move was probably to divide Khomeini's power between his two closest lieutenants, one of whom, President Khamenei, was selected by the clerical Assembly as the Leader of the Islamic Republic; the other, Majles Speaker, Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani, was duly elected as its President by popular vote on July 28, 1989. Dual leadership seemed quite appropriate for the emergent system of post-charismatic, collective clerical rule. Early on, the new President Hashemi-Rafsanjani, who was considered the more astute and competent of the two by many, appeared as the dominant party in the diarchy (p.37)." This suggests that neither the transition to Khamenei nor to Rafsanjani are SOLS changes. Both were pre-designated successors.

According to the U.S. Department of State, when the country became an Islamic republic the constitution was ratified to allow for the president to act as head of government. The Supreme Leader's role, which Khamenei plays to this day, is head of state. Thus, the president who is elected by the people of Iran, according to Archigos, became the leader of the country beginning with Rafsanjani's election in 1989, even though this leader is still ultimately answerable to the Assembly of Experts. Rafsanjani was reelected in 1993. Then, in 1997, Hojatolislam Mohammad Khatami, Non-Party, won elections to become president.

The relationship between Rafsanjani and Khatami is somewhat ambiguous. There is some indication that Rafsanjani may have supported Khatami, but Khatami was probably not a pre-designated successor in any strict sense. Rafsanjani has been called both a conservative and a pragmatist (Hauss and Haussman 2009, p. 382; Skelly 2010, p.169), while Khatami is consistently referred to as moderate/reformist. "Although a cleric himself, Khatami was widely known as a moderate (Hauss and Haussman 2009, p. 383)." Khatami was a member of the

“Society of Militant Clerics, a reformist movement within the clergy (Mattair 2008, p.160).” He was Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance between 1982 and 1992. Then he was National Library until 1997, when he ran for the presidency. “Khatami ran for the presidency in 1997, advocating social and economic reforms, and was the surprise winner, receiving support from Rafsanjani, reform-minded clerics, the middle class, students, and women (Mattair 2008, p.160).” Brownlee (2007) discusses the relationship between Rafsanjani and Khatami in more detail: “As the end of Rafsanjani’s term approached, Iran faced a three-way fight between the traditionalist right of the SCC, the modernist right of the Executives of Reconstruction, and the Islamic left of the ACC. When members of the Executives failed to amend the constitution to enable Rafsanjani to serve a third consecutive four-year term (the limit was two consecutive terms), the group opted to support the Islamic left’s nominee for the position, former minister of culture and Islamic guidance, Seyyed Mohammed Khatami.” Khatami, one traditionalist and two others had been approved by the Guardian Council, which wanted to increase turnout in the elections as a sign of regime support and thought that the conservative candidate would easily win. When Khamenei realized that Khatami might win, he and his traditionalist group used “fraud and thuggery to halt Khatami’s advance (p.165).” When there were signs that the election would be rigged, Rafsanjani intervened. “In 1992, the president had supported the regime’s exclusion of ACC candidates and assured voters that the leftists had been lawfully disqualified; in 1997, by contrast, he protected the ACC’s standard-bearer and ensure that Khatami had a genuine chance of victory (p.165).” This suggests that while Rafsanjani helped Khatami, the support was more more indirect. Thus, Khatami was not Rafsanjani’s pre-designated successor and we code a SOLS change here. Khatami was re-elected in 2000 and got a lot of support especially from women and young people (Hauss and Haussman 2009, p.383).

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