

“Decline of the Principlist Power in Iran’s Political System”

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Abstract

The aim of this research paper is to present and critically evaluate the power relations between Iran’s main post revolutionary political parties, the Principlist (Osool-garayan) and the Reformist (Eslah-talaban), within the existing political structure of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Thesis

This paper argues that the Principlist party is in an unprecedented weak position compared to the Reformist party in the Iranian political system. This is due to three central reasons: the failures of Ahmadinejad’s policies despite full support of the Principlist party, the resolution of the long-standing nuclear problem, and the lack of political means to challenge the reformist popularity among the public.

Methodology

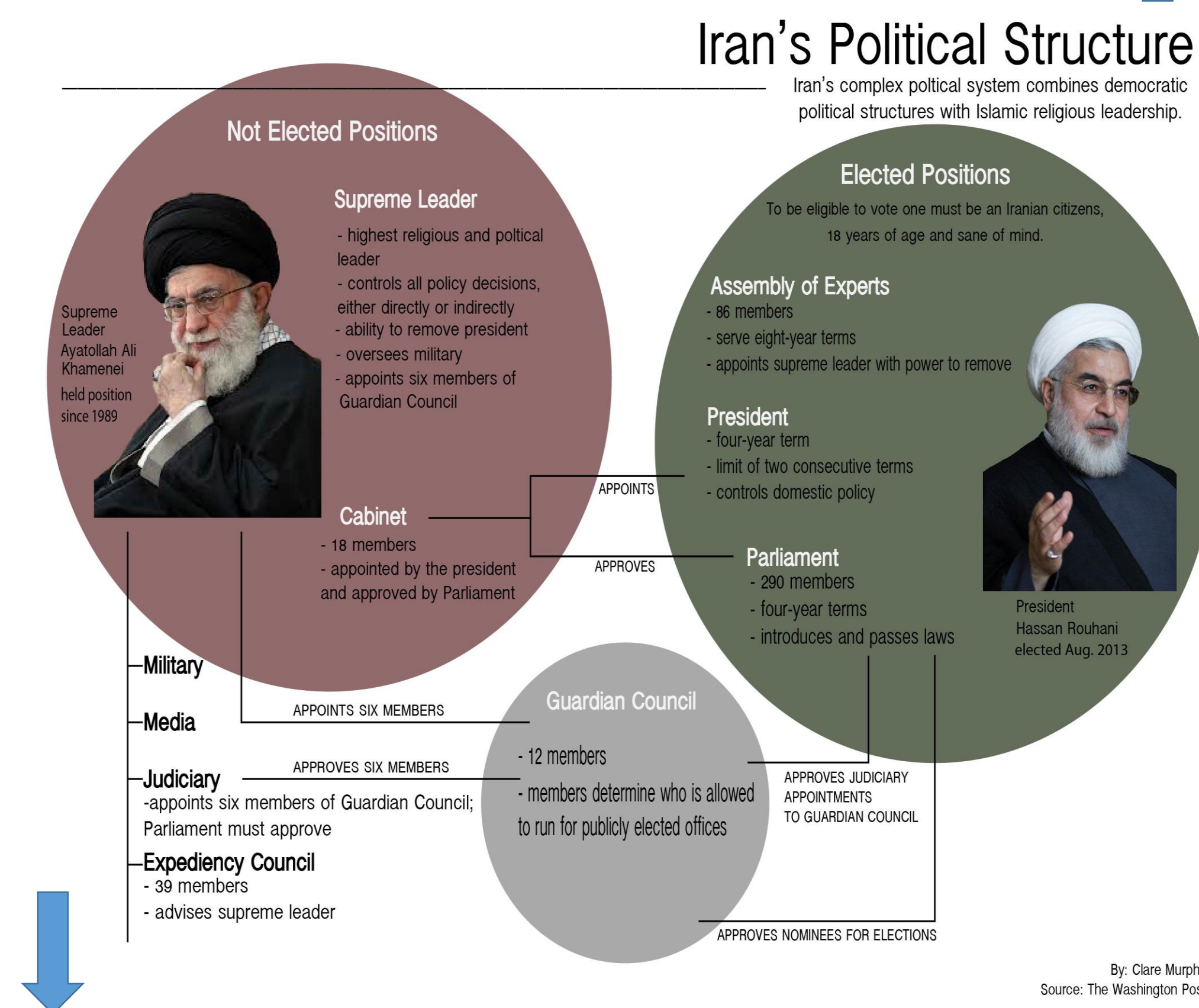
The research follows a qualitative design with analyses based on secondary sources, such as reference books, research papers, dissertations and news articles from various research institutes, publishers, and universities.

Brief Background

- Islamic Revolution in 1979
- Islamic Republic? Yes or No
- What is Islamic Republic?
- Theocracy or Democracy
- Combination of Both Systems
- Constant Tensions Between the Reformist and the Principlist

Reformist Party

- Ideology: Reforming the Political System, Friendly Relations with the west, and Open Economy
- Popular Among the Iranian People
- Always a challenge to the institutional Power



Principlist Party

- Ideology: Strong Loyalty to the Principals of Revolution, Hostile to the West, and Closed Economy
- Great Institutional Power
- Support of the Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Khamenei

Key Findings

1- Failure of Ahmadinejad’s Policies Despite Full Support of the Principlist Party:

- Radical Policies: Nuclear Adventurism and Anti-West Rhetoric
- Security Council Sanctions and Iran’s Isolation
- Economic and Social Hardship for the Iranian People

2- Resolution of the Long-Standing Nuclear Issue

- Resolving Nuclear Crisis Under Dr. Rouhani’s Government and Ending All Nuclear-Related Sanctions
- Rejoining to the International Community and Unprecedented Relations With the West (The U.S.)
- Historic Victory and More Popularity for the Reformist

3- Lack of Political Means to Challenge the Reformist Popularity Among the Public

- Inter-Factional Conflict and Division Within the Principlist Party
- Lack of a Popular Candidate and Strong Policy-Making Legacies
- Lack of Economic, Political, and Social Achievements Compared to the Reformist Camp

Conclusion and the Importance of My Research

The Principlist party is in an unprecedented weak position in the Iranian political system. The Principlist leaders are concerned that the Reformist party take advantage of this weakness and take control of the elected institutions, such as the Parliament and the Assembly of Experts which their elections are due elections due on February 26th, 2016.