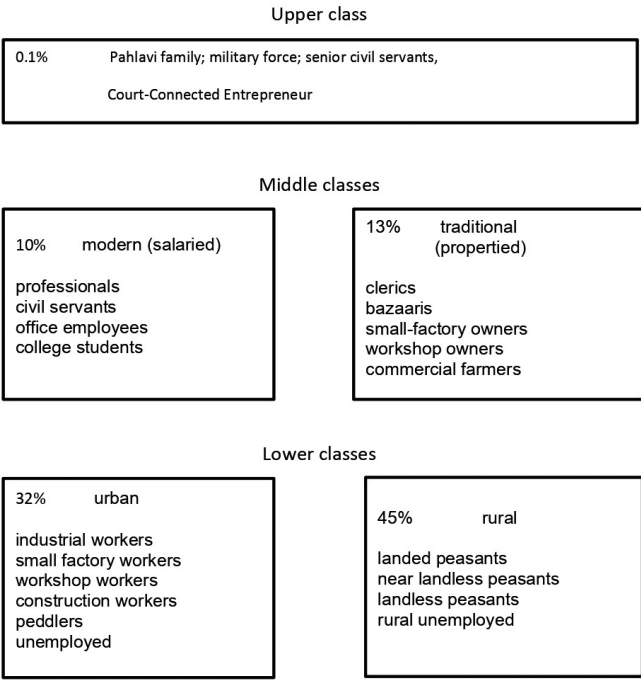


role of ulama in these democratic movements, one must not forget that Constitutional Revolution and the Revolution of 1979 in particular, were both against the state tyrannical power which was deemed serious threats to Islam. After the power struggle that followed the victory of the 1979 revolution, the formation of an Islamic state assured ulama that they had attained their goal.

Thus, it can be safe to say that losing influence as prominent socio-political actors is not the only problem the middle class including the intellectuals have been facing with. They have also lost the support of ulama. And given the statistics revealed by the authorities of the Islamic Republic of Iran is precise, in spite of the high growth of the middle class, it is increasingly affected by the rentier state and has become exceedingly dependent. The same goes with the intellectuals because they come from this very class.

As a consequence, the lower middle class which has always been moved by the above-mentioned prominent political actors are left desperately desirous for a democracy in which they are not solely given the right to vote, but the equal legal rights such as freedom of speech as well.



Class structure (Labor force in the 1970s)

(Ervand Abrahamian, *A History of Modern Iran* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 140.)

Comments

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First, regarding Takaiwa-san’s presentation, I would say that it was a well-organized argument, appropriately focused, and the concluding message is properly and decently presented. I appreciate his efforts and easy-to-understand presentation even for those who are not familiar with the field of Egyptian judicial modernization with special reference to the Waqf law.

Although I am almost convinced by his arguments, here I would like to raise a question. He mentioned the “family waqf” and the “public waqf” in the latter part of his presentation. Since I have not studied Iran’s waqf system, I can only comment based on my personal experiences. In the Iranian case, at least in the post-revolutionary era, I have not heard of such a definition and criteria.

Maybe I am wrong, but I believe that it is not because of the Sunni/Shia difference. It must relate to the character of states or the secularity thereof, in relation to Islam. In this sense, the categorization of “family waqf” and “public waqf” may well be a good indication of Egypt’s modernizing processes.

In the Iranian case, if I am correct, donating some of the fortune as waqf relates to considerations of inheritance and family-matters. This may logically make it hard to define public/family waqfs. On the other hand, it is almost unimaginable to label one’s fortune as his family’s (or other family’s) waqf. Hence, the category of “family waqf” is almost alien to me as a student of modern and contemporary Iranian society.

Second, regarding Nassr-san’s presentation, since I am studying about the Iranian society, I was eagerly looking forward to the analysis. However, I could not agree with the way the points were discussed.

First, you are writing at the very outset that “[t]he Iranian society has not long been a center of agriculture, and cities have always been important,” but is this all right?

In my humble understanding, being the oldest human culture, Iran has historically consisted of three basic social components, namely city-dwellers, rural villages, and pastoralists.

This was the case at least until the Safavid era of the seventeenth century, the early modernization period of Iran or maybe up until the end of the Qajar era, early twentieth century. This process is of course strongly related to the centralization policy of Reza Shah, as Prof. Yoshimura mentioned this morning. Then the strong modernization process in the Pahlavi era forced the rapid fading-away and settlement of pastoralists. Therefore, today the number of pastoralists is almost negligible in the Iranian society.

In the agricultural villages too, although the conditions are drastically changing, the urbanization process has entered a new phase just after the revolution, during the wartime of Iran-Iraq war.

Further, several Japanese scholars have made lifetime efforts to study about the rural agricultural society. It is also true that our huge legacy in this field is yet to be introduced properly to the international academic societies, but I would suggest Nassr-san to take advantage of studying in Japan and sharing the unique and vital achievements of the Japanese predecessors in this field.

I disagree with several other points of view, including his assessment about the Silk Road, evaluation of the Pahlavi modernization policy, argument about the modern versus traditional middle-classes, discussion on the relationship between the middle-class and democracy.

It is erroneous and almost misleading to argue that the Iranian modernization process started from the early twentieth century, meaning from the Constitutional Revolution. In Iran, as aforementioned, the modernization process may have started much earlier, at least from the second half of the nineteenth century. Of course, Mr. Tokuyama’s detailed analysis on the reforming efforts presented this morning is valuable in its own right, but in a broader context it must be said that the “Constitutional Revolution” ended prematurely and it was almost unsuccessful, leading to nothing other than the Pahlavi dynasty which was the puppet of the British and later, the American imperialistic hegemons.

True, Dr. Mosaddeq briefly became the national hero during that time, but soon after, there was a coup d’état in August 1953 with the intervention of the CIA headed by Kermit Roosevelt, president Theodore Roosevelt’s grandson, which only led to the shift in hegemony from the British Empire to the USA.

In a sense it was the real starting point of the Iranian contemporary history and not the Nationalism movement itself up to the present-day Iran, through the 1979 revolution. So here we must admit that in the Iranian history, the only successful revolution which they experienced was that of 1979.

With this bitter understanding, I still would not agree with Nassr-san in despising the Iranian society and culture for their basic character. Yes, the society is individualistic, but every aspect comprises of both the good and bad. I personally feel that the Iranian society offers much more comfort than Japan, which is too monolithic and imposes only one particular way of life. As to the misconceptions about democracy and strong authoritarianism, as we see, democracies everywhere are facing deep crises, including Trump's America, British Brexit, China, EU, etc. Japan too is no exception.

Finally, I think I must elaborate on the middle class in contemporary Iran. My humble understanding is that the "middle class" itself has changed its character very drastically from the time of the revolution forty years ago. This is partly because of the drastic shift starting from the village society in terms of urbanization in every remote region from the big cities, including Tehran, Mashhad, Esfahan etc.

The Iran-Iraq war must have had a major impact on the shaping of the new middle class in today's Iranian society too. Considering this, Nassr-san I just want to ask that in your definitions how do you categorize the major components of the Sepah (or Revolutionary Guard) militia or the voluntary Basij members? Are they to be categorized as middle class or higher/lower than that?

I ask this because Sepah is a militant and not a terrorist organization as defined by the US. At the same time, it is not a regular national army based on the conscription system and which could not be categorized under one social class.

In relation to the middle-class based analyses on the Iranian society, my general understanding is that since the entire Iranian society is shifting very drastically and quickly post 1960's (possibly after the agricultural land-reform of 1962), a consistent and concrete image of the "middle class" in Iran would be very difficult to define.

However, if we still want to search for a newly emerging middle class in the Iranian society, it could possibly be found in the small rural cities, including the young Basij members scattered in remote towns, but probably not in the suburbs of the central megalopolis of Tehran like the time of the revolution forty years ago.

