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# The New Middle Class and Political Developments in Iran

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**Abstract:** *Political interaction of members of the new middle class in Iran in recent years has lacked a cohesive and unilateral approach and therefore, its analysis needs a precise typology. Structural dependence of the new middle class on the government and bureaucratic structure of the state administration has had important role in giving direction to political interactions of this social strata. Undoubtedly, lack of independence of the new middle class from the structure of the political power in Iran has not been equivalent to their relentless support of official policies of the government. The new middle class in Iran is often the critic of the official policy of the government, and on the other hand, it plays a major role in implementing these policies as a bachelor force in the political system and thus cannot resolve this fundamental conflict in its relationship with the Islamic Republic of Iran. Due to modern knowledge and expertise, this social class has the potential to advance the process of political development in the country and should have a more effective role in the process of political modernization in Iran. In addition, with the expansion of urbanization and increased university education, the number of members of this category has been added. And has become the most important social class in Iran's political transformation. The new middle class in Ahmadinejad suffered from inactivity and weakened its central role in the country's political transformations, and its social and political power fell sharply. Ahmadinejad's attention was drawn to the low classes of society, and especially the villagers, with his disregard for this important social class.*

**Keywords:** *New Middle Class, Development Oriented Policies, New Life Style, Political Participation, Political Reactionarism.*

## INTRODUCTION

The immigrating trend from villages to large cities in the years after the Islamic revolution, development of city life and rentier economic structure dependent on oil in Iran has led to increasing growth of the urban middle class every day. The economic policies of the government in the years after the war and endeavor for implementation of development programs based on oil income has improved living conditions in large cities and considering the political and administrative focus inherited from the imperious renovating period of the first and second Pahlavi era and approach based on public industrial development which is influenced by governmental capitalization in Iran, the conditions for city population growth particularly in large cities such as Tehran and Isfahan and ... was provided.

With ending of the forced war and implementation of developmental policies after the war, we have witnessed improvement in level of livelihood of city dweller strata and growth of consumption among income receiving groups, office and labor workers residing in big cities. Iran's economic development in the 1900's led to growth of urban middle class. Growth of city dwelling in the years after the revolution was concurrent with

expansive growth in university education and many various strata of the Iranian society sought the best way to social mobility and improvement in their life conditions by higher education and entering universities. Increased volume of university graduates and growth of service sectors in city economy in the 1900's and 2000's along with expansion of governmental bureaucracy led to class evolution at the level of the urban society in Iran.

The level of income of various strata of the urban middle class has not been equivalent and the weakest strata of this class who were frequently occupied in service and office works in the administrative and economic system and generally have relatively low and constant income suffer from harm at times of economic crises and tensions and encounter severe livelihood pressures. Some other strata of the urban middle class such as directors, physicians and engineers and high ranking office employees can be considered high income strata of this social class. During economic blooming or in the trend of development in recent years, these strata have acquired a more stable economic condition and improvement of their livelihood has directly been connected with the development in urbanization.

City middle class in most developing countries is associated with the growing urbanization trend and development of new sectors and enjoys a higher potential for influencing political changes. Additionally, in Iran despite all political, economic and cultural upheavals during the first and second Pahlavi era and years after the victory of the Islamic revolution, we are persistently witness to increasing growth of the new middle class. Structural connectivity of this stratum with its trend of economic and social development has made the role of this stratum important in political, social, economic and cultural changes.

### **Development Oriented Policies and Formation of the New Middle Stratum in Iran**

Formation of the new middle class in Iran is the product of penetration by Western culture and technology, quantitative and qualitative advancement in education and development and the increasing growth of bureaucracy. In other words, new middle class can only be found since the Pahlavi era. Members of the new middle class are basically educated and depend on their knowledge and skills for their livelihood and this privilege gives them ability to play fundamental role in social evolution of society as main carriers of new thinking and ideas (Azghandi, 1997: 50).

With appearance of the new national government in Iran and implementation of renovative policies, gradually instead of the traditional middle class outside of the government, a class was created that free of power status enjoyed a special place. University education, bureaucratic knowledge, familiarity with Western thinking and ideas, freedom from traditional beliefs and values and acquisition of specialized tools and domains were characteristics of this stratum (Mohajernia, 2004: 25).

Reza Shah's cultural renovation revolved around three axes of nationalism, archaism and modernism and secularism. In the nationalism axis, with foundation of new and novel sectors, Reza Shah promoted archaism with emphasis on the Arian race and established the Persian Language Cultural Center (Amini & Shirazi, 2006: 272).

During the reign of Reza Shah, the initial steps for development of educational facilities were taken. During the 1935 -1949 period, the number of primary and high school students had a mind boggling increase of 1300 fold. In 1944, University of Tehran started operating and close to 36 teachers' training centers and 32 professional schools were opened.

Elites and middle classes in Iran increasingly gravitated to public schools and attended higher education at the newly founded University of Tehran, various technical schools and ministries or foreign universities. Some analysts believe in regards with changes of this period that advancement of the domain of education and development provided the necessary human forces for public systems in development. Yet, at the same time, it helped formation and growth of the new open minded stratum and those occupied in specialties, medicine and engineering. Furthermore, the government using the educational system barred free political

thinking and enforced a kind of conformity with society and homogeneity on the open minded. The educational curriculum was organized in such a way that obedient flattery, promotional support and ideological reasoning was induced (Fouran, 2001: 333).

At the time of resignation of Reza Shah in 1951, close to 5 thousand university graduates existed in Iran where most of them had been educated in the West, more than 10 thousand students had achieved their diploma, 15 thousand individuals had completed third year of high school and more than 65 thousand individuals had completed primary school (Ashraf & Nabouazizi, 2009). This trend in educational progress increased even more in the 60's and 70's decades. Number of students in higher education institutes in 1961 was close to 19800 individuals where this number reached 60000 in 1971 and was more than 123114 in 1974. In line with gaining dependence and loyalty of urban strata, as a reward, expenses for education abroad was provided for children of higher and middle strata. The sources of these funds were usually the Pahlavi Foundation, Oil Company, Central Bank and Ministry of Culture. In 1971, based on reliable statistics, a number of 20535 Iranian students were studying in foreign universities and colleges (except for England and the state of Illinois in America) who usually used educational grants (Adibi, 2000: 02).

The autocratic structure of the Pahlavi regime minimized the role of the new middle class in the process of renovation of Iran. If we chip off the coverage and external and glittering layers of new Iran of the era of Mohammad Reza Shah, its principle oligarchic corpus and political weave was not very different from Iran of the Ghajar period. In these hundred years, no steps were taken in the path of political reform. Political participation of people and their intervention in the country's affairs and determination of policies in the Pahlavi era were as rare and extinct as in the Ghajar period. Lack of role and involvement of people in main affairs of the country were practically equal in the two periods (Zibakalam, 1996: 142).

In the opinion of many experts in the domain of contemporary history of Iran, the new middle class had significant role in occurrence of the Islamic revolution. Abrahamian in the book «Iran between two revolutions» has mentioned the Shah's renovation in the economic and social domains as the reason for formation of the Islamic revolution in Iran. He believes that in this regard, expansion of the new urban middle class and industrial workers because of the renovations and lack of political renewal has led to attrition of the linking chain between the government and structure of society, blockage of communication paths between political and social systems and increased gap between governing groups and social forces. Widening of the gap between the developing socio-economic system and undeveloped political system in 1977 was to the extent that an economic crisis could lead to the overthrow of the entire regime (Abrahamian, 2008: 524-525).

The trajectory of consumerism and improvement in life conditions in Iran after the revolution tended towards an increase. While in 1977, a small percentage of Iranian households in total in rural and urban areas owned personal automobiles, this level in 2006 reached 5730395 households. In 1989, this level reached 41 percent in rural and 87 percent in urban regions and in 1996, it reached 10416983 households in the entire country (Fozi, 2009: 20). The growing trend of the new middle class also continued in the years after the Islamic revolution and growth of urbanization, academic development (particularly university education) and policies based on development models in the 1990's decade created the context for every day growth of the new middle class in Iran.

The new middle class in Iran was a non homogeneous group and does not qualify for a single independent ideological and specific class interests and its members are from various social strata and this matter prevents it to be able to form an independent and unit class approach for socio-political interactions.

### **Gravitation of the New Middle Class to Modern Life Style**

Method of living or life style is an important index of evaluation of growth of the new middle class in any society and in practice, life style can be considered as a summation of other indices. Life style is the method of

living of various social classes and groups in society in which individuals of the community with following behavioral models, beliefs, norms and social values or selection of particular cultural organizations and specific statuses manifest their belonging to it (Ayouzi, 2011: 161).

The new middle class more than other social strata and classes has tendency towards modern life style and promotion of livelihood among members of this class. Gravitation to social mobility and promotion of level of livelihood among members of this class is higher than other social strata. The members of this class because of owing their social status to modern sectors such as the university, bureaucracy and ..., more than other strata and classes are interested in development of modern life style and are more prone to consumerism.

Growth of consumerism among the new middle class has led to encouragement of new production methods and progression of thinking styles that give positive value to latest fashion household merchandise and equipment and modern research methods and novel ways of living. Such thinking styles show the growth and expansion of a greedy mentality which is the main dimension of consumer oriented culture. Complete blossoming of this way of thinking has occurred with expansion of the culture of fashion orientation (Abazari & Chavoshian, 2002: 21). Consumerism is considered the most important characteristic of the new middle class in Iran. This trend began from the 70's decade and with increased oil income for the country. Yet, in the 80's decade and considering the cultural environment created by the revolution and the forced war, it was lightened. Yet, in the 90's and 2000's, it grew again and gained increased acceleration. Development of department stores and increased consumer merchandise imports alongside with communications evolution and familiarity of the Iranian society with modern Western life style had tremendous influence on change of the cultural outlook of the new middle class during these years.

Lateralism and side taking of public communications media (much of the press, movies, series and television programs) from the 90's was to fill up the modern middle class. The reason is that the main agents of these media (such as writers, producers and actors and ...) were themselves mostly from this class and had trust in it.

This matter also applies to new social media as well. New middle class on the one hand constitute most of the audience of modern media and on the other hand are its major agents. For example, with increased coefficient of penetration of the internet in Iran, year by year, we have witnessed increased electronic and digital media in the web technology space such as news agencies, websites and weblogs and .... Currently, large extent of people and public opinion and even the country's media society are influenced by the published content in digital media. All these cases show influence of the middle class by public communications media particularly novel ones and represent expansion of the novel middle class culture by these media (Zibakalam, Afshari & Aslanzadeh, 2010: 61-65).

Interest in using digital media is seen in a daily increasing form among members of the urban middle class and this demonstrates the innovative and diversity seeking nature of this class. Change in individual's taste with literacy in a society undergoing evolution changes the kind of interpretation of political and social and ... issues and the individuals become aware of citizenship rights. Literate individuals, along with increased sense of independence, possess a higher sense of participation in issues related to their environment and principally look at problems with a more economic outlook (Rabii, 2001: 136).

In the 90's and 2000's, gradually parties and aggregations were created based on requests of the new middle class. The initiation of this flow was concurrent with formation of the party of development agents during the presidency of Mr Hashemi Rafsanjani and other parties formed during the subsequent years which originated from various layers and strata of the new middle class such as the participation front, moderation and development front, the developers and Islamic Engineering Society and ... that frequently entered the political arena of Iran in the frame of two political wings, reformists and fundamentalists (Fozi & Ramezani, 2009: 15).

### **Role of the New Middle Class in Khatami's Reforms**

Political participation refers to a person's involvement in the political system at various levels of activities ranging from lack of involvement to holding political position (Hafeznia & Kavianirad, 2004: 223). Elections constitute one of the levels of political participation which show expectations and gravitations of most people regarding social, economic and political issues (Iman, 1998: 487).

Evaluation of the political interaction model of the people of Iran in elections has persistently been under attention of experts and analysts of the political arena and political sociologists and various analyses have been presented by them in this regard. Some analysts and researchers who have investigated the political interaction in Iran believe that: «Numerous factors are influential on the election behavior of people in Iran with a range from internal and personality traits of the Iranian society to the overall atmosphere governing on the country. Additionally, unsuccessful experiences of organizations such as parties in formulating the election behavior of the people of Iran has led to their decreased political participation and in the absence of political organizations, other elements have been influential on people's political participation and election behavior. At times also, this behavior remained hidden and its expression during the elections created a kind of surprise in thoughts. The belief in lack of predictability of the election behavior of people of Iran also originates from the latter» (Baii Lashaki & Pishgahifard, 2009: 111).

Political participation in the first decade after victory of the Islamic revolution was influenced by the revolutionary atmosphere. In post revolutionary years, for various reasons such as political conditions of the initial years after the revolution, occurrence of war and economic difficulties post war, lack of people's interest in expressing their political requests and their high trust in officials and many other reasons led people's outlook towards elections to not be very political (Majidi Ghahroudi, 2001: 261).

During the reform period (years 1997-2005) trend for political and civil participation gained considerable booming and many of the strata of the new middle class who had suffered from political reactionarism and disappointment during the 80's and 90's regained the motivation for active political participation again in this period. Strong show up of people from large cities such as Tehran and Isfahan and Mashad and ... in presidential elections of the years 1991 and 1995 and also the elections for the sixth parliament in 1993, booming of political press in this period, wide activities by universities and students in political areas, expansion of parties and press with various political approaches, popularity of an atmosphere of criticism and political discussion are considered among political characteristics of this period.

In the opinion of some experts in the domain of political sociology, expansion of the new middle class had an important role in building the context for development of demand for democracy in society. The more expansion in the new middle class was, the more became development of demand for democracy. Various layers in the middle class provide the possibility for cognition, decision making, planning and implementation by citizens for the government and decrease its responsibility load and expenses (Massoudnia, 2011: 70).

This booming trend in political participation by the new middle class in Iran had wide spread political challenges and tensions along with it. Competition between political groups and fronts in this period very rapidly gained a radical form and expansive freedom of the press and sharp criticism of some political newspapers of the policies and overall values of the system of the Islamic Republic and increased political conflicts led to increased political tension in the country.

The increasing trend in political tension and inflammatory press atmosphere of this period was faced with reactionarism of the political governance in these years and its consequences was wide spread confiscation of political press and increased political and student detention. On the other hand, political conflicts and physical engagements encountered an expansive wave of dissolution of important and effective political figures after the revolution and the consequences of these conditions was not political development but political reactionarism by the new middle class.

Political participation of the new middle class never became institutionalized despite all the political disputes and tensions with regards to the domain of power of people and strengthening of democracy. Most political formations and parties and civil organizations shaped in this period more than being a product of public

demands were a government created product which were created in line with promotion of political development indices. This same issue created the context for fall in the boom of these newly arisen institutes in the years after the reforms in Iran.

The reform period with all its political achievements, which are propagation of parties and aggregate activities and improvement in international relations, unfortunately in the economic domain has not had considerable achievements. Economic standstill, increased unemployment rate, dispositional and political attitude towards some experienced directors of the country, increased political and press tensions led to disappointment of some layers of the urban middle class who were the main supporters of reforms (Taghi Tehrani & Nejhah Iran, 2015: 50).

Disappointment of various layers of the new middle class from the political tensions of the reform period and lack of realization of political, economic and social demands of this class led to political reactionarism. Decreased political participation during the second elections of the Islamic city and village councils particularly in Tehran and large cities and lack of public welcoming of the flows and reformist political figures and persistence of this trend in the elections of the seventh parliament along side with expansive rejection of qualifications of the main candidates and well known reformist figures led to decreased political participation of the new urban middle class in these elections.

Emphasis of the reformist government and political groups and elites engaged in this political flow on political development and support of the civil society and little attention to economic and social requests and lack of improvement in livelihood conditions and prevalence of bribery and economic corruption in the country alongside increased public expectation level in the tensioned atmosphere of the 1997 to 2005 years increasingly led to hopelessness of many social groups particularly low income layers of the new middle class such as lower level office employees and labor workers and people on wages.

In the opinion of some analysts, the condition of the new middle class in this period was based on privative participation and the new middle class with its political participation in most cases not only did not take steps in line with reaching self-awareness and political development, but also frequently with its immature kind of political participation (political and privative reactionarism and subordinate participation) slowed down the trend of movement towards political progress which can be symbolized by the victory of Mahmoud Ahmadinejad in the presidential elections of 2005 (Hessam Ghazi, 2014: 41).

### **Reactionarism of the New Middle Class during the Ahmadinejad Era**

Lack of attention and general public distrust in large cities towards well known figures and political parties and failure of well known candidates and introduction of two main political fronts (Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani, Mehdi Karoubi, Mostafa Moini, Ali Larijani and Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf) and unexpected victory of Mahmoud Ahmadinejad with acquisition of votes of most large cities such as Tehran and Isfahan and Mashad demonstrated the end of the era of political development and reformist talk in its prior form.

Political reactionarism of the new middle class and uncommon political interactions with lack of attention to politicians and well known parties who had more agreement with the trend of economic and political progress in Iran and trust in an unknown and nonpolitical figure supported by extremist and ideological flows in Iran shows failure of the reformist project in institutionalizing political parties in Iran. Agreement of the new middle class with lower layers of society in criticism of social and economic conditions and joining talks of request for fairness led to major change in the country's policies.

The years 2005 to 2011 should be considered the period of revival of the ideological approach to macroeconomic, political and cultural issues of the country. Reactionarism of the new middle class and lightening of its political role led to increased political role of lower layers of society. Joining of traditional middle class and new middle class wage earning strata with low income strata, villagers and city outskirts dwellers in support of policies of Mr Ahmadinejad's government of class dependencies and social self-

awareness in the framework of a kind of populist idealism was reminiscent of the first years after the victory of the Islamic revolution and uninstitutionalized political participation of people in the area of politics. Some supporters of the government of Mr Ahmadinejad evaluated and analyzed it in the framework of fundamentalist talk demanding justice and believed that this talk has four pertinences «promotion of justice», «kindness», «material and spiritual progress and excellence» and «service provision» that is built around the central axis of «guardianship» (Akhavan Kazemi, 2009: 40).

The renovation programs implemented after the Islamic revolution has to a great extent helped growth of the new middle class. Policies of the construction era in the context of economy such as privatization, giving importance to technocrats and encouragement of capitalization led to gradual acquisition of high capital by governmental directors, technocrats and individuals subordinate to them from the 90's decade on using governmental bribes and formed a newly founded class of capitalists' dependent on the government (Bohrani, 2009: 126).

Ahmadinejad's emphasis on fighting bribery and promotion of social justice based on the mottos of the Islamic revolution had major role in reviving ideological and revolutionary atmosphere for many of the revolutionary strata. Additionally, wide spread support by low income strata and particularly villagers of his populist approaches created new conditions in the Iranian society of the 2000's decade. In the plan of the ninth government published in August, 2004 matters are included such as acquisition of divine satisfaction by way of promoting justice, kindness, serving God's subservient and material and spiritual progress and excellence. Additionally, justice oriented development, upholding shares with kindness, service and excellence and progress of the ninth government's macro strategies were mentioned (Ninth Governmental Plan, 2005: 11).

Implementation of economic policies based on development of social justice such as increasing wages and salaries of office employees and governmental retirees and increasing the country budget due to increased global oil prices, goal orientation of governmental assistances, provincial trips and attention to problems of citizens of small cities and villages, awarding low interest loans and support of small businesses, donation of Mehr housing, delegation of Edalat (justice) stocks and ... in the years 2005 to 2011 created the context for wide spread support of low income strata from the ninth and tenth governments.

Considering the fundamental disagreement of the policies of the ninth and tenth government with prevalent models of development and its populist approach and also implementation of political and cultural limitations in line with absorption of religious strata and ideological and extremist flows created the grounds for dissatisfaction of many educated strata and elites, specialists and even governmental directors and various layers of the new urban middle class particularly in large cities.

The 2000's decade should be considered the period of gap between various layers of the new middle class. Low income strata, labor workers and office workers whom implementation of economic policies based on development of social justice by the ninth and tenth government had improved their living conditions and religious layers of the middle class who were concerned about consequences of cultural modernism and propagation of Western modern lifestyle in Iran acted in support of the official policies of the government. Yet, more modern and novelty oriented layers of the new middle class who in the reform period were also interested in political and cultural changes in society and distancing from ideological interactions were unhappy with the trend of these evolutions and frequently had transformed into critics of the official governmental policies or had become afflicted with political reactionarism and were disappointed in the political and social evolutionary trend.

Consumerism and lifestyle resulting from it is one of the characteristics of the urban middle class. Therefore, in conditions where material values were becoming more pronounced in the society of Iran, various strata of this class requested increased well-fare, enjoyment of various material, well-fare and recreational facilities and promotion of the level of standards of their life. The approach of the government in response to these daily increasing social needs gained a paradoxical situation. On the one hand, it was forced to provide for the

demands of the citizens in this regard and on the other hand, with advancement of material and well-fare facilities (such as movie theaters, restaurants and ...) the value directions of society underwent change towards modern Western values such as individualism and pleasure seeking (Fazeli, 2010: 217), values in fundamental contradiction with cultural and ideological policies dominating over the ninth and tenth government.

The economic policies of the ninth government despite the satisfaction and great support of underserved and lower strata of the urban middle class led to wide spread dissatisfaction among many of the layers of the new middle class in large cities. Increased disappointment and dissatisfaction of various strata with these policies led to formation of a large social wave disagreeing with the existing situation. Re-election of Ahmadinejad in 2009 led to wide spread complaints among the urban middle class in Tehran and other large cities.

Some analysts believe that lack of attention of the government to requests of various layers of the new middle class in Iran created the platform for riots and social outcries in this period. In their opinion: «Neglect of wishes and demands of this stratum, especially the higher up range and lack of creation of appropriate channels for its expression led to formation of resistant social movements that in case of predispositions would build context for riots and dissatisfactions in various areas. Otherwise, they would continue activity in the form of underground movements and organizations» (Ghasemi and Zarezadeh, 2013: 92).

Oppositional political interaction by the new middle class in 2009 and challenge of the entire governance and political system represented the depth of contradiction between political, economic and cultural approach of the ninth government with the demands of this class. Complaint by most of the opposition more than being the result of loss of election candidates of their interest was due to reaction to re-election of the previous president and concern of persistence of the previous policies of the ninth government.

6- Approach of the New Middle Class in 2009 led to rectification of the political approach of the tenth government with respect to the requests of this class and in the opinion of some analysts, the fundamentalist government of Ahmadinejad gradually distanced itself from radicalism. In the opinion of some, if fundamentalism represents the values of the middle class, it will automatically enter the game of the middle class; the same reformist, although without the title and sign of reformism, just like Ahmadinejad in the second term of his presidency came close to performing this role (Azad Armaki, 2015).

Off course, the recurrent approach of the new middle class towards the conservative movement in the 2013 elections showed that the tenth government and political flow supporting it were unsuccessful in responding to the demands of the new middle class and attracting its political participation. Yet, the reality that the identity of the tenth government and its ideological source was contradictory to the life style and demands of the new urban middle class ultimately afflicted the tenth government with a fundamental paradox. Some of its fundamentalist and ideological and extremist supporters accused this government of deviation. Also, some revisionist critics considered these policies a kind of modern populism for attraction of the support of critics. Yet, in sum, the events of 2009 showed what extent the potential of the new middle class for challenging the political system in Iran is.

Policies of the moderate government of Hassan Rohani with regards to relief of tension in foreign policy and resolution of the nuclear problem of Iran by way of negotiations with world powers and America in comparison with the approach of Ahmadinejad went along with a kind of turn in foreign policy with support of the elite and educated strata of Iran. Rohani, in his speech at the beginning of the new Iranian year, introduces achievements of his government's foreign policy as follows:

«We have established the nuclear rights of this nation. We have disrupted the sanctions and the people of this nation will be successful in the direction of their high achieving goals. We have expanded our relations with our neighbors in all platforms. Our policy with our neighbors is a policy of friendship ... Compared to other countries, our policies involve relief of tension and promotion of collaborations both with the East and West, particularly regional countries. Another grand work performed by our nation in foreign policy was the people's heroism against terrorism, extremism and aggression» (Rohani, 21/03/2015).



The political logic of the government of Rohani was based on the policy of «constructive interaction with the world» and he refers to it as a key for solving the country's political and economic problems. Principles and axes of the idea of constructive interaction with the world includes axes such as avoiding tension and relieving it, intellectuality and reflection in the area of foreign policy, creation of trust, improvement of appearance, image and prestige of Iran in the world arena, active and dynamic diplomacy, endeavor for balancing and improving relations with countries across the world particularly with neighboring countries and in case of existence of logical conditions for bilateral negotiations and from a respective stance with America (Rezaii & Ghasemi, 2013: 133). Rohani introduces this policy clearly as follows:

«The Islamic Republic of Iran will advance constructive interaction with all countries that respect the people of Iran and wish collaboration in the framework of common interests with Iranians and will stretch its hands for interaction with all countries in the world» (Rohani, 3/04/2015).

The consequence of resolution of the nuclear dispute of Iran with world powers and achieving a nuclear agreement and resolution of sanctions resulting from it and improvement of political and economic relations of Iran with various countries in the world (particularly world powers) has created the contexts for increased positivism towards the moderate political flow in Iran. Hope for improvement of economic and political conditions and fundamental changes in power relations in Iran in this period has created new motivation for participation of the new middle class in the tenth term of the Islamic parliament elections and the fifth term of presidential elections. The definite victory of the list of supporters of the government of Rohani (reformists) in the elections of Tehran shows an approach of exiting from reactionarism of the urban middle class and re-interest in political flows wishing change in Iran.

## Conclusion

The new middle class in Iran in the third and fourth decades after the Islamic revolution has had different approaches. In some terms such as period of reform (the government of Mohammad Khatami), we have witnessed motivation of the new middle class for active political participation. Yet, in the period after the reforms (the government of Ahmadinejad) we faced drop in political participation and as a result political reactionarism in the new middle class in large cities. Off course, reactionarism of the new middle class in Iran has persistently been sectional and this class has had high interest in active political and social participation for change in the social structure of Iran and has supported all modernist political flow and political values in Iran.

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