

Investigation of Class Origin of the Representatives of the Tehran Province in the Eighth and Ninth Terms of Islamic Consultative Assembly¹

Abstract

The social class of political elites mostly affects their political tendencies and approaches. These forces are also influenced by social and political developments within the power arena. Also, political developments in Iran and the prevailing thinking that some political elites have turned away from basic values and principles of the revolution have paved the way for the entry of some elites into the realm of politics who consider themselves to be the bearers of the original revolutionary values, such as simple living and support for the poor. Thus, the present article aims to investigate the class origin of Tehran's representatives of the Islamic Consultative Assembly at this stage of Iranian political history. The case study in this article consists of representatives of the eighth and ninth terms of Tehran's constituency, which amounted to 72 people. Data are gathered via library sources and through electronic note-taking. Research findings suggest that the social background of the representatives in these terms is based on vulnerable and poor classes of society.

Keywords: *Class origin, Representatives of the Islamic Consultative Assembly, Eighth and Ninth Terms, Tehran*

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Introduction

The social class of political elites mostly affects their political tendencies and approaches. These forces are also influenced by social and political developments within the power arena. Also, the establishment of a political agenda in Iran and dominance of the thinking that some political elites have turned away from basic values and principles of the revolution has paved the way for the entry of some elites into the realm of politics who consider themselves to be the bearers of the original revolutionary values, such as simple living and assistance for the poor. It is noteworthy that it is not feasible to understand the nature of social and political developments without regard for the role of the class and arrangement of social forces and the nature of their conflicts as well as interests. Considering the significance of the class discussion in socio-political sociology, this study aims to investigate the background of the representatives of Tehran's constituency in the eighth and ninth terms of the Islamic Consultative Assembly.

Statement of the problem

One of the major subjects in the political power structure is the class origin of political elites. In Iran, the social background of political elites has changed in different courses of history. First, it should be made clear that modernism has changed the living styles of the elites and those who govern the society, with the Iranian bourgeoisie experiencing continuous growth since the late 1940s. However, traditional groups demonstrated

considerable economic and cultural flexibility in the Pahlavi era. Despite this, the market lost its traditional ally, which was clergies who had been restricted by Reza Shah, thus linking with the bearers of nationalistic and bourgeoisie-democratic blocs, which originated from the Constitutional Revolution. The conflict between tradition and modernity that was characterized by the modern social classes (industrial laborers and new middle classes), as well as social groups related to the traditional business and the market, became the center of the social and political turmoil within the authoritarian, but modernist Pahlavi state; thereby resulting in the 1978 Revolution (Torabi Farsani, 2014:186).

With the establishment of the Islamic Revolution, the elites' class origin of different terms was also subjected to an intellectual context within the society. That said, the present study aims to answer the question: What is the class origin of the representatives of the Islamic Consultative Assembly in the eighth and ninth terms? The reason why these two terms were selected is that public discourse has strongly suggested that although the Iranian Islamic Revolution was founded on such principles as simple living and support for the poor, some people, after a couple of decades in the revolution, came to the political arena who had already distanced from the fundamental values of the Islamic Revolution. The incidence of some social and political events as well as tough international sanctions added to the necessity of this debate. Slogans by the assembly's representatives involved justice,

¹ This subject is taken from a doctoral dissertation.

fighting poverty and discrimination, attention to disadvantaged groups of people and the destitute, fighting corruption and managers' luxuriousness, etc. These slogans greatly contributed to the victory of the fundamentalist candidates. In contrast, reformists, in addition to their traditional slogans (political slogans), called for fighting inflation and hikes in prices, which constituted one of their three key slogans. Like fundamentalists, they had directed their focus on social and welfare issues (Darabi, 2009:169,319 and 348).

On the other hand, since a review of the representatives of all provinces requires a macro-level study, this research has been narrowed to the province of Tehran. The reason for the selection of this province is the spatial position and access to data from representatives, which is available on research sites. Moreover, because the province of Tehran covers a large number of representatives based on its population, it can provide more conclusive data concerning research findings. This will make it easier to generalize its findings to a broader society. Thus, the main research question is: What is the class origin of Tehran's representatives of the Islamic Assembly in the eighth and ninth terms?

It is hypothetically stated that Tehran's representatives of the Islamic Assembly in the eighth and ninth terms have come from poor and vulnerable social classes.

Research method

This study uses documentary and library methods to gather data. Thus, note-taking was used to gather all related data. Because the present study deals with the class origin of the representatives of the Tehran province in the eighth and ninth terms of the assembly, the statistical population is limited and definite, and there is no need for sampling. Thus, the statistical sample involves all representatives of the said terms in Tehran. To investigate the documents related to the indices and biographies of Tehran's representatives of the two terms, the researcher visited the Assembly's Research Center Website. Moreover, credible websites and online news agencies were visited to access data.

Theoretical foundations

Many social thinkers, historians, political scholars, and sociologists, among others, have each described their viewpoints on inequality in human societies. In a general categorization, all theories on inequality, groupings, and social classes can be divided into two categories: theories that consider inequality and grouping to be critical, functional, and inevitable, and theories that consider inequality and grouping to be incidental, thus approaching them from a critical point of view. Yet, some scholars have called for eliminating them. There is a third perspective is called in-between or hybrid, which, for Gerhard Lensky, is a modern scientific approach to studying the old issue of social inequality. However, the third

new perspective eventually ends up in one of the two previous perspectives (Adibi, 1975:187).

It is known that the concept of class was attributed a special meaning with the rise of Karl Max. For him, classes refer to groups of people who have a specific performance in the production organization; i.e., they are distinguished from each other based on their special economic position. Meanwhile, political conflicts are also involved in determining these positions. These classes are engaged in a permanent conflict with each other (Abazari & Chavoshian, 2002:7). Generally, there are two broad perspectives about the class: a) the Marx perspective and the Marxism proponents who consider the foundation of the social class to be the ownership or non-ownership of means of production. Consistent with this view, the class that controls the means of production is the ruling class, while the class without those means is the labor class; b) Max Weber's theory. Weber changed Marx's theory on grouping, to some extent, and created a multi-layer meaning of class. For Weber, non-economic differences have roles to play in the formation of classes, in addition to material factors. For Weber, a social class refers to people who share opportunities in market relations; in other words, they have a common purchase, income, and consumption status (Fawz & Ramezani, 2009:4).

Max Weber holds that class ranking characterizes the element of power in the economic arena, suggesting that all people who have similar and equal economic interests and economic authority are thought of as members of the same class. For him, many classes can rise from the market (based on their purchasing power). Moreover, he maintains that class conflict is inescapable. Weber rejects Marx's definition of the class, which describes it to be the holders of production means and those who lack the men (i.e., two types of classes), instead of laying his emphasis on means to acquire economic power. Unlike Marx, Weber did not believe in the victory of the proletariat over the bourgeoisie because he held that socially conflicting classes could find a basis for joint action that may involve some non-economic theses (Malek, 2003:87). Weber maintains although a class may be determined based on economic conditions; more economic factors are involved in the formation of the class compared to what Marx thought; for him, class, basis, and parties also affect the social groupings (Giddens, 2004:224-245).

Another viewpoint is the one put forward by Anthony Giddens. His viewpoint can be regarded as an in-between theory concerning Marx and Weber's theories, for he has adopted elements of their theories. Like Marx and Weber's proponents, he considers ownership over the means of production to be the key factor in the social class of the society. For him, three elements of rights or authority, i.e., property, education, or labor force constitute the main foundation of the triad class

structure, based on which the upper-class rules over the capital, the middle class enjoys the education and skills which are exchanged in the market, and the lower or labor class who just sell their body force. However, one cannot determine a limit between these three classes. Instead of speaking about separate groups, Giddens suggests considering the class structure to be a variable phenomenon that is usually composed of three classes; but that it is a variable construction. For Giddens, construction denotes to what extent classes have, over time and in different places, been characterized and reproduced as certain and distinct social categories; thus, it is reasoned that educational qualifications and properties, as well as the workforce, serve as means of power or main rights which connect the economy and the resulting classes; in other words, educational qualifications and properties (assets) are intermediaries between the economy and classes (i.e., play the intermediary role between the economy and classes). In societies or conditions where these three intermediate agents are not usually incorporated into a profession or specific position, the classes will be more distinguished or uncertain. Giddens introduced three major factors that will make clear or ambiguous the boundaries between the three mentioned classes. The first factor pertains to dividing the workforce at the workplace. For example, in some societies, so-called trained and skillful hand force and non-hand force are separated and perform certain distinguished duties. In this situation, the gap between the labor and middle classes is strengthened, thus, increasing class construction (Greb, 2002:208-232).

Some other sociologists have considered specific criteria for classes and class distinctions. For example, C. Wright Mills has taken into account three criteria of property, income, and source of income (profession) as well as position or prestige for the identification of the new middle class in the United States. For him, the new middle class, like the labor salary-taking class, lacks property (ownership). However, it is an in-between class between the labor and capitalist classes from professional income and prestige (Ebrahimi, 1999:31). Martin Lipset also distinguished the new middle class with the elements of the intelligentsia. For him, intelligentsia refers to those who create or produce, and apply culture. He explains that culture is meant coded and implicit forces, including arts, sciences, and religions. These forces are, by themselves, divided into three categories: the first group takes center stage, creates the culture, and includes scholars, artists, philosophes, and authors. The second group is intermediaries of culture such as press managers and journalists. The third group is those for whom culture is an integral part of their professions, such as the free profession of the middle class, like physicians, lawyers, etc. (Ibid:34).

Scholars maintain that to determine social position and status, efficacy, rationalism, and analysis, modernity, democracy, and non-affiliation with upper and lower classes characterize the middle class, in addition to economic position. In the 20th century, the term middle class referred to “white-collar employees or laborers) that involved a wide spectrum of physicians, accountants, lawyers, judges, and academics, as well as people who took conventional or semi-specialized professions such as employees, office workers, and service or administrative professionals (Nozari, 2003:5).

In sum, even though Marx is the most prominent theorist of social force of the class, Marxist theories, which reduce social and political forces to their social positions, cannot be employed in Iranian political sociology; for example, the new middle class cannot be defined nor explained based on economic origin. The members of this class have various social positions and statuses that do not simply imply their economic conditions; rather, they are characterized by professional, cultural, and administrative as well as economic conditions. For many scholars, Max Weber’s social grouping model is found to be more effective and feasible for the class structure of Iran. It is noteworthy that some argue that there are no social classes in Iran. For example, Katouzian maintains social classes, and their relations in Iranian history have been different from those of Europeans because of what he calls its “short-term” nature (Katuzian, 2001:7).

Simply put, Katouzian does not see a sample social class conceived of the European Society for Iranian history; as a result, in the absence of a social class, he considers the government in Iranian history as a main agent or functionary and in the meantime, as a structure lacking class basis. For him, although social classes have always existed in Iran (including landowners, traders, etc.), the Iranian society has not resembled the European society as it is known (Katouzian, 2001:7). That said, consistent with the Katouzian words, lack of private ownership and social classes in Iranian history are the major indices of the Iranian social structure.

Social structure in Iran after the Islamic Revolution

Post-revolution developments reveal the significance of Weber’s views concerning social prestige to explain inequalities; on the one hand, Marx’s emphasis on the economy (private ownership) and on conflict along with the adoption of labor division, and Weber’s status class, on the other hand, can be effective in explaining social groupings in Iran. The significance of Weber’s theory in introducing power and authority leads us to provide the theoretical framework to explain social groupings in Iran and to look at the way authority is employed in the nation. Following the Islamic Revolution, policies by two presidential terms led by Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani affected the social grouping developments in Iran. The late 80s saw new developments in terms of class

gaps in Iran. Hashemi Rafsanjani's liberal policies and the precedence of economic development over cultural and political development, together with the precedence of economic freedom over economic justice, disrupted the class balance and founded a new class in the country (Darabi, 2014:260-262).

For scholars, some developments helped create a new economic middle class that replaced the upper class in Iranian society. Before the revolution, landowners, senators, ministers, and managers of the Pahlavi era were in the premium rank, while from the beginning of the revolution until the end of the war with Iraq, market and businesspeople held the upper position (Zibakalam, 2010:66-67).

After the Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani government took office, the interests of the new middle class expanded due to the economic development and relative social mobility that took place during this term. These interests were mostly centered around the political field and involved participation in political affairs, freedom of expression, criticism, and the rule of law. Thus, Hashemi Rafsanjani's economic development policy helped expand higher education and the new intellectual population, which resulted in the formation of a new middle class (Darabi, 2015: 15).

Encouragement to investment and welcoming of educated managers and academics in an economic-oriented climate after the war paved the way for the development of modern forces. The government's educational policies and expansion of private and semi-private universities also helped establish a new group of intelligentsia and students who outnumbered those of the pre-revolution era. Hashemi Rafsanjani's eight-year presidential term was the time when the middle class rose; however, despite the gradual growth of this class, the government did not pay much attention to their demands and ideals, as the insider-outside policy led them to get separated from the system. Part of the modern forces which were affiliated with the middle class was integrated into the system to reduce the traditional and ideological face of the government in the form of modern groups. Construction functionary groups rose from the middle class, which was established following the revolution. This class was born into the system in 1994. This class included the revolutionary masses that used economic and educational opportunities provided by the revolution to join the new middle class. The economy was their main slogan, as they were ready to even relinquish some revolutionary slogans to achieve it. Over time, part of this group began to learn about the economic problems in a closed political system and called for a political expansion to be added to their agenda. This group cautiously confronted traditional conservatives, though they were incapable of separating from the political construction. In the social context, however, most of the modern middle class were thinking beyond the existing

framework. In May 1997, they got the opportunity to demonstrate themselves. On May 2, the presence of the new middle class and traditional segments of the classes was less conspicuous. After May 2, they had more opportunities to get into work in the system and saw an upward trend in society (Eraghi, 2007).

In sum, economic development and social modernity paved the way for the formation and perfection of a new middle class. It should be reminded that even though Hashemi Rafsanjani's government helped facilitate the growth of the new middle class, his policies on expanding economic development and security in investment, on the one hand, and the absence of political participation freedoms for the educated groups and removal of the political elites from the system, on the other hand, led to the defeat of Rafsanjani and victory of the next government led by Khatami whose slogan was centered around opening the political arena both domestically and abroad. From 1997 to 2005, it was the new or urban middle class of Iran that took center stage. From intelligentsia to middle-class parties and from journalists to technocrats in ministries and departments, power was in the hands of Iran's new and urban middle class. In the 2005 presidential election, however, the lower class of the society used around 11 million votes in the first round of the election to demonstrate its presence in the Iranian political scene, this time without unity with the middle class (Darabi, 2009).

Just as in the 1997 elections, the lower and new classes tended to Seyed Mohammad Khatami as a part of the upper class; the 2005 elections saw the middle class separating from the lower class. Based on its political and religious tendencies, the middle class cast its ballots for the fourth candidate basket, as the lower class saw the slogan of social justice in the second presidential election debates. In the runoff voting of the 2005 presidential elections, there was a competition between the upper class and middle class against the lower class. This time around, the middle class joined the upper class, which was opposite to 1997, when it did not support the lower class. The outcome indicated the significance of the role of the lower class. In the 2005 elections, the economic gap was regarded as a basis for the election competition, and it was natural that the then-powerful middle class, following the eight-year war, had no interest in granting economic benefits to the lower class. However, the year 1997 saw an economic-political gap. This year was a time for the unity of these two classes to protest the existing situation, with the revolutionary middle class in 1997 becoming a conservative middle class in 2005. Between the revolution and conservatism is a distance between the upper class and lower class. If the upper class of the society is thought of as the proponents of preserving the status quo and the lower class as the opposite of the status quo, the middle class could vary like a pendulum in this connection; when it gets

undermined, the middle class turns to the lower class to help it achieve power; however, when it enjoys authority, it supports the upper class to continue its economic and political life. This is the stance adopted by urban, middle-class people. Before 2005, the path to power could be taken through unity with the upper class or part of the upper class (Niakouei, 2014:220-223).

In this connection, to take office, Ahmadinejad began to remove the middle class from the political equation. This removal was neither meant to marginalize the middle class nor to regard them as a “secondary priority.” Following the May 2010 elections, the class grouping was suddenly disrupted. The middle class did not meet its political demands and had its coalition with the upper class against the lower class defeated for the second time. In the meantime, the joint demands of this class led to their integration for the 11th presidential elections of 2013 and the 10th Islamic Consultative Assembly of 2015.

Grouping of representatives of the Islamic Consultative Assembly in the eighth and ninth terms of the Tehran Province

To investigate the class origin of the representatives of the said terms, these representatives are introduced, and their slogans are examined.

Representatives of the eighth term of the assembly are as follow:

Fatemeh Ajrlou, Morteza Aghatehrani, Fatemeh Alia, Laleh Eftekhari, Zohreh Elahyan, Aziz Akbarian, Seyed Reza Akrami, Mohammad Reza Bahonar, Assadollah Badamchian, Farhad Bashiri, Ahmad Tavakoli, Gholam Ali Haddad Adel, Ruhollah Hosseinian, Shahrokh Ramin, Hamid Rasaei Ali Asghar Zarei, Alireza Zakani, Parviz Sarvari, Seyed Shahab-ud-Din Sadr, Tayebeh Safaei, Ali Abbaspour Tehrani-Fard, Hassan Ghafouri-Fard, Hossein Fadaei, Hamidreza Katozian, Mohammad Ismail Kosari, Mehdi Kouchakzadeh, Hossein Grossi, Alireza Mojabah, Alireza Mojabeh, Elias Naderan, Hossein Nejabat, Bijan Nobaveh, Hassan Norouzi, Seyed Hossein Naghavi Hosseini and Mohammad Hossein Nejad Fallah.

Representatives of the ninth term of the assembly are as follow:

Seyed Hossein Naghavi Hosseini, Hossein Grossi, Farhad Bashiri, Gholam Ali Haddad Adel, Seyed Alireza Marandi, Morteza Aghatehrani, Bijan Nobaveh Watan, Ismail Kawsari, Ahmad Tavakoli, Ali Motahari, Mohammad Reza Bahonar, Ali Asghar Zarei, Fatemeh Rahbani, Alireza Zakani Mehdi Kouchakzadeh, Laleh Eftekhari, Hamid Rasaei, Elias Naderan, Alireza Mahjoub, Hossein Nejabat, Gholamreza Mesbahi Moghaddam, Seyed Mohammad Hassan Abutorabi Fard, Seyed Massoud Mirkazemi, Ebrahim Neko, Seyed Mahmoud

Nabaviyan, Seyed Mehdi Tabarmani, Seyed Mehdi Hashemizaz Bazrpash and Hossein Tala.

A look at the most important slogans of the members of the Islamic Consultative Assembly in the eighth and ninth terms can reveal the prevailing social and intellectual concerns of the representatives of these terms.

Campaign slogans of Tehran’s representatives on the eight and ninth of the Islamic Consultative Assembly

A review of campaign slogans of the assembly’s representatives suggests that although they are based on social issues, they can help put forward issues that take precedence in the country. In addition, the social origin and class of the representatives can be effective in selecting slogans or following social and popular issues.

For functionalists, the socialization and living style of each individual greatly contribute to his/her personality and adoption of decisions in the future. Constructs are effective, albeit non-evident, factors that have formed over time as a result of social relations. In other words, people in their own lives are affected by the socialization process and political socialization in the form of special constructs. It is through these constructs, which have formed over time, that these constructs have a great impact on people’s behavior (Ayouzi, 2005:49). Accordingly, various factors can affect the elites’ political decision-making process. Thus, campaign content and its slogans are examined. From a content perspective, the campaigns of the eighth term of the Islamic Consultative Assembly took various respects:

Campaign with cultural characteristics: This type of campaign was launched with the use of national religious and scientific symbols to stimulate ethnic, religious, and national sentiments. These campaigns were sometimes employed as texts in fliers and brochures. The use of Iran’s three-color flags, the image of the Persepolis, and other ancient sites as national symbols on the edges of the fliers, brochures, and even weblogs are some other examples. Some of the groups also used the poems “I shall not live without Iran” or “Do not fear, haste.”

Campaign with economic and welfare characteristics: One of the major slogans of this term of elections was aimed at tackling economic and social problems. In this case, representatives made promises which sounded impractical. Some of these promises included granting marriage loans to the youth for up to 5000 dollars, creation of general employment, payment for students, etc.

Here, a campaign involving recreation and entertainment and a campaign involving benevolence and public services were also included in these campaigns (Iran paper, 2008:3). These

terms were characterized by such slogans as “containing inflation and creating economic prosperity,” “confronting wrong ideologies and defending the Imam’s views,” and “improving Iran’s dignity and status in the international arena.” In this term, the United Front of Fundamentalists entered the electoral competition with four slogans “do not fear, haste, the endeavor is the solution,” “effective and sympathetic representative,” “national authority, moderation and progress,” and “fighting inflation, employment, and welfare.” The electoral competitions in the ninth assembly were the scene of confrontation between the fundamentalists and a small presence of reformists. The United Front of Fundamentalists entered the competition with the slogan "Spirituality and rationality, justice and progress in the shadow of the Velayat." The Resistance Front, which was an offshoot of the fundamentalists, had no slogan. It just had a slogan which was "May God help us be steadfast in serving the people." The "Voice of the Nation" electoral list, which considered itself the critic of the government and was also another offshoot of the fundamentalists, also chose the slogan

Table 1: Education level

| Education | Eighth term | Ninth term | Total |
|-------------------------|-------------|------------|-------|
| Seminary | 3 | 4 | 7 |
| Diploma | - | - | - |
| Associate’s | - | - | - |
| B.A. | 1 | 1 | 2 |
| M.A. | 9 | 7 | 16 |
| PhD | 21 | 20 | 41 |
| Physicians/nurses, etc. | 3 | 3 | 6 |
| Unknown | - | - | - |
| | | | 72 |

As stated, the overall number of eighth and ninth terms of Tehran’s constituency amounted to 72 people. Consistent with the table, of the total of 72 representatives, seven held seminary-related degrees, three of whom were in the eighth and four in the ninth term. Also, two representatives held the B.A. degree, one in the eighth and one in the ninth term. Out of the total of 72 people, 16 held M.A. degrees, nine of whom were in the eighth and seven in the ninth term. Forty-one

Table 2: Gender

| Gender | Eighth | Ninth | Total |
|--------|--------|-------|-------|
| Woman | 6 | 4 | 10 |
| Man | 32 | 30 | 62 |

Consistent to the table, out of the 72 representatives, 62 were males, and another ten were females. Out of this, six women

Table 3: Birthplace

"Respect for the law, the rights of the nation, and freedom of expression." Some reformist groups, which had representatives in the eighth assembly, came to the scene with the slogan "The ideals of the revolution should not be forgotten" (Tabnak, 2015).

Class origin of the representatives of Tehran province in the eighth and ninth terms of the assembly using research variables

As stated above, campaigns and slogans can, to some extent, reveal the candidates' social concerns; these concerns can indicate the social origins of the representatives; however, this category does not provide a reason to determine their class position. For this, such variables as education level, occupation of the representatives, the occupation of their fathers, places of residence, etc., have been taken into account to determine the class origin of the representatives of Tehran province in the Islamic Consultative Assembly in the eighth and ninth terms. These variables are discussed below.

people held Ph.D. degrees, twenty-one of whom were in the eighth and twenty ones in the ninth terms. Also, six representatives in those two terms held physician ranks, three of who were in the eighth and another three in the ninth term. In table 1.

and 32 men were in the eighth and four women and 30 men in the ninth terms. In table 2.

| | Eighth terms | Ninth term | Total |
|--------------------|---------------------|-------------------|--------------|
| East Azarbaijan | 1 | 1 | 2 |
| Western Azerbaijan | 1 | - | 1 |
| Tehran | 20 | 17 | 37 |
| Mazandaran | 1 | 1 | 2 |
| Kerman | 1 | 1 | 2 |
| Hamedan | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| Esfahan | 2 | 2 | 4 |
| Khorasan | 2 | 1 | 3 |
| Alborz | 2 | 1 | 3 |
| Fars | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| Semnan | 3 | 2 | 5 |
| Kurdistan | 1 | 1 | 2 |
| Kerman | 1 | 1 | 2 |
| Kermanshah | 1 | - | 1 |
| Qom | - | 1 | 1 |
| Unknown | - | - | - |

According to the table 3, out of the 72 representatives, 37 were born in Tehran, while the rest were born in other provinces such as Hamedan, East Azerbaijan, West Azerbaijan, Mazandaran, Esfahan, Semnan, Qom, and Fars.

Table 4: Place of birth by city and village

| | Eighth term | Ninth term | Total |
|---------|--------------------|-------------------|--------------|
| City | 36 | 32 | 68 |
| Village | 2 | 2 | 4 |

According to the table 4, out of the 72 representatives, 68 were born in cities, while four ones in villages.

Table 5: Occupation

| Occupation | Eighth term | Ninth term | Total |
|---|--------------------|-------------------|--------------|
| Faculty members and academic professors | 18 | 14 | 32 |
| Physicians | 3 | 1 | 4 |
| Clergy | 3 | 4 | 7 |
| Market and business people | - | - | - |
| Teachers | - | 1 | 1 |
| Employees, office workers | 12 | 13 | 25 |
| Service members | 2 | 1 | 3 |
| Unknown | - | - | - |

In political sociology, peoples' occupational positions are the most important parameters which reveal which social or class origin they come from. Occupations and income sources help determine social positions. This subject is important in that each people's occupation determines his/her income level and lifestyle. In other words, a review of peoples' occupations shows which social class they belong to. In addition, each people's occupation affects his/her awareness of various social affairs and political decisions (Ayuzi et al. 2010:65-66). As suggested by the significance of the variable of occupation in the above table and the occupational position of the representative's understudy, it should be suggested that the main occupation of the representatives before assuming office were considered, which is apart from positions people held in the years before and after representation in the assembly. People's main occupation could determine their levels of income.

Accordingly table 5&6, out of the 72 representatives, 32 people held academic professions (e.g., faculty members, professors, etc.), eighteen of whom were in the eighth and fourteen were in the ninth term. Four representatives were physicians, three of whom were in the eighth and one in the ninth term. Also, seven people were clergies, three of whom were in the eighth and four in the ninth term. Of the total representatives, one of them was a teacher. In the meantime, 25 people were office employees and workers in ministries and state entities, out of whom twelve people were in the eighth and thirteen in the ninth terms. Also, three people held military positions, where two were in the eighth and one in the ninth terms.

Table 6: Father occupation

| Father's occupation | Eighth term | Ninth term | Total |
|---|-------------|------------|-------|
| Teacher | 1 | 1 | 2 |
| Physician and pharmacist | 2 | 2 | 4 |
| Clergies | 1 | 1 | 2 |
| Market and businessmen | 3 | 2 | 5 |
| Worker (e.g., farmer, rancher, baker, glass-maker, grocer, driver, builder, etc.) | 20 | 17 | 37 |
| Employee | 1 | 1 | 2 |
| Athlete, referee of international competitions | 1 | 1 | 2 |
| Unknown | 9 | 9 | 18 |

Father's occupation is also a major variable in determining the class origin of the representatives. In other words, the father's occupation is critical in determining the social class of the elites. Father's occupation usually determines the family's income level and living standards (Azghandi, 2006:167). Thus, one would say that the individual's living styles in different life stages, especially in childhood, teenage, and youth stages, are based on the father's occupation. The enjoyment of great life conditions with welfare facilities against low and medium life conditions will have specific impacts on the individual's beliefs, and these beliefs can also influence the decision-making process. As the table indicates, out of the 72 representatives, 37 had fathers with a working background, i.e., professions such as bakery, glass-making, farming, ranching, and building, among others. Out of this number, twenty representatives were in the eighth and seventeen in the ninth terms. This number accounted for the highest number of professions in the said terms. In the meantime, 18 people had fathers whose working status was unknown, whereas nine people were in the eighth and nine more in the ninth terms. Of course, some fathers held such professions as teachers, physicians, pharmacists, clergies, businesses, employees and athletes, or even referees of international competitions. In this regard, two fathers were teachers, 4 were physicians, 2 were clergies, 5 were business people, 2 were employees, and 2 were athletes or referees of international competitions. The above

variable indicates that most representatives had a labor class origin, with the remaining ones belonging to middle or middle-lower classes such as clergies, employees, and teachers. A few fathers also held business jobs.

Table 7: Social background of representatives of the eighth and ninth terms of the Islamic Consultative Assembly

| Social and economic background | Eighth term | Ninth term | Total |
|--------------------------------|-------------|------------|-------|
| Poor and vulnerable class | 20 | 17 | 37 |
| Lower class | 3 | 3 | 6 |
| Upper-intermediate | 6 | 5 | 11 |
| Upper class | - | - | - |
| Unknown | 9 | 9 | 18 |

According to the table7, out of the 72 representatives, 37 were from the poor class, six were from the lower-intermediate class, 11 were from the upper-intermediate class, and no one was from the upper class. A review of the lives of the Islamic Consultative Assembly's representatives indicated that some of them were from lower areas of the city and were born in villages. A review of the representatives' fathers' occupations, such professions as guards of the Imam Khomeini House, stone cutter, shop owner, farmer, tailor, clergies, employees, grocer, truck driver, and laborer were noted. The representatives whose fathers' occupations were unclear admitted that they had spent their lives in poverty and destitution. Most representatives emphasized simple living conditions. For example, such phrases as "living in an 11-meter room and contentment" (Jahan News, 2010)⁴, "studying with hardship, working along with studying" (Tasnim News Agency, 2018)⁵, and "living in populous families with the bad economic situation; living in old and lower areas of the city," "making money from selling items at a grocery, unemployment, spending childhood in lower-class families" (Khabar Online, 2020)⁶, "Working in various printing centers" (Asr Shahrvand, 2019)⁷, "baking bread for warriors of the war in the village furnace" (Bultannews, 2019)⁸, etc. are all examples of lower-intermediate class lifestyles that pertained to weak and poor groups of people.

One Of the representatives has written in his biography: "My father was unemployed for one or two years. He went to work

⁴ Jahannews.com/analysis

⁵ <https://www.tasnimnews.com/fa/news/1397/12/03/1953391>

⁶ <https://www.khabaronline.ir/news/1396496>

⁷ 2019. <https://asrshahrvand.com/?p=46192>

⁸ <https://www.bultannews.com/fa/news/654888>

for a shop owner in the village until he passed away in 1993”⁹. Another representative wrote: “My mother was a tailor and used to sew at home. My mother had to work when my father had lost his job”¹⁰ (Etemd Online, 2017). Another one is quoted as saying: “I had to work as a driver along with continuing my studies and taking responsibility of the university Basij”¹¹ (Mehr News Agency, 2013). Another representative writes in his biography suggests: “I was born in an employee and middle-class family. I spent parts of my life in adolescence with my father when he had been exiled for not cooperating with the Shah regime, along with the great scholars¹²” (Asre Iran, 2011). Another one reported: “I was born to a religious family. Used to work with my father as a farmer¹³” (Donyay-e-Eghtesad, 2017). Another representative said: “He was a member of a religious family who was a baker” (Rajaneews, 2019)¹⁴.

It is concluded from above that following the Islamic Revolution, considering developments in the values of the Islamic Revolution, i.e., shifts towards simple lives and support for the poor, the opportunity for the development of the lower classes of society to enter the social and political arenas was provided. A review of the lives of the representatives also showed that a large number of members of the Islamic Consultative Assembly for the eighth and ninth assemblies had come from the lower classes of the society.

Discussion and Conclusion

Various theories have been offered for the review of social classes and relevant groupings. Some of these theories emphasize economics to group social classes. Some others measure prestige, status, and social position. None of them alone, however, account for the analysis of the class arrangement in Iran. Thus, this study raised such variables as occupation (economic variable), gender, living pace, education (social status), etc., to examine the class origin of the Islamic Consultative Assembly’s representatives in the eighth and ninth terms. To determine the class origin of the representatives of the assembly, education, representatives, and their fathers’ occupations, as well as their residence, were discussed. Findings revealed that representatives of the Tehran constituency in the two terms totaled 72 people. Out of whom, 41 people had doctoral degrees. Only two people had Bachelor’s degrees, and 16 held Master’s degrees. The rest held medical or ministerial ranks.

Also, 68 representatives were born in the city, while four were in villages. It is noteworthy that the representatives who had

cited their living places in cities stated that they had come from lower areas of the city.

Another variable was the occupation of the representatives. Their occupational status indicated that most of them were faculty members and employees or office workers. In the meantime, the fathers of the representatives held common jobs like farming, teaching, ranching, and building. Some of whom were physicians, laborers, and business owners. Out of the 72 representatives, 37 had fathers with a working background, i.e., professions such as bakery, glass-making, farming, ranching, and building, among others. Out of this number, twenty representatives were in the eighth and seventeen in the ninth terms.

In sum, a review of the indicators suggested that most of the representatives were from the poor and vulnerable groups of the community. Some were from the lower-intermediate class, while no representatives had come from the upper class. Thus, since most representatives are from poor and vulnerable groups of people, the hypothesis stating that the representatives of the eighth and ninth terms were from poor and vulnerable groups can be supported.

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Conflict of interest

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Ethics Statement

All Permissions to conducting this research has been approved.

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⁹ <https://www.khabaronline.ir/news/1396496>

¹⁰ <https://etemadonline.com/content/139723>

¹¹ <https://www.mehrnews.com/news/2189871>

¹² <https://www.asriran.com/fa/news/202313>

¹³ [https://donya-e-eqtesad.com3307846/986-62 8%](https://donya-e-eqtesad.com3307846/986-62%80)

¹⁴ <http://www.rajanews.com/news/319509>

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