

Red Herring Innovation: Twelve Paradoxes of Innovation Ecosystem in a Closed Society

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Abstract : In Iran as well as other developing countries instituting innovation and entrepreneurship ecosystems by government around the universities is the new imported fashion of modernization and development in the 21st century. In recent decade various statesmen, policy makers, university administrations, economists and development theorists are emphasizing excitingly about the new “start-ups” which are going to solve all economic problems and backwardness of the country. However, critical study of modernization practices in Iran implies that this new trend is suffering from conventional deficiency of modernization planning in 20th century. This article is going to depict the misunderstandings of a situation which we can name “Pseudo-innovation in a closed society” by presenting these 12 paradoxes of this new system, actually happening in Iran: (1) Innovation without freedom? Fiction of innovation in a patriarchal state (2) Entrepreneurship without free market? Fiction of entrepreneurship in a rentier-state. (3) Ecosystem or a state-glasshouse? Is it possible to make and plan an innovation? (4) Innovation; epistemic or practical? How academic innovation could happen abstractly out of context? (5) Risk and Lucre: innovation to protect power and property?! (6) Silicon-valley mirage: what is in common between American-Iranian polity? (7) Information or Communication? ICT startups to restrict the internet (8) The elite paradox: new proletariat of private sector, new governmental clerk or a new path of brain drain? (9) Innovation or commercialization? Revisiting Schumpeterian creative destruction (10) The friendship of Jungle and fire: paradox of public science and market (11) Innovation and revolution: top-down or bottom-up paradox in an Iranian experience (12) Technology instead of civil society: ultimate result of innovation in a closed society. Through explaining these paradoxes we can gradually penetrate the real rationality of Pseudo-innovation ecosystem in a closed society, which can be understood as new-Neopatriarchy reconstruction of traditional patriarchal politics, economy and culture in Iran.

Keywords : innovation, critical sociology, modernisation, Iran, closed society

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