

Iranian Intellectuals, Localism, Globalization and the Challenge of Rebuilding National Identity

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Abstract : Since the inception of intellectual movements in Iran, Iranian thinkers have perennially found themselves at the crossroads of indigenous traditionalism and Western orientation. On the one hand, supporters of indigenous thinking have emphasized the defense of cultural, national, and religious values. On the other hand, Western-leaning intellectuals, often derogatorily labeled as 'Westoxication' by their indigenous counterparts, have been inclined towards embracing non-indigenous ideas and ideologies, primarily of Western origin. In this historical context, the dualistic nature of Iranian intellectuals, evolving amidst the era of globalization and its swift advancements in communication, has not only retained its inherent character but has evolved into a broader duality that can be identified as 'Iranian-Cosmopolitan'. In this duality, both in its classical form of indigenous-Western and its contemporary manifestation as Iranian-Cosmopolitan, the Iranian national identity has consistently been a significant part of intellectual discussions. While critically examining this dualism through a historical lens and drawing upon the theories of Anthony Smith, a historical sociologist and British theorist of nationalism, this article delves into the importance of aligning national identity with the prevailing societal transformations, especially globalization. It underscores that Iranian intellectuals, to national identity reconstruction in the present age, will find no solution other than discarding this dualism and reconstructing national identity within a global framework.

Keywords : Iran, Iranian intellectuals, globalization, localism, national identity, cosmopolitan

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