

Controversy over the concept ‘freedom’ during the Iranian constitutional revolution (1906– 09)

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Abstract

The Iranian constitutional revolution of 1906–09 paved the way for the establishment of new administrative institutions, adopting modern ideas and the hegemony of new political discourse over the archaic political reasoning. One of the most important aspects of the new discourse was the definition and internalization of modern concepts. This paper holds the view that the concept ‘freedom’ brought about a complicated problem for the socio-political sphere in the course of the Iranian revolution and, as such, deserves a thorough examination. Previous studies on the subject have usually neglected this aspect. Yet, this was exactly the main domain of the clash between traditionalism and modernity during the revolutionary years and brought about far-reaching results for Iranian society. This article attempts to contribute to this field by examining a number of Iranian journals of the period in order to evaluate their understanding of the concept ‘freedom’ and show the discrepancy between the constitutionalist and non-constitutionalist discourses.