

To Be A Constitutional Revolution:

THE IRANIAN CONSTITUTIONAL MOVEMENT OF 1906-1907 AND ITS
FAILURE TO BECOME A CONSTITUTIONAL REVOLUTION

Iranian Constitutional Movement

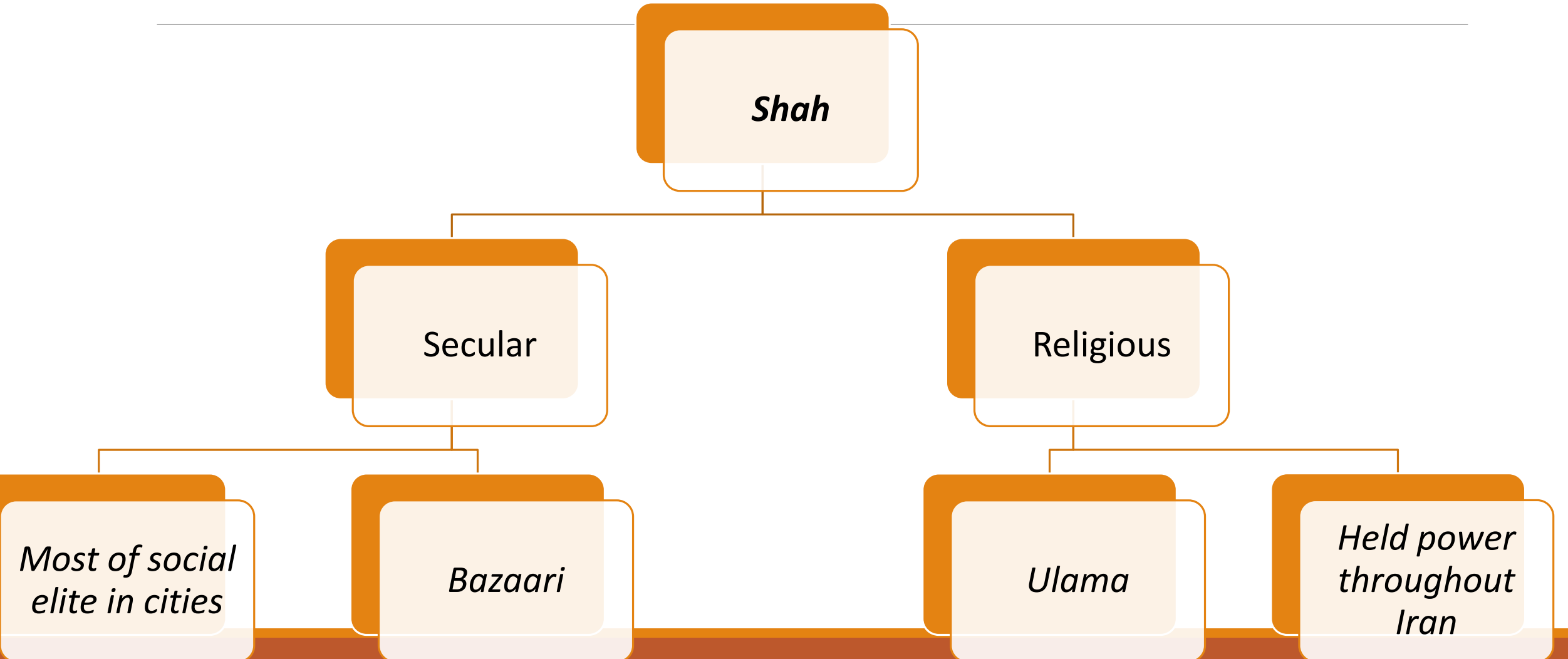
Thesis:

Though the Iranian Constitutional Movement of 1906-1907 did manage to create a constitution it cannot be considered a Constitutional Revolution because of its lack of secularization of the government.

What is a Constitutional Revolution?

- Jack Goldstone's definition
 - Constitutional revolutions come out of Enlightenment thinking
 - Remove divine authority and allowing reason to dictate government
- Gary Jacobsohn's definition
 - A governing set of rules and principles establishing a constitutional order based on a revolution that has over turned a previous order.
- Overall
 - A constitutional revolution establishes a set governing set of rules and principles with power derived from the constitutional body and not religion.

Social Structure of Iran



Background

- Mozaffar ad-Din Shah
 - Shah of Iran from 1896 to 1907
 - Absolute monarch
 - Absent and financially irresponsible



<http://www.ir-psri.com/>

- Social Elites
 - Schooled in Europe
 - Radical notion of Constitutionalism
 - Spread ideas through *bast*

Constitution and Assembly 1906

- Tensions mounting
 - Social Elite call for National Consultative Assembly - majlis
 - *Ulama* not interested in constitution
 - Will not follow Islamic law – *shari'a*
 - Political infighting → botched Constitution



Supplementary Fundamental Law 1907

- The second attempt at a constitution
 - It articles attempt to fix the issue of *shari'a* law
- Radical elite squared off with conservative *ulama*
 - Lost moderate elite
- The main issue: *Shari'a* law
 - Constitution grant the freedom of religion
 - Make all citizens before the law
 - Radicals wished to see the removal of Islamic law
 - *Ulama* final push
 - Amendment calling for the shah to uphold the legislature, which must be within Islamic law

Conclusion

The Goal:

- Secularize the government
- Reign in the shah
- Establish a constitutional government

The Result:

- Creation of the National Consultative Assembly
 - Representative government
 - Wrote constitution
- The reaffirmation of *shari'a* law within the government
- Not a constitutional revolution