

Insights Beyond the Revolution of Iran: A Review of Moral and Philosophical Values in the Political Realm of Imam Ayatollah Khomeini

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Abstract

The Islamic Revolution in Iran serves as a notable example of the erosion of moral values and political ethics. This study aims to assess the effectiveness of Imam Khomeini's concept of *Wilāyah al-Faqīh* in relation to the moral philosophy that underpins a nation. The research primarily employs library sources and utilizes a descriptive analysis method. The primary data consists of Imam Khomeini's thoughts on *Wilāyah al-Faqīh*, as articulated in his work *Hukumat-e Islami: Velayat-e Faqih*. Secondary data is drawn from his other writings, such as *Islam and Revolution: Islamic Government* along with additional relevant literature. The data collection process involves several steps: identifying literature that discusses Imam Khomeini's thought, reading and concentrating on his ideas, noting key points, and seeking other pertinent references. The data analysis employs content analysis and hermeneutic models, which are conducted in three main stages: data reduction, presentation, and conclusion drawing. The findings of this research uncover a profound relationship between Islamic political ethics and Imam Khomeini's concept of *Wilāyah al-Faqīh*. In a government based on *Wilāyah al-Faqīh*, there is no separation between religion and politics, as both realms share the common objective of establishing a just society rooted in God's law. For Imam Khomeini, politics is an extension of ethics, whereby ethics encompasses both individual conduct and social responsibilities.

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INTRODUCTION

The transformative wave of modernization impacts every facet of people's lives. Its influence is evident in various areas, including the economic, social, cultural, and media landscapes, as well as in our modes of thinking (Mihret et al., 2020). A society cannot flourish without established norms and ethical standards. In contemporary society, these norms and ethics are crucial for ensuring orderly functioning. Currently, numerous countries are grappling with crises in economics, security, and politics. These challenges often originate from a moral crisis among the nation's leaders, which subsequently leads to the moral deterioration of the populace. This underscores the continuous relevance of studying ethics (Naibin, 2020). Political morals will affect the foundation of a nation. Politics should be dedicated to the welfare of society, not to undermine the foundation of a nation built on morality and unity (Sutrisno et al., 2019). In this dimension, through moral philosophy, ethics will provide guidance on how a leader should act.

The world was taken aback when a man who devoted himself to teaching and studying religion sparked a political movement that resulted in the overthrow of the despotic ruler of Iran, known as the land of the mullahs (Bjorvatn & Selvik, 2008). Politicians, world leaders, and political analysts alike were astonished when the long-standing Pahlavi dynasty was dismantled by a

revolution led by the Quranic teacher Imam Khomeini in 1979. The Iranian Revolution is often regarded as the third most significant revolution in history, following the French and Bolshevik revolutions (Wafi, 2021). There is a clear distinction between the Iranian Revolution and the French and Bolshevik revolutions. The Iranian Revolution was rooted in religious teachings, while the latter two were founded on principles of humanism and socialist-communism. The success of the Iranian Islamic Revolution has given rise to various theories and studies related to Islamic politics. In the view of Imam Khomeini, religion and politics are inherently intertwined. Thus, the Iranian Islamic Revolution seems to challenge the widely accepted notion of the separation of religion and politics, a concept endorsed by many intellectuals, both Muslim and non-Muslim.

Iran's Islamic Revolution was not only a major change in Iran's history, but also an important moment for the people of Islamic countries and even for the people of the third world (Sujati, 2019). The Iranian Revolution, also known as the Islamic Revolution '*inqilāb islamī*'. It is called the 'Islamic Revolution' because it changed the face of Iran from a monarchy under Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlevi, to an Islamic Republic led by Ayatollah Ruhullah Khomeini. Khomeini was the leader of the revolution and the founder of the Islamic Republic of Iran. Although many view Iran as undemocratic, it is actually a very democratic country with its own peculiarities (Amran, 2009). At first glance, it does not seem democratic, because the word Islam is embedded in its name, the Islamic Republic of Iran. This view arises from the stereotype that Islam is incompatible with democracy, although many examples show that Islamic values can support democratic practices.

Imam Khomeini was a ulema who regarded Islam as a faith dedicated to social and political advancement. He strongly believed in the necessity of freeing both Islam and Iran from the influences of Western and Eastern colonialism. Khomeini emphasized that the clergy has a responsibility not only to the people of Iran but also to the hungry and oppressed across the globe. He was convinced that Islam encompasses a political dimension; without this understanding, he deemed religion to be little more than "nonsense" (Karnen, 2015). Since the 1979 Islamic revolution led by Ayatollah Khomeini, Iran has carved a new history in its political history, becoming an Islamic Republic with the *Wilāyah al-Faqīh* system as its system of government. In terms of politics, Iran displays a distinctive style in Islamic thought and political system with the leadership of the State held by the clerics (mullah). The *Wilāyah al-Faqīh* system is the political *ijtihad* of Ayatollah Khomeini which is based on the doctrine of *Imāmah* in Shia (Abd, 2015).

There are several previous studies similar to the research being conducted. First, the study conducted by Sansan Muhammad (2022). This study aims to present the main discussion of the concept of the state according to Ayatollah Khomeini and to analyze Islamic political philosophy in relation to Imam Ayatollah Khomeini's thoughts. Second, the study conducted by Rofiki (2022), aims to elaborate on the concept of Imam Khomeini's *Wilāyah al-Faqīh* leadership and its application up to the present day, particularly in Iran, a Shia-based country. Third, the study conducted by Budi Harianto and Nurul Syalafiyah (2022), aims to discuss Imam Khomeini's thoughts within the constellation of Islamic politics after the Iranian Revolution. Fourth, the study conducted by Hasan Bisri (2018), aims to trace the influence of Imam Khomeini's *Wilāyah al-Faqīh* concept on contemporary Islamic thought in Indonesia. Fifth, the study conducted by Vuyisile Msila (2024), aims to explore the role of education in two countries, the Republic of South Africa and Iran, and how the role of education has an impact in supporting social change. Sixth, the study conducted by Suleyman Demirci (2013), discusses the role of Islam in the Iranian Revolution. Seventh, the study conducted by Mohammad Reza Akhzareyan Kashani and Sayyed Mohammad Hosseini (2020), aims to outline the nature and necessity of electoral ethics and review the important components of electoral ethics in Imam Khomeini's thought through references that he stated. And eighth, the study conducted by Mukhlis Latif, et al (2022), discuss and uncover the thoughts of Ayatollah Khomeini about the concept of *Wilāyah al-Faqīh*, the application of *Wilāyah al-Faqīh* in modern Shia, and analyzes the position of *Faqīh* in the constitutional system of the Islamic Republic of Iran according to the perspective of *siyāsah*.

There are both similarities and differences between the previous studies and the current research under examination. The common ground among the four prior studies and the present research is their focus on Imam Khomeini's political thought. However, the distinctions can be found in the analysis and research objectives. The researcher identifies a gap between these earlier studies and the current investigation. While the previous studies offer an in-depth exploration of Imam Khomeini's ideas, they are somewhat limited by their primary emphasis on his political theories and their application in specific regions. Consequently, this research seeks to enhance the existing body of work by underscoring the significance of ethics in state politics. This focus on ethical dimensions constitutes a novel contribution of the current study.

This article examines Islamic political ethics, encompassing both theoretical and practical dimensions. It analyzes the foundational principles of Islamic politics and explores the concept of *Wilāyah al-Faqīh*, particularly through the lens of Imam Khomeini's political philosophy. Islam and politics are fundamentally intertwined, with a reciprocal relationship in which Islam informs politics, and politics, in turn, upholds and serves the tenets of Islam (Naufal, 2019). Islamic politics should be an implementation of global ethics, which is the essence of every religion. Iran, as a nation that explicitly declares itself an Islamic republic, implements democracy based on Islamic values. The democracy practiced in Iran is nothing other than the implementation of universal ethics, which is the essence of every religion and a fundamental need for all humanity.

METHODS

This article presents an exploratory study characterized by a qualitative-descriptive approach and categorized as pure research with a historical perspective (Huberman & Miles, 2002). The method employed in this study is descriptive analysis, selected to expand and deepen theoretical understanding based on historical investigations related to Imam Khomeini's political ethics, particularly as outlined in his book, *Hukumat-e Islami: Velayat-e Faqih*. The research comprises both primary and secondary data. The primary data is derived from Imam Khomeini's concept of *Wilāyah al-Faqīh* (Velayat-e Faqih) presented in *Hukumat-e Islami: Velayat-e Faqih*. In contrast, the secondary data is gathered from his other work, *Islam and Revolution; Islamic Government*, along with relevant scientific books, journal articles, theses, and credible internet sources..

The data collection method employed in this research is the library research method, which serves as the primary approach for gathering relevant information (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). This method is further enhanced by reviewing additional studies that relate closely to the subject matter at hand. The process of data collection encompasses several distinct stages: First, literature search. The initial step involves searching for literature that pertains specifically to the thoughts and teachings of Imam Khomeini. This includes scholarly articles, books, and other academic resources that provide insights into his philosophies and ideologies. Second, focused reading. Once the relevant literature is gathered, the next phase is a focused reading of these texts. During this stage, particular attention is given to the main ideas and arguments presented by Imam Khomeini, ensuring a comprehensive understanding of his thoughts. Third, note-taking. Important points and key concepts discovered during the reading are meticulously noted. This stage is crucial for highlighting significant themes and arguments that emerge from the literature. Fourth, seeking additional references. In this final collection stage, further relevant references are sought to support and enrich the initial findings. This may include exploring citations within the gathered literature or identifying other notable works that contribute to the overall understanding of Imam Khomeini's thoughts (Huberman & Miles, 2002).

For data analysis, this research adopts two main techniques: content analysis and hermeneutics. Content analysis involves a systematic examination of the collected texts, while hermeneutics focuses on interpreting the meaning and context behind the words used in the literature (Richards & Morse, 2012). Together, these approaches facilitate a deeper understanding of the various perspectives represented within the related works. The data analysis process unfolds in three comprehensive stages: First, data Reduction. In this stage, the collected data is carefully

reviewed and recorded in detail. The aim is to summarize the content, distill it to its essence, and select the most significant elements that align with the study's objectives. This process also involves identifying recurring themes and patterns that may provide insight into broader concepts of Imam Khomeini's thought. Second, data presentation. Once the data has been analyzed and reduced, it is presented in a clear and structured manner. This stage involves organizing the information logically, ensuring that it conveys the necessary findings effectively to the audience. Visual aids or diagrams may be included to enhance understanding where appropriate. Third, conclusion drawing. The final stage of data analysis involves drawing conclusions based on the presented information. This entails synthesizing the findings, addressing key themes, and reflecting on their implications in relation to Imam Khomeini's philosophies. The conclusions aim to outline how the information gathered contributes to the existing body of knowledge on the subject. Through this structured approach, the research seeks to provide a comprehensive and nuanced view of Imam Khomeini's thoughts, supported by a careful and thorough analysis of the literature.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Moral and Philosophical Values in the Political Doctrine of Imam Ayatollah Khomeini

Political ethics is vital for everyone to grasp. Imam Khomeini was a notable scholar who perceived Islam as a religion devoted to social and political advancement. In his book *Reign of the Ayatollahs*, Shaul Bakash shares that Imam Khomeini interpreted Islam as a commitment to social and political causes (Bakhash, 1984). In his formulation of the Wilayah al-Faqih, Khomeini delineated the duties and functions of a comprehensive Islamic government, addressing not only religious matters but also social, cultural, economic, political, and other pertinent issues. He underscored the necessity of a moral leader and elaborated on the authority and political rights of the people. Khomeini asserted, "The *Wilāyah al-Faqīh* must be held by a figure who is moral, knowledgeable, patriotically competent, and visible to the people. Consequently, it is the people who must select this individual. In accordance with human rights, you (the people) must determine your own destiny" (Khomeini, 1981).

This article delves into Islamic political ethics, which includes both theoretical and practical concepts. It investigates the foundations of Islamic politics, the interplay between religion and politics, and offers an overview of Imam Khomeini's political thought, along with his concept of governance. Based on the research formulation, the following findings have been derived.

A Brief Biography of Imam Khomeini

Imam Khomeini's full name is Sayyid Ruhullah Musawi al-Khomeini. He was one of the most important figures behind the Iranian Revolution and the establishment of the Islamic Republic of Iran. He was born on 20 Jumada al-Thaniyah 1320 AH, or September 24, 1902. He was the son of Sayyid Mustafa Mousavi, a prominent scholar of his time (Anwar, 2011). Through his father's lineage, Sayyid Mustafa Musawi, Imam Khomeini was a descendant of the Prophet Muhammad through Imam Ayatollah Mirza Ahmad, a respected theologian. His father opposed the tyrannical Qajar dynasty and was killed by the Qajar ruler's secret agents in 1903, when Khomeini was just seven months old. Khomeini was then raised by his eldest brother, Morteza, along with his mother (Sanusi, 2021).

Khomeini believed that politics, like philosophy, mysticism '*taṣawuf*', and jurisprudence '*fiqh*', is an integral part of Islam (Abidin, 2012; Nugroho, 2014). To advance his views, he closely observed two prominent figures of the time: Ayatollah Kashani, who played an important role in politics, and Ayatollah Borujerdi, the most important *marja' taqlīd* since 1947. Imam Khomeini's political career began around 1962, following the overthrow of the Mossadegh regime. However, his social concerns were evident from an early age. Imam Khomeini began his writing activities early on, penning the book *Miṣbah al-Hidāyah ilā al-Khilāfah wa al-Wilāyah* at the age of 26. Two years later, at the age of 29, he wrote another book titled *Syarh Du'a al-Sahar*. Between 1320 and 1330 AH, he wrote *Kasf al-Asrār*, which may be his first work influenced by his political activities.

The content of this book, written in 1944, uncovers political, theological, and social secrets, and was composed by Imam Khomeini as a response to doubts cast by a writer of that era against Islam (Juwita, 2021; Rofiki, 2022).

Ayatollah Khomeini emerged in the practical political arena with the rise of issues concerning land reform, recognition of Israel, and the White Revolution initiated by the Shah (Rofiki, 2022). During the Shah Pahlavi's leadership, Imam Khomeini persistently resisted the injustices and anti-Islamic stance of the Shah Pahlavi regime until Khomeini's presence was perceived as a threat to both personal safety and power. Khomeini was repeatedly arrested and exiled to Turkey, Iraq, and also France (Juwita, 2021).

Political Ethics: Between Theoretical and Practical

Political ethics discusses authority based on moral norms, laws, and regulations. The function of political ethics is limited to serving as a theoretical tool for testing and questioning political legitimacy responsibly. In this sense, it does not use measures of emotion, prejudice, or a priori assumptions, but instead employs scientific methodology standards in a rational, objective, and argumentative manner. The goal of political ethics is to regulate and control a country and to implement all formulated rules honestly and straightforwardly. These rules are designed to achieve the common welfare of all citizens (Adnan & Usman, 2022).

Political ethics serves as a moral and normative guide to assess the quality of political structures and dynamics with reference to human dignity. When philosophy is linked with politics, political philosophy emerges; and when political philosophy is connected with ethics, political ethics appears. Political ethics does not establish a normative system as the foundation of a state. Reflectively, political ethics contributes thought on how to address life's issues but does not provide concrete solutions to resolve them. Thus, political ethics highlights the responsibilities and duties of individuals as human beings, not just as citizens (M. A. Latif, 2024). As part of philosophy, political ethics studies reality, such as moral systems, but cannot become a moral system itself. It is important to underline that political ethics helps to embody a noble moral system or national ideology into political reality, such as accountability, the foundations of citizen ethics, and the wisdom of deliberative representation (Dahlan, 2021).

Justice and ethics are the essence of the universe closely related to every political phenomenon that occurs (Darussalam & Indra, 2021). Ethics is not an addition to moral teachings, but rather a philosophy or critical and fundamental thinking about teachings and moral viewpoints. Ethics is a science, not a teaching, so ethics and morals are at different levels. Moral teachings can be likened to instructions on how one should properly maintain a motorcycle, while ethics provides an understanding of the structure and technology of the motorcycle. Morality attempts to answer the question 'what should I do,' whereas ethics seeks to answer the question 'how to live a good life.' (Maloko, 2013).

In the context of Islamic political ethics, broad moral values must be the foundation and consideration for actions and political legitimacy. Islamic political ethics consistently refers to the guidelines in the Quran and Hadith. The Quran addresses political ethics in Surah al-Nisa (4:58), which highlights two fundamental principles for upholding ethics: trustworthiness and justice. Upholding the values of justice and respecting human rights to create sustainable peace under religious norms is a fundamental principle of Islamic political ethics. When every political activity is carried out in adherence to values derived from the Quran, it will result in the welfare of society at large and prevent calamities caused by actions that violate moral standards (Maloko, 2013). In addition to achieving the welfare of the community, Islam also emphasizes political ethics as a means to achieve clean politics, ultimately leading to success in politics that brings one closer to attaining honor in the sight of Allah (Farhah & Farid, 2019).

In Islamic thought, philosophy is classified into two categories: First, theoretical philosophy, which in Islamic tradition is referred to as *al-hikmah al-nadhariyah*, and second, practical philosophy, known as *al-hikmah al-'amaliyah* (Asmawi, 2021). The realm of theoretical philosophy

is concerned with the nature of things as they are. This includes discussions on metaphysics, as well as physics and psychology. This realm is often associated with a sense of 'abstractness' because it deals with things as they are. However, the current world seems uninterested in such topics. Contemporary civilization appears to be indifferent to the origins of things and what exists in life. What is sought by modern civilization is how to make things useful. Tragically, the measure of usefulness is often limited to material and narrow interests. On the other hand, practical philosophy deals with how things should be. Therefore, this realm is related to ethics and other fields such as economics and especially politics. As understood, ethics is the science of discerning what is good and bad. In other words, ethics governs individual behavior. For example, economic ethics concerns how to manage finances, social ethics deals with social interactions, and so on. Political ethics, meanwhile, governs how to manage a city or country. Thus, practical philosophy must be based on theoretical philosophy. This means that where theoretical philosophy ends, practical philosophy begins (Ibnu Rusydi, 2015). Practical philosophy is what is 'down-to-earth' and tends to attract much attention from people.

However, those who engage in the phenomena of practical philosophy must actually be grounded in theoretical philosophy. In other words, practical philosophy should be based on theoretical philosophy (King-Irani, 2007). Put differently, theoretical philosophy serves as the foundation, while practical philosophy is the implementation of theoretical philosophy. Therefore, the structure of ethics, whether in economics, social affairs, or politics, will be robust because it aligns with its theoretical 'nature'. Conversely, without this theoretical foundation, the resulting ethics in economics, social affairs, and politics may merely reflect the subjective desires and interests of individuals or institutions in power. This is because practical matters are inherently pragmatic, focused solely on immediate interests. Such pragmatism can be fragile and easily disrupted by changing times, as times are always changing (Shojaei et al., 2023). The fragility and chaos seen in current global ethical, economic, and political systems may be a result of this. Thus, the strong always prevail and appear correct, while the weak, even when correct, are always wrong. Naturally, the strong and powerful succeed and appear correct, because their foundation is indeed practical and pragmatic.

The Foundations of Islamic Political Thought

Islamic politics can be defined as the political activities of some Muslims who make Islam a reference value and a basis for group solidarity (Hamzani & Aravik, 2021). Islamic political philosophy is based on an understanding of the Qur'an and the Hadith as the main sources of Islamic teachings (Aziz, 2023; Bukhari, 2019; Sumantri, 2023; Utomo, 2023). The Qur'an as a guide for human beings provides a solid and unchanging foundation for all ethical and moral principles necessary for life. Quoting Hamzani & Aravik (2021), Muhammad Asad argues that the Qur'an provides a comprehensive answer to the problem of good behavior for human beings as members of society in order to create a balanced life in this world with the ultimate goal of happiness in the hereafter.

The principles of Islamic political philosophy contained in the Qur'an and Hadith include: 1) justice; 2) leadership; 3) public policy; 4) brotherhood; and 5) independence. The concepts of Islamic political philosophy in the Hadith include: 1) shura, the principle of consultation in Islam; 2) amanah, the principle of trust and responsibility in Islam; and 3) ihsan, the principle of perfection in Islam (Utomo, 2023). Al-Jarhi in his book *The Islamic Political System: A Basic Value Approach* states five principles of Islamic politics, namely shura (deliberation), justice, freedom, equality, and accountability of the ruler (Al-Jarhi, 2016). Other literature states that the principles of Islamic politics include (Hamzani & Aravik, 2021): (1) Deliberation '*al-Syūra*'. Deliberation can be interpreted as an exchange of thoughts, ideas, or suggestions that are made in solving a problem before a decision is made. From the point of view of the state, deliberation is a constitutional principle in Islamic politics that must be implemented in a government with the aim of preventing the birth of decisions that are detrimental to the public interest or the people. In deliberation, what is

important is the spirit of brotherhood based on faith in Allah, so that the purpose of deliberation is not to achieve victory for certain parties or groups, but for the benefit of the public and the people. (2) Responsible Freedom '*al-Hurriyah*'. Responsible freedom is primarily freedom of conscience. This freedom cannot be achieved by freeing the heart from the pleasures of life in the world, ignoring the life of the world, and looking only to God in the sky. (3) Equality '*al-Musawah*'. The principle of equality in Islam is based on humanity, which erases the view of racism. The principle of equality includes equality in all areas of life such as legal, political, economic, social, and others. The Qur'an mentions several times the ethical ideas of deliberation '*syura*', justice '*adl*', and equality '*musawah*'. Some of these principles were clearly practiced in the early Islamic political tradition, especially during the time of the Prophet Muhammad. Ethics also reflect the prophetic spirit of '*liutammima makarima al akhlāq*', the spirit of moral excellence. This spirit then becomes the basis for the application of Islamic values, which become the ethical foundation of all political action (Rizky HK, 2021).

Political Islam is based on a theory that is not only rational but also spiritual, as seen in the concept of *Wilayah al-Faqih* in Iran. The concept of *Wilayah al-Faqih* is not separate from the philosophy of wisdom and *irfān* or *taṣawwuf* in Sunni terminology. The success of the Iranian revolution, which succeeded in replacing the 'Western puppet' system and rulers, led to an interesting comment, "How could a grandfather who was busy teaching and worshipping every day succeed in overthrowing an authoritarian regime and replacing it with an Islamic system" (Al-Hadar, 2014). In other words, many people are astonished by the success of the Islamic Revolution of Iran in the midst of a foreign hegemony that appears modern and rational, even seemingly solid with all its material mastery.

Religion and Politics: An Examination of Imam Khomeini's Thought

Polemics over religion and power continue to heat up and become a topic of discussion in various spaces (Arifin, 2021). In the view of Ayatollah Khomeini's constitutional politics, politics is defined as an effort to achieve goals based on divine or religious values (Khumaini, 2008). Among the main points of Imam Khomeini's thought that are relevant in the context of discussing the relationship between religion and politics in the Shia are First, Imam Hussein rebelled and was martyred to prevent the establishment of monarchy and hereditary succession. Second, Islam is political because the Qur'an contains 100 times more verses dealing with social issues than with matters of worship (Shojaei et al., 2023). Third, the separation of religion and politics and the demand that the ulema should not interfere in socio-political matters is part of imperial propaganda. Fourth, the *faqih* have the right to act as representatives of the Imam in all religious, social and political aspects. Fifth, the Islamic state must guarantee social justice, real democracy and real freedom from capitalism. Sixth, Islamic law provides a blueprint for the state and society, which the executive is charged with protecting and overseeing, while the judiciary is charged with implementing Islamic law. Seventh, Islamic government is the government of the people through the observance of God's law. Eighth, in the Islamic government, the scholars occupy a position as guardians, interpreters, and executors of God's laws. Ninth, the absence of the Mahdi does not mean the end of the political role of the Shia community. In order to build an Islamic society and state, Muslims should not wait (passively) for the return of the Mahdi. Tenth, the true Islamic government is a constitutional government with the Qur'an and Hadith as its constitution (Nugroho, 2014).

There are different opinions on the theory of morality. Some argue that morality is important, but others disagree on which moral distinctions are most important. Four leading theories from sociology, linguistics and psychology give different answers. Hunter points to relativism and religion, Lakoff to primordial family metaphors, moral foundations theorists to notions of authority and purity, and value theorists to different value commitments (Miles & Vaisey, 2015). Lakoff in his book entitled "*Moral Politics: How Liberals and Conservatives Think*" argue about the way conservatives and liberals view morality. Conservatives have always talked about the centrality of morality and family in their politics, while liberals didn't talk about these things until conservatives

started winning elections by doing so. This shows that family and morality are central to both worldviews. However, while conservatives are relatively aware of how their politics relate to their views on family life and morality, liberals are less aware of the implicit views on morality and family that govern their own political beliefs. This lack of awareness of their own political worldview has been devastating for liberals (Lakoff, 2016).

As in the view of Sufism, politics as the implementation of religious teachings, specifically ethics, involves not only individual ethics but also social ethics (Ziari & Golzar, 2025). Therefore, no less important in religious practice is righteous deeds. Sufism ethics have often been misunderstood as showing disregard for the environment and being considered anti-social traits. In fact, the perfection of religion lies in the perfection of ethics. Without perfect ethics, one cannot progress beyond the general human existence. The discontent of scholars and the Iranian people with the policies and actions of rulers that are deemed to deviate from Islamic teachings and pose a potential threat to the existence of Islam provided the backdrop for the Iranian revolution. The Sufi system was used as the foundation for the Iranian revolution, where its teachings demand practitioners to apply noble ethics and abandon reprehensible ethics. From Sufism, a fundamental answer is found as to why humans should exhibit noble character. While ethics can inspire a spirit of justice and the ability to respond appropriately to everything, Sufism can cultivate meaning and values, making human actions and life more meaningful (Nur Azizah & Miftakhul Jannah, 2022).

Fundamentally, all humans acknowledge the truth of religion, but due to personal or group interests, religion is often exploited for purposes unrelated to its essence. Citing Hans Kung's thought, religion is a foundation for common ethics that can ensure human life on earth is more just, peaceful, safe, and humane (Kung, 1991). Thus, the *Wilāyah al-Faqīh* concept proposed by Imam Khomeini is not an ethics solely based on human rational intelligence, but rather an ethics built upon the humanistic values contained within religions, particularly Islam.

Islam cannot be separated from the rules that govern society and the state. Islam is not separate from political life because the duty of the state is to uphold religion (Abidin, 2012). Islam is not a religion that deals only with individual worship (Uyuni & Adnan, 2021). Islam is religion and state, government and politics, economic and social organization, education and morality, worship and jihad (Hidayat, 2023). If we look at the relationship between religion and politics in general, it is important to first consider the position of religion in the life of individuals. Religion plays a central role in a person's life, not because it determines many details, but because it provides a general purpose in life and helps focus energy on achieving goals. When religion is considered irrelevant, people tend to value the materialistic life more than the spiritual life (Fanni, 2006). This has led to the spread of a permissive culture in society, an increase in individualistic attitudes, as well as conflicts in social values and cultural polarization. This condition creates a dialectical tension between materialistic culture or modern culture and the need for religion to maintain transcendental aspects (D. A. Sari, 2019). In addition, if religion is understood in an individualistic way that only regulates rituals and worship, then religion will have little relevance to politics. In this context, religion loses its role in social and political life by focusing only on the moral and spiritual development of the individual. This can lead a society to experience a crisis of identity and values, ultimately exacerbating tensions and conflicts in social life when some of the moral guidelines of the individual conflict with the moral ideas generally accepted in society and enforced by the state (Utomo, 2023).

Resistance in the Iranian Revolution emerged because Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi's administration did not align with the principles of public welfare, leading to concerns among the clerics and provoking resistance from merchants and leftist intellectuals who opposed the consolidation of the Shah's regime, reliance on foreign support, and the authoritarian nature of the government. This resistance led to the downfall of the Pahlavi Dynasty, which was established in 1925, through the force of revolution (Mundzir, 2020). The Shah's policies of Westernization and his closeness to Western powers (the United States) clashed with the identity of Iranian Muslims, who had a strong foundation in their local traditions (local wisdom) (Kusumah, 2021). Shah Reza

Pahlavi implemented secular principles that differed from the Iranian people's respect for religious teachings and ethics. In this context, Imam Khomeini, with his authority and exemplary conduct, declared, "We will be hostile to the foreign government involved in establishing the monarchy in Iran, as evidence of our stance and resistance against the tyrannical ruler". The principle of resistance against arbitrary and arrogant systems has been consistently upheld to this day (Simpson, 2019).

Khomeini's in his book entitled *Islam and Revolution* stated that, "Muslims will be able to live in security and tranquillity and preserve their faith and morals only when they enjoy the protection of a government based on justice and law, a government whose form, administrative system, and laws have been laid down by Islam. It is our duty now to implement and put into practice the plan of government established by Islam. I hope that by presenting the system of government and the political and social principles of Islam to broad segments of humanity, we will create a strong new current of thought and a powerful popular movement that will result in the establishment of an Islamic government" (Khomeini & Algar, 2002). He also stated that Islamic government is not a form of monarchy, especially not an imperial system. In that type of government, the rulers are empowered over the property and persons of those they rule and may dispose of them entirely as they wish. Islam has not the slightest connection with this form and method of government. For this reason we find that in Islamic government, unlike monarchical and imperial regimes, there is not the slightest trace of vast palaces, opulent buildings, servants and retainers, private equerries, adjutants to the heir apparent, and all the other appurtenances of monarchy that consume as much as half of the national budget (Khomeini & Algar, 2002; Khomeini, 2009).

Concept of Government according to Imam Khomeini

The form of the Islamic state according to Ayatollah Khomeini is neither monarchy nor empire, and there is no oppression or plunder. The state constitution and sources of legislation should be based on Islamic law (Wibowo, 2023). Khomeini argued that politics is the same as philosophy, Sufism, and *fiqh*, which is one of the bodies of Islam (Firdaus et al., 2022). Ayatollah Khomeini rejected the separation of religion and politics. The separation of religion and politics and the demand that clerics should not interfere in socio-political issues is, according to Imam Khomeini, the propaganda of imperialism (Khumaini, 2008). He criticized the clerics who were reluctant to get involved in socio-political issues. The Islamic Republic of Iran is a concrete realization of the concept of Islamic politics based on belief in Islamic law (the Qur'an and the Sunnah of the Prophet). Imam Khomeini's thought was based on the rejection of the government of *tāgūt* in order to achieve the government of *tawhīd*; which emphasized the republic and the establishment of divine law and the supremacy of law, the government belonging to God, in which the *Velayat-e Faqih* model of appointing experts was used (Zahedinia et al., 2021).

Admittedly or not, the success of the Iranian revolution is inextricably linked to Khomeini's concept of moral education, which was properly implemented by the Iranian people. According to Khomeini, there are four methods in moral education, namely purification of the mind, purification of the heart/soul, improvement of behavior, and purification of charity (Anwar, 2011). Khomeini viewed education as a weapon to instill a cultural revolution, a tool that would also promote the ideological and religious reforms he deemed necessary (Msila, 2024). According to Khomeini, Islam is an attitude of submission and obedience to God's law that should be the ideology for Muslims. Therefore, he warned the Iranian Muslims to be vigilant against the efforts of the enemies of Islam to make Islam as an ideology that is far from the noble values and to make the Iranian people obey low rules and far from the world civilization and progress (Bisri, 2018).

Ayatollah Khomeini argued that there are three main characteristics of an Islamic government: non-tyrannical, based on law, and practicing Islamic governance (Prabaswari, 2021). Non-tyrannical means that the government does not act arbitrarily or abuse religious legitimacy. The constitutionality of power in the *Velayat-e Faqih* system must be based on God's law, not

merely on popular vote. Being based on the law means that sovereignty belongs entirely to God, and the law is His decree and command. And the implementation of Islamic rule means that God's law applies to all people, and people are obliged to obey it. In the constitution, the highest position is held by a *wāli faqīh* (religious leader), and the first person to serve as *wāli faqīh* was Khomeini.

In his book *Hukumat-e Islami: Velayat-e Faqih*, Imam Khomeini outlines the fundamental principles of an Islamic government that, according to him, must be implemented in accordance with Islamic law or sharia (Khumaini, 2008). The Iranian government system is based on three pillars of power: the executive, legislative, and judicial branches (Abd, 2015). The *velayat-e faqih* or guardianship of the jurist holds the highest authority in the new Islamic Republic of Iran. The presence of *velayat-e faqih* is seen as a necessary means to reintegrate Islamic ideology into the governance of Iran. Imam Khomeini's concept of the state differs from pure democracy, as he argues that humans, who often make mistakes (Khumaini, 2008), should not be given full freedom to regulate and legislate. Absolute authority for law-making rests solely with God (Mikail, 2019).

For Imam Khomeini, politics is an extension of ethics or a logical consequence of morals, because ethics is not limited to teachings and recommendations that are secondary and only for individuals (Khumaini, 2008). Therefore, Khomeini said that ethics and morals should not be considered a minor issue, considering that morals are the basis for the movement and progress of a society. Even Islam came to perfect morality through the Prophet Muhammad. Quoting Muhammad (2022), Khomeini argued that the people have political authority and rights. He stated: "*The Wilāyah al-Faqīh must be held by a figure who is moral, knowledgeable, patriotic, competent, and visible to the people. Therefore, it is the people who must choose this figure. Therefore, you (the people) must determine your own destiny on the basis of human rights*".

By referring to several sources, Hasan Islami's analysis in the book *Wajah Etika Islam* strengthens the paradigm of the interconnection between politics and ethics in Imam Khomeini's thought. Thus, in Imam Khomeini's thought, ethics or morals have a special place, which is a discipline that becomes the axis for all fields of knowledge, because indeed every field of science revolves around the moral circle (Islami, 2012). The model of the Islamic state such as the ten years of the Prophet's reign in Medina and the five years of Ali bin Abu Talib's reign in Kuffah is the thought of Ayatollah Khomeini's ideal state concept, whose thoughts became the basis of the State of Iran. Khomeini was inspired by Shia views and poured his thoughts in a Shia perspective, where the Shia group considers that the issue of leadership of the people is a very important issue that cannot be left entirely to the people. Therefore, the government of the Prophet and Ali bin Abu Talib is the ideal model of government according to Ayatollah Khomeini and Shia followers in general.

The concept of the *Wilāyah al-Faqīh* system of government initiated by Khomeini is closely related to moral control over all aspects of society. A *wāli faqīh* (spiritual leader) serves as a fortress guarding the morals of society. Therefore, a *wāli faqīh* must meet the following specific requirements: Have a broad knowledge of Islamic Shari'a and be able to act fairly (R. M. Sari, 2017). Imam Khomeini emphasized that "Islam is everything, the Qur'an is everything. In Imam Khomeini's eyes, the *faqīh* is not a philosopher, politician, or Islamist, but he knows Islamic jurisprudence and law (Sharifi et al., 2019). To reach this idealized state, Imam Khomeini argued that Iran must build and find its own way, even if it is not easy. According to this concept, the supreme power of the state rests with a *faqīh* 'Islamic religious expert' who is just, pious, obedient to the Shari'a, highly competent, and approved by the majority of the people. Moreover, he must obey the law, and if he does not, he must be dismissed (Boroumand, 2020). Khomeini argued that although the ideal power is held by the *Fuqahā* philosophers or *wāli faqīh*, he was strongly opposed to the use of coercive methods (Maulia & Suryani, 2022).

In his concept of statehood, a leader, namely *al-faqīh*, will perform his duties in government as the Prophet led the first generations of Muslims. A *faqīh* will always act in accordance with Islamic law and will not rule over the people without regard to God's commandments. A *faqīh*, like the Prophet and the Imam, is the executor of God's command and will with as much power as the

Prophet had. However, a *faqīh* is not equal to the Prophet or the Imam. In his book entitled *Islamic Government*, Khomeini stated that the authority that the Prophet and the Imam (a) had in establishing a government, executing laws, and administering affairs, exists also for the *faqīh*. But the *fuqahā* do not have absolute authority in the sense of having authority over all other *fuqahā* of their own time, being able to appoint or dismiss them. There is no hierarchy ranking one *faqīh* higher than another or endowing one with more authority than another (Khomeini, 2009).

Through the concept of *Wilāyah al-Faqīh*, Khomeini sought to build a modern state and government based on Islamic rules. For him, five elements of the political system must be in harmony with Islamic rules. The five elements of the political system are (1) the source of power, which comes from the people; (2) the mechanism for appointing the *walīd*, the *faqīh*, which is carried out by leading scholars; (3) the qualifications of the *walīd*, the *faqīh*, which include *faqāhah*, *'is*, and *kafā'ah*. *Faqāhah* is knowledge, especially of the provisions and rules of Islam. *Kafā'ah* is having intelligence and the ability to rule. *Faqāhah* is knowledgeable, especially about the provisions and rules of Islam (Silaban, 2019); (4) the high authority of the *walīd*, the *faqīh*; and (5) the responsibility of the *walīd*, the *faqīh* which is submitted to a number of scholars who have appointed him. In implementing the concept of *Wilāyah al-Faqīh*, Khomeini formulated a state structure consisting of four main elements, namely: (1) *wāli faqīh*; (2) legislative body (*Majlis al-Syūra*); (3) executive body (*Sulṭan al-Tanfizi*); and (4) judicial body (*Majlis al-Qadāi'*). Khomeini's formulation of the constitutional structure shows that the construction of the *Wilāyah al-Faqīh* requires that public policy cannot be decided by a handful of people, but must pay attention to the will of the people through their representatives in the assembly (Bisri, 2018).

The Islamic government initiated by Imam Khomeini in Iran is an answer to all secularist claims and accusations of separation of religion (Islam) and politics. It was also a rebuttal to people's pessimism about Islam as the most beneficial political ideology. Khomeini argued, "*Those who claim that the establishment of an Islamic government is not necessary have denied the necessity of implementing Islamic rules and have denied the completeness of the rules and the permanence of Islam*" (Dolatabadi, 2021). Imam Khomeini argued that the Islamic state is a state of law. The Islamic government is a constitutional government, but the definition of constitutional with the rule of law here is different from what has been known so far. The constitutional concept, which refers to "laws adapted to the majority opinion", is not known in the Islamic system of government, because in the Islamic government the law already exists, namely God's law (Silaban, 2019).

Imam Khomeini stated that the concept of *Wilāyah al-Faqīh* is related to the concept of Shia religious political thought such as loyalty, imamate and *taqlīd* (Sodikin, 2022). The theory of *Wilāyah al-Faqīh* is, in a way, a continuation of the doctrine of Imamate, as it carries out the main functions of the Imam's government. It illustrates the element of rational representation based on the choice of the people, which is different from the appointment of the Imam by God (Astuti & Sujati, 2019). According to Khomeini, the Islamic government in the concept of *Wilāyah al-Faqīh* has comprehensive duties and functions that take care of not only religious aspects, but also social, cultural, economic, political, and other issues. As the holder of the Imam's authority, the *Faqīh* is responsible for continuing the prophetic mission, as was the duty of the Imams. Politically, therefore, the *Faqīh's* main task is to ensure that the government is run justly on the basis of God's law. In the government of the *Wilāyah al-Faqīh*, there is no separation between religion and politics because both have the same mission and goal of creating a just society based on God's law. In the government of *Wilāyah al-Faqīh*, there is no separation between religion and politics because both have the same mission and goal, which is to create a just society based on God's law. Thus, if the mission of achieving power and enforcing God's law can only be achieved through political means, then efforts to seize political power become an obligation (Antonio, 2012). The duties and functions of Islamic government as stated by Antonio (2012) in the Encyclopedia of Persian Islamic Civilization are: First, to maintain Islamic institutions and laws. Second, to implement Islamic law. Third, to establish a just order. Fourth, to collect and use taxes in accordance with Islamic

teachings. Fifth, to oppose all forms of aggression and to defend the independence and sovereignty of Islamic territories. Sixth, to promote education. Seventh, to eradicate corruption and all other social evils. Eighth, to treat all citizens equally without discrimination. Ninth, to solve the problem of poverty. Tenth, to provide general humanitarian services.

The concept of governance left by Khomeini is not merely a decoration of democracy but aims to demonstrate that Islam, as a religion, can serve as both inspiration and solution to various societal issues, including governance. The Islamic Revolution of Iran, acting as a moral shield against Western values, has become a solution for individuals and social groups facing uncertainty, relativism, and identity crises (Hidayat, 2023). Khomeini emphasized, in line with Islamic philosophy that draws from Plato and Aristotle, that the purpose of law is “to create virtuous individuals who implement the law” or, in other words, “to produce honest and sincere law enforcers”. A good legal system will consequently foster good behavior. Therefore, the goal of an Islamic government is to create conditions conducive to the emergence of moral individuals (Sanusi, 2021).

CONCLUSION

Religion diminishes its importance in social and political spheres when it prioritizes only the moral and spiritual development of individuals. This focus can lead to identity crises and social conflicts, particularly when personal values are at odds with common societal norms. A significant example of moral and ethical decline in government is the outbreak of the Iranian Revolution. The Iranian Revolution arose as a response to the rule of Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, which many perceived as contrary to public benefit. His Westernization policies and authoritarian approach, along with reliance on foreign support, incited resistance from clerics, merchants, and leftist intellectuals. A significant factor in the revolution's success was Khomeini's focus on moral education, which deeply resonated with the Iranian populace. Khomeini viewed Islam as an embodiment of obedience to God's law, advocating for it to serve as a guiding ideology. He considered politics an extension of ethics, emphasizing that ethical principles are crucial for social advancement. The *Wilāyah al-Faqīh* system, introduced by Khomeini, merges moral guidance with governance, establishing an Islamic Republic rooted in the teachings of the Qur'an and the Hadith of the Prophet. In this framework, religion and politics are intertwined, both dedicated to the creation of a just society based on divine law.

The authors concentrate their study on the principles of political ethics and religion as expressed by Imam Khomeini in the context of governance. They observe a notable scarcity of primary sources, particularly original texts by Imam Khomeini. Consequently, the researchers urge readers and fellow scholars to delve deeper into Imam Khomeini's original writings and to allocate more time for their thorough analysis.

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