

Strategic Requirements of Islam in Political Sciences' Field

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Abstract

The expression of the reality that there is a relationship between the political system and the knowledge type in all societies that contributes to the establishment and continuity of power, guides us to discuss the ideal political knowledge in Iran, appropriate to the Islamic strategic teachings. In other words, Islam has its own requirements impacting all scientific realms including political science. From this viewpoint, the major question is: "What is the strategic requirement of Islam in political realm"? To answer this question, the researcher has tried, using the comparative method, to clarify the differences between the Islamic policy and the secular policy, and then to suggest a new political model. This new model is under the influence of the Islamic teachings from four aspects, namely: first ontological aspect which compares the two-dimensional Islamic viewpoint with the one-dimensional viewpoint of secularism; second, epistemology that compares the software approach of Iranian culture with the hostile one; third, providence that considers salvation as a substitute for hegemonism; and forth, methodology that suggests morality as an alternate for instrumentalism.

Keywords

Political Science Discipline, Islamic, Iran, Secularism, Power, Benefit.

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Introduction

Politics has several meanings such as protection of the country, ruling the citizens, kingdom, management upon social affairs (Derakhsheh, 1386: 141), powerful distribution of values and resources among members of the society (Easton, 1979: 57-69), regulating the relation of power, or the manner of power distribution (Schewartzmantel, 1987: 2-7). But by a glance at these definitions, it seems that “power” is the common phenomenon among all of them, having a specific position in the political science, as the major column of knowledge and definition of politics. This is while Islam, for the reason of change of bases and framework, criticizes the above-mentioned principle (hegemonism), and, as a result, we can witness a new approach in the science of politics. From this viewpoint, it can be said that any consideration of politics will be dependent on the attitudes of individuals toward extensive realms of ontology and epistemology. In other words, our manner of looking at the world impacts on our perception of politics and its duty. This is because of spatial nativism of politics that necessitates the influence of environmental conditions of politics (see Khajeh Sarvi, 1389: 35-36). This case becomes more important about the Islamic revolution. Derakhsheh et al., pointing to the civilizational nature of the Islamic revolution, concluded that the occurrence of revolution in Iran influenced on political equations in two levels (see Derakhsheh, 1390: 25-56). First is the software level, covering the reformation of philosophic feature of politics and finally leading to the Islamization of politics. Second is the hardware level of politics which involves the modification and improvement of the performance of politics, representing the Islamic-Iranian politics

model. Regarding the above-mentioned analysis, we are going to identify the layers forming politics in the Islamic Republic of Iran, appropriate to Islamic nature, and accordingly, introduce the important principles that contribute to the foundation of the native politics in Iran. To do so, we employed the comparative method, trying to introduce politics within the Islamic framework in four major levels of ontology, epistemology, providence, and methodology, differing from the Western secularism.

1. Analytical Framework

The understanding of characteristics of all scientific schools depends on the designing of an analytical framework so that it can indicate similarities and dissimilarities among them. It is only in such a case that weaknesses and strengths of different ideologies can be shown and finally an accurate conclusion can be obtained. To do so, the research will suggest a theoretical framework with two major columns:

First column: Islamic and the relationship between power and knowledge:

The investigation of relationship between power and knowledge is important because it eventually changes the mechanism of the foundation and continuity of political systems in practice. From this viewpoint, three approaches can be distinguished:

a. The superiority of knowledge to power:

In this regard, a political action is considered as dependent on the rationality through the changing of which, the improvement of political systems becomes possible. And it is just for this reason that the science of politics has declined to the understanding of

viewpoints and conceptual systems, and we can see the emergence of theoretical and ideological studies.

b. The superiority of power to knowledge:

In this approach, knowledge is considered as a product of power. In other words, knowledge is the full-faced mirror of power during any era (see Firahi, 1378: 13).

c. Interaction between power and knowledge:

Regarding that both of the above-mentioned approaches represent some part of reality, the interaction model can be regarded as the base in which, knowledge and power complete each other. This base is more consistent with the Islamic world (see Rezvan, 1986).

Thinking about the above-mentioned approach, it can be concluded that political power is the need of accuracy and consideration on the type and nature of political knowledge for different reasons including:

- 1. Knowledge represents a specific image of political system that can impact its establishment and continuity.*
- 2. Knowledge defines a specific life style that can impact the interaction model between governments and nations.*
- 3. Knowledge influences on social expectations, and thereby impact the political stability.*
- 4. Knowledge represents specific cultural indexes and evaluating criteria that can impact the future of political systems.*

To be brief, Islam as the founder of a new system in the realm of management of societies, needs to be sensitive toward the type and nature of political knowledge, because the type of political

knowledge can, via a mutual correlation with political system, contribute to its strength and continuity as well as its decline.

Second column: Islam and cultural structure of political knowledge:

Political knowledge has four cultural and methodologic layers according to the Islamic worldview as follows:

First layer: *Political ontology*

The word “ontology” means the science or philosophy of study of existence (High, 1385: 106). It refers to specific procedural assumptions or claims in social studies on political or social nature; claims about what exists, what it looks like, what components it has, and what kind correlation exists among those components (Blaikie, 1993: 6).

Generally, the aim of ontology is to answer the important question about the scope of political action. Accordingly there can exist two major approaches:

a. One-dimensional ontology:

In this approach, existence is limited to the material world; therefore, scientific politics is defined in the scope of effect of worldly affairs, and clearly is disconnected from spiritual affairs. The result of this traditionalism is secularism which is presents in the common political science of the West (see Novak: 1385).

This ontological approach is rejected from Islamic viewpoint and the Holy Quran says in this regard: “These are those who lost their afterlife, and bought the worldly life; their sufferings won’t reduce, and no one will help them.”¹ In other words, this approach

is considered as being incomplete because of paying mere attention to material dimensions of politics, and it is not able to manage all aspects of politics.

b. Two-dimensional ontology:

In this approach, life has two dimensions:

This worldly and next worldly. And any action has two simultaneous outcomes. In this approach, the issue of getting retribution for one's good or evil deeds is very important, and its index has been sent to man through a specific charter and with the hands of a specific messenger by Allah. The consequent of such an approach is formation of some kind of politics science relative to the ideal management of worldly affairs in relation to normative principles. Normalization of politics science is the product of choosing this approach. Thus it can be concluded that political science moves in a continuum of one-dimensional attitude rather than a continuum of two-dimensional attitude (see Khosrowpanah and Panahi, 1389). Accordingly, Imam Khomeini's idea becomes meaningful suggesting that man is a two-dimensional creature able to experience either the highest or the lowest ranks of existence. In other words all features of man's life, including politics, can be understood through two models (either one-dimensional, based on worldly prosperity, or two-dimensional, based on human prosperity).

Second Layer: Political epistemology

Epistemology studies the nature of obtaining knowledge by man about his surrounding world. Epistemology is important because it represents a philosophic base to identify the potential knowledge

to researchers. In addition, it gives some standards to evaluate the valid knowledge (Crotty, 1998: 8). To be brief, ontology asks about what there is to identify, while the epistemologist asks about the conditions of obtaining knowledge about the existing subjects. In other words, ontology pays attention to inherent components of the politics science, while epistemology describes their objective impression in the world, which is often referred to as power. From this viewpoint, two images of power are identifiable:

a. Hardware approach (policy based on force)

“Force” is a kind of power depending on “coercion” and “imposition”. In this model, power in its classic meaning is that someone forces another one to do something that if conditions were otherwise, the latter would not do it (see Dall, 1364).

On this base, force is considered as the origin of power and it confirms the model of “right belongs to the dominant side” in the political realm.

b. Software approach (policy based on capabilities)

Capability is a kind of power associated with willingness and cooperation. Thus it is considered as an ideal source of strength. Contrary to the above-mentioned model. Here, someone attempts willingly to do something, and another person asks him to do for the benefit of something regarding his interests and capacities (as a legitimizing factor).

As it seems, the political science moves within a continuum from force to capabilities, (Nai, 1387: 42-51). Imam Khomeini's suggestion in this regard is illustrative. He says: “If rulers of Islamic countries were real representatives of believers and enforced

Islamic orders, they would put aside trifle disputes and would get united ... Then a few abject Jews who are all servants of America and England could not become so aggressive” (Mousavi Khomeini, *Bitā*: 33).

Third layer: *Political teleology*

Here, the final and comprehensive end is regarded, within which all other small and middle size goals of actors are defined (see Altahanavi: 1996).

Within the above-mentioned ontological framework, the final end of political science can be described in the frame of two main concepts:

a. Profiteering:

Traditional approaches toward politics, regarding the Creation system’s perception of man, eventually put forward some kind of humanism, in which, the provision of concrete and worldly profits of man is of the highest priority. As a result of this approach, political science has the duty, regardless of moral or normative obligations, to prepare the ground for the realization of this end. Since in this trend, only material has authenticity, spiritual affairs become important only when they can facilitate the achievement of materialistic goals. Thus, they don’t have any value by themselves (see Jones, 1383: 481-502). Accordingly, morality also, as the center of humane action, loses its importance and can be used only as an instrument for achieving material interests.

b. Salvationism:

In non-traditional approaches (and specifically in Islamic normative approach), the political power is supposed to provide peo-

ple with both, worldly and other worldly interests, and to prepare the appropriate atmosphere for political-social growth of citizens, so that there exists the possibility of prosperity for individuals (see Morad, 1992). In this approach, power has no value by itself and gets enough importance, and it only serves as contributing to the prosperity of citizens. This is because submission to Allah and the obedience of his orders which is the final end of Creation, become possible only through correct use of political power (see Eftekhari et al., 1392: specially section 1 and 2).

Imam Khomeini says in this regard: “In fact the most important duty of Prophets was to establish a social righteous system through enactment of laws according to teachings sent by Allah” (Mousavi Khomeini, *Bitā Alaste Faghīh*: 77).

Fourth Layer: Political Methodology

In this discussion, we refer to methodology as a means by which we think about realization of capability of getting knowledge about what exists using appropriate procedures (High, 1385: 109). Here, method refers to techniques taken by agencies or society or other social institutions in order to achieve the goals defined by the policy. Thus, those techniques can be divided in two major groups:

a. Non-moral technique:

In the realm of epistemology and teleology, our choice of approach will impact the choice of methodology. Therefore, in force-based and profiteering approaches a system will rule the theoretical and practical policy which considers “achievement of benefits” as the standard for evaluation of theories and behaviors. This sys-

tem (comparing with the principles of normative schools in the political realm) is in fact some kind of immorality, because it devotes everything to provide material interests through employing every possible means. It is necessary to note that in this approach, spiritual means also sometimes is used to achieve materialistic goals and some politicians misuse religion in order to realize their own intentions (see Makiavelli, 1377 and 1388).²

b. Moral technique:

this technique has in fact been derived from theories of capabilities and salvationalism within the scope of epistemology. In this technique the essence of moralities and spiritual principles and their consideration are in the center of attention. Meanwhile, the goals and political instruments should be confirmed by the realm of moralities (see Motahhari, 1370). In other words, in this technique, the employment of immoral manners is forbidden even if the final goal is moral (see Kiani, 1388). Imam Khomeini says in the regard: “My dears, I don’t give priority to leadership; what is important to me is brotherhood; Allah has addressed us as brothers in his Holy book. You had better call me as your servant, not your leader”, (Imam’s Sahifieh, Vol. 11: 352. See Ghadre Velayat. 1393).

2. Islam and the Separation of Political Science

Here the researcher’s aim is to represent premises that prepare establishing the Islamic political science according to above-mentioned details. In other words, the political science should be freed from principles and bases of the Western politics science in four realms so that it can have a positive and generative interaction with

the Islamic revolution:

2-1. Separation of Politics from Secularism

This principle refers to the necessity of association of religion with politics; so that politics accepts its obligation to principles of religion. Seyyed Hossein Nasr, emphasizing on the strategic role of “endless reality” in fact, suggests that politics cannot be the more obedient to transitory and changing intentions of individuals, or even the elites: “Today, everyone is speaking about evolution and change. Some try to change affairs according to their own time... [for them] man should submit all realities to intentions and interests of this era-even though those intentions may be wrong... [but] man is a creature who has not basically changed and the depth of his spirit-like that of his ancestors-is involved in an endless reality. Thus, he himself has to find the concept in these transitory days of life” (Nasr, 1371: 249-251). Accordingly, “religion” and “secularism” shouldn’t be considered merely as two extensive concepts, even though very important in human life, but, they are the basis of two different atmospheres in human life only because they represent two different concepts for man. In other words they can be considered as the producer of two types of policy-one this worldly and the other, the spiritual worldly (see Kamali Ardakani et al., 1386: 3-38 and 317-356).

Thus, regarding the experiences of the Islamic government during the times of the Holy Prophet and Imam Ali, it can be claimed that the liberation of politics from the prison of secularism is considered as the first step toward the ideal political stage in the Islamic scope (see Derakhshah, 1386: 137-180). This attempt is called

“the legitimization of politics” as opposed to the conventionalization of politics (see Eftekhari, 2014).

2-2. Separation of Political Science from Hegemonism

The most important feature of politics criticized by Islam is hegemonism. While the conventional politics is formed with the centrality of power, and as seen by realistic interpretation. Politics reduces to being the technique of achievement, maintenance, and development of power. (Holsti, 1383: specially 12-40); in the Islamic discourse, power has basically no strategic value and it is often represented to realize the strategic goals (Mahdavi, 1392: 79-83). Thus it can be claimed that according to the experience of Islamic revolution, the system of political science education needs to be reviewed so that it can find its native form and obtain practical value (see A group of writers, 1389: 3-18 and 241-258). It is because firstly, the Islamic policy is not dependent on hegemonism, and thus, the Islamic political theory should be defined via substitute concepts. Secondly, the meaning of the present premise is to reject hegemonism and not to emphasize on invalidity of power. In other words, the instrumental role of power has been accepted by the Islamic policy.

Based on this insight, only that power is valuable that is committed to religious principles based on wisdom and knowledge. This is contrary to the power produced by force, which is able to impose itself, but the addressees do not accept it intentionally. In fact the Islamic policy is understandable in this framework and not with the theory of power based on forcing the addresses.

2-3. Separation of Politics from Profiteering

Although philosophic discussions on the final goal of politics are several and various (see Queenton, 1371: sections 6, 9, and 10; Hampton, 1380: sections 2, and 3), it seems that uncontested importance of benefits is more welcome, so that, within the scope of internal and foreign policy, the provision of benefits is considered as being the final goal of diplomacy (see Clinton, 1379: specially section 2). This providence is based on some kind of anthropology, within which, man is considered as a selfish creature who is always seeking his own benefits, and to success, shows interest in individual as well as collective attempts involving his own profits. This consideration which seeks simple and one-dimensional benefits of man is completely different from the Islamic perspective that gives importance to interests and well-being of man, observing two major dimensions (see Derakhshah, 1387: specially section 3 and 7) as follows:

a. The well-being produced by regulating the relationship between man and Allah that appears in the frame of submission to Allah, dominating upon all political features. In fact, politics should contribute to enhancement and development of religious devotion and commitment to Godly orders. Therefore, the management of social affairs without religion, is not considered as politics from Islamic viewpoint because it doesn't lead to the major well-being that is the satisfaction of Allah.

b. The benefit produced by the regulation of relationship between individual and others, and political and social institutions within the society. This feature of Islamic policy is outwardly similar to the conventional politics, in which, the goal is prosperity of

the society. Of course the purposes in this dimension of politics are not the same, but their foreign outcome looks similar.

As a result of this evolution, it seems that the Islamic diplomacy has a collective nature, that is, the public well-being, which has centrality. In this definition, politics in Islam, the dominating attitude is the prosperity of all individuals of a society. In other words, what people should do in order to achieve prosperity is not the subject of politics, but what the government should do so that all individuals become prosperous, is of importance.

According to this interpretation, some kind of responsibility toward public welfare (All of you are responsible for each other's deeds) is the subject of the Islamic diplomacy and completely different from mere benefit of individuals, groups, or parties.

2-4. Separation of Politics from Immorality

The contemporary world's problem in the binary of morality-immorality, as a result of which, some themes belong to the realm of morality while some others such as politics belong to the realm of immoralities (see Simbar, 1390: section 7 especially 207-213). This consideration of politics has contributed to several harms including positivism of politics and transformation of cultural principles and norms. It should be noted that in this type of policy, the basic principles and norms are not essentially rejected, but it is emphasized on their complying with political goals. In other words, politics produces morality, while morality cannot produce politics. Thus, immorality refers to a state in which, morality is dependent on political goals, and this state is contrary to the Islamic discourse in which, morality stands in the center and

politics depends on it (see Eftekhari, 1390).

Conclusion

Since the Islamic revolution is highly influenced by the common political science, sensitivity to requirements of diplomacy in Iran with the aim to guarantee a promising future for the Islamic Republic is of high importance. In this relation, the existing viewpoints can be classified to two groups:

1. Thinkers who believe in reading out the conventional political theories in the framework of the Islamic revolution's discourse. As a result of this attempt, Islamic versions will be produced in the framework of the conventional political science, contributing to the crisis of proficiency of the Islamic Republic in long term.

2. Thinkers who represent Islamic documented reasons for the conventional political theories. As a result of these suggestions we will experience the expansion of Western ideologies with Islamic feature, and it will lead to the transformation of the Islamic Republic in medium term.

It must be said that we consider none of these two suggested groups as comprehensive. We believe that the major difference of the Islamic Revolution from other existing discourses necessitates the production of new knowledge with the ability to have a creative interaction with the political system in Iran. For this reason, a comparative study has been conducted in order to clarify the differences between these two groups. The comparative study of Islamic and Western worldview indicates that we are facing two

different political sciences. In fact, contrary to apparent similarities, there are some epistemological and anthropological principles that prevents us from equating the Iranian political science with the conventional politics. Regarding what was represented in this paper, it can be concluded that, under the influence of the Islamic Revolution, politics in Iran has undertaken some conceptual evolution leading to the change of its emphasis from power to prosperity. In this new approach, politics is in the service of public prosperity and power is merely an instrument for achieving this worldly and the other worldly salvation. Accordingly, in order to get to the native politics in Iran, the conventional politics needs to separate itself from the common discourse in four dimensions:

1. separation of politics from secularism; 2. separation of politics from hegemonism; 3. separation of politics from profiteering; and 4. separation of politics from immorality.

It is only in the light of experiencing these four strategic principles that the Islamic Republic of Iran will be able to guarantee its strong future, otherwise, it can be said that the political knowledge will change to a negative system toward power that can endanger the future of our country.

Notes

1. Holy Quran, Baghareh sura: 86

2. see Ibne Asir, vol. 8. 1380: 3744-3745, and Tabarsi, 1373: 356-359 for additional information “Abbasids and misuse of religion to legitimize their power”

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