



Research Paper

## **The EU and the Dilemma of Balancing its Relations with China and the United States**

**Seyed Davood Aghae<sup>\*1</sup>, Sohrab Sadoddin<sup>2</sup>**

<sup>1</sup> Professor, Department of Regional Studies, Faculty of Law & Political Science, University of Tehran, Iran

<sup>2</sup> PhD in Regional Studies, Faculty of Law & Political Science, University of Tehran, Iran

Received: 11 August 2020, Accepted: 14 March 2022

© University of Tehran

### **Abstract**

With the rise of emerging powers, the multilateral liberal international order, which has always been characterized as having the full support of the transatlantic alliance partners, is grappling with the challenges of inadequacy of the United States as a hegemonic power, and illegitimacy of rival powers such as China. In the meantime, the European Union, as a key actor believes in the indirect exercise of power through the institutions of global governance, and seeks to protect and restore the legitimacy and effectiveness of the multilateral international system as an entity that can provide more space and opportunities for Europe to safeguard its interest. Recent developments in the structure of the international system have affected the relative position of the three major global actors (i.e., the European Union, the United States and China) in the existing world order and its management mechanism which will be influenced by new interest-based alliances. By collecting qualitative data available in governmental and non-governmental studies and reports, and by developing and analyzing possible scenarios, the authors attempt to answer the following research question: What choices do the EU status-quo supporters have in order to create a balance between the revisionist United States and opportunist China?

Based on Schweller's theory of revisionist or status quo behaviors of governments, and his four types of governments (i.e., lion, lamb, fox and wolf), the policies of the United States, China, and the European Union have been analyzed in terms of maintaining or changing the status quo. Within the context of this theory, in their research hypothesis, the authors postulate that given the common interest of the EU and the United States in maintaining the Western-oriented international order and the common interest of the EU and China in upholding multilateralism (particularly trade multilateralism) as a mechanism for managing order, the EU has formulated its policy of

---

\* Corresponding Author Email: [sdaghaee@ut.ac.ir](mailto:sdaghaee@ut.ac.ir)

balancing relations with the US and China. For hypothesis testing, five probable scenarios are developed and analyzed. It is asserted that the use of scenarios and public goods game as a research tool will be useful in carefully examining the contentious issues in the relationship between key international actors. Scenarios help to better understand the worldviews and policies of multiple stakeholders. Public goods games have been useful in understanding the role of rationality in actors' decision-making and the key behavioral incentives which determine what choices will be made for cooperation and conflict in inter-state relations. The EU's share in the supply of global public goods (based on Western values) and the role that the EU should play in this international game are determined based on "absolute personal interests". The key factors which work as incentives for the role of the EU in the supply of public goods are the self-seeking benefits of their contributions, the expected costs associated with the failure to participate in the supply of public goods, and the concerns about the irrational or opportunist behaviors of the other international players which might try to maximize their own benefits at the expense of the EU.

In conclusion, it is argued that the most likely scenario would probably be a hybrid scenario in which the European Union is reasonably anticipated to follow its own independent path in order to maintain global multilateralism, but in parallel with its transatlantic cooperation with the US to contain China, and its continued policy of keeping its trade ties with China intact. Such a dual-purpose policy would be adopted to maintain the EU's capacity for independent action while balancing its relationship with both China and the US. In other words, the European Union is primarily seeking to enhance (and then maintain) its capacity for independent action so that in case of the intensification of the renewed great power competition and even hostility, it could use this capacity in cooperation with the middle powers of the international systems for the purpose of safeguarding its independent position in global affairs. The EU is aware of the undeniable role of the United States and China in shaping the world order, and is eager to increase the breadth and complexity of its relations with these two players. It is not surprising to observe the EU's continued efforts to maintain good relations with both China and the United States based on a set of common interests since it wants to avoid being relegated to a bargaining chip in a probable US-China confrontation.. In sum, the EU is forced to play a balancing act between China and the US, but it is also interested in forming interest-based alliances with the middle powers.

**Keywords:** European Union, China, the United States, Interest-Based Alliances, Distribution of Power, Multilateralism, Balance of Interests

#### **Declaration of conflicting interests**

The authors declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

#### **Funding**

The authors received no financial support for the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

**ORCID iDs:** <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5383-0804>



Research Paper

## **Representation of the Syrian Crisis in the Pakistani Media to Advance Government Policy**

**Alireza Khosravi<sup>\*1</sup>, Muhammad Hussain Hussaini<sup>2</sup>**

<sup>1</sup> Assistant Professor, International Relation Department, Faculty of Law & Political Science, University of Tehran, Iran

<sup>2</sup> PhD in International Relation, Faculty of Law & Political Science, University of Tehran, Iran

Received: 26 January 2020, Accepted: 14 March 2022

© University of Tehran

### **Abstract**

Iran and Saudi Arabia, which enjoy good relations with Pakistan, were engaged in a proxy war during the Syrian crisis. The tensions between the two regional rivals over Syria posed a major challenge for Pakistan. On the one hand, Pakistan could not give up its friendship with its western neighbor with which it shares long and strategic borders and security concerns. On the other hand, Pakistan's close ties with Saudi Arabia did not allow Karachi to abandon its strategic cooperation with the oil-rich Kingdom. Every year, Riyadh provides billions of dollars in cash and credit to the Pakistani government in addition to extending cultural aid, humanitarian aid and other forms of assistance such as discounts on oil prices and loan forgiveness and discharge of the remaining balance on past credits. Pakistan's dependency is not limited to the economic or military dimensions of Saudi-Pakistan bilateral relations, and extends to cultural and religious domains because of the importance of Mecca and Medina as the holiest of Moslim cities and Pakistani people's interest in hajj (pilgrimage) to Mecca. In addition to the challenges of balancing its relations with these two regional states and other foreign policy issues, Pakistan's political leaders are faced with threatening domestic challenges due to the existing conflicts between different religious and sectarian spectrums ranging from moderates to extremist groups in Pakistani society. The power struggle and factional conflicts pose great challenges for the Pakistani decision-makers who have tried to find effective ways for public opinion management.

This brings us to the main objective of the present study —to examine how the Syrian crisis has been portrayed in the media in Pakistan, which is considered one of the most important countries in South Asia in terms of active media. It has dozens of television news networks and hundreds of newspapers operating nationally and locally in the country and enjoying relatively high levels of freedom of the press. However, some of them have

---

\* Corresponding Author Email: [ali.khosravi@ut.ac.ir](mailto:ali.khosravi@ut.ac.ir)

been influenced by powerful political parties and the country's rulers. By focusing on three media: *Ummat* newspaper, *Jang* newspaper and *Islam Times* news site and using qualitative content analysis method, "Pedam" approach and analytical software, the authors attempt to find out how Syrian crisis were represented in these three Pakistani media outlets by using different types of strategies (e.g., highlighting, marginalization, conceptualization, and naturalization). It is certain that the meaning of the world depends on its representation. Representation, then, is the way in which we make reality meaningful. We create meanings about ourselves, others and the world around us, and we share or argue with each other through representation.

The findings show that the *Ummat* newspaper with its anti-Bashar orientation and negative portrayal of Iran and Russia, claims that the roots of the Syrian crisis lie in the intervention of these pro-Bashar Assad governments that are aligned with Syria. The *Islam Times* news site seeks to defend the legitimate sovereignty of the Syrian government by concentrating on Western intervention, and criticizing and highlighting the US role in creating the crisis in Syria and the region. *Jang* newspaper has adopted a different approach, and has portrayed the crisis as a deep-rooted and unresolved domestic issue in Syria, and has introduced the intervention of Western and regional countries in support of (or in opposition to) Bashar Assad as a result of domestic anti-Bashar forces. While there are many similarities between the macro-orientation of the two media outlets of *Jang* and the *Ummat*, the clear differences arising from the meanings pushed out of context in the two media outlets of the *Ummat* and the *Islam Times* is evident. In the former (*Ummat*), the Iran-Russia bloc is highlighted as an enemy, and in the latter (*Islam Times*), the Western bloc is represented as an enemy taking side with the United States and its regional allies. Beyond the contradicting representation of the Syrian crisis in the three media outlets, we found that they represent three different segments of Pakistani society. However, these media outlets were in fact instilling in their audience the need for Pakistan's neutrality. Consequently, they made it possible for the Pakistani government to achieve its goal of public opinion management in the Syrian crisis through the media in order to advance its own policy agenda.

**Keywords:** Syrian Crisis, Representation, Pakistani Media, Jang, Ummat, Islam Times

#### **Declaration of conflicting interests**

The authors declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

#### **Funding**

The authors received no financial support for the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

**ORCID iDs:** <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1733-9356>



Research Paper

## The Impact of Brexit on Three Key Principles in British Foreign Policy

Mohammad Reza Saeid Abadi<sup>1\*</sup>, Sam Mohammadpour<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Associate Professor, European Studies, Faculty of World Studies, University of Tehran, Iran

<sup>2</sup> A PhD Candidate in British Studies, Faculty of World Studies, University of Tehran, Iran

Received: 12 April 2020, 14 March 2022

© University of Tehran

### Abstract

The Britons' referendum of 23 June 2016, known as Brexit has led to the UK's withdrawal from the European Union (EU). Within the context of ontological security theory, Brexit can be seen as a campaign by British people and politicians who have never been willing to see their country which was once at the center of world politics, in an alliance with 27 different European countries. For Britons, the EU is a federation aimed at regional integration of sovereignty and foreign policy of the member states, and consequently it might limit the ability of British government to conduct an independent foreign policy. Half a century of British membership in the EU and its recent withdrawal have raised doubts about the Kingdom's post-Brexit foreign policy. The potential for changes in the three key principles of British foreign policy (i.e., the Anglo-American special relationship, responsibility to protect, and multilateralism) are at the top of the ambiguities in the post-Brexit British foreign policy. In the research hypothesis, it is argued that Brexit will have a positive impact on the US-British special relationship, but it will create a more limited space for the use of British economic and military capabilities based on the principle of protection responsibility, and it will lead Britain to upholding the principle of multilateralism by seeking alliances that unlike its membership in the EU will not undermine its institution of sovereignty and independent foreign policy.

In this paper, the authors use a descriptive-analytical approach and a multi-case study method to analyze the impact of Brexit on these three principles. By using this method, an attempt is made to examine these three key principles on a case-by-case basis and analyze the effect of Brexit on them separately. A key objective is to scrutinize the attitudes and preferred policies of the two British major parties (i.e., Conservative Party and Labour

---

\* Corresponding Author Email: sabadi@ut.ac.ir

Party) concerning these principles and the expected impact of Brexit on them. For the theoretical framework of the present study, the theory of ontological security is selected. An important theoretical assumption is that the identity of a state is not necessarily formed only by an external factor, as an 'other'. Identity is also constructed through the development of autobiographical narratives that rely on a state's history and experience, which bring about the continuity of the state's existence and its perception of self-identity and its *raison d'être*. Through these narratives, the individuals in the state and society recognize who they are and how they should act in international politics.

In connection with the Anglo-American special relationship, concepts such as Anglo-Saxonism and Englishness have become powerful narratives that have historically strengthened British-American bonds. Regarding the responsibility to protect, the two main British parties, especially the Conservatives, fully endorse this principle. In this sense, one of the main narratives among British politicians has been the Kingdom's glorious past in defense of democratic values. They view their country as committed to promoting human freedoms, democracy, and anti-terrorism activities, which they call liberal interventionism. Furthermore, one of the characteristics of British foreign policy over the centuries has been the independence of its foreign policy. With the growing integration of the EU, the independence of British foreign policy as a dominant autobiographical narrative has been threatened. After the Britain's withdrawal from the EU, the British politicians need to establish an efficient multilateral system, to redefine the country's *raison d'être* and to create alternative narratives that justify their behaviour and actions, especially in the face of challenges from the emerging powers. Concerning these ontological issues, some scholars argue that the presence of a major power such as Britain in the EU as a tight alliance has been confronted with challenges from the beginning. In other words, it is far-fetched for a country like Britain, once at the top of the international power structure to merge its national sovereignty and foreign policy independence into a quasi-federation like the EU, and acquire no exceptional superiority over other members. However, the withdrawal from the EU in which Britain has been a key member state for half a century will undoubtedly change the main principles of British foreign policy (Anglo-American special relationship, responsibility to protect, and multilateralism). Our findings are summarized as follows:

After Brexit, the capacity to safeguard the special relationship will depend on Britain's willingness and ability to resolve US suspicions. In connection with the Britons' intentions to maintain and strengthen the special relationship, the two factors of mutual guarantee of the relationship and the approval and acceptance of a lesser role by Britain will be essential. However, the type and extent of bilateral assurances, particularly from the UK will help the Kingdom to reaffirm its commitment to US policies. Concerning the issue of British less significant role in the special relationship, it is clear that the US expects to play the dominant role and its policy of giving a secondary and subordinate role to Britain will be pursued more prominently in post-Brexit foreign policy. Regarding the responsibility

to protect, there are many concerns in post-Brexit Britain, and most of them are due to the fact that Britain will be in a weaker position, both economically and militarily. Therefore, many in Britain believe that intervention to fulfill their country's responsibilities, especially in the form of military intervention, even for humanitarian purposes, should be the last resort. Others believe that Britain will increasingly have to rely on its soft power capacities to fulfill its responsibility to support liberal interventionism. Finally, with regard to the third principle, it should be noted that due to its inability to pursue a unilateral foreign policy in the post-Brexit period, the UK is likely to continue to pursue the policy of multilateralism in its foreign policy, and to participate in coalitions that do not limit British national sovereignty and foreign policy independence, as shown in the case of NATO. The present study helps identify the challenges and opportunities that the phenomenon of Brexit has created for the key principles of British foreign policy and better evaluate its foreign policy behaviors in the post-Brexit period.

**Keywords:** Brexit, Anglo-American Special Relationship, Responsibility to Protect, Multilateralism, European Union

**Declaration of conflicting interests**

The authors declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

**Funding**

The authors received no financial support for the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

**ORCID iDs:** <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-3950-7939>



Research Paper

## Modern Governmentality in Iran's Nasserite Era: The Emergence of Population and its Management Techniques

Alireza Sadra<sup>\*1</sup>, Ghasem Nemati<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Professor, Department of Political Science, Faculty of Law & Political Science, University of Tehran, Iran

<sup>2</sup> A PhD Candidate in Political Science, Faculty of Law & Political Science, University of Tehran, Iran

Received: 31 January 2021, Accepted: 14 March 2022  
© University of Tehran

### Abstract

Modern state in Iran does not have a long history, considering that it has been established in the mid-nineteenth century. Due to its domestic and external conditions, this state has acquired unique characteristics. For this reason, the combination of traditional and modern governance as well as the various discourses and mechanisms of the modern state have influenced the public image of the state in Iranian contemporary society. To understand the special nature of the modern state in Iran, there is a need to analyze the historical stages through which the state has been evolving as a vital element in the lives of Iranians today. A large group of scholars attribute the formation of the modern state in Iran to the enactment and enforcement of the 1906 constitution (*Qānon-e asāsi-ye mashrotâh*) in Qajar era, or the rise of the first Pahlavi ruler in 1925. However, the authors in this paper argue that the conditions for the establishment of a modern state in Iran go back to the Nasserite era (decades before the adoption of the 1906 Constitution). The study of the origin of the modern state must go beyond the official histories and be concentrated on careful consideration of the relevant events. The occurrence of some seemingly insignificant and marginal events in the mid-Nasserite era gave rise to a new concept of population— one of the important consequences of which was a change in structures and processes of governance to better manage the population. The rulers had previously considered Iranian population to be without originality, authenticity, and independence, but the attitude of the ruling elites toward the public had been changing. The population was becoming one of the major elements of state power with the potential to overshadow other factors of power.

The main objective of this analysis is to find answers to the following research questions: 1. what conditions led to the emergence of modern

---

\* Corresponding Author Email: sadra@ut.ac.ir



government in nineteenth-century Iran, especially in the Nasserite era? 2. How did events such as epidemics and food shortages lead to the rise of the population and the emergence of the modern state in Iran? Inspired by Michel Foucault's conceptualization of governmentality which includes the study of processes and approaches by which states oversee all aspects of citizens' lives, our research hypothesis has been formulated. It is asserted that the occurrence of certain events (epidemics and food scarcity) in Iran has given rise to a new concept of population which has in turn led to the transition to a new form of governmentality, initially based on two apparatuses of security and discipline. To find suitable answers to the research questions and test the hypothesis, we collect and analyze quantitative data in nineteenth-century treatises and documents, as well as in academic texts related to the formation of modern state in Iran. The conclusion is that the micro-events (smallpox epidemic and grain shortage) affected the various dimensions of the processes of the formation of Iran's modern state with its unique characteristics. Although other factors such as the gradual development of cities, the growth of urbanization, and the delimitation of the country's borders in this period have also contributed to the emergence of the population and the evolution of Iran's modern state, but the importance of these two events are undeniable. By understanding the origin and true nature of modern state in Iran, we will be able to deal with many pressing political and socio-economic problems. This is a useful endeavor, given the urgency of addressing challenges facing the country today through effective governance.

**Keywords:** Iran, Modern State, Nasserite Era, Epidemic, Food Scarcity

**Declaration of conflicting interests**

The authors declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

**Funding**

The authors received no financial support for the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

**ORCID iDs:** <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0185-9883>



Research Paper

## Cooperation and Conflict in West Asia: The Evolution of Theoretical Approaches

Farhad Atai<sup>\*1</sup>, Monir Al-Sadat Mirnezami<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Professor of International Relations, Faculty of Law & Political Science, University of Tehran, Iran

<sup>2</sup> PhD in International Relations, Faculty of Law & Political Science, University of Tehran, Iran

Received: 22 September 2019, Accepted: 14 March 2022  
© University of Tehran

### Abstract

The causes and consequences of cooperation and conflict in West Asia have been extensively discussed by international relations scholars using different approaches. The main objective of the authors is to find answers to the following research questions: 1. How have cooperation and conflict in West Asia been analyzed and explained in different theoretical perspectives in international relations? 2. Which of these approaches provide a better explanation of the region's conflict and cooperation in the last decade? Three dominant approaches of realism, liberalism, and a form of idealism (i.e., constructivism) are comparatively examined to reveal the strengths and weaknesses of their explanations of regional developments over time. It was demonstrated that realism explains conflict and cooperation in the region on the basis of international order, military considerations, and the politics of power, ideology and general analysis of normative power. Liberalism's explanation is based mostly on democracy, type of political system and cognitive cohesion. The explanation of the scholars using the approach of constructivism is based on identity factors, ethnicity, sectarianism and security discourses of states. Realists tend to believe that subjective factors are important in the analyses of foreign policy and international relations issues. Ontological dimension of realism is not devoid of subjective elements, but realists have overlooked the process and the mechanism through which all subjective-objective elements influence the decisions and behaviors of governments.

From the perspective of liberalism, many political factors (e.g., regional hegemony, balance of power, sectarianism, nationalism, type of regime and political ideology) are important in shaping a state's foreign policy behaviors, which evidently need to be understood in their own historical context. On the other hand, it is not clear how these factors make sense to key decisionmakers within governments and lead them to choose the path of

---

\* Corresponding Author Email: atai@ut.ac.ir

cooperation or conflict. Perceptions and misperceptions influence how leaders decide to develop constructive or conflictive relations with other countries with which they are involved in a dispute. How the key decision-makers perceive a threat to their national security is particularly important because conflicts can develop and escalate between regional rivals in conflict situations. Indeed, there is a need to incorporate the context as a factor along with the perceptual and conceptual factors in the analysis of complex issues such as cooperation and conflict in West Asia. International relations theorists have tried to illustrate cooperation and conflict based on the impact of ideas. Even though they accept that ideas are a bridge between actors and reality, two problems remain in understanding cooperation and conflict in this region. First, there is no precise criterion for identifying ideas and identities that are active in constructing cooperation and conflict. Second, there is some confusion in the meaning of ideas and their fluidity and how they work, and this problem has led to overgeneralization in their analyses. The overgeneralization, excessively vague and general statements have resulted in misunderstanding.

The third category of constructivist studies (i.e., discourse analysis) considers cooperation and conflict between governments as constructing the discourse order of actors. Indeed, events, behaviors, practices and decisions can be understood in the context of discourses. Despite the limitations of discourse analysis, including the lack of consensus and even contradictory explanations of the causes of regional conflicts, there is a more clear basis for judging topics and their results because of the use of a more precise methodology. In general, language in the forms of metaphors, assimilations, attributions can be an explanatory factor. Moreover, discourse analysis as a method and theoretical framework could be inventive in topic selection, delineation and results. This type of research does not have a consistent position on actors, dominant policies, and levels of analysis, since it considers everything that happens in reality. Meaning of reality and interpretation of it is central to discourse analysis. Thus, it is clear that the three approaches reveal certain dimensions of the existing challenges in the region. However, we argue that neither realism nor liberalism can provide a comprehensive explanation of the potential impacts of regional challenges such as instability, climate change, demographic change, socio-economic risks of regional disparities and so forth. Most international relations scholars have had to fundamentally revise their theoretical perspectives and incorporate some elements of constructivism in their analysis especially for the studies of the post-Cold War period. As a result of the emerging changes in the international and regional security environment and the inadequacy of different theories, the scholars within all three approaches have turned to the incorporation of new factors (e.g., cognitive-perceptual factors, identity, norms, beliefs and ideas) in their analyses, but they have failed to fulfill all methodological requirements of robust explanations.

**Keywords:** West Asia, Discourse Analysis, Realism, Liberalism, Constructivism

**Declaration of conflicting interests**

The authors declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

**Funding**

The authors received no financial support for the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

**ORCID iDs:** <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-7407-2969>



Research Paper

## **A Causal Layered Analysis of the Continuation of Iran's Nuclear Crisis: Policy Proposals to Address the Challenges**

**Yahya Fozi<sup>1\*</sup>, Mohammad Mahmmodikia<sup>2</sup>**

<sup>1</sup> Professor, Department of Political Science, Institute for Humanities and Cultural Studies, Tehran, Iran

<sup>2</sup> Assistant Professor, Department of Political Thought in Islam, Research Institute of Imam Khomeini and the Islamic Revolution, Tehran, Iran

Received: 11 May 2021, Accepted: 14 March 2022  
© University of Tehran

### **Abstract**

The aim of this study is to identify and explain the causes of continuing challenges posed by Iran's nuclear program in the past decades in order to present a more realistic picture of this long-standing controversy. By using a more comprehensive, multi-layered approach to the study of the causes of the problem, the authors try to provide policy proposals to address the challenges, and ultimately resolve the issue which has sparked intense debate in academic and political establishments. The main research questions are as follows: 1. Why has Iran's decision to acquire nuclear technology and invest in civilian nuclear energy program in the post-revolution era encountered strong international opposition? 2. What are the great powers' reasons for their strong and unremitting objections to Iran's nuclear program? 3. What are the most effective policy proposals to overcome the challenges and prevent the escalation of the nuclear crisis? In order to answer these questions, the authors rely on the causal layer analysis as well as thematic and inferential analysis methods in their quest to assess and explain the impact of key factors on the occurrence and persistence of this protracted crisis. Iran's nuclear issue can be studied at different levels to identify known and lesser-known impediments to its peaceful resolution. There are some obstacles that can be removed in the short term through conventional diplomatic means such as direct negotiations. However, there are some more fundamental and deeply-rooted obstructing factors in the deeper layers which require more time to be tackled in a longer-term horizon.

The main findings are as follows: First, the visible causes of the objections to Iran's nuclear program are explicitly emphasized in the documents and resolutions of the UN Security Council. It is clear that there is a prevalent concern about the likelihood of Iran's acquisition of nuclear

---

\* Corresponding Author Email: fozi@ihcs.ac.ir

weapon capability which might endanger international peace, stability and security. Second, in the second layer of causal analysis, we examined what had been mainly discussed by the scholars and analysts in Iranian research and academic centers, and found diverse explanations of the causes of the nuclear crisis: In the first group, some researchers using neorealist and utilitarian approaches have argued that the Islamic Republic of Iran's access to nuclear technology has been viewed as threatening the interests of all permanent members of the UN Security Council for various economic, security and political reasons. The Big 5 intend to maintain their nuclear monopoly which is seen as necessary for their superior power position in the international system, and thus they are doing their best to prevent nuclear proliferation. The second group of Iranian researchers have adopted a constructivist approach to the study of the nuclear issue which is considered as a challenge arising from the differences in the perceptions and ways of thinking of the two sides (i.e., Iran and the small groups of advocates of its peaceful nuclear program vs the larger group of the opponents of Iran's nuclear program). A third group of scholars have concentrated on elements of identity, and the clashing worldviews of the two sides which have led to the development of different discourses with their own images and metaphors as related to the policies of protecting the status quo or reforming the existing world order in which some member states are reaping the benefit of their superiority at the expense of the rest.

In sum, it is concluded that management of the international crisis over Iran's nuclear program requires a comprehensive, multi-layered and win-win approach which addresses the security concerns of other countries and respects Iran's determination to protect its national interest, particularly as related to its territorial integrity and political system with a unique religious identity. The best strategy to confront the nuclear challenge is to use diplomatic tools to encourage the parties to keep to the existing international principles and rules, including adhering to the non-proliferation regime and accepting the legitimate right of Iran to continue its peaceful nuclear energy program under the agreement between Iran and the International Atomic Energy Agency for safeguarding its civilian nuclear facilities. Focusing on mutual interest-based and win-win-based formulas is of particular importance for the peaceful resolution of the disagreement over Iran's nuclear program.

**Keywords:** Islamic Republic of Iran, Management of Nuclear Crisis, Causal Layer Analysis, UN Security Council, Nuclear Technology

#### **Declaration of conflicting interests**

The authors declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

#### **Funding**

The authors received no financial support for the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

**ORCID iDs:** <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-2636-5839>



Research Paper

## **Marxist Historiography and the Characteristics of Society and State in Pre-Modern Iran**

**Hojjat Kazemi\***

Assistant Professor, Department of Political Science, Faculty of Law & Political Science, University of Tehran, Iran

Received: 23 October 2020, Accepted: 14 March 2022  
© University of Tehran

### **Abstract**

The Orthodox Marxism approach is one of the main perspectives of analyzing Iranian history from the modern social sciences point of view. The Marxist scholars have sought to understand the logic of Iran's historical transformations based on Marx's theory of Historical Materialism. The main objective of this article is to present a critical investigation of the formation of this approach and identify the main themes of Marxist analysis of Iranian history. The main research questions are as follows: 1. What are the main characteristics of Marxist understanding of Iranian history? 2. What is Marxist scholars' perception of the characteristics of society and state in Iranian feudalism? 3. What are the merits and weaknesses of this approach for evaluating the history of Iran? In the hypothesis, it is asserted that Marxist scholars based on the general theory of Marx's historical materialism believed that Iran, like other societies, had experienced the primitive communism modes of production, slavery, feudalism, and capitalism, although, in each period, the general characteristics of modes of production had been combined with the specific characteristics of Iranian society, which had led to the formation of the "Iranian" type. Although Marxist explanations and analyses are considerably richer than those of their historical theoretical rival (i.e., the theory of Oriental Despotism), the inadequacy of the Marxist theory prevents it from being a satisfactory and wide-ranging guide for understanding the history of Iran.

The findings of the present study are summarized as follows: the use of the Marxist approach to analyze the history of Iran dates back to the post-constitutional period and the beginning of Reza Shah's reign (1925-1941). However, the most prominent scholars of this tradition included a group of Soviet academicians. Following the translation of this group's works and the post-1941 dominance of the left's discourse in the Iranian intellectual space, the Orthodox Marxist analysis gradually became the dominant approach of analysis of Iranian history until the early 1980s. According to these scholars, Iran, like all societies, has experienced the primitive communism modes of

---

\* Corresponding Author Email: [hkazemi57@ut.ac.ir](mailto:hkazemi57@ut.ac.ir)

production, slavery, feudalism, and capitalism. However, during each period, the general characteristics of modes of production had been combined with the specific characteristics of Iranian society, and the Iranian particular type had been formed. Therefore, these researchers sought to identify the "general" and "specific" characteristics of the Iranian state and society during the above-mentioned four periods.

Focusing on understanding Marxist scholars' perceptions of the characteristics of society and the state in the period of "Iranian feudalism", the paper showed that in the group's works 20 characteristics for the Iranian society and 11 characteristics for the Iranian state have been identified. The notable features emphasized in this analysis of pre-modern history of Iran include the domination of subsistence agriculture and social relations based on feudal exploitation, the diversity of forms of land ownership, the existence of a distinct class structure, the description of the state as a tool of the feudal class, the cycle of strengthening state ownership of land at the early stages of the establishment of the state and its weakening and disintegration due to the transfer of *Iqta*, the decentralized model of imperial administration, the repetitive pendulum of centralism-feudal separatism, the perception of the status of *mülük al-tawā'if* as evolved feudalism, the perception of social movements as class struggles. Such characteristics are fundamentally in conflict with the characteristics that Oriental Despotism theorists consider as the characteristics of Iranian state and society. However, the article showed that a group of Iranian Marxist scholars have attempted to include the themes of the theory of Oriental Despotism to explain Iranian feudalism.

Based on his critical evaluation of the contributions of the Marxist analytical approach to study the history of Iran, the author concludes that this tradition had analytical advantages compared with the rival theory of Oriental Despotism, because of its consideration of historical dynamics, rejection of static notions as well as highlighting the activism of social forces, and taking into account the complex center-surrounding relations. Despite its merits, the Marxist analytical approach does not have the necessary requirement for a valid analysis of Iranian history, due to its weakness which include the imposition of theory on historical reality, economic reductionism, analytical Westernism, analytical contradiction in the discussion of the position of state in the social system and finally ignoring the pivotal role of tribal actors.

**Keywords:** Marxism, Historical Materialism, Mode of Production, Iranian Feudalism, Social Movement

**Declaration of conflicting interests**

The authors declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

**Funding**

The authors received no financial support for the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

**ORCID iDs:** <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-2031-7115>





Research Paper

## **Convergence and Divergence of Actors in Turkey's Military Offensive in Northern Syria**

**Mossadegh GanjKhanlou \***

Assistant Professor, the Ministry of Science, Research and Technology,  
Tehran, Iran

Received: 12 September 2020, Accepted: 14 March 2022  
© University of Tehran

### **Abstract**

One of the most important problems of the last decade in the international arena has been the protracted Syrian crisis, which has involved a multitude of extra-regional, regional and domestic actors. In February 2019, the Resistance Coalition defeated ISIS, and paved the way for Turkey's invasion of northern Syria with the stated objective of countering the security threat of Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) which is designated as a terrorist organization by Turkey, the U.S. and the EU. The Turkish offensives have been carried out in three phases in the form of three operations (i.e., the Euphrates Shield, the Olive Branch, and the Spring of Peace). In the third phase of Turkey's massive invasion of northern Syria which was referred to as Spring of Peace in September 2019, Turkey's ruling party leaders sought to implement a plan to establish a 32-km-wide and 480-km-long safe zone on Syrian soil along the Turkish border. Turkey's offensives and military presence in northern Syria, especially after the start of the Spring of Peace, created new ambiguities and complications in the Syrian crisis situation. The multiplicity of actors, who are pursuing their habitually discordant goals in Syria, made it very difficult to provide an accurate analysis of the situation in the aftermath of Turkey's multiple military operations in northern Syria. This complexity is better recognized when the extra-regional, regional, and domestic actors involved in Syria are classified on the basis of their worldviews and foreign policy objectives. At the international level of analysis, Turkey's military operations in northern Syria provoked a rivalry between the great powers (the United States, China, and Russia) along the lines of the theory of hegemonic transformation. At the regional level of analysis, Turkey's direct military involvement and deployment of troops to Syrian territory disrupted the balance of threat created by the leaders of countries in the region that have historically regulated their relations on the idea of comprehensive balance which has in turn been influenced by the actors' threat perception of offensive power and aggressive intentions of their

---

\* Corresponding Author Email: ganjkhanelou.m@ut.ac.ir

rivals. At the domestic level, the calculations of *takfiri* terrorist groups such as the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS, or *Daesh*), Al-Nusra Front, as well as Kurdish separatist terrorist groups such as PKK and Democratic Union Party (PYD) changed in proportion to their power position and the actions of the more influential actors at the higher levels.

The main purpose of the present study is to answer the following research question: What are the convergences and divergences between the multitude of actors influenced by the Turkish cross-border offensive mission and military presence in northern Syria? In the research hypothesis, it is argued that Turkey's military presence in northern Syria has created threats and opportunities for Iran, which must determine its policies based on its national interests by understanding the convergences and divergences of the interests of other key actors at various extra-regional, regional, national and subnational levels. A score of actors are involved in this conflict as either the supporters of the Assad regime or the backers of the Syrian opposition by providing considerable assistance in the form of arms, training, financing, political support, and even military personnel in order to achieve their contradictory goals. The author used the method of structural analysis of the actors involved in the Turkish intervention in northern Syria, and the "Matrix of Alliances and Conflicts: Tactics, Objectives, and Recommendations" (MACTOR) software in order to identify and analyze the strategies of the major actors. Data collection techniques in this study included: First, qualitative secondary data were obtained from government reports, newspapers, and previous scholarly articles assessing different aspects of the situation. Second, An expert interview was conducted to explore diverse perspectives of fifteen professionals with considerable knowledge of strategic issues in West Asia. To form the panel of experts on interaction matrices in this study, a purposive sampling technique is used to select the experts with extensive experience and/or academic research on the Syrian crisis. Based on the study's findings, the actors involved in the Turkish offensive into northern Syria were classified into six groups based on the degree of influence and vulnerability: 1. *Determinant actors* with powerful influence and low vulnerability consists of the United States, Russia, the Islamic Republic of Iran, PKK, and the Lebanese Hezbollah; 2. *Crucial actors* with powerful influence and high vulnerability include Turkey, the European Union, Israel, the PYD, Saudi Arabia, and the UAE; 3. *Aim actors* with lesser influence than that of crucial actors, and with high vulnerability include Syria, Iraq, and Syrian Democratic Forces (QSD); 4. *Regulatory actors* with less influence and vulnerability than crucial actors include the People's Democratic Party of Turkey (HDP), Turkish-backed Takfiris, the Iraqi regional government, and Turkish nationalists; 5. *Result actors* with very low influence and very high vulnerability include refugees from Syria, the Arab tribes in the conflict zone, and the Syrian Alawites; and 6. *Autonomic actors* with the lowest degree of influence and vulnerability; and thus were not considered in this study because of their insignificant impact and relevance. The crucial, aim, and regulatory actors have a top position in Iran's assessment of this foreign policy issue since they can have

positive or negative impacts on Iran's efforts to uphold its regional power status.

The findings of the study show that three polarizations of the actors can be distinguished in the crisis situation created by Turkey's offensives and military presence in northern Syria: 1. The actors in the first pole includes Iran, Hezbollah, Iraq, Russia, the Syrian government, and the Syrian Alawites. 2. The second pole of actors consists of Turkey, Al-Nusra Front, ISIS, Turkish-backed Takfiris, Turkish nationalists, the Free Syrian Army, Syrian war refugees, the Syrian Kurdish Patriotic Council, and Arab tribes in the conflict zone. 3. The third pole of actors includes the United States, Israel, the European Union, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, QSD, Kurdistan Regional Government of Iraq, the HDP, the PKK and its Syrian branch. The wide-ranging characteristics of the actors in the third cluster indicate the fragmentation in this category. The gap between PKK-PYD and the other actors indicates the tactical convergence as well as the extent of variation in multiple (and often conflicting) goals pursued by the actors in this category.

Analysis of the divergence of actors also showed that Turkey, the Islamic Republic of Iran, and the PKK terrorist group have the greatest divergence of goals regarding Turkey's military operations in northern Syria. Turkey and Iran are in a state of loneliness, but Russia is closer to Iran and the Resistance Coalition due to its views on security threats posed by the U.S. To overcome its loneliness, the Turkish government has the option of moving closer to the U.S. and its partners, but this move might lead to the empowerment of pro-Kurdistan Kurdish movements. Its other option is to get closer to the Resistance Coalition, but it must inevitably redefine its foreign policy objectives and behaviors according to the discourse of this Coalition.

**Keywords:** Turkey, Northern Syria, Convergence of Actors, Divergence of Actors, Kurds

#### **Declaration of conflicting interests**

The authors declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

#### **Funding**

The author disclosed receipt of the following financial support for the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article: He received financial support for the research of this article from *Mo'asseseh-ye motāleāt-e rāhbordi* (the Institute for Strategic Studies) as part of a larger research project grant.

**ORCID iDs:** <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5516-1771>



Research Paper

## The Emerging International Order, and the Future of Human Rights: Theoretical Perspectives and Critiques

Homeira Moshirzadeh<sup>1\*</sup>, Mostafa Saburi<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Associate Professor, Department of International Relations, Faculty of Law & Political Science, University of Tehran, Iran

<sup>2</sup> A PhD Candidate in International Relations, Faculty of Law & Political Science, University of Tehran, Iran

Received: 28 February 2022, Accepted: 14 March 2022

© University of Tehran

### Abstract

Human rights have been the concern of not only activists and governments but also the scholars of international relations for decades. With its emphasis on civil and political rights and its individualist underpinnings, human rights discourse appeared to have become dominant in the last two decades of the twentieth century. However, it now faces significant, and perhaps very consequential challenges. Although it has been challenged from various perspectives for decades, it seems that these challenges have become more articulated and multidimensional. Moreover, in the aftermath of the decline of the US, the emergence of China as a great power, and the formation of a post-liberal international order, security concerns have become more significant compared to ethical or normative concerns. This might eventually be followed by the emergence of a non-liberal, non-individualistic set of international norms and values.

In this article, the authors show that theoretical reflections have not led to any agreement among various thinkers over the justification of human rights in spite of the fact that they may be its advocates. Communitarianism as an important rival for universalism challenges natural law tradition as a fundamental justification for universal human rights, and many theorists, even with cosmopolitan inclinations, do not find natural law as an appropriate justification for universalism. Furthermore, the dominant liberal conception of human rights itself has been criticized by influential figures such as Hannah Arendt, Alasdair MacIntyre, Onara O'Neil, and Makau Mutua for being abstract, individualistic, Eurocentric, and with little concern for human obligations. These authors suggest a more contextual

---

\* Corresponding Author Email: hmoshir@ut.ac.ir

understanding of human rights, more attention to collective rights, public awareness of the significance of community bonds, more consideration of obligations towards others besides right claims, and becoming more aware of the need to end Eurocentric conscious or unconscious assumptions, methods, and understandings. These theoretical debates have become more significant in the post-liberal order in which security concerns have taken precedence over human rights promotion, and have led to violations of the universal narrative of human rights. On one hand, western powers, as the major advocates and promoters of liberal norms and values may not see human rights violations in the world as their main concern. On the other hand, China, as an emerging power is not part of the western world and its cultural Confucian tradition is characterized by being more collectivistic than individualistic. Therefore, it may eventually call for more emphasis on communitarianism and/or human obligations and collective rights. The combination of these two challenges have not been fully discussed by IR scholars. The main objective of this paper was to contribute to current debates on human rights and its significance for international relations by identifying threats and opportunities associated with the marginalization of the universalist account of human rights at both theoretical and practical levels. Finally, the authors conclude that the main threat is that the process may destroy the existing international arrangement without creating any alternative mechanism for defending individuals' rights. The only substitute for international mechanisms is the codification of human rights norms in domestic legal systems. However, since many countries in the world have not attempted to ensure upholding and protecting these rights in their own legal systems, this alternative may prove to be ineffective. However, the new world order may lead to a good opportunity for providing practical solutions to address the theoretical criticisms. The emerging international arrangement may provide new capacity for non-western cultural traditions such as Confucianism to play a role in the expansion of the notion of human rights and more obligation-based norms, in addition to more emphasis on recognizing and accepting differences in opinions in order to promote pluralism.

**Keywords:** Human Rights, Emerging International Order, Confucianism, China, Eurocentrism

**Declaration of conflicting interests**

The authors declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

**Funding**

The authors received no financial support for the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

**ORCID iDs:** <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-7983-1397>



Research Paper

## **Xenophontic Narrative of the Socratic Political Philosophy: A Commentary on *The Education of Cyrus***

**Shervin Moghimi Zanjani\***

Assistant Professor, Institute for Humanities and Cultural Studies, Tehran, Iran

Received: 10 May 2021, Accepted: 14 March 2022  
© University of Tehran

### **Abstract**

*The Education of Cyrus* is Xenophon's magnum opus in political philosophy. If *Memorabilia* is in the center of his Socratic writings, then *The Education of Cyrus* is the main work in his portrayal of Cyrus. *The Education of Cyrus*, as Plato's *Republic*, is an educational work in the Socratic sense of the word and hence an original text in the tradition of the Socratic political philosophy. The biographical form of this writing originates from the educational intention of his writer who, by concentrating on the Cyrus's deeds, encourages the reader to take notice of this question: "what is the best way of life for human beings?" If we confirm that *Memorabilia* has a biographical form, then we would be able to compare it to *The Education of Cyrus*. The author attempts to show that Xenophon's *The Education of Cyrus* contains a comparison between the Socratic way of life and the Cyrus' way of life. In spite of showing his admiration for Cyrus nearly in the entire of that work, Xenophon ultimately defends the superiority of the Socratic (or philosophical) way of life as compared to Cyrus the Great's (or political) way of life. This is the deepest educational layer in Xenophon's political philosophy hidden behind the disguise of political education in his work on Cyrus. In order to better understand, we should take a distinct stance on the text itself as a totality whose every part serves the whole. By whole, we mean the intention of the writer; and this is the well-known approach innovated and applied by Leo Strauss who is the most eminent commentator of Xenophon's work. Nevertheless, we should avoid the modern dogmatism in Xenophon's scholarship which tends to depict him as a marginal or second-rate writer. As mentioned by Strauss, Xenophon "had the courage to clothe himself as an idiot and go through millennia that way— he's the greatest con man I know." According to Strauss, and his commentaries in Xenophon scholarship in recent decades, there is no reliable way to understand Xenophon's intention in *the Education of Cyrus*, unless we use

---

\* Corresponding Author Email: s.moghimi@ihcs.ac.ir

Strauss's method of interpretation of Xenophon as a first-rank political philosopher. *The Education of Cyrus* might be read as a logographic text given that every part of the work "must be necessary for the whole; the place where each part occurs is the place where it is necessary that it should occur." Using this method, the author has tried to show that—in spite of its pessimistic tone toward the political way of life—the concluding part of *The Education of Cyrus* is consistent with the great admiration of Cyrus as expressed by Xenophon in the most other parts of this work. We examine whether Xenophon's intention in *The Education of Cyrus* is to expose the education which Cyrus received or the one he did not. Thus, he emphasizes the contradiction in *The Education of Cyrus* as a whole, and simultaneously in the other Xenophon's writing, especially his *Memorabilia*. To understand the two main Xenophontic scholarly work, and their positions in the hierarchy of Xenophon's philosophical thought, it is necessary to compare the similarities, differences and particularly as they relate to the limitations in the Socratic and Cyrus' ways of life, and to analyze how each has affected the other. The aim here was to show the true intention of Xenophon as one of the most authoritative Socratic political philosophers. In doing so, we understand Xenophon's preferences for philosophical or political ways of life.

**Keywords:** Xenophon, Education of Cyrus, Socrates, Political Philosophy, Way of Life

**Declaration of conflicting interests**

The authors declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

**Funding**

The authors received no financial support for the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

**ORCID iDs:** <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6553-5389>



Research Paper

## **A Comparison of Foreign Policy Discourses in Sociology Textbooks during the Presidencies of Khatami and Ahmadinejad**

**Ahmad Naghibzadeh<sup>1\*</sup>, Vahid Amani Zoeram<sup>2</sup>**

<sup>1</sup> Professor, Faculty of Law & Political Science, University of Tehran, Iran

<sup>2</sup> PhD in Political Science, Faculty of Law & Political Science, University of Tehran, Iran

Received: 21 July 2016, Accepted: 14 March 2022

© University of Tehran

### **Abstract**

Public attitudes toward foreign policy issues are part of the political culture of every country, and are influenced by the process of formal education and the curriculum adopted by schools and universities. In countries such as Iran with political electoral systems, in which rival political groups have reached no consensus on foreign policy approaches, issues and concepts, it is highly likely that changes in the executive branch would be followed by fundamental changes in the way the textbooks are designed to provide the students with knowledge about the theoretical and real-world examples of foreign policy challenges. Under different presidents, students might be confronted with different and sometimes conflicting types of values and attitudes toward foreign policy. These changes have been viewed as necessary in order to educate the younger generation to be prepared for foreign policy challenges. When Mohammad Khatami came to power as president in 1997, major changes took place in Iran's domestic and foreign policies, and in turn they led to changes in the content of high school sociology textbooks to reflect new values and attitudes. At the end of Khatami's presidency and the beginning of Ahmadinejad's presidency in 2005, the same books underwent fundamental changes as a new discourse of foreign policy emerged in the Islamic Republic of Iran. These changes indicate the lack of a grand strategy in defining the principles of domestic and foreign policy in a way which is not subjected to the whims and wishes of the dominant political faction and key leaders who win the presidential elections. This variability in the principles of domestic and foreign policy leads to continuous changes in the values and attitudes towards foreign policy issues and challenges in the process of political socialization. The main objectives of the authors are to study Iran's high school sociology

---

\* Corresponding Author Email: [anaghib@ut.ac.ir](mailto:anaghib@ut.ac.ir)



textbooks during the presidency of the reformist Khatami's presidency and compare them to the era of fundamentalist Ahmadinejad.

The main research question is: What has been the impact of the change of dominant political faction in the Iranian executive branch on the foreign policy discourse in the high-school sociology textbooks? In their hypothesis, the authors argue that changes in the foreign policy discourse of Iran's presidency markedly influence the high school curriculum. Qualitative content analysis method was used to compare the text of three sociology books published in Khatami's era with the same titles in Ahmadinejad's era. The content of each textbook, including text, images and symbols had to be considered as units of analysis in order to investigate major similarities and differences in how foreign policy issues were depicted in each textbook. The main findings indicate a fundamental difference in the patterns of political socialization and political culture related to complex foreign policy issues during the two periods. Although the textbooks of both time periods reflected a critical approach to the West, Khatami era's textbooks was based on the policy of accepting and interacting with the Western world, while Ahmadinejad era's approach was mostly to criticize the West and emphasize the obstacles in the interactions between the Western countries and the Islamic world. Furthermore, concepts such as diplomacy and international institutions were among the topics mentioned in the Khatami's textbooks, which provided students with a model of active foreign policy in the international system. In contrast, the textbooks of the Ahmadinejad period indicated the difficulties of cooperation with international institutions and considered confrontation with the key international actors highly likely.

**Keywords:** Curriculum, Iran's Foreign Policy, Political Culture, Khatami, Ahmadinejad

**Declaration of conflicting interests**

The authors declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

**Funding**

The authors received no financial support for the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

**ORCID iDs:** <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-2075-7348>



Research Paper

## The Civic Implications of the Mystical Thought of Ein Al-Qozāt Hamedāni

Yadollah Honari Latifpour<sup>1\*</sup>, Arash Amjadian<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Assistant Professor, Department of Political Science, Bu-Ali Sina University, Hamedan, Iran

<sup>2</sup> MA in Islamic Political Thought, Department of Political Science, Bu-Ali Sina University, Hamedan, Iran

Received: 28 June 2021, Accepted: 14 March 2022  
© University of Tehran

### Abstract

Mystical texts are an important part of the intellectual heritage of Iran and Islamic World. In spite of the differences of opinion between scholars about the history of political thought in Iran, there is no doubt that mystical tradition was rich and influential in medieval Islamic period. However, most of the research conducted on these texts are in the form of biographies and had almost exclusively concentrated on the literary aspects and moral teachings of these texts. Little attention has been paid to the intellectual themes and implications of these texts for politics and civic engagement in public life in society. A critical reading for the purpose of gaining a deeper and more accurate understanding of the political value of these texts can be useful in the analyses of the historical development of Iranian-Islamic thought. Furthermore, by doing so, we might find appropriate answers to the challenges of today's Iranian society. Abu'l-ma'ālī 'abdallāh Bin Abībakr Mohammad Mayāneji Known as *Ein Al-Qozāt Hamedāni* is one of the incomparable thinkers in Iranian-Islamic thought. He was considered one of the Sufi sheikhs of his time and had many disciples, some of whom had political influence and positions in the Seljuk political system. He died at the young age of thirty-three when the Seljuk executed him in 1131, but his works secured him a place in the history of Iran as a mystical philosopher. Henry Corbin, a French theologian and Iranologist with renowned expertise in Islamic philosophy and Sufism, has referred to him as a jurist, mystic, philosopher, and mathematician, but he is better known as a mystic among the Iranian scholars of Islamic-Iranian thought. *Ein Al-Qozāt* has not been recognized as a political thinker in the literal sense or a writer who has directly been interested in politics, and thus his works have seldom been evaluated from this perspective. Indeed, some scholars have argued that "mysticism never seeks to add, know, rearrange or improve anything in the earthly world", and mysticism as an independent epistemological realm is in conflict with politics as a science that is responsible for organizing the public arenas.

---

\* Corresponding Author Email: honari@basu.ac.ir

In the present study, the authors use certain components of Leo Strauss and Quentin Skinner's methodology to analyze important writings of *Ein Al-Qozāt Hamedāni*, particularly his letters in order to reveal the civic virtues and capacities of thought of this famous mystic, and find political significance not previously traced. The main research question to be answered is: How can civic life be organized by relying on the basic concepts of the mystical thought of *Ein Al-Qozāt Hamedāni*. By civic implications, we mean virtues such as justice, love, friendship, and tolerance, which being at the junction of mystical thought and political thought, strengthen social relations and create the desired political order. In the view of *Ein Al-Qozāt Hamedāni*, justice is considered as an element that provides a basis for welfare for all members of society.

*Ein Al-Qozāt Hamedāni* considered love as an inherent thing and believed that the love of God is hidden in the human nature, and wrote that the love of a human being to another human being is useful in moving towards transcendental love. He described love as the cause of moral strength, the promoter of friendship, and the basis for the movement toward true love leading to public good and eternal bliss. By his attention to love, *Ein Al-Qozāt Hamedāni* rejected prejudice and called on different societies to nurture friendship. He considered all religions as being equal and worthy of respect, and saw all religions and sects on the path to love. In fact, he considered love as the basis for tolerance, acceptance of pluralism and reconciliation of societies. In spite of the unsettled situation of his time, which was full of prejudice and rage, he insisted on the solidarity and reconciliation of religions. He showed his conviction that the observance of the principle of tolerance is a necessity in society. In conclusion, the authors' comprehensive analysis of *Ein Al-Qozāt Hamedāni*'s writings show a kind of systematic interactions between the various aspects of his thought, which was ultimately aimed at establishing a well-organized and just society free from crises, moral disorders and social conflicts. Introducing *Ein Al-Qozāt Hamedāni* as a great thinker in the mystical tradition with no interest in politics is an example of a contradiction in the narratives that have defined mystical thought in fundamental conflict with politics and political action, because of the characterization of mysticism as a promoter of apostasy and isolationism.

**Keywords:** Political Thought, Mysticism, Justice, Love, Tolerance

**Declaration of conflicting interests**

The authors declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

**Funding**

The authors received no financial support for the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

**ORCID iDs:** <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4650-623X>