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Apocatastasis and the Far-Right’s “Return” to Religion:

Against the Muslim Other

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Abstract

The notion of *apocatastasis* is central to Western theological traditions, yet it has remained little discussed outside of small theological circles, especially those interested in Patristics (Church Fathers). However, in today’s political climate, wherein the condition of the precariat continues to deteriorate, and the “saviors” of the precariat present various forms of nationalism as the panacea for the precariat’s political, economic, and cultural *erlebnis*, the notion of apocatastasis has once again emerged. This time, it is not a central *theological* concept, as it was in a more religious age, but rather has been translated into secular political-philosophy. It is no longer reserved for the discussion of eschatology and soteriology, salvation *from* history, but is now a matter of civilizational salvation *within* history.

Key Words: Apocatastasis, Muslim other, Far Right, Return to Religion, Identitarian Politics.

Apocatastasis in History

The Greek word “apocatastasis” (ἀποκατάστασις) can be understood as “reconstitution,” “restitution,” or “restoration” – a state of returning to an original or primordial condition. For the ancient Stoics, for an apocatastasis to occur, Zeus had to first contract into himself – into self-contemplation. This happened when the stars and planets returned to their original positions in alignment with sign of Cancer. In his contraction, Zeus returns to himself and away from his own expansion as cosmos, which leads to the cosmos being reduced to the primal element of fire, in an all-encompassing conflagration, or *ekpyrosis* (ἐκπύρωσις).¹ After this cosmic destruction, when Zeus projects his thoughts outward once again, all is purified and “reborn” (palingenesis) through the guidance of Logos – an emanation of Zeus. A new cosmos proceeds from the ashes of the old cosmos.

Among the Abrahamic religions, the Jewish rendering of apocatastasis occurs in Malachi 4:6, wherein the Hebrew verb *shúv*, meaning “again,” is translated in the Greek Septuagint as “apocatastasis” – as good fortunes are “restored” after times of destruction and tribulation. In the Christian New Testament, the term appears in Acts 3:21, wherein Peter “restores” health to the sick while speaking of the return of the Messiah.² The Church Father Origen of Alexandria, used the term to refer to “universal salvation,” or the idea that all sinners will return to the divine due to the endlessness of divine mercy. Thus, salvation for all through the restitution of all to their divinely-created primordial state. In Gnostic texts, apocatastasis occurs when a soul, which was considered to be “divine light” trapped in evil matter, emancipates itself by attaining secret knowledge (gnosis) and is thus reconciled with and returns to the True God. Martin Luther, the Protestant reformer, translated the Greek term “apocatastasis” in Acts 3:21 as “herwiedergebracht werde” (will be brought back) in German. Such “returning” for Luther meant salvation and resurrection.³

Norse mythology has its own version of a future apocatastasis, the *Ragnarök*, which foretells of great battles, natural disasters, and the submersion of the world in water, only to recover with the survival of two humans (Líf and Lífprásir), who will rebuild society anew from the ruins of the old (palingenesis) (Andersen 3-14).⁴

Although the majority of religious invocation of apocatastasis are eschatological in nature, some, like in Clement of Alexandria (c. 150 – c. 215), are social in nature. For example, Clement utilized the term apocatastasis in regards to the Gnostic Christians, believing that one day they would *return* from their corrupted state and thus be *reconciled* to the fold of “Orthodox” Christianity. In this account, the term

represents a hope for a future reconciliation and restoration of a painful schism *within this world*.

Whether it is understood within the realm of theology and mythology, wherein it pertains to the actions of a divine being or beings, or a matter of human relations, the notion of apocatastasis is constituted by a certain logical structure: (1) there is a nostalgic memory (projection backwards) of an original state-of-being, a primordial condition, or ideal state; (2) this original state-of-being is no longer in existence, as it was corrupted, polluted, or damaged beyond reform or repair by dysgenic forces, often from outside of the ideal state; (3) the corrupted condition is deemed intolerable by those who recognize the corruption, and out of this an apocalyptic destruction – or purification – of that corrupted state occurs; (4) in the end, those who champion the original condition rebuild the original state from the now-purified ashes of the ruins. This rebuilding is understood as a “rebirth,” “reconstitution,” or “restoration” (palingenesis) of that which was formerly corrupted: a new beginning modeled on the original condition. I argue that this philosophical concept provides the foundational logic of much of the West’s far-right’s politics today, albeit in a secular form. While it is no great insight to highlight that elements on the political right-wing look to an idealized past for their future-oriented politics, it is important to realize just how much of the Alt-Right’s, New-Right’s, Paleoconservatives’, and Eurasianists’ endeavor is rooted in the regenerative logic of this once-religious concept. At the core of all their political, religious, and cultural philosophies, is the desire to rebuild a West free the dysgenic elements of modernity: multiculturalism, “cultural Marxism,” globalism, nihilism, the consumer society, necrophilia, and Islamization, i.e. the colonization of the *Abendland* by the aggressive “other”: Muslims.

Apocatastasis and the Right’s “Return to Religion”

The clear majority of the West’s “retrotopian” politics are devoid of *explicit* theological considerations (Bauman). They do not argue for a substantive return to a religious way-of-being in the world. By their outward appearance, these movements, whether they be the Alt-Right in the U.S., the New Right in Europe, Generation Identitaire, or the numerous anti-immigrant and anti-Muslim political parties forming in Europe, have little basis in Christianity, Judaism, or even European paganism. They are thoroughly secular. However, many often do utilize the collective and nostalgic “idea” of Christendom in order to mobilize the masses with their identitarian politics.⁵ Despite their secularity (masquerading behind the

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façade of religion), I argue that the religious concept of apocatastasis is at the core of their retrotopian political philosophies. They have learned from the Hegelian Left to sublated (*aufhaben*) the theological into the philosophical, whereby “rescuing” – or in this case “taking hostage” – the emancipatory theological element by rearticulating it within a secular palingenetic philosophy. They do this in an attempt to undermine the “ideology of progress” that is fundamental to liberal and Marxist conceptions of history. Nevertheless, the dialectical logic they practice is not the same as Hegel, Marx, the Frankfurt School, etc. Theirs is what I call *peripeteic-dialectics*, or dialectics-in-reverse, wherein that which was formally negated is restored and reconstituted, and that which was preserved in the forward movement of “dialectical progress” is negated in the movement backwards. It is an *ekpyrotic-dialectical* – a destructive dialectical movement in reverse – with the ultimate goal of reconstituting the civilizational-ideal: apocatastasis.

Apocatastasis Philosophers: Examples

The retrotopian Russian philosopher Alexander Dugin, standing on the back of the perennialist philosopher René Guénon, the Traditionalist Julius Evola, and the Russia Orthodox philosopher Nikolai Berdyaev, has argued for the “reversibility of time” in his *Fourth Political Theory* (Dugin 68). He believes that the concept of time is a “social phenomenon,” relative to each culture and society (Dugin 68). As everything that is “societally-dependent” is ultimately transformable, and thus subject to *peripeteic-dialectics*, so too is time. “In the context of modernity,” Dugin writes, “turning back from some point in history to a previous one is possible” (Dugin 69).⁶ Dugin here rejects Hegel’s notion of linear time acting as a vehicle towards inevitable progress; rather he argues for a Russian apocatastasis – a return behind “modernity” – both communist and neo-liberal modernity – in order to produce what Nikolai Berdyaev called “the end of the Renaissance” and the beginning of a “New Middle Ages,” a restitution, restoration, and reconstitution of a holistic time before the dysgenic tendencies of Enlightened modernity, both in its capitalist and communist manifestations, fractured Western peoples’ primordial connection to their primordial ethnic and spiritual identity (Berdyaev). The Russian apocatastasis dreamt of by Dugin and Berdyaev will wipe clean the pollution of the dysgenic tendencies of the secular Enlightenment, which ushered in the terror of materialism, individualism, nihilism, and godlessness.

Standing alongside Dugin in the “primordial school” of René Guénon, is the aforementioned American nationalist Steve Bannon, who, despite his public avowal

of the “Judeo-Christian West,” has popularized and secularized the Hindu idea of the *Kali Yuga*, which he learned from Guénon’s 1946 book *The Crisis of the Modern World* (Guenon 7-20; Green 204-208; Koffler 59). According to this doctrine, time is conceptualized as being cyclical, and earthly ages come to their ends due to cosmological logic. The last of the ages in the Hindu cycle is the *Kali Yuga*, the age of strife and discord, generally associated with the disintegration of societal norms, values, and principles. As Guénon argued, the West entered into the Kali Yuga centuries ago, but its devolution accelerated with secular modernity, especially with the rise of globalization, cultural relativism, multiculturalism, and the “reign of quantity” over “quality,” as he describes it in his 1945 book *The Reign of Quantity and the Signs of the Times*. These dysgenic developments resulted in the loss of the West’s identity as a distinct civilization, as it severed its connection with the perennial truth expressed within its ancient religious traditions (both pagan and Christian). This anti-modernist argument of Guénon is especially important for apocatastasis thinkers, for it was this so-called “abandonment” of the Europe’s connection with the primordial traditional via Catholicism that left it open to be colonized by another group of people who are still in touch with their connection to the primordial tradition, i.e. Islam and Muslims.

Similar to the Kali Yuga, in William Strauss and Neil Howe’s influential book, *The Fourth Turning*, the Fourth stage of a civilization, or what they call “turnings,” is the devolution of civilization (Strauss and Howe). They argue that all civilizations have an “high” period, an “awakening” period, an “unraveling” period, and lastly a “crisis” period, out of which a civilization can be born again (palingenesis). For Steve Bannon, the crisis of modernity, as it pertains to the United States, began with the baby-boomer generation who undermined the traditional values that were established in the previous turnings.⁷ The ultimate telos of the Fourth Turning leads the West through catastrophic devastation – a social, political, and economic *ekpyrosis* – which is the precondition for a *Restitutio ad Integrum* – a restitution of the primordial condition, upon which a New-West – began by Trump and his nationalist European allies – will be built. Here, Bannon skillfully merges these two strains of thought into one integrated political forecast: The West is collapsing under the weight of its own doing, and we – the good Traditionalists and the Faustian Men of the West – must be prepared to, as Julius Evola said, “rise from the ruins” once the collapse is complete, and rebuild a civilization on its Greco-Roman, Germanic, and “Judeo-Christian” foundations (Andersen 6-9).

Why a Religious Apocatastasis: Islam and Western Identity

For the European New Right, an *ekpyrosis* has already begun to disrupt Europe’s historical retirement: the most destructive part of Zeus’ flood came not by water alone, but by way of immigrants and refugees on the water, washing in “reinforcements” for the Islamic colonials who are already a threat to Europe’s fragile sense-of-self. The most powerful signifier of the West’s collapse of identity is the Western Muslim. As a whole, Muslims who claim both their faith and their Westernality are the painful signifiers that demonstrate the fact that Western identity has lost its content, and remains, as a result, merely formal. *Blut* (blood) has been severed from *boden* (soil). The “newcomers,” or “invaders” as they’re called by Renaud Camus, the author of *The Great Replacement (Le Grand Remplacement)*, are the non-identical who can, by way of civil law as opposed to pre-political foundations (culture, language, shared history, ethnicity), rightfully claim their Western inheritance, whilst still remaining identifiably non-identical to the West (Camus). In other words, due to Enlightenment conceptions of citizenship, these “invaders” are both Western and non-Western – they are “naturalized” citizens by law but not of the Western *ethnosphere* – the sphere of blood. Yet, from the perspective of the New Right, the non-Westernality of the newcomers, smuggled into the West via liberal “ethno-masochist” policies, are replacing the remnants of Western identity with a culture that is incongruent with the West’s traditional identifying markers: its *Greco-Roman and Christian heritage*. This process is called “*überfremdung*” (over-foreignization) in German. *Überfremdung* can only happen, they surmise, because the West has no shared transnational identity, as it did when Europe still professed its faith in Christianity, or before that through its paganism, by which it could juxtapose the *West and the Rest*. As a means of defending the West from *überfremdung* and “Islamization,” a palingenetic response to the immigrant-induced *ekpyrosis* is required. According to the far-right, after the collapse of modern Europe, Europeans have a choice: they can either rebuild their civilization on the basis of its cultural and religious inheritance and ethnos: white Greco-Roman Christianity, or it can choose to be replaced for good. Clearly, the far-right prefers to return to the white ethnostates that existed before modernity and its disorder: a *civilizational apocatastasis*.

Part of the strategy by which “Islamization” is confronted is a call to “return to religion” – a political and cultural insistence on the West’s *Christian* heritage. This call to “return” Europe to its religious past is meant to move it out of dysgenic modernity, and into a coalition of “ethnostates” – a cleansing of the European

cosmos of what pollutes it – immigrants, universalism, liberalism, communism, urbanism, and most importantly, Islam. Christianity, in this way, is ideologically functionalized; it serves the political needs of traditional European identity. In this sense, it is the “European-ness” of Christianity that is emphasized, not the lived moral-ethical teachings of Rabbi Jesus of Nazareth, who welcomed the immigrant, refugee, foreigner, etc. It is Christianity without the Christ, Christianity without its Jewish *gründer* (initiator) – a “whitened sepulcher” form of Christianity, that is meant to stand in contradistinction to the Semitic-foreignness of Islam, despite the overlapping similarities between the two Abrahamic traditions.

Although, on the face of it, we can see that the far-right’s call to return to religion is a hollow call, as it categorically rejects the universal care for humanity that is at the core for all three Abrahamic traditions. That universal care is replaced by a particular concern: the survival of white society as white society, over and above all others. Nevertheless, we should look into the conditions of the possibility that an authentic form of religion – both in theory and praxis, i.e. as a defining civilizational force in contemporary Europe – can be resuscitated within Europe’s secular society.

Although many secular philosophers have been known to translate emancipatory and revolutionary elements of religion into their secular non-conformist philosophy, they have nevertheless has often concluded that religion within the West has exhausted itself as a civilizational force. Indeed, the only way to rescue religion within the secular society is to translate those still-emancipatory elements into philosophy. This is true for the Frankfurt School, which has argued that religion has been “neutralized” as a historical force in the *sonderweg* (deviant path) of the West (Adorno, 1950: 729). They have often argued that any “return” to it is mere camouflage for other insipient and oftentimes deadly ideologies, which takes advantage of mankind’s longing for a return to the comforting womb of religion. What is left of religion, after modernity has undermined it epistemologically, ontologically, political, economically, and culturally, is either (1) the nostalgia for an idealized state-of-being, which in reality is incapable of sustaining its own existence in a secular society, or (2) it is a lingering source of good that needs to be translated into a more appropriate idiom, i.e. philosophy rooted in autonomous reason, so that it may be rescued as a resource for a longed-for future reconciliation of mankind.

For the far-right, religion need not be alive; in fact, it’s preferable if it is dead, as it cannot protest much when it is sublated into the idolatry of their nationalist

philosophy. What is important is that its exoskeleton, its signs and symbols (the signifiers without the signified), contribute to the defense of Europe as a society distinct from the invading others. In other words, it must be recruited into the far-right’s “defense” of Europe as a weapon of ideology, or false consciousness, as it is an insistence on religious identity without religious substance. Because Christianity has been hollowed out by modernity, its substance undermined and devalued, its exoskeleton can be easily enlisted into a movement that would, for all intents and purposes, contradict its essential substance, especially its moral-practical elements. In its ethno-ideological form, it fulfills a political need for the far-right: a source of cultural distinctiveness, which serves as a demarcation line between the West and the Rest.

The Frankfurt School philosopher, Theodor W. Adorno, seemed to have highlighted a major flaw in this kind of “religious renaissance” thinking already in 1950. He famously rejected such a return to religion in his books *The Authoritarian Personality* and *Negative Dialectics*, and most forcefully in his essay *Reason and Revelation*, as being rooted in human need, not religious conviction. He writes,

In the best case, that is, where it is not just a question of imitation and conformity, it is *desire* that produces such an attitude: it is not the truth and authenticity of the revelation that are decisive but rather the *need* for guidance, the *confirmation* of what is already firmly established, and also the *hope* that by means of a resolute decision alone one could breathe back that meaning into the disenchanted world under whose absence we have been suffering so long, as though we were mere spectators staring at something meaningless. It seems to me that the religious renaissance of today [is] philosophy of religion, not religion (Adorno, 2005: 137).

The key component of Adorno’s argument here is that religion, at least for the non-immigrant Westerner, is no longer convincing, but remains with us hypocritically. Because of the human condition, religion is the half-truth that continues to fulfill certain *needs* that burden modern life, some of which are political-cultural needs. Those voices on the political Right who advocate a reconstitution of Christendom in service to a future apocatastasis are aware of this; they are not interested in personal faith; rather they seek to enlist Christianity in their “ideology of difference,” or as Alain de Benoist calls it “The Right to Differ,” which is part of the New Right’s concept of *Ethnopluralism*, which emphasizes Western identity as a civilization inherited distinctly from Christianity and/or pre-

Christian paganism. Without the particularity of such identity, they insist Europe will no longer exist as Europe, and will not be able to resist becoming “Eurabia.”

As such, this called for *apocatastasis* remains secular; it is not a return to Christianity at all. It is a clumsy appropriation of what remains of Christianity’s exoskeleton without a conversion to its faith material. A conversion to its substance, especially its *moral-practical* elements, looks too much like Pope Francis, and he’s been rejected as being overly Christian towards Muslim immigrants: the source of *überfremdung*. It is almost to say: “these Muslims truly believe in their religion but we don’t... however, we must appear to do so in defense of Europe.” In the end, it is merely a retrotopian functionalization of the residue of Christendom in order to preserve the idea of Europe as a distinct culture that is now threatened with Liberal and Muslim movement of *déculturation*.

This being the case, it is not the Muslims that threaten the Christian-inherited identity of the West, but rather retrotopian identitarian politics within the West, as it undermines the best of the modern West – individual rights, human rights, political and cultural freedoms, etc. while not recovering at all the good that was lost with the demise of Christendom – a sense of shared identity, enchantment with the world, sense of inherent meaning, etc.

As such, what can be lost in the rise of such retrotopian politics is twofold: (1) the moral-practical elements of Christianity can be lost, as retrotopians appropriate the signs and symbols of Christianity into their struggle against the “others,” and thus perpetuate the association of Christianity with hatred and violence (such as the Cross as a symbol of anti-immigration), and (2) those aspects of Christianity that have been already translated into modern secular principles and ideals (*agape* as solidarity; *Imago Dei* as universal human rights; *caritas* into the welfare state). Clearly, mass immigration is a vexing issue for the West, especially Europe, but an attempt at a Christian-inspired Traditionalist apocatastasis within a thoroughly secularized West is the farce that follows the tragedy of 20th century nationalism: it is merely a part of the 21st century’s *great regression* (Geiselberger) – not a halting of such a regression, nor a returning to a more purified state. If Christianity in Europe is to have a future, it is with the substantive faith of men like Pope Francis, who are open to the other because of his substantive commitments to Abrahamic principles, not inauthentic appropriation and weaponization of religion’s exoskeleton like Steve Bannon and the nationalist far-right.

Note

1. *Antapocatastasis* is the counter-occurrence: when the stars and planets align with Capricorn, the cosmos will be destroyed by a flood.
2. Scholars have argued as whether this “restitution of all things spoken by God” (*Restitutio omnium quae locutus est Deus*) refers to the reconstitution of the Kingdom of Israel or the Garden of Eden.
3. Even in law, apocatastasis, translated into Latin as “Restitutio ad Integrum” (Restoration to original condition), is the awarding of compensation for injurious actions, i.e. “restitution.”
4. In Greek mythology, a destruction of the earth by water is a *Kataklysmos* (*κατακλυσμός*).
5. Steven Bannon, the architect of Donald J. Trump’s presidential election win in 2016, is among the chief advocates for packaging palingenetic forms of ultra-nationalist identity politics within a “Judeo-Christian” framework. In 2019, he announced that he would be leasing a former Carthusian monastery in Trisulti, Italy, in order to establish an institute for the defense of the “Judeo-Christian West,” wherein he wishes to train the next generation of European nationalist leaders. At the heart of this project is the removal of the Argentinian Pope Francis – the pope of the poor, the disposed, the refugee, and the immigrant – from St. Peter’s chair. Despite being rebuked by numerous important officials in the church, Bannon as found allies within the nationalist-traditionalist-wing of the Catholic clergy, including the arch-conservative Cardinal Raymond Burke, who see Pope Francis’ openness to Muslims as a threat to the Christian heritage of Europe, and the Acton Institute of Father Robert Sirico, headquartered in Grand Rapids, Michigan. The latter’s mission is to reconcile Catholicism with capitalism, which is antithetical to Pope Francis’ denunciation of capitalism and its exclusionary economy.
6. Emphasis added.
7. The emeritus pope Benedict XVI (Joseph Ratzinger) has a similar critique of the generation of 1968, who yearned to be free of traditional social restrictions, and thus discarded them for their own individualistic way-of-being-in-the-world, which emphasized autonomy over solidarity, individual over collective, novelty over tradition, freedom over discipline, undetermined love over determined love, and sex without union. See Pope Benedict XVI’s letter on the clerical sex abuse scandal: Full Text of Benedict XVI essay: The Church and the Scandal of Sexual Abuse. <https://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/full-text-of-benedict-xvi-the-church-and-the-scandal-of-sexual-abuse-59639>

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Alavid Shiism versus Safavid Shiism

A critical reading of Ali Shariati's approach to Shiism

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Abstract

In this article, the author is looking at Ali Shariati's conceptualization of Shiism from its early period to the 20th century. By dividing the history of Shiism into two forms of movement and institution, Shariati argues that Shiism in the form of movement is faith-oriented, while in the phase of institution is power-oriented. This is a disputable form of conceptualization but it is worth debating, as this distinction is employed by Shariati in re-reading the relation between religion and state. He argues that in the movement phase, the Shiite religious scholar appears as an 'Alim', while in the institutional phase we are faced with a new form of social being which appears as 'Ruhani'. Here, Shariati argues that the consolidation of scholar as a Ruhani seems to bear resemblances to Christianity, both in its religious form and social institutions. Furthermore, Shariati argues that Shiism in the Alavid form which is symbolized by religious scholar as an Alim holds a critical stance vis à vis power, while in the Safavid form which is symbolized by religious personality as a Ruhani holds a domicile position vis-à-vis power. Finally, I have tried to work through these categories and reassess the Shariati's conceptual framework in the contemporary context too.

Keywords: Shariati, Velayi Order, Safavid Shiism, Alavid Shiism, Scholar/Cleric Dichotomy.

Introduction

How does Shariati approach Shiism? Could we assume a distinct understanding of Shiism in the work of Ali Shariati? What is the foundation of Shariati's discourse on Shiism? Is his view on Shiism based on a confessional conception of Shiism as a denomination within the religion of Islam? He clearly has stated that:

"...I discuss the issue only from the sociological perspective; other aspects (philosophy, theology, and jurisprudence) are out of my expertise" (CW: 9. P 46).

In other words, from Shariati's viewpoint, the two concepts of Alawite Shiism and Safavid Shiism should be conceptualized in a dialectical framework of *Movement* and *Institution*. He mentions that:

"... there is a principle in sociology, which is the conversion of a movement into an institution which is a system or an order" (CW: 9. P 39).

Shariati conceptualized Alavid and Safavid Shiism in a sociological framework, as a conversion of a "movement" into an "organization", which he elaborates on in the following way:

"Shiism consists of two distinct and separate periods; the first comes from the first century, and is exemplified by *Islam as a movement* versus *Islam as an institution* (Sunism) up to the early Safavid era. The second one is Shiism as a movement, starting from the Safavid era up to the present time, which is the conversion of *Shiism as a Movement* into *Shiism as an Institution*"(CW: 9. Pp 46-47).

Shiism as a Movement and as an Institution

A few questions can be raised regarding the division of Shiism into two periods. Is this division uncontroversial? Is the two-period division correct or should it be divided based on two forms or two different kinds of mentalities (in relation to state power)? From a sociological perspective, which one is more acceptable and valid?

Shariati's question, which is based on his viewpoint on epochal division, requires more deliberation, because he believes that "the law of Movement into Institutional conversion", which is a known principle in sociology, could be used to understand the latest developments of Shiism and the decline of Iranian society. In

other words, Shariati raised the issue of decline in the form of Shiite formic transformations and believed that by constructing the notion of "Alavid Shiism" and "Return to Alavid Shiism", Iranian society could survive decline through the guidelines that Alavid Shiism provides. Therefore, we must ask: what is the principle of conversion of a movement into an institution? It is important to answer this question if we want to understand what Shariati thinks is the logic behind the changes within Iranian society. He states that:

"Law ... [i.e.] ... the conversion of a movement into an institution is definable as a boiling faith, which is able to inspire all aspects of a society to a revolutionary movement ... it is converted to an institution, i.e. it turns into an institution, and becomes one of the formal pillars or establishments and foundations of a society that adapts and coordinates with other establishments and foundations within the society as a whole. This is to argue that boiling faith turns into an institution similar to other institutions, such as government, family, language, insurance, bank, retirement funds, savings bank, and so on and so forth" (CW: 9. P 48).

To put it simply, if we could conceptualize Shiism as a subject in the framework of movement-to-institution conversion law, then we would reach the conclusion that Shiism was primarily

"... a passionate emergence of freedom in worshipping god, sincerity, and rebellion against any system, custom, restriction, prejudice, and pretense. Later, those same things become administrative institutions or legal and formal principles that obtain organizational form, which manifested themselves as uniforms, certain ways of being, specific practices, sheikh and disciple, manager and general manager, and thousands of other issues. This means nothing. It is a large, complex, soulless, passionless, and motionless body without any meaning Every prayer of the dedicated warriors of religion looked like a jihad and a leap forward, very simple and fast, but now, it involves a complicated logarithmic table of ritual doubts, a lifetime of reading practice, and a comprehensive list of physical and chemical properties of how to say prayers before starting the actual rituals of pray. In other words, Shiism could be considered as one of the noticeable examples of this conversion, i.e. from being a movement and now turning into an institution"(CW: 9. Pp 48-49).

Two points exist in Shariati's interpretations that need more deliberation. The first point is that it seems Shariati's approach includes a kind of anti-structural component, which needs to be critiqued. Because, if a society wants to create a type of continuity and solidarity from within, it must construct social institutions. However, it is possible to respond to this critique by arguing that Shariati is not fundamentally against constructing social institutions, rather, he is opposing those forms of Shiism, Islam, and nationalism that are institutionalized in contemporary Iranian society and are rooted in historical understandings and establishments. Therefore, he starts a "methodic anarchism". In other words, Shariati does not believe in an "existential anarchism" as such, but rather as part of a strategy, he aims to disrupt the terms and conditions of the contemporary society that have created a kind of stagnation, stupor, and indifference through appealing to "methodic anarchism". In my opinion, this issue needs more deliberation and discourse. That is because some believe that Shariati not only defends anarchism as a strategy, but also there exists a kind of "existential anarchism" in his works, and in order to confirm this interpretation, references have been made to Shariati's works like *Hobut* (The Fall), *Kavir* (The Desert), and *Goft-e-guhayeTanhayi* (Dialogues in the Solitude).

The second point in Shariati's discourse on the "transformation of a movement into an institution", is the topic of "the return to genuine religion". As I have comprehensively discussed this topic of *Bazgasht* "return", and its distinction from another concept in Persian, i.e. *Bargasht* "turn backward" in my previous works, I do not intend to go over this topic again here. However, it should be noted that two important issues have been raised in the Islamic world and the Iranian *lebenswelt* in the contemporary era that require more research. (Miri, 2017) One is the issue of "Salafism", which has been raised in the Islamic world, with some attempting to divide it between "positive Salafism" and "negative Salafism". The second issue concerns the attempts made to fabricate a pure form of religion in the Iranian *lebenswelt* that could be found in the works of intellectuals like Akhondzadeh, Kasravi, and even Sadegh Hedayat. It seems that these two main trends had a major impact on Shariati's understanding of the Islam of *mujahedeen*, which was "a jihad, a leap forward, a revolution in souls, simple, fast, conscious, etc." (CW: 9 p 49) In other words, the reconstruction of Shiism (Islam, religion, and Iran) from a movement into an institution and the establishment of an "Islamic Republic", was a revolutionary leap forward. Additionally, to add fuel to the passionate movements across the society, the Iranian *lebenswelt*, and even the Islamic world, this needs to

be studied critically, as Shariati's approach to the "transformation of society into a flowing river" has not yet been carefully assessed.

A fundamental question can be raised regarding Shariati's concern on the conversion of a movement into an institution. Did Shariati approach Shiism with "religious" concerns, or as he mentions, did he try to approach the "Shiite problematique" as merely a sociological problem? If the answer to this question is positive, then it should be asked why the "Shiite problematique" became a question for Shariati? He clearly stated in his book *Alavid Shiism and Safavid Shiism* that his departure point was not philosophical, theological, or even jurisprudential, rather he tried to investigate the Shiite problematique from a sociological perspective. However, I doubt the claim that Shariati studied the Shiite problematique solely from a sociological perspective. Nevertheless, I do not intend to address that issue now, rather, I want to explore the viewpoint based on which Shariati investigated the Shiite problematique.

In my opinion, Shariati tried to conceptualize the Shiite problematique in the context of the Iranian society. He states that

"I am looking for the reasons behind the cultural and intellectual decline of my society, in which I have faced two contradictory [forms of] Shiism. My attempts are to re-identify each of them and understand the differences between the two logics directly, based on evidence, and draw an image of each one objectively" (CW: 9. P 63).

This means that Shariati's main concern in conceptualizing the Shiite problematique in the two phases of "movement" and "institution" does not imply exploring Shiism as a belief system, rather it implies understanding the essence of intellectual and cultural decline of the Iranian society, which is based on:

"... real extreme religious sensitivities and ... apart from it, our own current society, social relations, traditions, way of thinking, cultural institution of the society, our collective conscience, and our collective soul [these] are all rooted in the soil of religious sensibilities" (CW: 14. Pp 13-14).

Therefore, in order to understand Iran's backwardness, its cultural components should be re-visited seriously. To put it differently, it seems that Shariati has a Weberian perspective, and contrary to his class approach, which is indebted to Marxism, he tries to provide a Weberian explanation for the causes of Iranian decline.

The decline of Iran is closely related to the emergence of the Safavid Dynasty, but Shariati's understanding of this issue seems to need more deliberation. This is because he conceptualizes the emergence of the Safavid dynasty in the Iranian world as a *bankrupt triumph*, implying that in terms of establishing a national government, it was a victory, but in terms of the *Islamic Lebenswelt* versus the *Christian Lebenswelt*, it was a failure at the civilizational level. Moreover, he interprets the rise of western colonialism in the framework of this relation, and explores the roots of intellectual deviations and religious decline in Iran based on the two concepts of *Alavid Shiism* and *Safavid Shiism*.

The Creativity of the Safavid Movement

Shariati has conceptualized an important part of his discourse on Shiism in his book *Alavid Shiism and Safavid Shiism*, and introduces a concept with the title of *montage of religion and nationality* in this way:

"The skillfulness and vigilance of the Safavid movement was in the establishment of their government on the two strong pillars of Shiism and Iranian nationality the first one is based on Shiite sentiments and particular rituals, and the other relies on Iranian nationality and ethnic traditions. These two factors separated Iran from the rest of the Islamic world and the realm of the Ottomans who were the rival forces of the Safavids" (CW: 9 p 103).

In other words, the Safavid movement was rooted in the Shu'ubiyya movement, which tried to separate the Iranian ethnicity from the Islamic culture and connect it to the ancient identity of Iran. However,

"... although the humiliation of the Iranians, beside the hegemony of Arab ethno-centrism of the Umayyad caliphs, provided the ground for national awareness and the Shu'ubiyya movement, the intellectuals' and people's aversion of Zoroastrianism and the Sassanid order did not let the Shu'ubiyya movement succeed in any substantial way" (CW: 9. P 104).

Nevertheless, Shariati believes that the emergence and expansion of the Safavid reign should be explored along with the Shu'ubiyya movement. He states that:

"... the Safavids relied on Iranian ethnicity in order to confront the world power of the Islamic caliphate so that Iranians could strengthen

their independence against the great Muslim community. Moreover, instead of relying on Islam, which was the common bond among Iranians, Turks, and Arabs, the Safavids relied on their own local, traditional, and ethnic foundations through which they, unlike Shu'ubiyya, could find popularity and acceptance among the Iranians" (CW: 9. Pp 104-105).

The question therefore, is how could the Safavids accomplish this mission? This is one of the most important questions in understanding the Iranian identity of the past 500 years, which has affected Iranian society in various ways. Shariati believes that revealing the underlying factor of cultural and intellectual decline of the Iranian society is contingent on confronting this daunting question. However, in this position, I do not intend to confirm or reject Shariati's narrative on this issue; rather, I put my whole effort into understanding how the Safavid dynasty, based on Shariati's discourse, could succeed in a project that Shu'ubiyya started but could not fully realize. He also believes that the core of the Shu'ubiyya movement was "building the Iranian ethnicity", and connecting the roots of Islamic Iran to ancient Iran in order to separate this nation from the Islamic world, which he conceptualizes as the *Shu'ubiyya nationalism*. In other words,

"... the Shu'ubiyya failed due to many reasons, and the main one was that the people of that era needed a movement, and the salvation and conscience of the society were strongly inspired by vibrant and progressive slogans of Islam, especially in the two areas of leadership and justice (the two main pillars of Shiism), while Shu'ubiyya relied on splendors and glories of the Iranian kings, history, soil, and blood, and tried to revive those values that perished with the advent of Islam" (CW: 9. P 104).

What did the Safavid dynasty do in order to avoid such a failure? What was the skill and policy of this movement? Shariati made use of a highly paradoxical concept in order to explain the Safavid's policies, which requires additional deliberation. He states that the Safavid dynasty constructed a "Shu'ubiyya-Shiism" movement in order not to encounter the failure of Shu'ubiyya nationalism. Furthermore, he asserts that:

"For Safavid nationalism not to remain rootless and without support in the society, and in order for it to merge with the lively faith and warm conscience of the people, Safavids mixed nationalism with Islam, which was the religion and faith of the people. Moreover, they

even took it to the Prophet's house and built a Shu'ubiyya-Shiism movement in order to turn the solidarizing Shiism into divisive Shiism using Shu'ubiyya, and vitalize and sanctify Shu'ubiyya through the use of Shiism" (CW: 9. P 105).

As mentioned before, Shariati talks about two different types of Shiism; one is the Alawite Shiism (and Shiite scholar) and the other is the Safavid Shiism (and Shiite clergy). Along this ideal-type construction, he conceptualizes Alawite Shiism as "solidarizing Shiism" in relation to the larger Islamic community, and the Safavid Shiism as "separatist Shiism" in terms of the Islamic community. A question can be raised here, what is the relation between the Safavid Shiism and Shu'ubiyya Shiism? Basically, what is the locus of this concept in understanding the logic behind Iran's history? To put it simply, by constructing this paradoxical concept, how does Shariati intend to explain the secret behind the degeneration of the Iranian community, the confrontation of Iranianhood and the Islamic community, and the emergence of western colonialism? Does this concept have the capability to theoretically articulate such huge concepts and explain the logic behind the decline of Iran?

Sassanid Shiism and the Concept of "Prophet King"

Shariati constructs a narrative of Shu'ubiyya Shiism that originated from Safavid nationalism, which includes components seen both in Safavid Shiism and Alavid Shiism. However, the foundational similarities of the concepts, names, and words are understandable and researchable based on the principles of "Homonym" and "conceptual difference". In the narrative on the Safavid Shiism, he states the following:

"First, Islam, the prophet, and Ali became fascists and racists. They are presented in a manner as though they believed in the superiority of blood, soil, ethnicity, and Iranian races, especially the Persian tribe (Sassanids were from the same tribe). On the other hand, based on a suspicious and even ridiculous story (certainly created by old Shu'ubiyya), a girl from the Sassanid royal family marries a boy from the prophet's family, and the result is a prophet-king newborn that is the symbol of the link between ethnicity and religion ..." (CW: 9. P 105).

In other words, the "prophet king" is a story originating with the Shu'ubiyya, which tries to create an identity against Islamic identity, which is connected to the Sassanid ideas. In Shariati's viewpoint, Safavid Shiism is the revival of the Shu'ubiyya elements based on a religion-ethnicity paradigm. Shariati believes that Safavid Shiism is based on a false narrative, and criticizes it using the myth of "Divine Merit".

First, let us take a look at Shariati's approach to the "chain of narration", and then turn to Shariati's genealogical critique on the idea of "Prophet-King".

The narrative of "A girl between Khosrow and Hashim" in Bihar al-Anwar book, which was also narrated earlier by Koleyni, refers to Imam Sadiq, who said there was a conversation between Ali and Yazdgerd's daughter:

Ali: Hey! Little maid! What is your name?

Yazdgerd's daughter: Jahanshah!

Ali: No you are Shahrbanoo!

Yazdgerd's daughter: This is the name of my sister.

Ali: You are right.

Shariati analyzes this conversation and makes an interesting point:

"The narrator does not know that even if Ali was able to speak Persian, with that kind of Persian that Ali is using, Yazdgerd's daughter could not understand him. That is because Ali is speaking in Dari Persian – that had become the official language few centuries after the advent of Islam, and was the local language of Khorasan - while Yazdgerd's daughter is speaking in Sassanid Pahlavi. Furthermore, "Hey! Little maid!" (Ey Kanizak) is a very Persian form of expression that belongs to the era of the narrator. A far more interesting point is that Ali is speaking in Persian with the King's daughter while she is responding in Arabic. Another interesting point is the justification that Majlesi makes on why she introduces herself as The King of the World, and Ali corrects her with the answer that "No! you are Shahrbanoo!"; that is because the King is one of the many sacred names of God" (CW: 9. Pp 108-109).

Then, from a Shiite "Biographical Evaluation" (Ilm al-Rijal) and "Hadith Science" (Ilm al-Hadith) perspectives, that are an important part of the narration order of traditions in the Islamic tradition, Shariati contends that

"... in terms of narration, *Biographical Evaluation* and *Hadith Science*, this narrative is narrated by two persons, one is Ibrahim bin Ishaq Ahmadi Nahavandi whose religious credentials were suspect, and the other one is Amro Bin Shemr, who was believed to be a fabricator in terms of Shiite biographical evaluation" (CW: 9, p 111).

I believe that the second part of Shariati's approach, which is a critical genealogy of the divine merit, which serves as the basis of Safavid Shiite traditions, is far more important. That is because the issues of "Iranian monarchy" and "Islamic Imamate" culminate in Shu'ubiyya Shiism, which is the start, as Shariati believes, of Safavid Shiism's attempt to eradicate Alawite Shiism, all of which under the promotion of the Prophet's household. To explain the genealogy of the notion of "divine merit", Shariati refers to the concept of "Iranian monarchy" and "Shiite Imamate", and the linkage between "the Prophet's household" and "Sassanid household" through the marriage of Yazdgerd's daughter with Imam Hussein, which is of great importance in Shariati's attempt to reinterpret the concept of the Safavid Shiism. He asserts that:

"The connection between the Iranian kings and the Shiite Imams, and the linkage between the Prophet's household and the Sassanid household are based on a peculiar philosophy, which this story is constructed upon. In the past, the issue of marriage especially in the higher strata of society, and specifically in the foreign relations of tribes, nations, powers, and dynasties, before being a sexual, family, or marital issue, was a social, ceremonial, and symbolic act; it was as a kind of natural contract, unwritten treaty, political tie, and even a peace deal. In its final form, it was a blending or unifying of two tribes, nations, or governments. This tradition was a heritage of the primitive spirit and the collective conscience of the tribes, and each tribe considered itself as one person, a single entity, one body, and in fact one family. The children of the main father (The great grandfather) see the collective spirit or the general existence of the tribe clearly. This sacred social power, which is the holy collective spirit or the society itself, is passed down based on through racial inheritance, or blood nobility, generation after generation, from the

great grandfather to the tribal chief. Therefore, the existence of the tribal leader is the embodiment of the existence of all his tribe and race, and the true essence and collective spirit of the tribe, which is immortal and flowing throughout time. This holy and supreme reality is present in the racial inheritance form. Therefore, all the people coming from the same family tree have this inborn supreme merit. The tribal members try hard to preserve and protect the holiness of this merit and the existence, sacredness, reverence, solidarity, and survival of the tribe. That is why in the old times when the leader died and had no lineal successor, or had been extinct by another clan, as the tribe had to justify its existence, the holy inherited merit was passed on to the new successor clan by the tribe, even if the new clan was a prior enemy or a foreign invader occupant force" (CW: 9 Pp 112-113).

Shariati mentions various "mythical connections" and refers to the stories of "Rostam and Sohrab", "Alexander and Dara", and "Sultan Mahmood Ghaznavi and Bahram". He states that:

"For the sake of continuing a blood-line, which is the manifestation of an ethnicity, even when this line is cut off, the dynasty fails, and the heirs of the divine merit go extinct, the mythologists try to put this merit in the womb of the present enemy and preserve it, and make an artificial linkage by fabricating a kind of in-law connection that leads to a blood relation, and perpetuate the lost inheritance and dynasty in the new monarchy that has taken over the throne. Marriage at these critical moments of history has a profound role and very serious and clear sociological meaning in determining the history of a tribe. That is why the Sassanid monarchy with Yazdgerd, as its last heir, is bonded with the Shiite Imamate, and his daughter enters Ali's household" (CW: 9. Pp 114-115).

In other words, the concept of Imamate in Safavid Shiism is reconstructed in a spiritual way from the concept of monarchy. In the narrative of "A girl between Kasra and Hashim", it is mentioned that:

"The dynasty that has gone and died in the form of a womb, and the dynasty that has come and remains in the form of a boy's genital; a boy from Bani-Hashim and a girl from Bani-Sassan: the first of the new dynasty-chain that remains, and the last of the dynasty-chain that

dies. That is why the Prophet of Islam, before his armies, personally traveled in peace from Madinah to Iran and entered Yazdgerd's palace and bonded Yazdgerd's daughter, as a Sassanid girl, to Imam Hussein, a Hashemi boy, not as a marriage between a Muslim man and a Muslim woman" (CW: 9. P 115).

The question is what is the purpose of this mythological fabrication in the Safavid Shiism? Shariati explains this way in the following fashion:

"The purpose is to hide the "perished ethnicity" in "Islam" through bonding the "Sassanid monarchy with the Islamic prophecy and "divine splendor" with a light emanated from Muhammad the result of which would be an infant that has the merits of both Hashim and Kasra families" (CW: 9. Pp 115-116).

This is the same Shu'ubiyya Shiism that confronts Alawite Shiism in Shariati's discourse. He adds that,

"Such a dualistic Imam, the Safavid Shiism Imam, is the symbol of survival of "ancient nationality" in the "new religion", the representative who mixes "Iranian monarchy" in "Islamic imamate", and the Kasra survivor who enters the Prophet's household, and the symbol of unity and marriage between Shiite imamate with the Shu'ubiyya monarchy and succession. The result is the creation of a kind of Shu'ubiyya Shiism that is a dualistic and paradoxical combination of Islamic prophecy and Sassanid monarchy, which is manifested as a dualistic and paradoxical Imamate made of king-prophet elements" (CW: 9. P 116).

Shariati concludes that what Shu'ubiyya Shiism could not accomplish earlier in the Iranian history, Safavid Shiism could do it through,

"... reviving the ethnic, national, and Iranian elements by separating Iranians from Arabs and Turks. The escalation of ethnic, national, and lingual differences between Iranians and non-Iranians could weaken the old religious commonalities, and [as a result,] Islamic solidarity failed in the face of Iranian nationalism. They isolated Iran within the walls of ethnicity, nationalism, chauvinism, racism, etc., from the rest of the Islamic world. However, it should be noted that building this wall was also cherished by the clergymen affiliated with the Bab-e-Ali of Ottomans, because the role of Sunnism for the Ottomans was

the same as the role of Shiism for the Safavids. Similar to the Safavids in Isfahan, who built the Shu'ubiyya Shiism through the ashes of Alawite Shiism with the help of clergy of the Shah's mosque, Ottomans built a Turkish Sunnism" (CW: 9. Pp 119-121).

Now, let me turn to the question that I mentioned at the beginning of this discussion, which is the question of the decline of the Iranian society that Shariati pursues in his project. In his book *Alavid Shiism and Safavid Shiism*, he clearly states that

"The distance between the Alavid Shiism and Safavid Shiism is the distance from absolute beauty to absolute ugliness. Those people and scholars –especially the disciples of the School of Imam Sadiq –who seek the truth and thirst for the real ideals of Alavid Shiism, as well as a true faith, can find the secret behind the deviations of the Iranian culture and intellectuals by comparing these two faces of Shiism" (CW: 9. P 63).

In other words, Shariati's main concern is finding the reasons behind the decline of the Iranian society because he believes that Alavid Shiism has a "unique and brilliant scientific and research-based countenance", (CW: 9. P 126) but the interpretation of the "Safavid Church" (CW: 9. P 140) on Shiism has turned the biggest element in the development of the Iranian society into the biggest barrier of the development. However, I should add that in Shariati's viewpoint,

"The Islam of the Prophet, . . . Ali and . . . the kind of Shiism which Ali adhered to . . . should be considered as a school of salvation, freedom, and equality, and is the pioneer of justice, and as a matter of fact this kind of Shiism is the fountainhead of all emancipative movements in the world" (CW: 9. p 140).

Shariati's question is thus: why has this great religious movement turned into one of the biggest causes of social regression? The concept of the "Safavid Church" is one of the key concepts in understanding the *Safavization* of Shiism, which is explored hardly by the sociologists of the religion. Why did Shariati make use of this concept? Does anything special happen in a church? One of the main issues of the church is the distinction between "spiritual domain" and "secular domain" and the concept of "hierarchy", which eliminates the possibility of justice- and equality-formation in the society. On the basis of this distinction, classes are created in which their status is not based on knowledge; rather, their status is based on the

connection with "the sacred realm" or "the mysterious realm". It is in this context that Shariati presents the dualism of "scholar" and "clergy" in Alavid and Safavid Shiism. In other words,

"Similar to the way that Shiism transforms from a movement to a system, and Shiite sensibility transforms from knowing a conscious intellectual school into a sense of hatred and love for historical figures, without having any knowledge about these holy-like avatars, ... so, the scholar is transformed into any new shape which is called a clergy within the Safavid Church" (CW: 9. p 209).

To put it differently, in Islam,

"... and specifically, in Shiism, we call the religious figure a "scholar". The Islamic-Shiite term for a religious learned person is scholar, and the Christian term is clergy. The clergy is someone who is a man of God, a pure person with a good soul and an illuminating face; and when you kiss his hand, your heart enlightens; it is unimportant if he does not have knowledge! He has a soul under the influence of the Holy Spirit. However, traits of a religious scholar have also existed in minds of Shiite intellectuals during early Islam, along the history, and in the present time. A religious scholar is a person who knows religion, is an expert of it, has religious education and research experience, and is familiar with the spirit, purpose, relations, and rules of religion" (CW: 9. Pp 209-210).

With the "Safavid Church" being institutionalized,

"... Shiism, that had a critical approach to the current state of affairs, now has a new mission, which is to justify the conditions that were brought about by Shiite clergy who stands beside the state. In other words, here, within the Shiism a change of direction and policy has occurred, and the Shiism of critique turns into a conformist Shiism. The Shiism that once was a force against the regime now stands beside and supports the regime ...in this new matrix, its work and purpose change" (CW: 9. P 206).

Shariati points to a very delicate issue here, which is the classification of historical periods from a Shiite viewpoint in relation to power. Before the advent of the Safavid Church, Shiism defined itself by opposing the power of Islam as a ruling system; however, after the establishment of the Safavid Church, Shiite

scholars as a class were transformed into a new breed, which Shariati conceptualizes as "Shiite clergy", and in this new form they supported the ruling house and its power. This *change of vista* brought about profound transformations in the Shiite perspective that has kept all of us involved to this very day. In other words, Shariati, prior to Michel Foucault, defines the interiority of a discourse *in terms of* and *in relation to* power. A question can be raised here, if the Shiite scholar and his opposition to the power is one stage of Shiism, and Safavid clergy in support to the establishment of the Safavid church is another stage of the development of Shiism, then if the Shiite clergy becomes the power or sovereign itself, can we, then, say that it is the advent of yet another form of Shiism? Shariati has not reflected upon this third stage where the sovereign and the clergy have become incorporated into one single body— as elaborated by Kantorowicz (1957) – because his discussion is construed retrospectively as far as the relation between religion and power in the Shiite context is concerned. However, if we accept Shariati's logic on the relationship between religion (scholar and clergy) and power, then we can refer to the situation of Iran in the framework of "Guardianship of the Islamic Jurist" (*velāyat-e faqīh*). For instance, if out of the critical approach emerges the Shiite scholar, i.e. the ideal type born within the paradigm of the Alavid Shiism, then the apologetic form generates a type that Shariati conceptualizes as "Shiite clergy" in tune with the Safavid Shiism, i.e. the second stage of advance of Shiism (in the form of Safavid Church). Then, if the distance between power and religion in the context of the Guardianship of Jurist is removed, and the state considers itself a form of church/ecclesia, then what form of Shiism could emerge out of this transformation? By reading the "Alavid Shiism and Safavid Shiism", it is not possible to conceptualize the current situation of Shiism as a "form of life" in Iranian society; however, Shariati's conceptual frame of reference enables us to start theorizing in this direction. But what does it mean exactly when the two bodies of power are interwoven into one holy corpus as the Islamic State?

Shariati says that by distancing from power, Shiism found the opportunity to present a kind of critique, and by construction of a "form of being" (as a scholar) in a "condition of critique", it could exercise intellectual leadership over society. This separation from the power enabled the Shiite scholars throughout the history of Islam to play the social pioneering role compared to the social role of Sunnite scholars, because they were always among and ahead of people and against the ruling system i.e. the "state-backed form of Islam". However, during the Safavid period, with the conversion of scholars into the caste of clergy, and construction of Shiite clergy, the separation and distance between the two evaporated and the Shiite

clergy stood beside the regime, and this change of stance brings about the change in the nature of Shiism as a *vista*.

In other words,

"from here we see that the situation is changing, something new emerges with the name of Safavid Shiism; everything is different from now on, the words and justifications are new but the characters are not, it is again Ali, but this form of Ali is different than the one we had during the reign of Alavid Shiism" (Ibid. p. 97).

If we accept the logic of Shariati's form of analysis regarding the change of stance, then we should ask that now that Shiism and its followers are no longer "against the ruling system" and "against the ruler", and has embodied the ruling system *par excellence*, then how and in what sense does this third change of standpoint impact on the condition of Shiism? It should be noted that Shariati talks about two distinct forms of *scholar* and *clergy* in terms of his relation to the power, and based on this framework, he claims that these two different relationships to power "create two types of Shiism..."

"... for example, Ali whose main influence and value in people's lives is ... knowing him will lead you to the knowledge of God. The love for Ali brings the heart closer to God's love, and his leadership will remove humans' sins in this life, and replace those sins with virtues. For instance, if a traitorous acquisitive mischievous usurer could understand the true meaning of *velayat* of Ali, and place it in her/his heart, mind, and soul, they would serve the people instead of betraying them, apt for integrity of soul and personality instead of flattering, and like Ali, he would go for work and be productive rather than lead a life of usury. But look at the form of Shiism that is concocted in the Safavid Shiism, ... where the same Ali is placed versus God, becomes the partner of God, interferes in the creation of earth and heavens, his love may be so intense in a follower's heart that could send them to the paradise even if the person is disobedient to God, and his *velayat* would not remove treachery, rather based on interpretations provided in the Safavid Church, the sins of treachery would turn into the virtues of serving ..." (CW: 9. 208-209).

Nevertheless, if we follow this logic and conceptualize Shiism in relation to power, then how should we conceptualize the post-Safavid Shiism, which I call the stage of the Islamist Shiism? In other words, Shariati's interpretation of the existence of two types of Shiism, needs a more accurate conceptualization, and it would be better to say that two types of Shiism in relation to power can exist. The matrix that we face in Alavid Shiism is different from that of Safavid Shiism. In the Islamist Shiism the distance between "institutional monarchy" and "institutional religion" is removed, and the institution of Guardianship of the Jurist is established, which is a transformed entity that needs further conceptualization. If being "against the system" during the movement period gives birth to the "Shiite Scholar", and if being "at the disposal of the king" during the institutional period generates the "Shiite Clergy", then if you are not against nor beside the power, but become the power itself, then what form of "religious class" will be created by the construct that is formed in the society? In my opinion, the question which needs to be taken into consideration is how to reconceptualize an "Islamist Type" that is constructed within the context of the "Velayi Order", which is different from the "religious scholar" (*Alem*) in the pre-Safavid period and "Safavid clergy" in the context of the Safavid Church (Miri, 2019). However, this reinterpretation requires empirical studies on the institution of religion in the *velayi* context so that we can conceptualize the transformational contours of Shiism in accordance to three stages; i.e. Shiism at the stage of movement; Shiism at the stage of institution, and now Shiism within a "velayi order". In other words, what would be the future of Shiism in this third stage?

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Ali Shariati, and the Social Discourse of the Political in Iran

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Abstract

The French historian and philosopher, Pierre Rosanvallon, in an essay in 2001, wrote that ‘for the past twenty years or so we have been witnessing a ‘return to the political’.’ Rosanvallon identifies politics ‘as that terrain where society transforms itself’ and citing political theorist and philosopher Claude Lefort, defines the political as ‘the set of procedures out of which springs the social order’. Preceding Rosanvallon, Lefort had conceptualized the political as relating to ‘a certain emptiness’ or an ‘empty place’, as well as ‘a site which ‘welcomes and preserves indeterminacy’.’ Iran, since the 1905-11 Constitutional Revolution, has witnessed a distinctive emergence and development of the idea of the political. Further, with the 1979 Iranian Revolution, the idea of the political has consolidated and with it thereafter an incessant vibrant and deep discourse of the political has endured up to contemporary and present day Iran. Rosanvallon, notes that a history of the political examines ‘the notion of a principle or a set of principles generating the relations that people entertain between one another and with the world’. Guided by a history of the political approach, this paper examines the discourse of the political and society in Iran. The paper explores firstly the social origins of this discourse in the early 20th century. Next, referring to key selected works by the Iranian writer and thinker, Ali Shariati, this paper explains how Shariati’s social thought was the outcome of as well as contributed decisively to the deepening and expansion of the discourse of the political. Further, it will discuss some of the central themes and characteristics of this discourse as derived through the writings of Shariati.

The paper concludes by suggesting that in Iran, the discourse of the political is constantly undergoing renewal, and proposes that the framework and history of the political is a critical approach to study Iranian politics and society.

Keywords: Ali Shariati, the political, intellectuals, political thought, nation.

Introduction: Political Ideas, Society and the Political

In this paper, I seek to discuss and examine a direct and yet fundamental question: is politics situated in the sphere of the temporal, or the divine and spiritual? Further, do these spheres overlap, and at which points do they overlap? Finally, what are the implications of the form and vision of politics on contemporary society? The work of the historian of Asian studies Anthony Milner, *The Invention of Politics in Colonial Malaya* (Milner 1995), is a seminal and instructive writing. In his work, Milner discusses the political trajectory of colonial Malaya and reveals the political paradigms and ideas that emerged, represented and dominated each period in the process of social and intellectual-ethical development in Malaya. Accompanying this discussion is his interesting finding and exposition that the idea and practice of politics in Malaya, and Malaysia today, is a recent invention. Milner identifies its emergence and development in the late colonial period, around the 1940s. Since then, the practice of politics as well as political ideas has expanded in various competing and conflicting ways that have shaped and underpinned the social relations, social order and ethical vision of contemporary Malaysian society.

Elsewhere, the notable French historian and philosopher Pierre Rosanvallon has also focused and reflected profoundly and deeply on the subject matter of politics, and history and ideas. His emphasis on and discussion of the idea of the political and the philosophical history of the political as a conceptual-analytical framework and critical approach to study democracy and society is a crucial and relevant reference point and guiding methodology. Rosanvallon identifies politics 'as that terrain where society transforms itself' (Rosanvallon 2001: 201) and citing the French political theorist and philosopher Claude Lefort, defines the political as 'the set of procedures out of which springs the social order' (2001: 190). Preceding Rosanvallon, Lefort had conceptualized the political as relating to 'a certain

emptiness' or an 'empty place', as well as 'a site which 'welcomes and preserves indeterminacy'' (Ferrarese 2015: 59).

Using Milner as a starting and reference point, and guided by the ideas and conceptual framework of Rosanvallon, I seek to discuss and examine the discourse of the political and society in Iran. Rosanvallon notes that a history of the political examines 'the notion of a principle or a set of principles generating the relations that people entertain between one another and with the world' (Rosanvallon 2001: 190).

Why is this approach of the history of the political, and the need to examine the discourse of the political and society in Iran vital? I suggest that this is important and necessary to understand what politics, including political ideas, concepts and visions, even imaginations, mean, as well as what it entails. We use and refer constantly to the term politics, but what does it actually mean, and how do we frame and understand it? What is the nature and characteristics of politics, and what are its functions? What are its prospects and challenges? Most importantly, is there an ethical basis, and what is the ethical basis of or for politics? It is these fundamental questions that this paper seeks to highlight and discuss. The discourse of the political can assist to shed light on these questions. If for Rosanvallon, a history of the political assesses the principles that create the social and political relations among people and their conditions, through the discourse of the political we seek and are able to identify and examine both the meaning of politics and its ethical basis in Iran, for politics and ethics inform and underpin the social relations, and social structure and order of Iranian society.

The Iranian nation is a modern and recent invention. It was from the Constitutional Revolution of 1905 to 1911 that the question and theme of the nation arose and occupied the forefront of social, intellectual and political thought, writings and discourse in Iran. With the development of the theme of the nation, the political ideas of national sovereignty, democracy, social justice and equality rose in tandem. It was also during this time that a modern and civil public sphere and the discourse of women's rights and welfare emerged.

This period of intellectual and political ferment and contestation led to the rise and mobilization of numerous and diverse social groups and figures, including clerics, writers, intellectuals, religious intellectuals, activists, and pro and anti-constitutionalists. Some of the earlier and prominent ones included Mirza Malkum Khan author of *A Traveler's Tale*, which was 'one of the first literary works to be written in clear Persian prose, free of the traditional decorative terminology'

(Abrahamian 1982: 62, 65), Mirza Aqa Khan Kermani, and the religious clerics or preachers Abdollah Behbahani, Mohammad Tabataba'i (Bayat 1991: 5-6, 145) and Sheikh Fazlollah Nuri. Some commentators such as Peyman Vahabzadeh have identified this period as the beginning of political modernity in Iran (Vahabzadeh 2017: 291). Following Milner's study on Malaysia that highlighted the late colonial period in Malaya as the period and moment in which the idea or notion of politics emerged, I suggest that politics and the political emerged during, and constituted and accompanied the development of Iranian political modernity.

In examining the discourse of the political and society in Iran in this paper, I begin by exploring firstly, the social origins of this discourse in the early 20th century. Next, by using as a guiding point and referring to key selected works by and on the Iranian writer and thinker, Ali Shariati, this paper explains how Shariati's social thought was the outcome of as well as contributed decisively to the expansion and deepening of the discourse of the political during the 1960s and 70s. Further, I discuss some of the central themes and characteristics of this discourse as derived through the writings of Shariati. I conclude by suggesting that in Iran the discourse of the political including its central themes are constantly undergoing renewal, and also propose that in terms of conceptual framework, the historical of the political is a critical and vital approach to study Iranian politics and society.

Social origins and Development of the Discourses of the Political in Iran

The 1905 Constitutional Revolution was a pivotal moment for it marked the emergence of the discourse of the political in Iran. Arjomand has insightfully noted that 'the Constitutional Revolution marks the advent of modern politics and thus constitutes a watershed separating old and new Iran' (Arjomand 1988: 15-16). It was through this discourse that contemplations and visions of the nation, and political ideas and concepts were articulated, deliberated and debated. Vahabzadeh, in discussing the Constitutional Revolution and the development of political ideas together with their implications for contemporary Iran, citing Afary, argues that it was during this time that the Iranian nation was born:

"Through the revolutionary years of 1905-1906, as mobilization toward the future Constitutional Revolution shaped up, with the growing demands of increasingly disillusioned and disenchanted participants, Iranian people as Shi'i Muslim nation were transformed

into the “nation of Iran” (Afary 1996: 53-54). Indeed, the Constitutional Revolution marked the birth of a new nation” (Vahabzadeh 2017: 303; Abrahamian 1982: 82).

Vahabzadeh further defines the Constitutional Revolution as the moment when the ideas of constitutionalism, freedom, popular sovereignty and democracy arose:

“... the Constitutional movement was without a doubt a collective attempt at garnering institutionally enabled self-rule, responsible governance, and national self-assertion. This is nowhere better shown than through the rapid emergence of the anjomans or grassroots associations, the very (nonviolent) democratic-institutive origins of a new body politic as Hannah Arendt holds (1963: 262, 266-267), an experiment lost to turmoil in the aftermath of the constitutional movement and to the subsequent rise of Reza Shah” (Vahabzadeh 2017: 292; Abrahamian 1982: 62).

The constitutional revolution gave rise to the conceiving and articulation of nationalism, social justice and civil and constitutional government, as well as to a certain extent the development and expansion in the discourse and movement of women’s rights. As Afary and Anderson also affirms, during this period the notion of the nation and modern political ideas emerged and developed:

“Iranian democrats, whether liberal or socialist, usually saw the 1906-11 Constitutional Revolution as a founding moment, a time when the nation came to the forefront of the Muslim world in its quest for democracy, equality, and national sovereignty... The revolution also had a more radical social democratic dimension, and while women certainly did not win equality, important gains occurred, especially in women’s education” (Afary and Anderson 2005: 72).

Certainly, the emergence and development of ideas and concepts and visions require human thought, agency and articulation. Political visions, imaginations and ideals for a better and just society, even the very idea of society itself, none of this could have happened, without the rise and presence of a new ‘stratum’ and which would later become a social class: the ‘intelligentsia’ or ‘modern intellectuals’ (Abrahamian 1982: 50, 61, 80). Abrahamian explains how this class transferred and adapted new political ideas and meanings:

“The world outlook of these modern educated intellectuals differed radically from that of the previous court intellectuals. They espoused not the divine right of kings but the inalienable rights of man. They promulgated not the advantages of royal despotism and political conservatism, but the principles of liberalism, nationalism, and even socialism. They venerated not the Shadows of God on Earth but the triumvirate of Equality, Liberty, and Fraternity. Moreover, they not only introduced into the vocabulary of contemporary Iran numerous Western words, such as *despot*, *fudal*, *parleman*, *sosiyal*, *demokrat*, and *aristukrat*; but also injected modern meanings into many old words” (1982: 50-51).

Bayat also explains how members of the Iranian intelligentsia of the late 19th century were committed to emulating ‘Western liberal concepts of government’ and first and foremost was the establishing of a constitution (Bayat 1991: 37). They advocated for the reform of a new system of government and adopted the concepts of patriotism, nationalism, individuals’ rights and freedom, equality before the law and representative government (1991: 39) as well as a ‘national consultative assembly’ (Abrahamian 1982: 69).

This period saw the conflict and contestations between two main opposing groups, the *mashruteh* and *mashru’eh* (Bayat 1991: 159-160, 169-170). Around the end of the 19th century and towards the beginning of the 20th century the Qajar dynasty had began to lose political control over Persia, suffering from external threats and interventions by foreign powers, and internal dissensions and challenges. Losing gradually its lands and both its political power and legitimacy, the dynasty’s monarchial and absolute rule was opposed by the *mashruteh* movement, political forces and social groups that sought to establish a nation with a constitution and a national assembly. The aim was to curtail and control the political power of the king, and hence institute a constitutional monarchy (Afary and Anderson 2005: 72).

Some of the notable and important personalities include Mirza Fath Ali Akhunzadeh, Mirza Aqa Khan Kermani, Mirza Abd al-Rahim Talebof (Nabavi 1999: 335), Abdollah Behbahani, Mohammad Tabataba’i (Bayat 1991: 6, 41), Ali Akbar Dehkhoda (1991: 169), Theqat al-Islam (1991: 159), Mohammad Kazem Khorasani and Mohammad Hosein Na’ini (Kamrava 2008: 120) author of the work *Tanbih al-Ummah wa Tanzih al-Milla*. During this time when many new political ideas and concepts emerged, there was a vibrant exchange and contestation of ideas

and intellectual and social thought varying between and involving tradition, Islam, enlightenment, modernity, culture, and Europe or the West in relation to the East. It was no surprise then that those such as Fath Ali Akhunzadeh, Aqa Khan Kermani and Abd al-Rahim Talebof ‘aspired to the achievements of ‘cultured Europe’’ and attempted the process ‘of changing the attitude prevalent in Iranian society according to the western model’ (Nabavi 1999: 335). Nabavi notes that they were instrumental in introducing new ideas from Europe including nationalism, constitutionalism and the primacy of reason above faith (1999: 336). Thus, in the process of idea and concept building and discovery, there were also undeniably attempts to imitate what was perceived as the advancement of Europe.¹

The *mashruteh* movement and social forces were involved in the conceiving and articulation of intellectual and political thought, as well as in organizing mass and public political protest and struggles against the ruling regime. At the intellectual and theoretical level, some of its leading figures and thinkers such as Abdullah Behbahani, Muhammad Tabataba’i, Theqat al-Islam, Kazem Khorasani and Hosein Na’ini, in varying degrees and perspectives, articulated and advocated the ideas of democratic government and democracy, elections and parliaments (Bayat 1991: 120). Other important ideas included labor rights and welfare, as well as women’s rights (Vahabzadeh 2017: 289). It was during the period of the constitutional revolution that the first women political public rally took place and that this time ‘was truly a turning point in the history of Iranian women’ (2017: 293-294). At the political and mass movement level, many other figures engaged in protests and armed struggles and sought to overthrow the government in order to institute a constitutional monarchy and civil government. This included Sattar Khan, for instance, who in July 1908 led an armed uprising against Mohammad Ali Shah (*ibid*), Yeprem Khan and Samsam al-Saltaneh (Abrahamian 1982: 100).

On the other side of the political spectrum however, the *mashru’eh* movement pursued to institute a system of government as well as law based on Islam and Shariah. They sought to maintain and support the existing regime and ruling government under the Qajar dynasty. Some of its most important and notable figures include the cleric Sheikh Fazlollah Nuri (Bayat 1991: 73, 169; Afary and Anderson 2005: 72), Seyyed Kazem Yazdi and Mohammad Taqi Herati (Bayat 1991: 176). These religious clerics and thinkers advocated for the adherence to Islam and the Shariah as the basis of politics and law, and the establishment of a political rule and authority that was founded on Islamic teachings, principles, and rules.

In the end, the *mashruteh* movement prevailed over the *mashru'eh* movement. It saw the Qajar ruler, Mozaffar al-Din Shah, agreeing to establish a national assembly (Abrahamian 1982: 85), and signing the constitution (Bayat 1991: 154). It was not long however, when Mohammad Ali Shah replaced Mozaffar al-Din as the new Qajar ruler. Prolonged internal infighting and conflicts among the constitutionalists, and the continuous opposition of Fazlollah Nuri against the former together with Nuri's support for Mohammad Ali Shah, led to the Qajar ruler launching a coup on June 23, 1908. During and after the coup, Mohammad Ali Shah dissolved the national assembly and eliminated many key figures of the constitutional movement (Abrahamian 1982: 96). Subsequent uprisings and civil war however, led to the removal of Mohammad Ali Shah and the reinstating of the constitution in 1909 (Bayat 1991: 260). The revolution came to an end in 1911 when, because of continuing civil strife and conflicts and widespread economic and socio-political instability, Britain and Russia's military forces occupied crucial areas of Iran and reinforced the Qajar rule (Afary and Anderson 2005: 72).

Nonetheless, the constitutional revolution of 1905-1911 was a significant moment and left a profound and everlasting mark on the political development and landscape of Iranian society. It was during this time that the discourse of the political and other political ideas and concepts emerged and developed. And as Boroujerdi has notably noted, the early thinkers and intellectuals of this time were modernist and greatly important and influential not 'because of its answers but on account of its questions' (Boroujerdi 2003: 14). I would suggest and argue that the questions of what modern government entailed, how should modern society be governed and ruled, and what the concepts and ideas of constitutionalism, rule of law, democracy and rights meant were crucial questions asked by the thinkers and intellectuals of the time around and during the constitutional revolution.

Ali Shariati and the Expansion and Consolidation of the Discourse of the Political

Thus far, I have highlighted how a discourse of the political exists and developed in Iran, and discussed how this discourse emerged during and in the period of the 1905-1911 Iranian Constitutional Revolution, and that the intelligentsia or modern intellectuals and religious clerics were instrumental in leading the *mashruteh* or constitutional movement. And hence, gave rise to the imagination of the nation (Anderson 2006) and the modern political ideas and concepts of democracy, social

justice and nationalism. The discourse of the political further developed and strengthened, and reached its pinnacle during the build up to the outbreak of the 1979 Iranian revolution.

Similarly, to the period around the 1905 constitutional revolution, the years preceding the Iranian revolution of 1979 was an era of intense intellectual turbulence and political agitation. The political ideas that dominated the phase of the constitutional revolution also colored the intellectual and political landscape of the 1960s and 1970s. This included the ideas and notions of justice, democracy, equality and freedom. However, there were also minor differences in the way these ideas were conceived and articulated. While before and during the constitutional revolution these ideas were guided, and adopted and adapted, from the intellectual and social thought and discourse in Europe, in the decades before the Iranian revolution these same intellectual and political themes were utilized in the context of the critique of western modernity, and anti-imperial and anti-western sentiment. This was caused in part by the currency of 'third worldism' thought and ideology as well as conservative Shiite religious thought (Pesaran 2008: 695; Mirsepassi 2006: 417-418). In addition, this period also saw the emergence of an intellectual-political current that combined third-worldist and Shiite religious thought. Hence, the intellectual and social landscape of period consisted of the four main currents of communist, liberal nationalist, conservative religious Shiite and Islamic leftist-nationalist strands (Jahanbakhsh 2004: 473-474). These currents together with the articulation and contestations on the ideas and meanings of justice, equality, freedom as well as Islam constituted the intellectual-political context and discourse of the political in Iran of the 1960s and 1970s.

Numerous writers, intellectuals, clerics, activists and political leaders contributed to the expansion and consolidation of the discourse of the political during this period. However, none were more important than the religious cleric and 'leader of the 1979 revolution' Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, and the writer and thinker and 'teacher of the revolution' Ali Shariati (Mahdavi 2014: 26). Ayatollah Khomeini's work, Islamic Government or *Hokumat-i Islami* is a seminal writing in Islamic religious and political thought. It laid the foundations for the creation of a novel, and articulated a profound and revolutionary Shi'ite theological political thought and theory. He was the predominant marja-e taqlid and leader of the clerical class and revolutionary movement, and founding leader of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

The role of Ali Shariati was also undeniably important. Esposito writes how Shariati ‘has often been described as the ideologue of Iran’s “Islamic Revolution”’ (Shariati 1986: ix) whereas Rahnema reflects how Shariati ‘was probably the only twentieth-century Iranian intellectual who created a socio-political momentum which gave birth to a social movement, culminating in a revolution’ (Rahnema 1998: 370). More recently, Mahdavi presents that Shariati ‘is probably the most sophisticated and influential socialist Muslim in modern Iran’ (Mahdavi 2017: 280). The utilization of sociology, politics, religion, literature and rhetoric in his approach to understanding and portraying Iranian society made him distinct among the intellectuals, writers and activists of his time. Shariati was a crucial and significant writer and thinker who deepened and propagated the discourse of the political. He bridged tradition and modernity, as well as western, Islamic and eastern traditions. Shariati synthesized Shiite theological thought, socialist ideas and western philosophy (Rahnema 1998: 294) to produce a revolutionary ideology that mobilized the Iranian masses to seek and agitate for social change.

Thus, Shariati’s agitation for protest and to topple the Shah and his writings are attempts to change the social order. His social thought, as well as writings and speeches in addition articulate the premises on which this social order should be based upon. Taken as a whole, Shariati’s social thought expresses the attempt and intent to transform wholly and construct a new Iranian society. The synthesis of ideas, writings and revolutionary agitation by Shariati constitutes and reflects and is a manifestation of the discourse of the political. It illustrates the development and expansion of this discourse particularly in the decades of the 1960s and 1970s preceding the 1979 revolution.

The writings and works of Ali Shariati are many and these reflect his propagating of the discourse of the political and exemplify his contribution to the deepening and consolidation of this discourse. However, for purposes of this paper, I would like to refer and focus on Shariati’s essay *‘Where Shall We Begin?’*. First delivered by Shariati as a lecture in the Technical University of Tehran in November 1971, it has subsequently been published as a text both in Shariati’s *Collected Works*, and also *What is to be Done: The Enlightened Thinkers and an Islamic Renaissance*, edited by Farhang Rajaee and published in 1986.

This essay is significant and relevant as it outlines the main and fundamental characteristics and themes of the discourse of the political, as well as the individuals that are tasked in articulating and propagating and espousing the discourse of the political. In this essay, we identify how Shariati raises the political ideals and ideas

that constitute and are instrumental in a discourse of the political in society. Hence, he discusses the themes and narratives of leadership and justice, the commemoration of Ashura and Imam Husayn, equality and justice, and Islam's condemnation of poverty. Of central importance to us and in this paper, are Shariati's advocacy of the ethical political idea and principle of justice, and the meaning of justice in Islam, politics and society. Further, he discusses and relates the notion of justice to the value of human dignity.

In attempting to discuss and answer the question of 'where shall we begin?', Shariati begins by identifying the people and individuals that to him are tasked with this attempt and intent to begin, that is 'who should begin?' (Shariati 1986: 3). For Shariati it is the 'enlightened soul' that is given this task to begin:

"Obviously, the question of where to begin is asked by those who have a sense of responsibility with regard to their time and society and wish to do something about it. Undoubtedly, they are the enlightened souls, for only such individuals feel a social responsibility and have a sense of social mission. One who is not enlightened is not responsible either" (1986: 3-4).

Further, a perception of time and of the situatedness in a particular moment as well as in the movement of history, and critique and struggle towards social change in society are vital hallmarks of the 'enlightened soul'. And so, the sense of temporality and the social commitment to society constitutes the key characteristics of such a persona:

"Who is an enlightened soul? In a nutshell, the enlightened soul is a person who is self-conscious of his "human condition" in his time and historical and social setting, and whose awareness inevitably and necessarily gives him a sense of social responsibility. And if he happens to be educated he may be more effective and if not perhaps less so. But this is not a general rule, for sometimes an uneducated individual may play a much more important role" (1986: 4).

Shariati links the idea of an educated individual who has obtained a degree to the intellectual whose work or practice is in the sphere of thought, and makes the contrast between an 'enlightened soul' and an 'intellectual'. To him, an 'intellectual' may not necessarily be an 'enlightened soul'. And conversely, one who is an 'enlightened soul' may not necessarily need to be an 'intellectual'. He

identifies Sattar Khan, a leader of the armed uprising against Mohamad Ali Shah during the 1905-11 Constitutional Revolution from Tabriz, as an ‘enlightened soul’, whereas to him Allamah Muhammad Qazvini, a student of Sheikh Fazlullah Nuri, was an ‘intellectual’. The writer and scholar Ali Akbar Dehkhoda, an important and active figure of the constitutional movement, was to Shariati both an ‘enlightened soul’ as well as an ‘intellectual’ (1986: 4).

In discussing Islam as a progressive force, Shariati then asserts how the twin concepts of leadership and justice form part of ‘the symbolic essence of Shi’ism’ (1986: 22). This can be seen in the commemoration of Ashura. This event is commemorated yearly in remembrance of the martyrdom of Imam Husayn in Karbala in the conflict and battle against the Umayyad ruler, Yazid. The struggle of Imam Husayn against Yazid is identified as the contestation and conflict between justice and injustice, and the martyrdom of the former marks, and represents and symbolizes the commitment to and self-sacrifice for the higher ethical ideals of truth and justice in the struggle against oppression, despotism and injustice. Further, Shariati evokes how the worldview of Islam has always emphasized, again, the principles of equality and justice. In relation to Islam as a progressive force Shariati brings to attention the idea of the ‘enlightened Muslim’. This is the persona who recognizes that Islam as a cultural tradition blends idealism and spirituality, and life, and for this Islam upholds both equality and justice:

“An enlightened Muslim...should be fully aware of the fact that he has a unique culture...His is a mixture of faith, idealism and spirituality, and yet full of life and energy with a dominant spirit of equality and justice...” (1986: 22-23)

The convergence of idealism and spirituality with life, echoes Shariati’s representation and description of the central characteristics and dimensions and functions of the ‘enlightened soul’. Read in the context of Shariati’s reference to the link between idealism and spirituality, and life placed now in the framework of Islam, this illustrates the perspective and belief in the social commitment to society, underpinned by the ethical-moral principles and basis of justice and equality. As Laleh Bakhtiar emphasizes, Shariati in conceiving ‘the concept of Islamic social justice’ asserts that there is ‘a commitment by which each individual is bound by and that is to be an active participant in society opposing social ills’ (Shariati 1981: 10). The convergence of faith and life, or ethics and political commitment in Islam, is further illustrated through Shariati’s discussion of the view and understanding of poverty in Islam. Shariati emphasizes how poverty is unacceptable and against the

spirit and core principles of Islamic thought and practice. He highlights the importance of the economic base and dimension in Islam as well as the figure of Abudhar in Islamic history:

“One characteristic of this spirit is that, unlike other religions that justify poverty, Islam condemns it. A great student of Islam, Abudhar, says, ‘When poverty enters a home, religion exits from the window’... An empty stomach lacks everything. A society which has economic problems also lacks spiritual wealth” (Shariati 1986: 23).

The spheres of ethics, as reflected through the dimensions of spirituality and faith, and politics, as represented through the dimensions of life and social commitment, therefore occupy a central position in Shariati’s social thought and writings. Furthermore, Shariati’s ethical-political articulation and espousal of justice that embodies the concern with, and derives from the focus on, the features of spirituality, the economic and the social is an outcome of the union between Shiite religious thought, socialist thought and philosophy.

Shariati’s emphasis on and espousal of the political idea and concept of justice and struggle for social change in society towards pursuing this social ideal is rooted in the context of the 1960s and 1970s conflict and struggle against the Shah in Iran. The Shah’s state-driven economic development agenda, socio-cultural modernization project, and political and state authoritarianism (Abrahamian 1982: 426-427) constituted the discursive political field and context that resulted in the development of contending political ideas, concepts and visions by various social classes and groups, including by diverse writers, intellectuals, clerics, activists and political leaders. Shariati’s espousal and advocacy of justice as political equality and economic equality, was advocated as a response to the political and economic inequality arising from political authoritarianism and state led economic expansion and capitalism.

Shariati therefore answers the question ‘where shall we begin’ by explaining that it is from one’s own culture and faith that provides the platform for one to begin (Shariati 1986: 18-21). And as he writes and discusses, this derives from and involves ethics and politics, and the espousal of justice. For Shariati in the context of Iranian society, it is from Islam as ‘faith, idealism and spirituality’ that provides the foundations and vehicle for social change and the cultural and social renewal of society, and the realization of human dignity:

“Islam pays attention to bread, its eschatology is based on active life in the world, its God respects human dignity and its messenger is armed. Adalat is not simply a religious principle but the spirit that governs all aspects of Islam, and is considered the very objective for which all prophets were sent” (1986: 23-24).

The political and revolutionary ideology created by Ali Shariati was instrumental in the overthrow of the Shah and his ruling regime. However, more importantly and significantly, Shariati’s social thought and writings articulate and espoused the principles of justice and in particular equality, ideas and values that constitute the central themes and characteristics of Shariati’s discourse of the political. Shariati’s focus and elaboration on ethics and political ideas thus expanded and consolidated the discourse of the political in Iran in the 1960s and 70s. This discourse nevertheless, is not isolated and has its roots in the Constitutional Revolution of 1905 to 1911. The political ideas of justice and democracy, as well as equality and the limitation and restriction of political power and authority constituted the main themes and values of the protest and social movement during the period preceding the 1979 Iranian revolution similarly related to those expressed by the thinkers, writers and activists in the years of the constitutional revolution from 1905 to 1911 and thereafter. Additionally, this discourse has also contributed to the development and formation of later and different discourses of the political.

Conclusion: The Renewal of the Political

I begin this paper by attempting to explain how the idea and practice of politics is a recent and modern phenomenon and development in Iran, including several political ideas and concepts. I suggest how political ideas are linked to the political, and that these political ideas provide the foundations for and lead to the emergence of the discourse of the political. This discourse in turn encompasses the process where there occurs, and constitutes the space for the further development of, contestations and interactions and changes in political ideas towards influencing and determining the social relations among individuals in society as well as the social order of society.

I then discuss how the discourse of the political in Iran emerged and developed during the Constitutional Revolution of 1905-1911, and that this discourse was accompanied by the rise of the modern political notions and ideas including the

nation, democracy and justice. In the next section, I discuss how Ali Shariati contributed to the expansion and consolidation of the discourse of the political in the period preceding the 1979 Iranian Revolution. This was done through Shariati's focus on ethics and political ideas and commitment, and the advocacy of the principles of justice and equality. The political idea and value of justice therefore constitutes the central theme and characteristic of Shariati's discourse of the political, and the broader discourse of the political in Iran in general.

In concluding, the implications arising from the development of this discourse of the political in Iran is pronounced. This discourse, subsequently after the revolution in 1979, has persisted and further developed in different directions. For instance, in the 1990s and 2000s, the discourse of the political again emerged significantly and occupied the center stage of Iranian national and public life. During this time, it was the intellectual-political current of religious intellectualism that formed the central and influential platform in the discourse of the political in Iran. This was accompanied and followed by a vibrant and critical current of women's political thought, particularly feminist and Islamic feminist social thought. This included the proliferation of writings and debates on the rights, welfare and status of women in Iranian society as well as the expansion of the public sphere that holds the articulation of ideas and debates. From then to now, within this discourse different currents as well as themes and characteristics have emerged and changed, and articulated and espoused by different and various social groups and classes. However, what binds this social class, currents and themes together and which they have in common are the attempt and interaction and process of negotiating, maintaining and defending or transforming the social order of Iranian society.

Also, and thus, this changing landscape and constant renewal of the discourse of the political keeps up and is in line with Lefort's notion of the political as an 'empty place', and as the 'site which welcomes and preserves indeterminacy'. For some, uncertainty is a negative sentiment and social condition, and produces cynicism and pessimism. Nevertheless, it is precisely because of uncertainty that the political exists, and which in turn constitutes the vehicle and space for the advocacy and defense of ethical and humanitarian values and political ideas. In what way and which direction the discourse of the political will take in the coming years and near future, will depend on the interactions and contestations between the State, market or economy, and society. In this ongoing process, the history of the political serves as a useful and relevant approach to understand and examine the political ideas,

ethical values and moments that shape the contestations and deliberations on the nature and social order of Iranian society.

Note

1. Boroujerdi however argues that, citing Mangol Bayat, intellectuals of the nineteenth century such as Mirza Fath Ali Akhunzadeh, Mirza Taqi Khan Amir Kabir, Mirza Malkam Khan, Mirza Hoseyn Khan Sepahsalar, and Mirza Abd al-Rahim Talebof were convinced that ‘the ‘secret’ of European power and prosperity was rooted in constitutional government and scientific knowledge’ while at the same time sought to retain traditional ways of thinking and also culture for instance in not embarking in a sharp critique of Islamic thought. Please see Mehrzad Boroujerdi, *The Ambivalent Modernity of Iranian Intellectuals*, in *Intellectual Trends in Twentieth-Century Iran: A Critical Survey*, edited by Negin Nabavi (Florida: University Press of Florida, 2003), p. 13-14

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Sociological study of mental disorders in two industrial cities

Saigon and its passing comparison with Arak

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Abstract

Background and Aim: In this study, in addition to the epidemiological study of mental disorders in the population aged 18-64 in Saigon, we look at the socioeconomic factors which affect the prevalence of these disorders, and finally compare the results with the outcome of a similar research carried out in Arak.

Theoretical Framework: Sociological theory of Anomie of Durkheim and Strain theory of Merton are the bases of our theoretical framework in this research. To determine the prevalence of mental disorders, we used the well-known General Health Questionnaire (GHQ-28), and to determine the effective sociological parameters on them, the questions derived from Durkheim and Merton's theories formed our second Questionnaire, the sociological one. The sample size was 384, using Cochran formula, and sampling method was multi-stage cluster sampling.

Findings: Results showed that the overall prevalence of mental disorder in Saigon was 10.2%: in men 5.5% and in women 12.8%. Moreover, the components of immigration, job status, social status, ethnicity, structural and social pressures, family problems, and social capital, were shown to contribute to the risk of mental health and the occurrence of mental disorders. In the comparison of these two industrial cities, we observed that the state of mental disorder in the city of Arak is far worse than the city of Saigon: overall prevalence of mental disorder was 28.9% and in terms of respondent's sex, 34.55% in women and 23.31% in men. The sociological factors that were not confirmed to be effective in Saigon, were religious adherence and ethnicity. All aforementioned factors were strongly confirmed in Arak, including the religious and ethnic parameters.

Key Words: Epidemiology; Medical Sociology; Mental disorder; Saigon; Arak.

Introduction

The Statute of World Health Organization (WHO) defines health as “a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity” (www.who.org). In general, the three dimensions of physical, mental, and social well-being, while seemingly unrelated, are in interaction continuously. “Mental health is as important as physical health to the overall well-being of individuals, societies, and countries. Yet, only a small minority of the 450 million people suffering from a mental or behavioral disorder are receiving treatment. Advances in neuroscience and behavioral medicine have shown that, like many physical illnesses, mental and behavioral disorders are the result of a complex interaction between biological, psychological and social factors.” (WHO report, 2001: 1). In other words, “health is a combination of various qualities including readiness for work, decent nutrition, happiness, and lack of pain and suffering.” (Mohseni, 1997: 12). Regarding the high rates of mental disorders in developed and developing countries, the consequent economic and social costs are heavy. On the other hand, the negative effects on the afflicted individuals and their family include suicide, divorce, drug and alcohol abuse, unemployment, violence, and a damaged social life. Considering all these, mental disorder can be counted as a very serious social issue. As a matter of fact, the amount of research on mental disorders worldwide is huge and mainly in the frameworks of psychology, behavioral therapy, biology, and criminology. But it is the attention towards the effective social factors in mental disorders that sets the orientation of this study. More and more researchers have come to understand the major share of social realities in shaping,

spreading, and treating these disorders and the move towards an interdisciplinary approach in the field has been a meaningful turn towards sociology and its offshoots such as medical sociology. Anshensel and Flen (2012), for example, try to explain the way a society can contribute to the mental well being of its members and moreover, the life of those regarded as individuals with mental disorders, focusing on "how society shapes the thoughts, feelings, and actions of its members in ways that are considered to be mental illness, and with the consequences of having, or being thought to have, a mental illness." (Anshensel et al. 2013: 2). Similarly, Cockerham points to the fact that "with increasing numbers of studies uncovering a significant relationship between social factors and many psychiatric conditions, the study of mentally disturbed behavior has become an important area of research in sociology." (Cockerham, 2017: 3).

Unfortunately, the importance of social factors, compared to the ever-present biological and psychological factors in mental disorder, is less recognized in developing countries. As a matter of fact, in these countries, due to the heavier economic and social problems and their effects on mental disorders, though the statistics are rising officially and unofficially, the information is not comprehensive, coherent, and consistent. Also the studies conducted are normally in most cases narrow in their scope, and not multidisciplinary/interdisciplinary, and mainly focus on either biological or psychological factors. It is clearly impossible to improve mental health situation without accurate data about the prevalence and etiology of the problem. Obviously, a wrong or deficient information about this issue can lead to a misunderstanding about the critical condition and this, naturally, results in sometimes unrelated decisions to face the problem. A similar unfavorable research condition on the mental health issue applies to Vietnam as well.

The Socialist Republic of Vietnam, with a population exceeding 95 million in 331 square kilometres located in South Eastern Asia, is the 14th most populated country on the planet. In less than half a century, Vietnam has gone through three wars: the war with the Japanese, the French, and the Americans. The Vietnam War, the greatest war after the World War 2, resulted in the American defeat and their retreat in 1975. Vietnam, which was nothing but the rubble after the war, started a reconstruction program and since 2000, its economic growth is among the highest in the world. Its adamant pursuit of economic liberalization policy has led to Vietnam's rapid industrialization. This country is among the few nations which have had the lowest unemployment rates for several consecutive years. The following chart presents an overall view of the unemployment in Vietnam:

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The chart below shows the data for unemployment, income, population rates and other sociological and economic factors:

Vietnam Labour	Last	Previous	Highest	Lowest	Unit
Unemployment Rate	2.02	2.05	4.50	1.63	percent
Employed Persons	53.76	53.40	53.76	23.50	Million
Unemployed Persons	1.11	1.12	2.30	0.80	Million
Minimum Wages	3980.00	3750.00	3980.00	1000.00	VND Thousand/Month
Population	92.70	91.70	92.70	34.74	Million
Retirement Age Men	60.00	60.00	60.00	60.00	
Retirement Age Women	55.00	55.00	55.00	55.00	
Wages	5364.00	5202.00	5507.00	1399.00	VND Thousand/Month
Wages High Skilled	11409900.00	12286900.00	12286900.00	10241600.00	VND/Month
Wages In Manufacturing	5463.00	5122.00	5463.00	2871.00	VND Thousand/Month
Wages Low Skilled	4851300.00	5498500.00	7386200.00	4851300.00	VND/Month
Youth Unemployment Rate	7.80	7.67	7.86	5.17	percent
Labor Force Participation Rate	76.70	76.40	77.50	76.40	percent
Living Wage Family	7475300.00	7475300.00	7475300.00	7475300.00	VND/Month
Living Wage Individual	4131400.00	4131400.00	4131400.00	4131400.00	VND/Month

However, the prevalence of mental disorder in Vietnam is totally vague. “In Vietnam, Mental disorders have not been adequately researched. A national representative epidemiological survey on 10 most common mental disorders combined had a prevalence of approximately 14.9% of the population. Estimating from this result about 12 million people are in need of MHS [Managed Health Services]. The most prevalent of these are alcohol abuse (5.3%), depression (2.8%) and anxiety (2.6%).” (Vuang et al., 2011: 66; Nguyen, 2013: 5).

The disregard for mental disorders and mental health, and the effective social factors, in particular, is rather a global fact. Almost 2 decades ago, WHO issued a serious warning regarding this harmful neglect and pointed to the important effects of socio-psychological factors on health which is estimated to be about 85%.

Saigon (HCMC/ Ho Chi Minh City) is the biggest industrial city in Vietnam with a big diversity of jobs and professions, immigrations, ethnicities and religions, socio-economic strata, and subcultures. In this research, we aimed to show the current state of mental disorder in our sample population in Saigon and examine its effective sociological factors which contribute to the situation.

Background

On a global scale, there has been much research on the mental disorder in general, and more recently on its effective social factors too. The reason for the attention to mental disorder, apart from its being a pandemic, is its high cost of control and, in some cases, of treatment, as well as its heavy social, economic, and cultural impacts of. Therefore, prevention is the best and cheapest approach to this problem. As mentioned earlier, the growing rates of mental disorders, especially in developing countries such as Vietnam and Iran, show the urgent need to pay more attention to this problem. Most of the studies conducted, in developed countries are applied, for special purposes, and planned for certain time intervals. In contrast, in the developing countries, such epidemiological studies on mental disorders are not very old, and they mostly, except for a limited number of large-scale studies on the prevalence of mental disorders, are rather in the form of descriptive reports and are not scientific research. In the following paragraphs, first, we have an overview of some of the global and local papers.

In a study carried out in Holland and titled “A Meta-Analysis of the Relation Between Mental Disorders and Crime Recurrence”, Wibbelink conducted a three-level meta-analysis of 20 texts (17 independent studies, N=5737) focusing on internalization, externalization, and combined (a combination of an internal and an

external) disorders. The findings indicate that “type of delinquency (e.g., overt and covert delinquency), and gender influenced the direction and magnitude of the associations between recidivism and internalizing and externalizing disorders.” (Wibbelink et al., 2017: 78).

Also, kugelmass and Garcia, in a study titled “Mental Disorders Among the Secular American Youth” reached at three major outcomes: “First, nonreligious adolescents on average have higher rates of mental disorder than adolescents who identify as religious. Second, there is variability in rates of mental disorder among the three types of non-religious adolescents, with atheists/agnostics experiencing the highest rates, followed by those with no religion, and those with no religious preference. Indeed, after controlling for a host of sociodemographic characteristics, adolescents with no preference have levels of mental disorder that do not defer from the religiously affiliated. Third, the mental health disadvantage of non-religiosity is strongest among nonreligious adolescents with two highly religious parents. Their rates of mental illness are almost twice that of religious adolescents raised in religious households. Moreover, neither nonreligious nor religious adolescents are negatively affected by being raised in nonreligious households.” (Kugelmass and Garcia, 2015: 368).

Mossala Nejad and Amini in a paper titled “The Relationship Between Education and Mental Health Among Junior and Senior Students of Faculty of Medical Sciences in Jahrom” Analyzed the relationship between education and mental health disorders among senior and junior students. This descriptive-analytic study was conducted on 136 students and the data was gathered from the two groups (of junior and senior students) using a questionnaire which consists of two parts. The first part includes sociological factors and the second is a GHQ28 questionnaire. The results of this research indicate that there is a meaningful relationship between the general health of the junior and senior students regarding their physical problems, anxiety, and depression. The average score of both groups regarding disrupted social function was high and both groups show high rates of mental disorder. Also, the married were more depressed than single students and the social function disruption among male medical students was higher than female students. According to these findings, the researchers suggest that the student’s mental health promotion programs must be added to the educational syllabi due to the effects of education on mental disorders among students.

Pahlevanzadeh and Jarollahi, in a paper titled “A Study of the Effective Social Factors on Mental Health Among the Elderly Living in Rural Areas” have discussed

these factors in Dasht Village in Meshkin Shahr. To this end, a set of theories including socially produced mental disorder theory, social history, social support, Kokerin Theory, and Cohen theory were used along with multistage cluster sampling to study 284 people aged above 60. In this study, all research hypotheses were confirmed and the relationship between the mental health of the elderly and family support, socio-economic base, marital status, children's presence in the house, and the amount of daily activity were shown to be true. (Pahlevanzadeh and Jaroallahi, 2011).

Concerning Vietnam, Richardson, Loangturn, and others published a paper titled "Estimating mental distress in Vietnam: The use of SRQ-20" in which they used SRQ-20 on a population of 5000 and reached the number 19.2% as the probable percentage of Vietnamese people with mental disorder. They mention that "our estimate of mental distress using the SRQ-20 is much greater than that of other studies, and in contrast to western prevalence studies, age was not a protective factor in this study." (Richardson et al., 2010: 133)

In another study mentioned earlier, Vuang describes different kinds of mental disorders in Vietnam and concludes that although there has been a growth and improvements in services provided for mental patients, they are by no means sufficient for their large numbers. There is an urgent need for a variety of specialized services, medical staff training, and epidemiological and interventional studies.

A more recent study, "Political Economy and Mental Health in Vietnam", by Kelly Lee and associates begins with the narrating from a report by WHO in 2003; 13% of illnesses worldwide are mental disorders and three-quarters of which happen in countries with low or medium income. Moreover, countries engaged in a political and economic transition period are in deeper trouble. Finally, focusing on the effects of the political economy in Vietnam on mental disorders, it concludes that the globalization and transition process can act both as a threat and an opportunity in relation to mental health services (Kelly Lee and et al., 2015: 266).

Theoretical Framework

As mentioned before, mental health may be vulnerable to structural factors which go beyond the individual. Durkheim's anomie theory can closely approach to health and mental disorder. After analyzing the suicide rates in different industrial and non-industrial countries and then comparing them with each other, Durkheim concludes that the anomic division of labor in industrialized societies will lead to

social collapse unless there exists an integrative moral basis and a minimum of collective conscience. The causes of the rise in suicide numbers among civilized people have some common features.

"Now the causes on which depend the advance of suicide among civilized peoples have undoubtedly a general character. Indeed, suicide does not occur at isolated points, in certain parts of society to the exclusion of others: it can be observed everywhere. According to areas, the upward trend in suicide numbers is more rapid or slower, but there is no exception. Agriculture is less prone than industry, but its share in the number of suicides is continually growing. We are therefore faced with a phenomenon not linked to any special local circumstance but to the general atmosphere of the social environment. This condition is reflected differently in special environments (provinces, professions, religious denominations, etc.). this is why its effect is not felt everywhere with the same intensity, but this does not change its nature." (Durkheim, 2005: 346).

As a result, he begins with a comprehensive study on this anomic situation in a book titled *Suicide* and analyzes the effects of macro scale and structural components of mental disorder and health.

The study at hand uses Durkheim's theory in different ways. First, his theory helps to understand the effects of macro and meso scale structural components on the mental health of people. Second, in line with our research hypotheses, it seems that the prevalence of mental disorders has reached, in Durkheimian terms, a pathological form. Finally, Durkheim is among the top theorists who have discussed the problems of modern society from a structural point of view. As an evidence, in one of his seminal studies, Durkheim has analyzed extensively the social structural factors that encourage a person to take his own life (Bessa, 2012: 31).

Merton's strain theory is another framework we used in this research. According to Merton's Structural-Functional Sociology, society is like a system made up of a group of structural components such as cultural and social structures. Cultural and social structures interact with each other to make the continuity of social system and its coordination with the people and the environment:

"If the social structure restrains some dispositions to act, it creates others. The functional approach therefore abandons the position, held by various individualistic theories, that different rates of deviant behaviour in diverse groups and social strata are the accidental result of varying proportions of pathological personalities found

in these groups and strata. It attempts instead to determine how the social and cultural structure generates pressure for socially deviant behavior upon people variously located in that structure." (Merton, 1968: 175-176).

Following Durkheim's footsteps, Merton believes that the continuity of anomie conditions can have various consequences for the individual but unlike Durkheim, he does not see it as an outcome of a sudden change but he believes it to be the result of the existing social structure. Such a situation, Merton maintains, is the result of the unreachable gap between the accepted social goals and the legitimate means of attaining them in the society. This means that society encourages individuals to achieve certain goals while the means for attaining such goals are out of reach. In a sense, some individuals are forced to either choose specific goals reachable to them or use illegitimate means to reach those goals which their culture has allowed them to consider (Setudeh, 2008: 93). Under such conditions, the individual goes through frustration and other diverse pressures which may lead to an outbreak of mental disorder.

Although it is true that Merton proposed the strain theory to explain deviations, it is and will be an effective framework for understanding mental disorders too. Following the same line of thought, Merton's understanding of anomie is a state of confusion which results in an anarchy of social value system. The direct impact of such an anarchy is certain anxieties from which many people suffer. Merton's explanation of anomie is related to mental disorder in two ways. First, negative conditions such as confusion and anarchy can lead people to mental disorders. Second, the lack of balance between the expectations and real achievements will affect the mental health of the individual negatively (Bessa, 2012: 35). Here is only one of the applications of Merton's approach in medical sociology—but a very fruitful one (Tavakol & Armstrong, 2012: 38).

Research Hypotheses

Taking the Durkheimian-Mertonian theoretical framework into account and in order to see the effective social factors on major mental disorders such as depression, schizophrenia, emotional disorders, panic attacks, general anxiety disorder, and OCD, the research hypotheses are as follows:

- 1: Migration as a social factor is related to the prevalence of mental disorders.
- 2: Educational level and the prevalence of mental disorders are related.
- 3: Socio-economic class is related to the prevalence of mental disorders.

- 4: Job is related to the prevalence of mental disorders.
- 5: Ethnicity is related to the prevalence of mental disorders.
- 6: Mental disorder rates are different between males and females.
- 7: Urban life problems (social strain, social descent, lack of social support and sympathy and trust, fluctuation of social capital, etc.) affect mental disorders.
- 8: Religiosity is related to the prevalence of mental disorders.

Methodology

In this study, we aimed to get an estimate of the mentally disordered people in Saigon and to analyze the social factors affecting mental health or disorder. Along with using national data, research reports on health and mental disorder and other secondary sources, interviews with psychologists, and psychoanalysts, fresh data was gathered quantitatively, using questionnaires.

In this analytical-descriptive study, the prevalence of mental disorders was measured among Saigon citizens aged from 18 to 64. Using probabilistic and multi-stage cluster sampling, and based on the city maps, different social class districts were identified (D1 & D3 upper class, D5 almost upper class, Bin Tan middle class, D8 lower class, and Riverside very low class), and then blocks and neighborhoods were chosen to distribute and complete the questionnaires. Then, data was gathered using simple or systematic random sampling. The sample population was 384 according to Cochran formula. Morgan's chart showed the same number, 384, as well.

General Health Questionnaire (GHQ-28) was used to measure the prevalence and the types of mental disorders. The questionnaire was first translated from English into Vietnamese and after the pre test, the questionnaires were answered in the aforementioned districts. based on Durkheim and Merton's theories, the questions concerning the effective sociological parameters on mental disorders were put into a separate questionnaire (Sociological Questionnaire) which were also answered by the sample population. The GHQ-28 questions were answered using Likert's four-point scale: "No", "a little", "a lot", "too much". Higher scores were given to those answers that showed the signs of mental disorder. This scale was also pre-tested in clusters of 30 individuals and then underwent analyzes to measure the internal compatibility of each question with the total scale score. To determine the possibility of subscales, the scale was post-tested using factor analysis. Regarding the Sociological Questionnaire, parameters such as anomie, social pressure, social

capital fluctuations, employment status, class and socio-economic status, educational level, migration, religiosity, etc. were measured using a dual spectrum of yes or no. This meant that the preference for an option meant having the attribute and not choosing it was taken for its lacking. Finally, data analysis was completed by entering the data into SPSS, and a descriptive and inferential analysis was provided for explaining the relations between the variables. For analyzing each hypothesis, based on the gathered data the appropriate statistical method was employed. For example, the concept of religiosity was measured in 5 questions. For analyzing this variable, the code 1 (meaning yes) was assigned for those participants who had given a positive answer and the code 0 for those doing the opposite. Linear regression was used since the dependent variable here (mental disorder) was measured by the interval scale, and it was assumed that here there is a causal relationship between the dependant and independent variables. In some cases in order to evaluate the direct effect of independent variables on dependent variables the aforementioned distance scale was replaced by nominal scale (individuals suffering from mental disorders and individuals without mental disorders).

Factor analysis also was used in order to evaluate the subtest validity. GHQ-28 consists of 4 sub-tests each of which has 7 equivalent questions that evaluate one aspect of the mental health. Therefore, each aspect of mental health questionnaire should be correlated with only one common factor.

Aspects	Factor	Total Variance			KMO	Bartlett's Test for Sphericity
		Special Amount	Variance Percentage	Cumulative Percentage		
Physical Signs	1	201.4	60	60	0.902	000/0
	2	0.696	94.9	70		
Anxiety	1	26.3	46.6	44.6	0.795	000/0
	2	0.971	13.8	60.5		
Disrupted Social Function	1	3.81	55.54	54.5	0.865	000/0
	2	0.98	14	68.6		
Depression Symptoms	1	4.11	55.8	55.8	0.883	000/0
	2	0.903	12.9	71.7		

Validity and reliability of GHQ-28

The findings of the table also suggest that all of the 4 aspects of mental health have only 1 factor or equivalent special amount larger than 1. As a result, the number of

final factors for each aspect of mental health is only one factor which shows that the mental health subtest questions are equivalent. KMO indicator, which shows the correlation of variables, was used to find the proper variables for factor analysis. This indicator ranges between 0 and 1. The larger amounts mean that the variables are better for the factor analysis. Findings of the table show that all amounts of KMO indicator are between 0.8 and 0.9 which means that the variables correlation is fit for the factor analysis. On the other hand, regarding the Bartlett Test results, the factor analysis results are generalizable to the total population. The GHQ-28 reliability was evaluated by Cronbach's Alpha which was 0.934 for the entire questionnaire, 0.882 for physical signs factor, 0.803 for anxiety factor, 0.847 for disrupted social function, and 0.879 for depression symptoms. This means that the questions are highly compatible. The results of the KMO indicator and Bartlett's Test, regarding other questions and sub-factors of the study, show the results to be generalizable and the questions to be highly compatible with one another.

Findings

Using the standard GHQ-28, the prevalence of mental disorder in the research population in Saigon was 10.2%. The gender-based amount is 5.5% for males and 12.8% for females.

The findings of the tables show:

Descriptive statistics of the respondents' age	Mean	Variance	minimum	maximum
	36.50	16.089	15	91

As the table above shows the average age of respondents is 36.05. The variance is around 17 years with the youngest respondents ageing 15 and the oldest 91 years.

The place of the individual in the family	Prevalence	Frequency
Head of the family	101	26.30
Husband or wife	50	13.02
Girl or boy	150	39.06
Grand son or grand daughter	20	5.21

Parents	8	2.08
Brother or sister	6	1.56
Other relations	20	5.20
Not related	25	6.51
Total	384	100

This table includes the prevalence and frequency of place of the individual in the family. For example, 101 respondents (26.30%) are heads of the family. 150 respondents (39.06%) were boys or girls in the family as well.

Head of the family's income	Prevalence	Frequency
Less than 4 million Dongs	18	4.68
4 to 10 million Dongs	34	8.85
10 to 15 million Dongs	196	51.04
15 to 20 dDongs	134	34.89
20 to 25 million Dongs	3	0.78
Total	384	100

According to the respondents, in 4.68% of the cases (18 respondents) heads of the family earn less than 4 million dongs (each US dollar is approximately 22000 dongs). 34 respondents (8.85%) reported an income of 4 to 10 million dongs and 196 of them stated their income to be 10 to 15 million dongs. Therefore, the number of respondents with a total income of 10 to 15 million dongs per month is more than other income groups. The second spot is for those with a monthly income of 15 to 20 million Dongs.

Family status	Prevalence	Frequency
Married	304	79.16
Divorced	1	0.26
Single	79	20.57
Total	384	100

Regarding the family status of the respondents, the data gathered shows that 304 of them (79.16%) are married. This group has the highest numbers. Then comes the

single group with 79 members (20.57%). Finally, only one of the respondents reported being divorced - which makes up 0.26% of the respondents.

Domicile	Prevalence	Frequency
City	130	33.85
Slum dog	14	3.64
Suburbs	240	62.5
Total	384	100

Of the total number of 384 respondents, 62.5% or 240 people reported their domicile to be in the suburbs. The highest number was for this group. Next, the city dwellers make up 33.85% or 130 respondents. 14 people reported that they live in slums.

Descriptive statistics of respondents' family size	Mean	Variance	minimum	maximum
	4.36	2.210	1	20

The respondents' family size was 4.63. The variance of this answer was 2.012 individuals. The smallest family was 1 individual and the largest was 20.

Housing status	Prevalence	Frequency
House owner	320	83.33
Tenant	61	15.88
Governmental	1	0.26
Undeclared	2	0.52
total	384	100

320 respondents or nearly 83% reported to be house owners. The highest number was for this group. 61 respondents or 15.88% were living in rented domiciles. Only 1 individual was living in governmental houses and 2 respondents did not report their housing status.

Ethnicity	Prevalence	Frequency
Kinh	337	87.8
Khme	17	4.4
Chinese overseas	22	5.7
Missing	8	2.1
Total	384	100

The majority of the respondent's, 337, nearly 88%, reported their ethnicity to be Kinh. 22 respondents were Chinese overseas and 17 were Khme.

religion	Prevalence	Frequency
Buddhist	180	46.87
Christian	35	9.11
Atheist	160	41.66
Other religions	4	1.04
Undeclared	5	1.3
total	384	100

180 respondents identified themselves as Buddhists (46.87%), 35 respondents reported themselves as Christians (9.11%) and 160 respondents were atheists (41.66%). The results show that the majority of the respondents were Buddhists.

The checking of research hypotheses implies a meaningful effect of the sociological factors on mental health. Regarding the effect of migration on the prevalence of mental disorder the Chi-square shows 26.381 which means this factor is related to mental disorder. The Pearson's correlation coefficient was -0.26 which proves the longer an individual lives in his/her neighborhood, the less he/she may suffer from mental disorders. Regarding the effect of education on mental disorder the Chi-square test result was 12.388 which suggests a significant relationship between these dependent and independent variables. Regarding the hypothesis of the effect of socioeconomic status on mental disorder, the independent test result was 180.128 which clearly suggests a strong relation between socioeconomic status on the one hand and the prevalence of mental disorder on the other. This means that people with a mental disorder were mainly from the lower classes of society and those without disorders mainly from the privileged class. Based on the linear

regression model, the rise in social and economic class will decrease the prevalence of mental disorder by about 3.57 standard units. Regarding the effect of employment (employed/unemployed) on mental disorder, the Chi-square independence test clearly showed that employment and mental disorder are related and the results are generalizable. In order to better understand the intensity of this relation, Cramer's V measure and the level of significance were 0.37 and 0.000 respectively which shows a moderate relationship which is generalizable. Regarding the effect of the second job on mental disorder, the Chi-square independent test clearly showed that the second job and mental disorders are highly connected. In order to better understand the intensity of this relation, the Cramer's V measure was used. The Cramer's V measure with the significance level below 0.005 was 0.342. This suggests a strong positive relationship between the two variables; namely having a second job increases the probability of mental disorders to 0.342.

Regarding the effect of ethnicity on mental disorder, the Chi-square independent test showed that ethnicity and the prevalence of mental disorder are not strictly related. The effect of gender on the prevalence of mental disorder was studied by regression and the results showed that being female increases the probability of mental disorder by 1.1 times. Linear regression also showed that being female increases the chance of mental disorder by 0.39%. Chi-square independence test statistics was 47.262 which suggests that there is a significant relationship between social strain and the prevalence of mental disorder. The results of the logistic regression and the odds ratio (6.25) and the 95% confidence interval show that the prevalence of mental disorder as a dependent quantity and the social strain as an independent quantity are directly and positively related. This means that social strain increases the prevalence of mental disorder by 6.26 regression units. Using the linear regression model showed that social strain increases the prevalence of mental disorder by about 13.5 standard units. The effect of the decrease in sympathy and social trust on mental disorder was evaluated by different statistical tests and the results showed that this variable and mental disorder are directly connected. The results of the correlation test (r) suggested that sympathy and social trust and mental disorder have a strong and diverse connection which is completely significant. Increase in support, sympathy, and social trust will result in the decrease of mental disorders. The effect of statistical tests regarding social capital proved its strong effect on the mental disorder. The results of the correlation test (r) suggested that sympathy and social trust and mental disorder have a strong and negative connection which is completely significant. The increase in social capital will result in a decrease in mental disorder. The relationship between these two variables is

seen to be strong. Regarding the effect of religiosity on mental disorder using linear regression, it was demonstrated that this sociological parameter has no significant correlation with the mental disorder in this population.

$$y_{\text{General Health Status}} = \frac{33}{615} - \frac{4}{191x_{\text{Religious Activities}}}$$

As a result, there is no strict relation between irreligiosity and high prevalence of mental disorder. The resulting regression model showed that a positive answer to religiosity will decrease the prevalence of mental disorder by about 4 units (negative correlation regression). Therefore, it can be said that there was no significant statistical relation between suffering from mental disorders and irreligiosity among the respondents of this research.

It is interesting to compare passingly the mental health situation in Saigon and its sociological parameters with that of Arak, a provincial capital in Iran.

Iran is the second largest country in the Middle East, and with 81 million population in the world 18thmost populous country. Like Vietnam, the Islamic Republic's central government controls/directs the socio-economic system, but there is also a powerful pseudo and semi-private sector, along with some private activity too. The diversity of ethnicities and religions in Iran is bigger than those of Vietnam. The Islamic Revolution overthrew the monarch some 40 years ago, and the country went through the devastating war with Iraq (1980-88) which, along with socio-economic problems, was a big factor in the process of deterioration of mental health in the country. According to a literature review on mental disorders in Iran, the prevalence of mental disorders in 29 studies until the year 2001 swayed from 8 to 53 percent (Ehsanmanesh, 1380: 2). A more comprehensive survey conducted in 2014 in Iran, shows the prevalence of mental disorders to be 25.1% (Noorbala et al, 2014).

We mentioned Saigon is the biggest industrial city in Vietnam. Arak also is one of the biggest industrial cities in Iran and encompasses many diversities we mentioned about Saigon. The city has suffered economically and socially even more than the country in general which has been experiencing difficult socio-economic conditions; inflation, unemployment, corruption, social tensions, drug addiction etc. When it comes to the mental health situation of Arak, according to the study we carried out with a sample population of the same no of 384 respondents, and using the same theoretical framework and methodology, GHQ-28 results showed the shocking total prevalence of 28.9% for the mentally disordered among them. This

ratio according to a survey completed in 2014, was 25.1%. In our study, the gender-based prevalence of mental disorder was 34.55% for females and 23.31% for males. Regarding the research hypothesis and the effects of sociological factors on mental health in Arak case, our analyses confirmed that nearly all sociological parameters contributed to the risk of mental health and the prevalence of mental disorders, except the education parameter. As to the effect of religiosity on the independent variable of mental disorder, the Linear Regression analysis showed that religiosity decreases the chance of mental disorder by 60 regression units (unlike Vietnam). The effect of migration on the prevalence of mental disorder, using Chi-square test with 213.05 was strongly confirmed. Regarding the hypothesis of the effect of socio-economic status on mental disorder, the independent test result was 12.618 and according to the Linear Regression Model, higher social class decreased the prevalence of mental disorder by 7.3 regression units. Concerning the effect of employment on mental health, it was shown that mental disorder was more prevalent among unemployed people than employed ones. Unlike Vietnam, the effect of ethnicity on mental disorder was meaningful in Arak, especially considering the fact that most of the mentally disturbed people there, were originally Azaries. Regression results confirmed that being female increases the probability of mental disorder by 1.7 times. The effect of a decrease in sympathy and social trust on mental disorder was significant using the correlation test (r) with $-.807$ (which shows that they are negatively connected). As to the effect of social capital on mental health correlation test (r) with an amount of $-.862$, showed that the increase of social capital will decrease the probability of mental disorder.

Conclusion and Explanation

One of the most important hypotheses about the effect of social and structural factors on the mental health of individuals belongs to Emile Durkheim. He expressed these hypotheses in his famous book "Suicide". In his book, Durkheim discussed that biological concepts (and also merely psychological ones) cannot entirely explain human behavior. Durkheim believes that although suicide is apparently an individual and personal phenomenon, this anomic phenomenon can not be considered as an entirely personal decision which is made under the influence of personal difficulties or mental problems. There are hidden forces which lead the individual to commit suicide. There are many studies which followed Durkheim's line of thought about suicide. An economic crisis such as downturn and inflation, bankruptcy, extended unemployment, and etc., have different consequences in social life of individuals and consequently, the harmful effects of

these crises on individuals mental health is considerable. Durkheim in his "Suicide" claimed that economic fluctuations and suicide rates are related and during downturns, committing suicide is high. "Durkheim justifies that this phenomenon cannot be merely the consequence of poverty because the suicide rate among those who have always been poor is the lowest. In addition, the increase in suicide is not limited to the periods of downturn but it also increases in the periods of economic boom. Therefore, the main factor is not the financial condition but the inconsistency it brings to our social life. During the crisis, the usual moral principles which ordered the individual's social functions go under pressure and lose control" (Giddens, 1983: 39-40). In such situations of sudden downturns, dropping stock values, bankruptcies, and lack of funds disrupt relative stability, mental health of the individual is endangered as well. Therefore, the process which prepares an individual to commit suicide is not normally a one phase process. The most important phase, is mental disorder which over time not only disturbs the mental health but also affects the individual's social function. Reciprocally one's mental disorder is affected by the social realities.

The present study shows that social factors which affect the prevalence of mental disorders include migration, family status, socioeconomic status, employment, social strains, and social capital. The question is how these factors can be accommodated within the Durkheimian explanation. For Durkheim, an important issue was that "how to reconcile between personal freedom and social discipline. The political issue was how to make some form of social structure which is able to bring spontaneous coherent desires and maximize personal freedom (Thompson, 2009: 109). He believed that when the social division of labor developed, the traditional moral discipline which justifies the social inequalities weakened and more importantly, new forms of ethical supervisions on individual's life were not effective in modern societies. Needs and desires were made free from moral and regulating strains, division of labor became more professional, several traditional jobs no longer existed and some modern jobs were created; all these affected a self-centered person, in order to fulfill his/her limitless desires and to find a place in modern division of labor, to move to industrial cities and centers. In such situation in which there is no coherent source of moral discipline and a kind of anomie is dominant, the migration of individuals from different places with different cultures and limitless desires unfulfilled will lead them to permanent feelings of deprivation, discrimination, and frustration. Therefore, the anomic division of labor in industrial societies without an integrative moral base and a minimum of collective conscience will result in a social and mental collapse.

The destruction of traditional jobs and lack of new job opportunities for old and new immigrants have harmful mental effects. The effect of this variable in Saigon is observable, though, regarding the high level of employment in Saigon and its extended division of labor, the frequency of this issue is much less than other developing areas. Durkheim believes that corporations and employment groups can create social cohesion in modern times. However, as our data showed the effect of migration on the mental disorder is significant in Saigon too.

Regarding the social strains and the effect of macro and meso economic structural factors on mental health the Mertonian analysis is enlightening. When the system blocks the ways to fulfill the desires, as a result, the individual will face stress, mental pressure, loss of self-esteem, etc. The continuity of such a situation will result in mental collapse. This situation holds true, although in a smaller scale, for Saigon. Social strain increased the chances of mental disorder.

Regarding the social capital, Saigon showed that the majority of individuals who suffer from mental disorders have low social capital. In order to explain this matter, in addition to the above-pictured condition about anomie and economic and social fluctuations we should look for integrity. Durkheim in his Division of Labor in Society concerns about the relationship between individuals and society. The foundations of social unity that had formed gradually in ancient and primitive societies, continued with organic solidarity. With the changes in society, in modern times this integrity took the shape of a mechanical which was the result of the professional division of labor. In this situation, it is the individual's profession which connects them together. Therefore, though individuality is in place and all members of the society do not believe in common values, beliefs, traditions, and emotions, in industrial societies, due to equal conditions for all, meritocracy, equality against the law, syndicates, guilds, etc, integrity is somewhat secured. While in the developing countries, mostly, due to an inefficient economy, nepotism, and banning of guilds, there is an air of inequality, discrimination, and distrust which affects the interpersonal and group trust, social and cultural participation. On the other hand, one of the characteristics of the mental disorder, especially in the time of depression is the individual's desire for insociability and isolation. The results of our research confirmed this and showed that individuals with the mental disorder had the lower rate of social capital compared to mentally healthy individuals.

The last sociological factor that was expected to be effective on mental disorder was religiosity. As it was discussed, mental disorder in Saigon is not related to this independent variable.

But how the existing fact can be explained sociologically? Durkheim believed that the increasing division of labor in modern societies had usurped religion's older role as a provider of social unity. Division of labor in modern societies leads individuals to prefer personal goals to collective achievements. Under such conditions, when religion as a source for social unity is weakened or is absent, the individual ego and selfishness and the priority of personal goals to social ones can emerge in certain groups and strata. When there is no way for individuals to achieve their personal goals and on the other hand religion as a relieving factor loses its former function in society, the consequent pressure of not achieving the goals will lead the individual to frustration, discrimination, humiliation, and jeopardize his mental health. Regarding the meager unemployment rate in Saigon, secularism and the low percentage of religious adherence, tolerant mentality and culture, and ideological passivity have helped to decrease mental disorder and substituted the supporting role that religion was previously playing to facilitate mental health. As we mentioned before, the situation in Arak was different, most of the aforementioned factors in Saigon were absent in Arak, and the religiosity was an effective factor, and these make the high mental disorders there justifiable.

The last point is that the two industrial cities we studied and compared are located in the easternmost and westmost Asian countries. They are different regarding their ethnicity, culture, history, religion, production, nature and geography, and in their socioeconomic or-political systems, but they are similar regarding their economic development, urbanization and migration, industrialization, and experiencing catastrophic wars. The unexpected result was the great difference in the size of the prevalence of mental disorder between these two cities; very high in Arak and below normal in Saigon. The sociological data extracted from these two studies, along with the local participative observations we had, make this difference understandable. In Arak, in recent decades different heavy and huge industries were established while there was a lack of local workforce in the city which attracted so many migrants from different cultures from different provinces and regions. During the past few years, however, the city has suffered a lot from the worsening economic conditions in the country, downturns and inflation, corruption, discrimination, widespread imports from abroad, multiple bankruptcies, partial closure/complete closure of many industries and productive centers, compulsory retirements, insufficient monetary sources to pay the delayed

workers salaries, disappearance of traditional jobs and absence of new job opportunities, migration challenges and ethnic differences along with social changes such as identity and security crisis, increasing individualism, weakening public morals and hope, decreasing public trust and the sense of national regional belonging, weakening social support and beliefs. All these, which were more grave in Arak compared to the majority of other cities in the country, contributed to the terrible increase of mental disorders in this city.

But in Vietnam, Saigon in particular, the following positive conditions which were relatively acceptable, helped to decrease the prevalence of mental disorders: high employment, provision of basic economic needs, high literacy rate, low rate of socio-ethnic tensions, invisible security approaches in the city, a more popular administration, a more public services and mass facilities, an extensive welfare services even if at times minimal, a relatively high social trust, very strong family ties, a good social support atmosphere, calm morality and behaviour which is sometimes passive, low rates of tension and violence, religious and ideological tolerance, the culture of contentment and acceptance of the current situation, general hope for a better future, the widespread spirit for work and development along with low expectations, cooperation and mutual respect, a strong sense of nationalism and national pride, etc. These are interesting and instructive phenomena because the above mentioned characters, attitudes, features, and conducts are present in a city and in a country which has survived a devastating war with the USA only in few decades ago which did lead to almost total destruction of their economic, productive, environmental and natural foundations, and horrible human disasters.

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Study of Divine Titles with Reference to the Translations by Régis Blachère and Jacques Berque

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Abstract

Translating divine titles from one language to another is a very difficult task, and according to some rhetoricians in the field of translation, it is virtually impossible. However, since one of the ways of getting to know God is through Qur'an, and considering that he introduces himself through his attributes in this holy book, translation of its verses is essential. However, a wrong translation of the Divine Titles can affect the reader's mind and create an obscure misconception of God.

This article attempts to analyze Divine Titles' translatability with reference to the translations provided by Régis Blachère and Jacques Berque. In order to achieve this purpose, through the reference including dictionaries, interpretations, and philological books, and with regard to subtle differences in meaning of words in terms of etymology and linguistics, we attempt to analyze the equivalents selected by these two translators. This study indicates that in selecting most equivalents, sufficient attention is not directed toward the roots and true meanings of the Divine Titles, and thus, interpretive translation or adding confirmative adverbs or adjectives is suggested as a solution to understanding the exact meaning of the Divine Titles.

Keywords: Divine Titles, the Qur'an, Régis Blachère, Jacques Berque.

Introduction

Translation of the Qur'an has always been an important issue for human beings, and if we tend to present this issue by considering the Qur'an as the word of God with human beings, we will encounter the contradiction between the necessity of translation and its untranslatability, because the language in which the Qur'an was revealed has multiple meanings and demands Arabic language fluency, knowledge of translation, complete and extensive knowledge in all fields, and patience, and few people can collectively master these areas.

God says: "We sent thee (Muhammad) not, but as a mercy for all creatures" (AL-ANBIYA, 107). Citing this holy verse, we find that the mission of the last prophet was not limited to Arabs and includes all people around the world; therefore, the translation of the verses of God is essential.

The question of translatability of the Qur'an has always been a challenge for Islamic scholars and interpreters. According to Muslims, the Qur'an is the direct revelation to the Prophet and he has no desire and no expression in it. So the Qur'an is the word of God, and thus, "inimitable". So it seems untranslatable because the speaker is God. Another point is that the Qur'an was revealed in the Arabic language, and choosing Arabic as the language of revelation has allocated a great value to Arabic among other languages through which the revelation was conducted.

Some of the scholars who had permitted translation of the Qur'an have expanded the scope of the permit as far as they have allowed saying prayers with the translated surah. However, this permit (Fatwa) was faced with outright rejection by other scholars. What is certainly agreed between the pros and cons of the translation includes:

First: The Qur'an is the word of God and each word is selected based on wisdom unknown to all people in all ages.

Second: The guidance of the Qur'an is as wide as all generations in all ages. So the Qur'an is an eternal book and guide.

¹ بَارَكَ اللَّهُ الَّذِي نَزَّلَ الْفُرْقَانَ عَلَىٰ عَبْدِهِ لِيَكُونَ لِلْعَالَمِينَ نَذِيرًا (AL-FURQAN 1:25)

Third: The purpose the Qur'an is the most honorable one i.e. salvation of human beings from darkness and leading them to light.

² (IBRAHIM 2:14) «كِتَابٌ أَنزَلْنَاهُ إِلَيْكَ لِتُخْرِجَ النَّاسَ مِنَ الظُّلْمَاتِ إِلَى النُّورِ».

These three characteristics make the Qur'an prior to any human written test and makes its translation harder than any other religious or non-religious, scientific and literary text.

The Qur'an's translation besides the meaning of words and sentences, should contain messages along with its characteristics to present its certainty, charm, elegance, beauty, and transformational impact, as well as its eternality. This special sensitivity and specificity exists in translating religious texts other than the Qur'an (Seyyedi, 1991:34). In any case, if the meaning of the Qur'an is deemed as signs of divine origin, we conclude that the Qur'an is untranslatable. Therefore, no other text can be a substitute for the Word of God and claim to be a miracle and sanctity. Translation removes "the miracle of the Qur'an and its non-similarity, which is literary inherent in the Arabic language". Without a doubt, one of the strengths of the Arabic language is the regulated forms of rhetoric. The Arabic language compared to other languages presents many concepts in the least amount of words without any sense of ambiguity and failure. Therefore, we can only translate the Qur'an's interpretation, but this translation "will not be the same as the Qur'an" (Casper, 1980: 121-122).

Every language has specific subtleties, intricacies and ironies, allegories, and certain interpretations that make its translation difficult. But the difficulty in translation of the Qur'an is beyond this issue, because in its translation, the elegant concepts of the Qur'anic verses that come in very eloquent terms, should also be considered. In other words, if Qur'anic translation is formally correct, could it present a perfect translation? These problems and complexities make Islamic tradition prefer interpretive translations over literal translations.

Requirements to enter the realm of understanding and translation of Qur'an

In order to understand the deep and accurate translation of the Qur'an and the traditions, the knowledge of Qur'anic science and particularly strong science, similarity and the honor of their descent, etc., words close to the age of Qur'an Arabic literature and studies, linguistics, and etymology are required. The most important step in translation is to understand the exact meaning of the words of the Qur'an; because many words require exploration and research and have a great mission of transferring the concepts, the ignorance of which may lead to disasters, and they are the most important keys to master the Qur'an. The type of words and

their arrangements transfer the concept in the best way possible (Ibn ol Rasoul, Goli, 2012:31). Farabi regarding the Qur'an's themes says:

«لَا سِبِيلٌ إِلَى عِلْمِهِ وَإِدْرَاكٍ مَعْنَيِّهِ إِلَّا بِالْتَّبَحْرِ فِي عِلْمِ الْقُرْآنِ» (Lotfipoor Saedi, 80)

(There is no way to understand the Qur'an and its concept skills in philology). We should not forget that the Qur'an is the Divine Verbal Spirit, and one of the miracles is a very precise word selection, so that each word in its place is the best word in the Arabic language, so it is not possible to remove and replace it with a better synonym (Arab, 2012: 128).

Despite all these complexities, today there are more than 170 translations of the Qur'an in French. This book was translated for the first time in the first half of the seventeenth century by André Du Ryer. This text was so authentic that no one dared to retranslate it for about a century (Ziar, 2012: 73), but many translators took their chance in translation in the 19th and 20th centuries that Andre Chouraqui and Kazimirski are among them.

Régis Blachère and Jacques Berque and the Qur'an translation

Jacques Berque was a French Islamic scholar and sociologist. His expertise was the decolonisation of Algeria and Morocco. Born of French parents in Frenda (now in Tiaret Province) in French Algeria, he was a pied-noir. His father, Augustin Berque, was a scholar and Arabist of distinction, one of the few to take an interest in the Muslim culture of the Maghreb. Berque graduated from University of Algiers in 1929, and obtained a M.A. degree a year later. He was made director of Muslim Sociological Studies at the Ecole Practique des Hautes Etudes, and a year later, in 1956, was appointed Professor of the Social History of Contemporary Islam at the Collège de France, a post he occupied until his retirement in 1981. Later he presided over two government missions, one at the Ministry of Research (1981–1982) and the other at the Ministry of Education (1984–1985).

Among some of Berque's most important works are his books *Les Arabes d'hier a demain* (1960) and *L'Egypte: imperialisme et révolution* (1967), translated into English by Jean Stewart as *The Arabs: their history and future* (1964) and *Egypt: imperialism and revolution* (1972).

Berque's most lasting contribution might have been to the study of Islam. A devout Christian, he found in Islam "a new version of the truth of the world". Made a Chevalier de la Légion d'honneur in his own country, he was decorated also by

Morocco, Syria and Tunisia. In Egypt he was made a member of the Arabic Language Academy of Cairo.

Régis Blachère was born in 1900 on the outskirts of Paris. At the age of 15, when his father migrated to Morocco, he settled in Casablanca. Régis studied at the high school Lyautey, and since then had a keen interest in studying foreign languages. In 1922, he received a bachelor's degree from Al Jazeera University. In 1924, he was admitted to the undergraduate postgraduate entrance examination, and as his father was a simple worker, he was forced to continue his work at the school of Mulla Yusuf while studying in Algiers, and therefore he was always on the move between Robat and Al Jazeera.

Finally, he graduated in 1929 and continued his career with the assistance of Levi Provençal at the Moroccan Institute of Advanced Studies, head of research until 1935. He graduated in 1936 with a Ph.D. at the National Oriental Language School in Arabic and continued for 15 years. In 1950, he was appointed professor at the Arabic Language and Literature University of Sorbonne, who was in that position until retirement in 1970.

He was also a member of the Institute (1972), director of studies at the Institut des Hautes Etudes Marocaines in Rabat (1930-1935), Professor of Arabic at the National School of Oriental Languages (1935-1950), , director of the Institute of Islamic Studies at the University of Paris (1956) -1965), director of the Center of Arabic lexicography, associated with the CNRS (1962-1971).

Translation of the Divine attributes

This study first indicates the number of times each word is repeated in the Qur'an, and then we will analyze the roots with similar words. In the section related to the details of Divine Titles, it is attempted to present Islamic scholars' views with reference to various interpretations³ accepted by them.

Finally, with regard to all these statements and points of view, we will compare the proposed equivalents by Régis Blachère and Jacques Berque for each of the Divine Titles to find out whether they are translatable or not.

Table 1: Divine attributes

<p style="text-align: center;"> هُوَ اللَّهُ الَّذِي لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْمَلِكُ الْقَدُّوسُ السَّلَامُ الْمُؤْمِنُ الْمَهْيَمُ الْعَزِيزُ الْجَبَّارُ الْمُتَكَبِّرُ سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ عَمَّا يُشَرِّكُونَ (الْحَسْنَةُ ٢٣:٥٩)⁴ </p>	
<p>He is Allah, other than whom there is no deity, the Sovereign, the Pure, the Perfection, the Bestower of Faith, the Overseer, the Exalted in Might, the Compeller, the Superior. Exalted is Allah above whatever they associate with Him.⁵</p>	
Blachère	Berque
Il est Allah, nulle divinité excepté lui, le Roi, le très Saint, le Salut(?), le Pacificateur(?), le Préservateur, le Puissant, le Violent, le Superbe. Combien Allah est plus glorieux que ce qu'ils [lui] associent.	Il est Dieu, Il n'y a de Dieu que lui, Il est le Roi, le très Saint, le Dispensateur de Salut, l'Avérateur de la croyance, l'Englobant, le Dominateur, l'Irresistible, le Magnanime. Soit exalté Sa transcendance, bien loin de tout ce qu'ils lui associent

مَالِك, Al-Malik, Malik (ملك, المَلِك, مَلِيك)

The word “Al-Malik” is repeated nearly eleven times in the Qur'an, five times of which is considered an adjective for God and has become “Mâlik” - the attribute presented without article- Three times in the form of Mâlik (twice as Divine Titles and once to describe an angel in hell) (AZ-ZUKHRUF/ 77:43) and once as the comparative adjective to describe God (AL-QAMAR 55:54) (Aboufazeli; Djalili, 2012, 53).

Definitions:

Mâlik, Al-Malik, Malîk are three Divine titles that have the same roots (Mâlik, Al-Malik) and mean a specific domination that provide the context to possess any (Mamluk) object; like a man's authority on his property or the domination and authority that governors have on their people (known as Al-Malik) so Raqib says: Al-Malik is someone who has imperative authority over the masses.

Other meanings given in dictionaries to Al-Malik are Strength, intensity, dignity... all of which are the means and effects of ownership rather than the true meaning of Al-Malik.

Verbs and nouns are derived from the root (ملك) all of which are associated with “power”:

Table 2: verbs and nouns derived from the root "M-L-K"

		تملّكَ عَلَى الْقَوْمِ Tamallaka ala l-qowmi He was the king of the people		ملَكَ الْعَجَيْبِينَ Malak l-a'gina Kneading the dough Pressing/kneading	ملَكَ malaka Hold	Verbs
ملَكُوتُ Malakût The Kingdom of God	مَالِكٌ Mâlik Owner	مِلْكٌ Milk Ownership property	مَلْكٌ Malk Power Will	مَالِكٌ Malik King/ruler	مُلْكٌ mulk Kingdom/Royal	Nouns

Qur'anic interpretations

In Arabic, some words indicate many different meanings, and the meaning of words in some sentences should be expressed in a different way based on the context of speech to make the word seem normal. In the Qur'an, also sometimes given the honor of revelation or its convergence with other verses, a meaning other than the apparent meaning is considered for the words and interpreters and translators keep arguing in these cases (Ibn ol Rasoul, 2012: 30).

According to Qur'an scientists ownership and power over others have three types:

1. Absolute power is only for God:

سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ

Blachère : À Allah, appartient ce qui est dans les cieux et [sur] la terre.

Berque : A Dieu, appartient ce qui est aux cieux et sur la terre.

-Tafsir ol Mizan:

وَلَهُ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ^٦ (AL-E-IMRAN, 109:3)

Therefore, he can seize them the way he wants and that is why he is not unjust because he is the owner of all objects of the universe in all directions, and he has the right to make changes in them; therefore, according to his right, he is not unjust to be the example of oppression because those who are unjust have needs that cannot be satisfied, except seizing someone else's property; but God is the absolute owner and all creatures are under his power. Since no one except God has any ownership and power, so that God would deprive him of the power and confiscates the property so that he would become an oppressor, everything returns to Him.

Table.3

<p style="text-align: center;">.. تُوْتِي الْمُلْكَ مَنْ تَشَاءُ وَتَنْزِعُ الْمُلْكَ مِنْ تَشَاءُ... (آل عمران / ٢٦:٣)</p>	
<p>You give sovereignty to whom You will and You take sovereignty away from whom You will.</p>	
Blachère	Berque
Tu donnes la royauté à qui tu veux et tu arraches la royauté à qui tu veux.	Souverain de toute royauté , tu en dotes qui tu veux, la ravis à qui tu veux.

2. Ownership, control and domination that is based on honesty and justice is granted by God to anyone He wants:

تُوْتِي الْمُلْكَ مَنْ تَشَاءُ وَتَنْزِعُ الْمُلْكَ مِنْ تَشَاءُ⁷ (AL-E-IMRAN, 26:3)

Of God to everyone who wishes to be:

Prophet David and his son Solomon were the ones given the **reign in the world** by God.

وَقُتِلَ دَارِدُ جَالُوتَ وَأَتَاهُ اللَّهُ الْمُلْكَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ...⁸ (AL-BAQARA 251: 2)

وَأَتَبْعَاهُ مَا قَطُلُوا الشَّيَاطِينُ عَلَى مَلْكِ سُلَيْمَانَ...⁹ (AL-BAQARA 102: 2)

3. Ownership and power based on violence and aggression:

قَالَتْ إِنَّ الْمُلُوكَ إِذَا دَخَلُوا قَرْيَةً أَفْسَدُوهَا¹⁰ (AL-NAML 34: 27)

About the difference between words Mâlik, Al-Malik, Malîk, some Qur'an commentators like Abu Mozafar Shahfour Esfarayeni acknowledged that "all these words have the same concepts but their intensity which is related to their form is

different" "(1996, Vol. I: 51), but Tabarsi considers a subtle difference between Mâlik and Malîk. In Arabic, when they say that someone owns a dress they say "مَالِكُ الثَّوْب" (Mâlik) and never say "مَلِكُ الْمَلِكَاتِ" (Malîk) and here Mâlik i.e. the absolute owner and Malîk means King according to Qur'an:

وَقَاتَالْمَلِكَاتِ إِنِّي أَرَى سَبْعَ بَقَرَاتٍ سِمَانٍ..¹¹ (YUSUF43: 12)

Translation of Régis Blachère and Jacques Berque

وَاللَّهُ أَنَّى لَأَنْهَا إِلَهٌ إِلَّا هُوَ الْمَلِكُ...¹² (AL-HASHR/59: 23)

Blachère : *Il est Allah, nulle divinité excepté lui, le Roi...*

Berque : *Il est Dieu, Il n'y a de Dieu que lui, Il est le Roi...*

مَلِكٌ يَوْمَ الدِّينِ¹³ (AL-FAATEHAAH4: 1)

Blachère : *Souverain du jour du jugement*

Berque : *Le roi du Jour de l'allégeance.*

فِي مَقْدَدِ صِدْقٍ عَنْ مَالِكٍ مُفْتَنِرٍ¹⁴ (AL-QAMAR 55: 54)

Blachère : *Dans un séjour de vérité, près d'un Souverain Omnipotent*

Berque : *Sur un siège de Vérité, chez un Roi Omnipotent*

Table .4: Mâlik, Al-Mâlik, Malîk

The number of repeats in the Qur'an	Translation		The Divine Titles
	Berque	Blachère	
times ¹	Roi	Roi	مَالِكٌ Mâlik
5 times	Le Souverain	Roi	الْمَلِكُ Al-Mâlik
1 time	Souverain Omnipotent	Roi Omnipotent	مَلِكٌ Malîk

Since all three words are derived from the same root, they have more or less the same meaning. Therefore, it is better to choose an equivalent for each word in translation that has the same root, and which the intensity is changed by adding an

appropriate adverb. As noted earlier, Mâlik means the absolute owner, and Malîk means king; therefore, the choice of Blachère "Le Souverain" is more accurate than Berque, but it is better to choose **Le souverain-Absolu**'s equivalent for Mâlik.

2. الْقُوَّسُ (Al-Quddûs):

The word **Al-Quddûs** is mentioned twice in the Qur'an and it is always associated with Divine Title (with article): once in AL HASHR (23) and once in AL-JUMUA (1):

يُسَجِّلُ لِلَّهِ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ الْكَوْنُوسُ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ¹⁵ (AL-JUMUA 1:62)

Blachère: Ce qui est dans les cieux et ce qui est sur la terre glorifie Allah, le Roi, le très Saint, le Puissant, le Sage

Berque : Transcendance de Dieu : l'exaltent sans trêve ce qui est aux cieux, ce qui est sur la terre, Lui le Roi, Très Saint, le Tout-puissant, le Sage

In the Qur'an the root (قدس) is presented in words such as "Taqaddûs" and phrases such as "الْوَادُ الْمَقَدَّسُ" and "الْأَرْضُ الْمَقَدَّسَةُ":

إِذْ قَالَ رَبُّكَ لِلْمَلَائِكَةَ إِنِّي جَاعِلٌ فِي الْأَرْضِ حَلِيلَةً قَالُوا أَتَجْعَلُ فِيهَا مَنْ يُفْسِدُ فِيهَا وَيَسْفِكُ الدَّمَاءَ وَنَحْنُ نُسْجِنُ بِحَمْدِكَ وَتَقْدِيسَكَ قَالَ إِنِّي أَعْلَمُ مَا لَا تَعْمَلُونَ¹⁶. (AL-BAQARA 30:2)

Blachère: [Rappelle] quand ton seigneur dit aux Anges: « Je vais placer, sur la terre, un vicaire. » - « Y placeras-tu quelqu'un qui y sème le scandale et y répondra le sang alors que nous, nous glorifions Ta louange et proclamons **Ta Sainteté** ? [le Seigneur] répondit : « Je sais très bien ce que vous ne savez point. »

Berque : Lors que ton Seigneur dit aux Anges: « Je vais instituer un lieutenant sur la terre ». Ils dirent : « Quoi ! Tu rendrais tel celui qui tant y fait dégât et qui verse le sang, alors que nous autres célébrons par la louange Ta transcendance et **Sainteté** ? ». Il dit : « Moi, Je sais ce que vous ne savez pas. »

قُلْ نَزَّلَهُ رُوحُ الْقُدُّسِ مِنْ رَبِّكَ بِالْحَقِّ... (النَّحْل/١٦:١٢)

Blachère: L'Esprit **Saint** a fait descendre de ton Seigneur...

Berque : L'Esprit de **sainteté** le fait descendre de ton Seigneur...

يَا قَوْمَ ادْخُلُوا الْأَرْضَ الْمَقَدَّسَةَ... (المائدة/٥:٢١)

Blachère: Entrez dans la Terre **Sainte** qu'Allah vous a destinée...

Berque : Entrez dans la Terre **Sancrifiée** que Dieu vous assigne...

إِذْ نَادَهُ رَبُّهُ بِالْوَادِ الْمَقَدَّسِ طُوْيَ (النَّازُّعَات/٧٩:١٦)

Blachère: Quand ton Seigneur l'appela dans le Val **Sacré** de Towâ/: Quand ton Seigneur l'appela dans le Val Sacré par deux fois

Berque : Quand son Seigneur le héra au Val **Sacré** de Tuwâ ?

Definitions:

The words made of the root “قَسْ” communicate the concept of "refinement". The verb “Qadasa” mean "Cleaning" and "refinement". Where the angels tell God: نَحْنُ نُسَيِّدُ بِحَمْدِكَ وَنُقَسِّنَ أَنْكَ (17 شُبَّحَ بِحَمْدِكَ وَنُقَسِّنَ أَنْكَ، مجمع البحرين 1983، Volume 4:94), (Mofradat, 1972: 660), here "نُقَسِّنَ" refers to Gabriel because It came down from heaven and brought the blessings like the Qur'an, wisdom and grace of God through which man can refine his spirit. Also in the phrase "الْأَرْضُ الْمَقَسَّةُ" (Almaydh / 21: 5) Moses invites people to come there, because it represents "Jerusalem" (بيت المقدس) i.e. where people can refine their sins (لسان العرب 1988 Vol. 6: 168).

Now we address the meaning of **Al-Quddûs** as one of the Titles of God based on the interpretations:

According to Sayed Abdul Hussain Tayyip in "Tayeb Al-Bayan", Al-Quddûs means very pure and sacred(1999, Vol. 12: 484), from the perspective of Bahraini Al-Quddûs means away from ignorance (1415, Vol. 5: 347), and in accordance with the interpretation of Tabarsi this term means who is the source of all blesses (1993, Vol. 9: 401)

هُوَ اللَّهُ الَّذِي لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْمَلِكُ الْقَدُّوسُ...¹⁸ (AL-HASHR23: 59)

Blachère : *Il est Allah, nulle divinité excepté lui, ... le très saint...*

Berque : *Il est Dieu, Il n'y a de Dieu que lui,..., le très saint...,*

Table .5: Al-Quddûs

The number of repeats in the Qur'an	Translation		Divine titles
	Blachère	Berque	
2 times	<i>le très saint</i> مقَسٌ	<i>le très saint</i> مقَسٌ	الْقَدُّوسُ Al-Quddûs

The selected equivalents of both translators are more or less acceptable the structure is under the derivation (فُعُول) and considering this Equivalent "L'Infiniment -Pur" or "L'Infiniment-Saint" in French is a better equivalent.

3. (السلام) Al-Salâm :

Al-Salâm is predented only once in the Quran (verse 23 of Surah Hashr)

Meaning:

The term has the root "Salm" containing the meanings "Salm", "Salama" and "Salam" all of which meaning holy and away from any sin (قاموس القرآن 296: 3)

قالَ إِنَّهُ يَقُولُ إِنَّهَا بَقَرَةٌ لَا تَلُولُ تُثِيرُ الْأَرْضَ وَلَا تَسْقِي الْحَرَثَ مُسْلَمَةً لَا شَيْءَ فِيهَا ...¹⁹ (AL-BAQARA/ 71: 2)

Blachère: [Le Seigneur] dit, répondit [Moïse] : « Ce doit être une génisse non avilie par le labour de la terre et l'arrosage du sol labouré, **sans défaut** ni stigmate»

Berque : Il dit : « Dieu dit : ' C'est une vache encore indocile à retourner la terre ou à irriguer le labour, mais **exempte** de tache et **de défaut**.»

إِلَّا مَنْ أَتَى اللَّهَ بِقَلْبٍ سَلِيمٍ (AL-SHUARA/ 89: 26)²⁰ (clean from hypocrisy)

Blachère : Exemption faite pour ceux qui seront venus à Allah, avec un cœur **pur**.

Berque : Mais seulement de venir à Dieu d'un cœur **intègre**.

In Heaven there is absolute holiness, because Heaven is the house of peace and holiness and there is no place for Death, illness, difficulty and aging (M. B. Babawayh, 2005: 297)

لَهُمْ دَارُ السَّلَامِ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ وَهُوَ وَلِيَهُمْ بِمَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ (AL-ANAAM/ 6: 127)²¹ (Peace)

Blachère : Exemption faite pour ceux qui seront venus à Allah, avec un cœur **pur**.

Berque : Mais seulement de venir à Dieu d'un cœur **intègre**.

"Aslam" meaning "submission" and "to turn to Islam" is rooted in "Salm"

بَلِّيْ مِنْ أَسْلَمْ وَجْهَهُ لَهُ وَهُوَ مُحْسِنٌ فَلَهُ أَجْرٌهُ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِ ..²² (AL-BAQARA 112: 2)

Blachère : «Non point ! Ceux qui se seront soumis à Allah, tout en pratiquant **la bienfaisance**, auront leur rétribution auprès d'Allah. Sur eux nulle crainte et ils ne seront point attristés.»

Berque : Non, celui qui soumet à Dieu sa face, à condition d'agir **bellement**, aura son salaire en son Seigneur.

Interpretations

Commentators have different views about the meaning of " Al-Salâm" when they use a title of God. According to Tabarsi" Al-Salâm" means no one exercising oppression (1993, Vol. 9: 401), Fakhruddin Razi considers it as someone who is away from any sin (1420, Vol. 29: 513) and according to Allameh Tabatabai it means He exercises no harm to His created ones. (1417, Vol. 19: 222).

Blachère and Berque translations:

هو الله الذي لا إله إلا هو الملك القدوس السلام المؤمن...²³ (AL-HASHR23: 59)²³

Blachère : *Il est Allah, nulle divinité excepté lui, ... le Salut(?)...*

Berque : *Il est Dieu, Il n'y a de Dieu que lui,..., le Dispensateur de Salut...*

Although the word Al-Salâm is used as one of the Divine Titles, but it is an adjective so the equivalent "La paix" selected by Blachère is not right, and the term "le Salut" is not an appropriate equivalent based on the interpretations presented by experts; so the term "L'Apaisant" which means "reliever" taken from the verb "apaiser" was very close to the original equivalent, even though it may not have the full meaning.

Table .6: Al-Salâm

The number of repeats in the Qur'an	Translation		Divine Title
	Berque	Blachère	
1 Time	le Dispensateur de Salut The Salvation	le Salut(?) Savior	السلام Al-Salâm

4. المؤمن (Al-Mu'min)

This Divine title is just used once in AL-HASHR23.

Meanings:

The word is derived from the root "AMN". Other terms are derived from the same root all of which

meaning confidence and security: Aman, Maman, Ta'min, Amn, Amin

Interpretations:

Commentators pursue different views regarding the meaning of the title Al-Mu'min. Tayeb says that Al-Mu'min is someone who is safe against any changes (i.e. nothing can change Him) (1999, Vol. 12: 484). According to Zamkhashary, it refers to someone who does not punish his friends and that they are safe from punishment (1 407, Volume 7: 295).

Translations:

هُوَ اللَّهُ الَّذِي لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ...الْمُؤْمِنُ²⁴ (AL-HASHR23: 59)

Blachère : *Il est Allah, nulle divinité excepté lui, ... le Pacificateur(?)...*

Berque : *Il est Dieu, Il n'y a de Dieu que lui,..., l'Avératateur de la croyance*

Considering the root “AMN” meaning ensure and security we find that the equivalent selected by Blachère means “the Peacemaker” and the equivalent of Berque means “Driver of belief” and has nothing in common with “AMN” hence both equivalents are wrong and it is better to use «Le Garant», «le Sécurisant » both taken from the root “reassure”.

Table 7: Al-Mu'min

The number of repeats in the Qur'an	Translation		Divine Title
	Blachère	Berque	
1 Time	l'Avératateur de la croyance Driver of belief	Le Pacificateur(?) The Peacemaker	المؤمن Al-Mu'min

5. المُهَمِّينَ: (Al-Muhaymin)

The term Al-Muhaymin is repeated twice in the Qur'an: Once as the title of God (with article) in AL-HASHR23 and once in Almaydh / 5:48

وَأَنْزَلْنَا إِلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ بِالْحَقِّ مُصَدِّقًا لِمَا بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ مِنَ الْكِتَابِ وَمُهَمِّمًا عَلَيْهِ..²⁵ (AL-MAEDA/5:48)

Blachère: Nous avons fait descendre vers toi l'Ecriture [chargée] de vérité, déclarant véridique ce qui, de l'Ecriture, est antérieur à elle et en proclamant l'authenticité(?)

Berque : Nous avons fait descendre sur toi l'Ecrit, dans le vrai, pour avérer ce qui était en cours des Ecritures, en l'**englobant**.

Meanings:

According to Ibn Manzur, the author of the Arabian language. this word لسان العرب can be derived from two roots: "Hamana" or "AMN" (1988, Vol. 13: 437)

If we consider the root "Hamana" we reach the verb "Heyman" meaning "care" for example, in the sentence "هَمَنَ فَلَانٌ عَلَى كَذِّ" it means he has taken care of it. In the phrase "هَمَنَ الطَّائِرُ عَلَى فَرَاجِهِ" means a bird that opens its wings to take care its chicks (Abjad encyclopedia, 1991: 669)

If we consider the root "Amn" the term Al-Muhaymin is derived from "Amen" that after some changes means "Reassure" and "Protect"

أَمَنَ (a'a'mana) — مُؤْمِنٌ (moa'a'minu) — مُهَمِّمٌ (mua'yminu) — مُهَمَّمٌ (muhayminu) (Lisan al-Arab, the same)

Interpretations

According to the commentators and philologists, Al-Muhaymin can be interpreted in two ways: one meaning "care", and the other meaning "protection". Therefore, according to Maqatel bin Solomon, Al-Muhaymin is someone who takes care of his servants and their actions (1423, Vol. 4: 285), and according to Al Tayeb, it means one who protects his servants (the ones he has created) (1999, Vol. 12: 484).

Blachère and Berque translations:

وَاللَّهُ الَّذِي لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْمَلِكُ الْقَدُّوسُ السَّلَامُ الْمُؤْمِنُ الْمَهِيمُ²⁶ (AL-HASHR23: 59)

Blachère : *Il est Allah, nulle divinité excepté lui, ... le Préservateur...*

Berque : *Il est Dieu, Il n'y a de Dieu que lui,..., l'Englobant*

The selected equivalents by each of the two interpreters seem right but the adjective "Suprême" would be better to be added to them to have a more accurate concept. Hence "Tutélaire" is a better equivalent especially when there is a discussion of a higher divine force. (Le Grand Robert)

Table 8 :Al-Muhaymin

The number of repeats in the Qur'an	Translation		Divine Title
	Blachère	Berque	
2 Times	<i>le Préservateur</i> the Preserver	<i>l'Englobant</i> Encompass	المهيمن Al-Muhaymin

6. العَزِيزُ ۚ (Al- Azîz)

The term Al- Azîz is repeated 88 times in the Qur'an and used as a Divine title at the end of the verses

رَبِّنَا وَابْنُهُ فِيهِمْ رَسُولٌ مِّنْهُمْ يَتَلَوُ عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتِكَ وَيُعَلِّمُهُمُ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ وَرِزْكِهِمْ إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ (AL-

BAQARA129: 2)²⁷

فَإِنْ زَلَّتْ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا جَاءَكُمْ الْبَيِّنَاتُ فَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ (AL-BAQARA209: 2)²⁸

Meaning:

In Arabic several nouns and adjectives are made out of the root “EZZ”

عَزَّ			
عَزَّ Based on give strength فَعَزَّزَنَا بِثَالِثٍ (Yasin / 14: 36)	عَزَّنِي فِي الْخَطَابِ Being dominant (to me overcome)	عَزَّ الشَّىْ Shortage	Verbs
	الْعَزِيزُ Gross Rain	عَزَّةُ Power, glory, honor	Nouns
قَالَتْ امْرَأَةُ الْعَزِيزِ The king's wife said	وَمَا ذَلِكَ عَلَى اللَّهِ بِعَزِيزٍ It is not difficult for God(Ibrahim / 20: 14)	عَزِيزٌ	Adjectives

Interpretations:

It also called for "Alezzah" in Qur'an:

الَّذِينَ يَتَحَذَّلُونَ الْكَافِرِينَ أَوْلِيَاءِ مِنْ دُونِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ أَبْيَعُونَ عِنْهُمُ الْعِزَّةُ فَإِنَّ الْعِزَّةَ لِلَّهِ جَمِيعًا²⁹ (AN-NISA139: 4)

Blachère: Ceux qui prennent les infidèles pour patrons ('awlyā') en d'hors des croyants, recherchent-ils la puissance auprès de [ces infidèles] ? **La puissance**, en totalité, appartient à Allah.

Berque : Ceux qui nouent avec les dénégateurs des liens de protection au lieu de le faire avec les croyants, n'est-ce pas qu'ils convoitent de détenir **la puissance** ?

فُلَّا إِلَهَ مَالِكُ السَّمَكِ تُؤْتَى الْمُلُكُ مَنْ شَاءَ وَتَنْزَعُ الْمُلُكُّ مِنْ شَاءَ وَتُعْنَى مِنْ شَاءَ وَتُنَزَّلُ مِنْ شَاءَ يَبِدِيكَ الْخَيْرُ
إِنَّكَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ³⁰ (ALE- IMRAN/ 26: 2)

وَإِلَهُ الْعِزَّةِ وَلِرَسُولِهِ وَلِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ³¹ (AL-MUNAFIQOON 8: 63)

Commentators have various interpretations regarding the term Al- Azîz the reason of which is different meanings derived from the root. Zamakhshary considers Al- Azîz as the winner (1987, Vol. 7: 295). As mentioned before, everything that is hard to achieve is called Al- Azîz and accordingly Tabarsi calls something that cannot be achieved (1993, Vol. 9: 401).

Translations:

هُوَ اللَّهُ الَّذِي لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ...الْعَزِيزُ...³² (AL-HASHR23: 59)

Blachère : *Il est Allah, nulle divinité excepté lui, ... le puissant...*

Berque : *Il est Dieu, Il n'y a de Dieu que lui,..., le Dominateur...*

Given the meaning of Al- Azîz we can say that "EZZ" has no equivalent in French because it means "power", "dignity" and "greatness" at the same time so power is not an appropriate alternative. This quivalent can be replaced for "Al Qavi" another title of God. The equivalent selected by Blachère means "strong and unwavering" and the equivalent selected by Berque means "dominant". The following equivalent is better:

Omnipotent, Tout-puissant, L'Eminent

Table 9: Al-Azîz

The number of repeats in the Qur'an	Translation		Divine Title
	Berque	Blachère	
88 Times	<i>le puissant strong</i>	<i>le Dominateur Dominant</i>	Al-Azîz العزیز

Conclusion

In this research we analyzed the translation of some of the Divine Titles. Since the titles are repeated frequently in the Qur'an, their appropriate translation is very important, which is ignored by even well-known translators.

Analyzing the translations provided by Blachère et Berque in French indicated that they did not consider the etymology of the titles. In fact, the translator of the Qur'an should not forget that Qur'anic interpretations are one of the important and necessary sources to be studied before conducting translation, and the translator should interact with commentators, scholars, and etymologists to achieve a close equivalent to the original word during translation.

On the other hand, in many cases, a divine title cannot be obtained by replacing an equivalent in French, and in many cases, a few words, adjectives, and even a sentence are required to transfer an accurate meaning, because divine titles are elegant and some grammar and syntax rules of the French language do not allow the translator to present a clear meaning in French.

According to Alzarkashy from Shafi'i sect “the literal translation of the Qur'an into Persian and other languages is prohibited” and it should be read in the original form and language, because no translation can keep the miracles of Qur'an in the target language (Al-Zarkashi, 1994, 447). Translation removes the miraculous dimension of the Qur'an, which is inherited to Arabic language perfection.

With a general conclusion, we can conclude that the translation of divine books is always related to the original text and cannot act as a replacement.

Note

1. ¹ Moghadam@atu.ac.ir
2. blessed is he who sent down the criterion to his servant, that it may be an admonition to all creatures
3. of allah, to whom do belong all things in the heavens and on earth! but alas for the unbelievers for a terrible penalty (their unfaith will bring them)
4. In order to find the exact meaning of each term sources like التحقيق في كلمة القرآن، قاموس القرآن، مفردات الفاظ القرآن، لسان العرب و فرهنگ ابجدي is used.
5. **الملِكُ**: فرمانفرما. فرمانروا (نگا: طه / مؤمنون / . «الْقُوُسُ»: پاک و منزه. «السَّلَامُ»: بی عیب و نقص. «الْمُؤْمِنُ»: امنیت بخشندۀ، امان دهنده. «الْمُهَبِّمُ»: محافظ و مراقب. «الْجَبَارُ»: شکوهمند. !دارای جبروت. «الْمَتَكَبِّرُ»: والامقام. فراز مند
6. Muhammad Taqi-ud-Din al-Hilali and Muhammad Muhsin Khan,
7. And whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth is allah's; and to allah all things return
8. thou givest the kingdom to whomsoever thou pleasest and takest away the kingdom from whomsoever thou pleasest, and thou exaltest whom thou pleasest and abasest whom thou pleasest
9. And david slew goliath; and allah gave him power and wisdom and taught him whatever (else) he willed.
10. They followed what the evil ones gave out (falsely) against the power of Solomon
11. She said: "kings, when they enter a country, despoil it
12. The king (of egypt) said: "i do see (in a vision) seven fat kine
13. Allah is he, than whom there is no other god (Mâlik)
14. Master of the day of judgment(Mâlik)
15. in an assembly of truth, in the presence of a sovereign omnipotent
16. Whatever is in the heavens and on earth, doth declare the praises and glory of allah,- the sovereign, the holy one, the exalted in might, the wise.
17. Behold, thy lord said to the angels: "i will create a vicegerent on earth." they said: "wilt thou place therein one who will make mischief therein and shed blood?- whilst we do celebrate thy praises and glorify thy holy (title)?" he said: "i know what ye know not."
18. we do celebrate thy praises and glorify thy holy (title)
19. Allah is he, than whom there is no other god (Al-Quddûs)
20. he said: "he says: a heifer not trained to till the soil or water the fields; perfect and without blemish."
21. "but only he (will prosper) that brings to allah a sound heart;
22. for them will be a home of peace in the presence of their lord: he will be their friend, because they practised (righteousness).
23. nay,-whoever submits his whole self to allah and is a doer of good,

24. llah is he, than whom there is no other god;- the sovereign, the holy one, the source of peace (and perfection),
25. llah is he, than whom there is no other god;- the sovereign, the holy one, the source of peace (and perfection), , the guardian of faith
26. to thee we sent the scripture in truth, confirming the scripture that came before it, and guarding it in safety
27. Allah is he, than whom there is no other god;- the sovereign, the holy one, the source of peace (and perfection), , the guardian of faith, the preserver of safety, the exalted in might, the irresistible, the supreme: glory to allah! (high is he) above the partners they attribute to him.
28. Our lord! send amongst them a messenger of their own, who shall rehearse thy signs to them and instruct them in scripture and wisdom, and sanctify them: for thou art the exalted in might, the wise
29. if ye backslide after the clear (signs) have come to you, then know that allah is exalted in power, wise.
30. yea, to those who take for friends unbelievers rather than believers: is it honour they seek among them? nay,- all honour is with allah
31. say: "o allah! lord of power (and rule), thou givest power to whom thou pleasest, and thou strippest off power from whom thou pleasest: thou enduest with honour whom thou pleasest, and thou bringest low whom thou pleasest: in thy hand is all good. verily, over all things thou hast power
32. but honour belongs to allah and his messenger
33. llah is he, than whom there is no other god;- the sovereign, the holy one, the source of peace (and perfection), , the guardian of faith, the preserver of safety, the exalted in might, the irresistible, the supreme: glory to allah! (high is he) above the partners they attribute to him.

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Trump Has Committed a Crime against Humanity

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Abstract

The leader of the richest, most powerful country in the world – President Donald J. Trump - has set the trigger of destruction by exempting the United States from the international treaty – the Paris Agreement - that aims to give the entire planet some reprieve from warming. That is, all countries of the world are party to the Paris Agreement and have agreed to end reliance on fossil fuels, except the United States, which withdrew at the outset of the Trump Administration. Regardless of the US position in the future, the country's emissions are so very extremely high they will continue to wreak havoc on the entire world unless the U.S. takes dramatic steps to quickly abandon fossil fuels. Although the U.S. is not party to the International Criminal Court, there are European courts that have universal jurisdiction that could try Trump for crime against humanity. In one of these courts George W. Bush was found guilty of war crimes for the U.S. invasion of Iraq. He would risk imprisonment were he to travel abroad.

Key Words: climate change, Paris Agreement, renewable energy, carbon dioxide, fossil fuelsShariah, Wasatiyya, violent tendencies, extremism, contextual reading.

Introduction

Scientists, environmentalists, world leaders, and people, generally, were shocked when on June 1, 2017 Donald J. Trump announced that he was withdrawing the United States from the Paris Agreement, making the U.S. the only country in the world that is not party to the international treaty to curb global warming. (Lu and Soffen , 2017) I contend in this essay that Trump is not only guilty of an impeachable offense but he has committed a crime against humanity. Specifically, the likely consequence of the U.S. abandoning Paris is that the earth will become so hot that it will become uninhabitable.(Hawking, 2018) This is because carbon dioxide is the main cause of warming and if there are no constraints on how much carbon dioxide the U.S. spews out into the atmosphere, the planet will become exceedingly hot, spurring unprecedented migration and disease outbreaks, melting the Arctic and the Antarctic, bringing about extinction of many species. Indeed, scientists have been debating when the earth would become uninhabitable if the United States did not rejoin.(Wallace-Wells , 2017)

Yes, there was shock and disbelief when Trump announced that he was withdrawing the U.S. from the Paris Agreement. Ban Ki-Moon, former Secretary-General of the United Nations, was appalled. He told a journalist from the *Guardian*, “What President Trump has been saying is politically shortsighted and scientifically based on wrong advice; I don’t know who advised him.” (Vaughan , 2018) Emmanuel Macron, president of France, said in a televised address (both in French and in English) that Trump had “committed an error for the interests of his country, his people and a mistake for the future of our planet.” (Savransky , 2018) In other words, the consequences of the U.S. failing to live up to the international treaty will be horrific. After all, the U.S already is the world’s main source of atmospheric carbon dioxide (which is largely responsible for global warming), and second only to China in greenhouse emissions (which includes notably carbon dioxide and methane). (Wei-Haas)

In this essay, I briefly trace the history of the scientific work that predicts rising temperatures, sea rise, and the effects of greenhouse gases on climate change and then explain why Trump’s actions merit such harsh condemnation that it warrants charging him with committing a crime against humanity. Of course, it is possible that he will be impeached or voted out of office before November 5, 2020, the deadline for the U.S. to rejoin Paris. If Trump is voted out of office or is impeached before the 2020 deadline, it is very likely that the person who replaces him will rejoin Paris. However, if he is reelected and has not rescinded his earlier order it is

reasonable to consider that he will be charged with committing an international crime. His pro-coal policies have already led to an increase in the rate at which American industries pump carbon dioxide and other noxious gases into the atmosphere, thereby undermining the objectives of the Paris Agreement and raising the earth's ambient temperature. In a myriad of other ways, the U.S. has taken action that is at odds with the principles of the Paris Agreement and its practical requirements for nations to cooperate to slow warming. (Greshko, Parker and Howard) In other words, given the enormous size of the U.S. economy, Trump's decision has horrific implications for the entire planet and its peoples. How could he leave the Agreement? There was not a national outcry. The reason unfortunately is that Americans are less concerned about climate change and global warming than people who live in other countries. (Malbach, et. Al, 2016)

I contend that he has set into motion forces that will destroy the planet, by making it uninhabitable. It is appropriate that he be tried by a court for committing a Crime against Humanity. By suggesting that he be tried for committing this crime, I imply that the United States is a member of the International Criminal Court (ICC). It is not. However, there are courts with universal jurisdiction that try cases consistent with the Rome Statute and these cases include Crime against Humanity. " (Statute) Before I go into this, I will briefly review the history of scientific engagement with climate change.

How We Got to Where We are Today

Beginning as early as the late 19th century, scientists contended that emissions of greenhouse gases (especially carbon dioxide) warm the atmosphere, but they lacked the equipment to precisely test this. Yet over the decades, computer modeling and observational techniques improved and in 1979, the UN World Meteorological Organization organized the First World Climate Conference, attended by scientists from a wide range of disciplines. It called on the world's governments "to foresee and prevent potential manmade changes in the climate that might be adverse to humanity." It also led to the establishment of the World Climate Programme and to the creation of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change.¹ Thus 1979 was an important year for international science and policy related to climate change.

The 2nd Climate Conference was held in 1990, which led to the establishment of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), which aims to curb emissions and established the Global Climate Observing System (GCOS), a global observing system for climate phenomena. In 1995, international

climate meetings began to be held as meetings of the governing body of an international convention, which includes all parties to the convention, namely as a Conference of Parties, or “COP.” After that, COP meetings were held regularly, providing opportunities for world scientists to share findings about climate predictions, food production, public health, desertification and many, many other aspects of warming. At COP-16 the parties agreed to issue this statement: “Climate change represents a potentially irreversible threat to human societies and the planet and thus requires to be urgently addressed by all Parties.”²

It was at COP-21 that the global treaty on the reduction of warming was forged. The conference was held in Paris from 30 November to 12 December 2015. Appropriately called the Paris Agreement, it actually **is a treaty that all countries signed**. The U.S. signed and then Trump withdrew. The general objective is to abolish the use of all fossil fuels by 2030. Two things about the Agreement are especially important. First, industrialized countries are obligated to assist less-industrialized ones to acquire renewable energy, and second, although both 2 °C and 1.5 °C targets are mentioned in the Paris Agreement, the current goal is 1.5 °C.

It should be stressed that both mobilization and cooperation have accelerated as knowledge about warming has deepened and has been broadly shared around the world. Between 2007 and 2015 global reliance on renewables just about doubled and the total costs of renewable energy – wind and solar – became less than the cost of fossil fuels. The projections - if nothing is done to curb warming - are exceedingly discouraging. To give a few examples: parts of the world, especially in and around the Persian Gulf, will be uninhabitable by 2050; Boston may experience up to 6 foot sea rise by 2100; the Greenland ice sheet is melting at its fastest rate in at least 400 years, and were it to melt completely, the ocean would rise about 20 feet.

In sum, the empirical evidence for planetary warming is clear and decisive. It is getting hotter everywhere; because of the melting of the Greenland Ice Sheet, the seas are rising causing some small island states to disappear completely; some parts of the planet are so hot they are virtually uninhabitable; many species of insects and some species of mammals cannot survive. Perhaps the most frightening warning comes from a draft (October 2018) United Nations report, which will be officially released next year. The draft says renewable energy - such as wind, solar and hydropower – would have to surge by 60 percent from 2020 levels by 2050 to stay below 1.5°C. It says governments may have to find ways to extract vast amounts of carbon from the air, for instance by planting vast forests. It notes that because the

U.S. President pulled out of the Paris Agreement and because the U.S. promotes fossil fuels, other countries would have to make up for the U.S. Before its release to the media, over 25,000 scientists have had the opportunity to comment on the draft.³

Americans are less concerned about climate change than others are. For example, in a recent Pew Research survey, most Americans said they believed in climate change but only 28 percent said it was top priority.⁴ This is extremely low, compared with people in other countries. For example, 95% of Latin Americans and over 85% of Europeans are very concerned, giving climate warming a top priority.⁵

An Impeachable Offense?

Legal scholars contend that Trump could conceivably be impeached for, say, conspiracy with Russia, undermining the press, or violations of the emoluments clause of the constitution. (Feldman , 2017) The Constitution permits Congress to remove presidents before their term is up if enough lawmakers vote to say that they have committed “treason, bribery, or other high crimes and misdemeanors,” or, in general, a serious abuse of power.

Only three presidents have been subjected to impeachment proceedings. Two presidents were impeached but acquitted by the Senate and stayed in office: Andrew Johnson in 1868 and Bill Clinton in 1998 and 1999. A third, Richard M. Nixon in 1974, resigned to avoid being impeached. The context, of course, for all three was the United States and the U.S. Constitution. In contrast, Trump’s decision to withdraw from the Paris Agreement will affect the entire planet, and possibly harm all living creatures on earth.(Borenstein , 2017) Clearly, national laws are not sufficient and it will be necessary to draw on international law.

There is a both a body of law – The Rome Statute - and a world court that considers cases- the International Criminal Court (ICC). The body of law and court are comprehensive, representing the world’s peoples and defending universal principles. The overreaching goal of the ICC is to investigate the justification for any accusation, and, when warranted, to try individuals charged with the gravest crimes of concern to the international community, namely, genocide, war crimes, crimes against humanity and the crime of aggression. The U.S. does not belong to the ICC. Yet the ICC is not the only court with universal jurisdiction. Several countries – Germany, France, Spain, and Switzerland - have such courts,⁶ which carry out criminal justice proceedings dealing with the same crimes that the ICC

does and coordinating their work with the ICC and the United Nations Security Council. In fact, in 2012 a Malaysian court with universal jurisdiction found George W. Bush guilty of war crimes for aggression and torture in Afghanistan and Iraq, and he risks arrest if he travels outside of the U.S. Let us assume that Trump will be tried just as Bush was tried -- by a court with universal jurisdiction.

Yet unlike the case against Bush for which the objective was to punish Bush for committing horrific crimes against people, the objective for the case against Trump is to save the planet, specifically by punishing Trump for putting the U.S. on a path that would destroy the earth and extinguish all life.

Conclusions

The Paris Agreement is unique in that **all** countries are parties to it, except the United States. Indeed it is a world treaty to which all countries – democratic countries, former colonies, former colonialists, monarchies, dictatorial, tyrannies – are party and send participants to annual meetings. Fortunately a few US states – especially California and Vermont – are ignoring official federal policies with respect to renewable energy and have set their own deadlines to end dependence on fossil fuels. Yet the U.S. as a whole - in spite of the efforts of a few individual states – continues to depend on non-renewable fossil fuels; over 80% of total U.S. energy comes from nonrenewable sources. Although during President Obama's administration the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) took on the responsibility of working with states and corporations to reduce greenhouse gases and end dependence on fossil fuels, under Trump's administration the EPA abandoned serious environmental activities and Trump initiated the withdrawal of the U.S. from the Paris Agreement Even if a few individual states have policies and practices that favor renewable energy, all the world's peoples will be endangered by the effects of Trump's U.S. withdrawal from the Agreement.

Note

1. Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change: <http://www.ipcc.ch/index.htm>
2. Paris Agreement: <https://unfccc.int/process/conferences/past-conferences/cancun-climate-change-conference-november-2010/cop-16>
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