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## САЯСИ ИСЛАМНЫҢ ИДЕОЛОГИЯЛЫҚ НЕГІЗДЕРІ: ИРАН ТӘЖІРИБЕСІ МЕН ҚАЗАҚСТАНДАҒЫ ҚАЙТА ИСЛАМДАНУ ҮДЕРІСІН САЛЫСТЫРМАЛЫ ТАЛДАУ

### Аңдатпа

Бұл зерттеуде 1979 жылғы Иран революциясының идеологиялық бастаулары және олардың Қазақстандағы қазіргі қайта исламдану процесіне қатыстылығы талданады. Жұмыстың мақсаты – Рухолла Хомейни және Али Шариати сияқты негізгі тұлғалардың дәстүрлі діни ұғымдарды саяси құралдарға қалай айналдырғанын зерттеу. «Кербала парадигмасы» мен «Интизар» (күту) тұжырымдамасының қайта түсіндірілуін қарастыру үшін салыстырмалы-тарихи тәсіл мен герменевтикалық талдауды қолданады. Зерттеу бұл теологиялық қағидалардың пассивті рухани аза тұтудан қалайша белсенді революциялық доктриналарға ауысқанын айқындайды.

Зерттеу Ирандағы исламның саясиленуі солшыл социология мен діни догманың синтезі арқылы жүзеге асып, қуатты мобилизациялық құрал қалыптастырғанын көрсетеді. Атап айтқанда, мақалада жастарды радикалдандыру және әлеуметтік наразылықтарды діни күреске айналдыру үшін қолданылған механизмдер анықталады. Қазақстанның қазіргі діни жағдайымен параллельдер жүргізе отырып, автор бұл тарихи прецеденттерді түсіну қазіргі мемлекеттік-діни қатынастарды реттеу үшін өте маңызды екенін алға тартады. Зерттеу нәтижелері постсекулярлық қоғамдарда радикализацияның алдын алу үшін рухани жаңғыру мен сенімді саяси мақсатта пайдаланудың (инструментализациялаудың) аражігін ажыратудың маңыздылығын баса көрсетеді.

**Түйін сөздер:** саяси ислам, Иран революциясы, Али Шариати, Рухолла Хомейни, қайта исламдану, Қазақстан, Кербала парадигмасы, діни радикализм, мемлекеттік-конфессиялық қатынастар, идеология.

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## IDEOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS OF POLITICAL ISLAM: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE IRANIAN EXPERIENCE AND RE-ISLAMIZATION IN KAZAKHSTAN

### Abstract

This study analyzes the ideological origins of the 1979 Iranian Revolution and their relevance to the modern process of re-Islamization in Kazakhstan. The paper aims to explore

how traditional religious concepts were transformed into political instruments by key figures such as Ruhollah Khomeini and Ali Shariati. The authors employ a comparative-historical approach and hermeneutic analysis to examine the reinterpretation of the «Karbala paradigm» and the concept of «Intizar» (waiting). The study investigates how these theological tenets shifted from passive spiritual mourning to active revolutionary doctrines. The research highlights that the politicization of Islam in Iran was driven by a synthesis of leftist sociology and religious dogma, creating a powerful mobilization tool. Specifically, the paper identifies the mechanisms used to radicalize youth and transform social grievances into religious struggle. Drawing parallels with the current religious landscape in Kazakhstan, the article argues that understanding these historical precedents is crucial for managing contemporary state-religion relations. The findings emphasize the importance of distinguishing between spiritual revival and political instrumentalization of faith to prevent radicalization in post-secular societies.

**Keywords:** Political Islam, Iranian Revolution, Ali Shariati, Ruhollah Khomeini, Re-Islamization, Kazakhstan, Karbala Paradigm, Religious Radicalism, State-Confessional Relations, Ideology.

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## الأسس الأيديولوجية للإسلام السياسي : تحليل مقارنة للتجربة الإيرانية وإعادة الأسلمة في كازاخستان

### الملخص

تحلل هذه الدراسة الأصول الأيديولوجية للثورة الإيرانية عام 1979 وصلتها بالعملية الحديثة لإعادة الأسلمة في كازاخستان. يهدف البحث إلى استكشاف كيفية تحويل المفاهيم الدينية التقليدية إلى أدوات سياسية من قبل شخصيات رئيسية مثل روح الله الخميني وعلي شريعتي. يستخدم المؤلفون المنهج التاريخي المقارن والتحليل التأويلي لفحص إعادة تفسير «نموذج كربلاء» ومفهوم «الانتظار». تبحث الدراسة في كيفية انتقال هذه المبادئ العقائدية من حالة الحداد الروحي السلبي إلى عقائد ثورية نشطة.

يسلط البحث الضوء على أن تسييس الإسلام في إيران كان مدفوعاً بمزيج من علم الاجتماع اليساري والعقيدة الدينية، مما خلق أداة تعبئة قوية. وتحدد الورقة، على وجه الخصوص، الآليات المستخدمة لدفع الشباب نحو التشدد (الراديكالية) وتحويل المظالم الاجتماعية إلى صراع ديني. ومن خلال رسم أوجه التشابه مع المشهد الديني الحالي في كازاخستان، يجادل المقال بأن فهم هذه السوابق التاريخية أمر بالغ الأهمية لإدارة العلاقات المعاصرة بين الدولة والدين. تؤكد النتائج على أهمية التمييز بين الإحياء الروحي والتوظيف السياسي للدين لمنع التطرف في مجتمعات ما بعد العلمانية.

**الكلمات المفتاحية:** الإسلام السياسي، الثورة الإيرانية، علي شريعتي، روح الله الخميني، إعادة الأسلمة، كازاخستان، نموذج كربلاء، الراديكالية الدينية، العلاقات بين الدولة والدين، الأيديولوجيا.

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## ИДЕОЛОГИЧЕСКИЕ ОСНОВЫ ПОЛИТИЧЕСКОГО ИСЛАМА: СРАВНИТЕЛЬНЫЙ АНАЛИЗ ИРАНСКОГО ОПЫТА И РЕИСЛАМИЗАЦИИ В КАЗАХСТАНЕ

### Аннотация

В данном исследовании анализируются идеологические истоки Иранской революции 1979 года и их актуальность для современного процесса реисламизации в Казахстане. Целью работы является изучение того, как традиционные религиозные концепции были трансформированы в политические инструменты такими ключевыми фигурами, как Рухолла Хомейни и Али Шариати. Авторы используют сравнительно-исторический подход и герменевтический анализ для исследования переосмысления «парадигмы Кербелы» и концепции «Интизар» (ожидания). В исследовании рассматривается, как эти теологические постулаты эволюционировали от пассивной духовной скорби к активным революционным доктринам.

Исследование подчеркивает, что политизация ислама в Иране была обусловлена синтезом левой социологии и религиозной догматики, что создало мощный инструмент мобилизации. В частности, в работе выявляются механизмы, использованные для радикализации молодежи и трансформации социального недовольства в религиозную борьбу. Проводя параллели с современным религиозным ландшафтом Казахстана, авторы утверждают, что понимание этих исторических прецедентов имеет решающее значение для управления современными государственно-конфессиональными отношениями. Результаты исследования акцентируют внимание на важности разграничения духовного возрождения и политической инструментализации веры для предотвращения радикализации в постсекулярных обществах.

**Ключевые слова:** политический ислам, Иранская революция, Али Шариати, Рухолла Хомейни, реисламизация, Казахстан, парадигма Кербелы, религиозный радикализм, государственно-конфессиональные отношения, идеология.

### Introduction

The Islamic Revolution of Iran in 1979 was a historical turning point that reshaped the geopolitical architecture of the 20th century and brought the phenomenon of «Political Islam» to the global agenda. This event was distinguished not merely by a change in power, but by an ideological transformation achieved through a unique synthesis of religious dogma and social protest. Ideo-

logues such as Ruhollah Khomeini and Ali Shariati successfully transformed centuries-old eschatological and ritualistic concepts – such as the martyrdom of «Karbala» and the «Waiting» for the Hidden Imam – from states of passive mourning into instruments of active revolutionary struggle.

Currently, the process of re-islamization unfolding within the post-Soviet space, including Kazakhstan, is gener-

ating new debates regarding the role of religion in society. The risk of spiritual inquiries evolving into political ideologies, the utilization of religious symbolism for mobilization purposes, and the transformation of traditional values represent urgent issues requiring scholarly examination.

Therefore, the aim of this study is to uncover how religious terminology was politicized by analyzing the ideological structure of the Iranian Revolution and to assess the relevance of this historical experience to the current religious landscape in Kazakhstan. By examining the «mistakes and lessons» of history, we consider the importance of maintaining a balance between the secular state and religion.

### Methodology

**1. Research Design.** This study employs a **qualitative research design**, specifically utilizing a historical-analytical approach to examine the ideological transformation of Shi'a Islam prior to and during the 1979 Iranian Revolution. The primary objective is to deconstruct the mechanisms by which traditional religious concepts were reinterpreted into modern political tools.

**2. Data Collection.** The research draws upon two distinct categories of sources:

- **Primary Sources:** The core analysis focuses on the seminal writings and speeches of the revolution's key ideologues. This includes Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini's *Hokumat-e Islami: Velayat-e Faqih* (Islamic Government) and Dr. Ali Shariati's lectures, particularly *Red Shi'ism* and *Fatima is Fatima*.

- **Secondary Sources:** Academic

literature on the sociology of revolution, political Islam, and Middle Eastern history was utilized to provide context and theoretical grounding.

**3. Analytical Frameworks.** To process the data, the study applies the following analytical methods:

- **Hermeneutics:** This method is used to interpret the shift in meaning of theological terms. Specifically, it analyzes how concepts like *Mustazafin* (oppressed) and *Shahadat* (martyrdom) were extracted from their traditional spiritual context and imbued with revolutionary sociopolitical significance.

- **Comparative Historical Analysis:** The study contrasts the Khomeinist model with Sunni political Islam (e.g., the Muslim Brotherhood) and secular ideologies (Marxism/Liberalism) to highlight the unique «Third Way» nature of the Iranian revolutionary discourse.

**4. Scope and Limitations.** The scope of this research is limited to the ideological developments between the 1960s and the immediate post-revolutionary period (early 1980s). While it touches upon the geopolitical consequences in Central Asia, the primary focus remains on the internal discursive shifts within Iranian political theology.

### The Karbala Paradigm and Political Islam

The Event of Karbala is considered the second *fitna* (civil strife) in Islamic history, occurring after the schism following the death of Uthman. It is one of the most significant elements of traditional Shi'a theology. American researcher Kamran S. Aghaie was the first to introduce the term «Karbala Paradigm» to explain socio-political process-

es in Iran. What are the reasons for the formation of this concept, and what is its essence?

In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the state utilized Shi'a symbols and rituals to consolidate political legitimacy in Iran. This tendency can be clearly observed in the policies of three fundamentally different regimes: the Qajars (1796–1925), the Pahlavis (1925–1979), and the Islamic Republic (1979–present). During this period of rapid change, the government's attitude and policy regarding Shi'a (Muharram) rituals underwent significant transformations with each successive administration. Although they employed them in different ways, the leaders of the Qajar dynasty and the Islamic Republic relied primarily on Shi'a symbols and rituals. The main difference between these two regimes was that the Islamic Republic was a modern nation-state. The Pahlavis, conversely, worked tirelessly to weaken the political influence of these religious traditions [1, p. 154].

The Pahlavis did not use Muharram symbols as a tool to strengthen their political legitimacy. Reza Shah displayed hostility toward most of these rituals, deeming many of them unnecessary for building a modern Iranian society. The Pahlavis' negative attitude toward Ashura rituals was based on several factors. Many Iranians were concerned that Muharram rituals might damage Iran's international reputation as a modern and civilized state. Furthermore, the modernized elite in Iran rejected these rituals as savage and backward components of Iranian culture. Instead, the new elite emphasized aspects of Iranian heritage that

were more aligned with Western tastes and sentiments, such as Iran's imperial legacy and its historical contributions to science, philosophy, technology, literature, and art. The new elite focused on the idea that Iranians were representatives of the Aryan race, which fit well with racial theories still prevalent in some European circles at the time.

The Pahlavis also believed that Muharram rituals threatened to obstruct the state-promoted nationalist ideology and modernization program. The Pahlavi modernization program, based primarily on the Western model, included industrialization, urbanization, nationalism, secularism, and a strong monarchy. Pahlavi leaders promoted a secular Iranian national identity that drew upon their legitimacy as Iranian monarchs and rejected anything associated with Islam. Within this program, there was no place for Shi'a symbols and rituals. Many ideas promoted by the Pahlavis were consistent with narratives supported by secular nationalists, with the exception of anti-imperialism, democracy, constitutionalism, and various Marxist concepts. The symbols of the Karbala event retained their significance among the majority of Iranians but were rejected by the state and the secular nationalist elite. Thus, a rift emerged between the state and secular nationalists on one side, and the majority of Iranian society on the other [1, pp. 155-156].

The Karbala narrative was reinterpreted in the 1960s and 1970s to highlight active political opposition to the Shah. This process rejected the Pahlavi regime, political and economic dependence on the West, and social ideals im-

ported from the West. The Karbala narrative proved to be highly adaptable to the changing political environment. The categories of «Self» and «Other» were given new content. They redefined «identity» to include all victims of imperialism (Shi'as, Sunnis, and even non-Muslims). They also re-imagined the antagonistic «Other» against this identity; instead of referring merely to Sunnis, they directed it primarily against Western imperialists, corrupt rulers, and the Shah. The overall result was to give new impetus to the idea of active rebellion against the Shah and imperialist powers [1, p. 158]. Thus, the symbols of the Karbala event, which stood at the origin of the Sunni-Shi'a divide, were reinterpreted, and the figures of Hussein and Yazid became symbols of the eternal struggle between good and evil. Once the Islamic Revolution triumphed in Iran, the image of Hussein was equated with the revolutionaries and Iranians, while Yazid was equated – depending on the situation – with the USA, Iraq, or Israel.

The ideologues of the pre-revolutionary period in Iran and political processes during the revolution played a massive role in the formation of this paradigm. Specifically, the ideas of revolution ideologues Ali Shariati and Morteza Motahhari played a major role in the formation and establishment of the Karbala Paradigm. In accordance with his concept of «Red Shi'ism,» A. Shariati reinterpreted Shi'a theology, criticizing its conformist nature and glorifying martyrdom (*shahadat*). One of his main postulates was the re-examination of the meaning of concepts important to Islam, and even the essence of religion

itself. In Shariati's understanding, Islam is a revolutionary ideology, the believer fighting for faith is a soldier of the revolution, and becoming a martyr is the ultimate goal of revolutionary self-sacrifice. Conversely, political inertia, conformism, and turning a blind eye to injustice and exploitation are considered a hidden form of *shirk* (polytheism). These views of the philosopher were reflected in a slogan that became important in the revolutionary discourse: «Every place is Karbala, every day is Ashura, every month is Muharram» [3]. According to Shariati, the Prophet was the liberator of slaves and the oppressed [2, p. 38]. The essence of the monotheistic (*Tawhid*) religion he brought was to mobilize people against injustice and tyranny. Readiness for self-sacrifice and martyrdom on this path is the conscious choice of a Muslim and the central essence of Red Shi'ism [2, p. 237].

The core of Shariati's political philosophy is anti-clericalism. The platform of Shariati's reformist philosophy is the classification of *shirk*. He shifted the issue of *shirk* in Islamic canon from a theological problem to a socio-political context. He took the issue of *shirk* in canonical faith and *shirk* in action as the obvious, visible form, but argued that there is a less obvious, civilizational problem of *shirk* that is not easily noticed from the outside. Shariati concluded that this occurs when clerical religious figures aid usurpers of power by conducting two types of religious propaganda. In his opinion, the religious establishment creates soft, flexible propaganda for the political elite and the upper class to preserve their privileges, while explaining

to the common people that the legitimacy of the elite's power comes from God and that opposing it is akin to opposing God Himself. Thus, clerics contribute to the deepening of social inequality in society, and de facto, two different religions emerge. The first religion gives legitimacy to the elite to exploit socially vulnerable groups, while the second explains this process as a test from God, striving to suppress opposition and revolutionary moods in society.

In the story of Abel and Cain, Shariati views Abel as the symbol of Islam and *Tawhid* (interestingly, here Abel is not characterized by resistance to injustice – which is central to Shariati's thought – but rather possesses a more conformist, fatalistic character), while Cain is viewed as the symbol of *shirk*. Furthermore, he concludes that the *shirk* originating from Cain has continued throughout human history [2, p. 280].

The ideology created by Ali Shariati incorporated many concepts from Marxism (in the interpretation of Latin American partisans). The following similarities can be drawn between A. Shariati's teachings and Catholic Liberation Theology: Shariati equates the poor and the oppressed with Muslims, regardless of their religious beliefs. He even replaced the traditional phrase «In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful» with «In the name of Allah, the Protector of the Oppressed.»

When translating Frantz Fanon's book *The Wretched of the Earth* into Persian, A. Shariati replaced the dichotomy of «oppressor – oppressed» with the Quranic terms *Mustakbirin* (the arrogant/oppressors) and *Mustaz'afin* (the

weak/oppressed). Thus, he transferred the theory of class struggle into the Islamic lexicon and gave it a central place.

According to A. Shariati, the Shi'a principles of *Taqlid* (voluntarily following the instructions of spiritual authority), *Taqiyya* (hiding one's true faith), and *Shahadat* (dying in the name of Allah when fighting infidels) correspond to the three principles of Latin American revolutionary guerillas: 1) observing the conditions and requirements of guerilla warfare; 2) unconditional obedience to leadership instructions; 3) readiness for death [16, p. 9]. According to Mutahhari, this (the confrontation between Hussein and Yazid) is a «sacred revolution» (*inqilāb-i muqaddas*) – an event of global scale: Hussein opposes Yazid not only as an illegitimate ruler but also stands against tyranny, falsehood, and deceit, realizing the principle of «enjoining good and forbidding evil» [4].

There is a significant commonality between the views of Motahhari and Shariati: Hussein is portrayed as the example of a man who rebelled against the despotic rule of the Shah and global imperialism. Both adapted events from early Islamic history to their own goals, giving them the necessary emphasis to substantiate their ideological positions [18].

The Karbala Paradigm transforms the martyrdom of Hussein and his supporters into a global event. The rivalry between the Shi'a Imam and the vastly superior forces of Caliph Yazid becomes not just a political conflict, but a confrontation determining the course of history. The global scope of the Karbala tragedy opens the way for its universality: the

unequal struggle between Hussein and Yazid manifests on several planes simultaneously. In a political context, it is the clash between the victim and the usurper; in a social context, it is the attempt to restore justice; on an individual level, it becomes a call to accept the suffering of martyrdom [4]. Mark Juergensmeyer, in his monograph on religious violence, introduces the concept of «cosmic war» – an event of global scale that transcends human experience. The images of this war, according to the author's definition, give religious conflict the metaphysical character of a struggle between good and evil, and can be applied in both personal and social contexts [18].

Using the mobilization effect of the Karbala Paradigm, the leader of the Islamic Revolution of Iran, Ruhollah Khomeini (1902–1989), and his followers consolidated their supporters and used them to build a new Shi'a state after the victory of the revolution. Shi'a symbols played a significant role in this process [5, p. 134]. Khomeini consistently referred to the ideal of martyrdom even during the events of 1978: «You, by standing on your feet and wagering your property and lives for Islam, place yourselves in the same rank as the martyrs of Karbala» [7, p. 12]. Alontsev and Smagin note that references to the Karbala Paradigm increased even more after the revolution's victory. In a speech dedicated to the first anniversary of the revolution, he stated: «Martyrs are the light of our revolution, and the brothers and sisters who embraced death are the foundation of our Islamic revolution.»

The authors also state that after the fall of the monarchy, the «globalization»

of the above plot took place, where the role of Yazid was played not by the Shah, but by the USA and Zionism: «Honorable people, we see only a fraction of America's brutal crimes in the atrocities committed by the deposed Shah against the martyrs soaked in Islamic blood at Behesht-e Zahra. We hope this will convey the cry of the Iranian people, who are under exploitation, to the peoples of the world and stop the propaganda directed against our country, born of American and Zionist 'generous' support» [8, p. 166]. Regarding this, K.S. Aghaie states: «As for the regime's religious rhetoric, the revolutionary Karbala Paradigm continued to be used in new forms throughout the 1980s and 1990s. The Shah, the USA, Israel, and Iraq were equated with Yazid, while the Islamic revolutionary regime and its supporters were equated with Hussein and his supporters» [1, p. 132].

Khomeinism became the main political concept of Shi'ism. Its ideology was developed by Ayatollah Ruhollah Mousavi Khomeini and implemented in the model of the Islamic Republic of Iran. Detailed analysis of Khomeinism and evidence of its eclectic nature are provided by E. Abrahamian, noting that Khomeini «...took ideas, words, and slogans from the non-Muslim world... His final product had more in common with Third World populism than with the fundamentalism characteristic of traditional religion. This is especially closely linked with the Latin American (model)» [6]. Considering the influence of the ideas of the 20th-century Iranian philosopher Ali Shariati, who was extremely popular in the 60s and 70s, on the formation

of Khomeini's political views, this is not surprising. «Islam is the religion of uncompromising individuals who strive for truth and justice. It is the religion of those who desire freedom and independence. It is a school of struggle against imperialism. But the servants of imperialism have shown Islam in a completely different light. They have created a false understanding of Islam in people's minds. The distorted concept of Islam they taught in religious schools was intended to remove its revolutionary essence from Islam and prevent Muslims from rising up to achieve freedom, fulfill Islamic rituals, and establish governments intended to ensure their happiness, prosperity, and a decent life in Muslim countries,» wrote Khomeini [12, p. 144].

After taking power, the revolutionaries initially sought to export the Islamic revolution, and even the «Third Worldist» revolution. Khomeini emphasized that the export target of the revolution was the entire world and that Islam protects not only Muslims but also the oppressed and defenseless all over the world. A world map published in Tehran in 1982 depicted the USA and its allies in black, the USSR and its allies in red, and the territory of the «Global Islamic Republic» centered in Iran in green. All potential Muslim countries, including the republics of the USSR, were also shown here [13, p. 100]. «My divine political testament,» wrote the Ayatollah, «is a recommendation not only to the great Iranian people but to all Muslim peoples and to the oppressed of all nations and religions» [14]. Iran declared it would provide assistance in the struggle of all oppressed and defenseless people

in the world, including leftist insurgents in Nicaragua and El Salvador [15, p. 174]. Thus, the oppressed were automatically equated with Muslims. Iran divided Muslim states into brotherly and hostile ones. Among the brotherly states were many secular states eager to build «Arab socialism» (Syria, Algeria, Libya, PDRY) that supported Iran in anti-imperialism and anti-Zionism. According to Imakov, although the Iranian regime claimed to have found a «third way» in the economy, the *Tawhid* economy proposed by Khomeini was closer to socialism than capitalism [17, p. 167].

When Iran faced political isolation, economic difficulties, diplomatic pressure, and foreign invasion, this model of fighting against disproportionate challenges fit well with the symbolic rhetoric of Karbala. Courage and self-sacrifice were aggressively promoted. For example, in 1980, Iraq invaded Iran, leading to a bloody war that lasted eight years. During this war, Iraq was supported by the United States and several other Western countries. Iranians felt as if they were left alone near Karbala, fighting for the survival of the Islamic Revolution, the holy sites in southern Iraq, Shi'a Muslims, and Iran's independence. The symbolic language of *Jihad* and *Shahadat* (martyrdom) was widely and effectively used to mobilize Iranians to fight against the Iraqi invasion. Since Iran was betrayed by Iraq and its supporters and left alone, Iranian casualties were much higher, and «becoming a martyr» became a commonplace occurrence [1, p. 133].

Friday sermons became a key tool for strengthening revolutionary ideology and the legitimacy of the political regime.

As a sign of the connection between the «information war» and the armed struggle on the path of Allah, scholars (*Ulama*) began placing machine guns next to themselves during Friday sermons [1, p. 133]. In the post-war period, the Karbala Paradigm lost its militaristic character, and national reconstruction works were also equated to *Jihad*. M. Alontsev and N. Smagin called this trend «constructive jihad» in their articles [18, p. 131].

One of the most important trends regarding the Islamic regime's use of Shi'a symbols and rituals – marking a significant difference from parts of the Qajar and Pahlavi eras – was that prior to the revolution, there was no major opposition movement directed against these symbols and customs. Mansoor Moaddel concludes that one of the most important factors contributing to the Shah's legitimacy crisis was his inability to effectively use Shi'a discourses, which were dominated by the religious opposition [11]. The situation of the Islamic Revolution regime showed the reverse of this situation. The regime's effective use of the Karbala Paradigm was part of the reason why an opposition discourse based on the Karbala Paradigm had not emerged since the 1970s. By laying claim to a specific type of authority regarding these symbols and rituals, the state effectively «seized» this powerful tool from any potential opposition groups. The fact that these symbols were not used to massively challenge the legitimacy of the political regime indicates the degree of society's acceptance of the state's relative legitimacy within the framework of Shi'a symbols and rituals [1, pp. 140-141].

Analyzing the manipulation of symbols of the Karbala Paradigm within the context of nation-building, M. Alontsev and N. Smagin draw attention to the concept of «rebounding violence» by anthropologist Maurice Bloch and its role in analyzing «national myths» [9]. According to M. Bloch, rebounding violence is a two-stage symbolic mechanism. In the first stage, the person (object) loses their autonomy and will, subjected to an act of physical or metaphysical violence. However, after experiencing this act, the person (object) undergoes a special initiation, drawing power from a transcendent source, and the object of violence transforms from prey into predator. In this regard, the authors refer to the work of Radek Chlup, who analyzed the Czech national myth as an example of this process realized within nation-building. According to Chlup, the Czech people, who suffered a physical defeat by the Germans, accepted it as a moral victory legitimizing their state-building [10]. Viewing the martyrdom of Hussein and his supporters from this perspective legitimizes the struggle of the current Ashura movement against modern «Umayyads and Sufyanis.» Khamenei's description of Hussein as «a figure from whom all free people should learn» demonstrates the moral superiority of the Ashura movement over its opponents [18, p. 137].

It is also worth noting that the most dominant directions regarding Shi'a rituals were not under direct state control. State-funded rituals were usually in an isolated form; sometimes they could mobilize the population at a high level, and sometimes the opposite oc-

curred. They were politically significant. However, the vast majority of religious rites were organized by individuals and groups in society for various purposes. Furthermore, Shi'a rituals continued to develop independently of state control. Thus, while the state was significantly effective in influencing Shi'a customs, it can be said that the greatest influence came from society and the general culture. Broad changes (and continuities) in Iranian society and culture ultimately reveal the evolutionary path of these rituals [1, p. 141]. Later, the religious opposition also turned to the Karbala Paradigm, glorifying Khamenei as Yazid and Mousavi as Hussein [18, p. 143].

In conclusion, to highlight important lessons for Kazakhstan from the Iranian case, we would like to draw attention to: the high risk that socio-political discontent leads to the politicization of religion; the probability that increased political protest triggers the granting of religious legitimacy to it; the risk of individual figures reconstructing religious concepts and using them as tools of propaganda for political coups; and that religious illegitimacy is one of the potential factors for political discontent and mobilization.

### **Comparative Analysis: Khomeinism vis-à-vis Sunni Political Islam and Regional Implications**

While both Khomeinism and Sunni Islamist movements (such as the Muslim Brotherhood or ideas propagated by Sayyid Qutb) share the ultimate goal of establishing a state governed by Sharia, their structural visions differ fundamentally.

The Iranian Model (Shi'a): Khomeinism is strictly hierarchical and clerical. It relies on the doctrine of Velayat-e Faqih, which grants absolute political authority to a specific high-ranking religious scholar (Marja). The legitimacy of the state flows from the top down (Divine appointment via the Jurist).

The Sunni Model: Mainstream Sunni political Islam generally rejects a theocratic class of clergy. Instead, thinkers like Abul A'la Maududi advocated for a «Theo-democracy,» where the sovereignty belongs to God, but the administration is chosen by the people. The ideal is often a revived Caliphate, which is executive rather than mystical, lacking the infallible authority attributed to the Shi'a Imamate.

A unique feature of the Iranian Revolution was its ideological eclecticism. As analyzed in previous chapters, ideologues like Ali Shariati and Khomeini successfully blended Islamic eschatology with Marxist-Leninist terminology (e.g., imperialism, class struggle, the oppressed masses). This synthesis allowed the Iranian revolution to appeal to leftists and intellectuals.

However, replicating this synthesis in the Sunni world, particularly in post-Soviet Central Asia, faces significant hurdles. Conservative Sunni movements (particularly Salafism) reject such synthesis as Bid'ah (innovation). Furthermore, in the post-Soviet context, Marxist terminology is associated with the atheistic former regime rather than revolutionary liberation. Therefore, the «Islam-Leftist» hybrid that powered the Iranian revolution lacks cultural resonance in

Kazakhstan, where religious revivalism tends to be either traditionalist or strictly puritanical, rather than syncretic.

Khomeini aspired to lead the entire Muslim world (Ummah), attempting to downplay Shi'a specificities in his pan-Islamic rhetoric. However, the «Third Way» faced a hard sectarian ceiling. The specific reliance on Shi'a symbols (Karbala, the Hidden Imam, the mourning rituals) made the model difficult to export to the Sunni-majority Arab world and Central Asia. Instead of unifying the Islamic world, the revolution inadvertently triggered a sectarian counter-mobilization, leading rival powers (like Saudi Arabia) to fund anti-Shi'a groups, thereby deepening the geopolitical rift.

For the post-Soviet Central Asian republics, the Iranian Revolution served primarily as a «negative model» used by authoritarian leaders to justify strict secularism. However, applying the Khomeinist framework to analyze Kazakhstan's current «re-Islamization» reveals significant empirical and cultural gaps:

**Lack of Empirical Parity:** While the narrative of an «Iranian threat» exists, empirical data does not support the existence of a centralized, politicized clerical hierarchy in Kazakhstan comparable to that of 1979 Iran. The religious resurgence in Kazakhstan is largely horizontal, grassroots, and pietistic, lacking the vertical command structure required for a Khomeinist-style mobilization. Any direct comparison remains largely hypothetical.

**Cultural and Religious Barriers:** Beyond the Sunni-Shi'a divide, there is a profound cultural difference. The Iranian model relies on a sedentary, deeply in-

stitutionalized clerical tradition. In contrast, Kazakhstan's historical adherence to the Hanafi school was intertwined with nomadic customs, which historically resisted rigid clericalism.

**The Soviet Buffer:** Although Central Asian nations share linguistic ties (specifically Tajikistan) with Iran, the Soviet legacy of secularization acts as a buffer. The unique «Red Shi'ism» (revolutionary Islam) of Iran cannot easily take root in a society where the population is wary of radical ideology and where the «re-Islamization» process is still fluid and undefined.

Ultimately, while Khomeinism succeeded in establishing a durable theocracy in Iran, its specific theological requirements limit its global applicability. It remains a unique historical anomaly where a clerical hierarchy successfully co-opted modern revolutionary dynamics. For Kazakhstan, the cultural memory of nomadic egalitarianism and the lack of a pre-existing clerical class make the repetition of the Iranian scenario structurally and empirically unlikely.

## Results

**1. The Emergence of a Distinct «Third Way» Ideology** The analysis reveals that the Iranian Revolution succeeded by constructing a «Third Way» (*Na Sharq, Na Gharb* – Neither East, Nor West) that functioned not merely as a foreign policy stance, but as a comprehensive domestic ideology. The study finds that unlike previous Islamic movements that sought to accommodate modernity, Khomeinism presented Islam as a total system capable of replacing both Liberal Democracy and Marxism.

**2. Semantic Shifts in Theological Terminology** A key finding of the textual analysis is the systematic redefinition of traditional Shi'a lexicon. Three major semantic shifts were identified:

- **Intizar (Waiting):** Transformed from a passive state of awaiting the Mahdi into an active «preparation» for his return through revolution.

- **Mustazafin (The Oppressed):** Originally a Quranic term for the spiritually weak, it was repurposed as a direct equivalent to the Marxist «proletariat,» encompassing the economic poor and the politically marginalized.

- **Shahadat (Martyrdom):** Redefined from a tragic fate to a voluntary, strategic act of political defiance.

**3. The Efficacy of the Karbala Paradigm in Mobilization** The historical analysis demonstrates that the «Karbala Paradigm» provided the necessary emotional infrastructure for mass mobilization. The study finds that the 40-day mourning cycles (*Chehelom*) created a self-perpetuating momentum of unrest that secular opposition groups could not replicate. The identification of the Shah with Yazid effectively delegitimized the monarchy on religious grounds, making resistance a spiritual obligation.

**4. Institutionalization of Velayat-e Faqih** Finally, the research indicates that the ultimate result of this ideological shift was the institutionalization of *Velayat-e Faqih*. The concept successfully transitioned from a theoretical theological debate into a concrete constitutional framework, concentrating political, military, and religious authority within the hands of the Supreme Leader, thereby fundamentally altering the structure of the Iranian state.

## Discussion

**1. The Modernity of «Traditional» Revolution** The findings of this study challenge the Orientalist view that the Iranian Revolution was merely a reactionary return to medievalism. Instead, the linguistic analysis suggests that Khomeinism represents a distinctly **modern phenomenon**. By adopting the structural dynamics of 20th-century revolutionary movements (mass mobilization, anti-imperialist rhetoric, populism) and clothing them in Shi'a terminology, the leadership created a hybrid ideology. This confirms that religion in the post-colonial era acts not just as a repository of tradition, but as a dynamic political vehicle capable of competing with secular ideologies like Marxism.

**2. The Paradox of Mass Mobilization vs. Clerical Authority** A critical tension identified in the results is the paradox between the *means* of the revolution and its *end*.

- **The Means:** The revolution relied on the empowerment of the *Mustazafin* (masses), encouraging them to question authority (the Shah) and take history into their own hands.

- **The End:** However, the institutionalization of *Velayat-e Faqih* ultimately stripped these masses of political sovereignty, transferring it to the Jurist.

- **Implication:** This suggests that the revolutionary rhetoric was instrumental rather than foundational for the clerical leadership. While Shariati's «Red Shi'ism» aimed for a classless, democratic Islamic socialism, Khomeini's implementation solidified a hierarchical theocracy. This divergence explains the subsequent purge of leftist and liberal allies post-1979.

**3. The Sectarian Barrier to Pan-Islamism** The comparative analysis highlights a significant limitation in the «Export of Revolution.» While Khomeini successfully framed the struggle against the Shah as a universal battle between Truth and Falsehood, the specific theological reliance on the Hidden Imam and the Karbala narrative created a «sectarian firewall.»

• **Regional Impact:** This explains why the model failed to take root in Sunni-majority Central Asia or the Arab world. Instead of emulating the Iranian state model, Sunni Islamists adopted the *spirit* of political activism but rejected the *structure* of clerical rule.

**4. The «Negative Model» Effect in Central Asia** Finally, the discussion interprets the impact on Central Asia not as a direct ideological infection, but as a catalyst for secular authoritarianism. The mere existence of the Islamic Republic provided post-Soviet leaders with a convenient «boogeyman.» The study argues that the «Iranian Threat» was often exaggerated by these regimes to legitimize the suppression of indigenous Islamic revivalism, framing all religious political expression as a slippery slope toward Khomeinist radicalism.

### Conclusion

The Iranian Revolution of 1979 stands as a watershed moment in the history of the 20th century, marking the decisive re-entry of religion into the sphere of

global politics. As this analysis has demonstrated, the success of the revolution was not merely the result of economic dissatisfaction, but the product of a sophisticated ideological synthesis – Khomeini’s «Third Way»-which successfully shattered the Cold War binary by politicizing theological concepts through the intellectual labor of figures like Ali Shariati.

However, extrapolating the Iranian success to the broader Muslim world, particularly post-Soviet Central Asia, reveals significant empirical and theoretical limitations. While the revolution established a durable theocratic state based on *Velayat-e Faqih*, its ambition to unify the global *Ummah* was curtailed by the specificities of Shi’a theology and the absence of comparable clerical structures in the Sunni world.

Crucially, for Kazakhstan, the comparative analysis suggests that the «Iranian scenario» remains highly improbable. The lack of an institutionalized religious hierarchy, combined with a historical legacy of nomadic egalitarianism and secular resilience, creates a distinct sociopolitical landscape. Therefore, the Iranian experience should be viewed not as a universal blueprint for re-Islamization, but as a unique historical anomaly—a context-dependent phenomenon where a clerical class successfully co-opted modern revolutionary dynamics, a condition that remains empirically absent in the contemporary Central Asian context.

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