

The Chronological Changes between Law and Politics in Shi'i Understanding

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Abstract : The idea of this research had its genesis from the writer's interest in Shi'i school and religio-political atmosphere in contemporary Iran. The research aims to identify how the past dynamics between political and legal figures and their relationship between each other affect contemporary relationship between political and religious authorities at the local and global level. It attempts to explore religio-politic Shi'i figures and their relationship with the official jurisprudence from the 15th century to the contemporary period. The mutual interaction between the opinion and acts of political figures and jurisprudential institutions enlightens the role of religious values to control the mass population. After the collapse of the Safawīd Dynasty, Shi'i believers lost their political guardian and legal independence, and the situation gave them the inspiration to create unique ideologies or political approaches to solve the governance crisis. The analysis of authoritative political figures and their scholastic contributions elucidate the connection between political powers and religious doctrines under the protection of sectarian oriented theocratic governments. Additionally, understanding the incremental influence of political (historical) Shi'i figures into religious doctrines shed lights on the chronological development of peculiar government style and authoritative hierarchy in contemporary Shi'i communities. The research as being interdisciplinary one offers to create an academic awareness between legal and political factors in Shi'i school of thought and encompasses political, religious, social, financial and cultural atmospheres of the countries in which the political figures lived. The Iranian regime enshrines the principle of vilāyāt-i faqīh (guardianship of the jurist) which enables jurists to solve the conflict between law as an ideal system, in theory, and law in practice. The paper aims to show how the religious, educational system works in harmony with the governmental authorities with the concept of vilāyāt-i faqīh in Iran and contributes to the creation of religious custom in the society. Contemporary relationship between the political figures and religious authorities in Iran will be explained by religio-legal dimensions. The methodology that will be applied by the study has been chosen in order to acquire information and deduce conclusions from the opinions of the scholars. Thus, the research method is mainly descriptive and qualitative. Three lines of description are pursued throughout the study; the explanation of political ideas belonging to the religio-political figures theoretically depending on written texts; the description of approaches adopted by contemporary Iranian and Saudi scholars relating to the legal systems (theoretically); and the explanation of the responses of governmental authorities.

Keywords : clergy ('ulamā), guardianship of the jurist (vilāyāt-i faqīh), Iran, Shi'i figures

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