

POST-ISLAMISM REDEFINED

Towards a Politics of Post-Islamism

Milad DOKHANCHI

Queen's University, Kingston, Ontario, Canada

Email: m.dokhanchi@queensu.ca

Problematizing Asef Bayat's notion of 'post-Islamism', this article proposes an alternative definition for the concept, having in mind the case of Iran. The current conception of the term 'post-Islamism' may be challenged via a survey of post-revolutionary Islamist movements that resisted the state as well as Ayatollah's Khomeini's concession to the concept of *maṣlaḥat* (expediency), through which the state expressed preference for modern reason over shari'a law. The case of Islamists contesting state power questions the monolithic image of Islamism drawn by Bayat as movements longing to create a state based on the doctrine of *vilāyat-i faqīh*. Also Khomeini's concession to *maṣlaḥat* indicates that the Islamic state must be seen as one of the participants in 'post'-Islamist secularizing trends in Iran. Hence, Bayat's post-Islamism was more of an inevitable political phenomenon adopted by the state itself than a conscious project adopted by Muslim secularist intellectual figures seeking to put an end to Islamism. Unlike Bayat's post-Islamism, which celebrates the end of or a 'break' from an Islamist paradigm, this article then invites readers to expose Islamism to post-modern critique, the result of which would not be a negation but rather a revival of Islamism that takes into account the contingencies of the post-modern condition. Similar to post-Marxism and post-anarchism, post-Islamism maintains the ethos of the traditional canon, Islamism in this case, while rejecting its authoritarian and universalist tendencies. A post-Islamist politics is still on the rise, yet its introductory philosophical foundations had been already developed in the 1990s by figures such as Abdolkarim Soroush and Morteza Avini. Soroush's post-Islamism, however, ultimately landed in a modernist liberal episteme, hence remained Islamist, while Avini, despite his support for the state, offered a much more radical critique of Islamism while remaining faithful to its ethos.

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Seventeen years after the Islamic Revolution, Asef Bayat, a political theorist, identified a major discursive shift in the way the Iranian Islamic state expressed itself. He saw a 'condi-

tion where, following a phase of experimentation, the appeal, energy, symbols and sources of legitimacy of Islamism ...[were] exhausted, even among its once-ardent supporters.’ He called the new condition ‘post-Islamism.’¹ For Bayat the Islamist phase began in 1979 and continued until mid-1990s wherein the reformist, liberal-leaning Mohammad Khatami emerged as president. It was during this period that some began to voice criticism if not outright opposition to the principle of *vilāyat-i faqīh*, deeming it as undemocratic.²

One has to remember that the Iranian Constitution, which included the clause on *vilāyat-i faqīh*, was approved by a majority vote in a referendum in early December 1979.³ Comparing this referendum, however, with the previous one held in March in which voters could choose either yes or no to an Islamic republic, indicates a drop of 20 percent in turnout. In the original referendum the concept of an Islamic republic was still vague and there was not yet any mention of *vilāyat-i faqīh* in popular discourse, let alone the possibility of it being included in the Constitution.⁴ The new Constitution embodied the ideals of the Usulis and those Islamists who were comfortable with Khomeini’s (1902–1989) charismatic rule of Iran with constitutional backing. According to the new constitution, *fiqh* was to operate as a major source for the extraction of not only state laws but also mechanisms through which the state must be governed. The laws of the tribe-form of Islam were expected to provide the basis for governing the state-form. But soon the realities of the modern state formation began to pose new challenges and exposed the limits of modern governance based on pastoral visions. For almost a century the irreconcilable nature of the pastoral art of government and *raison d’état* had manifested itself in various meeting points of religion and politics, but the attempt to combine the two had never been experimented with in the realpolitik of state management. Now in charge of not only the state but also an economy based on capitalist principles, through practical experimentations, Iranian Muslims were perhaps best placed to confirm the famous Foucauldian assertion regarding the inherently secular nature of the modern state in general, and atheistic nature of modern economics in particular. Foucault said, ‘Economics is an atheistic discipline, economics is a discipline without God, economics is a discipline that begins to demonstrate the impossibility of a sovereign point of view over the totality of the state that he has to govern.’⁵

Confronting the ethos of bio-power of the modern state and its contradiction with the religious canon, pragmatist Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani (1943–2017) professed to Khomeini, ‘[U]nder these circumstances, based on the teachings of the *shari’a*, many policies of the government would be unjustifiable.’⁶ In response, Khomeini calmed the ruling party by invoking the jurisprudential concept of *zarūrat* (practical necessities) and offered solutions that suggested that reconciliation between *fiqh* and the *zarūrat* of the modern state may be possible.⁷ Khomeini’s solutions, however, were met with dismay among some traditional Usulis who viewed concessions to *zarūrat* as an indication that the *halāl* (religiously permissible) would be replaced with *harām* (the forbidden).⁸ In general, the more ‘the post-revolutionary state consolidated its power, the greater the number of Ayatollahs voiced their displeasure with the expansion of state power into their offices.’⁹ But soon the concept of *maṣlahat-i nizām* (interest/expediency of the state), a Persian concept for *raison d’état*, found prominence and became the *shari’a* of the emerging state.¹⁰ With this approach, ‘Khomeini began to lay the foundation of an Islamic republic in which the preservation and interests of the state would eclipse the ordained obligations and duties prescribed in *shari’a*,’ and

in that regard he showed no compromise.¹¹ He went as far as to declare that even daily prayers and pilgrimages may be dispensed with if upholding them would be contrary to the *maṣlaḥat* of the modern state.¹² Under Khomeini, material reconciliation between pastoral sovereignty and *raison d'état* took place in the real scene of political contestations, making the theoretical framework offered in *Vilāyat-i Faqīh* absolutely anomalous to the actual political experience. *Vilāyat-i faqīh* in practice had little in common with what was outlined in *Vilāyat-i Faqīh*. If in *Vilāyat-i Faqīh*, the primacy was given to *fiqh*, in the real political scene the expediencies of the modern state became the priority to the extent that the conservative *fuqahā'* in charge of the Guardian Council resisted the *maṣlaḥat* orientation of the Islamic state, although their discourse never prevailed.

With Khomeini's demise in 1989, the *maṣlaḥat*-oriented front – those with executive experience – took charge of the state apparatus, and the conservatives were partly sidelined. Ayatollah Khamene'i was appointed the Supreme Leader, and the constitution was amended accordingly to remove *marja'iyat* as a necessary qualification for becoming the leader. The fact that the *faqīh* in charge of the state no longer needed to have already held a position of religious authority 'did not mean the separation of religion from politics, but rather established the supremacy of politics over religion.'¹³ Shrewd Rafsanjani, 'who during the entire decade of the Islamic Republic stood on the side of the *maṣlaḥat* of the state rather than the realization of Islamic ideals,' also began his first term as president.¹⁴ Rafsanjani introduced a series of liberal economic initiatives and went to the Friday prayers podium and explicitly demanded reconsideration of the constitutive ethos of the revolutionary society. He defended luxury lifestyles and the transformation of 'the revolutionary virtues of the *homo islamicus* – selflessness, austerity, and perpetual discontent – into a post-revolutionary ethos of the prosperous, joyful and content subject.'¹⁵ The anti-*maṣlaḥat* faction of the ruling elite, whose outlook was manifested in the Guardian Council, opposed Rafsanjani and sided with the new *vali-yi faqīh*, Ayatollah Khamene'i.

There was another faction that opposed the new approach of the state. They were the religiously devout war veterans who saw the ethos of war at odds with the secular undertone of the *maṣlaḥat* of the state.¹⁶ Hence Khamene'i had now two sets of allies, the Guardian Council and the war veterans who looked up to the Supreme Leader as the embodiment of revolutionary and religious values. They all saw Rafsanjani's post-war policies heading in the direction of separating religion from the state, undermining the leftist aspirations of the Revolution and the liberalizations of culture.¹⁷ They not only targeted Rafsanjani, but also the protagonist of the Iranian intellectual scene of the 1990s, Abdolkarim Soroush.

Educated in Britain in the philosophy of science with some background in Islamic philosophy and mysticism, Soroush began to formulate a famous thesis entitled *Qabz va Bast* (The Theoretical Contraction and Expansion of Shari'a), in which he argued for the contingency of the truth of religious knowledge based on time, space, and its juxtaposition to other forms of knowledge.¹⁸ With this approach, Soroush sought to put an end to the exclusivity of religious truth as held by the clergy and open a way for a pluralistic reading of Islam.¹⁹ 'With these essays, Soroush inaugurated an intellectual movement the main premise of which was to salvage Islam from its officially sanctioned straitjacket.'²⁰ Soroush did not limit his provocative statements to abstract philosophical pursuits. He vocally defended a democratic religious state (*ḥukūmat-i dimūkrātīk-i dīnī*) as an alternative to an Islamic state.²¹ Soroush

also constantly exposed the limits of *fiqh* in relation to state governance and promoted *irfān* (mysticism) as an alternative Islamic discipline suitable for a post-revolutionary society. He defended individual liberty and made extensive attempts to prove that liberal freedoms are not in disharmony with shari'a.²²

Soroush's ideas were deemed blasphemous and his lectures were shut down, mostly by Ansar-e Hezbollah, who 'announced that its members would not allow him to speak at any public event.'²³ Soroush expressed his grievances to Rafsanjani, and although his complaints were never seriously addressed, a discourse similar to his began to be heard in the reformist government of President Khatami which replaced Rafsanjani. In the new era, concepts such as *impīriyālism*, *mustaz'afīn*, *jihād*, *mujāhid*, *shahīd*, and *inqilāb* gave their place to *dimūkrāsī*, *plūrālism*, *mudirniat*, *āzādī* (liberty), and *jāmi'ih-yi madanī* (civil society).²⁴ Government discourse, if not state, had indeed experienced a shift – the same shift that Asef Bayat had called 'post-Islamism'.

Sixteen years after the first deployment of the concept of post-Islamism, Asef Bayat, still studying and reflecting the same movements, came back to his original theorizations. Bayat, however, saw no need for revision of what he had already described as the post-Islamist trend. In the introduction of his book, published in 2013, he wrote: 'The program of post-war reconstruction under President Rafsanjani marked the beginning of what I have called "post-Islamism".'²⁵ Identifying the Islamist project with failure, Bayat continued, '[P]ost-Islamism is a discursive and/or pragmatic *break*, a break from an Islamist paradigm.'²⁶ Prior to Bayat, however, it was Olivier Roy who had diagnosed Islamism with a certain 'failure.' In his much-cited book *The Failure of Political Islam*, Roy commented on the way the energy and the discourse of Islamism had been co-opted by state power and how it had become difficult to identify a movement as 'Islamist' with a rather independent social and political vision in both local and global contexts. According to Roy, 'Today's Islamist movement [...] does not offer a new model of society [...] they reflect first and foremost the failure of the Western-style state model [...] [Hence t]here is no concrete political, let alone economic model inherent in Islamism.'²⁷ Roy later adopted Bayat's 'post-Islamism' to expand on his thesis on the failure of Islamism. He saw the nationalist orientation of Islamism, the lack of distinct geostrategic value, the lack of a distinct Muslim vote, Islamists' role in the secularization of society, and the rise of private Islam as indications that Islamism had transformed to post-Islamism.²⁸

Gilles Kepel, a French sociologist, echoed a similar line of argument viewing Islamism as a movement that is now replacing its 'utopian vision' by coming to terms with 'concrete realities.'²⁹ It is unclear as to whether Kepel was influenced by Bayat, but he too referred to post-Islamism as an Islamic movement with a strong liberal and democratic impulse.³⁰ Despite Bayat's conviction that Roy and Kepel have somewhat confused readers as to what he originally meant by post-Islamism, there are no obvious divergences in the way the term post-Islamism has been deployed by these scholars.³¹ Nonetheless, Bayat did aim to distance his notion of post-Islamism from that of Roy and Kepel by characterizing it not simply as a condition but also as a 'conscious project,' both intellectual and pragmatic, taken up by previous Islamists. In this new condition, Islamists tend to abandon the discourse of obligation and duties and adopt liberal values of rights and freedom. Post-Islamism, for Bayat, then 'represents an endeavor to fuse religiosity with rights, faith and freedom, Islam and

liberty [...] [and] instead of duties, [post-Islamism calls for] plurality in place of a singular authoritative voice, historicity rather than fixed scriptures, and the future instead of the past.’³²

Farhang Rajaei, a relative latecomer to this line of theorization, sympathized with Bayat’s thesis and viewed post-Islamism as a project of ‘restoration’ that aims to combine Islam and modernity. For him, contrary to ‘Islamist religionists, [post-Islamists] [...] do not see the world as an us-them dichotomy, and unlike their revolutionary brothers, they do not see life as a constant struggle along a friend-enemy divide.’³³ Both Rajaei and Bayat appeared reluctant to give away the free pass of ‘post-Islamism’ to any form of Muslim politics that adopts a certain façade of modern politics. Rajaei uses ‘modernism’ in negative terms in order to refer to Islamists’ utilization of modern apparatuses and technology, and Bayat differentiated between post-Islamists and those who adopt the path of electoral politics as a way to advance an Islamist agenda.³⁴ For Bayat, a political gesture could only claim the title ‘post-Islamist’ if it fully renounces its Islamicizing tendencies and conforms to liberalism. Bayat even went as far as to express comfort with equating post-Islamism with liberal Islam. He wrote, ‘If “liberal Islam” means an interpretation of Islam that accommodates modern democracy, a civil non-religious state, freedom of thought, and human progress, then certainly this shares considerably with post-Islamist thought.’³⁵

Bayat, however, was keen to stress that post-Islamism does not mean abandoning Islam. In fact, post-Islamism, in Bayat’s use of the term, aims to maintain ‘religious ethics in society’ and ‘an active role for religion in the public sphere.’³⁶ Bayat mentions the Iranian youth who engage in ‘underground music, illicit sex and dating games, drug use and fashion,’ yet they did not ‘abandon their Islam altogether.’³⁷

It is safe to give Bayat full credit for popularizing the term ‘post-Islamism’ in the academy. Mojtaba Mahdavi, for instance, adopted Bayat’s post-Islamism without any hesitation and re-applied it to the case of Iran. He added more content to Bayat’s observations but remained in full conformity with Bayat’s use of the term, and this trend may be ongoing.³⁸ In 2007, the British newspaper *The Guardian* published an opinion piece where the future of post-Islamist politics was analysed, and one must not be taken by surprise if the term gets recycled in the academy, media, and policymaking, and in general discussions in the near future.³⁹

But to what extent is the concept of post-Islamism able to explain the politics of the post-revolutionary condition in Iran? If Khomeini and his close disciples were willing to provide any concession to the *maṣlaḥat* of the state at the expense of overriding the religious canon, then where does his approach fall in the Islamist-versus-post-Islamist dichotomy? Who exactly were the Islamists that decided *to break* from their convictions and become post-Islamists? To what extent was post-Islamism in fact a conscious project as opposed to a forced material condition? If post-Islamism and liberal Islam are synonymous, what may non-liberal Islamic-oriented contestations of state power be called? What is the missing piece in reading the post-revolutionary interaction between politics and religion from the standpoint of post-Islamism?

In attempting to answer these questions, this article will problematize the concept of post-Islamism by highlighting the flaws and shortcomings of the concept in explaining the process through which Iranian Muslims encountered state power in modern Iran. Bayat’s

outline of post-Islamism will be subject of scrutiny while providing the historical context to the trends that Bayat and others identify as a ‘discursive shift’ in the post-revolutionary condition. In order to better historically and intellectually locate Bayat’s post-Islamist trends, the ideas of ‘post-Islamist’ thinkers will be invoked and analysed against Bayat’s conceptual framework, and lastly a general attempt will be made to outline an alternative definition for post-Islamism.

BAYAT’S POST-ISLAMISM

What is fundamentally problematic about Bayat’s post-Islamism is that he never clearly defined what Islamism is. The clearest definition he offered for Islamism was ‘those ideologies and movements that strive to establish some kind of an “Islamic order” – a religious state, shari‘a law and moral codes in Muslim societies and communities.’⁴⁰ In the case of Iran, Bayat contended that central ‘to Iran’s Islamism was the establishment of an Islamic state based on *wilayat al-faqih*.’⁴¹ As limited as these definitions appear, realization of shari‘a law through the doctrine of *vilāyat-i faqih* seems to define the core agenda of Islamism according to Bayat. For Bayat, Islamism and the Usulis’ rigorous project of including *vilāyat-i faqih* in the Iranian constitution are synonymous, and Islamism cannot be imagined outside the party that wished to rule post-revolutionary Iran according to a jurisprudential reading of Islam. This is while the phantasy of Islamism concerning the state contained a constitutionalist democracy *only* observant of religious values as opposed to a state governed strictly by shari‘a law. ‘Islamic government,’ as a concept, as Husaynizadieh puts it, was an empty signifier denoting not the rule of shari‘a, but a system that combines economic prosperity and ethical conduct.⁴² In fact, combining politics with spirituality and ethics was the promise of Islamism.⁴³ Also the notion of *vilāyat-i faqih* was never on the agenda of Islamist activism, and advocacy of the concept began to be heard only a few months after the Revolution. In fact *vilāyat-i faqih* was a post-revolutionary Usuli initiative and its success had more to do with contingencies of the post-revolutionary state formation as opposed to the Islamists’ doctrinal agenda.⁴⁴ Undoubtedly, part of the Islamists’ energy was appropriated as the ideology of the post-revolutionary state, but the resistant ethos of Islamism did not fully dissipate, and various brands of Islamism were among the first groups that came into conflict with the Usuli consolidation of power in the post-revolutionary situation.

ISLAMISM CONTESTING POST-REVOLUTIONARY POWER

Among the first Islamist groups that did not withstand the clergy’s authoritarian drive were the anti-Shah activists of the Freedom Movement (*nihzat-i āzādī*).⁴⁵ Members and associates of the Islamist Freedom Movement were able to form the provisional government after the Revolution, and they took charge of drafting the first constitution in which there was no mention of *vilāyat-i faqih*.⁴⁶ During the Assembly of Experts, Islamist Ezzatollah Sahabi (1930–2011) expressed discontent with the inclusion of *vilāyat-i faqih*, not out of secular

concerns, but rather his reasoning was based on Ayatollah Na'ini's attempt at reconciling Islam with *raison d'état*.⁴⁷ The provisional government headed by Mehdi Bazargan (1907–1995) also came into various conflicts with the clerical apparatus, the most critical of which concerned the new constitution and the judicial system. 'Bāzargān who had fought the Shah precisely over the issue of human rights... [held that] the judicial system should embody basic human rights, particularly the principle of equality before the law and should improve rather than undo the secular reforms of [the] 1930s.'⁴⁸ He and his Islamist sympathizers also believed that the 'Constitution should treat all, including the clergy, as equal citizens, place ultimate sovereignty in the people, and be modeled on modern Western constitutions.'⁴⁹ Opposing Bazargan, while having a stronger hand in confronting national crises with the backing of the charismatic Khomeini, the Usuli apparatus forced Bazargan to resign. He was found guilty for deviating from the Imam's line, meaning he would not comply with the new demands of the consolidating clerical state.⁵⁰

The Islamist Banisadr, the next president, experienced a similar fate to that of Bāzargān. Banisadr, who had reprinted *Charter of the Islamic Movement* before the Revolution, was Khomeini's associate during the leader's stay in Paris. In the *Charter of the Islamic Movement*, not only was there no mention of *vilāyat-i faqīh*, but one identifies a certain anti-hegemonic ethos in line with anti-colonialism and anti-despotism. The Charter had framed Islamists' activism as a continuation of the constitutionalist movement.⁵¹

Among the non-clerical members of the Assembly of Experts, Banisadr showed no sign of supporting the inclusion of *vilāyat-i faqīh* in the constitution and warned the members of handing over excessive power to the *faqīh*.⁵² After the resignation of Bazargan, he secured a landslide victory as president, but soon conflict between the president and the clerical authority erupted. He was accused of being 'a Bāzargān with a different face,' and his commitment to the concept of *vilāyat-i faqīh* came under intense scrutiny.⁵³ Prior to the Revolution, Banisadr envisioned the idea of Islamic government as one with a highly decentralized state with every citizen exercising the function of the imamate.⁵⁴ 'For Banisadr, the Government of God was to be maintained and municipally organized by a network of mosques, rather than through a hierarchical relation between infallible imams and their uniformed followers.'⁵⁵ None of these theories were materialized in practice, yet besides being labelled a powermonger and accused of having a cult of personality by his opponents, one cannot deny the impact of his Islamist conviction in his confrontation with the clerical apparatus.⁵⁶ At first, Banisadr maintained the façade of having good relations with the Usulis, but soon matters of dispute increased, forcing him to side with the anti-clerical Mujahidin (MKO).⁵⁷ Eventually, with the Mujahidin's support, he called for the downfall of a clerical state, which according to him 'was on all counts worse – more tyrannical, more unjust and more blood thirsty than the previous regime.'⁵⁸ A mass demonstration in support of him took place, and the state responded accordingly. Banisadr was removed from the presidency on account of 'incompetency' and the state successfully suppressed the opposition.⁵⁹ If Bazargan's resignation was concurrent with the rise of the phrase 'the Second Islamic Revolution,' the consolidation of state power through the Usulis after ousting Banisadr was called the 'Third Islamic Revolution.'⁶⁰

The notorious Mujahidin and their radical activism also must be seen within the Islamist-Usuli state hostility. In the post-revolutionary condition, 'the growing appeal of the

Mojahedin in the streets closely corresponded to the emergence of the clergy in the corridors of power,' but eventually the clergy triumphed, making the Mujahedin the third Islamist revolutionary faction that was discarded from the state machine.⁶¹

Initially the Mujahedin made all attempts necessary in the provision of their ideological commitment to operate within the confines of the emerging Islamic Republic, yet their refusal to participate in the referendum to ratify the constitution with the *vilāyat-i faqīh* clause included counted as their first act of open defiance in relation to the clerical state.⁶² 'Criticizing the Constitution, the Mojahedin claimed that before his death [even] Tāleqāni had grown so disillusioned with the Assembly of Experts, especially with its notion of *velāyat-e faqih*, that he had boycotted most of its sessions.'⁶³ In return, Massoud Rajavi, the head of the organization, was barred from entering the presidential election, and in future parliamentary elections, the Mujahedin's supporters were not able to secure victory, for which they blamed authorities for not conducting a fair election.⁶⁴ In their political struggles, the long pre-revolutionary rift between the Islamists and Usulis now manifested itself on the state scene. The Mujahedin called the Usulis 'reactionaries' and the Usulis charged them with hypocrisy and accused them of being those who promote Islam minus the clergy.⁶⁵ Eventually the ruling elite of the Mujahedin concluded that 'peaceful opposition was impossible and that the regime would not tolerate a single Mojahedin deputy inside the Majlis.' They also concluded that 'We have done our best to persevere on the peaceful path, but the reactionaries have forced us to seek another road.'⁶⁶ The Mujahedin then adopted armed struggle, sided with Banisadr in political showdowns in the streets, and were eventually suppressed and eliminated from the political scene. Khomeini once said, 'Our real enemy is neither in Iraq, nor in Kurdistan, nor anywhere else, but right here in Tehran. It is the monafeqin.'⁶⁷

One must also not neglect the radical Islamist Furqan group whose attitude towards the emerging state was uncompromising from the outset. Marxist in orientation yet observant of religious rituals, members of the Furqan group were among the first to employ the term *ākhūndīsm* (mullaism) to describe the ideology of the post-revolutionary clerical state.⁶⁸ Highly influenced by 'Ali Shari'ati (1933–1977) and his delineation of the concept of *permanent revolution*, their post-revolutionary activism mainly focused on removing the clergy from state power. In their writings, they warned their audience about the 'revival of the ruling clergy,' and described the 'clergy's excessive interventions' in state affairs as 'catastrophic.'⁶⁹ Headed by young Akbar Gudarzi (1959–1980), an activist with some clerical training, Furqan did not shy away from armed struggle and the assassination of those elements they perceived as the embodiment of social regression (*irtijā*).⁷⁰ Unlike MKO, Furqan members did not have statist aspirations, and their political significance relied on their ideologically oriented terrorist activities. They were responsible for claiming the life of the prominent intellectual clergyman Murtada Mutahhari (1919–1979), and their assassination attempts on Ayatollah Khamene'i and Rafsanjani remained abortive. Eventually the organization was dismantled as most of their active members including Gudarzi were caught and executed in prison by the state.⁷¹

These were only four instances of groups with soft and radical Islamist inclinations that not only did not support the doctrine and practice of *vilāyat-i faqīh*, but were the first to greatly challenge Usuli consolidation of state power. Despite the internal variance, there was

a consensus among these groups that the Revolution was not yet over, and until *vilāyat-i faqīh* was removed from the Constitution, the democratic and constitutionalist ethos of Islamism would not yet be realized. The fact that Islamists opposed *vilāyat-i faqīh* greatly challenges Bayat's sweeping generalization concerning Islamism and his limited definition of the term as a shari'a-inclined political agenda through the implementation of *vilāyat-i faqīh*. Not only was Islamism not a monolithic ideology, it was more than just an ideology of power. Instead, Islamism operated as an ideology of resistance in the post-revolutionary condition. Therefore, Bayat's post-Islamism, to use Peter Mandavilles' words, relies on 'too narrow a conceptualization of Islamism,' and Salwa Ismail is correct when she suggests, 'Before declaring the advent of post-Islamism, we should question the assumption that Islamism was ever coherent and homogenous.'⁷²

THE REIGN OF MAŞLAĤAT

One has to note that Islamists were not alone in their failure to identify with *vilāyat-i faqīh*; even grand ayatollahs who did not recognize the exercise of the new apparatus were naturally invited to adopt silence. Not impressed with the new constitution, Ayatollah Muhammad Kazim Shari'atmadari (1906–1986) was among the first great religious scholars to distance himself from the direction adopted by Khomeini in state-building. He believed that Khomeini's account of *vilāyat-i faqīh* 'violated the shari'a as well as the principle of democracy and popular sovereignty; that the true role of the ulamā was not to meddle in politics but to guard Islam.'⁷³ For his stance and his supporters' alleged contacts with the United States, he was placed under house arrest; the party of his followers, the Muslim People's Republican Party (Hizb-i Jumhuri-yi Khalq-i Musalmanan-i Iran), was dissolved, and eventually he was disqualified as *marja'-i taqlīd*.⁷⁴ The Islamic Republic 'had done what no Shah had ever dared to do,' and this was the case for the fate of Ayatollah Montazeri as well.⁷⁵ An ardent supporter of *vilāyat-i faqīh* in the initial stage of the Revolution, he was designated as heir to Khomeini in 1985.⁷⁶ Criticism of the mass execution of opposition inside Evin prison, and the involvement of his associates in exposing Iran's secret arms deal with the United States, did not help Montazeri maintain his reliability within assemblages of power in Iran.

Faced with a shortage of arms in the war against Iraq, the Rafsanjani front secretly launched talks with Robert McFarlane, then United States National Security Advisor, in meetings in Tehran. The objective was to buy arms in exchange for Iran lobbying for the freedom of US hostages in Lebanon.⁷⁷ The parties involved in the negotiation had ensured that Montazeri would not be informed of the talks lest he oppose direct engagement with the United States.⁷⁸ There was also another reason for keeping the affairs discreet and that was Montazeri's son-in-law's brother, Mehdi Hashemi, (1946–1987) and his involvement in foreign affairs and his particular influence in Lebanon. Shortly after the Revolution, Mehdi Hashemi began supporting militant Islamic groups in the Muslim world under the banner of an organization called the 'Office for Islamic Liberation Movements.'⁷⁹ A reader of Shari'ati and his famous theory of 'Islam minus the clergy,' Hashemi was resented by the conservative clergy for his 'radical leftist views as well as modernist religious beliefs.'⁸⁰ Mehdi Hashemi

was also among the early advocates of ‘exporting the revolution’ – that is, encouraging other countries, particularly those in the Muslim world, to emulate the Iranian revolutionary model – and made an effective presence in Lebanon and Afghanistan.⁸¹ Initially Khomeini shared and in fact propagated the discourse pertaining to the export of the Revolution, but, in the face of international isolation and pressure from abroad, he took a softer measure pertaining to the idea of exporting the Revolution and sided with a ‘more pragmatic policy [...], and subsequently adopted an intermediate position between the radical faction and the proponents of a more cautious approach based on the interests of the State’ and its foreign policy.⁸² Rafsanjani, the emblem of the pragmatic approach, along with Khomeini’s son, Ahmad (1946–1995), began to disdain Hashemi’s radicalism and growing influence in foreign policy and took measures to contain him.⁸³ Being informed of secret negotiations, Hashemi initially made attempts to disrupt the talks via his influence in Lebanon and eventually exposed the deal through the Lebanese weekly *al-Shira*.⁸⁴ The exposure produced a huge scandal, surprisingly not so much for the Rafsanjani front, because the entire initiative, also known as the Iran-Contra affair, was not entirely unknown to the major internal players.⁸⁵ In fact Khomeini had warned Montazeri in 1986 about his proximity with Hashemi, for not only did Hashemi face accusations of murder but also his activism abroad was deemed as interference in state affairs. In a letter to Montazeri, Khomeini wrote, ‘All those activities under the guise of supporting liberation organizations must stop, and those involved must be put on trial.’⁸⁶ Hashemi was soon tried in court and then executed for charges brought upon him allowing the state to hint to the international players that Iran has contained radicalism.⁸⁷ To frame the process that succeeded in containing Hashemi’s radical initiative of ‘exporting the Revolution’ in Deleuze and Guattari’s terms, one may state that the Islamist *war-machine* was gradually being appropriated by the state apparatus.

Upon the mass trial and execution of MKO members and sympathizers in Iranian prison, which took place in reaction to the MKO offensive on Iranian soil after the Iran-Iraq war, Montazeri voiced his opposition to the process.⁸⁸ He expressed absolute dismay with the executions calling them ‘unlawful’ and ‘un-Islamic.’⁸⁹ Khomeini wrote to Montazeri that ‘[i]n Islam the interests of the state are paramount and all else and everything else must be subordinate to them.’⁹⁰ Montazeri, having little regard for *maṣlaḥat*, soon witnessed a swift process to have him resign as the heir to the leader. He was eventually forced to resign and that marked the end of his career as a member of the ruling elite. After Khomeini’s demise, Montazeri initially kept a low profile but broke his silence in opposition to the ‘government’s intentions to take up foreign loans to finance the post-war reconstruction.’⁹¹ As a result he was boycotted and later on when defying Khomeini’s power, he was put under house arrest.⁹² The emblem of strict Usuli sentiments and non-state coordinated initiatives to export the Revolution was fully eliminated from state politics.

Certainly, behind the realpolitik of all state measures sat the notion of *maṣlaḥat* of the modern state. On a certain occasion, Ayatollah Safi, the Secretary of the Guardian Council, resigned over dissatisfaction with the primacy bestowed on *maṣlaḥat* in affairs related to legislation. ‘Imam Khomeini acknowledged the validity of Safi’s objection but nevertheless affirmed that his revolutionary deviation [towards *raison d’état*] was necessary.’⁹³ As Saïd Arjomand concludes: ‘[T]he legal logic and rationality of the modern state Khomeini had swallowed thus finally overcame the traditional logic of the Shi’i jurist law.’⁹⁴ During his

reign, a council called the *Majmaʿ-i Tashkhis-i Maṣlaḥat-i Nizām* (Determination of the Interest of the Islamic Order) was created to ‘to resolve the uncertain status of the novel government ordinance and the difficulties in Islamicizing the Iranian public law.’⁹⁵ A supporter of the council called the initiative ‘the most important of all the achievements of the revolution,’ which implied naturalizing the secularity of the nation-state yet giving it a religious façade.⁹⁶ Also, the case of separating the function of *faqīh* and *marjaʿ*, which was adopted by the new amendment to the Constitution, implied that the ‘the State did not receive its legitimacy from the *faqīh*, but the *faqīh* depended on the State for his own legitimacy,’ which was entirely against the original premise that ‘the *faqīh*... the most learned scholar, had been meant to supervise the three branches of government in order to ensure that their policies conformed to Islam.’⁹⁷ The modern state had appropriated Islam.

With this context in mind, one may state that if the beginning of post-Islamism, as stipulated by Bayat, was the moment of exhaustion of the energy and the symbols of Islamism, then Khomeini himself may be characterized as the initiator of post-Islamism.

Through experimentation, Khomeini soon realized that appropriation of the revolutionary religious ideology in fact operated as a great vehicle for the consolidation of power, and the Islamic Republic as an apparatus would not survive without subordinating Islam to the imposition of the modern nation-state. During the immediate post-revolutionary period, state bureaucracy expanded by 300 percent in the years 1979 to 1987, requiring discourses and techniques pertaining to state governance to replace heated revolutionary rhetoric.⁹⁸ If ideological commitment (*maktabī būdan*) was a priority of Khomeini’s state in the early stages of the revolution, his invocation of the concept dropped from 37 times during the first Majlis election in 1980s to five and to, at the most, two during the second and third Majlis election.⁹⁹ The more the state consolidated, religious ideological sentiments subsided and gave their place to a discursive regime pertaining to bio-power. Under the doctrine of *maṣlaḥat*, the Islamic state had found itself in the uncomfortable position of expanding and contracting the shariʿa such that it would conform to the realities of modern state management. And it was here that Soroush’s theory of *Qabz va Bast* appeared not as a challenge to the status quo, but rather as a theorization of it.

Soroush’s theory of *Qabz va Bast* was developed during the final years of Khomeini’s life, exactly when contestation over what constituted religious knowledge concerning management of the state was at its height.¹⁰⁰ If *Qabz va Bast* was an abstract theoretical intervention influenced by the philosophy of science, the *Islamic Republic* itself, as a modern experiment, was the embodiment of the expansion and contraction of shariʿa mediated through state power. Through *maṣlaḥat*, religious canon was expanded and contracted to conform to modern arts of government. Here the discourse pertaining to the management of the modern state also influenced the way in which shariʿa was invoked, organized, and turned into a ‘regime of truth.’ In that sense, Soroush had not proposed a radical theory. Rather he had merely described contemporary practices of power in theoretical terms. Soroush theorized the status quo and in fact when complaints were made to Khomeini about the heretical nature of his theory, Khomeini stated in private that there was nothing wrong with Soroush’s line of reasoning.¹⁰¹ Soroush theorized what Khomeini experienced on a daily basis in his attempt to expand and contract Islam to conform to the realities of the modern state.

In short, if there is anything post-Islamist about Soroush's theoretical investigation, it was the philosophical description of the experimentation of Iranian Muslims with state power. In that sense, there seems to be more evidence to suggest that Bayat's post-Islamism was a natural 'material condition' as opposed to a 'conscious project.' Post-Islamism, as Bayat understands the term, was the fate of any ideological discourse meeting the bio-power of modern governmental rule, and that implies that in locating a transition from Islamism to post-Islamism there is one gigantic factor absent in Bayat's analysis and that of others, and that is the modern state. Bayat's Islamism was doomed to 'fail' upon its encounter with a certain governmental reason based on *politique*, the outlook that had originally emerged as a heresy to the world of the cosmos.¹⁰² Given the contingencies of bio-power and the urgency of the modern state to conform to certain measures of the liberal art of government, as delineated by Foucault, Muslim statisticians, or what has elsewhere been referred to as neo-Islamists, had no choice but to downplay strict ideological positioning in favour of the interests of the modern state. As Wael shows in *Impossible State*, the homo-economicus subjectivity of the modern state remains at odds with the highly spiritually disciplined Muslim subjectivity.¹⁰³ Secularism in Wael Hallaq's perspective is a 'theology' of the modern state with its own metaphysics.¹⁰⁴ This theology, like all theologies, regulates one's conduct in both the private and public sphere while having the most sophisticated modern technologies and apparatus at its disposal in order to assert itself.¹⁰⁵ Panoptic eyes, new media surveillance, state and market aggressive regulatory mechanisms, police, hospitals, schools, prisons, and other repressive and ideological state apparatuses are all there to ensure conversion of state subjects to this theology. Hence, when Roy identifies Islamism with 'failure' in offering an alternative model for the state, he does not acknowledge the agency of the modern state in asserting its techniques and discourses of governance. The modern state is not a 'neutral carrier of ideologies', and its institutions adopt certain objectives, rationalities, and discourses pertaining to the ethics of bio-power.¹⁰⁶ According to Foucault, *raison d'état* or the *maṣlahat* dictates that the state 'has its interests and consequently has to defend these interests [...] but the state's objective must not be that of returning to the unifying position of a total and global [religious] empire at the end of time. It must not dream that one day it will be the empire of the last day.'¹⁰⁷ If Khomeini's state had any dream of Iran becoming the empire of the last day, his 'drink from the poisoned chalice,' as he referred to the acceptance of the UN truce in the Iran-Iraq war, marked the abandonment of his earlier remark that 'the road to Jerusalem goes through Karbala.'¹⁰⁸ Khomeini realized better than all his disciples that to 'govern according to the principle of *raison d'état* is to arrange things so that the state becomes sturdy and permanent [...] and so it becomes strong in the face of everything that may destroy it.'¹⁰⁹ Hence, implicit in the primacy of the state over religiosity under Khomeini's apparatus sat a semi-secularized state, the consequence of which was the emergence of a discursive regime, like that of Soroush, to manifest this secularity to public reason. If post-Islamism was a conscious project, its chief architect was Khomeini himself, not the liberal reformists of the Khatami era.

POST-ISLAMISM: BREAK WITH OR CONTINUATION OF ISLAMISM?

Soroush's theoretical intervention did have political implications, and his concept of a democratic religious state and his preference of *'irfān* over *fiqh* was an implicit challenge to not only *vilāyat-i faqīh* but also to the underlining tenets of Usuli beliefs.¹¹⁰ But even then Soroush operated within the anti-despotic, anti-authoritarian, non-Usuli tradition of Islamism. With Soroush, the dialectic nature of Islamism (resistance) and the modern state (power) that had come into effect since the Constitutional Revolution was once again revived, and his 'formal and informal students emerged as the new voice of Islamism' ready to 'rescue the revolution from the dogmatic clergy' and to defy the political order that in theory justified its legitimacy through an exclusive interpretation of the religious text.¹¹¹ In that sense, Soroush's post-Islamism was barely a disruption from the Islamist paradigm; it was its continuation.

Specifically concerning the relationship to the West, Bayat described 'post-Islamists' as those who desire to implement the following strategy: 'We take industry, modernization, philosophical and social science categories, and we offer concepts in ethics and mysticism.'¹¹² This position, as Bayat himself acknowledges, was in line with early Muslim reformers such as al-Afghani and Muhammad Abduh that had once again been rearticulated in the Muslim public sphere. To appreciate the West for its technological advancement, yet problematizing it for a lack of spirituality, and then offering Islam as a middle ground between care of the body and the soul was a classic Islamist position. If al-Afghani, the first modern Muslim activist, had encouraged Muslims to adopt science and technology and admonished them for having 'lost the will and capacity to engage in original inquiry and critical thinking,' the ethos of Soroush's intellectual activism was more or less the same.¹¹³ On what counts as preservation of old customs, Soroush stated that authenticity does not mean 'the perpetuation and revival of the offensive and superstitious customs of one's predecessors [...]. There is no shame in choosing to maintain or abandon certain elements of one's culture on the basis of investigation, insight and critical inquiry.'¹¹⁴ Soroush, similar to al-Afghani, called for the release of religious knowledge 'from narrow parochial values in the interest of the universally applicable findings of reason,' hence it is not clear how Bayat saw Soroush's discourse as a radical 'break' from modernist Islamist convention.¹¹⁵

There is, however, one explanation for employing the term *post* in reference to the discursive regime produced in the 1990s in the Iranian Muslim public sphere. Among with Western political traditions such as post-Marxism, post-feminism, and post-anarchism, the term 'post' often does not denote abandoning or breaking from a specific tradition. For instance, post-anarchist philosopher Richard Day understands 'post' as 'a way of working self-consciously within a tradition, reevaluating its values, questioning its questions, to produce something new, something other. Not an abandonment of the past, not a synthesis or even a progression, but an intimately connected divergence.'¹¹⁶ Having in mind this notion of 'post,' one must acknowledge the way in which Soroush sought to reinvent the tradition of Islamism through scrutiny of its foundations. Combining Popperian philosophy with Islamic mysticism, Soroush downplayed Islamist egalitarian concerns and exposed its modernist democratic potentials. In short, Soroush directed Islamism from Marxism towards liberalism. Having a long career in battling secular Marxism, Soroush charged Shari'ati with

turning religion into a modern semi-Marxist ideology implicitly holding him responsible for ‘the growth of a totalitarian and tyrannical system.’¹¹⁷ With *Qabz va Bast*, Soroush acknowledged the presence of various Islams and hence discredited Islamism for making universalist claims. Besides Popper’s post-positivism, Soroush was also influenced by Quine-Dhum’s anti-foundationalism in his delineation of pluralism.¹¹⁸ Various influences, particularly the anti-foundationalism of Quine-Dhum, shifted Soroush towards a postmodern reading of Islamism. However, given Soroush’s predicament with democracy and the liberal values of the modern state, his theoretical interventions eventually landed in a modernist liberal episteme.

The modernist framework of Soroush’s approach poses a new challenge to designating the term *post*-Islamism to his philosophical orientation. In not abandoning Islamism, Soroush operated as a post-Islamist. But more importantly, he operated as a post-Islamist in finding ‘a way of working self-consciously within [the] tradition’ of Islamism, hence making Islam the master signifier once again in contesting state authoritarianism.¹¹⁹ Yet, there is a framework in which Soroush’s thought can be disqualified as post-Islamist and that is through the second connotation often ascribed to the term *post* in philosophical traditions. According to Farhang Rajaei, post-Islamism consists of philosophical and theological attempts to ‘utilize the achievements of post-modernity to deconstruct Islamism and its ideology.’¹²⁰ Rajaei specifically mentions Michel Foucault and Jacques Derrida as two post-structuralist thinkers whose methodological approach may have informed critiques of Islamism in Iran. In fact, Rajaei’s characterization of the term as a post-structuralist critique of Islamism resonates with the way philosophical traditions such as post-Marxism and post-anarchism claimed the prefix *post* in their respective revivalist attempts.

In part influenced by Jacques Lacan (1901–1981), Michel Foucault, and Jacques Derrida (1930–2001), post-Marxist philosophers Ernesto Laclau (1935–2014) and Chantal Mouffe employed the post-structuralist tradition to engage with traditional Marxism. Critiquing the essentialism, foundationalism, and universalism of Marxism, they explicitly called their tradition post-structuralist Marxism or post-Marxism.¹²¹ Richard Day, Saul Newman, and Todd May also conducted similar critical experiments with anarchism and developed a philosophical paradigm known as post-structuralist anarchism or post-anarchism. Defining post-modernism, Saul Newman held that the concept and the philosophical approach do ‘not mean that we have somehow left modernity behind and entered a new historical era. It is more accurately seen as a kind of critical reflection upon the limits of modernity, and a moment of transcendence which is, at the same time, *within* modernity.’¹²² A postmodern lens, according to him, allows for a ‘general interrogation of [the] ontological foundations [...] [of a given tradition,] the questioning of their coherence, unity, stability, universality and so on.’¹²³ The *post* version of a certain tradition deconstructs that tradition in order to ‘move within it [while] being faithful to it [...] [and] radicalize its possibilities.’¹²⁴

Specifically concerning political traditions, post-structuralism shifts the attention of political actors from understanding power in terms of juridical sovereignty to pervasive forces within the social field. ‘Power is dispersed,’ as Foucault had it; hence, contestation of oppressive power may not be limited to the state apparatus.¹²⁵ Power operates both at the micro (molar) and macro (molecular) levels, and these physics of power meet and complement each other in complex power relations. Power is the result of discursive pro-

ductions mediated through technical means; hence, production, evaluation, and critique of knowledge become the primary task of knowledge producers. Knowledge may not claim universal truth; rather, it is always produced in relation to certain historical contingencies; therefore, intellectuals, instead of being ‘universal,’ must become ‘specific.’ The task of an intellectual is not to lead humanity to a certain political salvation, rather, through contextual analysis and intervention, the function of a specific intellectual is ‘to re-examine evidence and assumptions, to shake up habitual ways of working and thinking, to dissipate conventional familiarities, to re-evaluate rules and institutions and to participate in the formation of a political will.’¹²⁶ Oppression exists not only at the level of class, gender, or race, but rather the axes of class, gender, and race intersect, making the tasks of analysis and battling oppression more delicate and at the same time more urgent.¹²⁷ Grand utopian visions are only encouraged when they provide a basis for critiquing the present, otherwise phantasmatic constructions of the future only lead to a totalitarian universalist political order.¹²⁸ In a nutshell, through its suspicion of grand-narratives, postmodernism destabilizes foundationalist claims in the realm of the political and discourages ideologies from making universal claims. Instead, according to post-structuralism, state oppression may be transcended ‘through a certain spiritual transformation of relationships’ and ‘creating alternative, non-statist, non-authoritarian relationships between people.’¹²⁹

With this context in mind, post-Islamism may be framed as a critical reflection upon the limits of Islamism through its exposure to a post-structuralist framework. This postmodern Islamism enters into a critical conversation with Islamism, destabilizes its foundations while remaining faithful to its ethos. Given the modernist episteme through which he expanded his theoretical framework, Soroush barely qualifies as a postmodern Islamist. As alluded to earlier, Soroush ultimately remained within the modernist Islamist tradition, but he did make gestures towards post-Islamism for which he received backlash from his intellectual opponents. Ironically, however, Soroush’s philosophical enemies employed a Counter-Enlightenment philosophical canon to critique Soroush’s modernism, the implication of which was a further development of a postmodern evaluation of Islamist thought.

SORUSH, HIS OPPONENT, AND POST-ISLAMISM

‘I Ahmad Fardid [1909-1994], have a short message to Imam Khomeini: Abdolkarim Soroush will destroy this Revolution,’ exclaimed the Iranian secular Heideggerian philosopher whose Counter-Enlightenment ideas influenced a generation of Muslim thinkers in post-revolutionary Iran.¹³⁰ Fardid, along with Reza Davari Ardakani, a Tehran University professor of philosophy, comprised the opposing camp to Soroush.¹³¹ They accused Soroush of counter-revolutionary philosophical ideas in his allegiance to Popperian liberalism. Referring to Soroush, Davari held: ‘Our enemies abroad use [...] [Popper] to oppose the revolution, and there are people within the ranks of the Islamic Republic who sanctify him and regard any attack on his ideas [as] sacrilegious.’¹³² The hostility between Davari and Soroush became so intense that even today the debate between the two thinkers, despite shifts in their ideas, captures the binary of post-revolutionary Iranian intellectualism. Some even characterized this binary as a Popper-Heidegger debate mediated through the Iranian situation. Davari

resorted to Counter-Enlightenment philosophers such as Friedrich Nietzsche and Martin Heidegger to critique what was identified as Soroush's liberal, modernist tendencies.¹³³ Very suspicious towards modernity, Davari argued for the incompatibility of Islam and modernity, holding that other than exceptional cases, the former should not concede to the latter.¹³⁴ Davari held that with the 'expansion of the Islamic Revolution all social and political categories such as law, politics, and technology should conform to Islam, because Islam cannot conform to these and remain Islam.'¹³⁵ Soon the Davari-Fardid front gathered an intellectual following among young religious intelligentsia, the most prominent figure of which was Morteza Avini (1947-1993). An architect by training, Avini joined the war front as a documentary filmmaker and produced the famous *Ravāyat-i Fath*, a television series covering the war with Avini, dubbing the poetic narrations of the film. Later on, Mahdi Nasiri, Shahriar Zarshenas, and Mohammad Madadpur joined the Davari-Fardid front with one driving thesis: Islam and modernity are two contrasting entities and the attempt to combine the two is meaningless. They held Soroush responsible for the futile project of having a conversation between Islamic mysticism and the liberal values of the modern state.¹³⁶

Soroush, however, did not sit still and disseminated his ideas through an active presence in Iranian intellectual circles, the most famous of which was the Kian circle. One of Soroush's concepts that certainly had post-modern implications was what he called 'maximalist' versus 'minimalist' religion.¹³⁷ In a nutshell, Soroush critiqued the expectation that sought to extract all answers concerning modern life from the religious canon. Soroush held that there 'is a view that suggests that all the necessary and sufficient measures, instructions and rules for economics, governance, commerce, law, ethics [...] have been included in Islamic law.' He called this perspective a 'maximalist understanding of religion.'¹³⁸ He then stated that '*fiqh* is confined to "precepts"; in other words, it is summed up in a series of shoulds and should nots and dos and don'ts. This is a different matter altogether from drawing up plans and programs for life and living.'¹³⁹ Soroush advocated a minimalist understanding of religion which rejects the idea that religion can act as a blueprint for governing a modern society. Soroush argued:

Modern human life has not in any way emerged out of religion. No *faqih* [...] ever put forward a plan for technology and technical lifestyle [...] This is because *fiqh* is a minimalist system. It is conservative and does not set out to change anything [...] As people's knowledge undergoes transformations, so too will their lives (as will their religious lives and their religious understanding); it is not the other way around.¹⁴⁰

Through advocacy of minimalist religion, Soroush radically questioned the modernist, universalist assumptions imbedded in Islamism. If one of the premises of Islamism since Assadollah Kharaghani was to frame Islam as an all-inclusive religion with a comprehensive agenda for various spheres of modern life, Soroush's minimalist religion was an outright rejection of that thesis. Islam in Soroush's account was not the solution to all predicaments of modernity; in other words, Islam was not the solution (*hall*), as Hasan al-Banna famously held. Specifically concerning the state, Soroush held that even if 'religion has spoken about governance, if at all, it has been in minimalist, not maximalist terms. And this minimum is on the subject of legitimacy, not administration.'¹⁴¹ Soroush defended what he called 'sci-

entific management of society,' which stood at odds with attempts to Islamicize the modern state. He held: 'In the same way that there does not exist a religious thermodynamics, or religious geometry, governance cannot become religious.'¹⁴² With this approach, Soroush remained staunchly critical of the preconceived assumption that Islam is pregnant with wisdom concerning the administration of the whole of life within modernity, as held by some of the pre-revolutionary Iranian Islamists. As alluded to earlier, Soroush was not a postmodernist per se, but the anti-foundationalism that he borrowed from Quine and Duhm certainly informed his critique of Islamist universalist tendencies.

What appears striking is the fact that Soroush's antagonists reached similar conclusions, albeit from an entirely different route. Through arguing for the incompatibility of Islam and modernity, as put forward by Fardid-Davari disciples, there was already an implicit acknowledgement of the inability of Islam to be present in all aspects of modernity, hence reifying Soroush's thesis of minimalist religion. This intellectual front, that Avini was a part of, argued for the supremacy of Islam over modernity, yet that stance rendered a disguised secularism in which the attempt to Islamicize modernity was seen as doomed. If Heidegger's Counter-Enlightenment ideas provided a suspicious view of modernity to this brand of Muslim post-revolutionary intelligentsia, then the project of making Islamism compatible with modern ideologies had already been radically questioned. The 'incompatibility thesis,' as one may call it, discouraged attempts to extract laws from religion concerning the management of modern life, hence implicitly confirming Soroush's thesis.

Reflecting on the nature of cinema, Avini questioned the term 'Islamic cinema' (*sinamā-yi Islāmī*) through the same framework.¹⁴³ Holding that cinema as an apparatus must be understood within the Western cultural context from which it emerged, Avini argued that cinema is not ideologically neutral. Resonating with apparatus theory in cinema, Avini held that the cinema can be at the service of Islam, but given the presuppositions attached to its mechanism, it cannot be Islamic.¹⁴⁴ He extended the same thesis to various fields such as economics, banking, modern education, and even the state, and suggested that those who sought to Islamicize these fields were naïve.¹⁴⁵ He saw the attempt to reconcile Islam and Western experimental science as an 'assault' against the Islamist ideological front.¹⁴⁶

Hence, despite the opposition of Avini's camp to that of Soroush, the similarities between them are astonishing. In the same way that, for Soroush, concepts such as 'religious thermodynamics' or 'religious geometry' were oxymoronic, for Avini the term 'Islamic cinema' was ambiguous. Soroush's minimalist religion resonated well with Avini's suspicion that Islam could provide solutions to an inherently ungodly civilization. Heidegger and Popper had met at a crossroads in Iran.

Avini and Soroush, however, departed on the implications of their findings. While Soroush's concept of minimalist religion was to reduce religious interference in politics, hence allowing the state to take on a liberal leaning, Avini's incompatibility thesis launched a sceptical stance towards modern institutions as a whole. Avini never tackled the question of the state directly, but he left enough hints to express disregard for the underpinning assumptions embedded in the modern nation-state.

In *Tawsa'ih va Mabani-yi Tamaddun-i Gharb* (Development and the Foundation of Western Civilization), Avini launched an attack on the notion of 'development,' which according

to him had interlocking relations with the pleasure-seeking hedonist homo-economicus subjectivity of the capitalist economy:

Economic development is the attractive vision of the age in which human beings have forgotten God and the immortality of the soul [...] In our ideological system only a spiritual development is valid [...] therefore we do not divide the world into developed and underdeveloped nations simply because we do not acknowledge development as a criterion. The question may arise that 'can there not be an economic development that does not contradict Islam?' The answer is: yes, but before addressing that question, first, one has to make a case for the necessity of economic development.¹⁴⁷

Here Avini resonated with Foucault concerning the atheism of modern economics. Echoing thinkers of the Frankfurt school, by whom he was influenced, Avini targeted governmental bureaucracy, state propaganda machines, and the education system – all the embodiments of the 'dictatorship of economy' (*dīktātūrī-yi iqtisād*).¹⁴⁸ This dictatorship was at the service of 'the system' whose original foundation had roots in a machinic understanding of human nature.¹⁴⁹ He even critiqued states' pursuit of nuclear energy for not realizing the dangers associated with such technology.¹⁵⁰ Avini stated that unless the Revolution dismantles the existing apparatus and offers a new alternative and brings about a new project (*tarh-i naw*), one cannot speak of the 'victory' of the Revolution. Avini stressed that a mere political revolution should not impress Islamists since it was natural for revolutions to eventually adopt a different path from what was originally intended by the 'movement.'¹⁵¹

Avini's distrust of political revolution, his suspicion of the state and capitalism for their incompatibility with Islam, and his call for Islamic alternatives operated as radical critique of Islamists ideological posture. According to Avini, offering a modernist interpretation of Islam, relying on the apparatus of the modern state to bring about an alternative Muslim world, and Islamist universalist optimism all must be thoroughly scrutinized. If Soroush's lean towards post-Islamism landed him in liberal Islam, Avini landed in what may be called an anarchist Islam – anarchism in the sense of having major doubts about the major achievements of Western civilization, namely the ability of the state, capitalism, and modern technological apparatuses to bring about positive social change.

One has to note that despite Avini's radical scrutiny of modernity, he did not land in the Salafist episteme in which the modern world is considered a pure innovation of the infidels in the *jāhiliyya* social order.¹⁵² There is no doubt that discursively Avini remained sceptical of Western civilization, yet he was at the same time in conversation with the intellectual giants of modernity, including Marx (1818–1883) and Theodor Adorno (1903–1969) for instance. In fact, when proposing a solution as to how Muslims should confront modernity, once again invoking Fardid, Avini spoke of *taskhīr* (containment or capture).¹⁵³ Specifically concerning cinema, influenced by the mystical discourse in which a mystic develops certain supernatural abilities to exercise mastery over the material world, and hence its capture (*taskhīr*), Avini proposed that Muslim filmmakers, while mastering cinematic techniques, should spiritually elevate themselves such that they can subjugate technological machinery for spiritual ends. Otherwise, and without *taskhīr*, technology and its Western cultural pre-suppositions will triumph and rule Muslims; here Avini certainly echoed Fardid and Jalal

Al-e Ahmad's (1923–1969) famous *Gharbazadegi* (Westoxification) thesis. In *Gharbazadegi*, Jalal had lamented the lack of Muslims' agency in their confrontation with machines, hence their subordination to the technological and intellectual supremacy of the West. Locating where and how Muslim agency may be exercised in the face of a 'satanic civilization' was the prime quest of Avini, and in that sense his intellectual predicament was not a major departure from that of the conventional Islamist quest. Avini's 'incompatibility thesis' did not make him turn away from modernity; rather it sought to forge a certain Muslim identity that was able to contain modernity. Avini wrote:

Was Islam compatible with *jāhiliyya* that some expect that Islamic culture and [capitalist] economic development to be compatible with each other? No, reconciling these two [Islam and modernity] is impossible. There is, however, one way out, that is to interpret the new culture through the discourse of Islam and that requires us to fully grasp the essence of this new world. Then, this world would be subordinated to Islam since we believe that the material world may be subjugated by a perfect person (*insān-i kāmil*). The moment we determine the relation between things with the truth of the religion, then the world would be subjugated by us and the new world will be become captured (*taskhīr*). With *taskhīr* everything can become subordinated to religious thought even the writings of Marx. What preoccupies Marx has a specific relation with the truth of this world; all one needs to do is to discover that relation, and then Marx will be at the service of Islam. Even Satan has a certain relation with this world [...]. Thus, understanding the new world is essential for us. When we realize the essence of this world, it is then that we may discover its relation with the truth of this world and also religious thought. This is how one may contain (*taskhīr*) this world. There is no other way.¹⁵⁴

Through *taskhīr* Avini hoped to provide a solution to Westoxification, not through the negation of modernity, but rather through containing its ethos. While Soroush sought to read Islam through modernity, Avini prescribed reading modernity through Islam. Avini was an Islamist in that he pondered the question of Muslim subjectivity within modernity, and he was a post-Islamist in that he did not share the universalism of Islamism in providing grand solutions to modern crises. Avini did have a totalizing view of Islam *after* modernity, but his utopian vision only informed his phantasmatic Islamist construct and did not have many ramifications in his actual engagement with modernity.

Avini had a short life as he perished in a mine explosion while producing a documentary film a few years after the Iran-Iraq war. The 'martyred' Avini was now given the title Master of Pen-Martyrs (*sayyid-i shahidān-i ahl-i qalam*) by Ayatollah Khamene'i, and he was to serve as the ideal icon of state cultural policy. Avini's legacy, however, was paradoxical. Given his support for Khomeini, some saw him as an apologist for the state, and others saw his radical ideas as a challenge to the status quo. Politically, Avini influenced the younger generation of Muslims supporting Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's defiant policies against the West. Some were later attracted to state cultural institutions and some became disillusioned with the state as a whole and slowly began to voice their opposition to the state.

Neither Avini nor Soroush were in fact specifically influenced by post-structuralism in their critique of Islamism. Despite some translations of Foucault and Derrida to Farsi in the 1990s, there was no major engagement with post-structuralism among Islamists, and

this may explain why Soroush's postmodernism landed in liberal Popperism and Avini's anarchism ended up serving the state, acting as a defiant force in international relations over its nuclear program. In that sense, it may be stated that post-structuralist Islamism is still a project to come, but its foundations have been laid down by a new generation of Iranian (post) Islamists.

Avini through his 'incompatibility thesis' and Soroush with his critique of maximalist religion deconstructed modernist Islamist foundations and barred them from grand utopian and universalist claims. Post-structuralist Islamism may continue this critical engagement with Islamism, and instead of placing emphasis on the state it would turn its attention to the microphysics of power and the discursive productions pertaining to the molecular field. In fact, Peter Mandaville had a similar understanding of post-Islamism as he equated the term with 'a transformation in how Muslims think about religiously inspired social activism, and shifts in how and where they undertake such activity.' He saw post-Islamism not as an 'abandonment of Muslim politics, but rather as their reconstitution in forms more suited to a globalized world [...] [where] state is only one among many sites of the political.'¹⁵⁵ This version of post-Islamism could once again revive (*tajdīd*) religion as a liberation theology of the oppressed and turn Islam into the master signifier of movements contesting social inequality, political oppression, and state injustices. Post-Islamism would once again put Islam in conversation with other liberation discourses of late post-modernity, and in the form of 'political spirituality,' would insert Muslim subjectivity within contemporary power struggles and take the realization of *umma* as a paradigm for critiquing the state. As Ihsan Dagi suggests, post-Islamism may be imagined as a movement that is not primarily 'preoccupied with the state, capturing and using [it] as a transformative agency [...] As such post-Islamism represents the supremacy of the social over the political. Instead of looking to the state [...] post-Islamism turns to society and its capabilities to settle political disputes.'¹⁵⁶ Post-Islamism would rid Islam of the state apparatus and turn it into a war machine operating outside the state-form. Post-Islamism certainly contains the suggestion that 'abandoning the idea and ideal that an Islamic state is both theoretically and politically possible. [Hence post-Islamism is an] attempt to conceptualize a polity for Muslims in a world in which there is no preset divine order called the Islamic state.'¹⁵⁷ And for this version of post-Islamism to emerge a critical engagement with Avini and Soroush may be a starting point.

As is evident in the case of Avini and Soroush, however, not only was post-Islamism not a 'pragmatic break' from the Islamist tradition, it operated within the Islamist episteme while radicalizing its possibilities. Post-Islamism exposed the limits of Islamism while maintaining its ethos. Also, Islamism was not an apology for *vilāyat-i faqīh*; instead it was the main challenger of clerical will to domination. This reading of Islamism greatly challenges Asef Bayat's framework which saw post-Islamism as a critical moment in which Islamists abandoned their support of *vilāyat-i faqīh* and embraced the liberal values of the modern state. If anyone abandoned the doctrinal reading of *vilāyat-i faqīh* and made it subordinate to the ethics of bio-power, it was Ayatollah Khomeini himself. Khomeini's move towards *maṣlahat* had already proved Soroush's thesis about the minimal role that religion can play in modern state politics. The invocation of *maṣlahat* also implied that shari'a was to be expanded and contracted based on systems of knowledge that it comes in contact with.

CONCLUSION

The height of the Soroush-Davari debate took place exactly in the midst of a serious encounter of Islam with the modern state in post-revolutionary Iran. The incompatible relations between pastoral and *raison d'état* soon manifested themselves in practice, and Khomeini preferred to side with the *maṣlahat* of the state and subordinate Islam to state reason. Khomeini's *maṣlahat*-oriented approach produced some conservative backlash but enabled the state to become strong in the face of various oppositions from factions that were previously Khomeini's Islamist allies. As a result, the state's discursive practices gradually replaced neo-Islamist revolutionary rhetoric. Although Soroush and Davari were in the business of defending what they considered to be certain intellectual truth, in reality they were theorizing Khomeini's grand experiment. Davari's incompatibility thesis justified why Islam could not claim an alternative state and society, and Soroush's minimalist religion drew a conclusion out of the justification that perhaps the whole project was problematic to begin with. Asef Bayat calls this moment of realization 'post-Islamism.' For Bayat, post-Islamism was a conscious project that attempted to *break* from Islamism. What Bayat ignored, however, was the 'state' factor in what counted as the 'failure' of Islamism. Even the strict Usuli project of ruling society through shari'a law had to meet with the implications of bio-power and subsequently weaken ideological idealism in favour of the modern state. It is partly true that some of the energy of Islamism was appropriated by the state apparatus, but other parts in fact reproduced its pre-revolutionary momentum and participated in the contestation of state forces. In fact, it may be more accurate to state that it was Usulism that took charge of the state and Islamism remained the resistant force. Islamists were first not to comply with the emerging Usuli state apparatus, and they were among the victims of state policies. In its ethos, Islamism envisioned a socialist constitutionalist state observant of shari'a code. By no means did Islamism fancy a strict enforcement of shari'a law. Islamism, however, had other dimensions. First and foremost, Islamism was the embodiment of a Muslim renaissance in the twentieth century that sought to introduce ethics and spirituality to public reason, and by constructing a conversation between Islam and other liberation discourses, it operated as a liberation theology. The question of how governance, in the Foucauldian sense, and spirituality can be combined was the Islamists' main question. In that sense it may be stated that while Soroush was exposing the shortcomings and problematic nature of the Usuli project, his discourse operated within the episteme of Islamism. With Soroush, not only was Islam the master signifier in discourse pertaining to resistance, Islam was once again a liberation theology. Hence, what Bayat identifies as 'post-Islamism' was not a break from Islamism; it was the theorization that the Usuli project had failed and Islamism must be revived to expose the failure of the *fiqh*-based Islamic state. Soroush's Islamism was placed in a liberal episteme that was met with intellectual opposition, but the opposition also relied on the discourse of Islamism and invoked Counter-Enlightenment Western philosophers in order to better confront Soroush's liberalism. The engagement with Counter-Enlightenment thought exposed Islamism to what conveniently may be called a postmodern framework, and this is while Soroush's approach was also influenced by anti-foundationalism in the philosophy of science. Hence, what one may call a postmodern Islamism gradually began to be shaped. This postmodern Islamism exposed the universalist modernist qualities of

Islamism yet maintained its anti-authoritarian, liberatory ethos. The best example here is Avini who supported the post-revolutionary apparatus, but between the lines in his writing he showed great dissatisfaction with the state and capitalism, and formulated a framework for Islamism imagined outside of the state. Postmodern Islamism in fact may be called *post-Islamism*, one radically different from what Bayat had in mind. Since the term ‘post’ in other Western political traditions implies revival of a tradition after exposing it to a postmodern/post-structuralist framework, post-Islamism denotes the philosophical and practical approach in which Islamism becomes a subject of scrutiny and revival, having in mind the limits of modernity. This postmodern or post-structuralist Islamism is still in its early stages and is a project to come. Post-structuralist Islamism puts an end to Islamism’s obsession with the state and sublimates the energy of Islamism to various struggles pertaining to social justice, combating state oppression, and reviving spiritual and ethical practices. Whatever post-Islamism may be, it must be more than what Bayat understood it to be: a scene in which ‘underground music, illicit sex and dating games, drug use and fashion’ has proliferated throughout the social sphere. Post-Islamism is a struggle to create alternatives outside the state, even though these struggles will still be within the grid of *raison d’état*. One may be outside the state but not outside ‘the governmentalization of the state.’¹⁵⁸

NOTES

1. Asef Bayat, ‘The Coming of a Post-Islamist Society,’ *Critique: Journal for Critical Studies of the Middle East* 5, no. 9 (1996): 45.
2. Ibid.
3. Behrooz Ghamari-Tabrizi, *Islam and Dissent in Postrevolutionary Iran: Abdolkarim Soroush, Religious Politics and Democratic Reform* (I.B. Tauris, 2008).
4. Ibid.
5. See Michel Foucault, *Birth of Biopolitics* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan Macmillan, 2007), 282.
6. Ghamari-Tabrizi, *Islam and Dissent*, 86.
7. Ibid.
8. Ibid., 87.
9. Ibid.
10. The conceptual adoption of something secular but acting as shari‘a or a ruling principle was inspired by Wael Hallaq. He refers to secularism as the shari‘a of the modern state. See Wael Hallaq, ‘Beyond Secularism and Islamism – Perspectives for the Arab World,’ in *YouTube*. 25 February 2014. <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WFAqQiIVsF8>>.
11. Ghamari-Tabrizi, *Islam and Dissent*, 145.
12. Ibid., 150.
13. Ulrich von Schwerin, *The Dissident Mullah: Ayatollah Montazeri and the Struggle for Reform in Revolutionary Iran* (I.B. Tauris, 2015), 127.
14. Ghamari-Tabrizi, *Islam and Dissent*, 159.
15. Ibid., 159.
16. Ibid., 161.
17. Ibid.

18. Ibid., 192.
19. Ibid.
20. Ibid.
21. Forough Jahanbakhsh, *Islam, Democracy and Religious Modernism in Iran (1953-2000): From Bāzargān to Soroush* (Leiden and Boston: E.J. Brill, 2001), 153.
22. Abdolkarim Soroush, *Reason, Freedom, and Democracy in Islam: Essential Writings of Abdolkarim Soroush* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002).
23. Ghamari-Tabrizi, *Islam and Dissent*, 221. Ansar-e Hizbollah was the name of a radical pressure group with religious leanings that appeared in the Iranian political scene in the 1990s. The group was vocally critical of Rafsanjani's political and economic policies, deeming them anti-revolutionary and anti-Islamic.
24. Ervand Abrahamian, *A History of Modern Iran* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 186.
25. Asef Bayat, ed., *Post-Islamism: The Changing Faces of Political Islam* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), 39.
26. Ibid., 25 (Italics added).
27. Olivier Roy, *The Failure of Political Islam* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1992), 195.
28. Peter Mandaville, *Islam and Politics* (London: Routledge, 2014), 371.
29. Gilles Kepel, 'Islamism Reconsidered,' *Harvard International Review* 22 (2000): 26.
30. Ibid.
31. Asef Bayat, 'What is Post-Islamism?', *Ism Review* 16 (Autumn 2005), <https://goo.gl/GUoPeU>. Here Bayat writes: 'While the term's currency [that is post-Islamism] may be welcome, the particular way in which it has been employed [by Roy and Kepel] seems to have caused more confusion than clarity.'
32. Bayat, ed. *Post-Islamism*, 8.
33. Farhang Rajaei, *Islamism and Modernism: The Changing Discourse in Iran* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2007), 22.
34. Bayat, ed. *Post-Islamism*, 26.
35. Ibid., 27.
36. Ibid., 9, 8.
37. Ibid., 40.
38. Mojtaba Mahdavi, 'Post-Islamist Trends in Post-revolutionary Iran,' *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East* 31, no. 1 (2011): 94-109.
39. Ali Eteraz, 'Post-Islamism,' *The Guardian*, 31 October 2007, <https://goo.gl/bStv6z>.
40. Bayat, ed. *Post-Islamism*, 4.
41. Ibid., 38.
42. S. Muhammad 'Ali Husaynizadhi, *Islam-i Siyasi dar Iran* (Political Islam in Iran) (Qom: Mufid, 2006), 264.
43. Ibid., 469.
44. Ibid., 384.
45. Ervand Abrahamian, *Radical Islam: The Iranian Mojahedin* (London: I.B. Tauris, 1989), 82.
46. Ibid., 54.
47. *Şurat-i Mashruh-i Mudhakirat-i Shura-yi Baznigari-i Qanun-i Asasi-yi Jumhuri-yi Islami-yi Iran* (The Complete Report of the Re-Appraisal of the Islamic Republic's Constitution) (henceforth *Qanun-i Asasi*), 88. Sahabi states that 'vilāyat-i faqīh does not mean that a jurist must assume an executive position and have a share in distribution and supervision of power.'
48. Abrahamian, *Radical Islam*, 52.
49. Ibid.

50. Abrahamian, *Radical Islam*, 57.
51. Jalal al-Din Farsi, 'Manshur-i Nihzat-i Islami', (The Political-Islamic Pamphlets of the Pahlavi Period), ed. Rasul Ja'farian, vol.1 (Tehran: Markaz-i Asnad-i Inqilab-i Islami, 2005), 575.
52. Ghamari-Tabrizi, *Islam and Dissent*, 106.
53. Abrahamian, *Radical Islam*, 60.
54. In general, Banisdar had a rather novel anti-authoritarian reading of Shi'ism. His analysis of the Shi'i concept of Imamate was in line with anti-dogmatic free-thinking scientific struggles. See Abolhassan Banisdar, *Ta'mim-i Imamat va Mubarizih ba Sansur* (Extension of Imamate and Fighting Censorship) (n.l.: Abrari, n.d.).
55. Ghamari-Tabrizi, *Islam and Dissent*, 119.
56. Ibid., 128.
57. Abrahamian, *Radical Islam*, 60.
58. Ibid., 67.
59. Ibid.
60. Ibid., 69.
61. Ibid., 42.
62. Kenneth Katzman, 'Iran: The People's Mojahedin Organization of Iran,' in *Iran: Outlaw, Outcast, or Normal Country?*, ed. Albert V. Benliot (New York: Nova Publishers, 2001), 101.
63. Abrahamian, *Radical Islam*, 197. Mahmoud Taleqani (1911–1979) was a prominent revolutionary figure with mass support among Islamists, including the MKO followers. He died in the midst of the Assembly of Experts. There are accounts that he was dissatisfied with the direction taken by clerics who were adamant to include the clause on *vilāyat-i faqīh*, and he showed his implicit opposition by sitting on the ground in the Assembly and not in designated chairs.
64. Ibid., 202.
65. Ibid., 205, 65. The slogan 'Islam minus clergy' was stipulated by 'Ali Shari'ati and had become a reference point for Islamist groups challenging clerical power.
66. Ibid., 205.
67. Ibid., 259. The Mujahidin are referred to as *munāfiqīn* (hypocrites) up to this date in Iranian official discourse. The term *munāfiq* is a Qur'anic description of those who seemed to convert to Islam but did so only in appearance.
68. Rasul Ja'farian, 'Jaryan-ha va Sazman-ha-yi Madhhabi-Siyasi-yi Iran' (Religio-Political Currents and Organizations in Iran) (Tehran: Khanih Kitab, 2012), 678.
69. Ibid., 681.
70. Ronen A. Cohen, *Revolution Under Attack: The Forqan Group of Iran* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 79-100. Cohen speculates over the question of whether Furqan was in fact supported by foreign intelligence organizations. Given the professional nature of Furqan's terrorist activities, Cohen concludes that the organization could have received support from outside the country.
71. Ibid., 115-122.
72. Mandaville, *Islam and Politics*, 372.
73. Abrahamian, *Radical Islam*, 56.
74. Ibid., 58.
75. Ibid.
76. Sussan Siavoshi, *Montazeri: The Life and Thought of Iran's Revolutionary Ayatollah* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 119.
77. Schwerin, *The Dissident Mullah*, 96.

78. Siavoshi, *Montazeri*, 128.
79. Schwerin, *The Dissident Mullah*, 91.
80. Ibid., 93.
81. Siavoshi, *Montazeri*, 127-128.
82. Schwerin, *The Dissident Mullah*, 91.
83. Ibid., 95. They even offered Hashemi a diplomatic cultural mission abroad, which he denied.
84. Ibid., 101.
85. Ibid.
86. Ruhollah Khomeini, 'Namih bih Aqa-yi Muntaziri' [A Letter to M. Montazeri] in *Sahifih-yi Imam* (Anthology of Imam Khomeini's Writings), vol. 20 (Tehran: The Center for Publication of Imam Khomeini's Works, 2000, 1981-89), 135-137.
87. Schwerin, *The Dissident Mullah*, 105.
88. Shahrough Akhawi, 'The Thought and Role of Ayatollah Hossein'ali Montazeri in the Politics of Post-1979 Iran,' *Iranian Studies* 41, no. 5 (December 2008): 657.
89. Schwerin, *The Dissident Mullah*, 110.
90. As quoted in Ibid., 123.
91. Ibid., 128.
92. Akhawi, 'The Thought and Role of Ayatollah Hossein'ali Montazeri,' 648.
93. Saïd Amir Arjomand, *After Khomeini: Iran under His Successors* (Oxford University Press, 2009).
94. Ibid., 35. The case of Ayatollah Safi and his challenges to the rulings of the modern state is a notable one in the early confrontation between pastoral power and *raison d'état* in post-revolutionary Iran. Ayatollah Safi was a critic of the famous *Shahid-i Javid*, the book that had depicted Imam Husayn as a revolutionary leader in search of creating an Islamic State. He was also critical of 'irfan (mysticism), and his position on religious affairs embodied the perspective of traditional Usulis whose views were at odds with the *maşlahat* of the modern state. For instance, he was opposed to the creation of a ministry of intelligence, deeming it un-Islamic, and in general he did not appreciate the primacy given to *maşlahat* under Khomeini. He resigned as a member of the Guardian Council in 1988. For more on Ayatollah Safi, see 'Ali Ashraf Fathi, 'Vakavi-yi Nizam-i Fikri-i Kuhansaltarin Marja'ï-i Taqlid-i Shi'i, Nigahban-i Sunnat va Daghdaghih-yi Tahdid-i Qudrat' (A Study of the System of Thought of the Oldest Shi'i Marja', The Defender of Tradition and Concerns with Limiting Power), *Taghrirat Magazine* (April 2016).
95. Ibid.
96. Ibid.
97. Schwerin, *The Dissident Mullah*, 127, 128.
98. Abrahamian, *Radical Islam*, 72.
99. Arjomand, *After Khomeini*, 30.
100. Husaynizadieh, *Islam-i Siāsi dar Iran*, 368.
101. Soroush revealed this to the author of this article in a private conversation.
102. Michel Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 246.
103. Wael Hallaq, *The Impossible State: Islam, Politics, and Modernity's Moral Predicament* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2014), ch. 5.
104. Wael Hallaq, 'Beyond Secularism and Islamism'.
105. Ibid.
106. Tony Bennett, *Culture: A Reformer's Science* (London: Sage, 1998), 69.
107. Michel Foucault, *Birth of Biopolitics* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 6.

108. 'Drink from the poisoned chalice' is the famous metaphor employed by Khomeini marking his pragmatism in accepting the realities of war. He stated, 'I am so shameful that I am alive to be the one drinking the poisoned chalice (*jām-e zahr*) and accepting the resolution.' See Ruhollah Khomeini, *Sahifah-yi Nur: Majmu'ih Rahnavard-ha-ye Imam Khumayni* (Leaves of Illumination: Collection of Imam Khomeini's Messages), vol. 21 (Tehran: Ministry of Guidance Press, 1981-89), 93. 'The road to Jerusalem goes through Karbala' is Khomeini's famous statement marking the phantasmatic and ideological nature of his rhetoric in the early stage of the war.
109. Foucault, *Birth of Biopolitics*, 4.
110. Ghamari-Tabrizi, *Islam and Dissent*, 193.
111. *Ibid.*, 193.
112. Bayat, ed., *Post-Islamism*, 50.
113. Mandaville, *Islam and Politics*, 60.
114. Soroush, *Reason, Freedom, and Democracy*, 169.
115. Mandaville, *Islam and Politics*, 42.
116. Richard J. F. Day, *Gramsci is Dead: Anarchist Currents in the Newest Social Movements* (London: Pluto Press, 2005), 129.
117. Ghamari-Tabrizi, *Islam and Dissent*, 196.
118. *Ibid.*, 224.
119. Bobby S. Sayyid, *A Fundamental Fear: Eurocentrism and the Emergence of Islamism* (London: Zed Books, 2003), 47.
120. Rajaei, *Islamism and Modernism*, 6.
121. See Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe, *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy: Towards a Radical Democratic Politics* (London: Verso, 2001).
122. Saul Newman, *Politics of Postanarchism* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2011), 49.
123. *Ibid.*, 48.
124. *Ibid.*, 48.
125. See Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality, Volume 1: An Introduction* (New York: Vintage, 1978).
126. Michel Foucault, 'The Concern for Truth,' in *Politics, Philosophy, Culture: Interviews and Other Writings 1977-1984* (New York: Routledge, 1988), 255-67.
127. Patricia Hill Collins and Sirma Bilge, *Intersectionality* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2016).
128. Yannis Stavrakakis, *Lacan and the Political* (London: Routledge, 1999).
129. Newman, *Politics of Postanarchism*, 162.
130. Ghamari-Tabrizi, *Islam and Dissent*, 191.
131. Farzin Vahdat, 'Post-revolutionary Islamic Discourses on Modernity in Iran: Expansion and Contraction of Human Subjectivity,' *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 35, no. 4 (2003): 599-631, 600.
132. Ghamari-Tabrizi, *Islam and Dissent*, 190.
133. Vahdat, 'Post-revolutionary Islamic Discourses,' 607.
134. *Ibid.*, 609.
135. *Ibid.*
136. Ghamari-Tabrizi, *Islam and Dissent*, 161.
137. Abdulkarim Soroush, *The Expansion of Prophetic Experience: Essays on Historicity, Contingency and Plurality in Religion*, trans. Nilou Mobasser, ed. Forough Jahanbaksh (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 93.
138. *Ibid.*, 94.
139. *Ibid.*, 100.

140. Ibid., 107.
141. Ibid., 116.
142. Ghamari-Tabrizi, *Islam and Dissent*, 205.
143. Sayyid Morteza Avini, *Aynih-yi Jadu* (The Magic Mirror, vol. 1, Theoretical Essays) (Tehran: Saqi, 2008), 157.
144. Ibid., 157.
145. Sayyid Morteza Avini, *Tawsa'ih va Mabani-yi Tamaddun-i Gharb* (Development and the Foundation of Western Civilization) (Tehran: Saqi, 2008), 157.
146. Ibid.
147. Ibid., 21.
148. Ibid., 81.
149. Ibid., 100.
150. Ibid., 141.
151. Ibid., 228.
152. Mandaville, *Islam and Politics*, 58.
153. Morteza Avini, 'Chigunih Hunar-ha-ra dar Khidmat-i Islam dar Avarim? Sakht ast amma Mishavad' (How Can Art Be at the Service of Islam? It is Difficult but Not Impossible', *CinemaPress.Ir*, accessed 1 September 2018, <http://cinemapress.ir/news/چگونه-هنرها-را-در-خدمت-اسلام-درآوریم-سخت-است-اما-می-شود>.
154. Ibid.
155. Mandaville, *Islam and Politics*, 376. Overall Mandaville leans towards neoliberal conceptions when speaking of transcending the state. He has social media and the network society of the neoliberal age in mind when speaking of 'a globalized world.'
156. Ihsan Dagi, 'Post-Islamism a la Turca,' in *Post-Islamism: The Changing Faces of Political Islam*, ed. Asef Bayat (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), 73.
157. Ibid.
158. Ibid.
159. In his last governmentality lectures in 1978, Michel Foucault reminds his audience that those movements outside of or opposed to the modern state may not entirely escape the grid of *raison d'état*. He writes: 'Whether one opposes civil society to the state, the population to the state, or the nation to the state, it was in any case these elements that were in fact put to work within this genesis of the state, and of the modern state. It is therefore these elements that will be at issue and serve as the stake for both the state and for what is opposed to it. To that extent, the history of *raison d'état*, the history of governmental ratio, and the history of counter-conduct opposed to it, are inseparable from each other.' See Michel Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population*, 367.