The "Political Functions" of "Pilgrimage" in Shiite Political Culture

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Abstract

In this paper, the political functions of pilgrimage in Shiite political culture at both national and international levels are studied. It is attempting to answer the question of what are the political functions of pilgrimage in Shiite political culture and how do they affect the political arena at national and international levels? The article is inspired by Durkheim's theory of the impact of social rituals on solidarity, theoretical literature on political socialization, as well as on the political effects of the religious and spiritual. However, the paper does not emphasize these theories as the theoretical framework of the article, because they are shaped in contexts that have little to do with Iranian society. Therefore, relying on them can lead to misleading results in scientific research in relation to Iranian society. At the national level, the functions of political socialization, the development of personal and social identity, political stability and the strengthening of national solidarity have been examined as political functions of pilgrimage. Strengthening solidarity among nations, expanding intergovernmental relations, strengthening regional political discourses, Political and Media Streaming, and enhancing cultural deterrence capabilities have also been described as political functions of pilgrimage to the international arena. The research method used in this study is a qualitative method of documentary analysis and the results show that the role of pilgrimage in Shiite political culture is not only in the field of rituals and has a great influence in the political field.

Keywords: *Political Culture; Shiite Political Culture; Pilgrimage; Spiritual; Political*

Introduction

The issue of pilgrimage is one of the most important pillars of the Shiite religion, which, despite its consistent conceptual core, has taken various forms throughout history. In Shiite culture, pilgrimage is considered a practice of worship in which the Muslim and Shiite people go to their religious leaders or their graves and express their devotion to them. The word 'pilgrimage' is a generic word. When Muslims go to the house of God in Mecca or other sacred places, they have made pilgrimage. It is even used in meetings with great personalities.

In general, the pilgrimage to the house of God, pilgrimage to the mosque, pilgrimage to the martyrs and gravesites, pilgrimage to scholars and believers may be cited as examples of pilgrimage to Shiite culture. But the main theme of this article is the special meaning of pilgrimage based on the Shiite political culture used in connection with the infallible Imams.

Throughout history, pilgrimage has been in much importance to Muslims, and this practice, as a form of worship, has a high status and spiritual impact for Shiites. The pilgrimage of Imam Reza (AS) in Mashhad, the visit of her holiness Masoumeh (AS) in Qom, the pilgrimage of Imam Hossein (AS) and Abbas ibn 'Ali in Karbala and the pilgrimage of two imams in Baghdad's Kazimiya neighborhood are among the prominent Shiite pilgrimages. Due to the importance of pilgrimage in Shiite political culture, this practice has evolved throughout history and has gradually become one of the features and symbols of Shiites (Fajri, 1388: 74-86).

The rituals required for pilgrimage, the principles of pilgrimage, its functions and effects are among the things that have strengthened the place of pilgrimage in Shiite political culture. Pilgrimage functions may be divided into two general categories of personal and social functions. From this perspective, the social, historical, political, economic, and cultural-artistic functions may be enumerated. The emphasis of this article is on the political functions of pilgrimage in Shiite political culture, which have been examined at both national and international levels.

A. Concepts and Conceptual Framework

Theoretical concepts related to pilgrimage are traced in several ways to the theories of scholars: social cohesion, political socialization, and ultimately the importance of religion and spirituality. Émile Durkheim focused on the individual's relationship with society and the ways in which it was established. Relying on the dual nature of mankind, he considers man selfish and altruistic. Durkheim mainly discusses two types of solidarity: the instrumental solidarity that he sees most in traditional societies, and the other is the organismic solidarity that existed in non-traditional or modern societies, suggesting a kind of interdependence among the components of the system.

Durkheim's approach to the question of solidarity, of course, is more material and his framework is incapable of expressing immaterial and transcendent religious concepts. What he was more concerned with was the division of labor and called it the basic pillar of social cohesion (Giddens, 1387: 751). It should be noted that some concepts of Shiite culture cannot be analyzed with this framework. Because the concepts of Shi'ism have evolved in different social contexts from Durkheim's. For example, the Arba'een event is one of these. The personal and social origins of the Arba'een event are different from Durkheim's analytical framework and cannot be analyzed solely under solidarity. It has different functions of which solidarity may be mentioned.

Analyzing the political functions of pilgrimage also requires attention to political socialization; Accordingly, political socialization is considered as one of the most important topics in political culture. Gabriel Almond highlights the interdependence of events within and across countries in his research with a systematic approach. He points to eight functions of political systems for sustaining life and stability, including the functions of socialization and political communication (Almond, 1375: 22).

According to Rocher, socialization is the process of acquiring beliefs, attitudes, norms and habits from culture, and after the process of political socialization, people become familiar with the political system in the social system. Finally, in the light of this familiarity, they determine their reaction to political phenomena (Rocher, 1396: 220-243).

Another aspect of pilgrimage is spirituality; spirituality in the modern age differs substantially from the spirituality that modernity provides and offers to man. The modern concept of spirituality is

mostly concerned with the existence of some spiritual deficiencies in man. But the religious is essentially an organizational one with the following spirituality.

In fact, the function of modern spirituality is to heal human suffering but Religious spirituality, seeks to bring peace to God. Friedrich Schleiermacher is one of the important thinkers who has discussed religious experience. He attempted to provide a completely new and humane interpretation of religion, noting that religion was not only the result of the spiritual revelation of the prophets, but also the experience that potentially exists in all human beings. In his book, "On Religion" he separated religion from metaphysics and ethics and regarded religious feeling as the only way to enter religion (Zarvani, 1385:145-158).

Abraham Maslow is also one of those who has focused on spirituality; In his view, modern times contain a void of value, and modern man needs spirituality because of this value vacuum (Maslow, 1371: 225).

Maslow's point of view is remarkable in that he believes that the spirituality needed by modern man is provided by religion. He considers religion a source of injecting spirituality into society that can add meaning to human life (Elkins, 1385: 87). Of course, Maslow's view of religion and its spirituality and functions are not entirely in line with the actual functions of religion, and religion seems to him to be more instrumental. But his attention to religious spirituality and its functions in the modern world is considerable.

According to the previous lines, the concept of pilgrimage should be defined as religious spirituality, not modern spirituality in the general sense; Because religious spirituality, especially in the Shia religion, is linked to historical events and it's not just about the modern age. In addition, people attending religious events, in particular pilgrimage, are predominantly Muslims seeking a spirituality with religious identity rather than modern spirituality. Of course, there are also differences between spirituality rooted in religion and non-religious spirituality.

It should be noted that the nature of concepts such as spirituality and religion in the theories of non-Muslim theorists are different from those of Muslim scholars. The latter theories are rooted in the verses of the Qur'an and the traditions of the Imams of religion. For this reason, in the author's view, these theories are not very applicable to Islamic concepts and cannot be analyzed solely on the basis of their framework.

B) The Political Functions of Pilgrimage at the National Level

1. Political Socialization

Political socialization is a process whereby one becomes acquainted with his duties, political roles and rights in society. In general, communal rituals can be one of the most effective means of preserving and disseminating Native values. Native values are values that are rooted in a society based on the culture and traditions of that community in individual and collective life.

Social events are events that are held by the community or parts of society for various reasons. These rituals are, of course, not limited to religious rituals. In Western social thought, social rituals play a decisive role in shaping and reinforcing collective identity. In fact, holding these rituals is a part of the process of socialization. Perhaps that is why there is less of a country where no communal rituals take place.

Today, however, social rituals are more defined in terms of national boundaries, and their identities are predominantly national identities. While the issue of pilgrimage plays an important role in

the socialization of the Iranian individual, its identity-building aspect is not confined to national borders; Rather, such an identity is formed throughout Islam and Islamic lands.

In the process of political socialization, a person learns what he or she needs to learn within society and defines his or her existential and intellectual coordinates as political and social actors in relation to others. Accordingly, the extent of personal communication within the context of society is directly related to the speed of the socialization process. From this perspective, pilgrimage plays an effective role in socialization by providing a vast community of people and forming relationships between them. It is clear that the extent of activism in this society and its structural and agency strengthening can play a decisive role in the quality of socialization.

2. The Development of Individual Identity

According to Erik Erikson's definition, individual identity is a relatively stable sense of oneness with one's self. According to this definition, although one's thoughts and feelings and behaviors may change, the perception of oneself is almost constant. In fact, individual identity is an answer to the question of "who I am?" and is usually a reflection of one's and society's attitudes toward one's own. As a result, what Erikson thinks is important in shaping individual identity is the relationship between the individual and society (Biabangard, 1378: 23-52). Accordingly, the context of one's relationship with society, which is very prominent in pilgrimage, provides the basis for the formation of one's personal identity. When one is in the process of pilgrimage, many circles of concepts are formed around him; For example, one finds oneself associated with certain parts of society and, however, he may interact with people who have never had a chance to interact with him before.

Symbols and values associated with pilgrimage also create or reinforce emotions that will have different effects on one's personality depending on what stages of one's life. According to a study on the components of Iranian individual identity in 2018, the thirteen main factors constitute the components of Iranian individual identity. Important factors associated with this research include the importance of mass communication, the importance of national rituals, the importance of religion, perfectionism, and traditional values (Solgi, 1397:299-335). It is noteworthy that all the above mentioned factors exist in the socio-political ritual of pilgrimage. Therefore, it may be considered as one of the factors influencing the formation of Iranian individual identity.

3. Strengthening National Solidarity

The issue of solidarity with regard to pilgrimage is to be examined from two perspectives: one is to strengthen national solidarity and the other is to strengthen religious solidarity. The main difference between the two is at geographical and ideological boundaries. Since this section deals with the political functions of pilgrimage at the national level, it is merely an explanation of national solidarity, and the next section, "The Political Functions of Pilgrimage at the International Level", deals with religious solidarity. National cohesion means sharing the views of individuals in society and on certain values in order to achieve the goals of those values (Rouhani, 1389:479-504).

The purpose of sharing ideas among individuals in society is not to make everyone in the community think the same; it is to create commonalities that bring them together around specific axes and common goals. However, there are differences. Given such an explanation, pilgrimage may be seen as an important capacity to strengthen national solidarity. For example, the pilgrimage of Imam Reza (AS) is one of the important examples of this issue.

There are thousands of pilgrimage trips to the holy city of Mashhad every year, and the participating people cannot be considered merely religious. Rather, millions of people from diverse

cultural and ethnic backgrounds, such as ethnicity, race and language, come together to set up a pilgrimage. In addition, one should not neglect the cultural capacities and programs held at this great place. Various events, such as lectures, scientific and cultural events, political events and the like, give such an added value to Imam Reza's pilgrimage that it can rarely be seen elsewhere in the world. It also provides the opportunity to mobilize resources and human resources.

Pilgrimage provides the conditions for dialogue between individuals and different discourses. The circumstances in which human beings face each other from an empathetic standpoint, and as they become familiar with each other's beliefs, views, and perspectives, can better understand each other.

In the past, pilgrimage was only a trip to the holy shrines and the pilgrimage to the grave. But today, the development of cultural, social, and cultural infrastructures has given rise to increased political awareness and socialization. The pilgrimage of Imam Reza (AS) is not just a religious event in Iranian society; It is a symbol of the individual and collective identity of society. Even Mohammad Reza Pahlavi and his family, who were not religious, were keen on the pilgrimage.

4. Political Stability

There are various definitions of political stability that each have a particular angle. Some have considered it to mean the regularity of political interactions, while others have considered it synonymous with political institutionalization. In other definitions, democratic aspects are also mentioned and they consider such things as free elections as the pillars of political stability. (Movassaghi, 1390: 321-340).

Regardless of the multiplicity of definitions, the concept of political stability that is sought in this study is concerned with the stability of the political and social system. Accordingly, whenever the political system is able to maintain its totality despite political challenges and not undergo fundamental changes and collapse, it enjoys political stability. Political stability is not a unique phenomenon; it depends on the set of factors that must be established. Accordingly, the strengthening of national solidarity, the development of individual identity and the political socialization discussed above are all factors that can contribute to political stability. Therefore, pilgrimage will have an impact on political stability by influencing the collection of these three factors.

C) The Political Functions of Pilgrimage at International Level

1. Strengthening Solidarity Among Nations

Solidarity between nations is based on the concept of ummah in Islam. Ummah means a people, tribe, and a nation or religious community under the guidance of a prophet (Torki, 1368:30). Accordingly, the use of the word nation does not only mean people living in a specific geographical area, Rather, it means a set of people who have the same intellectual, cultural, and religious capacities. Places of pilgrimage everywhere have the capacity to create intellectual and cultural synergies between individuals. Examples of this include the Arba'een Global Walking Event, in which millions of people from all over the world attend Karbala and draw the attention of the whole world. The occurrence of this religious spiritual event at a time when humankind is dominated by the manifestations of modernity is a miracle. An obvious example of solidarity between nations is the solidarity between the two nations, Iran and Iraq. Particularly during Arba'een's time, the hospitality of the Iraqi people for Iranians is significant. Shiite travel from other countries to Iran to visit Imam Reza (AS) has also shaped intellectual and cultural discourses.

Along with the spiritual achievements of pilgrimage trips, religious tourism is also a relatively new branch of interest in Iran in recent years. The effort of religious tourism is to provide an experience

of encountering religious symbols and cultural elements through which a general narrative and humanistic interpretation of these concepts are presented. The concept of pilgrimage and its associated symbols, including places, architecture and rituals, are very prominent in religious tourism and occupy almost one of the main axes of the field. Accordingly, pilgrimage will strengthen the solidarity between nations both in the sense of the nation as a modern political concept and in the sense of the Ummah from a religious point of view and will contribute to cross-cultural integration.

2. Developing Relations between Governments

In addition to the transnational communication that focuses on the common culture and mental elements, Government cooperation can also be seen as one of the achievements of pilgrimage. In fact, it is the concept of pilgrimage that has given rise to the expansion of diplomatic relations. Pilgrimage in two ways can increase communication between governments; First, by influencing nations and creating collective action within them, governments will also seek to develop the necessary cultural, social, and economic infrastructures by following the nations. The second route is pilgrimage-based cultural planning around tourism and social capacities. This will of course vary with the enthusiastic populations in different countries. For example, Iran, Syria and Iraq can manage pilgrimage-related events by concluding agreements in various fields. This, of course, requires close political discourse. Also, a chapter of Iran's diplomatic relations with other countries may be defined around religious tourism where pilgrimage is prominent.

There are shrines of religious leaders throughout Iran; This capacity for Muslim countries is defined on the basis of religion, and the issue of pilgrimage is particularly relevant. But for non-Muslim countries, the scattering of pilgrimage sites could be an excuse for the development of religious tourism and other branches of tourism. As a result, other Iranian cultural sites and monuments will be introduced to the world. Also, considering certain trips a year to places of pilgrimage to certain institutions and groups in other countries is considered as a suggestion to make the world more familiar with the subject of pilgrimage and its individual, social and political effects.

3. Political and Media Streaming

Considering the media dimensions of pilgrimage requires a proper understanding of the media; media capacity should be taken into account in relation to events from two perspectives;

The first is that the media itself reflects the event and the second is the ability to represent the events. The term representation in communication and media science has theoretical literature and has its own definition; In the reflective representation of what happened, it is conveyed in the same way. But in voluntary representation, hidden appendices and desires beyond reality are also shown. (Hall, 1997: 23-67). According to these definitions, it is necessary to represent the concept of pilgrimage both reflexively and voluntarily.

In the reflective representation of pilgrimage, the emphasis is on the presence of a large crowd of people in a sacred place and on the practice of pilgrimage-related beliefs. But in voluntary representations, goals and motivations, outcomes and functions, social and political effects of the short, medium and long term, as well as the emotions behind the behaviors are shown. Every year in the days of Arba'een, the media of the world, either with their goals and missions, either do not cover this event or only do it as a reflective representation. The event has other messages that these media messages are tailored to different audiences.

Sunnis, adherents of other Islamic and non-Islamic religions, and the general public in other societies at the scientific, cultural, political, and social levels may be media beneficiaries of the event and

can benefit from it. Although Arba'een is now well-known internationally as a global event due to time and geographical conditions, it seems that other sacred places such as Imam Reza (AS) shrine in Mashhad or 'Shah Cheragh' shrine in Shiraz could also have such capacities. Of course, there is no need to follow all the sacred events on a global scale. Even at the provincial and national level, infrastructure can be provided on a variety of occasions to provide the ground for pilgrimage-based media maneuvers.

4. Enhancing Cultural Deterrence Capabilities

If until the 20th century, the term 'power' in the international arena was often used to refer to military power, it would now have a concept beyond military power and encompass cultural, economic, and political dimensions. The experience of military confrontation of some countries with advanced military weapons with other countries that are not militarily aligned suggests that civilian agents can also serve as a means to thwart military threats.

These factors refer to 'civilian deterrence' or 'non-military deterrence'. Civilian deterrence is a type of deterrence that relies on elements and components of internal power that these elements and components have nothing to do with hard power equipment. 'Psychological impact' is an important element of military and civilian deterrence. While in military deterrence the source of psychological effects is military equipment, in civilian deterrence any other subject has the potential to become a power. For example, the culture of resistance and self-sacrifice during the Iran-Iraq war was one of the most important elements of deterrence that led the enemy to consider in its strategic calculations at various points and to abandon some of its decisions. In this regard, the issue of pilgrimage to Shiite political culture can also be considered as one of the components that play a significant role in cultural maneuvering by pooling resources and mobilizing human resources.

Every year millions gather in pilgrimage sites and shrines to celebrate different occasions, both in terms of both politically and socially conveying messages of order and solidarity. This crowd delivers important messages both politically and socially, showing some order and solidarity.

In civilian deterrence, the source of the effect should be able to create a threat to prevent another country from attacking or starting a war. This collective show also represents a manifestation of political unity that influences other countries' political decisions. In military deterrence, the source of the effect is military equipment and weapons. The more sophisticated the equipment, the more the enemy abandons the idea of military attack. But in civilian deterrence this role rests with the cultural component, and the more these elements are identified and addressed, the more the country and the political system will be immune from the risks of attack.

In the field of non-material deterrence, culture, especially political culture, is very important and different experiences show that countries have different decisions in the field of international relations and take appropriate action, given the different national conditions. as a pilgrimage event, The Arba'een Walking Event carries important political messages to the political leaders of the countries of the world and confirms every year that the Iranian people still have such a political culture; It is clear that this event and other similar pilgrimage events are also a source of decision-making for policymakers, and the strategies of the Islamic Republic of Iran's political system are also extracted from this culture. It is therefore necessary for theorists to pay more attention to the political dimensions of pilgrimage in the international arena. And from an outside perspective, they also go deeper into evaluating the functions and effects of the event (Torabi, 1390:160).

5. Strengthening Regional Political Discourses

With the expansion of intergovernmental relations, the ground for regional communication is being created. When statesmen enter into diplomatic relations with regard to their country's cultural capacities, they will have a wider field of action. Strengthening pilgrimage-based regional political discourse can now be pursued by security.

The approaches to the issue of security can be positive and Negative. The negative approach has a hardware-oriented index and is opposed to the positive discourse that has a software-specific index. In fact, negative discourse in contrast to positive discourse is distinguished in that it emphasizes the role of hardware factors. (Eftekhari, 1378: 168).

It seems that the issue of pilgrimage, in addition to its capacity to increase cultural deterrence potential within the country's borders, can also become a form of regional cultural deterrence. Pilgrimage has its own media attachments that if fulfilled, can create social security that is rooted in society. Contrary to the discouraging and threatening security discourse that emphasizes the military's creative means of security and this is in contrast to the negative and threat-centered security that emphasizes hard and military means of creating security. The power of the Positive Approach will bring security to the region. An obvious example of that, is the Arba'een event that if its facade was not so widespread, its security stability would not have been possible. (Mohammadi Sirat, 1397:23-26).

Conclusion

The issue of pilgrimage is one of the most important pillars and symbols of the Shiite school that plays a prominent role in the formation of Shiite political culture. The present paper deals with the political functions of pilgrimage at both national and international levels.

At the national level, the strengthening of national solidarity, the development of individual identity and political socialization are all factors that indirectly create the grounds for political stability. At the international level, strengthening nation's solidarity, expanding intergovernmental relations, strengthening regional political discourses, political and media streaming, and enhancing cultural deterrence capacity are seen as political functions.

In the process of political socialization, the individual learns what he or she needs to learn within society and defines his or her existential and intellectual coordinates as political and social actors in relation to others. Accordingly, the greater the amount of individual communication within the context of the community, the faster the process of socialization will take place. From this perspective, pilgrimage plays an effective role in socialization by providing a vast community of people and forming relationships between them. The regional pilgrimage approach provides the conditions for dialogue between individuals and different discourses. The circumstances in which human beings face each other from an empathetic standpoint, while understanding each other's ideas, views, and perspectives, can better understand each other. A clear example of solidarity between nations, solidarity, the nations of Iran and Iraq, especially in the Arba'een event. In this regard, the hospitality of the Iraqi people is prominent among Iranians.

In addition, the Shiites' journey from Iran to other countries to visit the shrines of the Imams and religious elders has also has been effective on creating dialogue between intellectual and cultural currents. Along with the spiritual manifestations of pilgrimage trips, religious tourism is also a relatively new branch of interest in Iran in recent years. The effort of religious tourism is to provide an experience for the close encounter of people with religious symbols and cultural elements, thus providing a general and humane version of these manifestations. Pilgrimage can also increase governments' communication in two ways.

First, by influencing nations and creating collective action within them. In this case, governments, after the nations, will seek to develop the necessary cultural, social and economic infrastructure.

The second way is through cultural planning around pilgrimage-based tourism and social capacities, which will, of course, vary with the enthusiastic populations in different countries. Every year in Arba'een's time, the world media does not cover the event according to their goals and missions or they only deal with it as a reflective representation. While the event has other messages, these media messages can be sent to audiences around the world. Sunnis, adherents of other Islamic and non-Islamic religions and the general public in other societies at the scientific, cultural, political and social levels may be the Pilgrimage Events media audience.

Every year millions of people gather in shrines to celebrate different occasions, both in terms of both politically and socially conveying messages of order and solidarity. The source of the effect of civilian deterrence must be to create a threat that prevents another country from attacking or starting a war. Pilgrimage presents a manifestation of political unity that influences other countries' political decisions. It seems that the issue of pilgrimage, in addition to its capacity to enhance cultural deterrence potential within the country's borders, can also become a form of regional cultural deterrence. Pilgrimage security is a form of soft power that is rooted in society and does not rely on rigid military tools. As a result, regional political discourses will be strengthened. Therefore, pilgrimage has not only many personal and social effects, but also political functions. The following is a summary of the article.

Table 1 The political functions of pilgrimage at both national and international levels

Number	International level	National level
1	Strengthening national solidarity	Political socialization
2	Developing relations between governments	The development of individual identity
3	Political and Media Streaming	Strengthening national solidarity
4	Enhancing cultural deterrence capabilities	Political stability
5	Strengthening regional political discourses	-------

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