The Theory of the Guardianship of the Jurist as a Mechanical or Organic System

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Abstract

Based on the principles of Islamic governance and the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran, the institution of the Guardianship of the Jurist (*wilāyat al-faqīh*) is not considered an independent branch alongside the three traditional branches of government. Rather, the executive, legislative, and judicial branches are formed within the framework of the will and oversight of the Supreme Leader (Jurist Guardian), interacting with each other. In this model, while the three branches enjoy relative independence, they are coordinated under the leadership of the Supreme Leader. According to this theory, the sovereignty and leadership belong to the jurist, who stands at the top of the power structure, and the legitimacy of all system components derives from him. The Supreme Leader serves as a central figure for the unity of society and government, overseeing the performance of government officials and assuming responsibility for the macro-level policy-making and guidance of the system. The political system of the Islamic Republic, which is based on the theory of the Guardianship of the Jurist, can be analyzed both as a mechanical system and as an organic system. In mechanical systems, the components operate based on inherent laws and internal structure, having a stable and static framework. Such a system, with its centralization and formality, is designed for the execution of uniform tasks and precise control of plans, showing less flexibility in response to unforeseen changes. On the other hand, organic systems, with their dynamism and flexibility similar to living systems, engage in complex interactions and relationships with their environment, enabling them to respond to changing and unpredictable conditions. This concentration of power and leadership within the institution of the Guardianship of the Jurist has led some to question whether the political system of the Islamic Republic is, in essence, a mechanical system or an organic one. I argue that the Guardianship of the Jurist system is a combination of both types and benefits from the advantages of each. In this combination, the Islamic Republic system draws on the stability and permanence of the mechanical system to maintain

cohesion, while also leveraging the flexibility of the organic system to adapt to social and political changes. This article, through an analytical approach, aims to explore this claim and demonstrate how the theory of the Guardianship of the Jurist, as a hybrid system, allows for the application of both stable and flexible management principles, thereby responding to the diverse needs of the Islamic society.

Keywords

Theory of the Guardianship of the Jurist, system theory, mechanical system, organic system, appearance of mutual exclusion, Jurist Guardian (Supreme Leader).

Introduction

One of the most important issues in both religious studies and political theory is the relationship between religion and politics. Today, two major and opposing views exist in the realm of political thought: the theory of the separation of religion from politics and the theory of the integration of religion and politics. In the first theory, the realm of political knowledge is separate from religious knowledge. Political theories are not derived from religion, and religion does not provide guidance for social life, nor is there any obligation to adhere to religion in the social sphere. This theory is commonly known as secularism or the separation of religion from politics. According to the second theory, wherever religion has made a statement, there must be adherence to it. Just as religious teachings govern personal life, in the collective sphere, religious values should prevail. And just as personal matters are evaluated according to religion, the collective life of humans should align with religious perspectives.

After explaining that religious texts are not silent regarding the political system, and that the model of the Guardianship of the Jurist, as an ideal model for establishing an Islamic system and religious government with its specific characteristics, serves as our assumption, the question arises: Is the theory of the Guardianship of the Jurist recognized as a mechanical system or an organic system? Since raising such an issue is based on the fallacy of "appearance of mutual exclusion" (Mousavi, 2020), our claim is that the theory of the Guardianship of the Jurist, as both a mechanical and organic system, exists simultaneously. Our approach in this article will be an analytical method, including (definition, description, and explanation).

Before delving into the main question of the article, it is necessary to explain at least two commonly used concepts, "system" and " Guardianship of the Jurist," to ensure that my intentions are clear throughout the article.

1. The Concept of "System"

The term "system" refers to a structure, rule, or governing apparatus (Haghshenas, 2004). In the contemporary era, Ludwig von Bertalanffy can be considered the father of systems theory, who laid the foundations of systemic thinking by defining the concept of a system. According to his perspective, a "system" is a collection of elements that interact with one another (Bertalanffy, 1987, p. 72).

According to Bertalanffy, the most fundamental characteristic of beings lies in their organization, and examining them through the analysis of a single

component or specific process is not sufficient. Rather, the entirety of the system must be studied, as an organization is not merely a collection of separate elements but a coherent and integrated whole.

In the definition provided by Russell Ackoff, a system is a collection of two or more elements that satisfies the following three conditions:

1) Each element of the system affects the behavior or characteristics of the entire system, similar to how the behavior of parts of the body impacts the overall function of the body.

2) There is interdependence between the elements of the system in terms of behavior and the way they affect the system as a whole, such as how the behavior of the eyes depends on the behavior of the brain.

3) Every subset of elements forms a group that affects the behavior of the entire system. In other words, the components of a system are so interconnected that no independent subgroup can be formed from them.

Ackoff's definition, despite its comprehensiveness, does not address the issue of "purpose" in a system. Every system operates to achieve a specific goal. Therefore, a more comprehensive definition of a system is as follows: A system is a collection of related or dependent components that, due to this interdependence, form a new whole and work toward achieving a specific goal, which is the raison d'être of the system.

What is significant in the above definition is, firstly, the necessity of wholeness, secondly, the interrelations between components (including causal relationships), and thirdly, the existence of a goal. These three essential characteristics, when combined, make it possible to apply the term "system" to any phenomenon.

- Components of a System

All systems include a set of common elements, which are as follows:

1) Input: The elements that enter the system and initiate its activity.

2) Process (Transformation): The flow of change and conversion within the system that applies to the inputs, transforming them into valuable outputs.

3) Output: The results and outputs of the system, which are exported to the surrounding environment or other systems in the form of goods or services.

4) Feedback: Feedback refers to the necessary information about the system's performance. Feedback mechanisms help maintain balance within the system. Through feedback, the alignment between actual performance and the established objectives is assessed, and the degree of deviation is determined (Alagheband, 2002, p. 24).

5) Environment: Encompasses all the factors and variables that can affect the system or be influenced by it. The interaction between the system and environmental factors (such as natural, cultural, ideological, social, political, and economic factors) plays a crucial role in the system's performance.

- Classification of Systems

Various classifications of systems have been mentioned, and a few of them are highlighted here given the purposes of this paper:

1) Primary and Subsystems: A subsystem is a part of the whole that performs a specific task and strives to achieve a particular goal. This system, which plays a special role, is itself an integral part of a larger system, which can be referred to as the primary system. Therefore, the primary system is formed by the integration of several subsystems. An important point is that the dependency of the subsystem on the primary system does not lead to its reduction or analysis within the larger system. Rather, while the subsystem performs its duties, it works toward fulfilling the larger system's objectives.

2) Open and Closed Systems: Closed systems do not interact with their surrounding environment, whereas open systems engage in continuous interaction with their environment.

3) Mechanical and Organic Systems: A mechanical system is one that operates based on the imposed laws of its internal structure and its inherent rules, such as a clock or a car (Mohammadi et al., 2010, p. 56). When an organization is viewed as a mechanical system, it is considered a stable and rigid system. This is because mechanical behaviors are characterized, among other things, by complexity, formality, and centralization. On the other hand, organic systems have responsibilities aligned with the goals and objectives of the larger system. Unlike mechanical systems, which can be either open or closed, organic systems are necessarily open, meaning they are influenced by external factors. Generally, when conditions are changing and new challenges continually arise, and the future cannot be predicted, organic management systems are more appropriate. This is because organic structures are relatively flexible and adaptable.

According to proponents of mechanical structures, standardization offers several benefits, the most important of which are increased coordination and improved work efficiency. Furthermore, standardization, through the definition and determination of tasks, roles, and rules and regulations, ensures that behaviors are directed towards pre-established goals. In such organizations, due to the standardized nature of activities, there is little need for individuals

with extraordinary skills or talents.

Of course, the advantages and disadvantages of each system deserve further discussion. However, it is undeniable that organic structures offer benefits that mechanical structures lack. It can be said that organic structures foster creativity, whereas mechanical organizations extinguish the light of thought and understanding, leading to a blind conformity with predefined tasks. In short, they are counterproductive to creativity.

It is true that the only way to control complex social systems is through the principle of decentralization in decision-making. It must also be accepted that the era of large organizations led from top to bottom has come to an end, and many issues must now be resolved through self-organization (Durand, 1991, p. 144). However, the preference for an organic structure over a mechanical one heavily depends on the specific situation of the organization. The more intellectual and mental capabilities the individuals within the organization possess, the more organic the organization can be.

- Characteristics of Systems

Some characteristics of systems are as follows:

1) Goal: Every system must have a clear objective or mission.

2) Activity Cycle: Systems have continuous cycles of input, processing, and output.

3) Entropy: Internal factors that cause the system to deviate from its main course and may lead it towards disorder and instability (Robbins, 2007, p. 34).

4) Dynamic Equilibrium: This is a characteristic of open systems, involving a balance-seeking or self-maintaining dynamic state (ibid, p. 66). A prime example of this is the maintenance of equilibrium in a living organism. For instance, when the blood cools, specific centers in the brain are activated, triggering mechanisms that generate heat in the body (Farshad, 1983).

More precisely, equilibrium can be understood as a stable balance between the components of a system and their relationships with each other and the system's environment. However, equilibrium does not have a fixed meaning; rather, it is determined based on the system and its specific requirements. Just as systems vary, the type of equilibrium they maintain also varies. For instance, in mechanical systems, equilibrium refers to stability, in organic systems, it denotes self-regulation, and in ecological systems, it conveys the concept of adaptability and sustainability (Sadowski et al., 1982, p. 50).

A very important point here is that if a system, for any reason, lacks any of

the three types of equilibrium mentioned above, it must be controlled by a higher hierarchical level (Durand, 1991, p. 31).

Therefore, the role of the balancing force in the system, which is irreplaceable, is crucial in preventing the system's entropy.

5) Integration and Coordination: The components of the system must operate cohesively and in coordination to optimize the system's performance.

6) Hierarchy: Systems exhibit a hierarchical order in terms of structure (the order of components), as well as functionality and behavior (the order of processes). Every complex system is composed of simpler subsystems. The universe, for example, is like a vast hierarchy that starts with fundamental particles and extends through atomic nuclei, molecules, cells, and beyond (Bertalanffy, 1987, p. 50).

2. Theory of the Guardianship of the Jurist

Those who advocate for the necessity of a political system for Islam and view it in the framework of governance and the leadership of a jurist have proposed three models: Guardianship of the Jurist, Representation of the Jurist (*wikālat al-faqīh*), and Supervision of the Jurist (*niẓārat al-faqīh*).

According to the view of the Guardianship of the Jurist, decision-making in public affairs rests with the jurists. After the infallible Imams were introduced as the executors of religious laws, in their absence, jurists with comprehensive qualifications are entrusted with this responsibility. Since the domain of religion is inseparable from politics, the interests of the public and the public sphere are under the domain of religion and its executors. In essence, jurists guide the decision-making and administration of the community. In other words, political guardianship of the jurist means that an just and qualified jurist is the rightful and most capable person to manage and govern the affairs of the Muslim community based on Islamic teachings. Political guardianship, therefore, is a different interpretation of the political authority and power that various political systems assign to the highest level of political leadership.

Hence, the difference between the Guardianship of the Jurist and other forms of governance lies not in the nature and essence of political authority but in the source of legitimacy, the scope of its powers, and the restrictions and guidelines governing its rule.

However, some opponents and critics of the political guardianship of the jurist insist on interpreting the concept of "wilāyat" in *Wilāyat al-Faqīh* in a way that is completely different from legal authority and political power.

According to this view, "wilāyat" arises when a group of individuals is unable to make decisions for themselves and essentially lacks the competence to decide, thus requiring someone to make decisions on their behalf. Just like a minor or a mentally ill person, whose decisions are made by their guardian, the notion of *wilāyat* is applied. From their perspective, the theory of the Guardianship of the Jurist presupposes the existence of the "incapacitated" in society—those who live without the ability or competence to make decisions. Instead of the term "guardian," they propose using the term "wikālat" (representation) (Haeri, 1995, p. 77).

According to this view, sovereignty belongs to the people, and therefore the term "wilāyat" is incorrect. Since the people collectively share ownership of sovereignty, they can, as owners, make decisions regarding the individual who manages public interests and appoint him as their representative. The advantages of representation cannot be overlooked, as, firstly, in representation (unlike in guardianship), the ruler is a representative of the people and makes decisions on their behalf, not on his own behalf. Secondly, a representative's will is aligned with the will of the principal (the people), while a guardian's will is above that of the principal (the people). Thirdly, guardianship is incompatible with the concept of a republic, as a republic emphasizes the involvement of the people and their decision-making authority, while guardianship implies the absence of people's participation and their incapacity to make decisions. Finally, according to the third viewpoint, the expertise of jurists is limited to the principles and generalities of societal management, whereas governing a society is a professional and technical task that involves dealing with details. Therefore, expertise in principles and generalities does not necessarily equate to expertise in the details and management of society. Hence, jurists, through their "supervision" and applying general principles to specific matters, fulfill their duty, and political guardianship is not required. In other words, the concern of making society religious and fulfilling the goals and rulings of religion is not confined to the political leadership of the jurist. Other models of religious governance can be envisioned and implemented in which the jurist's role is to explain religious rulings or, at most, supervise the observance of Islamic law, without holding political authority.

From their perspective, policymaking and political leadership should be entrusted to qualified individuals, with jurists ensuring that rulers are kept in check and preventing deviations and injustices.[1]

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1. Among those who defended this theory, one can mention Ayatollah Montazeri, who, in the later

In adjudicating between these theories, and considering the challenges posed by the two theories of the Representation of the Jurist and the Supervision of the Jurist as discussed elsewhere, the theory of the Guardianship of the Jurist will be the political model and framework for an Islamic system. However, since the principle of the Guardianship of the Jurist and its supporting arguments are assumed as a premise in this article, the textual and rational evidence for its validation will not be addressed.

3. Three Formulations of the Theory of the Guardianship of the Jurist

After presenting three models of leadership and the rule of the jurist, if the model of the Guardianship of the Jurist is accepted as a presupposition, the next step is to introduce and specify the different formulation of the Guardianship of the Jurist. In this article, my espoused formulation will be outlined.

1) The Theory of the Appointment of the Jurist[1]

Sovereignty belongs to the infallibles, and the sovereignty of the infallibles is realized through divine appointment. This means that the infallible Imams were chosen by God, and any interference by others is considered usurpation of sovereignty. During the period of occultation, sovereignty remains with the infallible, and ultimately, a jurist with the necessary qualifications exercises sovereignty on their behalf, a position that the infallible Imam has designated for them.

2) The Theory of the Election of the Jurist[2]

While the appointment of the infallible Imam to the position of authority is established, such an appointment has not been made for the jurists. On the other hand, the establishment of an Islamic government is a religious

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years of his life, deviated from the theory of the Guardianship of the Jurist and advocated for the theory of the Supervision of the Jurist.

1. The viewpoint of Imam Khomeini, the great architect of the Islamic Republic of Iran, and many of the scholars before him, such as the late author of *al-Jawāhir*, al-Muḥaqqiq al-Narāqī, and others.

2. The theory of Ayatollah Montazeri during the first phase of his political life, when he supported the concept of the Guardianship of the Jurist, which he elaborated in detail in his book *Dirāsāt fī Wilāyat al-Faqīh wa-Fiqh al-Dawla* (Studies in the guardianship of the jurist and the jurisprudence of the state).

necessity, and since the main characteristic of an Islamic government is its religious nature, no one other than a jurist can assume such governance. Therefore, it is obligatory for the people to establish such a government and appoint a jurist to oversee it.

3) The Theory of the Guardianship of the Jurist Based on *Ḥisba*[1]

The concept of "Ḥisba" refers to affairs that the sacred lawgiver never allows to be neglected. Among these matters, the governance of society and the management of the social and political affairs of the Muslim community are such that God is not pleased with their abandonment. Therefore, due to the permissibility or obligation of the legal duty, the jurist assumes the role of governance. The point that stands out in this theory is that, unlike the first theory, where the jurist is appointed by the infallible Imam to hold authority, and unlike the second theory, where the jurist is appointed by the people, this theory asserts that guardianship (*wilāyat*) is not a position, but rather pertains to the actual practice of governance. Therefore, the exercise of sovereignty in some cases is permissible, and in others, it becomes obligatory.

However, considering that the structure of the Islamic Republic is based on Imam Khomeini's viewpoint regarding the religious government rooted in the Guardianship of the Jurist, our presupposition regarding the Guardianship of the Jurist will align with Imam Khomeini's interpretation, which is the theory of appointment.

4. Application of the Systems Theory to the Theory of Guardianship

In response to the initial question of whether the theory of the Guardianship of the Jurist is considered a mechanical system or an organic system, it should first be stated in the form of a general principle:

1) If the goals and ideals of an organization are highly variable and complex in both concept and application, mechanical structures will be far more suitable and operational.

2) If the environmental requirements are not essentially complex or variable, the structures can be defined as organic.

However, an important critique of this binary distinction is that the "either-or" dichotomy is based on the fallacy of "appearance of mutual exclusion." This means that this approach is used for dual concepts that are mutually

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1. The theory of Ayatollah Khoei and many other scholars, such as the late Ayatollah Araki.

contradictory, such as "A or B," while, based on the technique of converting "either-or" into "both," contradictory concepts can be transformed into continuous variables. In other words, instead of having a relationship based on "either-or," a relationship of "both" should be established.

These concepts are primarily viewed as dichotomous, and the selection of one is proposed, whereas various degrees and variables can be considered for them, and the selection should be made accordingly. Elsewhere, under the title "appearance of mutual exclusion," I have addressed this issue (Mousavi, 2020), noting that sometimes the issue is designed as mutually exclusive propositions. It was stated that, in such cases, the structure has the potential to induce a certain implication. When it is said "A or B," it implies mutual exclusion, leading to the assumption that it is either A or B, but not both, while it could very well be both. For example, when discussing the goals of the mission (of the Prophets), it is said, "The Prophets came either for the prosperity of the Hereafter or for the reform of the world." This presents an appearance of mutual exclusion and seems incompatible, whereas it is possible that the Prophets came for both the prosperity of the Hereafter and the reform of the world. The "conversion" technique is used to resolve this issue. Even in cases where there is an "appearance of either-or," this technique can be applied. For instance, when it is said "A or B," it is assumed that it is either A or B, not neither. In such cases, one must choose, and neither can be the option. Many ethical conflicts are of this nature, such as a manager who thinks about "laying off excess employees or incurring losses for the company," while a third solution exists, which is training and improving employee productivity. In all of these cases, the "conversion" technique can be employed.

Accordingly, organizations can have both mechanical and organic structures simultaneously. No organization can have purely mechanical or purely organic structures. The most effective structure is one that aligns with both its internal and external requirements. In other words, if the environmental requirements are not excessively high, mechanical and organic structures can coexist to foster both creativity and innovation while maintaining the organization's efficiency based on standards. In such organizations, when the situation demands that the organization innovate and propose new theories or ideas, it should adopt an organic structure. However, when the issue is the long-term implementation and utilization of the new idea, the organization should adopt a mechanical structure.

In other words, given the severe lack of coordination among subsystems

and, on the other hand, the limited speed and flexibility of the government, the political structure of the system should be based on both mechanical and organic structures simultaneously. To increase the independence of the government's subsystems, flexible connections should be used, while rigid and inflexible connections should be employed to enhance coordination. By "rigid connections," this article refers to clear missions, strategies, objectives, and laws for the organization, all of which must align with these principles. Under this framework, flexible connections should emerge, manifesting in creativity and organic organizations. Throughout the process, and based on the feedback received, if necessary, adjustments should also be made in the rigid connections of the system.

Therefore, in designing the comprehensive system of government in the theory of the Guardianship of the Jurist, adequate capacity should be foreseen for the simultaneous use of dual connections, so that, while enhancing the independence of subsystems and peripheral systems, the overall government space does not evoke chaos and entropy. Maintaining a balance in the appropriate combination of flexible and rigid structures will ensure that, while enhancing the system's flexibility through network structures, the overall identity and cohesion of the political system's actions remain intact. It is important to note that one of the characteristics of an open system is its "balance-oriented" nature. By "balance," we mean a stable equilibrium between the components and their relationships with each other and the system's environment. Based on this, creating balance in the Islamic Republic system may involve either a stability-type balance or a self-regulation-type balance. A very important point is that if a system, for any reason, lacks either of these forms of balance, it must be controlled by a higher hierarchical level (Durand, 1991, p. 31). It seems that the Supreme Leader, as the highest authority of the country and the most critical pillar, can serve as the central axis of the system in the structure of the Islamic Republic, playing the role of balancing the system. In other words, if any system or subsystem in the Islamic Republic becomes imbalanced—losing its self-regulation in organic structures or stability in mechanical structures—before it leads to entropy, the Supreme Leader, given his position, can restore the system to equilibrium.

The words of the jurists indicate that they also characterize the theory of "guardianship" (*wilāyat*) in terms of a mechanical system, as expressed by Ayatollah Momen in the context of planning:

> The implication of the evidence for *wilāyat* is the management and supervision of people's affairs in accordance with what is in their best

interest. Therefore, it is obligatory for the ruler to focus all their efforts on the welfare of the people, so much so that if they neglect this matter, they will be sinful in the sight of Almighty God for failing to fulfill their duty. (Momen, 1995, p. 420)

Or, elsewhere in the discussion of supervision, he states:

It is obligatory for the Jurist Guardian (*Walī Faqīh*) to oversee the actions of the system's officials so that the people can achieve their desired objectives. These are the goals for which various departments and institutions have been established, and managers have been appointed to ensure that, through their proper actions, the desired outcomes for the people are realized (Momen, 2010, p. 327)

Accordingly, from an Islamic perspective, the just jurist is responsible for governing society and must manage it in the best possible way. In terms of the form and type of governance, they must implement what is in the best interest of society and what aligns with Islamic principles.

On the other hand, some scholars depict the system based on the Guardianship of the Jurist as organic. In this regard, Ayatollah Montazeri states:

The meaning of the Guardianship of the Jurist is not that the jurist directly supervises all executive, legislative, and judicial matters. Rather, as the government expands and the needs and responsibilities increase, various departments and management structures are formed accordingly, with the jurist delegating responsibilities in proportion. The jurist, as the head of the pyramid, has full oversight over all these departments and managers. In reality, the jurist is the supreme and primary authority in the Islamic system, expected to be responsible for the management and policy of the country and its people. All other officials, at every level, serve as agents and assistants to him. (Montazeri, 1989, p. 57)

Legally, when the jurist guardian is responsible for ensuring that different organizations do not deviate from their true Islamic duties (as stated in the preamble to the Constitution of the Islamic Republic), and explicitly (in Article 57) the three branches of government are exercised under the absolute guardianship of the leader and the leadership of the nation, it indicates a mechanical system for governing the Islamic society. Additionally, in the first two clauses of Article 110 of the Constitution (setting the broad policies of the

system and supervising their proper implementation), the desired and claimed perspective in this article is a maximalist view of duties, meaning that the guidance of the system entails creating a structure that institutionally directs the system towards pre-set goals and ensures that these objectives are reached, all while undergoing strategic oversight. In this context, any deviations should be corrected in the shortest possible time, and the movement of the system should be driven by the will of the leadership. This interpretation clearly represents a mechanical system. However, the issue of the separation of powers and the naming of numerous institutions in the Constitution itself reflects the existence of an organic system in governing society.

The Supreme Leader, while emphasizing the organic nature of the system (self-regulation), also stresses the mechanical system (stability of policies). He states:

> The leader is not an executive manager; the executive management is entrusted to the three branches of government. The leadership supervises these branches and oversees the general movement of the system, serving as a macro-level, value-oriented manager. (Khamenei, July 24, 2011)

In another instance, emphasizing the stability of policies, he states:

> The leader does not interfere directly in the executive affairs of the country; neither in the executive branch, nor in the judiciary, nor in the legislative branch. The most important task of the leadership is to determine the broad policies of the country; that is, those things that define the country's direction, and all laws, regulations, and actions must align with this direction. The presence of the leader in all sectors of the country means the presence of the leader's policies, which must be carefully implemented. (Khamenei, October 29, 2001)

Therefore, regarding his statement:

> If certain economic decisions being made are not accepted by the leader, the leader does not interfere; it has responsible officials, and those officials must act. (Khamenei, July 24, 2011)

If this means that the leader does not engage in executive affairs and, in this regard, the system is organic, this is a correct interpretation, as his other statements support this idea. However, if it is used to suggest that the country's executive branches do not operate under the broad policies and strategic oversight of the leadership, and thus the system is not mechanical,

this would be a misinterpretation. According to the principles of the Guardianship of the Jurist, the responsibility of the three branches of government in managing the society lies with the jurist and, in general, with the institution of the leadership. The main authority is the leadership of the system. If a program does not align with the leadership's policies, a legal mechanism must be established to ensure the implementation of these policies and to oversee their proper execution. Therefore, both from a jurisprudential and legal perspective, the structure of the Islamic Republic is based on the theory of the Guardianship of the Jurist, and it is both a mechanical and organic system.

There are numerous pieces of evidence to support the coexistence of both the mechanical and organic systems in the theory of the Guardianship of the Jurist:

1) Determining the General Policies of the System

In any political system, the executive branches and institutions carry out their programs based on the established general and strategic policies. In the 1989 revision of the Constitution, the responsibility for determining the general policies was assigned to the leadership of the system. This responsibility cannot be delegated to other institutions because the country's broad policies require stability and continuity, which go beyond the periodic changes in governments and parliaments. Governments and parliaments, which change every four years, cannot guarantee this stability. During the time of Imam Khomeini, the general policies of the system were presented as guidelines and broad strategies in public sessions and special meetings with officials. In important and sensitive matters, such as the Sacred Defense (Iran-Iraq War) and foreign policy, senior officials of the system would consult with him and make decisions based on his responses. One clear example of the policies issued by Imam Khomeini was related to the reconstruction of the country after the imposed war and the acceptance of Resolution 598, which was formally communicated to the officials in writing on October 3, 1988. Additionally, his eight-point directive regarding the protection of people's privacy can also be mentioned within this framework.

After the passing of Imam Khomeini and the increasing activity of the Expediency Discernment Council, various levels of general policies were developed and communicated as documents and resolutions. These policies can be observed at four levels:

1) **The Vision Document:** This document outlines an ideal and achievable

long-term future, encompassing the ideological values of the system as well as the social, cultural, economic, and environmental realities of society. The preparation of the Vision Document is carried out by the Expediency Discernment Council with the approval of the leadership to ensure its stability and continuity. The process of drafting the Vision Document began in 1999 with the "Future Horizon" plan.

2) General Policies for Development Programs: The general policies for the Fourth and Fifth Development Plans were developed by the Expediency Discernment Council and presented to the leadership. These programs are based on the Vision Document and are structured as five-year plans, which are communicated to the governments after the leadership's approval.

3) General Policies for Other Sectors: These policies encompass various sectors including the economy, society, politics, judiciary, science, and the administrative system. Examples of these policies include those for information networks, national security, energy, social participation, and ethnic and religious minorities.

4) Cultural Policies: In the area of cultural policymaking, the concepts of "engineering the culture" and "cultural engineering" are discussed. Engineering the culture involves the design, renovation, and enhancement of the country's cultural system, thereby laying the groundwork for cultural engineering. These concepts were first introduced by the Supreme Leader, and the Supreme Council of the Cultural Revolution is recognized as the institution responsible for cultural engineering and the guidance of the country's culture. This council is tasked with identifying cultural weaknesses, correcting them, and preventing harmful foreign influences.

As can be seen, in order to increase coordination in the direction of the broader movement of the Islamic system, rigid and inflexible links have been utilized. That is, based on these policies, all institutions are required to align themselves with them (mechanical system). At the same time, within this framework, flexible links have been established, which manifest themselves in creativity and organic organizations (organic system). An important point is the dialectical relationship between the mechanical and organic systems, where, throughout the process and based on feedback, if any corrections are needed, changes will also be made in the rigid links of the system.

2) Regulating the Relationships Between the Powers (Coordination)

According to Clause 7 of Article 110 of the Constitution, resolving conflicts and regulating the relations between the three branches of government is the

responsibility of the leadership. Furthermore, under Article 57, the three branches of government are under the supervision of the absolute guardianship of the leader and the leadership of the nation, that is, the Supreme Leader of the Islamic Republic of Iran. This prominent position of the leadership in the strategic management of the political system leads to the creation of balance within the executive structures and prevents disorder and entropy in the political system.

For example, in a military division composed of various forces such as infantry, logistics, and intelligence, although all these forces must work in coordination, the main axis of the division is clearly defined, and the others can be understood in relation to that axis. This axis plays a fundamental role in the output of the system. In the Islamic Republic system, the leadership, as the highest authority in the country and the primary pillar of the system, acts as the central axis and serves as the balancing force within the system. If any sector or subsystem of the Islamic Republic falls out of balance and deviates from its regulation within the organic structures or its stability within the mechanical structures, before it leads to disorder and collapse, the leadership, due to its position, will restore the system to equilibrium.

In this regard, both Imam Khomeini and the Supreme Leader have utilized at least three methods to create coordination within the system:

1) Private and Unpublicized Warnings: The leadership of the system, both during Imam Khomeini's time and the Supreme Leader's tenure, has, at various points, issued serious warnings to the country's officials in private. Some of these warnings later became public, such as the disagreements between Bani-Sadr and Beheshti or the conflicts between the Prime Minister and the President at the time.

2) Public Warnings: When private warnings were ineffective, both Imam Khomeini and the Supreme Leader openly addressed the public with their concerns. These public warnings had significant impacts at various times. For example, one can point to Imam Khomeini's serious warnings to Bani-Sadr or the Supreme Leader's comments on different issues concerning the governments of the time.

3) Regular Meetings of the Heads of the Branches: One of the most important strategies used by the leadership to create balance and coordination among the branches of government is the regular meetings involving the heads of the three branches. In these meetings, the leadership minimizes the disunity between the branches by offering guidance and solutions, thus using the full capacity of the leadership to resolve ambiguities and establish coordination

within the system.

   This leadership approach plays a vital role in maintaining the stability and endurance of the system by preventing systemic entropy. In fact, ensuring balance through the appropriate combination of flexible and rigid structures helps the system maintain its overall coherence and unity, while enhancing its ability to adapt using networked frameworks.

3) Resolving Differences Between the Branches

This is an implication of the previous discussion on creating coordination. As previously mentioned, Imam Khomeini, in some cases, established a Committee for Resolving Differences and systematically and methodically addressed the issues at hand. Similarly, the Supreme Leader, by forming a High Committee for Resolving Disputes and organizing the relations between the three branches of government, sought to resolve the ongoing issues and conflicts between them in a structured manner. These actions, which are part of the leadership's responsibilities under Article 110 of the Constitution, can effectively resolve the issues facing the Islamic Republic. This ties into the point previously raised: if a system lacks any of the aforementioned balances for any reason, it must be controlled by a higher level of the hierarchy. (Durand, 1991, p. 31).

Conclusion

It is not possible to define the structure of the Islamic Republic, based on the theory of the Guardianship of the Jurist, as purely organic or purely mechanical. Rather, depending on internal and external necessities, the structure of the Islamic Republic consists of both primary and secondary systems, with the institution of "guardianship" (*wilāyat*) being one of the core systems of the Islamic Republic. This core system is designed as an "open" system and maintains a full and continuous relationship with its environment. At the same time, the arrangement of the primary and secondary systems is both mechanical and organic. Therefore, establishing balance within the Islamic Republic could involve either stability balance or self-regulating balance. Accordingly, the guardianship system is a mechanical system in the sense that the policies and programs of the guardianship institution are present in all sectors of the country. However, the guardianship system is also an organic system in that the institution of guardianship does not directly manage affairs or engage in executive work. Instead, as the government expands and needs increase, various organizations are formed that function in a self-

regulating manner. Of course, the system of control and oversight must be designed in such a way that it can appropriately and promptly respond to any deviation from the leadership's policies, quickly identify and control any entropy in the system.

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