

The Role of Spirituality in Sustainable Progress in the Statement on the Second Phase of the Revolution

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Abstract

Sustainable progress has, in recent decades, become one of the foundational concepts in the progress literature. It emphasizes achieving a balance between improving the quality of life for the present generation and preserving vital resources and capacities for future generations. Within the discourse of the Islamic Revolution of Iran, however, this concept is not confined to economic and environmental indicators; rather, it is defined within a value-based and civilizational framework in which spirituality occupies a central position. The Statement on the Second Phase of the Islamic Revolution, as the strategic document for the continuation and deepening of the Revolution, presents spirituality and ethics as the guiding principles of all individual and social endeavors. The central question of this study is what role the conception of spirituality articulated in the Statement on the Second Phase of the Islamic Revolution plays in achieving sustainable progress in Iranian society, and how it can, as a fundamental variable, strengthen the institutional and social mechanisms of progress. Using a descriptive-analytical method and drawing upon documentary and library sources, this study first conceptualizes spirituality on the basis of the views of the Supreme Leader and the Islamic intellectual tradition, identifying its principal components as faith, sincerity, self-sacrifice, trust in God, and refraining from making assertions without knowledge. It then formulates the concept of sustainable progress within the theoretical framework of the threefold model of the Triangle of the Governance System, the Triangle of Capitals, and the Triangle of Decentralization, and analyzes the relationship between these three domains and the components of spirituality. The study's theoretical framework is founded on the premise that spirituality stands not in opposition to rationality and

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development, but rather functions as their animating spirit and guiding force, capable of enhancing the quality of both individual and institutional action in the pursuit of sustainable progress. The findings indicate that within the domain of the Governance System—comprising political culture, good governance, and an interactive foreign policy—the promotion of spirituality strengthens political ethics, fosters greater tolerance and forbearance, enhances accountability and transparency, and reinforces the fight against corruption. In turn, these developments increase social capital and institutional stability. Within such a framework, political rationality transcends a merely instrumental level and becomes integrated with ethics and commitment, thereby laying the groundwork for effective governance and constructive engagement in the international arena. Within the domain of the Triangle of Capitals, spirituality plays a decisive role in the formation and strengthening of social capital by fostering public trust, social cohesion, and informed civic participation. It also deepens the spirit of sincerity and self-sacrifice among elites and professionals, thereby reducing the emigration of human capital while reinforcing motivation for service and social responsibility. With respect to financial capital, spirituality curbs consumerism and excessive profit-seeking, redirecting idle capital toward production and other productive economic activities, thereby creating the conditions for sustainable employment and mitigating social problems. Within the domain of the Triangle of Decentralization—encompassing political, administrative-managerial, and economic decentralization—spirituality strengthens moral conscience and collective responsibility, whereby creating the conditions for effective public participation in democratic processes, the delegation of authority to local levels, and the merit-based implementation of privatization. In the absence of spirituality, these processes may give rise to rent-seeking, corruption, and inefficiency. By contrast, the presence of spiritual values serves to ensure justice, transparency, and effectiveness across these domains. In conclusion, spirituality in the Statement on the Second Phase of the Islamic Revolution is not merely an ethical or personal recommendation; rather, it constitutes a strategic variable in the architecture of the Islamic Republic of Iran's sustainable progress. By forging a connection between divine values and institutional mechanisms, it has the potential to produce a distinctive model of progress in which material development, social justice, human dignity, and the preservation of natural resources are integrated within a coherent framework. Accordingly, the realization of sustainable progress in the Second Phase of the Revolution requires the institutionalization of spirituality within the country's educational, administrative, and cultural systems, together with its systematic integration into macro-level development policymaking.

Keywords

Spirituality, Sustainable Progress, Statement on the Second Phase of the Islamic Revolution, Social Capital, Good Governance.

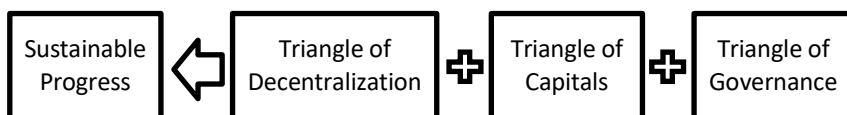
Introduction

There is no doubt that a healthy environment, water, soil, and underground resources are divine blessings bestowed by God upon humankind. They constitute part of the created order, and it is our responsibility to make optimal use of these divine blessings. While benefiting from these resources and improving our standard of living, we must also preserve these vital resources for future generations. This perspective is rooted in the Islamic worldview of divine unity (*tawhīd*), for the Quran characterizes the destruction and degradation of the environment as an act of transgression (*i'tidā'*): "O you who have faith! Do not forbid the good things that Allah has made lawful for you, and do not transgress. Indeed, Allah does not love the transgressors" (Quran, 5:87). Accordingly, when the members of a society utilize its available resources to improve their standard of living without engaging in wastefulness or extravagance, while at the same time preserving those resources for future generations, that society may be said to have attained sustainable progress. More generally, Islam prohibits any conduct that leads to environmental degradation, as God repeatedly warns in the Quran against spreading corruption on the earth. The Quran states: "... He brought you into being from the earth and settled you upon it" (Quran, 11:61); "... and they work corruption on the earth—it is they who are the losers" (Quran, 2:27); "... and do not be wasteful; indeed, He does not like the wasteful" (Quran, 6:141); and "... and do not cause corruption on the earth after it has been set right. That is better for you, should you be faithful" (Quran, 7:85). The Quran also emphasizes the formation of the earth and its importance as the basis of human sustenance: "We spread out the earth, cast firm mountains upon it, caused every well-proportioned thing to grow in it, and provided therein means of livelihood for you ..." (Quran, 15:19–20). The traditions (*ḥadīth*) likewise underscore the importance of natural resources and environmental stewardship. For example, Ja'far al-Ṣādiq is reported to have said: "Do not cut down fruit-bearing trees, lest God send down severe punishment upon you" (Kulaynī, 1986, vol. 5, p. 264, no. 9). Taken together, these Quranic verses and traditions emphasize the proper use of natural resources and the obligation to preserve them for future generations. Accordingly, in 1987 the World Commission on Environment and Development defined sustainable progress as progress that meets the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Thus, the discourse of sustainable progress takes into consideration the interests and needs of both present and future generations (Etaat & et al., 2013, pp. 15–17).

Given the scarcity of underground and environmental resources in Iranian society and the ethical obligation to preserve these resources for future generations, it is important to examine and analyze the role of spirituality in sustainable progress in the Islamic Republic of Iran. Using a descriptive-analytical method, this article seeks to answer the following question: What impact does the conception of spirituality presented in the Statement on the Second Phase of the Islamic Revolution have on the process of sustainable progress in Iranian society? The article advances the following hypothesis: The implementation of the spiritual principles articulated in the Statement on the Second Phase of the Islamic Revolution strengthens the formation of the three triangles of governance, capitals, and decentralization, which constitute essential prerequisites for the sustainable progress of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

1. Theoretical Framework

Accordingly, based on the concept of sustainable progress, many scholars and sociologists maintain that sustainable progress cannot be achieved in Iranian society unless the Triangle of Governance, the Triangle of Capitals, and the Triangle of Decentralization are properly established (Etaat & et al., 2013). This article examines the role of spirituality within each of these three triangles. The Triangle of Governance, comprising the three dimensions of political culture, good governance, and an interactive foreign policy, can generate the social capital necessary for sustainable progress when informed by spirituality. Likewise, the Triangle of Capitals, consisting of social capital, human capital, and material capital, cannot effectively contribute to sustainable progress in the absence of spiritual values. Without spirituality and sincerity toward God, the emigration of scientific elites and the resulting shortage of highly qualified human resources are likely to persist. Finally, the Triangle of Decentralization, which encompasses political decentralization, administrative-managerial decentralization, and economic decentralization, likewise depends upon spirituality, sincerity, and self-sacrifice for the homeland. Without these values, the process of privatization is unlikely to be entrusted to competent and capable individuals, thereby undermining the possibility of achieving sustainable progress.



2. Concepts

2.1. Spirituality

Spirituality (in Persian, *ma'naviyyat*) literally denotes that which is spiritual—namely, that which is real, true, essential, intrinsic, absolute, inward, and spiritual, as opposed to that which is merely formal or outward. It has also been understood to refer to anything pertaining to meaning, inwardness, or ultimate reality, in contrast to what is material, external, or merely formal. As these definitions indicate, spirituality concerns the realm of meaning and encompasses such notions as inwardness and ultimate reality. In its lexical sense, therefore, spirituality stands in contrast to materiality. For this reason, spirituality has become one of the concepts to which humanity—particularly in the postmodern era—has devoted increasing attention. At the same time, debates concerning the source of spirituality, or, in other words, the distinction between authentic and inauthentic spirituality, have remained prominent in various intellectual circles. In recent years, the promotion of Christian spirituality and various new spiritual movements in both the West and the East has encouraged conceptions of spirituality that, lacking a defined framework and not deriving from the source of genuine divine revelation, have fostered forms of false spirituality in the minds of some individuals. The term *ma'naviyyat* ("spirituality") is, in fact, a relatively recent one. Neither the Quran nor the Sunnah employs this specific term, and therefore it cannot be given a strictly scriptural definition. Consequently, if one wishes to determine what spirituality means from the perspective of Islam, it is necessary to formulate an external or conceptual definition. As a technical term, however, *ma'naviyyat* is a modern coinage. Drawing upon the statements of the Supreme Leader, it may be argued that he moves beyond the lexical meaning of the word and instead defines and conceptualizes spirituality in accordance with the Islamic tradition (Shakernejad, 2019).

2.2. Spirituality from the Supreme Leader's Perspective

According to the Supreme Leader, spirituality is "a heartfelt relationship and connection with God," attained when "a person develops intimacy with Almighty God inwardly, in the heart, and in the depths of one's being" (Supreme Leader, May 5, 2014). He further characterizes the highest degree of this relationship with God as "being captivated by the grace of God" (Supreme Leader, April 21, 2010). He likewise identifies the foundations of spirituality as "communicating with God, coming to know God, benefiting from spirituality, purifying and refining the soul, and cleansing the mind of

temptations" (Supreme Leader, May 9, 2005). The Supreme Leader was the first to employ the term *ma'naviyyat* ("spirituality") in this sense. He maintains that "Spirituality is incompatible neither with science, nor with politics, nor with freedom, nor with any other sphere; rather, spirituality is the soul of all of them" (Supreme Leader, December 1, 2010). In other words, spirituality exists alongside materiality rather than in opposition to it. Like rainfall, spirituality is a quality that descends upon worldly life, imparting to it a divine character and orientation. Thus, spirituality is inseparable from progress, science, material advancement, and justice (Shakernejad, 2019). Although spirituality constitutes the foundation of all endeavors, this does not imply a separation between the material and the spiritual. Addressing a gathering of intellectual elites, the Supreme Leader stated: "Spirituality is not incompatible with scientific progress, diverse practical innovations, new methods, or intelligent organization... Nor is spirituality incompatible with attending to the material principles of work and its proper organization. This spirituality must be preserved, for it is the foundation of all work" (Supreme Leader, September 17, 2013). Furthermore, in the Statement on the Second Phase of the Islamic Revolution, while calling upon the Iranian people—and especially the younger generation—to uphold spirituality and ethics, the Supreme Leader defines spirituality as "the promotion of spiritual values such as sincerity, self-sacrifice, trust in God, and faith, both within oneself and throughout society" (Supreme Leader, February 2, 2019, p. 10).

2.3. Indicators of Spirituality in the Supreme Leader's View

According to the Supreme Leader: "In the system of the Islamic Republic, what determines people's rank is spiritual values. Accordingly, all hearts must unite in this orientation through reliance upon God. The Islamic Republic is a system established for the people and for addressing their material and spiritual hardships. It is a system under whose compassionate protection every form of deprivation and suffering among the disadvantaged should be alleviated, and the gap between the various strata of society should be reduced. That is, those whose standard of living is low should be elevated. We cannot claim that we have already achieved this objective. Nor can we be satisfied that we have fulfilled Islam's goal in this regard. All we claim—and for which we thank God—is that we are moving along this path. This is our objective" (Supreme Leader, May 7, 2005). In light of the Supreme Leader's statements and the Statement on the Second Phase of the Islamic Revolution, spirituality may be understood as comprising the following principal components:

(a) Faith (*īmān*): Lexically, *īmān* means to believe, to have conviction, or to hold something to be true. In this context, it entails a firm commitment to refrain from sin—avoiding lying, betrayal, and various forms of sexual and sensual misconduct (Supreme Leader, August 22, 2010). The Supreme Leader further stated, in an address to university students: "The most important step toward spiritual and moral elevation is to refrain from sin. Strive to avoid sin. Sins take many forms: there are sins of the tongue, sins of the eyes, sins committed by the hands, and many other kinds. Learn to recognize these sins and keep watch over yourselves. This is the most important path to spiritual growth" (Supreme Leader, July 11, 2015).

(b) Refraining from Speaking Without Knowledge: Refraining from making assertions without knowledge is among the most fundamental principles of spirituality. It requires avoiding backbiting, slander, and the spread of rumors within society. As the Supreme Leader explains: "If we attribute something to a person that is not true of him, that is slander. Likewise, if we say something for which we have no knowledge—for example, if it is merely a rumor—then we are contributing to the spread of that rumor; this is rumor-mongering and speaking without knowledge. Speaking without knowledge is itself objectionable, and acting upon something that is unknown and unsupported by knowledge is equally objectionable. 'Do not pursue that of which you have no knowledge' [Quran 17:36]. 'Do not pursue' means: do not follow or act upon something of which you have no knowledge" (Supreme Leader, August 6, 2012).

(c) Sincerity (*ikhhlās*): Lexically, *ikhhlās* denotes purity of intention and sincerity of conviction. In practice, it entails commitment to one's work and the avoidance of negligence or indifference in executive and managerial responsibilities—that is, working sincerely for the sake of God and in service to the people. For this reason, ethics has received increasing attention worldwide as an essential element of sustainable progress. Professionals such as physicians, engineers, and other specialists can, through the responsible application of their knowledge, creativity, and ethical principles, help resolve societal problems and promote public welfare and well-being. Conversely, the failure of professionals to adhere to ethical and spiritual principles can result in irreparable harm. Accordingly, professional organizations and regulatory bodies have developed codes of ethics, guidelines, and frameworks addressing ethical and spiritual responsibilities in fields such as medicine, engineering, and other specialized professions. One of the principal challenges facing contemporary commerce, medicine, engineering, and infrastructure projects is

the erosion of ethical and spiritual foundations. This problem stems, in part, from the insufficient attention devoted during university education to ethics and to the ethical and spiritual challenges that future professionals are likely to encounter. For this reason, the Supreme Leader states in the Statement on the Second Phase of the Islamic Revolution: "Spirituality and ethics provide direction for all individual and social movements and activities, and they constitute one of society's fundamental needs. Their presence can transform a life marked by material deprivation into a paradise, whereas their absence can turn even material abundance into a hell. The more spiritual awareness and moral conscience flourish within society, the greater the blessings they produce. This undoubtedly requires striving and sustained effort" (Supreme Leader, February 2, 2019).

(d) Self-Sacrifice (*īthār*): Lexically, *īthār* means giving generously, bestowing upon others, preferring others over oneself, and placing the interests of others before one's own in all matters. In essence, a person who gives priority to the welfare of others and to the interests of society and the nation over personal interests exemplifies genuine self-sacrifice. Indeed, a fundamental prerequisite for sustainable progress is that a society's specialists, scholars, and scientists place the interests of society above their own personal and familial interests. Only under such conditions can a society achieve genuine flourishing and progress.

(e) Trust in God (*tawakkul*): Lexically, *tawakkul* means entrusting one's affairs to God and placing one's hope in Him. When individuals in a society exert their utmost effort toward achieving a particular objective, sparing no endeavor, they should ultimately entrust the outcome to God. This constitutes a fundamental component of spirituality: human beings are obliged to make every possible effort, while leaving the final result in God's hands.

Neglecting spirituality and failing to consider its relationship to society can lead a community into costly crises. Spiritual challenges inevitably affect all social structures, resulting in profound losses and hindering the realization of the objectives of the Islamic Revolution. Nevertheless, it is hoped that through a well-conceived and carefully coordinated program, the Revolution's enlightened spiritual path—while preserving its Islamic character—will ultimately attain its lofty aspirations. Beyond underscoring the importance of spirituality, this profound perspective highlights two further points with particular clarity. First, spirituality must be made manifest and prominent throughout society; second, it serves as the guiding force behind all human activity. Together, these points demonstrate the profound significance and

elevating purpose of spirituality in every aspect of individual and social life. Scholars and intellectuals should therefore neither overlook nor neglect this comprehensive and influential strategy for social development. Indeed, the absence of sustained and effective spiritual planning can inflict irreparable harm upon both social activities and everyday life. Many moral virtues and human excellences emerge only within a social environment shaped by spirituality and ethical values. It is likewise evident that younger generations are products of this very social environment, thereby placing an even greater responsibility upon public officials and the nation's intellectual and cultural elites. In general, cultivating spirituality within society yields three principal outcomes. First, it fosters compassionate steadfastness in life, enabling individuals to develop resilience so that they do not succumb to adversity. Such individuals remain committed to building a society founded upon divine values and regard others as they regard themselves. As stated in a well-known hadith: "All creatures are God's dependents, and the most beloved of creatures to God are those who are most beneficial to His dependents" (Majlisi, 1983, vol. 71, p. 316). Second, those who embrace spirituality develop a distinctive sense of individuality rooted in sincerity and selflessness, dedicating themselves wholeheartedly to the service of others. In this way, society becomes an integrated whole that strives collectively toward the ideal society, leaving no room for complacency or indolence. Third, spirituality endows the rationally religious or spiritual individual with a depth of character that ordinary individuals do not possess. Such people attain a degree of sincerity that frees them even from the expectation of reward for their actions. Accordingly, spirituality should be understood in conjunction with such concepts as sincerity, self-sacrifice, trust in God, and faith. The presence of these moral virtues can help pave the way for sustainable progress in society.

2.4. Sustainable Progress

Sustainable progress refers to a process within a country whereby its people meet their needs by utilizing the nation's available resources and improving their standard of living without jeopardizing the resources and assets upon which future generations depend. Accordingly, vital resources such as water, soil, and underground reserves must be preserved and protected for future generations (Zahedi, 2007). Achieving sustainable progress requires fundamental changes in our way of life. Such far-reaching and structural changes cannot be realized without the active and informed participation of every member of society. Each individual must first acquire sufficient

awareness to become convinced of the necessity of changing existing patterns of behavior and then convey this understanding to others, so that meaningful improvements in the current situation may ultimately be achieved. Behavioral change should therefore be pursued through a participatory approach. The process begins when individuals recognize the need for change, develop a willingness to embrace it, and subsequently modify their own conduct. Over time, collective behavior likewise evolves in the desired direction. The most fundamental step in this process is the transformation of cultural policy. Positive values should be strengthened, while harmful habits should be weakened. Greater attention should be devoted to spirituality, simple living, and rational consumption. Through the prudent and responsible use of natural and productive resources, it is possible to reduce environmental pollution, make effective use of water, air, soil, genetic resources, and wildlife, prevent deforestation, and combat desertification. In essence, resources should be utilized in such a way that their continued use remains possible over the long term. Under these conditions, it can be said that society is moving along the path of sustainable development (Zahedi, 2007, p. 13).

3. Impacts of Spirituality on Sustainable Progress

To realize sustainable progress in the Islamic Republic of Iran, as envisioned in the Statement on the Second Phase of the Islamic Revolution, three interrelated frameworks—the Triangle of Governance, the Triangle of Capitals, and the Triangle of Decentralization—must first be examined and analyzed within the context of Iranian society. The role of spirituality should then be investigated in relation to each of these frameworks in order to determine how it can contribute to the progress and development of society.

3.1. Spirituality and the Triangle of the System of Governance

The Triangle of Governance consists of three dimensions: political culture, good governance, and an interactive foreign policy. At the core of this framework lies political culture, political socialization, and, more broadly, the influence of the political psychology of a nation's citizens and its intellectual and executive elites on the processes of development and progress. Reforming the processes of political socialization requires a relatively long period of time. Likewise, the establishment of political rationality is a difficult and complex undertaking, since political rationality depends upon moral and spiritual virtues such as tolerance, self-restraint, avoidance of political and electoral misconduct, acceptance of electoral defeat, and refraining from obstructing

those who prevail in elections. Empirical research conducted in Iran has demonstrated a significant relationship between a negative political culture and the country's lack of development (Sariolghalam, 2008). According to this research, obstacles at the individual level include pessimism, false pride, impatience in analysis and understanding, insufficient reflection, poor listening skills, and a marked discrepancy between outward appearance and inner character. At the level of relations among citizens, factors such as distrust, the limited institutionalization of merit-based selection, unfamiliarity with the rules of fair competition, and a tendency to harass, demean, or undermine others constitute major impediments to development in Iran. As these findings suggest, the application of ethical and spiritual values at both the individual level and in interpersonal relations can strengthen social capital by fostering mutual trust, thereby encouraging greater social participation and enhancing institutional stability. Indeed, the presence of such virtues as sincerity, self-sacrifice, trust in God, and faith contributes to the cultivation of a rational public culture and creates the conditions for social stability, which is an essential prerequisite for sustainable progress and development. Another dimension of the Triangle of Governance is good governance. Under this model, the process of decision-making is carried out by God, the prophets, the *awliyā'* (divinely appointed leaders), and their legitimate successors, while its implementation is directed toward securing the welfare, well-being, and worldly flourishing of society, as well as humanity's ultimate happiness and salvation in the Hereafter. Good governance is characterized by such principles as accountability, the rule of law, transparency, efficiency, effectiveness, and the fight against corruption. Although worldly life and material well-being are accorded significant importance within this model, they are not regarded as ends in themselves. Rather, worldly life serves as the arena through which human beings can attain eternal felicity in the Hereafter (Bahrami, 2019). Accordingly, good governance is founded upon a theistic worldview and grounded in ethical and spiritual values. Without adherence to such principles as sincerity, self-sacrifice, faith, and trust in God, it cannot cultivate the capacities necessary for meaningful and voluntary citizen participation or for empowering members of society. The third dimension of the Triangle of Governance is an interactive foreign policy, which entails adherence to international ethical norms in relations with neighboring states and non-interference in their internal affairs. Such an approach is essential for safeguarding national security and advancing national interests. The Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran explicitly addresses these

principles. Article 152 provides that the foreign policy of the Islamic Republic of Iran is founded upon the rejection of all forms of domination, whether exercised or accepted; the preservation of the country's comprehensive independence and territorial integrity; the defense of the rights of all Muslims; non-alignment with hegemonic powers; and the maintenance of peaceful and mutually respectful relations with non-belligerent states. Article 154 further declares that the Islamic Republic of Iran regards the happiness of humanity as its ideal, recognizes independence, freedom, and the rule of truth and justice as the right of all peoples, and, while fully refraining from any interference in the internal affairs of other nations, supports the just struggles of the oppressed against the oppressors throughout the world. In this perspective, Iran's position and standing in the international community constitute an important asset and foundation for its engagement with the international system. Through such engagement, Iran can draw upon global knowledge, capital, and technology to strengthen its national security and accelerate its process of development (Etaat, 1997).

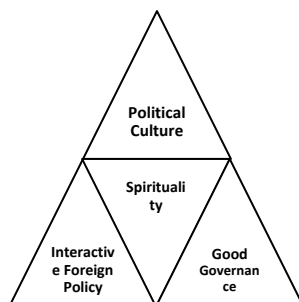


Figure 1. Impact of Spirituality of the Triangle of the System of Governance

3.2. Spirituality and the Triangle of Capitals

The Triangle of Capitals comprises three forms of capital: social capital, human capital, and financial capital. Among these, the most essential for development is social capital. Social capital consists of social solidarity, cohesion, public trust, participation in political processes based on awareness, commitment, and a collective sense of responsibility toward the nation and society, among other elements (Dini Torkamani, 2006). Social capital is generated through the interactions among members of society and through their relationship with the governing authorities. It constitutes the most important form of capital for achieving sustainable progress and development. Such capital, however, cannot emerge without adherence to ethical principles and the presence of spirituality at both the individual and social levels. It depends upon cultivating mutual

respect among citizens, fostering a strong work ethic, and promoting a sense of vitality and optimism within society. In the absence of these conditions, the development of social capital is unlikely. The second dimension of the Triangle of Capitals is human capital. A population of young, educated, competent, intelligent, and innovative individuals is an invaluable asset for any society. When supported by social capital and guided by ethical and spiritual values—such as sincerity, self-sacrifice, trust in God, and faith—human capital can provide the foundation for a dynamic, vibrant, and developed society. It should also be recognized that human beings are regarded as both the means and the end of development. Moreover, the objective of the development process is to eliminate forms of unfreedom and expand individuals' range of choices by enhancing their capabilities and enabling them to realize their potential functions within society. Accordingly, the active agency of human beings, together with their dignity and inherent worth, constitutes the central focus of development planning (Etaat & et al., 2013, pp. 340–341). The third dimension of the Triangle of Capitals is financial capital. In addition to social and human capital, financial capital is indispensable for a society's progress. Here, ethical and spiritual values assume a crucial role. If the members of a society conduct their economic affairs in accordance with moral principles and seek God's pleasure, many usurious transactions would not arise, and idle capital held in homes or financial institutions would instead be directed toward productive investment, allowing its benefits to serve the people and, in particular, the nation's younger generation. In other words, when individuals place the welfare of their fellow citizens above their own personal interests, practice self-sacrifice, act with sincerity for the sake of God, trust in Him, and invest their wealth in productive activities motivated by the pursuit of divine pleasure, employment opportunities for young people are naturally created. Such an approach contributes not only to reducing unemployment and lowering crime rates but also to placing the country's progress on an upward trajectory.

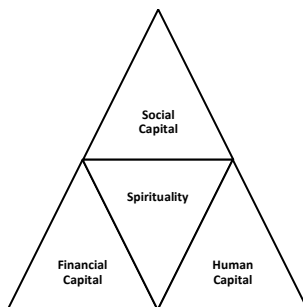


Figure 2. Impact of Spirituality on the Triangle of Capitals

3.3. Spirituality and the Triangle of Decentralization

Accelerating the process of sustainable progress depends upon the implementation of the Triangle of Decentralization. This framework consists of political decentralization (the institutionalization of democratic processes), administrative-managerial decentralization (the delegation of authority and the downsizing of government), and economic decentralization (the strengthening and expansion of the private sector) (Etaat & et al., 2013, pp. 355–356). Political leaders and public officials should be selected through democratic processes, and both the electoral process and adherence to political ethics should be actively supported so as to prevent the emergence of authoritarianism and one-person rule. Likewise, political education and training—and, more broadly, the political socialization of the public—must not be neglected. Through appropriate political education, citizens can be prepared to assume greater governmental responsibilities at the local level, making it possible to delegate public authority to them. Such decentralization, however, can succeed only if a culture of ethical conduct, diligence, and creativity is cultivated among the population. Similarly, privatization should be carried out in accordance with the principles of meritocracy and efficiency so that it genuinely reduces the burden on the state. If, instead, privatization is driven by unethical economic practices and rent-seeking, it will only exacerbate governmental problems. Ultimately, when public policies fail to establish and preserve a stable democratic system, sustainable progress cannot be achieved.

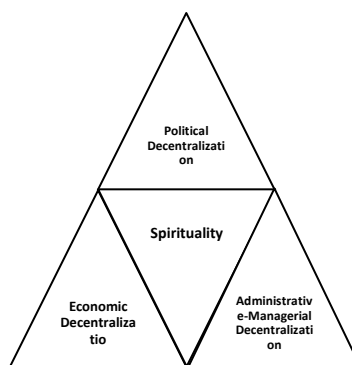


Figure 3. Impact of Spirituality on the Triangle of Decentralization

4. Conclusion

Spirituality within a society is invariably shaped by a set of underlying beliefs

and convictions. Since Iranian society is fundamentally religious and centered upon Islam, and since Islam places great emphasis on ethical conduct, spirituality and religious ethics have consistently served as guiding principles for the country's political leaders and governing authorities. Accordingly, in the Statement on the Second Phase of the Islamic Revolution, the Supreme Leader places particular emphasis on ethics and spirituality, calling upon both public officials and the people to uphold these values. At the same time, the Statement also underscores the importance of sustainable progress. Given that sustainable progress requires the responsible use of essential national resources in such a way that they remain available to future generations, this study has sought to examine the role of spirituality in promoting sustainable progress. The capitalist world, it is argued, encourages consumption and stimulates ever-increasing consumer demand by creating artificial needs. In contrast, it is necessary to present a clear understanding of existing realities—realities of which the public may not be fully aware—and to pursue effective solutions capable of transforming patterns of excessive and harmful consumption for the benefit of future generations. Such an approach would help ensure that essential resources remain available for those who come after us. To this end, the three constituent frameworks of sustainable progress—the Triangle of Governance, the Triangle of Capitals, and the Triangle of Decentralization—were examined within the context of Iranian society. The findings suggest that if spiritual values such as sincerity, self-sacrifice, trust in God, and faith become widespread, public trust and social capital will be strengthened, idle financial resources will be directed toward productive investment, and the decentralization of power will contribute to the flourishing of different regions of the country, thereby advancing sustainable progress. Accordingly, it is recommended that the relationship between spirituality and sustainable progress be incorporated into educational curricula at all levels, from primary education through doctoral studies; that greater attention be devoted to the moral and spiritual foundations of society in efforts to cultivate a culture of sustainable progress; and that rural communities be empowered to participate actively in the process of sustainable progress. Furthermore, to realize sustainable progress during the Second Phase of the Islamic Revolution, the Islamic-Iranian model of spirituality should be promoted through measures such as: developing a sound understanding of the nature of spirituality and its significance for both individuals and society, especially among those in positions of authority; introducing authentic spirituality grounded in divine revelation to younger generations; presenting religious and spiritual teachings in a contemporary, practical, and accessible

language through capable religious scholars and institutions; providing society with genuine role models who embody authentic spirituality while avoiding political instrumentalization; and ensuring that remembrance of God remains central in both individual and public life.

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