

**IBN HALDUN UNIVERSITY  
SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES  
DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY**

**MASTER THESIS**

**A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF AL-GHAZALI'S AND  
SHELDON WOLIN'S POLITICAL THOUGHT**

**ARXHEND BLAKÇORI**

**THESIS SUPERVISOR  
PROF. BURHAN KÖROĞLU**

**ISTANBUL, 2022**

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**by**

**ARXHEND BLAKÇORI**

**A thesis submitted to the School of Graduate Studies in partial  
fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in  
Philosophy**

**THESIS SUPERVISOR  
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## APPROVAL PAGE

This is to certify that we have read this thesis and that in our opinion it is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a thesis for the degree of Master of Arts in Philosophy.

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This is to confirm that this thesis complies with all the standards set by the School of Graduate Studies of Ibn Haldun University.

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## ACADEMIC HONESTY ATTESTATION

I hereby declare that all information in this document has been obtained and presented in accordance with academic rules and ethical conduct. I also declare that, as required by these rules and conduct, I have fully cited and referenced all material and results that are not original to this work.

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ÖZ

GAZALİ VE SHELDON WOLIN'IN SİYASİ DÜŞÜNCELERİ ÜZERİNE  
KARŞILAŞTIRMALI BİR İNCELEME

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Kaos, düzensizlik ve belirsizlik, canlı bir şekilde deneyimlediğimiz günün ve çağın açık içsel ve dışsal gerçekliğinde apaçık ortadadır. Siyaset, yani güç istenci, metafizik alemde evrensel, temel, muzaffer ve güçlendirilmiş hale geldi. Metafizik gerçekler, yani gerçeğin aranması ve varoluşun sırlarının sorgulanması, meta, kullanım değeri ve özellikle siyasi iktidar arayışının körü körüne takibi ile kamufle edilirken. Buna karşılık, akledilir âlemi, yani bilgi, hikmet, adalet ve insani fazilet, siyasi tartışmanın yalnızca bir dipnotu haline geldi. Mevcut gerçeklik koşulları göz önüne alındığında, siyaset kendi başına bir araç ve amaçtır. Bu gözlemleri takiben, bu bilimsel yazımı siyasetin ve siyasi düzenin doğasını kavramsallaştırmaya, detaylandırmaya ve açıklığa kavuşturmaya adayacağım. Ne siyasetin ne de siyasi düzenin diğer felsefi araştırma alanlarından bağımsız olmadığını göstereceğim. Aksine, siyaset bilgilendirilir, yapılandırılır ve işlevsel olarak metafizik ve etiğe dayanır. Hem İslami hem de Batı felsefi dünya görüşlerinden siyaset teorisinin dikkatli bir incelemesinden, yani Gazali ve Sheldon Wolin'in siyasi düşüncesinin karşılaştırmalı bir çalışmasından sonra, siyasetin, siyasi düzenin ve siyasi bilginin bilgilendirildiği, kategorize edildiği ve hizmet ettiği sonucuna vardım. Metafiziğin üç ilkesine dayalı anlamlı bir hayat yaşamak: hakikat, iyilik ve güzellik. Ampirik olarak siyaset, yurttaşların yaşamının aşağıdaki en temel boyutlarını iyileştirmek için bir araç olarak hizmet eder: Uzun ve sağlıklı bir yaşam sürmenin sağlanmasına atıfta bulunan artan yaşam beklentisinden

bařlayarak evrensel yařam kořullarının iyileřtirilmesi, İnsana yakıřır saęlık hizmetlerine eriřim hakkına sahip olma, doęumda getirilen engellere bakılmaksızın eęitime eriřim özgürlüęü, tüm nüfus için ekonomik büyümenin teřvik edilmesi ve güçlü sosyal adalet ve başarıya ulaşmak için eřit fırsat.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Al-Ghazali, Sheldon Wolin, Siyaset Teorisi, Hükümet, Deęerler, Hukuk.



## ABSTRACT

### A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF AL-GHAZALI'S AND SHELDON WOLIN'S POLITICAL THOUGHT

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Chaos, disorder, and uncertainty are self-evident in the manifest inward and outward reality of the day and age we vividly experience. Politics, namely the will to power, has become in the metaphysical realm universal, essential, triumphant, and fortified. While metaphysical realities, namely the seeking of the truth and the examination of the mysteries of existence are camouflaged with commodity, use-value, and in particular, blind following of the pursuit of political power. In turn, the realm of the intelligible, that is, knowledge, wisdom, justice, and human virtue, have become only a footnote to political discussion. Given the current circumstances of reality, politics is the means and the end in and of itself. Following these observations, I shall dedicate this scholarly writing to conceptualize, elaborate, and clarify the nature of politics and political order. I will demonstrate that neither politics nor political order are independent from other domains of philosophical inquiry. Rather, politics is informed, structured, and functionally reliant on metaphysics and ethics. After a careful examination of political theory from both Islamic and Western philosophical worldviews, namely a comparative study of the political thought of Al-Ghazali and Sheldon Wolin, I conclude that the politics, political order, and political knowledge are informed, categorized, and serve living a meaningful life based on three principles of metaphysics: truth, goodness, and beauty. In empirical terms, politics serves as a means to improve the following most fundamental dimensions of the life of citizens: Improvement of universal life conditions, starting from an increased life expectancy

which is to refer to the enablement of living a long and healthy life, the possession of the right to access decent healthcare, the freedom of access to attaining education regardless of barriers imposed at birth, the stimulation of economic growth for the entire population, and robust social justice and equal opportunity to achieve success.

**Keywords:** Al-Ghazali, Sheldon Wolin, Political Theory, Government, Values, Law.



## DEDICATION

To family, friends, and professors who paved the road for me through many sacrifices and supported me so that I could successfully dedicate the time, commitment, energy, focus, care, and willingness to finish the thesis for a master's in philosophy.



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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>ÖZ.....</b>	<b>iv</b>
<b>ABSTRACT .....</b>	<b>vi</b>
<b>DEDICATION .....</b>	<b>viii</b>
<b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....</b>	<b>ix</b>
<b>TABLE OF CONTENTS.....</b>	<b>x</b>
<b>CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION TO THE PHILOSOPHY OF POLITICS .....</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1. The Philosophy of Politics: What it is, why it is, and how it is – The Western Worldview – The Case of Aristotle and Fukuyama!.....	1
1.2. Politics Proceeding from Metaphysics - Politics in the Islamic Worldview: The Case of Al-Farabi .....	4
<b>CHAPTER II AL-GHAZALI’S SPIRITUAL JOURNEY, INTELLECTUAL AWAKENING AND POLITICAL THOUGHT.....</b>	<b>9</b>
2.1. Al-Ghazali’s Life and Spiritual Journey.....	9
2.2. Sheldon Wolin’s Background, Life, and Political Thought .....	13
2.3. The Foundation of Political Philosophy of Al-Ghazali.....	15
2.4. Al-Ghazali: Judicial Order instead of Anarchy and Peace or Conflict .....	16
2.5. Al-Ghazali’s Political Thought: Strengthening Religious Orthodoxy via Realpolitik .....	18
<b>CHAPTER III ISLAMIC LAW, DEMOCRACY, AND CHARACTERISTICS OF GOVERNANCE .....</b>	<b>22</b>
3.1. Al-Mawardi on Conditions of Governance and Qualities of the Rulers .....	22
3.2. Al-Ghazali on Characteristics of the Rulers.....	24
3.3. The Modes of Interaction and Division between Democracy, Islamic Law, and Modern State .....	29
<b>CHAPTER IV SHELDON WOLIN’S POLITICAL THOUGHT AND LEGACY</b>	<b>36</b>
4.1. Continuity and Innovation in Western Political Thought and the ‘Managed Democracy’ .....	36
4.2. Sheldon Wolin’s Fugitive Democracy Conceptualization: Political Theory from Vocation to Invocation .....	41
<b>CHAPTER V CONCLUSION .....</b>	<b>47</b>
<b>REFERENCES.....</b>	<b>52</b>
<b>CURRICULUM VITAE.....</b>	<b>55</b>

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION TO THE PHILOSOPHY OF POLITICS

### **1.1. The Philosophy of Politics: What it is, why it is, and how it is – The Western Worldview – The Case of Aristotle and Fukuyama!**

In search of the lost practical wisdom of philosophical definitions, politics/political order/the political in their current usage need comprehensive universal, spaceless, and timeless definitions to reach the means to live a good life. To start with, in the Oxford Learners Dictionary, even represented in a grossly over-simplified manner, politics is defined as “the activities involved in getting and using power in public life, and being able to influence decisions that affect a country or a society”. Mary Ann Glendon in the article titled “Should the Virtuous Avoid a Vacation in Politics”, brings back the brilliant philosophical explanation of Aristotle’s ontological and epistemological description of the two path-ways, which an individual can choose to live accordingly in a virtuous polis, which is his implicit definition of politics as well:

For it is evident that these two ways of life are the ones intentionally chosen by those human beings who are most ambitious with a view to virtue, both in former times and at the present—the two I mean are political and the philosophic. It makes no small difference on which side the truth lies, for a sensible person, at any rate, must necessarily organize matters with a view to the better aim both in the case of human beings individually and for the regime in common (Glendon, 2019, p. 2).

Interestingly enough, the definition by Aristotle of man as a rational animal is directly related with its end or telos which is achievement of happiness within the polis or city state. Aristotle separated sciences into three types: contemplative, practical, and productive sciences. According to Aristotle, politics or political science is categorized under the “contemplative one” (Deslauriers and Destreè, 2013). That is so because politics concerned the happiness of the citizens primarily, but most fundamentally the need to study the proper duty of the politician or statesmen in his role as lawgiver. The role of politician as a law-giver is studied in order to establish and endure customs, law, and constitution for the city-state. In turn, the establishment of justice from the

law-giver produce order, justice, and entail happiness or felicity ultimately. Plato's inquiry into the nature of politics is something "unique and distinctive from other dimensions of life" as Sheldon Wolin said (1996), in his book *Politics and Vision*. Nevertheless, politics is unified in the interrelated functions of the coherent interconnected whole of the divine principles, philosophical wisdom, and the implementation of political art in society:

That name is one which I believe to belong to this art and to this alone, the name of Statesmanship. When the supreme power in man coincides with the greatest wisdom and temperance, then the best laws and the best constitution come into being; but in no other way (Wolin, 1996, p.32).

Lord of Kames (1778) as cited in Wolin's *Politics and Vision* (1960, p. 6). defined politics as the task of man "to fabricate images without any foundations in reality". Thus, Lord of Kames implied that the designated forms of political practicalities to achieve a good life become corrupted, exploitative, and purely rhetorical. Furthermore, one of the founding fathers of the US, namely Thomas Jefferson, in the famous Declaration of Independence, conceptualized the arrangement of a holistic approach towards politics, government, and the state, heavily influenced but shifting narrowly from the mechanistic philosophical worldview of Lockean root hypothesis of the ultimate end of man as a protector of property, to the following declaim signifier of ending associations of unalienable rights and ultimate happiness:

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness. That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed, that whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to affect their Safety and Happiness (Thomas Jefferson et al, 1776, p. 1).

The above-mentioned elucidation of the philosophy of politics may be constrained as somewhat imaginative or even a stretch of the imagination, yet the theoretical inquiry laid out the practical implementation of the worldview of the civilization itself. Yet, let's return to the momentary reality of the business of politics. To add a contemporary tonality to the field of political philosophy, Fukuyama (2011) in his book *The Origins of Political Order and Decay* defined the state as a "long-run struggle against the family", particularly after the "peculiar English path of the industrialization period" (pp. 89-107). Furthermore, Fukuyama (2011) argues that the state is the main

instrument that should impartially fight the phenomena of nepotism and cronyism. Likewise, for Fukuyama (2011), the public institutions should function on the basis of human and intellectual capital. That is to say, the state's paramount role is accommodating the individual competence in institutional functions. The pronouncement of the “death of God” from Zarathustra, the “visionary” character employed by the iconoclast Nietzsche (1887) offers in tangent that what remains after the “death of God”, in the realm of existence is nothing else except the “Will to Power”. Nietzsche (1887) derives the “Will to Power” philosophical conceptualization from the morality category that he named “slave morality”. Nietzsche (1887) in *Genealogy of Morals* offered the claim that for politicians mankind is divided into two classes, tools and enemies. According to Nietzsche (1887), the ontological consequence of this division is either nihilism or totalitarianism.

Naquib Al-Attas (1993), one of the most prominent contemporary Islamic philosophers, in his seminal work *Islam and Secularism* has a lot to say about the Muslim majority world’s worshipful attitude towards material progress, excessive usage of technological and industrial devices at the expense of environmental exploitation, and desacralization of politics from human affairs (p. 9). Al-Attas (1993) claims that the secularization process involves the separation of the spiritual world from the world of nature. Furthermore, Al-Attas (1993) claims that even politics as a human affairs activity has become separated from being in service of the human being and conduct of values. Attas (1993) courageously claims that even in such times of crisis of Islamic civilization and shortage of practice of real Islamic values and principles, Muslims should not allow themselves to lose hope. Rather, according to Al-Attas (1993), the Muslim intellectual elite should not produce intellectual work based on resentful activism, meaningless slogans, and negative resistance (p. 9). Furthermore, for Al-Attas (1993), real intellectual activism is the one that is directed to solve the real challenges that the present time and space present to us. These challenges can be addressed through a rich tradition of knowledge that was passed to Muslim intellectual elites in the past (p. 9). Attas (1993) articulates clearly that the real values and vision that need to be embodied by intellectual and political elites in the Islamic world are the ones that assimilate spiritual and intellectual maturity, integrity, and awareness rooted in wisdom, justice, and truth (p. 9). For Attas (1993), the revival of such awareness should be based upon the tradition of God’s Apostle and Quranic

injunctions, instead of the imitation of the secular models. Nonetheless, the process of revival of the Islamic sciences, Muslim-Majority societies, and Muslim intellectual elites must go hand in hand with intensive efforts to create knowledge with the purpose of corresponding with the original values of Islamic virtues, as also in correspondence with real challenges of contemporary modernity (Attas, 1993).

## **1.2. Politics Proceeding from Metaphysics - Politics in the Islamic Worldview: The Case of Al-Farabi**

Abu Nasr Al-Farabi (879-952), known as the “second teacher” after Aristotle, is one of the most systematic Islamic philosophers, whose unprecedented comprehensive philosophical writing encompassed the fields of metaphysics, cosmology, ontology, and epistemology. In the present day and age, where politics lies predominantly in the domain of power distinction between friend and enemy, a noticeable return to a tribal and survival worldview of human beings in international affairs is becoming normalized. Al-Farabi through his masterpiece *Al-Madinat al-Fadilah* or the *Virtuous City*, communicated to us the importance of achieving political order, unavoidably as a mean not as an end to the ultimate goal of the metaphysical inquiry, named conscientiously the ultimate happiness. As I contended hitherto, such kind of Farabian perplexity, namely the integrated character of politics connected to metaphysical inquiry serves as a guide to postulate, in hierarchical order, the vision, mission, and intentionality consciousness of politics.

Al-Farabi’s adopted philosophical worldview arguably came about as a result of the political circumstances of his time and a modified adaptation of Aristotle and Plato's philosophical schemes of happiness and politics (Butterworth, 2015, p. 11). Al-Farabi, in his magnum opus, named *Virtuous City*, in the fifteenth chapter, “Perfect Associations and Perfect Ruler; Faulty Association” postulated the following strikingly remarks representing the man not as the center of the universe, but rather as a political animal:

In order to preserve himself and to attain his highest perfections, every human being is by very nature in need of many things which he cannot provide all by himself; he is indeed in need of people who each supply him with some particular need of his (Walzer, 1998, p. 229).

Al-Farabi, in the same chapter also examines the function of what he calls excellent cities as a means of the realization of ultimate perfection. This, he felt, was to be done through the function of the given natural spiritedness of the human agency to search for virtuous happiness, in cooperation and togetherness of the society:

Therefore man cannot attain the perfection, for the sake of which his inborn nature has been given to him, unless many societies of people who cooperate, come together supply each and everybody else with some particular need of his, so that as a result of the contribution of the whole community, all the things are brought together that everybody needs, in order to preserve himself and achieve perfect happiness (Walzer, 1998, p. 229).

The ultimate felicity or happiness and a good life, as an ontological central sequencer of Al-Farabi, obeyed closely the *Nicomachean Ethics* of Aristotle and *Plato's Republic* (Mahdi, 2000). However, the difference between Aristotle and Plato on one hand, and Aristotle and Al-Farabi on the other hand, is to be found in terms of the Al-Farabi's deployment of an emanationist scheme of existence using the similitude principle of the "Active Intellect":

God Almighty grants him revelation through mediation of the Active Intellect, so that the emanation from God Almighty to the Active Intellect is passed on to his Passive Intellect through the mediation of Acquired Intellect and then to his faculty of representation. Thus, he is the wise man, the accomplished philosopher, and the sovereign of the universal state (Walzer, 1990, p. 247).

The similitude principle of associating the "Organs of Body" and the ruler's functions in governing the state, is presented clearly as well in Al-Farabi's description of the arrangement of the order of the city and the ruler's disciplining of his involuntary habits, in the lines below:

The heart comes to be first and then becomes the cause of existence of the other organs and limbs of the body, and the cause of the existence of their faculties in them and of their arrangement in the ranks proper to them, and when one of the organs is out of order, it is the heart, which provides the means to remove that disorder. In the same way, the ruler of this city must come to be in the first instance, and will subsequently be the cause of the rise of the city and its parts and the cause of the presence of the *voluntary* habits of its parts and their arrangement in the ranks proper to them (Walzer, 1998, p. 235).

Al-Farabi, in his magnum opus *Virtuous City* further continues to provide the definition of the twelve natural qualities that the ruler of a universal state should have, as the paver of the citizens' road to ultimate felicity or happiness within the excellent city (Walzer, 1998). Al-Farabi lists these qualities as follows:

But this state can be achieved by a man in whom twelve natural qualities are found together: He should have limbs and organs which are far from deficiency and are strong, he should by nature be good at understanding and perceiving everything said to him, he should be good at retaining what he comes to know and forget almost nothing, he should be well provided with ready intelligent and brightness, he should have a fine diction, he should be fond of learning and acquiring knowledge, he should by nature be fond of truth and truthful men, he should by nature not crave for food, drink and sexual discourse, he should be proud of spirit and fond of honor, dirham and dinar and the other worldly pursuits should be of little amount in his view, he should be fond of justice and of just people, he should be strong in setting his mind firmly upon the things which in his view, ought to be done, and daringly and bravely carry it out without fear and weak-mindedness (Walzer, 1998, pp. 247-249).

In opposition to the excellent city, there are ignorant cities which, by Al-Farabi's characterization and classification, have one thing in common: "The lack of the inclination to achieve the true felicity" (Fakhry, 2002). According to Al-Farabi, the citizens of such cities share the following common characteristics of a more hedonistic and narcissistic directedness:

"the aims in their life is bodily health, wealth, enjoyment of pleasures, freedom to follow one's desires, and being held in honor and esteem" (Walzer, 1998, p. 255).

According to Al-Farabi (Walzer, 1998), ignorant cities are grouped into different cities, but all share one commonality: "Indulgent in passion and outward design" (p. 255). But Al-Farabi also brings forward another hierarchical differentiation of ignorant cities, in the following categorical differentiation of cities:

The city of necessity, that is the city whose people strive for no more than food, drink, clothes, housing, and sexual intercourse. The city of meanness: the aim of its people is to cooperate in the acquisition of wealth and riches. The city of depravity and baseness, the aim of its people is the enjoyment of the pleasure connected with senses, imagination, entertainment and idle talk (Walzer, 1998, pp. 255-257).

The detailed account of Al-Farabi's philosophical explanatory differences between the cities of excellence and cities of ignorance, the analogy between the active intellect as part of the emanationist cosmological scheme and the ruler of the city of excellence, demonstrate firmly one thing: The account of metaphysical inquiries invades the domain of politics. To be careful in order to not put the horse before the cart, politics is cross-related to metaphysics, and if not at its paramount, the resident realm of the practical manifestation of metaphysics, ontology, and epistemology. To pursue such a factual occurrence further, in Al-Farabi's *Al-Madinah al-Fadilah*, the anatomy of the philosophical program presented by him is such that political knowledge follows after (or is preceded by) metaphysical principles. The metaphysical programmatic inquiry of Al-Farabi's philosophical legacy gives birth to and flourishes within his political conceptualization of the city-state:

with an account of metaphysical principles and heavenly bodies— their hierarchy, origin, and operation proceeds to a discussion of the sublunar sphere and the hierarchy, origin, and operation of its elements, including matter and form, possible beings, and the plant and animal kingdoms. It is after this, that the progress of political life is discussed (Galtson, 1990, pp. 185 – 186).

Galtson (1990) further argues that the investigator of the ultimate felicity is initially acquainted with the first cause and principles of natural bodies, and what follows subsequently is the enjoyment of the plurality of the diversity of existential perfections, including the establishment of political science, political life, and political knowledge. As Galtson explains, Al-Farabi's political theory established the fact that the whole existence of political science and its forms of practical applicability is only a footnote to preparing the ground to achieve human happiness:

Initially, the foundations of human science and political science are further obscured by the fact that Alfarabi identifies the subject of human science variously as "the purpose" of human existence and "the perfection that man must achieve (Galtson, 1990, p. 198).

Al-Farabi finds that both natural and human sciences signify the plurality and different paths that human beings can take to achieve happiness (Galtson, 1990, p. 198):

Al-Farabi described the investigator as becoming acquainted with "the ends and ultimate perfection" for the sake of which man came into existence (and he noted that a plurality of perfections (*kamalat*) are available to human beings.

Al-Farabi's account of religion, from another point of view, is intimately related as well to the art of ruling (Butterworth, 2015). For Al-Farabi, religion is comprised of opinions and is a result primarily of the ruler's activity, yet it represents a kind of disconnectedness from the metaphysical truth, which is the highest one in the largest scheme of the hierarchy of being:

Religion is opinions and actions, determined and restricted with stipulations and prescribed for a community by their first ruler, who seeks to obtain, through them, practicing a specific purpose. If the first ruler is excellent and his rulership truly excellent, then he prescribes what he seeks only to obtain, for himself and for everyone under his rulership, the ultimate happiness that is truly happiness; and that religion will be the excellent religion (Butterworth, 2015, p. 93).

Al-Farabi's account of politics may look outdated, complacent, and absurd in front of fleeting images of hyper-reality, tremendous accumulation of wealth and technological

innovation, and the fourth stage of governmental internationalized institutionalization. Nonetheless, it highlights the importance of the linkage between life in the polis, metaphysics, and the realm of intelligible truths beyond the world of imprisonment from desires along with the worship of the self. However, the greatest merit of Al-Farabi's understanding is that political science is informed by metaphysics, with the highest aim to support the understanding how to achieve happiness in the city-state. On the practical level, there are multiple risks encountered in Al-Farabi's political thought. Al-Farabi's explanation that all that is left to the natural duty of humanity is the pursuit of happiness leaves aside the practical forms of political organization and association. Nevertheless, despite the fact that there is a threat to Al-Farabi's practical applicability of political thought, the optimism conveyed, solidarity, and will to attain virtue are more than needed in the hyper-materialistic times that we are living through.

## CHAPTER II

# AL-GHAZALI'S SPIRITUAL JOURNEY, INTELLECTUAL AWAKENING AND POLITICAL THOUGHT

### 2.1. Al-Ghazali's Life and Spiritual Journey

Abu Hamid Muhammad al-Ghazali was born in Tus, Persia, in 1058. His father died when he was quite young, which enabled Al-Ghazali and his young brother to study thoroughly and be educated under the greatest theologian of the age, al-Juwayni (Watt, 1952, p. 11). After a long journey in search of real knowledge and rebuttal of heretical innovations, Ghazali was appointed as a professor in Baghdad, and later he attained one of the most distinguished positions in the academic world of that day and age (Watt, 1952, p. 11). Yet, despite all the worldly achievements, he was deeply concerned about his inner spiritual struggle and philosophical doubts in his mind about the true nature of reality, knowledge, and other ontological and epistemological dilemmas. His spiritual struggle, despite Al-Ghazali's intellectual brilliance and academic achievement, deepened day by day and came to the point that he was forced to leave his academic position and take up the life of an ascetic for 10 years, and return back to write *Deliverance from Error* as an autobiographical source of his intellectual and spiritual journey, which shall be the only source used in this short description of his life and background.

Al-Ghazali's schematized chronology of his intellectual and spiritual journey is a lifetime study of four types of seekers (Watt, 1952, pp. 12-14). Thus, Al-Ghazali's intellectual and spiritual journey started from blind imitation of the teacher's authorized instructions. Later Al-Ghazali went to study the science of theology and the science of the Shia creedal group 'Batiniyah' which he refuted and labeled heretical. Later Al-Ghazali studied the sciences of logic and demonstration, namely philosophy, and ended up studying the sciences of Sufism and embraced mysticism, following his description from *Deliverance from Error*:

You have begged me to relate to you the difficulties I encountered in my attempt to extricate the truth from the confusion of contending sects and to distinguish the different ways and methods, and the venture I made in climbing from the plain of naive and second-hand belief (taqlid) to the peak of direct vision. You want me to describe, firstly what profit I derived from the science of theology (kalam), secondly, what I partly disapprove of in the methods of the of ta`lim (authoritative instruction), who restrict the apprehension of truth to the blind following (taqlid) of the Imam, thirdly, what I rejected of the methods of philosophy, and lastly, what I approved in the Sufi way of life (Watt, 1952, p. 19).

In addition, Al-Ghazali in his autobiography *Deliverance from Error* describes his innate/inborn natural tendency of being a seeker of truth, as an iconoclast of mere authority, and a scrutinizer of reality as it is and illusion as it is:

From my early youth, since I attained the age of puberty before I was twenty, until the present time when I am over fifty, I have ever recklessly launched out into the midst of these ocean depths, I have ever bravely embarked on this open sea, throwing aside all craven caution; I have poked into every dark recess, I have made an assault on every problem, I have plunged into every abyss, I have scrutinized the creed of every sect, I have tried to lay bare the inmost doctrines of every community. All this have I done that I might distinguish between true and false, between sound tradition and heretical innovation (Watt, 1952, p. 20).

Furthermore, Al-Ghazali goes on to argue in his written autobiography that the comprehension of things as they really are and the search for the truth was from his God-given nature (Watt, 1952, p. 21). While, during this journey, Al-Ghazali's inborn grasping capacity to see the truth as the truth and falsehood as falsehood, which is named in the Islamic theological vocabulary as *fitrah* or *firasah*, was damaged by continuous interference in his quest for knowledge from social conventions, whether they were academic mentors, false knowledge that did not generate certainty in his mind and tranquility in heart, sins, and other environmental barriers. Nonetheless, Al-Ghazali cited these sources of interruption in his journey to attain real knowledge and spiritual fulfillment not in an accusatory or victimized manner, but rather in a descriptive intellectual order. Al-Ghazali finds his intellectual and spiritual journey to the truth to be compatible with the report transmitted of one of the sayings of the prophet Muhammad, which he puts in the introductory paragraphs of his intellectual and spiritual autobiography:

Consequently, as I drew near the age of adolescence the bonds of mere authority (taqlid) ceased to hold me and inherited beliefs lost their grip upon me, for I saw that Christian youths always grew up to be Christians, Jewish youths to be Jews and Muslim youths to be Muslims. I heard, too, the Tradition related to the Prophet of God according to which he said: `Everyone who is born is born with a sound nature; it is his parents who make him a Jew or a Christian or a Magian (Watt, 1952, p. 21).

Moreover, Al-Ghazali in his autobiography *Deliverance from Error* offers the epistemological definition of what real knowledge is:

Sure and certain knowledge is that knowledge in which the object is disclosed in such a fashion that no doubt remains along with it, that no possibility of error or illusion accompanies it, and that the mind cannot even entertain such a supposition (Watt, 1952, pp. 21-22).

If the knowledge that is grasped in the mind causes occasions of doubts or denial, in Al-Ghazali's epistemological account, that knowledge is not real knowledge. Actually, the knowledge that causes more doubt and confusion is delusionary knowledge. The crisis that Al-Ghazali experienced was not a crisis caused by the doubt and lifelong intellectual and comprehensive study, from an early age, of different branches of qualitative and quantitative sciences (Ormsby, 2007, p. 1). On the contrary, the spiritual crisis that Al-Ghazali experienced had occurred when Ghazali found what real knowledge was. That is to say, Al-Ghazali found that the only knowledge that establishes ordered certainty in the mind is the knowledge of virtuous practical conduct transmitted from the prophetic practice and the Quran (Ormsby, 2007, pp. 1-2). Nevertheless, Al-Ghazali was still not decisive in practicing this knowledge, which led to his mental paralysis but served him at the same time in the best way to establish the practice of the prophetic knowledge and write his magnum opus, *Revival of Religious Sciences* among other critically important books with renewed structure and meaning; read by an audience of simple people and scholars:

“He had discovered the truth but could not act on it. He was effectively paralyzed by the truth” (Ormsby, 2007, p. 1).

Now, what is the truth for Al-Ghazali? The truth for Al-Ghazali is “certainty” and the “calmness/peace” within the spiritual organon of heart and mind (Ormsby, 2007, p.1). The question arises: How do we arrive at the truth? Al-Ghazali explains in his autobiography “Deliverance from Error” that the final arriving, embedding, and integrating of the truth within the spiritual organon of heart and mind is a matter of practical devotion to Islamic orthodox teachings, i.e., theoretical and practical Qur’an and the prophetic tradition (Watt, 1952, pp. 25-26). Again, Al-Ghazali (Ormsby, 2007) makes sure to repeat that the journey to embed the truth within and reach goodness continuously within is the prophetic methodology. It involves self-journeying and experience accompanied by sincere purpose to know the truth as it is. This process has to include both knowledge and action. The finalization of such a process is a combination of both knowledge and action. Al-Ghazali famously put the following maxim on achieving the equilibrium between action and knowledge, in both his

magnum opus *Revival of the Religious Sciences* and other Sufi works written after his spiritual crisis (Ormsby, 2007, p. 2): “Knowledge without action is madness and action without knowledge is void.”

The firmness and clarity in his mind for the legitimacy of the credal principles of revelational sciences, as Ghazali points out, came not from “carefully argued proofs”, but from “reason of various causes, coincidences, and experiences which are not capable of being stated in details” (Watt, 1952, p. 56). Another tremendous contribution of Al-Ghazali to the field of philosophical inquiry, namely epistemology and ontology, is the integration of motivation or intentionality of the individual as a precursor to either mental facilitation of the intellectual journey to find and integrate the truth within, or to the increase of doubt and misery within the organon of the mind. Interconnectedly, Al-Ghazali explicitly wrote of his self-realization in his autobiography *Deliverance from Error* on the main reason why he experienced a spiritual crisis at the height of his career. While he was the head of the Nizamiyah College, at the age of 38, his motivation to demonstrate academic superiority and intellectual dominance was a hidden form for fame, prestige, public recognition:

After that I examined my motive in my work of teaching, and realised that it was not a pure desire for the things of God, but that the impulse moving me was the desire for an influential position and public recognition (Watt, 1952, p. 56).

For Al-Ghazali, the methodology of Sufism and Sufis was the “soundest methodology”, their life was “the best life”, and their character was “the purest character” (Watt, 1952, p. 60). On the Sufi path, accordingly to Al-Ghazali’s experience, three degrees of transformative knowledge could be comprehended (Watt, 1952, p. 62):

Certainty reached by demonstration is knowledge (*‘ilm*); actual acquaintance with that `state’ is immediate experience (*dhawq*); the acceptance of it as probable from hearsay and trial (or observation) is faith (*iman*).

At the end of his biography “*Deliverance from Error*”, Al-Ghazali explained that genuine knowledge orients the human being to righteous action:

Genuine knowledge is that which informs us that sin is a deadly poison and that the world to come is better than this; and the man who knows that does not give up the good for what is Lower than it (Watt, 1952, p. 84).

Again, for Al-Ghazali, to conclude hereby, real knowledge is not attained by means of the theoretical studying of various special branches of knowledge, to which most people devote their attention and life. On the contrary, as a result of in-detail specialization in various branches of knowledge, most people's knowledge accelerates their ego and only makes them bolder in disobeying God. Thus, the hallmark of genuine knowledge, as stipulated by Al-Ghazali in *Deliverance from Error* increases a "man's reverence and fear and hope; the devotion in general" (Watt, 1952, p. 84). Taking into consideration the above summary of Al-Ghazali's life and his intellectual project after the spiritual crisis that he experienced, I will argue that Al-Ghazali's political thought is a practical project aiming at the investment of practical expansion of the good through embedding the framework of Islamic worldview and prophetic guidelines in rulers' hearts and minds along with the accompanying establishment. The question arises, how? Practically, it is done through justice, i.e., application of law in equal terms for all citizens and security of the community. This should be done in order to establish good, forbid evil, and establish peace and reach justice as the culmination of all virtues in the society. Al-Ghazali establishes straightforwardly the relationship between political life and religious life. To be more concise, in Al-Ghazali's scheme of building a resilient public life and order, the successful political life of the community is dependent immensely on the practice of the ruling class of leadership, the prophetic teachings of fairness, meritocracy, mercy, investment in institutions of knowledge, lack of corruption and nepotism, and justice.

## **2.2. Sheldon Wolin's Background, Life, and Political Thought**

Sheldon S. Wolin was a prominent political theorist, social critic, author, philosopher, educator, and publicly engaged intellectual (Marcus, 2015). He was a professor of politics, Emeritus, at Princeton University where he taught from 1973 to 1987. He also taught at Oberlin College, the University of California, and Northwestern University. He is considered the most prominent contemporary political philosopher by scholars of different fields, including Cornell West, professor in African-American Studies at Princeton University, who said "Sheldon Wolin was the greatest political theorist of our times" (Grimes, 2015, para 13). Sheldon Wolin's 1960 book, "*Politics and Vision: Continuity and Innovation in Western Political Thought*" influenced a generation of political science theorists and students (Grimes, 2015, para 4). Sheldon Wolin tried to bring back to the center of academic gravity, within the social sciences domain, the importance of politics, political philosophy, and the history of political thought. This comes particularly after the American political science worldview and framework of analysis was based on the behaviorist methodology of scientific conduct, emphasizing the overarching importance of quantitative analysis of data over political ideas and the history of political thought. He wrote a series of other books, as follows: *The Presence of the Past: Essays on the State and the Constitution* (1989), *The Tocqueville between two worlds: The Making of a Political and a Theoretical Life* (2001), *Democracy Incorporated: Managed Democracy and the Specter of Inverted Totalitarianism* (2008).

The main academic vision and mission of Sheldon Wolin, as it can be scrutinized and thoroughly analyzed, is to challenge the one-sided behaviorist and economics/sociology-based mechanistic view of political science to the possibility of using history and the past traditions of political thought as a means to build in the present the democratic theoretical foundation for the “possibility for collectivity, common action, and shared purpose” (Grimes, 2015, para. 4). The profession of the study of political theory, according to Sheldon Wolin, should correspond with civic and public engagement for the betterment of the human condition and democratic participation. If not, political theory and the practice of political philosophy become insignificant, directionless, and unpurposeful. Thus, political theory, Sheldon Wolin wrote, “is primarily a civic and secondarily an academic activity” (Grimes, 2015, para. 7). One can proclaim, from reading Sheldon Wolin’s writing, that his scholarly work displays an immense amount of academic originality and practical wisdom. That being said, especially in relation to giving a practical, community-revivalist, value-oriented theoretical framework and analysis, regarding the protection and renewal of the fundamental ideas behind the US Constitution and democracy.

To the same extent, Sheldon Wolin emphasizes the need for the protection of the democratic mechanisms serving the purpose of limitation of political power as well as the political accountability of the leading American and Western public officials and political leadership. Again, all of this is done in order to ensure and serve the purpose of the continuation and preservation of freedom in democratic societies. This comes particularly after the endangering process of “privatization of public functions” which has a consequential effect on the “immunization of public power against democratic control and public scrutiny (Wolin, 1960, p. 19). In 1981, Wolin introduced the *Journal for Democracy of Political Renewal and Radical Change* exploring the potential and future trajectory of the populist movements in the United States. He clearly states in there that the main purpose of democracy is to “have a more decentralized and local politics, scattered and diffuse” (Grimes, 2015, para. 17). Since the 1970s, Wolin saw the risk of the decline of democratic norms and institutional autonomy due to the close intertwining of corporate power and political power. This was clearly stated in the premises of one of the most important writings of Wolin’s (2008) book “*Democracy Incorporated: Managed Democracy and the Specter of Inverted Totalitarianism*”, where he proclaimed that democracy in the late modern

world “cannot be a complete political system given that the public is becoming so apathetic to the genuine participation to the public realm that potentialities of forms of power relations between citizens and government are becoming managed, submissive, and privatized” (pp. 13-16). I would argue that Sheldon Wolin's project, in its totality, is an attempt to academically retain the reformative character of democracy, re-recognize its encouraging and freedom-giving possibilities to citizens, and foster awareness of the tendencies of the totalizing power given to corporates and private-interest groups at the expense of diminishing local modes of political participation. Additionally, he called for attention to serving and solving real community needs and protecting fundamental human constitutional rights.

### **2.3. The Foundation of Political Philosophy of Al-Ghazali.**

Al-Ghazali wrote a number of scholarly works in different domains of intellectual sciences, including philosophy, theology, law, and quite importantly politics. For our academic purpose, I shall give the best of my intellectual endeavor, from reading directly Al-Ghazali's works related to politics and other serious academic studies in order to understand his political thought and to show with originality and authenticity his stance on the mission, vision, and scope of politics and governance, the what and hows of political thought and action, the relationship between the religious and the political life, politics-law relationship, and the dichotomy between the realpolitik and Islamic orthodoxy. I shall argue that Al-Ghazali's project in the political domain is one of preservation of Islamic orthodoxy, in turbulent times of chaos and bloody conflict, with realpolitik considerations. Thus, naturally, Al-Ghazali derives the mission and vision of the political mission and vision from the Islamic worldview. Nonetheless, Al-Ghazali's view on politics and how it should be arranged in the most practical sense it is not romantic, naïve, or illusory.

I can testify from political and foreign affairs professional experience, that often in politics, one is entitled to choose not between what is good and bad, but between what is bad and worse with the aim to preserve the principle, values, and original vision of virtuous polis. Thus, I reserve the conviction that the political responses toward the given circumstances differ across time and space. Political maneuvering mechanisms thus change considering the social and cultural context. Nonetheless, first and

foremost, the philosophy and practice of politics fundamentally should be value-oriented, based on the virtues of individual responsibility and community-oriented service. Most importantly, the leadership should lead with humility, courage, and self-accountability.

#### **2.4. Al-Ghazali: Judicial Order instead of Anarchy and Peace or Conflict**

Al-Ghazali, whose polymath stature, as mentioned beforehand, needs little introduction, provides a different account pertaining to the domain of politics, as a subfield of knowledge, life, and daily practical activity. In his autobiography *Deliverance from Error*, Al-Ghazali offers the following observations pertaining to politics (Watt, 1952, p. 38):

All their discussion of this is based on considerations of worldly and governmental advantage. These they borrow, from the Divine scriptures revealed through the prophets and from the maxims handed down from the saints of old.

In the remarkable letters of advice sent to Nizamuddin Fakhru'l Al-Mulk, the vezir of the Seljuk Empire at that time, Al-Ghazali stressed the importance of the state as a mechanism enabled to be functional in order to produce order out of chaos through discipline of three types of emerging manifested forces of the souls of individuals in the scope of community life:

Lust, which misdirects one to unhealthy and immoral activities, Anger, which incites to murder, and Greed, involving dishonesty and corruption. If these chiefs could be presented in material form, the first would assume the form of a pig, the second of a dog, and the third that of a devil (Brown, 2006, pp. 2-3).

Furthermore, on Al-Ghazali's political theory, the most important instrument of the state as a hierarchical structure that generates power is the judiciary branch. According to Al-Ghazali, the judiciary branch has the power to legitimize violence, regulate chaos, and generate order through creating, legislating, and changing the law. That is why Al-Ghazali offers a profoundly conceptualized political advice that the independence of the judiciary branch from political interferences signifies the hallmark of a stable society ruled on the basis of justice and balanced order:

Grave consequences would not follow if a king entrusts the office of a minister or that of an executive officer to an inefficient person, but it would be disastrous if he appoints an

undesirable man to a post relating to judiciary, since an executive job or ministership is intended to run the affairs of worldly institutions, while on the contrary judiciary is expected to perform the duties delegated by our Prophet Muhammad, praise and peace be upon him. Judges are required to arrive at their decisions in accordance with the commands of Allah (Brown, 2006, pp. 11-12).

Al-Ghazali in *Moderation in Belief (al-Iqtisad fil al-Itiqad)* examines the relationship between the necessity of the properly constituted judicial and political authorities as means to escape the misfortune of violent spontaneity and disorder:

There are those who hold the imamate is dead, lacking as it does the required qualifications. But no substitute can be found for it. What then? Are we to give up obeying the law? Shall we dismiss the qādīs, declare all authority to be valueless, cease marrying and pronounce the acts of those in high places to be invalid at all points, leaving the population to live in “sinfulness”? Or shall we continue as we are, recognising that the imamate really exists and that all acts of the administration are valid, given the circumstances of the case and the necessities of the actual moment? The concessions made by us are not spontaneous, but necessity makes lawful what is forbidden. We know it is not lawful to feed on a dead animal: still, it would be worse to die of hunger. Of those that contend that the caliphate is dead for ever and irreplaceable, we should like to ask: which is to be preferred, anarchy and the stoppage of social life for lack of a properly constituted authority, or acknowledgement of the existing power, whatever it be? Of these two alternatives, the jurist cannot but choose the latter (Lambton, 1981, p. 110).

Interestingly enough, James Madison (1778) in the Federalist Papers 51, offered a similar constitutional-political point of view on the necessity of independence of people and judiciary branch on checking and balancing the governmental power to Al-Ghazali’s worldview on the independence of the judiciary branch vis-a-vis governmental control and authority (para 3):

In framing a government which is to be administered by men over men, the great difficulty lies in this: you must first enable the government to control the governed; and in the next place oblige it to control itself

Ibn Sina, in his *Shifa*, elaborating on the concept of human collaboration, civilization and politics, through remembrance of the Medinite Prophetic experience, underlines two factors constituting such the world of political life: the proper path of truth in life accompanied by higher metaphysical and moral principles, following from justice (Kalin, 2016). What follows subsequently is a good life based on virtues, compassion, mercy, mutual understanding, and truth. Such eternal principles are forgotten in the day and age of domination, power games, heavy consumerism, and endless craving desires and entitlement of the human being as an entity of mechanically reducible commodity. Notwithstanding, Samuel Huntington (1968) in his work *Political Order in Changing Societies* is reminding us that “the political order is a goal, not a reality”, and politics is not about a “form of government”, rather, it is about the “degree of governance” (pp. 16-20). Thus, Huntington (1968) pointed out the continuous transformable nature of the political order, political knowledge, and interrelated elemental epistemological signifiers in the metaphysical hierarchy of being.

## 2.5. Al-Ghazali's Political Thought: Strengthening Religious Orthodoxy via Realpolitik

The subject matter of this section is to examine the relationship between the preservation of Islamic orthodoxy, law, and politics in Al-Ghazali's political thought. From the chants of people in Egypt in 2011, starting the so-called Arab Revolution in the Middle East to a series of bloody attempts at regime change in Syria, Yemen, and Iraq, the role of ulama has been always critical to adopt a particular stance among people regarding support of a regime change in one way or another. The predominant strand of Islamic Scholarship since the classical period towards power holders generally has been characterized as apolitical, distinguishingly quietist, and compromising (Anjum, 2012). But this quietest attitude, by any stretch of the imagination, is not reflected in the personal conduct of the majority of scholars towards rulers. Most certainly, this is not the case in Al-Ghazali's framework of thinking toward politics and rulers. In first book in the Revival of Religious Sciences series, *the Book of Knowledge*, Al-Ghazali prioritizes the prophetic framework of thinking and action. In the first chapter entitled "Value of Knowledge, Instruction and Learning with its Evidence in Prophetic Reports" he gives rulers and scholars interconnectedly a central role in arranging a successfully cohesive societal sphere citing directly a prophetic report (Faris, 1962). Similarly, an account of checks and balances deeply rooted in the virtues of sincere advice, truthfulness, justice, and critique with courage stemming from the tradition of prophets and companions is emphasized across the book of knowledge, letters sent to Nizam Al-Mulk, and Al-Ghazali's book called *Counsel for Kings*, as a pathway that scholars ought to follow concerning how to conduct the relationship with rulers.

The report on God's Apostle, extracted from Chapter 1, specifically the section on prophetic reports in Al-Ghazali's *Book of Knowledge*, explains the manifest importance and the profound impact of the embedded mission, vision, values, and action of the following two categories of intellectual and political leadership to managing successfully the livelihood of simple people (Faris, 1962, p. 7):

Amongst my community, there are two classes of people. When they are sound, the people are sound, and when they are corrupt, the people are corrupt. They are the ruler and people of insight.

Quite stunningly, Al-Ghazali by citing directly a reported saying of God Apostle's report, in the same chapter, in the section of "Virtues of Teaching" in the *Book of Knowledge*, explains the consequences of the diminishing impact and death of scholars in a ruler's decisions and a community at large:

God does not divest humanity of knowledge after he has bestowed it on them. Rather it disappears with the disappearance of the scholars; each time a scholar passes away with him until there are no scholars remaining. At this time, the people take up with ignorant leaders, who, when questioned, give judgments without knowledge; they are misguided and they misguide others (Faris, 1962, p. 18).

Al-Ghazali's content of political thought is a balancing act between pragmatic instruction for the ruler on how to live the routines of the mundane life with the ideal in mind and heart to attain the hereafter successfully by the service to community and humanity. On the contrary, Al-Ghazali's political thought is well calibrated between recognizing the practical reality of the living conditions of people, the well-thought metaphysical counseling of the state of the mind and heart of the rulers derived from the revealed guidance from the Quranic, prophetic behavior and action, and additionally Sunni Islamic traditional sources, on how to reach a balancing act of living a good life in an earthly and heavenly setting.

In the section named "Elucidation", within the first chapter of the *Book of Knowledge*, Al-Ghazali argues that the earthly existence in the world, rather than serving as a permanent abode, serves as a cultivating field of immense efforts and sacrifices to reach the heavenly world of the hereafter (Faris, 1962). Analogously, the organization of religion, according to Al-Ghazali bears its fruits in this world with the proper arrangement of the affairs of this world. The arrangement of the affairs of this world is related to the efforts and the selected categorized craftsmanship of humankind. Referring to the circumstances of the time when he lived, Al-Ghazali categorizes four groups of craftsmanship necessary for the management and organization of social affairs (Faris, 1962, p. 26):

Agriculture for nourishment, weaving for clothing, building for dwellings, and politics for cohesiveness and social order as well to assure mutual cooperation for the sake of security and general social well-being.

The noblest of all the disciplines aforementioned, in the same section of the *Book of Knowledge* Al-Ghazali mentions the discipline of governance that assures “social cohesiveness and mutual well-being” (Faris, 1962, p. 26). The discipline or occupation of governance, to the same extent, employs and involves necessarily all other crafts and disciplines. According to Al-Ghazali, in the same section of the *Book of Knowledge*, the discipline of politics is categorized into two other types of governance:

The First and most exalted is the governance of the prophets whose governance extends over the entire population, both the elites and the common population, and concerns both their outward deeds and inward thoughts. The Second is that of caliphs, kings, and sultans. Their authority extends over the entirety as well, the elite and the common folks; however, their authority is for outward deeds, not inner thoughts (Faris, 1962, p. 27).

Basically, Al-Ghazali’s characterization of the noblest form of politics is the “politics of prophets” which leads to the rule of hearts of people's minds, character, traits, and habits towards achieving a state of praiseworthy character that leads to certainty in the mind, felicity in the heart, and health in the body as portrayed in the *Book of Knowledge of the Revival of the Religious Sciences* (Faris, 1962, p. 26). Similar to Al-Ghazali’s political worldview, the renowned political scientist of the eleventh century, Al-Mawardi, in the introductory chapter of his magnum opus *Ordinances of Governance*, the translation provided from Yate, from the Center for Muslim Contribution to Civilization, stresses the importance of established authority and order as means to prevent mutual injustice:

Without governance, disorder, and barbaric behaviors would arise amongst the wanton and lawless. The pre-Islamic poet, Al-Afawh al-Awdi said in his poem: There is no benefit to a leaderless people when disorder reigns and they will never have a leader if the ignorant amongst them lead (Yate, 1978, p. 10).

Similarly, a renowned scholar of the political thought of Al-Ghazali, Carole Hillenbrand (1988), in the article named “Islamic Orthodoxy or Realpolitik? Al-Ghazali’s views on Government”, while providing a historical and sociological analysis of Al-Ghazali’s views on government, stresses the fact that the prominence of Al-Ghazali during the reign of the great vizier Nizam al-Mulk came as a byproduct of the process of revitalization of Sunni Islam through a network of Shafi madrasas and the Nizamiyah College (p. 2). The madrasas were meant to produce a class of Shafi scholars in order to oppose Ismaili missionary activities. Hillenbrand's (1988) primary argument was that Al-Ghazali's theory on government is one that holds fast to the

necessity of Islamic orthodoxy nonetheless keeping in mind the turbulent nature of societal order at that time (p. 2). This is so even considering the harsh political realities of the environment of that time, namely the widespread presence of Ismaili and Batinite missionaries aiming to destroy the credal authority of Sunni Islam. According to Hillenbrand (1988), Al-Ghazali was well aware of his own disillusionment with the attainment of perfection in temporal political systems.



# CHAPTER III

## ISLAMIC LAW, DEMOCRACY, AND CHARACTERISTICS OF GOVERNANCE

### 3.1. Al-Mawardi on Conditions of Governance and Qualities of the Rulers

Al-Mawardi in his magnum opus named *Ordinances of Government*, the translation of which into English I refer to as provided by Yate (1978) from the Center for Muslim Contribution to Civilization, outlines a number of qualities that the ruler should possess in order to be considered qualified for the office, at the very beginning of his scholarly work on governance, rulers and the implied ordinances. To the same extent, Al-Mawardi gives both revelation-based and rational arguments for the necessity of the institution of the imamate and sultanate and the accompanying micro-institutions of the governance body. Al-Mawardi as per Yate (1978) provided in his translation a detailed political-philosophical account of the direct linkage between the existence of the responsibilities of the institution of the sultanate as a means to establish successfully the principled values and worldview of the institution of the Muhammedan prophethood which in turn would facilitate the protection of “the deen and manage the affairs of this world” (p. 10).

According to Al-Mawardi, good management of social and human affairs through socially lawful contracts and fulfillment of the exigencies of justice through serving equitable justice when dealing with people’s affairs are additional reasons why the institution of the sultanate should exist (Yate, 1978). Al-Mawardi gives a specific reference to a report, quoted in multiple chains of transmission from God Apostle’s Muhammad, instrumental to his argument why there is a need for delegation of societal affairs and power to competent authorities:

After me, governors will rule over you and those who are upright will rule you by their uprightness and those who are corrupt will rule you by their corruptness: listen to them and obey them in everything which is compatible with truth - if they are correct in their dealings then it will be to your benefit and theirs, and if they act incorrectly then that will still be to your benefit (in the next world) but will be held against them (Yate, 1978, p.11).

Al-Mawardi, also, at the very outset of his *Ordinances of Governance*, to give a clear glimpse of what it takes to have fully qualitative governance, classifies three conditions that make a candidate suitable to rule:

- I. They should be just – meaning justice as a quality should embody all other implied categories of the character of the ruler,
- II. They should possess knowledge – meaning they should possess the knowledge and whatever else is derived as a condition from this quality,
- III. They possess insight and wisdom – meaning they should possess experience and good morals in upright management of the offices of administration (Yate, 1978, p. 11).

While following the continuation of Al-Mawardi's political analysis of what the right conditions for a ruler to fit into such a framework. There is a list of qualities that are different from conditions that were presented in the previous lines. These qualities, according to Al-Mawardi, are the extension of the outward and inward qualities that the upcoming leader of the land shall possess in order to bring its power into effect fully and as much as possible fitting to the application of law and order to the benefit of the wider society. The qualities that a ruler should possess are presented in a summarized manner, nonetheless in a chronological fashion, as follows:

- I. Justice together with its all conditions.
- II. The knowledge that equips them for independent reasoning and decision-making in unexpected circumstances of trials, tribulations, and special difficulties,
- III. Possession of good health in the pivotal faculties of sight, speech, and hearing,
- IV. Being normal, without any deficiency, in the movement of limbs.
- V. Courage and bravery to defend the territory of the state and launch successfully the defensive capabilities against the potential danger of the enemy,
- VI. Precedence from the family of Quraish due to a reported hadith on passing the line of political command and authority from the Quraish line (Yate, 1978, p. 12).

When it comes to the methodology for the selection of the leader, considering the political realities of that time, two approaches are stipulated as legitimate by Al-Mawardi: “The first formational approach is the one of imamate from the election of a majority of people with power and influence” (pp. 13-14). According to Al-Mawardi (1978), the second formational method of the state is “one of a direct delegation from the one holding the position of power beforehand (pp. 13-14). In terms of the highly selective criteria of the leader of the land, Al-Mawardi, considers even the probabilistic prospects of a given circumstance where if two people fulfill equally the qualities of being qualified for leadership, he lays out three filtering criteria into the equation:

- I. If the two prospective candidates for being leaders are equal in terms of age, the preference is given to the one who is most advanced in age,
- II. If out of the two prospective candidates for being leaders, one of them performs more excellently in knowledge, while the other one is more advanced in courage, the given time and specific circumstances are considered respectively (Yate, 1998, pp. 14-15).

Specifically, if there is widespread injustice, a greater tendency for tyranny, and the need is to protect or expand the borders of the state, then the candidate to be selected would be the one who is more advanced in courage and boldness. But, if the society is encapsulated with tranquility, stability, and order, priority regarding the selection of the prospective candidate is given to the one who is excellent in knowledge due to the protection of the mind of the general public from innovations and outside cultural interventionism.

### **3.2. Al-Ghazali on Characteristics of the Rulers**

After spending a considerable amount of writing passages on provided explanations of the principles of a creed which are the roots of faith, Al-Ghazali wrote the book *Counsel for Kings (Nasihah Al-Mulk)*, whose translation is provided by F.R.C. Bagley (1964). It provides the springboard and the cornerstone for the principled thinking, action, and worldview of the rulers based on the statesmanship which should promote and embody stability, prosperity, a sense of justice flowing from peace and preservation of orthodoxy in the lands of Muslims and non-Muslims. Al-Ghazali starts his list of advice, suggestions, and criticisms for improvement of the living conditions with a comprehensive description of the character, purpose, and duties of the statesmen that should be derived from the prophetic practical conduct of thought, behavior, attitude, words, and actions. Furthermore, Al-Ghazali advises straightforwardly that the ruler should visit, and seek the advice and counsel of pious scholars. Al-Ghazali's hierarchy of the ruler-scholar relationship, as per Faris' (1962) translation is portrayed as follows in the *Book of Knowledge*: the best of rulers are the ones at the doors of scholars, while the worst of scholars are the ones staying at the doors of rulers. Al-Ghazali starts the first counsel for kings in his *Nasihah Al-Mulk*, (1964, trans. Bagley), with words and advice that draw the attention of rulers to understand the importance, meaning the privilege and responsibility, of the given authority in their hands. On the other hand, Al-Ghazali introduces what are the great dangers of misusing the authority and power, leading to the destruction of the societal well-being, corruption, bloodshed,

not putting the right people in the right places, and varieties of political dysfunctionalities leading to chaos and adding to individual and collective suffering.

At the very beginning of giving the counsel to kings/rulers/statesmen, Al-Ghazali (1964), relates the importance and blessing of power and authority to God's Apostle's transmitted tradition on ruling, stating that "one day of just rule by an equitable sultan is more meritorious than sixty years of continual worship" (p. 14). Al-Ghazali's purpose here is to establish the premise between the righteous exercise of power and political authority and the obtainment of unsurpassed happiness. With the same continuity and clarity of vision of providing clear links between God's Apostle's - transmitted worldview on the necessity of governance and earthly and heavenly happiness, Al-Ghazali (1964) references the prophetic tradition that on the day of resurrection, the only shade or shelter remaining will be the shelter of God, and in that shelter, seven types of people will reside, among them the just ruler (p. 14). Moreover, Al-Ghazali in his political thought and action is very keen and careful to not attach a blindly automatized critique towards rulers, thus providing the space to make objectively the case that what sometimes is the typical scholarly preconceived notion of the ruling elite as evil, non-responsible, greedy, gluttonous and corrupt should not be either the epistemological or ontological baseline from where to start the proper judgment of the political activity of the ruling class. In order to proof-demonstrate his claim of establishing an objective terrain of judgment towards rulers, Al-Ghazali in *Nasihah Al-Mulk* (Bagley, 1964) established very clearly what are the rights and responsibilities of rulers, statesmen, and kings as a criterion to only then provide an objective critique to their activity. Al-Ghazali goes further by referencing God's Apostle's transmitted tradition emphasizing that just actions of the rulers affecting simple people are carried to the heavens each day, while each prayer of a just ruler is worth seventy thousand prayers. With respect to the same perfunctory act of the judgment of the ruler's activity, Al-Ghazali lays out the terrific menace and peril of the ruler's bad governance, namely poverty, disease, bloodshed, and corruption due to the acts of governance of rulers based on pure tyranny, passion, greed, lust, and absolutization of power.

Following God's Apostle's transmitted tradition on the inward and outward qualities of the rulers, in *Counsel for Kings*, as per Bagley's translation (1964), Al-Ghazali

distinguished three types of profound qualities that need to be nourished, worked on, and disciplined when it comes to the effective applicability of the craft of statesmanship, governance, and ruling. According to Al-Ghazali, these qualities of the rulers, adjusted to a variety of circumstances arising be it war or peaceful times, including three types of performative actions (Bagley, 1964, p. 15):

- I. “When the ruler is asked for mercy – he shows it,
- II. When the ruler is asked for judgment – he renders it,
- III. When the ruler gives their words – they keep it”

Likewise, deducing from God’s Apostle’s transmitted tradition in *Counsel for Kings*, Al-Ghazali provides another set of characteristics, traits, and attributes that should be the content of the character that the rulers uphold in order to prevent injustice and instill peace and habitable order. While epistemologically analyzing Al-Ghazali’s Sufi transformation after he lived through a mental and spiritual crisis, these characteristics are related to the disciplining of the soul and nourishment of practical action and include the following: Rulers should discipline their mind to be a God-conscious mind, follow the path of piety and chastity, and live a frugal life. Interestingly enough, Al-Ghazali, as per Bagley’s translation, following another saying of God’s Apostle, in *Counsel for Kings*, states that “If any man is granted authority over people, and he does not look upon them as the members of their household, his place will be in hell” (p. 15). Thus, Al-Ghazali strikingly increased attention and awareness for training the ruler’s character in all possible dimensions of the worldview, belief, and attitude in treating people as dignified human beings with fundamental rights and responsibilities.

The rulers, according to Al-Ghazali should treat the people as dignified human beings with rights and responsibilities, accord them fair treatment, protect them against injustice, and maintain impartiality between the more fortunate and less fortunate (Bagley, 1964). To the same extent, Al-Ghazali provides the opposite qualities, acts, and impoverished behavior of rulers toward people. The impoverished behaviors of rulers include arbitrary judgment towards people breaking the principle of impartiality, and engagement of people to do labor for the state without discharging the debt that the state owes them for their public service (Bagley, 1964, pp. 14-16). Islamic intellectual tradition when analyzing metaphysically the world of human existence,

always congruently attached the unbroken bond between the inner (*al-batin*) and the outer (*al-zahir*). Essentially, what is out there externally – in the outside realm, is nothing else except what is inside our soul. This is a direct relationship. Al-Ghazali embodies in his political worldview the same conceptualized unbroken bond between the inward qualities of the soul of the ruler and the outcome of the appliance of the political ideas, principles, and acts of service to either war, chaos, conflicts, and disorder or peace, prosperity, economic enrichment, and respect for universal human rights. To be more precise, Al-Ghazali, in his *Counsel of Kings*, on the third principle portrays the clash between instinctive passions and reason guided by revelation, when applied to the virtue-minded ruling of rulers:

The ruler must act justly towards his subjects and keep his staff, household, and sons on the path of justice. Nobody can do this unless he first observes justice inside himself. Now justice consists of restraining passions, instincts and anger in order to make them prisoners of reason guided by religion (Bagley, 1964, p. 24).

Analogously, Al-Ghazali constructs an irrevocable relation between the perfection or disciplining of the passions and instincts of the soul and the spring of justice as a normal bifurcation to the intellect of the ruler and society thereof. Achieving justice inside the soul brings to the faculty of reason what is called the equilibrium state where things are perceived as they are in reality. Furthermore, Al-Ghazali on the fourth principle in the *Counsel for Kings*, argues that it is a necessity for the ruler to uphold, control, and exercise authority over his anger, otherwise, the consequences of pride and anger dominating him will result in injustice (Bagley, 1964). If that would be the case, that is, if pride and anger become the dominant qualities of the soul of the ruler, he should refrain from deciding in public, and he should bend such evil inclinations in the direction of forgiveness and make the habit of generosity and forbearance the ruling principle of his political modus operandi (Bagley, 1964). Al-Ghazali continues to expound in the fifth principle in the *Counsel for Kings*, that it is truly necessary for the rulers to apply the principle of fairness as the leading principle to justice, by stating that in every situation that emerges, the ruler should impose on his own mind that he is the subject while the other person is the holder of authority and that he should not sanction for others anything that he would not sanction for himself:

If any person wishes to be saved from hell and enter heaven, when death finds him, he must find the words to say ‘There is no God but God’; and he must never sanction for any Muslim that which he cannot sanction for himself (Bagley, 1964, pp. 28-29).

The seventh, eighth, and ninth principles in the *Counsel for Kings* comprise authentic pieces of advice, suggestions, and methodologies for the perfection of behaviors of rulers in terms of self-regulation combined with self-contentment. Specifically, the rulers should have just conduct when it comes to behaving gently and avoiding harshness with people as much as possible, and most importantly cultivate a sense of love and mercy for people coming from all different societal strata, economic statuses, and cultural origins. It is worth underlining here the fascinating intellectual fashion in terms of how Al-Ghazali gave a detailed account of how the ruler should commit himself not to fall prey to the praise that people falsely attribute him by forming the conviction in his mind that all people are contented with his governance. Specifically, interrelated to the false consciousness that a ruler may develop about the quality of his governance, Al-Ghazali in *The Counsel for Kings* envisions a particular scenario in how the holder of the authority can escape from that self-delusional stage and examine real problems, challenges, and problems that people face in multiple levels of governance:

A holder of authority should not let himself be deluded by the praise he gets from anyone who approaches him to believe that all the subjects are pleased with him. On the contrary, such praise is entirely due to fear. He must therefore appoint trustworthy persons to carry on intelligence and inquire about his standing among the people, so that he may be able to learn his faults from men's tongue (Bagley, 1964, p. 30).

The renowned British historian and scholar of early medieval Islamic political theory, Ann Lambton (1981), in her seminal work named *State and Government in Medieval Islam* offered the scholarly opinion that the political writings of Al-Ghazali, are, by a large margin, an extension of his extraordinary thought on theology and juridical methodology (p. 126). Moreover, Lambton (1981) stipulated that Al-Ghazali's theory on governance, accompanying the acceptance of the maxim that the final object of politics was to prepare man for eternal happiness in the next world, in a way legitimatizes the maxim that religion and temporal power in some regards are twins. According to Lambton (1981), the highest ideal of Ghazali's political theory for eternal happiness nonetheless did not make him blind to the realities and dangers of civil strife, disorder, and anarchy. Hence, Lambton brings another argument to her scholarly display, that Al-Ghazali was a realist, and recognized the political facts on the terrain as they were.

Al-Ghazali's political theory, according to Lambton (1981), has three critical aspects: Firstly, the comprehension of the necessary power to accomplish the maintenance of order. Secondly it symbolized and represented the collective unity and historical continuity of the Muslim community, and thirdly the institution of government derives its functional and institutional authority from the sharia or Islamic law (p. 132). While, Al-Ghazali's works named *Al-Mustazhiri and Iqtisad Fi al-I'tiqad*, according to Lambton (1981), laid out more of a theoretical conception of the state in the form of an absolute monarchy, while *Nasihah Al-Mulk* is more concerned with the practical duties of the ruler (pp. 134-136). Another seminal work on the study of Al-Ghazali's political philosophy, is a doctoral dissertation named "Political Philosophy of Al-Ghazali: An Analysis", by Kamarudin (1997) at the Institute of Islamic Studies at McGill University. He clearly brings forth the argument that the circumstances that led Al-Ghazali to develop his political theory were shaped by his encounter with the Abbasid Court and the Seljuq Sultanate, combined with his own colored theological and jurisdictional background, but with the overriding concern to contribute to a stable society which at least can secure unequivocally the practice of religion, even though sometimes the common folks can find themselves in oppressive tyrannical regimes.

### **3.3. The Modes of Interaction and Division between Democracy, Islamic Law, and Modern State**

Ann K.S. Lambton, in her seminal work named *State and Government in Medieval Islam* published in 1981, provided a comprehensive analysis on where the derivative root of the starting discussions on government is for the "Muslim", symbolizing the Islamic epistemological and ontological worldview implications. Specifically, for Lambton (1981), the Islamic political theory of the state, historically speaking, did not ask the question of why the state exists. On the contrary, according to Lambton (1981), the for-granted foundation and epistemological baseline for the existence and proper functioning of the government was the law of God, the sharia (p. 14). Lambton (1981), brings out another brilliant and authentic scholarly contrasting comparison between the Greek political theorists and Islamic political thinkers concerning the foundation of the basis of the state and the sources of its law, introspectively observing that for Greek political thinkers, the foundation of the political theory was closely connected with moral philosophy, while for the Islamic political theorists, both analogously and

contradictorily, political science as an intellectual and practical enterprise is intentionally connected with ethics, but first and foremost with theology (pp. 16-18). Accordingly, for Lambton (1981), both Muslim political theorists in Islamic scholarly tradition and Greek political theorists have a common set of advocacies, which is to say, both coherently advance and proliferate the virtues of the common good for society, enabled by the common moral purpose of the individual.

Lambton (1981) through a thorough examination of the trilogy religion-law-state, brings to light, another authentic scholarly reflection on the difference between the Aristotelian modicum of political theory and Islamic political theory (p. 16). Specifically, referring to Lambton's (1981), in Aristotle's political science hierarchy, the content of the political theory consisted of the state, a theory of morals, and a theory of law, while in the Islamic political worldview, that law precedes the state, namely state exists to protect, provide, and secure the application of the law (pp. 16 - 17). Moreover, following Lambton's (1981) examination of the genealogy and typology of the diverse Muslim political theories, the evolution of the body of political ideals, in the Islamic political historical worldview, passed through three types of theoretical traditions: The theory of jurists, the theory of philosophers, and the literary theory (p. 17). All three historical Islamic political traditions, at their very epistemic assumptions of the body of political ideals, address the necessity for the existence of the state as a precursor to enablement in due course of the earthly life of the community and its divine duty to the maintenance of the Islamic sharia, with an overwhelming concentration on the political uphold the position of the ruler to pragmatically apply his authority through government apparatus. According to Lambton (1981), among the three formulations of the political theories, the first formulation, namely the formulation led by jurists is the most truly Islamic in content (p. 17). Continuing on this line of argumentation, the Islamic formulation of political theory from jurists contains three root parts and genealogical sources: The Quran, the tradition of the prophet, the practice of the early Islamic community, the ijma or scholarly/community consensus fortified by textual divine guidance, and shurah/consultation (Lambton, 1981). Henceforth, according to Lambton (1981), the so-called boundaries between politics, law, morals, and theology are somewhat blurred. Hence, Islamic political thought is cross-fertilized between the different sets of ideas, concepts, and thoughts deriving from the aforementioned disciplines. To this extent, the distinction between

the secular and the spiritual does not hold, in the worldview of the political order of Al-Ghazali and Islamic political thought, by any stretch of practical denotation and implication, or by any significance or meaning.

Wael Hallaq, in his seminal work named *The Impossible State*, published by Columbia University Press in 2013, presents a serious study on the interlinkage between Islam, politics, and modern morality's predicament by providing both a theoretical substance and empirical direction to the so-called Islamic governance and law. Hallaq's (2013) analysis is drawn from an Islamic perspective of law, politics, and morality but fills the intellectual gaps in building a more comprehensive theory on the possibilities and impossibilities of Islamic governance with the engagement of Western political science, philosophy, morality, and law. Moreover, Hallaq (2013) postulates explicitly the argument that the Islamic state by any stretch of a comparative standard to the normal definition of what constitutes the modern state, is simply impossible and contradictory to be brought into life (pp. 6-7). Specifically, until the early nineteenth century, the shariah law was the regulating supreme moral and legal force of the society and government. Hallaq (2013) brings forth the arguments, building upon John Rawls' conception, that the shariah as a paradigmatic system was accepted as a centralized system of general societal norms that maintained well-ordered governance across the dynastic Muslim and non-Muslim lands. However, by the beginning of the nineteenth century, due to the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire as well as colonialism by European powers, the Shariatic system as a meta-system of socioeconomic and political regulation was dismantled and eviscerated. Thus, according to Hallaq (2013), the shariah was reduced to a paradigmatic system of law providing no more than just raw legalistic guidance, mostly reduced to secondary and tertiary legal subtleties, for the legislation and regulation of personal affairs. Shariah lost its practical social agency and operational autonomy in favor of modern state expediency (p. 7). However, Hallaq (2013) describes an interesting discrepancy between the leading Islamic intellectual elites and political leadership accepting, imitating, and gradually implementing the modern state model as a natural reality for the great majority of Muslims, for whom the only source of moral authority remains shariah (p. 9). Hallaq (2013) finds very peculiar, contradictory, and false, the whole phenomenon of modern Islamic scholars positing that nationalism together with the modern state-based paradigmatic model

was launched originally from the Islamic constitution drafted in Medina during the time of the prophet Muhammad.

Continuing this line of argumentation, Hallaq (2013) contends that any conception of a modern Islamic state, namely the aggregate implications of a form of Islamic governance in western modernity, is inherently contradictory and impossible. Hallaq (2013) insists that the impossibility of Islamic governance in modernity directly results from the lack of a morally sound environment with all its microcosmic manifestation of the modern macroscopic material, constitutional, structural, philosophical, and conceptual framework of values. The moral problems emerging out of the implementation of the modernity project premises enumerated by Hallaq (2013) start from the widening economic inequalities, the organic loss of social capital, and gradual weakening of the sense of belonging of social units up to the rise of oppressive economic units and the destruction wrought against the environment and natural habitat (p. 9). The practical impossibility of the implementation of the Islamic mode of governance in modernity is centered on the moral and epistemic differences as much as in the material, physical, and practical matters of conduct as well. Practically speaking, Hallaq (2013) suggests that the postcolonial nationalistic rule of Muslim elites pursued oppressively the very same colonial policies that European colonizers towards their fellow Muslims paving the road for establishing a state apparatus that is authoritarian, oppressive, and violent. Thus, the traditional mode of political organization based on Islamic law, morality, and culture, even in Muslim-majority lands, was substituted by the robotic implementation of political, legal, and cultural premises of modernity in the Islamic world. The results: A massive failure leading to the establishment of oppressive, violent, and corrupt political regimes all across Muslim-majority lands in the Middle East and beyond.

Decisively, Hallaq (2013) argues, he is compelled to dismiss the modern experiment in the Islamic world as a failure at multiple levels of theoretical analysis and practical implications. The net result of what is allegedly called the post-colonial modern state period, starting from Iran to Algeria, Iraq to Syria, in Hallaq's (2013) scholarly analysis, resulted in political abuse of Islamic law and the death of the spirit of the institutions that worked for the common benefit of people. This is reflected in the cognitive moral dissonance of the majority of Muslims between their moral and

cultural aspirations and realities of the modern world. Hallaq (2013) rightly observes that the realities of the advanced modern science and health technologies, third and fourth-wave industrial and technological revolutions, capitalism, nationalism, and American monoculture globalization have fairly shaken two-thirds of the world population, including Muslims in the Middle East and the Gulf States, which contributed to the loss of the sense of historical identity and disarray of the previous lived Islamic organic life (pp. 12-13). Devastating wars, rampant diseases, poverty, and destruction of the natural environment are the unfortunate day-to-day realities that innocent Muslims face with courage and humility, from Syria to Egypt, from Yemen to Lebanon, from Libya to African states.

Furthermore, Wael Hallaq presents a list of five form-properties without which the modern state cannot exist, in the following order:

- I. The state is a historical product of the politico-cultural arrangement that is European in origin,
- II. The state sovereignty and its metaphysics is politically and ideologically constructed around the idea of will to representation in domestic and international dimensions,
- III. The state is the law-giver par excellence which has the authority to produce law, legislate law, and implement the law,
- IV. The state possesses the rational bureaucratic machine which is in practice the administrative order and it is an integral part of the legal order which exhibits domination over citizens,
- V. The modern state through European and American cultural hegemony enables the global politicization of the cultural (Hallaq, 2013, pp. 27 – 35).

According to Hallaq (2013), Islamic governance rests on moral, political, legal, social, and metaphysical foundations which are dramatically different in the foundation from the modern state functioning paradigm. In Islamic governance, the nation of the modern states is displaced from the community of believers. Moreover, the community is governed by the moral-legal concepts and principles of Islamic law. Consequently, according to Hallaq (2013) the boundaries and defining concepts of the community as the essential organic unit of the state are set from the Islamic law or Shariah. The general moral working principles of the state apparatus defined as the community of citizens that are equal to each other and stand undifferentiated before God are a representation of the divine moral will. Nonetheless, Islamic law consists of a conglomerate of hermeneutical, theoretical, conceptual, practical, educational, and institutional systems that build the legal and moral state whose structural intention is to facilitate the difficulties of the mundane existence in order to promote the welfare

of the individuals and community to obey and worship the Creator freely. Whereas, according to Hallaq (2013), the modern state cannot exist without its sovereignty and the sovereign will of the individual. Hallaq provides thence one of the most comprehensive and up-to-date differences between Islamic governance and modern state functioning values, foundation, structures, and principles.

Similarly, Oliver Roy (1994) in his seminal work named “*The Failure of Political Islam*”, posed the question if the contemporary Islamic political movements offered an alternative to Muslim societies to build social harmony, economic development, and political equilibrium. The answer: in the majority of Muslim societies that was not the case. The gist of Roy’s argument is that the failure of political Islam all across Muslim lands came due to the radical secularization of the Muslim intellectual elites as a counter-response to European colonialism. Specifically, according to Roy (1994), the intellectual and political elites in the Islamic world adopted socialism and communism as feedback to colonialism. For Roy (1994), the Islamic political imagination is found in generic statements like the following one: there is no separation between politics and religion. Such a rhetorical usage, according to Roy (1994) is blind and conceals the creation of new types of states, the birth of new classes of societies, and the invention of new political ideologies. Roy (1994) states that contemporary political movements like Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt and the Indo-Pakistani Jamaat-i Islami party endeavored a new thought that considered Islam as primarily a political system (p. 5). Roy (1994) used the term “Islamism” to define the contemporary movements that defined Islam as a political movement (p. 6). Islamism, in Roy’s usage of the term, did not alter the political landscape of the Middle East. According to Roy (1994), such contemporary political movements have been spreading from Pakistan to Algeria but they lost the original impetus and became socially democratized. As such, the existence of such political movements does not offer a different model that brings a brighter future for society. To this extent, according to Roy (1994), on the one hand, Islamic law and tradition are used as a mere cover to justify ethnic, tribal, and communal division on Muslim-majority lands, while on the other hand, the Islamic reformation of the economic system is used as a mere rhetorical device to mask either a third world state socialism or a liberal form of economic speculation that gears more towards manipulation than towards production. Thus, according to Roy (1994), the crisis of the implementation of political Islam led

to the permanence of autocratic regimes, religious and ethnic segmentation, the destitution of the middle class, the unemployment of the educated, the growing number of masses who live in the city without being properly integrated. Oliver Roy is very careful to not equalize the failure of political Islam with the Islamic culture because to him Islam is not the cause of the crisis but it could have been easily the cure.



## CHAPTER IV

### SHELDON WOLIN'S POLITICAL THOUGHT AND LEGACY

#### 4.1. Continuity and Innovation in Western Political Thought and the 'Managed Democracy'

The stature of Sheldon Wolin as one of the most prominent political philosophers of the twenty-first century was established as such, after publishing his masterpiece intellectual work on the history of political philosophy in the Western tradition, from the past to the present, named *Politics and Vision*, at the Princeton University, initially in 1960, and then in the form of an expanded edition, in 2004. Sheldon Wolin's substantive approach in studying political theory not only as a form of societal or institutional organization but rather as a living tradition with a firmly established study of the ancient past to bear witness to the concrete outcome of the present political processes, systems, and organic entities, with an embodied worldview, a long history, with a specific set of problems, solutions, and a distinctive language. Quite importantly, to follow up on previewing analytically Wolin's (2004) rich introspections on the tradition of western political thought, his political critique of democracy, integrating the historical lenses of study of the ancient, medieval, and modern forms of democratic institutional and societal organization present one of the most accurate conceptualizing political and philosophical systems on how the present and the forthcoming political systems may look like for the West. Wolin is deeply thoughtful, and keen on strengthening intellectually and publicly the participatory model of democratic action and shared purpose for the inclusive solution of societal problems of divisiveness and inequality, through a more decentralized decision-making system. Reading his scholarly work is worth dedicating time and mental energy as a precursor to absorb his key explanations, suggestions, criticisms, and solutions on how to improve democracy as the best of the available models of institutional organization and social arrangements, with all the flaws and disproportions of frequent inequality, heavy technologization that often have hidden

intentions for the abuse of political power and exploitation of natural and human resources.

Sheldon Wolin in his own words, in *Politics and Vision*, professes after publishing the expanded version of the original work published in (2004), namely writing new chapters and modifying the scholarly work, was the concern and worry of what he called “the most highly sophisticated and concentrated system of power”. Still, his belief remains intact that the American political experience in combating totalitarian regimes had been more and more intensively incorporated as a practice and value of the American political decision-making elites for frequent interference in the international system sometimes rightfully so, sometimes manipulatively and abusively. Sheldon Wolin gave an insight and thoughtful critique on another tremendously prolific scholarly work on democracy and different typologies of political theory, named *Democracy Incorporated: Managed Democracy and the Specter of Inverted Totalitarianism*, published at Princeton University Press in 2008, to another concerning declining participatory democracy trend, that was happening, in the democratic civic life amongst citizens in the West. Specifically, Wolin (2008) explained the concerning declining participatory rate of American citizens in elections and other electoral bodies due to the direct witnessing of their own how very frequently the free-market economic superpowers are coupled with the political system in Washington and share benefits to only a few in society, “Similarly, the demos have changed from citizens to occasional voters” (p. 214). Wolin employed the term “Inverted Totalitarianism” to articulate the emergence of the two concerning trends. Specifically, on one hand, the emergence of occasional voters due to the power of corporations over political processes and the economy, while on the other hand, an increasingly accumulating power of the state apparatus emerged to control, punish, survey, direct, and impact citizens in their political and consuming decisions. Nonetheless, Wolin, in his work *Politics and Vision*, counts the blessings that bear fruit in public life due to the implementation of the check and balance constitutional mechanism, a product of the original liberal-democratic process emerging from the founding fathers' legal illuminist ideas, that actually miraculously work against regimentation oppression and discriminatory tendencies based on ethnicity, race, gender, or sexual orientation.

According to Wolin (2004), the driving complex forces of science and technology supplemented by the corporate capital are blending with the political authority of the democratic state thus creating the precedent of an expansive system of powers that numerous times accepted no limits of checks exercised upon them until the force of law implemented by courts impose limits on them. These forms of power blending in terms of the political, technological, and corporate complex factors are cumulative and self-reviving, and their effect, according to Wolin (2004), are not changing only his homeland which is America but is taking form and shaping the distant societies as well. This is what Wolin calls the new scientific, technological, and economic revolution. These revolutions, referring to Wolin (2004), speaking from his standpoint as a political theorist that has the character of the historian, have always furnished governments with “unprecedented means of waging war, controlling the population, and improving the well-being of their citizens” (p. 18). Interestingly enough, Wolin did not use the term political revolution here. Why? In some later passages, in *Politics and Vision*, Wolin (2004), states that the post-modern scientific and technological methods of organization, systematization and spread of ideas and beliefs are perfect in terms of their distinctive capability to generate power and will speedily and rapidly anywhere in the world. While political revolutions of the past were more localized and they needed at least a lot more time to widespread across continents and the globe. Wolin (2004) employs another term titled “obedient citizenry”, which according to him, represents what signifies the transition or passage from modern to postmodern power, namely signifying a new era where democracy as an institution has become only a formal connection between the political community of the citizens and the state (p. 18). Hence, democracy as an institution transformed itself into an intermediary mechanism that became essentially instrumental to the legitimization of the symbiosis between the de-facto economic powers with the de-jure governmental political authority. Luckily, according to Wolin (2004), these totalizing massive postmodern power formations are constrained by the ideals of constraining, checking, and balancing the authority in the American letter and spirit of constitutional law, the body of the supreme court, the patriotic public administration, and the general anti-big government sentiment among the public and deep care and worry for the preservation of liberty and autonomy of choice.

Wolin, outlines in a masterful theorizing manner, in *Politics and Vision* (2004), through using the historical lenses of his organized philosophical knowledge of politics, the evolution of the paradigms of state power formation from massively bureaucratic authoritarian states, types such as Vichy in France and Peron in Argentina, to welfare states, types such as American New Deal of President Roosevelt to Britain's post-war Labor government. Consequently, according to Wolin (2004), the states applied power primarily "by enlarging the size and scope of governmental and party bureaucracies" (p. 18). Theorization of the new modes of political philosophy in the twenty-first century revolves around the basic creed of democratic ideals substantiated nonetheless essentially by a practical engagement with the global consumerist culture of the economic capitalist totalizing system. Furthermore, Wolin (2004) inserts chapters on Marx and Nietzsche in *Politics and Vision*, as he pronounces the illustration the diversity of the modes of the theoretical engagement with the latent ideal of the political organization and distribution of centralized power, but he addresses the underlying significance of cultural and economic power to the current status of democracy. Sheldon Wolin (2014) inserted an intellectual and practical counterplay between the political philosophical accounts of Karl Popper and John Rawls as beacons of the ideal political substance of liberalism, free-market economy, technology, and science in the twentieth-century vis-à-vis Dewey's philosophical analysis of the politicization of science, technology, and capital. Wolin is careful enough to recognize a kind of equilibrium between the economic and social benefits that modern technology and science brought and the power of legitimate authority, but he is very concerned with the detailed scrutinization of the distribution of power. Namely, according to Wolin (2004), the power of the governmental institutions should be legitimate, shared, checked, and principally essential derived from the collective active citizenry. Sheldon Wolin in *Democracy Incorporated: Managed Democracy and the Specter of the Inverted Totalitarianism* (2008), goes on to argue, with a very critical tone for a form of democracy that is emerging in the postmodern societies in the West, primarily America followed closely from European democracies as well. This democracy, according to Wolin (2008), in the post-modern context, is managed by the abstract, non-physical threat of violence, namely includes the creation, collection, control, and storage of information as a form of unparalleled potential to surveil an increasingly massive number of the communication network of domestic

and global interconnections, which signify the expansion of depersonalized relations and technologization of society.

Historical study of political modes of knowledge, despite its richness, depth, and repeatable patterns of the human reaction towards power accumulation, distribution, and socio-economic implicated dynamics is necessary and tremendously informative in order to prevent and escape from the bloody consequence of the regimes like Hitler in Germany, Mao in China and Stalin in the Soviet Union. These political modes of historical knowledge of different types of political regimes are sufficient enough to provide a semi-predictable future where the democratic-established models of the Western powers, and the world, as a whole, are heading, namely what political philosophy possibilities and paradigms will be embodied within the upcoming decades to come. Sheldon Wolin through his intellectual precision in *Politics and Vision* (2004) recognized what are the current actualized potentialities of the post-modern political condition, as he in a very articulated political rhetoric describes the phenomenon of the “wiring of the world” as an illustration of the prevailing dominant stream of globalization and international foreign affair system yet as an indication of the preservation of the state in the international organized anarchical order in close partnership with economic elites and corporates. Correspondingly, Wolin (2004), continues to explore how the current manifestation of the modes of political distribution of the globalized post-modern American and European nations in terms of the concentrated wealth and power at the top is juxtaposed with contrasting economic, cultural, political, and social identity-based progressive type leftist movements demands and requests for human dignity, equality, and freedom from oppression. In Wolin’s (2004) own words, in *Politics and Vision*, post-modern political power undergoes an interesting phenomenon of bifurcation between being simultaneously concentrated and segregated (p. 18):

While a nation-state boasts *e pluribus unum* (from plurality to unity), a veritable host of groups—feminists, multiculturalists, defenders of ethnicity, environmentalists—proclaim *e uno plures* (from unity to plurality).

Such a noticeably new development, according to Wolin (2004), requires new employment of the political conceptualization of what should be the role of the citizen and the prospects of democracy vis-à-vis the invasive nature of globalization and the dominant role of corporations (p. 22). Wolin in his seminal work *Politics and Vision* (2004), using a legacy-related language, clearly affirms with a very positive conveyed intellectual tone, the need for senior scholars in academia to lay out the terrain and encourage the new generations of political theorists to

engage in the difficult yet very possible task of reinvigorating the politics of democratic theory and redefining the political at large.

#### **4.2. Sheldon Wolin's Fugitive Democracy Conceptualization: Political Theory from Vocation to Invocation**

The contrasting tension between Wolin's theorizing postulated stance on the autonomy of political theory and philosophy of politics, on the one hand, and the emerging post-modern forms of democratic anomalies, namely fugitive democracy, corporate-based governance, and imperial citizenship, on the other hand, can be experienced while coming across and reading his comprehensively vigorous written political thought. Analogous to the above-presented analysis, Sheldon Wolin in his own words, in another Princeton University press publication named: *Fugitive Democracy and Other Essays*, published in 2016 and edited by Nicholas Xenos, self-confesses the tension that stroked him as a true believer in a more of an organic and primordial form of democracy, from the antagonism between the individualism of the political theory and the commonality of democracy. Furthermore, Wolin (2016), somewhat via subconscious sarcasm posed the question, while, at the same time, providing the answer in rhetorical modus, on whether the democrat should be suspicious of the theorist. Thus, Wolin (2016) announces the following public secret of the American and Europe lived democratic experience: namely the experienced nervousness between the democratic theorist who sets out to prescribe the essential democratic policies – foreign and domestic and the essential form of democratic institutions and the American citizens who reflect upon the unsuccessful marketing of sameness, inclusion, and exceptionalism. Conceivably, what sets apart Wolin's system of political theory and his philosophically critical analysis of the theoretical and practical end of the democratic theory is his exceptional ability to differentiate what is concrete from abstract and what is particular from universal in the historical trajectory of the development of democratic theory. Specifically, Wolin's detailed construction of the political analysis on fugitive democracy (2016) and the agitated times of the new public philosophy constituted from manipulative electoral politics, popular entertainment, disturbing demagoguery, and the industrious misinformation of masses represents an affront to the exaggeratedly romanticized sentimentalism of political theory thinkers and leaders to embrace and embody uncritical forms of massiness patriotism and modified forms of democratic menaces leading to elitism and popular

resentment. Likewise, Wolin's sharp public declaration and concern about the new phenomenon of fugitive democracy and vocational politics (2016) shed light on his careful critique of the conventional ideas of democracy such as popular sovereignty, majority rule, and equality, when such embodied concepts in the very spirit of American democracy, day in and day out share a kinship with manipulative electoral lobbying systems, aggregated power, and disturbingly invasive culture of mass consumption.

Parodically, the attempted advertising of the goodness and moral superiority of the politics of sameness and massiness from the conservatives and liberals contradicts the very balancing tendencies of the founding fathers from James Madison to Alexander Hamilton and others whose primary motive was to build an American constitutional democratic system where the people were not treated like costumers or industrial machines but rather as dignified human beings (Wolin, 2016). The increasingly notable striking differences in life prospects, accessibility to higher education, and deepening economic inequality across American society, in Wolin's philosophical account and assessment, celebrate poorly and manifest the deep flaws and misdeeds of the American academic and political elites. This contributes to failing the democratic model as the most significant invention of a successful mode of life with goodness, beauty, and truth, at the center of existence, which paved the road for citizens to live a life worthy of living. Henceforth, in the newly lived phenomenon of fugitive democracy, according to Wolin (2016), where the manifested societal and economic inequalities are enormous, elitism masked under the unified diversity doctrinal triumph, composed typically of academicians of both right and left-wing preferences, normalized and legitimized the acceptance of elitism and enabled corrosion of the common good. Correspondingly, according to Wolin (2016), elitism is a natural opponent of democracy. Wolin (2016) defines elitism, in his scholarly work named *Fugitive Democracy and other writings* as "the claim that special skills are required to operate the major institutions of society and to articulate and represent coherent diversities. These skills are described as demanding and uncommon except by few" (p. 9). Wolin (2016), neither thoughtlessly nor scandalously, lists the institutions in charge of the production of the certified elites through proper grooming of another set of institutions. These involve businesses, law, journalism, graduate schools, corporates, and apparatuses of political parties.

The living experience of elitism where the actual politics and governance are dominated by elites, referring to Wolin (2016), is incongruent with the exemplar of democracy and equality. The opponents of democracy label equality as a primary denominator of democracy as nothing else except a euphemism for leveling the claims of merit, achievement, and contribution. Nonetheless, Wolin (2016) speaking in a plural tense, states that the majority of the defenders of equality as an essential form and forerun of the democratic theory, are right, on the championing of the sameness and the existence of the difference of different capabilities, abilities, and contribution amongst the citizens, while addressing the manifestation of certain forms of unfairness and inequalities. One of the most serious critiques employed by Wolin regarding the practical functionality of the historical actuality of the democratic ideal, especially in his two seminal works *Democracy Incorporated: Managed Democracy and the Specter of the Inverted Totalitarianism* published in 2008, and *Fugitive Democracy and other essays* published on 2016, is the degree to which the merit-based distribution of rewards originating from the democratic system is egalitarian, fair and just. Linearly continuing in his critique of the merit-based rewarding formula of the democratic system, Sheldon Wolin is very keen on striking a grounded practical criticism of the discrepancy between the rising disparities of such return on rewards, on corporate prolific high payment and the diminishing focus of the American government on the public workers:

How democratic is a system of rewards whereby corporate executives who are being fired are nonetheless given several million dollars in severance pay while workers in highly skilled and socially essential jobs (public school teachers, firefighters, nurses, etc.) barely manage to scratch along? (Wolin, 2016, p. 10).

Thus, Wolin (2016) believes that the impact of the free-market economic system on the distribution of rewards based on allegedly merit-based work performance should be moderated and balanced. This comes especially in a time where the globalizing and corporate forms of contemporary capitalism create an urge of highly unrealistic hedonistic expectations for living a good life only based on material achievement, influence, and winning at the edge of a day-to-day, tiring Darwinian race in a competition-based society. The global competition for winning many times only for the sake of winning, without a domestic balancing act, is a battle that is putting the majority of American working-class citizens to work harder and extended longer working hours. While, to Wolin (2016), the French and German workers on the other

side of the European Continent participating in the welfare state system benefit from shorter working hours, relatively easy access to healthcare, and longer vacations. That is why, according to Wolin, political scientists need to relate the cause of higher political participation in Germany, France, and Great Britain compared to the United States with the implementation of the welfare state paradigmatic model.

Sheldon Wolin in *Politics and Vision* (2004), *Managed Democracy and the Specter of Inverted Totalitarianism* (2008), and *Fugitive Democracy and other political essays* (2016) beyond offering what is called an objective value-free philosophical and historical programmatic scholarship of the political systems of the western tradition from Plato and Aristotle to Popper, Dewey and Rawls, provides his reasoning on what constitutes the best political model of the organization of societal life and individual accomplishment. In this relevant connection, Wolin's intake on the best of possible worlds of political arrangement and pragmatic programmatic organization of the singular and collective life to attain happiness, freedom, and goodness is the egalitarian modus vivendi of political democracy. That is to say, in Wolin's clarification of this model (2016), a paradigm's combination of what constitutes the continuation and combination of the social democracy programs and policies aligned to the New Deal program, namely minimum wage, social security, empowerment of trade unions, government vigorous regulation of financial markets and illicit business markets with the capitalist model of the market-based democracy. Thus, bringing the combined influence of the social democracy model to the capitalist free market economy democracy model contributes to the softening of societal polarization, shrinking the rising inequalities, and reducing the value gap between the red states and blue states. Practically speaking, Wolin (2016) articulates that the accelerated public investment and promotion of public education, expanded health care, and social security as part of the social democracy paradigm alleviates the societal divisiveness brought by race, ethnicity, wealth, and other implicated potential explosive identities. Thus, integration of the social democracy components to the capitalistic free market economy helps the actualization of the commonalities of both the left and right-leaning ideals hence leading to a moderate rather than an infuriating form of majority rule. To this extent, referring to Wolin (2016), the unfair reward system of the corporate-capital system should be balanced by the updated constraints of the constitutional democratic structure followed by a functionally operating social democratizing movement of both

right and left. Sheldon Wolin's main worry remained on the fact that democratization is not anymore, a determining primary factor of neither constitutional formation nor of shared values leading to a good life.

Democratization, therefore, is a systematic process of the representation of the democratic ideal, according to Wolin (2016), but when it enters the realm of power, it is no more democratic. On the contrary, democratization when it enters the realm of power enters into stages and structured practices of elitism, secrecy, centralized command, and economic processes where corporate lobbying is akin to an enormous financial contribution to politics. The democratization process as a whole, in the end, results at odds and is contradictory to the practice of the democratic principles of participation, transparency, and equality. At the core, the outcome of the democratization process reflects, accordingly to Wolin (2016), the very episodic character and limited scope of the application of democratic action. The irreversible trend of modern democratic governance towards increasing economic and social inequalities coupled with hidden governmental favoritism towards the few reflects the perennial challenges of globalized societies in the West and beyond, but with a specific attention span to the American model of democracy. Wolin (2016) calls attention to the remarkable introspection of Aristotle's famous dictum towards bringing a definition for democracy as a form of government that is exercised by those who do not have too much leisure time due to the work that they are engaged in. Wolin (2016) finding himself in such troubling circumstances of reaching means to a successful practice of the inclusive democratic ideal recalls the ancient paradigmatic example of the Athenian democracy, whereby the practice of participatory democracy of the citizen body was meaningful and inclusive regardless of economic and financial eligibilities and capabilities. In contemporary conditions, following Wolin's dictum, the translation of the suggestive Athenian democracy model to renew the effective mode of performative action of the democratic ideal is called social democracy.

## CHAPTER V

### CONCLUSION

After the critical evaluation, examination, and thorough investigation of Al-Ghazali's political thought and Sheldon Wolin's political thought, I shall stress hereby that it has been worth the scholarly time, commitment, energy, and devotion to understand truly what is the essential philosophy of the political thought and processes that both prolific writers engaged intensively to bring forward. In the conclusion section, I will try to originally describe the essential commonalities in their political thought, and how we can find a common ground for the reconciliation of the idea of why political theory rooted in the right principles, values, and paradigmatic worldview is necessary. I will also provide some thoughts on what are naturally occurring differences and similarities between the two seminal thinkers. I would argue that Al-Ghazali is a transhistorical academic figure that speaks beyond the time and space where he lived. Al-Ghazali's political thought was subordinated to his quest for real knowledge which laid itself out in the intellectual and spiritual world of the Quran and the Sunnah. Thus, I would argue that Al-Ghazali's breadth, subtlety, and influence of his political thought is a footnote to the tradition of Islamic law, the prophetic practice of political command, and the preservation of the moral conduct of the latter generation of Sunni scholars and leaders. Al-Ghazali, far from being naïve and isolated from the dangers of the anarchic nature of political order, is truly concerned with stability, and order, and analogously sees the existence of political order as a precursor to laying out the path for living a good life based on the principled values and worldview of Islamic law via preservation of the prophetic example and Qur'anic injunctions. Al-Ghazali's pragmatic and realistic approach in formulating his political thought, overall, signifies and is adamant about a rational, objective response to the circumstances of his time. But, even for Al-Ghazali, the law, order, and justice as the culmination of all virtues in the realm of public order do not come at the expense of the justification of the oppressive, violent, and tyrannical forms of the governments. The famous political dictum "Tyranny is better than anarchy" does not synchronize very well with Al-Ghazali's political thought.

Furthermore, the luxury to pursue solely pure theoretical conceptual formation on the origin of the government, state, and alternative forms of political organizations, in Al-Ghazali's living experiential circumstances of the rapid spread of Fatimid and Batinites influences, would be of no benefit to his communal project for the preservation of the Sunni Islamic orthodoxy from heretical innovations. The holistic approach of Al-Ghazali's political thought transcends the political trials and tribulations of his time and resonates with the nature of his universal worldview which does not consider the human life and the political laid-out facilitated conditions to live a dignified life, as mental gymnastics or word games. Rather, while reading *Al-Ghazali's Advises to Nizam al-Mulk, the Book of Knowledge, the Letter to the Disciple, the Book of Death*, and the accompanied corpus of his enormous diversified body of sciences, from philosophy to law, from law to politics, Al-Ghazali was convincingly professing that knowledge, including the political knowledge, political mechanisms, and governmental power and its implementation mechanisms cannot and should not be used to manipulate, corrupt, oppress and create mayhem, bloodshed, and chaos in the human condition. In the day and age in that we live, despite enormous economic prosperity and technological advancement, the problems of economic inequalities, wars, poverty, and famine are the modus vivendi of nearly two-thirds of the world. Some scholarly articles cited in this scholarly examination of Al-Ghazali's political thought, tend to portray him as an elitist pro-establishment scholar. From the first-person perspective reading of his scholarly works on political thought, law, and theology, I can attest to the factual reality that Al-Ghazali's political thought create a state of equilibrium between the necessary just conduct of the rulers and the heavy responsibility of the governmental leadership on prioritizing the prosperity, safety, and order of the public life. Analogously, citizens share equally the same rights and responsibilities to contribute to a proper life in an environment where public order is established on basis of peace, cooperation, mutual trust, and freedom. Henceforth, Al-Ghazali's political thought was a scholarly sunnah-based project that saw political action and the necessity of the governmental application of just power as a means and assurance to the maintenance of Sunni orthodox Islam, security, justice, peace, and betterment of life, thus moving towards the sacred preservation of the happiness triangle comprised from truth, goodness, and beauty. The famous dictum of "Might makes it right", as a pathway to ensure the application of the concept of the survival

of the fittest was never applicable in Al-Ghazali's scheme of political thought, complex jurisprudence, and theological dispensation.

Reading Sheldon Wolin's rich corpus of political theory works enriched my intellectual capabilities and inspired openings in my mind on the root crisis of the diminished interest in studying political theory today, and what it can be done in the academic setting to awaken the consciousness on why the study of the general character of the political philosophy and its lines of development to the present is pivotal to addressing the challenges of lacking theoretical pluralism and accurate intended demarcations on what are the original meaning of the Western civilizational great ideas and concepts, starting from liberty and democracy, openness, unified diversity, equality, fairness, meritocracy, freedom, and justice. Wolin's elucidation on the definition of political philosophy is not linear nor static since political philosophy most fundamentally according to him is an activity that operates within a varied and complex tradition that has its subject matter, language, and angles of vision. Nonetheless, Wolin (2004), when defining holistically the discipline of political philosophy, goes back to Plato's perceived inquiry that the nature of living a good life is in direct association with the inquiry of the nature of the good community, thus providing a close connection between political philosophy and philosophy in general (p. 28). The virtue of the alliance between political philosophy and philosophy facilitated Wolin's basic quest for systematic knowledge on linking the essential quality of politics with the public good, the commonwealth, and the community as a whole. That is why according to Wolin (2004), certain functions like the dispensing of justice, national defense, internal order, and economic regulations were historically declared as primary responsibilities of the public institutions due to the beneficiary impact on all members of society. To this extent, there was always an intimate connection between public institutions and public interest and concerns. Thus, the task of political philosophy, according to Wolin (2004), is to reflect on matters that concern the community as a whole via a public type of knowledge which is in alliance with private modes of cognition thus generating a public form of knowledge accessible to the whole community (p. 29).

Those subject matters of concern of political philosophy, when examined comprehensively – namely historically, philosophically, and politically, disclose the

continual appearance of certain problems and challenges. Those problematized topics, according to Wolin (2004), are the relationship between the ruler and the ruled, the nature of authority, the consequences of social strife and conflict, the goals, purposes, and objectives of political action, and the character of political knowledge. So, there is a continuation from the ancient time till the present about the continuity of the aforementioned preoccupation. Wolin's (2004) philosophical conception of political theory is directed not so much at policy practices and the way how they operate but rather at the meaning behind political concepts such power, authority, consent, citizenship, and democracy. The meaning behind the establishment of these political concepts is interconnected with the duties and practices of the institutions. Consequently, the task of the political philosopher is to activate the challenge-response mechanism at times of immense crisis where the actual relationship between the functioning political system and practices of society is in a period of great disintegration. The task of a political philosopher at such perilous times is to not confine himself to the comfort of criticism or infinite interpretation. Rather, according to Wolin (2004), the role of a political philosopher, at times of great chaos and crisis, is to reconstruct the shattered world of the meaning of the institutional presence. Therefore, the first and foremost commonality of political conceptualization and thought between Al-Ghazali and Sheldon Wolin is that of the necessity for elemental meaning and the presence of order as a signified condition for peace and security that renders possible civilized life. Wolin's (2004) understanding of the need for a political philosophy that advocates for the quest for order and peaceful life obliged him to study St. Augustine's political thought, in his magnum opus *Politics and Vision* multiple times, on his quite rightful concern which was the enablement of the preparations for man's transcendent destiny by the basic requirements of peace and security in the earthly setting. That is why, words like peace, stability, balance, harmony, and order find immense space in the vocabulary of Al-Ghazali and every other major theorist including Wolin, despite both living in a time difference of a thousand years.

The why, the what, and the how of the political theory, political order instituted by the state, and political philosophy universally revolves around the dictum of living a good life based on the association and satisfaction of a hierarchy of goods, starting from biological needs to domestic peace, protection of life and possessions. The notions and concepts of what constitutes a good life vary due to the changing circumstances

imposed by innovations in technologies, industrialization, infrastructure, and science, but the essence remains the same. That is to say, while Wolin (2004) describes that for Greeks the main task of political order was to enable the practical application of individual self-fulfillment, for Christians the conception of the political order was as a precursor for the *preparatio evangelica*, let alone the liberal modern conception which views the existence of the political order as a mean that serves the enablement of the implementation of the rights of the individual, liberty, the equality before the law, free market economy, private property, and pursuit of happiness (p. 35). Wolin's preferential mode of political theory and political action in the contemporary modern context has a correlation with Al-Ghazali's political mode of action prioritizing security, stability, and order although with some striking natural differences in terms of the time and circumstances where both prolific scholars lived. For Wolin, as he expressed himself in *Fugitive Democracy* (2016), *Politics and Vision* (2004) and *Democracy Managed* (2008), the finest form of the democratic ideal would bear fruits in the societal practice if the modicum of political organization would mark the realization of the egalitarian potential of the political democracy through social democracy.

That is to say, in Wolin's ideal, the democratic *modus vivendi* should bring to society the practice of participatory democracy which accelerates the day-to-day democratic action of the citizens to require transparency and equality vis-à-vis the predominant favoritism of the governmental organization toward the reward structure of corporate capital of the Few. The moderate form of the rule of the majority through promoting public education, health care, and expanded health care brings to the whole society the opportunity to contribute, benefit and have a stake in the political system. For Wolin, similarly to Al-Ghazali, political theorizing and politics serve only as means to a rather profound mission and vision for the ideal of living a better life. In *Fugitive Democracy* and other political essays, Wolin (2016) confesses that his struggle to bring back the importance of political theory in the academic setting was primarily a civic duty and only secondarily an academic activity. Irrefutably, overall, both Al-Ghazali's and Sheldon Wolin's mission, vision, and values share the task of retrieving the virtuous

precedent of the usage of political knowledge and academic formation to the benefit of a more secure, more prosperous, freer, less-despotic, less-corrupt, less chaotic, and less-oppressive society accompanied from resilient institutions and kept-in-check political leadership.



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