



Basics of Self-Determination: A Comparative Study of Kant and Imam Khomeini's Perspectives

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ABSTRACT

This research aims to examine and compare the basics of the right to self-determination from the perspectives of two prominent thinkers, Immanuel Kant and Imam Khomeini. The main objective of this study is to investigate the relationship between the philosophical and political thoughts of these two scholars regarding the right to self-determination and to analyze the similarities and differences in their intellectual basics. The research method is descriptive-analytical and based on a comparative approach, and the research data was collected through library resources. The research findings indicate that the right to self-determination in Kant's thought emphasizes it as a fundamental human right based on absolute will, individual freedom within the framework of moral duty, and legal principles. In contrast, Imam Khomeini, with a theological approach and utilizing Islamic jurisprudence, interprets this right within the context of divine will. In Imam Khomeini's philosophy, human will be defined in harmony with divine will, and the divine dimension of duty plays a crucial role in realizing this right. The results of this research show that although both thinkers acknowledge the right to self-determination as a fundamental human right, the difference in their philosophical basics, particularly Kant's emphasis on individual freedom and Imam Khomeini's emphasis on divine will, has created two different approaches to interpreting this right.

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1. Introduction

The right to self-determination is a fundamental human right that has evolved throughout history alongside geopolitical changes and historical events. Initially a political concept, this right became a legal right after World War II, enshrined in international documents, and now holds a central position in international law. Article 1 of the International Covenants states that all people have the right freely to determine their political status and to pursue their economic, social, and cultural development. This right, as a manifestation of free will and human autonomy, has been considered not only in legal discussions but also within philosophical frameworks. From the perspective of Western philosophy, particularly in the thought of Kant, the right to self-determination is presented as a manifestation of moral autonomy and free human will. Kant, emphasizing rationality and individual autonomy, defines this right as the ability of individuals to determine their own life course. In contrast, in Islamic philosophy, this right is linked to concepts such as divine will, free choice, and divine obligation. Imam Khomeini, as one of the most prominent Islamic thinkers, considers the right to self-determination a divine right linked to human responsibility towards God and society. Examining these two philosophical and legal approaches can help understand the differences and similarities in the basics of the right to self-determination. Therefore, this research aims to conduct a comparative analysis of the basics of the right to self-determination in the thought of Kant and Imam Khomeini, seeking to answer the question of the relationship between the philosophical and political views of these two thinkers and identify the differences and similarities in their perspectives. While numerous studies have been conducted on the right to self-determination, a comparative analysis focusing on the thoughts of Kant and Imam Khomeini has received less attention. Domestic research, such as that by Maghami et al. (2022) in an article addressing the Islamic basics of this right, and the article by Asghari and Hashemi (2018) comparing Imam Khomeini's viewpoint with international documents, has been conducted. Foreign sources, such as Ameriks' article (2019), have examined the various meanings of "self-determination" in Kantian moral philosophy, defining moral autonomy as the ability to determine one's will based on moral laws. Furthermore, the book *Human Dignity and the Kingdom of Ends* (2023) explores the political and ethical dimensions of human dignity in Kant's thought. This article, through a comparative analysis of the philosophical basics of the right to self-determination in the thought of Kant and Imam Khomeini, seeks to identify differences and commonalities, offering a novel contribution to the theoretical explanation of this right and enhancing the philosophical and legal understanding of this concept in various contexts.

2. Methodology

This research is descriptive-analytical, employing a philosophical hermeneutical approach. Data was gathered from written sources, including books, articles, the original works of Kant and Imam Khomeini, and the works of commentators, researchers, and critics. The analytical method involves a critical review and comparison of the theories of these two thinkers within the framework of the philosophical basics of the right to self-determination. Data was collected through library research, and data analysis focused on identifying similarities and differences in their theories. Finally, the relationship between these theories is analyzed, and the results are presented as comparative findings.

3. Findings

To answer the research question, original texts and related works on the views of Kant and Imam Khomeini were used to examine the basics of the right to self-determination from the perspectives of these two thinkers, based on conceptual analysis and logical inference. Based on a qualitative analysis of the data, the findings were categorized into the following seven themes:

Criteria		Kant's Viewpoint	Imam Khomeini's Viewpoint
1	Reason	Considers the basis of human autonomy and dignity, emphasizing its importance in achieving happiness and shaping human destiny.	considers theoretical and practical reasons essential for achieving happiness and recommends using reason to understand duties and responsibilities under divine guidance.
2	Freedom	Defines freedom as the ability to act according to rational principles and moral laws.	consider freedom a primary and divine right given to humans by God.
3	Formation of Society	Believes in the necessity of a civil society where individuals collectively enact laws for the common good.	views society as independent of individual will and considers public participation in determining destiny and holding elections as fundamental to an Islamic society.
4	Human Duty	Views human duties as stemming from practical reason and obligates humans to follow moral principles.	considers duty a rational and religious matter and holds humans accountable as God's caliphs in determining their own destiny.
5	Critique of Theology	Accepts the concept of God as a systematizing principle but considers proving its existence beyond the limits of reason.	views God as the divine source of the right to self-determination, defining this right in harmony with God's will and the religious system.
6	Human Nature	Considers humans autonomous beings capable of rational thought and moral decision-making.	defines human nature in relation to God, and this relationship entails responsibility and a special place in creation.
7	The Role of State	Supports a state that respects individual rights and freedoms and creates conditions for individuals to determine their destiny for their own reason.	views the role of the state as enforcing divine laws and guiding society according to Sharia, believing that an Islamic state should facilitate the realization of God's will and collective happiness.

4. Discussion and Conclusion

The right to self-determination is a key concept in political philosophy and public law, interpreted differently by various thinkers. A comparative analysis of the views of Immanuel Kant and Imam Khomeini, as two prominent thinkers, reveals fundamental contradictions in their understanding of this concept. Kant, relying on rationality and autonomy, considers freedom as the most fundamental human value and defines the political and legal system on the basis of liberal democratic principles. Within this framework, the state is

obligated to guarantee individual freedom and minimize interference in private decisions. This Kantian perspective is the founder of contemporary human rights, promoting freedom of expression, public participation, and the separation of religion from politics. In contrast, Imam Khomeini interprets freedom within the framework of divine servitude and Islamic Sharia. In his view, the right to self-determination is meaningful within the framework of the Islamic Wilayat system, where divine sovereignty and religious values are central. The state plays an active role in guiding society towards religious goals. Limitations such as the supervision of the Guardian Council and the requirement to align laws with religious principles restrict rights and freedoms within the framework of Islamic principles. Ultimately, this analysis shows that the right to self-determination in Kant's thought rests on individual autonomy, while in Imam Khomeini's view it rests on adherence to religious principles and sacred Sharia. These differences highlight fundamental challenges in balancing human rights and religious values.

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