

Ayatollah Ali Khamenei on the Shaping of Iran's Foreign Policy on the Post-October 7, 2023 Palestinian Issue

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Abstract : The escalation of the Israel–Palestine conflict after 7 October 2023 has reinforced Iran’s role as an important actor in Middle Eastern politics. Previous studies have primarily examined Iran’s foreign policy through geopolitical and security perspectives, while the role of Ayatollah Ali Khamenei as an individual actor remains underexplored. This study aims to analyse Khamenei’s role in shaping Iran’s foreign policy toward Palestine after 7 October 2023. Using a qualitative approach with library research, this study applies Constructivism as a grand theory and Foreign Policy Analysis, particularly James Rosenau’s idiosyncratic variable, as an analytical framework. The findings reveal that Khamenei plays a central role in directing Iran’s foreign policy through the construction of an Islamic-revolutionary identity and personal characteristics that shape his perceptions of Palestine, Israel, and the United States. Iran’s policy is reflected in sustained support for Palestine through a combination of ideological commitment and strategic considerations. This study contributes to International Relations scholarship by highlighting the influence of leaders’ identities and individual characteristics in foreign policy formulation.

Keywords : Ayatollah Ali Khamenei; Iranian Foreign Policy; Palestine; Constructivism; Foreign Policy Analysis.

Abstrak : Eskalasi konflik Israel–Palestina pasca 7 Oktober 2023 kembali menempatkan Iran sebagai aktor penting dalam dinamika politik Timur Tengah. Namun, penelitian terdahulu umumnya berfokus pada kebijakan luar negeri Iran dari perspektif geopolitik dan keamanan, sementara kajian mengenai peran Ayatollah Ali Khamenei sebagai aktor individu dalam pembentukan kebijakan luar negeri Iran terhadap isu Palestina masih terbatas. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan metode studi kepustakaan untuk menganalisis peran Ayatollah Ali Khamenei dalam pembentukan kebijakan luar negeri Iran terhadap isu Palestina pasca 7 Oktober 2023. Analisis dilakukan menggunakan Konstruktivisme sebagai grand theory dan Foreign Policy Analysis, khususnya variabel idiosinkratik James Rosenau, sebagai kerangka analisis. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa Ayatollah Ali Khamenei berperan sentral dalam membentuk orientasi kebijakan luar negeri Iran melalui konstruksi identitas Islam-revolusioner dan karakteristik individual yang memengaruhi persepsinya terhadap Palestina, Israel, dan

Amerika Serikat. Orientasi tersebut diwujudkan dalam dukungan yang konsisten terhadap Palestina serta penerapan strategi yang mengombinasikan komitmen ideologis dan kalkulasi strategis. Penelitian ini berkontribusi pada kajian Hubungan Internasional dengan menunjukkan bahwa identitas ideologis dan karakteristik individu pemimpin berpengaruh dalam pembentukan kebijakan luar negeri Iran terhadap isu Palestina

Kata Kunci : *Ayatollah Ali Khamenei; Kebijakan Luar Negeri Iran; Palestina; Konstruktivisme; Foreign Policy Analysis.*

INTRODUCTION

The Palestinian-Israeli conflict is one of the central issues in the political dynamics of the Middle East that not only involves both parties, but also the interests of various countries in the region. Differences in national interests and political orientations have shaped various regional power responses to the Palestinian issue (Afrilia & Sahide, 2026). The escalation of the conflict on October 7, 2023 further strengthens the regional dimension because it also affects the political and foreign policy calculations of a number of actors, such as Iran, Saudi Arabia, and Turkey. In this dynamic, Iran has become one of the actors that has consistently placed the Palestinian issue as an important part of its foreign policy orientation (Hariri et al., 2024); (Awwad, 2024). The Hamas attack on October 7, 2023 became a turning point in Iran's strategic environment in response to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. In the aftermath of the attack, Iran maintained its support for the Palestinians and the *Axis of Resistance*, but sought to limit direct involvement to avoid an open war with Israel through a more measured strategy. These dynamics are increasingly complex as the escalation of the conflict weakens a number of key actors (Cingöz, 2025) of the *Axis of Resistance* and escalates direct Iran-Israeli confrontations, so that Iran's *forward defense strategy* and *strategic patience* face increasing pressure. This condition shows that after October 7, Iran's policy towards Palestine developed in the midst of efforts to maintain its commitment to resistance while maintaining its strategic interests (Pinfold et al., 2025).

Iran's foreign policy towards Palestine has a complex character because it is shaped not only by strategic interests, but also by values and identities that have developed since the 1979 Islamic Revolution. The principles of justice, defense of oppressed groups (*mustazafin*), anti-domination, and rejection of Israel have been part of Iran's foreign policy orientation, including in its support of the Palestinians. A number of studies suggest that Iran's support for Palestine is a mix of (Dehghani Firouzabadi, 2009). *Islamic-revolutionary* identity, security interests, and efforts to maintain regional influence in the Middle East. In practice, such ideological orientation does not always work absolutely, as Iran also adjusts its policies to national interests, domestic limitations, and international pressures. This condition shows the dynamic between ideological consistency and pragmatism in the implementation of Iran's foreign policy (Farhadi Nasab et al., 2023).

The complexity of Iran's foreign policy is increasingly evident in the thinking of *Ayatollah Ali Khamenei* who places *Islamic-revolutionary* identity, anti-hegemony, and support for resistance as important orientations of Iranian foreign policy. A number of studies show that Khamenei's thinking not only serves as an ideological foundation, but also serves as a reference in determining the direction of Iran's foreign policy, especially regarding the Palestinian issue and regional security dynamics. Although some of these principles are maintained as normative commitments, Khamenei's thinking also accommodates revolutionary rationality and heroic flexibility that allow for tactical adjustments based on national interests and strategic conditions (Alirezaei et al., 2025). This contradiction is increasingly relevant in the Palestinian issue because Khamenei places the defense of Palestine and resistance as part of the religious principles and identity of Muslims. This condition shows that Khamenei's orientation towards Palestine lies in a dynamic between consistency of ideological principles and strategic rationality (Shojaei et al., 2025).

Ayatollah Ali Khamenei's statement on November 29, 2023 showed the consistency of Iran's support for Palestine by placing Taufan Al-Aqsa (*Al-Aqsa Storm*) as part of the resistance to Israel and the hegemony of the United States in the region (Khamenei.ir, 2023). Khamenei also reaffirmed the referendum as a solution for the Palestinians and viewed the development of the conflict as strengthening *the Axis of Resistance*. Nonetheless, Iran in the early phases of the Gaza war sought to avoid direct involvement in a large-scale war, while maintaining its support for the *Axis of Resistance* network in the region. This fact shows that there is a gap between Khamenei's strong ideological orientation and Iran's prudence in determining strategic actions after October 7 (Nakhoul et al., 2024).

Research on Iran's foreign policy towards the Palestinian issue has evolved from a study of the ideology of the Islamic Revolution, strategic interests, and regional security dynamics to a study of Iran's response after October 7, 2023 and the political thinking of Ayatollah Ali Khamenei (Glombitza, 2024);(Cingöz, 2025); (Alirezaei et al., 2025). Other research has also begun to examine Khamenei's views on Palestine through the perspective of identity, resistance, and the discourse of Al-Aqsa Storm. However, these studies still place ideology, state interests, or regional dynamics as the main focus, while the individual characteristics of Ayatollah Ali Khamenei as a factor shaping Iran's foreign policy towards Palestine have not been analyzed in depth through the perspective of Foreign Policy Analysis. Therefore, this study focuses on the role of Ayatollah Ali Khamenei in shaping Iran's foreign policy towards the Palestinian issue after October 7, 2023 (Shojaei et al., 2025);(Taheri & Naeemabadi, 2025).

Research on the role of Ayatollah Ali Khamenei in shaping Iran's foreign policy on the Palestinian issue is important because the post-October 7, 2023 escalation of the conflict not only enhances the political and security dynamics in the Middle East, but also shows how ideological orientation and strategic calculation run simultaneously in Iran's foreign policy. Academically, this research is expected to enrich the study of International Relations, especially regarding the influence of identity and individual factors in the formation of foreign policy in countries with a centralized political structure. Therefore, this study aims to analyze the role of Ayatollah Ali Khamenei in the formation of Iran's foreign policy towards the Palestinian issue after October 7, 2023 through the perspective of Constructivism and Foreign Policy Analysis.

RESEARCH METHODS

This research uses a qualitative approach with the library research method. The qualitative approach was chosen because this study aims to comprehensively analyze the role of Ayatollah Ali Khamenei in shaping Iran's foreign policy towards the Palestinian issue after October 7, 2023. The literature study method is used by utilizing various relevant written sources to understand Iran's foreign policy towards Palestine as well as Khamenei's individual characteristics related to the policy-making process (Creswell, 2014). Data collection is carried out through literature studies and documentation using secondary data obtained from scientific journals, books, academic articles, research reports, and relevant institutional documents (Zed, 2008). Literature was collected through Google Scholar, Scopus, SpringerLink, Sage Journals, JSTOR, and ScienceDirect databases, as well as Iranian research journals to obtain official documents and statements related to research. The inclusion criteria include literature that discusses Iran's foreign policy, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, the Palestinian issue, Foreign Policy Analysis, and Constructivism, particularly those published in the 2012–2025 range. The exclusion criteria include publications that are not relevant to the focus of the research, do not have academic credibility, or only discuss the Palestinian-Israeli conflict without linking it to Iranian foreign policy or the role of Ayatollah Ali Khamenei. All data collected are then classified based on the research theme to facilitate the analysis process.

Data analysis was carried out using an interactive qualitative data analysis model which includes data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification. At the data condensation stage, the data that has been collected is selected, simplified, and focused based on the research objectives and idiosyncratic indicators used. Furthermore, data is presented systematically based on a research theme (data display) to analyze the relationship between Khamenei's individual characteristics and the formation of Iran's foreign policy towards the

Palestinian issue. The final stage is carried out through drawing conclusions and verifying to ensure consistency between the findings and the data analyzed. The validity of the research is maintained through triangulation of sources by comparing information from various scientific journals, books, research reports, and relevant institutional documents so as to increase the credibility of the research findings (Miles et al., 2018).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Constructivism and Idiosyncratic Factors in Foreign Policy Analysis

Constructivism views foreign policy not only as a response to material conditions, but also as the result of the ideas, norms, and identities that shape the interests and behavior of the state. Identity and interests are not pre-given, but are formed through social interaction and intersubjective meaning between actors (Wendt, 1992); (Finnemore & Sikkink, 1998). This perspective is relevant in understanding the foreign policy of the Islamic Republic of Iran because the relationship between identity and its interests shows the influence of norms as well as ideological structures on foreign policy orientation. In fact, Iran's normative and revisionist character is considered to make the constructivist approach more relevant in explaining its foreign behavior than a purely material approach (Javadi Arjmand, 2013).

Iran's change in identity after the 1979 Islamic Revolution became the main foundation in shaping its foreign policy orientation. The revolution not only changed Iran's political system from a monarchy to an Islamic Republic, but also shaped the country's identity based on Islamic values and revolutionary spirit. In the perspective of constructivism, the identity then shapes national interests while also determining the direction of Iran's behavior at the international level (Mohammad Nia, 2012); (Glombitza, 2024). Therefore, Iran's foreign policy develops on normative principles such as the rejection of foreign hegemony. These principles serve as a normative reference that explains why Iran has consistently taken a position on a wide range of international issues seen as related to its Islamic-revolutionary identity, including the Palestinian issue (Mohammad Nia, 2012); (Glombitza, 2024).

While constructivism is able to explain how state identities, norms, and interests are formed, it does not fully explain how those identities translate into concrete foreign policy decisions. In this context, Foreign Policy Analysis (FPA) is present as an approach that complements constructivism by focusing on decision-makers as the main unit of analysis. According to FPA, it is a multidisciplinary subfield of International Relations with the main characteristic of an actor-specific focus, namely refusing to view the state as a unitary rational actor or black-boxing the state. In contrast, FPA departs from the assumption that all events in international relations are essentially rooted in decisions made by human beings, both individually and collectively. Therefore, foreign policy is not solely determined by the structure of the international system, but is also influenced by the characteristics of the decision-making actors. This approach places decision-makers as a meeting point between material and ideational factors, while emphasizing that foreign policy analysis does not only focus on policy outcomes, but also on the decision-making process which includes the identification of problems, the formation of perceptions, the determination of objectives, and the selection of alternative policies (Hudson, 2005).

Table 1. James N. Rosenau's Foreign Policy Variables

No	Variable	Description
1	Systemic Variables	Factors originating from the international environment, including the distribution of power, alliance patterns, technological developments, and the international system
2	Societal Variables	Domestic social conditions such as economic development, culture, history, social structure, and public opinion that influence foreign policy.
3	Governmental Variables	Institutional and political characteristics of government, including political accountability and governmental structure.

4	Situational Variables	Immediate internal or external events requiring rapid policy responses, such as crises, conflicts, or sudden political developments.
5	Idiosyncratic Variables	Individual characteristics of decision makers, including values, beliefs, personality, talents, experiences, perceptions, and intellectual capacity. This variable is the primary focus of this research.

Source: Processed by the author based on Rosenau (1980)

One of the approaches in Foreign Policy Analysis that is widely used to analyze foreign policy formation was developed by James N. Rosenau. According to Rosenau (1980), foreign policy is the result of the interaction of various sources from different levels of analysis, so it cannot be explained through only one single factor. Rosenau grouped these sources into five main variables, namely *systemic* variables, *societal* variables, *governmental* variables, *situational factors*, and *idiosyncratic* variables. The five variables interact with each other in influencing the process of foreign policy formulation and implementation, so an *integrated approach* is needed to understand how each variable has an influence, either independently or in combination with other variables. Thus, the Rosenau model provides a comprehensive analytical framework to explain how various internal and external factors shape a country's foreign policy decisions.

Dynamics of Iran's Foreign Policy towards Palestine Post-October 7, 2023

Since the 1979 Islamic Revolution, Palestine has been one of the main issues in the Islamic Republic of Iran's foreign policy. The regime change from the monarchy of Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi to a revolutionary government under Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini changed Iran's orientation from establishing relations with Israel to denying the country's legitimacy and making support for Palestine part of its foreign policy. The commitment is based on Article 152 of the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran which affirms the defense of the rights of all Muslims and the rejection of all forms of domination, as well as Article 154 which expresses support for the struggle of oppressed peoples around the world (Presidency of the Islamic Republic of Iran, n.d.). Its implementation is realized through political, diplomatic, and military support to Palestinian resistance groups and the strengthening of the Axis of Resistance as a strategy to counter the dominance of Israel and the United States in the region (Awwad, 2024).

The Operation Al-Aqsa Storm attack on October 7, 2023 became an important point in the dynamics of Iran's foreign policy towards Palestine. Iran conveyed political support to the Palestinians and praised Hamas' operations, but insisted that the attack was an independent Hamas decision so Iran was not directly involved. Amid the escalation of the Gaza war, Iran continues to condemn Israeli military operations, call for a ceasefire, and maintain its support for Hamas and the Axis of Resistance. However, the support was carried out without direct military intervention. This approach reflects a policy of controlled tension, which is to maintain a commitment to the Palestinian cause and the Axis of Resistance while avoiding open confrontation that has the potential to trigger a broader regional war (Cingöz, 2025).

Various literature shows that after October 7, 2023, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei has consistently placed the Palestinian struggle as a central issue in Iran's foreign policy. Khamenei views Operation Al-Aqsa Storm as a legitimate form of resistance to the Israeli occupation and calls it a major blow to the Zionist regime, although he insists that the operation is an independent initiative of the Palestinian people with no direct Iranian involvement (Taheri & Naeemabadi, 2025); (Cingöz, 2025). In various studies, Khamenei also places Israel as an apartheid regime responsible for violence against the Palestinian people as well as views the United States as a major supporter of Israeli policies in the region (Hasani Nasab & Mohammadi, 2025); (Shojaei et al., 2025). On the other hand, he rejected the two-state solution and offered a referendum involving all indigenous Palestinians as a way to resolve the conflict, while affirming the importance of the Resistance Front (Axis of Resistance) as the axis of resistance to Israeli and U.S. domination ((Shojaei et al., 2025); (Salari et al., 2024).

After October 7, 2023, the Gaza conflict developed into a regional security dynamic through the involvement of the Iranian-backed Axis of Resistance network, which includes Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) in Palestine, Hezbollah in Lebanon, the Houthi group in Yemen, as well as various Shiite militias in Iraq and Syria (Taher, 2024); (Pinfold et al., 2025). Hamas and the PIJ became the main actors in the Al-Aqsa Storm operation, while Hezbollah opened the battle front on the Lebanon-Israeli border through a series of limited attacks in support of Gaza. At the same time, the Houthis began attacking shipping lanes in the Red Sea, while Iran-affiliated militias in Iraq and Syria stepped up attacks against U.S. interests in the region (Pinfold et al., 2025). The escalation of the conflict further escalated when Israel launched an airstrike on the Iranian Consulate complex in Damascus' Mezzeh District on April 1, 2024, killing Brigadier General Mohammad Reza Zahedi, his deputy Brigadier General Mohammad Hadi Haji-Rahimi, as well as a number of members of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC). The Iranian government denounced the attack as a violation of international law and conventions, while Ayatollah Ali Khamenei insisted that Israel would receive retaliation for the attack. This incident is a form of serious escalation that increases the risk of direct confrontation between Iran and Israel in the midst of the Gaza war. Thus, the war that was originally centered in Gaza has developed into a regional security dynamic involving various state and non-state actors in the Axis of Resistance network (BBC News Indonesia, 2024); (Cingöz, 2025).



Figure 1. Condition of the Iranian Consulate Building in Damascus after the Israeli Airstrike on April 1, 2024

Source: BBC News Indonesia (2024)

Although Iran has consistently demonstrated political, diplomatic, and strategic support for Palestine and the Axis of Resistance network, such policies have not always been realized through direct military involvement in the conflict with Israel (Pinfold et al., 2025); (Taher, 2024). In his speech on October 10, 2023, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei called Operation Al-Aqsa Flood an "irreparable military and strategic defeat" for Israel, praised the Palestinian people who planned and carried out the operation, and called on Islamic countries to continue to provide support to the Palestinians (Islam Times, 2023). On the other hand, various studies show that after the outbreak of the Gaza war, Iran continued to try to avoid direct military confrontation with Israel and the United States despite continuing to provide support to groups belonging to the Axis of Resistance (Pinfold et al., 2025); (Taher, 2024). Cingöz (2025) called this approach controlled tension, which is a strategy of maintaining support for the Palestinian struggle and the Resistance Front while controlling the level of escalation so that it does not develop into a direct regional war. Thus, there is an empirical paradox in Iran's foreign policy, namely that a strong ideological commitment to the Palestinian cause goes hand in hand with a tendency to limit direct military involvement.

The development of the Iran-Israel confrontation after October 7, 2023 shows a change in the security dynamics of the Middle East from an indirect conflict (*shadow war*) to an increasingly open confrontation between the two countries. The change was even more noticeable after Israel attacked the Iranian Consulate complex in Damascus on April 1, 2024, killing a number of senior IRGC officials. In response, Iran launched Operation True Promise on April 13, 2024, which was

followed Pinfold et al (2025) *by Operation True Promise II* on October 1, 2024 after the killing of a number of key Axis of Resistance figures, while Israel again launched attacks on Iranian military facilities on October 25, 2024. Despite the escalation, studies have shown that Iran's support for the Palestinians and *the Axis of Resistance* continues to coexist with *escalation management* and strategic adjustments to prevent the conflict from escalating into a broader regional war (Badawi, 2026); (Poza Cano, 2025); (Saraswat, 2024). This empirical pattern is the basis for this study to analyze the role of Ayatollah Ali Khamenei in shaping Iran's foreign policy towards the Palestinian issue through the perspective of Foreign Policy Analysis.

Analysis of Ayatollah Ali Khamenei's Role in the Shaping of Iran's Foreign Policy Towards Palestine Post-October 7, 2023

The position of Ayatollah Ali Khamenei as Supreme Leader makes him a major actor in the formation of the Islamic Republic of Iran's foreign policy, so it is relevant to be used as an analysis unit in this study. In the Iranian political structure, the doctrinal concept of Wilayat al-Faqih (the guardianship of the jurisprudence) places the Supreme Leader as the holder of supreme authority over all state and governmental institutions (Sitompul et al., 2025). Its constitutional authority gives it the authority to set the strategic direction of foreign policy and control national security affairs as a whole. Although the process of formulating security and defense policies is coordinated by the Supreme National Security Council (SNSC), any strategic decisions made must still be in line with the Supreme Leader's direction and approval (Osuli Odlu et al., 2026). In addition, his position as commander-in-chief of the armed forces places the IRGC under his authority as the main instrument in the implementation of Iran's security strategy and foreign policy in the region. Therefore, Khamenei's individual characteristics become relevant to be analyzed through the perspective of Foreign Policy Analysis in explaining the formation of Iran's foreign policy towards Palestine after October 7, 2023 (Taher, 2024).

In the perspective of constructivism, foreign policy is not solely determined by material interests, but is shaped by social identities, values, and meanings constructed through interaction and intersubjective belief (Nia, 2012); (Shojaei et al., 2025). In this context, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei's foreign policy orientation towards Palestine is rooted in the construction of an Islamic-revolutionary identity that shapes his outlook on international political dynamics. For Khamenei, the Palestinian struggle is not interpreted as a mere territorial conflict, but as a representation of the struggle between justice and oppression. This meaning departs from the Karbala narrative which places the struggle of Imam Husayn as a symbol of resistance against tyranny and injustice, thus forming a moral obligation to always defend the oppressed (Nia, 2012). These values are then embodied through the concept of mustazafin, which places the defense of oppressed groups as part of the Islamic Republic of Iran's ideological mission of realizing a more just world order (Glombitza, 2024). In Khamenei's construction of thought, the search for justice is inseparable from the rejection of Zionism which is seen as a manifestation of colonialism, imperialism, and the domination of hegemonic powers in the Middle East (Reda, 2016). Therefore, Palestine is constructed not merely as a contested territory, but as a symbol of the mustazafin struggle against the mustakbirin (oppressors), so that support for Palestine is understood as an ideological consequence of the Islamic-revolutionary identity that shaped the foreign policy orientation of Ayatollah Ali Khamenei (Shojaei et al., 2025).

In the framework of James Rosenau's Foreign Policy Analysis, the idiosyncratic characteristics of a leader which include beliefs, values, experience, and perception play an important role in shaping foreign policy orientation. In this context, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei's experience during the Shah's rule, including detention by the United States-backed SAVAK as well as the experience of the Iran–Iraq War, shaped his belief that the international system was dominated by hegemonic forces that perpetuated injustice (Buonomo, 2018). The experience reinforced the Islamic-revolutionary values it adheres to, such as the defense of mustazafin, the enforcement of justice, and the rejection of foreign domination as a moral foundation in international politics (Nia, 2012). Departing from these beliefs and values, Khamenei perceives the United States as a representation of Global Arrogance, while Israel is seen as an instrument of Western colonialism and imperialism in the Middle East (Buonomo, 2018); (Shojaei et al., 2025). This perception then shaped his belief that

Palestine was the main symbol of the struggle of the mustazafin, so that support for Palestine and the Axis of Resistance was seen as an ideological consequence as well as a strategic orientation in Iran's foreign policy (Reda, 2016).

The construction of Ayatollah Ali Khamenei's Islamic-revolutionary identity and individual characteristics was then translated into Iran's foreign policy orientation towards Palestine that was consistent and based on ideological values. Khamenei's perspective that positions Palestine as a representation of the struggle of mustazafin and Israel as a symbol of colonialism and Western hegemony is reflected in Iran's policy of consistently rejecting the legitimacy of the state of Israel along with various peace initiatives that are considered to ignore the rights of the Palestinian people, such as the two-state solution and the Deal of the Century (Awwad, 2024); (Shojaei et al., 2025). This orientation is also manifested through political, financial, and military support for Palestinian resistance groups as part of the Axis of Resistance's strategy to confront Israeli dominance in the region (Kazdal, 2025). On the other hand, Iran proposes a referendum for all indigenous Palestinians as an alternative to resolving the conflict that is considered to reflect the principles of justice and self-determination, while continuing to strengthen international solidarity through the institutionalization of Quds Day as a symbol of support for the Palestinian cause (Nia, 2012) (Shojaei et al., 2025).

Although Iran's foreign policy orientation towards Palestine is built on ideological commitments, its implementation is not always realized through direct military confrontation. This shows that Ayatollah Ali Khamenei not only bases policy-making on Islamic-revolutionary identity, but also considers the political rationality and sustainability of the Islamic Republic of Iran. The Maslahat-e Nezam principle places the continuity of the state as the top priority so that the achievement of ideological goals must still take into account national stability and security. On the other hand, economic limitations due to international sanctions and conventional military capabilities that are disproportionate to Israel have prompted Iran to avoid open war and opt for a more effective and low-risk strategy. In this context, support for (Mohammad Nia, 2012); (Cingöz, 2025) *the Axis of Resistance* through the *doctrine of forward defense* and *the strategic patience* approach became an instrument to maintain Iranian influence while pressuring Israel without directly involving Iranian forces (Barzegar & Divsallar, 2017); (Pinfold et al., 2025).

The results of this study show that Ayatollah Ali Khamenei's role in shaping Iran's foreign policy towards Palestine is influenced not only by the political structure of the Islamic Republic of Iran, but also by the construction of individual identities and characteristics that shape its policy orientation. These findings are in line with research that places Palestine as a symbol of the struggle for justice in Khamenei's political thought, as well as supporting the argument that Islamic-revolutionary identity is the main cornerstone of Iran's foreign policy. In addition, the results of this study reinforce the findings regarding the consistency of Iran's support for Palestine and the Axis of Resistance. However, this study complements previous studies by showing that this consistency is not only influenced by state ideology, but also by the individual characteristics of Ayatollah Ali Khamenei as Supreme Leader who shaped the perception of threats, policy orientation, and strategic boundaries of Iran's involvement after October 7, 2023. (Shojaei et al., 2025); (Mohammad Nia, 2012); (Awwad, 2024).

Based on the results of the analysis, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei's role in shaping Iran's foreign policy towards the Palestinian issue is determined not only by his position as Supreme Leader, but also by his ability to construct an ideological identity and direct the orientation of Iran's foreign policy. In the perspective of Constructivism, Palestine is positioned as a symbol of the mustazafin struggle that must be maintained as part of Iran's Islamic-revolutionary identity. Meanwhile, through the perspective of Foreign Policy Analysis, Khamenei's individual characteristics influenced by his experiences, beliefs, values, and perceptions of Israel and the United States contribute to shaping a policy orientation that consistently supports the Palestinians, rejects Israel's legitimacy, and strengthens the Axis of Resistance. However, this ideological orientation is not realized through direct military confrontation, but is combined with strategic calculations that consider the survival of the country through the principles of Maslahat-e Nezam, forward defense, and strategic patience (Sitompul et al., 2025); (Mohammad Nia, 2012); (Shojaei et al., 2025); (Buonomo, 2018).

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

This research shows that Ayatollah Ali Khamenei played an important role in shaping Iran's foreign policy towards the Palestinian issue after October 7, 2023 through his ability to shape an ideological orientation while setting the strategic direction of the country's policy. As Supreme Leader, Khamenei constructed Palestine as a symbol of the mustazafin struggle so that Iran's support for Palestine, rejection of Israel's legitimacy, and strengthening of the Axis of Resistance became a consistent part of Iran's foreign policy. However, the ideological orientation is implemented adaptively through strategic calculations that take into account national stability, regional balance of power, and state sustainability.

Theoretically, this study enriches the study of International Relations by showing that the formation of Iran's foreign policy towards Palestine cannot be explained only through material interests or structural dynamics. The Constructivist perspective explains the importance of Islamic-revolutionary identity in shaping policy orientation, while Foreign Policy Analysis shows that Ayatollah Ali Khamenei's individual characteristics also influence the foreign policy decision-making process. In practical terms, this study provides an understanding of how individual leadership can influence the direction of a country's foreign policy in the face of regional conflict and security dynamics in the Middle East. This study still has limitations because it uses a literature study approach so that the analysis relies on the available secondary data. Therefore, further research is recommended using primary data, such as interviews with Iranian academics or experts, as well as developing analyses using the perspectives of other International Relations theories in order to produce a more comprehensive understanding.

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