



## THE DISCUSSION OF POLITICAL ISLAM AND DEMOCRACY IN AFGHANISTAN

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### **Atıf:**

İNAÇ Hüsamettin, Jawid Asefi (2021). "The Discussion of Political Islam and Democracy in Afghanistan", *Ulusam Türkiye Politik Çalışmalar Dergisi*, 1(1):1-12.

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Geliş tarihi/Arrival date: 20.10.2021

Kabul tarihi/Acceptance date: 29.11.2021



### **Abstract**

Afghanistan is located in the heart of Asia with over 99% of the population Muslims, most of whom are conservative and religious. Islam had an influence on governance and politics in Afghanistan from the long past until the twentieth century and religion was an integral part of politics. From its establishment until the twentieth century, it was ruled by kings and Amanullah Khan is the first Afghan king who started moving toward modernism and democratic order in the 1920s. The role of religion in politics changed after Afghanistan's independence from Britain gained by Amanullah Khan in 1919, and its reason was the reaction of some Mullahs and conservatives against Amanullah Khan's modern and democratic reforms with the provocation of foreigners, especially Britain. The second democratic wave in Afghanistan has seen in the years of 1963-1973, but could not continue as a result of coups, interventions, and wars caused by Islamists and communists. Political Islam movements emerged in Egypt and the Indian subcontinent via establishing social and political groups by some individuals as a reaction to the abolition of the caliphate in 1924 by Mustafa Kamal Atatürk, the new world order, and Muslim backwardness in various fields. Muslim Brotherhood of Egypt and Jamiat-e Islami of Mawdudi, who are known as predecessors of Islamist movements influenced politics in Afghanistan after the 1960s. Hasan al-Banna's moderate ideas spread in the 1960s through Afghanistan Muslim Youth Organization's leaders who were educated in Al-Azhar and returned to the country with the influence of the Muslim Brotherhood's ideas about Islam, government, society, etc. Jamaat-e Islami of Mawdudi which formed in the Indian subcontinent in 1941 is another Islamic movement that influenced Afghan Islamists and Mawdudi's ideas about the Islamic government became a basis for Afghan Islamists. Sayed Qutb influenced Afghan Islamists, especially radical Islamists through his ideas expressed in his "ignorance" theory, during the Afghan-Soviet battle in the 1980s. Afghanistan is a country with a long history of instability, and political Islam is one of the major players in the situation. This study aims to fill a gap in the literature area about political Islam and democracy in Afghanistan and their relation and influence on each other.

**Keywords:** *Islam, Political Islam, Democracy, Government, Politics, State*

### **Özet:**

Afganistan, çoğu muhafazakar ve dindar olan Müslüman nüfusun % 99'undan fazlası ile Asya'nın kalbinde yer almaktadır. İslam, uzun geçmişten yirminci yüzyıla kadar Afganistan'da yönetim ve siyaset üzerinde etkili oldu ve din, siyasetin ayrılmaz bir parçasıydı. Kuruluşundan yirminci yüzyıla kadar krallar tarafından yönetildi ve Amanullah Han, 1920'lerde modernizm ve demokratik düzene doğru ilerlemeye başlayan ilk Afgan kralı oldu. Afganistan'ın 1919'da Amanullah Han'ın İngiltere'den bağımsızlığını kazanmasının ardından dinin siyasetteki rolü değişti ve bunun nedeni, bazı Mollaların ve muhafazakarların Amanullah Han'ın modern ve demokratik reformlarına başta İngiltere olmak üzere yabancıların kışkırtmasıyla tepki göstermesiydi. Afganistan'da ikinci demokratik dalga 1963-1973 yıllarında görüldü, ancak İslamcılarının ve komünistlerin neden olduğu darbeler, müdahaleler ve savaşlar sonucunda devam edemedi. Siyasal İslam hareketleri, 1924'te Mustafa Kemal Atatürk'ün hilafetin kaldırılmasına, yeni dünya düzenine ve çeşitli alanlarda Müslüman geri kalmışlığına tepki olarak, bazı kişiler tarafından sosyal ve siyasi gruplar oluşturularak Mısır ve Hindistan'da ortaya çıktı. İslamcı hareketlerin öncülleri olarak bilinen Mısırlı Müslüman Kardeşler ve Mevdudi'nin Cemaati İslami 1960'lardan sonra Afganistan'da siyaseti etkiledi. Hasan el-Benna'nın ılımlı fikirleri, Afganistan Müslüman Gençlik Örgütü'nün El Ezher'de eğitim gören ve Müslüman Kardeşlerin İslam, hükümet, toplum vb. konular hakkındaki fikirlerinin etkisiyle ülkeye geri dönen liderleri aracılığıyla 1960'larda ortaya yayıldı. 1941'de Hindistan alt kıtasında kurulan Mevdudi Cemaati İslami, Afgan İslamcılarını etkileyen bir başka İslami harekettir ve Mevdudi'nin İslami hükümet hakkındaki fikirleri Afgan İslamcılar için temel oluşturmuştur. Kutub'un, 1980'lerde Afgan-Sovyet savaşı sırasında "cehalet" teorisinde ifade edilen fikirleriyle Afgan İslamcılarını, özellikle radikal İslamcılarını etkiledi. Afganistan, uzun bir istikrarsızlık geçmişine sahip bir ülke, ve siyasal İslam bu durumun en önemli oyuncularından biridir. Bu çalışma, Afganistan'da siyasal İslam ve demokrasi ve bunların birbirleriyle olan ilişkileri ve etkileri ile ilgili literatür alanındaki bir boşluğu doldurmayı amaçlamaktadır.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** *İslam, Siyasal İslam, Demokrasi, Hükümet, Politika, Devlet, Afganistan*

## **1. Introduction**

The philosopher Karl Popper says that history has no meaning but that we can give it a meaning (Popper, 1977: 278). The reason we remember this sentence is that we have to learn a lesson from the bloody history of Afghanistan so that we don't see such things in the future, otherwise everything we read will be of no use and history will repeat again and again. The relationship between religion and governance is one of the most important results we can get from the history of Afghanistan. Whenever religion becomes a tool of politics, then we should not expect development and prosperity. We should learn how to act when want a basic change in society or politics. It means that spontaneously and revolutionary changes are not key to stable success as we saw it in Afghanistan.

Why Afghanistan faced all these problems in the past forty years and still have problems from the prospect of religion and government's relation? There are many elements and some of them are related to religion and its role in politics, which will be discussed in the following:

As our topic is about political Islam, so a general view of the roots of Afghanistan disaster which belong to Islamists are as follows: Most Afghans are Hanafi Sunni Muslims, which attaches the greatest importance to logic and wisdom, so they are opposite to fundamentalist ideas naturally. But how were Afghan people influenced by fundamentalist and political Islamic movements? It had two main parts not just for Afghan Islamists, these two movements influenced most of the Islamic countries as well. One is Deobandi Madrasas, which originally built by Hanafi Muslims to fight against the British in India, and second is the Muslim Brotherhood movement in Egypt, which was discussed in the previous chapter. Both had their influences on Afghan people as well. Muslim Brotherhood and

Jamaat-e Islami of Mawdudi influenced the formation of the Muslim Youth movement of Afghanistan in the 1960s. Deobandi movement was a response to modern education and lifestyle which was started by the British in India. Overtime Deobandi Madrasas spread to Pakistan and some parts of Afghanistan, and they were radicals and against any modern moves, which later caused the emergence of Taliban movement. We can say that Deobandi education is the ideological base for Taliban movement, which are the most radical Islamists among Afghans (Magnus and Naby 2002: 44).

Afghanistan's one of the biggest problems is that there is no standard center for learning religious sciences, so many go to Pakistan to learn about religion, where they study very radically and against Afghanistan's interests and become tools for extremist groups (Zaman 1998: 691). The number of religious schools for Afghan youth increased dramatically during Afghanistan invasion by Soviets, publications with fundamentalist content by various Mujahedin parties, as well as institutions that came to their aid, are widely circulated and published free of charge, ideological books and treatises were also widely printed and distributed, the experiences of Arab and Pakistani fundamentalist groups were also systematically transferred to the part of the Afghan youth. The Pakistani intelligence service played an important role in this game and prepared the situation for emerging radicals who then fought in the Afghanistan civil war more than with the Soviets.

## **2. The conflicts in religious understanding and morality**

A source in the Afghan conflict is the difference in understandings of religion. As Maley claims that the Islam of the intelligentsia is different from the Islam of the village prayer-leader or

mullah (Maley, 2002: 10). As we mentioned in the previous chapter Muslim Brotherhood and Wahhabi movement are different at their origins and have little in common. But they had coordination in supporting Afghan Islamists against Soviet forces with coordination of Pakistani army and ISI (Inter-Services Intelligence). According to Roy, Wahhabi and Ahle-Hadith activities in Afghanistan, where Sufism and Hanafism are well rooted, led to religious conflicts among the population (Roy, 1994: 119). Today's Ahle Hadith and Wahhabi movement become stronger in Afghanistan especially in the east of the country some regions in the border with Pakistan who are initially Hanafi Muslims are now under influence of Wahhabi and Ahle hadith thoughts (Zaman 1998: 701).

One of the problems of religiosity in Afghanistan, especially among Afghan Islamists, is that they care a lot about appearance and subdivisions (Rubin 2002: 31). Moheq classifies religiosity according to moral values to two main types. One is to believe in the superiority of religion over morality, which means that our actions are not inherently good and ugly, and are only considered good or ugly when we have a reason from Sharia for it. But in the second approach, morality takes precedence over religion, and religion derives its legitimacy from its morality, and its validity stems from the fact that its message is moral, and we accept it because its guidelines are based on morality, and this is a subtle and important point. Because of the different interpretations from Sharia, the first approach has its problems. For example, suicide attacks in Afghanistan are good but bad in Pakistan (according to many Pakistani mullahs) or, armed jihad is necessary to eradicate denial in Afghanistan and is forbidden in Egypt (according to many Egyptian Islamists). Or silence against vulgar series in Afghanistan is forbidden and permissible

in Syria, United Arab Emirates, and other Islamic countries (Moheq, 2011: 50/1) Moheq emphasizes, that the most important message that the Qur'an has for its reader is morality. Of course, the examples are given in the Qur'anic language and discourse maybe the color of certain historical conditions or the minds and languages of the audience of that period may be more consistent, but the moral generalities of the Qur'an are compatible with the universal standards of morality, which is a common thread between religions and major cultures are assembled and adaptable (Moheq, 2011: 52) Yusuf Qarzawi in his book (Islamic Awakening and the Identity Crisis) is stating the situation of Muslim societies as: The crisis of our societies is first and foremost a crisis of morality. Mawdudi's idea about moral is: "Islamic ethics is part of ethics, not all of it" (Moral foundations for Islamic movements).

### **3. The Ideology of Jihadism and Takfir**

One of the issues in Afghanistan is the ideology of Jihadism as it is in some Islamic countries too. When we mention the word Jihadism, we do not mean the word of Jihad in Islam, we mean the ideology which emerged after the 1960s and writings of Sayed Qutb and some other radicals can be count as a source of this ideology as well. According to Moheq, today the word Jihadism has some characteristics which are as follows: 1. Jihad is the meaning of armed struggle 2. In this sense, it is considered as the most important pillar of Islam and possibly in the post-monotheistic degree 3. It considers any other effort, such as scientific activities, social services, political efforts, cultural reforms, etc., to be insignificant in the current situation, along with the armed struggle 4. It considers this method to be the only way to save Muslims from countless problems 5. In this regard, it does not consider

legitimate defense to be sufficient and considers the aggressive war to be an important part of jihad 6. In this battle, if necessary, there is no obstacle to killing civilians (Moheq, 2014: 41/2).

Now we examine the ideology of Jihadism in Afghanistan. Afghan people's Jihad against Soviet invader forces in its first years had no relation with the ideology of Jihadism which was discussed above. After passing some time thousands of young fighters with Jihadist ideology mostly influenced of Sayed Qutb came to Pakistan from different Arabic and other countries to fight against Soviet forces beside Afghan Mujahedin parties. These fighters and some of their leaders like, Usama bin Laden, Ayman al-Zawahiri, and Abdullah Azzam spread their fundamentalist ideologies among anti-Soviet Afghan fighters (Zallum 2012: 78). This was the time when an informal base for both Al-Qaeda and the Taliban was established in Pakistan. The military and intelligence of Pakistan had the most important role in formation of these movements, as they were teaching and coordinating them against the Afghan leftist government and then used these Islamic groups against each other.

As we mentioned before, Takfir was first used by the Kharijites (Khawarej) against some of the Companions, and even the fourth caliph of Islam, Ali, was killed by this weapon. Muslim scholars at various stages of history have struggled with this tactic and tried to eradicate it, the most important of which is Abu Hanifa, who says: We can not call any Muslim as an infidel who is praying towards qibla. At various points in history, this tactic was used against political opponents. According to Moheq, the first time a new wave of Takfir started with the writings of Mawdudi and then Sayed Qutb (The four terms in the Qur'an (and Sayed Qutb (The signs of Path) in the 1970s (Moheq, 2014: 34/5).

There was no matter of Takfir in Afghanistan till the 1960s, where the majority of the population is Hanafi, founder of which was very opposed to Takfir. So when and why this problem emerged in Afghan society? There are different views on the subject as some claim, this tool was used first time in Afghanistan's history against Amanullah Khan, who started a wave of modernization after declaring Afghanistan's independence (İnaç and Sada 2021: 146). Afghanistan's society was religious and conservative so they did not welcome these modernization movements by Amanullah Khan, even some of them started a battle with him as a result of some provocations and he left the country. Moheq claims that Takfir has two stages in Afghanistan, first, it was used against leftist parties in the 1960s (Moheq, 2014: 34/5). This wave of Takfir emerged against leftists and communists when Islamists and leftists started their efforts to gain power in the 1960s, as Islamists were those who were influenced by the Muslim Brotherhood of Egypt and especially Sayed Qutb's views on Islamic subjects.

Takfir become public and normal when leftist Afghans got to power through a bloody coup against Dawood Khan. One of the reasons for the increasing Takfir and hate of people to the government was that the left-wing parties in power suppressed their opponents very strongly in brutal methods and the general public forced to join the jihadist parties (Mann 1993: 56). This was the time which most Islamists counted all those as non-Muslims which should be killed who were working with the Afghan government of the time (İnaç and Sada 2021: 83). There was an increase in this issue as the Soviets invaded Afghanistan, even people who were not on the same side with Islamists and working with government or living in cities were counted as communists who should be killed and thousands of civil

Afghan were killed as a result. The situation was worsening, when Arabic and Pakistani religious books were distributed among Afghans in Pakistan. the first wave of Takfir continued after Soviet forces withdraw from Afghanistan against Dr. Najibullah's government by Islamists (İnaç 2021b: 227). This wave did not stop even when Islamists got the power in 1992, different Islamists and warlords used the term during the civil war against each other as well.

According to Moheq, the second wave of Takfir began when NATO forces launched attacks on the Taliban and their government collapsed (Moheq, 2014: 40). This time, Takfir was used against all those who supported the USA and NATO against the Taliban regime by both al-Qaeda and Taliban. Some people used this tool against left-wing parties in the 1980s like Rabbani and Sayyaf who were now targeted by the Taliban through this weapon. Their fault was eliminating an Islamic government (Taliban) in cooperation with non-Muslims.

#### **4. Different Approaches towards the Takfir Issue**

Different solutions are suggested to get rid of this situation. Moheq emphasizes on rational solutions, providing a pleasant interpretation of religion, and criticize of its extreme and insane statements (Moheq, 2011: 03). Afghanistan is a religious society and every effort for the stability of the country should contain the element of religion on it as the last 40 years is the best explorer of the situation. When we tell about the religious element, it does not mean to provide fundamentalists or do something resemble the past failed experiences that had no positive consequences for Afghanistan during the last forty years of different regimes, especially the era in which Islamists were in power. The element of wisdom and modern logic should not be ignored as Moheq points it

out: any society that has been able to use the element of religion with developed rationality has brought peace, affection, and positive emotions to the lives of its people, and any society that has lacked such an element has caused great confusion and scope for it has become. The most important conscious action that some societies have taken in the field of their religious tradition and culture has been to correct it. Religion can not have an existence and presence outside and independent of the interpretations and perceptions that religious people have of it and express it in their speech and behavior. Reforming religion means reforming religious thought and, in general, reforming the cultural mechanisms that result from individual and social behaviors (Moheq 2011: 139). Most Muslim and non-Muslim authors indicate extremism and fundamentalism as a reason for putting Afghanistan to all these struggles, but they are not something that comes into being overnight. So familiarity with theology and historical background of fundamentalism in Islam is one of the most important ways to understand the role of Islamists in Afghanistan's long period struggle.

After its emergence in the 7<sup>th</sup> century, Islam saved millions from slavery, idolatry and other misery. But why are Muslims, especially Afghans, now in such a misfortune situation that they have not been able to find a logical solution for 40 years? (İnaç 2021b: 234). This question has not been resolved, and I hope that this study will help us to do things that are good for the future of religion, the country and humanity, using the history and experiences of the last forty years.

#### **5. Political Islam and Democracy**

The findings of this study examined the relationship between Islam and democracy in terms of political Islam movements within the context of the post-

World War Second era in Afghanistan. The debate on Islam and democracy is very complex for many reasons. Both subjects are completely different, Islam is a religion and democracy is a political system of modern governing (İnaç 2021a: 11). Democracy is secular by nature because it does not commit to any particular faith, and it is liberal by circumstance as it respects individual freedoms that will cause the forming of a liberal society (İnaç 2020: 20). The basic presupposition of democracy is that everybody is right in their faith, or at least it does not judge who is right and who is wrong, and there is no recognition for superiority or inferiority of any particular people and faith. The debate on Islam and democracy is a reaction to a fundamental transformation in Muslim societies and a struggle by the religious to reform their political system. Some individuals think that Islam is compatible with democracy, they refer to verses in the Qur'an and Sunnah of Prophet Mohammad and favorable views in the significant Islamic writings that can support their theories.

There are several verses in the Qur'an, that can be the base of religious tolerance and even very similar to a liberal democracy. For example, verse 99 of Surah Yunus, where Allah asks the prophet if he was forcing people to become faithful and says that all people would have been faithful if God wanted. Several other verses in the Quran imply that it is a matter of choice for everybody to be a Muslim or not and nobody including the Prophet Mohammad is allowed to force anybody to become a Muslim. Illustrations of the life of the Prophet Mohammad can drive us to understand that Islam provides a rich resource for the development of societies that promote the general well, recognize the need for consultation, and respect the human dignity of all persons and groups Mawdudi 1939: 78). These are all examples of the conformity of Islam with democracy. But many think that

democracy is not compatible with Islam and they describe some verses from the Qur'an, like verse 32 of Surah Yunus which says: (That is Allah, your true Lord. There is only perversion after Allah (Right), so how is it that you are turned away (from Allah?), and many others which describe incompatibility of Islam with any other form of governing than Islam according to opposites. Writings of Sayed Qutb are also full of ideas that claim the incompatibility of Islam with democracy.

The discussions of political Islam and democracy, type of government in Islam, compatibility of Islam with democracy, and other related issues emerged in a period when Muslims lost their previous power in various fields and style of governing changed which they had in past, under name of caliphate or emperor built by Muslims (İnaç 2018: 311). Europeans and others successfully evolve to a new and modern form of governing which is a representative democracy in form of nation-states, but Muslims after falling off Ottoman caliphate/empire faced many problems which caused emerging of political Islam and the reason of this emergence is the disintegration of the Islamic societies that had either been colonized by the Western powers or ruled by authoritarian regimes, kings, and ethnic dynasties (İnaç 2004: 36-38). Political Islam emerged as a crippled response to modernity and disabilities of Muslims in the new world order and failed to present a stable and successful model to the Muslims (Budak 2019: 127).

The discussions about governance among Muslims before and after emerging political Islam changed fundamentally, as it was focusing on general perceptions before emerging Islamist movements and the political debates had been centered mainly on how the rulers should rule (İnaç 2007: 29); for instance, rulers should be just, wise, and so forth and the ruled were to obey "God, the Prophet and those who

represent him”, but all these changed with forming Islamist movements in different areas especially the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt and Jamiat-e Islami of Mawdudi in India. Muslim Brotherhood is the first and most significant Islamic movement established in 1928 by Hasan al-Banna with a moderate view of the politics but it sharpened in the person of Sayed Qutb. At the time of the emergence of the Islamists, the anti-imperialist rhetoric was very important and influential, that is, it had a great influence on rallying the people around itself, and the main reason for this was the imperialist occupation of the Muslim countries, especially the Egyptian at that time (Mitchell 1993: 79).

## **6. The Religious Plurality and the Historical Background**

Afghanistan is like a bridge that connects different regions. Due to its geographic location, Afghanistan has always been a place of competition for great powers, and it has suffered greatly in this regard from the past to the present. Modernization and nationalization attempts in Afghanistan were not successful in the past as a result of Russian and British pressures and competitions (İnaç and Sada 2021: 27). Lately, besides the internal factors being more intense, it has become a field where different forces play their intelligence games. Politics over religion in Afghan society has caused more conflicts and instability than any other country. Since the beginning of the twentieth century, the influence of religion has increased in Afghan politics, especially with the independence of Afghanistan, the first reactions in the modernization process came by the Mullahs and conservative fundamentalists (Yousaf and Adkin 1992: 49). From the second half of the twentieth century, religious groups emerged and began to be seen in Afghan politics as political actors. Besides the internal and external factors caused by superpowers, the birth of Pakistan as a

Muslim country in 1947 and the outbreak of the Islamic Revolution in Iran in 1978 are regional factors that caused an increase in Islamist activities in Afghanistan (Roy 1990: 71-77). As a result of the politicization of Islam in Afghanistan, it has started a radicalization process under Islamists.

The year 1964 is important in Afghanistan's history. This is the year of a new democratic order in the country with the most democratic constitution until that time, although the state form was still a monarchy, for the first time, members of parliament were elected through democratic elections, and progress was made towards creating a real constitutional monarchy. As these advances were taking place, many political and social actors appeared on the scene that political Islam and communists are considered the most important, and both have dealt major blows to the well-functioning democratic order. Dawood Khan's 1973 coup changed the political environment. After Dawood Khan's coup, the Islamists became even more active in politics and mobilized against Dawood Khan's modern and leftist stance. Dawood Khan needed foreign aid to modernize the country and USSR found the chance to make relations more closely with him. During this period, while Afghan-USSR relations rose to the highest level, Islamists responded with harsh policies in 1974, the Islamists attempted a coup attempt against the Dawood khana, and a year later organized armed attacks against the state in the provinces and thus, for the first time in the history of Afghanistan, there has been an armed conflict between Islamists and the state (Anwar 1998: 81). With the communists' 1978 bloody coup, Afghanistan entered the longest-running instabilities and wars in its modern history.

With the occupation of the USSR in Afghanistan, the influence and unifying



power of religion increased (Mann 1986: 74). While resistance against a non-Muslim force is seen as the duty of every Muslim in terms of religion, a global call for jihad has been made. Global jihad has left deep marks on Afghan politics. The 10-year occupation and war shaken the foundation of the country in all areas, including democratic institutions of the country. Most of the patriotic Afghans, including the elite cadres of the society, left their country. The expulsion of the Soviets and the peace and reconciliation policy pursued by the Doctor Najibullah's government have been a good opportunity to re-build democracy and order in Afghanistan, and some pro-democracy international organizations, including the UN, have made efforts for peace, but the Islamists declared the overthrow of Najibullah's government via armed struggle as their only target (İnaç and Sada 2021: 89). They finally, took control of Kabul and Afghanistan with Pakistan's backing in 1992. Their civil war has been intensified by both the different interpretations of religion and the struggle of ethnic elements for supremacy, but selfishness among Islamists was in front of all factors. The prestige of Islamic movements and even religion in Afghan politics was damaged due to the civil war that started with the hegemony of the Islamists (Anthony 2000: 78). Afghanistan has suffered in various fields in this period, on the one hand, Afghanistan's material and spiritual assets were plundered, tens of thousands of innocent people were killed due to the civil war between the Islamists, and while this mixed period continued, a group of new and more fundamentalist Islamists broke up in the name of the Taliban in 1994 and were able to banish the old Islamists and control Kabul and then the whole country in 1996.

## **7. The Sectarian Politics, Taliban and Radicalism**

Because the Taliban Movement is strictly Sunni, it has been supported by states such as Saudi Arabia, which is strictly Sunni due to regional and global rivalries, to pressure states such as Iran (İnaç 2017: 112-114). Besides, this movement was supported by Pakistan to keep Afghanistan under control and to reduce the influence of India, which is causing trouble to the USA and especially to Pakistan in reaching the energies of Central Asia. Afghanistan has entered one of the darkest periods in history, when Islamists took control of the country. In the end, after staying in power for 5 years, the Taliban were removed from the administration by the United States, and new hopes for democracy and peace emerged and some positive steps were taken. These steps are as follows: the most democratic constitution in the region was drafted. For the first time in the history of Afghanistan, the president was directly elected by popular vote, and the parliament was reopened democratically after about thirty years. But this peaceful and democratic environment changed dramatically at the end of 2006 when the Taliban reemerged as an armed group and got stronger day by day. Finally, the USA and Taliban signed a peace agreement in the spring of 2020, and according to this agreement, the USA will leave Afghanistan in the next months and the Afghan government and the Taliban will start inter-Afghan peace talks in near future (İnaç 2021b: 233).

All societies also have an element of religion in politics, and in some places, they have maintained their relations with each other in a compromising way, and in others, it caused controversy and tensions (İnaç and Ünal 2013: 227). It means that there is no society where one of these elements is ignored completely even in most fundamentalist secular countries

(Delanty 2013: 123). Therefore, the solution is to make a convergence among them not to cause a situation like in Afghanistan. The relation of state and religion can be rational and advantageous to the Afghan society via some democratic parameters. In a country like Afghanistan, it is very difficult to keep religion away from politics, but can prevent the misuse of religion as a tool in politics and promote democratic institutions (Berting 2018: 91).

### **8. The Conclusion: Political Islam and Beyond**

Why is Afghanistan in this situation? One of the reasons is related to political Islam and the use of religion in politics: Radical movements are under the problem of insecurity in Afghanistan today. Radicalization has reached this position by going through the politicization period of religion (İnaç 2003: 344). When we look at the reasons for politicization of the religion, the intervention and occupation of foreign powers come to the fore due to the strategic location of the country. There has been a relationship between political Islam and democracy from the very beginning, and in our analysis, Afghanistan was unable to establish a proper connection between Islam and democracy as a result of continuous external interventions, import ideologies including political Islam, who all tried to be imposed on the society (İnaç 2021: 229). Democracy can be applied in Afghanistan as it is possible in every other Islamic country, but these interventions and orientalist logic prevents the creation of harmony between the state and society so there was not the right environment for democracy to grow and settle. As a result of this inappropriate situation a vicious circle was founded, it means the state could not be democratic because of foreign interventions and imported ideologies including political Islam on the one hand,

and on the other hand, because of the lack of democracy, the people could not choose the administration they wanted. The new constitution of Afghanistan drafted in 2004 is a tremendous example of a system where Islam and democracy conform very well and as a result, the religious and the liberals could work together for the future of their country. The constitution forbids any law that is against Islam and in the meantime it recognizes the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and equality of men and women.

One of the main reasons for Afghanistan's instability and failure to enter the democratic order is that those who are in power have undergone rapid and fundamentally reforms before the society is ready, which has always garnered reaction and thus led to the establishment of a negative and undemocratic order (İnaç 2016: 74). It is very important for the permanence of democracy and for the building of order to create the necessary grounds with cultural and social activities, but rapid democratization steps are full of risks and harmful as we can see it in Amanullah Khan's case. Modernization process should be convenient with the social structure. To be democratized you should prepare the social order. This can be applied to the Islamists too as we saw in two different examples of Turkey and Egypt, where both Islamists or those who are pro-Islamic ideas at least got the power democratically but had different results: the Turkish model has shown that political Islam can be applied as a long-term strategy, which can exist alongside democracy, but Islamists in Egypt, especially president Morsi had a different approach and acted spontaneously to seize all the power and did not wait for a suitable chance in the long-term future (İnaç 2003: 347).

The example of Alnahda in Tunisia under Ghanushi is also a different case than most Islamists who failed in politics

even after getting the power democratically, but Ghanushi accepted and promoted democratic values and could even attract non-Islamist to the party (Hobsbawm 2017: 52). The greatest evidence of Sayed Qutb's radicalism is that he rejects the western and non-Islamic systems fundamentally and uses the concept of ignorance for those who live in these systems, including most Muslims, but Hasan al-Banna does not have such a radical statement and even accept parliamentary democracy which was Egypt's formal governing system in that time, if it is not in obvious conflict with Islam.

One of the most fundamental characteristics of Islamists is the idea of rejecting other political ideologies or although they do not deny them, they see them unnecessarily because similar ideas already exist in Islam (Berting 2014: 66). Political Islam can play a positive role in Islamic countries when its proponents distance themselves from any linkages to radical and fundamentalist movements like it did in Turkey and Tunisia to a point, but the debate on the compatibility of political Islam and democracy will not have an end in the near as there are still very different ideas. Some western thinkers and intellectuals have embraced Islamism in terms of more jihad and some sort of undermining Islam by conveying the ideas of the radicals among the Islamists.

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