

## UNDERSTANDING POLITICAL ISLAM MOVEMENTS

*This article focuses on political Islam, its emergence, development, principles, and the struggle against liberal movements. It shows the difference between Islam as a religion and as a political movement and points at the difference between Islamic fundamentalism and democratic Islam. Though Islamic movement is based on the common principles, there exist different approaches towards Islamic law and its application in the real world.*

**Key words:** Political Islam, Democratic Islam, Islamic Movement, Liberal Movements, Islamic Fundamentalism.

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## РОЗУМІННЯ РУХУ ПОЛІТИЧНОГО ІСЛАМУ

*Розглядається політичний іслам, його поява, розвиток, принципи та боротьба проти ліберальних рухів. Показано різницю між ісламом як релігією та політичним рухом, а також відмінністю між ісламським фундаменталізмом та демократичним ісламом. Хоча ісламський рух базується на загальних принципах, існують різні підходи до ісламського права та його застосування в реальному світі.*

**Ключові слова:** політичний іслам, демократичний іслам, ісламський рух, ліберальні рухи, ісламський фундаменталізм.

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## ПОНИМАНИЕ ДВИЖЕНИЯ ПОЛИТИЧЕСКОГО ИСЛАМА

*Рассматривается политический ислам, его появление, развитие, принципы и борьба с либеральными движениями. Показывается разница между исламом как религией и политическим движением и указывается на отличие исламского фундаментализма от демократического ислама. Хотя исламское движение основано на общих принципах, существуют различные подходы к исламскому праву и его применению в реальном мире.*

**Ключевые слова:** политический ислам, демократический ислам, исламское движение, либеральные движения, исламский фундаментализм.

Actuality of the subject in this article stems from the necessity of understanding political Islamic movements. There are lessons to be learned from a past in which fear of Islamic threat often blinded the United States and European countries to the Islamic diversity. In order to understand the diversity of political Islam movements it is necessary not to equate Islam and Islamic fundamentalism with extremism, because this equating led to uncritical support of dictatorship in Arab countries.

This article is aimed at a better understanding of the diversity of Islamic political movements, their establishment, the principles that they stand on and their aspirations that can be explained by their role in the political life.

The study of the subject of the article is based on literature that contains the works of Bernard Lewis, Dalibor Rohac, Noah Feldman and others. They depicted the intersection of religion and politics and the role of religion both in government and in private life in their works.

Political Islam is a political, media and academic term used to describe political change movements that believe in Islam as a «political system of government». It can be defined as a set of political ideas and goals emanating from Islamic law, which is used by the group of «fundamentalist Muslims» who believe that Islam is not only a religion but a political, social, legal and economic system that can build state institutions [1]. Countries such as Iran and Saudi Arabia and the former Taliban regime in Afghanistan, Sudan and Somalia are examples of this project, noting that they reject the term political Islam and use instead the rule of Sharia or divine rule.

After the events of September 11, 2001 in the United States of America, the world media directed its attention to the Islamic political movements. In this critical period, a kind of chaos in analysis led, in one way or another, to the distinction between Islam as a religion and certain groups, based on it. This lack of focus promoted to the spread of some concepts, which still have a significant impact until today. These concepts have been used by the minority in the Western world to describe the Islamic world as a threat to the Western way of life [2].

The term «Islamic Fundamentalism» is one of the first terms used to describe what is now called «political Islam». In September 1994, a global conference was held in Washington, DC, in the United States, bearing the name of «The threat of Islamic fundamentalism in North Africa». The conference was about Sudan and what the conference described as an attempt by Iran to spread the «Islamic revolution» to Africa through Sudan. Then gradually in the nineties and in the midst of internal events in Algeria, which witnessed the most difficult stages of the clash between the Algerian government and the Islamic movements opposed to it, the concept was replaced by the term «radical Islam» and after September 11, 2001, it became known as political Islam.

The political movement of Islam in its modern concept began after the collapse of the Ottoman Empire and the abolishment of the Islamic Caliphate as an institution in 1922 that was followed by the establishment of the Republic of Turkey in the European style by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk [3].

Since the end of the XX-th century the application of Islamic law gradually started to decline, some intellectuals argued that the reason of the decline of Islamic law in Muslim countries is because Muslims have abandon the path of the sharia, Islam divine law. They hypothesize that in order to return to Muslims golden age they must implement the true sharia into the society. The Islamic Movement has its tracks and crises which contributed to its maturity and crystallization in terms of its resurrection and establishment that enabled it to occupy its position and lead the scene in many cases.

Most Western political analysts believe that the emergence of the phenomenon of political Islam is due to the low economic level of most countries in the Arab world. Since the 1950s, some socialist movements in some Islamic countries have been under the influence of communist thought aimed at raising the economic and social level of individuals [4].

But these socialist movements failed to reach their goals in the long term. In fact the worsening of the economic crisis in the Arab world, the collapse of the social development project in particular deepened the inequality between the social classes, in light of the rampant financial and administrative corruption and the inability of the regimes to find solutions to this crisis.

Adding to that, the Palestinian cause, the Arab-Israeli conflict and the occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip coincided with the Islamic Revolution in Iran and the Second Gulf War which paved the way for the emergence of the idea that Western politics is unfair to Muslims and uses the double standards concept.

These two main factors contributed to the appearance of large segments of the Arab people who had different ideas about solving their social problems. The people have lost their faith in practical matters and tended to believe in solutions, posed by the Islamic movements, with the slogan Islam is the solution. The opponents of Islamist movements accuse these movements of «trying somehow to take power, build a theocratic state and apply its vision of Islamic law» [5]. The idea of applying Islamic law strictly to politics is not accepted by liberal currents or secular movements. These liberal movements want to build secular and religiously neutral states, and their vision to the issue of following Islamic law or other laws is a special matter for every individual in the society in which the state does not interfere.

The concepts of liberalism and democratic participation were already present in the medieval Islamic world [6]. The Rashidun Caliphate “632 to 661 CE” is perceived by its proponents as an early example of a democratic state and it is claimed that the development of democracy in the Islamic world eventually came to a halt followed by the Sunni–Shia split. The conservative trend in Islam interprets the term «liberal Muslim» as «Westernize». Those who share these ideas may stay away from the basic principles of the religion of Islam because they are influenced by the Western world.

Despite criticism and security campaigns against them, the movements of political Islam have been able to become an opposition political force in some countries of West Asia and some North African countries. Several Islamic parties have also succeeded in reaching power in some Arab countries, such as Egypt, Tunisia, Morocco, Palestine (Hamas) [7].

Robert Spencer, an American analyst in the affairs of Islam, said that there is no difference between Islam and political Islam

and it is unreasonable to separate them. Islam in its view assumes the principles of political objectives. «Spencer said that «Islam is not just a religion of Muslims, but it is a way of life, it contains instructions and commands starting from the simplest acts such as eating and drinking to the most complex spiritual things» [8]. Today many Islamist or Islamic democratic parties exist in almost every democracy with a Muslim majority.

Many militant Islamic groups are also working in different parts of the world. The controversial term «Islamic fundamentalism» has also been coined by some non-Muslims to describe the political and religious philosophies of some militant Islamic groups. Both of these terms (Islamic democracy and Islamic fundamentalism) are used by a large variety of groups with varying histories, ideologies and contexts [9]. The subdivision in these notions can be summed up in the following points: first, individual independence in the interpretation of the Quran and Hadith, second, the academic analysis of the Quranic texts and biography of the life of Prophet Mohamad [10]. The beginning of this subdivision dates back to the counteraction of Muslims with the Western world through waves of migration. This subdivision is based on the literal application of all Islamic texts that may be very difficult if not impossible in the circumstances of modern-day variables [11].

Democratic Islam does not believe in the authority of any party to issue an advisory opinion and it adheres in the current right of women to take up political positions. Most representatives of these views are trying to separate politics from religion and prefer the principle of nonviolence. Countries which fulfill the two basic features (the interpretation of the Quran and hadith, the academic analysis of the texts and biography of the life of prophet Mohamad) include Afghanistan, Iran, and Malaysia. Saudi Arabia, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates. They are examples of countries that do adhere to the principles of Islamic democracy. The expression of Islamic democracy is different in the Muslim majority countries, as sharia interpretations vary from country to another, and the use of sharia is more comprehensive in countries in which sharia forms the basis for state laws.

There are many movements that are described as «movements of Islamic jurisprudence» or «progressive Islam movements» that rely on *ijtihad* (modern interpretation of the texts of the Koran and the Prophet's Hadith).

They state that they are trying to return to «the basic principles of Islam».

The Arab revolutions in 2011 led to the spread of the call for the implementation of Islamic law, the establishment of the Islamic Caliphate and forming Islamic parties, as happened in Egypt. After the revolutions some representatives of Islamic movements started to participate in the government for example, Justice and Development Party in Morocco, the Justice and Building Party in Libya, but these parties were unable to implement Islamic law.

In Egypt many Islamic parties were established – The Muslim Brotherhood, the Freedom and Justice Party, the Salafist Call in Alexandria, the Noor Party. These parties obtained the majority of the seats in the parliament, except the Salafiyya al-Jamaiya which abstained from political participation and was dissolved by the Supreme Constitutional Court on Thursday, June 14, 2012.

In Syria the revolution united all the Islamic movements in the country to jihad movements (groups who fight against nonbelievers). Many armed factions were formed to call for the application of Islamic law, such as: Ahrar Cham, the Hawks, the Unity Brigade, Jund al-Sham, Al-Qaeda (who's responsible of making the Islamic State in Iraq) and Sham (known in media as ISIS) [12].

According to some analysts, political Islam projects have failed to put forward their styles as soon as they reached power. In his book «End of Fundamentalism and the Future of Political Islam», Faraj al-Asha describes how armed political Islamic groups used slogans against state corruption and they used violence and criminality against the state and its citizens. He pointed out that the victory of the Justice and Development Party in Turkey, which is classified as a group of political Islam, is «a resounding declaration of the end of political Islam and not an overwhelming victory of it. He pointed out that the leader of the Turkish Justice and Development party (AKP) Recep Tayyip Erdogan has turned to the traditional roots of the Islamic empire [13]. Erdogan and his party had for years denied that it was an Islamic party. But as political Islam began to triumph in the Arab World, AKP leadership began to openly show their affinity to political Islam and even presented themselves as a model for Islamism in the post Arab Spring Middle East.

The writings of the Tunisian Islamic thinker Sheikh Rashid Ghannouchi says that his electoral program is a political one and it separates religion from politics, but that does not mean separating religion from society [14].

Islam has an undeniable social and political character. This may be due to its worldly nature and the circumstances of its birth and evolution that coincided with state emergence, unlike Christianity which began as a creed persecuted by Roman authorities. The attempt to restrict Islam's role to the private sphere and within the mosque's confines is a very difficult endeavor. A majority of respondents of the recent Pew survey in Muslim countries have declared their support for democracy, demanding at the same time a larger role for Islam in public life. Islam evidently continues to have an active and influential presence in Muslims' lives.

The challenge is how it can play a positive role in a space open to different religious expressions, free of all forms of violence and fanaticism. Only through combining respect for collective culture with individual freedoms and the demands of identity with the reality of pluralism, can Muslim societies hope to regain their lost equilibrium and stability.

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УДК 316.422

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#### ЗАЛЕЖНІСТЬ ЯКОСТІ УКРАЇНСЬКОЇ ПОЛІТИЧНОЇ ЕЛІТИ ВІД СТУПЕНЯ РОЗВИТКУ ГРОМАДЯНСЬКОГО СУСПІЛЬСТВА

*Розглядається взаємозв'язок рівня розвитку громадянського суспільства та якості політичної еліти. Підкреслюється зв'язок політичної еліти з організаціями громадянського суспільства, що представляють конструктивну опозицію владним структурам. Аналізуються труднощі становлення політичної еліти України через збереження деяких принципів, характерних для формування радянської номенклатури. Показана роль місцевого самоврядування в процесі вдосконалення політичної еліти та її діяльності.*

**Ключові слова:** політична еліта, громадянське суспільство, громадський контроль, державність, місцеве самоврядування.