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DETECTING THE IDEOLOGICAL POSITION OF POLITICAL ISLAM TOWARDS LIBERAL DEMOCRACY IN MUSLIM COUNTRIES

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Abstract: *The question of the correlation between Islam, political Islam and liberal democracy has so far been the most exposed topic in exploring the democratic capacity of political Islam and Islamic societies in general. What is particularly intriguing about the relationship between political Islam and liberal democracy is the fact of its westernized triviality that has received a pejorative tone in Islamic political circles. Simplified, the triviality of liberal democracy for the Islamic political campus implies imposing a model of democracy that cannot be fully compatible with the original Muslim notion of society and government. Hence, the following paper analyzes exactly the relations of political Islam to specific inherent categories of liberal democracy such as the rule of law, representative government, the separation of powers and secularism as differentia specifica of liberal western democratic discourse. Through the methods of induction and deduction, the author will illustrate how appropriate tangent or divergence is illustrated and how this is reflected in the general ideological positioning of political Islam towards liberal democracy in Muslim countries through an axiological and praxeological perspective.*

Keywords: *Political Islam; Liberal Democracy; Sharia; Rule of Law; Separation of Powers; Secularism*



INTRODUCTION

Liberal (Western) democracy is often treated in Islamic political discourse as a latent incarnation of neo-colonialism which implies the degradation of Islamic values and social norms of behavior, the exploitation of natural and human resources, and the devastation of political development on its own social outlines. Simplified, the triviality of liberal democracy for the Islamic campus implies imposing a model of democracy that cannot be fully compatible with the original Muslim notion of society and government.

Bejtula Demiri rightly observes that the values of Islamic religion in Muslim societies, whether integral or non-integral, are a dominant value system that cannot fully, at once, and automatically incorporate the values of Western liberalism. This statement also applies to the possible acceptance of liberal (westernist) democracy (as a Western concept of democracy) in certain Muslim societies and states (Demiri 2009, 64). Political Islam, in turn, builds its positions towards liberal democracy through the prism of the established values of modern liberalism that contain moral decadence through Islamic discourse, as well as the rapid attempts to sever separation of Islamic principles from political and social spectrum and the 'privatization' of religion according to a French reasoning.

In this paper, we will base the relationship between political Islam and liberal democracy on the principles, i.e., the basic features of the rule of law, representative government, separation of powers, as well as secularism, which are the defining features of this model of democracy. Here we will not engage in social engineering or epistemological recombination through the prism of two elements: First, the attempts to redesign liberal democracy, by ignoring the secularism as its value dimension and component, and second, the status of religions in contemporary liberal democratic states. Our primary goal is to determine the relation of political Islam through an axiological and praxeological perspective with the liberal model of democracy, which often tries to be imputed in some Muslim countries such as Turkey, Tunisia, Algeria, Egypt, etc. In this regard, this paper will answer a few elementary questions that concern that dimension. First, whether liberalism and democracy have always been complementary or does the historical narrative indicate a different constellation. So what does liberal democracy mean today and what are its value postulates that would serve as a working framework for this paper? Second, are there common outlines of political Islam and liberal democracy in relation to the concept of the rule of law and what is the liberal *vis-à-vis* Islamic perspective of that category? Are there any divergent positions in that area? Third, what constitutes the Islamic political discourse on representative government and separation of power? Is there any way in which the Islamic concept of shura (consultation) with the ideas of representative government is manifested and is there any opposition? Fourth, why is there an antagonism of political Islam to secular postulates, and what constitutes the political-ideological paradigm of such a relationship?

DETERMINATION OF LIBERAL DEMOCRACY

Democracy is one of the most commonly used terms today. If Lincoln says that there is no adequate definition of the term 'freedom', Sartori, in his work 'Democracy - What Is It?' rightly concludes in his work that the concept of democracy is even more complex. The problem with the conception of democracy is gaining momentum precisely because of its frequency, mass use, and template reference to it that may compromise its very essence. Thus, Bernard Crick treats the term democracy pejoratively, by qualifying it as "the most promiscuous in world public affairs", that is, a term that can mean anything to anyone and which may be in danger of meaning nothing (Hejvud 2009, 74).

In this regard Christoph Gusy points out that since the last century the history of the world has not had any political doctrine that identifies itself as anti-democratic. Charges of anti-democratic action or behavior are often directed against opponents, while political critics and political theorists agree on the affirmation of the democratic element that exists in the institutions and theories for which they apologize. Hence, this acceptance of democracy as the highest form of political and social organization is a sign of a thorough agreement on the ultimate goals of modern social and political institutions and practices (Gusy 1989, 739).

Liberal Opposition, Acceptance and Adaptation of Democracy

Towards the end of the XVII, XVIII and XIX centuries, democracy was understood as 'the rule of the poor majority and the crowd', so it was not acceptable to the economic and social upper classes, traders and the young bourgeoisie. Saveski notes that this fact is quite often ignored in contemporary democracy papers or at best buried in the text, so that only well-meaning readers can come to the realization that the democratic record of liberals is not too much unproblematic as it wants to be (Saveski 2011, 83).

The mid-nineteenth century meant opening up the maps of ideological adaptation and harmonization between liberal ideas and some aspects of democracy. As the Sartory metaphorically expresses, the wind of history has changed its course and blows only one way - in the direction of democracy. But that is certainly not the end of the controversy over democracy and its meaning, and although a new leaf is being rolled out, the book of the future is as open as ever (Sartori 2001, 275). Thus began a dual process: liberalization of democracy and democratization of liberalism, noting that, however, as Sartory notes, the first dominates, because liberalism absorbs democracy much more than it annuls liberalism. Hence, although liberal ideas prevail, democracy is the term that has become dominant. (Sartory 1962, 361). It is therefore concluded that for this reason typically liberal ideas and concepts began to be identified as democratic. This was later an important factor that enabled the equation of democracy with liberal democracy (Saveski 2011, 97). In this regard, we will mention only a few moments that marked the adaptation and harmonization of

democracy and liberalism. John Stuart Mill argues that it is not in our power to choose between aristocracy and democracy, but that we should turn to a well-regulated democracy on which the future of all mankind depends. Macpherson speaks in terms of turning the old idea of democracy as the rule of the poor into the right to enter the race to win the mandate. And finally, Alexis Tocqueville, arguing that stopping democracy is like fighting God himself, and proposes a strategy of teaching democracy, fostering the beliefs inherent in it, purifying its morality, gradually replacing inexperience, improving the skill in doing public work, the blind urge to be replaced by understanding real interests, and managing it to adapt to circumstances and people (Saveski 2011, 94-95).

A Valuable Framework for Contemporary Liberal Democratic Discourse

This adaptation, summarized, under democracy (even in the era when universal suffrage was not introduced), began to imply several essential features of early liberalism: representativeness, limited and divided power, and the rule of law. However, liberal democracy today gets stronger components, although according to Held, representative democracy is in itself a liberal democracy that is understood as a compromise. More specifically, that democratic form is a requirement for a way of unifying the authority of democratic governments by simultaneously limiting their scope and domain. By its very definition, liberal democracy is a limited power (Hag and Harop 2009, 49). As Hague and Harrop note, unlike the overarching domain of Athens' *polis*, liberal democracies are governments that are created by laws, not by individuals. Leaders are subordinate to constitutions and usually contain respect for human rights (Hag and Harop 2009, 49).

Matic and Podunavac cite a series of factors that in political theories constitute a condition for democratic stability and the maintenance of democratic political relations. These are the fundamental features of modern liberal democratic discourse.

First, pluralism of ownership - property relations with proper legal basis and public guarantees for both the different form and the benefits of its economic use as an important segment of economic development, freedom and democracy, with the elimination of the so-called 'monopoly on employment'.

Second, the autonomy of civil society, which implies that the three-phase dimension of the political process, conflict - consensus - democracy can only take place if a relatively autonomous, free civil society exists in the middle, which opposes the hegemonic class of a social class, nation).

Third, a society in which collective interests and values (national, ethnic, religious, class) are assumed and tolerated as a social reality, and as the main essence of such process the general social interests arising from the natural-historical development of these segments.

Fourth, the existence of the *rechtsstaat* and the rule of law, which should prevent political voluntarism and monopoly and guarantee neutral power, equal chances and respect for democratic 'rules of the game'. Fifth, freedom of information - openness of the media to all active political actors and access under equal conditions for all (Matici and Podunavac 1994, 286-287).

ISLAMIC DOMAIN OF THE RULE OF LAW

The idea of the rule of law has gained wide popularity in liberal political thought because of its ability to protect the rights of the individual from the unlimited and arbitrary power of the king and his executives. From a westernist perspective, the rule of law is a concept that limits government. The theoretical postulate of the concept of the rule of law is well summarized by Kant who argues that laws should be universal, i.e. general (not dealing with a particular case), open (not prescribing specific behavior) and certain (their implementation being predictable). Lon Fuller outlines another well-known framework that encompasses the content of the rule of law paradigm. All the components cited by Fuller may be qualified as necessary properties that the laws should contain. Thus he lists several characteristics of laws: a) Generality; b) Public promotion; c) Prospectiveness (not retroactivity); d) Clarity; e) Consistency (i.e. without contradictions); f) Practicality (i.e. not seeking the impossible); g) Constancy with time; h) Congruence with the activity of public servants (Fuller 1969, 45-50).

Sharia Compatibility

Taking into account such predispositions, it means that in this domain we primarily consider the essential domain of the rule of law. In this respect, several elements are contained in the sharia that, according to Fuller's criteria, would be compatible with the theoretical matrix of the rule of law concept. Jerg Gutmann and Stefan Voigt note several parameters of the correlation of sharia characteristics with Fuller's frame. So, above all, sharia complies with many of Fuller's features. The Shari'ah (or the Qur'an) is publicly announced, and its prominence and revelation are remarkable. In addition, sharia is the clearest in terms of one of Fuller's criteria - its durability over time. For some apologists of Islamic provenance, sharia is very important because the fact that it is perceived as divine law makes it difficult for the government to ignore its compliance or implementation, or the ability to modify it according to its own political options. Consequently, Islamic law connects and applies to all Muslims including rulers. Therefore, its generality is argued in accordance with Fuller's cumulative list of criteria (Gutmann and Voigt 2018, 5).

Divergent Liberal Positions and Debates

From a liberal democratic conception of the rule of law, sharia has certain divergences with this principle. It is thus noted that one key feature of the rule of law is the equal treatment of all individuals (isonimia). As liberals have observed since the founding of Islam, three social inequalities were not only sanctioned but also 'illuminated by the sacred text'.

These inequalities included the relation between master and slave, man and woman, and Muslims and non-Muslims (Kafir). Differential treatment between men and women is still a practice in many Muslim countries, where women's rights, including the right to vote, imply different treatment than men. Inequality between Muslims and non-Muslims also has deleterious consequences, so historically non-Muslims have specific legal treatment qualified as Dhimmi (protected), as well as specific clothing identification and exclusion from court testimony (Gutmann and Voigt 2018, 5). A few remarks should be made in this regard. First, the master-slave relations, which the Islam categorically seeks to abolish, that is, one duty for Muslims is to 'free the slaves' for deliverance from some sin (Karic 2018).

Second, inequalities between men and women should be seen in the light of the pre-Islamic position of women and their social status, which is greatly enhanced by the emergence of Islam and Muhammad. Third, through the prism of expediency, the general purpose of Islam, including the protagonists of political Islam, is not equality but justice. Hence many categories of citizens (such as non-Muslims, women and children) have special status in order to implement justice. And finally, from the praxeological discourse, improving the rights and status of women, minorities and social welfare mark the rise of the features of the Islamic political party's platform such as the AKP, EI-Wasad, Ennahda, etc.

However, what is of additional importance to the liberal discourse of the rule of law is its dynamism, the possibility of revision and the extension of a set of rights to certain categories of individuals or groups. Due to the divine nature of sharia, according to the liberal discourse, it becomes an obstacle to the realization of the concept of the rule of law. It is because of the divine origin of Sharia that cannot simply be changed. This is a problem as Gutmann and Voigt note about all religions (and from our discourse expressed on political Islam as a subject with religious ideology), but especially on some central provisions of Islam because of the belief that after the revelations of Prophet Muhammad (the Qur'an and his Sunnah, observed through the hadiths) and their interpretations by the first generation of Muslims (the companions and the second generation Muslims), the door to a new interpretation of the Qur'an is closed. This idea is called Ijtihad (Gutmann and Voigt 2018, 6).

These positions, too, come up with remarks, primarily through the prism of the character of the position of Islamic law, comparing it to other systems and secondly to the political discourse of modern Islamic parties. In this respect, it is true that according to the majority of Islamic political spectrum sharia regulations cannot be changed by human laws. But for example, some historic constitutional documents of the British system like the Magna

Carta or the Bill of Rights have also not been changed to this day. Fatwa (the legal determinations of Islamic experts) play the role of thoughtful interpretation in Islamic law and adapting certain human relations to Shari'ah. Second, the praxeological discourse of the Islamic parties concludes that many of them do not address issues that in the modern age would have a negative connotation with the liberal masses, and certain sanctions such as the Hudud (rigid punishments) would only have a secondary meaning if justice was not implemented. Third, many contemporary Islamic intellectuals re-actualize the issue of ijtihad as relevant because of the new socio-political circumstances. And finally, a distinction should be drawn between the Wasatiyyah (moderate) and the Salafi (conservative) branch of political Islam.

The first one would agree to the implementation of modern liberal postulates in the field of human rights and freedoms, while the second would remain strictly in the Islamic context prescribed by the Prophet and interpreted by the most imposing representatives of the Islamic ulama. For example, the Turkish AKP stipulates that standards in the field of human rights and freedoms are an integral part of the international treaties to which Turkey is a signatory, with particular respect for the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and Freedoms, the European Convention on Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, the Paris Charter and the Helsinki Final Act (Demiri 2009, 131).

However, what is crucial to the rule of law in political Islam is the syntagma that the legislature would respect the principle of the rule of law unless it makes decisions contrary to the Qur'an or the Sunnah and the legal teachings of prominent Islamic experts.

POSSIBILITIES FOR REPRESENTATIVE GOVERNMENT AND SEPARATION OF POWERS

Representative government and separation of powers are domains for which Islamic political thought has a modest elaboration. This is due to the fact that the caliphates and sultans were known during the rise of Islam, and the liberal discourse emerged at a time when the Islamic world was experiencing a political and economic crisis. The aspects of representative government, that is, a representative body of citizens and the separation of powers, which were accepted as a general determinant of all models of democracy, are more recent in Islamic political thought.

We have to bear in mind the fact that for many of the Islamic leaders in the Middle Ages this concept was completely unknown, hence their ambivalence on the issue. The representativeness of the citizens is leveled by the principle of Shura (consultations) in Islamic legal and political discourse, and the separation of powers with certain hadiths of the Prophet concerning the judges, which we will consider in the following.

Allusion to the Principle of Shura (Consultation)

Abdulkadir Mubarak rightly observes that certain Islamic circles proclaim all decisions in Islamic states to be made through consultation, or shura. In this respect, the concept of shura with representative government is alluded to. For some Islamic activists, the concept of shura demands a representative democracy. Through the Qur'anic provisions of the Shura, as well as the traditions of the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him), this implies that Muslims are obliged to consult each other when deciding their issues. Contemporary Islamic thinkers such as Mubarak, transmit ranging from the relatively conservative (Salafist branch according to our qualifications of political Islam) to the liberal (moderate - Wasatiyyah Branch) to Shia activists emphasizing the importance of shura in the political arena. In this regard, the Shia Islamic political activist who was executed by Saddam Hussein's regime in Iraq, Bakir al-Sadr, stated: "People have a general right to dispose of their powers based on the principle of Shura" (Mubarak 2016, 10).

Many modern, but also traditional Islamic jurists and activists believe that the government should be a form of consultation or Majlis el-Shura (Consultative Assembly). Al Mawardi, as a prominent Islamic scholar inspired by many contemporary Islamist activists, says Majli (Parliament) members must meet three criteria: they must be fair, they must have sufficient knowledge to distinguish righteous and good from bad Caliph (head of the Islamic State) and to be distinguished by the wisdom of selecting the best caliph. In addition, Mawardi points out that in case there is no caliphate or Majlis, the citizens, i.e. the Islamic Ummah (communities, have to create a Majlis (Parliament) with their own representatives, compile a list of candidates for a caliph, and then the Majlis to choose from the submitted list, a caliph of the Islamic State from the submitted list (Nabhani 2002, 6). Mubarak's answer to such questions would lead to the answer of the question of what is Shura?

It basically involves three assumptions: first, all people in society are equal in civil and political rights; second, public affairs should be decided by a majority; third the principles of justice, equality and human dignity in accordance with the Islamic moral code are best realized through the principle of shura, i.e. consultation (Mubarak 2016, 12). It is also notable that non-Muslims may participate in the representative consultative body, but with one exception- they cannot participate in the election of a Caliph, according to the archetypal Islamic construction and cannot perform some functions, but may therefore react to the unlawful and unjust actions committed against them by the government (Mubarak 2016, 12).

But not all Islamic activists agree that the principle of shura is a parliamentary representative government. This is especially true for some circles of the Salafist branch or neo-Khawarij. Sayyid Qutb, for example, points out that the Qur'an does not prescribe how a ruler should be elected (through consultation or universal suffrage), nor by whom he should be advised, and whether all people are equally entitled to vote.

Qutb dismissed representative liberal democracy as a Western product foreign to the Islamic world (Mubarak 2016, 13). Yet almost all Islamic activists and theorists today agree, at least from the praxeological point of view, that modern living imposes the need for legal regulation on numerous public sector categories such as traffic, irrigation, transport, industry, economy, currencies, imports, exports, public health, education etc. Fathi Othman states that all these aspects should be regulated through representative bodies, with due regard for the public interest and the principles and objectives of sharia. It is also noted that the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) had foreseen in his lifetime that some aspects would not be regulated by the Qur'an, so he asked the people performing judicial functions (Qadi) to judge according to their own judgment (ijtihad) which is completely natural and guided by the spirit of Sharia and its general principles (Othman 1994, 97).

Different Positions about Separation of Powers

This point also implicitly reveals the assumption of the separation of powers in Islamic political thought. Islamic political activists from different provinces have a different view on the issue. According to some scholars, in Islam there is no separation of powers because there was a fusion of power (legislative, executive and judicial) during the Prophet's time. But yet another group with a stronger argument argues that such assumptions are invalid because it only applies to the Prophet.

Second, there are several Quranic verses and hadiths that suggest to the judiciary (Qadi) that they have been assigned a role to perform that function. For example in the Surah Al Ma'idah (The Table) the Allah warns those entrusted with judging: "and those who do not judge according to what Allah has revealed, they are unbelievers!" (Kuran na makedonski 5:14). Third, it also cites the vast empirical experience of the Islamic states (Caliphates and Sultanates) in which the institution of judiciary or Qadi was known. Second Rashidun Caliph Omar was the first Islamic leader to start appointing Qadi to eliminate the obligation of personal arbitration in any dispute. After that, the Islamic State adopted the custom where the ruler had to appoint Qadi in order to ensure the administration of justice. And finally, for Muhamamad Hamidullah the ruler of the Islamic State (Caliph, i.e. the executive) can never be a judge in his own dispute, except in the case of Prophet Muhammad. If in Western medieval thought there was a conviction of the 'kinglessness of the king', in Islam this is not the case, so there are cases where personal accusations were made against the Prophet and He did not rule in his favor (Velic 2009, 644).

SECULARISM: REALITY OR INSTRUMENTAL DECLARATION?

One of the most controversial, islamically speaking, features of the contemporary notion of liberal democracy is the question of secularism. We will not go into the theoretical underpinnings of such a notion, nor in the epistemological assumptions of secularism's foundation in liberal democracy from the point of view of the first liberals and their value framework for the treatment of religion and divine law. The contemporary interpretation of liberal democracy as an elementary postulate takes the separation not only of the church as a religious organization, but also the distancing of religious principles and principles from political action in a 'modern, liberal and democratic' society. It is particularly intriguing that in all attempts to implant liberal democracy in Muslim societies, liberal democracy has gone hand in hand with secularism, even with militant secularism. Suffice it to note that authoritarian regimes, such as Egypt, Tunisia, Algeria, and Turkey, have clashed with Islamic political entities under the sheath that they undermine secularism, and consequently the possible democratic postulates of nation states. Putting aside the question of their democratic endorsement, we can rightly conclude that secularism is the field most commonly encountered in political Islam and liberal democracy. In addition, it must be concluded that secularism has an additional impetus for the apologists of liberal democracy through the possibility that its earlier features have been overlooked. Namely, secularist apology through instrumentalized declarations has allowed many governments in the Muslim world to present themselves as liberal democratic by adopting laws or opposing Islamic legal and moral ethos, such as legalizing interest in banking, proliferation of alcohol, hijab and niqab prohibition for women, substitution of Shari'ah inheritance and family law with European, etc. There are cases of Kemal Ataturk in Turkey, Nasser in Egypt, the experience of Bendjedidin Algeria and Ben Ali in Tunisia etc.

Acute Rejection of Secularism

The Islamic aspect of the acute rejection of secularism, which can be accepted here by all branches of political Islam, is best explained by Sheikh Ali ibn Hudajr el Hudajr, pointing out four rules that distinguish an Islamic believer from a secularist, qualifying him as a modern shirks (sinner, irrespective of its types and forms. It is required for a Muslim to distance himself from such teachings, to despise them, to fight them, to fabricate them, whether they are thinkers, intellectuals, politicians, rulers, artists, secular theorists, governments, systems etc. Those rules, according to El Hudajr, are the following. First, the polytheists (mushrikun) to whom Allah's Prophet Muhammad was sent, believed in Allah's supremacy (that is, it exists, gives life, food, death, etc.). However, the Prophet of Allah (PBUH) fought against them and regarded them as unbelievers, proving that belief alone is not sufficient to enter Islam, i.e. its principles and norms should be respected.

Secularists, similar to those polytheists, except the extreme ones, believe in Allah's supremacy, some even practice Ibadah (worship), but still cannot be called Muslims. On the other hand, the extreme secularists say there is no God, no Creator, and life is just matter. (El Hudajr 2018). Second, Prophet Muhammad came among the people who had their own rules and laws and judged according to one another. They also had many Jahiliyyah (pre-Islamic) customs, so they did not accept Allah's judgment and His guidance. The Prophet treated them as infidels and fought against them. Similarly, secularists have their own laws - secular, local, provincial and the courts under which they decide. Also, under that sheath, they use terms like 'progress', 'civilization', 'development' etc. They did not accept Allah's judgment nor His guidance (El Hudajr 2018).

Third, the Messenger of Allah (SAW) came among the people who only occasionally practiced Islam. During times of hardship and turbulence they worshiped Allah, and during prosperity they committed sin (shirk) and immorality. As for the secularists, they only invoke Allah during the month of Ramadan, during weddings and divorces and some more, while for the other spheres they invoke their own laws (incorporated by the West), as well as their deceptive practices (El Hudajr 2018).

Fourth, during the Prophet's life the polytheists and unbelievers worshiped various deities such as statues, giants, angels, stars, and fire, while the others worshiped Isa son of Maryam (Jesus Christ, the son of Mary) and the other prophets and pious people. Prophet Muhammad strongly opposed such occurrences. Similarly, secularists adore different people and work as Europeans, Americans, Russians, different theories and movements, nations, nationalism and call for it (El Hudajr 2018). The analogy is evident.

From praxeological discourse the situation is well described by Azzam Tamimi and John L. Esposito, referring to the Algerian and Turkish cases (before Erdogan), namely the abolition and ban on Islamic parties and movements - FIS (Islamic Salvation Front) in Algeria and the Welfare Party (Refah) in Turkey. These are examples of the present danger of secular fundamentalism and extremism. In many Muslim countries, as in the West, secularism is not an option but a mere political dogma or doctrine, not an alternative but an imperative. Hence, if secularism is a normativist and rationalist imperative, then any deviation from such normation is perceived as abnormal and irrational. Those who want to base the modern state on religious postulates are labeled extremists and religious fanatics (Tamimi and Esposito 2000, 6).

CONCLUSION

Any attempt to unilaterally and one-dimensionally determine the relationship between political Islam and liberal democracy is doomed to failure. The reason for such a claim can be seen through the dichotomy of the West's attempt to impute elements that are incompatible with Islamic political thought and political culture of Muslim countries on the one hand, and the values that political Islam contains, which have a tangible relation to the liberal principles of democratic discourse. Adding to this the generic understanding of the notion of democracy in the past from liberal discourse and the 'liberalization of democracy' today with new value elements the plausibility of such claims gains an enhanced dimension.

In this regard, several general conclusions can be differentiated, reflect the position of political Islam towards liberal democracy on a theoretical and empirical level. But before that, the primary conclusion is differentiated by the fact that liberalism and democracy were not always synonymous.

On the contrary, the liberal credo that originally opposed democracy accepted and adapted it to its own advantage. Hence liberal ideas and concepts began to identify as democratic *vis-à-vis* the initial Athenian notion of democracy in the *polis*. In contemporary discourse, it has gained new value dimensions by absorbing contemporary values and the progress of political and social life.


Consequently, there are common points of connection between political Islam and the Islamic discourse with liberal democracy and they relate to the concept of the rule of law. Fuller's framework for the substantive and procedural side of the concept of the rule of law has very similar parameters in Shari'a nomology.

On the other hand, although serious divergences seem to be found when it comes to the liberal discourse on issues such as equality and freedom, it is more a matter of priority and praxeology than of real opposition. A true Islamic opposition to liberal postulate refers to the ability of a parliament in liberal democracy to make decisions contrary to Sharia principles and content.

Third, the idea of representative power is not unknown in Islamic political habits and ideological orientations. It often alludes to the Islamic concept of shura (consulting) which has an obligatory category in the Islamic legal and political landscape. On the other hand, separation of powers has modest theoretical assumptions, especially regarding the relationship between the legislature and the executive. The only indication is the sharia provisions for independent judiciary (Qadi) as the initial and crucial category in that domain.

Finally, the acute rejection of secularism has an axiological and praxeological perspective. The first one is expressed through the complexity of the Islamic political matrix which correctly implies Islam in its socio-legal dimension, while the second has its essence in the experience of persecuting Islamic political entities under the cloak - defending secularism as in the case of Turkey (before Erdogan), Tunisia, Algeria and Egypt.

Therefore, having in mind such constellations, we can conclude that political Islam's approach to liberal democracy does not necessarily have to be ambivalent.

On the contrary, there are tangent ideological political moments. But the premise of secularism as a determinant category in this discourse plays a crucial role for the established antagonism. 

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