

RECONCEPTUALIZATION OF DEMOCRACY

FROM AN ISLAMIC SUBALTERN

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## **Dedication**

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## **Abstract**

This dissertation challenges a dominant trait in contemporary western thought that understands Islamist politics as holistic and antithetical to modernity and democracy; that presents Islamism as an expression of traditionalism in the modern world. I challenge this dominant western perception by asking the question: how have the ideologues and the founders of the most well known Islamic movements of the Muslim world approached democracy, a modern political system, and related it to an Islamic state?

Addressing the dynamic relationship between Islamic political thought and socio-political context, with this dissertation, I offer a critique of this literature, which positions the Islamic world as an archaic civilization in an inevitable clash with the West, the representative of modernity. By analyzing the original works of two well-known ideologues of Islamic movements from Indo-Pakistan and Egypt, I depict the ways in which Islamic political thought intervenes in cardinal conversations about democracy.

There are four main goals of this dissertation. First, I recover the story of modernity in political thought from the two different parts of the Muslim world. Second, I reveal the voices of Muslim intellectuals in the meaning making and indigenization of a western-originated idea, democracy, into Islam. Third, I challenge a dominant discourse that puts Islam and the West as civilizations in a clash. Fourth, I point out the necessity to engage non-western political theory to enhance our intellectual endeavors and rid the literature of its Eurocentric biases.

To achieve these goals, a comparative historical analysis method was utilized based on two cases: Sayyid Qutb and Mawdudi's conceptualization of democracy. In analyzing the data, I employed analytical narrative method in tracing patterns of causal factors as well as in making causal inferences through the comparison between and within these cases. Throughout the study, I pursued a dual analytical agenda, which included examining how each ideologue defined democracy, how these ideologues related democracy and Islam to each other, and how the local and international events and institutions uniquely shaped their ideas regarding democracy.

Findings indicate that, both Mawdudi and Qutb opened up the idea of democracy to a new set of critiques and methods of adaptation. For Qutb and Mawdudi, being an imported product of colonial and capitalist world, democracy was not to be implemented to the Muslim world directly. It had to be supplemented with indigenous forms of explanation and interpretation to make sense within existing political realities. Criticizing the slavish imitation of western democracies, they recommended a political system based on local representation. They believed that governments would achieve greater legitimacy if the political structure and language of politics were in line with the culture and beliefs of the people. They emphasized the match between the cultural meanings, values, and beliefs of Islam and democracy. They raised questions regarding certain dogmatic assumptions implicit in the concept, which they identified as part of the secularist/capitalist/colonialist project. Mawdudi and Qutb's works reveals that the western democratic model cannot and should not be replicated in the Muslim world



because, at the economic level, it presumes capitalism, and at the social level, it presumes individualism and secularism. Their solution was to create their vernacular political language and terminology to work with the idea of democracy which they named as theodemocracy by Mawdudi and Islamic state by Qutb and strictly refrained from using western terminologies like republican, democratic, or socialist to define their systems.

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## CHAPTER ONE:

### INTRODUCTION

9/11 and following events placed Islam and Muslims in the focus of global politics and academic interest. The focus became even more intense during the recent “Arab Spring,” in which a number of governments in Islamic countries were toppled. Researchers and the general public alike are increasingly exploring the compatibility of Islam with democracy, human rights, and liberal values. Political, cultural, religious and spiritual tendencies and beliefs of Islam have been under scrutiny. As a result, there is a growing literature focusing on the relationship between Islam and democracy. The coexistence of Islam and democracy has become an issue of vigorous debate not only among students of democratic theory but also among political Islam/Islamic political movements.

So far, the argument of incompatibility of Islam with democracy has gained the upper hand in this debate (Huntington 1996; Barro 1999; Nettler 2000; Fukuyama 2001; Fish 2002; Inglehart 2002; Mernissi 2002; Lewis 2002). World-wide data shows that, in 1975, twenty five percent of the world's non-democratic regimes were pre-dominantly Muslim countries. These countries made up forty five percent of the world's non-democratic regimes in 2001 (Democracy Center, 2002). Indeed, no single Muslim country, except some conflicting reports on Turkey and Malaysia, at the present is considered to be a consolidated democracy in the world.

While the coexistence of Islam and democracy is being discussed in academic and political circles in the West, starting from the last quarter of the twentieth century Muslim scholars were also busy developing a contemporary Islamic literature on the relationship between western values of liberalism, democracy and Islam. Surprisingly, however, this contribution of Muslim scholars to the discussions of the compatibility of Islam and western values in general and democracy in particular has not been recognized by the mainstream research on Islam and democracy. Indeed, a quick review of the western literature on democracy and democratization reveals that there is hardly any reference to the theories of democracy as developed by Muslim intellectuals or their politico-religious activism and democratic processes in Muslim countries. This is quite puzzling particularly under the circumstances that Islamic movements in all Islamic countries make up the main opposition against despotic regimes and are major forces behind the demands for democracy (Kurzman 1999; White 2002; Hafez and Wiktorowicz 2004; Yavuz 2004).

### *Research Objectives and Questions*

The main objective of the dissertation is to provide insights on conceptualization of the idea of “democracy” which is a western originated concept, in the Muslim world. It does so by focusing on empirical cases of Islamic discourse of two intellectuals from two most well known Islamic movements of the Muslim world: Mawlana Mawdudi, the founder and the main ideologue of Jamaat-i Islam of Pakistan and Sayyid Qutb, the main

ideologue of Muslim Brotherhood of Egypt. By the nature of this study, I offer an analysis and understanding of the ideas and discourses of Mawdudi and Qutb's intellectual journey in their engagement with the idea of democracy and trace the meaning making, internalization, criticizing and evolution of the idea of democracy in their works. At the most fundamental and conceptual level, the dissertation aims:

(1) to de-naturalize the concept of democracy and to seek out how democracy, or democratic government conceptualized or theorized by the ideologues of the two most well-known Islamic movements of the World in their own terms.

(2) to explore how Islamic discourses on democracy are constructed from below, by actors who are the leading Muslim intellectuals with varying identities, strategies, and constraints in these two different contexts. While the majority of sociological perspectives on the matter tend to privilege the construction of democracy from above by the state or international actors, this study seeks to investigate the role of the dissidents (who are in the constant processes of adjustment, articulation, ambivalence, or resistance) in the process.

(3) to challenge a dominant discourse that puts Islam and the West as civilizations in a clash. The dissertation challenges this claim of clash by looking to the works of Islamist revivalists in two parts of the world in order to offer a more complex story of a relationship between Islam and the West. By analyzing the works of the two main political theorists of Islamic world, the dissertation aims to show that political Islam is a modern phenomenon and not just a traditional response to the western political theory or

modernity. It is rather a sincere attempt to simultaneously, critique, transcend, abolish, preserve, and transform modernity and its theories.

(4) to point out the necessity to engage in the non-western political theory to enhance our intellectual endeavors and to rid off Eurocentric biases. In a way the dissertation argues that we need to recognize and include non-western voices on democracy in democratic theory. Insisting on the universality of liberal democracy by arguing that West holds “superior” and “correct” definitions of democracy while others’, say socialist’ or Islamist’ view of democracy are somehow inadequate, is to deny the non-western world the right to create theory own distinct version of democracies as the western democracy did in its own historical and theoretical journey.

At the substantive level, the dissertation aims:

(1) to provide an understanding of how ideologies get shaped and transformed, thus improve our comprehension regarding political processes and ideological analysis

(2) to develop a sociological model that correlates the relationships between ideological transformations that took place within and between the movements and broader structures, global events and discursive current and individual biographies of the ideologues

(3) to explore how studying a political concept, such as democracy, in a non-European context helps us to understand the meaning and the relevance of the concept in the non-western world. In other words, the dissertation explores how new political concepts or practices gain legitimacy or fail to do so in non-western cultures. I will deal

with the issues of how a foreign concept becomes indigenized, the kind of framing and legitimacy process are at work in order to do so, and under what conditions ideological innovation, assimilation or adaptation happens.

(4) to enhance our understanding on how global discourses, ideas and ideals (e.g. democracy) are constructed in the local context

At the methodological level, the dissertation aims to enhance our understanding of the question; to what degree is a political concept, in this case democracy, derived from a group's socio-political experience (in this case two Islamic movements in two different Muslim countries) and provides a meaningful framework for understanding political practices and the institutionalization of an Islamic movement with divergent political, historical and cultural traditions? Since investigating the complexities of thinking and action with regard to democracy in the Muslim world not only teaches us something about the Islamic political culture; it also can help us to think about larger issues like: the correspondence between global norms and local meaning making; the interdependence between culture and institutions; the interaction between international discursive currents and local intellectual context in diverse communities; and the interrelation between global events and how it affects reconstruction of meaning and action in the local context. My dissertation focuses, in short, on enriching not only the study of Islam and democracy, but also the practice of cross-cultural analysis more generally.

In realizing the above stated goals of the study, the dissertation proposes to study the complex world of thinking and action in the Islamic world through the works of the



ideologues of two critically important Islamic movements: Jamaati Islami and Muslim Brotherhood. By arguing that students of political Islam must *attend to* these indigenous voices of Muslim scholars, who are the prominent actors on the sociopolitical life of Muslim societies, on the relationship between Islam and democracy, my dissertation asks:

*(1) How has democracy been conceptualized in the works of ideologues of these movements, and how have these ideas been put into practice by these Islamic movements? How does each conceptualization and enactment of democracy deviate from its western counterparts?*

*(2) How has the conceptualization of democracy and its relationship to Islam changed in these discourses? What factors prompted these actors to formulate these particular discourses? Why have these discourses varied within and across the movements? Under what conditions is a particular type of movement able to alter existing, western or “traditional” Islamic, approaches to democracy and to succeed in producing a genuine and indigenous democratic theory and practice of its own?*

In asking these questions, my dissertation not only intends to focus on the academic interest in democracy and Islam, but also seeks to contribute a neglected field in the literature, which is the lack of interest in the ideologues of Islamic movements’ approaches to democracy. Majority of western scholars along with their many Muslim counterparts, have viewed Islamic political thought unfit to democracy because Islamic movements were believed to be exclusivist, traditional and anti-modern by nature and

definition. This study considers that tracing the intellectual history of the Islamic movements' engagement with democracy is a not yet well developed, but highly required contribution for studying and understanding the wider development of Muslim political thought. By examining theories and practices of democracy of two major contemporary Islamic movements in the Muslim world, my dissertation intends to fill this gap in the literature. By focusing on the intellectuals and democracy, this dissertation offers to bridge the gap in the democracy literature between the studies on democracy that focuses on social groups and the ones that study democratization via country characteristics.<sup>1</sup>

Revealing the complex world of thinking and action with regard to democracy in the Muslim world, the dissertation emphasizes the multifaceted nature of the compatibility of Islam and democracy and addresses the significance of social structures and institutions as well as the major global events and intellectual currents in shaping this relationship. In the dissertation, I answer the above questions by analyzing the original works of Mawdudi and Sayyid Qutb.

The rest of this introductory chapter sets out the theoretical, and organizational framework of this dissertation. The first section presents a theoretical and historical analysis of the idea of democracy in the literature and how Islam and Muslims are included into these academic studies. The section also lays out what I see to be the troubling epistemological and theoretical moves existed in the literature in analyzing democracy in Muslim contexts. The following section offers a brief analysis about the

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<sup>1</sup> For another similar study of this nature, see Kurzman 1998.

way in which social movement theory and Islamic movement literature relates to the dissertation. In the section, I present the dominant arguments in social movement literature that deal with Islamic movements, therefore their ideologues and constituents, as exclusivist, traditional and anti-modern by nature and definition. Then offer a critique of this reading of Islamic movements. The final section offers an overview of the dissertation chapters to help to visualize the broader project.

### *Situating the Dissertation within the Literature*

#### *Islam and democracy*

The word democracy derives from Greek *démokratía*, or “rule by people.” This classical definition of democracy can be traced to the writings of Locke, Rousseau, and Jefferson. Traditionally, the collectivistic nature of democracy expressed in statements like “common will,” “sovereignty of the people,” “government of the people, by the people, for the people.” Yet, these definitions are criticized on the basis that they are open for multiple interpretations, which makes the term “democracy” a highly contested concept.

One point of criticism lies in the notion of “people” in the definition since who the “people” are is a question that has been answered differently throughout history. Are we to understand the “people” as everybody, some elite, only men, only women, people within certain age range, people belonging to one religion, one race, one ethnicity, one

class? These questions have been and are still being discussed among theorists. As for what type of “rule” is entailed by democracy, different variants have been suggested from “everyone participating in the business of governance to rulers merely acting in the interest of the ruled” (Schaffer 1998: 2).

The classical conceptualization of democracy has also been criticized by many, such as Schumpeter (1962), for being overly idealistic. It is dismissive of the fact that, as is the case in all politics, democracies are sometimes defined in terms of violent struggles for power and always include a ruling majority and a ruled minority. The concept of democracy itself is a historically contested concept and there is no universally accepted definition of democracy that exists. It is likely that this is the reason why “democracy” in academic research tends not to appear without a modifier whether it is pluralist, liberal, direct, participatory, and representative or the like.

To deal with the problem of multiple meanings, modern theorists of democracy, e.g. Joseph A. Schumpeter, Robert A. Dahl, Samuel Huntington and Seymour Martin Lipset, have preferred to define democracy in terms of its institutional aspects. These include certain practices, processes and mechanisms. As one of the leading figures of this approach, Schumpeter sees democracy as a method that is in essence an “institutional arrangement for arriving at political decisions in which the individuals acquire the power to decide by means of a competitive struggle for the people's vote.” Schumpeter (1962: 269). For Friedrich (1950), on the other hand, democracy means “constitutional democracy.” The central characteristic of constitutional democracy, for Friedrich, is its

ability to ensure political responsibility by placing effective checks and balances on governmental power. Dahl (1956), on the other hand, stresses the necessity of ordinary citizens' ability to have a control over their leader and or government as a minimum requirement for democracy. For Lipset, democracy is "a political system which supplies regular constitutional opportunities for changing the governing officials, and a social mechanism which permits the largest possible part of the population to influence major decisions by choosing among the contenders for political office" (Lipset 1963:27).

Starting from the 1960s, scholarly interests moved toward comparative studies that took the western experience as a point of comparison, a yard stick to measure democracy and democratization in the rest of the world. Theorists offered a variety of hypotheses to measure the odds of any given country becoming a democracy based on a set of prerequisites of democracy (Dahl 1971; Lipset 1994). Some preferred to offer macro-level explanations that would focus on socioeconomic variables (e.g. Lipset 1960); while some others offered micro level explanations which were based on attitudes, beliefs, and culture of people (e.g. Huntington 1991). Still others offered elitist theories (e.g. Dahl 1961). By and large, however, scholars agreed that secularization, bureaucratization, rationalization, and industrialization are the major motivators for democratic transition in medieval agrarian societies. According to the culturalist approach, while some cultures (e.g. Protestant West) are more favorable to democracy, others (e.g. Catholic) are less conducive to it (Kramer 1993; 1997; Huntington 1997; Fukuyama 2001).

Following these premises when studying democracy in the Muslim countries, the democracy scholars overwhelmingly argue that there is an inverse relationship between Islam and democracy, or put another way, democracy and Islam are incompatible (Lipset 1960; Huntington 1996; Lewis 1993, 2002; Roy 1994; Fukuyama 2001; Fish 2002). The literature that makes this argument can be put into three groups according to their claims: (1) Some scholars like Daniel Pipes and Ellie Keddourie argue that Islam pacifies people to not demand democratic change and turns them into people who are more likely to accept the things as they are by saying that “it is the will of the Allah”<sup>2</sup> (Keddourie 1992; Pipes 2000; Berger 1964). Emerging from the idea that the presence of instrumental rationality is a base for modernization, secularization, and democratization, the scholars who adopt this view claim that instrumental rationality has not developed in Islamic societies (Weber 1930[1998]). Thus, irrationality and traditional society are seen as the definers of the Islamic societies.

(2) Some other scholars, like Samuel Huntington in his well-known work, *The Clash of Civilizations*, have argued that Islam and democracy are inherently incompatible because Islam does not recognize secularization and individualism. Huntington even takes it a step further and claims that Islam is not only incompatible with democracy but it can in fact “impede the spread of democratic norms in society, deny legitimacy to democratic institutions, and thus greatly complicate if not prevent the emergence and effectiveness of those institutions.” (Huntington 1996: 298-300). Fukuyama (2001) also

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<sup>2</sup> This is a classic Orientalist interpretation of the Islamic belief in divine destiny.

makes a similar argument in regard to Islam and the threat of its doctrines to democracy; see also Tibi (1990).

(3) Presenting gender equality as a prerequisite for democracy, yet another trend argues that Islam and democracy are antithetical because Islam does not provide for gender equality (Inglehart 2002; Fish 2002).

Despite variations in this line of research and the justification of these claims in the literature, there is one common point among these scholars arguing for the incompatibility of Islam and democracy: by merely relying on Islam as their explanatory variable and imaging the existence of a one homogenous Islamic society, they all place Muslim societies and cultures into one large group and treat them as homogenous entities. All these explanations assume that Muslims throughout the world would understand, define, and react to democracy in the same way by completely ignoring historical, political, cultural, institutional diversity throughout the Islamic world as well as the fact that western scholarship itself tells us that the experience with democracy differs among different social categories and political or cultural agents even within the one homogenous culture. Hence, this line of work dismisses the country specific socio-economic and historical factors found in arguments about the incompatibility of Islam and democracy.

Scholars have gathered little empirical data about the ways in which Islamists (at the individual- or community-level) supported or opposed democracy in the Muslim world. In reality, we know very little about how so called “Islamists” let alone *ulama* (the

scholars of Islam) approach democracy and relate Islam to it. My dissertation aims to fill this gap in the literature by aiming to seek out these diverse approaches to democracy within the Islamic world by comparing the two most well-known Islamic movements of the world. Conceptualization of democracy in each case and functionalization of Islamic democratic ideals by each Islamic movement allow this study to criticize and construct a framework produced from the paradigms of modern liberalism and Orientalism, which often inform the studies of Islamic movements and democracy.

Fortunately, some scholars have gone beyond these culturally deterministic explanations of the lack of democracy in Islamic societies and of Islamic revivalism (Burke and Lapidus 1988; Esposito 1992; Esposito and Voll 1996). Their work presents a shift in the focus of analysis from Islamic text and culture to social, economic, historical contexts and international factors.. Scholarly works, which follow this latter approach, examine Islamic movements, their leaders, Islamic organizations, Islamic activism, and networks by taking into account the socio-economic, political and historical contexts in which they operate (Burgat and Dowell 1993). Still, approaches to Islamic movements, at worst, see them as a threat to liberal democracies and, at best, see them as less important than the socio-economic context of Islamic countries or the historical effects of colonialism. In all of these works, unfortunately, the complex and multifaceted nature of the relationship between Islamic movements and democracy and the very affect of these this relationship on the democratic process in Muslim societies have largely been ignored.



Another issue that needs to be addressed within the current literature on democracy and Islam is the idea that the literature mainly concentrates on the underlying factors impeding democratization, while paying little attention to *how* democratization has been defined and functionalized by Islamic movements and Muslim intellectuals. Little, if any, of the recent theoretical literature on democratization has addressed this question, mainly because democracy and Islamic movements are deemed ill-suited to each other. Kurzman's *Liberal Islam* (1998), Euben's *Enemy in the Mirror* (1999), Moaddels' *Islamic Modernism, Nationalism, and Fundamentalism: Episode and Discourse* (2005) are among the most cited examples that followed this approach and let the Muslim intellectuals, or Muslim subjects to speak what they saw and thought about democracy. Attempting to trace the history of the debate over Liberal Islam, Kurzman in his sourcebook *Liberal Islam*, brings out the voices of several Muslim intellectuals and offers an analysis of these intellectuals perspective regarding six liberal themes: theocracy, democracy, rights of women, rights of non-Muslims, freedom of thought and progress. The importance of Kurzman's study lies in the fact that in his works he examined writings of Muslim intellectuals within their own tradition. Euben's work (1999) is another important study that needs to be mentioned here. Using "dialogic model of interpretation" (1999: 25-26) and by taking Islamist discourses seriously, Euben studies and presents the Muslim Brotherhood leaders, like Qutb, worldviews in their own terms and categories. In following the mentioned works above, this dissertation suggests shifting the scientific interest on Islam and democracy from culturalists or text based

analysis towards a concern of how scholars of Islam or the ideologues of the Islamic movements approached democracy as a concept and how the ideal governing in their work relates to democracy could prove productive.

This shift requires moving away from the Orientalist tradition in which the Oriental subject (Islamists for my case) do not speak for themselves and are not allowed to represent their perspective, but instead the researcher speaks for them and explains their perspectives for them. The religion, culture, and history of the Oriental subject is considered stagnant and interpreted and represented to him/her by the researcher scientifically (Said 1994). The works of Huntington (1991; 1993; 1996), Fukuyama (1992; 2001), and Lewis (1988; 1993; 2002) are good examples of this tradition. My dissertation differs from this trend, and follows the lead of Said (1994), Kuzman (1995) and Euben (1999) by aiming to give voice to the Oriental subject instead of speaking for him/her. In bringing out the voices of the Muslim intellectuals and political activists in regard to democracy, I intend to let the Islamists<sup>3</sup> to speak of the assumed place of democracy in their own interpretation. In this study, I will introduce the ideological world of the ideologues of the prominent leaders of the major Islamic movements of the Muslim world on democracy.

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<sup>3</sup> In this study the word “Islamist” does not mean radical or fundamentalist. Though I personally feel uncomfortable to use the word “Islamist” I do it mainly for two reasons: One is that I seem not to be able to come up with another word, and secondly the word “Islamist” has been so widely used within the literature that making up a new word might not mean much. Therefore, I would like to warn the reader that when I use “Islamist” or “Islamic” I refer to instrumentalization of Islam by individuals or groups that pursue political, social, economic and moral objectives to offer responses to social, political, economic challenges that are occurring within their society through mobilization.

Studying what democracy means for Islamic movements and how the meaning and its practice change between these movements and within the movements over time enriches our knowledge of democracy, and also provide us with advantages and limits of using democracy as a concept in Muslim societies. At the practical level, gaining this knowledge will be greatly useful in adopting or advising policies for promotion of democracy throughout the Muslim world. Yet, the social science research tends to ignore how the ideologues and founding fathers of the Islamic movements thought and conceptualize democracy throughout their life course, what they understood of democracy, how they visualized the concept working in their own society, in what ways they imagined Muslim democracy to be different from the western one, and in what ways they find it compatible. Without explaining these topics, it would make no sense to make predictions or policy proposals regarding the Muslim world's experiment with democracy.

By seeking democratic rhetoric in the writing of these ideologues, my dissertation moves beyond the arguments that take for granted that democracy and Islam are incompatible. While Islam is not the focus of my study, interpretation of Islam by the ideologues who are of interest for the study and the outcome of employing Islam as a political discourse for the movements is. Therefore, examining conceptualization of democracy by the ideologues of two major Islamic movements of the Muslim world, helps me to picture the complex world of thinking and action with regard to democracy in the Muslim world and to show the multifaceted nature of the relationship between Islam

and democracy/ It will also help me to address the significance of social structures and institutions as well as the major global events in shaping this relationship.

Studying interpretations of democracy in Islam in different parts of the Muslim world helps us to recognize local agency in democratization. As such, it differs from mainstream studies of democratization in comparative context in that those studies mostly have a tendency view vernacular readings of democratization as troubling and a deviation from genuine norm, which is represented by the western liberal democracy. Moreover, looked from a global perspective, studying Muslim intellectuals attempt to develop their version of democracy would carry great importance on the one hand for enhancing our knowledge on democracy, while on the other, it might help to establish more viable and effective forms of democracy in non-Western settings.

Therefore, with my dissertation, I specifically highlight the importance of including the Islamic movement ideologues' voices in the study of political Islam and democratic theory in general. The processes and consequences of theorizing the relationship between Islam and democracy by the ideologues of Islamic movements and the subsequent politico-religious change as these (re)conceptualizations have shaped and have been shaped by are interest of this study. The dissertation will focus primarily on the ideologues / founders of Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt and Jamaati Islami in Pakistan, but will do so in a historical-comparative framework, with detailed consideration paid to social, political, economic, historical developments, international events, and global discourses.

*Social movement theory and Islamic movements*

Since I am particularly interested in intellectuals and/or ideological fathers of the Islamic movements of the Islamic world, this study is also guided by work from the sociology of social movements and engages with existing theoretical perspectives on social movement ideologies (Snow and Benford 2000), framing strategies (Benford and Snow 2000), and emergent opportunities and constraints (Pedriana and Stryker 1997; Goldstone and Tilly 2001). Yet, rather than follow the general trend within the social movements literature and focus on how and why mobilization occurs and the contribution of social structures, the political opportunities, and symbols in this mobilization, in this study, I am interested in how the experiences of a social movement shape the ideology of its ideologue and in turn the ideology of the movement itself.

The sociological literature refers to social movements as locales for the formation of oppositional cultures, or competing discourses within the dominant culture (Johnston and Klandennans 1995; Swidler 1995; Taylor and Whittier 1995; Gamson 1996). From this theoretical perspective, social movements, such as the Islamic movements, produce discourses that challenge hegemonic ideological constructions. Social movement theory on movement discourses and the embodiment of these discourses on the actions of the movements are crucial to understand how Islamic movements express their experiences, grievances, and viewpoints in regard to the relationship between Islam and democracy. In other words, following the social movements literature (McCarthy and Zald 1977;

McAdam 1992, 1997), it can be argued that Islamic movements' input arises primarily as the medium for the critique of state sponsored religion and social reality. By considering this context, Muslim movements focused in this study serve as a means to question the state monopoly on the meaning and practice of democracy as in modernity, secularization, nationhood, and economic and political systems in the Muslim world. Yet, students of social movements and democracy mostly failed to specifically address how Islamic movements articulated their perspective on democracy and rule of governing in their discourses and experiences especially from a comparative perspective. Even though Islamic movements are the main challengers of the authoritarian and unconstitutional actions of the state and they represent the main opposition against the current despotic regimes, they receive relatively little recognition compared to other social movements that emerged in the Islamic world. Their contributions tended to be obscured.

In this dissertation, following social movement theory, Islamic movements and their ideologues are conceptualized as being in constant struggle to mobilize and liberate the civil society which is, from the perspective of the movements, oppressed and marginalized by the state and sometimes by the West e.g. the colonizers, the US, western intellectuals (Marguiles 1988; Burgat and Dowell 1993; Munson 2001; Wiktorowicz 2004 ;White 2002; Moaddel 2002; Wickham 2002; Hafez 2003; Yavuz 2004). As a member of society, engaging in a political action or being aware of the political responsibilities is seen as the vehicle or instrument to attain liberation. As in the case of other religious movements, Islamic movements too, see faith and religious values as

sources of motivation. Thus the ideologues of the movements speak about these issues in their works, but this does not mean religion is the only resource that they use to mobilize. Social movements literature tell us that any social movement that wants to survive and stay relevant to the experiences of the society needs to engage in the current debates and daily experiences of the people for which the movement claims to speak (McAdam 1997, 2001; Nash 2000; Tilly 2004 ). As I will show in the chapters three and four, Mawdudi and Qutb's are highly engaged in the current debates that are taking place in their respective countries. As social movement theory shows us over and over, the movements both affect and are affected by the political opportunities and constraints encountered during their organization, mobilization and action (Kriesi 1995; Tarrow 1998; Della Porta and Diani 2006) and this study will show that naturally the same is true for their ideologues.

It is impossible to think of a social movement that is only affected by one course, which in this case is Islam. This is the point where the social movement literature comes in handy for me to dispute the claims of researchers who base their analysis of Islam and Muslim societies on the assumed existence of a fixed and reactive political identity based on a shared religion. This line of research ignores the idea that sharing a common identity or referring to common texts does not automatically unite under people under the one banner. As Bourdieu states, "the sense of social world does not assert itself in a univocal and universal fashion" (cited in Kalyvas 1996: 4). Yet, referring the universal and unified "Islamic way of thinking and acting" is a theoretical necessity for these authors to be able

to produce Islam or Islamic texts as a primary determinant of Muslim behavior. By doing so, the researchers that follow the first trend fail to give agency to a Muslim actor.

This dissertation, however, differs greatly at this point from the above stated old school (Gellner 1991; Huntington 1997; Fukuyama 2001; Lewis 1988, 1993; Fish 2002) of studying Islam and Muslim societies, and follows the new school (Hafez 2003; Munson 2001; Wicktorowicz 2003; Wickham 2004; Sadowski 2006, Donohue and Esposito 2007) which aims to extend our understanding of the role which Islam plays in Muslim and non-Muslim societies by using social movement theory as a theoretical standpoint. I argue that Islamic movements base their activism on a combination of Islamic teaching and contemporary political and economic ideas and issues (e.g. democracy, freedom of speech, freedom of press, freedom to organize, capitalism etc). The product of this combination serves as a frame of reference to analyze and evaluate the social, political and economic reality. This study, then, inspired by the social movement theory considers each Islamic movement and their intellectuals as a part of a larger intellectual canvas onto which students from diverse schools can paint their ideas with an originality that characterizes their unique experiences. Some similar colors will be used; some lines will converge while some others will not. In other words, due to the commonality of their task, there will be agreements as well as disagreements among the movement ideologues on the issues. Yet, due to their collective and grassroots character, each of the movement will inevitably have their uniqueness that will present itself in the work of the movement ideologues. Hence, it is my belief that, the works of Islamic



movement ideologues and their world views and the enactment of these world views cannot be properly studied with any attempt to homogenize or subsume them under a specific ideology or reduce them to one set of issues while ignoring the diverse social and political conditions from which they emerged. The considerable overlapping of issues among the ideologues of each movement and the diversity of opinions among them makes the concept of Islamic movements a heterogeneous entity that is developing with a core of Islamic principles and values.

In sum, the Islamic movements, whose ideologues or founders / ideologues are the object of this dissertation, draw on meanings and resources from the way Islam is understood and lived in each locale, pull them into national politics, and then challenge the legitimacy of the state and its ideology “from below.” This does not mean, however, that Muslim movements limit their ideological base only to Islam. As such, this dissertation argues that Muslim movements create their ideology through processes that involves learning and reflection about the political and intellectual environment (both global and the local) that they are in, as well as their socialization into that environment. Therefore, this study stresses that the movement and its ideologues cannot attain the survival of the movement by creating the movement’s ideology and discourse in isolation of or only within the borders indigenous knowledge (Islam), but through acquiring knowledge about the actions and ideologies of others in the political arena. Thus, as Tilly (1998) does, I see the ideology as relational to and a function of contention. The ideology and the discourse of the movement which is created by the intellectuals of the movement

on diverse matters (on economy, governing, democracy, family, social issues etc.) is produced interactively between the movement and the other players like state, international actors and events, economic conditions of the country at the time etc. Although, social movements literature mostly defines the other player as the state (e.g. Tilly 1998), I do not see it strictly as a function of contention with the state, but it also as a function of international intellectual discourses, global political contexts and events. In other words, while the state is crucially important, as it will be seen in the upcoming sections regarding Mawdudi and Qutb, I like to stress in this dissertation that political, social, local and international events and intellectual discourses are also important and need to be taken into account in studying the movements and their discourses. For example, besides the difference in their state structure, the cold war was also highly effective in shaping the discourses of the Islamic movements. Furthermore, I am interested in how similar or the same international events, and international discursive currents are reconstructed in the local context, in my case Islamic movements.

Therefore, my dissertation presents how the works of the ideologues of two Islamic movements, the Muslim Brotherhood and Jamaati Islami, both draw on and produce local and global discourses on how Islam relates to politics in their national settings, what does an ideal Islamic state entitles, and what kind of political system is sought. The cases of Mawdudi and Qutb offer one possible site for articulating Islamic political thought, while at the same time offering a case study for how Islamist activism made it possible for their discourses to become publicly available to many Muslims in

and out of their countries. As such they offer us, the researchers, moments in the making of an Islamic political discourse in regard to democracy. Studying them offers us an understanding of both the experiences of the ideologues with the political system and the alternative that they present via their writings as well as their movements. Furthermore, looked from social movements perspective, studying what do these intellectuals say, why they say it, and what they offer, helps us to understand how they define, conceptualize, and act upon democracy, and how their discourses evolved over time.

At a more theoretically general level then, my study does not limit itself to how democracy has been defined and related to Islamic teaching, but it explores how the ideas of democracy translated into movement ideology and action. Although historically the two movements emerged from the same ideological source, emerged around the same time, and their founding fathers / ideologues referred to the same ideologues (e.g. Muhammad Abduh, Jamaladdin al-Afghani) as the ideological fathers of their movements, over the course of history these movements diverged into different directions in terms of their discourse, action and organization. I argue in this dissertation that this divergence and increasing differentiation can be explained with the concept of path dependence which “occurs ... as a result of several feedback mechanisms through which actors gain increasing returns for behaving in ways that are consistent with their past actions. As a result, instructions and the behaviors associated with them become “locked” to a particular path of historical development” (Campbell 2003: 67). Of course, much remains to be explained about why and how these path dependent processes worked as it

did and why each of the two Islamic movements had different levels of success in their respective countries in regards to their involvement in political life. I think one way of understanding it might be considering the ideologues of the movements as intellectual “entrepreneurs” (Campbell 2003) who combine ideas of Islamic teachings and their local culture with the western originated ideas (like democracy) in innovative ways that creates symbolic support for their organizational and theoretical approach. Understanding the role of an entrepreneur, according to Campbell (2003), begins with not an assessment of their individual interpretations and innovations, but with an appreciation of their position with a set of social relationships and institutions. By not only focusing on the interpretations of the two Islamic movement ideologues’ in regards to democracy, but also realizing that they are social movement actors requires me to take institutional, international, and local events into consideration when studying their discourses. Thus, my dissertation will contribute to our understanding of the process of innovation and adaptation in producing social movement discourses.

To sum up, my dissertation will contribute to the literature on democratization and social movements by providing an analysis of Islamic discourses on democracy in the words and actions of Islamist activist intellectuals. By doing so, this work concentrates on the ideology and how the ideology affects the political action. By basing itself on the work of activist ideologues of the two Islamic movements, my dissertation offers concrete examples for exploring otherwise abstract theoretical debates on the agency and structure which claims that actions and discourses (frames) of the movements

and their activists are always conditioned by social structures. At a more basic level, the ideologues are social actors on the micro level seeking to bring about change to macro level structures that they define as a problem. By studying the evolution, transformation and creation of the movement ideologues' thoughts and actions on democracy overtime, my dissertation will be able to shed light on how these multiple levels of social reality are related. Thus, this study offers an alternative framework to prevalent views that attempt to interpret Islamic political activism from the standpoint of western liberal democratic tradition that places them in the category of "conservative," "traditional," "isolated" and "static." Employing interpretations of democracy based on the writings of the ideologues of the Islamic movements and the enactment of those ideas by the movements (rather than starting with an assumption that Islamic activism is a threat to democracy, but by situating Islamic activism among the other kinds of political activism, and their intellectuals among the other kinds of intellectuals, like nationalists or socialists) my dissertation design will allow me to better understand and theorize Political Islam and its relation to democracy in Egypt and Pakistan.

To sum up, in investigating the ideas of the ideologues of transnational Islamic movements regarding their discourse and enactment of democracy, my goal is to seek out how Mawdudi and Qutb envisioned a new kind of religious thought that was able to incorporate certain secular liberal ideals like democracy, constitutionalism, parliament etc. into Islam. What makes these intellectuals unique and interesting is that they are not only the two leading theorist of political Islam, but also they managed to instigate the

emergence and advancement of a nascent civil society of an associational nature - Jamaati Islami and the Muslim Brotherhood, respectively—simultaneously with their public debates, prison letters, and written work.

### *Organization of the dissertation*

This dissertation consists of five chapters, including the introduction and conclusion. The introductory chapter, chapter one, has presented the background and the objectives of the study, the research questions, and situated the dissertation within the literature. A brief summary of the rest of the thesis plan is as follows: Chapter two outlines the methodological parameters of this dissertation. In this section, I present the research design by discussing the logic of case selection and the theoretical and methodological approach that the dissertation utilized to explore the conceptualization of democracy within the Islamic movements that are of interest to the study. I also provide basic background information on the two cases under consideration. The subsequent section discusses the data collection and analysis. Finally, I conclude with a brief review of the significance of this work.

Chapter three traces conceptualization of democracy in Mawdudi's works in connection to his biography. In the chapter, Mawdudi's dealing with the idea of democracy is analyzed and discussed in connection with the national and international events that took place during his lifetime like the abolition of the Khilafat, end of British colonization over India, establishment of the state of Pakistan, wars with India and

Bangladesh, nationalism etc. The main argument of this chapter is that Mawdudi accepted basic tenants of the idea of democracy but attempted to give theological foundations to it. The chapter also argues that, for Mawdudi like any imported idea, for democracy to survive in a non-western context, it needs to be naturalized. For Mawdudi, Islam presented not a religion in the western sense of a word referring otherworldly and sacred, but an action-oriented system that covers all aspects of a Muslim's life in this world including politics. Rather than using the term "democracy," he preferred to use his own terminology "theodemocracy" which meant for him democracy that is naturalized to better fit into the realities and necessities of Pakistan. The chapter presents that Mawdudi's theodemocracy is not theocracy but it is not secular either. It required a strong state, which is required to be an elected one, and should uphold separation of powers, the rule of law and freedom of speech and assembly.

Chapter four investigates and presents an analytical narrative of the idea of democracy in Sayyid Qutb's works. At the heart of this chapter is a centrality of the idea of social justice for Qutb in his political theory. In presenting Qutb's conceptualization of democracy, as a response to changing economic, cultural, and political parameters that have transformed the lives of many in Egypt, the chapter argues that Qutb agreed and supported the basic tenants of democracy like, electoral system, constitutionalism, freedom of thought and assembly, accountability of the rulers, and rule of law. Yet, he was of a belief that western democracy, the way it was practiced and promoted have aligned itself with the capitalist worldview which is in essence for Qutb was in conflict with the nature of democracy that is said to aim the equality and freedom of people.

Refraining to use the word “democracy” but preferring to use Islamic system or state in its place, Qutb offered a strong critique of the certain aspects of western democracy while wholeheartedly supporting other presented a naturalized version of democracy that is to be survived and supported not by a strong state but vivid civil society.

Chapter five presents the competing and contrasting theory of democracies developed by Mawdudi and Qutb in order to understand the theoretical and political characteristics of the idea of democracy in each ideologues worldviews. The main argument in the chapter is while comparing their conceptualization of democracy pointing out that Mawdudi and Qutb thought within the modern political worldview and not refused or ignored what modernity brought into the field. Yet, the chapter shows, they did not copied the Western originated concept of democracy directly into their world, but tried to create an amalgam, a home grown version of democracy that they deemed a better fit to their countries. The chapter also points out similarities as well as differences in Mawdudi and Qutb’s approach to the idea of democracy and situates their work within the modern political thought. The chapter concludes with an author’s last words that articulates the necessity for developing a “democratic” democratic theory and discourse which is free from cultural imperialism and orientalist attitudes.



## CHAPTER TWO:

### RESEARCH DESIGN

This section outlines how the empirical research for the study will be conducted. Just as the theoretically, my dissertation relies on tools from several sociological subfields, so, too, does the methodological approach draw from multiple methodologies. In terms of research methodology, I utilize historical comparative analysis based on two cases. Comparative-historical utilizes systematic comparison between carefully selected cases and offers an analysis of processes and changes overtime in order to explain certain outcomes such as democratization, revolutions, certain state structures or legal systems (Mahoney and Rueschemeyer 2003). In a comparative historical study, the researcher is fundamentally concerned with explanations and identifications of causal configurations that produce major outcomes of interest. Since I am fundamentally concerned with bringing out diverse conceptualizations of and engagement with democracy in the works of the main ideologue of Muslim Brotherhood, and founder / ideologue of Jamaati Islami through their life work, a historical comparative study fits well with the intended study.

Proceeding from this point, the section begins with an explanation of the case selection, providing basic background information on the cases under consideration. I explain the logic of the case selection. Then, I discuss my methodological approach to the cases and the research questions of the study. Next, I explain the data and data analysis processes.

### *Case Selection*

The dissertation is designed to offer empirical cases of what could be called varieties of political Islam in the modern world. Mawdudi and Qutb represent different stories of the transformation of political Islam and the meaning of democracy on the road to modernization for their countries and the major transnational movements of the Islamic world: Jamaati Islami of Pakistan, and Ihwan-i Muslimin (known to western audiences as the Muslim Brotherhood) of Egypt. Each of the cases tells a different story of political Islam, idea of what democracy means and it entitles, and how to democratize and transform the Muslim world.

The two ideologues, Mawdudi and Qutb, selected for the case studies have been chosen;

(1) Because the movements that they are the ideologue of are the two most well known and most influential Islamic movements of the Sunni world (Esposito 1984; Arjomand 1989; Nasr 1995; Euben 1997; Ahmad 2009; Calvert 2010).<sup>4</sup> The Muslim Brotherhood of Egypt is one of the oldest Islamic movements of the Muslim world. The historical home to the Abbasid Caliphate and the base for Al-Azhar, one of the most influential Islamic institutions for Muslims, Egypt has always had a crucial importance

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<sup>4</sup> The dissertation limits itself with Sunni world, since there are fundamental differences between the Sunni and Shia Islam in terms of the basics of political theory (eg. Whether the leader is to be elected or to come from prophet's bloodline) and institutionalization of Islam (eg. Presence of a bureaucratic religiousclerical structure vs. absence of it).

for the Islamic world in general, but especially for Arabs. Jamaati Islami was selected since it is the most effective Islamic movement in the subcontinent that is the home for the largest Muslim population of the world. Created as a homeland for Muslims, Pakistan serves as an important case to study the relationship between Islam and democracy.

(2) Because it is crucial part of the study to analyze how political, historical societal and economic factors impacted the relationship between Islam and politics, I choose the countries and the movements that show the most similarities between them on these factors. Both of these movements adhere to the same religious tradition: Islam. They share the same emerging ground as nations that were struggling to gain their independence by going through radical social, political and cultural transformations. Due to the fact that these two movements emerged after the collapse of the Ottoman Empire following the First World War and abolition of the Caliphate, their political ideologies have been widely shaped from these historical experiences. The same power, the British, colonized both countries. Further, both Jamaati Islami and the Muslim Brotherhood Islamic movements were actively engaged in the independence wars against the British Empire. Thus, they both had a history of militant activism beside political, social, educational, and charity activities. Furthermore, both movements had to survive autocratic rulers and authoritative one-party regimes. Both in Egypt and Pakistan, the transition to democracy emerged from above, and in both countries the relationship between Islam and politics has been a major issue in modernization and democratization. The two movements, as were their founders and ideologues, were under strict

governmental control and banned many times. Not only the ideologues but also active members of the movements spent most of their lives under house arrest, in prison<sup>5</sup>.

As stated above, even though these countries experienced similar transformative episodes of modernity, independence, nationalization, they also constitute a stark empirical example of differences in terms of interaction between Islamic movements and democracy. As such, these two cases constitute a great set for comparison.

(3) Despite the many similarities in terms of their socio-political histories, I specifically was careful to choose cases since they represented a different relationship between Islam and politics. As a result I would compare and contrast how democracy came to be defined and what it meant for the two ideologues from two different parts of the Muslim world.

The two countries that I have selected are Pakistan and Egypt. They can be categorized into following relationship between Islam and politics:

i. Egypt is the country where Islamic opposition has been suppressed by a partly secular-based government, which has resulted in serious clashes between the state and the movement (and of course its ideologues), and in continued authoritarianism.

ii. Pakistan is the country where Islam has continually influenced government and politics, which resulted in a legally and politically recognized (most of the time) political Islamic movement.

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<sup>5</sup> This was mostly true for Egypt although, in Pakistan, Jemaati Islami leaders were also arrested.

(4) Mawdudi and Qutb are chosen because they are intellectuals and activists who formulated the theoretical bases of Islamism in the post-colonial Sunni world through the scholarly literature<sup>6</sup>. It probably would not be an exaggeration to say that no other Islamists were able to make a comparable influence on the twentieth century Islamic Political thought (Esposito 1984; Ahmad 2009; Calvert 2010). Their philosophies shaped cultural, political, social, and economic discourse on the role of Islam for the state and society in the Muslim thought throughout the Islamic world. The conceptual frameworks that Mawdudi and Qutb developed not only provided the reader with a sophisticated critique of colonialism and western modernity but also equipped the Islamists with a vocabulary that allowed them both to give voice to political, economic, and social concerns of the Islamic world and to suggest solutions to those with a unique terminology.

The time-periods and locations for this study were chosen based on a number of theoretical and methodological considerations regarding historical and geographical context, temporality, and historical contingency (Quadagno and Knapp 1992). The study locates the dynamics and transformations in Islamic movements' approach to democracy in the changing historical conjunctures during the lifetime of Mawdudi and Qutb.

Although it would have been ideal to bring the case analysis to our current time by

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<sup>6</sup> The inclusion of another case from Islamic world, Said Nursi the founder/ideologue of Jamaati Nur in Turkey was also considered to bring another variety for the study, yet because Nursi 's movement was never a political one. Moreover, he was not a political theorist like Qutb and Mawdudi, both them provided Muslim political theory with certain vocabularies that are still in use. Furthermore, Turkey does present a different case among them as it did not had a colonial experience as the rest of the Muslim world (with an exception of Iran), and it is the only country in the Islamic world that implemented French secularism. Thus I did not include Said Nursi and his movement as another case.

adding new ideologues that became the brain behind the movements after the death of Mawdudi and Qutb, the project then would have been too vast to deal with. The practical considerations forced me to limit my analysis; I ended up settling on Qutb and Mawdudi's life times, which coincides with 1980 Iranian Islamic Revolution when Islamic movements throughout the Muslim world went through a new kind of transformation. Although the Iranian Revolution resulted in new conceptualizations and actions in the Muslim world and that it would have been very intriguing to study them, my dissertation does limit itself right around the time of the Iranian Revolution.

I articulate my analysis around three historical moments that, I argue, made an impact on the ideological productions and operationalization of Mawdudi and Qutb's ideas. I define these historical movements in relation to the major structural and political shifts that took place in the Islamic world: (1) 1924, the abolition of the Caliphate and the collapse of the Ottoman Empire a few years before. The 1920s also represent the end of the First World War, and the emergence of the first nation states in the Muslim world. (2) The 1940s represent the Second World War and the independence movements within the Muslim world. Efforts to end colonialism and the ideological impact of fascism and communism are very important ideological trends for this time. (3) The 1950s and 1960s represent the cold war era, shifting alliances between the United States and the USSR among the Muslim countries, the Arab-Israeli wars, the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, and the United States sponsored democratization attempts. Organizing the study around these essential historical movements will be helpful in my analysis when I am tracing the

thematic transformation within and between the Islamic movements' ideological evolution.

The historical comparison of the narrative of democracy within and between these movements is not only itself interesting but also serves to illustrate empirical instances of various types of political Islam, understandings of democracy, and Islamic movements. Placing all of these points together in a comparative historical narrative within a single sociological study will reveal heterogeneity in the political Islamic discourse that has not been widely recognized in the current literature on Islam and politics.

#### *Data Collection*

The methodological approach used in this study focuses on the published works<sup>7</sup> of the main ideologues of the two Islamic movements by exploring their ideas on democracy and ideal governance. Thus, my data is the Turkish and English translations of the writings of the main ideologues of Muslim Brotherhood, Qutb, Jamaati Islami, and Mawdudi. My reading of the ideologues of the Islamic movements will focus primarily on their published books, I will also examine other forms of intellectual output from them, e.g., letters, newspaper, and journal articles, precisely since I want to observe the change or stability in their thought.

The original data for the Muslim Brotherhood will be gathered from the work of Sayyid Qutb (1906-1966) the main ideologue of the Muslim Brotherhood (Ihwani

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<sup>7</sup> The published work of the intellectuals that will constitute my data is given as an Appendix at the end of the proposal.

Muslimin), and the data for Jamaati Islami consist of the writings of Sayyid Abul Ala Mawdudi (1903-1979) who was the founder of the movement.

The founders and other ideologues of these movements were intellectuals with diverse backgrounds and qualifications. They were also the ideological and intellectual support behind the Islamic movements. The goals and aspirations that they set forth in their work (both as a written discourse and as active members of their movements) created a wave of supporters for their causes making these movements the leading transnational Islamic movements of the Muslim world. The pieces these intellectuals wrote, their speeches, letters they sent from prison, and the classes they taught were made into literary collections creating ideological texts which were used as a constant reference by these movements. These collections are still widely read throughout the Islamic world not only by their followers but also by non-affiliated Muslims as well. In their work, Qutb and Mawdudi dealt with wide array of issues from imperialism to governance; from social change to women's rights within what they defined as an Islamic perspective. By doing so, they announced their claim and determination to participate in the dominant public discourses of their time in their respective societies as well as other Muslim societies.

This is why it is my intention in this study to use these intellectuals as a theorists and practitioners of Islam and democracy and the discourse on Muslim politics in their countries. In their work, these ideologues contested the official state ideology and critiqued the state sponsored secular intelligentsia on diverse issues. Due to their



dissidence, the ideologues of these two Islamic movements spend most of their life in prison, exile, or on house arrest. For example, in the case of Muslim Brotherhood, Sayyid Qutb was prisoned a number of times and finally was executed. The founder of Jamaati Islami, Mawdudi, was sentenced to death although the sentence was not carried out.

It is rather strange to see that despite their importance for the past and current importance in shaping the ideology and enactment of the Muslim sociopolitical life, remarkably little has been written on issues like how these leading Muslim intellectuals dealt with the notion of democracy; in which ways their notion of democracy was similar to or different from western notions; what were the characteristics of the political system that they found ideal? Despite the lack of interest in the academic literature in the original voices of these intellectuals, throughout the Islamic world they are highly respected, and they have played important roles in transforming of their societies. They criticized existing institutions and mentalities and provided literal alternatives. As such, they not only shaped the conceptual world by setting the terms for most debates in the Muslim world, but also their ideas provided the foundations for many Islamic movements throughout the Islamic world. Therefore, it is of crucial importance to seek out the authentic Islamic voices on the interpretation of the relationship between Islam and democracy.

In addition to the original works of the two Islamic movements' ideologues, this study also will utilize secondary resources to gain biographic information about the ideologues and the history of the Islamic movements. Using secondary sources becomes

a necessity as I am exploring the world of action in regard to democracy within the movements. In my study, I am interested in finding out more than the Islamic movements' conceptualization of democracy; I am also interested in how these ideas were put into practice via these movements. In order to succeed at this, I need more than the works of the ideologues. In this regard, I will utilize secondary data on these movements by scholars from diverse fields. By using these sources I hope to learn more about the organizational structure, leadership arrangements, membership issues, forms of protest, distinct social occasions, and organized activities of the movements. Indeed, this data will serve a very useful purpose in analyzing whether or not and how the ideologues' ideas were put into practice.

#### *Method and Analysis*

In my dissertation, by means of a historical comparative study, I consider how democracy was understood, defined, and enacted by the Muslim Brotherhood and Jamaati Islami. I pursued a dual analytical agenda. First, I examined in detail how the ideologue of the each movement defined democracy, and how he related democracy and Islam to each other. My theoretical arguments are advanced in two major steps. In the first step I conceptualize discourses of democracy from the writings of the major movement ideologues of each movement and their transformation over time. The first step involved three main domains: (1) the narrative of democracy advanced by the movement ideologue; (2) the transformations in the discourse of the ideologue over time;

and (3) how democratic theory of the time in the West relates to these conceptualizations. In a second step, I tried to create a narrative explaining why these specific transformations occurred.

By following these steps, I was able to map a conceptual framework to address my other research question, which is what are the structural, social, and historical forces that led Mawdudi and Qutb, despite the similarities among them, to follow different paths with respect to structure, politicization, activism, and discourse in regard to democracy? My central argument is that the process of different state formations, diverse practices of secularization, dissimilar outcomes of the same international events, relative familiarity and engagement with the western intellectual discourses. And lastly the individual biographies of the ideologues have been critical in shaping the diverse discourses, organizations, and activities of these movements.

Second, I related the contemporary re-figurations of democracy and the rule of governing in the writings of these intellectuals with the actions and activities of the movements. During that process, I paid special attention to how changes in national and international politics helped, complicated, or hindered the application of these ideals into practice. To put it other way, I explored how the local and international events and institutions uniquely shaped the ideas and the way they were to put into practice.

This two-stage process was supported by the utilization of a narrative framework. In analyzing my data, I employed the analytical narrative method, which uses, “theoretically framed questions, concepts, and mechanisms to help select historical

happenings for further interpretation and explanation. Such further interpretation and explanation then lead to more precise concepts, improved causal hypotheses, and new theoretical questions” (Stryker 1996; Stryker 2004; also see Goldstone 2003) to my work. This type of analysis was especially useful for my research in tracing patterns of causal factors as well as in making causal inferences through the comparison between my cases. Similar to Stryker’s own work in which she focused primarily on scholars as narrators, my focus was on the movement ideologues. The strategic narrative (Stryker 1996) approach was also a very useful tool in analyzing the development of issues over time, thus a good match to my study. I constructed historical narrative of the important, strategic events concerning Islamic movements’ interaction (i.e. conflict, contention, peaceful existence, co-operation) with political systems as well as international events and intellectual discourses in analyzing what this interaction meant at the end in terms of the conceptualization and enactment of democracy by the movement. Then, I analyzed these narratives to determine causal sequences of these events on ideological production in regard to democracy over time.

To capture what democracy and ideal governance meant to these ideologues is in a way to understand the causality of events related to political actions. Similar to events, ideas also do not form in isolation; rather they emerge and develop in relation to many things like certain constraining effects, certain freedoms, new encounters, or even turmoil. Systematically studying the ideological narratives can help us to discover formations, mechanisms and factors that might otherwise escape from our attention since

existing theory might not talked about them. The methodological challenge of my dissertation then is to establish the credibility of diverse conceptualizations of democracy as well as the enactment of these ideas by the movements (political or ideological in nature) as being caused by other factors (e.g. events and intellectual discourses, individual biographies of the ideologues). In the context of my dissertation then, making historical linkages between events and intellectual discourses to the Islamic movements' ideologies and actions of their ideologues becomes vital, as Stryker (1996) argues, to ensure the history-theory relationship in qualitative 'historical' research in social science. Therefore, the use of strategic narrative helped me to identify how the above stated differences (e.g. in the institutional environments, historical conditions, individual biographies of each ideologues, and impact of global events) are related to the different conceptualizations and implementations of democracy by the movement ideologues, and how these different conceptualizations affected understandings of democracy in these two Muslim societies.

Rather than basing itself on the scholarly tradition of positing an explicit or implicit opposition between "Islam" and "modernity," "Islam" and "democracy," or "tradition" and "modernism" in conceptualizations of the Islamic movements (e.g. Zubaida 1989; Roy 1994; Gole 1996; Abu Lughod 1998), my dissertation sees Islamic movements and their activists as people who are trying to reconcile Islamic tradition within a modern social and political context (Hefner 2000; Mahmood 2005; Moaddell 2005). By following this trend of scholarship in my analysis of the conceptualization of

democracy in Mawdudi and Qutb, I was able to show the agency in the discourses, doctrines, and practices of the Islamic actors. In other words, this kind of understanding lets me involve myself in my intellectuals' works with a tool that sees them as activists whose central claim is re-making themselves as proper Muslims while at the same time they are constantly dealing with the socio-political conditions of their times. This means that I am recognizing my intellectuals as not passive reactionaries of modernity and all that comes with it but, on the contrary, their agency by arguing that they not only were aware but also more importantly involved and interacting with the ideas, ideologies, and discourses of their times, whether these ideas emerge within, or were imported from outside, the Muslim world.

In its dealing with Islam, my dissertation followed Talal Asad's (1986) conceptualization of Islam as a discursive tradition with a shared body of texts, the Quran and the Hadiths,<sup>8</sup> that give it a particular coherence while recognizing that contestation also plays an essential role. In other word, it sees Islamic tradition as a "historically evolving set of discourses, embodied in the practices and institutions of Islamic societies and hence deeply imbricated in the material life of those inhabiting them"(Hirschkind 2003:22). Asad's conceptualization of Islam as a discursive tradition allowed me to think out of unifying logic that totalize Islamic world into one single unit by ignoring the diversity within it. Since as Asad argues " ... belonging to a tradition does not preclude

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<sup>8</sup> The sayings and actions of the Prophet Mohammad constitute one of the main sources of Islamic teaching and law making.

involvement in vigorous debates over the meaning of its formative texts... and over the need for a radical reform of the tradition..." (Asad 1999: 188).

Furthermore, Asad's perspective helped me to escape thinking of Islamic discourses in terms of "modern" or "traditional" dichotomy. By doing so, it provides a productive way of approaching, understanding and analyzing the discourses of ideologues and their actions within the complexities of real world while paying attention to their development, change and continuity. I consider the discourses of democracy in the works of the movement ideologues as discourses related "conceptually to a past (when the practice was instituted, and from which the knowledge of its point and proper performance has been transmitted) and a future (how the point of that practice can best be secured in the short or long term, or why it should be modified or abandoned), through a present (how it is linked to other practices, institutions, and social conditions)" (Zaman 2002: 13). Thus, I expect discourses on democracy or constitutional government not to be conceptualized with the language and terminology of the western norms and ideas, but with the references to Islamic norms, history, and teaching combined with the local experiences of the specific author.

To explore what democracy meant for these ideologues and how the meaning and its practice changed between the movements and among the ideologues of the same movements over time, I need to also be aware that the meanings of words often vary within their context. Therefore, I am aware and paid particular attention in my analysis to the fact that the term "democracy" may not mean the same thing or that the ways to get to

a “democratic system” may not follow the same prescription in the writings of the ideologues or actions of the movements. In an effort to grasp this diversity and to be able to get a better grasp of the use of the concept by each movement, I, as Felix Oppenheim (1981) suggests, reconstructed the concept of democracy by providing it with an explanatory definition. My explanatory definition is composed of the terms and concepts that are deemed to be crucial in diverse definitions of democracy. I believe borrowing a definition from a western literature and expecting to find an exact or a similar version of that definition is a futile if not unreasonable project. With this study, I want to see how Islamic ideologues see and define democracy in their own terms. Western democracy, over the years has proposed several conditions for the development and success of democracy in the western world. Democratization literature argues that individualism, Capitalism, emergence of bourgeois, Protestant culture, non-hierarchic structure of religion, gender equality, secularism, and rationalization, among other things, are essential requirements to the development of democracy. In studying intellectual discourses and attitudes of Muslim intellectuals and Islamic movements, the dissertation paid particular attention how these conditions for democracy were referred to in a particular text or speech.

Besides grasping how these ideologues conceptualize democracy and the ideal ways of governing through the use of their works, I also tried to explain those concepts and to locate their role in the arguments of the each ideologue. In this elucidation, I primarily relied on a comparative analysis between the ideologues’ works as well as the



differences that exist among each ideologues own works. For example, when I analyzed the work of Sayyid Qutb, I found significant radicalization in his intellectual work between 1948 and 1965. This was very different from his earlier work, and I explain that this is in part the result of his terrible experience in Egyptian prisons and the increasing state oppression over him and the whole array of Muslim Brotherhood members. I found that his concerns, claims and the goals he set for the movement in his early writings are not the same as those of his later writings. As I explain in chapter four, Qutb's discourse changed not only due to personal experiences, but for other reasons as well, since the intellectuals are products of the social, cultural, and intellectual environment that they live in. I also find that Mawdudi's earlier work stresses the unity of the Ummah more than his later work, which supports the idea of Pakistan as an Islamic nation. I attribute this shift to the political development of the time that made it necessary for many Muslim intellectuals, like Mawdudi, to come to the belief that separation from India and establishing the state of Pakistan was the best solution for the Indian Muslims. Overall, throughout this dissertation, I remain alert to shifts in meaning between the various works, and highlight these differences whenever I encounter them. My aim in the dissertation is to correlate the relationship of ideas of Islamists on democracy with the social and political transformations that occurred in Egypt and Pakistan.

### *Contributions and Significance of the Study*

Studying what democracy means for Islamic movements and how its meaning and practice changes between and within these movements over time will enrich our knowledge of democracy, and also will provide us with advantages and the limitations of using democracy as a concept in Muslim societies. At the practical level, gaining this knowledge will be greatly useful in adopting or advising policies for promotion of democracy throughout the Muslim world. However, social science research tends to ignore how the ideologues or intellectuals of the Islamic movements thought and conceptualize and understood democracy throughout their life course, how they visualized this concept working in their own society within the Islamic way of life, in what ways they imagined Muslim democracy to be different from the Western one, and in what ways they find it compatible. Yet, I strongly believe, without studying these issues and offering answers to these questions, it would make no sense to make predictions or policy proposals regarding the Muslim world's experience with democracy.

The investigation of the complex world of thinking and action with regard to democracy in the Muslim world not only teaches us something about the Islamic political culture, but it also can help us to think about larger issues: the correspondence between global norms and local meaning making; the interdependence between culture and institutions; the interaction between international discursive current with local intellectual context in diverse communities; and the interrelation between global events and how they

affect reconstruction of meaning and action in the local context. My dissertation is intended, in short, to enrich both the study of Islam and democracy and also the practice of cross-cultural analysis more generally.

Furthermore, the research findings from this project aim to broaden our understanding of the diversity of the Islamic discourses on democracy in Egypt and Pakistan by investigating the ways in which Islam has provided a frame of reference for the movements' constituencies to claim a public role in the articulation and implementation of Islamic discourse and debate on democracy and its fate in their respective countries.

As increasingly prominent actors on the contemporary political scene throughout the Islamic societies the Islamic movements with the ideas and ideologies that they support, their transformations, their discourses, the intellectual debates that the movement ideologues engage with the Western as well as non-Western intellectuals and their religio-political activism should not be ignored if we want to understand political Islam. The processes and transformations of the idea of democracy and rule of governing as they have shaped, and been shaped by, the intellectuals of the Jamaati Islami and the Muslim Brotherhood are the subject of this study. This dissertation focuses primarily on Pakistan and Egypt in a comparative framework. However, because these movements are transnational therefore important not only within Muslim countries but even within the West, the final product of this study will be relevant to the experiences of the Islamic movements in the number of contemporary Muslim societies throughout the world.

## CHAPTER THREE:

### MAWDUDI, TOWARDS A HOME-GROWN DEMOCRACY?

This chapter summarizes conceptualization of democracy in the works of Mawlana Mawdudi. The chapter is organized in four parts. The first part traces the early years of Mawdudi and the emergence of the idea of theodemocracy. The following section deals with mature Mawdudi where his thoughts and ideas regarding democracy become more clear and complex. The third part compares the ideas of theodemocracy and Western democracy. The last part presents a summary of the sections presented in the chapter.

#### *Introduction*

Indian reformist Mawlana Sayyid Abu al-'A'la Mawdudi (1903–1979), hereon Mawdudi, was one of the most significant Muslim ideologues of his generation. Mawdudi is mostly referred as the first Muslim ideologue who developed a modern political Islamic ideology, a socio-political vision and put that into practice through strategy for social action by establishing a social movement, Jamaati Islami. It was even argued that Mawdudi is one of the most important intellectuals of Islamic revivalism, if not its cardinal ideologue (Nasr 1993; 1994; Ahmad 2009). His ideological perspective, which sought to create a socio-political reading of Islam, intended to mobilize ordinary Muslims for the purpose of political action have greatly influenced Islamic revivalism for Muslims all around the world. Mawdudi also established “parameters for the revivalist

discourse on the state and society, and gave revivalists ideas their distinct flavor” (Nasr 1995: 50). It was Mawdudi’s work on Islamic state that offered a foundation for theorizing an Islamic political and economic system throughout the Islamic world, from Muslim brothers of Egypt to political parties in Malaysia. The impact of his interpretation of Islam is clearly seen on the political discourses and actions of Islamic revivalists throughout the Arab world and even in Iran, Turkey due to translations of his works in Arabic, English, Turkish, Farsi, and many other languages.

In order to understand conceptualization of democracy by Mawdudi, this chapter provides a detailed analysis of the formations and development of his thoughts on democracy as well as internal problems in it. The central theme developed in this chapter is that Mawdudi’s conception of democracy, which he names as theodemocracy or democratic caliphate, is not just a traditional response to modernity, but rather a sincere attempt to develop a modern political idea that by it he simultaneously aims to transcend, abolish, preserve, and transform western concept of democracy. The arguments in this chapter is supported by analytical reading of Mawdudi’s intellectual biography, his unique approach to Islam that allowed him to be critical in reading both westernized elite’s as well as traditional *ulama’s* interpretation of Islam, and his ability to accommodate the techniques of modernity as well as its critiques to his organic interpretation of democracy in his original writings. His political activism was a socio-political struggle to create a Muslim society that enforces and obeys the *Shari ‘a* law. His pursuit of Islamization program (revivalist in nature) in the beginning via his

organization, Jamaati Islami, and later by capturing the state (through democratic means) thus to use its institutions are aimed to reinstate Islam as a blueprint of socio-political order.

The present chapter is organized as follows. First, I will provide an overview of the biography of Mawdudi, which is divided in two phases: The early years and Mature Mawdudi. The early years section covers Mawdudi's life prior to Jamaati Islami's active participation in Pakistani politics as a political party around 1950s, and includes a short history of Mawdudi's stance during political struggles for the creation of Pakistan. It also presents the emergence of several issues pre and post-colonial independence that shaped his political thoughts. The following section, called Mature Mawdudi, covers his life as a leader of one of the political parties of Pakistan until his death in 1979. In each biographic section is embedded the development of his democratic theory in the face of the intellectual, social, and political problems he confronted as an engaged intellectual trying both to understand and transform his world. Early years and Mature Mawdudi sections are organized according to those occasions in which Mawdudi's thinking was formed and transformed and offer an understanding regarding how democracy was conceptualized by Mawdudi through tracking his concept of "theodemocracy" as a creative and critical response to "western democracy." Here I will argue that theodemocracy, for Mawdudi, was an attempt to de-colonize Muslim political thought and create an organic Islam-inspired version of government, but also had strong unifying features and capacities since it was not shaped by nationalistic or ethnic worldview but

religiously inspired political ideology. These sections are followed by a summary where I will offer an analysis of his democratic theory and a response to western critics regarding mainly on non-Muslims and women's place in his theory. The chapter will end with a short summary.

### *Mawdudi, the Early Years*

Born on 25th of September 1903 at Aurangabad, India, Mawdudi grew up in between a time of declining Muslim power in the Indian subcontinent<sup>9</sup> and during the heyday of British colonialism in the region. Mawdudi started to his life at a time when majority of Muslim states were under direct or indirect control of western powers. This reality would have a major impact on his intellectual formation. His revivalist ideology was generated as a direct response to the rising needs of Indian Muslims of the twentieth century to define their post/colonial identity and destiny in India. As the struggle for freedom against British colonialism progressed, politics and religion was to gain new meanings for Muslims and well as Hindus of India.

Coming from one of the leading families of his community Mawdudi experienced both advantages and disadvantages of his family background. From his father's side, he was a descendant of the Prophet Mohammad (a mark of nobility among the Muslims) and one of the most prominent branches of Chishti Sufi order that had been instrumental in the spread of Islam in northern India (Mawdudi 1995: 3). Being of a Turkish origin,

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<sup>9</sup> In south Asia, the Muslim minority ruled over a non-Muslim majority for a long time, and British colonial rule brought an end to this rule.

Mawdudi's mother's<sup>10</sup> side also carried a mark of nobility (Nasr 1996: 11). His mother's family was of *nawabs* (ruler of the Princely states/provincial governor) and *jadigars* (landlords) when Moguls were the rulers before India was colonized by the British (Nasr 1996: 11). In his autobiography Mawdudi proudly talks about the traditions and noble heritage of his mother's family (Mawdudi 1995: 3-4). His family background was to be useful for him in his future endeavors in life. Mawdudi himself took great pride in his family background, which can be easily seen from his autobiography.

According to Nasr (1996: 12), being from Delhi, the Mawdudis were faithful to Moguls and when British Raj was established in 1858 they suffered greatly under this new rule. Thus, the family, as a one of the leading families of the community, remained detached from colonial establishments. Although Mawdudi's father, Ahmed Hasan, was sent to a Anglo-Oriental Collage at Aligarh,<sup>11</sup> Mawdudi's grandfather when the news of his son's western habits of wearing British clothes and playing cricket were made known to him, called his son back and sent him to study Law in a non-Anglican school.

Being a lawyer, an occupation, which was born out of western legal systems, his father was at unease with his profession and soon gave it up by committing himself to Sufism. Not until Mawdudi was around four years of age that he returned to practicing law. Mawdudi says that when he did, he vowed that he would never defend a case based

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<sup>10</sup> Ruqiyah Begum

<sup>11</sup> Anglo-oriental school had established by Sayyid Ahmad Khan, who was one of the renowned modernist thinkers of his time. He had opened this school with an aim to empower Muslims by giving them education in modern subjects.



on deceit and represents only the ones that he believed in their innocence (Mawdudi 1995: 5). His father's experiences with colonial rule in terms of the cultural confusion and social limitations it carried with it and the tendency to return to Islam for a refuge were not unique to him and were widely shared by many Muslim elite of his time who were colonized (Kara 1994; Nasr 2001; Dabashi 2008).

His father was very influential in Mawdudi's education and wanted him to be a Mawlavi<sup>12</sup> and a religious scholar and organized Mawdudi's education around this idea. Yet, life circumstances made a journalist out of Mawdudi (Mawdudi 1995). In 1918 (when he was 15 years of age), Mawdudi started to work at the editorial board for a local journal, Madinah. His father's insistence on him using pure Urdu proved useful. Later on his career Mawdudi insisted on using Urdu in his writings to free Muslim minds of the influence of English as he saw the text more than a mean to disseminate the ideas but was an agent of cultural liberation (Mawdudi 1995).

Madinah was closed down just a few months after he started, Mawdudi moved to Delhi. Living in Delhi, which was one of the hot centers of political action at the time, provided Mawdudi with many opportunities. It was there that he started to learn English. In his autobiography, he states that his father had paid a special attention to refrain him from studying English and western thought. However when he became a journalist, he felt the need to learn English and study history, philosophy, political science, economics, religion, and other social studies in English (Nasr 1996). In Delhi he improved his

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<sup>12</sup> A sect of Sufism. Mawlavi order was founded in 1273 by Mawlana Jaleddin Rumi's followers after his death.

reading list by including many western thinkers such as Plato, Aristotle, Kant, Saint Simon, Comte, Goethe, Hegel, Nietzsche, Darwin, Marx, Lenin, Shaw to learn about western political thought (Mawdudi 1995).

When the World War 1 ended, the Indian Muslims found themselves at the threshold of the Khilafat Movement (1919-1924), which was launched in India to pressure the British Government to not tamper with the Ottoman Empire's 1914 borders and to preserve the authority of the Ottoman Caliph. The movement was more than a religious movement<sup>13</sup>; it was also seen as an anti-British action since abolition of the Khilafat was for to benefit the British interest in both India subcontinent and in Arab world. Mawdudi writes that it was because of abhorrence of British sovereign power and its expanding influence that he began to take part in political activities, including the Khilafat movement which was very influential in shaping Indian Muslims as well as Mawdudi's political activities (Minault 1982). Although the movement did not succeed in realizing its goal of saving the Khilafat, by participating in the movement Mawdudi learned not only about social mobilization and its importance, but also the benefits of using Islamic slogans for the political ends. He successfully applied what he learned from this experience into his own movement when he established Jamaati Islami<sup>14</sup>.

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<sup>13</sup> Being in a non-religious in nature, Gandhi too was a member of The Khilafat Movement and participated in and supported its activities.

<sup>14</sup> Jamaati Islami was founded in 1941. For more information regarding Jamaati Islami see Nasr's book titled "Islamic Opposition to the Islamic State" (1993)

When the Khilafat movement ended in 1924 with the abolition of Caliphate<sup>15</sup> by Turkish Republic, Mawdudi saw this as a fault of nationalism<sup>16</sup> as an ideology. For Mawdudi, Caliphate was abolished because of westernized Turkish nationalists wanted to establish their secular-national state. The Arab nationalists too were responsible since it was them who betrayed the Ottomans by rebelling against the Caliphate, which made the Ottomans weak against the western imperialist, thus harmed the institution of Caliphate and caused its early death (Mawdudi 1981). Experiencing the wars and ills nationalism caused<sup>17</sup>, Mawdudi believed that it was not a fit with the Muslim world due to its secular nature and had not worked and will never work for the Muslim interests. His distrust of nationalism was the reason why Mawdudi, in the early years of his career in Delhi, supported United India and was against the establishment of Pakistan as a nation. With that purpose in mind, he wrote essays to praise Congress Party<sup>18</sup> and its leaders, including

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<sup>15</sup> Caliphate for Mawdudi refers to a system of government where the state is run according to the rules of Islam.

<sup>16</sup> Mawdudi defined nationalism as national selfishness, blind prejudice and national pride.

<sup>17</sup> This statement of Mawdudi I believe expresses well his view on nationalism: “what is objectable, nay even hateful is ‘nationalism’. This nationalism has no reality except that is another name for national selfishness.... in a country that class is a curse which is blindly pursues its own class interests and ends without caring for their good or bad consequences to others. then why should not, in the wider sphere of humanity, that nation be treated and looked upon as a curse which deifies its national interests and admires the principles that ‘right is that which conforms to our national interests and wrong that which does not conform them?’ ...but you can look around that see that modern civilization has involved all nations in this curse and is responsible for converting the whole world into national wrestling arenas and battlefields in which each wrestler is opposed to the other...”(Mawdudi 1947a: 27-28; 1976b)

<sup>18</sup> Indian National Congress (INC or Congress) founded in 1885. Initially the Congress was not opposed to British rule but soon it turned into a mass organization against the colonial rule in India. Although predominantly Hindu in both number and character, at first the Muslims of India represented by the Muslim

Gandhi. He worked for pro-Congress Party papers like Taj where he was co-editor and then editor. Being pro-Congress newspaper, Taj was closed down several times. The last time was due to Mawdudi's piece criticizing the colonial government. From 1925 to 1928, he was the editor of the daily Al-Jamiyah a very influential newspaper of an organization called the Ulama, Jamiyyatul Ulama Hind<sup>19</sup> which, not surprisingly, was supportive of the Indian National Congress. In 1927, he published his famous piece on the subject of Islamic War, Al-Jihad fil-Islam.

From the 1929 forward, Mawdudi started to lose faith in the National Congress and the idea of United India. His encounters with Hindu revivalism, the apparent Hindu domination in the Congress with its adverse consequences for the Indian Muslims made him question his earlier stance regarding United India and existing political system.

1930s were important times for the fate of the Muslim community in India. The elections of 1937 had brought the Congress Party to power in a number of provinces while the Muslim League<sup>20</sup> experienced terrible loss (Nasr 1994; Khalidi 2003; Moten 2006;

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League in the political arena supported the INC. Later on however, Muslim League came to support the idea of two nation theory which finally led the establishment of the state Pakistan for Muslims in India.

<sup>19</sup> Jamiyyatul Ulama Hind (JUH) was launched in 1919 by some Deobandi ulama (scholars). The Jamiyyat was highly active in politics gave a great struggle for freeing India from British rule. They were against the idea of Pakistan. In 1945 Jamiyyatul Ulama Islam was established to accommodate the separatists who supported establishment of Pakistan. Following the establishment of Pakistan in 1947, JUH focused on religious and cultural issues and remained distant to politics.

<sup>20</sup> All Indian Muslim League (AIML) was established in 1906 in Daka (now in Bangladesh) with a goal to seek a proportionate representation for Muslims in the legislative branches of government, public employment at all levels, protection and continuation of Islamic culture by constitutional means. Initially worked together with INC, Muslim League departed their ways from INC under the leadership of Jinnah (who had joined INC in 1896 and AIML in 1913). Jinnah played leading role in the establishment of Pakistan in 1947.

Ahmad 2009; 2011). The results of the election gave the Muslim elite their first and painful experience of what the future political order in the post-independent India was to be like. After the elections, Mawdudi declared his new stance in these words in 1938 “...it can easily be inferred how the policy adopted<sup>21</sup> to gain political power in the name of independence struggle under the shadow of British rule is being used to extinguish the power of Muslims and their identity; and how our neighborly friend is appropriating all those devices of national imperialism which they have learned from their English masters” against us (Mawdudi 1981: 180). This new realization made him initially to work for the revival of Islam as a way of life and to protect Muslims’ interests in India, and later the support for the establishment of the state of Pakistan for Indian Muslims. Mawdudi’s revivalist work, then is not to be seen as reaction against the West, but should be understood in connection with his experience with colonial politics and the type of identity that it promotes, the way the idea of democracy works in societies that divided by hard lines and nationalist wars of his time.

As the debates over the fate and nature of the post-colonial order in India was discussed widely in the media, public gatherings, and legislative bodies, Mawdudi kept himself away from these discussions by focusing his energy on his revivalist work of establishing a Muslim community that was distinct from traditional Muslim identity and secular nationalism. His past experiences convinced him to the importance of structures

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<sup>21</sup> by the Congress Party

thus he came to an understanding that if the system was not Islamic, his revivalist project had no chance for survival. In 1938, he wrote in his column:

“The conceptualization of the state by the nineteenth-century scholars of politics is now utterly outdated. . . . Gone are the days when if the state presented its economic, educational, industrial, or social scheme, people made fun of it by calling it grandmotherly legislation. The situation has completely changed. Now the state’s arena has almost become as all-encompassing as that of religion. Now it also decides what you are to wear or what not to wear; whom you are to marry and at what age; what you are to teach your kids and what mode of life you are to choose; ... what language and script you are to adopt. So, the state has not left even the most peripheral issues of life independent of its ultimate right to intervene” (Mawdudi 1981: 5).

Against that strong of a modern state, which was apparently to be controlled by Hindu majority according to rules of democracy, Mawdudi attempted to re-narrated Islam as a political system to give millions of Indian Muslims a cohesive identity with which they would carve out a space for themselves as Muslims against the Hindu sectarianism, on the one hand, and the Indian nationalist and statist projects, on the other. As stated , mainly dictated by the political necessity of his time that he wrote *Political Theory of Islam* (1939) and *Islamic Law and Constitution* (originally lectures and pamphlets which are combined into a book in 1941) to present his systematic theory of Islam as a political system.

When looked carefully, Mawdudi’s presentation of Islam as a political system, and his conceptualization of Islamic state via modern political terminology, the similarity between his thoughts and Gandhi’s and some other anti-colonial intellectuals like Iqbal and Fanon is interesting. Experienced the colonial violence and nation state making

experiments in India, as well as throughout the Muslim world, Mawdudi's political understanding was highly shaped by anti-colonial (can easily be read as critical to modernity since the idea of modernity was carried over and was implemented by colonizers) worldview that called for indigenization. Western modernity is understood by Mawdudi as an authoritative discourse that imposes itself by destroying characteristics of Muslim identity by presenting them at best as problematic, while supporting certain characteristics and identities that essentialize modernity while warranting its survival. Like Gandhi, he too argued that politics should never be divorced from religion. In *West vs. Islam*, he explains his belief that it was colonial mentality that required detachment of religion from politics since that detachment resulted in "degenerate lives of slavish morality" (Mawdudi 1992: 88-89). In other words, he argued that the promotion of the separation of religion from politics by Colonizers / West allowed and sustained colonial subjugation. One of the vital examples of colonial subjugation among the Muslims, Mawdudi indicated, was the problem of viewing Islam as a religion in the western sense of the word not as a social order, a way of life as intended in Islam. In Islam, he argued, religion is considered not only as an individual and personal affair but also as a social system that controls every aspect of Muslim's life (1927: 134-38; 1992: 14-24; 20021:105, 124). He declared that "Islam is not a mere dogma, nor a collection of some religious functions and rituals, but a detailed program and a comprehensive scheme for the whole human life... [it is] to mutilate Islam by limiting it to religious cores and rituals." (Mawdudi 1992: 294-98; 1970: 294 – 298.). To him, Islam was "a revolutionary

ideology which seeks to alter the social order of the entire world and rebuild it in conformity with its own tenets and ideals” (Mawdudi 1976: 3). By doing so, he stressed the social and political meanings behind the religious requirements, and was highly critical of the idea that presented act of praying, fasting, going to *Hajj*<sup>22</sup> and other religious requirements only as *ibadat* (serving to Allah). Mawdudi (2002a: 110-116; 2003: 8-9) He believed that, as different from Christianity, which promoted an other-worldly salvation, Islam sought for both. A religious politics would be a very concise way of describing Mawdudi’s departure from liberal thought since completely rejecting secularism as the basis of his politics, he argued that Islam recognized no boundaries between the spiritual and secular. In this aspect, he was much like Calvin, Mawdudi was interested Islam in political terms. He saw religion as a moral educator of politics and argued that

“ the separation of politics from morality and religion has created more problems than it has solved. The result is that there is skepticism in thought, confusion in values, expediency in standards, vulgarity in behavior and opportunism in diplomacy. Politics has become out and out Machiavellian and this state of affairs has greatly impaired the poise and tranquility of life” (1980 (originally 1941): p7).

Mawdudi’s non-secular political views was causing him trouble since he started form his ideas on Islamic state. Though in this stage of his time, Mawdudi believed that Islamization of society was to preside the establishment of the state, he theorized the Islamic state as an ideological one (Mawdudi 1941; 1939; 1960), and outlined the characteristics of it. According to Mawdudi, the Islamic state was democratically

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<sup>22</sup> Muslim pilgrimage to Mecca, which is the fifth pillar of Islam.



constituted and the government is run with mutual consultation. Being the *caliphs*<sup>23</sup> of Allah, there is no distinction among the citizens in terms of race, class, gender, nationality, or any other aspect<sup>24</sup>. They all have equal rights that given to them by Allah in the Quran (Mawdudi 1980: 184). In his work, *Islamic Law and Constitution*, he refurbished certain terminologies of Islam such as *Tawhid*, *Risalah* and *Caliphate*, which are according to him three fundamental principles of Islamic state, with political meanings (Mawdudi 1980: 253-62). While in traditional Islamic teaching, *tawhid* meant there is only one God, in his political terminology the term was used to refer the idea that the sovereignty vests in God and God alone. *Risalah*, -in its literal meaning book or text- which is used to refer the books that were sent to some of prophets by Allah, stands for the supremacy of the Shari`ah as the commands of the only Sovereign, God. *Caliphate* stands for the vicegerency of man. Although Mawdudi clearly stated that the Islamic state by its nature was democratic, and that “no sane person can disagree with the spirit of

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<sup>23</sup> means representatives, vicegerency

<sup>24</sup> Even though, Mawdudi stated that Islamic state did not recognized difference among its citizens in terms of race, gender, nationality, class or class, he also stated that Islamic state classified its citizen into two categories: Muslim and *zimmi* (non-Muslim). In the later parts of this chapter I will explain how he overcomes these seemingly conflicting ideas of him. But for now, it would be useful to know that for Mawdudi, considering the ideological nature of the state. These two categories of citizenship (Muslim and *zimmi*) were essential. The base of classification among the citizens is different in an Islamic state than non-Muslim states have been making their classification. Islam does not divide people on the basis of tribe, race, color, language, ethnicity or class as it was the case in Western states. It differentiates, according to Mawdudi, from them by tying citizenship to whether one believes in principle and ideology of Islam or not. Whoever accepts the ideology which is its basic principle, its *raison d'être* governing all its actions etc. becomes entitled to the rights of full citizenship. Islamic state for Mawdudi should confer all basic human rights to all its citizens whether he/she is Muslim or *zimmi*. “The only distinction between the two is in the realm of political responsibilities only. Since an Islamic state is based in an ideology, it is evident that only those who believe that ideology can be trusted with the responsibility of running its affairs” (Mawdudi 1941; 1960: 188-189)

democracy” (Mawdudi 1938 quoted in Ahmad 2009: 204-5), he had certain reservations towards western democracy and very clearly made distinction between western type of democracy and his version of democracy which he referred as “democratic Caliphate” or “theodemocracy.” As I will delve more deeply into his own version of democracy in the coming paragraphs, it would be enough for now to say that the main difference between democracy and theodemocracy for Mawdudi lies here in that, in western democracy, sovereignty vests in the people; whereas in theodemocracy, God is the only sovereign.

“ Muslim democracy violently differs from this new fangled democracy is that it puts forward the principle of unrestricted sovereignty of the masses while we consider it wrong from the viewpoint of reality and disastrous from the aspect of its consequences. The fact of the matter is that the right of sovereignty vests in Him who created the mankind...” (Mawdudi 1947: 36).

Except this point, Mawdudi argues, there is no difference between western democracy and Muslim one and nothing to be learned from the West on that matter. In fact, according to Mawdudi, it was Muslims who gave practical illustrations of it long before it was practiced by the modern West (1947: 35).

As he more developed and write his ideas on Islamic politics, the pressure of the colonial state on him increased. The newspaper he worked has been closed by authorities, the college he was teaching, Lahore’s Islamiyyah Collage, dismissed him in 1940 due to pressures from Punjab government. He came to believe that, to establish an Islamic state one needs to establish a Muslim society, which was made conscious individuals<sup>25</sup> who

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<sup>25</sup> Making conscious individual is one of the main concerns of Mawdudi. It was around the time of his establishment of the Jammat Islami that he stated his intellectual mission in these words: “The plan of action I had in mind was that I should first break the hold which Western culture and ideas had come to

are aware of their place in the world and what they had promised to God when they choose Islam as their religion. He argued, only such a society would lead to the establishment of an Islamic state. Islamic state according to Mawdudi guaranteed freedom of its citizens and equality among them. “In this is a democratic age in which government is based on the consent of the people” he said one of his speeches,

“...powers are delegated to the government by people. Hence it follows that our government<sup>26</sup> cannot be Islamized unless the people themselves become true Muslims is the masses do not profess the faith in Islam, Allah as their master and ruler and accept Islam as their way of life, the government can never embrace Islam recognize Allah as the Supreme Authority and work according to the principles of Islam... When they [masses] profess their faith in Islam after giving a careful thought to it, the government formed by their consent will naturally be obedient to Allah and enforce his laws.”(Mawdudi 1981: 71).

With this mindset, he planned for social action to realize his revivalist vision.

As it was stated in previous paragraph, since Mawdudi was of a belief that an Islamic state without an Islamic revolution<sup>27</sup> is bound to be unstable if its adherents were

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acquire over Muslim intelligence, and to instill into them the fact that Islam has a code of life of its own, its own culture, its own political and economic systems and a philosophy and an educational system which are all superior to anything that Western civilization could offer. I wanted to rid them of the wrong notion that the needed to borrow from others in the matters of culture and civilization ” (originally from Tarjuma ul Quran quoted in Mawdudi 1981: 56)

<sup>26</sup> Although the excerpt is taken from Mawdudi’s 1948 speech to ladies, which is after Pakistan was established it was before his decision to actively involve in politics thus present a good example of his mindset at that time.

<sup>27</sup> Both Moten (2006) and Nasr (1996) explain that for Mawdudi revolution involved more than the overthrow of a political regime. Moten, for example argues that revolution for Mawdudi is a “process of comprehensive and fundamental change in the system, which requires, first and foremost, changing the man himself, his outlook, his motivation and his personality. Mawdudi insisted on the evolutionary approach for carrying out social change. He was opposed to all unlawful, unconstitutional, and subversive acts and distrusted political radicalism of any kind. Respect for law and order was indispensable to the civilized society and hence he cautioned the revolutionaries to resist the temptation of resorting to the methods and techniques of secret movements and bloody revolutions. He did not believe that anything positive could result from disrupting the social order” (Moten 2006: 188). One of his radio talks, Mawdudi said “... Whatever I have done, I have always done it openly within the boundaries of law and existing

not conscientious Muslims. "The French, Russian and German revolutionary movements would not have succeeded," Mawdudi argued, "without the backing of appropriate social consciousness and moral atmosphere." (Mawdudi 1980: 33) By these words, he was explaining his view that socio-political order cannot be formed through artificial means. Political order for Mawdudi was the outcome of moral/religious, cultural and historical factors, which were already existed in that society. A revolution, therefore for Mawdudi, was a pre-requisite for establishing an Islamic order. With this sociological reasoning, Mawdudi established Jamaati Islami, also referred as al-Jamaat, (Islamic Party/Islamic Community) in Lahore, India in 1941, to be a revolutionary force in Mawdudian meaning of the term (see the footnote 18).

Establishment of Jamaati Islami was very important for Mawdudi to realize his revivalist ideas. The Jamaat was as an active site of practice for him. Khursid Ahmad in his foreword to Mawdudi's Islamic Law and Constitution says that Mawdudi believed that in the past change would take place around a charismatic personalities of *mujaddid* (revivalists), but in the modern times in order to ensure the change properly organized movements, like Jamaat, were to play the same role (in Mawdudi 1980: 4). Thus Jamaati Islami provided him with a practical arena to put forward his revivalist work, which was to create an ideal Islamic society<sup>28</sup>. According to Mawdudi, an ideal Islamic society was

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constitution, so much that I have never violated even those laws which I have fought hard to oppose. I have tried to change them through lawful and constitutional means and never adopted the path of violation of the law. " (Mawdudi 1981: 116)

<sup>28</sup> This of course expected to lead to an establishment of an Islamic state.

to be made up by people who internalized the idea that they are to have no allegiances except the one they have to Allah. This state of mind, he said, was the literal translation of phrase of “La ilahe illallah” which is the word of declaration of one’s Muslimness. Having no loyalty other than Allah is important concept for Mawdudi because he believed that men’s loyalty to another men mostly give a way to exploitation.

To achieve his ideal society, Mawdudi established a social movement, the Jamaat-i Islami. In creating the Jamaat, he aimed to follow a strategy of social reform that resulted in a mental and behavioral change among Muslims. Thus in establishing the Jamaat, his aim was to produce a social change/reform from a bottom-up<sup>29</sup>. In other words, his central political imperative was to develop a society of believers that provided the conditions for intellectual, religious and political revival through active participation in community life. By changing the people, he was aiming to change the political order. Active participation in social and political affairs, he believed, was essential to self-realization of an Indian Muslim. (Mawdudi 1947; 1960; 1980; 1981)

Mawdudi theorized a connection between and among civic experiences, individual development, social context and learning through *dawah*<sup>30</sup> activities. Through these connections, he aimed to provide a way for his followers to understand and learn

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<sup>29</sup> As will be shown in the upcoming parts of the section, after the establishment of Pakistan in 1947, he replaced this bottom-up approach with a top down one. After the establishment of Pakistan, as will be stated later in the chapter, he came to realize the importance of the state and saw the capturing of political power by taking active part in politics as the most effective way to bring about the desired change which was Islamization of the state, through democratic means.

<sup>30</sup> His idea of civic engagement was religious in nature however since for Mawdudi religion and politics go together as they feed into each other. Politics divorced from religion has absolutely no meaning for him.

about Islam as way of life, as a system that covers all aspects of a believer's life (Mawdudi 1966; 1988; 1940), and to help Muslims to develop a Muslim self<sup>31</sup> as active citizens. Indeed, Mawdudi's conceptualization of the idea of theodemocracy as a way of life has profound implications for civic engagement. Citizenship becomes a way of life and civic engagement becomes a responsibility not a choice<sup>32</sup> (Mawdudi 1941; 1960; 1981). Call for *dawah* involves people taking civic action to change actual conditions of their everyday lives, to challenge

“... materialist culture of the West which threatens to annihilate all other cultures of the world. Equipped with modern scientific technology and commanding the sharpest weapons of propaganda, persuasion, dominance and devastation both the arms of the western culture - secular, capitalistic democracy and totalitarian socialism- are busy in establishing their political and cultural hegemony over the world.” (Mawdudi 1968: 2).

Of course Mawdudi did not use the terminology like “participatory democracy” or “civic engagement” but it is safe to say, however, that many of the obligations that he put forward for the members of the Jamaat anticipated civic engagement to bring about desired social change which was to create an Islamic Society made up from conscious

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<sup>31</sup> We need to recall that in Mawdudi's political thinking the idea of a conscious individual is crucially important. He constructed the self as a way of questioning colonialism, of traditional understanding of Islam, and as a vital component for the establishment as well as survival of an Islamic state.

<sup>32</sup> For Mawdudi, being a Muslim requires an active choice, it is not a state of being born to a Muslim parents. In other words, according to him, being Muslim is an act of conscious choice. That is why when he founded Jamaati Islam, he recited *kelimai sahadat* (a declaration of believing Islam) to re-declare his conscientious choice of Islam as his religion. He argued that one needs to question a religious faith's postulates or argue its validity before accepting it not after. So being Muslim needs to be a rational and voluntary choice which comes with certain obligations... This experience matches the voluntaristic impulses of modern democracy. If one had chosen Islam, for Mawdudi, as his religion it would mean to accept the sovereignty of God, and his/her status as caliph. Thus, it is only natural that working for the establishment of an Islamic society and Islamic state, not a secular one that people if they want can change God's rules, becomes a religious duty and obligation.

Muslims. In one of his speeches made at the headquarters of Jamaat, which was later on made a booklet titled *Our Message*, he states “...it [is] incumbent on us (and it is duty which God has laid on all creatures who profess allegiance and render obedience to Him)...” to struggle and strive for the establishment of a society which would observe the true principles of Islam with full consciousness and sincerity (Mawdudi 1947: 10). If, he continues, “you are avoiding your duties and obligations [to do so] and hoping for a reward [from God]; if you choose to do so you are welcome to feel satisfied with such an absurdity.” (Mawdudi 1947: 40). By stressing the idea that man is political, and political is religious, therefore political activism/awareness is a religious duty, he aimed to charge the colonial foundations of political understanding which was for him organized to de-politicize the colonial subject thus allowed colonial subjugation and feeling of helplessness (Mawdudi 1970).

The fundamental political problem which preoccupied Mawdudi, at this stage of his time was the difficulty of creating free individuals. As an activist/intellectual, he argued that a free individual was the one who is not only free from colonially imposed ways of thinking, acting, believing, clothing, etc., but also the one who has a respect for his/her culture and believes, who is free from inferiority complex against westerners in a colonized society<sup>33</sup> (Mawdudi 1940: 1947). The qualifier “colonized society” is highly crucial for understanding Mawdudi’s political theory, since it sets him apart from the

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<sup>33</sup> From Mawdudi’s writing it is clear that he believed that the colonial subject is created through de-personification, de-politicization and by sense of inferiority. All of these Mawdudi tried to overcome by the medium of Islam.

other writers on democratic theory in the western world, and makes him an important figure in the Muslim world. Mawdudi's writings make its reader fully aware of how much more difficult it was to conceptualize and practice democracy in a colonized society. The impediments of the colonized society, such as power imbalance among the various groups in the society (but mainly between Muslims and Hindus), inferiority complex of the colonized subjects<sup>34</sup>, recreation of colonial life space through colonial institutions and of mentality that feeds the de facto coloniality, were the realities that he took into account in shaping his political theory. It is with these impediments, that Mawdudi was preoccupied when he was writing about democracy during his early years.

Mawdudi in his [www.lib.umn.edu](http://www.lib.umn.edu) writings used democracy as a neutral term and made differentiation between western democracy and theodemocracy (a term coined by Mawdudi to define democracy that would fit to Islamic way of life). Before talking about the differences between the two, it would be best to first explain how he defined theodemocracy and why and how he deemed a need to make such a concept. To be sure, Mawdudi identifies theodemocracy with the self-determination of the people. The main characteristics of theodemocracy for him can be summarized as follows: *hakimiyyah*: the sovereignty of Allah; the *caliphate*: authority derived from the citizen body; representation; consultation; participation; accountability of the rulers to the people; rule

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<sup>34</sup> Mawdudi states that Western gaze presupposes inferiority of Muslims. He complains that the term "Muslim" come to signify mark of degradation, humiliation, gross backwardness and utter powerlessness" (Mawdudi 1992: 223) Muslims, for Mawdudi, by going to western schools, being taught the materials that were written in the West by westerners who were the creator, products and beneficiaries of the colonial system were learning to internalize this inferior status of which they needed to free themselves. Only then they were to regain their self-respect and worth and stop using Western standards for criticizing their own culture



of law; independent judiciary<sup>35</sup>; justice and equality among citizens; and existence of a civil society (Mawdudi 1994: 582, 595). Although in this stage of his democratic theory, he showed little interest in the actual working of institutions but more concerned with abstract theorizing when compared to his later years when the Jamaati Islami became a political party, his theorizing of theodemocracy fits with the main requirement of democratic theory of the West. He states that he and the members of Jamaati Islami are:

“as much opposed, as the biggest democrat can be, to personal monarchy, the power of rich feudal lords, and class monopolies. We insist as much as the greatest protagonist of western democracy does on equal rights and free and equal opportunities for every person in a social order. We also believe that governmental administration and the election of rulers should be made with free consent and votes of all inhabitants. We too are strongly opposed to a social system in which there is no freedom of expression of opinion of assembly and of action, or in which there may be special rights reserved for a certain people of race, birth or class and special disabilities imposed on others on this very basis. There are no differences between the western democracy and our own type of democracy in these matters which form the very essence, as it were, of true democracy.” (Mawdudi 1981: 35).

Although Mawdudi argued that western democracy and theodemocracy were the same in essence, the difference between them lied in the fact theodemocracy required the unity of politics and religion. Mawdudi argued that an Islamic state is

“doubtless be democratic; the election of the Amir as the administrator should be made by franchise of the masses; the members of the assembly should be elected by votes... [the public] should have the fullest right to criticize and call them to account. But all this should be done with consciousness and feeling that God is Sovereign and not the people... the

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<sup>35</sup> Independence of judiciary became more and more essential for him in his theory of democracy as his participation and impact in Pakistani politics increased. As the state's aggression over him increased, he realized the necessity of independent judiciary, since it was always them that saved him from free from state's oppressions and even death sentence.

principle is that we cannot legislate in matters which God has given us clear guidance, while in matters in which no guidance is given by God, we may legislate by mutual consultation.” (Mawdudi 1981: 36-37; 1976b).

This, for Mawdudi, was the only difference between western democracy and theodemocracy and it was born out of the fact that philosophical foundations of western democracy were the antithesis of political philosophy of Islam (Mawdudi 1980: 138). Mawdudi states that the philosophical foundation of western democracy gives the absolute right of legislation, which he refers as sovereignty, to the people. Yet, Mawdudi argues, in Islamic theory the right of absolute legislation vests with Allah. Even if the whole society comes together, they would not have a right to change Allah’s rules and limits (*hudud-Allah*) that he puts clearly in the Quran. If people do that kind of a change then it is not an Islamic state for him. If people do so, it would then mean that people had opted out to not to be an Islamic state, which is an act of ignorance for the Muslims’ part, since, for Mawdudi, a conscious Muslim would want nothing but to obey Allah’s rules and limits.

Mawdudi refers theodemocracy as “the better form” (Mawdudi, *Islamic State and constitution, west vs. east*) since, to him, while democracy suffers from the shortcomings of human nature and intellect, and tend to turn into men’s hegemony over other men, theodemocracy does not if it follows *shari’a*, God’s rules. If this would not be the case, Islamic democracy would become equal to a liberal democracy. He criticizes liberal democracy for giving political rights figuratively while in reality enjoyment of the political rights of the citizens is controlled by economic structures. Mawdudi further

argued that in western capitalist societies despite their claim, the real authority lies with the few well to do, not with the people. Moreover, he said it is unmoral nature western democracy that normalizes one small country's national greed to rule over millions of people in other countries, as it was case in the colonization of the world by so called democratic nations of the West. According to Mawdudi, western democratic system does not function as it claims because human theories are dependent on the circumstantial tendencies and weakness of humans, which in turn prevent the development of equality and freedom. The difference between democracy and theodemocracy, for Mawdudi, is then not methodological or procedural but substantive in that the latter is grounded in Allah's absolute *hakimiyya* (sovereignty) and the people's caliphate (vicegerency). While in the latter individual responsibility is also metaphysical and doctrinal thus does not expected to change according to the circumstantial tendencies, or greed of the humans, in the former it is considered only legal in the secular sense.

One important warning is need to be made in here regarding the concept of theodemocracy. Even though Mawdudi opposes the idea of secularism<sup>36</sup> and believes that religion and politics go together and should not be put opposition to each other, he explicitly states that theodemocracy does not mean theocracy. He opposes theocracy and argues that theodemocracy and theocracy are, in fact fundamentally very different from each other since "...in a theocracy real day to day power belongs to a small religious class

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<sup>36</sup> It might be useful here to note that for Mawdudi in the Islamic world secularism means "anti-religion and state sponsored persecution of the religious elements" thus the term has different connotations to him then it does for the westerners.

which wields absolutely authority and whose opinion is treated as law... Those who conduct and manage the affairs of the Islamic State are answerable to God as well as to the people” (Mawdudi 1981: 64; 1994). He further argued that in Islamic history “we never come across the type of Papacy found in the history of Europe. In our story, eminent religious scholars (*ulama*) upheld that they considered to be truth and acted as the protectors and guardians of liberty. They themselves were sometimes the victims of tyranny and oppression.” (1981:65; 1968; 1980b). Theocracy would have no place in Islam since, Mawdudi argued, in Islam nobody can claim to enjoy spiritual monopoly as is the case for any religious clergy in theocracies. In an Islamic state:

“The “*Mullah*” or the “*Alim*” is not a titular head claiming any inherent or exclusive rights of interpreting religious laws and doctrines. On the contrary, just as anybody may become a judge, or a lawyer or a doctor by properly qualifying for these professions, similarly whosoever devotes his time and energy to the study of the Quran and the *Sunnah* and becomes well-versed in Islamic learning is entitled to speak as an expert in matters pertaining to Islam.”( Mawdudi 1981: 209)

#### *Why theodemocracy?*

Mawdudi's theory of democracy is best understood as one addressing the transition from colonial rule to nation state. As an intellectual who came out of colonial experience, Mawdudi believed that modernity, capitalism, nation building, and western democracy are organically linked with colonialism, as parts of the same historical movement of European expansion and domination. He urged people of India<sup>37</sup> to be

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<sup>37</sup> His call clearly for all the people of India and is not limited with Muslims of India. It can even be argued that this call of him can be expanded to all colonized nations not only Indians.

aware of the colonial roots of nation building, constitution of citizenship and undemocratic foundations of democratic theory: “Secularism, nationalism and western democracy have all come to you from those Englishmen who ruled over you in an oppressive manner for nearly two hundred years and against them you have been fighting the battle of freedom during last forty or fifty years.” Then why, he asked, “did you not adopt a partial attitude in accepting the principles brought by these enemies of yours.” (1947a: 1; Mawdudi 1981: 46). By redefining western democracy as a “colonial imposed political system” (Mawdudi 1981: 46), Mawdudi offered a legitimate ground for his ideological construct “*theodemocracy*” as a better fit initially for the people of India, but later for the Muslims of India.

The idea of theodemocracy in Mawdudi, as indicated above, is in the first place should be seen as a product of the political and intellectual climate created by colonialism. Mawdudi theorized that there were two forms of power,

“the intellectual and psychological and the political and material. The first kind of dominance happens when a nation is so advanced in its thoughts that the other nations takes its concepts as truth and then absorb them as the only true form of knowledge, hence adopting the dominant nation’s thoughts and knowledge as criteria for right and wrong, true and false.” (quoted in Raja 2007: 176).

Pointing out the main problems of colonized Muslims in his early works, Mawdudi took an issue with the rise of West’s capacity for producing knowledge that is claimed to be universal. He argued that having the power to produce knowledge in the global scale initially provided the West political and economic power. Arguing that Muslims needs to criticize and challenge western monopoly over knowledge production, Mawdudi himself

engages with a counter-ideology production, which aims to create a Muslim identity that is sophisticated, homegrown and resistant. "Muslims of today are caught in... dual slavery," Mawdudi argues,

...in some places they are under the sway of both intellectual and political slavery, and in other places the degree of manual slavery is higher than that of political slavery. Unfortunately, there is not even a single country on the world that is completely free, intellectually or politically. Whenever they are politically free, they are still mentally enslaved. Their schools offices, bazaars, societies, homes, and even their bodies, symbolize the power of western thought, western knowledge, and western know-how. They think with a western mind, see with a western eyes, and walk, consciously or unconsciously, on the paths created by the West. In all it has been imprinted on their minds that truth is what the West considers truth, and false is what the West considers false. (Mawdudi 1981:6).

Experienced colonial life, all things that are western become suspicious for Mawdudi.

Thus, he aims to turn to what he considers the roots, which is Islam and its resources, in order to create a resistant as well as a revolutionary ideology. Western concepts, rules and regulations that aims to shape the life of the colonized individual, for Mawdudi, is to be subjected to an evaluation to judge if it has a place within the range of acceptability in Islamic tradition. In other words, he urges Muslims to question whether a concept can or cannot be normalized within the Islamic tradition before accepting or rejecting it. This is what Mawdudi has basically done with many political concepts like nationalism, democracy, sovereignty, etc. in his writings. In terms of democracy, he has taken a western concept and indigenized it to make it fit to Islamic tradition. Theodemocracy for him, then, becomes a method of anti colonial struggle, a way to get free from colonial slavery on thought and action. His Islamist vision provides the context for interpreting

his democratic theory which posits incompatibility between what he calls western democracy and Islam, and seeks to facilitate evolution towards an ideal system that he calls as "*theodemocracy*." As Dasbashi also states, Mawdudi's hostility towards colonial modernity and his ideological construct of "*theodemocracy*" as an alternative to all the "isms" of the West, which included capitalism, socialism, liberalism as well as western-democracy, was nothing new when we think of similar reactions to modernity in Europe, e.g. Heidegger as well as other intellectuals of the colonized world (Dabashi 2008). Looked from this perspective, Mawdudi's idea of theodemocracy can be regarded as a nativist site of resistance to modernity that born out of with the colonial experience.

Mawdudi's call for theodemocracy can also be read as a stance against what he perceives as the monistic and assimilating nature of democracy in post-colonial India. It is obvious that Mawdudi's ideas on democracy had its roots not only in Islamic tradition but also in the Indian history. It is natural that his treatment of democracy is very much affected by the context in which he had encountered with the idea. When the Congress Party's emancipatory discourse failed Muslims that it would protect their rights and it was turning into a vehicle for Hindu nationalism Muslim intellectuals and among them Mawdudi forced to envision a Muslim identity which is separate from Indian one and to demand communal and ultimately national rights for Muslims of India. This was the time when Jinnah abandoned the Congress party to lead the Muslim League which argued secular state had no meaning for Muslims as long as it is not a Muslim state since only in that state identity of the Muslims would not have an effect on their social and political

rights (Nasr 1996: 85). Mawdudi had different views on the matter of and the state of Indian Muslims. He did not only question the secular, inclusive and democratic nature of the Congress party, but he questioned the essence and relevance of these concepts as well as their consequences for Muslims living in India. He rejected democracy's cultural foundations stating it would not fit to Muslim belief. Needless to add, supporting democracy in India at the time was meant Hindu rule, which has also complicated his accommodation of western democracy. In 1938 he wrote:

“The real issue is not if the political system of the country should proceed along the path of democracy because no sane person can disagree with the spirit of democracy ...The question troubling us ... is that ... because of the misguidance and rule of British ... a system of government has evolved on the principle of single community on the form of democratic institution. The spirit of democracy and this specific notion of democracy based on the principle of a single community should not be conflated... Disagreeing with the latter does not mean disagreeing with the former... It is assumed that because of shared geography... we Hindus, Muslims, Untouchables, Sikhs, Christians are single community and thus the grammar of democracy should be such that the state should be run by the wish of the majority community. Based on this ideology, the Constitution has been framed... Hindus consider it utterly beneficial for themselves... Such a situation has made Hindu nationalism and Indian nationalism coterminous. In contrast to Hindus, our condition is such that under this [democratic] system our community aspirations remain unfulfilled; rather they are... killed because we are in a minority. This system gives to those who are in majority” (Mawdudi 1938 quoted in Ahmad 2009: 204-5)

These valid concerns of Mawdudi drove him to argue that Islam had its own version of statehood and true democracy, which was “theodemocracy.” Theodemocracy, or divine democracy, was a pragmatic solution for Mawdudi then when it is analyzed with a historical lenses, to the problems of both being trapped as a minority in the “democratic” India and being ruled by Hindus, and creating an alternative to Pakistani



secular nationalism, which was supported by Jinnah, by stressing the Muslimness of the citizens as well as the Islamic character of the new state which was to be Pakistan.

As the idea of a separate country for Muslims by partitioning was getting settled in political circles, Mawdudi kept himself away from these discussions. He focused his energy on to awaken and guide the popular will to base the foundation of their political belief on what Muslims consider to be divine (Mawdudi 1947: 44). For Mawdudi, what was essential was not the establishment of Pakistan, but to raise Muslims who are aware of the realities of their time and the responsibilities that born out of those realities(Mawdudi 1947; 1968; 1976). As Indian Muslim population's political status became the main issue among the political as well as intellectual circles of the country, Mawdudi as a political philosopher was steadily concerned with how to Islamize it and how much of a democratic practice in prophetic tradition can be preserved for contemporary Muslim society in this new homeland for Indian Muslims.

### *Mature Mawdudi*

When Pakistan was founded in 1947 as a dominion<sup>38</sup>, Mawdudi and the headquarters of Jamaat moved to Pakistan though a branch of Jamaati Islami kept its

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<sup>38</sup> Pakistan was established in 1947 by a partition from British India that divided Indian Raj into two dominions: India and Pakistan. Both were refereed as independent nations yet they were dominions of the British Commonwealth that shared the same person as its respective monarch with the United Kingdom. In 1953 Pakistan became a realm in the Commonwealth Nations and finally 1956 it became a republic. This description of Pakistan is telling to show how independent it was in 1947 when all the three Commanders-in-Chief in the Pakistani army were Englishmen, as were nearly all the key secretaries to the government and even some joint secretaries and deputy secretaries. Except one province, all provinces were under

existence and activities in India. The new state<sup>39</sup> was made up by many ethnic groups like Punjabis, Sindhis, Baluchis, Pathans, and Bengalis. Diversity of the new state was beyond these ethnic divisions, each of these ethnic groups was divided into variety of subgroups based on their language or caste divisions. This reality made it more complicated for Pakistan to establish a parliamentary democracy in a federal setting. Islam was the only unifier for this newly founded state. This reality made Mawdudi's call for an Islamic state and constitution more relevant. Theodemocracy gained new meaning and importance for his political activities at this time. By virtue of being a religiously inspired political ideology, which claimed to transcend class and ethnicity, theodemocracy had strong integrative capacities that were highly needed at the time of the emergence of Pakistan as an independent state Mawdudi argued.

As Jamaati Islami expanded all around the Indian continent as a self-awareness/ Islamic revivalist movement its importance as an ideological force in political life of Pakistan grew. With the establishment of Pakistan, Mawdudi restructured his thoughts regarding the necessity of the Islamic state, how to establish that state and what role Jammaati Islami should play in it. Mawdudi always believed the necessity of and the need for an Islamic state since

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British Governors. The first financial adviser for the Jinnah was an Englishmen, Sir Archibald Roland, as was the first secretary, Sir Victor Turner (Altaf 1979: 266).

<sup>39</sup> The state of Pakistan was established as a parliamentary democracy though the first national elections did not take place until 1958. Pakistan, like independent India, had Constituent Assembly for a Parliament. Known as the founder of Pakistan, Muhammad Ali Jinnah (1976-1948) was appointed as the first Governor by British King George VI, and became the speaker of the state Parliament.

“...it becomes impossible for the Party itself to act upon its own ideals under an alien state system. No party which believes in the validity of its own ideology can live according to its precepts under the rule of a system different from its own. A man who believes in communism could not order his life according to the principles of communism whilst living in Britain or America, for the capitalistic state system would bear down on him and it would be impossible for him to escape the power of the ruling authority. Likewise, it is impossible for a Muslim to succeed in his aim of observing the Islamic pattern of life under the authority of a non-Islamic system of government. All rules which he considers wrong, all taxes which he deems unlawful, all matters which he believes to be evil, the civilization and way of life which he regards a wicked, the education system which he views as fatal... all these will be so relentlessly imposed on him, his home and his family, that it will be impossible to avoid them.” (Mawdudi 1981: 10).

Yet, initially Mawdudi insisted that the task was first to Islamize the citizens, then to create a state which is Islamic. With the partition and the emergence of Pakistan as an independent state, Mawdudi re-structured his and his party's stance since he saw that if creating a community of true (*salih*) believers first was not the case anymore; he had to work on to Islamicize Pakistan. In other words, after Pakistan was established, he came to realize the importance of the state and saw the capturing of political power by taking active part in politics as the most effective way to bring about the desired change, which was Islamization of the state, through democratic means. His focus obtaining the political power to initiate desired changes in people's beliefs, attitudes and lifestyles was not unique to Mawdudi. In fact, his approach to social change now was very much line with

the other isms of his time, like socialism, fascism. From this time on, we see that Mawdudi's idea of political Islam became statist and revolutionist<sup>40</sup>.

Mawdudi had always a troubled relationship with colonial government due to his writings. This reality did not change when Pakistan was established. He was struggling to make the Pakistan an Islamic state, which was not seen with a friendly eye neither by Jinnah government, which was for the secular state, nor by the British since until 1956 that Pakistan defined itself as an Islamic state of Pakistan, the monarch of England retained the title of the King of Pakistan. Mawdudi's insistence on Islamizing the state of Pakistan attracted the hardship of the government on him and his movement. When he openly challenged<sup>41</sup> the state's call for Jihad during the war of Kashmir, between India and Pakistan in 1948, he was sent to jail. When he was released in 1950, he had made his mind to take active part in elections with his movement Jamaati Islami as a political party.

Mawdudi had gradually arrived to a decision to Islamize the state by capturing the state power. He had begun with the idea that *shari'ah* is to be implemented and faithful is to be mobilized to create an Islamic state and to protect the interests of the Indian Muslims. Later on he came to realization that without political power, true Islam would

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<sup>40</sup> Although it is stated earlier it must be required here to remind the reader that revolution in Mawdudi's language is never violent, or forceful.

<sup>41</sup> Mawdudi argued that the state's call for Jihad was not valid since the right to call for a Jihad was exclusively belonged to an Islamic state. Since the constitution of Pakistan refrained to call itself as an Islamic state, its call for Jihad was not valid.

remain as an ideal, nor a reality. In his correspondence with Maryam Jamaleh<sup>42</sup> he responded her question of why the Jamaat was involved in active politics. Mawdudi responded as he came to see that “preaching, printing literature even education is of little avail unless Islam can be implemented practically in a full-blooded Islamic state” and that the Islamic *da’wa* (calling to Islam) and controlling the power were to go parallel with each other, one cannot succeed in the former if he has no saying in the latter (Jamelah 1973: 56). Politics was not a means to an end but an end itself. He came to think that if his movement was to capture the state through democratic means, in this point he was so strict, Pakistan could have set precedence for the whole world as an example. Believing whole heartedly that Islam is a revolutionary ideology that would solve the problems of the new state, he argued that it was essential that Pakistan was to be made an exemplary Islamic state so that its ideology and characteristics were to be imported to the rest of the world later. With these sentiments, he turned his focus of interest towards capturing the state via democratic means. In his 1950 speech outside the Delhi gate, he declared the decision that Jamaati Islami decided to participate in the upcoming elections as a political party.

Mawdudi’s decision for his party to participate in elections<sup>43</sup> was also a result of his dissatisfaction with the government which he referred as “ruling junta” or “dictatorship” (Mawdudi 1981: 99,100,101). The government, for Mawdudi, was

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<sup>42</sup> Maryam Jamelah was an American born Jewish convert to Islam who became a prominent female voice for Jamaati Islami. She wrote many books on Jamaat and Mawdudi.

<sup>43</sup> Mawdudi himself never was a candidate.

imposing a non-Islamic system of government upon people of Pakistan against their will and his choice of participating active politics was to bring the government in line with the wishes of the People of Pakistan. Mawdudi frequently argued that the strong state was the one that its system of government was in “close harmony with the country’s traditions, moral standards and social system. It would be wrong to adopt a [political] philosophy out of tune with the moral standards of people and their general outlook on life” (Mawdudi 1981: 175). He claimed that when Pakistan was established, it was dedicated to Allah as a land for Muslims by the people of Pakistan. This fact made the state unquestionable Islamic, yet this character of the state was not recognized by the rulers of Pakistan. He argued that Pakistan was intended as an Islamic state and the members of the Constituent Assembly had no right to deny the people of their choice of government. If a change was to take place it was belonged to the people themselves not the assembly who were the representatives of the representatives (Mawdudi 1981:170, 175, 166-67).

From his statements of that time, it is clear that Mawdudi’s decision to participate in politics was also shaped by his frustration that government was becoming increasingly authoritative and undemocratic. Mawdudi criticized the constitutional assembly’s proposal for a new constitution<sup>44</sup> pointing out “... freedom does not merely mean independence from foreign domination. It also means getting rid of the tyrants of the nation... most of the battles for freedom have been fought in the world against the tyrants

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<sup>44</sup> Writing the first constitution of Pakistan after independence took more than eight years due to political turmoil that Pakistan was in. Yet, the first constitution of 1956 survived only two years and was abrogated on 7th October, 1958 by Martial Law proclaimed by General Ayub Khan.

at home rather than against foreign rulers” (Mawdudi 1981: 143). He indicated his fear that the loopholes that are left in the constitutional draft were to enable the government to act autocratically since “... no constitutional safeguards and guarantees are provided for the people by which they can protect their rights” (Mawdudi 1981:141). When declaring Jamaat’s decision to participate in the elections, he pointed out his frustration that the government: “... arming itself with increasing powers in order to be able to impose upon the people a system of its own choice. If the system is not acceptable to the people, they will not be in a position to offer resistance against the moves of powerful government to impose such a system as to get the system so imposed, amended, or revoked” (Mawdudi 1981: 99-100) and offered Jamaati Islami’s stance on the matter as :

“If you want to establish a right system, you should first try to try to impress upon the minds of the people its basic principles, its purpose and spirit. It is then that the people would choose it of their own accord and the change resulting from the enforcement of such system would be durable. We also want to replace the existing system with the democratic order by democratic means. We strictly abide by this principle and expect the rulers of the country to maintain such conditions in which it is possible to work in a democratic and legitimate manner. ... Not to arbitrarily impose a system of their own choice against the const of the people... in a country where a change of government impossible by the mandate of the people, there is no need to adopt violent or revolutionary methods that might lead to bloodshed or disruption of national life... It is the interest of all concerned including the nation, the country, Islam and the government to keep the door open for democratic changes. (Mawdudi 1981: 100-101)

Jamaati Islami gave his first test in real politics by participating provincial elections of 1951. Mawdudi was recently got out of two years of sentence in prison and it was rather a rushed decision. The failure in the elections strengthened oppositional voices within the party who were against the idea of active involvement in politics which was,

they believed, corrupting by nature thus having an adverse impact on the Jamaat's constituency (Ahmad 2003). Yet Mawdudi's stand was clear, he was determined to stay in the politics (Mawdudi 1981). In Jamaat's meeting following the elections, he convinced the members to keep the party political.

As a new independent state with diverse ethnic and religious minorities, Pakistani parliament was trying to create a common Pakistani identity by declaring a state language, approving national anthem and working on the constitution of Pakistan. It was during this time that Pakistan had its first trial with its minorities. While the newly founded state was struggling with the Bengali language movement and the troubles in Kashmir; anti-Ahmadiyya riots emerged in the country. In 1953, the *ulama* and religious activists led agitations to demand from the state that members of Ahmadi sect were to be recognized as a non-Muslim minority (Nasr 1995; 2001). The anti-Ahmadiyya agitations led to the declaration of the first martial law ordinance in Pakistan in 1954 which was to be the first instance of to be a continuing tradition of military intervention into politics in Pakistan. A military tribunal investigated the riots, found Mawdudi was found guilty due to his pamphlet on Ahmadis, titled Qadiani Problem in it Mawdudi refutes the fundamental beliefs of Ahmadis. The tribunal sentenced Mawdudi to death. Besides Mawdudi, many leading members of the Jamaat were also arrested over the same events. The death sentence created both national and international uproar and was reversed by a civil court (Binder 1961: 263; Nasr 1996: 139).



The government's way of dealing with Mawdudi in forcing him and his political views out of Pakistani politics made an inverse impact and made him a victim of the oppression thus increased his and his movement's popularity among the people (Binder 1961; Nasr 1996). While Mawdudi and his party became increasingly active in the political life of Pakistan, yet never successful in the elections, he always remained important ideological force (Nasr 1996; Salvatore 1997; Euben 1997; Esposito 1984; Khan 2001; Osman 2003). The governments that came to power were always challenged by Mawdudi's legitimacy and his opposition. It was the case still in 1956 when dominion was dissolved and Pakistan focused its energy to create writing its first constitution. Mawdudi too was invited in drafting the 1956 constitution. At the heart of the constitution it was stated that Pakistan was a democratic state but most importantly for Mawdudi, it finally proclaimed the state was Islamic<sup>45</sup>. Between 1947 and 1958, no election was held in Pakistan at the national level, though provincial elections conducted occasionally<sup>46</sup>. In 1956, the parliament appointed Major Gen. Iskander Mirza as the first elected President of Pakistan, and elections were scheduled for early 1959. Yet, Mawdudi's hopes to enter the elections were shattered when General Mohammad Ayub Khan with his agenda of modernization that aimed to secularize the politics assumed

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<sup>45</sup> Mawdudi's delight was to be a short one. The Islamic nature of the state was to be annulled in few years when Ayub Khan annulled the constitution in 1958 and declared a new one in 1962 which renamed the state as Republic of Pakistan by dropping any reference to Islam.

<sup>46</sup> Most important of them was the 1954 elections that were held in East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) for its Legislative Assembly. Pakistani Muslim league lost the elections while their opponents, the Bengali nationalists, gained a victory. The result of the election was to have a great impact on the future of Pakistan and would open the road to establishment of Bangladesh in 1971.

power in 1958 through a military coup. He dissolved the National Assembly and abolished the constitution that Mawdudi endorsed it wholeheartedly. Over the course of the following decade of military regime, Mawdudi and his party endured great pressure from General Ayub. The party's offices were closed, its funds are confiscated, leaders of the party including Mawdudi were censored in government publications, their activities, and networks were curtailed (al-Mujahid 1971; Ziring 1984; Nasr, 1993; 1996; Ahmad, 2009). In 1962, all political parties were banned. In 1963, Mawdudi survived from an attempt to assassinate him while he was giving a speech. During the government's offensive against religious activism to modernize the state of Pakistan, he was imprisoned twice in 1964 and 1967. It was during this time that Mawdudi joined the alliance that supported the Fatimah Jinnah<sup>47</sup> for the presidential elections of 1965 with the aim of ending the military dictatorship and to restore the democracy. Yet, Ayub Khan became the winner of the presidential elections of 1965. The loss of the elections was mostly explained not only by the indirect election system and not having adult franchise, but by also Ayub's interference to the elections by using his powers as a current president (Monshipouri and Samuel 1995; Nasr 1996; Ahmad 2004). General Ayub was to stay in power for total 11 years, and only following the "loss" of Kashmir on March 1969 that he was to end his military rule by appointing another military ruler, General Agha Muhammad Yahya Khan who was the commander-in-chief of the Pakistani Army, into his place.

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<sup>47</sup> Fatimah Jinnah (1893-1967) was the younger sister of Mohammad Ali Jinnah the founder of Pakistan.

Mawdudi's decision to actively involve in Pakistani politics and his subsequent experience with never ending military rules impacted how he writes about democracy. While previously what he has done was mostly abstract theorizing of what an Islamic state would look like without mentioning too much of hows; by participating in the elections and especially experiencing the hardship of military dictatorship as a leader of a political party, Mawdudi was forced to mesh his theory of theodemocracy and Islamic state with practice. He came to pay more interest in actual working of democratic institutions like elections, role of judiciary, opposition, presidency, and candidacy, obedience to the state and the leader, and so forth. This practical experience with politics even forced him to modify certain hard-line arguments in his political theory (e.g. regarding women and politics), and also made his idea on democracy less abstract but realistic.

Mawdudi and the Jamaat played an important role in the above mentioned events that shaped Pakistan's political history from 1950s to 1970s. Within that time frame, Mawdudi focused his energy on both mobilizing popular opposition against the authoritarian governments, but also writing and giving speeches regarding his political demands which were mostly about his views on democracy. He mobilized opposition by not only calling for and involving in alliances with the other oppositional groups and parties but also training and encouraging the members of the Jamaat to become active citizens. Mawdudi obliged the members to take a keen interest in politics, be informed

citizens and to make their voices heard in social and political issues<sup>48</sup> (Mawdudi 1968; 1992; Ahmad 1981; 2003). The members of the Jamaat were also obliged to “educate and train the voters for the general elections...” so that they can stimulate “... the right sort of a political and social consciousness [among the voters] so that they might be able to elect better people” (Mawdudi 1981: 82).

When looked at democratization movements of Pakistan during the years of military dictatorship, Mawdudi’s, and his party’s, central role in it is undeniable. As a leader of the Democratic Action Committee he demanded that Ayyub Khan should end his authoritarian rule. His writings and speeches at the time demanded for the establishment of a better democratic system in Pakistan. As the demands of the Democratic Action Committee became stronger and clear, the government became more and more oppressive. There were two main reasons for Mawdudi’s demands for democratization. One is of an obvious reason, that he was the leader of an oppositional party. Therefore, he felt the control and violence of the oppressive government in every step that he took. Thus, it was only natural for him to seek for a democratic government. The other reason for him to argue for democratization was more in line with his ideological aims of revival Islam to establish an Islamic state. He was of a belief that “revival of Islam can only be facilitated in an atmosphere wherein government and the

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<sup>48</sup> Mawdudi even discourages the member of Jamaat to read or listen the literature that encourages the audience to believe in “determinism and endangers in his mind the conviction that man has no free will of his own but is simply predetermined and that under the present dispensation he can not ... help” himself. He states that such literature “is unhealthy from Islamic point of view, because it blunts the sense of responsibility and negates moral obligations”

people hold each other in respect by direct contacts and thus devise a system of statecraft by which they can settle their matters through a process of mutual consultation.”

(Mawdudi 1981:150).

When his statements regarding democracy during the Ayub Kahn’s military dictatorship are analyzed, it can be seen that his main focus at the time is on establishing a fair system of election and electoral system, controlling the government and the power of the president and improving political consciousness by raising moral consciousness. As stated above, believing that the establishment of an Islamic order can only be possible via a democratic system, he calls for restructuring the system of indirect election<sup>49</sup> arguing that it takes away from a healthy democracy by closing the doors for the formation of healthy opposition via general and free elections (Mawdudi 1981: 167)<sup>50</sup>. Also opposed the idea of two houses, House of Commons, composed of the elected representatives of the people, and Upper House, comprising members elected by provincial assemblies, he argues that it is undemocratic to give people’s representatives, the house of commons, and the representatives of the representatives, the Upper House, an equal power. He suggests the use of Upper House as a consultative/advisory body. The

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<sup>49</sup> Elections that are done through provincial assemblies not directly by people.

<sup>50</sup> Mawdudi argues that prior to the partition, the Muslims entrusted to the Muslim League to present them in provincial assemblies so they voted blindfold for any candidate contesting the election in the league’s ticket to establish the Pakistan regardless of who the candidate was. Later, when the question of forming Constitutional Assembly arose, the British government laid down the procedure of indirect election according to which the members of the Constituent Assembly were to be chosen by the provincial assemblies and not directly by the people. The members of the provincial assemblies who are faithful to the League are now being called to elect the members of the Constitutional Assembly. That is the League now that manages to monopolize the Constitutional Assembly, thus can nominate any candidate to the parliament and will get him elected by any provincial assembly.

Upper House, for Mawdudi, is not to be allowed to share power with the Lower House on equal footing, and should leave the final decision to the elected representatives of the people (Mawdudi 1981: 166).

His frequent visits to prisons and courtrooms made Mawdudi realize the importance to an independent judicial system. While there is not much referral in Mawdudi's earlier works the need to guarantee the autonomy of the judiciary, the mature Mawdudi's writings stress the importance of having a judicial system that is untouched and not-corrupted by the power of the government (Mawdudi 1975). Mawdudi also states his opposition to preventive detention, which is proposed by the government of the time as a necessary mean, as not only un-Islamic, but also "in direct conflict with the Islamic jurisprudence." (Mawdudi 1981: 159). Arguing that Islam necessitates the freedom of speech and writing, denying a citizen of this right becomes not only undemocratic but un-Islamic for Mawdudi. Furthermore, he argued, placing restrictions on these rights put the peace, tranquility and the security of the country in danger since it would give rise to undemocratic methods (Mawdudi 1981: 172).

At the heights of the authoritarian leadership in Pakistan, Mawdudi argued against giving special legal privileges and protections to the president: "Exemption of the head of the state from prosecution" he said "means replacing him above the law and this has nothing to do with Islam and democracy" (Mawdudi 1981: 159-160). Practical politics forced Mawdudi to modify a number of doctrinal issues. He made alliances with secular

parties, supported a woman,<sup>51</sup> Fatimah Jinnah, for the presidency, and changed his perception on regulating the power of the president. While in his earlier years rather than offering means to restrict the leader's behavior by laws and regulations, he was placing all the responsibility to the electorate stating they should not choose someone as the leader if they do not trust him fully.<sup>52</sup> But his opinions on the matter have changed when he was actively involved in Pakistani politics. In his later writings he challenged a perspective in Islamic politics regarding to obey the authority so that unity would not be harmed. He argued that nothing would be more misleading than to support the claim that Muslims must obey the instructions of the central authority. In his lecture on Human rights in Islam 1975, later on published as a book, he gave a greater scope to the citizen's right to protest against the state "...if an individual or a group of people or a party usurps power, and after assuming the reins of authority begins to tyrannize individuals or groups of men or the entire population of the country, then to raise the voice of protest against it openly is the God-given right of man and no one has the authority to usurp or deny this right." (Mawdudi 1975: 25, 28)

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<sup>51</sup> as will be seen in upcoming pages, Mawdudi is against the idea of woman to be a politician.

<sup>52</sup> In the very first speech that he delivered after the inception of Jamaat in 1941 Mawdudi was saying "You should also bear in mind that the position of *ameer* (leader) in an Islamic democracy is different from that of the president in a western democracy. Under the western democratic system all the equalities... are required in a person of the president except fear of Allah and integrity of character. In fact the procedure in the western democratic system is such that the most cunning, intriguing and capable of contriving to achieve the desired ends by hook or by crook accedes to power... Therefore he argued the people are not sure of his honesty thus providing in their constitution safeguards to restrict him to the limits of his authority lest he should become a tyrant. On the contrary to that, he declared, Islamic polity looks candor and integrity in the character of the *ameer*. "... never, he is entrusted with entire responsibility of managing their affairs. So, you should not follow the example of western democracy and impose on your *ameer* all those restrictions by which the president of a Western democracy is bound. If you are in doubt the integrity of anyone, never elect him" (Mawdudi 1981: 12)

When involved in politics, Mawdudi was aiming that through the candidates that his party, the Jamaat, puts forward; he was to set an example of how sincere and trustworthy a politician can be if the person was a good believer. We decided to participate in the elections with all the means at our command; he said “in order to get maximum number of virtuous people elected to the assemblies.” (Mawdudi 1981: 101). He complained that political activism has been corrupted and the politicians are mostly seeking the benefit of the office when they should be conscious of the responsibilities that the office that they hold (Mawdudi 1981: 102-103), and aims to bring a morality to the political activism. “... democracy is no talisman” says Mawdudi in his 1965 interview. Adopting a democratic system and conducting elections are not enough anymore for him to make a working democracy. Most probably by considering his country’s experience with democracy, he argues that the success of democracy depends on what he calls “minimum moral requirements” (Mawdudi 1981: 134):

“1-the nation to be set on the path of democracy should be fully conscious of its rights and have determination to defend those rights... Its individuals cannot be impelled by greed to sell their vote; nor can they be compelled by fear to vote against their conscience not would they allow their prejudices and personal considerations to affect their choice of right candidates.

2- The personal of law enforcing agencies, administrative machinery and the defense services are ... to be loyal to the principles of democracy that they inhibit any attempt to use the as a tool for imposing autocratic rule in the country or for doing things against its constitutional law. They should sincerely believe in and strictly adhere to the democratic principles that government is the executive responsibility of the people’s chosen representatives and that it is duty of the government servants to serve under those representatives.

3-majority of influential people in the nation should not be selfish and unscrupulous ... and (their political ambitions) must be restrained



within the legitimate limits. Instead of making any attempt to hinge or grab the power, they should try to gain confidence of the people...” (Mawdudi 1981: 134-135-136)<sup>53</sup>

1970s were eventful at the same time tragic years for Pakistan as well as Mawdudi. When Ayub Khan resigned in 1969, power was not transferred to Democratic Action Committee, which was a multi party coalition, but to a military government of Yahya Khan who soon was to declare a state of emergency and martial law in Pakistan. The autonomy request than independence of Bangladesh, then East Pakistan, voiced by Awami League and its leader Sheikh Mujibur Rahman (here on Mujib); the increasing impact of socialist ideology within the region which was voiced by Pakistan People’s Party and its leader Zulfikar Ali Bhutto; the constitution of 1973 were the main issues that Mawdudi dealt in his political writings during these years. Although increasing economic hardship and inequality among the population was one of the, if not the main, issues that shaped the Pakistani politics at the time, Mawdudi did not pay much importance to socio-economic issues in his democratic theory. The general elections were set for 1970 and Mawdudi organized his campaign around the idea of unity under the banner of Islam in East Pakistan and Islam as a remedy for socialism in West Pakistan.

As always, Mawdudi stressed certain characteristic of democracy to offer solutions that he deemed as problems of the country. In his addresses to the people of

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<sup>53</sup> In later part of the same talk, he refers these principles as “three essential pre-requisites of introducing democratic rule in a country.” He argues that if democracy is to be introduced to a country by illegitimate means, by revolution or by imposition, it will be no democracy at all. He believes that “People coming to power by hook or crook are not sincere. They will put self-interest above truth and justice in discharge of their legislative and executive duties.” (Mawdudi 1981: 136)

East Pakistan, he centralized his statements on the “religion” factor as a unifier. He argued that there should be no “distinction of nation, race, country, color, or language; and in no way should it tolerate the pride, prejudice, and selfishness arising from them” (Mawdudi 1981: 31), and that Islam was instead of an establishment of a national system was supportive of an ideological system based on certain fixed principles and stable values which was the establishment of an theodemocracy. Islam required that under such a system, citizenship should not be confined within the geographical foundations (Mawdudi 1981: 32). Theodemocracy, at this time, was at work again as to give the citizens a sense of unity.

In West Pakistan, his message was organized around the idea how Communism was antidemocratic and un-Islamic. By doing so, he conceptualized democracy as an antithesis of communism. He claimed,

“Capitalism, Fascism, Socialism, and Communism are ancillary. Their ideological bases are identical... They owe their origin to the fundamental postulate that God or no God, man is free and do not stand on need of His guidance ... and that the ultimate end of human life is happiness in this world.” (Mawdudi 1981: 153).

He also called the communist system as constitutional dictatorship, and argued that it “involves coercion and oppression. We oppose to it because constitutional dictatorship is an essential condition for its perpetuation. We also oppose to it because it does not admit individual freedom, of the right to criticize, of reforms by constitutional means and of change of government by democratic process” (Mawdudi 1981: 170). Mawdudi also argued that not communism but “Islam and only Islam is the real antagonist of capitalism. It is Islam, which prescribes measures cutting at the very root of capitalist

order” (Mawdudi 1981: 192) so there was no need to seek out other ideologies. Stating his distrust to Marxist literature, he complains that they teach the young people that “revolutions were brought about by bullets and not by peaceful means...” (Mawdudi 1981: 266) while the prophetic example is just the opposite in that the more that public opinion is mobilized in favor of Islam, the closer the government successively formed will be to Islam. Democracy, for Mawdudi, can never be established by means of bloody revolution (Mawdudi 1981: 266).

1970 elections carried, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto of the Pakistan People’s Party to the power. Although the winner of the election was Awami League, Yahya Khan was not ready to relinquish the power; the conflict in East Pakistan gave him a leeway. Jamaat and Mawdudi urged him to not discriminate against the Awami League and to allow Mujib to form a government. His inclinations indicated his support for Bhutto. As a result, on March of 1971 East Pakistan declared its independence and become Bangladesh. Yahya Khan did not relinquish power to Bhutto<sup>54</sup>, until December 1971.

The results of 1970 election were a big disappointment for Mawdudi. The party had secured only four seats in the National Assembly. According to Nasr, the party had lost both its innocence and the elections (Nasr 1996: 45). Mawdudi stepped down as *Amir* (leader) of the Jamaat in 1972. In 1975, he advised that Jamaati Islami to opt out of politics (Nasr 1996: 45). But his proposition was not accepted by the Jamaat. When he was asked if he believed the Jamaat achieved its goal he was to say “Although we have

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<sup>54</sup> Although Bhutto came to power by violating the rules of democracy, oddly enough his rule is referred as a return to a civilian rule and democracy.

not been able to fully achieve our purpose, yet we have succeeded beyond expectation in awaking the Muslims and making them active.” (Mawdudi 1981: 290). Not until 1977 that Mawdudi became active again in Pakistani politics. When his successor was put in prison, he became a de-facto leader of the Pakistan National Alliance which was organized as an opposition to Zulfikar Ali Bhutto government. In July 1977, growing anti-government protests throughout the country helped to undermine already weakened government, which led to a military takeover by General Zia ul-Hak.

A year before his death, Mawdudi appeared in a Jamaat affiliated radio talk show in which he was asked if he believed would that ever possible for an Islamic party to come to power through democratic means. His answer was very clear:

“Whether we like it or not, the elections shall have to be a starting point, because this is at present the only peaceful course for changing the system of government and rulers. There is no other alternative for bringing about a change in the system of government and choosing leaders for running it. Our efforts should therefore be that our elections are fair and free from deceit, bungling, racial and regional prejudices, sectional and tribal considerations, false propaganda, mud sliding, bogus voting, conscience buying and other malpractices which are employed for changing the result of elections. People should have full opportunity to elect representatives of their own choice. Parties, and individuals, who contest elections, should present their manifesto in a decent manner before the public and then leave the choice to them. It is possible that in the first election we may not fully succeed in changing the people's mode of thinking or choice, but if the system of election kept clean a time is bound to come when the government would be completely in the hands of honest men....”  
(Mawdudi 1978: 21-22)

In April 1979, Mawdudi’s health got worsened. He went to the US where his son was working as a medical doctor. He died in Buffalo New York in September 1979. His funeral was in Buffalo but he was buried in an unmarked grave in Lahore, Pakistan.

### *Theodemocracy and Western Democracy*

Mawdudi's critique of western democracy, first of all, offers a challenge to anyone who thinks and study about democracy. Rather than asking whether religion is compatible with democracy, he puts the question other way around and say shouldn't we ask if democracy is compatible with religion? His ideological product theodemocracy born out of this thinking and it is defined as not compatible with the secular democracy, but compatible with his religion, Islam. Arguing that not the people but the God was the sovereign, he came up with unique statement that the rule of men over men is exploitation; submission to Allah is the only way to emancipate<sup>55</sup>. Claiming that for the most devout believers, God comes first and human affairs after, Mawdudi pointed that democracy is to be responsive to the people's believes and wishes not the other way around. That meant for Mawdudi that if people of Pakistan consider God to be a major factor in their lives, so called democrats had better pay attention in their political theorizing to that.

His reservations about democracy, in the western meaning of the term, in the second place had to do with the concrete applicability of the western democracy to his own historical context. From his perspective, given India's population makeup, considering Muslims being the minority in India, it was politically unwise to support

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<sup>55</sup> This statement became the well-known slogan of the Jamaat.

western democracy, which had no recognition for religious minorities and offered no other way than to be ruled by Hindu majority.

In the third place, Mawdudi was aware that democracy in Europe was historically corresponded to the growth of European nation-states. He believed, not secular nationalism but another type of nationalism, which is based on the brotherhood of faith was to be the base for political unity if Pakistan was to survive. By re-conceptualizing the nation as a religious community, Mawdudi offered a critique of nationalism and depicted the Islamic state as sovereignty of God as oppose to secular sovereignty. When seen in this eye Mawdudi's views reflected nationalist ideology but also contained a reaction to it. Convinced that nationalism was blinding people with selfish national considerations and hate for others, with the help of secular democracy who does not recognize any higher and moral authority rather than the will of selfish nations, the world was led to the "tyranny of human over another" as was seen he argues in the examples of colonialism, World War I and World War II (Mawdudi 1970).

In the third place, Mawdudi questioned the culture of electoral campaigning. He criticized the western, culture of campaigning as bombarding citizens with fake promises, lies and manipulations while at the same time allowing only the rich and already powerful candidates to win. He argues that the rich and powerful dominates and shapes the public opinion by means of propaganda. He question realness of western democracy under these conditions where a special group of people are elected because this group is able to influence people by their wealth and propaganda and make laws for their personal

and class interest. In Islamic democracy, Mawdudi argues, the people are not absolutely free to make their own laws. There are divine limits (*hudud Allah*) which protect and guarantees basic rights and freedom of even the least powerful in a society. And those laws cannot be replaced or altered by any human, class or even by a majority of the population (Mawdudi 1976b). Mawdudi agrees on the necessity of elections yet he is critical of the elections of the western type. He argues that the western way of conduction election puts a heavy financial burden on the poor countries' economies, and encourages all types of corruption (Mawdudi 1981: 1947).

Although Mawdudi offered right criticisms to western democracy, he fell short to look his theory of democracy with a critical eye. It can be suggested that there are two main contradictions in his democratic theory that needs consideration. Firstly, although he frequently states that Islam is the religion of equality and it does not discriminate along lines of race, ethnicity, class, gender and religion (Mawdudi 1947; 1960; 1976; 1976b; 1981 etc.) in his theory of democracy women are downplayed and restricted from participating into politics as politicians. Mawdudi's inability to envision a democracy that women's roles were not limited to voting and being an activist might not be that unique when women's political struggle in the western political history was considered, yet considering the history of Indian subcontinent with many women leaders, his choice of denying women of a seat in politics is interesting. Despite his flirtations with the idea of women's leadership during the Fatimah Jinnah's candidacy, which Mawdudi was

supportive of, he has not changed his stance on the matter and not offered a valid explanation to why.<sup>56</sup>

Another point of tension in his democratic theory deals with the political rights of non-Muslims in an Islamic state. Regarding non-Muslim citizen of the state, he offered they can vote, organize their own party, and become a member of the parliament but they cannot hold the key positions of the state thus cannot become the head of the state: “the head of the state or the assenting authority would necessarily be a Muslim” (Mawdudi 1981: 147-148). When compared to his views on women and politics, his reasoning behind the idea that it is not permissible in an Islamic state for non-Muslims to hold a key political position. According to Mawdudi, Islamic state is an ideological state, which is established not on the idea of nation not as an ethnic unity, but nation as a religious unity. Therefore people who hold the key positions in the state should be the ones that prescribed to that ideology, which is Islam.

As it was seen in the previous pages, the way Mawdudi theorized theodemocracy; it referred to a new type of democratic political system that combines democracy with institutionalized religious / ideological survival mechanism since this would allow it to retain the ideological character of the state. In Mawdudi’s *theodemocratic* system, the non-Muslims’ fundamental rights like physical safety and equality; social rights like right to employment and education; civil rights like freedom of speech and press and rights of association and assembly; and political rights like being a candidate in the elections,

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<sup>56</sup> in one of his speeches Mawdudi offers an explanation to why and says that “they[women] should not be burdened with political responsibilities” (Mawdudi 1981: 138)



right to vote, and to protest were recognized. Yet, theodemocracy differed from other types of democracies in that by being a believer of the ideology of the state; one has different political rights than those who have not prescribed to it. Thus they should have a relatively lesser political claim since they are expected to have less loyalty to the state. The exclusion of non-Muslim citizens from the right to hold the office of the presidency and some other key positions was crucial for Mawdudi, in order for Pakistan's ability to function as a theodemocracy. The unity of republicanism and religious-nationalism as principles of legitimating has resulted that non-Muslim citizens enjoy civil and political rights but are barred from holding the key positions. When seen in this light, Mawdudi's model of theodemocracy in some ways was very similar to the current model of Israeli democracy, a model for dominant groups that are seeking to maintain both their dominance and a democratic system of government.

Mawdudi frequently argued that if democracy is to mean "... government should be formed, run and changed in accordance with the will of the people" Islam and democracy was not contradictory to each other. "But if it means that the people are sovereign and such empowered to determine what is right and what is wrong and are not committed to the limits prescribed by God and his Prophet, it is incompatible with Islam" (Mawdudi 1981: 226-227). Believing Islamic state is democratic by nature he questioned why democracy was not taking hold in Muslim countries. To this question, Mawdudi offered few explanations. Firstly, he argued that although the West claims that democracy is an ideal way of governing and must be implemented all around the world -through

direct intervention if necessary-, in reality western powers have no respect to the will of the Muslims if they opted out for an Islamic rule (Mawdudi 1939: 3). He is of a belief that all over the Islamic World, the Muslim masses in Muslim countries are never allowed to choose their representatives.

Secondly for Mawdudi, dictatorships in Muslim countries are not only supported and encouraged by the West, but also Muslims are presented as “not fit for democracy” and that “only dictatorial forms of government is suited to their genius.” (Mawdudi 1981: 63). He gives an example from Muslim world, like Egypt and Syria, and says that if a political movement (religious in nature)

“is being crushed in a Muslim country, the people are detained without trial or tried in military courts in most ridiculous fashion and then they hanged<sup>57</sup> ... (and this was reported in the American Press to the world that) good developments are taking place in that country. They have no scruples about commending such acts of repression, moreover, if dictatorship is thrust upon a Muslim country by dislodging democracy and making arbitrary alteration in the constitution or laws, (this is hailed as a change for the better).” (Mawdudi 1981: 63).

Thirdly, he finds fault with Muslims themselves. He criticizes the Muslim masses for not doing anything when their representatives are toppled down<sup>58</sup> while they “watch this political drama like helpless onlookers” (Mawdudi 1981: 151). In an interview to a Moroccan newspaper, he criticize the passivity of the masses in not standing up for demanding respect for their political choices in the Islamic world: “The destiny of Muslims” he says “depends on whether or not they manage to introduce true form of

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<sup>57</sup> He refers to Sayyid Qutb and other members of the Muslim Brotherhood here

<sup>58</sup> Here Mawdudi references the events that are taking place in Syria at the time.

democracy in their countries. It will, in other words, be shaped according as the masses determine their future or as so called revolutionary dictators continue to decide for them.” (Mawdudi 1981: 288).

### *Chapter 3 Conclusion*

Mawdudi wrote during a time when whole Indian continent was going through a transition, which meant not only independence from Britain but also the establishment of Pakistan. Many politicians, philosophers, and theologians had argued for democracy before and after Mawdudi. This was not unique to him. What makes Mawdudi interesting is that he argued for democracy not by pitting it against religion but by making religion a necessary ingredient for democracy. What Mawdudi did was an attempt to give a theological foundation to democracy that would undercut both secular nationalists as well as traditional *ulama* both of whom sought to undermine the unity of democratic politics and theology (Nasr 1996). Nasr argues that Mawdudi’s importance does not necessarily stem from in his intellectual contributions to Islamic political thought, but mainly his successful attempt to create an intellectual agency that argues the necessity to address, to discuss and to offer solutions to modern socio-political themes within an Islamic tradition (Nasr 1996: 133). Arguing that political activism is not just a right or desired but a religious responsibility and a sacred duty for each and every Muslim, he obliged the members of Jamaati Islami, which he was the founder of, to take a keen interest in politics thus become informed citizens. Mawdudi’s writings also aimed to promote

democratization of the religious interpretation. When he criticized westernized elite's representation and interpretation of Islam, he also challenged traditional religious *ulama's* claim on monopoly over the interpretation of Islam.

His ideological concept of theocracy was a radical displacement for centuries old local traditions, yet it was rooted in Mawdudi's interpretation of Islam. However, it was at the same time intensely modern in looks and democratic in nature. Mawdudi's democracy, aside from the issue of absolute sovereignty of God and his use of Islamic terms and symbols, was structured by the use of western political concepts, structures, operations and theory of modern statecraft. While refusing western democracy, Mawdudi argued that he was not to innovate a new form of governance but was emulating the prophetic example in the making of Islamic state and its mode of governance. By reconstructing the term democracy as theocracy, his aim was to offer a new concept which is as a better fit for not only to Muslim people's beliefs and traditions which were shaped by Islam but also the political realities of his time. When seen in this light, it can be argued that Mawdudi mobilized Islam as an ideology to authenticate the idea of democracy while at the same time used it as a rubric to question the colonial background of democracy.

It is clear that Mawdudi wholeheartedly believed that Islamic state is the democratic one. The only difference between the two, according to Mawdudi, was that Islamic democracy is based on the belief that ultimate sovereignty belongs to Allah as embodied in divinely revealed Quran in Islamic democracy, and does not lay with the

people. Other than that, he argued Islamic democracy was not different from western democracy in that both type argued that government should be formed, run, and changed in accordance with the will of the people. Being an avid believer of democracy, neither the manipulation of Pakistani government nor his critical approach to the western history with democracy nor the belief that western democracy is an importable ideology, made Mawdudi to denunciation, he call on Muslims to adopt democracy, as he recognized it as both not only as Islamic, but also as the only suitable way of governance for this century. At the same time Mawdudi clearly urges the politicians and intellectuals of his time that the concept of democracy must be analyzed with a critical eye and to be redefined and reformulated to make it fit to Islamic tradition. Otherwise, Mawdudi believed, western democracy cannot be internalized by Muslims since its linguistic, social, historical, philosophical, and moral references would not correspond to the people's. Considered from this perspective, for him, western democracy is to be ineffective for Muslims since it represents another culture, political philosophy, worldview, morality, and history. That is why Mawdudi coined the term theodemocracy, to authenticate and naturalize a modern-western originated concept to the general principles of Islamic political understanding for the Muslims of India in particular but for all of the Muslim in the essence.

## CHAPTER FOUR:

### QUTB, DEMOCRACY AS A QUEST FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE AND THE RULE OF LAW

This chapter analyzes Sayyid Qutb's conceptualization of democracy in three sections. The first section presents the biography of Qutb. The following section critically approaches Qutb's thought regarding democracy and presents them in their historical development. The last section summarizes the arguments presented in the chapter.

#### *Introduction*

Today Sayyid Qutb (1906-1966), more than a decade after his execution in 1966 in the hands of the government of Nasser, still stands as the major ideologue of Muslim Brotherhood and as a constant reference person to many other Islamic movements all around the world. It was Sayyid Qutb, who challenged critiques of colonialism, liberalism, capitalism, and communism on the question of religion and revolution. Because of his writings, his firm stance in expressing his dissident thoughts, and of the way that he was killed<sup>59</sup>; Qutb occupies a special position for Muslims but especially for contemporary Islamic political thought and for the history of Islamic revivalism. For many in the Muslim world, he represented both a critique to an unjust authority, and a rebellion against social and political inequality existed in Egypt during his lifetime.

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<sup>59</sup> As will be explained more fully in an upcoming section of the chapter, Qutb was sentenced to death following 12 years of imprisonment and torture. His execution not only turned him into a main ideologue of the Muslim Brotherhood, but also a martyr. He has come to represent more than mere sum of writings he left behind. He has become a symbol, a witness (in the original meaning of the term, the word "martyr" means "witness") of an individual Muslim confronting an all-powerful authoritarian state. Even today, when his name is mentioned, people who know of his life or sympathize with his call, almost always pair his name with "*shahed*/martyr" or "*masum*/innocent."

Qutb's theories concerning politics and democracy were the result of his experiences with colonialism, the increasing westernization endeavors in Muslim societies in general but in Egypt in particular, the abolishment of the Caliphate, and the forced cultural suppression and demonization of Islam by the Egyptian as well as western elite. Later on, poverty, an ever increasing gap between the poor and the rich in Egypt, the mistreatment and degradation of the Egyptians by British soldiers during World War II, his personal experiences with racism and anti-Muslim sentiments while in the USA, and his long incarceration and torture were added as factors that shaped the way Qutb thought, wrote and expressed his world view, including his political thoughts.

In order to reveal the conceptualization of democracy by Qutb, this chapter provides an analysis of Qutb's political thoughts as an attempt to provide a window into his religio-political worldview. Realizing that Qutb is more eulogized than analyzed, more quoted than read, and seen in the light of immediate conflicts rather than in the context of historical, political, economic and social realities of his time, the chapter tries to take all into account in narrating and analyzing his religion-political theory. It is the argument of this chapter that Qutb's reading of Islam is to a great extent a product of modernity as we can trace the crises of imported modernization in Egypt in his writings. His political theory needs to be read and studied from this perspective. In other words, in this chapter, I present and argue that Qutb's political thought, and his approach to democracy in particular, is a radical critique of not only the systems born out of modernity, like imperialism, colonialism, capitalism per se, but also modern forms of

sovereignty and the western thought that justified them and denied life chances to their detractors. Qutb believed and presented Islam as the agent that would create a just and humane society apart from and independent of capitalism and communism. Islam, for Qutb, is not merely a religious discourse but also a political one that challenges unjust political and cultural hegemony. What Qutb did, through his writings, was then to mobilize Islamism for establishing a just society and to prove that Islam was offering an authentic solution to the crises of modernity.

The present chapter is structured as follows. First, I give a biographical account of Qutb's life interwoven with historical background information to help visualize and situate him in the socio-political and historical context of his time. I also provide a bibliographical sketch of his most important works. The next section of the chapter focuses on Qutb's political theory and the way that he approached democracy. In this section, I argue that for Qutb Islam as a system represents a democratic alternative to liberal democracy. It is a critique of the western ideologies that have proven themselves unjust and inhumane.

The quest for conceptualization of democracy in Qutb's thoughts will also involve his use of religious concepts, such as *hakimiyya*, *jahiliyya*, *tawhid*, *ijma*, *Firavn* (Pharaoh), *Tugyan*, and *Tagut* as political constructs, since I argue that his concept of democracy rests in meanings that he attaches to these constructs. I show that these concepts are vital for Qutb and he weaves these interrelated concepts into his political theory to make it domestic and authentic. The section on Qutb's political theory also



includes his critique on western political theories of democracy to reveal the moral and political logic of Qutb's account of the state and an Islamic alternative, and to highlight the main contrasts between his and liberal theories of democracy. The central themes developed in the chapter are firstly to show that Qutb's theory of democracy does more than create a procedural form of government that is defined by voting and elections. Democracy for him is closely linked to social justice and the vitality of the rule of law. Secondly, the chapter argues that, contrary to widespread statements regarding Qutb, his democratic theory can be thought of as more democratic than liberal democracy, insisting on democratic internationalism and political participation by the poor. Finally, the chapter ends with a short summary.

*Sayyid Qutb, Biography of a Dissident*

Sayyid Qutb was born in 1906 in the small village of Musha, Egypt to a middle class intellectual family. He was the eldest among his siblings. Two sisters, Amina, Hamida, and a brother, Muhammad, all later became members of the Muslim Brotherhood, attained prominence in the ranks of the organization, and experienced Gamal Abdel Nasser's prisons, just like Qutb and millions of other members of the Brotherhood.

Qutb went to a local government school rather than the more religious *kuttab* school in his village for his primary education. Yet he was *hafiz*, which means he had memorized the whole Quran. In 1922, when he was around the age of sixteen, he moved

to Cairo where he was later to enroll in Dar al-Ulum, a teacher's college.<sup>60</sup> When he came to Cairo, the country was in the midst of 1918-1922 nationalist revolt against the British rule by Wafd Party<sup>61</sup> in the leadership of Sa'd Zaghul. In his early years in Cairo, Qutb was a typical representative of the cohort of intelligentsia that emerged in Egypt in the wake of the 1919 popular uprising against the British occupation (Calvert 2010: 11). Qutb was a prominent critic of the Egyptian monarchy, and was very close to the nationalist Wafd party, Qutb was a prominent critic of the Egyptian monarchy, and was very close to the nationalist Wafd party, as his literary mentor Abbas Mahmud al-Aqqad was one of the ideological spokesmen for the party.

In 1920s Egypt, universal enfranchisement, political parties, public trials, the idea of the independence of justice, and parliaments representing the will of the people were commonly shared realities of Egyptian political life. The Wafd party was instrumental in the development of the Egyptian constitution of 1923 that was drafted under the impact of the constitution of Belgium of the time. The constitution was a move towards a constitutional monarchy where power would be wielded by a nationally-elected parliament. Although the parliamentary system had not worked out that well under British-controlled monarchical rule, calling for such a system, based on multi party politics, was not considered an ultra-revolutionary demand for Egypt at the time. The

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<sup>60</sup> The college was founded in 1873 as a part of modernization movement in Egypt and was offering Western curriculum that al-Azhar (a famous university of Egypt which was then mostly focused on religious education) had resister to adopt.

<sup>61</sup> The party dominated Egyptian politics until coup d'état of the Free Officers in 1952.

Egyptian elite belonging to different factions discussed and theorized how Egypt could best be represented through such a system.

Qutb entered Dar al-Ulum in 1929 and graduated in 1933 with a Bachelor's degree in education, Arabic Language, and Literature. Qutb had been writing poems since he was nineteen and during his student years and after his graduation he continued to write and publish literary pieces in several journals. In 1932, he published *The Mission of the Poet in Life*, which is usually considered proof that he was a first rate literary critic (Musallam 1993; Khatab 2002; 2006; 2007; Calvert 2004; 2010). From 1926 to 1948, Qutb was known well among Egyptian literary circles with his works as a literary critique. Some of the important works produced by Qutb during this stage were *Artistic Imagery in the Qur'an* (1945); *A Child from the Village*<sup>62</sup> (1946); *Thorns*<sup>63</sup> (1947); and *Literary Criticism: Its Foundation and Methods* (1948). During these years Qutb also wrote novels, stories, poetry, autobiographical sketches, and literary criticisms. Most of his short stories and novels were romantic in nature and were about love and marriage. Later he was to disclaim many of his early work and was to publicly distance himself from his previous writings (Calvert 2010; Musallam 1993).

After his graduation from university in 1933, Qutb worked for the Ministry of Education as an elementary school teacher. In 1939, he was appointed to a new role in the

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62 A Child from the Village was autobiography of Qutb

63 Thorn is a romantic novel by Qutb. The book is about a boy who yearns for a true love and his only love affair turns out to be a disaster a very similar story to the one that Qutb had experienced in his own life.

ministry to work as a school inspector and advisor on cultural issues. He worked in these roles until 1952.

According to Calvert (2010) Qutb started to question his support for Wafd party by the end of 1930s, especially after the 1936 Anglo-Egyptian Treaty. It was around this time that Qutb became increasingly critical of the Wafd government for consenting to limited independence. He became more and more aware of the inequalities that existed in Egypt like the growing gap between the rich and the poor, a shortage of food in the country, and inflationary pressures that almost tripled the cost of living at the time (Calvert 2010: 103). The government's indifference towards these issues epitomized in Qutb's eyes the leadership's separation from the people and signified a mere self-interest to stay in power. During this time, sharing the outrage of his countrymen like al-Aqqad, he distanced himself from Wafd party and began to support its rival Saadist party.

His writings in these times aimed to restore a sense of religious meaning within the immorality of the colonial world (Calvert 2010: 10). During World War II, he became more distanced from western thought. He was of the belief that this new war, born again in Europe and spreading its death toll to all over the world, revealed the violent face of western civilization. He imagined that western civilization was on the brink of a collapse and was in need of spiritual regeneration. By turning away from the spiritual dimensions of life, people in the West, for Qutb, had become the objects of materialism and selfish gain. These tendencies revealed themselves in the form of imperialism and capitalism (Qutb 2000; Kutup 1982; 1967). In 1946, he wrote "All the western nations take their

bearings from one source, and that is the materialistic civilization that has no heart and no moral conscience. It is a civilization that does not hear anything except the sound of machines, and does not speak of anything but commerce... How I hate and disdain those westerners! All of them, without exception.” (quoted in Calvert 2010: 121). In his opinion, the establishment of the state of Israel in 1948 with support from the capitalist as well as the socialist world totally disregarded the wishes and opinions of the Palestinian people. This made Qutb more and more critical of the West as a model for Egypt and pushed him toward an indigenous model, namely Islam.

From 1948 onward, Qutb’s writings moved from literary critique to social criticism of the inequities and injustices that were becoming increasingly prevalent in Egyptian society. As his writings acquired clear political overtones, his solutions became more religiously oriented. Islam had always an important factor in his life. For him, religion meant more than the western-based idea of a personal relationship to God and praying and going to church. For Qutb, Islam meant a revolutionary ideology (Qutb 2000; Kutup 1982) an enabler of a social change (Kutup 1982), and a complete system that aimed to positively change societies that were crying for justice, equality, and humane life.

As poverty became more widespread in Egypt, and as the gap between the rich and poor grew rapidly, Qutb’s call for change became more clear and loud. Musallam (2005) states that as a part of Fikr al-Jadid movement, Qutb made speeches and wrote newspaper articles calling for a redistribution of wealth, abolishing the existing feudal-

like system by taking the land from big landowners and distributing it among the landless peasants. He also proposed strategies to minimize the conflicts that existed between capitalists and the labor. As expected, his revolutionary ideas were not seen with a friendly eye by the Palace, the Wafd Party, the landowners, and the rich. The authorities decided to silence him by sending him out of the country for a mission. Thus, in 1948, Qutb left Egypt for the US to study American educational system and continue his graduate studies.

When Qutb left Egypt for the US, he left behind a manuscript ready to be published. The manuscript, titled *Social Justice in Islam (1949)*, was to become one of his most well known works. The main theme of the book, which would continue to be the central theme of his future works as well, is that Egypt, like many other Muslim post-colonial states, was in need of a religious awakening. Qutb believed it was important to make Muslims remember the essence of God's message and start seeing Islam as a system and a revolution that was sent by Allah to end all forms of exploitation, and to exterminate the poverty and inequality that is brought about by capitalism, feudalism or communism. In *Social Justice in Islam*, Qutb also accused the elite (both religious *ulama* and secular elite) of only thinking of their interests instead of caring for the rights of ordinary Egyptians and fighting against British occupation. He stated that it was a duty for a Muslim to oppose, resist, and rebel against injustices, exploitation, and oppression regardless of the perpetrator. This was a part of a definition of Jihad in Islam for Qutb (Kutub 1982: 26, 32. 57). For him, being an intellectual meant being an example in

seeking and calling for justice and raising a voice against an unjust authority. Throughout his life, he was adamant to be an example of the intellectual that he described which in the end carried him to his execution.

Qutb stayed in the US, in Greeley, Colorado, until 1951. His stay in the US coincided with the declaration of Israel as a state, the Arab Israel war of 1948, the US support for Israel, and open anti-Arab sentiments represented in the media. As an Arab with dark skin, life in the US was not easy for Qutb. He published his experience in the US in a book *The America I have Seen* (1951). He was especially disturbed by the reaction in the media and by the ordinary people to the assassination of Hasan al-Banna<sup>64</sup>, the founder of the Muslim Brotherhood. Hasan al-Banna was assassinated by the government of Egypt in 1949 (Musallam 1993; 2005; Mitchell 1993; Calvert 2010). In *The America I have Seen*, Qutb expressed his amazement that an assassination could be treated as news to be celebrated. Qutb left the US in 1951 more determined than ever that Islam was the only way to bring justice and equality to the world, and was the only way to end the alienation of the modern man.

After returning from the US in 1951, Qutb resigned his advisor position at the ministry and joined the Muslim Brotherhood (also known as Ikhwan al-Muslimun or Ikhwan) (Musallam 2005; Calvert 2010). Founded in Egypt by Hassan al Banna in 1928, Muslim Brotherhood is one of the oldest and most well-known grassroots movements of

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<sup>64</sup> While Banna became a social activist by establishing the Muslim Brotherhood and disseminating his ideas via this movement, Qutb focused on literary work.

the Muslim world. Although, both Qutb and al-Banna were born in the same year (1906), received secular education, even graduated from the same college, the teachers' college (*Darul Ulum*) in Cairo, they do not acknowledge of knowing each other. Following graduation, both Qutb and Banna started to work as teachers for the ministry of education. The Muslim Brotherhood was founded in Egypt's small town of Ismailiyya in 1928. At the time, the city was under a heavy British military control. The impact of ideas of the reformist Muslim leaders of the time like Afghani and Abduh are recognizable in birth of the movement. The establishment of the Muslim Brotherhood, for Mitchel, was a reaction and protest against the political, economic, social, intellectual and moral disappointment that swept through Egypt and the Muslim world (Mitchel 1993). On the other hand, the Muslim Brotherhood was also established to confront against the *ulama* order of Egypt of the time (Mitchel 1993; Musallam 2005).

Qutb joined the Muslim Brotherhood in the same year he published his famous book *The Battle Between Capitalism and Islam* (1951). In the book, Qutb criticized the government, in an accusatory tone and with very harsh language, due to the ever-increasing poverty and misery of the Egyptians. He also charged the government with unlawful acts, citing the police's interaction with the people, and the use of torture to control and suppress the opposition. It is in this book that Qutb equates democracy with capitalism (Qutb 1970; Kutup 1967). The book ends with a warning/prediction that people's patience is over and the system is approaching its doom if things do not change (Qutb 1970; Kutup 1967).



A year later in 1952 Qutb's warnings regarding the fate of the parliamentary monarchy and the government of Wafd became true not because he was a good fortuneteller, but because he was involved in the revolution and supported it openly. After his return to Egypt from the US, Qutb became engaged with young army officers including Abdul Nasser and Anwar Sadat, both of them were members of the Free Officers Movement and later became presidents of Egypt.

Initially aiming to dethrone King Faruk, the July revolution of 1952, under the leadership of Muhammad Nagub, ended up abolishing the Egyptian monarchy. Revolutionary Command Council (RCC) also declared to end of the British occupation and announced the establishment of Egypt as a free republic. Free Officers had already secured the support of the Muslim Brotherhood for their cause. The Muslim Brotherhood provided grassroots support to the revolution, which was something the Officers needed. Nasser and Sadat were frequent visitors of Qutb's lectures and read his works. Sayed Khattab in his book quotes a speech of Nagub referring Qutb as "the teacher of the revolution" (Khattab 2006: 231). He was later on to be appointed as an advisor to the Revolutionary Command Council (RCC) (Khattab 2006).

Qutb, like many others, had high hopes regarding social justice after 1952 revolution. He believed that constitutional rule would be established within a few months, the army would return to its camps, elections would take place, land reform would occur and the labor movement would be supported. Soon after the revolution, however, all of these issues became growing points of dispute between Qutb and the RCC. Ultimately

this led Qutb to resign his advisory position (Musallam 2005; Khattab 2006). There were problems within the RCC as well, which eventually carried Nasser to the leadership position. Nasser's regime turned out to be a disappointment for Qutb. Even though the regime attempted to realize many social reforms that Qutb had called for in his writings, he came to the painful realization that the reforms themselves were not enough unless they were rooted in proper Islamic conceptions and intentions since manmade systems were not as comprehensive and easily bended and corrupted according to the interest the few who own the capital and political power. From that time on, we see Qutb shifting from the moral to the theological dimension.

In 1954, Qutb became the chief editor of the Journal of Ihvan al-Muslimun, an official publication of the Brotherhood. He also became the Muslim Brotherhood's foremost ideologue. He held a senior position in the Guiding Council of the Brotherhood and was head of the department of propagation (Khattab 2006). In 1954, he was arrested twice with a charge of being a member of the Muslim Brotherhood, which was banned by Nasser in that year. Qutb's last arrest was a part of the Nasser government's crackdown on the Muslim Brotherhood. The leaders of the brotherhood as well as hundreds of members were imprisoned as well. Qutb was to stay in Tura prison until his execution in 1966. He was sentenced to fifteen years. During his stay in Egyptian prisons, he was heavily tortured and made a witness to the torture of other members of the Brotherhood. The killing of twenty one members of Muslim Brotherhood by prison guards left a huge scar in his life and in his theory (Mitchell 1993; Khatab 2006). He came to question how

was he to call these guards Muslim if they were as cruel and vicious as he observed and experienced. Ten years after his imprisonment, in 1964, Qutb was released when then-Iraqi president, Abd al-Salam‘ Arif, plead for his release. He was to be rearrested again eight months later with the accusation of attempting to change the government by force. This time he was sentenced to death together with six other members of the Brotherhood.

Qutb was most productive during his prison years. He produced two of his best works while he was in prison: *In the Shade of the Qur’an* (first volume was published in 1954) a thirty-volume commentary on the *Qur’an*, and his manifesto *Milestones*<sup>65</sup> (1964). He had already started writing *In the Shade of the Qur’an* as a free man in the form of entries for a weekly journal. Later, he decided to turn it into volumes. When he was imprisoned, the government forbade him to continue to write: *In the Shade of the Qur’an*, yet the publishing house that Qutb had signed a contract with took the matter to the court. Against the government’s wishes, the court decided that Qutb had to obey his contract and finish the whole series, which came to be a thirty-volume piece. Written during his ten years of incarceration the: *In the Shade of the Qur’an* hailed by Paul Berman as “one of the most remarkable works of prison literature ever produced.” (Berman 2003:1)

As for the *Milestones* it was written in secrecy. The pieces were to be carried out of the prison by Qutb’s sisters. *Milestones* is one of the most well-known and widely read books within Muslim countries; it has been translated into many languages all around the world. When it was first published, the book became so popular that in a month it was

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<sup>65</sup> The title of the book is also translated as Signposts.

printed six times and each time the number of prints was doubled the previous printing. Soon, the book was banned not only by the government but also by al-Azhar, the leading religious institution of higher education in the Muslim world (Calvert 2004; Khatab 2006). *Milestones* was the product of Qutb's personal and intellectual experiences. Written as a religious and political manifesto, the book was about the unavoidability of an Islamic revolution. As Qutb saw it, revolution was the only way for humanity to realize its human capacities and thus create a just order. It was with his *Milestones* that Qutb put forward his political critique to what he called tyrannical rule and condemned this tyrannical Muslim governments, like Nasser's regime, as illegitimate. It was *Milestones* that, when read under the consideration of his execution, turned Qutb into one of, if not the leading Islamist of the 20th century.

Qutb's death sentence, which was mostly based upon excerpts from his book, *Milestones*, was carried out on August 29th, 1966. When he was executed together with two other members of the Brotherhood, Nasser was the president. His execution was carried out in secrecy to prevent any public upheaval. When the news of his execution was announced, not only in Egypt but also in other parts of the Muslim world, people took the streets to protest.

### *Democracy? Islam? Or Islam as a Democratic Alternative to Democracy*

As stated earlier in the introduction to the chapter, Sayyid Qutb offered a systematic critique for the political, economic, social, intellectual, and moral presentation

of modernity in Egypt. His ideological response to modernity was based in Islam and stems from his reinterpretation of Islam to his historical conditions. In this section, I offer an understanding to Qutb's political theory in respect to democracy. Although Qutb is usually referred as "fundamentalist" or "radical" in the literature (Goldberg 1991; Pipes 2000; Fukuyama 2001; Rahnema 2008) in this chapter I intend to put aside all of these titles and describe him instead as an intellectual who struggles to overcome the problems of modernity through a local remedy, Islam, rather than borrowed or imported ones like secularism, democracy, nationalism, capitalism or communism. In this respect, I intentionally investigate the sociopolitical and religious bases of Qutb's concept of democracy and analyze the relevance of Qutb's religio-political constructs to this concept.

Writing about Qutb's conceptualization of democracy is not as simple task. When analyzing his political thoughts, we need to keep in mind two things. On the one hand, as we have seen in his biography, Qutb was highly involved in Egyptian political life. He supported political parties but divorced them all. Supported army officer's 1952 revolution yet he was for a civilian rule. Later he rejected Nasser and the revolutionary council, joined the Brotherhood a decision that cost him fifteen years of imprisonment. He wrote his political theories from his cell in Tura prison until his execution in 1966. All of these shaped his confrontational and in some ways revolutionist political theory. On the other hand, we need to consider his political theories (his understanding of the relationship between state, society and individual agency) as a product of the secular

nationalist state of postcolonial Egypt. His theory is very much shaped by his experiences in a highly powerful and authoritarian nationalist state with military-oriented rulers intruding into society in a way in which the colonial state had never been capable. In the upcoming section of the chapter, I will outline his political theory in general and his conceptualization of democracy in particular.

Qutb's ideas on democracy originates from his theories of Islam as a unique system, which he posits as a democratic alternative to liberal democracy; of the necessity of the rule of law (read as *Shari'a*); and of social justice, which is closely related to his theories of Islam and capitalism. He refuses to reduce democracy to meanings put forward by the western political theories in terms of voting, election, or the results of an election. For Qutb, democracy is not a matter of words but of essence. According to Qutb, democracy needs to be understood as a set of values and aptitudes regarding the self and the relationship between the self and the others. Moreover, democracy should be understood and regarded as an amalgam of the socio-political and economic conditions that are necessary for securing social justice, which is the condition for the establishment and development of a just society (Qutb 1980: 78–86). Considered from this perspective, Qutb's vision in his writings is aligned with Dewey's vision of democracy as more than a form of government, but rather a mode of associated living. To this end, however, in rather strong contrast to Dewey, Qutb rehabilitates religion for its potentially positive effects on democracy.

As noted above, to understand Qutb's conceptualization of democracy, it is important to first reflect on his understanding of Islam as a system. Qutb believed that Muslims needed to see Islam as a system to wage a successful struggle against all kind of oppression and injustices that existed in the society (Qutb 1990; 2000; 2004; Kutup 1982). He believed that Muslims could not defeat imperialism and overcome social alienation and regain their self-esteem unless they first discovered their Muslim heritage and re-discovered their religion as a system. Furthermore, the idea that Islam is a system also necessities for Qutb to see Islam as a revolutionary ideology that infuses and shapes all spheres of life, especially including politics but not limited to that sphere. It is this political aspect that makes it a duty for a true believer to fight all forms of exploitation, oppression, and social injustice (Kutup 1982; 1967; Qutb 1990; 1991, 2004)

Qutb frequently states in his writings that the Prophet Mohammad had come to establish not only a religious community, but also a just society that would end men's rule over men. For Qutb, it is the essence of Islam to be in a constant struggle to establish social justice, equality, and human brotherhood. In his writings, Islam depicted neither a mere theory nor only a practice. Islam is about a dialectical relationship between theory and practice; thought and action; believing and becoming (Qutb 2000: 7, 22, 36). Different from a western conception of religion that sees it as simply an abstract, inwardly-focused, and metaphysical spirituality, Qutb sees Islam as "a practical religion," (Qutb 1990: 15) "a dynamic movement" (Qutb 1990: 7) that offered "solutions to the ills of the modern society... communist atheism and disregard for spiritual needs of men and

capitalism's imperial aggressiveness (Qutb 1990; Kutup 1967; 1982). He even argued that what defined a true Muslim was not having a faith in God, his prophet and the afterlife, but rather the willingness to take action for truth (Kutup 1982: 23, 36)

Qutb is reluctant to accept western political theories, ideologies, or to follow a western outlook, and insists on "Islamic authenticity" in his social and political theories. He shies away from using terms like "republican," "democratic," or "socialist" to define a Muslim society. That is the reason he never uses terms like Islamic democracy or Islamic republic. He is of a belief that the only title a Muslim community needs is "Islam" since the term includes the best of the other systems and more. By rejecting the use of western ideologies, Qutb does not mean that Islam and those theories have nothing in common. He, for example points out the resemblance between Islam and democracy, but he also outlines the differences. His final aim is to show his readers that Islam is a unique and independent system: "It may happen in the development of human systems that they coincide with Islam sometimes and diverge from it sometimes, but Islam is a complete and independent system" (Qutb 1980: 76). As an all-encompassing system that covers all aspects of life of a Muslim, Islam, for Qutb, is equipped to form a political system with institutions, concepts and forms of government that does not need imported ideas, especially if they are imposed. Therefore, he insists that the state should be established based on the teachings of Islam, and its institutions should be extracted from Muslim culture. It should be indigenous to the people.



Qutb's rejection of imported terminology and preference to use or even to make indigenous terminology in outlining his political theory was part of his intellectual attempt to establish Islam as an ideology, a system of its own, but also to struggle against the colonialism of knowledge. The alienation of people from their native language is an aspect of colonial control for Qutb. Indigenization of the language of politics was essential for emancipation and self-rule. To be successful in their fight against imperialism, Muslims should regain their belief in their Islamic tradition and believe in their own ability to develop their societies. He considered borrowing from other models as being the beggar instead of being the giver that is a more respectable position to be in:

“We have tried the ready-made models for which we implored, like beggars, from here and there. We tried them in all spheres of our life, intellectual, social, and legislative, until we have emerged with a comic carnival of fashions-with no difference between the fashions in thought and fashions for the body. Let us take an example from the legislation that we borrowed first from France and have continued to borrow from everywhere, whenever we come to legislate for this life. There is a conflict between the spirit of the legislation that we have borrowed and the spirit of the people . . . The borrowed law does not originate in the social situation, historical circumstances, feelings and creeds, customs and traditions.” (Kutub 1967: 32).

To prevent any misconception, it needs to be clarified that Qutb finds it legitimate to borrow from other cultures to advance and modernize one self. Yet, he argues that what Muslims needs to do is first to confer their culture, then look for answers in other cultures to their problems. He said “if I find that I must borrow from European ideas, I would do so if this idea would develop the culture without manipulation or assumption” (quoted in Calvert 2000: 90-91).

Following this line of thinking, he structures his democratic theory consciously by using terms and notions that are indigenous to Islam and thus to Muslims. Qutb had a unique way of taking well-known concepts from Islamic history, theology of judiciary and turning them into political concepts to define, refute, or support his political claims. His political theory in general, and his conceptualization of democracy in particular, rest in meanings that he attaches to these politico-religious constructs like *jahiliyya*, *hakimiyya*, *tawhid*, *Firavn (Pharaoh)*, *Tugyan*, *Qarun*, *Shari'ah*, *Tagut*, *jihad*, *ijma* and *shura*. This indigenization of the language of politics was the only way; he felt, the political system would have a familiarity for the ordinary people. In other words, for Qutb, the only way to engage the ordinary people to participate in everyday politics, to be active and conscious citizens, is to use a political language that has a reference point in their cultural repertoire. To create this familiarity, Qutb loaded theological or juristic concepts with a political meaning and transformed them into central demands of his political struggle to establish a just society.

As stated earlier, since 1919, constitutional rule, representational government, and multi party politics were already characteristics of Egyptian politics. It is beyond argument that these systems were not working properly; however, this view was widely supported by Egyptian intellectuals from all ranges of worldviews. Qutb, like his predecessors Rashid Rida and Abduh, confirmed that certain notions of democracy are in line with Islam, while he also stated in some detail the points of incompatibility. To him, the principles of an Islamic system and a democracy were in line in requiring these basic

institutions: (i) protection and personal freedom of people; (ii) *shura*; (iii) consensus; (iv) the rule of law. All these principles were necessary, but, not the only foundations for an Islamic system of government but also representing the characteristics of a democratic government in reference to the western meaning of the term.

The principle of the protection and personal freedom of the people is *tawhid* in Qutb's political language. According Qutb, the ideal Islamic society is a society that is based on the worldview of *tawhid*, the core principle of Islamic theology, which originally refers to the belief in the oneness of God. Qutb politicized the idea of *tawhid* by turning it to be the establishment of a social relation; a proclamation of a Muslim's submission to and freedom from enslavement by any other man, system, ideology or object. Declaration of *tawhid* is, for Qutb, the end of man's arrogance and selfishness. For Qutb *tawhid* provides the perfect freedom of a person since, by citing *tawhid* a Muslim not only declares his freedom but also his stand against tyranny and his promise to Allah to struggle to establish a just political order (Social Justice in Islam). Yet, different from western political theory, for Qutb the freedom of the individual comes with certain responsibilities and being consciousness of one's duties. For example, political participation is a duty for Muslims for Qutb. If political participation of a citizen is denied or made ineffective, or if the elected ruler seized the God given rights of the citizens or annexed the law, then, it becomes a duty for a Muslim to revolt against that tyrannical rule (Qutb 1990, Kutup 1982).

*Jihad* is another term that is utilized by Qutb to ensure and protect the freedom and the rights of an individual. *Jihad*, commonly defined as physical or spiritual struggle in Islamic literature, for Qutb, becomes a revolutionary stand against the tyrannical order. *Jihad* for Qutb means resistance to the authority under the legitimate circumstances (Kutub 1966: 33). He asserts rulers who act outside legal limits outlined by *shari'a* (constitution of an Islamic state) are to be resisted. It is the responsibility/duty of every Muslim according to Qutb, to struggle against injustices and oppression, “whether inflicted upon Muslims, non-Muslims, allies, or non-allies.”(Kutub 1982; 1966).

Qutb argues that the Qur'an prescribed the institution of *shura* (representative body of the Islamic state) to guide how society is to come to decide on issues. *Shura* for Qutb is not merely a theological concept or a system for election. Its importance comes from its being the reflection of the public will which embodies in it the concept of individual freedom and social contract which are the necessary elements of western democratic rule. Qutb, like Mawdudi, al-Banna, Afghani and many other Islamist intellectuals before him, gave the people a decisive legitimating role by demanding democratization of religious knowledge. Referring Mohammad's<sup>66</sup> declaration “my community will not be agreed upon error,” he saw the people (not only the *ulama*) as sovereign in legitimation and interpretation. He qualified *shura* as a restrictive force on the ruler's power.

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<sup>66</sup> The prophet of Islam

Consensus is the other important concept for Qutb. The term *ijma*, meaning the consensus of legal scholars on a legal matter to make a new ruling, was transformed by Qutb into a political vehicle. He used the same word to argue consensus of the people is necessary for the election as well as the legitimacy of Muslim rulers. Today it is not possible, Qutb argues, to get representation other than through voting and referendum. (Kutub 1967: 101). The voting system should be established in a way that ensures that it represents the whole society. "Electorate should not be left to the mercy of feudal lords, capitalists ..." (Kutub 1967: 102). A ruler may ask obedience from the public if he comes to power via general elections, and if he is upholding the law. This is the condition on which his contract with the public is based. If rulers ascend to power without the approval of their people, even if they apply the law, *sShari'a*<sup>67</sup>, they are illegitimate (Kutub 1982: 36). If such a ruler disregards the law, then the people have a right to disobey him. Qutb argues that blind obedience to the ruler is unacceptable in Islam. (Kutub 1967: 102-3)

Rule of law is essential for Qutb in making his Islamic system. Islam has created a society that is based on law, he believed. *Shari'a* is the constitution and Islam cannot survive if Islamic law is not to govern (Qutb 1991). The idea of the rule of law appears in his concept of *hakimiyya* and *hakimiyya* to him is the sovereignty of law (Qutb 1993: 117). Qutb explains that since Allah does not decent himself to govern, he governs

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<sup>67</sup> As it will be seen in the upcoming section, for Qutb a leader who does not upheld the law is illegitimate

through his law, which is *shari'a*. In other words, “the *shari'a* of Allah is the foundation of legislation” (Qutb 1993: 117).

The key word here for Qutb is foundation, *shari'a* is not all of the legislation. Importance of the rule of law presents itself in Qutb's idea of legitimacy of government. The elected government, for Qutb, gains its legitimacy not only from the electorate, but also from its obedience as well as application of law (Qutb 1983: 14-15, 82; Qutb 1995: 113). Adherence to *shari'a* does not lead to theocratic government for Qutb because, an Islamic system is realized, not when the rulers are men of religion or clergy, but when the law rules.

Qutb makes a distinction between political and legal power. For him people are the only legitimate source of political power. Yet, when it comes to legal authority, it is not the people but *shari'a* rules. Allah had set certain limits and rules to obey, people have no right to change or challenge them. God's rules are the best fit to human's nature and only way to achieve peace and justice in the world. Men can only make laws if they do not conflict with the divine one or there is not any divine ruling on the issue. Qutb's unique among many Islamists that he believes that Quran does not need an interpretation or Muslims do not need a religious mans to understand Qur'an. All a Muslim needs to do is to live under the shades of Qur'an to understand it.

*Jahillyya* is another key term for Qutb to define a society where law does not rule. The original meaning of the term is historical and refers to both the condition of Arabs during pre-Islamic times, and being ignorant to the calls of the God. Qutb loads a new

meaning to the idea of *jahiliyya*. In his writings, the term came to define a socio-political order where a man rules over other men unlawfully. When he referred the *jahili* societies, Qutb uses two other concepts to define and explain what he means by *jahili* society, an unlawful political leadership: *Tagut* and *Tugyan*. *Tugyan* has to do with overstepping legal boundaries; whereas *tagut* seems to be associated with worshiping something other than God. Pharaoh<sup>68</sup> in Qutb's writings represents the arbitrary power of the state or the ruler who constantly tries to overstep the boundaries, whether imposed by his own system or by God, and inflict cruelty on the people he rules. In his stand against the Nasser regime, Qutb refers to Nasser in his writings as "Hubel," who is the pre-Islamic idol/God. Making the connection between Hubel and Nasser, Qutb aims to illustrate that to worship is not limited to godlike idols. The way people treat their leaders or the way the leaders demand to be treated can and do become an act of worship.

While Qutb's writings suggest that there are resemblances between Islam and democracy, he indicates mismatches between Islam and democracy. Having experienced colonialism and imperialism, Qutb approached cautious of western liberal democracy with caution, and questioned its ability to create a truly free and just society. In his work, Qutb frequently pointed out the connection between liberal democracy and capitalism. In fact, he equated democracy with capitalism: "capitalism which is also called democracy" (Kutub 1967: 34). He questions if it was ever possible to realize democracy's promise of equal liberty when the severe impact of capitalist wealth on politics was considered.

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<sup>68</sup> Pharaoh is a familiar figure for Muslims as it is for Jews and Christians.

Opposing capitalist democracy, Qutb claimed that Islam strived for realizing social or collective goals and means, which was against the very nature of capitalism. For him, to take equality and liberty seriously is to challenge the essence of capitalist ideology that claimed democratic values can be realized by individuals in a capitalist economy. He believed that equality, liberty, and justice for the people couldn't be realized in a world dominated by a capitalist economy. Parliamentary history in Egypt, Qutb argued, proves

“... that existing political parties are not there to protect the rights of the poor and underrepresented, but to protect the interest of the capitalists. No matter which party they belong to, if it is for the interests of the capitalists, the opposing parties forget their hostility and disagreements towards each other and unite... More than being a member of a certain party, the members of the parliament are capitalists.” (Kutub 1967: 165).

The parliament in a capitalist democracy is the parliament of the money patrons, not the people for Qutb.

When the parliament is not the peoples' but the capitalists', the law that parliament makes does not represent the will of the people. Rather, it is made by the capitalist masters to protect their rights. He finds it comical to talk about the rule of law and the benefits of the parliamentary system in a capitalist state. He argues that the state is protected by the laws, yet the interest of the state and the interests of the capitalist ruling elite is the same (Kutub 1967: 27). A capitalist system, for Qutb, produced two groups of people: profiteers who live in wealth and prosperity, and poor millions, and the poor has no say on the type of laws that are made in the parliament.

Qutb openly questions the basic assumptions of democracy in a capitalist system. He criticizes the systematic inequalities in income, wealth, and opportunity that



perpetuated in the Egyptian society. He presents these inequalities as outcomes of capitalist market relations. After depicting ever increasing poverty and the sufferings of the majority of the population in Egypt he asks,

“...who would believe the reality of the statements like ‘sovereignty belongs to the people’ or ‘the people has a right to elect and to be elected.’ Who would believe these idle talks? This is such a deception that it does not even worth to talk about it. Does sovereignty belong to this above-mentioned nation (Egypt)? Is it? Does sovereignty belong to this hungry, miserable, deceived, uneducated millions? Does it belong to the people who are crying for bread for days and nights, and is it for the poor powerless public who does not have a second to think about their right to elect and be elected? Does sovereignty belong to these millions of people who are left to choose whoever their master wants and refuse if the masters wish –since those masters are the ones that provide them with the means to survive- ? Does sovereignty belong to these people?” (Kutup 1967: 17)

Qutb furthermore questions the function of parties, elections and candidacies in making so-called “democracy” work in a capitalist state. He asks his readers to think about whom these parties represent in a capitalist democracy. “Take a good look at the constitution, to see prerequisites for being a candidate. These people are no other than the ones with a certain accumulation of wealth. Does any one of these downtrodden millions have a chance to be elected to the parliament?”(Kutup 1967: 164). He argues that in a capitalist state, the state represented by the people who own the means of production, not by all as democratic theory calls it.

Qutb is correct in arguing that in all “isms” there is a tendency in the ruling elite to misuse of power for their benefits. This belief comes from his experience with various regimes, monarchical parliamentary system, democratic system, capitalist system and

socialist systems. Throughout his life, he trusted the systems and saw them fail miserably which at the end turned him to not to trust men made systems but to the superiority of divinely originated systems. The main reason he offers for the failure of manmade systems and corrupt politicians or the intellectuals are the absence of solid religious and moral upbringing. However, Qutb fails to explain, at least convincingly, how such honest people are to come to power and what was there to guarantee that they are going to transfer that power back to the people. He seems to dismiss the fact that divine rules are at the end is interpreted by the men since God himself will not come to rule.

In relying on the religiosity of revolutionaries, Qutb fails to pay attention to the systematic checks and balances of power. Though he finely describes the rights and duties of people to rebel against an unjust and unlawful, therefore an illegal, ruler by several means including revolution, he fails to see that conflict between democratic principles and self-interest are inevitable in any type of rule (as it is true for western democracy). It is obvious that Qutb supposes a great deal of idealism/righteousness on from his leaders.

For Qutb, democracy cannot be separated from capitalist modernity, which is a distinctive worldview that tries to re-shape the world according to liberal principles. It is the capitalist nature of modern democracy that gives societies and states their distinctive character. This is the kind of democracy that Qutb criticizes and argues against. Islam, on the other hand, for Qutb,

“...represents a political system which would not allow concentration of capital, prevent social inequality, provide freedom of thought, and at the

same time will not ignore the spiritual needs of human. Islam is a system, which is characterized by its just stance when distributing justice, wealth, opportunity, labor, and wage... this system is not established by imitation... it is born out of our hopes and desires... it fits to our hearts and minds” (Kutub 1967: 47).

Seen from this perspective, Qutb’s writings suggest that Islam can make a better partner for democracy than capitalism ever has and could.

#### *Chapter 4 Conclusion*

Sayyid Qutb is one of the few Muslim intellectuals of the twentieth century who influenced and still continues to influence generations of committed Muslim throughout the Muslim world. According to Esposito and Voll (1996), Qutb’s influence went beyond his country of birth, Egypt, to the Arab world and to the Muslim world. In the view of many scholars, Qutb is referred as being one of the most compelling intellectuals of the Islamic revivalism for Muslims in the modern world. Smith (1957) presents Qutb as a person who transformed Islam to a dynamic force, which is characterized as being actively at work to produce answers to the problems of modernity.

As a product of colonialism and Egypt’s royal and military regimes, Qutb’s ideology was a reaction to modernity, western imperialism, and its modern extensions in Egypt at his time. Even if he did not want to confess it, he was not immune from the ideological influences of modernity. His ideas and solutions to the problems of post-colonial Muslim subjects were unique in the way they were an amalgam of authenticity and those of modernity. He provided Muslim activists and intellectuals with a vocabulary

that reflects political, social and economic concerns of 20<sup>th</sup> century Egypt in particular, but Muslim world in general.

In his writings, Qutb argued that Islam, as a political system, was better equipped than democracy itself to implement democratic values. As presented in the chapter, Qutb claimed that Islamic system of government is a valid and viable alternative to western democracy. In theorizing about democracy, he strongly stresses his belief that democracy in reality means more than having the right to vote. Democracy, for Qutb, endorses a just society, warrants the rights of the citizens. Yet, for Qutb, democracy also gives citizens certain responsibilities to guarantee its survival. The responsibilities that comes with a democratic system is as, if not more, vital as the rights that comes with it. Qutb called for constitutional government based on *shura* (representation), consultation, the rule of law, social justice, freedom, and protection of the rights if the individual. For Qutb, Islam was a complete system and an alternative that transcends the western models that, according to him, have proven themselves bankrupt.

## CHAPTER FIVE:

### CONCLUSION

This dissertation asserts that the departure point for treating the contested and problematic question of democracy in the Muslim world must be an exploration of how Muslims themselves understand, imagine, and view democracy. Thus, the question to be asked, I argue, is not whether democracy can flourish outside the western world. This framing is culturally specific and racialized. Instead, the appropriate question is whether and how the concept of democracy is understood, interpreted and transformed by Muslims like Qutb and Mawdudi. I argue that scholarly debates on democracy and Islam give insufficient attention to how democracy is conceptualized by Islamist intellectuals. Although we know much about secularist political configurations of democracy, Islamist configurations of political modernity have not previously been studied, except as abstract foils. Thus, Muslims' own perspectives are often ignored in democratic theory.

Some previous studies of the relationship between Islam and democracy (e.g., Moaddel (2002; 2005) and Kurzman (1999)) are more sociologically informed than others. As in these studies, I too move away from Islamic texts and essentialized culture. Further, in recovering the story of modernity in Islamic political thought, my dissertation confirms the important finding of this previous work that the conceptualization of democracy is best understood in particular, socio-political, economic, cultural, and historical contexts and not as a direct consequence of western influence or religious tradition. In the end, however, these foundational studies do not yet go far enough. More

is required to fully understand the relationship between Islam and democracy. In addition to considering the sociological context, it is also critical to understand how political Islamists re-present Islam, not as a religion in the western sense (otherworldly, conservative, and anti-modern), but as an ideology that is political, action-oriented and intimately tied to modern concepts like capitalism, nation states, etc. My dissertation moves beyond earlier work by creating a bridge between the rich contextual analyses it suggests and a critical post-modern perspective. In essence, I go further by allowing the two most prominent ideologues of political Islam to speak for themselves. By allowing Mawdudi and Qutb to speak, my analysis provides a survey of their contributions to democracy—contributions, which I have shown opened up the concept to a new set of critiques and methods of adaptation.

Specifically, I show that, for Qutb and Mawdudi, the western concept of democracy did not apply to the Muslim world; it had to be supplemented with indigenous forms of explanation and interpretation to make sense within existing political realities. Muslims, like many in the global South, encountered western democracy through colonial hegemony and then, after independence, through its active support or indifference to authoritarian rule. In many countries, Muslim intellectuals, like Mawdudi and Qutb, criticized this contradictory face of democracy. They questioned democracy's western foundations, and problematized the idea of democracy in the west as well as in their respective countries. They raised questions regarding certain dogmatic assumptions implicit in the concept, which they identified as part of the secularist/capitalist/colonialist

project. My analysis of Mawdudi and Qutb's works reveals that the western democratic model cannot and should not be replicated in the Muslim world because, at the economic level, it presumes capitalism, and at the social level, it presumes individualism and secularism.

### *Confronting an Essentializing Discourse*

The literature that deals with Islam and democracy usually carries a tone of pessimism, if not the idea of an impossible relationship - an oxymoron. As the leading intellectuals among this trend, Huntington, Lewis and Fukuyama in their works each took a substantialist approach by arguing that civilizations, e.g. Islamic or western, are autonomous, self-constituting, shutdown, and sealed off entities. Having unique characteristics, each civilization marks its place in a civilizational ladder with the west being at the top of this hierarchy of civilizations. This essentialist<sup>69</sup> project asks us to recognize Islam and the west as opposing ends of a spectrum since one, the West, represents the modern while the other, Islam, represents what is archaic and traditional.

As presented in the previous chapters, my dissertation fills the gap in the literature on democracy and Islam by taking a stand against this essentialist claim and offering a more sociological approach to the relationship between Islam and democracy. I argue that

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<sup>69</sup> As stated in the introduction chapter, Huntington's essentialist theory eventually make him to present democracy as "... a civilizational achievement of the Christian West and therefore not easily transferable to other civilizations or world religions other than through Western hegemonic imposition or through the conversion of Western norms." (Huntington 2003: 105). Thus, he claims Islamic mind and democracy are mutually exclusive.

the departure point for studying contested<sup>70</sup> and problematic questions like democracy in the Muslim world must be an exploration of how Muslims themselves (ordinary citizens, intellectuals, or even politicians) understand, imagine, and view democracy. Following Said's lead in *Orientalism* and Spivak's influential work "Can the Subaltern Speak?," in this dissertation, I aimed to give voice to the subaltern. I open a space for these voices by analyzing the perspectives of the leading intellectuals (Mawdudi and Qutb) of political Islam in the Sunni world postcolonial era.

### *The Voices of Muslim Intellectuals*

The conflict between liberal democracy and its critics like socialism, describes much of the history of the last century of the world. It is during this time that liberal democracy became a key value and a political structure that has been extended its impact to every corners of the world. Yet, it is in the same era that we observed the emergence

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<sup>70</sup> Democracy is an institutional term that represents a historical range of projects since its first appearance in Athenian politics. As such, How a polity combines democracy? What type of democracy? Whose democracy? Who is to have a right to vote? Who or which groups are to be excluded from political process? or How democratic it is going to be? Depend on its traditions, values, history, its problems and needs. This reality makes democracy a deeply contested concept. When I refer democracy as a contested concept, I mean to stress that it is a concept such that "... any use of it in a social or political context presupposes a specific understanding of a whole range of other contextually related concepts whose proper uses are no less disputed and which lock together so as to compose a single, identifiable conceptual framework" (Gray 1977: 332). And that its "criteria of correct application ... [is] multiple, evaluative, and in no settled relation of priority with one another" (Gray 1977: 332). In other words, I would like to stress that we cannot simply ignore how we come to make a meaning of an idea is a deeply political, normative and ideological matter, since all conceptual definitions are "bound up with complex political, ethical and ideological lines of contestation" (Gray 1977: 77). Thus, to insist on universality of Western democracy (as Huntington, Fukuyama and others does), is to deny the experience of the Western democracy of its own history and the idea of democracy its principle characteristics of respect for diversity.



of powerful challengers to liberal democracy from both the right and the left wings of the political spectrum. Muslim intellectuals with their religiously-based political ideology and indigenous conceptualization of democracy represent only one group of challengers. Mawdudi, the founder and main ideologue of Jamaati Islami, Pakistan, and Sayyid Qutb, the main ideologue of Muslim Brotherhood are two important representatives of these intellectuals. This dissertation presented an understanding of the political thoughts of the founders of these two major Islamic movements of the world in an attempt to provide a window into their own understanding of their religio-political worldview. I concentrated on these intellectual/activists whose readings of Islam as a religion, and Islam's relation to modernity and to political action has shaped the commitments of generations of Muslim throughout the world then and now.

As highly influential figures in their countries as well as of the Islamic world, Mawdudi and Sayyid Qutb initiated fundamental turning points in modern history between East and West. Although it might come as a surprise to many, they are the ones who proposed the common denominators (like Jahiliyya, hakimiyya, theodemocracy) that today guide Muslim social and political thought. In this dissertation, I approached their writings with a particular set of purposes: (1) to explore how they conceptualized the idea of democracy, (2) how was this conceptualization shaped, and (3) how it differs from the western idea of democracy. The quest to find answers to these questions carries us into a centrality of Islam in the political theories of these intellectuals. Considering that their lifetimes coincide with the end of the colonial era, wars of independence, and the

emergence of nation states throughout the Islamic world, the centrality of politics in their everyday experiences as Muslims, the dissertation argued, should not be surprising or read as a sign of fundamentalism or radicalism. In this sense, intellectual production, adapting a phrase from Marx, occurs not under the circumstances of one's own choosing but it is the results of conditions directly given and inherited. Their demands for establishing a state where the rule of law (*shari'a*) is upheld; their definition of a "good life" where there exist free and equal conditions for participating in politics, and their requirement that leaders are selected via fair elections represent personal struggles that they experienced in their intellectual quests.

In examining how democracy is conceptualized in the works of Mawdudi and Qutb, the dissertation based itself in Asad's (1986) idea of Islam as a discursive tradition framework. In addition, in narrating their stories, I used Stryker's (1996) strategic narrative method, which allowed me to analyze the conceptualizations of democracy produced at the intersection of their life biographies, national and international events and dominant political and intellectual perspectives. Combining the strategic narrative method with Asad's framework<sup>71</sup> allowed me to use Mawdudi and Qutb's

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<sup>71</sup> Asad argued that, when studying any religion, a researcher needs to keep in mind that its rationality and styles of reasoning is embedded in its texts, history and institutions. Anyone wishing to argue within that tradition must start with them, even if only to argue against them. Islam as a discursive tradition kept me within the framework to think the texts does not give meaning without contexts. Meaning does not come from texts but how those texts are contested in different contexts, which allows re-reading of the text in order to situate meaning in relation to time and place. Moreover, the framework gives the religious subject their autonomy back by "claiming that the arguments and discourses of the *thinking* subjects with their specific styles of reasoning couched in their historical and material context which is then become the focus of the analysis of the researcher." (Anjur 2007: 662)

conceptualizations of democracy to interrogate, dislodge and unsettle the dominant trend in the literature that studies Islam. It allowed me to see Islam not as a fixed or ahistorical social system but rather, a relationship with certain foundational texts and particular historical narratives. This in turn helped me to avoid the essentialist tone when analyzing the work of the two Islamists.

*Modernity<sup>72</sup> in the Works of Mawdudi and Qutb*

As shown in the previous chapters, when theorizing about democracy from a subaltern perspective, both Mawdudi and Qutb imagined a form of modern state that is not secular yet modern. (Both Mawdudi and Qutb were also against theocratic government and were in a constant struggle with the *ulama* and their monopoly on religion). Yet, at the same time, Mawdudi and Qutb's thoughts are a radical critique of not only western imperialism, and colonialism or modernity, but also of other modern forms of sovereignty (like secularism, socialism, capitalism) and the western epistemology that justifies universalizing them by denying agency and legitimacy to their dissidents. Not only their dissidence to these modern impositions but also their conscious efforts to create political and legal systems that are modern yet homegrown, are what make Mawdudi and Qutb the ideological bedrock of Sunnism. More systematically than any other intellectuals before them, Mawdudi and Qutb aimed to establish a system that is at odds with dominant ideologies –e.g. capitalism, socialism- of the world. Criticizing

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<sup>72</sup> Modernity should be read here as modern forms of sovereignty, which includes democracy but not limited to it.

the slavish imitation of western democracies, they recommended a political system based on local representation. They believed that governments would achieve greater legitimacy if the political structure and language of politics were in line with the culture and beliefs of the people. For them, it was essential to include ordinary people in the affairs of government and politics, both as political activists and as conscious citizens who are needed to establish a strong political structure.

Just as western democracies, liberal or other kinds, are formulated to cope with and the outcomes of the political crises of industrialized and individualistic western societies, the realities of Pakistan and Egypt also shaped and defined what democracy meant and how it was conceptualized by Mawdudi and Qutb. Social, political and economic realities of each country together with the major global events that took place during the lifetime of the two intellectuals shaped and re-shaped what democracy meant for each. Being a colonial subject, living through the times of abolishment of the Caliphate and the Ottoman Empire, experiencing the establishment of a new state, Pakistan, separation of Bangladesh from Pakistan and highly patriotic mode the country and his movement was in, the presence of a constant enemy, India, and last but not least the weak and corrupt national state were, as explained in the chapter on Mawdudi, the main issues that shaped his conceptualization of democracy, making it more accommodating and process based. Qutb on the other hand experienced the oppression of a strong nationalist state, which had no regard for law, and observed high levels of inequalities and poverty in Egypt. World War II, the presence of British soldiers, the

establishment of the state of Israel and the wars with Israel, independence movements of African Muslim nations like Sudan and the west's unconsidered or oppositional attitude towards the independence and freedom movements, were the issues that shaped Qutb's conceptualization of democracy. In response to these events, his conception of democracy became more revolutionist and action oriented.

Modernity, which includes modern forms of politics, was recognized by Qutb and Mawdudi, as by many colonial intellectuals, as a discourse that privileges western cultural and moral dispositions, defines political in terms of western cultural and historical experiences, while positioning itself as superior and universal. The language of modernity commonly perceived Islam and Muslim thinkers as "the others" of the western world, and defined them as fundamentalist, anti-historical or ahistorical, (Roy 1994; Pipes 2000; Fukuyama 2001; Berman 2003). This dissertation argued that modern Islamic thought, which Mawdudi and Qutb represent, can be seen as a reaction to this kind of "othering" and the way the modern world order is organized and imposes itself on the non-western world. It is within this context that we need to read and understand their intellectual projects.

Yet, it is also the argued in this dissertation that it not right to see Mawdudi and Qutb's works (just like other Islamist's works) as a simple clash with modernity or a total rejection of it. It is more of an attempt to accommodate modernity within historical experience of Muslims, and Islamic identity, culture. When we consider the authentic discourses of modernization through the works of Mawdudi and Qutb, we realize that the

politicization of language was not a unique occurrence but part of a general trend of response to modernity, just like Nietzsche's and Heidegger's works were. Moreover, Qutb and Mawdudi did not only present an alternative to western political theories but also to traditional Islamic ones. Their alternative theories manifested themselves in the idea of *tawhid*, the oneness of God, as well as other Islamic theology oriented words that they both loaded political meanings into and used them efficiently according to the needs and realities of their countries.

#### *Transforming Democracy for the Modern Islamic Context*

In conceptualizing democracy in the context of Muslim politics, both Mawdudi and Qutb focused on issues like the rule of law<sup>73</sup>, freedom, liberty, elections, right to vote, party politics and multi party system, parliamentary system, sovereignty, legislative authority, and the state's right to legislate. Although they both wrote about the participation of the masses in governance, the real problem for them was the recognition of a common man in the democratic system. They rejected theories of democracy and democratization literature in which democracy is constructed for secular and capitalist societies, or aimed at maintaining these characteristics, or project a capitalist and secular direction of change. Mawdudi and Qutb, just like many other Muslim intellectuals (e.g

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<sup>73</sup> Both Mawdudi and Qutb mistrusted to the state claiming that its policies directly reflects the personal preferences of the ruler. For Qutb, the rule of Nasser, thought it was not dynastic or wholly absolute, in Egypt was representative of such a state polices where laws were born out of personal preferences. They believed that creating a just and harmonious society was only possible through instituting Shari'a.

Banna, Muhammad Iqbal, Said Nursi) of their time, focused in their writings on the need to create a moral community where Islam as a system plays a crucial role. As presented in the previous chapters, in their writings, Islam was presented not as a religion in the western sense of the world, which is other worldly and personal affair, but as a comprehensive ideological system covering politics, society, and economy.

Mawdudi's and Qutb's vision of democracy suggests that both liberal and socialist forms of democracy have run their course and fallen into the traps of modernity which gave birth to them. Therefore, what is needed is a system in which values such as the rule of law and the protection of human rights are guaranteed, differences of culture, religion and historical circumstances are respected rather than denied, and certain assumptions of western democratic theory such as secularism and capitalism are questioned. Understood in this way, we may say that they saw such a system as an open-ended vision of an equal and socially just world, and their efforts as struggle / jihad (both ideological as well as practical) to create homegrown expressions of democratic vision. They emphasized the match between the cultural meanings, values, and beliefs of Islam and democracy (defined as a constitutional rule where the leaders are elected for a period of time by the people through fair elections).

Both Qutb and Mawdudi, like many Muslim intellectuals before them e.g. Abduh, Afghani, Rida, contended that being Muslim is not a mere theological submission to God, as understood by traditional or modern thinkers, but also a political stance. Both Qutb and Mawdudi agreed on the idea that participating in politics was an obligation for Muslims.

Islam was, like all other revolutions of God that came before Islam (e.g. Christianity or Judaism), a vehicle for revolution, renewal and transformation of political, social and economic structures to create a just society. Moreover, Islam represented a revolution against all (Muslim as well as non-Muslim) unjust political and religious manifestations. For both of scholars, revolution was a necessary ingredient for renewal and aimed to bring justice and happiness. It was not the presence of the idea of revolution but the absence of it that was the problem for Qutb and Mawdudi. They both inferred the absence of revolution as a sign of laziness and political stagnation. That is why revolution becomes a moral responsibility for them, since it is instrumental in not only creating but also maintaining Muslim society through education, culture, government, and politics. Yet, while for Mawdudi revolution was revolution through non-violent means, this is not necessarily true for Qutb. Qutb was of a belief that, under repression, Muslims should defend their rights against the oppressor no matter if he was Muslim or non-Muslim.

The dissertation showed that Mawdudi and Qutb wanted to create a society based on Islam as a system. They did not completely reject the ideas of modernity but were reluctant to accept (at least consciously) western principles and insisted on "Islamic authenticity." They created their own terminologies to establish first the type of society and then the system that they deemed Islam came to create. They specifically refrain from using western terminology like republican, democratic, or socialist to define that system. Since according to them, only denominator for the proposed system was an



Islamic system. Thus, they created their vernacular political language and terminology to work with.

### *Differences in the Approaches of Mawdudi and Qutb*

Notwithstanding their agreements on many issues regarding what democracy is and how it is to work out in a Muslim majority country, there are still some differences between Qutb and Mawdudi. Mawdudi is more elitist in his theory than Qutb is. For Mawdudi, reform and change can come from above. The change starts from educated, elite, and power holders downward to people. But for Qutb, the direction of change is bottom up. That is why when we read Qutb and his idea of democracy, it has its argument regarding the destruction of wealth and privilege in order to transform society into a more just and equal system. Mawdudi's theory on the other hand, by being downward movement, maintains existing structures. While the direction of change is from above, Mawdudi refrains from government's control on economy. On the other hand, for Qutb, an ideal system with democratic governing would intervene to remove inequality and excessive wealth accumulation in the hands of some. The government's taking an active role to secure equal starting points to its citizens is crucial for Qutb to establish and maintain a just society.

One of the aims in this dissertation was to argue against the understanding that there is a monolithic Islamic tradition, a single uniform culture called Islam that reacts uniformly to projects of modernization throughout the Islamic world. Just as Christianity

itself was a product of multiple identities and traditions, Islam, as any religious tradition, is a site of contestation that is informed by the cultural, political, and historical context in which it is located. Thus Mawdudi and Qutb are interesting because their writings tell the story of political modernization in Pakistan and Egypt. Their narratives present not a personal tale but assume a transcendental voice speaking for history. It is crucial to realize and remember the fact that Islamism, as in every "ism," is multifaceted and may not be understood through a single lens. The dynamisms and the character of the Islamism in a country tend to follow the fluctuations of global and local politics. As presented in previous chapters, while Mawdudi's vision of society, politics, and governance was product of the ancient regime and the colonial era, Qutb's vision was more focused on the military originated nationalist socialist state in a post colonial Egypt. This historical reality changed and shaped their political theories, the issues that they deemed as important and their approach to democracy. While Qutb was trying to limit the all powerful state and its intrusion into every aspect of social life, Mawdudi was for the establishment of a strong Pakistani state which would then help to Islamize the people but also can protect itself from foreign enemies like India. One of his main interests in his political theory is to ensure the survival of the state of Pakistan and to make it as an exemplary system of government.

*Last Words*

The concept of democracy was and still is highly politicized in the Muslim world as a result of the ways that Muslim world's encountered European modernity and also because of the way postcolonial regimes acted with the idea. We need to remember that due to the colonial experience of the Muslim world in general, and in Pakistan and Egypt in particular, the concepts like modernity, capitalism, nationalism, and democracy are read as organically linked with colonialism, and as extensions of European attempt to expand and dominate over the colonial world. During and after the colonial regimes, these institutions are used to cover tyrannical regimes that are supported by the old-colonial authorities. Such acts of the new states pushed people and intellectuals away from western concepts to find and establish indigenous institutions that can be used to counterbalance the imported political, social and economic systems of the newly founded republics of the Muslim world. This is why this dissertation looks at the quests of these Muslim activists as a quest for liberation from state oppression as well as western imposed ways of thinking and acting. Mawdudi and Qutb just like many other Muslim intellectuals and activists of then and now, experienced oppression at the hands of authoritarian but "democratic" national governments, or observed and experienced injustices that are done to them in the name of democracy. Their logical conclusion was that democracy had noble ideas in it but also had its flaws and was being used as an ideology of exclusion and repression<sup>74</sup>. The fact that the West both proudly proclaimed

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<sup>74</sup> Democracy was seen as exclusionist by most Islamists since the overall argument in the site of liberal democrats is and was that Islam and democracy cannot go together thus an Islamist

itself as democratic yet, openly supported the authoritarian regimes like general Ayub Khan in Pakistan, or the Nasser regime in Egypt, only served to delegitimize liberal democracy as an ideal type of government even further in the eyes of Mawdudi and Qutb. The remedy according to Qutb and Mawdudi was then to utilize religious language in their activism. This provided them with an avenue to challenge the autocratic state. “If *shura*, for instance, is a *Qur’anic* doctrine, and if the state does not refer to people’s choices, then the state is illegitimate. The regionalization of democracy in the form of *shura* is a quest for popular empowerment vis-à-vis the oppressive state. This form of popular empowerment, derived from a *Qur’anic* doctrine, offsets the power of the state, derived from its coercive power.” (Moussali 1992: 298). Any study of democracy and democratization not only in the Muslim context, but also in others must take this reality into consideration.

There is a tendency in the literature that analyzes democratization in the non-western societies by reading the history backwards and from a historical point of view. There exists, in these studies an implicit and common assumption that West has always been liberal and democratic. Yet, Europe’s political organization was a process, and not always a pleasant one as Nader Hashemi says, “fascism and communism should be regarded not as exceptions to the general rule of democracy, but as alternative forms of government that attracted millions of Europeans by offering different solutions to challenges of the modern world.” (Hashemi 2003: 576).

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democratic party cannot be legitimized. In other world, Islamic Democratic Party was /is an oxymoron for many liberal democrats in the Muslim world as well as in the non-Muslim world.

In analyzing the original works of Muslim intellectuals from a comparative historical perspective, this dissertation showed how they were supportive of the idea of democracy as a modern political institution. Nevertheless, they realized that they had to create a native form of it, rejecting some aspects of democracy, but accepting others when those fit with the realities and needs of their respective countries. According to these intellectuals, democracy cannot be described as a secular politics. But of course it is not theocracy either. They both believe that secular politics de-moralizes of politics and brings out love of power and position in humans. The only way to control the authority's urge to hold on the power, for them, is to accept a higher authority, the God. By grounding their democratic theory on religious morality, they included a moral obligation and motivation as necessary parts of democracy. Democracy in their worldview meant respecting different interpretations and nuance differences as long as it upholds the rule of law, the rulers are elected by the people and can be changed by the people, and freedom of thought and association is granted. Qutb also adds social justice as an essential variable for democracy. He argues that if people are discriminated or privileged based on who they are or what they own, or the state is not responsible for its citizen's economic rights as their individual rights it is not possible to talk about democracy.

How a polity combines democracy depends on its history, traditions, values, problems and needs. Democracy has evolved and still continues to evolve its distinct form in the west. This study argues that this is to be the so, in that non-western countries also needs to and have a right to form their own democratic understanding. This

dissertation argued that, by studying Mawdudi and Qutb, we can learn local interpretations and attempts to make the idea of democracy fit on foreign soils. The political sociology literature should engage in a dialogue with Islamist intellectuals and try to include and learn from their critique and analyses of democracy. In sum, both Mawdudi and Qutb embraced modernity and endeavored to use the legacies of their faith to form an alternative political modernity that included core democratic principles but had more potential to create a just society.

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