Political Islam and Democracy: Moderation and the Islamic Revival Party of Tajikistan?

Dissertation

zur Erlangung des akademischen Grades

Dr. phil.

genehmigt durch die
Fakultät für Humanwissenschaften
der Otto-von-Guericke-Universität Magdeburg

von: Adzhamsho Kalonov M.A.

geb. am   20. März 1981 in Bergbadachschan

Gutachter: Prof. Dr. K.-Peter Fritzsche
Gutachter: Apl. Prof. Dr. Heiko Schrader

Eingereicht am: 14. Mai 2019

Verteidigung der Dissertation am: 30. Juni 2020

ABBREVIATIONS

All-Union IRP   All Union Islamic Renaissance (or Revival) Party

AKP/JDP   (Turkish: *Adalet ve Kalkinma Partisi)* Justice and Development Party

DPT   Democratic Party of Tajikistan

GBAO   Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Oblast of Tajikistan

KGB   *Komityet Gosudarstvennoy Bezopasnosti* (Russian: Комитет государственной безопасности (**КГБ**) translated as Committee for State Security **KNB** – Committee for National Security (main intelligence agency in the Republic of Tajikistan)

IMU   Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan

IRMT   Islamic Renaissance (or Revival) Movement of Tajikistan

IRPT or IRP   Islamic Renaissance (or Revival) Party of Tajikistan

OSCE   Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe

SADUM   Spiritual Administration of the Muslims of Central Asia and Kazakhstan (SADUM), the official governing body for Islamic activities

SSR   Soviet Socialist Republic

UN   United Nations

USSR   Union of Soviet Socialist Republics; alternately referred to as "the Soviet Union"

USA   United States of America; alternately abbreviated as "US"

UTO   United Tajik Opposition, an alliance between the Tajik democratic organizations and the Islamic Renaissance Party of Tajikistan

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

Over the last several decades, especially since the final quarter of the twentieth century, the impact of Islam or political Islam has become incredibly visible in politics. Due to the rise of Islamic actors in politics, delusional and prophetic predictions about modernity with regard to the future of secularization, which claim that "the more a society becomes modern, the more its religious traditions decline", have failed in Muslim societies; this is one striking counter-example of the secularization thesis (Esposito, 1997, p. 3).

However, it should be noted that "there is no single pattern of interaction between religion and politics in Islam, but rather several competing ones" (Yavuz and Esposito, 2003, p. xvii). The world of political Islam, especially since 1991, has "[become] significantly diverse. It encompasses everyone from the terrorists' Islamic groups who flew planes into the World Trade Center to peacefully elected governments" (Wittes, 2008, p.1).

The mainstream, that is, largest, group of Islamists today is widely known as moderate. Presently, in most Muslim countries, from Indonesia to Morocco, these so-called moderate Islamic parties participate in democratic processes and most of them have already won several seats in their national parliaments; some of them have even ascended to power. The so-called 'Arab Spring' has drastically altered domestic and regional politics. Islamists, once the long-standing victims of Arab regimes, have become the new rulers in Egypt (for [a] short time), Tunisia, and Morocco" (Al-Anani, 2013, p. 30). Many moderate Islamist parties, meanwhile, "came to the forefront of the political struggle obtaining significant electoral victories at the polls" (Yilmaz, 2010-11, p. 9). According to Al-Anani, and certain other experts, the "West should not consider moderate Islamists as a threat any more, but potential partners", since these actors now "try to achieve their goals through gradual reform within the framework of existing political institutions" (Al-Anani, 2010, p. iii). According to this literature, the inclusion of mainstream Islamists and their participation in political contestation is the main incentive that encourages them to become moderate.

Without doubt, moderate Islamists, who are the "most relevant to discussions of democratic change" (Wittes, 2008, p. 9), have given hope to many liberals, both in the West and in Muslim countries, which have been concerned about the future destiny of modern democratic values. Therefore, according to Haqqani, "[m]uch of the debate about liberal democracy's future in

Arab countries focuses on the extent to which the Islamists might be moderated by their inclusion in the democratic process" (Haqqani, 2013, p.5).

However, there are groups of scholars, such as Bassam Tibi, Daniel Piples, Baran Zeyno and John Kelsay, who are suspicious of the sincerity of these so-called moderate Islamists. They assert that moderates and militant Islamists differ from each other "in means, not in goals", since both groups have the same aim, that is, to create "[a] *shari'a*-based order" (Tibi 2012, p. 121), which is incompatible with democracy. According to them, these so-called moderates "are uncommitted to democratic norms and seek to exploit electoral processes to achieve non-democratic ends" (Schwedler, 2006, p. 1). Therefore, they think that the Islamists' "participation in democratic institutions raises [a] dilemma" (Tibi, 2012, p. 98) for democracy itself.

1.2 Selection of Case Study

This thesis will examine the Islamic Revival Party of Tajikistan, which has been the only legal Islamic party in post-Soviet Central Asia between 1999 and 2015, and is similar to other so-called moderate Islamic parties in the Middle East. Indeed, since the signing of the peace agreement, and the inclusion of the IRPT into the political process in 1997, this party has gradually moved away from its revolutionary radical agenda and changed its tactics as well as strategy in favour of moderation[1]. Therefore, the image of political Islam has gradually changed in the eyes of both international and local observers in Tajikistan, and many have begun to consider them moderate. The insights and behavior of the young chairman of the IRPT, Muhiddin Kabiri, has especially changed the minds of many observers, both in Washington and in Moscow.

---

[1] Prior to this, the Tajik Islamists, as key players in internal Tajik politics, were mostly known as a militant fundamentalist group. For example, following the disintegration of the USSR in the early 1990s, "in the turmoil of civil war and under conditions of weak central control" (Epkenhans, 2010, p. 329), the IRPT was a very influential radical movement with fundamentalist views which actively attempted to Islamize the state and society in Tajikistan. Due to their significant role in internal politics in the early 1990s, as well as due to their close ties with Iran, some foreign observers – such as Ahmad Rashid – even believed that "the green flag of Islam, with the Crescent and Star and the Kalma or creed of Islam" will be the "most potent symbol of the future in Dushanbe [Tajikistan's capital]" (Rashid, 1994, p. 159). Therefore, American diplomats in Central Asia in the 1990s repeatedly tried to convince Central Asian elites, including Tajiks (the Islamists were for short time part of the coalition government), "to follow the path of Turkey rather than that of Iran" (Rashid,1994, p. 159) , as they feared that Central Asia might face radicalization and that "Iranian-inspired fundamentalism would spread and destabilize the region" (Khalid, 2007, p. 143).

Even though some clearly do not believe in the Tajik Islamists' compromise with secular modern norms, most intellectuals, including pro-government politicians, have often talked of the importance of peace between both sides as a positive example; and the Tajik Islamists' participation in the political process has even been considered significantly important for their further moderation, as well as for security in the region. Notwithstanding civilizational misunderstandings between the Islamists and the secularists in the early years after the civil war, many believed that a solution to the 'dilemma of distrust' is possible (Seifert, 2005, p. 17). With regard to above-mentioned arguments, in one of his articles, the former head of the Strategic Research Centre under the President of Tajikistan, Suhrob Sharipov, a well-known secular intellectual in Tajikistan, wrote that he considered the Tajik Islamo-secular peace experience to be quite a unique[2] example in the search for a universal model of coexistence between religious parties and the secular state (Rahnamo, 2011, p. 171).

However, at the same time there are many who have always been sceptical about the moderation of the IRPT, and have criticized the IRPT as being an anti-modern, anti-democratic party (Muhabbatov, 2012). Since 2012, especially after the Arab Spring, the dilemma of distrust increased and dialogue between the Islamists and the secularists reached a crisis point. However, it seems that the majority of criticism of the IRPT has been based on fear and hate, as well as aversion and illusion, rather than challenging it through the deep analysis of their actions and thoughts (see: Yodgor, n.d; Nurzoda, 2015; Qudrat, 2011). Therefore, the aim of this dissertation is to comprehensively investigate to what extent the Tajik Islamists have changed their behaviour or not in accordance with contrasting models of moderation theory.

1.3 The purpose of the Study

Taking into consideration the above discussions, the main purpose of this study is to examine the IRPT's ideological change, which happened after its inclusion into the political process in an attempt to identify their moderation as either tactical or ideological. Identifying the IRPT's main challenges, with a focus on their commitment to democratic principles in an attempt to measure their moderation, also falls within the scope of this research. Finding out the main

---

[2] It should be noted that the IRPT is, in many cases, unique. For example, the IRPT, unlike almost all other Islamists in the world, emerged under the very harsh authoritarian and atheistic regime of the former Soviet Union. The Tajik Islamists are part of a country that had been under Russian control for several decades, and is landlocked between two global powers, Russia and China, that both consider radical Islamism to be the main threat to their own stability. Generally speaking, all factors and facts noted above have had a specific impact on the behaviour of the Tajik Islamists, and also their evaluation toward both moderation and radicalization.

factors that led to the IRPT toward tactical moderation, with a focus on the inclusion-moderation hypothesis, is the other main task of this dissertation.

As already mentioned above, this research focuses on the Islamic Revival Party of Tajikistan (IRPT). The current study does not investigate the entire history of the party, but rather concentrates on pivotal periods in its history. The exploration mostly embraces the years after 1999, following the IRPT's inclusion into the political process, until the subsequent exclusion of political Islam from internal Tajik politics in 2015. However, this research begins by providing the reader with general information on the role of Islam, and Islamic actors in Tajikistan, and broadly describes the history of the IRPT, inclusive of its ideological transformation from 1973 until 2015. Describing the previous positions of the IRPT and their radical historical role is important to demonstrate the extent to which they have changed after their inclusion into the political process. While investigating the ideology of the IRPT, this study also focuses both on the members as well as leaders of the party. Nevertheless, primary research is mostly focused on the official documents of the party and the ideas of the IRPT leadership.

1.4 The main Questions and Sub-questions

The current study advocates two main questions with several sub-questions:

1. To what extent has political Islam in Tajikistan (via the IRPT) become moderate or been successful at moderating its discourse and ideology after its inclusion into the political process? One can ask this question differently: To what extent has the IRPT moved away from its old illiberal positions following its inclusion into the political process, as can specifically be observed over a number of years through changes in their support for violence, declaring *jihad*, and their intended implementation of *Shari'a*, as based on their conservative and fundamentalist reading of religious texts?

2. What are the main factors that have led political Islam in Tajikistan toward moderation, in accordance with the inclusion-moderation hypothesis?

1.4.1 Sub-questions of the Research Questions

If they have either entirely or partly become moderate, then is their moderation strategic as well as ideological, or tactical and behavioural? Did their moderation occur on the individual level or as a collective group? What are the main challenges for the IRPT in the context of modern democratic principles? Do their challenges demonstrate that their moderation is a tactical or political manoeuvre, that is, an example of temporal pragmatism toward real politics? Has the IRPT genuinely internalized democracy? Is their ideology compatible with secular democracy? Which causal mechanisms and factors have had a considerable impact on the tactical or behavioural moderation of the Tajik Islamists? Are there processes or mechanisms that demonstrate the ideological moderation of Tajik Islamists?

However, in order to find out the proper and persuasive answer to the above-mentioned questions, first we need to explain the definition of the concept of moderation and/or the term 'moderate', which is very problematic. These concepts have been interpreted differently by scholars, as discussed in the next section, in which further information about the concept of moderation is included and expanded upon.

1.5 Islamists' Moderation

The concept of moderation, as with many other phenomena in the social sciences, have been variably interpreted. Primarily, the concept of moderation is discussed in the study of party politics. Furthermore, one discovers the rhetoric of "moderates and radicals…in modernization theory and the democratic transitions literature, where binaries such as hard-liners/soft-liners, technocrats/theocrats, reformers/conservatives, and reformers/stand-patters are common" (Schwedler, 2011, pp. 348-349).

According to transition literature, those "who support an elite-led transition" are moderate. Moderate groups and actors are sometimes considered to be pro-democratic, but "the term is most often used to describe those who don't rock the boat: moderates may advocate for democratization…but ultimately they accept limited reform that protect the power bases of the current elites" (Schwedler, 2011, p. 350), even if it is non-democratic.

On the other hand, as has already been mentioned, those who "demand substantive systemic change and strongly oppose...power", are considered in transition literature to be radicals, but in this case "the real democratizers may be the radicals" since they want to radically change a non-democratic regime into a democracy. Therefore, in the 1960s and 1970s, "the terms radical and progressive were often linked in reference to leftist and pro-democratic movements"

5

(Schwedler, 2011, p. 351), since they endeavoured to overthrow repressive and undemocratic regimes in the third world countries[3].

In the case of Islamists there are also various definitions proposed by scholars. For example, according to some like Schwedler, only those "who seek gradual change by working within [the] existing system" in favour of democratization can be considered as 'moderate'; those who wanted to overthrow the system, especially through violence, were described as 'radical' (Schwedler, 2006, p. 8). Some scholars, such as Wickham, give wider definitions, and claim that moderation "entails a shift toward a substantive commitment to democratic principles, including the peaceful alternation of power, ideological and political pluralism, and citizenship rights" (Wickham, 2004, p. 206). There are also experts, such as Graham Fuller, who have gone further by using the term "liberal Islamists" (Fuller, 2003, pp. 50-56) and tried to "equate liberalization with moderation" (Marzui n.J, p. 3).

1.5.1 Complexity of "Moderate" as a Concept

However, it seems the term moderate is not able to identify clearly that the whole complexity of Islamist movements consists of various factions and therefore "suffers from a high degree of imprecision" (Wickham, 2013, p. 5). For example, "Islamist leadership on an individual level may hold moderate views at the top, but the [grassroots] members and supporters may easily hold moderate views on some issues but radical views on others" (Schwedler, 2011, p. 351). Ambiguity among Islamists' voices also make this issue more problematic, as one may support democracy in one audience and reject it in another. Tamara Wittes (2008, p. 7) also challenged such criteria or "definitional minimalism" by asking questions such as "how to classify groups that do not themselves engage in violence but who condone, justify, or even actively support the violence of others" on the moderate-radical continuum[4].

This dissertation also uses the terms 'moderate' and 'radical' in order to illustrate the positions of the Tajik Islamists toward democracy and democratic norms. To be precise, this means that the more Islamists become close to the ideal of the modern democratic system and reject violence, the more they will be considered moderate. Moderate Islamists are defined in this dissertation as those who have already condemned violence; deeply believe in peaceful

---

[3] The term 'Global South' is the somewhat controversial terminology which is now used, instead of the more problematic 'Third World' that was widely used during the 1960s and 1970s.

[4] Some experts have interpreted moderation as a process, "whereby groups move along a gradient toward their eventual integration within the state's legal process", rather than as a category (Alidina, n.J, p.2).

participation in the political process; and who have sincerely adopted democratic procedures, such as electoral politics, or have ideologically internalized the primary principles of democracy, such as fundamental freedoms, citizenship, minority rights, and pluralism. In other words, moderates are not those who have generally declared that they accept democracy, but rather, are those who have ideologically justified their commitment.

In order to clarify the complexity of the term moderation, this study generally divides moderation "into two dimensions – [tactical or] ***behavioural moderation*** (which denotes change in the Islamists' behaviour in terms of adaptation to the regime's overall rules of the game) and ***ideological moderation*** (which denotes substantive change in ideological stances)" (Pevna, 2014, p. 1-2). More concretely, this dissertation asserts that this behavioural change occurs especially when a party adopts the instruments or procedures of the modern democratic system such as electoral politics. By the term "ideological moderation", this study means the adaptation and/or adoption of basic liberal democratic values, such as fundamental freedoms and human rights, not only through general official declarations but also through substantive ideological transformations.

1.6 Contribution of the Study

First and foremost, the current study intends to be the only comprehensive research, especially in English, which solely focuses on the IRPT, and aims to provide extensive analytical data for later researchers regarding the ideological transformation of the IRPT. It is clear that the current study focuses on a particular period of time and analyses the ideological transformation of the IRPT from this party's inclusion in the political process from 1999 until its exclusion in 2015.

Nevertheless, the significance of this work is its wide discussion of the IRPT's political history insofar as the ideology and policies of this erstwhile legal Central Asian Islamic party within the post-Soviet sphere is concerned. The history as well as the ideology of the IRPT has only been sporadically explored, and even then, primarily within the field of comparative political studies or within civil war literatures. However, the second and most important scientific contribution of the current study is that it provides the reader with extensive analytical data on the contemporary post-civil war ideology of the IRPT, especially their positions regarding modern liberal democratic values, in an attempt to assess to which extent, they have moved away from their old illiberal positions. The current research focuses on a specified period in the history of the IRPT which hitherto seems to have not been exhaustively explored within

academic literatures. In general, the IRPT's ideology and its attitude toward modern norms has been not discussed in depth.

Another characteristic of this study is it focus upon a discussion of the IRPT's attitude toward democracy, which illustrates the main challenges of the IRPT with regards to modern norms in an attempt to measure the level of moderation of the IRPT, since it appears as though no comprehensive discourse analysis exists to challenge the alleged moderation of the IRPT with respect to the core tenets of democracy. It is the contention of this dissertation that the majority of scholars who have labelled this group as either 'moderate' or 'radical' have selectively highlighted the Islamists' ideas in support of the arguments needed. Therefore, this study intends to be the *seminal* work that comprehensively analyzes the IRPT's ideology after the peace process in an attempt to categorically quantify and measure their moderation. The current dissertation discusses a set of theoretical debates which have offered useful knowledge regarding the interaction between political Islam and democracy. Extensive use has been made of these theoretical debates in order to challenge the scholarly consensus concerning the moderation of the Tajik Islamists.

The final and most important contribution is that this work applies a theory known as the "inclusion-moderation hypothesis", and also discusses the "force moderation hypothesis" in the context of the only hitherto legal Islamic political party in Central Asia. By using these hypotheses, this study has attempted to identify the main factors and processes that have led the Tajik Islamists toward either tactical or ideological moderation. Until the present, there has been no comprehensive research work conducted which has employed any theory to explain this alleged moderation, nor have the factors behind the IRPT's moderation been adequately investigated. In summary, the current study contributes to the literature on religious party moderation, specifically Islamist party moderation, and furthers understandings about so-called 'moderate mainstream Islamism' and its controversial challenges for the modern world. This work will also be useful for those researchers who are interested in comparing the Central Asian Islamists' experience in ideological evaluations with other Islamists around the world.

1.7 Study Structure

Including the introduction and conclusion, the current research consists of eight chapters. **The first chapter** explains the main questions, the purpose, and the particularity of the study. It also presents the methodology used in this research and introduces the literature review in order to

contextualise the academic contribution this work makes to the field. Chapter one **also** introduces the concept of moderation in order to identify the main characteristics of moderate groups, as discussed in other chapters. The **second chapter** present an overview of academic debates concerning Islamist movements, especially as regards the largest category on mainstream Islamist movements, which are "most relevant to discussions of democratic change" (Wittes, 2008, p. 9).

This chapter, alongside key concepts such as Islamism and fundamentalism, also discusses a set of theoretical debates. As mentioned, this chapter firstly explores two controversial theoretical approaches regarding the compatibility of political Islam and democracy. This theoretical approach was important in order to establish to what extant the so-called "moderate mainstream" political Islam is compatible with democratic systems. The main aim is not to explore the relationship between political Islam and democracy, but rather to better understand the concept of moderate Islam in the face of this debate.

In addition, in this chapter, another theoretical debate, known as moderation theory, is also discussed. The second theoretical debate, which is discussed separately, is explored in order to identify the factors and causal mechanisms that have contributed to the moderation of mainstream Islamic political parties. These theoretical debates help to comprehensively measure the moderation of the Tajik Islamists, and also to identify the mechanisms behind their tactical moderation.

The **third chapter** introduces the political, cultural, and religious landscape of Tajikistan. It especially focuses on Islam, Islamic actors, and the role of Islam in politics. This chapter is more descriptive, but due to the intensive interactions among various Islamic actors, is significantly important to contextualise the next chapters, where political Islam will be discussed. **Chapter four** describes the history of the IRPT and explores the ideological transformation of the party. This chapter will furthermore help the reader to observe the historical transformation of political Islam in Tajikistan.

The **next chapter** investigates the IRPT's positions toward secular democratic norms. This chapter explores the successes as well as challenges of the IRPT in relation to democratic values. Through these analyses, this chapter measures the level of moderation exhibited by the IRPT and illustrates to which extent the IRPT has become moderate: Whether it be on an individual or at a group level, and indeed, if it is simply tactical or ideological. The IRPT's position toward democratic principles is significantly important in this research, since categorisation as moderate or not will be identified in accordance with the embrace and

acceptance of secular democratic norms. Chapter five, and chapter four to a lesser extent, mostly investigate the transformation of the Tajik Islamists in an attempt to identify the level of moderation of the IRPT in relation to the first and second primary research questions. Both of the following empirical chapters employ theoretical debates conducted in chapter two regarding the definitional difference between 'moderate' and 'moderation'.

Chapter six analyses the main challenges of the IRPT with the focus on their positions toward democracy. This chapter is a continuation of chapter five, and more deeply challenges the claim to moderation of the IRPT. This chapter demonstrates that the IRPT's tactical moderation occurred only on an individual level, and that the grassroots are still deeply conservative in their ideological commitments. Chapter six explores the more controversial aspects of the speeches of key Tajik Islamists and also analyzes the Islamization project as a whole. It also attempts to provide more detailed information about the Tajik Islamists' preferred or ideal form of the state in the context of Tajikistan

The aim of chapter seven is to test the validity of moderation theory and/or the *inclusion-moderation hypothesis*, as well as the *exclusion-force moderation hypothesis*, in the case of Tajikistan. In other words, the research attempts to observe how the inclusion or exclusion hypotheses work in the moderation or radicalization of the Tajik Islamists. Initially, the above-mentioned theories are described, and this is followed by an exploration of the factors and mechanisms relevant to the moderation of political Islam in Tajikistan based on the inclusion-moderation hypothesis. The inclusion-moderation hypothesis also helps the reader to comprehend the concept of moderation more deeply. Chapter seven thereby demonstrates that the theoretical debates are significantly useful to extensively understand all chapters in the current research. As has already been observed, chapter seven provides further relevant information regarding the final research question of this study. The final chapter concludes the thesis and provides key findings and results. At the same time, the conclusion briefly discusses the new period in the history of the IRPT, which began in September 2015, when the IRPT were again excluded from the Tajik political process.

1.8 Literature Review

Post-Soviet Central Asia, both the region and its people, are Islamic and Muslim respectively, and until the collapse of communism, have been almost unknown to Western researchers. Indeed, Central Asian Muslims have had no connections to the outside world, and "[had] been

cut off by 'Soviet xenophobia…from the rest of the world" (Khalid, 2007, p. 3). There were only a few scholars, such as Alexandre Bennigsen, Carrère d'Encausse, and Martha Brill Olcott, who had investigated Islam and the Muslims of the Central Asian region during the Soviet period (Thibault, 2014, pp. 6-7).

Only after the collapse of the Soviet Union were the doors opened to Westerners; limitations for locals to investigate some taboo topics, such as Islam and religiosity, were also removed. However, due to various reasons, such as difficult living conditions, limitations imposed by semi-authoritarian regimes, isolation from key Western research centers, and language barriers as well as other social-political problems, the region still remained mostly of marginal interest within the body of literature in the field of comparative politics, according to Hélène Thibault (2014, pp. 6-7).

The main scientific work and research conducted on post-Soviet Central Asia has demonstrated that Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan have attracted much more attention by comparison to the other two republics, Turkmenistan and Tajikistan[5]. Regarding the literature on religious revivalism in general, and Islamism in particular, it also appears to be the case that Uzbekistan has attracted more attention than Tajikistan. For example, comprehensive monographs, such as Louw's *Everyday Islam in Post-Soviet Central Asia* (2007), as well as edited monographs such as *Muslim Eurasia: Conflicting Legacies*, edited by Yaacov Ro'I, have focused primarily on Uzbekistan (Thibault, 2014, p .6). The well-known American scholar of Central Asia, Brill Olcott, has published works such as *Islam and Fundamentalism in Central Asia*, *Roots of Radical Islam in Central Asia*, and *The Whirlwind of Jihad*, while Josef Lang's *Radical Islamic Militants of Central Asia*, also refer mostly to Islam and Islamism in Uzbekistan. The publications provided by the Institute for Central Asian and Caucasian Studies in Sweden, and the Institute of Strategic Studies of the Caucasus in the Republic of Azerbaijan, which were published between 2001-2003, also show that Uzbekistan – as well as Russian Muslim territories such as Dagestan and Chechnya – have attracted more attention[6]. Indeed, very little has been written about Tajikistan. Incidentally, Turkmenistan is considered to be the closest society in the post-Soviet Central Asian sphere.

---

[5] For example, Eric McGlinchey's 2011 *Chaos, Violence, and Dynasty: Politics and Islam in Central Asia* focuses only on Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan.

[6] Institute for Central Asian and Caucasian Studies in Sweden and the Institute of Strategic Studies of the Caucasus in the Republic of Azerbaijan, official website: https://www.ca-c.org/journal-table-eng.shtml [Accessed 08 January 2018].

Despite their being very active and influential actors in Tajik politics, very little has been written solely about the role of the Islamists in Tajikistan (Thibault, 2014, p.11). Even since 2001, most scholars in Central Asia have investigated radical Islam and Islamic activism in Central Asia taken as a whole within the framework of comparative studies. Therefore "relevant literature on Tajikistan is still manageable…[but] while most of the research addresses Islamic issues, a concise account [of] Islam in Tajikistan is still lacking" (Epkenhans, 2010, p. 314). Incidentally, it needs to be mentioned that scholarly works on Central Asian Islamists in general, and the Tajik Islamists in particular, are significantly fewer in number than for the Arab Middle Eastern Islamists, as well as Islamists in other parts of the World such as South Asia. While there are hundreds of books, monographs and scholarly articles written about the Muslim Brotherhood's branches in Arab countries, as well as Jamaat-e-Islami in Pakistan, it is really difficult to find a single, comprehensive work of scholarship in English, which separately focuses on the Tajik Islamists.

As a result of this absence of scholarship, the current study has had to verify various topics, as well as needed to collect considerable data about the IRPT in general, and its ideology in particular, in order to attempt to identify their moderation in the post war period. The current study describes those scholars whose literature has contributed to providing relevant data on political Islam in Tajikistan, as follows below.

The current research divides experts and their works into three groups: 1) Local experts (literature), 2) Russian experts (literature), 3) Western and non-Western experts whose literature is written in English. According to the current study, the most well-known students of political Islam to have published scholarly works, among the local experts, are: Abdullo Rahnamo, Muzaffar Olimov, Saodat Olimova, to some extent, Kamoluddin Abdulloev and Parviz Mullojonov. Among the Russian experts, who have more or less focused on Tajik Islamists in their works, are: Alexei Malashenko, Aziz Niyazi, Mikulskiy Dmitriy, and Vitaly Naumkin. Adeeb Khalid, Christian Bleuer, Eim Epkenhaus, Emmanual Karagiannis, Kirill Nourzhanov, Murial Atkin, Olivier Roy, Pinar Aksali, Shirin Akiner, Stephane A. Doudiguan, and including the famous Pakistani journalist, Ahmed Rashid, are Western and non-Western experts who write in English, and have focused on the IRPT, especially based in the comparative studies literature.

However, it appears to be that most of the above-named experts have mostly focused on the early history of political Islam in Tajikistan (1980s and 1990s). They either focused on the Tajik Islamists' role in Tajik domestic politics in the late 1980s and early 1990s, or on their role in

the Tajik civil war, including the peace process. The Tajik Islamists have also been widely discussed in the literature on the civil war. For example, the comprehensive study on Tajikistan published by Tim Epkenhans in 2016, *The Origins of the civil war in Tajikistan*, as well as Nourzhanov's and Braure's, *A Political and Social History of Tajikistan*, have both widely discussed the early history of the Tajik Islamists, including their role in the civil war. The book edited by Mohamad-Reza Djalilli, Frederic Grare and Shirin Akiner, *Tajikistan: The Trials of Independence*, and the book *Allah's Kolkhozes: Migration, De-Stalinisation, Privatisation and the New Muslim Congregations in the Soviet Realm (1950s-2000s)* edited by Stephane A. Dudoignon/Christian Noack, have also partly focused on the early 1990s history of the Tajik Islamists and their role in the civil war. Especially useful to the current research in both edited titles were the chapters written by S. Dudoignon, *Political Parties and Forces in Tajikistan in 1989-1993* and *They Were All from the Country. The Revival and Politicisation of Islam in the Lower Wackhsh River Valley of the Tajik SSR (1997)*, which widely discussed the roots of the IRPT and its role in Tajik politics during the 1990s. Scholarly articles published by Aziz Niyazi, Kamoluddin Abdulloev, Murial Atkin, Parviz Mullojonov, Pinar Aksali, Saodat Olimova, and Shirin Akiner were also important in understanding the role of Islamic actors in the early 1990s, including the civil war and the peace process. For example, Shirin Akiner's book, *Tajikistan: Disintegration or Reconciliation?*, and Kamoludin Abdulloev's edited book, with Catherine Barnes *Accord: Politics of Compromise* discussed the Islamists' role in war and peace.

In addition, there were some key Islamic actors who have also published their memoirs about the Tajik civil war and the peace process, and proposed an Islamist approach. For example, one of the key figures during the civil war, Agbar Turajonzoda, published *Miyoni obu otash* ["Between Water and Fire"], while the IRPT's founder published a book called *Oshtinoma* [Peace], specifically about the peace process. These sources are also considered important in understanding the role of Islam in the war, and the peace that followed, in Tajikistan.

Within the framework of a comparative study, the work of Ahmad Rashid, *Jihad: The Rise of Militant Islam in Central Asia*, Adeeb Khalid, *Islam after Communism*, Olivier Roy, *The New Central Asia: The Creation of Nations*, as well as Mehrdad Haghayeghi, *Islam and Politics in Central Asia*, and especially Vitaly V. Naumkin's book, *Radical Islam in Central Asia*, seem to be the most important sources for understanding political Islam in Central Asia in general and Tajikistan in particular. Each of these books have devoted separate chapters to describe Islam or political Islam in Tajikistan, although most examined the period from 1990-1997. Naumkin's book especially is one of the more considerable scholarly works on Islamism and the Islamists in Central Asia, including Tajikistan. There are some articles that focused on the

Tajik Islamists within the framework of the All-Union IRP, and discussed their ideology, structure and peculiarity. These include Aleksej Malashenko's, *Islamskoe vozrozhdenie* v *Rossijskoj Federacii* [The Islamic Renewal in the Russian Federation] (Moscow: Moskovskij Centre Kamegi, 1998), and Olivier Roy's, *The Foreign Policy of the Central Asian Islamic Renaissance Party* (2000b).

In the above literature, some experts, including opponents of the Islamists, mostly described the latter's negative role in the 1990s. They characterized the intra-Tajik conflict as a war between Islamic fundamentalism and neo-communism (Rahnamo, 2008). In particular, Russian and Tajik scholars, including pro-governmental scholars, demonstrated that the Tajik conflict was a confrontation between radical Islamism and secularism, since they were mostly politically motivated in their attempts to convince the international community that the Tajik government fought against Islamic radicalism; through it, they also tried to justify the Russians' involvement in the Tajik war (Mullojonov, 2015, p. 9). This means, in other words, that a majority identified them as radicals, except those few who have tried to show them to be relatively moderate (Khalid, 2007, pp. 99-152), and a key part of the national democratic forces that were opposed to the pro-communist *nomenklatura* – an "opposition movement with an Islamist twist"(Roy, 2001, p. 53).

1.8.1 Literature on Islamists' Moderation in Tajikistan

It seems that the post-conflict ideology and history of the IRPT, which began after its legalization, has to date been little investigated. Most importantly, it would appear to be the case that the literature on the moderation of political Islam in Tajikistan, through an analysis of their ideology, is lacking[7]. Moreover, only a minority of experts – amongst whom are Abdullo Rahnamo, Emmanual Karagiannis, Ihsan Yilmaz, Kamol Abdulloev as well as Kathleen Collins, Seifert Arne, Tim Epkenhans and Vitaly Naumkin – the Tajik Islamists' moderation process, in part, and also illustrated their ideological development since the peace agreement in their scholarship.

Most of the above-mentioned experts emphasized the positive development of the IRPT after their inclusion into the political process. For example, Epkenhans and Karagiannis, in their

---

[7] Although Naumkin and Ahmad Rashid in their books, as well as Saodat Olimova/Muzzafar Olimov, Andreev A. A. in his article, and Adam Saud, respectively, described the post-civil war period of the IRPT, it seems that they did not prioritize the ideological development of the party and mostly emphasized the difficulties the Tajik Islamists faced during their integration into the political process of the secular state.

articles respectively, focused more on the positions of Muhiddin Kabiri in order to show the positive ideological transformation of the IRPT. While one labeled him an Islamo-democrat, the other identified his policies as similar to conservative democracy. Kathleen Collins, in her article analyzing the social base of three Islamist parties, has partly shown that positive moves toward moderation happened in the positions of the Tajik Islamists. Both Epkenhans and Collin mentioned the existence of a conservative faction within the party. However, like Hearthewer, Collins called both factions (moderate and radical) "moderate" by comparison to those radical Tajik Islamists who joined either the IMU or the Hizb ut-Tahrir after the peace reconciliation process. Ihsan Yilmaz, in his article *An Islamist party, Constraints, Opportunities and Transformation to Post-Islamism: The Tajik Case*, also tried to demonstrate that the Tajik Islamists had successfully integrated into the secular system and transformed themselves into a post-Islamist party. Kamoluddin Abdulloev, Arne Seifert, and many other experts (including pro-government experts), meanwhile, did not fully believe in the compatibility between Islamists and secular democratic norms, and have often mentioned the importance of the Tajik Islamists' inclusion into the political process for the future security of the region (Seifert, 2005, pp. 20-25).

However, it seems that the works of Abdullo Rahnamo are a more comprehensive in attempt to illustrate the integration of the IRPT into the secular Tajik state. By comparison to others, he has most widely investigated the IRPT's ideological turn toward secularism and modern political principles, as can be seen in his book, *Religious Party and Secular State*. At the current time, it is the only book in the Tajik language that solely focuses on the contemporary ideology of the IRPT, even though the author argues that his aim was not to describe the history and ideological development of the IRPT, but instead, to introduce his personal ideas regarding the future sustainability of peace in Tajik society with a special focus on the activities of the IRPT (Rahnamo, 2008, p. 11). Similar to Schwedler, Rahnamo broadly considers the inclusion and legal participation of political Islam into the political process to be an important factor for the sustainability of peace in Tajik society, as well as for the moderation of the Tajik Islamists themselves. He also believes that the lawful participation of the Tajik Islamists led them considerably toward moderation, and made them favor unity and stability. He also mentioned that the IRPT, both pragmatically as well as ideologically, had successfully become moderate within the secular system. He further mentioned that he could not read the minds of the Islamists, nor knows about any non-public project, but according to him, the speeches and articles from the Islamists has demonstrated that they had already adopted democracy and democratic values. Generally speaking, Rahnamo argues that the Tajik Islamists' ideological

justifications are persuasive in any attempt to reconcile Islam with the secular state and democracy (Rahnamo, 2008, Rahnamo, 2011).

In sum, however, it seems to be that neither local nor foreign experts have tried to comprehensively explore the post-war ideology of the IRPT or to challenge claims about their moderation,[8] either with a focus on their positions toward core democratic principles in an attempt to identify the level of moderation, or an attempt to find out whether their commitment is ideological or merely tactic. It seems that many have generally highlighted the Islamists' pro-democratic slogans without deeply exploring the whole of their ideas toward each element of democracy. The factors and indicators that led the IRPT to moderation have also been mostly ignored by other students and scholars of political Islam in Central Asia[9].

Islamists' published works

Furthermore, there are some works published by the Islamists themselves, especially since signing the peace agreement, where they described their ideology and expressed their positions toward various issues. These works are not highly academic, but are very significant in terms of analyzing their ideology and identifying their ideological transformation. Of considerable importance are the Islamist's articles, which had been published as a result of the "secular-Islamic confidence-building project…facilitated by German and… Swiss research teams" (Seifert, 2005, p. 14). In these works, representatives of Tajik Islamists, from both the moderate and radical factions, expressed their ideas about the future role of Islam within a secular state, and about the compatibility between their ideology and secularism. Some of the Islamist's articles were also published as a result of a conference organized by the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung in Dushanbe in the early years following the signing of the peace agreement. For example, the articles written by Muhiddin Kabiri (deputy chairman of IRPT), where he compared the IRPT to Hizb-ut Tahrir, are one of the more important source that have been widely used by those who have emphasized the pro-democratic positions of the IRPT. In this article, Kabiri described

---

[8] Instead of their ideology, Rahnamo has mostly criticized the Tajik Islamists as a weak team. He specifically mentioned that Islam as the ideology of the IRPT is not a threat, but rather, that the Tajik Islamists as a weak team would be a challenge for the future security of the country. He only criticizes the Tajik Islamists as a team, and argues that Islam is a great idea in the hands of a weak team (Rahnamo, 2008, p. 198).

[9] Only Yilmaz Ihsan (2009) in his article has generally and briefly described some factors and mechanisms which led the Tajik Islamists toward moderation. Abdullo Rahnamo also underlines inclusion, legal participation as well as some other factors, to explain what motivated the IRPT to become more moderate. However, he does not follow it in an attempt to find out the main factors of moderation of the IRPT, either systematically or theoretically. Therefore, the current study tries to fill this gap in the literature on political Islam in Central Asia in general, and Tajikistan in particular.

the differences between the IRPT and other radical parties, especially Hizb-ut Tahrir. The brochure about human rights in Islam written by the founder of the IRPT also provided important data, as it was published after the peace process.

However, Himmatzoda's works after the peace agreement in 1997, are considered the most important for researchers to comprehend ideology of Tajik Islamists. He is considered the main ideologist of the IRPT, and is also the only Islamist who more deeply described his positions toward democracy, human rights, secularism and political pluralism. Some of his key works include: *Islom va davlatdorii muosir* [Islam and the Modern Form of the State]; *Islom va davlat* [Islam and the State]; *Islom muqobili bisyorhisbi nest* [Islam is not against the multi-party system], *Oyo dunyavi mone'i hizbi dini ast?* (Is Secularism against Religious Parties?); *Tafsiri qalati dunyavi-badbakhtii millat* [Wrong Interpretation of Secularism – Dangerous for the Nation]; and *Teokrati va nizomi Islom* [Theocracy and the Islamic system]. All of his articles are collected in his books, "*dar justujui haqiqat*" (Searching for Trust) and "*didgoh va masoil*" (Approach and Problems).

However, the above-mentioned sources were also inadequate in order to successfully analyze the ideology of the IRPT. Therefore, this study has at the same time widely used other sources, such as the speeches, lectures, and interviews of the Islamists, as shown below in the methodology.

1.9 Methodology

1.9.1 Qualitative methods

The current study uses *qualitative* research methods in order to explore the main research questions. According to the author, the qualitative method, is more appropriate to the current study since it gives more opportunity for flexibility, while the research process itself permits the researcher to undertake a deeper and more detailed analysis by comparison to quantitative research methods (Crossman, 2017). The current research has benefited from the flexibility provided by qualitative methods.

However, it would be impossible to totally ignore the *quantitative* research methods and techniques as well, since research, especially in the social sciences, often employs statistics and numbers to understand better some characteristics of phenomena or events as object of study. The current research, utilizes statistics and numbers obtained during the data collection to

illustrate the ideological development of IRPT, even if not widely, especially while analyzing causal mechanisms, such as electoral pressure, which affected the moderation of the Tajik Islamists. Therefore, this dissertation has used a mixture of quantitative and qualitative methods (Johnson, Onwuegbuzie, & Turner, 2007, p. 123) – what Robson (2002) calls 'flexible research design' – which gives the researcher more freedom and flexibility.

It should be noted, however, that there are some scholars who believe that there is no clear dichotomy or distinction between quantitative and qualitative research methods, which – it is claimed – both refers to the same philosophical assumptions (See: Yin 1994). Accordingly, they share a "unified logic of inference", and the difference between these two "are only stylistic and are methodologically and substantively unimportant" (King, Keohane, & Verba 1994, p. 4).

1.9.2 Case Study Methods

Case studies are important in the tradition of qualitative social scientific research, and have been employed in this thesis in order to systematically and intensively investigate the ideology of a global phenomenon, political Islam, within particularist context such as Tajikistan. The case study method "involves an empirical investigation of a particular contemporary phenomenon within its real life context" (Yin, 1994, p. 13), and therefore, this thesis has utilized the case study method in order to explain the ideological transformation of the IRPT and to determine their level of moderation in their particular context.

The case study method, as an empirical analysis, is significantly important in investigating contemporary phenomena, since the "boundaries between the phenomenon and the context are not clearly evident" (Zainal, 2007, p. 2). Various case study types exist, which include the holistic or single case study, as well as multiple case studies; the current research employs a single case study model, as it is "considered a robust research method particularly when a holistic, in-depth investigation is required" (Zainal, 2007, p. 1).

1.9.3 Methods of Data Collection

Documentary analysis constitutes the main research methods of data collection in the current study. Documentary data is considered the most important part of this thesis as it is through secondary sources that the particular research questions have been identified, and through which the transformation of Tajik political Islam in favour of moderation can be illustrated. Due to the limitations of documentary analysis, however, the focus is primarily on the positions

and ideas of the IRPT's leaders due to a lack of available data about the ideas of the ordinary members of the party[10].

A large collection of documentary data obtained from diverse sources has been employed in this thesis, since in order to receive reliable information about particular phenomena, and to understand the situation in depth, the use of multiple sources is significantly important. Most of the collected data was available in three main languages: Tajik (Persian), Russian and English. Fluency, or functional competency, in all three languages has afforded a high degree of opportunity to investigate in depth all collected sources. In particular, being a native speaker of the Tajik/Persian language as spoken by the Tajik Islamists themselves, has enabled me to comprehensively and accurately analyze the documents and sources belonging to the Islamists in order to undertake this discourse analysis.

1.9.4 Categories and Codes

The current study uses several key categories and codes, which are nominated as 'words or short phrases' "that symbolically assigns a summative, salient, essence-capturing, and/or evocative attribute for a portion of language-based or visual data" (Sadana, 2013, p.3). Employing such categories and codes has extensively helped the researcher to reduce the large quantity of data, and to easily search the key term(s) or points needed concerning the selected main questions. Key words, in particular, consisted of categories and codes that were significantly helpful for the process of analysing the speeches, sermons and interviews of the Tajik Islamists – including newspaper and journal articles – which mostly provided general information without a particular focus on the IRPT's ideology and its moderation. In the table below, the selected categories and codes, as used in this dissertation, can be seen:

Categories	codes	codes	Codes	codes	codes
Democracy Moderation	Electoral politics	Political pluralism	Checks and balance	popular sovereignty	Rules of the Game
Islam and Core Values of Democracy	Human Rights	Minority Rights	Fundamental freedoms	Tolerance and Pluralism	Women's Rights

---

[10] Analyzing the ideas of their supporters would be an interesting topic for future research.

Islam and Secularism	Secular state	Secular-people	Secular law	Atheists or unbelievers	Secular-communists
Islam and the West	Western countries	Western people	Western organizations	Western norms	Western culture
Political Islam and Violence	Terrorism	Militant groups	Holy war (Jihad)	Radicalism	Intolerance and Hate
Islamic agenda	Islamic law/*Shari'a*	Islamic state	Hijab, gender inequality	Islamic culture and civilization	Islamic norms and values

1.9.5 Document Analysis

The documentary data for this research work has been collected from a veriety of sources. This research relies especially on secondary materials, such as: scientific works, newspaper articles, internal papers, speeches as well as lectures and interviews.

Books and Journal Articles

The first documentary data examined in this study that has helped the researcher to discover answers to the main questions were published books and articles. The researcher divided the data into two groups, which were written by two different groups of people: a) Pro-government experts; and, b) Independent scholars, both local and foreign. A considerable number of invaluable articles written by representatives from these two groups has been widely employed in this study, and were published by a project organized by the Swiss Government and the OCSE called the Secular-Islamists Dialogue (S-ID) (Seifert, 2005, p. 14). For example, articles and reports of foreign experts writing for the project, such as Anna Kreikemeyer and Arne C. Seifert, were helpful for better understanding the post-war ideology of the Tajik Islamists and their ideological disputes with the secularists. However, most secondary data collected for use in the current study is already listed in the literature review above and will not be repeated here.

Newspaper Articles

Newspapers, and online newspapers accessed via the Internet, have also been employed in this thesis. These sources can be divided into three types: a) Official or governmental; b) Opposition or Islamist; and, c) Independent newspapers or Internet newspaper websites. The data obtained from these varied sources in this thesis demonstrate that different discourses exist in Tajik society regarding the Tajik Islamists' agenda. For example, Islamist and governmental news sources always express two contradictory viewpoints and approaches in opposition to each other, but the independent and online news sources try to keep the balance even though most of them are secularly-oriented.

First and foremost, this research has used the IRPT's official Internet websites such as *nahzat.tj,* and since 2015, *payom.com* and *nahzat.org*[11]. An important point to note here is that most books published by the IRPT's leaders are collections of their articles, speeches, statements and interviews, which were published either in *Najot* or on *nahzat.tj*. Although these sources are deeply pro-Islamist, their use in this dissertation is as considerably reliable data in support of the discourse analysis.

From governmental newspapers, the newspaper *Jumhuriyat* – and especially its Internet website – have been employed in this research. This newspaper has had anti-Islamist contributor-propagandists. The numerous articles published in *Jumhuriyat,* especially since 2012, against the leadership of the IRPT often described the party as anti-modern, radical and extremist. However, governmental newspapers, such as *Jumhuriyat's* critical contributors, are mostly opinion pieces without much strong evidence. These news sources do not provide evidence or strong facts that support the arguments they advocate. Therefore, the current study measures the level of moderation of the IRPT, and challenges their moderation, mostly based on data provided by the Tajik Islamists themselves in addition to selected independent sources.

Independent newspapers were invaluable to the current study, since the articles and information they provided were both relatively fair and relatively free. This study employed local newspapers, such as *faraj* and *millat,* as well as Internetonline Internet newspaper resources, such as the BBC and Radio Free Europe/Ozodi.

In addition, this study employed reports published by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the ICG (International Crisis Group), and Freedom House

---

[11] Since both *nahzat.tj and Najot* was banned after exclusion of the IRPT from the political process.

reports. The result of surveys conducted by SHARQ, and Findings from the International Foundation for Electoral systems (IFES), have also been widely utilized in this thesis.

Internal papers, Islamists´ published works, speeches and interviews

However, the above-referenced resources were not enough to deeply understand the extent to which the IRPT had ideologically moved away from its radical positions after the civil war. Therefore, in order to examine their ideology more deeply, the author has widely employed the Tajik Islamists´ published works, internal papers, their speeches, sermons and interviews. The current research divides the sources belonging to the Islamists into three groups: 1) Official party documents: Party program and electoral platforms; 2) Written works (articles and books) of the key Islamists; and, 3) Speeches, lectures, interviews and sermons.

As follows:

Official Party Documents

First and foremost, the current study has widely employed the official documents that belong to the Tajik Islamists, such as the party program, party charter, the IRPT's electoral platforms, in order to determine their ideological development and to better comprehend their agenda. However, the official documents of the party were not enough to comprehensively understand the IRPT's agenda and ideology due to their general character and brevity. Therefore, further sources were required for this dissertation.

Books and Articles Of additional and considerable importance as secondary sources, alongside the official documents of the party, are the Islamists' works which have been published since 2000, which have been widely employed in this thesis. The books and articles published by the IRPT's leaders are reliable and invaluable resources to help better understand the ideology of the IPRT and their positions toward the modern democratic system and its components. Most of their works have already been mentioned above in the literature review.

Speeches, Sermons, Lectures and previous Interviews

This thesis most widely employs the lectures, speeches, interviews and sermons of the Tajik Islamists. These sources can be considered the most reliable evidence for better understanding the Tajik Islamists and their agenda, and are used especially to support the main arguments and

determine the results that form the focus of the current research. These speeches and interviews were given in various locations and to different audiences. Comparing their speeches and lectures given in different countries to various kinds of people was considerably helpful in challenging their positions and challenging their loyalty and commitment toward democracy. For example, their speeches and lectures with their supporters were different from their public speeches. Their interviews in Russia were substantially different from their interviews and lectures in the West.

Most of their speeches and lectures are published on YouTube. Accurately as well as carefully observing the Tajik Islamist leaders on YouTube and TV programs during their speeches strongly helped to identify their ideological commitments. The transcripts of most of these speeches and lectures have been published in the Islamists' own newspaper and on their website, but some are from other sources. That is, the leaders of the Tajik Islamists have been interviewed not only by the Islamists themselves, but also by independent foreign organizations, such as the BBC, Radio Free Europe, and the ICG, as well as by the representatives of many other local independent newspapers, including *Millat, Asiaplus, Ozodagon, Nigoh*, and *Faraj.* However, most transcripts were published in newspapers that the Islamists later collected and published as books, such as Abdullo Nuri's "*Mujaddidi asr*". All of these books made researching this doctoral dissertation much easier.

1.10 Limitations and Challenges

During the period of this research, various difficulties have been faced, which need to be mentioned. First of all, as already observed in the literature review, very few scholarly works have been written about the subject of political Islam in Tajikistan, especially that focused on the post-war ideology of the IRPT with a focus on their alleged moderation.

The main problem, which other experts have also emphasized, is that the Tajik Islamists did not publish any comprehensive works, reports or books about their doctrine or their agenda. For example, Abdullo Rahnamo in this regard mentioned that by comparison to Middle Eastern Islamists, the Tajik Islamists wrote very little. According to him, in order to investigate the Tajik Islamists' insights and ideas, one needed to observe the writings and interviews of their leaders across different sources.

Therefore, various sources, such as YouTube, Internet websites, the newspapers where the Islamists have expressed their ideas, have been looked at in order to find out more information about their agenda and their positions toward modern norms.

In addition, it should be mentioned that at the end of 2012, for various reasons, the Tajik secular regime changed its attitude toward the IRPT and increased its pressure on Islamic groups. In 2014, the IRPT's situation became even worse prior to the parliamentary election, and after the parliamentary elections in September 2015, the party was banned. Given such conditions, collecting data, contacting experts, as well as conducting observations – both directly and indirectly – proved difficult. Especially since 2014 and 2015 after the IRPT's political ban, nobody was ready to talk about the moderation of the IRPT. Many experts, as well as journalists, especially those who often talked about the integration of the IRPT, now had no interest in repeating such ideas. During the final trip to Tajikistan in 2017, I met with several local experts who spoke very carefully about the IRPT as the party had since been declared a terrorist group: Showing sympathy toward the Islamists can be considered a crime in Tajikistan, with one Tajik man, for instance, "sentenced to 9½ years in prison for…liking and sharing videos" of the IRPT on Facebook (Radio Free Europe/Radion Liberty, 2018). The final complication, especially during this latter period, was that both the IRPT's newspaper and their official website had been banned, which made this research even more difficult, since most important information regarding the IRPT was published on their official website, *nahzat*. Finding books written by the Islamists was also problematic because few were published, and it is also impossible to buy or order them online. I have done the best I can with the resources I have had access to, but any shortcomings are an unavoidable result of these obstacles.

CHAPTER II: CONCEPTUAL AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: ISLAMISM, DEMOCRACY AND MODERATION

2.1 Introduction to the Key Concepts

In this chapter the researcher provides the reader with an overview of the academic debates about Islamist movements, especially regarding the largest category of mainstream Islamist movements, which are "most relevant to discussions of democratic change" (Wittes, 2008, p. 9). Alongside describing key terminology related to the research, this chapter also discusses two theoretical debates. Firstly, it explores two key approaches regarding the compatibility between moderate political Islam and liberal democracy in order to observe to what extent moderate Islamists are dynamic and flexible. Here the focus is especially on those scholars who believe that moderate political Islam has adopted democratic norms. This means that the main aim is not to explore the relationship between political Islam and democracy, but rather, to better understand the concept of moderate political Islam in light of this on-going debate. The second theoretical debate concerns the causes and causal mechanisms of Islamic parties' moderation. This theory, known as moderation theory/inclusion-moderation hypothesis, is a key theory that is discussed extensively in the existing scholarship, as well as throughout this dissertation.

2.1.1 Islamism

Today the term 'Islamism' describes a common theme within contemporary world politics. Especially since 9/11, and more recently after the Arab Spring, the current term has become a contentious topic throughout academic audiences and the mass media. Traditionally, Islamism, or political Islam (*islami siyasi*), has been understood as an modern ideology, which generally claims that Islam encompasses all aspects of life and its main target is to take Islamic law from theory to practice and replace the national secular constitution introduced by westerners with *shari'a*. According to scholars such as Olivier Roy, Islamism is not only about religion "but [is] a political ideology that should reshape all aspects of society (politics, law, economy, social justice, foreign policy and so on)" (Roy, 2004, p. 58). It is "not that the Middle Ages are invading our modern world, but rather that modernity itself produces its own forms of protest" (Roy, 1994, p. 1), one in which modernity combines with Islam. Therefore, Islamists have explicitly been using modern terms such as "state" (*dawla*), "revolution" (*enqelab*), and

"sovereignty" (*hakimiyyat*) in similarity to other 20th Century ideologies (Roy, 2004, pp. 58-9). Thus, Roy believes that Jihad is closer to Marx rather than to the *Qu'ran* (Roy, 2004, p. 41).

Indeed, Islamism is not as old as Islam itself, and emerged only in the 19th century, when it "introduced a new movement of thought that endeavored to define Islam primarily as a political system in keeping with the major ideologies of the twentieth century" (Roy, 1994, p. viii). This explains why, for example, the Muslim Brotherhood's leader compares Muslims with socialists and capitalists rather than with Christians or Jews (Pipes, 1998). Unlike both traditionalists as well as secularist Muslims, Islamists completely deny the idea of a separation of religion from politics.

However, today due to the diversification of political Islamic groups, its definition has also become wider in order to "capture the full spectrum of Islamist expression that runs the gamut from radical to moderate, violent to peaceful, democratic to authoritarian, traditionalist to modernist" (Fuller, 2003, pp. xi-xii). Therefore, for some experts, Islamists are those "who [believe] that Islam as a body of faith has something important to say about how politics and society should be ordered in the contemporary Muslim World and who [seek] to implement this idea in some fashion" (Fuller, 2003, pp. xi-xii).

The term Islamism was employed for the first time during the 17th Century by authors such as Voltaire (in his *Le Petit Robert*), and de Tocqueville (Kramer, 2003, pp. 65-67). It was later used by other European scholars, such as Caussin de Perceval, Comte de Gobineau, Ernest Renan, and Baron Bernard Carra de Vaux (Mozaffari, 2007, p. 17).

However, the term Islamism, which has been used by scholars over the early years, has had completely different meanings from that of the modern definition. In the beginning, scholars utilized the term more or less equivalently to the religion of Islam. By 'Islamism' they meant only to define the religion of Islam "without any political connotation" (Muzaffari, 2007, p. 17)[12]. Subsequently, the term Islamism disappeared from academic works and it was only after the Iranian revolution with its demonstration of political Islam in reality, that new terms such as 'Islamic fundamentalism', 'Islamic revivalism', 'Radical Islam', and even 'political Islam' started to appear in academic circles in order to explain the politically-oriented Muslim activists (Muzaffari, 2007, p. 18). Especially since 9/11, the Islamism term has increasingly become popular mostly to describe radical terrorist groups (Ramadan, 2012). By using these new concepts, scholars have tried to distinguish these religious political groups from Islam as a faith.

---

[12] This isn't strictly true, at least not in the English language, where the term "Mohommedanism" was preferred, at least until ca. the 1950s.

The term Islamism itself, in its contemporary coinage, first appeared "in the late 1980s in [the] French academe and the crossed into English, where it eventually displaced Islamic fundamentalism" (Kramer, 2003, p. 65); in sum, the "nineteenth-century definition, 'Islamism' is no longer an emulation of '*christionisme*', but rather a new and independent concept" (Muzaffari, 2007, p.19).

The point that is important to note is that neither Islamists, nor the *Qur'anic* or Islamic traditions themselves, use the term Islamism. The *Qur'an*, as well as Muslim tradition, typically use "*muslimun*" and "*mu'minun*", general terms used to describe or refer to all Muslims. Early Islamist leaders such as Banna, Mawdudi, Qutb, and Khomeini, have also never used such a term as Islamism in reference to their groups and followers. For example, Banna called disciples 'Muslim Brothers', whereas Khomeini used the term '*Muslimin* or '*Musalmanan*'[13], to mean Muslims (Muzaffari, 2007, pp. 19-20). Some modern Islamists even consider themselves representatives of Islamic politics and completely ignore the political Islam term, since they believe that Islam cannot be political but politics can be Islamic,[14] since Islam covers all aspect of life including politics (Kabiri, 2005).

Only some scholars, such as Tariq Ramadan who is the grandson of Hasan al-Banna, believe that the term Islamism does not come from the West, but originates within Islamic traditions. According to Ramadan, this term emerged as a result of theological and political discourses among imprisoned Muslim Brotherhood activists, who had been arrested by Jamal al-Nasser. Given the current situation, Tariq underlines the rise of such questions among Muslim Brotherhood activists in prison as "Is Jamal al-Nasser still Muslim or not?" (Ramadan, 2012). Tariq observed that some radicals were arguing that Nasser is similar to other infidels, since he continued the same policy as infidels, but according to him, the moderate trend of MB have rejected the argument of radicals by mentioning that "Nassir is still Muslim but our project as Muslim is different" from him. Tariq further argues that it was only during that time that the term "Islamist" had been created when the followers of Banna began to call themselves Islamists (*islamiyyun*) in order to differentiate their project as [a] social and political movement from other Muslims, such as Nasser (TVSUNNAH, 2012).

---

[13] The term Musalman is the "Persian and Turkish variant form of the Arabic Muslim ("one who has surrendered [to God]") as ['Muslim'] is the common English form" (Glasse, 2013, p. 391).

[14] By comparison to all scholars discussed above, there are also experts such as Bill Warner and James White who reject Islamism as a modern project and consider the religion of Islam itself to be a political ideology. According to them, Islam itself by definition is a political system, and Warner even does not use the term Islamism, since he believes that Islam itself is a political religion.

2.1.2 Islamism and Fundamentalism: Two sides of the One Coin?

As mentioned above, numerous terms have been used to refer to modern Islamic political groups, which have "normally and mistakenly [been] lumped together" (Moussalli, 2009, p. 2). Most of these phenomena have often been associated with Islamism and used as synonym for political Islam. Islamic fundamentalism is a term that has especially been used as an ideology that introduces the "politicization of religion" (Tibi, 1998, p. 2). Therefore, Kramer (2003) raised the question about whether "those Muslims who invoke Islam as the source of authority for all political and social action" should be labeled as either Islamic fundamentalists or Islamists".

In this regard, scholars are divided generally into two groups. The first group consists of those who argue that fundamentalists, such as Wahhabis and Salafis, are synonymous with Islamism, and who group all Islamic groups under the umbrella of fundamentalism. In the second group are those who differentiate between Islam*isms,* especially moderate trends, from fundamentalism. There are also scholars, such as Robert Pelletreau, the American historian Ira Lapidus (2002, p. 823), and Bernard Lewis (Lewis, 1988, p. 118), who see fundamentalism as broader still.

From the first group, scholars such as Bassam Tibi (1998), Vali Nasr (1996), and Daniel Pipes, amongst others, consider Islamic fundamentalism as political ideology equivalent to the term Islamism or political Islam. For example, Tibi clearly "conceptualize[s...] political Islam as fundamentalism", and separates Islam as system(s) of belief from fundamentalism as a political ideology[15] (Tibbi, 1998). Martin Kramer (2003) mentions that the term "Islamism…crossed into English, where it eventually displaced Islamic fundamentalism". Therefore, according to Kramer, "Islamic fundamentalism and Islamism have become synonyms in contemporary American usage". Brill Olcott (1995), as well as many other students of political Islam in Central Asia, have also widely employed the term Islamic fundamentalism in order to describe politicized Islamic clerics in Central Asia.

The second group of experts, including Roy, Moussulli and to a certain extent, Fuller, differentiate "Islamism" from other fundamentalist groups. For example, Fuller sees Islamic fundamentalism as a subset of Islamism, being "the most conservative element among

---

[15] Ideology "is a fairly coherent and comprehensive set of ideas that explains and evaluates social conditions", which " helps people understand their place in society, and provides a program for social and political action" (Ball and Dagger, eds., 1998, p. 5).

Islamists", and asserts that "all fundamentalists are Islamists, but not all Islamists are fundamentalist by any means, since Islamism includes those who interpret political Islam in a more modern or liberal sense" (Fuller, 2003, p. xii). According to him the term Islamic fundamentalism does "refer to those Islamists who follow a literal and narrow reading of the *Qur'an* and the traditions of the Prophet..." (Fuller, 2003, p. xii), such as Wahhabis.

However, Roy even more explicitly divides Islamism from fundamentalist groups. On "three points he separates the Islamists from the fundamentalism of [the] *ulamas:* political revolution, the *sharia*, and the issue of women". According to him, political revolution, which was supported by Islamists, is rejected by fundamentalists. Therefore, Islamists always observe that "it is necessary to leave the mosque" since "society will be Islamized only through social and political action". From Roy's point of view, the second and third aspects which separate Islamists from fundamentalists are *sharia* and the issue of women. For example, Islamists within the framework of *shari'a* encourage women to be active in social and political activities, including education, but fundamentalists in their turn totally reject this position (Roy,1994, pp. 36-38). They prefer women to be less active and to remain at home. Regarding the issue of *sharia*, Roy emphasizes that Islamists "insist less on the application of the *sharia* than do the fundamentalist *ulamas*" (*Ibid.*).

Maussalli also divides Islamism from other Islamic movements and believes that these groups have been "mistakenly lumped together". According to him, Islamism is a completely different trend and "is not equivalent to Wahhabism: it is actually its antithesis". Like Roy, Moussalli emphasises that "while Islamism and *Wahhabism/Salafism* share a few theological and intellectual doctrines, they are theologically and politically very different" (Moussalli, 2009, pp. 2-3). For example, as already mentioned, while both groups propagate puritanical literalist interpretations of Islam, political Islam, unlike the fundamentalists, widely employs modern concepts such as "revolution" and "political party". The Islamists, as a product of modernity, have widely adopted the modern Western conceptual terminology in favor of their ideology, and have also attempted to discover their equivalents in the *Qu'ran*. According to Roy, therefore, the Islamists, as a modern phenomenon, plan to Islamize modernity and want to "adopt the classical version of Islam as a complete and universal system" (Roy, 1994, p. 37), in a modern context.

The fundamentalist movements, by contrast, mostly consider these concepts *bid'a* (innovations) which came from the West. Fundamentalist movements, such as Salafis, unlike the Islamists, have always preached the idea that Muslims should obey the head of the state and

never accepted Western concepts such as political parties. The creation of the *Al-Nur* Party by the Salafis in Egypt is a new phenomenon.

However, Roy (1994, p. 29) differentiates the fundamentalists into two groups: traditionalist and reformist. The best example of reformist fundamentalists in the eighteenth-century is *Shah Wali Allah* in India and *Abd al-Wahhab* on the Arabian Peninsula. *Salafiyya*, which emerged in the nineteenth century is also considered by Roy to be a continuation of this reformist fundamentalist line, the movement that "mark[s] a phase between fundamentalism and Islamism"(Roy, 1994, p. 35).

It needs to be mentioned that "Islamism was created both along the lines of and as a break from *salafiyya*", which is considered together with *wahhabism*, to be the strictest form of conservative fundamentalism. Islamists, accordance to Roy, in general try to implement Salafist (meaning fundamentalist) theology, since "they preach a return to the *Qu'ran*, the *Sunna*, and the *shar'ia* and reject the commentaries that have been part of the tradition" (Roy, 1994, p. 35).

Both Roy and Maussali believe that the war against the Soviet Union in Afghanistan for the first time brought together all Islamic groups such as radical Islamists as well as Wahhabi or Salafi fundamentalists, "under the umbrella of jihad", and where "Arab Afghans blended together [the] Salafism of Abdallah Azzam, the Wahabism of Osama Bin Laden, and the radical Islamism of Azman al-Zawahiri" (Moussalli, 2009, p. 31). According to Maussali, the combination of "Wahhabis and salafists...together with radical Islamists...consequently have created *neo-salafism* and *takfiri-jihadism*" (Moussalli, 2009, p. 31). Likewise, Roy explained that the "blurring of the border between conservative fundamentalism (Wahhabi) and political Islamism…helped to create neo-fundamentalism" (Roy, 1994, p. 117). It is an important point to distinguish *al Qa'ida* from radical Islamism, even though their commingling created neo-fundamentalism. The Taliban of Afghanistan, most of whom were former Afghan *Mujahideen* (Islamists), seem to be from the neo-fundamentalist group.

The current study also uses Islamism both moderate and radical separately from fundamentalist groups, both militant as well as non-militants, political and apolitical. However, whether modernist trends among the Islamists exists or not is a question which the current study will discuss in the next section, since there are many students of political Islam who believe that Islamism is not exclusively monolithic, but is rather a more diverse phenomenon.

2.2 Political Islam and Democracy: Attempt to understand Islamists' Moderation

2.2.1 Orientalist versus non-orientalist Approach

The relationship between political Islam and democracy has been a pivotal topic which has created incredible debates over the past decades, both between Western and non-Western scholars. The current study generally explores two contradictory approaches regarding the interaction between political Islam and democracy against which the case study will be tested.

The first approach underlines that political Islam and democracy contradict each other, whereas the second does not. The first approach, as proposed by representatives of the essentialist or orientalist school of thought such as Bernard Lewis (2002), Bassam Tibi (2012; 1998), Daniel Pipes (1995; 1998), Elie Kedourie (1994), Patricia Crone and Samuel Huntington (1993), believe that Islamism "by nature is anti-democratic and aggressive, anti-Semitic and anti-Western" (Pipes, 1995). This approach defines Islamism as dogmatic, static, as well as a singular and monolithic phenomenon (Mozaffari, 2007, p. 21), the final aim of which is the creation of an Islamic state.

Among essentialists, there are those, such as Bernard Lewis, Elie Kedourie and Huntington who even believe that "democracy is alien to the mindset of Islam" (Knudsen, 2003, p. 6), consider Islam to be generally anti-democratic, argue that "Islamic concepts of politics differ from and contradict the premises of democratic politics…" (Huntington, 1993, pp. 307-309); indeed the essentialists do not even take into consideration the contributions of Muslim modernists, as well as open-minded theologians such as Hasan Turabi. According to Bernard Lewis (1988, p. 118), not only the Islamists but "all Muslims, in their attitude to the text of the *Qur'an*...at least are fundamentalists", since according to him there are no "liberal or modernist [Muslim theologians as in Christianity], who tend to a more critical, historical view of Scripture" (Lewis, 1988, p. 118). He tends to assume that "Islam is a fixed and enduring tradition and cultural system" (Yavuz, 2003, p. 16). Similarly,

> [the] notion of a state as a specific territorial entity which is endowed with sovereignty, the notion of popular sovereignty as the foundation of governmental legitimacy, the idea of representation, of elections, of popular suffrage, of political institutions being regulated by laws laid down by a parliamentary assembly, of these laws being guarded and upheld by an independent judiciary, the ideas of the secularity

of the state… —all these are profoundly alien to the Muslim political tradition (Elie Kedourie, 1994, pp. 5-6).

However, many young neo-orientalists, such as Bassam Tibi and Daniel Pipes differentiate Islam as a faith from Islamism as a political ideology and especially consider Islamism to be incompatible with democracy. For example, Tibi mentions that "Islam itself, as a faith and system of religious ethics, could [become] compatible with democracy if combined with the will to religious reform" (Tibi, 2012, p. 97), but not Islamism (Tibi, 2008, p. 84) which is totalitarian, anti-democratic, and puritanical as well as monolithic (Tibi 2012, 1998).

It should be mentioned that reformist Muslim intellectuals, such as Mohammed al-Jabri (Moroccan philosopher), Abdullo a'Na'im (1996), Mohammad Arkoun, and Abdulkharim Soroush, also believe in reconciling Islam with modern principles such as democracy through a re-reading, re-interpreting, and re-thinking of the *Qu'ranic* text, taking into account the modern context. For instance, al-Jabri mentions that Islamic philosophy developed by Muslim rationalists "is in line with modernity", and claimed that "liberal civic Islam" is not in conflict with the secular order (Tibi 2012, pp. 236-239)[16].

By contrast, scholars representing the second approach categorically reject the argumentation suggested above by the essentialists. For them, Islamism is no more a single entity than it is a diverse phenomenon, which "encompasses everyone from the terrorist Islamic groups who flew planes into the World Trade Center to peacefully elected governments" (Wittes, 2008, p. 7). That is, these scholars see Islamism exactly as they do Islam, as a diverse rather than monolithic phenomenon. There are numerous leading scholars worldwide who are representative of this approach, such as Mohammad Ayoob, Ahmad Moussulli, Al-Anani, Graham Fuller, John Esposito, and Charles Kurzman (see, Esposito 2002; Fuller 2002; Kurzman, 1998), who argue that "Islamism is a broad term embracing a body of quite variegated and even contradictory political, social, psychological, and economic – even class – functions" (Fuller, 2003, p. xi-xii).

Most of these scholars have "moved away from abstract debates about the compatibility of Islam and democracy toward empirical studies of the practices and commitments" of Islamist groups (Schwedler, 2011, p. 347). For example, Muhammad Ayubi brings many examples, both from the reality of current Islamic regimes as well as Islamists movements, in order to illustrate the diversity among Islamists in his writings while countering the assumptions proposed in the first approach, which state that "Islamists are single-minded fanatics who are

---

[16] This technique, known as "hermeneutics", was practiced by Medieval philosophers, such as Maimonides and al-Farabi.

obsessed with implementing the sharia and…are, therefore, incapable of making political compromises" (Ayubi, 2015, pp. 2-8). According to him "there [are] an infinite variety of organizational and ideological differences among" modern Islamic movements and parties "that are reflective of their particular contexts". He argues that "the Muslim Brotherhood is as much a product of the Egyptian context as the *Jamaat-i-Islami* is a product of the Indian and … the Pakistani context". Thus, "even the various branches of the Muslim Brotherhood in the Arab world – in Jordan, Syria, Palestine, and Kuwait – adopt different strategies that are determined by the contexts in which they operate." (Ayubi, 2015, pp. 2-8).

Therefore, scholars representative of the second approach have divided Islamists into two groups: radical and moderate: "Radicals" are defined as those who use violence and reject democracy; and "moderates" are defined as those who condemn violence and have adopted democracy, pluralism, and even human rights and try to gradually achieve their goals from within democratic institutions. For example, Amr Hamzawy mentions that "those who still insist that there is no such thing as a 'moderate Islamist' miss the reality" because these so-called Islamist organizations, "instead of clinging to fantasies of theocratic states...now see the wisdom of competing peacefully for shares of political power and working within existing institutions to promote gradual democratic openings" (Hamzawy 2005).

It seems that the ideas representative of the second approach resemble the theory of constructivism, which is a theory that "assumes that any society [is] a human construction and subject to multiple interpretations and influences" (Yavuz, 2003, p.20)[17]. Unlike essentialism or orientalism, which "studied…Islam without studying the people as it is a desert religion" (Praveen, 2016, p. 48), the theory of constructivism tries to bring human actions and human interactions into analysis. Constructivism recognizes the power of ideas and actions in everyday practices and shows how people as human beings can change their direction in spite of their ideology. For example, al-Anani, based on this approach, emphasizes that Islamists are human beings and they "can be affected by people's opinions, the environment" and other external factors. Current approache sees the human being as a mediator between the text and context (IEMed Barcelona, 2012). In other words, according to constructivists, the Islamists or Muslims in general, are mediators between scripture and reality[18].

---

[17] For more information see Thomas Kuhn's The Structure of Scientific Revolustions (1970)

[18] In addition, there are some critical postcolonial theories, such as Edward Saïd's "Orientalism", and the "subaltern theory" of Antonio Gramsci and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, respectively, whose theories are both able to be used to reject the essentialists' more Eurocentric approaches and assumptions.

On the other hand, the essentialist approach "seeks to reduce the diverse spectrum of human relations to a few 'essential' causes" (Yavuz 2003, p. 16). According to them, there are no moderate Islamists, and that both moderates and radicals have the same aim but different ways of achieving it. Tibi asserts that both jihadists and institutional Islamists aim to create *Shari'a*-based states (Tibi 2012, p. 20), and that "their commitment to democratization ends with the ballot box" (Tibi 2012, p. 98). That is:

> The test of Islamism's compatibility with democracy rests on the Islamist idea of *nizam Islami* (Islamic system of government) based on *hakimiyyat Allah* (God's rule). The core contention of Islamist ideology is that only God, not man, is entitled to rule the world. Can this truly be reconciled with the popular sovereignty of secular democracy? (ibid, p. 107).

One of the pivotal figures represented by this view, Daniel Pipes, has even associated moderate Islamists with authoritarian regimes such as Hitler's Third Reich, which used elections in order to come to power (Pipes Fall, 1995, p. 49). Tibi also argues that "the notion of 'moderate Islamists' entertains the illusion that any Islamist leader who is not openly *jihadist* is a potential democrat" (Tibi 2012, p. 99). They consider the positional changes, which have occurred among some Islamists, to be a tactical game in order to use the methods of electoral democracy in an attempt to destroy liberal democracy. Therefore, such scholars have often emphasized this paradox of democracy, which makes non-democratic actors powerful and call Islamism a "wolf in sheep's clothing" (Schwedler 2013, p. 4).

Such observers do not appreciate the new positions of moderate Islamists who condemn violence and intend to have good relations with the West, or who agree to participate peacefully in the political process. According to Tibi, moderates or

> Institutional Islamists split democracy into two segments, much as they do with modernity itself. They adopt modern instruments and procedures, including electoral politics, while rejecting the values of cultural modernity. Islamists approve the ballot box as a mechanism of voting, thus reducing democracy to an instrumental procedure. But they do not espouse the more important aspect of democracy, democratic pluralism and power sharing. They reject the political philosophy and civic culture of democracy as Western and alien to Islam. Can democratization succeed on such a basis? (Tibi, 2012, p. 20-21).

Tibi even criticizes those theories and concepts, which contend that moderate political Islam can be a non-threatening part of the modern political system, as compared to radicals. For example he criticizes postmodernism, cultural relativism and other concepts that consider moderate Islamists "a kind of 'other modernity' whose relation to democracy will necessarily be different from what Westerners expect" (Tibi, 2012, p. 97), and argues that "despite different understandings of the concept of democracy, there must remain a distinction between

democracy and its opposite. The Islamist *shar'ia* state is that opposite". According to him "postmodernism and cultural relativism put aside the political culture of democracy, focus on the ballot box, and suggest a positive assessment of Islamism and its ideology of an Islamic state…" (Tibi, 2012, p. 110). While he believes in a diverse understanding of democracy, he also argues that "these varieties, to be considered democracies, must all satisfy certain universal conditions" (Tibi, 2012, p. 118). Bassam Tibi, and other critics, have advocated a critical stance towards Habermasian "post-secularism" by arguing that Islamists are not interested in religious ethics or "in a post secular renaissance of religion as a cultural meaning, but rather in the politics of an Islamic order". Similar to Hassan Sa'b, a liberal Lebanese scholar, Tibi and others differentiate "pro-democra[tic] Islam" from an "Islam of despotism" (Tibi, 2012, pp. 118-119).

However, it seems that both Tibi and Pipes, in order to demonstrate the undemocratic features of the moderate Islamists, mostly refer to the sayings and writings of older Islamists such as Maududi, Sayd Qutb, and Hassan al-Banna (Tibi, 2012, pp. 95-104; Pipes, 1995). Furthermore, the essentialists also consider Islamists and Islam to be anti-modern based only on scriptural text, and not in the context of where Islamists live and develop.[19]

On the other hand, those who believe in the moderation of Islamists, unlike the essentialists, have mostly highlighted the pro-democratic slogans of the modern generation of Islamists, and claim that moderate Islamists are flexible and have no intentions to establish an Islamic state. Therefore, some scholars such as Chemski and Wright, have called these moderates *neo-Islamists*. For Wright, neo-Islamists are not dogmatic since according to her "for them *shari'a* is about values, civilization, and political context...is dynamic and not a set of fixed rules and tenets, but rather an organic belief system that can adapt to or live with the times". She goes further and even observes that "neo-Islamists…[are] on some issues, even liberal, and trust the reform scholars" (Wright, 2012, p. 9). For example, Wickham (2004, p. 209) highlighted the statement by Abu Ayla Madi, the leader of the Wasat party, that "*Shari'a* is very simply a collection of guiding principles, which should be put to *ijtihad*, to a free interpretation in order to adapt them to a world in the process of change" (Rouleau, 1998, p. 2 quoted in Stacher, p. 426.). Chemski further characterizes five trends of neo-Islamism, such as "the renewal of religiosity, gradualism, modernization, redefining nationalism and improving relations with the West" (Chamkhi, 2015).

---

[19] In addition, it seems that they generalize moderate Islamists by analysing only some Middle Eastern Islamic movements or parties, such as the AKP in Turkey and the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt.

There is even "a small but growing body of [W]estern scholarship" (Wickham 2004, p. 207) that has begun to describe some moderate Islamists as "liberal" and "modern", which in the Muslim world is "characterized primarily by the call for *ijtihad*, the use of human reasoning to adapt enduring Islamic principles to modern times" (Wickham, 2004, p. 207). According to Wickham, these groups of Islamists "[w]hile continuing to seek divine guidance in the *Qu'ran* and the *Sunna*…have formulated new interpretations of Islam's revealed texts that privilege ideas of pluralism, representation, and human rights" (Wickham, 2004, p. 207). For example, Fuller has labelled them "liberal Islamists'" even though according to him, "many modernist Islamists object strongly to being referred to as liberals because they believe it carries connotations, at least in the Muslim world, of permissiveness, or casualness toward belief" and thus "prefer the term modernist or moderate". Fuller believes that "liberal, modernist is not yet the dominant trend among Islamists...but the trend is growing with time", and that "a modernist and pluralist Islamist approach accepts the near-universal values of democracy, human rights, pluralism, and vibrant civil society as fully compatible with Islam and inherent in Islam's own original multiculturalism" (Fuller, 2003, pp. 50-56). Brumberg used the term "strategic modernism" in order to describe those minority moderate Islamists who have already accepted democracy and support human rights (Brumberg, 1997, pp. 24-25).

Accordingly, for such Islamists, "[the] process of reconciling Islam and democracy is easily accomplished through consideration of Islamic concepts", such as *shura* (consultation), *ijma* (consensus) and *ijtihad* (rational interpretation) (Schwedler, 2006, p. 154; Moussuli 2001). Another well-known American scholar, Ahmad Moussulli, tried to demonstrate that moderate Islamism is compatible with democracy, since Islamists "observed and 'Islamized' the notions of democracy, pluralism and human rights" (Moussalli, 2001, p. 3). He especially highlighted the ideas of moderate Islamists, such as al-Turabi, as well as al-Ghanoushi, the Tunisian Islamist leader. While Moussalli emphasizes that they have both adopted individual freedom and democracy, he at the same time does not reject that *shari'a* is considered pivotal for them, especially so in the case of al-Turabi (Moussalli, 2001, pp. 117-125).

2.2.2 Post-Islamism

Beyond the mainstream scholars, some other experts have recently started to employ a new term, *post-Islamism*, in order to describe what Fuller calls liberal Islamists. Asaf Bayat is one of the first leading scholars to extensively use the concept of post-Islamism in his work. Bayat used the term post-Islamism to describe Iranian youths who supported the reformist president

of Iran, Mohammad Khatami. He developed this concept only for the case of Iran, but later expanded it to include the AKP, the al-Wasat party (a breakaway branch of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt), and even the Tunisian Ennahda, as being those who – in his view – have changed their directions from "*shar'iaisation*" to that of democratization (Bayat, 2013, p. 8).

According to Bayat, unlike Islamists, post-Islamists have always been focused on religious duties and obligations, and mostly highlight citizen rights and freedom of choice. He underlines that post-Islamists are pious and religious people, but unlike Islamists, do not intend to Islamize the state. On the contrary, they "called for the secularization of the state but stressed maintaining religious ethics in society. It aspires to a pious society within a democratic state". He points out that post-Islamists are "neither anti-Islamic nor un-Islamic or secular" but "rather...represent an endeavor to fuse religiosity and rights, faith and freedom, Islam and liberty" (Bayat ed. 2013, p. 8). Roy interprets post-Islamism "as [the] privatization of Islamism" (Bayat ed. 2013, p. 8).

Subsequently, considering the changing positions and ideological developments towards democratization, many scholars have also identified other Islamist movements in various regions as post-Islamist, and signaled a shift towards a post-Islamist era. For example, Ihsan Dagi, a leading expert on political Islam in Turkey, has tried to demonstrate that the Turkish Islamists are post-Islamist. Dagi, like Bayat, mentions that post-Islamism is not the "antithesis to Islamism but rather, Islamism fused with democracy and pluralism" (Dagi, 2013, p. 70). Another leading Turkish scholar of political Islam, Ihsan Yilmaz, has even described such a transformation in the case of the Tajik Islamists (the IRPT), the specific focus of this dissertation (Yimaz, 2009).

One important point to note is that both Bayat and Roy describe post-Islamism as a condition as well as a project broader than Islamism. By explaining this phenomenon, they did not mean only moderate Islamists who transitioned into this new era, but also a wide range of Islamic activists who participated in Arab revolutions. For example, Bayat considered the "youths of modern Iranian protest as the same people who filled Bourguiba Avenue in the front of Tunisia's Interior Ministry on 14 January 2011, and the same people who protested in the millions in Tahrir Square" (Chemski, 2013, p. 14). Chemski also describes post-Islamism external to Islamist projects as "Independent Islamists…who practice social Islamist activism, but remain outside political parties and organizations" (Chemski, 2013, p. 21).

However, according to current studies, identifying all Muslim protesters as post-Islamist is not accurate since there were thousands of secular, liberal, and mainstream Muslims who

participated in the protests, both in Iran and Tunisia; it is therefore impossible to link them either Islamism or post-Islamism. Furthermore, it is rather difficult to label Tunisian Islamists, as well as Iranian reformists, as post-Islamists since neither group have rejected *shari'a* law. Iranian reformists specifically work within Islamist frameworks and have never tried to reject the main concept of the Islamists, which is religious law. The co-founder of the Islamic party in Tunisia, Rachid Ghanoushi (someone who is often labeled a democrat among Islamists) in his interview with Al-Jazeera, has meanwhile mentioned that they avoided *shari'a* based on consensus (*ijma*)[20] with other political parties in the country, but are not ready to reject controversial religious laws such as stoning, apostasy, and polygamy (Al-Jazeera, 2015).

Furthermore, it seems that many of those who labeled moderate Islamists 'liberal', 'neo-Islamist', or 'post-Islamist' did not consider the double standards and/or ambiguities among the myriad voices of moderate Islamists worldwide[21]. It seems that they have been satisfied with the general statements and speeches made by this younger generation of 'moderate' Islamists insofar as adopting democracy and its components has been concerned.

This dissertation does not start from the essentialist's assumption that there is, or can be, a monolithic approach to the study of Muslims and Islam. Indeed, Islam is without a doubt subject to diverse interpretations. In other words, there is no singular Islam or interpretation of Islam, but rather many, faces and facets of Islams that exist throughout the world. As is known, there are many Muslim reformists who have introduced new interpretations of Islam compatible with modern liberal principles, in particular through the use of the Islamic concept of *ijtihad,* and also through a re-reading and re-interpretation of the key Islamic religious texts. As a result, Islamists often have diverse readings of these texts, which is a reflection of their consideration of their contemporary context. It should be mentioned that many existentialists take only orthodox interpretations of Islamic law into consideration, and have, as a result, come to the conclusion that Islamists and their ideology are both anti-modern and anti-democratic.

---

[20] *Ijma*(lit. assembly") is actually "[o]ne of the *usul al-figh*, or principles of Islamic law…[and means] 'consensus' [the method or tactic used] on a question of law". Alongside other religious sources such as the "Koran, Hadith and Sunnah, it is a basis which legitimizes law" (Glasse, 2013, p. 238).

[21] Nevertheless, several scholars (representative of the second approach), while emphasizing the existence of diversity among Islamists, "are often quick to point out the nondemocratic implications of what remains the primary objective of most Islamist groups, the call for *Shari'a* rule" (Wickham, 2004, pp. 206-207). They appreciate the ideological changes of moderates and differentiate them from militants, but at the same time, observe the ultimate aim of moderates' non-democratic project (Chemski 2015; Wrights 2012, p. 9). For example, Wrights mentions that "neo-Islamists are seeking the ultimate objectives of *shari'a*" and Wickham also argues that the Wasat party supports Islamic law (Wrights, 2012, p. 9; Wickham, 2004, p. 208).

However, the aim of this research is not to judge or affirm any of these approaches, but rather, to test and apply these approaches in the case of Tajikistan in order to identify the level of moderation exhibited by the Tajik Islamists. In other words, the current dissertation examines the Tajik Islamists' religious interpretations and ideological commitments, in order to see to what extent their ideology has changed and became compatible with the core democratic core values and institutions.

Below, this study discusses another theoretical debate, which has mostly been proposed by representatives of the second approach, being those scholars who have emphasized the moderation of the Islamists. These "non-essentialist" intellectuals have, through moderation theory, illustrated the factors and mechanisms that contributed to the moderation of the Islamists.

2.3 Moderation Theory or Inclusion-Moderation Hypothesis

2.3.1 Introduction

Over the last decades, many students of political Islam, in their work and research, have made efforts to explain the moderation of various Islamist parties and movements, as described above. The majority have endeavored to discover the factors and variables that best explain the moderation of the Islamist movements. Indeed, moderation has always been one of the main puzzles for those interested in this field. There are many theories and hypotheses that have been tested or developed in order to better explain the changes in behavior of the Islamists across various Muslim-majority countries. It should be mentioned that numerous distinguished scholars of political Islam, especially those mentioned in the above theoretical debate, have employed the *inclusion -moderation hypothesis* as their theory of moderation, in order to explain the moderation of Islamist parties. Until now, the inclusion-moderation hypothesis does not appear to have been tested in the case of political Islam in Central Asia, and especially with respect to Tajikistan.

2.3.2 Theoretical Overview: Moderation Theory, or Inclusion-Moderation Hypothesis

Moderation theory is a sub-field of democratic theory, which consists of several similar, interrelated hypotheses and approaches. The current theory describes certain processes and

situations where radical political parties and movements, due to different reasons, after their inclusion in to the political process change their revolutionary strategies in favor of more moderate positions (Schwedler, 2006). Generally speaking, moderation theory states that the inclusion of radical political groups into the political process leads radical groups toward moderation whereas exclusion will return them to their revolutionary strategies.

The theory of moderation is backed by Robert Michels' work, in which he analyzed the German Social Democrat Party in his seminal "Political Parties". The Anthony Downs, Joseph LaPalombara, Myron Weiner, Adam Przeworsi, John Sprague as well as Scott Mainwaring and Timothy Scully have also been influential scholars in the literature on political parties, "emphasizing the impact of diverse political constraints, on party behavior"[1] (Schwedler 2011, p. 353, Sprague & Pzeworski, 1986, pp. 22-25). The vast majority of literature "emphasizes the ways in which institutions and political opportunities provide incentives" for radical popular organizations "to enter the system, abandon more radical tactics, and "play by the rules" (Schwedler 2011, p. 352).

There are several causal mechanisms that have been advocated based on moderation theory, by which radical socialist parties eschew their revolutionary policies[22]. Michels nominates several causal mechanisms, including: a) *pursuit of votes*; and b) *organizational survival*, which have had impact on the moderation of socialist parties. *Resource constraints* are another causal mechanism mentioned in moderation theory that create incentives for radical parties to abandon their radical positions (Michels 1959, pp. 333-341).

The first causal mechanism explains the situation whereby political parties that favor vote-maximizing strategies change their radical positions after inclusion into the electoral process, as "they...quickly realize that the espousal of ideological policies alienates large segments of the electorate" (Tezcür, 2010). A second mechanism is more about the concerns of revolutionary political parties concerning state repression, since "participation in elections exposes a party's formerly clandestine networks to state authorities and renders the party vulnerable" (Tezcür, 2010). This means, as a result of both electoral dynamics and the threat of state repression, radical parties tend to avoid radical revolutionary ideas.

Kalyvas is another leading scholar who uses moderation theory in his work, in which he analyzed the evolution and transformation of the Christian Democratic parties in Europe. Kalyvas was encouraged by those scholars who earlier analyzed the transformation of socialist

---

[22] However, this does not necessarily mean that only left-wing socialist parties are radical. Depending on the historical condition and context, both right- and left-oriented parties and movements can be described as radical.

parties, such as Adam Przeworski, John Sprague and Michael Robert (Kalyvas, 1996, p. ix). He focuses mostly on the case of Belgium where he observed the transformation of the radical Catholic confessional movement into the Christian Democratic Party. According to Kalyvas, radical political parties change their revolutionary ideas due to the '*strategic pursuit* of their interests under *certain institutional conditions*' (Kalyvas, 1998, p. 296). "The possibility of access to power" within the electoral game was also considered by Kalyvas to be a main factor that creates incentives for the moderation of radical religious parties (Yilmaz 2010-11, p.121). Later, based on the structure of religious institutions, he compared Christian Democratic parties with Islamic parties. He especially compared the Belgian case with Algeria and "posits a number of alternative pathways to moderation in competitive political systems regardless of the specific religion that underlies the confessional reaction" (Yilmaz 2010-11, p.121). He came to the conclusion that, in a hierarchical structure like Christianity, for "moderate leaders [it] is easier to reign in the radical demands coming from the grass-roots. When religious authority is not centralized and hierarchical, as is the case with Islam, it [is] much more difficult for moderates to silence the radicals inside [the] party" (Yilmaz, 2010-11, p.122).

There is also later research that has been conducted in order to explain the transformation of leftist parties in southern Europe and Latin America based on the logic of inclusion. Most of these studies have demonstrated that the democratic process or political opening has encouraged radical leaders to abandon their agenda. They have linked de-radicalization with democratization (Huntington 1991, p. 165; Wickham 2004, p. 212). According to them, the socialists understood that they needed to moderate their agenda in an attempt to convince the political elite in order to be allowed to participate in post-transition elections. Therefore, they adopted basic modern institutions and condemned violence, and also started to avoid revolutionary goals (Huntington 1991, p. 170). For example, in the case of Chile, Kenneth Roberts argues that "the transition process in Chile, and in particular the institutional constraints established by [the] Pinochet regime, gave powerful advantages to the party of the Left that was most adept in establishing an alliance with the Center". (Roberts 1995, p. 509).

2.3.3 Moderation Theory in the Case of Muslim societies: Inclusion-moderation Hypothesis

In recent years the participation-moderation theory has often been used by numerous scholars for explaining the evolution and transformation of Islamist movements in Muslim countries, especially in the Middle East. In other words, "debates about the effects of inclusion and

exclusion in the Middle East that were made explicitly and implicitly in the 1980s and 1990s have now moved to the center of debates about Islamist groups" (Schwedler, 2011, p. 349). For example, Dagi, Tezcür, Yavuz, Turam, and Kuru tested moderation theory in the case of Turkey; Clark and Robinson, in the case of Jordan; Albrecht and Wickham, in the case of Egypt; and Schwedler, in the case of Jordan and Yemen; others have used this theory in the case of Indonesia and Malaysia. The work of Wickham on Egypt, and Schwedler and Tezcür in the case of Turkey, Iran, Jordan and Yemen, are significantly important for explaining the moderation of Islamist movements with the focus on the inclusion-moderation hypothesis. However, unlike the "moderation of leftist parties which mostly have occurred in a context of democratization" (Wickham, 2004. p. 212); these scholars mostly examined the moderation of Islamist movements within authoritarian or semi-authoritarian environments.

As Schwedler (2011, p. 353) notes, "[m]uch of [the] recent literature on the effects of inclusion on Islamist groups...have built on Huntingdon as well as on studies of Christian and socialist groups" – especially Samuel Huntington's (1991) notion of the participation-moderation trade-off…" (Tallmeister, 2013), that argues that the inclusion of radical political parties into the legal system will encourage Islamists to agree "to abandon violence and any commitment to revolution, to accept existing basic social, economic, and political institutions…and to work through elections and parliamentary procedure…" (Huntington, 1991, p. 170). Huntington argues that "the scope of participation was broadened and more political figures and groups gained the opportunity to compete for power and to win power on the implicit or explicit understanding that they would be moderate in their tactics and policies" (Huntington, 1991, p. 169).

Gunes Murat Tezcur is one of the key scholars who in his research on the Islamists' moderation in Turkey, emphasized the impact of inclusion or "political openings that create incentives for behavioral moderation" among the Islamists (Schwedler, 2011, p. 357). According to Tezcur, the Islamist parties "have strong incentives to comply with democratic rules even if they do not hold deep democratic convictions" (Tezcur, 2010, p. 31). Similar to the other founders of moderation theory, by focusing on the impact of electoral dynamics, he mentioned:

> [O]nce Islamists are organized as electoral parties seeking mass support, they expose themselves to constant state surveillance and to outside influences that dilute their ideological cohesion. Even just for organizational reasons, it becomes increasingly difficult for Islamists to pursue radical agendas because of their vulnerability to regime crackdowns and discontent among their own ranks (Schwedler, 2011, p. 357).

Indeed, Jillian Schwedler is one of the most distinguished experts of political Islam, and has widely worked on the impact of inclusion on the behavior of Islamists. She considers inclusion to be a mechanism which reduces radicalization as well as encourages tolerance, pluralistic values and even maybe promotes the democratization process (Schwedler, 2006, p. 11), its central dynamic is that it allows parties to "participate in legitimate competitive political processes, such as democratic election, a free civil society, legal protests and demonstrations" (Schwedler, 2013, p. 4).

By contrast, the "exclusion-radicalization" hypothesis has been advocated, and posits that "as political opportunities for opposition actors close, the risk of radicalization increases (Schwedler 2013; Kepel 1986; Burget 1993; Anderson 1997; Esposito 1997; Moussali 1999, 2005; and Wickham 2004). The Algerian experience after the 1992 military coup provides an historical example that supports the exclusion-radicalization hypothesis.

In her work, Schwedler particularly illustrates the process of moderation in the examples of the Islamic parties in Jordan and Yemen, two countries in which Islamist parties have been relatively tolerated by the ruling regimes. For example, she illustrates the experiences of the Muslim Brotherhood and the Islamic Action Front in Jordan and the Islah Party in Yemen, which, due to their political participation,and the inclusive policies of the state, have successfully transformed towards moderation (Schwedler, 2006, p. 28). She argues that the Muslim Brotherhood has always had a special relationship with the King of Jordan, and thus, been able to participate in the political system. According to her, even during the period 1957-1989, when all political parties were banned, the Muslim Brotherhood was allowed to remain active as a charity organization. Indeed, one reason why the King of Jordan has always given priority to the Muslim Brotherhood was to reduce the role and threat of leftist and nationalist parties (Schwedler, 2006, p. 192).

However, Schwedler at the same time mentioned that "inclusion may not turn radicals into moderates...but rather deny radicals a large support base". For example, both the IAF in Jordan and the Islah party in Yemen have enjoyed similar levels of participation in the political process, but it is notable that the IAF, especially since the political opening, has become more moderate than the Islah party (Schwedler 2006, p. 192). In other words, inclusion pushed the IAF party toward moderation where the Islah party is not.

According to her "inclusion may increase moderation by a variety of methods, including:

1. Turning radicals into moderates (thus reducing the number of radicals and increasing the number of moderates);

2. Turning fence-sitters (those teetering between moderation and radicalism) into moderates (thus increasing the number of moderates without necessarily reducing the number of radicals);

3. Leading moderates to adopt even more moderate positions than they held previously;

4. Providing moderates with opportunities to increase their visibility and efficacy (without necessarily changing the number of moderates or radicals)" (Schwedler 2006, p. 13).

In addition, it needs to be mentioned that the "Islamists themselves [also worldwide] have dutifully promoted the idea that more political participation leads to moderation". For example, Hamid argued that in most of his interviews with Islamists in Egypt and Jordan "during the crackdowns of 2008", "Brotherhood officials warned that their supporters would radicalize if regime repression continued" (Hamid, 2014, p. 40). The Tajik Islamists' leadership have also often repeated the same statements to the effect that more repression of the Islamist faction will create more radicalization. Therefore, they considered their party an important factor in preventing this process from occurring in Tajik society. For example, Ilhom Yakubov, an active member of the IRPT in Sughd, once asked: "Can you imagine the kind of situation we would have in Tajikistan without the IRPT? Our party is moderate and we are here to prevent the young from joining radical underground groups" (Thibault, 2014, p. 164). Muhiddin Kabiri, after the exclusion of their party, referring to the negative effect of repression and exclusion, wrote: "[A]fter [the] banning of the party and [the] arrest of most of its high-ranking members, many of the IRPT's members and supporters despaired of reaching political solutions and [a] peaceful way for changing the situation and thus tend[ed] to join extremist groups". He tried to vindicate his arguments by citing some facts. For example, Kabiri mentioned that "the number of Tajik citizens fighting in the line[s] of ISIL until September 2015 [until the banning the IRPT] was about 300 persons, but the last findings of the same ministry say the number reached 2000 [after the IRPT was banned]" (Kabiri 2017).

Generally speaking, "the "inclusion-moderation hypothesis" has gone mainstream and mutated into various related forms" (Hamid 2014, p. 39), and as argued by Quinn Mecham: "Considerable research has shown that often Islamists will 'moderate' their ideology and behavior the more they directly participate in their political systems" (Mecham, 2012, p. 5).

2.3.4 Strategic Adaptation Approach versus Value Transformation Approach

As seen in chapter one, regarding the moderation of Islamist groups, "a major point of discussion in the literature is the differentiation between behavioral and ideological moderation" (Buehler 2012, p. 212). Within the logic of the inclusion-moderation hypothesis

two approaches have been discussed: The first refers to behavioral moderation and the second to the ideological moderation of Islamist groups. Both approaches describe the process through which Islamist parties move away from more radical positions. The first approach is ***strategic adaptation***, which refers to behavioral moderation; and the second approach is ***value transformation***, which tries to explain the ideological moderation of the Islamists. It should be mentioned that both approaches consider the inclusion of Islamist political parties into electoral politics and the legal system as a "necessary precondition for their eventual moderation" but "they disagree on the actual causal mechanisms at work" (Yilmaz, 2010-11, p. 120).

Strategic adaptation approach: According to the strategic adaptation approach, radical Islamists, due to different reasons "can start behaving as moderates without necessarily undergoing a major transformation in their ideological convocations", since they change their positions only due to their strategic interests. This approach "conceptualizes party moderation as an instance of strategic adaptation under institutional constraints" (Yilmaz 2010-11, p. 120). According to the strategic adaptation approach, Islamists moderate their behavior and rhetoric simply because pragmatically they want to survive as an organization within the competitive political system and come to power through it. It should be mentioned that all three causal mechanisms described above within moderation theory explicitly refer to the strategic adaptation approach.

Value Transformation approach: On the other hand, unlike the strategic adaptation approach, the value transformation approach emphasizes the ideological moderation of the Islamists. Unlike most of the above-referenced experts, Schwedler (2006) alongside some other scholars, such as Wickham (2004) and Marshal (2005), argue that the ideological moderation of the Islamists occurs as a result of inclusion, and tried to show the mechanisms and processes that can explain this ideational change. For example, according to Wickham (2004) and Schwedler (2006), the political opening and liberalization process not only incentivizes Islamists to became moderates based on their strategic calculations, but also encourages them to change their core values and beliefs.

Schwedler also argues that both institutional constraints and the opportunities provided by political openings, which "support [the] inclusion-moderation hypothesis" (Schwedler 2006, p. 193), "do not offer a theory or model for explaining [the] ideational change or ideological moderation" of moderate Islamists (Schwedler 2006, p. 14). According to her, "these formulations assert rather than explain ideational change, that is, how a political actor may come to hold more moderate positions as a result of inclusion" (Schwedler 2006, p. 193). Their

suggestions are known as the 'value transformation' approach instead of the 'strategic adaptation' approach, which explains the mostly behavioral moderation of radical groups (Yilmaz, 2010-11, p. 120).

Both Wickham and Schwedler have proposed mechanisms and processes that explain ideological moderation or value changes. For example, according to Wickham (2004), this ideological moderation and identity transformation especially occurs based on several factors and processes such as "political learning and interactions with secular opposition". Schwedler, however, recognizes the internal debate going on within Islamist parties as a mechanism and process that explains their ideological moderation, which as a result, "enables Islamists to justify previously unthinkable changes". This ideological moderation, alongside the contributions of modernist leaders, is also "a process of collective engagement" with debates on doctrinal ideological issues among the Islamists. In her view, internal debate among most Islamists happened as a result of tensions between the modernist and traditionalist fractions within these organizations. Thus, a causal mechanism of Islamist moderation is a process she calls the "shifting boundaries of justifiable action" (Schwedler 2006).

Berna Yilmaz' PhD research very clearly supports the insights of the above-mentioned leading experts. He separately describes, the factors and causes of moderation of each approach within a table. According to him, political participation is a precondition for both approaches, but the causes of moderation for these two rival perspectives vary. He considers *institutional constraints*, such as political survival, regime oppression, electoral viability, vote maximization, and the forging of coalitions as factors and causes behind the strategic adaptation approach to moderation. *Ideational processes* such as political learning, bipartisan interaction, and discursive shifts in the justification of democratic practices are considered to be causes for moderation within a value transformation approach (Yilmaz, 2010-11, p. 129). However, one point that should be mentioned is that all supporters of the value transformation approach, accept the causes of moderation of strategic adaptation as well, regardless of any misunderstanding or disagreements about the latter's mechanisms,. Indeed, they recognize the "strategic elements in party moderation especially in its earlier stages" (Yilmaz, 2010-11, p. 125). This means that, for opponents of the value transformation approach, behavioral moderation is only the first step in the process, ideological moderation is the second step, and is more important.

2.4 Alternative Approaches: Force Moderation Hypothesis

The American political scientist, Shadi Hamid, in his book *Temptation to Power* has extensively highlighted the impact of 'state repression' as a a causal mechanism for moderation. Unlike Schwedler, he comes to the conclusion that it is not the democratic opening and inclusion, but rather, the state repression and marginalization of Islamists in an autocratic environment that has had deeper effects on the moderation of Islamists. As such, Hamid has proposed *force moderation* as a hypothesis. According to him, the Islamists in Egypt and Jordan moderated their ideologies under state repression. Unlike Schwedler, who particularly highlighted the impact of political openings, Hamid argued that: "They [the Muslim Brotherhood leaders] don't show interest in internal issue[s] unless they're under external pressure". Moreover, "during the 1980s, the Brothers didn't feel threatened by the regime because it allowed them to participate openly through social and political activism, but once the regime started to attack and suppress them, internal voices call[ed] for reform" (Hamid, 2014, p. 97).

Hamid has additionally referred to the experiences of the Wasat Party in Egypt, which was created by young, reformist former Muslim Brotherhood members. He claimed that the Wasat party "did not emerge in an atmosphere of openness and democratization, but rather the opposite", since "[the] party was founded on the heels of what was, up until then, the worst four-year period for the Brotherhood since the *mihna*, or ordeal, of the 1950s and 1960s". Therefore, he concluded that in this case, "repression appears to have helped produce a moderate outcome" (Hamid, 2014, p. 98). Unlike Schwedler, however, Shadi Hamid believes that the democratic opening and the dynamics of the electoral game in the Middle East led the Islamists not toward moderation, but rather, in a right-wing and more conservative direction.

Indeed, during the short periods of political opening in both countries (Egypt mid. 1980s and Jordan between 1989 and 1992), it was not only the Islamists, but the whole political spectrum, that moved towards the right. He specifically mentions that the democratic opening in Egypt did not push the Muslim Brotherhood toward the center, but rather, to the right, where even the secular parties in Egypt tried to Islamize their political platforms. Hamid argues that, since 1989, the Jordanian Muslim Brotherhood's discourse has also become more illiberal as part of a coalition government that has adopted many religious laws. Shadi Hamid therefore considers religious revivalism to be the main factor that shifts political groups toward the right. Accordingly, Egyptian and Jordanian societies are strongly conservative, and political parties need to listen to the voices of their voters given the need to maximize their votes. Hamid

therefore asserts that the political opening in the Middle East has made the political spectrum in general illiberal (Hamid, 2014).

By contrast, Faraz Aladina, Seda Demiralp (Demiralp, 2004, p. 15), Schatcher, and Yilmaz, (2010-11, pp. 93-114), as well as Günes Murat Tezcür, (2010, p. 75) and even Wickham (2004, p. 212-213), have each emphasized the impact of state repression or the "threat of state repression [which has already]…featured…in the literature on moderation theory" (Aladina n.J. p. 2), alongside other factors on the moderation of Islamists within the logic of participation. For example, Stacher (2002, p. 416) argues that "Islamists have democratized their positions in order to reject the state repression and torture they have faced in the past". According to him the possible threat of state repression was an important point that has pushed the Muslim Brotherhood toward moderation. Even Wickham in her works notes that repression sometimes led Islamists toward moderation, "not only to seize new political opportunities but also to evade new political constraints...in order to avoid state repression" (2004, p. 212-213).

The oppression or threat of repression especially underlines the strategic adaptation approach within moderation theory. Indeed, the force-moderation hypothesis proposed by Hamid is similar to the strategic adaptation approach. However, unlike Hamid, many of the above-referenced scholars have also mentioned – alongside state repression – the positive impact of political openings provided by hitherto repressive regimes as well. Unlike Hamid, however, these scholars did not mention that political openings can lead Islamists toward a radical conservative agenda.

On the other hand, there are also scholars who have even considered exclusion to be a factor in the moderation of Islamists. For example, Francesco Cavatorta and Fabio Merone demonstrated that the Tunisian Islamists have transformed from a radical party into a conservative pro-democratic party, despite harsh repression and exclusion over the last four decades. As a result, they proposed a new concept, so-called "moderation through exclusion". According to both scholars, due to the specific characteristics of Tunisian society, the *Ennahda* faced a "double exclusion", both from the secular state as well as from large parts of Tunisian society (Cavatorta, & Merone, 2013, pp. 857-859). Therefore, they argue that the *Ennahda* has learned that a majority, both in government and society, do not accept their radical agenda. It is apparently under this pressure that they have changed their behavior.

2.5 Conclusion

The current chapter concludes that political Islam or Islamism, which today is considered a main threat to world security and is most often associated with terrorism and extremism, is not necessarily monolithic and totally static, but is rather a diverse phenomenon with a variety of expressions across Muslim countries. The specifically modern "moderate" trend within the phenomenon of Islamism represents a completely new face for the Islamists, which is "most relevant to discussions of democratic change" (Wittes 2008, p. 9).

In an attempt to better understand 'moderate Islamism', two main approaches regarding the interaction between political Islam and democracy were discussed. The first approach underlined that Islamism is "by nature is anti-democratic, anti-modern" – dogmatic, static, as well as a singularly monolithic phenomenon (Mozaffari 2007, p. 21). However, advocates of the first approach, such as Elie Keourie, Bernard Lewis (Lewis 1990), Huntington (1993), Bassam Tibi (Tibi 2012; 1998), Patricia Crone, and Daniel Pipes (Pipes 1995; 1998) mostly consider moderate Islamists to be inseparable from militant Islamists – which they highlight by reference to older, anti-democratic Islamist voices such as Saïd Qutb and Hassan al Banna. They generally ignore newer, moderate Islamist voices, those which advocate democracy and pluralism and consider changes accrued in their positions as a tactical game. According to this essentialist interpretation, the ideology of political Islam, especially the concept of an Islamic state or Islamic law, is incompatible with modernity and democracy.

The second group of "non-essentialist" intellectuals, including Fuller, Tariq Ramadan, Al-Anani, Esposito, Kurzman, and Wickham have demonstrated that Islamism is not a monolithic phenomenon, but is actually rather diverse. This group of scholars mostly focused on the so-called 'moderate' Islamists, and further developed concepts such as 'post-Islamist' and 'neo-Islamist' in order to highlight thoese differences. According to them, this new Islamist trend condemns violence, participates in the political process, and supports democracy. Unlike the first approach, however, these scholars observe that most moderate Islamists are flexible and do not intend to implement Islamic law in an attempt to create a religious state. Most of them consider the AKP in Turkey, the Wasat Party in Egypt, the Tunisian Al-Nahda, as well as the Muslim Brotherhood in various Middle Eastern countries, to be moderates who respect democracy and its elements; some even regard them as liberals and/or reformists.

As already mentioned above, some representatives of the second group of "non-essentialist" intellectuals have used moderation theory in order to determine the factors and mechanisms

that contributed to the Islamists' moderation. Moderation theory, the inclusion-moderation hypothesis in particular, states that the inclusion of radical political actors – such as Islamic parties – in the political process encourages them to become more moderate in their positions. Once they join the political process, and participate in electoral competition, they soon realize that large segments of society do not support their revolutionary slogans, and therefore, change their tactics. As seen above, the inclusion-moderation hypothesis also states that inclusion encourages radical Islamists groups to become moderate as they realize that their participation in this process is more beneficial to their ideological interests than exclusion.

In this chapter, two approaches have been discussed within the logic of the inclusion-moderation hypothesis: a) *strategic adaptation,* which refers to behavioral moderation; and, b) the *value transformation* approach, which focuses on the ideological moderation of Islamists. Both approaches consider inclusion to be the "necessary precondition for their eventual moderation" but "they disagree on the actual causal mechanisms at work" (Yilmaz, 2010-11, p. 120).

The strategic adaptation approach "conceptualizes party moderation as an instance of strategic adaptation under institutional constraints" (Yilmaz 2010-11, p. 120). In this approach, institutional constraints and the strategic calculations of radical groups recognize electoral pressure, lack of resources, state pressure, and the threat of repression as causes of moderation. Value transformation, on the other hand, argues in favor of the ideological moderation of Islamists, and proposes causal mechanisms and processes that can explain the ideational change of Islamists. According to this second approach, institutional constraints cannot explain the ideological moderation of the Islamists. As noted by Wickham (2004, p. 214),, "it is impossible to limit [the] growing adoption of democratic values by Islamist to strategic adaptation".

Wickham used 'political learning' and the 'interaction of Islamists with other secular groups' as processes which better explain the ideational change of Islamists. Schwedler has similarly mentioned the internal debate as a process that is able to explain the ideological moderation of Islamists groups, and has extensively underlined the role of inclusion in any democratic opening on the ideological moderation of Islamists in Yemen and Jordan. She did not emphasize institutional constraints – such as pressure and the threat of state repression – as the causes behind Islamist moderation, but rather, considered limited political openings to be the main indicator of that moderation.

As already observed, experts such as Shadi Hamid have extensively highlighted the impact of repression rather than political openings as a causal mechanism that forced the Islamists toward

moderation. Hamid has therefore proposed the forced moderation hypothesis to explain his arguments. His approach is closer to the strategic adaptation approach, since this approach considers repression and the threat of pressure to be causes of moderation for political parties once they join the political process. The empirical evidence also demonstrates that in some countries, democratic openings, and in others, repression or even exclusion, can lead Islamists toward moderation (Demiralp, 2004). Nonetheless, to date, no attempt has been made by scholars to generalize these concepts to make them applicable for Islamists all over the world.

CHAPTER III: INTRODUCTION TO POLITICAL AND RELIGIOUS LANDSCAPE OF TAJIKISTAN

3.1 Overall Information

Tajikistan is a post-Soviet republic that gained its independence after the collapse of the Soviet Union in September 1991. It borders on China to the east, Afghanistan to the south and Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan to the west and the north. The population of Tajikistan according to year 2018 statistic is approximately 8,604,882 (July 2018 est.). Just over 84.3 percent of the population are ethnic Tajiks, almost 12.2 percent are Uzbeks, while the final 3.5 percent is comprised of Russians, Kyrgyz, Turkmens, Tatars, and Arabs (2010 est.) (The CIA World FactBook, 2019).

Tajikistan is a Muslim majority country, whereby more than 96.7 percent are Muslim, the majority of whom belong to the Sunni Hanafi sect, (90 percent); only 7 percent are Shia Isma'ili Muslims[23] (2010 est) (TheWorld FactBook, 2019), who differ from the Iranian-dominated mainstream Shi'a Islam, as well as Sunni branches of Islam. There is a very small percentage of Christians living in Tajikistan, most of whom are ethnically Russian. Tajikistan measures 143,100km^2 but approximately 93 percent of the country is mountainous. Its economy is primarily agrarian, while about 70 percent of the population live in rural areas. The agricultural sector contributes 40 percent of the net material product, in comparison to the industrial sector, which contributes only 30 percent, where "cotton is the most important crop" in the country (Economy Watch, 2015).

Tajikistan is the only Persian-speaking country, among the Turkic-speaking republics in post-Soviet Central Asia. Considering its longest border is with Afghanistan, Tajikistan's location is between secular Turkic speaking republics, on the one side, and conservative Persian-speaking countries on the other. During the Cold War, the Tajik SSR was the geopolitical crossroads between the two ideologically-opposed blocs. While politically the Tajiks are closer to the

---

[23] The Shia Isma'ili Muslim community is the largest Muslim Minority community in Tajikistan, after the Hanafi Sunni School *madhab*, with an estimated 3/5 percent of the Muslim population of country. Ismai'ilis live in the Pamir Mountains, and a majority live in the in autonomous region known as the GBAO, which is geographically the largest region of the country. Isma'ili Muslims are more secularly-oriented. Unlike Sunni Islam, the Isma'ili Muslim community is managed from outside the country through the influence and guidance of their spiritual leader worldwide, His Highness Aga Khan IV, who lives in France. Since the collapse of the Soviet Union, the Spiritual leader of all Isma'ili Muslims, Aga Khan, has been very active in the development of modern Tajikistan. In spite of being a religious leader, Aga Khan is also head of the AKDN (Aga Khan Development Network), which is considered the largest non-government organisation in the world. Over the previous decades, the AKDN has been remarkably supportive of the education system, as well health and agricultural, sector(s) of Tajikistan (See: Akiner, 2002).

Turkic zone, "iranianism (that is speaking in one of Iranian–Western or Eastern—languages, having Farsi as a lingua franca), and sedentarianism (absence of tribal structures and egalitarian political institutions)" made Tajiks different from other post-Soviet Turkic tribes with more nomadic traditions (Abdulloev, 2009a). A large minority of Tajiks currently live in neighbouring Uzbekistan, especially in the ancient Achaemenid cities of Samarkand and Bukhara. Furthermore, a visible minority of Tajiks live in the north, centre, and eastern parts of Afghanistan, as well as some resident in China's Xinjiang province (Rashid, 1994, p. 160).

Before the Soviet occupation[24], the territory of the modern Tajikistan, especially the central and southern regions that in the past were called "eastern Bukhara", belonged to what was known as the *Bukharan Emirate*. The north as well as mountainous area in the eastern part of modern Tajikistan was part of the *Russian Empire*, when it was known as the Russian province of Turkestan (Baizoyev & Hayward 2004, p. 103).[2] The northern region of Tajikistan, known as Khudjand by the early nineteenth century, was also part of the "*khanate of Kokand*, and was incorporated into the Russian Empire as part of Ferghana in 1876" (Rashid, 1994, p. 161). Only after the revolution of Bukhara in 1920, and the division of Central Asia into separate ethnically-oriented republics by the Soviet Union, did Tajikistan first appear on the map as a Soviet Socialist republic under the direct rule of Moscow. The year was 1929, and a "product of Stalin's nationality policy (Roy, 1993, p. 13).

The concept of nationalism based on ethnicity had been introduced by external colonial powers (the Soviet Union) in Central Asia. For centuries, these people had identified themselves collectively neither by territory nor by ethnicity, but rather by their belonging to their belief and religion, Islam. According to Roy, "ethnicity had nothing to do with territorialization in Central Asia" and "this pseudo-scientific conception (of nationalism produced by Stalin) ignored the fact that Central Asia, a multi-ethnic area, shared a common Islamic culture" (Roy, 1993, p. 13).

---

[24] Historically, the post-Soviet Central Asian territory (especially between amudarya and sirdarya) in general has been known by different names. Arabs nominated the territory "*Maawaraa'an-nahr*" (is the region beyond the Oxus river called Amu-Darya); this is the region known as *Transoxiana*, by the ancient Greeks. Post-Soviet Central Asia was widely also known as *Turkestan* (Land of the Turks). Another part of Amu-Darya river is called *Khorosan* by the Arabs (which occupies the north-eastern part of Iran, and the north-western provinces of Afghanistan). Together, the regions of Maawaraa'an-nahr and Khorosan constitute Central Asia. The term Central Asia has been used by Europeans since the 19th Century. (Abdulloev 2009b, p. 57) As observed by Abdulloev, "Khorasan and Movarounnahr were principal centers of a global civilization connecting the East and West...and functioned for many centuries as a hub of overland trade" (Abdulloev 2009b).

3.2 Islam

"Islam has always been a central element in the identity of the people of the Central Asia" (Roy, 1998, p. 130) including Tajikistan, which is considered the most religious and conservative country by comparison to other post-Soviet Central Asian republics (see: Research Center, 2012). Over the centuries, the region was "one of the world centres of Islamic thought, science and culture" (Olimova, Tolipov, 2011, p. 1) and has been home to influential Muslim philosophers (Avicenna, Aa-Farabi), as well as Islamic Jurists (al-Bukhari), and also Mystics (Rumi, Jami, Naqshbandi), each of whom has extensively influenced the whole of Islamic civilization. For this reason, Star (2015) designated the region the intellectual centre of the world during the golden age of Islamic civilization.

Undoubtedly, Islam lost its previous primacy during the Soviet era, "its infrastructure almost totally destroyed" (Akiner, 2003, p. 97). The Soviet regime's official state atheism led them to eliminate, both physically as well as culturally, all religious institutions from society. No other Muslim regions in the world have been challenged by such an aggressive system. In no other Muslim country had clerical authority become so weak as in post-Soviet Muslim Central Asia, "and in almost no other country had Muslims been so isolated from their co-religionists" (Akcali, 1998, p. 267).

However, in spite of this, "the tradition and succession were never discontinued in the region. Throughout the Soviet period, Islam existed as a way of life and as an identification of the indigenous population of Central Asia" (Olimova, Tolipov 2011, p. 3), including in Tajikistan. As a result, "Islam retained its position as a source of identity, a transmitter of cultural tradition" in the region in general, and in Tajikistan in particular. Akcali even believes that the faith of Muslims from the former Soviet Union "remained essentially the same as it had been before 1917 (Akcali, 1998, p. 267).

Authoritarian modernization, and forced Soviet secularization through the top-down approach favored by the Soviet regime, was mostly limited to urban areas. Similar to many other Muslim countries, ordinary people lived with their beliefs during these years and transferred their religious values and principles to the next generations. Modernization and industrialization were rejected by those Tajiks who mostly lived in the over-populated countryside. According to Saodat Olimova, "the cultural revolution, despite all the achievements in the field of education, did not eradicate the old values". However, at the same time, no-one can ignore the

influence of Soviet modernization and urbanization which have had "on the whole, the greatest impact on the religious situation in Tajikistan" (Olimova, n.d. pp. 1-2).

Therefore, after the collapse of the Soviet Union, the role of Islam in Tajik society has increased remarkably in a very short time. This religious revivalism,[4] according to both Roy and Olimova, "which emerged [on] the scene in 1989... [was] not a foreign import… [but rather] the public appearance of a culture and a religious practice that never entirely disappeared...and is much more linked to a simple return of traditionalism" (Roy 2000a). At the same time, however, experts have also emphasized external factors, such as the Soviet-Afghan war, the Iranian revolution, and Saudi and Pakistani financial and logistical support, to better explain the phenomenon of rising religious revivalism in the region (Roy, 2000a).

3.3 Religiosity in modern Tajikistan

Over the past decade, Islam has become both politically as well as socially more visible, and the Islamization process has increased in society markedly. The numbers of hijab-wearing women and girls has visibly increased in Tajikistan (Asia Plus, 2010). According to the official statistics from 2013, as well as the survey conducted by the Sociological Research Center ("SHARQ"), almost 95 percent of people polled self-reported as Muslim (Seifert, 2012, p. 7). Today according to official statistics, there are more than 3,000 Mosques in Tajikistan, in contrast to just 17 in the whole country during the Soviet era. The percentage of those Tajiks who consider themselves to be practising Muslims has also dramatically increased. For example, in 2010 about 73 percent of respondents considered themselves religious. According to the 2010 IFES survey, the number of Tajiks who pray five times a day has increased to 63 percent (IFES, 2011, 41), an increase from only 1 percent in 1996 (IFES, 1997, p. 111). The percentage of those Tajiks who attend Friday prayers has also dramatically increased to 52% in 2010 although it was 13 percent in 1996.

Another poll shows that 88 percent of the population of Tajikistan fast during Ramadan (Islam news, 2012), which is noticeably higher than in other Central Asian countries, where only 30 percent of Kazakhs, 50 percent of Uzbekis, and 53 percent of Kyrgyzstanis fast (Pew Research Center, 2012). Furthermore, according to the Pew Research Centre poll, religion is very important for 50 percent of Tajiks, which is relatively low by the standards of Middle Eastern countries, but visibly high by comparison to other post-Soviet Muslim republics (Pew Research Centre, 2012).

However, most of the surveys demonstrate that the majority of the country's population, in spite of becoming increasingly conservative, prioritizes the secular regime over the religious state, due to their apolitical interpretation of religion. Thus according to the last survey conducted by the Centre of Islamic Studies under the President of Tajikistan in 2015, among 1,584 people polled from different ages and regions, almost 60 percent supported the secular regime, whereas only 12 percent defended an Islamically-oriented society. The last survey conducted by the OSCE also demonstrated that 87 percent of those polled are concerned about religious extremism, about half of them condemn a theocratic state, and only 7 percent want to live in accordance to religion (Gulhoja, Nazar and Yatim, 2015). This supports the view that the Central Asians in general, and the Tajiks in particular, value their Islamic heritage, "but believe that religion should be a matter of private conscience, not a normative regulator of public behaviour (Akiner, 2002, p. 167).

3.4 Islam and the State

The concept of secularism is a fundamental principle in the constitution of Tajikistan. Article 1 of the Constitution of the Republic of Tajikistan declares the country to be a secular state, and article 100 even underlines that the "secular...nature of the state shall be irrevocable (Constitution of the Republic of Tajikistan, 2003, pp. 62-84). The law on religion also clearly emphasizes a division between state and religion, and especially reinforces that religion cannot interfere with state obligations (Epkenhans, 2010, pp. 325-326).

It appears to be that the Tajik model of secularism, taking the Tajik elite's views toward religious symbols into consideration, is somewhat close to the Turkish or French model of *laïcité,* where the state controls every single aspect of religion and religious activities in society. The French and Turkish models of secularism has been called 'assertive secularism' by the well-known scholar, Kuru. By contrast, he labeled the US model 'passive secularism', "which allows [for the] public visibility of religion". According to Kuru, both "France and the United States despite their shared Western heritage and parallel levels of industrialization" have different views of secularism (Kuru, 2012)[25]. For example, "[s]tudents' display of religious symbols…are

---

[25] According to Kuru there are two criteria which define the main characteristics of secular states.In particular, ' "their parliaments and courts are secular, in the sense of being free from institutional religious control, and they constitutionally declare neutrality toward religions by lacking an established religion" (Kuru, 2012). In this regard, he clearly differentiates secular states from religious (or theocratic) states, and even from states with established churches, such as the United Kingdom and Greece, as well as from states that are actively hostile towards religion (such as atheist China).

free in the United States, [but] prohibited in French public schools, and banned in all educational institutions in Turkey" (*ibid.*). Assertive secularism's aim, in his view is, "...to confine religion to the private domain and to exclude it from the public sphere" (*ibid.*). According to Taylor, also French and Turkish model of secularism "is mainly concerned with controlling religion. Its task is to define the place of religion in public life, and to keep it firmly in this place" (Taylor, n.a.).

The secular state in Tajikistan also seems to follow this same model of secularism. The state identifies and regulates most areas related to religion, and also regulates religious institutions such as Mosques and Madrasas. Therefore, many international observers, as well as the Islamic opposition, have criticized the Tajik Government because of its "interference" in the religious sphere, and claim that the Tajik Government does not maintain the secularist principle, *i.e.*, the division between state and religion. The state in Tajikistan manages and regulates religion through special official institutions known as *shuroi ullamo* (Council of Ulamo) as the highest religious authority, in conjunction with the State Committee for Religious Affairs, as well as some other governmental institutions.

3.4.1 Council of Ulamo and State Committee for Religious Affairs

The Council of Ulamo in Tajikistan is similar in principle to the Directorate of Religious Affairs in Turkey. It is the successor to SADUM (Spiritual Muslim Board of Central Asia), the institution which was created in the 1940s by the Soviet regime in order to have better control over religious affairs in all Central Asian Soviet republics. Following the disintegration of SADUM, the institution of *Qaziat* continued the former's role in Tajikistan, and was headed by the well-known cleric, Agbar Turajonzoda, who later joined the political Islam and other opposition groups in the early 1990s upheaval. Since 1993 and following the beginning of the civil war, the president of Tajikistan "transformed *Qaziat* [into] a *Muftiate* and nominated a pro-government cleric at this head" (Thibault, 2014, p. 122). In 1996 this religious institution was renamed the Council of Ulamo (Akiner, 2003, 119).

The Council of Ulamo has 27 members, which every seven years appoint the new *Qazi* (Head of the Council of Ulamo). It is mostly concerned with the spiritual life of the people; oversees Islamic institutions such as mosques; trains *imam-khatibs* or official mullahs of the mosques, and tests them; and through them, guides the people of Tajikistan based on the peaceful Hanafi interpretation of Islam; develops the religious curriculum; and manages the import of religious literature into Tajikistan (Thibault, 2014, p. 122). The Council of Ulamo is the only official

religious institution that has the right to issue the *fatwa* related to any case in Tajikistan. For example, according to a 2004 *fatwa* issued by the Council of Ulamo, women cannot pray in mosques (Aliev and Sindelar, 2004). Although the Council of Ulamo is officially declared independent, paradoxically, many believe that it serves the interests of the state (Thibault, 2014, pp. 121-122). It is also of interest to note that, according to Kuru, ""Control" and "separation" are two strategies of the assertive secularist project of excluding religion from the public sphere" (Kuru, 2012). However, the Tajik politicians called this interaction between religious institutions and the state 'co-operation' rather than 'control' or 'interference'. They considered this policy important in the case of Tajikistan, and brought many examples from other secular countries, where religion is regulated by the state. Therefore, they did not consider it anti-secularism.

The State Committee for Religious Affairs, unlike the Council of Ulamo, is "a governmental body enforcing the laws regulating the registration of religious communities, religious education and private religious practices" (Thibault, 2014, p. 128). However, in 2006 the Committee of Religious of Affairs was banned, and in its stead, the Department for Religious Affairs (DRA), under the Ministry of Culture, was created (Epkenhans, 2010, p.325). The "registration of mosques and madrasa and the organization of the annual pilgrimage to Mecca" has been considered a main responsibility of the Department of Religious Affairs (Thibault, 2014, p. 129).

The State Committee for Religious Affairs, together with the Council of Ulamo, appoint as well as test the *imam-khatibs*, and even oversee and identify the content of their sermons. For example, in 2002 a special religious test was developed by them in order to identify the religious knowledge of clerics or mullahs (Blua, 2002). Later in 2006, further training was organized for imams of Friday Mosques (US Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor, 2010). In 2014, uniforms for imams were introduced, with approval by the State Committee for Religious Affairs together with Council of Ulamo (Najibullah, 2014).

3.5 Main Islamic Actors in Tajikistan

As mentioned above, the majority of Tajikistan's population are Hanafi Sunnis, similar to other Muslims in the region (Roy, 2000a, p.143). The Hanafi School is considered moderate and "deliberately separated from political power" (Saodat Olimova, Farkhod Tolipov 2011, p 1). Generally, one can divide Sunni Islam in Tajikistan into two main groups or factions,

representing *traditionalism* and *Islamism.* There are also imported fundamentalist radical groups, such as *Salafists* and *Hizb ut-Tahrir.*

3.5.1 Traditionalism or Orthodox Islam in Tajikistan

Traditional clerics *(ruhoniyani sunnati*[26]) constitute all Sunni spiritual leaders, such as *mullahs* (clerics), *ulemas* (masters of religious law), as well as *Shaykhs* and *Eshans* (Sufi spiritual *pirs* or leaders), in Tajikistan. The majority of the mainstream Muslim population in Central Asia, including in Tajikistan, follow these traditional clerics. In this dissertation, the term 'traditional Islam' is used to "describe the conservative, overall rather passive attitude of religion that continues to characterise the outlook of the great majority of Central Asian Muslims" (Akiner, 2003, p. 101). Traditional orthodox Islam, or what Roy calls the conservative Islam of the *ulemas* (Roy, 2000a, p.144), especially during Soviet period[27] and even today, can be divided into two main groups in Tajikistan: the *official mullahs* and the *traditional, unofficial mullahs.*

Official Islam: Official *Mullahs*[28] are pro-government clerics who work within the framework of the religious institution known as the Council of Ulema, as mentioned above. *Official Islam*, or what Akiner refers to as "*governmental[ly] sponsored Islam*" (Akiner 2003, p. 101), in Central Asia "was put [into] place by Stalin in 1943 as part of his four spiritual directorates or *muftiyya*" (Roy, 1998, p. 130).

Unofficial Islam: Unofficial mullahs are what Mullojonov refers to as *informal clergy* (Mullojonov, 2001), and are those who are not necessarily appointed by *muftiyya* or *Shuroi Ulamo* as *imam-khatib* in mosques, but who nevertheless have very high personal prestige among ordinary Tajiks. They are much more influential by comparison to the official mullahs (Rahnamo, 2009, pp. 235-240), since people believe that they are not under the control of the state, and are therefore uncorrupted. During the Soviet period while official clerics served the atheist political authority, unofficial clerics proselytised religion in the countryside. It should be mentioned that this unofficial Islam, or 'parallel Islam' (Roy 2000a) appeared in Soviet times.

---

[26] Rahnamo uses the term 'traditional clerics', or *ruhoniyani sunnati*, to describe only the unofficial clerics, even though the official clerics are also belong to the traditional clergy. (Rahnamo, 2009, pp. 226-267). Olivier Roy also divided the Islamic clergy in Tajikistan into official and parallel or unofficial(Roy 2000b).

[27] For more information about the division between official and unofficial Islam during the Soviet period, see: (Roy 2000a, and Akbarzadeh 1997).

[28] *Mulla*, also *Mullah* (lit. from Arabic *mawla*, "master"). "In Iran and Central Asia it is a title accorded to religious scholars and dignitaries". This them is synonymous with the term *Faqih* (lit. an Islamic jurist) which is widely known in Middle East and North Africa (Glasse, 2013, p. 387).

According to Benningsen and Wimbush, this parallel Islam in Tajikistan "is represented by the adepts of some Sufi brotherhoods which are more structured than in the other Central Asian republics (Bennigsen, and Wimbush, 1986, p. 91).

Parallel or unofficial *mullahs* have always enjoyed higher prestige and religious legitimacy than official clerics or *mullahs*. According to Rahnamo in the contemporary Tajik society traditional clerics [independent mullahs] such as Eshoni Nuriddinjon (Turajonzoda's family), Domullo Muhammadii Hoiti, Domullo Hikmatullohi Tojikobodi and Hoji Mirzo are more popular among people than official clerics. Thus a good example according to him is Domullo Hikmatullohi Tojikobodi who is popular among Tajiks and has many followers and supporters among Muslims in Kyrgyzstan and Muslim Uighurs in China (Rahnamo, 2009, pp. 236-240). However, it is difficult to draw a clear line between official and unofficial clerics in Tajikistan, since they have always been flexible and interdependent from each other. An unofficial independent *mullah* can be at a particular time an official *mullah* or vice versa. For instant, Akbar Turajonzoda in the late 1980s until 1992 was the head of the official clergy but later became an unofficial *mullah* with his brothers.

However, all traditionalists both official and unofficial *mullahs*, are generally apolitical. With some exceptions, traditionalists have never challenged the legitimacy of secular governments past or present in Central Asia. Capturing political power is not their target, as their interpretation of religion is less political. According to traditionalists all kinds of regime, both secular and non-secular, have legitimacy and should be respected. Therefore, secular states both in the Middle East and Central Asia have always used these religious actors to prevent and fight radicalism and political Islam, since traditionalists are against both Islamists as well as fundamentalists. According to most traditional *mullahs*, Islam does not need any political party. Furthermore, they condemn the puritanical Salafi-Wahabi interpretation, since Salafi Islam rejects religious traditions as an innovation or *bid'ah*[29], which have always been preserved by the traditionalists. Traditional or folk Islam does not offer a liberal, modern interpretation of religion, but at the same time, "has nothing against the secular way of life *per se*" (Usmonov, 2005, p. 69). Therefore, many Islamists "consider folk Islam the main root of animosity between Islam and the state, because they see folk Islam as misunderstanding the modern institutions of society and their inter-relation" (Usmonov, 2005, p. 69).

---

[29] **Bid'ah** (innovation). "A practice or a belief which was not present in Islam as it was revealed in the Koran, and established by the Sunnah, on the basis of the Prophetic traditions..." (Glasse, 2013, p. 101).

3.5.2 Political Islam

Political Islam (Islamists), or what Rahnamo calls the "political clerics", has been another influential religious actor in Tajikistan since the collapse of the USSR. Seifert, and some Tajik Islamists, employ the term "political representatives of Islam" (Seifert 2012, p. 6) in order to describe those Muslims who believe in Islam as a political ideology. In the religious sphere of Tajikistan, they have become influential especially after the political opening Gorbachev's Glasnost provided. In this dissertation, the term 'political Islam' refers specifically to the Islamic Revival Party rooted within Tajik society. Hizb ut-Tahrir, as a radical pan-Islamic party, is represented in some parts of country, mostly in the northern provinces of Tajikistan. By comparison to the IRPT, they do not have as much influence in the religious sphere. Further information about the IRPT will be elaborated on throughout the following chapters as part of the case study for this research**.**

3.6 Sufi Islam in Tajikistan

Sufism in its turn has also extensively deep roots in Central Asia including Tajikistan; it has an inseparable link with Islamic culture and the identity of the people in this region. The richness of Sufi literature has also had a pivotal role in Tajik society, both among the clergy as well as among the Tajik intelligentsia. Sufism is omnipresent and has many faces in Tajikistan (Roy, 2000a p. 147). There are at least two major *Sufi Tariqats*[30] practicing in Tajikistan, which are rooted in Hanafi Sunni Islam, namely, *Naqshbandiyya* and Q*odiriyya*; these are the two largest Sufi groups in the entire Sunni Muslim world. *Naqshbandiyya* was founded by Bahauddin Naqshband from who was from Bukhara, an which was political and religious center (Arabov, 2004, p. 345) after Baghdad over the years during Abbasids dynasty[31].

Sufi families in Tajikistan are known mostly by their titles, and names such as *"pir", "ishan", "shaykh"*, or through the use of suffixes such as *"jan", "sharif",* and *"zada"*(Roy 2000a, p. 148); Ishanism[32] which is widely known in Central Asia is also transformed form of classical

---

[30] ***Tariqah*** (lit. path pl. *Turuq*) refers "to the doctrines and methods of mystic union…synonymous...with the terms esotericism and mysticism" (tasawwuf, or Sufism). However, in this work this term "refers... to a 'school' or 'brotherhood of mystics'" (Glasse, 2013, p. 521).

[31] **Abbasids** are the "second dynasty of the Islamic empire that succeeded the Umayyads in 132/749" (Glasse, 2013, p. 5).

[32] ***Ishan*** (lit. Persian means 'they') and refers to the "Sufi spiritual masters used in some areas of Centrals Asia". The "term *Pir* is [also] used, and among Arabs, *Shaykh*"(Glasse, 2013, p. 248).

Sufism (Abdullaev, 2014). The most important tie that shows the connection between Tajik society and Sufism is their "pilgrimage to holy places where Sufi saints are buried". Mullahs, who are Sufi spiritual leaders or are ordinary clerics, have served in these Sufi shrines and saints (Arabov, 2004, p. 345).

Another point which is important to note is that the traditional clerics of "orthodox Islam and Sufism are much intermingled in Tajikistan", such that most Tajiks are unable to differentiate them from each other (Arabov, 2004, p. 346). Thus, the two main Sufi orders in Tajikistan, according to Roy, "are the vectors of an orthodox Islam, whose fundamentalism is only tempered by their mysticism and their rooting in ancient Persian culture" (Roy 2000a p. 148). The Sufi *ishans* or mullahs in their turn have always been among both the official and unofficial clergy, as in the example of Qozi Akbar Turajonzade, the former *mufti* of the republic, who is a *Qaderi*, and another *mufti* of the republic appointed later, Fatullah Khan Sharifzode, who was *Naqshbandi* Sufi (see: Nourzhanov and Breuer 2013).

3.7 Salafi[33] Islam

The Salafi or Wahabbi interpretation of Islam does not have any roots in Central Asia, but is rather imported from outside the country, and is specifically financed by Saudi Arabia and some other Gulf states. The number of followers of Salafi Islam in Tajikistan during 2009 and 2010 was estimated at 20,000 (Olimova, and Tolipov, 2011, p. 3). Although they constitute a minority in Tajik society, they have nevertheless been very active in their actions and propaganda both in society as well as on the Internet. Salafists have a puritanical and fundamentalist interpretation of Islam, and are intolerant towards other branches of Islam, especially Shi'a Muslims. Ideologically, Salafists are opposed to both traditional Sunni orthodox Islam and Islamic mysticism. Furthermore, and more importantly, they are even opposed to political Islam in Tajikistan, since they consider the concept of a "political party" to be an innovation or *bid'a*, which originates in the West (Rahnamo 2011, pp. 104-152).

In Tajikistan, the Salafists became popular in the mid-2000s, especially among the youth. Within a short period of time, they have become very active and have caused many problems

---

[33] **Salaf** (lit. "predecessors,"ancestors") refesr to the early generation of Muslims, such as the Companions of the Prophet, their successors (*Tabi'un*), and finally, "the successor of the successors" of Muhammad, the Prophet of Islam (*Taba' at-Tabi'in*). These three groups are considered by later Muslims to be the "most authoritative source for Islamic practice and guidance" (Glasse, 2013, pp. 461-462).

in Tajik society, such as intolerably insulting traditional clerics, accusing some clerics of supporting the doctrine of Shi'ism, and proselytising against Sufi teaching while advocating its destruction – all of which have pivotal roles in Persian and Tajik literature and culture. Generally, the Salafists also deny the cultural and religious diversity of Tajik society, and are instead advocates of a monolithic and monocultural (especially Sunni) Islam.

As a result, in 2009 the Supreme court of Tajikistan banned the Salafi movement and later proclaimed it an "extremist group" (Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, 2009a). After the Salafi movement had been banned in Tajikistan, hundreds of their supporters, as well as their leaders, were prosecuted and imprisoned over the past decade.

3.8 Conclusion

As observed above, Tajikistan, as a young Muslim majority country and the smallest republic in post-Soviet Central Asia, is the only Persian-speaking nation among the otherwise Turkic-speaking republics. Tajiks are the oldest and "original descendants of the *Aryan[34]* population of Turkestan" (Rashid 1994, p. 160).

Indeed, this chapter has sought to demonstrate that Islam has "always been a central element in the identity" (Roy, 1998, p.130) of Tajiks, and despite all efforts imposed through harsh Soviet secularization policies, Islam and "the tradition and succession were never discontinued [but] rather remained as a way of life as well as an identification of identity of [the] indigenous population" (Olimova, and Tolipov, 2011, p. 3). Over the last two decades, and especially since the peace agreement, the role of religion in Tajik civil society has markedly increased.

According to this study, Sunni Islam and Islamic players in Tajikistan are divided mainly into two groups or factions: representatives of the *traditional clergy* (or *Orthodox Islam*) and *Political Islam (Islamists)*. Moreover, the puritanical Salafist import is also active in society. Sufism is similarly widespread in Tajikistan, and most influential Islamic clerics are rooted in the Sufi brotherhoods, either *Nawshbaniya* or *Qodiriya*.

However, despite the huge role of these religious players in Tajikistan, religion is treated exactly as in Soviet times: completely under the control of, and subordinate to, the secular state.

---

[34] In the case of the Persian-speaking peoples in the post-Soviet Central Asian region, the term 'Aryan' has a different usage to that that was misappropriated by the Nazis. Aryan refers instead to the original Indo-Iranian inhabitants of the region – "Indo-Iranian" is, it should be noted, the currently accepted term used in anthropological and linguistic scholarship.

The Government manages religion through the special official association known as *shuroi ullamo*, which is the seat of the form of the *official clergy*. This form of secularism in Tajikistan appears to be close to what Kuru has called "assertive secularism", which differs from passive or liberal secularism, exactly the practice that is most common throughout Western European countries and the US.

Nonetheless, the strongest religious group in Tajikistan over the past several decades following the disintegration of the Soviet Union are the representatives of political Islam; it is they who have continually challenged the secular Tajik state, and who have been at the center of political debate in the country. As the case study for this dissertation, therefore, the next chapter will explain the history and ideology of the IRPT in detail, and provides the reader with an overview of the general situation in Tajikistan since independence.

CHAPTER IV: HISTORICAL BACKGROUND: HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF POLITICAL ISLAM IN TAJIKISTAN

4.1 Introduction: From Underground Religious Network to Political Organization

The Islamic Revival Party of Tajikistan (IRPT) is an exclusively Sunni movement that is ideologically close to the *Muslim Brotherhood* and *Jama'ati Islami*, two of the oldest political Islamic movements in the Islamic world. This party appeared at the beginning of the 1990s, during the final days of the Soviet Union. The IRPT, the largest branch of the All-Union IRP (Islamic Revival Party), was the first religious party in the history of Tajikistan and was founded on October 6, 1990 at an underground meeting in the village of Chortut near Dushanbe, the capital of Tajikistan, even though the Tajik Communist government in the early days did not recognize its legitimacy (Roy, 2000b, p. 5); . It was the only Islamic opposition that could cause huge problems for the communist regime in post-Soviet Central Asia.

4.1.1 The Early History of Political Islam in Tajikistan

However, historical evidence demonstrates that the roots of the Islamic party in Tajikistan, previously known as the Islamists´ network, is much older than first thought, and was established long ago in the early 1970s (Atkin, 1995, p. 248). That is why members of the party celebrated the 30th Anniversary of the IRPT in April 2003 in Dushanbe. According to pivotal founders of the IRPT, their primary, religiously-oriented organization was established on 20 April 1973 in the city of Kurgan-Tyube in southern Tajikistan, even though some have claimed that the organization only appeared in 1978, one year prior to the Iranian revolution (Naumkin, 2005, p. 208).

At the beginning, their organization was known as *Nahzati Javononi Islomii Tojikiston* (Revival of the Islamic Youth of Tajikistan), and was very small and limited to one region among those migrants who came from the *Qarotegin* valley, which is known, alongside the Fergana Valley, as one of the most conservative areas in Tajikistan. The main purpose of the organization at that time was "religious education (*ta'lim*) and religious propaganda (*da'vat*)". According to Abdulloh Nuri, the founder of the organization, the main purpose of their organization was only to educate youth about their religion, cultural values, and identity, and at the same time to propogate religious values among the people. He argued that they did not have any anti-

governmental political project at that time, and that their organization was not political, but rather a social reform movement (Sattori, 2007, pp. 155-156). He had used both the term *sozmon* (organization) and *nahzat* (movement) to refer to their organization. However some experts, such as Khalid, identify their group as an "underground network (Khalid, 2007, p. 147).

Their organization was founded by five key personalities, who are considered the earliest Tajik Islamists in the country, namely Abdullohi Nuri, Qori Muhammadjon Gafurov, Ne'matullohi Eshonzoda, Jumabeki Abdusallom (Kholid) and the Qalandar Sadriddinov. The group appointed Nuri as the Head of the organization; Muhammadjon became responsible for publication (*irshod*) and propaganda (*tabliq*)*;* N'matulloh was made the responsible person for education (*tarbiya*); Abdusallom for security issues; and finally, Sadriddinov had responsibility for finance. However, in spite of such divisions each of them at the same time was busy with religious propagation, as well as teaching Islam, which was a key purpose of the organization. Each of them had their students that they taught in their houses known as *hujras.* However, due to control and surveillance by the Committee for State Security, the Soviet Union's infamous KGB, they had fewer opportunities to proselytise (Rahnamo, 2008, pp. 31-32).

The founders of the Islamist underground network in Tajikistan were similar in profile to the majority of Islamists in other key Muslim countries, being young, with secular educations, primarily in science. For example, the key Islamist leader, Abdullohi Nuri was an "engineer in geodesics, and Mohammed Sharif [Himmatzoda] is trained in mechanics" (Roy 2000b, p. 4). The famous Afghan Islamists, Hikmatiyar and Mas'ud, also studied in these fields, with Hikmatiyar even widely known as an 'engineer'. Similarly, the founder of the Islamist parties in Turkey, Erbakan, was a Professor of Science. In other words, most Islamists around the world do not belong to traditional clerical institutions, but rather, are urbanized and often secularly-educated young conservative Muslims who aimed to employ religion in order to participate in the political process through the creation of a modern ideology based on their religious beliefs. (For more information, see: Chapter 2)

However, the early Tajik Islamists were at the same time also known as clerics (*mullahs*), and "this double identity was especially strong in rural Tajikistan…" and Uzbekistan (Roy 2000b, p. 4) in comparison to many other Muslim countries, where Islamists were almost completely separated from clerical institutions, except in Iran (see: Roy, 1994). As a result, the Tajik Islamists were widely known as 'young mullahs' and their party was often referred to as the 'party of mullahs'.

The Majority of the early Tajik Islamists received their religious education from parallel, unofficial traditional clerics. Almost none of them graduated from professional religious universities. Most of the key leaders of both the Tajik and Uzbek Islamists, including Abdulloh Nuri and Rahmatulloh Alloma – the latter is known as the founder of modern Islamic political thought in Uzbekistan – were students of "Hajji Mohammad Rustamov, alias [of] Mawlawi Qari Hindoustani, who studied at [the] traditional *madrassa* (religious school) of Deoband, in India, before World War II" (Roy, 2000b, p. 4). Muhammad Sharif Himmatzoda, another key leader of the Tajik Islamists, was also a student of Hindoustani. a cleric with "close links to Afghan and Pakistani Islamists", and was known by some of his supporters as *Hekmatyar*[35] of Central Asia, (Rashid, 2003, p. 98).

4.1.2 Roots of Political Islam in Tajikistan

According to some experts, Hindoustani was the one who brought new ideas regarding the ideology of Islamic fundamentalist movements into Central Asia and spread these ideas among Tajiks and Uzbeks (Rashid, 2007, p. 97). However, many scholars, and some Islamists, considered him representative of orthodox Hanafi Islam (Khalid 2007; Rahnamo 2008). Nuri mentioned that Hindoustani had never spoken about the Deobandi[36] doctrine or new ideas with his students (Nuri, 2003, p. 11).

According to Nuri, neither the Uzbek fundamentalists' networks nor other external factors, had an impact on the emergence of political Islam in Tajikistan, since according to him, in the early 1970s nobody had contact with the outside world. He and other leaders of the IRPT considered this phenomenon to be purely domestic in origin, rooted in Tajik society. Abdullohi Nuri clearly described in one of his interviews the main reasons which pushed them to establish a religious political organization. Firstly, according to him, "Islamic teaching itself was the main reason behind it". He argued that the more he learned about Islam, the better he understood that the reality did not correspond to Islamic teaching. He added that his father's criticisms of Stalin's

---

[35] Hikmatiyar has been the most radical militant Islamist leader (Hizbi Islami). He joined the Taliban in the 1990s, and until recently, fought against the Afghan government.

[36] The Deobandi school of Islam appeared in 1867 "at the Dar ul-Ulum (Adobe of Islamic Learning) madrassa in Deoband, India "as [a] reaction to Western colonialism. Deobandism as school of thought is [a] very "conservative Islamic orthodoxy that follows a Salafist egalitarian model and seeks to emulate the life and times of [the] Prophet "Muhammad". The Deobandi school has created thousands of madrassas across South Asia to spread its radical interpretation of Islam. "Deobandis believe they have a sacred right and obligation to wage jihad to protect the Muslims of any country". One of the most influential Islamic parties in Pakistan, "Jama'at-ulema Islam (JUI) led by Maulana Fazlur Rehman", is representative of this school of thought (GlobalSecurity.org, n.d.).

policy toward religion, and remembering the unhappy stories that Muslims faced in the 1930s, also impacted on this young generation's world view. However, he considered the absence of freedom, as well as of being constantly under pressure, as the main factors behind the creation of a religious political organization. Furthermore, he emphasized the influence of several books, such as the history of the Tajiks "*Tajikan*", written by Bobojon Gafurov, where he learnt about the history of the resistance of the (Muslim) Tajik people against foreign invaders (Nuri, 2003, pp. 7-9).

Furthermore, some scholars, such as Brille Ollcot and Olivier Roy, almost agree with the Tajik Islamists, and believe that the Islamists' ideology in Central Asia "was largely generated and sustained from within" (Olcott, 1995, pp. 33-35). For example, Olivier Roy believes that the "political radicalization of Islam is not an import" since the "militant network existed under the Soviets" (Roy 2000a, p. 144). He mentions that "despite being isolated from the Muslim world…indigenous fundamentalist movement[s] developed… around Qari Mohammad Rustamov [Hindoustani]" throughout the region (Roy, 2001a, p. 54). Brill Olcott also believes that "the main impetus for the development of the politicized strains of contemporary Central Asian fundamentalism comes from the *madrasas* of the Fergana Valley, particularly from the students of Hakimjon Qari", who is himself from Margilan (Olcott, 1995, pp. 33-35).

4.2 The Soviet Invasion of Afghanistan and the Iranian Revolution: Radicalization of Islamist Network

In the early 1980s, especially after the Iranian revolution and the beginning of the Afghan-Soviet War, the Islamist network gradually changed its strategy. It should be mentioned that the above-mentioned events, which changed the trajectory of world history, occurred in Persian-speaking countries and therefore had a special impact on Persian speaking areas such as Tajikistan. The war in neighboring Afghanistan, especially, had a religious significance (between believers and unbelievers), and "contributed both to [the] radicalization of the Islamic movement and to the extension of the links with the Muslim world under the influence of the [*mujahideen*]" (Roy, 2001a, p. 54; see also Roy 2000b, p. 154; Akcali 1998a).

The Afghan War, for the first time, had provided the Central Asian Islamists with the opportunity to contact other Islamist networks and to access their literature. Tajik Islamists during this time got into contact with "Ingeeneer" Gulbudin Hikmatiyor, who headed *Hizbi Islami* (Islamic Party), "the most radical Islamist movement in Afghanistan" (Roy 2000b), and

received fundamental works written by the founders of Islamism, Banna, Maududi and Qutb, through Islamist contacts in Afghanistan, as well as through the "official Soviet *ulama'* (official religious clerics) who were sent during the 1980s to religious faculties in the Arab Muslim world, such as Amman and Cairo" (Roy, 2000b, p. 5).

In addition, the Tajik Islamists during this time secretly started to advocate to young people against joining the war in Afghanistan and criticized the position of the Soviet regime in the war against the Afghans. The head of the underground Islamic network, despite the rigid repression and strong control of the Soviet KGB, even organized the first "demonstration in favor of [the] Afghan Mujahideen" to coincide with operations launched by Gulbuddin Hekmatyar in the territory of Tajikistan (city of Panj) (Roy 2000a, p. 154). As a result, the KGB arrested Abdullohi Nuri (incarcerated until 1988) along with forty of his followers because of anti-war propaganda in Afghanistan, as well as for "circulating illegal Islamic literature" (Rashid, 2003, p. 97).

4.3 Tajik Islamists' Underground Network during *Glasnost*: Islamists versus Traditionalists

Later, due to the political opening provided by Gorbachev's policy of *Glasnost* at the end of the 1980s, the Tajik Islamists became more active in the mosques and broader society. Gorbachev completely changed the situation in the region and provided incredible opportunities for the new-born Islamist network to openly propagate their ideas.

At that time, the main purpose of the Islamist network was to purge Islam of what they called unlawful innovations (*bid'a*) and substitutions (*khurofotho*), which according to them do not belong to early prophetic Islam. Their purification project was mostly targeted against the traditional clergy, since they were considered the main defenders of all these substitutions and traditions. Therefore, Khalid has labelled Islamists as those "who rejected the political caution of their teachers and advocated a social, if not political, status for a purified Islam" (Khalid 2007, p. 147). While debates between the Islamists and the traditionalists began earlier, it was during the *perestroika* era *that* they became increasingly open and public. Especially between 1988-1990, the religious debates between the traditionalists and the young Islamists (or what Rahnamo refers to as the "reformists") became apparent (Khalid, 2007, p. 147; Rahnamol, 2008, pp. 42-45); their supporters even physically clashed with each other (Dostiev, 2003, p. 26).

The reason the young Islamists rejected religious ceremonies and rituals was not because they wanted to innovate and reinterpret the religion itself, but rather, due to their desire to return it to a "pure" Islam or an earlier understanding of their religion. According to them, all these rituals and traditions did not exist in the early period of Islam, and they therefore consider the subsequent developments to be *bid'a* (innovation), in similarity to Wahhabi and Salafi ideologies. This means their reform project did not aim to innovate, but was intended to fight against those innovations that have been preserved by traditional clerics for hundreds of years. Like many other puritanical and fundamentalist movements (mentioned in chapter 2), they wanted to reform religion in order to purify it, to return to an early Islam, rather than to reform it in order to make the religion compatible with modernity – which is in contrast to the Muslim modernists. For example, the founder of Tajik Islamism, Nuri, has often argued that the ideology of their party was based on 'pure Islam' and the teaching of the *Qu'ran* and *Sunnah* (Rahnamo, 2008, p. 42). One of the early members of the organization, Hoji Qalandar Sadriddin, also clearly stated that their aim at that time was to revive Islamic culture and to resist alterations (*bid'atho*) and superstitions (*khurofotho*) (Roziq, 2013, p. 45). It would therefore be better to describe them not as "reformers" but as "deformers" (for more information about fundamentalists see chapter 2).

During that time, the Islamists also seriously began to criticize the traditional *mullahs* because of their position regarding the war in Afghanistan, since the official clergy had rejected *jihad* in Afghanistan and supported the Soviet position in the war against the Afghan *mujahideen*. The letter, written secretly at the end of the 1980s by young Islamists to Mawlawi Qari Hindoustani, the latter a defender of the traditional clergy, clearly shows how serious the religious crisis between the young fundamentalists (and future Islamists) and traditionalists was at this time. In the letter, unknown and unnamed persons who belonged to the Islamist network strongly criticized Hindoustani because of his condemnation of *jihad* (Holy War) against the Soviet regime in Afghanistan, misleading Afghan Muslims about the good life enjoyed by Muslims in the territory of the Soviet Union, criticizing the Afghan *mujahideen*, and at the same time collaborating with the KGB (Rahnamo 2008, pp. 45-50).

Many traditional clerics, additional to Hindoustani, labelled the *mujahideen* as radicals, *Wahhabis*, and fundamentalists; the communist regime also favoured those traditionalists who had accused the young Islamists of being *Wahhabi.* The term „*wofchik*", which was used during the Tajik civil war to describe the opposition, also meant *Wahhabi*. The communist politician, Kenjaev, was the first to widely employ "the discourse on Islamism and Wahhabism in his philippic attacks on political adversaries" (Epkenhans, 2016, p. 195) and tried to convince

Russian politicians that the demonstrators were Islamists and *Wahabbis* (Sohibnazar 1997, p. 196). The Tajik communist regime supported the traditionalists, both the representatives of official Islam and also the Sufi *Ishans*, in order to weaken these new Muslim activists. Indeed, the contradictions between Islamists and traditionalists, "later became one of the reason[s] behind [the] civil war in Tajikistan" (Rahnamo, 2008, p. 52; Akiner, 2010, p. 104).

4.4 Transferring Fundamentalist Organization into Political Party – Birth of the All Union Islamic Revival Party

In the early 1990s following the democratization of Gorbachev's Soviet Union, the Tajik Islamists decided to get involved in the political process and began to negotiate the formation of an Islamic political party. Most importantly in the early 1990s, the Tajik Islamists together with other Muslim activists in the territory of the Soviet Union through their "connection with *Jamiat-i Islami*, and the Islamic Republic of Iran" (Roy 2001a, p. 54), founded the All-Union Islamic Renaissance Party in June 1990 in Astrakhan, Russian (Rahnamo 2008, p. 43).

As already observed, prior to the early 1990s, the Tajik Islamists had *never* been directly involved in politics or identified their movement in political terms. Furthermore, until the 1990s, their political platform, their ideology, and their orientation towards the future form(s) of the political system were completely unclear; indeed, they remained almost exclusively focused on the religio-cultural reform of Tajik society.

4.4.1 Ideology of the all-Union IRP

The all-Union IRP program developed in July 1990 with the main aim to unify all Muslims in the territory of the Soviet Union, to provide religious education for them, and to propagate a certain type of Islam among both Muslims and Christians inside Soviet territory. Since the All-Union IRP was founded in a Christian majority country, its program promoted equality both among Muslims and among non-Muslims. According to the party platform, they rejected terrorism, ethnic conflicts, nationalism as well as atheism, and recognized all international organizations except those which were against Islam and the Islamic world even though they did not explain in detail what kind of organizations they considered to be anti-Islamic. It should be noted that, according to most radical Islamists, all Western countries and international organizations are both pro-Israel and anti-Islamic. In addition, the All-Union IRP promoted

respect for the constitution of the Soviet Union, and was not against the Soviet Union's existence despite the anti-Islamic policy of the Soviet regime (Rahnamo, 2008, pp. 60-61).

However, at the same time, the political awakening, in an attempt to implement the principles of the *Qu'ran* and the prophetic tradition or *sunna* (Orzu, 2013, p. 432), was considered to be the main aim of the party. Therefore, scholars such as Olivier Roy (Roy 2000b) and Pinar Akcali (Akcali, 1998a, pp. 267-284) believe that the ultimate aim all along of the All-Union IRP, which the Tajik Islamists were members of, was to establish an Islamic state.

Radical, anti-democratic, as well as anti-Western positions, had also been clearly observed in the speeches of some of the key leaders of the All-Union IRP. For example, Geydar Dzhemal, one of the key leaders of the party, was known for his skeptical attitude toward the West and Western values, since he considered Western political models such as atheistic communism, as well as secular Western democracy, to be alien to the Muslim world (Akcali, 1998a, pp. 271-272), a view which echoes that of Hassan al-Banna, the founder of Egyptian Islamism. The All-Union IRP's newspaper, *Al-Vakhdad*, also published an article titled "Democracy for Democrats, Islam for Muslims" (Statues of IRP, pp. 6-8), which demonstrates that they advocated religion as an ideological end, and exactly like Banna, ignored both totalitarian communism and democratic capitalism as possibilities.

4.4.2 Structure of the Party

The All-Union IRP was founded by Muslim activists from all parts of the Soviet Union, but especially consisted of the North Chechens, Ingush, Tatars, and Central Asians. However, according to Roy, the party "had taken root in Central Asia, almost exclusively in Tajikistan and Uzbekistan" (Roy, 2000b, p. 2). According to some local experts, such as Abdullo Rahnamo, the Tajik Muslim activists were the main initiators in establishing the All-Union IRP. The suggestion that both Abdulloh Nuri and Davlat Usmon become the leader of the All-Union IRP explicitly demonstrated their contribution and power in that process, even though both of them rejected the offer as they preferred a Russian Muslim to be appointed to the position (Rahnamo, 2008, p. 60). Nevertheless, the two Tajik Islamist leaders were appointed to high positions, with Gadoev made first deputy of the party while Usman headed the department responsible for organizational issues. The vast majority of deputies of the congress of the All-Union IRP were also from Tajikistan, where some of them became members of the party presidium (Rahnamo, 2008, pp. 60-61).

The current party, which united all Soviet Muslim activists under the umbrella of the concept of an Islamic "*umma*", in the beginning had only three regional structures: Central Asia (majority Tajik and Uzbek members); North Caucasia (Daghestani, Chechen, and Ingush); and Europe (mainly Tatars) (Akcali 1998a, p. 270). Roy states that the structure of the All-Union IRP, as a Sunni movement, had created two models based on the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood and the Communist Party. Indeed, "[t]he party's congress (*anjoman*) was to be made up of deputies (*vakil*) of primary cells which elect a fifteen-member Council of *Ulama* that in turn puts forward to the congress the candidacy of an *amir* (Head of Party)". In comparison to other Islamic parties, Roy mentions that in this party, the *ulama* (religious authorities) had pivotal power over final decisions, since they "could dismiss the *Amir* without calling the congress" (Roy, 2000b, p. 2-3).

However, the All-Union IRP, despite its aim of challenging the communist regime and uniting Soviet Muslims, following rising political upheavals throughout Soviet territory, could not prevent the dissolution process. Therefore, after the collapse of the Soviet regime, each branch created its own independent party.

It should be mentioned that ethnic confrontations inside the party existed from the party's inception. For instance, due to the Turk-Tajik confrontation, the Central Asian regional structure was only created with difficulty, since Tajik Islamists were not ready to be with other Turkic people under the same structure (Akcali,1998b, p. 142). Roy and Abdulloev have also noted the pre-existing Persian, anti-Turkic elements, and nationalistic attitudes of members of the Tajik IRP (Roy, 2000b, p. 10) and state that "Tajik Islamists have been closely attached to ethnic nationalism from the first days of independence" (Abdullaev 2014, p. 6).

4.5 The Islamic Revival Party of Tajikistan: Successor Branch of the All Union IRP

Three months later, on October 6, 1990, the largest branch of the All-Union IRP, the so-called Islamic Renaissance Party of Tajikistan (IRPT), was founded at an underground meeting in the village of Chortut near Dushanbe, the capital city of Tajikistan. The Tajik SSR Communist regime, as well as representatives of the official Islam or *muftiyat,* in the early days did not recognize the legitimacy of the religious party. In December 1990, the IRPT was officially banned after the communist regime officially passed a law, as did most Central Asian republics (Nourzhanov & Bleuer, 2013, p. 251; Roy, 2000b,p. 5).

Only in October 1991, after the collapse of the Soviet Union, was the IRPT officially recognized, and in December 1991, was legalized by the Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Tajikistan. It was the first legal, religiously-oriented party in the history of post-Soviet Central Asian Islamic countries. The recognition of the IRPT was not a gift by the communist elite, but rather, was the result of the protests and demonstrations by supporters of the IRPT, as well as other opposition groups in August and September 1991 that forced the communist regime to accept their demands (Usmonov, 2003).

The first congress of the IRPT was held on 26 October 1991, and was attended by 657 deputies as well as 310 guests. In that congress, Himmatzoda was appointed as the head of the party, and Davlat Usman as the first deputy leader, even though unofficially Abdulloh Nuri was the main charismatic figure of the party. Later in mid-1992 the IRPT reported having more than 30,000 members (Henry Dunant Centre, 2003, pp. 12-13), a fact which made the IRPT the second strongest party in terms of membership after the communist party.

4.6 Islamists' Coalition with Democrats and Nationalists

Following the disintegration of the Soviet Union and the collapse of communism in 1991, a new chapter in the history of the newborn religious party in Tajikistan started. The collapse of the Soviet empire provided an opportunity to realize their dream, which was to Islamize the country.

In this new period, the Tajik Islamists made broad coalitions with other influential secular newborn political organizations, such as the Democratic party, the nationalist movement known as "*Rastakhez*" (popular among intellectuals), and *Pamiri*, the Isma'ili regional movement, in order to confront the communist regime. Tajikistan was "one of the few places in the Muslim world where a lasting common front had been established between an Islamists movement and nationalist or democratic parties" (Roy 2000b, p. 10). Another tactical strategy of the IRPT which helped strengthen them in their political competition against the neo-communists was their coalition with the head of the official clergy or *Qayizzat*, Haji Akbar Turajonzoda, who was one of the most influential figures in the early 1990s (Epkehnauns 2016, pp. 210-214). He was a young, energetic, and influential reformist cleric from the same region as the Tajik Islamists.

Common interests, such as the independence of the country, having the same opponent, and an interest in socio-political reform, united these groups in order that they would be able to

challenge the neo-communist regime, which was ruled by a clan from Khujand (Leninabad). This anti-communism was a "convenient ideological base for an alliance" and provided "the first noticeable political victory for the opposition" (Mullojonov, 2001, pp. 237-238).

Another reason behind the coalition of these groups were regional interests or affiliations, since these opposition groups in Tajikistan were mostly rooted in the southern part of Tajikistan, and were especially popular among the Qarategini/Garmi and Badakhshani (Pamiri) people, who had themselves been mostly marginalized from power, especially during the Nabiev presidency. According to Saodat Olimova and Muzaffar Olimov, the majority of these new parties "began with ideological convictions but gradually ethno-regional interests dominated national and ideological concerns". For example, they argued that the IRPT's "ideological motivations intersected with regional concerns…representing *Qarateghini* interests" (Olimova and Olimov 2001, p. 26). Although they "identified themselves by ideology…[they] drew their support from a particular region" (Akiner and Barnes 2001, p. 17). However, according to Olivier Roy, the IRPT's coalition with nationalists and democrats was not simply an alliance of marginalized groups, but rather, "it was an alliance firmly rooted in a common Tajik nationalism". Roy further mentions that "the policy of [the] IRP is intrinsically related to this connection between Islamic and nationalist identity in Tajikistan" (Roy, 2000b, p. 10).

4.6.1 Role of Alliance of Islamo-democrats on Upheavals of 1991-1992

In the early 1990s, this coalition of the IRPT together with other opposition groups organized substantial demonstrations against the communist regime, and twice forced a change in the political leadership of Tajikistan: In the first case, through the removal of Qahor Makhkamov, and in the second, the removal of Rahmon Nabiev. The role of Turajonzoda, the Head of *Qaziyat*, which controlled the mosques, was especially important in mobilizing people during these demonstrations. This was unique since the opposition groups in other Central Asian Soviet republics could not challenge their regimes as seriously as occurred in Tajikistan. However, "this free play of political forces demonstrated not so much the high level of development of the democratic processes, as the rapid weakening of the Tajik statehood inherited from Soviet times" (Abdullo, 2001, p. 5).

After the resignation of President Makhkamov on 31 August 1991, Qadriddin Aslonov from Garm (the same region as the majority of Islamists originated), according to Dustov (Dustov 1994, pp. 88-89), was in contact with opposition leaders, and for a very short time, became acting President of Tajikistan. He declared the independence of Tajikistan on 9th of September

1991. Later, on 22 September 1991, as a result of mass demonstrations as well as perhaps because of his sympathy and regional affiliation toward opposition groups, he even banned the communist party and nationalized its property (Hansen, 1999, p. 7). Furthermore, by authority of the Mayor of Dushanbe during his tenure, Lenin's Statue was destroyed, which was considered a catastrophe for the communists who had ruled the country for over seven decades. As a result, the very next day, the communists who formed the majority in parliament, forced Aslonov from power and replaced him with Rahman Nabiev, a communist party member from Khujand.

The resignation of Aslonov prompted opposition groups, especially the Garmi and Qarategini Islamists, "to stage a series of demonstrations calling once again for the dissolution of the communist party and new elections" (Haghayeghi 1995, p.144), as well as the legalization of religious parties. In this demonstration the Tajik Islamists brought 10 000 people from Garm Valley to the capital of the country (Nourzhanov, K and Breuer, C 2013, p. 280); the final result of the protest was Nabiev's decision to legalize the IRPT, and his promise to hold a new presidential election (Roy, 1993, p. 4).

4.6.2 Islamo-democrat Co-operation in Presidential Election

The first democratic presidential election in the history of modern Tajikistan took place in November 1991. In this election, the Tajik Islamists together with other opposition groups, supported the Democratic Party, of Tajikistan's (DPT) candidate, Davlat Khudonazarov (Mamadazimov 2000, p. 317), who obtained 34 per cent of the vote. The results shocked political elites throughout Central Asia, as well as in Russia (Rashid, 2003, p. 100). The interesting point was that Tajik Islamists had seriously supported the candidacy of someone who was, on the one hand, secular and on the other hand, an Isma'ili Muslim, as contrasted to the mainstream Sunni Islam (their co-religionists). However, their coalition with the secularists was based on cynical calculation, since they realized they could not defeat the communist *nomenklatura* alone.

After the presidential election tensions between Tajik opposition and communists continued. Especially, after the Minister of the Interior, the influential Badakhshani, had insulted on TV, the opposition groups, mostly the people from Badakhshan (mostly members of La'li Badakhshan) and Qarategin (Islamists) organized another demonstration agains the Government, which took place on 22 March 1992 in *maidoni Shahidon* (Shahidon Square). On the other side, supporters of the communist regime, especially from Kulyab, Hissar and

northern Leninabad held a counter-demonstration in Ozodi (Freedom) Square. The tensions between these two Squares "intensified to the point where different factions took up weapons" and it continued until the establishment of a coalition government in May 1992. (Akiner, and Barnes, 2001, p. 16).

4.6.3 The IRPT as Part of Coalition Government in 1992

As a result of the demonstrations held by the opposition parties, in May 1992, the communist party under the leadership of Nabiev integrated all opposition parties into the government and created a National Reconciliation government. After establishing a fragile coalition government, many Islamists as well as nationalists and democrats were appointed to governmental positions, whereby "[the] opposition was given 8 of the 24 cabinet posts including defense, education, and broadcasting" (Haghayeghi, 1995, p.144). For example, Davlat Usmon, Deputy Head of the IRPT, became First Deputy Prime Minister of the Republic of Tajikistan. According to critics, even secular nationalists (from Tajik opposition) appointed to similarly high positions were under the influence of the Islamists and served their interests (Mirzorahmatov, 2012).

However, the coalition government was not able to keep peace, since pro-communist forces in the Khulob, Hissar and Leninabad (currently known as Sugd) regions did not recognize the legitimacy of what Roy calls an "uneasy coalition between President Nabiev and the government formed by the "Islamo-democratic" opposition" (Roy, 1993, p. 12). Thus, armed groups were created and fought against government forces (Haghayeghi, 1995, p.146). Nabiev, as the leader of the communists, also had less sympathy for coalition government from within that coalition government. Uzbekistan and Russia also viewed the coalition government with skepticism, since they were opposed to the rise of Islamist power and influence, and indeed, the Islamization of Tajikistan. Similarly, the USA was also wary about Iranian influence over the Islamo-democrats (Niyazi, 1998).

Therefore, the Tajik communist *nomenclatura*, in unison with the above-mentioned countries, forced the Islamists and other opposition parties from power. As a result, in November 1992 the coalition government resigned, and Emomali Rahmonov, a communist from the Kulyab region, was elected Chairman of the Supreme Soviet (making him Head of State) (Haghayeghi, 1995, p.147). Subsequently, in early 1993, the constitutional court disbanded the IRPT as well as other opposition parties and movements. The Ministry of Justice of Tajikistan also listed

them as a terrorist group. By eliminating the Islamists and other opposition parties from the political process, Tajikistan thus descended into civil war.

4.7 Ideology of the IRPT in the early 1990s

Taking into consideration its program, the aim of the IRPT in the early 1990s was to revive Islamic values and to bring its norms and principles into daily life. While the IRPT in its program did not directly declare that they wanted to create an Islamic state, Islamic leaders nevertheless "called for the establishment of an Islamic state in Tajikistan as an ultimate objective" (Atkin, 1995, p. 258). For example, former US Ambassador R. Grant Smith writes that the Tajik Islamic opposition "at a minimum, did not want to foreclose the option of an Islamic government, although it pledged not to impose it by force and admitted that it would take many years to prepare the country for such rule" (Seifert, 2005, pp. 20-21). Therefore, it can be seen that there were different ideas about the time for implementation, as well as the model of, any would-be future religious state among Islamic leaders, both Islamists and politically-oriented clerics such as Turajonzoda. For example, Turajonzoda and Davlat Usmon both believed that in the short-term it would be impossible to establish an Islamic state since the majority of people, due to their Soviet experiences, were not ready and had no idea about religion; conservatively, they estimated that they needed at least 40 years. As regards the preferred model of the state, most Islamists emphasized that they would not emulate the Iranian model (Istad, 1992, p. 6).

However, in the regular open discussions, the IRPT's leaders often focused on general issues such as popular sovereignty, civil liberties, social and economic reforms, and transparency, as well as democratic elections "that were typical of the opposition as a whole, whether secular or Islamic" (Atkin, 1995, p. 258). They supported such democratic principles, on the one hand, as these ideas were part of the platform of alliances, and on the other hand, because the IRPT "needed to tone down its radical ideas, since their secular partners within [the] alliance did not support [the] Islamic project" (Dudoignon, 1998, p. 67). This means their tactical calculation was to have common goals alongside the secular opposition in order to defeat the communists in Tajikistan, which clearly formed part of a longer-term strategy.

4.8 Civil War: Islamo-Democrats versus Secular-Communists, 1992–1997

After the collapse of the coalition government in November 1992, the leaders of the IRPT as well as other Islamic opposition groups left Dushanbe, and in early 1993 gathered in Afghanistan. In the beginning, due to numerous pre-existing non-Islamist clerics, they disbanded the IRPT and founded the Islamic Revival Movement of Tajikistan (IRMT) in order to create one umbrella for all Islamic factions (Rahnamo 2008, pp. 69-70). They then proclaimed themselves a "government in exile" even though no one had accepted their legitimacy (Niyazi, 1998). Later, in 1994, the IRMT together with other opposition forces such as the Democratic Party of Tajikistan (DPT), and the Coordination Centre of Democratic Forces of Tajikistan, created the United Tajik Opposition (UTO) in order to go to the negotiation table (Abdullaev and Barnes, 2001, p 91). The point which is important to note here is that the IRPT held a dominant position, both over the UTO and the Islamic Revival Movement of Tajikistan. The vast majority of military troops belonged to the IRPT. Indeed, they had more than seven thousand troops at their command, which had been trained in Afghanistan and Pakistan and sent to fight in Tajikistan. Consequently, the Islamist leader, Abdullo Nuri, was appointed as the head of both the UTO and the IRMT.

The Tajik opposition "launched guerrilla attacks against the government", mostly not from outside the country, but rather, from inside Tajikistan, especially from Badakhshan and other southeastern regions of the country (Rashid, 2003, p. 90). The IRPT's troops had control over the Gorno-Badakhshan region, Tajikistan's largest region by area, and also fought against the Government's troops in Tavildara and Karategin valleys.

The exclusion which had forced the Tajik Islamists to seek refuge in other Islamic countries deeply contributed to the radicalization of this group, in particular, their tactics, ideology, rhetoric, and the structure of the party. In the early years of the war, the Islamists' military commanders declared Garm Valley – where most of the Islamists originated from – an Islamic Republic (Rahnamo, 2008, p. 123). Some Islamic commanders practically introduced the religious order based on their narrow interpretation of religion. They did not allow people to organize weddings with music and dance, punished those who drank alcohol, and those who disobeyed such ordinances. Women who did not wear the *hijab* were insulted (Seifert, 2005, pp. 20-22).

They officially declared that they had fought in order to establish an Islamic state, and wanted to achieve it through revolutionary tactics. The best example which clearly describes the radical

ideas of the Tajik Islamists at that time was the book written by the IRPT's leader, Nuri, "*dar on sui siyosat*" ["Beyond Politics"], which consisted of his speeches, interviews, and sermons during the civil war. In his book he often mentioned that they wanted to build an Islamic state and that anyone who rejected it would be considered by him an enemy of the nation (Nuri 1996, pp. 18, 100, 171). The Islamists' used increasingly radical rhetoric, both in order to morally strengthen their soldiers as well as to gain more support from Arab countries and organizations. In order to legitimize their war, they interpreted the intra-Tajik war as a war between Muslims and non-Muslims, or against a regime of unbelievers. Nuri even declared Tajikistan "*Dor-ul Kufr*" ("Land of Unbelief") and invited the faithful to join them in Afghanistan, which he called "*Dor-ul Islam*" (Nuri, 1996, pp.190-198).

Many of the Tajik Islamists were trained in Afghanistan and Pakistan, which were recognized as centers of radicalism and terrorism, and at the same time they had contact with those countries which financially supported radical groups, including Saudi Arabia. The IRMT was financially supported through unofficial channels from Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Sudan and other Islamic organizations such as the Muslim Brotherhood; often veteran Afghan *jihadis* joined in their operations against the secular government (Niyazi, 1998). The Government of Afghanistan, ruled at this time by ethnic Tajiks, also supported the IRMT in particular, and the Tajik Opposition Union in general, and gave shelter to more than 100,000 Tajik refugees who were in Afghanistan during the civil war.

On the other hand, Russia and Uzbekistan supported the secular pro-communist regime under the leadership of Emomali Rahmonov (currently known as Emomali Rahmon), but both Russia and Uzbekistan "maintained a dialogue with the opposition" at the same time (Rashid 2003, p. 104). There were recorded instances where Russian troops or officers stationed in Tajikistan interfered in the civil war several times and battled against Islamist troops or prevented operations planning by Islamist troops, especially on the border, which was defended by the Russian Army. However, the "IRPT's position on Russia is not analogous to that of the Algerian FIS on France" (Roy, 2000b, pp. 16-17). In spite of having difficulties with Russia, the IRPT tried to "encourage [the] Russians to stay neutral" and convinced them to continue as 'observers' to the conflict (Roy, 2000b, pp. 16-17).

The IRPT endeavoured to persuade Russia that they were not an anti-Russian movement[37]. Abdullo Nuri in his interview during the civil war mentioned several times that they wanted to maintain good relations with Russia, and sent messages to the parents of Russian soldiers claiming that they did not want to kill them. He differentiated between the interferences of Russian officers on behalf of the secular regime, but did not ascribe these actions to Russia itself (TajNetTV, 2013). The reason was clear: the IRPT had never wanted to develop an enemy as powerful as Russia. From 1993 until July 1997, the civil war in Tajikistan continued. During the civil war in Tajikistan about "600,000 people were internally displaced" (Akiner and Barner 2001, p. 16), more than 100,000 people were killed, and many cities and villages, as well as the infrastructure to support them, were destroyed (Nuri, 2001, p. 1). Indeed, according to Akiner and Barner (2001, p. 16), "the brutality of fighting in rural areas in the south shocked" both Tajiks as well as foreign observers in Tajikistan.

However, the increasing conflict on the border with Afghanistan, and the Tajik Islamists' further co-operation with other Islamists, increased the concerns of the other Central Asian republics, as well as those of the Russian elites. They were afraid that Tajikistan would become a second Afghanistan. Therefore, Russia sent Primakov, then Minister of Foreign Affairs, to Kabul to talk with the leaders of the IRPT and other opposition groups (Usmon 2012a). The subsequent rise of the Taliban in Afghanistan completely changed the situation and motivated regional actors to intervene, and to stop, the Tajik civil war (Rashid 2003, p. 104). Russia and Iran especially decided to speed up the negotiation process to stop the war, since they shared similar geopolitical interests and concerns regarding the rise of the Taliban (Abdullaev & Barnes 2001, p. 10). This meant that is was the rise of the Taliban that united supporters on both sides of the conflict, and forced them to bring the warring parties to the negotiating table. The Taliban weakened the power of ethnic Tajiks in Afghanistan, but conversely forced the Tajiks in Tajikistan closer together. From the other side, after years of conflict and bloodshed, gradually both opposition groups realized that complete victory over the other would not be possible, and that the continuation of the war would destroy the country as a whole (Usmon, 2012).

---

[37] The IRPT has also officially always condemned all accusations that have been highlighted by the secularists regarding the Islamists' position(s) and attitude(s) toward the Russian-speaking people in Tajikistan. Abdullo Nuri, the Leader of the IRPT, in his interview given during the civil war mentioned that their movement has always respected as well as supported Tajikistna's Russian-speaking people, considering them a part of Tajik society. Despite their focus on Islamic Identity as main the aspect for uniting the Tajik nation, Nuri mentioned that if the IRPT did come to power, Russian minorities would be respected and provided with all necessary rights (TajNetTV, 2013). But he did not mentioned in detail regarding what their rights would be, as non-Muslim minorities under an Islamist regime in which religious law is given priority.

4.9 Inclusion of the IRPT: Tajik Peace Agreement

Following lengthy negotiations between both sides, the peace agreement was finally signed between the Tajik Opposition Union and the secular pro-communist government on 27 of July 1997. Tajik peace and reconciliation is recognized as both a unique and successful case study in the history of Islamic societies, and has even been suggested as an example for deconfliction in other societies that have experienced sectarian violence (Rahnamo, 2008, p. 60).

However, some radical Islamist opposition warlords refused to accept the 1997 peace agreement and deserted from the mainstream faction of the IRPT, including the influential commander Sadirov, who was later killed on August 1998 with 45 of his supporters by the Tajik Army (Rashid, 2003, p. 104); likewise, Ali Bedaki and Mullo Abdullo, who were both killed in April 2011 in Tavildara Valley (Radio Free Europe, Radio Liberty, 2011a; Radio Free, Radio Liberty, 2011b) .The intra-Tajik negotiations consisted of 9 rounds, with 9 protocols signed by both sides. After the peace agreement in 1997, the National Reconciliation Commission under the leadership of the Islamist leader, Said Abdullo Nuri, implemented all protocols throughout the country even while implementation problems remained (Nuri, 2001, pp. 26-28). According to the current agreement, 30 percent of the governmental positions were given to the UTO and most importantly in 1999, the IRPT alongside other opposition parties once again were registered, with the IRPT once again becoming the only legitimized Islamic Party in post-Soviet Central Asia.

4.9.1 Islamists's Participation in the Early Elections

Since 1999, the IRPT has participated in all elections, including the 1999 presidential election, as well as parliamentary elections in 2000 and 2005; in the latter two cases, "[the IRPT] surpassed the 5 percent threshold and gained two seats" (Yalmaz, 2009, pp. 141-142). Between 2000-2005, under Nuri's leadership, the Tajik Islamists established a new structure for their party, expanded its departments and branches of the IRPT into a majority of cities, regions, and districts in the country (with the exception of Baljuvon and Murgob districts), as well as the cities of Kayroqum, Rogun and Taboshar. In 2007, the IRPT reached 25,221 members, and had created 1,000 local cells. According to Rahnamo, by the end of 2006 and early 2007, the IRPT gradually became a widely accepted political party, since its branches opened all over the country. They became especially active in the north in the Tajik part of the Fergana Valley (Rahnamo, 2008, pp. 74-75). Furthermore, in favor of reconciliation, Nuri had even replaced

many clerically-oriented –but older – members with their extensive experience, for younger, more energetic members of the party in order to give a new face to the party. For example, Muhiddin Kabiri, a young educated activist who had not even participated in the civil war, became the first deputy chairman. Nuri really understood that "he needed a right-hand man who was educated, spoke foreign languages and knew how to conduct policy" (Eraj, 2006, p. 45). As a result of their inclusion into the political process, the Islamists' ideology also changed gradually, with their leaders changing their radical positions over time toward more moderate positions. The secularists' sharing of power with the Islamists encouraged them to become tolerant toward the secularists as well as other segments of society (Nuri.tj, 2015) (for more information about their ideology see: Chapter 5).

4.9.2 New Chairman of the IRPT

In 2006, Abdullo Nuri, the founder of the IRPT, passed away. After his death, a new chapter in the history of the Tajik Islamists began, since he was an influential and charismatic leader for all Islamists and ruled the party directly and indirectly over several decades. After his death the IRPT was at high risk of splitting between its various factions. Misunderstanding between generations within the party, notwithstanding, the IRPT under the new leadership of Kabiri did not split into factions like other Islamic political movements had done in Turkey and Egypt; Muhiddin Kabiri, Deputy Chairman, in 2006 was elected as the new chairman of the IRPT (Rahnamo, 2008, pp. 167-170).

The new leader of the party was, in many ways, vastly different from the IRPT's previous leader. His appearance, his interpretation of religion, his relationship to politics were all different from Abdullo Nuri's, even though Kabiri himself often maintains that he continues the path of the old leaders. For example, unlike previous leaders who looked more traditional with beards and had a more clerical identity, this new leader looks more modern dressed in his jeans, suit, and tie; has had both a high religious as well as secular education; graduated from the Tajik State University and the Diplomatic Academy in Moscow; and holds a PhD in Political Science. Unlike the previous leader, he was not involved in the civil war, but rather, had his own business in Moscow during that time. The ideas and views of Kabiri, (subject to discussion in the next chapter) are also more moderate than previous leaders of the party.

Under Kabiri's leadership, the relationships between the IRPT and the West in particular, and the outside world in general, have steadily improved, as he strengthened the party's relationship

not only with Western countries but also with Western academic institutions such as the OCSE (Rahnamo, 2008).

Furthermore, since 2006 because of his realistic policies, many recently educated Tajiks, including teachers, doctors, businessmen and even intellectuals from the center as well as the northern part of the country, have since joined the IRPT. Most, according to Rahnamo (2010), were under the age of 30. Indeed, Kabiri has "made [the IRPT] more attractive in Tajik society and added more supporters in urban areas" (Eraj, 2006, p. 46).

4.10 Re-exclusion of the IRPT: Beginning of a New Phase in the History of IRPT

Since 2011-12 following the events of the Arab Spring, and due to the rise of radicalization in the Muslim world, the increase in religiosity within the country, and the emergence of ISIS, as well as some other reasons such as the economic crisis, the Tajik government dramatically changed its attitude toward religion in general and the IRPT in particular. The government increased its control over the religious sphere and adopted new laws to fight religious radicalization. In September 2015, following the parliamentary election in which the Tajik Islamists lost their two seats in parliament, the IRPT was finally banned and denounced as a terrorist organization.

This raises certain questions regarding the future of the IRPT; in particular, "Will the IRPT repeat its history and use violence?" and "Will the IRPT's supporters join other terrorist groups?" These are questions to be explored in the final chapters of this dissertation in order to identify the possible future direction of political Islam in Tajikistan in this new era.

4.11 Conclusion

The historical development of political Islam in Tajikistan, as explored in this chapter, has precisely demonstrated that Tajik Islamism is similar to any other modern social movement in that it has always been in the process of change. In other words, the historical trajectory of the IRPT testifies to the fact that political Islam in Tajikistan, as a global phenomenon, is similar to other mainstream Islamist movements in the Middle East or any other parts of the world. It is neither a completely static nor an entirely dogmatic project, but rather, is relatively dynamic

and flexible since it has changed for various reasons throughout its history toward either moderation or radicalization.

Throughout its history, Tajik Islamism gradually transformed from a small, apolitical religious educational network in 1973, when it was known as *Nahzati Javononi Islomii Tojikiston* (Revival of the Islamic Youth of Tajikistan), into a wider, anti-Soviet and puritanical fundamentalist movement that both seriously challenged the communist political establishment as well as traditional Hanafi Sunni clergy during the *Perestroika* period in the late 1980s, with the aim to purge Islam. As can be seen, later in the early 1990s after the collapse of the USSR, and as a result of the political opening this offered, the Tajik Islamist movement became one of the earliest opposition parties when it turned itself into a political party, participated in the political process, and agreed to 'play the game' – both before and after the civil war in Tajikistan.

Generally speaking, this chapter takes the Tajik Islamists' participation in elections, as well as their interaction and cooperation with other, secular opposition parties, into consideration, and it is this history that demonstrates that Tajik political Islam is not totally the anti-democratic, anti-modern and anti-systemic movement the essentialists – as mentioned in Chapter 2 – described them as.

Additionally, this chapter not only illustrated the Tajik Islamists' positive change toward moderation, but rather, often demonstrated their change toward radicalization as well. For example, this chapter has clearly showed the radicalization process of the IRPT during the civil war of 1992-1997, when they declared *jihad*, promoted violence and denounced their opponents as enemies of Islam. In other words, it is arguably the case that it was the exclusion of the IRPT from the political process at the end of 1992 that pushed them dramatically toward radicalization and militarization.

One of the main aims of this chapter was also to show the Tajik Islamists' previous radical positions in their history in order to indicate to what extent these had changed after the peace agreement. Their positional changes, moreover, have raised the following specific questions: 1) To what extent has the IRPT moved away from its old illiberal positions following its inclusion into the political process?; 2) Furthermore, are the Tajik Islamists loyal and sincere in their commitment to democracy?; 3) Is their change toward moderation, especially after peaceful reconciliation, ideological or tactical?; 4) These questions remain open for analysis in the next chapters.

CHAPTER V: POLITICAL ISLAM AND DEMOCRACY: TACTICAL OR IDEOLOGICAL MODERATION OF THE IRPT?

5.1 Introduction

The attitude of political Islam toward democracy, as previously discussed in chapter two, has been one of the hottest contemporary topics in this academic field, since traditionally the key founders of political Islam reject the modern democratic system as well as its principles as Western products. For example, Maududi, one of the earliest Islamist theorists, definitely opposed popular sovereignty as well as secular law by proposing concepts such as 'God's sovereignty' and 'God's law' as having unquestioned legitimate authority. According to Maududi, as well as other classical Islamists, the *Qu'ran* is the constitution of life and Man has no right to abandon it (Farooqui, n.J, pp. 7-9).

Furthermore, today there are radical movements, such as Hizb ut-Tahrir, the Taliban, and many other militant groups in the Middle East as well as in Africa and Asia, which consider democracy and human rights to be non-Islamic principles; to imitate them is therefore claimed to be a sin for Muslims. As seen in chapter two, these radical groups were labelled 'neo-salafists' or 'takfiri-jihadists' by Moussalli (2009, p. 31) and as 'neo-fundamentalists' by Roy (1994, p. 120). Therefore, this issue of the compatibility between political Islam and Western-style democracy comprised of secular liberal values, has created many questions in the minds of experts about whether Islamism or even Islam itself is, or can be, compatible with democratic pluralism.

It should be mentioned that the IRPT's positions toward these democratic principles is significantly important in this research, since the question of their moderation or not will be identified in accordance to their embrace of democratic norms (*i.e.*, the more Islamists move closer to democracy and democratic values such as pluralism, citizenship and human rights, the more they can be considered moderate).

Taking into consideration the previous chapter, with its exploration of the IRPT's old ideology, the current chapter asks the following questions: To what extent has the IRPT moved away from their radical ideas and toward moderation after the political reconciliation? Is the IRPT loyal and sincere in their commitment to democracy and its principles? Has the IRPT become ideologically moderate or is their moderation tactical? These are the questions the current study will examine in the next three chapters.

5.2 Political Islam and Democracy in the Case of IRPT

As mentioned in the previous chapter, following the peace agreement the IRPT gradually moved away from their radical slogans and tactics toward more moderate positions. Especially after the legalization of the IRPT in 1999, the Tajik Islamists intensively altered their tactics as well as their radical rhetoric, ceased military action, and gradually transformed from a military guerrilla movement into a modern pragmatic political party. As a result, after their first parliamentary election in 2000, it became the only religiously-oriented party with parliamentary representation in post-Soviet Central Asia (see: Rahnamo, 2008).

After their inclusion in the political process, they officially declared that they no longer had contact with radical militant movements located in the territory of Afghanistan and Pakistan, such as the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU), as well as other illegal terrorist groups. After the 1997 peace agreement, in their statements and documents they officially and continuously condemned religious radicalism, terrorism and terrorist attacks (ICG, 2003, p. 20), including the September 11, 2001 events (Naumkin, 2005, p. 245). Abdullo Nuri, the leader of the IRPT, officially declared that "we will support this peace; we won't repeat the tragic battle which continued for five years…[w]e will never permit the start of any military activities…" (Eraj, 2006, p. 66). Since signing the peace agreement, the IRPT also officially declared that they wanted to build good and friendly relationships with all countries and organizations around the world (Rahnamo, 2008, p. 154).

Unlike transnational radical Islamist parties such as Hizb ut-Tahrir, the IRPT declared their acceptance of the concept of the 'nation-state' as an important concept, and that they respect the territorial integrity of Tajikistan (IRPT's Charter 1999, pp. 438-441). They have even often considered themselves to be a national movement, one created based on religious values, which has always supported Tajik national interests and fought for Tajik independence, even during Soviet times (Kabiri, 2013, pp. 5-8) (see also: Chapter 4). According to the IRPT's leaders, the transnational agenda of contemporary radical movements is unrealistic and even non-Islamic. For example, according to Kabiri, the concept of an 'Islamic Caliphate', as proposed by Hizb ut-Tahrir, necessitates a political administration, and as a man-made product, does not have any direct connection with the core principles of Islam (PAYOM tv, 2018). Likewise, Kabiri also claimed that the IRPT has always maintained a balance between religious and national identity (Kabiri, 2013, p. 15).

Furthermore, after the legalization of the IRPT in 1999, the new party statutes prioritized the protection of Tajikistan's economic, cultural, and political independence, the preservation of its national integrity and national unity, as well as the promotion democracy, to be among its main tasks (Charter of IRPT, 1999, pp. 446-450). By contrast, in 1991 the party advocated the "spiritual revival of [the] citizens of Tajikistan...with a view to realizing Islamic norms in the life of the republic" to be among its main tasks (Charter of IRPT, 1991, pp.446-449). According to one of the key leaders of the IRPT, Davlat Usmon, the revival of Islamic norms and morals as one of the main aims of the party after the peace agreement became a secondary task in the party's new statute (Usmon, 2003, p. 52).

In general, due to the sensitivities of the Tajik secular elite, and the suspicions of regional and global players regarding the rise of radical 'political Islam', the Tajik Islamists tried to avoid the words 'Islam or Islamic' in the new Charter of their party. Instead, they often used terminology like 'spirituality', 'culture', and 'morality', and alongside religious values, added national and international norms in its program and documents (Charter of IRPT, 1999, 2003, pp. 1-4). Many observers therefore think that nothing Islamic has remained in their new program and doctrine (Epkenhans, 2015; Eraj, 2006).

Nevertheless, by 'national values' as well as 'spirituality' and 'Tajik culture', the IRPT has always meant "Islam", since they believe that Islam is the main pillar of Tajik identity (Umed Ozodi, 2010a), and by "Tajikism" they mean "Islamism" and vice versa (Asadullaev, 2009, p. 28). For example, Abdullo Nuri has often mentioned that an "essential part of the national culture of Tajikistan is a religion and the backbone of national culture is Islam" (Rahnamo 2008, p. 133). Kabiri has also often considered Islam to be an inseparable part of Tajik culture. Even in one of his interviews with BBC Persian in London, Kabiri identified Islam as the main part of Tajik culture and identity (Umed Ozodi, 2010b.).

Most importantly, since the peace agreement, the IRPT, both in its program as well as in its electoral platforms, has declared that it has no problem with the secular democratic regime and are further going to act within the secular Tajik constitutional framework (Shozimov, 2005, p.22). For example, the IRPT's electoral programme emphasises that the establishment of a democratic, law-based, and socially-oriented society, which provides all rights and liberty to its citizens, is the main target of their party (The IRPT's Programme, pp. 2-3).

Furthermore, they declared that they are going to establish a "real" free, democratic, law-based society, which consists of religious, national and international values (The IRPT's Programme,

pp. 2-3). The "assistance in the provision of democratic, law-based...society, assistance in the provision of individual, political, economic and religious freedom of citizens" (Charter of IRPT, 1999, p. 446) were highlighted as its main objectives. By a real and free democratic society they mean that the current constitutional settlement is insufficiently democratic and secular. Neither the IRPT's program developed since 2000, nor the statements and declarations of their leaders, officially claimed that the IRPT was going to establish an Islamic state. Rather, both Nuri and Kabiri declared that they would not support the Iranian model or the Taliban's *shar'ia* project (Collins, 2007, pp. 87-88). For example, Kabiri (2012, p. 9) mentions that

> [in] Tajikistan, the concept of Islamic state or Islamic government is somewhat obsolete and controversial. Many political parties are beginning to reconsider the nature and concept of Islam in favor of building a democratic state where Islamic values are an integral part of society and private personal life, rather than just part of government decision-making or exhibited at the government level.

Therefore, according to some observers, the IRPT is becoming almost ideologically similar to the Justice and Development Party in Turkey[38] (Karagianniss, 2006, p. 12; Naumkin, 2005, p. 250-256). The founder of the IRPT, Abdullo Nuri, following the peace agreement and legalization of Islamic parties, emphasized that they had already come to the conclusion that the democratic experience is useful and appropriate for the development of the country and promised that they were not planning to put their beliefs and ideology above others. He added that "[the] IRPT in spite of being [an] Islamic oriented party does not reject any democratic principles, except those principles which clearly contradict Muslim beliefs" (Rahnamo, 2008, p. 139).

Some of the IRPT's leaders even confidently declared that if they came to power democratically, they would never destroy the game, but rather would further promote democratic principles and respect the will of the people. Indeed, Jaloluddini Mahmud questioned "how they can destroy [the] democratic game when they themselves demand from government to be more democratic" (Mahmud, 2013, p. 262). They have also tried to discover the principles of democracy within the Islamic tradition. For example, Jamolluddin Mahmud mentioned that "in the past fourteen centuries, when the world did not have any liberty, the Prophet of Islam preached freedom and other norms to the people, which are now known as democratic" (Mahmud, 2013, p. 262). The President of the youth Committee of the IRPT's regional branch in the northern part of

---

[38] However, due to the current situation in Turkey, especially Erdoğan's attitude toward secular and democratic politics, the Turkish model of political Islam may no longer be considered the best comparison.

Tajikistan, Yakubov, also mentioned that "democracy is part of Islam and [they] want to defend it" (Thibault, 2014, p. 164).

The new leadership of the IRPT is especially known as belonging to the second generation, modernist trend of the party, and has made more of an effort to demonstrate that Islam and democracy are compatible, even though they accept that a complete ideological justification of this problem is beyond their capacity. For example, he mentions that they prefer only a democratic system for the future of Tajikistan, and that they will advise the other Islamists around the world to participate in the political system and negotiate with the representatives of other outlooks (Kabiri, 2003, p. 219). In his speech in Washington, Kabiri argued that "Tajikistan should be a secular and democratic state", and even underlined that "it is not a slogan designed to obtain support from the voters and the public, or experts in the West", but was the decision of the party "that the democratic development of the state is the most optimal path for the future development of Tajikistan and that it is in the interest of Muslims" (Kabiri, 2012, p. 9).

Furthermore, most foreign observers, and some key local experts such as Abdullo Rahnamo, have also emphasized the successful ideological development of IRPT in favor of moderation since 1999. Muhiddin Kabiri, is often cited as an "Islamic intellectual with democratic views" (Olimova and Tolipov, 2011, p. 4), as well as "the modern face of the party and the symbol of a new generation" (The Economist, 2003). Some Russian experts even label him as the best example of a Muslim politician and reformist (Kabiri, 2015a), while others believe that Kabiri is not a fundamentalist in any meaningful sense at all given he easily sits and talks alongside those who drink alcohol and eat pork (Asadulloev, 2009, p. 26).

For example, Richard Hoagland, the U.S. ambassador in Dushanbe, has argued that Kabiri "appears genuinely to be moderate and to understand Western-style democratic politics…The West should carefully find ways to support Kabiri as a new-generation, moderate Islamic leader" (Karagiannis, 2016 p. 272). Both Immanual Karagiannis (Karagiannis, 2012, pp. 79-80; Karagiannis 2016, pp. 272-273) and Tim Epkenhans (Epkenhans, 2015, pp. 341-342) have also described Kabiri's positions and policies as both successful and moderate. For example, Emmanuel Karagiannis labels Kabiri an 'Islamo-democrat' (Karagiannis, 2016). Ihsan Yilmaz, meanwhile, even sees the IRPT as "similar to Christian democratic parties in Europe". Yilmaz's article even believes that the IRPT has transformed into a post-Islamist period, especially under

Kabiri's leadership, as someone who "advocate[s] a liberal, non-violent Islamism...compatible with democracy" (Yilmaz, 2009, p. 142).

Besides, the IRPT leaders, alongside their general support of democracy – both in their speeches and in their official written documents– have tried to show their loyalty toward each element and principle of democracy, such as the multi-party system, electoral politics, the separation of power, as well as liberal democratic values such as human rights and fundamental freedoms.

However, prior to describing the IRPT's viewpoints toward each element of democratic government, this study briefly describes the term 'democracy' and its main features. This study will also illustrate what he (author of this thesis) mean by the terms 'democracy' and 'democratic state', since as Ball and Dagger (1998, p. 19) note, due to today's popularity of democracy, "everyone will try to link his or her ideology, whatever it may be, to democracy", defining democracy in their own ways. For example, "...the leader of the Chinese Communist Party, for more than forty years, maintained that his government was a 'people's democratic dictatorship'…[whereas the] formal title of East Germany...was the 'German Democratic Republic'...".

5.3 Democracy as an Ideal and as a Form of Government

The idea of democracy as a form of government or as "a way of taking collective decisions" (Jay, 1994, p. 120), which has increasingly flourished over the last several centuries, actually has its roots in ancient Greece. The word 'democracy' derives from Greek and first and foremost means 'rule or government by the...people'. It consists of two words, *demos*, meaning "people" [and] *kratein*, to rule" (Ball, T., Dagger. R., eds., 1998, p.20). Abraham Lincoln, the former U. S. President, later described the term "as 'government by the people, of the people, for the people'" (Jay, 1994, p. 120). This form of government appeared in reaction to other forms of government, such as "monarchy", "oligarchy" and "theocracy", which were each systems of rule by one or by a few people, where democracy unlike other forms of government, gives as many people as possible equal opportunity to participate in political decisions. Indeed, the idea of democracy as a process of selecting governments, articulated by scholars ranging from Alexis de Tocqueville to Joseph Schumpeter to Robert Dahl, is [even] now widely used by social scientists" (Zakaria, 1997, p. 24).

However, the definition of democracy has changed over the centuries and now "... democracy goes much deeper than the electoral process", and is therefore richer than that of earlier periods. According to Diamond (2004), generally speaking, modern democracy has four major elements: "1) A political system for choosing and replacing the government through free and fair elections; 2) The active participation of the people, as citizens, in politics and civic life; 3) Protection of the human rights of all citizens; and, 4) A rule of law, in which the laws and procedures apply equally to all citizens".

In other words, although human rights and civil liberties historically developed separately, since 1945 they have been considered essential elements of the modern democratic state, even though there are still those scholars who associate democracy with electoral politics[39] Today, however, "human rights and democracy are inextricably linked". Since the end of World War II, these norms and principles have been added to and extended by international law. Without doubt, today a "truly democratic society is one in which all human rights are respected and protected…and [i]t would be a serious mistake to imagine that [only] freely-elected governments are a guarantee of individual rights or that majority rule can be equated with democratic rule [since]...[h]istory has taught us that the formal "trappings" of democracy are never enough" (Gallagher, n.a. p. 2). Therefore, the UN has continually emphasized the importance of links between individual liberties and democracy. For example, at the World Conference in 1993, the UN member states argued that:

> Democracy, development and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms are interdependent and mutually reinforcing. Democracy is based on the freely expressed will of the people to determine their own political, economic, social and cultural systems and their full participation in all aspects of their lives. [However], [i]n the context of the above, the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms at the national and international levels should be universal and conducted without conditions attached (Gallagher, n.a. p. 1).

There are three categories of democracy that are most widely known: parliamentary (representative), presidential (direct republican) and semi-presidential or Hybrid[40].

This dissertation has largely focused on the presidential model of democracy and its main elements, since this is the category that is widely known in post-Soviet Central Asia. The next

---

[39] The relationship between democracy and human rights will be discussed later in this chapter.

[40] For example, popular sovereignty is common to republican models of democracy. By contrast, parliamentary sovereignty is a common feature of parliamentary *representative* models of democracy.

section attempts to demonstrate the extent to which the IRPT's commitment and loyalty toward these democratic principles can be proven in further detail. Firstly, this study describes the IRPT's positions toward democratic procedures, and then toward the core values of democracy.

5.4 IRPT and the Instruments and Procedures of Democracy

The IRPT, in its program and other declarations, officially supports most democratic institutions and procedures, such as the multi-party system, electoral politics and the separation of power. According to their interpretation, Islam does not have a problem with the above-mentioned concepts.

5.4.1 The IRPT and Political pluralism

For example, in their party programme they consider political pluralism to be a source of political freedom (IRPT's Program, pp. 2-4), even though traditionally political Islam's goal was always to build a strictly theological regime, where democratic elections and the multi-party system are neither appreciated nor accepted. According to the official documents of IRPT the "multiparty system is the guarantee of political freedoms and the indicator of law-based democratic state". According to them "[in] one hand it is the base of the development of the society, expression of personal aptitude; on the other hand it will promote the security of the society" (IRPT's Program, pp. 2-3). Furthermore, the spiritual leader of the IRPT, Himmatzoda, tried to effect the ideological coexistence of Islam with the multi-party system, and even wrote a book justifying that the multi-party system does not go against the doctrine of Islam (Rahnamo, 2008).

Muhiddin Kabiri, the young chairman of the party, has also often emphasized in his interviews the importance of the multi-party system, both for the party and for society. According to him, one of the most important demands of the IRPT, and a major point in the peace agreement signed by both sides, was the creation of a strong multi-party system and pluralistic society. Regarding the necessity of political pluralism, in one of his last speeches before the parliamentary election in 2015 in the northern part of Tajikistan, Kabiri mentioned that "if more than one party would have their representatives in parliament, the discussion during the adoption of new laws would be deeper", which he claimed would help to improve the quality of the laws (IRPT, 2015a).

The IRPT and its founders even consider themselves a main factor in the formation of the multi-party system in the post-Soviet history of Tajikistan, since the IRPT was one of the first active – as well as oldest – opposition political parties in Tajikistan. In effect, they consider themselves to be the party that fought for political pluralism in Tajikistan and empowered other opposition parties in the fight against the one-party system in the early 1990s (Rahnamo 2008, p. 140).

5.4.2 The IRPT and Electoral Politics

The Tajik Islamists, as with many other Islamists, have emphasized the principles of fair and democratic elections more than any other, since these are the only instruments that enable them to gain power peacefully. The IRPT, both in its program as well as in its electoral platforms, has often declared that they support electoral politics and consider fair and democratic elections to be important for the future development of the country (IRPT Program, p. 3). In similarity to Turkish and Arab Islamists, the IRPT has never rejected elections as an instrument, neither before the civil war nor after it. They have always participated in elections, since the founding of their party, inclusive of the first presidential election in 1991, where they even supported the secular and non-Sunni candidate (see: Chapter 4).

Of the IRPT's leaders, both Himmatzoda and Kabiri clearly emphasized that the concept of elections is not in contradiction with Islam. According to Kabiri, the current issue had already been solved by religious intellectuals, the so-called *mujtahiddin*[41], who made elections permissible for Muslims to use. Indeed, he considered democratic elections the best instrument for the transfer of power hitherto created by humans in history (Interview with Kabiri 2015). The key leader of the IRPT, Himmatzoda, also often mentioned in his writing that, in Islam, the people *do* have a right to elect and re-elect their rulers since Islam *denies* divine authority to those rulers (Himmatzoda, 2001, p. 27).

In addition, the Tajik Islamists, both on their website as well as through other published electoral programs, have tried to demonstrate that elections have been used in Islamic history, even by the Prophet. Consequently, elections are considered to be a legitimate way to reach their aims. Prior to the 2015 election, Yahyo Abdussator, one of the IRPT's younger members, clearly prioritized elections as an instrument, since according to him elections and parliamentary representation would permit the adoption of pro-Islamic laws (IRPT, 2015b).

---

[41] *Mujtahid* is a somebody who use his or her independent reasoning so-called *ijtihad* while interpreting Islamic law.

Furthermore, according to the IRPT, active and fair participation in elections, and choosing a just leader who can serve people, is a religious duty. Kabiri also declared that the IRPT considers participation in elections to be a religious responsibility (Umed Ozodi, 2010a). Thus, he used religious language in order to attempt to ideologically justify the importance of elections for Muslims. During the election, the IRPT's leadership considered the corruption and illegal behaviour of people, as well as of government, to be either sinful or blasphemous. Therefore, in pre-election meetings, the IRPT's leaders claimed that, if the electoral process is corrupted, then this is treasonous both to God and for the people of God (Jaliliyan, 2015a).

Nevertheless, through its actions and efforts, the IRPT has also tried to contribute to democratizing the electoral system. For example, several times the IRPT – both separately and in combination with other opposition parties – proposed a series of amendments to reform electoral law in Tajikistan. Similarly, the IRPT's parliamentary representatives often criticized the current electoral system because of the domination of the electoral process by the ruling party (Jaliliyan, 2015a). Given this context, the IRPT has clearly promoted elections and attempted to legitimize them in religious terms, both theoretically and in practice.

5.4.3 The IRPT and Separation of Power

As important principles of democracy, the separation of power into judicial, legislative, and executive has also been generally adopted by the IRPT, a fact often highlighted by them. Indeed, the IRPT declared that "all three parts of the government shall be sovereign, independent and at the same time supervise each other", otherwise, they claimed "the country would gradually approach authoritarianism or totalitarianism". The IRPT's program also emphasizes that all three branches of the government, as well as other governmental institutions, should serve the people (IRPT Program, p. 3).

5.4.4 Is the IRPT Moderate?

As has already been observed above, by comparison to their previous policies, and despite some difficulties, the IRPT have noticeably changed since they officially declared their acceptance of – and respect for – the primary principles of democracy. The party has especially condemned militant Islamist activities and agreed to co-operate and collaborate with the secularists in one country within the framework of a nation-state.

However, taking into consideration the above-mentioned arguments, as well as the definition of the concept of 'moderation' as elaborated in chapters one and two, can the IRPT's moderation be called successful? Are the IRPT's leaders actually loyal and sincere in their commitment to democracy and its principles, as mentioned above? Is the IRPT's moderation an ideological commitment or simply a tactical convenience?

Based on a narrow interpretation of moderation, without a doubt, it is indeed possible to consider the Tajik Islamists moderates. For example, based on Schwedler's definition that those "who seek gradual change by working within [the] existing system in favour [of] democratization...[are] moderate" (Schwedler, 2006, p. 8), one could easily define the Tajik Islamists as such. However, it would be difficult to agree with this argument that the Tajik Islamists have already become ideologically moderate and sincerely believe in democracy, based on the definitions of Wickham and Fuller, and what the current study has proposed.

The most important point, which clearly challenges the attitude of the Tajik Islamists toward democracy, and makes their moderation appear questionable, is their attitude toward democracy as a system of values differ from their attitude toward the democratic procedures. In similarity to almost all mainstream and moderate Islamists worldwide, and the examples given above, the Tajik Islamists have likewise had difficulties internalizing democratic norms. This suggests that the IRPT's acceptance of democratic procedures, especially the electoral process, serves a tactical purpose only[42].

5.5 IRPT and the Core Values of Democracy

As previously mentioned, the IRPT and its key leaders adopted the "modern instruments and procedures [of democracy] including electoral politics" (Tibi 2012, p. 21), but have always had

---

[42] There is enough historical evidence to demonstrate that once Islamists gain power, they are interested in monopolizing that power. The AKP experience in Turkey, and the efforts of Erdogan, are the clear example. Another example that clearly shows how quickly Islamists change once in power is demonstrated by the MB in Egypt, which tried to hijack the revolution and began to implement their undemocratic project by organizing referenda after Egypt's first democratic elections. Therefore, Samuel Huntington has argued that "the introduction of elections in non-Western societies may often lead to victory by antiliberal forces", whereas Zakaria "has contended that the promotion of elections around the world has been responsible for the rise of illiberal democracy" and has even suggested that "liberal autocracies are preferable to illiberal democracies" (Plattner, p. 172).

controversial opinions along with problems internalizing democratic values[43] such individual freedom – or what Tibi has called the "values of cultural modernity" (Tibi 2012, p. 21). Although a generalization, the IRPT and its leaders have officially and symbolically declared their respect for, and acceptance of, democratic norms and values (IRPT Programme, p. 1-5). For example, after the peace agreement, the founder of the IRPT often emphasised the importance of fundamental democratic principles, and the party's acceptance of them (Sattori, 2007, pp. 20-22). In 2001, Nuri published a brochure, titled "Human Rights in Islam", which is regarded as the most important document concerning the Tajik Islamists' positions toward human rights. In this brochure, he tried to demonstrate that human rights – such as freedom of expression, the right to life, the right to private property, and the rights of religious minorities – are accepted as well as respected in Islam; these arguments he had tried to vindicate by reference to religious texts, specifically the *Hadith* and *Qu'ranic* verses (Nuri, 2001b, pp. 2-25).

Despite such commentaries, Nuri's inconsistency and ambiguity has often been observed in his more controversial viewpoints. While Nuri, in his works, has tried to equate human rights with religion, he often prioritized religious law over profane or secular law, emphasizing that the "Creator knows better than humans which law is good for humans"; similarly, he explicitly stated that the *Qu'ran* is a "constitution for life", being permanent and immutable (Nuri, 2001b, pp. 2-3). Similarly, he has also mentioned that human rights as well as fundamental freedoms should be limited within the framework of *shar'ia* or Islamic law. Unlike the traditionalists, and many Muslim modernists, who consider the *Qu'ran* a moral and ethical book, Nuri considers this holy religious text to be law, with the *Qu'ran* clearly identified as the source of truth and justice sent by the Creator as a "constitution" (Nuri, 2001b, p. 3).

However, as already mentioned in chapter 2, unlike the Islamists, many Muslim reformists or modernists look to the *Qur'an* as a book of morality and spirituality. Most modernists, unlike the Islamists, differentiate *Shari'a* from Islamic jurisprudence and assert that *Shari'a* is only used in the *Qur'an* once (Sura 4:84), and means "way" or "path." (Tibbi, 2012, pp. 158-161). Therefore, the Muslim modernists believe that Islamic jurisprudence or *fiqh* "is man-made,

---

[43] It should be mentioned that for identifying the Islamists' moderation, their position toward the primary liberal norms, such as human rights, are significantly important even if we would agree to consider liberal principles – such as fundamental freedom and civil rights – to be outside the mainstream normative definition of democracy. As already mentioned in chapter one, only those Islamists who have firstly agreed to participate in the political process peacefully and have also successfully adopted these core values can be said to be moderates.

written by Muslim scholars...based on their best understanding of how the *Qur'an* should be translated into codes of law" (Fuller, 2004, p57).

In addition, in his book, Nuri avoided those aspects of religious law that clearly contradict the modern concept of human rights. Specifically, he did not mention the controversial religious laws regarding minority rights, religious freedom, or gender equality. Indeed, according to orthodox or Islamist interpretations of Islam, Muslims who change or abandon their faith will be punished for apostasy[44]. Furthermore, according to medieval Islamic law, religious minorities do not have the same rights as Muslims, nor do Muslim women share the same rights as Muslim men[45]; none of these issues were raised in Nuri's discussion about the interrelation between Islam and human rights.

Himmatzoda, another key leader of the IRPT shares a similar interpretation to Nuri with regards to human rights. For example, in his writings, while he generally advocated gender equality by arguing that men and women are created from one soul, he nevertheless systematically justified the orthodox interpretation of religion whereby men have always had a dominant position to women. For example, regarding marriage, divorce, inheritance, and the right to bear witness in Islam, he did not introduce any new interpretations, as the Muslim modernists have done, but rather, supported polygamy and men's superiority over women (Himmatzoda, 2006, pp. 96-103).

Other key conservative members of the party have also advocated "conservative social positions such as legalizing polygamy,"(Collins, 2007, p. 88). Specifically, in 2011, Vohidkhon Qoziddin, one of the key leaders of the IRPT, published an article where he officially declared that the "constitution is not dogma", and suggested the legalization of polygamy, since according to him, in reality many Tajik men have more than one wife. He made further mention of the contradiction between human law and God's law, where he considered God's law to be an untouchable dogma, which nobody has the right to change (Faraj 2010, Mahmadulloev, n.J.).

---

[44] Islamic law traditionally "agree[s] on the death penalty for an adult male in full possession of his faculties who has renounced Islam voluntarily. Some schools of law allow imprisonment instead of death for apostate women. [However], [b]ased on the Quranic prohibition of coercion in matters of religion (2:257), many modern thinkers argue against capital punishment for apostasy, and the legislation is rarely invoked today" (The Oxford Dictionary of Islam, Apostasy).

[45] Universal Declarations of Human Rights adopted by the UN clearly emphasizes equal rights and freedom for all people despite their religion, nation, gender and race.

Furthermore, some older members of the IRPT, such as Mavlavi Abdulhai, have clearly targeted the concept of "human rights", and argued that the religious law revealed by God is more important than human rights which are made by humans. By contrasting these two systems of law, Abdulhai, referring to the current political elite, maintains that nobody has the right to change God's law, not even the Prophets. He additionally argued that human beings have limited rights and should not stray beyond God's law, as identified by Allah[46]. While speaking, he said that he tries not to look to Kabiri [for guidance], since the latter would hint or suggest to him not to speak in such ways. More importantly, his revolutionary religious slogans were widely supported by a majority of participants and members of the IRPT's 9th party congress in 2011 (Nurik Rahmatov, 2014). On the other hand, the speech of another key activist belonging to the 'old guard', Mavlavi Kosim, who had spent nine years in prison, was not liked by the IRPT's clerics since he had advocated for more worldly achievements and modernization to party members. He considered the more emotive religious slogans no longer important for Islamists (Davlat, 2011).

In addition, conservative and anti-modern views, which contradict the Western concept of human rights, are even clearly observable in some of the most progressive leaders of the party as well. For instance, one of the more enlightened Islamists in northern Tajikistan and a former university teacher, mentioned after a long discussion with Tajik expert known as Abdullaev that 'women can be beaten but man firstly needed to influence her peacefully' (Abdullaev, 2005, p. 62).

5.5.1 Young Generation of Islamists

By contrast to the IRPT's old leadership, the rhetoric of representatives of the younger generation of the party – which includes Muhiddin Kabiri, Bobojon Qayumzod, Mahmudjon Fayzrahmonov, and Muhammadali Hayit – has been mostly non-religious[47] regarding human

---

[46] His argument is against the Western concept of natural law, which can be found in Thomas Aquinus' *Summa theologica*.

[47] They have expressed very generally. For example, in his article comparing Hizb ut-Tahrir to the IRPT, Muhiddin Kabiri very generally mentioned that, unlike Hizb ut-Tahrir, the IRPT believes that the "four fundamental freedoms...[as] accepted by [the] international community are not in serious contradiction with Islam"; in such a view, Kabiri's main source is the book of Abdullo Nuri on the relationship between Islam and human rights (Kabiri, 2003, p. 220).

rights and other democratic values. Indeed, they have neglected to mention too much about the role of the *Shar'ia* law in their general expression of their ideas.

In comparison to the older conservative leaders of the party, he and other members of the younger generation of the IRPT mostly prioritize socio-economic problems through which one can avoid ideological paradoxes, on the one hand, and successfully attract the masses of voters, on the other hand (Sodiqov, 2011). Like the other, more secular opposition political parties, the younger generation of Islamists have often emphasized the importance of free elections, human rights, and fundamental freedoms, and also talked about corruption and economic problems while wanting to benefit from the democratisation process.

However, while Muhiddin Kabiri and the younger generation of the party have always avoided discussion about controversial religious laws (such as polygamy, stoning, and apostasy), there have been several times where they were in such inconvenient situations that they needed to express their ideas (Karagiannis, 2016, p. 273). As a result, their confusing answers regarding controversial religious laws demonstrates that they also mostly share the same positions as their party's old conservatives or radicals, but that they have a strategy to talk more about other issues in order to focus people's minds on those other issues.

For example, in one of the debates conducted by the BBC World Service Persian in Tajikistan on the topic of political Islam, the speaker of the IRPT was asked about the future destiny of minorities, as well as their plans regarding the implementation of polygamy. The speaker of the IRPT was deeply confused, and briefly stated that under the current conditions, the party would prefer to work within the framework of the Tajik constitution, and mentioned that they prioritize today other social and political issues. He was asked again by the moderator about whether or not they would implement polygamy and other controversial religious laws once they had solved the current socio-political problems in Tajik society? Again he appeared to be confused, not knowing what to say, and avoided giving answers to other detailed questions (BBC Persian 2013). This clearly shows a lack of concrete answers regarding these issues.

Once in a meeting in Isfara, in northern Tajikistan, Muhiddin Kabiri himself was asked about the implementation of polygamy by one participant, who probably was not member of the party but was nevertheless interested in some aspects of *shari'a*. Kabiri mentioned that, regarding this issue, he refers to two sources: the constitution of the country and *shari'a,* even though one contradicts the other. However, he further mentioned that in the current situation it would be difficult for the IRPT to raise this issue due to pressure from their opponents. He said that if

they were to raise this issue, the secularists would say that "we knew that [the] Islamists' plan [was] to implement *shari'a*". However, he argued that they would reach that goal step by step if the constitution allows for it (IRPT, 2015c). At the same time, he tried to express a different or moderate interpretation, and stated that "Islam allows men to have more than one wife but [does] not propagate it". He argued that *shari'a* considers one wife important, but that in particular situations (war), also allows for up to four wives. He tried to explain that one wife is enough for one man, since according to him, in contemporary Tajik society, it is difficult to provide more than one wife for one man (IRPT, 2015c).

5.5.2 Selective Approach toward Core Democratic values

The Tajik Islamists' approach toward liberal democratic values, such as individual freedom and human rights, has always been *selective*. For example, the IRPT have often raised issues close to their ideology, such as the violation of religious freedom and discrimination against Muslim believers, and consistently criticized the legislation and unwritten laws adopted by governments that have limited religious freedom, among which include the banning of the wearing of religious headscarves in universities and schools, as well as the forbidding of youth under the age of 18 to pray at mosques (US Department of State, 2013).

On the other hand, they have almost never expressed their concerns regarding issues such as domestic violence against women, which is a more serious problem than the headscarf issue in Tajik society. They have silently ignored such issues, suggesting they do not have much interest in raising them. While women in Tajik society have often "face[d] societal pressure to wear headscarves" (Freedom House, 2009), both in society as well as from their families due to increasing religiosity, the IRPT has almost never condemned such tendencies. On the contrary, the articles and interviews of many Islamists show that they ideologically support the pressure on women, since they consider females without the hijab to be examples of unethical behaviour that makes men misbehave. Recently, one Tajik Islamist activist even argued in his article that "to struggle against [the] Islamic *hijab* is thus to support rape". According to him "only women wearing the *hijab* belong to their husbands while uncovered women often commit crimes, especially sexual perversion" (Boboyorov, 2017).

Furthermore, neither the modernists nor the older generation of Tajik Islamists have tried to condemn the intolerant sermons of some politicized Tajik clerics who have promoted

controversial ideas regarding women's rights, atheists, and secular-oriented people in society. For example, some Tajik clerics' sermons have radically criticized women who wear European clothes, create hatred toward those people who keep a secular way of life, and promote an intolerant interpretation toward those secular Muslims who do not practice their religious duties every day. Some of these politically-oriented clerics have had close contact with the IRPT. For example, after a book was published in the Academy of Science by a group of atheists about God, no Islamists tried to support their right to express their ideas. On the contrary, their supporters have intolerantly criticized them on social networks.

In addition, the IRPT did not clearly condemn many radical religious movements banned by the Government, such as Tablighi Jamaat, even when they were against the IRPT, *e.g.,* the Salafiya (BBC Persian, 2013). According to some secular pro-government experts (Nurzoda, 2015), the IRPT did not even clearly identify their position toward radical Islamic groups, such as ISIS (the so-called 'Islamic state').

By 'human rights', it seems, the IRPT mostly mean Muslim conservative rights; by 'individual freedoms', they mean the religious freedom of Muslims, not necessarily the rights and freedoms of all segments of society, including secularists. In other words, although they employ the Western concept of human rights, it is as an attempt to protect the rights of the more conservative segments of society. The party even refers to the concepts of human rights and individual freedom more than religion itself in their speeches, since they realize that democracy helps more effectively to achieve their rights and freedoms than *shar'ia*. For example, after the IRPT's ban, and the arrest of their leaders, human rights is now the top news item on their websites while the term "human rights" became the most popular word in their lexicon.

Taking into consideration the above-mentioned arguments, it is better to call the moderation of the Tajik Islamists 'selective' in regard to democratic values, since in this case, as observed, the Tajik Islamists closely resemble Brumberg's "tactical modernism" category (Brumberg 1997, pp. 24-25). Indeed, the IRPT have tried to become politically moderate, but remain strictly conservative in culture – similar to many other Islamists that have accepted modern technology – as well as having made only selective use of political modernization; nevertheless, they reject the culture of "philosophical Western modernization that gave rise or [is] considered as [the] source of scientific and technological modernization" (Tibi, 2012, p. 177).

5.6 Is Democracy a Way or Means? Liberal Democracy versus Illiberal Democracy

5.6.1 One-Sided Moderation or Tactical Approach toward democracy

Another point, which more clearly demonstrates that the IRPT's moderation is behavioural, is the tactical approach of the Tajik Islamists toward democracy. There are many instances where the Tajik Islamists have themselves acknowledged that they look to democracy as an instrument, a way of reaching a power, instead of as being based in values and norms.

For example, Saïd Abdulloh Nuri's interpretation of democratic systems from the last years of his life explicitly strengthens this argument. According to him, democracy can be understood in different ways, and he divided his definitions into two parts: First, democracy as a system of values, and second, as an instrument or way to achieve a target. He clearly underlined that they (the Tajik Islamists) support the second definition, that they understand "democracy" only as a way to achieve political power. (Rahnamo, 2008, p. 139). As Tibi noted, "they split democracy into two segments, much as they do with modernity itself, they adopt modern instruments and procedures including electoral politics, while rejecting the values of cultural modernity" (Tibi, 2012, pp. 20-21). However, as mentioned above democracy is not only "about [the] ballot box and voting booths, it is also, and more basically, about the core values of a civic political culture" (Tibi, 2012, p.).

The founder of the IRPT even went further, and advocated an Islamic model of democracy in place of the Western model (Rahnamo 2008, pp. 144-145). It appears to be the case that he differentiated democracy between an "Islamic" variant and "Western" variants. In the last years of his life, he was deeply unhappy with Western policies toward Muslims and was therefore openly critical of Western democracy, especially the USA's attitude to Iraq and Afghanistan, as well as France's policy on the headscarf issue. Therefore, he concluded that real democracy exists only in Islam, and that Islamic democracy is a most perfect one even though he never explained in detail precisely what he meant by 'Islamic democracy'. Nuri even associated democracy with Islam and claimed that "Islam is the source of the best justice and the best democracy" (Rahnamo 2008, p. 138), a claim shared by "those who claim that Islam itself is the only authentic democracy" (Lewis, n.d, p. 52).

Agbar Turajonzoda, a politicized cleric who has always been close to the IRPT, shares the exact views regarding the relationship between Islam and democracy, and mentions that while Islam does not ignore the rights of people to elect their leaders, it is incompatible with the notion of Western liberalism. According to him, the understanding of democracy in Islam is different from the Western version (Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, 2009b), although he also believes that Islam is reconcilable with electoral politics, but not with the liberal democratic norms commonly identified with constitutional democracy.

Furthermore, even Muhiddin Kabiri, who often prioritized democratic models over authoritarian regimes in both Muslim and non-Muslim countries, mentioned in one of his last interviews in 2015 in Russia that democracy is not an ideology but is instead a mechanism and process[48]. Through his arguments, he clearly illustrated that he also believes in the concept of democracy as a mechanism or instrument. In his interview, he differentiates Islam, communism, and even liberalism as ideologies from democracy as a mechanism. Therefore, he adds that they will use democracy as a process and mechanism to advance their ideology, but at the same time, will respect the democratic game, where people have the right to choose their rulers. He said that if his party comes to power, they would change the laws and regulations that limit religious freedom, and would even introduce some parts of *shari'a* law into the constitution, especially those related to education and family issues (CATV NEWS, 2015). Kabiri has further stated that the party is not going to go too far by introducing polygamy (or even adding stoning or apostasy laws to the penal code), but rather, will solve only some simple paradoxes. Specifically, he mentioned that they would like to eliminate some double standards, such as with marriage and divorce, for which two separate procedures have been introduced by the people in Tajikistan: the first follows religious norms, which is considered unofficial, and the second is the official marriage registration recognised by the state (CATV NEWS, 2015).

Another important speech by Muhiddin Kabiri, given prior to the parliamentary election of 2010, also helps us to identify how they segment democracy into two parts. Indeed, he confidently mentions that his party does not have a problem with democratic principles, but does have problems with what they consider to be the wrong interpretation of them. By "democracy", Kabiri emphasized that they understand it to be about fair elections, the separation of power[49], the freedom of conscience, and justice (some elements of so-called

---

[48] It seems that Kabiri's view is close to the Weberian description of 'instrumental reason'.

[49] As already mentioned, the separation of powers is typically associated with the republican and hybrid democratic models.

'social democracy' observed). However, he said that if democracy means the promotion of unethical principles or the adoption of anti-Islamic laws, then they will not accept it as legitimate and would even consider these norms undemocratic (Umed ozodi, 2010a). It is unclear what both the conservative Islamists and Muslim clerics mean by 'unethical principles'; prostitution or legalizing drugs, wearing European-style clothes; the drinking of alcohol; going to disco bars; perhaps the presence of women on TV; being a female singer, and even music more generally (the list could be longer) could also sometimes be considered as anti-Islamic and unethical. For more information about these limitations, it is best to refer to the political systems in Iran, Saudi Arabia, and Sudan. Afghanistan, under the rule of the Taliban, was the worst example in which most spheres were under their control.

The clearest example, which shows that the IRPT has adopted democracy only as an instrument and procedure, and that they consider liberal democratic values alien to Central Asia, is Kabiri's speech in Russian to an audience in Moscow. To this audience, he clearly mentioned that the future democratic form of the political system in Central Asia should concentrate on Islamic norms, since Western[50] liberal democratic principles were not formulated in this region and therefore do not have their place there (Kabiri, 2015a). Here his argument closely resembles Samuel Huntington's theory of a clash of civilizations (Huntington, 1993, p. 23). The realization of liberal democracy in Central Asia is a fantasy or utopia, and further mentioned that he did not know whether "it is good or bad but it is a reality" (Kabiri, 2015a). He clearly supports the idea of democracy as a mechanism for the future of the region, but without liberal values.

However, it seems that Kabiri has ignored the minority of secularly-oriented people, and a majority of Tajik Muslims, who do not support involving religion in politics but who nevertheless consider religion to be part of the cultural identity of the people. Statistics and surveys also shows that a majority of people prioritize a secular state despite their high religiosity (for more information see chapter 3).

Therefore, taking into consideration the above-mentioned arguments, the current study considers the moderation of the Tajik Islamists an example of tactical, **one-sided or interest-based moderation,** since they have mostly adopted "modern instruments and procedures including electoral politics, while rejecting the values of cultural modernity" (Tibi, 2012, pp. 20-21). This strongly suggests that they have had a plan to use democracy instrumentally in

---

[50] Even though in his article in 2003, Kabiri mentioned that democracy cannot be 'Western' or 'Eastern' and criticized secular Muslim dictators' argumentation using culturally relativist concepts of 'eastern democracy' through which to justify their undemocratic regimes. (Kabiri, 2003, p. 220).

order to prevent autocracy and, in the long-term, create a theocracy or maybe what Mawdudi called "theodemocracy" (see: Chapter 6).

5.6.2 Is "Islamist Democracy" an 'Alternative Democracy'?

The many above-mentioned facts demonstrated that Kabiri, as well as other leaders of the party, differentiate their understanding of democracy from Western liberal democracy, which is perhaps close to what Fareed Zakaria (Zakaria, 2003) or Shadi Hamid (Hamid 2014) have started to identify as "illiberal democracy", or to what Larry Diamond called 'electoral democracy' (Plattner, 1998, p. 171). Even if their tactical changes and selective use of democratic principles are considered to be ideological developments, then what they advocate is best described as "partial democracy", or what Tibi has called "semi modernity" (Tibi 2012, p. 177).

In this regard, it should also be mentioned that there are some Western scholars, Lynch for example, who believe that the Islamic version of democracy "may not be a classically liberal one, [although] it is a fully legitimate guide for how Muslims…can participate in a liberal and democratic system as an 'other modernity[51], whose attitude [toward] democracy is different from [the] Western" (Tibi, 2012, pp. 97-98). Indeed, scholars such as Michael Signer (2009, p. 31) and Fareed Zakaria (2003, p. 124), as already observed above, also distinguish "democracy" from "liberalism", and some have tried to explain the democratic participation of illiberal groups, such as Islamists, in the democratic process. For example, Fareed Zakaria mentions that the liberal "bundle of freedoms...has nothing intrinsically to do with democracy" (Zakaria, 2003, p. 15), since according to him, "constitutional liberalism, is theoretically different and historically distinct from democracy" (Plattner, p.172). Philippe Schmitter similarly argued that "[l]iberalism, either as a conception of political liberty, or as a doctrine about economic policy, may have coincided with the rise of democracy. But it has never been immutably or unambiguously linked to its practice" (Zakaria, 1997, p. 23). Zakaria also asserts that

> [c]onstitutional liberalism developed in Western Europe and the United States as a defence of the individual's right to life and property, and freedom of religion and speech. To secure these rights, it emphasized checks on the power of each branch of government, equality under the laws, impartial courts

---

[51] It seems that the concept of "multiple modernity", developed by Shmuel N. Eisenstadt, could also support the above argument to label the Islamists' model as an 'other modernity' or as an 'other democracy'.

and tribunals, and [the] separation of church and state...The Magna Carta, the Fundamental Order of Connecticut, the American Constitution, and the Helsinki Final Act are all expressions of constitutional liberalism.

Shadi Hamid, another expert on political Islam, also separates liberalism from democracy. According to Hamid, "[i]n the Western experience, democracy and liberalism usually went hand in hand, to the extent that 'democracy' in popular usage became shorthand for liberal democracy" (Hamid, 2014, p. 24). However, according to him, democracy in the case of Middle Eastern societies, where a majority of the population are conservative, is different from liberal democracy. Therefore, he calls Muslim democracy "illiberal" and adds that Muslims do not want to be secular, but instead demand a greater role for Islam in the political process. (Hamid, 2014, pp. 167-189).

With regard to the above-mentioned facts, Zakaria came to the conclusion, exactly like Hamid, that in most Muslim countries "from the Palestinian Authority to Iran to Pakistan, democratization has led to an increasing role for theocratic politics… such as Tunisia, Morocco, Egypt, and some of the Gulf States, were elections to be held tomorrow, the resulting regimes would almost certainly be more illiberal than the ones now in place". He asserts that [c]onstitutional liberalism has led to democracy, but democracy does not seem to bring constitutional liberalism". (Zakaria, 1997, p. 28).

Unlike the current study, these experts think that the "idea of natural or inalienable rights, which today are most commonly called 'human rights', originated with liberalism", and differentiate them from democracy (Plattner p. 172). These arguments appear to make mainstream Islamists' confident about their instrumental use of democracy in order to build illiberal democracy, based on majority Islamist rule over minorities, which violates many core principles of all democratic models.

However, the experts mentioned above only believe in a minimalist definition of democracy, whereby "[i]f a country hold[s] competitive, multiparty elections, we call it democratic"(Zakaria 1997, p. 25). According to these scholars, democracy is little more than the "procedures for selecting government"(Zakaria, 1997, p. 25). Samuel P. Huntington, for instance, wrote in *The Third Wave* that he considered "open, free and fair [elections the] essence of democracy". As cited by Zakaria (1997), Huntington further stated that "[g]overnments produced by elections may be inefficient, corrupt, shortsighted, irresponsible, dominated by special interests, and incapable of adopting policies demanded by the public good...These

qualities make such governments undesirable but they do not make them undemocratic [since] [d]emocracy is one public virtue, [but] not the only one..." (Zakaria, 1997).

This raises the question of whether democracy is "simply a matter of process, a peaceful way of making collective decisions through regular elections with competing parties and candidates?" This dissertation refutes the implicit answer and asserts in the negative. This study considers modern democracy to be, as Huong Nguyen (2014) formulated it, "both a form of government and a way of life that upholds liberty and equality as its core values", as well as a "way of life [that] means a respect for other peoples' political equality, and hence respect for each individual's liberty and autonomy in everyday interaction[s]". Thus, "[c]onstitutional democracy," in sum, connotes (1) appraisal of fundamental laws with (2) a view to joint popular self-rule as (3) a condition of political and personal freedom" (Michelman, 1996, p. 68).

There are many well-known scholars worldwide,[52] including liberal legalists, who believe 'democracy' in modern times "signifies something beyond the rule of the many…[which] marches arm-in-arm with freedom" (Michelman, 1996, p. 68). Some assert that, "[[i]n the substantive view of constitutional democracy, the question of a given regime's democratic character depends only on what its fundamental or constitutive laws prescribe and not at all on how they come to prescribe it" (Michelman, 1996, p. 68). For example, "in Dworkin's conception, "democracy points not to a procedure but to a state of affairs". Therefore, according to him, the government must treat "all members of [the] community as individuals, with equal concern and respect..." (Michelman, 1996, p. 70).

5.7 Political Islam and Secularism in Tajikistan

In post-Soviet Central Asian republics, as well as other Muslim countries, the concept of secularism as a prerequisite principle for reinforcing democracy has always had an anti-democratic image, and has always been associated with authoritarianism rather than with democracy. Indeed, official secularism has mostly been used by governments in the region for controlling religion and keeping political Islamic movements away from politics.

---

[52] Among whom, some of the more notable include: Bassam Tibi, Ronald Dworkin, Hans Kelsen, Charles Taylor, Chantal Mouffe, and Ernesto Laclau.

As a result, the political Islamist movement in Tajikistan has always been skeptical toward the concept of secularism, since the existence of secularism was against the existence of Islamism. Therefore, the IRPT's representatives to the National Reconciliation Committee, during the negotiation of the peace process (after the end of the war), as well as the preparation of the national reconciliation documents, seriously tried to have the word "secular" deleted from the constitution of Tajikistan since they believed it to be against the legalization of the political Islamic party (Kabiri 2005, p. 279; Himmatzoda, 2001, p. 9). Moreover, the IRPT also realized that this concept would become a barrier to the implementation of their ultimate aim, which is the Islamization of Tajik society.

This suggests that the Islamists had more problems with secularism than with democracy, since the strict form of secularism practised in the post-Soviet environment had always kept religious actors outside the political process. Therefore, the Tajik Islamists often used democracy in order to fight against what they called the anti-religious policies and false secularism of the Tajik elite. Some Islamist leaders, such as Sayfullozoda, even considered democratizing secularism to be important, having mentioned that a secular regime should not be radical but rather needs to be built based on demand and democratic principles (Sayfullozoda 2005, p. 171).

On the other hand, the Tajik secular political elite have also always been sceptical toward the Islamists, and were concerned by the secretive project of the Islamists with regard to the establishment of an Islamic state (Muhabbatov, 2012; Naukin 2005, pp. 247-48, Seifert 2003, p. 172). Therefore, on 23 of May 1998, even after the signing of the peace agreement in the Tajik parliament, the representatives of the secularists again adopted a new law against legalizing the IRPT (Usmonov, 2003, p. 118), which resulted in an escalation of tensions between both sides. Only after the intervention of the President of the Republic of Tajikistan was the IRPT legalized, in which he finally convinced the secularists about the importance of consensus (Rahnamo 2008).

Abdullo Nuri, as head of the Peace and Reconciliation Committee, as well as head of the Islamic opposition, even sent a letter to the UN regarding his concerns over disputes between the representatives of both sides (Sattori, 2007, p. 43). He therefore mentioned that "[w]e need another peace, peace in our thoughts. There are [negotiated] agreements, but intransigence remains in the thoughts" (Sayfullozoda, 2005, p. 171). Indeed, between 1997 and 1999, more than 30 meetings around the term "secular" were conducted between the Islamists and the secularists by the Peace and Reconciliation Committee (Himmatzoda, 2006, p. 9).

The disputes and hard debates between the Tajik Islamists and the secular pro-government intellectuals were also observed during 2000 and 2005 within the framework of the Tajikistan Dialogue Project (TDP) organized by the OCSE[4]. Seifert (2005, p. 22), an observer to these debates, as well as an active organizer of the project (OCSE), clearly mentioned the deep mistrust between Islamists and secularists in the introduction to the book published within the framework of the project in 2005. According to Seifert, "on one side, the Tajik secularists were both sceptical and fearful, once the IRPT came to power, either through winning elections or by some other means, that they would begin to establish a theological state. As a result, the secularists had attempted "to obtain guarantees to prevent such a situation". From the other side, he argues that the Tajik Islamists were not satisfied with the interpretation of secularism made by the secularists. In particular, Seifert mentioned that the Tajik Islamists "claim[ed] that [the] secular side does not hold a sufficiently co-existential understanding of secularism and the secular character of the state, thus preventing Islamists from playing an equal role in state-building processes" (Seifert, 2005, p. 22).

The articles published by representatives of both sides within the framework of the current project also clearly demonstrated that both sides have their own concerns. For example, Sayfullozoda, one of the participants from the Islamist faction, emphasized that the Tajik Islamists really are concerned about their future destiny, especially "that the government may eventually halt their activities under some or other pretext". According to him, the Tajik secularists' interpretation of secularism is close to the Soviet model of "separation" since they express views against the activities of political Islam (Sayfullozoda, 2005, p. 162). This means that, by necessity, both sides signed the peace agreement without any real development for the coexistence of their ideologies. Therefore, the contradictory concepts of both sides led them each to tactically abandoned their classical definitions. From one side, the secularists agreed to allow Islamism to participate in the secular system, and from the other side, the Islamists also agreed to act within the limits of the secular state (Abdullaev, 2010).

5.7.1 The Islamists' Approach to Secularism

Indeed, the IRPT understood that they could not remove the term 'secular' from the constitution, and the IRPT itself "was legalized while secularism remained central to Tajikistan's constitution" (Abdullaev, 2010). The alternative was to again be excluded as anti-constitutional actors. Therefore, the IRPT's leaders were inevitably forced to find ideological

justifications through re-reading the history and doctrines of political Islam in order to show a coexistence between these two contradictory terms, and through such an approach, tried to convince both their supporters, as well as those secularists who were concerned about the return of the Islamists.

The IRPT's leaders, especially Himmatzoda, who is considered a key party strategist, made the most effort to this end in his writings. He tried to demonstrate that Islamic teaching fundamentally does not contradict secularism so long as secularism does not oppose the participation of religious actors in politics (Rahnamo, 2008, p. 99) although involving religious organization into real politics itself contradicts the notion of secularism.

Nevertheless, the Islamists' interpretation of secularism was always different from that of the Tajik state (which was close to true meaning of secularism) and they therefore often criticized the secular policy of the Tajik government, which they claimed was more control-based. The Tajik Islamists have often emphasized that they accept only the form of secularism that tolerates political Islam and guarantees freedom of religion. According to their program, as well as the speeches of their leaders, the current government and some governmental institutions follow what they call the "wrong interpretation of secularism" (IRPT's Program, pp. 4-5; Umed ozodi 2010a); this claim is probably close to the "assertive" form of secularism (see: Chapter 3). The IRPT's leaders, as well as their party program, stress that they are against that form of secularism that violates religious freedom (Kabiri, 2004, p. 283). According to them, the Tajik version of secularism violates religious freedom since it does not allow girls to go to schools and universities in a headscarf, and also forbids praying outside the home (IRPT's Program, pp. 4-5).

According to the Tajik Islamist leaders, there are many contradictions in the current Tajik legislation regarding the inter-relation between religion and the state. For example, Kabiri has clearly mentioned that "the problem is that [the] law On Religion and Religious Organisations stipulates the 'separation of religion from the state' rather than the church (i.e. religious organisations) from the state". Therefore, according to him "it creates terminological and practical difficulties in both the interpretation and understanding of this concept and also in the relations between the state and religion in general. Furthermore, he said that "such a formula contradicts Article 8 of the Constitution". He suggested that "[t]his existing contradiction between the Constitution and the Law On Religion and Religious Organisations should be corrected in favour of the Constitution's interpretation of the issue", since according to Kabiri

and other Islamists, for many secularists "the phrase 'separation of religion from the state' still meant the absolute separation between the state and religion" (Kabiri, 2005, pp. 202-209), a completely unacceptable situation to the Islamists.

Mentioned by other Islamists was that the definition for 'secularism' had been translated mistakenly "from Russian, where it is stated as the 'separation of church and state'". Accordingly, "during the Soviet period, all state documents written in Russian included the concept that [the] 'church is separated from the state'. Why was this translated into the Tajik language as 'the separation of religion from the state'?", and not the separation of mosques from the state (Muhammadnazar, 2005, p. 152). By emphasizing such arguments they wanted to ensure their presence within the system, since they knew that their organization is also religious and that a complete separation of religion from politics would limit their political activities as a political organization. Therefore, they have always emphasized that separation more concretely as mosques from politics or the state. The interesting point is that they have always differentiated themselves from the mosque, even though both are considered to be religious organizations.

5.7.2 Propagating a Passive Model of Secularism

Some of the IRPT's leaders, especially Kabiri, promote a more liberal and Western form of secularism (Heathershaw, 2009, p. 106), which is perhaps closer to what Ahmet Kuru called "passive secularism"; this concept corresponds with their interests, such as freedom of religion and of religious activities. As is known, passive secularism is associated with liberal democracy, where religious people have less limitations in practicing and propagating religion in the public sphere. Passive secularism, unlike the assertive secularism practiced in Turkey and France, is dominant in the United States, which "allows public visibility of religion"[53] (Kuru, 2012) and also tolerates different religious groups. Therefore, the IRPT's leaders have often supported the model of secularism followed in Western Europe, the US, and even Russia, where according to Kabiri enough harmony and collaboration between religion and the state exists (TOlOnews 2013). This suggests that they have realized that they can enjoy the benefits

---

[53] According to Kuru the "secular states … are defined by two criteria : their parliaments and courts are secular [since are not under the control of religion], and they constitutionally declared nationality toward religions." What is interesting is that he does not call "*states with established churches*" such as England and Greece and "*anti-religious states*" such as North-Korea , secular even though in this countries legislature and judiciary are secular (Kuru, 2012).

of such liberal secularism and employ the freedom provided by it in an attempt to de-secularize society (see: Chapter 6 on the Islamization project). Nuri once mentioned that true (here he means 'passive') secularism helps to increase religiosity and is therefore beneficial to the Islamists (Rahnamo, 2008, p. 127).

The IRPT's program clearly states that secularism is not defined as the division of religion from the state, but rather, as cooperation between them (IRPT Program). Likewise, in most of his articles and books, Himmatzoda often mentioned that the state and religion need each other's support and cooperation, and observed that, although the US is a secular state, the US constitution recognizes the role of religion in society. For example, according to Himmatzoda, the US House of Representatives (Congress) has an office in which prayers are held before the start of each meeting. Similarly, he has said that during the adoption of new laws in the US, the opinions of spiritual leaders are sought. Similar to the US custom, Himmatzoda asked rhetorically if the Tajik President should be sworn in with the *Qu'ran*, given this is the holiest book for many Tajiks, and whether this would go against secularism (Himmatzoda, 2006, pp. 58-62). In order to demonstrate the good relationship between state and religion, moreover, he brought many examples from Russia. Specifically, Putin's policy toward religion he considers to be just and true, since Putin has often met with the Orthodox church to talk with clerics; similarly, he has questioned why Tajik politicians, although Muslim, nevertheless distance themselves from religion generally, and from the Islamic *ulema*s or *mullahs* specifically (Himmatzoda, 2006, p. 63).

5.7.3 Controversial Approach toward Secularism

Despite welcoming Western-style secularism, and proposing collaboration between religion and the state, the IRPT's leaders have very often had paradoxical viewpoints regarding the concept of secularism. While they agreed to accept the form of secularism which allows political Islam to participate in the political process, they have often rejected the concept of secularism itself as a Western product. Most Islamist leaders, while they have declared that they accept secularism at least as the 'separation of religious organisations from the state', have extensively and continuously emphasized that secularism is alien to Muslims and Islam. According to them, this concept is a Western concept that appeared in a European historical

context[54] in which the (especially) Catholic Church exercised political power in the past. They think that this concept is not appropriate to the history of Muslims, since Islam from the very beginning was against the separation of religion from the state (Muhammadnazar, 2005, pp. 150-160; Himmatzoda, 2006, p. 63). For example, Sayfullozoda has associated secularism with the Judeo-Christian tradition, which according to him is not familiar to the Muslim tradition, since according to him "there is no institutionalised church in Islam" (Sayfullozoda 2004, p. 162). According to Muhammadnazar, until the fourteenth or fifteenth centuries in Europe the Churches "held significant political power. The heads of these churches called themselves regents of God on Earth and were considered infallible, never making any mistakes". However, he further explained that the difference in Islam is that no one has been declared 'God's regent on Earth', with the exception of the "Prophets, who are considered to be messengers of God". Muhammadnazar further stated that "all orders and instructions of God are clearly and concisely laid down in the Koran, which is sacrosanct", which means, in his view, that, there is no need to implement this principle in the context of Muslim countries (Muhammadnazar, 2005, pp. 152-154).

Himmatzoda, on the other hand, mentioned that both religion and the state were joined in the personality of the prophet of Islam. According to him, rejecting this reality or life of the prophet – who was both leader of the faith and a political leader – means rejecting Islam itself (Himmatzoda, 2001, p. 65). Indeed, his ideas in this case are very radical, since a majority of Muslims, both traditionalists as well as modernists, today prioritize the ethical message of Islam instead of its politics. However, by proposing such an exclusive and monolithic interpretation of Islam, it seems he set some Muslims outside the religion, since according to him, rejecting one aspect of Islam, its politics, means rejecting Islam as a whole.

Himmatzoda even explicitly claimed that, although there are laws to separate religious organizations from the state, in reality, if it were to be explored faithfully, religion serves not only human needs, but also the needs of society and the state. According to him, the division which "exists between religion and the state today in the many countries is artificial", since it is impossible to do this in Islam (Himmatzoda, 2006, pp. 57-58). Himmatzoda has even mentioned that there are many secular laws in Tajikistan in conflict with religious norms, and that he gives priority to the latter. He added that in some territories of the country much secular legislation regarding marriage, divorce, and inheritance do not work since the people try to

---

[54] These are the views of Tajik Islamists toward secularism as a specifically Western phenomanon.

follow religious family law in order to solve their problems. Therefore, he suggested that some religious law be implemented in the constitution (Himmatzoda, 2006, pp. 62-64). Sayfullo Safarov's article, printed as a result of a dialogue between Islamists and secularists, clearly demonstrate that in 2004 the Islamists still made an effort to strengthen their position and improve the position of *shari'a.* He has further stated that "some members of the religious side would like to participate in the structures of political power and entirely usurp this power for the sake of achieving the goal of the Islamization of politics" (Safarov, 2005, p. 195-196).

The IRPT and its leaders have always emphasized that Islam and politics are inseparable (Himmatzoda, 2001, p. 65), and even believe that clerics also have a right to participate in elections even though they agreed to the separation of the mosques from government. Therefore, some Islamist leaders from the radical branch of the IRPT even directly rejected not only the separation of religion from the state, but also the 'concept of [the] separation of religious organizations from the state'. As Sayfullozoda states:

> Today, various people hold that it is religious institutions, and not religion as such, that [are] separated from the state in Tajikistan. While this view may be considered to be a progressive one, we should be aware that in Islam there is no concept of a 'religious institution' as such. This position is an imitation, through ignorance, of the ideas of the West on the subject, and does not bear any relation to the culture, civilisation and history of the Tajik people (2005, p. 162).

Sayfullozoda does not accept the separation of mosques from the state and politics. Many other Islamist leaders have had the same ideas. Muhammadnazar, for example, also criticized the separation of religious organizations from the state in one of his articles, and questioned why the clerics of mosques do not have a right to participate in the political process, to became candidates in elections, or to become members of political parties like other citizens; he further questions why a teacher of the National University and the Islamic University are treated differently, the former having the right to be involved in politics and the latter not (Muhammadnazar 2005, p. 150-152). While they reject one aspect of secularism, being the "separation of church (or religion) and state", they promote other aspects of secularism in their own self-interest, and to ensure the "state maintain[s] a neutral equidistance from different religious within a plural society" (Bilgrami, 2014, p. 10).

Through such positions, it is clear that the Tajik Islamists, especially the older leaders, still have a deep problem with this concept and thus wanted to increase the role of Islam in politics through which they could Islamize secularism. Therefore, it would be better to call their form of secularism, which is very unclear and inconsistent, 'Islamic secularism', similar in form to

'Islamic democracy'. In sum, it should be mentioned that, according to Abdullaev (2010), an "important dilemma of secularism versus Islamism remains unresolved in the long-term" in Tajikistan. Shirin Akiner considers this unresolved dispute between the Islamists and the secularists to be a threat to peace in post-conflict Tajikistan, since in the longer term, according to her, their aims "are diametrically opposed… (T)actical concessions cannot eradicate [the] underlying tensions" (Akiner 2001, p. 66), especially in such situations where the role of religion has dramatically increased in the country. Recently, this dilemma of mistrust and misunderstanding has continued to increase in recent years, the result of the secular state finally having closed down the IRPT in September 2015.

5.8 Conclusion

As the facts and evidence cited in this chapter demonstrates, by the end of the war, and especially after the 1997 peace agreement had been signed, which resulted in its inclusion in the political process, the IRPT gradually abandoned its revolutionary slogans, stopped its radical tactics – such as declaring *jihad* against secular communists – and cut contact with other Islamist militant networks, turning from a militant radical group into a peaceful national political party. Most importantly, they agreed to participate in the secular state on secular terms, and declared both in its program as well as in its electoral platforms that they had adopted democratic principles such as respect for the rule of law, the separation of powers, and the multi-party system.

However, the current chapter also concludes that the IRPT only shows its sympathy toward these democratic procedures due to its interests and calculations in order to convince Tajik secularists that they are already moderate and no longer a threat to the future of the secular state in Tajikistan.

Furthermore, the Tajik Islamists – especially representatives from the 'old guard' or conservative faction – have less sympathy for the core cultural values of democracy, which includes civil rights, individual freedoms, gender equality, and human rights. To be more precise, while they easily adopted democratic procedures as instruments, they have continued to have serious problems internalizing the fundamental democratic values most highly appreciated in pluralistic liberal democratic societies.

Therefore, the current research hesitates to identify the Tajik Islamists as post-Islamist, or Islamo-democratic, by highlighting their generalizable pro-democratic views as many other experts in this field of research have done. Rather, as a result of an extensive examination of controversial speeches, the interviews given by the IRPT's leaders, and party documents, the conclusion is that their moderation is mostly one-sided and behavioral.

In this chapter, it has been demonstrated that Tajik Islamism's model of democracy, and the form of state they have in mind, differs from pluralistic liberal democracy. As already observed, they have adopted democracy as a way and as an instrument, rather than as a commitment to values. However, this chapter's research did not go further in order to understand precisely what kind of model of government the Tajik Islamists wish to build, nor to discover what their model of democracy looks like or what they generally plan to do in future. The next chapter will focus on the above-named issues in order to measure more deeply the moderation of the Tajik Islamists, and thus challenges the IRPT's 'moderation' more deeply.

CHAPTER VI: DEMOCRACY WITHOUT DEMOCRATS[55]: CHALLENGES OF IRPT'S MODERATION WITH FOCUS ON THEIR POSITIONS TOWARD LIBERAL DEMOCRACY

6.1 Introduction

The previous chapter concluded that the Tajik Islamists' moderation is behavioral as well as tactical, since they have had problems adopting basic liberties, human rights, and the rule of law; it is through these values that the Islamists' ideological moderation can be identified. However, at the same time, the previous chapter explicitly highlighted the Tajik Islamists' successes and efforts in internalizing democratic procedures, such as electoral politics, their respect for the rules of the game, and their condemnation of violence – even if only on a tactical level.

Unlike the previous chapter, however, this chapter will try to demonstrate that the Tajik Islamists' moderation is not only behavioural, tactical and one-sided, but that it is also **inconsistent, mistaken** as well as **temporal** and **fragile**. This terminology has been further developed for the purposes of this dissertation.

This chapter attempts to illustrate that the Tajik Islamists not only have problems with secular liberal norms, but with democracy as a whole. In order to prove the above-mentioned hypotheses, this chapter first introduces several relevant facts. The first fact which explicitly illustrates the challenges of the Tajik Islamists' moderation concerns the double-standards and ambiguity of their positions regarding democratic principles and norms. Another important piece of evidence is the Tajik Islamists' misinterpretation of secular democracy, as related to their bottom up Islamization project, which will be discussed in this chapter in order to determine the key questionable points of the Tajik Islamists' alleged moderation.

This chapter also challenges the moderation of the Tajik Islamists through a comprehensive analysis of their ideology with a focus on their attitudes toward the modern conventional political system, as well as their position concerning the future form of the state. The current chapter raises the following questions in order to challenge the IRPT's ideological development: 1) What kind of model of government do the Tajik Islamists want to build?; 2) If

---

[55] The title have been used by some experts. For example, there is a book known as "Democracy without Democrats? The Renewal of Politics in the Muslim World", which edited by Ghassan Salame.

democratic, what does their model of democracy look like?; And, 3) What are their general plans for the future?

6.2 Double Standards and Ambiguity among Tajik Islamists: Inconsistency in Moderation

As already mentioned above, there is sufficient evidence to challenge the ideological moderation of the IRPT. According to the current study, the *ambiguity* as well as *uncertainty* in the positions regarding the core values of democracy is one of the most reasonable problems that makes their moderation less attractive and more questionable. In other words, the Tajik Islamists' *double standards*, particularly their controversial speeches toward democracy as well as toward the future form of the state they have in mind, is one of the main issues that confuses researchers investigating the Islamists' transformation toward moderation.

Indeed, it needs to be mentioned that inconsistencies have often been observed in the positions of the Tajik Islamists in the decades following the peace agreement in Tajikistan. Controversial statements have especially been seen in the speeches, interviews, as well as official documents such as the statements, electoral platforms, and program of the party. (some of them mentioned in chapter five).

For example, from one side, the IRPT's charter as well as electoral platform regarding the future form of government underlines that the IRPT plans to create a free and just society, in which they declared their acceptance and respect of the current secular democratic regime, whereby the legislature, executive and judicial powers are independent and elections are transparent (Najot, 2010, p. 4). Nevertheless, in their speeches and official documents, the Tajik Islamists often announced that they planned to work toward an Islamic society[56], where according to their electoral program no law and action should be adopted or implemented against Islamic norms, and where real Islamic values and norms become the pillar of social and governmental relations (Najot, 2010, p. 4; IRPT Program, p. 3).

Although the IRPT's leaders promised from very beginning that they would not impose their beliefs over others (Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, 1997), their program clearly demonstrates that the IRPT's ideology is not simply for their own party but is rather supposed

---

[56] This study provides more information about the concept of 'Islamic society' later in this chapter.

to be the ideology for the whole of Tajik society; indeed, what they mean by an 'Islamic society' is formulated based on religious norms and laws (Najot, 2010, p. 4).

Furthermore, inconsistencies and controversies have been clearly observed in the speeches and writings of key leaders of the IRPT, such as Abdulloh Nuri and Himmatzoda, in which they have often confused democracy with Islamic teaching and interpreted democracy through their ideological backgrounds. For example, Nuri often emphasized his support for human rights and freedom, but at the same time, prioritizes religious law above secular law (Nuri 2001, p. 3-25), and has given priority to those societies where religious law is implemented (Sattori, 2007, pp. 84-85). Another speech by the IRPT's founder regarding democracy also explicitly indicates the ambiguity of his opinions, where he mentioned that the "IRPT as a religiously-oriented political organization does not reject any democratic principles", but in the same sentence he further added that the party only accepts those principles of democracy that clearly do not contradict Islamic beliefs (Rahnamo 2008, p. 139). However, he did not clarify exactly what democratic principles contradict their interpretation of Islam.

The point which is important to note here is that these ambiguities and inconsistencies have even been observed in the positions of the so-called modernists like Muhiddin Kabiri as well. For example, on the one hand, when he was in Washington, Kabiri explicitly mentioned that the Tajik Islamists "talk about democracy in the future as…the core of [their] strategy", and even argued that "it is not a slogan: [rather] it is a deliberate and calculated tactic and policy of…[the] party" (Kabiri 2012, p. 9). But on the other hand, as observed in the previous chapter, in his speech in Moscow he associated democracy as a mechanism and considered liberal values to be alien for Central Asian Muslims (Kabiri 2015a). Unlike many other Islamists, Kabiri has always talked about the combination of international Western values with religious norms, and often suggested that there be more cooperation between the West and the Muslim world, yet in another of his meetings with some conservative clerics, he unexpectedly made remarks about some kind of 'clash of civilizations' between Islam and the West, and even used the rhetoric of radical Islamists. He stated that "...never [has the] global *kufr* (unbelief in God, referring to the West) been unified in such a way against Islam [as] today" (Faraj 2013). He further argued that the Westerners today "want to weaken Islamic 'identity' and make Muslims without identity" (Faraj 2013). It should be mentioned that the term "unbelief" (adj. *kafir* means 'atheist') "has more shocking and dreadful associations in the mind of…Muslims…than [it] does...for a Western believer", since it denies God's existence – which is the "*only* sin which God cannot forgive, because it refuses Him and His Mercy" (Glasse, 2013, p. 302).

It would appear that almost all of the IRPT's leaders tried to hide their beliefs and agenda, (especially when they present the party to Westerners) because of international and domestic pressures and the suspicions of secularists. It is assumed that the IRPT's leaders, (especially the conservative faction) have practiced *taqiyyah* in order to avoid more pressure. In other words, they do not want their main agenda to be discovered in such a historical situation, which they think is not appropriate for Islamists in the world.

The term *taqiyyah* is an Islamic concept derived from Arabic "(from the root *waqa*, [means] "to safeguard", "self-protection" and hence "dissimulation" [in order to protect oneself]" (Glasse, 2013, p. 520). According to Yerdan, *taqiyyah* is "an Islamic juridical term whose shifting meaning relates to when a Muslim is allowed, under *Shari'a* law, to lie" (Yerdan, 2014, pp. 89-108). However, it should be noted that throughout the history of Islam, *taqiyyah* has mostly been practiced by Shi'a Muslims living under Sunni-dominated regimes in order to avoid persecution (Glasse, 2013, p. 520). The present findings confirm that the IRPT's moderation is deeply unclear, and therefore, the current study labels their moderation as both inconsistent and uneven[57].

Exclusivist Approach of the IRPT: Another critical issue, which seriously challenges the Tajik Islamists' moderation and illustrates the inconsistencies in their positions is the *exclusivist approach* of the IRPT's leaders; this approach is in exact opposition to a pluralistic approach. The Tajik Islamists' exclusivist views, which are mostly observable in their intra-party speeches, is totally in contrast to their public pronouncements in support of pluralism, diversity, and tolerance.

The "term[s] 'exclusivist'…chosen…for its negative connotations" and "'exclusivism' about religious diversity [that] denies any form of pluralism…" are used in this study (Tuggy, n.a). In this study, 'religious exclusivists' are those who do not tolerate others' beliefs, [or] interpretations of belief", and are those who "…believe that there is only one true faith [or interpretation of faith] and only one way to salvation" (Roumeas, n.a p. 11). Unlike religious exclusivism, the theory of religious pluralism promotes religious "plurality and diversity" and assumes that "[t]here is no such thing as one true faith or a unique path to salvation". Pluralistic approaches deeply challenge the "myth of uniqueness" (Roumeas, n.a, p. 12) and promotes the

---

[57] Some experts, such as Wickham, have also used similar phrases such as 'uneven moderation', arguing that "moderation may be uneven across issue areas". For example, she mentioned that "[a] single group may espouse moderate positions on some issues and radical positions on others and may undergo uneven moderation…" (Wickham, 2004, p. 206).

idea of tolerance which is "an outcome of secular 'rationality' and neutrality" (Kazemi, 2010 p. 10).

The Tajik Islamists' leaders have often promoted similar exclusivist ideas, where they have considered their ideology to be the only way to salvation – both in this world as well as the hereafter – and have spread enmity, hatred and intolerance. For example, they have often considered their party a divine organization and linked it to 'God'. In other words, they consider themselves a continuation of prophetic experience in the contemporary world, and through this, have tried to persuade a majority of Muslims to follow their experience. Therefore, they have often declared that service to their party means service to God, and have labeled the IRPT 'God's party' (*hizbi Khudo*), or the 'divine party' (*hizbi illohi*), and indirectly considered themselves to be the purest Muslims.

Generally speaking, by making such arguments, the Tajik Islamists' leaders have tried to privatize 'Islam' and 'Allah', since they claim to have spoken on behalf of "true" Muslims – those who, unlike other Muslims, serve God and favor His teaching. They have tried to show themselves to be purer and truer Muslims than other Muslims in Tajik society, and consider their ideology the only way to salvation. In one of his less analyzed lectures given after the IRPT's inclusion into the political process, Sayid Abdulloh Nuri seriously criticized ordinary conservative Tajik Muslims because they were not actively supportive of what he considered to be God's party. Nuri also clearly stated that the responsibilities of true Muslims does not conclude with prayer and fasting, since to him, service to 'God's party' qualifies as a main test for each Muslim to illustrate his or her faithfulness and loyalty to the religion (Hizbi Nahzati Islom, 2012, Nuri.tj, 2014).

To be more precise, with such messages he wanted to convince all Muslims in Tajikistan that fast and prayer alone are not enough to qualify as faithful Muslims. Referring to these people, the founder of the IRPT argued that "if you do not support Islam and Muslims on the day of the election or on the day of supporting the honor of Islam, it means you follow satanic letters". According to him, many conservative Muslims and clerics in Tajikistan, including those who regularly pray and even teach Islam, have unfortunately supported the Tajik secular parties. He also mentioned that these Muslims have always ignored the party that best represents them (Nuri.tj, 2014).

In his speech, Sayid Abdulloh Nuri further argued that one can check the true faith of Muslims on these days, or in situations such as elections, which leads one to wonder for what or why any one Muslim prays: "for their God or for their own interests"? Referring to those key leaders

of the IRPT who left the party after the civil war, he also said that "they lost the support of God, support of the people of God and the party of God" (Nuri.tj, 2014). He very clearly denominates all Muslims of the country as members of his party even if they are not registered as *members* of the party. It appears to be that he associates the other, more secular ideologies with being alien to Muslims, and therefore equates such ways as ,satanic' (Nuri.tj, 2014).

There are many examples of instances where the IRPT's members and leaders have practically tried to monopolize the mind of Muslims by raising these issues during their electoral campaigns. Therefore, the head of the Shuroi Ulamo, as the highest clerical institution in Tajikistan, once criticized the IRPT's leadership and expressed his concerns during the parliamentary elections. He observed that during the election process, the IRPT's activists attempted to monopolize ordinary Muslim minds with arguments such as: "[I]f somebody strikes out the name of [the] Islamic party [on the electoral ballot], this means they strike out [the] religion of Islam itself" (Faraj, 2015).

It should be noted that such judgments in a Muslim context look very radical, since according to conservative or radical interpretations of Islam, those who have been accused of following Satan and ignoring the teaching of God are no longer considered to be Muslims and will be punished both in this world and the hereafter. Today, many militant Islamic groups, such as the Taliban in Central Asia, ISIS in the Middle East, and Boko Haram in Africa, have utilized similar terminology and presented similarly radical forms of religious exclusivism. These groups mostly kill and persecute other Muslims, even those worshipping in the mosques, since they believe that the only pure and true form of Islam is that which they practice.

On this basis, it can be concluded that the above-mentioned ideas of the IRPT contradict the positions they have often promoted, specifically diversity and respect for pluralism. Such attempts at the monopolization of the population looks a lot like the instrumentalization of religion and the privatization of Islam. Some experts therefore believe that the Islamists' "religionization of politics leaves no room for negotiation", since according to them, they "reject power sharing with secular parties or with non-Muslim minorities" (Tibi, 2012, p. 123).

However, in this case, it seems that Kabiri is the exception, since he has always avoided such terminology and even tried to ignore it. For example, as has been seen, in one of his speeches in 2015, Kabiri clearly mentioned that voting against the IRPT is not the same as voting against Islam, and that such a vote against the IRPT does not mean a Muslim is an unbeliever. Through such messages, firstly he illustrated his position toward particular issues, and secondly, he sent

a message to those members of his party who believe that supporting the IRPT means supporting Islam.

6.3 Democracy or Theocracy: Tajik Islamist's Misuse of "Secular Democratic state": Mistaken Moderation

Another huge obstacle, which makes understanding the Tajik Islamists' positions toward the core democratic values difficult, and further illustrates the inconsistency in their claimed moderation, is that the Tajik Islamists' definition of a secular democratic system is not persuasive.

As already observed in the previous chapter, after the IRPT's inclusion into the political process, the key leaders began to reinterpret the concept of the state in Islam in an attempt to reconcile it with secular democratic forms of the state. Himmatzoda, especially, tried to discuss this topic at more depth in his articles and books (Rahnamo, 2008, p. 103). As a result, almost all of the IRPT's leaders came to the conclusion that Islam is not opposed to the secular or democratic forms of the state. While they did not ignore the concept of 'God's sovereignty', as proposed by Maududi, they nevertheless declared that they recognized 'popular sovereignty', and even argued that the people should identify their future destiny themselves and claimed that their voices and opinions need to be taken into consideration within a democratic system (Kabiri, 2003).

It seems that some of their leaders, including Himmatzoda, saw no contradiction between the concepts of 'God's sovereignty' and 'popular sovereignty'. In order to justify their beliefs, and to show the compatibility between these two concepts, he even mentioned that "no democrats want to reject 'God's sovereignty'", but rather, they simply desired to reject the absolute sovereignty or power of one human over any other human. In other words, according to him, democrats condemned this human superiority over others, but did not reject God's superiority (Himmatzoda, 2018) – an assertion which is not totally correct, since democratic thought itself rejects theocracy, where God's rule is important.

Therefore, he concluded that Islam does not have a problem with the modern understanding of the secular democratic state, where people are recognized as the source of political authority (Himmatzoda, 2001, pp. 20-60). Himmatzoda even criticized those Muslim radicals who rejected democracy as a system of *kufr,* and unlike them, he summarized that the "main

principles and norms of democracy are not against Islam and the teachings of Islam" (Himmatzoda, 2018).

In order to vindicate his arguments, the IRPT leaders, and Himmatzoda in particular, emphasized that in Islam the head of state is similar to the secular state's, since according to their interpretation, the head of state in Islam does not have any divine authority – unlike kings in medieval Europe. According to him, the head of state in Islam is not representative of God, which is what the clerics have traditionally taught and thought, both in the East and the West, to legitimize political authority. He mentioned that the head of state in Islam is a representative of the people, and thus needs to serve the people (Himmatzoda, 2001, p. 45).

As the spiritual leader of the IRPT, Himmadzoda had even directly criticized the concept of 'theocracy'[58] (Himmatzod, 2001, pp. 29, 43-45), and unlike the traditionalists, he has pointed out that early Islamic teaching permits every Muslim to criticize and challenge their rulers, especially if they are unjust or work against divine law. In order to vindicate his arguments, Himmatzoda told the story of the early Muslim ruler or *Caliph*[59] (Ar. *Khalifah*, "successor, substitute") (Glasse, 2013, p. 115), Uthman ibn Affan, who instructed Muslims to obey him only when he himself obeys Allah and his law, but disobey him if he disobeyed Allah (Himmatzoda, 2001, p. 45). Through this story, he tried to prove that rulers in Islam are no different to secular heads of state.

Himmatzoda, as well as other key members of the IRPT, mostly associates the theocratic form of the state to the European medieval period, where and when – according to him – the Church dominated politics in the name of God. Thus, the theocratic state is the form of a political system in which the ruler is considered to be God's representative on Earth, and where the ruler's will is accepted as the will of God. The IRPT's leaders therefore argued that, unlike in medieval Christianity, the Islamic communities had never been governed 'from the Mosque', as the clerics

---

[58] The term *theocracy*, which is derived from the Greek *thoekratia*, itself combined from the two words *theos*, "God" and *kratein* "to rule", means "rule by god". Theocracy is form of government "in which religion or faith plays the dominant role. It denotes thus a political unit governed by a deity or by officials thought to be divinely guided". The current term was for the first time "coined by the Jewish historian Flavius Josephus ((37 CE-C. 100 CE)". By comparison to other forms of government, Flavius Josephus mentioned that "Our legislator [Moses] had no regard to any of these forms, but He ordained our government to be what, by a strained expression, may be termed a theocracy ..." (Zakaria, n.a p. 342).

[59] The word Caliph derives from Arabic, and means "successor", "substitute", "lieutenant", or "viceroy". In the *Qu'ran* (2:30), God called Adam his Caliph, which means "representative of...God on earth". After the death of the Prophet of Islam, the successors of the Prophet also styled themselves Caliph, but "could not, of course, presume to continue the prophetic function" (Glasse, 2013, p. 115). The four early Caliphs, "Abu Bakr, Umar, Uthman and Ali" were known as "*al-khulafa' ar-rashidun*, the "rightly guided" or the "patriarchal Caliphs". After that, the "office became *de facto* hereditary" during the Umayyad, Abbasid and other Islamic Caliphates (Glasse, 2013, p. 115).

never held political authority. Indeed, the IRPT's leaders instead identified the early Islamic rulers or *Caliphs* as humans equal to others, but who were also especially responsible to serve people in accordance with God's law. For instance, Abdullohi Nuri stated that the Prophet was an ordinary Muslim who was simply the ruler at that time, and claimed that during the prophet's life, neither mosques nor any other clerical institution governed (Nuri, 2001, p. 7).

Muhiddin Kabiri, the new leader of the party, has also challenged the traditional concepts of the theocratic or clerical forms of the state, and often mentioned that people themselves must be the source of political authority and have the right to choose their future destiny. In order to substantiate his argument, Kabiri even used verses from the *Qu'ran*, where Allah forbids the prophets from forcing people to accept God's messages (Umed Ozodi, 2010b). Through his arguments, he illustrates that God gives humanity the right to elect and criticize their own rulers.

Unlike the traditionalists who advocate that people must obey their rules since they are representatives of God, the Tajik Islamists promote those *hadiths* of the Prophet that allow people to criticize their rulers, especially when they violate God's law. For example, there is a saying of the Prophet often highlighted by the Tajik Islamists: "Do not obey a creature against his Creator – in other words, do not obey a human command to violate divine law". Another *hadith*, which is supported by Islamists worldwide, observes: "There is no duty of obedience in sin", which means Muslims have the right to ignore their rulers if their rulers do wrong (Lewis, n.J).

It would appear that the Tajik Islamists borrowed these ideas from the early Islamists, such as Maududi, who was one of the key theorists behind political Islam, and often used similar arguments long before in the 1950s. For example, Maududi claimed that within the Islamic democratic system, "Muslims are…entitled to depose the caliph if he fails to implement the commandments of God, fails to protect their life, honor and dignity. Thus, according to him in an Islamic political system there is no place for monarchy or dictatorship" (Farooqui n.J, p. 10).

However, according to the current study, the arguments mentioned above by the Tajik Islamists' leaders to describe the secular democratic system are neither logical nor acceptable. Indeed, it appears that they have misinterpreted the conceptual meaning of the secular democratic state. While they have reconciled some aspects of the secular democratic state, especially those which correspond with their interpretation, they have also systematically ignored other important aspects of this system. Primarily, they associate democracy with electoral politics, but also advocate some elements of liberal democracy, such as freedom of expression. For example, Himmatzoda mentioned that, for him, the main pillar of democracy is that people can elect and

re-elect their rulers, as well as criticize them when they are unjust. Accordingly, such a democracy is not opposed to Islam as Islam itself has promoted and taught it (Himmatzoda, 2018). This means, therefore, that he understood democracy simply as a procedure and mechanism for changing power from one person to another, which is a variant known as 'electoral democracy'. In other words, as already mentioned in chapter 5, their interpretation is closer to procedural democracy than it is to liberal democracy (see chapter five).

Another most important point which needs to be noted is that almost none of the IRPT's leaders had tried to reinterpret religious law when describing the secular democratic system; this is significant because *shari'a* is considered the main source of law in an Islamically-oriented state or theocracy. For instance, Himmatzoda and Nuri have both accepted the people as the source of power, but they do not recognize people as the source of law or as having the right to make law, accepting only the previously mentioned right to criticize the head of state in those cases where rulers worked against religious law (Himmatzoda, 2001, p. 45). In their opinion, religious law is superior to both the ruler and the people, even though many Muslim modernists understand *shari'a* as an ethical system rather than as a legal system (Fuller, pp. 56-57).

Himmatzoda very clearly mentioned that the people's sovereignty and God's sovereignty should not be in contradiction, and argued that any law or system, which is against Islamic *shari'a* is both unacceptable and wrong (Himmatzoda, 2018). Through such argumentation, he effectively rejects secular democratic law and the rights of people to adopt laws independently. In this sense, their ideas and model of democracy are similar to the concept of 'theonomy'[60], since they especially emphasized the rule of God's Law. This means, in practice, that the IRPT has tried to reconcile Islam only with one side of the democratic state, since they have only attempted to challenge the medieval understanding of "leadership" in Islamic history, rather than the ideological doctrine of a religious state as such. Like many mainstream Islamists, they "have offered their own versions of democracy that allow [only] for the election of officials but limit the authority of legislators" (Haqqani, 2012, p. 7). In other words, it should be mentioned that the IRPT's leaders reject only one side of the medieval theocratic form of the state, whereby rulers are considered the representatives *of God* on Earth. It needs to be mentioned that the

---

[60] Late 20th Century and early 21st Century movements in the Church, which aim to apply Old Testament or Mosaic Law, are known as theonomic movements. (Clauson, 2006, p. 3).

theocracy, which is often known as an '*Islamic* state'[61], as advocated by the founders of Islamism, is different from the traditional medieval form of theocracy (Farooqui n.J, pp. 7-9).

In conclusion, it would appear that the Tajik Islamists' concept of the state is very close to the Islamic theocracy advocated by Maududi, sometimes called "theo-democracy". He clearly differentiated the Islamic model of theocracy from the Western form of theocracy, since this model of society "is not ruled by any particular religious class but by the whole community of Muslims", who run the state based on teaching of Islam. He mentioned that, "[i]f I were permitted to coin a new term, I would describe this system of government as 'theo-democracy', that is to say a divine democratic government, because under it the Muslims have been given a limited popular sovereignty under the suzerainty of God" (Maududi, 1980, pp. 139-40).

According to Maududi[62], theo-democracy "is not like '[W]estern democracy' where people are free to legislate without any restriction". Rather, Islamic democracy "firmly believes in the absolute sovereignty of God, wherein the executive comes into existence through election" and "the power of [the] executive shall be within the limits of the law of God and his prophet" (Farooqui n.J, pp. 9-10). The Supreme Law in the form of the state proposed by Maududi is based on the *Qu'ran* and *Sunnah*, and since this "law is unalterable... [and] the 'final authority' neither [can] it be cancelled nor...amended" (Farooqui n.J, pp. 9-10). On this basis, he called this system "theo-democracy because neither the religious classes nor the common Muslim can change or alter the laws of God" (Farooqui n.J, pp. 9-10). According to the current study, it is based on the observations that almost all of the IRPT's leaders, with the exception of Kabiri, have misunderstood democracy and the secular state.

---

[61] The word 'state*'* or 'Islamic state' does not exist in the *Qu'ran* and was never used by the Prophet. Terms such as "ideology", "government" (*davlat*), "revolution" (*inqilob*), and "political party" (*hizbi siyasi*), are modern concepts that have been "rediscovered" by Islamists through a re-reading of the historical texts in the modern context in order to justify their actions. As such, their interpretation of Islam is a modern innovation that has appeared in reaction to the modern world, but mostly in opposition to that modernity.

[62] Generally he used the term 'theocracy' in order to explain Islamic politics. For example, in his lecture in 1948, he mentioned that "[a] more apt name for the Islamic polity would be the 'kingdom of God' which is described in English as a 'theocracy'"" (Haqqani, 2012, p. 9).

6.4 What does 'Islamization' mean to Tajik Islamists? Temporal Moderation

According to the current study, the concept of 'Islamic society' or of an 'Islamization' project, as has been proposed by the IRPT's leaders, is also a contradictory phenomenon that deeply challenges the Tajik Islamists' efforts and commitments in favor of moderation. Although the IRPT did not officially declare such a project, their leaders especially after the end of the war, often used the term 'Islamic society' instead of 'Islamic state' whereby they prioritized the Islamization of society instead of the state. Prior to this, as already seen in previous chapters, during the civil war they mostly concentrated on the Islamization of the state. Rahnamo, the distinguished Tajik expert on political Islam, considers the concept of an 'Islamic society' to be the most important political concept of the IRPT's founder in the new period of the party's history after the civil war (Rahnamo, 2008, p. 131).

Muhiddin Kabiri, the new chairman of the IRPT, has also frequently used the phrases 'Islamic society' instead of 'Islamic state', and 'Islamic values' instead of 'Islamic law'. Therefore, he mentions that there is no need to change the name of the state, since society is already Islamic (culturally not politically), and the people live in accordance to Islamic values (Umed ozod 2010b).

The main questions related to this problematic project, which needed to be asked, are the following: 1) "What does the IRPT mean by 'Islamizing society'?" 2) "What would an 'Islamic society' look like?" 3) "Based on which interpretation of the Islamic religion are they going to Islamize society in order to create such an Islamic society: a) Orthodox; b) Fundamentalist; or, c) Modernist approaches?". Similarly, it needs to be asked: In turn, 4) "What is the end point of a bottom up Islamization project?", and, 5) "Is based on a narrow fundamentalist approach?" Finally, 6) "By 'Islamization', does the IRPT really only want to Islamize society, as officially declared, or do they want to gradually Islamize state legislation as well?" (The latter would be similar to the AKP's agenda of 'creeping Islamization' in Turkey) (Rabasa, A & Larrabee, S, 2008, p. 93).

The first problematic point regarding this controversial project which has been a cause of concern to secularists is that the IRPT's leaders and activists support an ultra-conservative, narrow, and fundamentalist interpretation of religion, whereby religion should have a strong role to play in politics. The writings and speeches of key leaders in the IRPT demonstrate that by "Islam" they mean not only the morality or ethics of the faith, but rather, that of a religion

which covers all aspects of life, including the law and politics (Himmatzoda, 2006, p. 62). This means that, unlike the approach of the modernists, the IRPT planned to Islamize society based on narrowly politicized interpretation of religion.

The point which needs to be mentioned here, is that the Tajik Islamist leaders who often self-identify as moderates also never declared that their aim was the reform of religious norms, as is the case with the Muslim modernists or reformists who tried to reconcile Islam with modernity. Indeed, the Tajik Islamists always followed fundamentalists such as Maududi and Hasan al-Banna as an example, rather than Islamic modernists such as Sayyid Jamāl al-Dīn al-Afghānī, Sir Syed Ahmad Khan, Muhammad Iqbal, Gamal al-Banna, as well as Abdoulkarim Soroush and Mohammad Arkoun, each of whom has made efforts to reform Islamic doctrine over the years.

Only Muhiddin Kabiri, as the new chairman of the party, has sometimes been sympathetic toward the reformation of religious doctrine. For example, he once complimented the secular-orientated Shi'a Isma'ili Muslims, and mentioned that they had successfully integrated into the modern world by reforming their *madhhab*[63]. Therefore, he suggested that Sunni Muslims should employ *ijtihad*[64] (reasoning) in an attempt to reform their religious thinking. However, he immediately faced a lot of criticism, both within his party as well as from outside sources.

Furthermore, the evidence demonstrates that the majority of members, as well as many of the supporters of the IRPT, also support an exclusivist and fundamentalist interpretation of Islam[65]. For example, the territories of the Karategin and Fergana valleys, including the city of Isfara, which are considered the IRPT's social heartlands, have always been considered ultra-conservative segments of Tajik society and very illiberal compared to other parts of the country. Research conducted by Dr. Shozimov in the village of Chorkuh near Isfara, which is a region in which a majority of the residents are supporters of the IRPT, clearly demonstrates that the IRPT members are ultra-conservative Muslims. Therefore, according to Shozimov, the secular-

---

[63] School of thought within Shi'a Islam.

[64] *Ijtihad* is an "Islamic legal term meaning 'independent reasoning', as opposed to *taqlid* (imitation). One of the four sources of Sunni law. Utilized where the *Quran* and Sunnah (the first two sources) are silent" (Oxford Islamic Studies Online).

[65] However, it would be difficult to show the percentage of radically-oriented members of the party, since as of now, no extensive survey has been done among the IRPT's members.

orientated people of the city of Isfara look upon the people of Chorkuh as "radical-orientated Islamists"[66] (Shozimov 2003, p. 187).

There is also evidence which shows that some of the IRPT's members promoted intolerance and hatred toward others, secularists and religious minorities in particular (Safoev, 2014.)[67]. All these arguments demonstrate that the IRPT want to Islamize society based on a narrow conservative interpretation of Islam, which is anti-democratic. This therefore makes the Islamization' project of the IRPT problematic and questionable.

6.4.1 Islamic society or Islamic state?

The second and most important controversial argument of the above-named project concerns their ultimate goal, which is the creation of a *shari'a* state. It is perhaps the case that the IRPT and its leaders would say that their conservative interpretation of religion is only intended for their own people, and that they are never going to impose their belief or ideology over society. There are also some scholars such as Abdullo Rahnamo, who assert that the theory of an 'Islamic society' proposed by the IRPT's leaders is not the same as the form of the state, or system of government. Indeed, according to Rahnamo, the theory of an 'Islamic society' or Islamization project is only about the cultural [Islamic] values and social interaction between people, which is possible to apply within any model of political regime (Rahnamo 2008, p. 128)[68].

---

[66] For example, Shozimov's investigation illustrates that the faces of women in this village are mostly veiled, and many of their girls leave school after their eighth class, which is unusual in other parts of the country. According to that study, the people in Chorkuh are also opposed to music and alcohol at wedding ceremonies (Shozimov 2003, p. 187), even though Kabiri once mentioned in one of his meetings with his supporters in this region that weddings should be held with music.

[67] Additional information provided by the Tajik Government demonstrates the radical views held by some local activists of the IRPT, in which intolerance and hatred toward other religious minorities had been promoted. Saodatsho Adolatov, the head of the IRPT's branch in the Badakhshan region, who studied in Pakistan, was prosecuted due to his promotion of religious enmity and hatred among the people. According to reports by the newspaper *Jumhuriyat*, Saodatshoev labeled those who did not or could not accept the Islamists' project '*shi'a*', used as an insult or as hate speech. Indeed, he used the words '*shizik*' and '*shi'a*' in order to describe these people as bad Muslims, even though the majority of the population in Badakhshan are themselves *Shi'a-Isma'ili*. Governmental sources also mentioned that Saodatsho Adolatov even considers their foods to be *haram*, (Forbidden or proscribed by Islamic law) and claimed that the killing of anyone *of the* Shi'a faith is to be *hallal (Halal* literally mean permissible) (Safoev, 2014.). However, it should be mentioned that the IRPT at large has always had a strategic relationship with Tajikistan's Shia Ismaili Muslims. Unlike the *Salafi* or *Wahabbi* Muslims, the IRPT also maintains a positive relationship with Iran.

[68] In other words, Rahnamo assumes that the IRPT's leaders, by Islamizing society, desire only to promote and propagate Islamic religious values within the framework of a secular democracy. Therefore, he came to the conclusion that the theory of 'Islamic society' proposed by the IRPT's leaders does not go against the modern

However, taking into consideration the Tajik Islamsits' teleological language, the current study concludes that by "Islamizing society" the Tajik Islamists' leaders (especially conservatives) mean 'an Islamic state', and that this is an end-goal they want to achieve gradually. For example, Nuri's criteria and description of an 'Islamic society' in his book, *Islam and Human Rights*, explicitly illustrates that by "Islamic society" he means not only the promotion of Islamic ethics and values within a free and democratic society, but rather, the ultimate aim of his model is a Shari'a-based state where religious law plays a dominant role. Thus, according to Nuri, the 'Islamic society' that is reachable through Islamizing society is a society in which "all people are equal regardless of nation, race, ethnicity, region, gender, language and religion". He also emphasized the importance of the concept of *shura* (the Islamic concept of consultation) in this society. However, although he considered equal rights and freedom to be important in an "Islamic society", at the same time he added that political power in this society should be in the hands of the "ruler who will implement God's laws". In addition, in an Islamic society, they have in mind that the people have equal rights not before secular democratic law but rather before religious law or *Fiqh* (Nuri, 2001, p. 26). He further mentioned that he believes that Tajik society, and humanity as a whole, will understand the reality and will live based on God's instruction (Nuri 2001, p. 8).

These arguments clearly prove that for Nuri the endpoint is an Islamic society in the form of a political system based on religion, especially since he emphasized the role of *Shar'ia* law in the political system, and given his argument that the head of state in an "Islamic society" should implement religious law. Said Abdullah Nuri, in one of his infrequent interviews with RFE/RL in Dushanbe in 1999, more clearly illustrated this gradualist 'Islamization' project, when he mentioned that: "...creating an Islamic state is our dream and our hope. But we understand that it can be achieved only stage by stage and in accordance with the wishes of the people of Tajikistan. We want to build a state that will be within the framework of the constitution" (Eggleston, 1999). Taking into account the above, it is clear that their ultimate aim is an Islamic state that is achievable through a bottom-up transformative approach.

Although Abdullo Nuri did not used the term Islamic state, all criteria mentioned above for their model of an Islamic society demonstrate it. He not only focused only the promotion of religious morality and ethics, but also explicitly emphasized the importance of religious law

---

secular democratic constitution of Tajikistan and the secular form of the state, since he asserts that the Tajik Islamists do not plan to change the political system into an Islamic or theocratic state (Rahnamo, 2008, pp. 127-129).

and politics in the Islamic society he has in mind for the future. Promotion of religious morality and ethics are the first stage in their project to reach their ultimate aim, which in its final stage is the implementation of religious law and politics. Therefore, as seen in the previous chapter, unlike many Muslim modernists[69] IRPT's leaders have considered *Qur'an* as constitution for Muslim[70]. However, it should be mentioned that neither Nuri nor any other leaders of the IRPT have described in detail the future model of Islamic state they have in mind. There are various models of Islamic states, and likewise different interpretations of *Shari'a* among both Muslims in general and Islamists in particular.

It seems, that the Tajik Islamists followed a bottom-up transformative strategy developed by the founder of Islamism. The idea of gradual "Islamization" of society had been developed long before by Banna.[71] He crearly announced that his organization's aim was "the "Islamization" of Egyptian society through an Islamic revolution that would begin with the individual and extend throughout the community". He declared that this process has four stages: "First, to make every individual a true Muslim [based on their interpretation]; second, to develop Muslim families; third, to Islamize the community; and finally, to establish an Islamic state" (Haqqani, 2013, p. 8).

Therefore, the current study identifies their tactics of political maneuver as being an example of **temporal moderation**, since it seems their aim once they gain power is not to preserve a multiculturally diverse society within the framework of secular democracy, but rather, is intended to make all people the same and to implement their interpretation of religion.

In addition, enough evidence has been gathered here to support the argument that the views expressed by the IRPT's other key leaders is demonstrates that their ultimate aim is the creation of a religious state – not by revolution, but by evolution. For example, in his 2003 article,

---

[69] Most Muslim Modernists look to the *Qu'ran* as an ethical code. According to some of them, such as Tibi, the Islamists' interpretation of *Shari'a* is the "invention of [a] tradition", a term he borrowed from Hobsbawm. Therefore, the Muslim modernists believe that Islamic jurisprudence or *fiqh* "is man-made, written by Muslim scholars...based on their best understanding of how the *Qur'an* should be translated into codes of law" (Fuller, 2004, p57). They believe that *fiqh* or jurisprudence and Islam in general is the subject of different interpretations. Therefore, according to them, *Shari'a* is not about the law as such (Tibbi, 2012, pp. 158-161). For example, Sa'id al-'Ashmawi, from Cairo University, mentioned that traditionally, *Shari'a* "refers not to legal rules but rather to the path of Islam consisting of three streams: 1) worship, 2) ethical code, and 3) social intercourse " (Salim, 2008, p. 13). It seems that most Muslim modernists employ the theory of hermeneutics, which is a methodology for interpretation, including the interpretation of law and theology.

[70] It should be mentioned that not all Muslims are focused on the *Qu'ran* as a constitution. The *Qu'ran* itself is also not a book about law, and that the word *shari'a* is also only mentioned once in Quran.

[71] According to Haqqani, "Banna's view of this historical progression is reminiscent of Marx's stages of history" (Haqqani, 2013, p. 8).

Sayfullozoda clearly mentioned that "[t]he representative[s] of political Islam (i.e. the IRPT)…consider themselves [to be the] executors of God's will regarding the political, economic, social and cultural organization of the Earth". He further stated that "[t]hey believe that only Divine law can resolve the totality of social problems". However, at the same time he also said that so long as society is not prepared, they will only act within the limits of the current secular constitution (Sayfullozoda, 2005, p. 174). This means that, so long as the people are not ready, they will not attempt to change political system and will not impose "religious law" over all people, even though they believe that it is only the way to resolve the problems in society. Therefore, Sayfullozoda believes that the amendment of the constitution is the right of the people, and if the people want to choose a new political system (by which he means to a religious state), then they can do it through referenda (Sayfullozoda, 2005, p. 175). In other words, he argues that if a majority of the people were to vote for a religious state, then the people's demand needs to be respected.

In 2012, meanwhile, Davlat Usmon, another conservative leader of the IRPT (even though he was not a member of party at that time) expressed similar arguments: "Our aim is [an] Islamic state, but the decision is in the hand[s] of [the] people. When the people in Tajikistan [are] ready religiously, the constitution will change through referenda. But not [by] force" (Usmon, 2012a). Hence, when a majority of Tajiks become "true Muslims", then democracy should become Islamic. This is exactly the same logic used by many mainstream Islamists in the Middle East. For instance Mohamed Nadi, a young Islamist from Cairo, argued: "Is democracy the voice of the majority? We as Islamists are the majority. Why do they want to impose on us the views of the minorities-the liberals and the secularists?" (Tibbi 2012, p. 133). Therefore, as Tibi has argued, "creeping Islamization", as bottom up policy, "is not democratization. Indeed, in Tibi's view, "Islamist *shari'a* [unlike classical version of Shari'a] is a totalitarian concept rather than an Islamic adoption of democracy" (2012, pp. 110- 121).

6.4.2 Secularists' concern about Islamization of Tajik society

In addition, the Islamists' political opponents, both secular politicians as well as Tajik secular intellectuals, have always been sceptical about the IRPT's moderation. Specifically, they are concerned by their secretive project with regard to the establishment of an Islamic state (Muhabbatov, H 2012; Naukin 2005, pp. 247-48). Some secular atheists, such as Professor Asadullaev, have often even expressed their concerns by asking Islamist leaders about their own personal fortunes under any would-be future Islamic rule (Rahnamo 2008,).

Many secular experts, especially pro-government intellectuals, also believe that the Tajik Islamists are radical, anti-modern, and a threat to the future of the secular Tajik state. According to the secularists, the IRPT is by nature opposed to democracy, human rights, pluralism and secularism, since the Islamists' ideology is incompatible with these modern principles (Nurzoda, 2015, Qudrat, 2011); some, such as Hafiz Boboyorov, even consider the IRPT to be as dangerous as the Taliban and ISIS (Navruzshoh, 2014). Indeed, while officially the IRPT's participatory role was accepted in Tajikistan's domestic politics after 1997, "many [secular] officials [were] much less accepting" of the IRPT, and even equated it with other radical groups. For example, one secular senior police officer told the ICG that they do not see any difference between Hizb ut-Tahrir and the IRPT since according to them both groups "wanted to come to power through war" (ICG 2003, p. 21).

According to Tajikistan's secularists, moreover, the IRPT has employed these modern principles only in order to attract the support of the global community, and to present themselves as moderates; the secularists otherwise think that the Tajik Islamists both hate the secular state as well as Tajikistan's secularists. For example, Nozim Nurzoda, a member of the Academy of Science of the Republic of Tajikistan, in his article in *Jumhuryat*, the governmental newspaper, noted that many secular people in contemporary Tajikistan are under pressure from extremists,most of whom follow the IRPT. Nurzoda further states that, "[the] IRPT has never defended and respected the [secularists'] freedom of expression, but rather, has always blamed and insulted them in meetings conducted by the Tajik Islamists" (Nurzoda, 2015).

Some other independent secular Tajik intellectuals, meanwhile, have also often raised similar problems and confirmed that the IRPT and its members have promoted hatred and intolerance in society. For example, Hafiz Boboyorov, a well-known secular Tajik intellectual and frequent critic of the IRPT, mentioned in his 2014 interview with FRI/RL that the IRPT and its members have always monopolized the minds of a majority of Muslim Tajiks through their politicization of religion. According to Boboyorov, they intolerably attacked freedom of expression in Tajikistan. In his opinion, the IRPT considers itself the representative of all Muslim in the country, which is demonstrably false, and dangerously, the party also uses religion and the pious people for its own interests (Navruzshoh, 2014).

For instance, after some independent Tajik philosophers published a book in 2013, in which only one section of the book concerned God, Boboyorov argued that this made the IRPT, and its members and supporters aggressive. As a result, he said that the Tajik Islamists and their supporters began to insult and humiliate the publisher, which politicized the academic debate.

In his view, the supporters of the IRPT have intolerably promoted hatred toward this group of intellectuals, often labelling them as either "kafir" (unbeliever) or "murtad" (apostate)[72]; according to Islam, apostates need to be punished (Navruzshoh, 2014).

On this basis, it appears to be that the position of almost all of the IRPT's leaders (Kabiri is an exception on many issues) close to Bramburg's 'tactical fundamentalist' classification, since they seek to replace secular law with *shar'ia*, but claim that it should be implemented gradually. They "use [a] reformist version to get allies within regimes and society", and their long-term strategy is to create an ethical state based on God's law (Brumberg, 1997, pp.   24 -25). Thus, according to Tibi, "throughout the world of Islam, conflicts occur not only between authoritarian regimes and Islamist opposition but also between Islamism and liberal democracy" (Tibi, 2012: 107).

In this respect, the current research concludes that moderate political Islam in Tajikistan, as a modern phenomenon, does not have a plan to democratize Islam (except Kabiri on some issues), but instead aims to Islamize democracy in Tajikistan. Therefore, it would be difficult to label the vast majority of Tajik Islamists as neo-Islamists, as argued by Wright, since for Tajik Islamists *shari'a* is not only about values and civilization, but also law and politics (Wright, 2012, p. 9).

6.5 Muhiddin Kabiri: Democrat among Islamists? Fragile Moderation

As already seen in the previous chapters, the rhetoric and behavior of the current chairman of the IRPT, Muhiddin Kabiri, has always been different from the vast majority of the IRPT's more conservative leaders, as well as the IRPT's members and supporters. Without doubt, he is the only Islamist in Tajikistan who is widely known among Westerners, where he is known for his pro-democratic views and always trying to encourage other Tajik Islamists toward moderation and reform. Regardless of his controversial speeches and interviews, which have already been observed, Kabiri is also the only person among the Tajik Islamists who has sincerely attempted to change the outlook of the Islamists. It would appear to be the case that, unlike other Islamists, he has less interest in the total dominaton of religion and religious law over politics in Tajikistan. Therefore, some of the more conservative leaders of the IRPT, such

---

[72] The punishment for *murtad* (or apostasy) is death. An apostate (or *murtad*) is any person born a Muslim who later rejects Islam. However, modernist Muslims have re-interpreted this aspect of *Shari'a* law, and today believe that no one has to be punished because they reject religion. They prioritize the *Qu'ranic* verse where Allah commands that "there is no compulsion in religion" (2:256).

as Mirzomuhammadii Navid, since he believes that the core the IRPT´s ideology its not changeable (Roziq, 2013, pp. 184-185).

The point which is important to note here is that Kabiri has been the only Islamist who had highlighted the importance of a "modernization of religious thinking", especially for the Islamist side. For example, in one of his articles in the early years after the peace agreement, he very clearly emphasized that "religious thinking has to correspond to the requirements of the times and of society", since according to him "life goes on and religion should keep step with the times". It appears to be that he even agrees with those Tajik secularists who thought that "representatives [from the] Islamic side [are] not developed enough and hence, [do] not meet the requirements of modern society". However, he believes that all of Tajik society should be engaged with this problem. According to Kabiri, "[r]eligious thinking cannot be modernized separately if society does not [go] in the same direction". Taking into account the dominant role of Islam in Tajik culture, he even stated that "there will be no development in other fields as long as religious thinking lags behind" (Kabiri, 2005, p. 208-209).

Furthermore, unlike most of the IRPT's leaders, Kabiri has never officially emphasized the implementation of Islamic law, and has never prioritized Islamic regimes such as Saudia Arabia and Iran in comparison to the Western democracies. By contrast, he has instead talked about the successes of Western countries by comparison to Muslim societies (PAYOM tv, 2018). Unlike most Tajik Islamist leaders, Kabiri has always avoided the word *shari'a*, and made efforts to associate Islam with a system of ethics and morality, instead of as law and politics[73]. By including some religious principles, as seen in the previous chapter, it seems that he only wants to introduce some symbolic aspects of family law from the Islamic tradition rather than a strict implementation of *shari'a* law. One example that supports this conclusion is that he has suggested that Islamic marriage practices be introduced alongside secular marriage. Therefore, the current study asserts that his position is closer to Wright's called "neo-Islamist", since he has always tried to fuse democracy with Islam.

In addition, unlike most of the IRPT's previous leaders, Kabiri is widely known for his unconventional propositions and statements. Over the last decades, he has advocated several

---

[73] However, Islamic ethics can easily become state legislation, especially if religion is politicized in the event that the Islamists come to power. For example, in Saudi Arabia and Iran, there are ethical police whose responsibility it is to observe and maintain religious ethics, and who often persecute women who do not wear so-called '*good hijabs*'. By politicizing religious ethics, it is possible to control every sphere of life by law, including for cinema, art, medicine, school, and so on. But if Kabiri genuinely believes that Islam concerns ethics and morality, rather than law and politics, then his interpretation of religion would create fewer problems. As Tibi observed, "there would be no contradiction, and hence no delusion, if Islamism were rooted in Islamic ethics, which, if combined with religious reforms, actually could make Islam compatible with democracy" (Tibi, 2012, p. 105).

concepts and models where he has tried to reduce the role of religion in politics. He has, moreover, declared that the model of society for the future of the region needs to be created based on *"religious, national and international values and norms"* (IRPT Program). Alongside religious values, he added cultural, national, as well as international, values for building the future of society in Tajikistan. Another of Kabiri's unconventional statements, which creates more disputes within his party as well as outside it, is that he proclaimed that nobody on Earth has the right to govern in the name of God, not even Prophets [Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, 2009c]. Through such statements, in fact, it seems that he sent messages to other Islamists to the effect that they cannot implement religious law in the name of God over the people on Earth, and even challenges the classical Islamist interpretation that attempts to implement divine law in the name of God.

For such reasons, according to Qayumzod (2011), many observers consider Muhiddin Kabiri to only be a reformist among the majority of radical and backward mullahs with their "highly conservative preferences and conspiratorial political thinking" (Heathershaw, J and David W, 2014, p. 10). Rahmatkarimi Davlat, one of the more well-known Tajik journalists, even stated that "if we remove Kabiri out of the IRPT, there will remain only conservative [and] backward *mullahs* (clerics) with their beards and *jelaks*"[74] (Davlat, 2011). He has also been identified by some secularists as a "swing ticket in [a] raincoat of radicals" (Asadulloev, 2009, p. 27). There are also some Islamist leaders, such as Navid, who believe that Kabiri is less loyal to the core ideological values of the party (Milod, 2011). It is therefore the conclusion of this study that the IRPT's moderation, alongside being temporal and uneven, is also *individual.*

However, in spite of all of the positive arguments mentioned above, Kabiri's efforts at ideological moderation are also not persuasive. The first problem is that the concepts and models suggested by Kabiri are more or less slogans, while his concepts are very general and unclear. For example, Kabiri has never explained in detail how he wants to combine these three completely different value systems (religious, national and international norms). In addition, he did not explain the ways in which he wishes to generate a 'just society' that is based on religious, national and international norms and values.

On the other hand, while he has also declared that "nobody has a right to govern in the name of God", he has similarly never challenged Islamic law – viewed by Islamists as divine – and the law that needs to be implemented in the name of God on Earth. Likewise, no serious efforts to

---

[74] A *jelak* is traditional mens clothing mostly worn by clerics and older men.

reform religious law in favor of the moderation or modernization of the IRPT's ideology were made. In other words, he has made suggestions for reform, but taken no practical steps to achieve it (Kabiri, 2005, p. 208-209). Indeed, it is clear that Kabiri does not have any interest in the implementation of controversial religious laws, such as stoning, but at the same time, he has never condemned these principles, or tried to re-interpret these laws through the use of *ijtihad*, by comparison to other Muslim reformists. Ideologically, he has neither challenged the old *shari'a* understanding, nor introduced any new interpretations. This means he has kept the door open for the implementation of *shari'a* law for the future leaders of the IRPT, which can only lead to the conclusion that his moderation is fragile.

Another problematic issue that challenges Muhiddin Kabiri's approach is his position on the extension and future role of Islamic norms in politics. The first problematic point that is important to know regarding this issue is that he did not explain in detail to which extent he wants to include religious norms and principles in the political system. For example, in one of his interviews, he mentioned that religion should play more of a role in some spheres, such as education and culture, but should not be active in the bureaucratic institutions of the state, or with economic problems. That is, while he mentions the spheres Islam should play a role in, he has not described the specific ways in which religion should play a role in the education system.

As we know from the experience of currently existing Islamic regimes, such as Iran and Saudi Arabia, religion as an ideology may have different effects in each sphere. For example, under the influence of religion, the Islamists could deny the study of philosophy as an anti-religious course in universities, or they could introduce the *hijab* for students and schoolchildren, forbid music, and even Islamize cinema, among other things. In other words, the Islamist ideology could penetrate into each and every sphere of life once they achieve absolute power. Kabiri's general declarations are, as a result, neither helpful nor persuasive.

This reveals another fact that demonstrates the lack of any concrete model of government for the future of Tajikistan, from the Tajik Islamists in general, and Kabiri in particular. Indeed, Muhiddin Kabiri himself has acknowledged the fact that they still have not developed their own model. In one of his 2012 lectures with Russian intellectuals, Kabiri mentioned that they are now looking for an appropriate model by learning from examples in other Muslim countries, with the Indonesian, Malaysian and Turkish models considered important. He even emphasized the Iranian model's importance, especially in regards to their experience with the separation of powers (Kabiri, 2015a). However, he stated that they would not copy any of the models, but rather, create a new Tajik model appropriate to the reality of Tajik society. Kabiri's preferred

model, would stand somewhere between the Taliban and Turkish models, since he considered both models extreme. The Taliban model he considered too radical, and the Turkish model too liberal, and therefore declared that Central Asia needs a 'golden middle' (Kabiri, 2015a). Based on these observations, if Kabiri could see the future of the political spectrum, of a society that had become more conservative, he would probably propose a more conservative platform. But if the secular segment of Tajikistan's society remains strong, he would probably maintain the status quo. In his lecture, he mentioned that the IRPT should be realistic and take into consideration the reality of the region. These arguments show that he is a pragmatic politician and will change his ideas based on his strategic calculation and pursuit of the votes.

On this basis, it is possible to conclude that the democratic opening of free and fair elections in increasingly conservative societies would not lead the Tajik Islamists toward moderation, but toward the right wing, which would make them more *shar'ia*-oriented, since a more conservative society would want an increased role for religion in politics that the Islamists would then be able to justifiably follow. In other words, if Tajik society became as conservative as Afghanistan and Pakistan, then the democratization process likely would not lead to liberal democracy, but rather, toward illiberal democracy. This prediction is very similar to the conclusion of Hamid, since as already mentioned in the theoretical chapter, Hamid came to the conclusion that political openings and democratization have led Arab Middle Eastern Islamists more toward the right wing (see: Chapter two).

6.6 Conclusion

As can be seen, the current chapter has provided evidence through which the Tajik Islamists' commitment to democracy can be seriously challenged. Indeed, this chapter has comprehensively analyzed the Tajik Islamists' speeches, interviews, and articles (as well as official documents, such as their statements, electoral platforms and programs), in order to show the challenges and problems regarding their position toward liberal democratic principles.

Generally speaking, unlike in the previous chapter, this chapter concludes that the IRPT's moderation is not only one-sided and tactical, but is rather inconsistent, mistaken, temporal, in addition to being both fragile and individual. As has been seen, the current chapter explicitly demonstrates that the IRPT not only has problems adopting some aspects of the liberal democratic system, but also has difficulties with the whole democratic project in general. Indeed, the Tajik Islamists' have often misused and misinterpreted it. As already observed, the

Tajik Islamists' leaders have advocated their own interpretation of democratic government, which is closer to a theocracy than to modern liberal democracy. According to them, democracy is a means through which they can implement what Tibi calls their own '*shari'atization*' project (Tibi, 2012).

As demonstrated throughout this chapter, the double-standards and ambiguity in the positions of the Tajik Islamists were a clear example with which the IRPT's inconsistent and uneven moderation could be proven; indeed, the more reliable sources of evidence shows the contradictory statements of the Tajik Islamists regarding democracy and other modern liberal principles. For example, while the IRPT's leaders have often supported democracy and its values, at the same time, they have rarely proposed controversial ideas which have made their commitment to democracy persuasive.

The Islamization project, which aims for an 'Islamic society' instead of an Islamic state and was proposed after the peace reconciliation by the Tajik Islamists, is also a problematic model that makes the IRPT's moderation questionable. It would appear that by 'Islamic society' the Tajik Islamists understand a process through which they can prepare society for the establishment of an Islamic state, since the evidence and facts in this chapter demonstrate that the vast majority of the Tajik Islamist leaders think religious rules and laws should have a key role in society. To be more precise, it should be mentioned that the end point for their model of an 'Islamic society' is a religiously-based state that is gradually achieved through a bottom-up approach. Thus, this study labels their moderation *temporal*.

However, the current chapter, despite all criticisms, at the same time came to the conclusion that there are some individuals among the Tajik Islamists, especially Muhiddin Kabiri, whose ideas are relatively moderate by comparison to those of the majority of conservative leaders and their supporters. To be precise, Muhiddin Kabiri has always tried to rejuvenate religious thinking through his efforts; indeed, the current chapter demonstrated that Kabiri was almost always alone among those who have had an interest in reformation. Therefore, the current study concludes that the IRPT's moderation is also *individual*.

As can be seen, this study has attempted to explore the extent of the IRPT's moderation, and has confirmed that the IRPT's moderation is, indeed, tactical, interest-based, one-sided, selective, and behavioral. Furthermore, as already seen, the IRPT's moderation has also been demonstrated to be inconsistent and uneven, as well as temporal and fragile. In the next chapter, this dissertation will try to identify what the main factors are behind the tactical or temporal

moderation of the IRPT with a focus on moderation theory and the inclusion-moderation hypothesis.

CHAPTER VII: FACTORS BEHIND MODERATION OF POLITICAL ISLAM IN TAJIKISTAN WITH THE FOCUS ON INCLUSION-MODERATION HYPOTHESIS

7.1 Introduction

In this chapter, an effort is made to test the validity of moderation theory, and/or the inclusion-moderation hypothesis, in the case political Islam in Tajikistan in order to determine to which extent political inclusion and institutional constraints within the logic of participation in the political process have had an impact in changing the behavior of the Tajik Islamists. In other words, this dissertation has examined the main factors and mechanisms that created incentives for the behavioral moderation of the Tajik Islamists within the logic of their political participation since 1997. However, prior to this, this chapter also illustrated the impact of inclusion and exclusion over the IRPT's history since the early 1990s.

These observations raise to questions that form the focus of the remainder of this chapter: 1) What are the main causal mechanisms or factors which encouraged the IRPT to move toward moderation[75] as a result of their inclusion and political participation in the last fifteen years since the 1997 peace agreement was signed?; and, 2) What approaches mentioned in the theoretical debate best explain the processes of tactical moderation by the IRPT: Strategic adaptation or value transformation?

7.2 Testing Inclusion-moderation Hypothesis in the Case of Tajik Islamists

Generally speaking, over the last two decades (1990 until 2015) the historical trajectory of political Islam in Tajikistan has demonstrated that the inclusion-moderation as well as exclusion-radicalization hypotheses are relatively applicable in the case of the Tajik Islamists, since either the positive or negative development of the IRPT has occurred based on the inclusion-moderation and exclusion-radicalization logics. In other words, insofar as the Tajik Islamists have been allowed 'to play the game', the less they have had an interest in their radical agendas and have thereby followed the 'rules of the game'. When the Tajik Islamists have been

---

[75] Moderation which has been called tactical, behavioral one-sided and fragile.

excluded from political process, on the other hands, they have turned to their radical revolutionary tactics and the use of violence.

For example, after the collapse of the Soviet Union and the independence of the Central Asian republics that followed, the Tajik Islamists founded their political party and began to participate in the political process in 1991. After their inclusion into this political process, they strategically calculated that they could benefit from the opportunities given to them by the regime. Prior to this, during the Soviet period, as observed in chapter 4, they had almost no possibility to propagate their ideas freely or to participate in the political process legally.

As a result of the political opening provided by the communist regime in the early 1990s, they actively participated in public debates as well as in both local and national parliamentary and presidential elections. The nature of political contestation encouraged them to accept the rules of the game and utilize the situation for their interest in an attempt to gradually establish an Islamic state[76]. Taking into consideration their experiences under the strict Soviet authoritarian regime, the Tajik Islamists realized that the democratization process would be to their benefit, since democracy could enable them to come to power peacefully and give them more opportunities to successfully propagate their ideology. Therefore, they have often emphasized the importance of democratization in Central Asia as positive examples and considered themselves the promoters of Islamic democracy (For more information see: Chapter 4), even though this was only a tactical maneuver, and while they have their own understanding of "democracy" that is not compatible with democracy itself (See: Chapters 5 and 6).

Furthermore, as has already been shown in chapter 4, having common interests and a common enemy united the Tajik Islamists with other opposition parties and movements under the same umbrella[77]. According to the inclusion-moderation hypothesis, inclusion provides appropriate opportunities for different political groups to cooperate with each other (See: Chapter two). In other words, having a common enemy encouraged the Tajik Islamists to collaborate with secular democrats and nationalists alike. In particular, the Tajik Islamists forged a coalition with secular-nationalist groups in order to compete against the ruling party, the secular

---

[76] Game theory is appropriate for explaining the behavior of the Tajik Islamists, as mentioned above

[77] As seen in Chapter 4, the Tajik Islamists have always had coalitions – and cooperated with – secular movements, parties and individuals, both before the civil war and afterwards. This has even included secular movements and parties such as the nationalists and democrats in exile, as well as the so-called Tajik Opposition Union. Some experts, such as Abdullo Rahnamo, believe that the Tajik Islamists were influenced by the nationalists and democrats, even in the absence of a political opening or a framework for political participation. According to him, as a result of cooperation with the nationalists and democrats, the Islamists became more nationalistic and democratic on the one hand and on the other hand, the democrats and nationalists became more Islamic or religious (Rahnamo, 2008).

communists. It was inclusion that created "incentives for various [Tajik] groups to cooperate with each other, even if only at a tactical level" (Schwedler, 2013, p. 6) in Tajikistan at that time. Therefore, despite their ideological differences, in the first presidential election following the Soviet Union' disintegration, the Tajik Islamists supported the candidate of the Democratic Party, Dawlat Khudonazarov, based on shared objectives, who was secular, and unlike the Islamists, was a Shia Ismaili Muslim (see Chapter 4).

Prior to this, as a non-political and puritanical movement, the Tajik Islamists never had the opportunity or interest to interact and cooperate with other secular groups. As mentioned already in the historical chapter, they did not even tolerate the orthodox clergy (known as traditionalists) in the late 1980s, and intolerantly criticized the positions of the clerics in the early years of the political opening. It was the impact of *inclusion* that encouraged them to, at the very least, be tactically relatively moderate, since they understood that confrontation with all religious and non-religious groups would weaken their popularity, credibility, and electoral viability. Therefore, alongside the secular nationalists and democrats, they went into coalition with the head of the clergy in Tajikistan, Haji Akbar Turajonzoda[78], who was very influential both politically and religiously.

In summary, it should be mentioned that the moderation of the Tajik Islamists at that time was likely based on what Wickham calls strategic calculation or cost-benefit rationale: (See: Chapter two) They have used intellectuals and the secular opposition in order to better mobilize people, and they furthermore knew that being under the same umbrella as the secular democratic opposition made them more democratic in the eyes of Westerners.

7.3 Exclusion of the Tajik Islamists and the Beginning of Radicalization

Later, the Tajik Islamists joined the coalition government and due to their dominant role in internal politics, as well as due to the weaknesses of state institutions in Tajikistan, the risk that the Islamists might monopolize power was high. Due to their strategic concerns, regional powers such as Uzbekistan and Russian helped the anti-Islamist forces to exclude the Islamists from power. This exclusion really pushed them more toward radicalization, which as a result, led to civil war (see: Chapter 4).

---

[78] Later during Civil war Turajonzoda became one of the key leader of Islamic opposition.

During the civil war the Tajik Islamist leaders were dramatically influenced by Islamist groups located in other Islamic countries, especially Afghanistan and Pakistan. Therefore, they became tactically as well as ideologically very radical. This period of history of the Tajik Islamists, supports the exclusion-radicalization hypothesis and demonstrated that exclusion creates more radicalization and less moderation.

It seems that exactly as occurred with the An-Nahda Party in Tunisia, the IRPT at that time was excluded – not only by the pro-communist regime, but also by a majority of the people in the north, north-eastern and central parts of Tajikistan, particularly among secularly-orientated urban citizens. This was a fact which some leaders of the Islamic opposition also knew.

7.4 Re-inclusion of Tajik Islamists since Peace Reconciliation

After the peace agreement in 1997, as already shown in Chapter 5, the Tajik Islamists again became a legal party and gradually abandoned their radical positions. First and foremost, the Tajik Islamists strategically calculated that regional as well as global conditions did not suit a continuation of the war in Tajikistan, especially after the rise of the Taliban in Afghanistan.

Therefore, most experts underlined the foreign factors influential to the peace process and the de-radicalization of Islamists. They highlighted the impact of regional actors, like Iran and Russia, in bringing peace to Tajikistan and de-radicalizing the Tajik Islamists. For example, Kamol Abdullaev wrote that the "Talibanization and Pashtunization of Afghanistan pushed [the] Tajik sides to the reconciliation" (Abdullaev, 2014, p. 11). Therefore, according to him, the inclusion of the Tajik Islamists "was induced, forced from outside" (Abdullaev 2010). The IRPT also knew that regional as well as global powers such as China and Russia were not interested in the empowerment of the Islamists and could never allow the Islamists to monopolize power in Tajikistan. For example, Davlat Usmon, one of the key leaders of the Tajik Islamists, mentioned in one of his interviews that they realized that regional powers would not allow them to govern, even if they won. He said that they came to the conclusion that, if they did come to power through revolutionary tactics, they would face sanctions from both Russia and (Usmon, 2012b) China.

Alongside these foreign factors, the Tajik Islamists also came to the conclusion that due to their 'organizational constraints' and their 'lack of resources' (the causal mechanism mentioned by Robert. See: Chapter two), they were unable to fully capture political power and implement their revolutionary ideas through the use of violence. Taking their own experience into

consideration, they therefore realized that by comparison to war, it would be easier to reach their ideological goals through the ballot box. Politically they also learned from the war in Afghanistan that security, and the national interest of the Tajiks, was more important than any transnational Islamic ideology which threatened the young Tajik state (Usmon, 2012b). In one of his interviews, one of the key IRPT leaders, Davlat Usmon, mentioned that when they went to Afghanistan they clearly observed that state-building is not easy work. He said that they saw that even other Islamic groups could not stabilize the country because of its complexities. Therefore, he claimed, "we change[d] our strategy", as they realized that it was only through the peace process that they could preserve the Tajik nation-state and its structure (Usmon, 2012b).

The IRPT's key high-ranking leaders also often mentioned that they learned the importance of national unity from the intra-Afghani conflicts. Therefore, they inevitably modified their radical tactics and agreed to join the secular regime, as well as to accept its legitimacy, even though they maintained their deep ideological problems with the secularists (Usmon, 2012b). Therefore, Kamol Abdullaev mentioned that the Tajik Islamists agreed to sign the peace agreement and, unlike the Uzbek Islamists, also "rejected a pro-Taliban course [of action] in favor of Tajik nationalism" (Abdullaev, 2010). These factors lead to the conclusion that both *domestic* as well as *international structural constraints* (Omar, 2007, p. 12) were the main reasons behind the de-radicalization of the Tajik Islamists at first, the result of which was that they were inevitably forced to condemn violence and join the political process.

7.5 Behavioral Moderation of Tajik Islamists since 2000: Main Factors and Mechanisms

According to the current study, there are several institutional constraints as well as political opportunity structures within the logic of political participation, which have had a direct impact on the IRPT's tactical moderation between 2000 and 2015. More concretely: a) electoral pressure; b) constitutional or legal constraints, including pressure from civil society; and, c) (the threat of) state repression; are the decisive factors or the main set of causal mechanisms, which have had an influential impact on the changing behavior of the IRPT. As can be seen in the following section, these causal mechanisms belong to the strategic adaptation approach. In other words, the current study asserts that the Islamists' moderation in Tajikistan mostly occurred as a result of the institutional constraints of the limited political opening provided by

the semi-democratic and semi-authoritarian regime. As seen in previous chapters, the IRPT's moderation was identified as tactical, behavioral, one-sided and selective, as well as uneven, temporal and fragile; in other words, there are reasons to doubt the ideological moderation of the IRPT.

7.5.1 Impact of Electoral Dynamics on Behavioral Moderation of Tajik Islamists

Diverse political constraints, especially the electoral pressures discussed in the inclusion-moderation hypothesis, have had an influential impact on the behavior of the IRPT over the years, primarily between 2005 and 2010. In other words, the 'pursuit for votes' emphasized by Robert as a causal mechanism contributed to the behaviors of the Tajik Islamists since the Tajik Islamists were deeply interested in increasing their votes in the post-civil war period.

In this respect, it should be mentioned that after the IRPT's legalization in 1999, the Tajik Islamists realized that their party "subsequently lost significant support" among the people, mostly because of their negative role in the intra-Tajik conflict (Seifert, 2005, pp. 20-26). As the ICG (2003, pp. 13-21) concluded, "many people, rightly or wrongly considered the IRPT the fomenters of the civil war" and "whether religious or not [had] little interest in political Islam".

The results of a survey from 1999 explicitly showed that only 6 percent of the interviewees in Tajikistan supported the IRPT's chairman (Nuri), while just 0.6 percent preferred the second key leader of the IRPT, Himmatzoda. Although these statistics illustrate that 27 percent of respondents agreed to the participation of Islamic actors in government, very few believe in the IRPT as a political party. In the early years after the war the IRPT even lost their limited social base among their traditional voters in the most conservative areas, such as the Karategin and Tavildara valleys (Seifert, 2005, p. 24). In this regard, Ahmad Rashid observed that: "As I travelled through the Karategin and Tavildara valleys in the spring of 2001, interviewing villagers and local clan leaders who had once been the main support base for the IRPT, it was apparent that the IRPT's influence and even 'Islamicization' of the civil war years had declined dramatically" (Rashid, 1991, p. 112). Moreover, many of the IRPT radical warlords, and those who did not agree to the signing of the peace agreement, as well as their supporters, either joined the IMU or Hizb ut-Tahrir.

The IRPT's leaders recognized after the war that the IRPT had "far fewer members than in the early 1990s", since 2004, the IRPT only had three thousand members including supporters, whereas in 1990 their membership were about 20,000. In other words, "[v]ery little remains of the interest and support of [political] Islam which had been shown by hundreds of thousands of persons marching for the IRPT on the streets during the transition years" (Seifert, 2005, p. 21). Especially after the first parliamentary election, the Tajik Islamists "realized that a military-driven political Islam did not benefit, but rather harmed their cause and social prestige" (Seifert, 2005, p. 21). In other words, after coming down from the mountains into the cities and participating in the political process, the Tajik Islamists faced new realities and understood that they could not attract the votes of people through weapons or radical slogans.

With regard to the above, using poll data provided by the SHARQ (ORIENS) Research Center in Dushanbe, key local experts such as Saodat Olimova also argued that the limited popularity of the IRPT is further decreasing (Olimova, 2003, pp. 29-30). According to this data, from February 2001 only 4.7 percent of adults, and only 2.4 percent in December 2002, mentioned that they would have voted for the IRPT – these figures are considerably lower than for even the Communist and People's Democratic parties. For example, in December 2002 approximately 27 percent of people said they would have voted for the Communists (Olimova, 2003, pp. 29-30).

Moreover, the statistics provided by the SHARQ (ORIENS) Research Center also illustrated that the majority of those who supported the IRPT are men (three times more than women), and that the IRPT is much less popular among the youth in Tajikistan. Indeed, 39.4 percent of interviewees were categorically opposed to the IRPT and would have not voted for this party in the upcoming parliamentary election (Olimova, 2003, pp. 29-30).

Furthermore, both the presidential and parliamentary elections in 1999 and 2000 clearly demonstrated that the Tajik Islamists' social base became very poor; as a result, their electoral viability is under threat, even though both the OSCE's Office for Democratic Institutions and the IRPT have often criticized the government and described elections in Tajikistan as neither free nor fair. In the first presidential election after the war, the incumbent President of Tajikistan, Emomali Rahmonov (now Emomali Rahmon), was extensively supported by the people of Tajikistan as the primary figure who had strongly influenced bringing peace to Tajikistan. He received about 97 percent of the vote, while the representative of the IRPT, Davlat Usmon, received only 2 percent (Freedom House, 2009). Furthermore, in the first parliamentary election after signing the peace agreement, the People's Democratic Party of

Emomali Rahmonov received 65 percent of the votes while the IRPT received only 7 percent of the votes. Even the Communist Party received more votes than the Islamists (about 20 percent) (Freedom House, 2001).

Taking the above into consideration, the Tajik Islamists had themselves realized that the radical revolutionary slogans that pushed Tajikistan into conflict would no longer attract the attention of Tajiks due to the war weariness of a majority of the people. They understood that, due to their role in the civil war, as well as their radical religious rhetoric, many voters, including conservative non-Islamist Tajiks, prefer to keep their distance from the party. The IRPT's leaders, in particular, also clearly realized that a significant part of Tajik society does not support their *shariatization* policy, including a majority of voters from the two most overpopulated regions, Sugd and Khatlon, which mostly supported the secular pro-communist regime during the civil war. According to Seifert, after the early elections in 1999 and 2000, the "IRPT and other leading Islamists agreed not to question [in such strict forms] the secular character of the state" (Seifert, 2005, p. 21), since they realized that a majority of the population – regardless of their party affiliation – are more secularly-oriented Muslims.

Abdullo Rahnamo, mentioned in his 2008 book, *Religious Party and Secular State*, that although 99 percent of the Tajik population are Muslim, for a variety of reasons, most do not have an obviously religious outlook. Therefore, according to him, the IRPT could not attract the attention of most segments of society if they continued to express their more radical ideas in support of the establishment of an Islamic state (Rahnamo, 2008, p. 122).

Indeed, the Tajik Islamists understood that it is impossible to reach their ideological goals in the near future. Therefore, similar to other mainstream Islamists in the Middle East who enjoyed a limited political opening during the late 1980s and early 1990s, they "largely stayed away from partisan politics, instead choosing to build local networks…and spreading their [soft moderate] message to [a] public that, at first, knew little about them" (Hamid, 2014, p. 86). The IRPT have moved toward the center and have tried to utilize soft language in order to attract larger segments of Tajik society. Such a tactical change has been a familiar process for all revolutionaries parties in history. For example, socialist parties in the past also "did not command [a] numerical majority, [therefore] they needed to reach out beyond their natural constituency of wage earners and workers and move to the 'center', where the median voter could be found (Hamid, 2014, p. 41)."

The less ideological and more moderate speeches of Saïd Abdullah Nuri in the early years after the peace agreement, especially in his speeches to broader society, were to some extent in favor

of pursuing votes. For example, by removing doubts and showing the people that they would no longer prioritize their ideology over the other segments of society, in his appeal to the people of Tajikistan, Nuri often noted that "all people of Tajikistan should be free in their choices and practices" and that "all people of Tajikistan regardless of their ethnic and religion should be respected and have to have their own rights" (Sattori, 2007). For more information regarding the views of the founder of the IRPT see Chapters 4 and 5. As seen in Chapter 6, however, when Nuri was among his own community, he sometimes held different viewpoints that contradicted this pluralistic approach.

Later, in order to mobilize more people and increase the popularity of the party, the IRPT further tactically moderated their ideology. One of their steps toward openness in pursuing votes was that they decided to allow minority Isma'ili non-Sunni Muslims to become members of their party. This tactical change in their behavior was in favor of pursuing the votes, since ideologically, the Sunni Islamists' interpretation of religion is completely different from Isma'ili Muslims – the latter of whom are secularly-oriented and considered by many conservative radical Sunni Muslims to be heretics.

With regard to allowing Isma'ili Muslims to become members of the Islamic party, the spiritual leader of the IRPT, Himmatzoda, in his interview with FREE/Europe Radio argued that everything had been in the process of political change and their party has its political interests that limit its actions. According to him, the IRPT is now a political party that has prioritized its political aspects, while he further emphasized that the religious agenda of the party remained. By the 'political aspects' of the party, Nuri meant their specific political interests, which are important in spite of their ideology. Nevertheless, he mentioned that there are some religious duties and requirements that each member of the party must adhere to. For example, he mentioned that drinkers of alcohol cannot become members of the party. It would appear that his remarks were directed toward Isma'ili Muslims specifically (Mirzoev, 2013).

Muhiddin Kabiri has a more pragmatic approach in attracting Isma'ili Muslims to his party, since he shows more sympathy toward the interpretation of Islam represented by their *madhab*. As mentioned previously in Chapter 6, Kabiri once complimented Isma'ili Muslims, and mentioned their successful experience in reconciling Islam with the modern world. Furthermore, he often mentioned the historical ties between the Isma'ili Tajiks (from Badakhshan) and the Islamists (mostly from Garm (now Rasht) Valley). According to Kabiri, his party has always had close ties with Isma'ili Muslims in Tajikistan, both during the political opening of the early 1990s, and also during the civil war. He argued that, "for our Sunni party,

the [Isma'ili] minority [were] among our closest partners". Kabiri further mentioned: "Our party always had a good reputation in Badakhshan [region where a majority are Isma'ili] and in recent years we were working hard there…we had proposed a program in which special attention was to be paid to tolerance between Islamic religious schools. Our Isma'ili compatriots understood the message and received it positively" (Kabiri 2016, p. 17).

The party's own statistics, meanwhile, show that the IRPT could attract numerous people in Badakhshan where many non-Sunni Muslims live. According to statistics provided by the Islamists, the IRPT had 1,760 members out of the total population of 220,400 in Badakhshan. According to the IRPT's chairman, "after the Khorog events the number of [their] supporters increased markedly". He also mentioned that, following these events, people mostly "[came] to us not only because we have an Islamic party…they turn to us, especially the youth and women, and that means that they are looking for alternatives" (Kabiri, 2012, p. 8).

Despite these observations, most of the Islamists, including veterans, have at the same time widely employed religious rhetoric in an attempt to involve those members who joined the IMU and Hizb ut-Tahrir. As already observed in previous chapters, Saïd Abdullah Nuri even tried to convince all Tajik conservative Muslims to vote for the IRPT and clearly considered his party to be the party for all practicing Muslims.

7.5.1.1 New Chairman, New Strategy since 2005

Only after Muhiddin Kabiri's election as the new chairman of the party has it appeared that the IRPT tried to systematically change its tactics, agenda and language toward moderation in order to attract more voters from outside of their conservative and rural social base. Muhiddin Kabiri also understood that the image of the incumbent president was very high and his party weak by comparison. Therefore, in the 2006 presidential election, the IRPT did not propose their candidate, since they knew that they could not compete with the ruling party. Indeed, Muhiddin Kabiri himself stated that "[t]he reason for not putting up a candidate [in 2006] was, first, that Rahmon's popularity was very high – he was a strong candidate" (Kabiri 2016, p. 8). That is why they began to prepare for future elections. In order to attract a large segment of voters in the 2010 parliamentary election, the new leadership widely used new concepts and modernized their electoral tactics. According to Kabiri: "…[W]e made very thorough preparations for the parliamentary elections of 2010…We put forth a new party with a new program…We intended to work with the youth and increase the number of party members to more than 100,000. First of all, we had taken more young, educated people into the presidium and also increased the

number of women…" (Kabiri, 2016, p. 8). The IRPT started to use modern tactics, exactly as used by progressive European political parties, and collaborated with young girls and boys during the election in 2010. For example, Kabiri clearly argued:

> We used a new concept, which even the party in power had never used. This strategy was kept secret until the very last moment, when everything was ready: posters, slogans, and strategies. Our young people had rented Mickey Mouse costumes, tiger costumes, and some other animals. Children took pictures with them. Seeing all the Mickey Mouse characters, tigers, and elephants with gifts for children, with balloons, and with flowers for women was a novelty in the streets of Dushanbe. Usually an Islamic party reads sermons in mosques and speaks to people through religious literature, but we had changed our strategy. Now the Islamic party was visible in the streets with gifts, flowers, balloons, and booklets... (Kabiri, 2016, p. 8)

It should be noted that Kabiri and his young team had moderated their tactics and rhetoric in two ways: a) Firstly, they de-Islamized their rhetoric and tactics. They tried to minimize the use of religious rhetoric, and especially avoided controversial Islamic references in order not to alienate the vast-majority of secularly-orientated Tajik voters. By avoiding religious rhetoric, and instead emphasizing worldly issues, they tried to portray themselves as a modern, Western-style opposition political party; and, b) Secondly, in addition to Muhiddin Kabiri, some of the younger members of the party often used moderate or 'soft' Islamic language through which they advocated more liberal religious concepts in order to attract the increasingly conservative, young, and urban [middle class] Tajiks.

7.5.1.2 Non-Religious Rhetoric of the IRPT: Prioritizing Socio-Economic Issues to attract anti-Government Masses

By avoiding religious language and focusing on purely political and socio-economic issues such as poverty, migration, corruption, and the transparency of elections, the new leadership of the IRPT tried to pursue the votes of people who disagree with the government, the so-called 'protest voters' (some of whom are religious, but some are not). Similar to other secular opposition parties, they began to emphasize unemployment, social injustice, poverty, lack of freedom, absence of transparent elections, violations of human rights in Tajikistan. They knew, for instance, that "government…ha[d] struggled to provide basic social services to the population" (Bowyer 2008, p. 14) in Tajikistan. Many of the younger Tajik Islamists, including

Kabiri, often referred to the government in their interviews and speeches, and said that "if [the] government want people to not come to [the] IRPT, they should provide people with food, electricity and jobs". According to the young IRPT's speaker, Fayzrahmonov, many protest voters in Tajikistan joined the IRPT especially because of these unsolved social and economic problems (Jaliliyan, 2015b).

Muhiddin Kabiri in his speech at George Washington University also argued that "if we did obtain the most voters in the election [parliamentary election in 2010], the large percentage of those votes were just protest votes that were given to our party, not because they love us, but because they hate us less than others". According to him "there are people who [become] members [of the IRPT] just because we are the opposition party, whether Islamic or not" (Kabiri 2012. p. 4-8). One of the most active members of the IRPT, and President of the Youth committee of the Islamic party in northern Tajikistan, Ilhom Yakubov, concerning their focus on worldly issues such as corruption, education and human rights, mentioned that: "Our party also focuses on raising awareness about respect of human rights, not only about Islam, we actually talk more about politics and other topics, liberty and rights than religion" (Thibault 2014, p. 164).

As can be seen, in order to mobilize people, the IRPT used the exact strategy and tactics of the Welfare Party in Turkey in the 1990s. According to Toprak, "the success of the Welfare Party had less to do with its image as an Islamist party than with its activities in delivering material goods…[since] it had learned the first lesson of democracy, namely, to answer the demands and interests of the electorate" (Toprak, 2005 p. 40). The Tajik Islamists also realized that today's main concern for the majority of people in Tajikistan is poverty, the economy, and migration. They understood that, through radical religious utopian slogans, it is difficult to attract the attention and votes of a young society (a majority of the population are under the age of 20 (Bowyer, 2008, p. 13).

The surveys in 2004 and 2010 also demonstrated that the economic and social policies of political parties are the primary factor behind support for the different political parties in Tajikistan. For example, according to the findings of the IFES Survey in 2004, 39 percent (in 2010, 41 percent) of Tajiks considered the economic policies of parties to be the primary factor for their support. Only 6 percent of respondents in 2012 considered the religious outlook of the party a factor in their support of a party (IFES, 2010). All these realities had been understood by the new leader of the party, who was himself a more pragmatic politician than his predecessor.

Therefore, in both the 2010 and 2015 parliamentary elections, the IRPT tried to choose slogans which expressed the socio-economic problems of the country and avoided religious rhetoric. For example, their slogan in 2010 was "*Trust in Allah, Loyalty to the Motherland, and service to the people*". In his interpretation of this motto, Kabiri prioritized the second and third phrases, which do not refer to religion:

> The motto of our party reads *Trust in Allah, loyalty to the Motherland, service to [the] people*. The emphasis will change now. Our relationship with Allah is our personal matter. There is no need to continue announcing [its Islamic principles], that is, emphasizing the first part of our motto. We now need to focus our efforts on the second and third parts of the motto (Sodiqov, 2011).

In the 2015 parliamentary election, the main slogan chosen by the IRPT before their exclusion from the political process was "*We are for Tajikistan and Tajikistan is for everyone*" (Ozodagonnews, 2015). Through such slogans, the Tajik Islamists also wanted to send messages to all people of Tajikistan that they are going to serve everyone equally, regardless of their belief and party affiliation.

Furthermore, in order to maximize their votes and attract other segments of society outside of conservative circles, Muhiddin Kabiri and his team often visited Russia to meet Tajik migrants (Ato, 2008), and also conducted lectures with students inside and outside these countries, mostly delivering topics on social and political issues rather than on purely religious topics. According to Kabiri, "the party's communication strategy included door to door visits and monthly meetings with students and civil society organizations. The party also maintains strong links with Tajik labor migrants in Russia..." (Kabiri, 2012, Chatham House, p. 2). Therefore, unlike the IRPT's veterans, Kabiri became more known for his lectures outside of religious circles and among young students from secularly-oriented families.

7.5.1.3 Introducing Islamo-Democratic Language to Attract the Growing Urban Conservative Tajiks

As can be seen in the previous chapter, Muhiddin Kabiri advocated several concepts where he tried to fuse Islam with democracy and human rights; he also attempted to illustrate the compatibility between Islam and modern democratic values. He has therefore been labeled an "Islamic intellectual with democratic views" (Olimova, and Tolipov, 2011, p. 4), as well as

being seen as the modern face of Islam and the symbol of a new generation who combined their religious and secular identities (even though he was not successful) (Salimpur, 2010).

According to this study, such attempts at expressing liberally-oriented moderate Islamic views by the IRPT's young chairman have partly been to attract new votes. In other words, Kabiri, with his modern style, soft language and Muslim democratic agenda that was completely different from mainstream or traditional religious leaders, made an effort to attract the growing urban youth vote, including both men and women [middle class] of the conservative segment of society. As Nasr argued,

> the rise of Muslim Democracy has occurred at the same time as a steady increase of religious consciousness within Muslim-majority societies. The recent "greening" of Muslim societies, in other words, has led not to votes for Islamists but rather to something that looks at least somewhat like the early stages of Christian Democratic politicking in twentieth-century Western Europe (Nasr, 2005, p 16).

As already observed in Chapter 4, supporters and members of the IRPT conventionally came from rural areas in the Karategin and Fergana valleys. The statistics clearly indicate that in the early 2000s most of the IRPT's supporters were male (mostly old or middle aged), uneducated peasants from religious families (Olimova, 2003, p. 29-30), both in small cities and villages. However, due to various factors, especially as a result of globalization after 2000, urban, young, and educated families in Tajikistan became increasingly religious and conservative, both in the towns like Isfara Hisar, and Kulob, as well as in the big cities such as Dushanbe and Khujand. Some of these growing number of ultra-conservative Tajik Muslims have been described by Hélène Thibault as 'born-again[79] Muslims' or 'strict believers', being "those people who have (re)discovered faith and live their life according to strict religious principles…[for example] they dress according to Islamic codes; long ample clothes, long beards, and small hats for men while women wear ample conservative dresses and hijabs…pray five times a day, fast during Ramadan". According to her, born-again Muslims in Tajikistan are not a majority "but a growing minority of [the Tajik] people" (Thibault, 2014, pp. 140-141).

However, this study associates the growing urban conservative middle class with those students, doctors, businessmen and merchants who have had secular educations, tolerate

---

[79] The term has been mostly used "to refer to Christians in the United States…". However, the literature which employed the term 'born-again Muslims' especially referred to Western Muslims. One of the most important books that widely used the term is *Globalized Islam* written by Olivier Roy. In Central Asia Rashid (2003, p. 138), and and Karagiannis (2006, p. 15), have also labeled the founder of Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan , as well as members of Hizb ut-Tahrir, as born-again Muslims (Thibault, 2014, p. 139).

Tajikistan's secular heritage, but at the same time have a deep sympathy toward the Tajik Islamic civilization and its values. It should be mentioned that for a majority of Muslims in Central Asia, including growing conservative urban educated Muslims, Islam is more about morality and ethics and not political or legal system. As Louw has mentioned, "'Muslimness' in the post-Soviet context is comparable to a morality in the making rather than a fixed concept" (Thibault, 2014, p. 149). Therefore, it seems that urban conservative middle class Muslims, in similarity with the majority population of Tajikistan, are both secular and non-secular and do not have an interest in the radical Islamists' slogans, such as establishing of an Islamic state, jihad, implementation of Shari'a with force etc. Kabiri himself, in many of his speeches, mentioned that "Tajiks in comparison to their neighbors have more tendency toward religious values", but he recognized that despite this, a majority of Tajiks have never supported radical ideas. Therefore, he mentioned that the "extremism and radicalism level was [always] relatively lower" in Tajikistan (Kabiri, 2017).

As shown in the statistics, while the percentage of those who emphasized the importance of the role of religion in politics has been increasing since 2010, a majority of the population – both secularly-oriented and conservative Muslims – in Tajikistan prefer the secular state instead of an Islamic state. According to one of the latest reports, 63 percent of Tajiks think that the form of state should be secular while only 7 percent support a *sharia-based* system[80](Gulhoja, Nazar and Yatim, 2015).

The new leader of the IRPT has realized that, for the increasingly urban conservative educated religious people, Islam is more of an ethical system rather than a political agenda. He understood that many young Tajiks who grew up in secular families were interested in softer, more liberal Islamic ideas. Therefore, Kabiri often tried to interpret Islam more liberally and peacefully. As has already been observed in the previous chapter, he often talked about reforming religious thinking and of combining Islam with the modern world. In many of his speeches Kabiri declared that the IRPT needed to present a new interpretation of Islam which corresponded to that modern world. As Nasr mentioned, the "rise of the Muslim Democracy [young generation of Islamists] has begun the integration of Muslim religious values – drawn from Islam's teachings on ethics, morality, the family, rights, social relations, and commerce,

---

[80] At the same time the percentage of radical ideas among youth is growing. The ideas of young Tajiks in Internet as well as joining Tajiks to ISIS are the best examples. Nevertheless, it is difficult to determine their popularity due to lack of data and statistics.

for example – into political platforms designed to win regular democratic elections" (Nasr, 2005, p. 14).

It should be mentioned that throughout the history of modern Tajikistan, there have mostly been two groups of people active in the political arena; on one side, there are the Tajik secularists, who have no interest in religious principles and believe in the complete separation of religion from politics. On the other side are the traditional Islamists, who had less interest in modern principles or in reconciling Islam with modernity. Muhiddin Kabiri, it seems, has tried to fill an empty space in order to attract the growing cohort of educated, middle class, and urban Tajik conservatives. It should be mentioned that Kabiri himself belonged to Tajikistan's urban middle class. He made an effort to promote his interpretation of religion, which is relatively compatible with modern norms to people like him, and clearly knows what kind of society this segment of society wants.

Although Kabiri was not successful in reconciling Islam with democracy given his concepts were mostly general and unclear, it seems that he could attract many young urban educated peoples in Tajikistan. For example, according to Karagiannis, the pragmatic agenda and liberal views of Kabiri "expanded the electoral base of the new IRPT to include students, women, urban dwellers, doctors, teachers (Karagiannis, 2016, p. 272), [and] those who saw the IRPT in the face of Kabiri and did know about conservative factions behind him" (Rahnamo, 2010). Many local experts and journalists also noted that Kabiri was successful in attracting other segments of society to the IRPT, and have called him a new Islamic leader and politician consisting of both religious and secular identities (Salimpur, 2010). Qayumzod, a journalist known to be close to the IRPT, stated that the modern, Western style of Kabiri, including his tie, attracted many people from other segments of society – especially "those who did not know where to go" (Qayumzod. 2011).

According to both the Islamists as well as outside observers, the 2010 parliamentary election had shown that the IRPT had a larger social base by comparison to 2005. Muhiddin Kabiri himself, in his interview with the BBC after the parliamentary election in 2010, mentioned that they could successfully attract young people (Umed Ozodi, 2010b) in big cities by proposing a "new interpretation of Islam". Kabiri also mentioned that the people who voted for the IRPT in 2010 did so since the party advocated "...a new program, one based on national, religious, and democratic values". He argued that, "We had promised that if we won, we would have a new country where everybody could coexist. This is what attracted people because by 2010 many people had grown tired of the party in power. Both corruption and various difficulties had

started to affect all social groups, so people really voted for us" (Kabiri, 2016, p. 9). As Nasr said, "Muslim Democrats are in the streets looking for votes and in the process are changing Islam's relations to politics" (Nasr, 2005, p. 15).

On maximizing their votes in conservative Tajik society, the new leader often has also emphasized the rights and role of women in Tajik society, and often proudly in his speeches, especially in the West, he mentioned that more than 50 percent of party members are women. He has often argued that "[w]e need to show that we have greater faith in them [women] and in what they can do, and to bring them out from under the shadow of men". He even mentioned that "his party was ready to throw its weight behind female candidates" (Institute for War and Peace Reporting, 2014). He tried to demonstrate that, unlike classical Islamists who did not allow women to have a greater role, he planned to give more rights to women. Rashid Ghani Abdulllo, a famous political analyst in Tajikistan, also argued that the IRPT "was seeking to overturn perceptions about Muslim women being excluded from public life" (Institute for War and Peace Reporting, 2014).

Muhiddin Kabiri, however, highlighted two explanations for showing the strong role and status of women in his party. The first reason behind the activation of women, according to him, is migration since "many men have migrated to Russia". The second reason "relates to the political circumstances in which we have to operate". Indeed, Kabiri has said that "to preserve their jobs…men need to keep [a] certain distance from our party. But at the same time they would like to show their loyalty and support to our party, so they designate female members from their families – a wife, a daughter, or daughter-in-law – to represent the family in the party while the man assumes the responsibility of feeding and providing for his family" (Kabiri, 2012, p. 2).

Notwithstanding the above-mentioned, compared to Islamists in Turkey, who changed their behavior and discourses in order to capture the center right votes in more democratic spaces, the Tajik Islamists' moderation was not totally influenced by electoral politics and political competition. One of the key reasons why electoral politics has not had a primary impact on the Tajik Islamists' moderation is that there was always a very small *possibility of coming to power* through political contestation, since according to both local and international observers, elections in Tajikistan have not been transparent and have been conducted over the last decades under the strong control of the government.

Especially, phrases from the IRPT's, such as 'we are not going to establish an Islamic state', 'we accept secularism and the secular democratic state', 'we...function and act...within the

framework of the constitution of Tajikistan' were not totally the result of electoral pressure, but rather, a result of constitutional constraints, as well as of state pressure or the threat of repression. It should be mentioned that neither the IRPT's traditional supporters, nor the newcomers, had expected such slogans from the IRPT. Most of them had expected to hear more religious slogans. Therefore, as already mentioned in Chapter 6, during religious radical speeches delivered by some veterans of the IRPT, their supporters always enthusiastically supported these statements. For example, radical speech done by one of the founder of All Union IRP from Russia Geider Jamal in 11th Congress of IRPT "collected the loudest applauses" (Thibault, 2014, p. 166).

It should also be mentioned that many ordinary people in Tajikistan do not know the meaning and notion of secularism or the secular state. On the contrary, the Islamists' supporters are aware about the secularists and secularism, and until now, hold negative positions about them. As such, the IRPT's positions in support of the secular constitution and secularism were not because of interactions with their supporters or even other Tajiks, but rather, the secular Tajik state and the West. Thus, the section below will describe the impact of constitutional constraints, and the threat of repression, on the behavioral moderation of the IRPT.

7.5.2 Constitutional Constraints and Behavioral Moderation of the IRPT

One of the key factors that significantly pushed the Tajik Islamists toward moderation were the constitutional constraints (Yilmaz, 2009, 135). This factor played huge role in the moderation of Islamists in other countries as well. For example, according to Toprak, one of the main factors that "contributed to the moderate politics of the Islamist movement in Turkey [is] the role of the Judiciary and the legal system, [since] the secular state is [always] protected by…the Constitution, [which is] not subject to amendment" (Toprak, 2005, p. 37). Tibbi also asserted that "Turkey's AKP, deny their Islamism to avoid constitutional banning" (Tibbi, 2012, p. 122). The Tajik Islamists, both during the Soviet period and after, had similar experiences to the Turkish Islamists. As already observed in previous chapters, the constitution of Tajikistan, has always had such strict secular elements that have not allowed religious political actors to act however they pleased. Indeed, contemporary Tajik legislation is the main guarantor of the secular establishment in Tajikistan.

For example, Article 1 of the Constitution of the Republic of Tajikistan highlights that Tajikistan "shall be…democratic, law-based, secular", while Article 8 even declares that the

"ideology of any party, social and religious association, movement [or] group shall not be recognized as [the] state ideology" and that the "establishment and activity of…political parties which encourage racism…social and religious enmity, hatred, as well as advocate the forcible overthrow of the constitutional state structures and formation of armed groups shall be prohibited" (Constitution of the Republic of Tajikistan, 2003, p. 62-63).

Most importantly, Article 100 of the constitution, in an attempt to protect the secularly-oriented political system, underlines that "the form of public administration, the territorial integrity, and the democratic, law-governed, secular and social nature of the state shall be irrevocable" (Constitution of the Republic of Tajikistan, 2003, p.84). As a consequence of this, in the immediate aftermath of the peace agreement, the IRPT's delegates to the peace and reconciliation committee had seriously tried to remove the term 'secular' from the constitution, since they knew that this aspect of the constitution would not allow them to easily expand their ideological agenda. As already observed in chapter five, moreover, they did not have the same problem with the term 'democracy', since they knew that democracy would give them the chance to participate in the political process.

However, due to having a weak position in the negotiations, under political pressure from the secular elite they agreed to accept the concept of secularism, albeit tactically rather than ideologically. That is, so long as the Tajik Islamists could not remove the word 'secular' from the constitution, they tried to adapt themselves to the new realities of the post-civil war secular regime.

Due to the constitutional constraints and political pressure described above, the Tajik Islamists were forced to rethink and secularize their ideology, having finally agreed to join the secular state where the term "secular" is the main pillar of modern Tajik constitution. This situation led some key leaders of the Tajik Islamists, including Himmatzoda, Nuri and Muhiddin Kabiri, to think about the reconciliation of Islam to the secular constitution, who began to modify their positions in favor of that moderation (but were not successful). Most justifications by the Islamists in favor of the secular state happened as a result of the legal constraints and pressure which they faced from the legal system, especially the constitution. In other words, they attempted to abandon their positions regarding secularism, and showed sympathy toward democracy, in order to legitimize their existence and participation within the secular democratic system.

The Tajik Islamists also realized that following the old Islamists' radical agenda, such as the creation of an Islamic state and the implementation of religious law, would only increase the

tensions between both sides of the conflict and challenge the legitimacy of the secular constitution (Rahnamo, 2008, p. 121), the result of which would be to threaten their political survival. All of the above-referenced articles of the Tajik constitution were clearly recognized as contradictory to their revolutionary tactics as well as their anti-secular ideology. They understood that any attempt to revive these radical ideas would be interpreted as encouragement of religious enmity and hatred, and therefore, as anti-secular and anti-constitutional acts. They had already learned from experiences of the Turkish Islamists, who were banned several times due to their anti-constitutional rhetoric. Indeed, some scholars have described the AKP's politicians as 'intelligent', since they "[knew] well that the Supreme Court would ban their party if they publicly pronounce[d] their agenda…" (Tibi, 2012, p. 17). The IRPT's leaders also knew that the secular establishment in the post-Soviet republics as the heritage of communism is still strong. Therefore, as has already been illustrated in previous chapters, the party's leaders often considered Tajikistan's secularist model to be illiberal and closely related to Soviet secularism.

Finally, as already observed in Chapters 5 and 6, in order to legitimize their ideology and demonstrate their commitment to the Tajik constitution, the IRPT often emphasized that they had no intention to Islamize the state. For example, their electoral platform, in spite of their more controversial ideas explained in chapter 7, sincerely tried to convince the people that they were not going to change the constitution, which they accepted as irrevocable. Rather, they promised to establish a democratic, law-based state if they won the election (Although there have been many contradictions in their views. See: Chapters 5 and 6). The presentation of such arguments by the Islamists was not because they deeply believed in the secular constitution, but rather, was intended to remove the secular establishment's suspicion of the party and to prevent threats to their political survival. Therefore, they were careful in their attitudes, and in their speeches to always emphasize that they were working within the framework of the constitution. Muhiddin Kabiri, meanwhile, often claimed that if they came to power they would implement the current constitution better than the other parties (Umed Ozodi, 2010b).

7.5.3 Pressure from Secular Civil Society

Tajik civil society is mostly secular. Alongside the constitutional constraints, most Tajik intellectuals both – pro-government[81] as well as independent experts – have always prioritized

---

[81] See: Seifert, A., and Kreikemaier, A., eds, 2003 and Bitter, J., Guérin, F. Seifer, A., and Rahmonova-Schwarz. D., eds, 2005.

the secular system in Tajikistan. Furthermore, almost a majority of Tajik politicians, poets, writers, feminists, as well as journalists and political parties in Tajikistan, have been secularly-oriented, even among those who had an alliance[82] with the Islamists during the civil war (such as the members and supporters of the Democratic party, Raztakhez and La'li Badakhshan) (see: Chapter 4). Similar to Turkey, the most important governmental institutions in Tajikistan, such as the constitutional court, the Supreme Court, the Prosecutor's office, the military, parliament, and the key ministries of state have always been protectors of the secular form of government and their cadres have mostly been secularly-oriented people.

Tajik civil society has, moreover, always emphasized the importance of this secular aspect of government for the future of Tajikistan, where religious organizations remain separate from the state, and where no political party has the right to use religious organizations such as mosques for their own political purposes, *etc*. In other words, the pressure of Tajik civil society on the IRPT is another key factor which forced them to change their rhetoric and behavior. It should also be mentioned that "public commitment to the secular state" is also recognized as one of the factors behind moderation for other Islamists as well. According to some experts, such as Toprak, "important groups within Turkish society and a large middle class have been very sensitive on the question of secularism. Surveys show that the majority of the population opposes the politicization of religion and the granting of a role of Islam in state affairs" (Toprak, 2005, p. 38).

This means that the Tajik Islamists understood that not only a small number of politicians in government, but also significant segments of society, are not interested in their ideology. The existence of such strong intellectual authority put real pressure on the Tajik Islamists, since Tajik civil society has always challenged them in society and during public debates, both at conferences as well as in other meetings. As a result, the Tajik Islamists were very careful with the Tajik intellectuals and journalists, and prepared themselves to talk with them. By contrast, for the Tajik Islamists, it has always been easy to talk with ordinary people since the latter are

---

[82] Following 2001, most of the Tajik opposition who received governmental positions lost their posts and were again marginalized from the political mainstream. Many members of the UTO who received governmental posts (not all of them were members of the IRPT) later kept their distance from the IRPT and became more pro-regime. The alliance between the Tajik Islamists and secular democratic opposition also split after the peace reconciliation process. Taking into consideration the above-named facts, the Tajik Islamists realized that they no longer had the position they had previously – either during early 1992 or during the civil war – and were rather, in a much weakened position by comparison to their secular opponents: "While the peace agreement has been praised by international observers as a unique compromise between secular and Islamist political groups, in practice it looks much more like a victory [for the] former" (ICG, 2003, p. 13).

not able to challenge their ideology in the same way that Tajik civil society (for example, public intellectuals, women's groups, and political parties more broadly) did.

Since becoming the new chairman of the IRPT, Muhiddin Kabiri, in an attempt to convince the strong secular political elite, as well as Tajik civil society, has declared that dialogue and the creation of trust between the IRPT and Tajik society, the political elite, and also the international community, would be one of the key tasks of his party before the next parliamentary election in 2010. He also mentioned that they needed, through clear argumentation, to remove the suspicion and distrust that exists about his party in the minds of the secular elite and the international community (Rahnamo, 2008, pp. 180-181).

Prior to this, past leaders of the IRPT, such as Himmatzoda and Nuri, had always had limited contact with secular Tajik secular society. They were mostly busy within the community of believers and were never ideologically challenged by other segments of the population. For example, Nuri and Himmatzoda who had their secret religious networks from 1970 until 1990, never had the chance to face the mostly secular Tajik intellectuals, and did not openly participate in public debates either. Therefore, as a puritanical movement, they always had exclusivist views through to the end of the civil war, not only toward secularists, but also toward the orthodox clergy (see: Chapters 4 and 6).

The Tajik Islamists had never before had such political opportunities to join in public debates (only during their short period of representation in the political process in the early 1990s). Since signing the peace agreement, however, the Tajik Islamists came down from the mountains into the cities in order to participate in public discourse., where they were faced with new realities. During this new period, the younger generation of Islamists, such as Muhiddin Kabiri and Muhammadali Hayit, also began to intensively participate in public debates at various levels. They were often interviewed by local and non-local journalists. Besides which, there were monthly debate clubs in Tajikistan, where both secular intellectuals and the religious opposition could come together and discuss various issues relating to Islam and its role in politics.

One such debate club, which was created by Kabiri himself, was known as "Dialogue". These debate clubs gave opportunities to members of both sides to express their ideas. During the debates they shared each other's ideas, and especially in the case of the secular intellectuals, challenged the Tajik Islamists and often raised questions concerning their destiny under Islamist rule. While in the 'Dialogue' debate club, the Islamists were always a majority, the secular intellectuals nevertheless tried to challenge them. [Full disclosure: The author of this thesis was

also a participant in this debate club from 2009-2010]. It should also be mentioned that "public debate is highly valued in a democratic political system not only because public deliberation can be a democratic process but also because it exposes individuals and groups to the concerns, beliefs, and methods of reasoning with others (Schwedler, 2006, p.11).

Inclusion provided appropriate opportunities for the Tajik Islamists to cooperate with other, secular segments of society, which as a result, made the Tajik Islamist at least more moderate toward other outlooks. As Schwedler notes, "if a group holds a relatively closed worldview that precludes the legitimacy of alternative views, the core question is whether inclusion can create or at least encourage ideological moderation in the sense of opening the possibility for a group to see validity in the views of others, or at the very least see legitimacy in their right to hold alternative views" (Schwedler, 2013, p. 7).

7.5.4 Threat of State Repression and Behavioral Moderation of the IRPT

The pressure or threat of state repression is considered to be one of the key factors behind the moderation of Islamists in Muslim countries. The (threat) of repression has been emphasized, both in moderation theory as well as by advocates of the force-moderation hypothesis, such as Shadi Hamid (2014).

The impact of regime repression has especially been emphasized in the case of Turkey. According to some experts, as a result of pressure from the military and the courts, the Turkish Islamists have avoided radical religious references, and from the 1970s onwards, had by the 1990s and 2000s moved from the right to the center. As mentioned above, in Turkey, the military as well as the courts had always been the main protectors of the secular, Kamalist form of government, and they often banned the political participation of the Islamist parties in Turkey in order to defend that constitutional secularism. Therefore, Turkish Islamists learned from their historical mistakes and realized that it is impossible to confront the military in Turkey. Hakam Yavuz asserts that "the coup [against the elected Islamist-led government in 1997] taught [AKP leader Recep Tayyip] Erdoğan to realize the parameters of democracy and the power of the secularist establishment, and forced him to became a [relatively] moderate and a [tactically] democrat" (Hamid, 2014, p. 44).

According to the current study, therefore, '*regime pressure and threat of repression*' is an influential factor in the tactical moderation of the Tajik Islamists, especially in the five years

prior to the banning of the IRPT in 2015.[83] In other words, it is the claim of this dissertation that the IRPT did not democratize its agenda only as a result of the political opening where political opportunities had been provided by the regime, but also as a result of state pressure and the threat of repression. In this understanding, state pressure and the threat of state repression are considered to be part of the institutional constraints discussed above.

According to Hamid (2014, p. 48), political 'repression' is defined as "the use or threat of coercion in varying degrees applied by government against opponents or potential opponents to weaken their resistance to the will of authorities". Thus, "[r]epression is not just a matter of rigging elections, punishing speech, or arresting dissidents—although that is all bad enough--- but of undermining the vast organizational structure that serves as the engine for the Islamic movement" (2014, pp. 49-50).

However, this study asserts that the Tajik Islamists have moderated their ideology as a result of what Hamid called "low to moderate levels of repression" or state pressure, which is different from "extreme levels of repression –deployed in an attempt to eradicate a particular social or political group" (Hamid, 2014, pp. 44-45). It should be noted that the Tajik Islamists, since signing the peace agreement and being reintegrated into the political process, similarly to many Islamist parties in the Middle East, such as in Jordan and Yemen, have enjoyed political opportunities from the limited political opening provided by the semi-authoritarian regime, and have been allowed to participate in elections, to have (both printed and online) mass media, and to win seats in parliament.

Without a doubt, the Tajik Islamists have always been under the moral pressure of the secular authorities, and have always feared future repression. Furthermore, since 2012, the political pressure on the IRPT intensified. Nevertheless, the level of pressure (until 2015) in Tajikistan was lower in comparison to some secular regimes elsewhere in Central Asia, or by the Egyptian military in the Middle East. Notwithstanding the limited political opening of the late 1980s, the Egyptian regime often made mass arrests and persecutedEgyptian Islamists. For instance, in a three-week period ahead of the Egyptian 1995 parliamentary elections, "1,392 members and supporters [of the Muslim Brotherhood] were arrested",while the "number of political prisoners, many of them Brotherhood activists and supporters, jumped from 5,000 in 1990 to nearly 16,000 in 1995" (Hamid 2014, p. 90).

---

[83] Even though international observers have often warned the government that repression will create more radicalization (ICG, 2003, p. 1).

More serious repression and pressure on the Islamists occurred during Islom Karimov's time in Uzbekistan[84]. For instance, on May 13, 2005 Uzbek forces killed hundreds of protesters in the city of Andijan and declared a war against 'Islamic extremists'. According to some sources "[t]he scale of this killing was so extensive, and its nature was so indiscriminate and disproportionate, that it can best be described as a massacre" (BBC, 2005). It was considered "the biggest and bloodiest crackdown on a popular revolt in the former Soviet Union since its 1991 dissolution" (Mirovalev, 2015). Kamol Abdullaev consideres the Uzbek response to its Islamist challenge to be: combat/control. By comparison to Uzbekistan, he has called the Tajik response to the Islamist challenge not combat, but control/partial-cooperation (Abdulloev, 2014, p. 11). However, the aim of study is not to justify the pressure and repression, but rather, to illustrate the evaluation or tactical changes of the Islamists that occurred as a reaction to state pressure and/or repression.

7.5.4.1 Has Pressure or the Threat of Repression had an Impact on the Tajik Islamists' Behavior?

The impact of pressure or threat of repression on the behavior of the Tajik Islamists has almost always been observed since the signing of the peace agreement. According to international observers, the Tajik secular regime's pressure on political Islam begun from the very beginning. International Crisis Group stated in its report that in 2001, only three years after the peace agreement, the secular regime manipulated the "war on terrorism to   put…pressure on the IRP" (ICG 2003, p. 14). This exactly mirrors other Middle Eastern regimes, which "were [also] using Bush's war on terror to pass draconian anti-terrorism legislation with Islamist groups as the primary target" (Hamid 2014, p. 59). For example, after the arrest of three Tajik citizens in Afghanistan and their "rendition" to Guantanamo, the pressure on the IRPT's members increased. Following this event, the President of Tajikistan gave a speech in the city of Isfara where he criticized the Tajik Islamic party as "engaged in indoctrinating people in a spirit of extremism, which may lead to a split in society" (ICG 2003, pp. 15-16). He mentioned that "extremism was being propagated in mosques where IRP members were working as clergy…". Later, in "August 2002, ten imams were dismissed for being members of political organizations, mostly the IRP" (ICG 2003, pp. 15-16).

---

[84] According to many sources, the situation now is improving.

In 2003, even the "party's deputy chair, Shamsiddin Shamsiddinov, was arrested on charges of murder, setting up armed groups, and other crimes..." (Freedom House, 2004). Later in the same year another "senior IRPT member, Qurbon Rakhimov, was arrested and charged with offenses including rape of a minor" (ICG, 2004, p. 6). The IRPT's leadership appealed to the OSCE and the UN regarding the arrest of their members (Burke, 2003). Their leaders believed that the latest arrests were in order "to discredit the party and to frighten its members" (Weihman, 2003). The IRPT were also under moral pressure after military operations in the Rasht and Tavildara valleys in 2009 and 2010, which targeted the warlords and Islamist militants who did not accept the peace agreement (ICG, 2011), or who joined the IMU, such as Mullo Abdullo and Ali Bedake, since some officials and observers still linked them with the IRPT (Muhabbatov, 2012).

It would appear that the constant pressure and threat of repression, as mentioned above, did not radicalize the mainstream leadership of the IRPT. On the contrary, taking their difficult experiences during civil war into consideration, the pressure appeared to make the IRPT's leadership more careful and responsible. In the early years after the civil war, the key leaders of the IRPT continuously tried to convince the regime that they remained committed to peace and had no interest in confronting the system. They always tried to keep soft or 'moderate' positions, emphasized the importance of peace and stability, and tried not to escalate the situation. Many of their leaders claimed that their "…generation is the generation of the civil war [and]…'will tolerate almost any imposition and hardship to avoid a repeat of the conflict" (Chatham House, 2009, p. 5).

For example, a well-known Russian scholar of political Islam, Naumkin, wrote in his book that Nuri's passive and soft [moderate] reaction toward the government's actions made many radical members of the IRPT unhappy, especially those who had sympathy toward radical Islamic organizations such as al-Qa'ida. According to one senior official, due to the leadership's passivity, the radical wing of the IRPT even tried to "oust Nuri from his post or set up a new Islamic party" (Naumkin, 2005, pp. 246-247). Some of the radical members of the IRPT even joined other radical illegal Islamists movements, such as IMU and Hizb ut-Tahrir, in protest of Nuri's policy (*Ibid*.).

In other words,even though Nuri was a conservative, unlike many radicals within the party he totally rejected revolutionary tactics, such as jihad or even civil disobedience against the political system. It should noted that "moderation [in the case of the Islamists] is also often conflated with non-confrontation. The 'confrontational' political approaches have been viewed

by both the regime and the international community as a sign of radicalism". As Hamid (2014, p. 46) notes, many "Islamist groups", including the IRPT, "generally avoided civil disobedience and mass mobilization" in their countries in order to not be labelled as radicals. For example, Muhiddin Kabiri (2012, p. 4), in his speech in Washington, focused on the less confrontational policies of his party through which tried to send Westerners a message about their moderation:

> We are [a] moderate party and we don't even criticize the government. That is why this position frustrates people. These people are unhappy with the moderate position that we are talking and they are now in search of a more radical alternative…"

Kabiri's speech demonstrates that their softer language was not in pursuit of votes, since many people were unhappy with their policy.

That is, the IRPT's leadership became careful in their rhetoric and moderated their behavior as result of the state's pressure, since they realized that a radical reaction toward the government would again create a crisis and make the regime more aggressive. The IRPT's leadership were also aware of their *lack of resources* – that they were much weaker than in the 1990s – and no longer had the organizational resources to challenge the political elite (their troops were disarmed), and also had less public support and few foreign allies as before.

Furthermore, the IRPT clearly perceived that regional and global powers, such as Russia, China and the US, had developed a consensus on fighting Islamic terrorism, were not interest in the escalation of conflict, and would not be happy about rising Islamic revolutionary voices close to Afghanistan. They especially understood that Russia, as an extensively influential player in the region, did not support an Islamist agenda. They also knew that these actors were completely on the side of the secular state in fighting the Islamic threat, including secular opposition groups.

Notwithstanding the disagreement of many of their members, in order to not be associated with other radical extremist groups in the region in the context of 11 September 2001, the IRPT's leadership constantly made efforts to moderate the party's ideology by differentiating themselves from other extremists. As was the case with the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt, "[t]hey needed to make the case to both domestic and international audiences that they were not like the extremists; they were a different breed of Islamist that pursued. nonviolence…" (Hamid, 2014, p. 59). They tried keep their distance from all radical Islamists groups and even countries, both inside and outside of Tajikistan, in order to minimize the eventual threat of repression and convince secularists inside the country that they were no in contact with global Islamism. Despite their long co-existence alongside other radical groups in

Afghanistan, they categorically condemned terrorist acts and supported US policy in order to avoid suspicion. Abdullah Nuri, for example, unlike in his previous interviews, mentioned that the IRPT did not have any contact with the IMU and repeatedly condemned Hizb ut-Tahrir's policy and ideology (as already observed in chapters 5 and 6, it should be remembered that these statements are controversial, as the Tajik Islamists continued to espouse radical ideas at the same time). However, unlike militant groups, they always tried to condemn violence.

The IRPT's leadership also recognized that their connection with Muslim countries and movements outside Tajikistan had always made Tajik secularists aggressive inside, a result of which would be to increase the risk of state repression. In this regard, local experts such as Rahnamo also observed that the Tajik secular government had always been skeptical about the IRPT's contacts with Islamic organizations, even in the early 1990s before the civil war (Rahnamo, 2008, p. 156). That is why in April of 1992, the IRPT's chairman, Himmatzoda was forced to testify to Tajik parliamentary deputies that the IRPT had no contact with any Islamic organizations outside the country in his speech to the session of the Supreme Council of the Republic of the Tajikistan (Rahnamo, 2008, p. 156). Thus, the IRPT continuously kept their distance from Islamic countries and organizations until 2006 until Tajikistan's relationship with other Islamic countries had improved (Rahnamo, 2008, p. 156).

7.5.4.2 Recruiting the West Outside to support themselves inside

In order to protect themselves inside the country from state pressure, the IRPT understood that they needed extensive relationships with Western international organizations and countries. In the the early years after 11 September 2001, many of the IRPT's leaders often mentioned that they needed to have more contact with Western countries and international organizations in order to convince the West that they are a moderate and peaceful political organization. According to Abdullo Rahnamo, in just 2006, the leaders of the party visited Western countries more than 40 times, as well as had 120 meetings with internationally influential organizations and Western ambassadors in Tajikistan. This was much more than other political parties in Tajikistan.

The IRPT's leaders understood that the West was still skeptical toward the IRPT's policies due to their involvement in the civil war, and also their long presence alongside other Islamist groups in Afghanistan, as well as close links with the Islamic Republic of Iran. They often declared pro-democratic slogans in order to interact with the West and strengthen their political

positions inside the country. According to Rahnamo, if the Tajik Islamists were to claim the establishment of a religiously-based state, in this period, they would have lost the international support that they considered to have significantly strengthened the IRPT due to the sensitivities of the international community to these topics (Rahnamo, 2008, p. 122).

Improving their relationship with the West, and convincing them that the Tajik Islamists were moderate, was important to the IRPT as they understood that Western countries and organizations could be good partners in preventing any eventual threat from the secular state. Exactly as the Turkish Islamists did, the IRPT "strategically moderated their political discourse to gain external support in their struggle against the strictly secularist establishment" (Yilmaz, 2010-2011, p. 127). According to Rahnamo, this extensive relationship with Western countries and their influential international organizations was a significantly important factor in strengthening the IRPT's political stability in the future within the secular regime. He said that in such a situation, the government would take into consideration the realities (Rahnamo, 2008, p. 155). Abdullah Nuri also clearly argued in favor of the positive effects of the party's relationship with Western organizations and states. He also emphasized that their "extensive, transparent and sustainable relationship with [international] foreign institutions, [which have had an influential impact on the Tajik state]" have helped them a lot to solve their difficulties. Therefore, he also claimed that their relationship with international institutions as well as Western countries needed to be further improved. (even though the relationship with Muslim countries had always been prioritized)(Rahnamo 2008, pp. 155-156).

In other words, the fear of repression changed the behavior of the IRPT over the last decade following their inclusion in the political process, and increasingly made them both pro-Western and pro-democracy. Generally speaking, this is an example of a pragmatic policy shift, or 'tactical' moderation, by the Tajik Islamists to recruit the liberal West outside in order to defend and strengthen its political legitimacy inside the country. They likewise realized that Western democratic countries could help them much better than that of non-democratic Islamic countries to minimize the secular regime's threat of repression.

Muhiddin Kabiri, the young chairman of the IRPT, is a widely-known figure in the West, and has done more to strengthen his party's relationships with the West than other key leaders. He often visited the cities of Europe and the US, delivered lectures, and met with Western politicians (Millat, 2009). In his meetings and lectures, he always tried to convince the Westerners that his party is democratic, and would not create an Islamic state. He also tried to show his party as the best partner for the West in Tajikistan, since he often explained to the

Westerners that his party suffered from two group of people: religious extremists and secular extremists. According to him, on the one hand, the religious extremists considered the IRPT to be "non-Islamic[85]" and liberal; and, on the other hand, the secularists labeled the IRPT as radical Islamists. Through his arguments, he tried to lobby the Westerners, especially the international organizations, that the IRPT stood between two radical trends. Indeed, in many of his interviews, Kabiri claimed that Westerners only see two groups in the Muslim world: secular autocrats and Islamist radicals. According to him, therefore, Westerners have mostly ignored moderate Islamists (Millat, 2009).

7.5.4.3 Use democracy to Minimize State Pressure

Since 2010, the Tajik Islamists have largely democratized their agenda in an attempt to minimize threat of state repression or pressure and also to protect its political legitimacy within the semi-authoritarian system and secular establishment of the country (Stacher, 2002, p. 416). For Hamid (2014: 52), The "reason for [the] Islamists' accommodation with democracy – and later their forceful advocacy of it – is deceptively simple and intuitive: in the…[lack] of democracy, it becomes something worth fighting for". Therefore, especially since 2012 as a result of state pressure on religious activities, the Tajik Islamists extensively exploited democracy as a tool even more than the Tajik democratic opposition forces in Tajikistan did, as they realized that democracy would be the best instrument to fight against the semi-authoritarian secular government. They also frequently emphasized their acceptance of the constitutional importance of the separation of power, political pluralism, freedom of speech, as well as fair and free democratic elections in their program, statements, speeches and interviews (see: Chapter 5). Similarly, they have always highlighted the separation of power because of their interest in minimizing the executive branch of the state, which they claim has absolute power in Tajikistan. As Hamid observed in the case of Islamists in the Middle East, "[c]alling for separation of powers, alternation of power, judicial independence, and popular sovereignty makes sense only if those things are perceived as being taking away…" (Hamid, 2014, p. 52).

The Tajik government has often been criticized by the IRPT's leaders because of its alleged violation of the constitution. They have accused the government of adopting the democratic constitution while not implementing it in reality. Muhiddin Kabiri often mentioned that the Tajik political elite considered the current constitution of Tajikistan to not be a legal document,

---

[85] By non-Islamic he means less committed to Islamic norms and laws.

but rather, a declaration for the future. However, he said that the IRPT would implement (better than others) the constitution of Tajikistan without postponement or delay once it came to power (Umed ozodi, 2010b). Indeed, the IRPT made many efforts to reinforce these democratic principles, since it is the democratic system that guarantees their legitimacy. They also understood that the end of democratization in Tajikistan would be the end of their political survival. Therefore, the closer the regime came to authoritarianism and the more it limited political freedoms, the more the IRPT became tactically democratic in an attempt to protect themselves, and advocates of democratic reform.

That is, their moderation and over-emphasizing of democratic principles was not to attract the moderate or mainstream voters, or for members and supporters (especially since 2012), but rather, to prevent the rise of authoritarianism and to minimize the threat of the state's pressure. As already mentioned in chapters 5 and 6, most members and supporters of the IRPT are deeply conservative and are not interested in the idea of democracy or political pluralism. Many ordinary members of the IRPT, such as Iskandar, desire to live under *shari'a* law and are "confident that in the event of an electoral victory of the IRPT, the Party would slowly implement Islamic laws" (Thibault, 2014, p. 167). Most democratic concepts, such as secularism, are considered completely alien – a view shared with like-minded Islamists in other Middle Eastern countries. For example, regarding this issue, Abdel Moneim Mahmoud, a former Muslim Brotherhood member and journalist, mentioned that, "when you discuss issues [such as pluralism, democracy, and women's participation] with ordinary members, you find that they lack a depth of knowledge" (Hamid, 2014, p. 55). Al-Anani also mentioned that there is a "clear division between the discourse and understanding of the Brotherhood's leadership and the discourse and understanding of the base" (Al-Anani, 2007, p. 74). Therefore, as Hamid wrote: "When Islamists see themselves as under political siege, the necessity and urgency of democratic reform becomes an almost existential concern" (Hamid, 2014, p. 52).

7.5.4.4 Using 'Human Rights' to Protect Religious Rights

The Tajik Islamists have always selectively used the core values of democracy, such as the language of human rights and freedom, in order to defend the rights and freedom of their supporters and further its interest in the political arena. The new generation of Tajik Islamists especially, after the adoption of some legislation by the government that limited religious freedoms, have widely used such language in order to protect the rights of Muslim conservatives since they knew that in such situations only the core values of democracy could

help them. For example, the IRPT's new leadership actively protected the rights of the growing number of young conservative girls to wear the hijab, especially since the mid-2000s when the campaign against the hijab began.[86]

According to the IRPT's headquarters, since this time, many girls came to their party to ask for help in resolving the issue of the hijab ban. The IRPT branch in northern Tajikistan, for example, "received more than a hundred complaints from desperate parents" (Thibault, 2014, p. 165). The IRPT has mostly employed the concept of human rights in order to protect the rights of its supporters, as well as other conservative Muslim girls. They connected the hijab ban to human rights, not with Shari'a, since they realized that raising the issue of Shari'a made the secular state more aggressive. For example, in an interview with Radio Free Europe, Kabiri argued that: "For us, the hijab issue is about human rights. It's about freedom of choice, which is guaranteed by our constitution. The Education Ministry or any other bodies have no right to ban the hijab anywhere" (Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, 2009c). The Women's Committee of the IRPT also argued that "the hijab ban not only hinders freedom of faith and access to education but also violates the Constitution" (Thibault, 2014, p. 165)[87]. Thus, according to Tibi, the "rhetorical and strategical adjustment to democracy" made by the Islamists was "merely for instrumental reasons, to avoid proscription or, in the case of the Muslim Brothers in Egypt, to avoid prosecution" (Tibi 2012, pp. 122-123).

7.5.4.5 Moderation as Protection: Interaction with other Secular Forces

After signing the peace agreement in 1997, in order to improve its position and minimize pressure or threat of repression, as always, the Tajik Islamists often made coalitions with secular forces. For example, during the last presidential election in 2013, the IRPT established a coalition with the Social Democratic Party, including some key Tajik figures, both secular and

---

[86] According to Helene Thibault, who did her research in the northern part of Tajikistan, "[o]ne of the most prominent forerunners of the anti-hijab campaign was the Minister of Education from 2005-2012, Abdudjabbor Rahmonov". (Thibault, 2014, p. 158). Indeed, Rahmonov was someone who refused to allow students and pupils to go to school and universities wearing the hijab.

[87] We should not forget that Tajik secularism is close to the assertive form of secularism, which is very sensitive toward the rise of religious fanatism or radicalism. Actually, the ban on the wearing of the hijab in universities is some kind of reaction against the increasing growth of religious symbols in society and the intolerant speeches given by some clerics. Many Tajik religious clerics and female Muslim activists propogated such ideas that if Muslim women do not wear the hijab, then she is not considered to be a good Muslim. These religious groups, through their interpretation of the Islamic religion, have monopolized the 'truth'. Some politicized Tajik clerics have also made more intolerant speeches toward women who do not wear the hijab. This means the top-down government policy is to some extent a reaction to the bottom-up re-Islamisation project of the radicals.

religious. They even supported the candidacy of Bobonazarova, a secular woman and human rights activists (Freedom House, 2014). Despite their dominant role in the coalition, the IRPT did not insist upon its ideological agenda and supported the secular and democratic platform proposed by the coalition. Furthermore, they even tried to justify their actions religiously in order to persuade their supporters that women, even if secular, could be the leader of the country. Moreover, tactically they made themselves closer to secular groups in order to find allies and protect the party from eventual repression. This tactical change Hamid has called "moderation as protection" (Hamid, 2014, p. 52). According to Wickham (2004, p. 207), "incentives for such interaction were created by a mix of regime accommodation and repression of the country's Islamist opposition groups".

This means that it was not only their inclusion, or the political opening, which gave incentives to make coalitions; rather, it was state pressure that led the Islamists to establish coalitions with other, secular, groups in order to to strengthen their own position. In this regard, Shadi Hamid wrote: "Forming coalitions offers protection against government crackdowns, making it harder for regimes to portray Islamists as extremists or terrorists. In one sense, working with other, more "liberal" and "respected" political forces give Islamists the political cover they need….On the other hand, isolated from other parties and civil society groups, Islamists were easy targets" (Hamid, 2014, p. 52). Vali Nasr, regarding the moderation of the AKP in Turkey and the PML in Pakistan, has also mentioned that both Islamic parties "sought to reduce [the] military pressure on politics through…efforts to build broader coalitions that the generals would hesitate to confront" (Nasr, 2005 p. 18).

However, Wickham and Schwedler both believe that the Islamists' interactions with secularists was the result of not only tactical moderation, but was also ideological. According to Wickham, ideational change and development by the Islamists was "facilitated by [the] interaction of Islamists and secular opposition leaders (groups) in pursuit of common goals", including the democratic reform of authoritarian regime (Wickham 2004, p. 207).

7.5.4.6 *The Policy of 'Patience' and 'Tolerance' in order to survive under the Pressure*

The strategy of 'patience' and 'tolerance' followed by Kabiri (considered a moderate) in the years before his party was banned also had direct link to state pressure and threat of repression (Kabiri, 2013). In other words, state pressure and the threat of repression forced the IRPT's new leadership to talk more about toleration, cooperation and dialogue, since their political destiny

was under threat. Therefore, in the years between 2011 and 2015[88] Muhiddin Kabiri often suggested to his supporters to be patient in reaction to governmental pressure, especially after the elections. He continually invited the political elite and government for negotiations and dialogue (Millat, 2012), and in order to justify his commitment to peace and prosperity in Tajikistan, often sent messages to the government that the IRPT would be patient for as long as needed. However, in his 2012 interview, Kabiri said that his call for a national debate had a negative effect (Millat, 2012).

For example, after the presidential election in 2013, which was conducted under the strong control of the government, Kabiri frequently mentioned in an interview that he is totally against revolutionary tactics and mentioned that his party wants to reform the political system gradually through the use of elections and other legitimate methods, such as negotiation. He tried to give hope to his supporters even though many of them were not satisfied with his policy. In one of his interviews, he had been asked many provocative questions by three well-known Tajik journalists. However, he continually claimed: "If somebody wants to use revolutionary tactics" in an attempt to change the regime, they could do it, but that the IRPT would not repeat its mistakes from the early 1990s. He said that they would not seek to overthrow the system, but rather, would try to find ways to reform political system and make Tajikistan a more democratic and open society. They wanted to convince the regime that they are loyal to the state and no danger for the future stability of the state since they understood that had no other choice. Kabiri himself recognized that the "opposition in Tajikistan cannot do anything without [the] permission of [the] government". Therefore, he said that "if [the] secular state closes the doors, we need to go through windows" in an attempt to talk with the political elite and convince them that reform is important for whole segments of society, as "we are all in the same boat, either opposition or ruling party" (nahzat.tj. 2013). That is, that the IRPT's toleration and patience, regardless of the disagreement of their supporters, was because of their fear of repression.

---

[88] However, according to many experts, both religiosity and the strong pressure on the IRPT have increased, especially since 2012 following the events of the Arab Spring, and also due to the increase of radicalization in the Muslim world following the emergence of ISIS. Both local and foreign observers have claimed that this pressure began after the parliamentary election in 2010. Between 2005 and 2010, the IRPT, as vote-seeking party under the new chairman of the party, had mostly moderated its platform and strategy in favor of vote-maximization strategies, since the political situation was more appropriate for political opposition. The IRPT assumes that they "reached the hearts of the people" in the 2010 parliamentary election. In 2012, a secret document known as "Protocol 32-20" was uncovered on zwezda.ru,. In this protocol, they alleged that the Tajik government had adopted strategies to weaken the IRPT in particular, and religiosity in Tajikistan in general. The situation of the IRPT, as well as of its members, became worse after the presidential election in 2013 and before the 2013 parliamentary election. During this period many of the regional members of the IRPT left the party, and some of their local branches were even banned by party member themselves. While the government asserted that members of the IRPT had voluntarily left the party, the IRPT's leaders emphasized that their members left under pressure.

After the parliamentary election of 2015, which resulted in the IRPT losing its seats in parliament, in his speech, Kabiri told to his supporters that they must: "obey the law in any-case...even in [this] most difficult situation" since, due to various factors, Tajikistan today "needs stability more than [at] anytime". He argued that he came not to reduce their anger, but rather, to talk about the political reality (Kabiri, 2015b). Indeed, he knew that the government had just come to the conclusion to close down his party. Therefore, some experts associate the Islamists' tolerance toward the regime with fear (Kabiri, 2013, pp. 32-33).

It should be mentioned that Kabiri often called his party 'moderate' by referring to his non-confrontational policy, known as the 'tolerance of Kabiri'. He often mentioned that they are the most moderate Islamist party by comparison to other Islamist parties elsewhere, since according to him, despite all pressure, the IRPT has never used violence, and has never even called people to organize demonstrations against the secular government. He has continuously noted the less confrontational policy of his party, since confrontational tactics used by revolutionary Islamists parties were often associated with radicalism. Although demonstrations and protests are part of the democratic process, as mentioned in the first chapter, the moderates in the case of Islamists are mostly associated with those who "…advocate for democratization…but ultimately…accept limited reform that protect the power bases of the current elites" since the term "is most often used to describe those who don't rock the boat" (Schwedler, 2011, p. 350).

The more pressure that was imposed, the more the IRPT's rhetoric softened in regards to the state. Kabiri even suggested several times to the government that they should agree to talk about the future of their party. During the final years of his party's existence, several times he officially declared that the IRPT would even agree to cease their activities if the government could convince them that their existence was a threat to the stability of country. They therefore knew that the government was deeply concerned about religious groups due to rising religious radicalization, especially after the Arab Spring. In one of his final articles, Muhiddin Kabiri stated that, just before the IRPT was banned, an official had told him: "After the Arab Spring, we have realized that is better not to have an Islamic party. After the elections you will have to disband the party" (Kabiri, 2016, p.15). That is, in the end of the days before banning their party in 2015[89] when Tajik Islamists have clearly realized that their political survival is under the

---

[89] On 24 August 2015, the Ministry of Education closed down the IRPT's publication office due to some technical reasons. Later, on 28 August, the Ministry of Justice of Tajikistan arbitrarily banned the IRPT (Amnesty International Public Statement, 2016) and gave them only 10 days to stop its activities. According to the Ministry of Justice's statement, the IRPT no longer had right to be active since the majority of its members had left the party, and therefore, they "do not have [enough] members to qualify as an officially registered party". The Ministry

threat, they officially declared that they want to radically reform their political ideology. They even mentioned that wanted to remove the word "Islam" from the party title. This leads to the conclusion that it was the threat of repression that pushed them to more radically reform their party, even though they did not do it in the end (ozodivideo, 2015). In other words, "[t]his fear creates self-enforcing norms that encourage accommodation with the state and discourage confrontation" (Hamid 2014, p. 50). Similarly, Michels wrote that "the party… threatened by the state upon which its existence depends, carefully avoids…everything which might irritate the state to excess" (Hamid 2014, p. 50).

According to some experts, the main reason behind the banning of the IRPT in 2015 was also the weakness or patience of Kabiri himself (Qayumzod, 2015). They claim that the IRPT, after signing the peace agreement, had always tried to find compromise and never tried to challenge the state. They think that this moderate policy led the state to ban it, since the secular Tajik government realized that the Islamists were unable to challenge it (Mullojonov, 2015). Kabiri himself, in one of his interviews, also aimed to prove this argument: "Many experts, including those who are close to the corridors of power, had been telling us that the policy of tolerance and moderation will eventually turn against us. Later, with increasing pressure on the Party, similar assumptions have been expressed even by some of our supporters, who demanded a tougher response from us" (Kabiri, 2016, p.2).

It was arguably because of the fear of repression that the IRPT's leadership avoided revolutionary slogans and promoted tolerance in spite of that pressure. Indeed, Kabiri much more clearly explained the impact of repression on their attitude. Referring to those who criticized the IRPT's toleration and patience, he mentioned that the Tajik Islamists' leadership chose these softer ways due to their difficult situation. He emphasized that, "[i]f we were openly to oppose Rahmon [president of Tajikistan] it would be very easy for the elite [secular Tajik political elite] to label us Islamic radicals and suppress our activities. If we [Islamists] were to organize public demonstrations we would be beaten by the police as Islamic radicals – and it is easy for the government to convince the EU and the US that Islamic parties in Tajikistan are akin to Islamic fundamentalists in Afghanistan or the Middle East" (Chatham House 2009, p. 6). This leads to the conclusion that many Tajik Islamists did not use radical revolutionary tactics, or radical slogans, simply out of fear of the state.

---

of Justice further stated that 58 branches of the IRPT across the country had already stopped, and that further activities by the IRPT as an official party are unacceptable (Radio Free Europe, Radio Liberty, 2015).

7.6 Conclusion

In attempt to find out the factors behind the moderation of the Tajik Islamists, the current chapter has utilised the theory of moderation under the title of *inclusion-moderation hypothesis*. As can be seen, this hypothesis has been extensively used in order to explain the moderation of Islamists in Middle Eastern as well as other Muslim countries. But it had not yet been applied in the case of Islamists in Central Asia. The point which is important to know is that, by comparison to other Islamist groups in the Middle East and even beyond, such as Indonesia and Pakistan, the factors in the moderation of political Islam in Tajikistan have never been deeply explained and investigated by scholars. Only some scholars, such as Abdullo Rahnamo and Ihsan Yilmaz, have briefly noticed some aspects of the moderation of the Tajik Islamists. Most students of political Islam have focused mostly on Middle Eastern Arab Islamists and the Turkish Islamists.

Taking the theoretical debates into account, the current chapter has come to the conclusion that the inclusion-moderation hypothesis can explain the moderation of Tajik Islamists. The argumentation and historical development of the IRPT demonstrates that the inclusion-moderation hypothesis is applicable in the case of Tajikistan, at least until the IRPT was finally banned in 2015. For example, after their exclusion from the political process in 1992-1993, the Tajik Islamists became extensively radical, but after their inclusion after 1999, they gradually changed their tactics and agenda in favor of moderation.

Generally speaking, this chapter came to the conclusion that the strategic adaptation approach can better explain the moderation of the Tajik Islamists, because according to this study, political Islam in Tajikistan moved toward moderation only tactically. In other words, taking into consideration the challenges of the Tajik Islamists, the current chapter comes to the conclusion that the IRPT became behaviorally moderate only. The causal mechanisms proposed by the strategic adaptation approach, as well as those developed by the force-moderation hypothesis, are applicable in the case of the Tajik Islamists. According to the current study, the main institutional constraints based on moderation theory that provided incentives for the behavioral moderation of the Tajik Islamists are as follows: 1) electoral dynamics, constitutional constraints including secular civil society pressures; and, 2) Threat of State repression.

CHAPTER VIII: SUMMARY AND CONCLUDING REMARKS

8.1 Introduction

The main purpose of this thesis has been to explore the ideological transformation of so-called 'moderate' political Islam in Tajikistan after the end of civil war in an attempt to determine their moderation, which occurred after their inclusion into internal Tajik political process as being either tactical or ideological in its origins. In other words, this thesis has made effort to identify the level of moderation of the Tajik Islamists in an attempt to clarify whether the Tajik Islamists are genuine and sincere in their commitment to democracy or not? Another key task of this thesis has been to specify or identify the mechanisms and factors that led the Tajik Islamists toward moderation, either tactical or ideological, following their inclusion.

To systematically achieve the above-referenced research goals, this thesis identified two main questions:. Firstly, "To what extent has the ideology of political Islam, via the IRPT, successfully been moderated after its inclusion into the the political process?" And, secondly, "What are the main causal mechanisms and factors that have had an impact in changing the IRPT's behavior toward moderation after their inclusion into the political process?

In an attempt to test the impact of their political inclusion on the behavior of the Tajik Islamists, this thesis explored a particular period in the history of political Islam in Tajikistan, focused on the party's inclusion in the political process from 1999 until its re-exclusion in 2015. Prior to 1999, the IRPT was mostly known as a radical movement (in particular during the civil war), and after 2015, was once again excluded from the political process. Although the current thesis is focused mostly on the party's leadership, it also partly concentrates on the members and supporters of the IRPT.

This concluding chapter will therefore firstly summarize the previous chapters and highlight the key points of each chapter. After each chapter description, a brief exploration of the IRPT's development since 2015 will attempt to show the impact of their re-exclusion. Of particular interest are the factors that have prevented the IRPT's re-militarization, in contrast to the early 1990s, despite their political re-exclusion. In addition, there is some discussion about the limitations of the current thesis, as well as the areas that need to be taken into consideration as the basis for future research. Finally, this concluding chapter separately describes the key discoveries of the research undertaken.

8.2 Summary of Chapters

As can be seen in **chapter one**, the literature on Islamist moderation in Tajikistan is really lacking. According to Hélène Thibault, in spite of the Soviet Union's collapse, and the opening of the doors to foreign researchers, the Central Asian region in general has remained a mostly marginal area of study within the body of literature in comparative politics (Thibault, 2014, pp.6-7). Indeed, the limited literature on the IRPT that has been published, both by local and foreign experts, mostly concentrates on the early 1990s history of the Tajik Islamists.

However, it seems that very little has been written about the post-war period of the IRPT. Literature on the ideological development of the Tajik Islamists since the peace agreement is especially lacking, while very few works have explored the ideology of the IRPT or emphasized the Tajik Islamists' moderation after their inclusion into the political process. Therefore, as already seen in chapter one, as well as some other chapters, the current thesis mostly concentrated on the interviews, speeches, and official documentation of the Islamists, as well as the articles of their opponents in official newspapers and websites, in an attempt to identify enough evidence in order to be able to scientifically determine answers to the main research questions identified above.

As already discussed in chapter one, the Tajik Islamists' moderation and ideological transformation has been examined predominantly without the application of any theoretical debate. Thus, **chapter two** discusses the main theoretical approaches in order to better comprehend the main characteristics of the Tajik Islamists' alleged moderation. After describing several key concepts considered important for this dissertation, such as definitions of Islamism as either moderate or radical, as well as fundamentalism, chapter two then examined two key approaches regarding the interaction between political Islam and democracy.

The first approach discussed in this thesis is widely known as the essentialist theory, which states that political Islam (according to some essentialists, Islam itself) is by nature static, anti-modern, both anti-democratic as well as anti-Western, and anti-moderate. The scholars who supported this approach, such as Pipes, Tibi, and Lewis, all advocated that the ideology of political Islam is incompatible with the Western secular democratic heritage[90]. They do not believe in the existence of concepts such as 'moderate Islamists', since according to them, all

---

[90] Without doubt, not all Western countries have been democratic throughout their entire histories. By "Western" is meant the secular-democratic states of western Europe, North America, and also the south Pacific states, Australia and New Zealand.

Islamists have the same aim – the creation of an Islamic state – but have different ways of achieving this anti-democratic project: one through violence, and the other through the ballot box. This is why, Tibi has labeled moderates as 'institutional Islamists', who tactically use democratic electioneering in order to eliminate pluralistic democracy from within. According to Tibi: "Institutional Islamists do not engage in the violence of jihadism but instead play the game of democracy and agree to go to the ballot box. They still share the common goal of the Islamists movements, to establish *al-nizam al-Islami*, the *shari'a*-based Islamic order" (Tibi, 2012, p. 106).

By contrast, as already seen, the second group of "non-essentialist" intellectuals "have moved away from abstract debates about the compatibility of Islam and democracy and toward empirical studies of the practices and commitments of Islamist groups" (Schwedler, 2011, p. 347) in reality. As mentioned in chapter two, representatives from the non-essentialist group during their analysis of some Islamist groups, such as the AKP in Turkey, the En Nahda party in Tunisia, and the Wasat party in Egypt, came to the conclusion that these Islamists are totally different to their predecessors, since they have already adopted primary democratic principles, condemn violence, and do not aim to establish religious law. Therefore, these scholars labeled these Islamists 'moderate' (Al-Anani, 2010; Schwedler, 2006; Wickham, 2004), as being a 'new generation of Islamists', or 'neo-Islamists'(Chamkhi, 2013), as well as 'Muslim democrats' (Nasr, 2005) and even 'post-Islamist' and 'liberal Islamists' (Fuller, 2003).

It should be mentioned that the theoretical debate conducted in chapter two was deeply helpful in understanding the new phenomenon, such as 'moderate Islamism'. As observed later in chapter five and six, these two contradictory approaches have helped to systematically determine the level of moderation of practiced by the Tajik Islamists. Especially, the critical arguments and facts proposed by orientalists, such as Tibbi, were of considerably help in challenging the Tajik Islamists' achievements and ideological development. This dissertation has thus used their methods of criticism in order to explain the contradictory arguments of the Tajik Islamists.

Furthermore, some of the above-mentioned non-essentialist intellectuals who believe in the moderation of the Islamists, have advocated theoretical debates which explain the factors, mechanisms and processes that have led these Islamists toward moderation. They developed the inclusion-moderation hypothesis in order to explain the factors that have contributed to the moderation of the Islamists in the Middle East. These scholars borrowed moderation theory from those scholars who wrote about the impact of inclusion on the moderation of socialist

parties in Eastern Europe and Latin America. These scholars believed that "radical socialist leaders and parties moderated their agendas in order to exploit the new opportunities for electoral participation created by democratization" (Wickham, 2004, p. 205). However, it does not necessarily mean that only the socialist parties were or are radical, since conservatives and nationalists have often exploited the term in order to de-legitimize these groups. This research refers to those radical leftists who used revolutionary tactics and fought to reach their goal, such as those who resisted Falangist Spain[91] and the Estado Nuevo in Portugal.

As mentioned in chapter two, numerous of these non-essentialist experts mentioned above, such as Schwedler and Wickham, emphasized the impact of inclusion and the political opening upon the moderation of Islamists in the Middle East. This theoretical debate has helped to develop a better understanding of the main mechanisms that led the Islamists toward moderation, whether tactical or ideological. The second part of chapter two discussed mostly moderation theory, also known as the inclusion-moderation hypothesis, as well as the force-moderation hypothesis.

Taking these theoretical debates into account, **chapter four** concluded that political Islam in Tajikistan, similar to other social and political movements or parties, had always been in the process of change. The historical trajectory of the IRPT, which was widely discussed in chapter four, demonstrated that this party is neither completely static nor dogmatic, but rather, relatively dynamic since its behavior, tactics and structure often changed throughout its history, either toward moderation or toward radicalization. IRPT experienced constant change and evolution between 1973 until the present. To clarify, in the very beginning, the party was a small Islamists' network limited to a particular region. But during *perestroika*, they became a strong, anti-clerical Islamist movement, and later in the early 1990s following the disintegration of the former Soviet Union, they emerged as a strong political party. Since the peace agreement in 1997, and after the IRPT was legalized in 1999, the behavior of the Tajik Islamists changed positively.

As can be seen in chapter four, prior to 1997, the IRPT advocated a mostly illiberal agenda despite its transformation. Especially with the beginning of armed confrontation in the early 1990s, and later after their exclusion from politics and the beginning of the civil war, the Tajik Islamists became more radical. They dramatically changed their tactics and their ideology,

---

[91] *Partido Comunista de España*; PCE (Communist Party of Spain) was the main opposition to the Francoist dictatorship, since the end of the Spanish Civil War. It was a Marxist-Leninist party founded in 1921. As a revolutionary party, its members joined a militant group known as the Spanish Maquis and fought against the Franco regime.

declared *jihad* against the secular and pro-communist regime, and were linked with other militant Islamist networks in Afghanistan with the aim to establish an Islamic state.

As seen in the **next chapter**, the available evidence and facts illustrated that after peace agreement and legalization of the IRPT in 1999, the Tajik Islamists positively changed their behavior. However, as already mentioned in **chapter five**, by the end of the war, and as a result of its political inclusion, the IRPT gradually abandoned its radical revolutionary tactics and strategy; cut its contacts with other militant Islamist networks; and gradually changed from being a radical militant group into a peaceful national political party. Most importantly, they agreed to re-join the secular state, and declared both in their party program as well as in its electoral platforms not to plan to eliminate the democratic form of government, but instead accepted that they would be willing to act within the framework of the current secular constitution. Chapter five also clearly showed how the Tajik Islamists have easily adopted the above-named elements of democracy, and even described how they tried to justify their arguments religiously in order to convince their members and supporters that their alterration or changes correspond with Islamic teaching.

However, unlike other scholars, chapter five of this dissertation did not hastily conclude, by highlighting their generalized pro-democratic views, that the Tajik Islamists are "post-Islamist" or "Islamo-democratic", but rather, through extensive examination of their controversial speeches, interviews and articles, has instead concluded that the IRPT's moderation is mostly tactical rather than ideological in character and quality, and is not deeply appreciable.

Chapters five and six discovered that the IRPT, and predominantly representatives of the 'old guard' or conservative faction of the party, have no sympathy for the core values of a civic political culture, or core cultural values of democracy, such as individual freedoms, gender equality, and human rights. As already mentioned in chapter five, many of the IRPT's leaders have misinterpreted the Western concept of human rights and mixed it with Islamist teaching. For example,in his brochure on Islam and human rights, Abdulloh Nuri tried to talk about the rights of humans in Islam but always avoided controversial religious laws such as stoning, polygamy and apostasy. At the same time, while mentioning the importance of freedom and human rights, he prioritized Islamic *Shari'a* law over secular, man-made law[92]. As Tibbi argued, the Tajik Islamists "split democracy into two segments, much as they do with modernity itself. They adopt modern instruments and procedures, including electoral politics, while

---

[92] It should be mentioned that the 1648 Treaty of Westphalia was one of the most significant documents in the development of the secular concept of 'law' in European history.

rejecting the values of cultural modernity", such as political pluralism, human rights, and gender equality (Tibi, 2012, p. 20-21). Accordingly, the "rhetorical and strategical adjustment [of all Islamists] to democracy" is "merely for instrumental reasons, to avoid proscription" (Tibi 2012, pp. 122-123).

In presenting such evidence, chapter five extensively demonstrated that the Tajik Islamists' moderation is tactical and shows that for the Tajik Islamists democracy is only a way or mechanism to reach power and to protect itself within the limited political opening. For example, in one of his last speeches, Nuri clearly segmented the democratic system into two parts. He said that democracy is understood as: 1) A value system; and, 2) A way or instrument for achieving a goal. As chapter five demonstrated, he clearly prioritized the second definition, with democracy seen as way to achieve the Islamists' instrumental aim, *i.e.*, the transformation of power.

Therefore, taking the above arguments into consideration, chapter five concluded that the IRPT's moderation is **one-sided, tactical and behavioral,** since they have mostly adopted the instrumental part of democracy based on their interests, but have a deep problem with the core values of democracy. Due to such a conclusion, Bramburg's definition of 'tactical modernists' best describes their behavioral moderation , since they use modern tactics as an instrument to implement their fundamentalist agenda (see: Brumberg, 1997). In other words, the Tajik Islamists' dynamism or flexibility mostly refers to their tactics, structure and behavior and less to their beliefs and agenda. That is, it is mostly their tactics and behavior that have changed over the years and not necessarily their ideology.

Without doubt, it was the younger generation of Tajik Islamists [largely Kabiri] that advocated democratic values and talked more about human rights and freedom rather than Islam itself. Similar to liberals, they often emphasized democratic values in order to defend themselves. However, it appears to be that their approach toward democracy's core values of democracy were merely selective, since they talked about individual freedom or human rights when religious freedom was the issue. Therefore, chapter five determined that the Tajik Islamists' ideological **moderation was** also **'selective'**.

Chapter six of this dissertation, through the use of theoretical debates, further challenged the ideological moderation of the Tajik Islamists by describing the paradoxes, ambiguities and double standards in positions of Islamists in Tajikistan. As already observed in chapter five, in the previous literature, the essentialists especially often labeled the Islamists' moderation as "tactical", "behavioral", or even "selective" and "uneven". Generally speaking, however,

chapter six concluded that the Tajik Islamists' moderation is not only tactical or selective, as mentioned in chapter five, but rather, demonstrated that their moderation is also **one-sided, interest-based, mistaken** as well as **temporal** and **fragile**. This terminology has been further developed for the purposes of this research. The hypocritical voices, uncertainty and ambiguity in the Tajik Islamists' positions clearly illustrated the dilemma of the Tajik Islamists. There is enough evidence to prove that the Tajik Islamists' speeches and statements regarding their positions toward modern democratic system and values are controversial.

Another key finding of **chapter six** is the teleological language of the Tajik Islamists regarding the ultimate aim of their project. This chapter demonstrated that the Tajik Islamists' ultimate aim is not to build democracy, as they have often claimed, but rather to gradually establish a religiously-based political order in Tajikistan. The comprehensive examination of the Tajik Islamists' positions, as well as observation of both the behavior and beliefs of their members, demonstrated that the concept of 'Islamic society' advocated by their leaders means an 'Islamic state', which can only be achieved temporally. This means their bottom up Islamization project has not only been about Islamizing society, but also about de-secularizing the state in order to create an Islamic state with some democratic characteristics. Therefore, this chapter identified their moderation as **temporal**, since between 1999 and 2015, they kept their more moderate agenda, as they did not have an opportunity or the ability to reach their ultimate aim.

However, as can be seen in **chapter six,** the new leadership of the party in Tajikistan has ideas that differ by comparison to the older party leaders. Muhiddin Kabiri has a considerably different approach toward the role of Islam in politics. As already observed in chapter six, Kabiri agreed to include some religious elements into state legislation, and continuously mentioned that the state should remain democratic and secular. Likewise, he often called for reform and suggested interpretations of Islam that corresponded with modern life to the Tajik Islamists. Nevertheless, it would appear that he was alone in advocating democratic views within party. As already mentioned in chapter six, Kabiri was also unable to develop any concrete model for the future of Tajikistan. Indeed, Kabir's concepts were mostly general and unclear. Furthermore, while he often mentioned that they would preserve the secular system, at no point did he ever challenge the controversial and radical beliefs of Islamism supported by the other party leaders. He has never could condemn or reform Islamic law. Therefore, in sum, chapter six identified Kabiri's moderation as **'fragile'**.

Chapter seven, unlike the previous chapters, tried to determine the factors and mechanisms that led the Tajik Islamists toward tactical moderation. Taking into account the theoretical debates, this chapter explained the IRPT's moderation as largely tactical, as well as it being both temporal and fragile. Furthermore, chapter seven tested the inclusion-moderation hypothesis in the Tajik context.

Generally speaking, this chapter concluded that the inclusion-moderation and exclusion-radicalization hypotheses are applicable in the case of the Tajik Islamists, since a positive or negative development of the IRPT has occurred based on either the inclusion-moderation or exclusion-radicalization logics, at least until 2015. In other words, so far as the Tajik Islamists have been allowed 'to play in game', the less interest they have had in their radical agenda: they followed the 'rules of the game'. Insofar as the Tajik Government excluded the Tajik Islamists from the political process, however, the latter turned toward radical revolutionary tactics and violence. In summary, with its focus on moderation theory, this chapter argued that several institutional constraints had a greater impact on the behavioral moderation of IRPT, in particular, electoral pressure, constitutional constraints and state repression. As already observed, once the IRPT were legalized, their interest in attracting new people increased, since they understood that they unpopular among the mainstream Tajik people, in particular due to their negative role in the Tajik civil war. The IRPT, especially during the parliamentary elections of 2005 and 2010, used modern tactics and language to attract more of the youth vote. However, in conclusion it would appear that constitutional constrains, including state pressure of threat of state repression, had more impact in the alteration of the IRPT's behavior than did their pursuit of votes.

8.3 Exclusion of the IRPT: Development of Political Islam since 2015 in Tajikistan

As already noted in chapter four, at the end of September 2015, after just fifteen years' participation in the internal politics of Tajikistan, the IRPT was banned. The Tajik government had accused the IRPT of organizing attacks, which they labelled a military coup; this attempted "coup" had been allegedly conducted by Nazarzoda, who was a key Islamist warlord during the

civil war and the former Deputy Defence Minister, on 4th of September 2015[93]. Following this event, therefore, the IRPT was officially declared as terrorist group by the Supreme Court (Human Rights Watch, 2016).

As a result, numerous key Islamist leaders were arrested, and many active members and supporters of the party left the country. Nevertheless, unlike the period of their first political exclusion in the 1990s, the Tajik Islamists were not exiled to other conservative Muslim countries such as Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iran, but rather, emigrated mostly to European countries,[94] including Turkey[95]. In other words, a new period in the history of the IRPT has begun.

After the IRPT's ban, many questions were raised in the minds of experts, such as: Does the IRPT want to repeat its history and again became a radical or military group? If yes, does the IRPT have the ability to mobilize people again in this way as before? These, and other questions, belong to the new period of the IRPT, and are avenues to be explored in future research.

8.3.1 Exclusion but not Militarization: Factors and Mechanisms

Domestic and International Structural Constraints

Taking the history of the IRPT into account in this dissertation, I would like shortly to advocate some factors that have contributed to keeping the IRPT from repeating its history, and will attempt to answer the question why – at least until now – the IRPT leadership did not radicalize in the same way as in the 1990s? There are several factors, or domestic and international structural constraints, which are influential (see: Ashour 2007, p. 12), such as: 1) *Physical Presence in Europe;* and, 2) *Lack of Resources* (see Chapter two).

---

[93] It should be mentioned that on 4th of September a group of gunmen linked to the former Deputy Defence Minister, Abdulhalim Nazarzoda who was one of the key former Islamist commanders, attacked two police checkpoints in the cities of Dushanbe and Vakhdat, which was announced by the government as an attempt to capture power or military coup (Ataeva, 2016).

[94] As previously mentioned, the leader of the IRPT, Muhiddin Kabiri left the country earlier in March 2015 after the parliamentary election. After an article critical of Kabiri was published in the governmental newspaper, *Jumhuriyat,* which accused him "based on facts of illegal privatization 16 years ago (Fargana news, 2015)", the IRPT's deputies suggested to him not to come back until the situation is normalized in Tajikistan.

[95] According to the IRPT, the number of Tajik immigrants who entered European countries over the last year was an estimated 4,000 (Payom.net, 2016). However, it should be noted that not all Tajik immigrants who have migrated to Europe are Islamists, since the vast majority of them are economic emigrants, who left Russia due to the recent economic crises. The IRPT's representatives also recognize this reality. (Payom.net 2016a).

The IRPT, especially its leading members outside the country, have strategically calculated that supporting violence like they did in the 1990s, and promoting religious radical ideas, is not beneficial for them anymore. They realized that the international community in general, and the region in particular, continues to suffer deeply from the rise of religious radicalism, even though they themselves are in many areas still radical. They understand that influential regional powers, such as Russia and China, also prioritize secular regimes and have never supported the rise of radical militant Islamist groups.

Therefore, Kabiri has often criticized the UN, as well as those countries that were guarantors of the Tajik Peace Agreement, since according to him, due to their concerns in Syria, Iraq and Yemen they forgot their old duties (Central Asia Program, 2016, p. 4) and have not paid attention to Tajikistan. According to him, the international community, including Western countries, are not deeply concerned with the banning of the IRPT, and "the EU continues to support the country [Tajikistan] with millions in development assistance" (Pikulicka-Wilczewska, 2017).

Furthermore, the Tajik Islamists realized that, unlike in the early 1990s, they no longer had regional partners such as Afghanistan and Iran, since these countries are now busy with their own problems and almost all of them are now suffering from Sunni radical Islamism. Iran is also closer to Russia than at any other time. That is why the head of the party mentioned in his interview that, unlike the 1990s, they do not have Mas'ud and Rabani as their supporters (Leaders of the Afghan government during the 1990s that supported Tajik Islamists), and according to him, the current political elite in Russia and Iran are also busy with their own problems in Syria and Ukraine and have less interest in the events in Tajikistan.

In addition, the Tajik Islamists observed the destiny of other militant radical groups, such as the Islamic movement of Uzbekistan, and did not want to become a second *Boko Haram* or *Al-Shabaab* in Central Asia. In general, the Tajik Islamists understood that the global structure and conditions were not favourable for raising any militant and pro-*Shar'ia* radical Islamist groups. These constraints do not allow the Tajik Islamists to even think about military action.

Physical Presence in Europe

The presence of high-ranking Tajik Islamist leaders and activists in Europe, and their cooperation with international organizations, are also another constraint that does not allow the Tajik Islamists to re-militarize. The Tajik Islamists realized that the European countries where

they live, as well as various international organizations, would not support the *shariatization* project or the promotion of religious violence. Therefore, they have instead focused on non-violent tactics and the use of democratic slogans and modern electoral techniques. This suggests they have realized that utilizing democracy is today more important than S*hari'a* for them. Furthermore, it also needs to be mentioned that most of the key and current leaders of the IRPT, especially Muhiddin Kabiri, are young and belong to a new generation of the IRPT. Almost none of them participated in the civil war. This generation of Islamists, in other words, has had more experience with the peaceful political process.

Lack of Resources

Another reason why the IRPT did not radicalise, or more concretely, did not become a militant group this time was their *lack of resources, both inside and outside the country.* It was clear to the Tajik Islamists that they did not have enough resources to organize military groups, as they had done in the 1990s. Furthermore, unlike in the 1990s, they also realized that they did not have enough support within the country to challenge the regime, and most of their current leaders were arrested, while key charismatic and ideological leaders are no longer alive. They also understood that today's governmental institutions are not as weak as they were in the 1990s. Kabiri himself argued in one of his interviews that, by comparison to the 1990s, today they no longer have charismatic leaders, such as Abudillo Nuri and Muhammadsharif Himmatzoda (Islamists), Davlat Khudonazarov (democrat), or Tohir Abdujabor (nationalist), and that this reality should be accepted (PAYOM tv, 2016).

It should be mentioned that in the early 1990s, the state institutions were weaker, while certain regional clans also supported the Islamists. Furthermore, at this time, the IRPT ha alone been excluded, whereas in the 1990s, they had been excluded together with other opposition groups, such as the nationalists, democrats, and some influential official religious clerics such as Akbar Turajonzoda. Their coalition, in other words, had consisted of various political parties and socio-political movements, which is why their coalition had such a strong social base.

8.4 Limitations and Future Research

As already observed, due to time limitations, and a focus on a particular period of time, this dissertation has not investigated the new period in the history of the IRPT mentioned above.

For that reason, the policy, strategy and activities of the IRPT in this new period is an open topic for future researchers to investigate. Due to rising religious radicalization in such a tough situation in the world in general, and the Central Asian region in particular, the future development of the IRPT and its members and supporters – either toward moderation or radicalization – is also a considerably interesting and open topic for future researchers to pursue. The future research, unlike the current study, could test either the *exclusion-radicalization hypothesis*, or the 'moderation in exclusion' hypothesis, which has been used in the case of the Tunisian Islamists, in order to analyze the impact of exclusion on the behavior and beliefs of the Tajik Islamists.

Investigating the Tajik Islamists' members and supporters from the bottom up: Exploring the members and supporters of the IRPT, and focusing on their behaviour and ideology from the bottom level up, is another interesting topic for future research. As already seen, the current research mostly focused on the official documents of the IRPT in general, and the ideas and behaviors of the IRPT's leaders in particular. For example, this dissertation determined that institutional constraints, including politico-legal pressure as mentioned in chapter seven, had an influential impact in changing the behavior of the IRPT's leadership, and the party in general. On the contrary, this dissertation did not analyse the impact of political pressure on the ideology of the IRPT's members and supporters, since information about the ordinary members and supporters of the Tajik Islamists is currently lacking. This is a potential field of inquiry that has not been analysed in much detail. It seems that, unlike the Middle Eastern countries, there are no comprehensive surveys that have been conducted focused on the ideas and positions of the IRPT's membership and supporter base. As a result, it was extremely difficult to explore these ideological commitments in any depth.

Comparing new leadership with previous one: As already seen throughout this research, the current study neither extensively nor separately explored and compared the new leader of the party, Muhiddin Kabiri, to the previous key and traditional leaders of the IRPT. It would therefore be very interesting to investigate his ideas and insights separately in order to identify more clearly the differences between him and the older generation of Islamists.

As can be seen, the research conducted in this dissertation has already shown the many differences between the new leadership and the old one, but more research work in future is still needed in order to determine Kabiri's positions more clearly. Identifying the mechanisms and factors that led Kabiri toward moderation (probably ideological)are also especially

important to investigate. Maybe there are other theories such as party change theory, which can better explain his moderation, as opposed to the inclusion-moderation hypothesis.

8.5 Main Findings and Results of Dissertation

Prior to describing the key findings of this dissertation, it is important to rewrite the definition of moderation provided in the first chapter, since it will help to better support the statements and concluding results. According to this dissertation, moderate Islamists are those who have already condemned violence, accept the rules of the game, believe in peaceful participation in the political process, and who have sincerely adopted or ideologically internalized at least the primary and core values of democracy, such as fundamental freedoms and citizenship rights, including minority rights.

First Finding: The IRPT has not been a completely static or stalled movement, but rather, a dynamic phenomenon, which has changed over its history toward moderation as well as radicalization.

One of the primary results this dissertation has identified is that it demonstrates that the IRPT is similar to other social movements throughout history, in that it has always undergone a constant process of change. As already mentioned in chapter four, due to various reasons and events in the history of Tajikistan, both the behavior of the IRPT's leaders and the structure of their movement have altered, sometimes positively and sometimes negatively. Neither their tactics nor their strategy, and even to some extent their agenda, were completely static. Unlike the essentialist approach, which considers Islamism to be a dogmatic, static and holistic phenomenon, this research asserts that Islamism as global phenomenon, in the case of Tajikistan, in similarity to Islam as a whole, is not a totally monolithic movement. Taking these historical facts into consideration, chapters four and five illustrated the different positions expressed by the leaders of the Tajik Islamists at different times in reaction to the varied conditions they have faced. For example, on the one hand, in the early years of independence, as a result of the short period of the political opening, the Tajik Islamists created a political party, agreed to participate in elections, and made a coalition with the anti-communist secular opposition even though they held a conservative approach and aimed to Islamize Tajikistan (Roy 2000, p. 5 Foreign policy). On the other hand, due to the changing situation at the beginning of armed confrontation, and later as a result of their exclusion from Tajik politics, the IRPT increasingly changed its tactics and became more radical. They declared *jihad* against

the secular, pro-communist regime, and aimed to establish an Islamic state. That is, the tactics and strategy of the IRPT changed considerably due to the fluidity of political events and historical situation.

Second Finding: Impact of Inclusion on the IRPT's moderation

Generally speaking, his dissertation concludes that the political inclusion of the IRPT since 1997 led the IRPT directly toward moderation. In other words, the current research asserts that the inclusion-moderation hypothesis is applicable in the case of political Islam in the Tajik context. The historical development of political Islam in Tajikistan, especially since the signing of the peace agreement in 1997 between the Islamists[96] and the secularists[97], proved the validity of the inclusion-moderation hypothesis – that is, "the idea that political actors included in pluralist processes [become] more moderate as a result of that inclusion" (Schwedler, 2006, p. 192).

Both the opportunities and constraints provided by the political opening have had a visible impact on the de-radicalization of the Tajik Islamists since 2000. Indeed, the Tajik Islamists realized – and learned from – their mistakes that the democratization process would best be to their benefit, since democracy might allow them to come to power peacefully and thereby give them more opportunities to successfully propagate their ideology (See: Chapters 5 and 6).

As already extensively described in chapter five, after their inclusion into the political process, the Tajik Islamists were encouraged to abandon their radical revolutionary slogans and tactics, cut their contacts with militant Islamist networks and turned from a militant radical group into a peaceful national political party. Most importantly, they agreed to become a part of the secular state, accepted the secular constitution and even declared that they would promote democratic reform of Tajikistan's government. For example, the IRPT chairman, Abdullo Nuri, clearly mentioned that they had already come to the conclusion that the democratic experience would be useful and appropriate in this situation for the development of the country. Similarly, in his speech after the war to the International Donors Conference in Support of Peace and Reconciliation in Tajikistan (among other places), Nuri promised that the IRPT was not

---

[96] Including other secular opposition groups, such as democrats, nationalists and secularists (mostly former communists).

[97] Former communists, who were also known as neo-communists or even conservatives.

planning to impose their beliefs on others by force. The IRPT and its leaders had learned[98] from their experiences that democracy is a more appropriate system for the Islamists and their supporters, since they had suffered from the lack of freedom and a repressive secularism over the years. As Bermeo suggests, "the experience of dictatorship (rising authoritarianism) can produce important cognitive change" or "political learning" (Bermeo, 1992, pp. 273-275). Therefore, many scholars and outside observers began to consider the IRPT to be a moderate party, and even described the new chairman of the party as somebody who "advocated a liberal, non-violent Islamism that was compatible with democracy", and called him an "Islamic intellectual with democratic views".

Nevertheless, according to this dissertation's research findings, the IRPT's moderation mentioned above was mostly tactical, rather than ideological. Similar to the views of the essentialists, it is asserted here that the changes that did occur in terms of the rhetoric and tactics of the Tajik Islamists was mostly behavioural. That is, ideologically-speaking, theTajik Islamists had always preserved their anti-modernity agenda and introduced no new approaches to religion, changing mostly just their tactics, rhetoric and structure.

According to this research, the s*trategic adaptation approach* can best explain the Tajik Islamists' moderation. As already mentioned in chapter two, the s*trategic adaptation approach* only considers the behavioral moderation of the Islamists. This approach articulated mechanisms and factors that help to explain the tactical moderation of the Islamists. Thus,it can be asserted that several institutional constraints that are explained by the strategic adaptation approach have contributed to the IRPT's tactical moderation (between 2000 and 2015). Accordingly, as follows: a) electoral pressure; b) constitutional or legal constraints, including pressure from civil society; and, c) (the threat of) state repression; are the three most decisive factors, or the main set of causal mechanisms, which led the IRPT toward behavioral moderation.

---

[98] According to Bermeo (1992, pp. 273-275), political learning is a "process through which people modify their political beliefs". As already observed, moreover, political learning has been nominated by Wickham as the process that explains the ideological moderation of the Islamists. However, according to the research in this dissertation, it is still difficult to consider the Tajik Islamists' political leaning to be an example of value-based or ideological moderation.

Third Finding: However, the IRPT's moderation (mentioned above) was tactical, one-sided, interest-based, as well as behavioral and selective[99]

Chapters five, six and seven comprehensively demonstrated that the IRPT's moderation is not ideological, but rather, is mostly tactical, one-sided, interest-based and selective;indeed, according to the current research, the Tajik Islamists have largely changed their behavior or rhetoric as a result of their interests and political calculations.

Unlike the non-essentialist experts mentioned in chapter two, his dissertation does not hastily identify the Tajik Islamists as being "post-Islamist" or even "Islamo-democratic" through a simple highlighting of their generalized pro-democratic views. For example, Abdullo Rahnamo, the most well-known local expert on the IRPT, highlighted the pro-democratic speeches and statements of the Tajik Islamists in his book without any critical reading, and concluded that the Tajik Islamists had successfully adopted democratic norms and system. Rahnamo also mentioned that he was unaware of what the Tajik Islamists had in mind, but mentioned that the IRPT's leaders' speeches and the party's official documents supported democracy and its principles.

By contrast, through an extensive examination of the speeches, interviews of the IRPT's leaders, and party documents, this dissertation came to the conclusion that the Tajik Islamists' ideology is really problematic and controversial in their relationship to modern democracy.

The first reason to describe the IRPT's moderation as behavioral or one-sided is because the IRPT has always had more sympathy toward democratic procedures and institutions, such as electoral politics, parliament, and the separation of power, as compared to the core values of democracy, such as human rights, fundamental freedoms, and gender equality. As observed in chapters five and six, the representatives of 'old guard' or conservative faction of the party have very little sympathy for these core values. Indeed, both the leaders (especially from the old guard), as well as the party's members and supporters, have always held an ultra-conservative interpretation of religion. In many cases, the promotion of such an interpretation can be considered as actions against the core values of democracy. For example, Nuri and Himmadzoda, in addition to some other conservative leaders, prioritized God's law – or *Shar'ia* – in their writings over secular, man-made law, and have never made any efforts to challenge or re-interpret the more controversial aspects of religious law.

---

[99] Declaring IRPT's moderation tactical, one-sided as well as interest-based and selective is the second and most important finding of the current research.

Moreover, there are enough arguments expressed by high-ranking Islamists, which more deeply support the argument that the Tajik Islamists' moderation is tactical and one-sided. For instance, chapter 5 observed how many Tajik Islamists had themselves acknowledged that they look to democracy simply as an instrument, a way to reach power, rather than being about values and norms. For example, Nuri proposed two definitions of democracy: Democracy as a system of values; and, 2) Democracy as an instrumental means. He clearly underlined that they understood "democracy" only as a way to achieve a transform the political system. (Rahnamo, 2008, p. 139). Agbar Turajonzoda, another key Islamic leader close to the IRPT, also separated electoral democracy from Western liberal principles, and stated that Islam is only compatible with the electoral form of democratic politics. It should also be mentioned that they largely used the term "democracy" only occasionally; and whenever they tried to explain the concept in detail, they only advocated their own interpretation, which differs from both democracy's core values and the electoral process itself. As noted in chapter five, even Muhiddin Kabiri, someone who is considered to be a pioneer of democracy among the Tajik Islamists, considered democracy to be just a mechanism, and mentioned in some of his speeches and interviews that liberal Western norms are alien to Islamic Central Asia.

In other words, as argued by Tibi (2012, p. 21), although the Tajik Islamists have easily adopted the "modern instruments and procedures, including electoral politics" of democratic politics, they have always had controversial opinions, along with problems internalizing democratic values such individual freedom – or what Tibi identified as the "values of cultural modernity" (Tibi, 2012, p. 21). However, as observed in chapter one, to be considered a moderate, it is important to accept and genuinely respect democracy, both as a procedure and as a values system.

Fourth Finding: The IRPT's Approach toward Core Democratic values is Selective

It was seen in chapter five that the younger generation of the Tajik Islamists' leaders had at the same time widely cited the core values of democracy, and often declared their support of democracy in general, and its principles in particular. However, the current thesis has come to the conclusion that the IRPT's leaders only supported democratic principles, including human rights and fundamental freedoms, selectively in order to protect both their position as an opposition, as well as to defend the rights of their supporters within Tajikistan's semi-authoritarian system. For example, they always talked about the importance of freedom of expression, religious freedom and human rights. The younger generation of Islamists, especially, referred more to human rights, by comparison to *Shari'a*, in order to defend

themselves in their political contestation. They associated themselves in the public's mind as protectors of democratization, and often criticized the political elite for their violation of religious and political freedoms. Ambiguity as well as inconsistencies in the positions of the IRPT's leaders regarding democracy is one of their most serious problems, and which demonstrated their selective approach toward the core values of liberal democracy. For example, Nuri often emphasized his support for human rights and freedom, but at the same time, has in some of his writings prioritized religious law above secular law (Nuri 2001, p. 3-25).

Arguments and Methodology

Several questions need to be asked as a result of the above-mentioned arguments. Does the IRPT really believe sincerely in the core values of democracy, such as human rights and fundamental freedoms, or do they, as an opposition group, just need them as a weapon to fight against arbitrary political power? If the IRPT's leaders genuinely believe in these principles, then why have they expressed contradictory statements at the same time? In other words, which of their arguments are more appropriate and closer to their deepest-held beliefs? How can one identify what their true convictions actually are?

In order to properly understand the Tajik Islamist's ideology and identify their sincerity, or their genuineness toward democracy and its principles, this research has carefully explored the speeches, interviews and writings of the IRPT's leaders and activists. As a result, it has been possible to come to the conclusion that the Tajik Islamist leaders have mostly democratized their rhetoric and tried to de-islamize their language when they send their message to the global community, or have it reported to the whole of Tajik society, including the secularists and non-Muslim minorities, since they realized that their fundamentalist views are not shared by all. For example, after the 1997 peace agreement, Abdulloh Nuri, in his speech to the people of Tajikistan, titled *Belief, Freedom, Independence and Respect to the Rights of all People*, tried to convince the people of Tajikistan that the rights and beliefs of all Tajik people would be respected regardless of race, ethnicity and religion. In his speeches, he often highlighted the value of freedom for each person. In 2001, in another of his written works, he also mentioned that while all people in Tajikistan are Muslim, their lifestyles and political activities are different. He claimed that Tajikistan consists of various groups and argued that respect and tolerance for each other's ideas is important. According to him, the Tajik conflict forced all these groups, including the Islamists, to tolerate each other; he further stated that nobody has

the right to force anybody to be religious or not (Nuri.tj, 2015). As can be seen, in almost all of his official speeches and interviews intended for broader consumption by society as a whole, the chairman of the IRPT tried to advocate more moderate views, and avoided talk about the more controversial aspects of their ideology.

By contrast, speeches by the Tajik Islamists' leaders within their community contained completely opposed ideas, in that they appear to have expressed the true beliefs of their agenda. For example, as opposed to his promotion of tolerance in public, in one of his lectures to his pupils and members of the party, the previous chairman of the IRPT advocated very exclusivist views, where he considered his party to be a divine organization, and argued that following other, secular political parties was to follow Satan (Nuri, 2014). In his book, *Islam and Human Rights*, he also equated the *Qu'ran* with a 'constitution', and in which he claimed that religious law is more important than secular law. It is reasonable to conclude that the Tajik Islamists' high-ranking leaders expressed what they really believed in their articles or books since they mostly tried to write these in detail.

The interesting point concerning Muhiddin Kabiri is that he has expressed different ideas regarding democracy in different places. For example, in many of his speeches in Europe and the US, he largely tried to convince his audiences of the IRPT's deep beliefs in democracy. In one such speech given in Washington, he mentioned that his party believes democracy to be not simply an instrumental means, but claimed that the party had exactly the same program as the democrats, and denied that they planned to create an Islamic state (Kabiri, 2012). However, at the same time, his speeches and interviews in Russia expressed more conservative positions closer to their ideology, in which he mentioned that liberal Western norms are alien to the people of Tajikistan. On this basis, therefore, he mentioned in his Moscow speech that the future form of the state should be based in Islamic norms. In another of in his interviews, given in Russia in 2015, he stated that he considers democracy to be a mechanism, and even mentioned that the Tajik Islamists were going to reach their ideological goal to partially implement some part of religious law using democratic methods (Kabiri, 2015a).

This means, the Tajik Islamists, Kabiri in particular, have explicitly expressed pro-democratic views in the hope that the West could help them with democratic reform in their own country beneficial to them. On the contrary, due to sensitivity of Western audience regarding the agenda of political Islam, they often avoided religious rhetoric. By comparison, Kabiri was more natural and objective in Russia, and sincerely expressed what he believed, since he knew that Russia itself is neither as committed to Western liberal values nor to the core values of

democracy. Therefore, in Russia, he mostly focused on the importance of Islamic principles in Central Asia, which are the cornerstone of their ideology. In other words, in Russia, Kabiri more openly expressed his opinions and ideas about the future role of Islam in Tajik politics.

Fifth Concluding Result: the IRPT's moderation is Temporal

In their program and their electoral platform, as well as their statements and speeches, the IRPT's leaders almost declared that they were not going to create an Islamic state, and were not going to impose their ideology over all other segments of society. They have always tried to avoid (mostly in public) phrases such as "Islamic state" or about the implementation of *Shari'a*. Several times they even mentioned that if they were to come to power through elections, then they would not change either the current constitution or the secular form of the state. In order to remove the suspicions of the secularists about their conservative ideological interpretation, they often mentioned that they were going to Islamise society and not state. As such, most of their high-ranking leaders often used the concept of an Islamic society as opposed to an Islamic state; a majority of experts therefore believe that they have successfully internalized democracy and fully-integrated within the secular environment. Abdullo Rahnamo, a distinguished local expert on political Islam, however, has asserted that the theory of an 'Islamic society' proposed by the founder of IRPT is not the system of government. By 'Islamic society', the founder of the IRPT meant a society where religious norms are widely practiced and respected. For example, according to Rahnamo, the theory of an Islamic society is only about Islamic cultural values and social interaction between people, which is possible to apply within any model of political regime (Rahnamo 2008, p. 128).

However, unlike Abdullo Rahnamo, as a result of a deep and comprehensive investigation into the IRPT's official documents, and the written and spoken works of their leaders, this dissertation concludes that by 'Islamizing society' the Tajik Islamists' leaders actually mean 'an Islamic state', and that this is the end-goal they want to gradually achieve. For example, Nuri's criteria and description of an Islamic society explicitly illustrated that he meant not only the promotion of Islamic ethics and values within a free and democratic society, but rather, the ultimate aim of his model is a *Shari'a*-based state where religious law plays a dominant role, and that the ruler should implement God's laws (Nuri, 2001, p. 26). Therefore, according to this study, the Tajk Islamists' leaders are mostly insincere in their pro-democratic statements and appear to have a hidden agenda behind their official declarations that they plan to attain.

Therefore, they have often mentioned that they want to reach this society in stages as well as peacefully within a democratic process based on the will of the people. Saïd Abdullah Nuri, in one of his interviews clearly illustrated this gradualist 'Islamization' project. In 1999 he mentioned that:

> creating an Islamic state is our dream and our hope. But we understand that it can be achieved only stage by stage and in accordance with the wishes of the people of Tajikistan (Eggleston, 1999).

In other words, they first want to prepare the people spiritually. Davlat Usmon, a key former conservative leader of the IRPT, mentioned in 2012 that "our aim is [an] Islamic state, but the decision is in the hand[s] of [the] people. When the people in Tajikistan [become] ready religiously, the constitution will change through referenda. But not [by] force" (Usmon, 2012a).

One may ask why the author has devalued the numerous pro-democratic statements by bringing the few undemocratic statements of the Tajik Islamists into focus. The answer is clear. First of all, as already observed, the Tajik Islamists had already largely accepted democracy as a mechanism but continued to have deep problems in their adaptation to the core values of democracy, since they had never attempted to seriously reconcile Islamic law – especially controversial Islamic law – to these democratic norms. No re-interpretation of the religion was introduced. Secondly, one should not forget that they are Islamists, and consequently, that their ideology is also based in Islamist thought. Every piece of their religious rhetoric is significant, especially their positions regarding the future role of Islam and the creation of a religious state, since it is rooted deeply in their beliefs, which are fundamental and essential.

However, their model of an Islamic society or state similar to many other so-called moderate Islamists is not explicit: Thus, it is difficult to determine what model of society they want, since there are different interpretations of religious law, and different models of Islamic states that exist. According to Khalid (2007, p. 142), "states as diverse as the populist, constitutional, and quasi-democratic republic of Iran; the absolute monarchy of Saudi Arabia; and the military dictatorship in Pakistan have all proclaimed themselves to be Islamic". Similarly, "calls to implement the shariat are never transparent" since "[i]n practice, the shariat [has] never been a neatly codified system of canon law: it is a system of jurists' law, a legal discourse, forever in flux and often independent of state power".

Sixth Concluding Result: the IRPT's model of Democracy is illiberal and opposed to pluralistic or constitutional democracy

Publications written by high-ranking Tajik Islamist figures, especially Himmatzoda, who is the most prominent Islamist intellectual, demonstrated that their model of democracy – and form of the state – is both controversial and contrasted against the modern constitutional and pluralistic democracy. One of the key points that illustrates that their model of democracy is controversial is that key leaders of the IRPT consider divine law to be unteachable in a political system. In their opinion, God's law is superior to both the ruler and the people, even though many Muslim modernists understand *shari'a* as an ethical system rather than a legal system (Fuller, pp. 56-57). Both Himmatzoda and Nuri have accepted the people as the source of power, but neither has recognized the people as the source of law nor as having the right to make law (Himmatzoda, 2001, p. 45). Himmatzoda very clearly mentioned that the people's sovereignty and God's sovereignty should not be in contradiction, and argued that any law or system which is against Islamic *shari'a* is both unacceptable and wrong (Himmatzoda, 2018). Through such argumentation, he effectively rejected secular, democratic law and denied the people's right to adopt laws independently. As Haqqani observed, like many mainstream Islamists, they "have offered their own versions of democracy that allow [only] for the election of officials, but limit the authority of legislators" (Haqqani, 2012, p. 7).

It seems that the Tajik Islamists' concept of the state is similar to the Islamic theocracy advocated by Maududi, which is sometimes called a "theo-democracy". He clearly differentiated the Islamic model of theocracy from the Western form of theocracy, since theocratic Muslim societies "[are] not ruled by any particular religious class but by the whole community of Muslims" (Maududi, 1980, pp. 139-40) who run the state based on the teachings of Islam. Thus, this system is better known as "theodemocracy because neither the religious classes nor the common Muslim can change or alter the laws of God" (Farooqui, n.J, pp. 9-10).

Seventh Finding or Concluding Result: Muhiddin Kabiri's Moderation is Uneven and Fragile

It was seen in chapters four and five that Muhiddin Kabiri had always had softer positions by comparison to the more traditional leaders of the IRPT. He often talked about the necessity of religious reform in the contemporary world, and unlike the conservative faction of the party, always avoided controversial religious statements, preferring to use the words "Islamic society"

and "Islamic values" instead of "Islamic state" or "*Shari'a*". While he mentioned the role of religion in politics, it seems that he had less interest in the total domination of religion and religious law over the politics of Tajikistan.

However, Kabiri's main problem is that he also never tried to deeply reform the IRPT's ideology; instead, he just proposed generalized pro-democratic slogans, but did no conceptual development. He often mentioned plans to include only some aspects of *Shari'a* and not the complete or more controversial aspects of *Shari'a* law. Likewise, he never tried to reform or challenge religious law, which left him able to re-interpret in the future. On this basis, the current study identifies his moderation as fragile.

Until this point, this research has supported the positions of the "Orientalist" scholars (discussed in chapter 2), whose representatives assert that the moderate Islamists "are uncommitted to democratic norms and seek to exploit electoral processes to achieve non-democratic ends" (Schwedler, 2006, p. 1). In particular, the concluding results listed above correspond with the assumptions of Bassam Tibi, whose work is widely known in this field of research: that the moderate Islamists' project is "[t]he politicization and Shari'atization of Islam [which] is not compatible with democracy" (Tibbi, 2012, p. 114).

8.6 Conclusion

Notwithstanding all the challenges faced by moderate Islamists in Tajikistan, this dissertation concludes that, similar to other radical militant groups, the IRPT are not completely static, entirely anti-modern or anti-democratic. Without doubt, the IRPT's moderation is tactical, and the future creation of a democratic state with Islamic characteristic is still the ultimate aim of many of its members. However, unlike radical Islamists elsewhere in the region, the Tajik Islamists have continuously condemned the violence of other militant groups; formally agreed to follow the rules of the game; and have even tried to encourage other Islamists that this approach is the better way to serve Islam.

Therefore, despite all criticisms mentioned above, it needs to be emphasized that the IRPT's behavior, as well as strategy and doctrine, is still different from most radical militant Islamists, such as the IMU, Hizb ut-Tahrir, and even transnational neo-fundamentalist groups such as Al-Qa'ida. Although the Tajik Islamists' moderation has been seriously challenged, the author still believes in the diversity of Islamists as a whole. Thus, unlike the claims of many essentialists, it is the author's belief and conclusion that it is impossible to put all Islamic groups into one

box or to generalize their characteristics. In other words, neither the essentialist nor the anti-essentialist approaches are supported by the research findings of this dissertation.

Nevertheless, taking the above discussions into consideration, one point is clear: that democratization and political liberalization in contemporary Tajikistan has not led to liberal democracy, but rather, has created the conditions for an illiberal, plebiscitary democracy explicitly as a direct result of the increasingly conservative Islamization process. Kabiri's pragmatism, and his *realpolitik*, in this more open and democratic context has led him to become more conservative.

REFERENCES

Abdullaev, K., and Barnes, C., 2001. 'Introduction: from war to politics', in K Abdullaev, K., and Barnes, C., eds., *Accord, politics of Compromise: The Tajikistan peace process*. London: Conciliation Resources, pp. 8-15.

Abdullaev, K., 2005. 'Questions and Discussion after First meeting of Seminar', in Shozimov, P. and Khaidarov, R., ed., *Gosudarstvo i Religiya:poisk putei prodolyheniya dialoga, materials from Seminar* [State and Religion: Search in the way of continuing dialogue]. Dushanbe: Irfon, pp. 47-66.

Abdullaev, K., 2009a. *Conflict Resolution in Tajikistan.* [online] 1 July. Available at: <http://kamolkhon.com/conflict-resolution-in-tajikistan/> [Accessed 28 Januar 2019].

Abdullaev, K., 2009b. *Ot Zintzyana do Khorasana: iz istorii sredneaziyatskoi emigratzii XX veka* [From Xinjiang untill Khorasan: The History of Central Asian Immigration XX century]. Dushanbe: Irfon.

Abdullaev, K., 2010. *Integrating Political Islam in Central Asia: the Tajik Experience.* [online] 3 November. Available at: <http://kamolkhon.com/integrating-political-islam-in-central-asia-the-tajik-experience/> [Accessed 24 March 2018].

Abdullaev, K., 2014. Repressing Central Asian Islamic Activism: a Problem or Solution?, Independent scholar, Tajikistan, *Sumitimo Bank Fellow*, Yale University, pp.1-16.

Abdullaev, Z., 2005. Tajik Islamic Paper Sacks Modernising Editor. *Global Voices Central Asia,* [online] 21 February. Available at: <https://iwpr.net/global-voices/tajik-islamic-paper-sacks-modernising-editor> [Accessed 2 April 2018.].

Abdullo, R., 2001. Tajikistan: The Political Results of a Decade of Independence. *Central Asia and the Caucasus*, 5(12), pp. 1-7.

Akcali, P., 1998a. Islam as a 'common bond ' in Central Asia: Islamic Renaissance Party and the Afghan mujahidin. *Central Asian Survey*, 17(2), pp. 267-284.

Akcali, P., 1998b. Islam and Ethnicity in Central Asia: In the Case of Islamic Renaissance party. *Mediterranean Quarterly*, 9, pp. 126-150.

Akiner, Sh., 2001. Tajikistan: Disintegration or Reconciliation? *Central Asian and Caucasian Prospects series*. London: The Royal Institute of International Affairs.

Akiner, Sh., 2002. 'Prospects for Civil Society in Tajikistan', in Sajoo, A., ed., *Civil Society in the Muslim World: Contemporary perspectives*. London: The Institute of Ismaili Studies, pp. 149 -193.

Akiner, Sh., 2003. The Politicization of Islam in Post-Soviet Central Asia. *Religion, State & Society,* 31(2), pp. 97-122.

Akiner, Sh. and Barnes, C., 2001. 'The Tajik civil war: Causes and dynamics', in Abdullaev, K. and Barnes, C., eds., *Accord: Politics of Compromise: The Tajikistan peace process.* London: Conciliation Resources, pp. 16-23.

Al-Anani, K., 2007. *Al-ikhwan al-Muslmimun fi Misr: Shikhoukhe Tassaru al-Zamman* [The Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt: Gerontocracy Fighting the Clock]. Cairo: Maktaba al- Shorouq al- Dawliya.

Al-Anani, K., 2010. *The Myth of Excluding Moderate Islamists in the Arab World.* [working paper] Washington: Washing The Saban Center for Middle East Policy. Available at: <https://www.brookings.edu/wpcontent/uploads/2016/06/201003_moderate_islamists_alanani .pdf> [Accessed 17 January 2014].

Al-Anani, Kh., 2013. Arab Islamists, from Opposition to Power: A Critical Appraisal. Transition in the Arab World. *IEMed Mediterranean Yearbook,* 2013, pp. 30-35. [pdf] Available at: <https://www.iemed.org/publicacions/historic-de-publicacions/anuari-de-la-mediterrania/sumaris/avancaments-anuari-2013/Arab%20Islamists%20from%20Opposition%20to%20Power_Khalil%20al-Anani_Med2013.pdf> [Accessed 1 March 2010].

Alidina, F., 2014. *Islamism and Secularism in Turkey: Revisiting Moderation Theory.* Paper presented International Political Science Association 23rd World congress of Political Science, Montreal, Canada, 19-23 June, pp. 1-11.

Aliev, I. and Sindelar, D., 2004. Tajikistan: Top Islamic Body Bans Women From Attending Mosque Services. *Radio Free Europe/Radion Liberty,* [online] 20 October. Available at: <http://www.rferl.org/content/article/1055440.html> [Accessed 10 July 2013].

Alinazar, S., 2012. *Raisi bakhshi HNIT – uzvi dastai terroristi* [Head of IRPT' Branch - Member of Terrorist Group]. *Jumhuryat,* [online] 31 July. Available at: <http://www.jumhuriyat.tj/index.php?art_id=9850> [Accessed 10 May].

Al Jazeera English, 2015. *Upfront - Is political Islam compatible with democracy?* [video online] Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BpJVq78A4Y0> [Accessed 28 January 2019].

An' Naim, A, A., 1996. *Toward an Islamic Reformism:Civil Liberties, Human Rights and Internatonal Law.* Syracuse: Syracuse University Press.

Anderson, L., 2001. Arab democracy: Dismal prospects. *World Policy Journal,* 18, pp.53-60.

Arabov, O., 2004. A note on Sufism in Tajikistan: what does it look like? *Central Asian Survey,* 23(3-4), pp. 345-347.

Asadulloev, I., 2009. *Politicheskij Islam v Tadzhikistane. Zametki i Nabljudenija* [Political Islam in Tajikistan: Remarks and Observations]. [e-book] Dushanbe. Available at: <http://new.ifppanrt.tj/images/Books/05-Book_of_Asadullaev_I_4/Politicheskiy_islam_v_Tadjikistane.pdf> [Accessed 22 March 2019].

Asia Plus, 2010. Women appeal against 'impending hijab ban' at Qurghon Teppa market. [online] August 25. Available at: <http://www.asiaplus.tj/en/news/198/68649.html> Broken link, now available in the Archives section of the site.

Ashour, O., 2007. 'lions Tamed? An Inquiry into the Causes of De-Radicalization of the Egyptian Islamic Group'. *Middle East Journal,* 61 (4), pp. 596-597.

Ataeva, N., 2016. *Trial against 13 members of the Islamic Renaissance Party begins in Tajikistan.* [online] Available at: <http://nadejda-atayeva-en.blogspot.de/2016/02/trial-against-13-members-of-islamic.html> [Accessed 19 February 2017].

Atkin, M., 1995. 'Islam as Faith Politics and Bogeyman in Tajikistan', in Bourdeaux, M., ed., *The Politics of Religion in Russia and the New States of Eurasia.* London/New York: M.E. Sharpe, pp. 247-272.

Ato, Q., 2008. M. Kabiri: Bo muhojironi kori muloqoti beshtar boyad [With labor migrants need to be more meetings]. *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty*, [online] 29 September. Available at: <www.ozodi.org/a/1292373.html> [Accessed 10 April 2018].

Ato, Q., 2009. M. Himmtzoda: Salafiho mukholifi mo budand [Salafis were against us]. *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty*, [online] 11 September. Available at: <www.ozodi.org/a/1820507.html> [Accessed 10 April 2018].

Ayubi, M., 2015. Many Faces of Political Islam. [working paper] *119,* Singapore: Nanyang Technological University Library.

Baizoyev, A., and Hayward, J., 2004. *A Beginner's Guide to Tajiki.* London, New York: Routledge Curzon.

Ball, T., and Dagger. R., eds., 1998. *Political Ideologies and the Democratic Ideal.* New York and London: Routledge.

Barnomai Hizbi Nahzati Islomii Tojikiston, [The IRPT's Political Program], pp.1-22.

Bayat, A., (ed) 2013. ´Post-Islamism at Large´, in Bayat, A., ed., *Post-Islamism: The Changing Faces of Political Islam.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 3-34.

BBC, 2005. Uzbek crackdown a 'massacre'. *British Broadcasting Corporation*, [online] 7 June. Available at: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/asia-pacific/4617231.stm> [Accessed 7 December 2018].

BBC Persian, 2013. *Islomgaroi dar Todzhikiston* [Islamism in Tajikistan]. [video online] 2 August 2013. Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uXchxRsicWw&t=197s> [Accessed 21 March 2018].

Bennigsen, A., and Wimbush, S.E., 1986. *Muslims of the Soviet empire: a guide.* Bloomington: Indian University Press.

Bermeo, N., 1992. 'Democracy and the Lessons of Dictatorship'. *Comparative Politics,* 24 (April 1992), pp. 273-75.

Bilgrami, A., 2014. *Secularism, Identity and Enchantment*. London: Harvard University Press.

Blua, A., 2002. Tajikistan: Government To Vet Islamic Clerics. *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty,* [online] 7 August. Available at: <http://www.rferl.org/content/article/1100477.html> [Accessed 13 March 2019].

Boboyorov, H., 2017. Tajikistan: Between security and objectification of female body. *New Eastern Europe*, [online] 13 November. Available at: <http://neweasterneurope.eu/2017/11/13/tajikistan-security-objectification-female-body/> [Accessed 5 February 2018].

Bowyer, C. A., 2008. *Islamic movement and democracy in Central Asia: Integration or Isolation?* [report] Paper IFES, 11 July, pp. 2-18.

Brumberg, D., 1997. 'Rhetoric and Strategy: Islamic Movements in the Middle East', in Kramer, M., ed., *The Islamism Debate.* Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv University, pp. 11-33

Buehler, M., 2012. Revisiting the Inclusion-moderation thesis in the context of decentralized institutions: The behavior of Indonesia's Prosperous Justice Party in national and local politics. *Party Politic*s, 19 (2), pp. 210-229.

Burgat, F., 1993. 'Bilateral Radicalism'. in Azzam, T., ed., *Power-Sharing Islam?.* London: Liberty for Muslim World Publications, pp. 43-48.

Burke, J., 2003. Tajik Islamic Party Appeals to OBSE, UN over Arrest of Deputy Leader June 8, 2003. *EurasiaNet: Tajikistan Daily Digest,* September 22 2003, 1. Available from: <www.eurasianet.org/resource/tajikistan/hypermail/news/0010.stml> [Accessed 12 May 2017].

CATV NEWS (Central Asian TV), 2015. *Jekskljuzivnoe interv'ju Muhiddina KABIRI* [Interview with Chairman of IRPT Kabiri]. [video online] Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qAIqrKVI8v0> [Accessed 27 October 2017].

Cavatorta, F., and Merone, F., 2013. Moderation through exclusion? The journey of the Tunisian Ennahda from fundamentalist to conservative party. *Democratization,* 20 (5), pp.857-875.

Chamkhi, T., 2013. *Neo-Islamism Post Arab Spring*. Paper presented at Australian Political Studies Association Annual Conference, Murdoch University, 30 September – 2 October 2013. Available at: <https://www.auspsa.org.au/sites/default/files/neo_islamism_post_arab_spring_tarek_chamkhi.pdf> [Accessed 29 March 2016].

Charter of the Islamic Revival Party of Tajikistan adopted in 1991, 2013. in Roziq, Z., ed., *40 soli Nahzat: Khotira, Andesha, Didgoh* [40 Years of IRPT: Memory, Insights and Approaches]. Dushanbe: Muaattar, pp.438-444.

Charter of the Islamic Revival Party of Tajikistan adopted in 1999, 2013. in Roziq, Z., ed., *40 soli Nahzat: Khotira, Andesha, Didgoh* [40 Years of IRPT: Memory, Insights and Approaches]. Dushanbe: Muaattar, pp. 446-454.

Charter of the Islamic Revival Party of Tajikistan adopted in 2003, 2013. in Roziq, Z., ed., *40 soli Nahzat: Khotira, Andesha, Didgoh* [40 Years of IRPT: Memory, Insights and Approaches]. Dushanbe: Muaattar, pp.455-464.

Chatman House, 2012. *Politics and Stability in Tajikistan*. Russia and Eurasia Programme Meeting Summary, United Kingdom, London, 26 November. [pdf] Available at: <https://www.chathamhouse.org/sites/default/files/public/Research/Russia%20and%20Eurasia/261112summary.pdf> [Accessed 3 March 2017].

Central Asia Program, 2016. *Interview with Muhiddin Kabiri, leader of the Islamic Renaissance Party of Tajikistan in-exile.* [pdf] Available at: <http://centralasiaprogram.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/Policy-Brief-33-January-2016-1.pdf> [Accessed 20 April 2018].

Clauson, M. A., 2006. *A History of the Idea of "God's Law (Theonomy): Its Origins, Development and Place in Political and Legal Thought.* Lewiston: Edwin Mellen Press Ltd.

Collins, K., 2007. Networks, and Islamist Movements: Evidence from Central Asia and the Caucasus. *World Politics,* 60 (1), pp. 64-96.

Constitution of the Republic of Tajikistan, 2003. Dushanbe

Crossman, A., 2017. An Overview of Qualitative Research Methods. [online] Available at: <https://www.thoughtco.com/qualitative-research-methods-3026555> [Accessed 17 November 2017].

Dagi, I., 2013. 'Post-Islamism a' la Turca in Post-Islamism: The Changing Faces of Political Islam', in Bayat, A., ed., *Post-Islamism: The Changing Faces of Political Islam.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 71-108.

Davlat, R., 2011. Agar mo Kabiriro az HNIT bigirem [If we take Kabiri from IRPT out]. *Millat,* [online] 24 April. [online] Available at: <http://www.millat.tj/articles/siyosat/2524-agar-kabiriro-az-hnit-bigirem-2524.html> [Accessed 7 February 2018].

Demiralp, S., 2004. The Moderation of Political Islam in Turkey: The Case of the Justice and Development Party. *The Public Purpose* 2.1 (2004), pp. 14-29.

Diamond, L., 2004. What is Democracy. [online] Lecture at Hilla University for Humanistic Studies. Available at: <http://web.stanford.edu/~ldiamond/iraq/WhaIsDemocracy012004.htm> [Accessed 21 October 2018].

Dostiev, A., 2003. *Shikastu bastanho* [Breaking and Tying]. Dushanbe: Irfon.

Dreazen, Y., 2005. Iraqi Charter Causes Alarm: Bush Allies Raise Concern over the Role Islam. *Wall Street Journal*, September 19, A15.

Dudoignon, A., 1998. 'Political Parties and Forces in Tajikistan (1989-1993) ', in Djalili, M. R., Grare, F. and Akiner, Sh., eds., *Tajikistan: The Trials of Independence*. New York: Martin's Press, pp.52-85.

Dustov, N., 1994. *Zakhm dar jismi vatan* [The Wound in the Body of the Homeland]. Dushanbe: Irfon.

Economy Watch, 2015. Tajikistan Economic Statistics and Indicators. [Online] Available at: <http://www.economywatch.com/economic-statistics/country/Tajikistan/> [Accessed 13 March 2019].

Eggleston, R., 1999. Central Asia: OSCE Proposes Asian Summit on Fundamentalism. *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty*, [online] 9 October. Available at: <https://www.rferl.org/a/1092335.html> [Accessed 18 November 2018].

Epkenhans, T., 2015. The Islamic Revival party of Tajikistan: Episodes of Islamic Activism, Post-conflict Accommodation, and Political Marginalization. *Central Asian Affairs* 2 (2015), pp. 321-346.

Epkenhans, T., 2016. *The Origins of the Civil War in Tajikistan: Nationalism, Islamism, and Violent Conflict in Post- Soviet Space*. Lanham, Boulder, New York, London: Lexington Books.

Epkenhans, T., 2010. 'Muslims without Learning, Clergy without Faith: Institutions of Islamic Learning in the Republic of Tajikistan', in Kemper, M., Motika, R. and Reichmuth, S., eds., *Islamic Education in the Soviet Union and its Successor States*. New York: Routledge, pp.313-348.

Eraj, S., 2006. *Political Islamic versus Secular Politics in Tajikistan*. Master thesis. Master degree. OSCE Academy in Bishkek.

Esposito, J. L., 1997. ed. *Political Islam: Revolution, Radicalism, or Reform*. Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers.

Esposito, J., 2002. *Unholy War: Terror in the Name of Islam.* New York: Oxford University Press.

Faraj, 2010. Sarqonun dogma nest [The Constitution is not dogma]. 15 September.

Faraj, 2013. Turajonzoda: Hamaamon nahzatro hifz mekunem [Turajonzoda: Altogether we protect nahzat or IRPT]. [online] 10 September. Available at: <http://www.faraj.tj/index.php/tj/sijosat/2757-t1263ra1207onzoda-1202amaamon-na1203zatro-1203ifz-kunem.html> [Accessed 10 May 2018].

Faraj, 2015. Charo president az Saidmukarram Abduqodirzoda intiqod kard? [Why President criticized Saidmukaram Abdukqodirzoda?], Wednesday, 12 August.

Farooqui, M., n.d. *The Political Thought of Maulona Mawdudi.* [pdf] Synopsis. Osmania University, Hydarabad, pp. 9-29. Available at: <http://shodhganga.inflibnet.ac.in/bitstream/10603/24630/15/15synopsis.pdf> [Accessed March 2018].

Fargana news, 2015. *Muhiddin Kabiri: Closing IRPT will not bring about better life in Tajikistan.* [online] Available at: <http://enews.fergananews.com/articles/2930> [Accessed 30 January 2017].

Fredirick S., 2015. *Lost Enlightenment: Central Asia's Golden Age From the Arab Conquest to the Tamerlane.* United Kingdom: Princetion University Press.

Freedom House, 2001. *Report on Tajikistan: Overview.* [online] Available at: <https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/2001/tajikistan> [Accessed 19 March 2019].

Freedom House, 2004. *Report on Tajikistan: Overview.* [online] Available at: <https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/2004/tajikistan> [Accessed 19 March 2019].

Freedom House, 2009. *Report on Tajikistan: Overview.* [online] Available at: <https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/2009/tajikistan> [Accessed 24 March 2018].

Freedom House, 2014. *Report on Tajikistan: Overview.* [online] Available at: <https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/2014/tajikistan> [Accessed 19 March 2019].

Fuller, G. E., 2003. *The Future of Political Islam.* New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Gallagher, A., n.d. *The United Nations, Democracy and Human Rights.* [pdf] Manual on Human Rights Monitoring. An Introduction for Human Rights Field Officers. Chapter 1. Oslo: University of Oslo, Norwegian Centre for Human Rights. Available at: <https://www.jus.uio.no/smr/english/about/programmes/nordem/publications/manual/current/kap1.pdf> [Accessed 5 July 2018].

Glasse, C., 2013. *The New Encyclopedia of Islam?* Fourth Edition, Boulder New York Toronto: Rowman and Littlefiefl Publishers, Inc. Lanham.

GlobalSecurity.org, n.d. *Deobandi Islam.* [online] Available at: <https://www.globalsecurity.org/military/intro/islam-deobandi.htm> [Accessed 1 February 2019].

Gulhoja, Sh., Nazar U. and Yatim Sh., 2015. Pazhuhish 60 darsadi Tojikiston jonibdori davlati dunyavi hastand [Poll 60 percent Tajikistan support Secular State]. *Europe/Radio Liberty*, [online] 29 September. Available at: <www.ozodi.org/content/official-servey-says-tajik-people-suppot-secularism/27277124.html> [Accessed 29 September 2015].

Haghayeghi, M., 1995. *Islam and Politics in Central Asia.* London: Macmillan Press Ltd.

Hamid, Sh., 2014. *Temptations of Power: Islamist and Illiberal Democracy in the Middle East.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Hamzawy, A., 2005. *The Key to Arab Reform: Moderate Islamists*. Policy Brief 40. [pdf] Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. Available at: <http://carnegieendowment.org/files/pb40.hamzawy.FINAL.pdf> [Accessed 17 January 2014].

Hansen, F., 2007. The outbreak and settlement of civil war: Neorealism and the case of Tajikistan. *Civil Wars*, [e-journal] 2(4), pp.1-22. Available at: https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/13698249908402420 [Accessed 13 March 2018].

Haqqani, H., 2013. Islamists and Democracy: Cautions from Pakistan. *Jornal of Democracy,* [e-journal] 24 (2), pp. 5-14.

Heathershaw, J., 2009. *Post-Conflict Tajikistan: The Politics of Peacebuilding and the Emergence of Legitimate Order*. Abingdon: Routledge.

Heathershaw, J., and David W., 2014. *The Myth of Post-Soviet Muslim Radicalization in the Central Asian Republics* [pdf], London: Chatham House, the Royal Institute of International Affairs. Available at: <https://www.chathamhouse.org/sites/default/files/publications/research/20141111PostSoviet RadicalizationHeathershawMontgomeryFinal.pdf> [Accessed March 2019].

Henry Dunant Centre, 2003. *Humanitarian Engagement with Armed Groups: The Central Asian Islamic Opposition Movements.* [pdf] Available at: <https://www.hdcentre.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/Humanitarian-engagement-with-armed-groups-The-Central-Asian-Islamic-opposition-movements-February-2003.pdf> [Accessed 13 March 2019].

Himmatzoda, M., 2001. *Dar justujui haqiqat* [The Seeking the Truth]. Dushanbe: Devashtich.

Himmatzoda, M., 2006. *Didgoh va Masoil* [Approach and Issues]. Dushanbe: Devashtich.

Himmatzoda, M., 2018. *Democratiya nizomi kufr nest* [Democracy is not the system of *kufr*]. [online] Available at: <http://payom.net/?p=13021> [Accessed 17 March 2018].

Hizbi Nahzati Islom, 2012. *M. Hait dar viloyati Sugd* [M. Hait in the Sugd region]. [video online] Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wHh4XcOjcUQ> [Accessed 31 November 2016].

Human Rights Watch, 2016. *Tajikistan: Severe Crackdown on Political Opposition.* [online] Available at: <https://www.hrw.org/news/2016/02/17/tajikistan-severe-crackdown-political-opposition> [Accessed 19 February 2017].

Huntington, S, P., 1991. *The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century.* Norman: University of Oklahoma Press.

Huntington, S. P., 1993. The clash of civilizations? *Foreign Affairs,* 73(3), pp. 22-49.

Huong, N., 2014. On Democratic Theories. *Philosophy of News* [online]. Available at: <https://philosophynow.org/issues/101/On_Democratic_Theories> [Accessed 9 October 2018].

ICG (International Crisis Group), 2003. *Central Asia: Islam and the State*. Asia Report, 59. Osh/Brussels: International Crisis Group.

ICG (International Crisis Group), 2004. *Tajikistan's Politics: Confrontation or Consolidation?*. Asia Briefing, 59. Dushanbe/Brussels: International Crisis Group.

ICG (International Crisis Group), 2011. *Tajikistan: The Changin Insurgent Threats*. Asia Report N205. Bishkek/Brussels: International Crisis Group.

IEMed Barcelona, 2012. *Khalil al-Anani - Islamist parties and state model.* [video] Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Jjr8AMC9mXk> [Accessed 17 January 2014].

IFES Survey, 2011. *Public Opinion in Tajikistan 2010.* [pdf] Available at: <file:///E:/Dokumente/PhD%20Thesis/Tajikistan%20IRPT/Surveys/ifes_tajikistansurvey_012510_2.pdf> [Accessed 13 March 2019].

IFES Survey, 1997. *Obshestveniye mnenie v Tadzschikistane 1996* [Public Opinion in Tajikistan 1996]. [pdf] Available at: <file:///E:/Dokumente/PhD%20Thesis/Tajikistan%20IRPT/Surveys/IFES%201996%20–%20Public%20Opinion%20in%20Tajikistan%20(Russisch).pdf> [Accessed 13 March 2019].

Index mundi, 2018. *Tajikistan Demographics Profile.* [online] Available at: <www.indexmundi.com/tajikistan/demographics/profile.html> [Accessed 21 April 2018].

Institute for War and Peace Reporting, 2014. *Tajik Islamic Party Focuses on Female Vote*. RCA Issue 748, 22 November. [online] Available at: https://www.refworld.org/docid/5476ebb64.html [Accessed 15 December 2018].

IRPT, 2015a. *Sukhanronii M. Kabiri dar Khujand* [Kabiri's speech in Khujand]. [video online] Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HJb8GcyfPRk&t=147s> [Accessed 20 March 2018].

IRPT, 2015b. *Intikhobot az Nigohi Islom bo Yahyo Abdusattor* [Election and Islam, interview with Yahyo Abdusattor]. [video online] Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L_XG51nl_kE&t=343s> [Accessed 20 March 2018].

IRPT, 2015c. *Savolu javobi intikhobkunandagon bo M. Kabiri* [Questions and Answers of Voters with Kabiri]. [video online] Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WCfSCrO2IrQ> [Accessed 20 March 2018].

Islam news, 2012. *V Tadzhikistane v mesyats' Ramazan 88% naseleniya sobliudaiut post* [In Tajikistan, 88% of the population fast during Ramadan]. August 13.

Istad, A., 1992. Davlati milli chi guna boyad? [How should look like the nation state?]. *Adabiyot va sana´t*, 4 June.

Jaliliyan, A., 2015a. *Musohiba bo Ustod Kabiri: Ahamijat va Dzhojgohi Intihobot dar Dzhomea: Qismi 1* [Interview with Muhiddin Kabiri: The Role of Election in Society Part 1]. [video online] Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UhwCE0nuPMA> [Accessed 19 June 2015].

Jaliliyan, A., 2015b. *Mahmudjon Fayzrahmonov*. [video online] Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C8MMLoLlWUk> [Accessed 14 December 2018].

Jay, R., 1994. 'Democracy', in Eccleshall, R., Geoghegan, V., Jay, R., Kenny, M. MacKetzie, I. and Wilford, R., eds., *Political Ideologies: an Introduction.* 2nd Edition. London and New York: Routledge, pp. 118-152.

Johnson, R. B., Onwuegbuzie, A. J., & Turner, L. A., 2007. Toward a definition of mixed method research. *Journal of Mixed Methods Research, 1* (2).

Kabiri, M., 2003. 'PIVT i Hizb-ul Tahrir: Sovmestimost i razlichie' [IRPT and Hizb-ul Tahrir: Similarities and Differences] in Seifert, A., and Kreikemaier, A., eds., *O sovmestimosti politicheskogo Islama I bezapasnosti v prostranstve OBSE* [On Coexistence of Political Islam and Security in the OSCE Space: Documents of *Islamic-Secular Dialogue* in Tajikistan]. Dushanbe: Sharqi Ozod, pp. 218-222.

Kabiri, M., 2005. 'The Hermeneutics of the Dialogue to Achieve a Secular-Isamic Compromise in Tajikistan', in Bitter, J., Guérin, F., Seifer, A., and Rahmonova-Schwarz, D., eds., *From Confidence-Building Towards Co-operative Co-existence: The Tajik Experiment of Islamic-Secular Dialogue.* Baden-Baden: Nomos, pp.199-213.

Kabiri, M., 2012. *Muhiddin Kabiri. Chairman of the Islamic Rebirth Party of Tajikistan.* [online] Transcript of Mr. Kabiri's speech and discussion at the Central Asia Program, George Washington University, United States, Washington, D.C., 16 October. Available at: <https://app.box.com/s/rguimm2zip588mc09jnq> [Accessed 9 January 2018].

Kabiri, 2013. 'Risolati HNIT: Diruz, imruz, fardo [IRPT's Mission: Yesterday, Today, Tommorow]', in Roziq, Z., ed., *40 soli Nahzat: Khotira, Andesha, Didgoh* [40 Years of IRPT: Memory, Insights and Approaches]. Dushanbe: Muattar, pp. 5-38.

Kabiri, M., 2015a. *Vstrecha Muhiddina Kabiri s russkimi analitikami* [Muhiddin Kabiri's Meeting with Russian Experts]. [video online] Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?t=2373s&v=Nf-oAPFQEM4> [Accessed 1 May 2018].

Kabiri, M., 2015b. *Muhiddin Kabiri bo fa'olon* [Kabiri with activists]. [video online] Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OAwgsxZW--U> [Accessed 18 April 2018].

Kabiri, M., 2015c. *Intikhobot az Nigohi Islom* [Election According to Islam]. [online] Nahzat. Available at: <http://nahzat.tj/14226- intihobot-az-nigoi-islom.html> [Accessed 19 June 2015].

Kabiri, M., 2016. *Birth and Death of Democracy in Tajikistan: Memories and Reflections about Elections from 1990 until 2016.* [online] Central Asia Program CAP Papers, 174, pp.1-19. Available at: <http://centralasiaprogram.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/CAP-Papers-174-September-2016-Muhiddin-Kabiri.pdf> [Accessed 20 April 2018].

Kabiri, M., 2017. *IRPT and the De-Radicalization Program in Central Asia and among the Refugees.* [online] Available at:<https://www.osce.org/odihr/343646?download=true> [Accessed 19 March 2019].

Kalyvas, S. N., 1996. *The Rise of Christian Democracy in Europe.* Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

Kalyvas, S. N., 1998. Democracy and religious politics: Evidence from Belgium. *Comparative Political Studies,* 31, pp. 292-320.

Kalyvas, S. N., 2000. Commitment problems in emerging democracies: The case of religious parties. *Comparative Politics*, 32(4), pp. 379-399.

Karagiannis, E., 2006. The Challenge of Radical Islam in Tajikistan: Hizb-ul Tahrir al-Islami. *Nationalities Paper,* 34(1), pp. 1-20.

Karagiannis, E., 2012. The New Political Islam in Central Asia: From radicalism to the Ballot Box? *The Brown Journal of World Affairs,* XIX(1), pp. 71-82.

Karagiannis, E., 2016. The New Faces of Political Islam in Central Asia: The Rise of Islamo-democrats. *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs,* 36(2), pp. 267-281.

Kedourie, E., 1994. *Democracy and Arab Political Culture.* London: Frank CASS & CO. LTD.

Khalid, A., 2007. *Islam after Communism: Religion and Politics in Central Asia.* Berkeley, New York and London: University of California Press.

King, G., Keohane, R. and Verba S., 1994. *Designing social inquiry: scientific inference in qualitative research*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Knudsen, A., 2003. Political Islam in the Middle East. Bergen: Chr. Michelsen Institute, CMI Report 2003: 3. pp. 1-31 [online] Available at: <https://www.cmi.no/publications/file/1548-political-islam-in-the-middle-east.pdf> [Accessed 01 May 2019].

Kramer, M., 2003. Coming to Terms: Fundamentalists or Islamists. [online] *Middle East Quarterly*, 10(2), pp.65 -77. Available at: http://www.meforum.org/541/coming-to-terms-fundamentalists-or-islamists [Accessed 21 February 2016].

Kuhn, T., 1970. *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*. 2nd ed. Chicago. The University of Chicago Press.

Kuru, A., 2012. *Assertive and Passive Secularism.* [online] Available at: <http://www.themontrealreview.com/2009/Secularism-and-State-Policies-Toward-Religion-The-United-States-France-and-Turkey.php> [Accessed 1 February 2019].

Kurzman, Ch., 1998. *Liberal Islam*: *A Sourcebook*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Lapidus, M., 2002. *A history of Islamic Societies*. 2nd ed. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Lewis, B., 1988. *The Political Language of Islam.* London: The University of Chicago Press.

Lewis, B., 2002. *What Went Wrong: Western Impact and Middle Eastern Response*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Lewis, B., n.d. Islam and Liberal Democracy: Historical Overview, *Journal of Democracy*, pp. 52-63 [online] Available at: <http://journalofdemocracy.com/downloads/JoD7.2-Bernard-Lewis.pdf> [Accessed 22 March 2019].

Mahmadulloev, S., 2015. Posukh ba maqolai V. Qossidin 'Sarqonun dogma nest [The Response to the article of V. Qosiddin 'The Constitution is not dogma']. *Jumhuriyat* [online], 15 September. Available at: <http://www.jumhuriyat.tj/index.php?art_id=5631> [Accessed 10 May 2018].

Mahmud, J., 2013. 'Musohiba bo Jaloluddini Mahmud' [Interview with Jaloluddini Mahmud], in Roziq, Z., ed., *40 soli Nahzat: Khotira, Andesha, Didgoh* [40 Years of the IRPT: Memory, Insights and Approaches]. Dushanbe: Muattar.

Mamadazimov, A., 2000. *Paliticheskaya istoriya tadzhiksogo naroda* [Political History of Tajik nation]. Dushanbe: Donish.

Marshall, S., 2005. *Framing contests and moderation of Islamist groups: The case of the Muslim Brotherhood and the Wasat in Egypt.* Paper presented at the annual meeting of the International Studies Association, Honolulu, Hawaii, March 2005.

Maududi, S. A., 1980. *The Islamic Law and Constitution.* 7th ed. Lahore: Islamic Publications Ltd.

Mazrui, A., n.d. Liberal Islam vs Moderate Islam: Elusive Moderates and Siege Mentality. *The American Journal of Islamic Social Sciences,* 22, no. pp. 83-89.

Mecham, Q., 2012. *The Rise of Islamist Actors: Formulating a Strategy for Sustained Engagement,* Project on Middle East Democracy.

Michelman, F., 2003. 'Democracy and Positive Liberty', in Campbell, T., and Stone A., eds., *Law and Democracy. Second Series.* Great Britain: The Cromwell Press, pp. 67-81.

Michels, R., 1959. *Political Parties: A Sociological Study of the Oligarchical Tendencies of Modern Democracy.* New York: Dover Publications.

Millat, 2009. Dar movaroi tundgaroi mazhabi va rezhimhoi khudkoma [About Religious Radicalism and Authoritarian Regimes]. [online] Available at: http://www.millat.tj/articles/musohiba/1567-muhiddin-kabiri-dar-movaroi-tundravoni-mazhabi-va-rezhimhoi-khudkoma-1567.html> [Accessed 16 March 2019].

Millat, 2012. Bozii buzurg va ishtibohoti buzurg [Big game and big mistakes]. [online] Available at: <http://www.millat.tj/articles/musohiba/3384-muhiddin-kabiri-bozii-buzurg-va-ishtibohoti-buzurg-3384.html> [Accessed 20 March 2019].

Milod, F., 2011. Mirzomuhammadii Navid: Kabiri moro gush nakard [Mirzomuhammadii Navid: Kabiri did not listen to us]. *Free Europe/Radio Liberty*, [online] 16 August. Available at: <www.ozodi.mobi/a/24298174.html> [Accessed 13 October 2015].

Mirovalev, M., 2015. Uzbekistan 10 years after the Andijan Massacre. *Aljazeera*, [online] 12 May. Available at:
<https://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/features/2015/05/150511123115026.html> [Accessed 7 December 2018].

Mirzoev, J., 2013. *Ustod Muhammadasharif Himmatzoda: Ismoliliya va HNIT* [Himmatzoda: Ismailism and IRPT]. [video online] Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Gqp8Js9A6fQ> [Accessed 19 March 2019].

Mirzorahmatov, S., 2012. *Shumo kisted?* [Who are you?]. *Jumhuriyat*, [online] 17 July. Available at: <http://www.jumhuriyat.tj/index.php?art_id=9740> [Accessed 10 May 2018].

Moussalli, A., 2001. *The Islamic Quest for Democracy, Pluralism and Human Rights.* Gainesville University Press of Florida.

Moussalli, A., 2009. Wahhabism, Salafis and Islamism: Who Is The Enemy? *Conflicts Forum Monograph*, pp.1-39.

Mozaffari, M., 2007. What is Islamism? History and Definition of a Concept. *Totalitarian Movements and Political Religions,* 8(1) pp. 17-33.

Muhabbatov, H., 2012. Ikhtiyoran parokanda shudani HNIT behtarin hadya baroi millati tojik ast. [Voluntary Disintegration of IRPT would be the Best Gift for the Tajik People] *Millat,* [online], 8 August. Availabe at: <www.millat.tj/siyosat/3227-ikhtiyran- parokanda-shudani-hnit-.html#comment-3168> [Accessed 13 December 2015].

Muhammadnazar, S., 2005. 'The role and Place of religious organizations in the Nation State', in Bitter, J., Guérin, F., Seifer, A., and Rahmonova-Schwarz, D., eds., *From Confidence-Building Towards Co-operative Co-existence: The Tajik Experiment of Islamic-Secular Dialogue.* Baden-Baden: Nomos, pp.146-158.

Mullojonov, P., 2001. 'The Islamic Clery in Tajikistan since the End of the soviet Period', in Dudoignon, S. A., and Komatsu H., eds., *Islam in Politics in Russia and Central Asia (Early Eighteenth to late Twentieth centuries)*, London: KEGAN PAUL, pp. 221-250.

Mullojonov, P., 2015. *The History of Civil War (1992-1997) Thesis.* Ph.D. Philosophisch-Historische Fakultät Basel.

nahzat.tj, 2013. *Musohibai Qayumzod bo Muhiddin Kabiri* [Qayumzod's inteview with Muhiddin Kabiri]. [online] Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eFPjXT-kiBY> [Accessed 16 March 2019].

Najibullah, F., 2014. Tajik Imams get a Makeover. *Free Europe/Radio Liberty*, [online] January 18. Available at: <http://www.rferl.org/content/tajikistan-imams-makeover/25234064.html> [Accessed 26 January 2014].

Najot, 2010. IRPT's Electoral Platform, 21 January. pp. 4-9.

Nasr, V., 1996. *Mawdudi and the Making of Islamic Revivalism.* New York: Oxford University Press.

Nasr, V., 2005. The Rise of Muslim Democracy. *Journal of Democracy*, 16 (2), pp. 13 -27.

Naumkin, V. V., 2005. *Radical Islam in Central Asia: Between Pen and Rifle.* Lanham: Rowman and Littleeield Publishers INC.

Navruzshoh, Z., 2014. HNIT misli Doish kofiru mulhid mejuyad [IRPT like ISIS seeks heretic and atheist]. *Europe/Radio Liberty*, [online] 12 December. Available at: <https://www.ozodi.org/a/tajik-scholar-likened-islamic-party-to-is/26721601.html> [Accessed 13 June 2018].

Nazirov, D., and Sattorov, I., 2005. *Respublika Tajikistan: Istoriya nezavisimosti. god 1992*-e [The Republic of Tajikistan: History of Independence. Year 1992]. Dushanbe: Irfon.

Niyazi, A., 1998. Vozrozhdenie Islama v Tadzhikistane: Traditsiia i palatika [Revival of Islam in Tajikistan: Tradition and Politics]. *Central Asia and the Caucasus.* Available at: <https://www.ca-c.org/journal/cac-06-1999/nijazi.shtml> [Accessed 13 March 2018].

Nourzhanov, K., and Bleuer, C., 2013. *Tajikistan: A Political and Social History.* Canberra: ANU E Press.

Nuri, A., 1996. *On sui Siyosat* [Beyond Politics]. Dushanbe.

Nuri, A., 2001a. *Oshtinoma* [Peace]. Dushanbe.

Nuri, A., 2001b. *Nazare ba huquqi bashar az didgohi Islom* [Human Rights in Islam]. Dushanbe: Nashriyoti Nodir.

Nuri, S, A., 2003. Diruz, imruz va fardoi HNIT: Hizbe, ki resha dar ormoni mardum dorad [IRPT's Yesterday, Today and the Tomorrow: The party which has roots on peoples 'desire]. Interviewed by Qiyomiddin Sattori, in Sattori, Q., ed., *HNIT- Zodai ormoni mardum* [IRPT-Born by the Will of the People]. Dushanbe: SHKO, pp. 5-44.

Nuri.tj, 2012. *Sulhi Tojikon* [Tajik Peace]. [online] Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=13uCLLWnQFA> [Accessed 17 August 2017].

Nuri.tj, 2014. *Jaholati Siyasi* [Political Ignorance]. [online] Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DAWDisUKWNM&t=648s> [Accessed 10 October 2018].

Nuri.tj, 2015. *Ormonhoi millat* [Nation's Desire]. [video online] Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vOxFeRarkmI> [Accessed 13 August 2017].

Nurzoda, N., 2015. Hizbi Nahzati Islomi Tojikistan az haft pushti dunyaviyat bezor ast [Islamic Revival Party of Tajikistan totally hate Secularism]. *Jumhuriyat,* [online] 10 July. Available at: <www.jumhuriyat.tj/index.php?art_id=19887> [Accessed 16 March 2018].

Olcott, B., 1995. 'Islam, fundamentalism and public policy in Central Asia', in Yacacov, R., ed., *Muslim Eurasia: Conflicting Legacies*. London: FRANK CASS.

Olcott, B., 2007. Roots of Radical Islam in Central Asia. *Carnegie Papers, 77.* Availabel at <https://carnegieendowment.org/files/cp_77_olcott_roots_final.pdf> [Accessed 17 December 2016].

Olimova, S., 2003. Politicheskǐi Islam v Obshestve i gosudarsve: Dialog ili konfrontatsiya [Political Islam in Society and Government: Dialogue or Confrontation], in Seifert, A, K., and Kreikmayer, A., eds., *O sovmestimosti politicheskogo Islama I beyopasnosti v prostransve OBSE* [On the compatibility of political Islam and secularity in the OSCE Space]. Dushanbe: Sharqi Ozod.

Olimova, S., n.d. Political Islam and Conflict in Tajikistan. *CA&C Press AB Publishing House* [online]. Available at: <https://www.ca-c.org/dataeng/11.olimova.shtml> [Accessed 7 March 2018].

Olimova, S., and Olimov, M., 2001. 'The Islamic Renaissance Party', in Abdullaev, K., and Barnes, C., eds., *Accord: Politics of Compromise: The Tajikistan peace process.* London: Conciliation Resources, p. 26.

Olimova, S., and Tolipov, F., 2011. Islamic revival in Central Asia. The cases in Uzbekistan and Tajikistan. In: Fundacio CIDOB. NO. 26, pp. 1-14.

Omar, A., 2007. Lions Tamed? An Inquiry into the Causes of De-Radicalization of the Egyptian Islamic Group. *Middle East Journal, 61(4),* pp. 596-625

Ozodagonnews, 2015. *Baromadi peshazintikhobotii Muhiddin Kabiri dar shabakai avval* [Kabiri's speech in TV one]. [video online] Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0ZFTwKMHiHE> [Accessed 19 March 2019].

Ozodivideo, 2015. *Nishasti khabari Hizbi Nahzati Islomii Tojikiston* [Press Conference of the IRPT]. [video online] Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pVJ9KOxxYWU&t=50s> [Accessed 16 March 2019].

Oxford Islamic Studies Online, n.d. *Aisyiyah*. [online] Available at: <http://www.oxfordislamicstudies.com/article/opr/t125/e90> [Accessed 27 November 2018].

Payom.net, 2016. *Jarayoni nav: Muhojirat ba Avrupo: Omil va ravandi on* [New Wave: Migration to the Europe: Factors and Process]. [online] Available at: <http://payom.net/archives/3780> [Accessed 05 February 2017].

PAYOM tv, 2016. *Musohiba bo Muhiddin Kabiri* [Interview with Muhiddin Kabiri]. [video online] Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OouAd3tlNF0> [Accessed 21 February 2017].

PAYOM tv, 2018. *Muhiddin Kabiri dar borai khilofati Islomi, Democratiya va sokhti davlat* [Muhiddin Kabiri: Islamic Khilafah, Democracy and Political System]. [video online] Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uitsm76Bkbs/> [Accessed 21 May 2018].

Pevna, K., 2014. *Moderation of Islamist Movements. A Comparative Analysis of Moroccan PJD and Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood.* Paper presented at the ECPR Graduate Conference, Innsbruck, Austria, 3-5 July. Available at: <https://ecpr.eu/Filestore/PaperProposal/8980bf70-2461-4e77-92c6-d8bde0b8cea6.pdf> [Accessed 9 March 2018].

Pew Research Center, 2012. *The World Muslims unity and diversity*. [online] Available at: <www.pewforum.org/2012/08/09/the-worlds-muslims-unity-and-diversitz-2-religious-commutment/> [Accessed 29 September 2015].

Philipphe, S., 1996. Democracy's Future: More Liberal, Preliberal, or Postliberal? *Journal of Democracy*, 6(1), pp. 15-22.

Pikulicka-Wilczewska, A., 2017. Exiled Tajik Opposition Leader Speaks. *The Diplomat,* [online] 1 May. Available at: <https://thediplomat.com/2017/05/exiled-tajik-opposition-leader-speaks/> [Accessed 20 April 2018].

Pipes, D., 1995. There Are No Moderates: Dealing with Fundamentalist Islam. *The national Interest*, [online] 41. pp. 48-57. Available at: <http://www.danielpipes.org/documents/274.pdf> [Accessed 7 March 2018].

Pipes, D., 1998. Distinguishing Between Islam and Islamism. *Middle East Forum* [online]. Available at: http://www.danielpipes.org/954/distinguishing-between-islam-and-islamism [Accessed 10 March 2019].

Pipes, D., 2009. *In the Path of God: Islam and Political Order.* 5th Printing. New Brunswick and London: Transaction Publisher.

Plattner, M. F., 1998. 'Liberalism and Democracy: Can't Have One Without the Other'. *Foreign Affairs,* 77(2), pp. 171-180.

Praveen, V. A., 2016. Postcolonialism: Edward Said & Gayatri Spivak. *Research Journal of Recent Sciences*, 5(8), pp. 47-50. Available at: <http://www.isca.in/rjrs/archive/v5/i8/9.ISCA-RJRS-2016-051.pdf> [Accessed 28 January 2019].

Qayumzod, A., 2011. *Sallai Nuri va galastuki Kabiri: kadom behtar?* [Sallai Nuri and Kabiri's tie: which is better?]. [online] Available at: <http://www.sunni-news.com/tj/articles.aspx?article_no=15713> [Accessed 8 February 2018].

Qudrat, A., 2011. *Salom ba payomi Kabiri* [Hallo to Kabiri's Statement]. *Jumhuriyat,* [online] 24 December. Available at: <http://www.jumhuriyat.tj/index.php?art_id=8303> [Accessed 10 May 2018].

Rabasa, A., and Larrabee, S., 2008. *The Rise of Political Islam in Turkey.* Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation.

Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, 1997. Tajikistan: Conference Raises Millions In Aid. *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty*, [online] 9 November. Available at: <https://www.rferl.org/a/1087470.html> [Accessed 15 March 2019].

Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, 2009a. Tajik Supreme Court Bans Salafi Islam. *Radio Free Europe/Radion Liberty*, [online] 8 January. Available at: <https://www.rferl.org/a/Tajik_Supreme_Court_Bans_Salafi_Islam/1367891.html> [Accessed 8 January 2015].

Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, 2009b. *Dar Dushanbe az Islom va Democratiya harf zadand* [In Dushanbe talked about Islam and Democracy]. [online] Available at: <https://www.ozodi.org/a/1901720.html> [Accessed 26 March 2018].

Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, 2009c. Islamic Party Leader in Tajikistan Says He supports Secular System. *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty*, [online] 15 September. Available at: <www.rferl.org/content/Islamic_Party_Leader_In_Tajikistan_Says_He_Supports_Secular_System_/1823086.html> [Accessed 14 March 2019].

Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, 2010. *Kabiri ba "farhangi guftugu va mukolama" da´vat kard* [Kabiri invited to "culture of dialogue"]. [online] Available at: <www.ozodi.org/a/2166331.html> [Accessed 10 April 2018].

Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, 2011a. Tajik Official Gives New Details of Ali Bedaki's Death. *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty*, [online] 6 April. Available at: <https://www.rferl.org/a/tajik_official_death_ali_bedaki/3549012.html> [Accessed 15 March 2018].

Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, 2011b. Tajik Claim Militant Leader Killed. *Free Europe/Radio Liberty*, [online] 15 April. Available at: <https://www.rferl.org/a/tajikistan_says_militant_leader_killed/3558497.html> [Accessed 15 March 2018].

Radio Free Europe/ Radio Liberty, 2015. Tajik Islamic Party Banned, Given Deadline To Stop Activities. *Free Europe/Radio Liberty*, [online] 28 August. Available at: http://www.rferl.org/a/tajik-islamic-party-banned/27213877.html [Accessed 19 February 2017].

Radio Free Europe/Radion Liberty, 2018. Tajik Man Sentenced To Nearly 10 Years Over Sharing IRPT Videos. *Europe/Radio Liberty*, [online] 11 May. Available at: <www.rferl.org/amp/29221164.html> [Accessed 31 May 2018].

Rahmatov, N., 2014. Mavlavi Abdulhai. [video online] Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f0X22XTVUEs> [Accessed 27 October 2017].

Rahnamo, H. A., 2005. 'The Need to Adopt Political Islam to the Tasks of Nation-State Building', in Bitter, J., Guérin, F. Seifer, A., and Rahmonova-Schwarz., D., eds., *From Confidence- Building Towards Co-operative Co- existence: The Tajik Experiment of Islamic-Secular Dialogue.* Baden-Baden: Nomos, pp. 129-146.

Rahnamo, A., 2008. *Hizbi Dini va Davlati Dunyavi* [Religious Party and Secular State]. Dushanbe: Irfon.

Rahnamo, A., 2009. *Ulamoi Islomi dar Tojikiston* [Islamic Ulema in Tajiksitan]. Dushanbe: Irfon.

Rahnamo, A., 2010. HNIT va Intikhoboti 2010 [IRPT and Election in 2010]. *Millat,* [online] 27 May. Available at: <http://millat.tj/siyosat/1811-hnit_va_intikhoboti__345.html> [Accessed 18 June. 2017].

Rahnamo, A., 2011. *Islam va Amniyati Milli* [Islam and National Security]. Dushanbe: Irfon.

Rashid, A., 1994. *The Resurgence of Central Asia: Islam or Nationalism?* Karachi: Oxford University Press.

Rashid, A., 2003. *Jihad: The Rise of Militant Islam in Central Asia. New Haven:* YALE UNIV PR.

Rasizade, A., 2002. The New Great Game in Central Asia after Afghanistan. *Turkish Journal of International Relations,* 1(2), pp. 125-146. Available at: <http://dergipark.gov.tr/download/article-file/19372> [Accessed 12 March 2019].

Roberts, K, M., 1995. From the Barricades to the Ballot Box: Re-Democratization and Political Realignment in the Chilean Left. *Politics and Society, 23* December 1995.

Robson, C., 2002. *Real World Research: a Resource for Social Scientists and Practitioner-Researchers*. 2nd edition. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers.

Rouméas, E., n.d. *What is Religious Pluralism?* [pdf] Available at: <https://spire.sciencespo.fr/hdl:/2441/6ugg3blvrk8ampdv99pcaonog5/resources/2015-roumeas-what-is-religious-pluralism.pdf > [Accessed 25 November 2018].

Roy, O., 1993. *The Civil War in Tajikistan: Causes and Implications. A Report of the Study Group on the Prospects for Conflict and Opportunities for Peacemaking in the Southern Tier of Former Soviet Republics.* Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace Washington.

Roy, O., 1994. *The Failure of Political Islam*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Roy, O., 1998. 'The ties that bind', *Index on Censorship,* 27:2, pp. 130-134. Available at: <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/03064229808536327> [Accessed 6 May 2019].

Roy, O., 2000a. *The New Central Asia: The Creation of Nations.* London, New York: I.B. Tauris Publishers.

Roy, O., 2000b. The Foreign Policy of the Central Asian Islamic Renaissance Party. *Council on Foreign Relations*, [online] pp. 1-34. Available at: <https://www.cfr.org/content/publications/attachments/Roy.pdf> [Accessed 11 March 2018].

Roy, O., 2001. *Qibla* and the Government House: The Islamist Networks. *SAIS Review,* XXI(2), pp. 53-63.

Roy, O., 2004. *Globalized Islam: The Search for a New Ummah.* New York: Columbia University Press.

Roziq, Z., 2013a. *HNIT 40 soli nahzat: khotira, andesha, didgoh* [IRPT 40 years of nahzat: Memory, Insight, Approach]. Dushanbe: Muaattar.

Roziq, Z., 2013b. *HNIT dar masiri ta'rikh* [IRPT on the Path of History]. Dushanbe: Muattar.

Sadana, J., 2013. *The Coding Manual for Qualitative Researchers.* Loss Angeles, London, New Dehli, Singapure, Washington DC: SAGE Publications Ltd .

Safarov, S., 2005. 'Searching for a Compromise: Proposals for Consolidating Confidence Between Representatives of Secular and Islamic Worldviews', in Bitter, J., Guérin, F., Seifer, A., and Rahmonova-Schwarz., D., eds., *From Confidence-Building Towards Co-operative Co-existence: The Tajik Experiment of Islamic-Secular Dialogue.* Baden-Baden: Nomos, pp.192-199.

Safoev, K., n.d. Hizbi Nahzatro ki gilolud kard? [Who made dirty IRPT?]. *Jumhuriyat,* [online] Available at: <http://www.jumhuriyat.tj/index.php?art_id=7065> [Accessed 10 May 2018].

Safoev, K., 2014. Bozdoshit Saodatshoi Nahzati [Detain of Saodatsho]. *Jumhuriyat,* [online] 29 April. Available at: <http://www.jumhuriyat.tj/index.php?art_id=13920> [Accessed 10 May 2018].

Salim, A., 2008. *Challenging Secular the State: the Islamization of Law in modern Indonesia.* Hawai'i: University of Hawai'i Press.

Salimpur, M., 2010. Muhiddin Kabiri. *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty,* [online] 6 March. Available at: <www.ozodi.org/a/1975772.html> [Accessed 10 April 2018].

Sattori, Q., 2007 ed., *Mujaddidi Asr: Bakhshida ba 60-umin solgardi zodruzi ustod Sayid Abdullohi Nuri* [Reformer of Century: Dedicated to the 60th Anniversary of Ustad Abdullo Nuri] Dushanbe: Devashtich.

Sayfulloyoda, H., 2005. 'A Modern national Understanding of Relations Between the Secular State and Islam', in Bitter, J., Guérin, F., Seifer, A., and Rahmonova-Schwarz., D., eds., *From Confidence-Building Towards Co-operative Co- existence: The Tajik Experiment of Islamic-Secular Dialogue.* Baden-Baden: Nomos, pp. 159-181.

Schwedler, J., 2006. *Faith in Moderation: Islamist Parties in Jordan Yemen.* New York: Cambridge University Press.

Schwedler, J., 2011. Can Islamists Become Moderates? Rethinking the Inclusion-Moderation Hypothesis. *World Politics,* 63(2), pp. 347-376.

Schwedler, J., 2013. Islamists in Power? Inclusion, Moderation, and The Arab Uprisings. *Middle East Development Jounal*, 5(1), pp. 1-18.

Seifert, A. S., 2003. 'Svetsko-islamskii kompromissnyi protsess v Tadzhikistane Obieediniaiushchie i razdeliaiushchie faktory Rezume II' [The Process of Islamic-Secular Compromise in Tajikistan. Unifying and Dividing factors. Resumee II], in Seifert, A., and Kreikemaier, A., eds, O sovmestimosti politicheskogo Islama i bezopasnosti v prostranstvu OBSE [On coexistence of Political Islam and Security in the OSCE Space: Documents of *Islamic-Secular Dialogue* in Tajikistan]. Dushanbe: Sharqi Ozod, pp.167-185.

Seifert A. S., 2005. ,On the Benefits of Confidence-Building Between Islamists and Secularists', in Bitter, J., Guérin, F. Seifert, A., and Rahmonova-Schwarz, D., eds., *From Confidence-Building Towars Co-operative Co-existence: The Tajik Experiment of Islamic-Secular Dialogue.* Baden-Baden: Nomos.

Seifert, A, S., 2012. Political Islam - Opponent of Democratic Partner? *CORE Working Paper 25.* [online] Available at: <https://ifsh.de/file-CORE/documents/CORE%20WP25_en.pdf> [Accessed 13 March 2019].

Sharipov, S., 2005. 'The Relation of Relations Between the Political System and Islam in the Tajik National State', in Bitter, J., Guérin, F. Seifer, A., and Rahmonova-Schwarz., D., eds., *From Confidence-Building Towards Co-operative Co- existence: The Tajik Experiment of Islamic-Secular Dialogue.* Baden-Baden: Nomos, pp. 114-128.

Shozimov. P., 2003. *Tadzhikskaya identichnost I gosudarstvenoe stroitelstvo v Tadzhikistana* [Tajik Identity and Nation-Building in Tajikistan]. Dushanbe: Irfon.

Shozimov, P., 2005. Social science Research Isolation and Tajikistan. *SAIS Review,* 25(2), pp.19-26.

Signer, M., 2009. *Demagogue: The Fight to Save Democracy from its Worst Enemies.* New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Sodiqov, A., 2011. Kabiri Reelected as Islamic Revival Party Leader in Tajikistan. *The Central Asian Caucasus Analyst*, [online] 19 September. Available at: <https://www.cacianalyst.org/publications/analytical-articles/item/12374-analytical-articles-caci-analyst-2011-10-19-art-12374.html> [Accessed 14 March 2019].

Sohibnazar, A., 1997. *Subhi sitorakush, kitobi avval. Sayare ba ruydodhoi okhiri Tojikiston* [The Morning the Star is killed, First Volum. An Opinion of the latest Events in Tajikistan]. Dushanbe: Donish.

Soroush, A., 2000. *Reason, Freedom, and democracy in Islam: Essential Writings of 'Abdolkarim Soroush'.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Sprague, A., and Przeworski, J., 1986. *Paper Stones: A History of Electoral Socialism.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Stacher, J., 2002. Post-Islamist Rumblings in Egypt: The Emergence of the Wasat Party. *The Middle East Journal,* 56(3), pp. 415-432.

Star, F., 2015. *Lost Enlightenment: Central Asia's Golden Age from Arab Conquest to Tamerlane.* New Jersey: Princeton University Press.

TajNetTV, 2013. *Musohibai Dodojon Atovulloev bo Sayid Abdullohi Nuri* [Sayid Abdullohi Nuri's interview with Dodojon Atovulloev]. [video online] Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Spr2UdfdyDU> [Accessed 26 November 2015].

Tallmeister, J., 2013. The Ideological Moderation of Islamist Movements. *E-International Relations Students,* 2485 views. [online] Available at: <https://www.e-ir.info/2013/07/25/the-ideological-moderation-of-islamist-movements/> [Accessed 01 May 2019].

Taylor, Ch., n.d. *Secularism and Multiculturalism.* [online] Available at: <https://www.bbvaopenmind.com/en/articles/secularism-and-multiculturalism/> [Accessed 1 February 2019].

Tezcür, G, M., 2010. The Moderation Theory Revisited: The Case of Islamic Political Actors. *Party Politics,* 16 (1), pp. 69-88.

The World Fact Book, 2019. *Central Asia: Tajikistan.* [online] Available at: <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ti.html> [29 January 2019].

Thibault, H., 2014. *Religious Revival in Tajikistan: The Soviet Legacy Revisited/ thesis.* Ph.D. School of Political Studies Faculty of Social Sciences University of Ottawa. Available at: < https://ruor.uottawa.ca/bitstream/10393/31787/1/Thibault_Helene_2014_These.pdf >[Accessed 12 March 2019].

Tibi, B., 2008. *Political Islam, World Politics and Europe: Democratic Peace and Euro-Islam versus Global Jihad.* London and New York: Routledge Taylor & Francis Group.

Tibi, B., 2012. *Islam and Islamism.* New Haven and London: Yale University Press.

Tibi, B., 1998. *The Challenge of Fundamentalism, Political Islam and the New World Disorder.* London: University of California Press.

Tolonews, 2013. Tolonews 21 December 2013 PURSO PAL. [video online] Available at: <www.youtube.com/watch?v=5-Lk2jFAbec> [Accessed 6 January 2016].

Toprak, B., 2005. 'Secularism and Islam: The Building of Modern Turkey', *Macalester International,* 15 (9), pp. 27-43.

Tuggy, D., n.d. *The Theories of Religious Diversity.* Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy. [online] Available at: <https://www.iep.utm.edu/reli-div/#H3> [Accessed 17 August 2017].

TVSUNNAH, 2012. Post-Islamists Revolution-Prof. Tariq Ramadan. [video online] Available at: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LXu1JXUth1o> [Accessed 12 April 2016].

Umed Ozodi, 2010a. *Ustod Muhiddin Kabiri Rahbari Hizbi Nahzati Islomi Tojikiston -3* [Muhiddin Kabiri Chaiman of Islamic Revival Party of Tajikistan -3]. [video online] Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3puqKFE0Od4> [Accessed 21 March 2018].

Umed Ozodi, 2010b. *Ustod Muhiddin Kabiri Rahbari Hizbi Nahzati Islomi Tojikiston -2* [Muhiddin Kabiri Chaiman of Islamic Revival Party of Tajikistan -2]. [video online] Available at: <https://www.Umed Ozodi, 2010b.youtube.com/watch?v=PtNZ_1187p4> [Accessed 21 March 2018].

Umed Ozodi, 2010c. *Hizbi Nahzati Islomii Tojikiston* [Islamic Revival Party of Tajikistan]. [video online] Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BpPJaaL9aWQ> [Accessed 21 March 2018].

US Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor, 2010. *U.S. Relations with Tajikistan.* [online] Available at: <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/5775.htm> [Accessed 10 June 2013].

US Department of State, 2013. *Tajikistan 2013 International Religious Freedom Report.* [pdf] Available at: <www.state.gov/documents/organization/222555.pdf> [Accessed 23 October 2015].

Usmon, D., 2003. 'Samoponimanie, zadachi i tseli islamskoi politiki v Tadzhikistane i Srednie Azii' [Self-awareness, tasks, and objectives of Islamic policies in Tajikistan and Central Asia], in Seifert, A, K., and Kreikmayer, A., eds., *O sovmestimosti politicheskogo Islama I*

bezopasnosti v prostransve OBSE [On the compatibility of political Islam and secularity in the OSCE Space]. Dushanbe: Sharqi Ozod.

Usmon, D., 2012a. *Davlati Usmon: Kadom Tajribai Sulhi tojikon?* [Davlat Usmon: What Experience of Tajik Peace agreement?]. Interviewed by BBC. [video online] 17 May 2012. Available at: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/tajik/institutional/2012/05/120511_mm_davlat_usman> [Accessed 13 March 2019].

Usmon, D., 2012b. Sulh az musolaha ba taslim tabdil yoft [The Peace from Reconciliation turned to obedience]. *Millat,* [online] 21 June. Available at: <http://www.millat.tj/musohiba/3146- davlat-usmon-qsulh-az-musolaha-ba-taslim-tabdil-shudq.html"-shudq.html> [Accessed 14 March 2018].

Usmonov, I., 2003. 'Protsess natsionalnogo primireniia v Tadzhikistane' [National Reconciliation Process in Tajikistan], in Seifert, A., and Kreikemaier, A., eds, *O sovmestimosti politicheskogo Islama I bezapasnosti v prostranstve OBSE,* [On coexistence of Political Islam and Security in the OSCE Space: Documents of *Islamic-Secular Dialogue* in Tajikistan]. Dushanbe: Sharqi Ozod, pp. 100-118.

Usmonov, I., 2005. 'The Application of the Principle of Separation of Religion an the State in the Context of the Tajik State', in Bitter, J., Guérin, F., Seifer, A., and Rahmonova-Schwarz., D., eds., *From Confidence-Building Towards Co-operative Co- existence: The Tajik Experiment of Islamic-Secular Dialogue.* Baden-Baden: Nomos, pp. 192-199.

Weihman, E., 2003. Tajik Islamic Party Demands Release of Detained Members. *EurasiaNet: Tajikistan Daily Digest,* [online] 12 November. Available at: <www.eurasianet.org/resource/tajikistan/hypermail/news/0010.stm> [Accessed 17 March 2016].

Wickham, C. R., 2013. *The Muslim Brotherhood: Evolution of an Islamist Movement.* NJ Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Wickham, C. R., 2004. The path to moderation: Strategy and learning in the formation of Egypt's Wasat Party. *Comparative Politics,* 36(2), pp. 205-228.

Wittes, T. C., 2008. Islamist Parties: Three Kinds of Movements. *Journal of Democracy*, [e-journal] 19(3). Available at: <https://www.journalofdemocracy.org/sites/default/files/Wittes-19-3.pdf> [Accessed 10 March 2019].

Wright, R., 2012. *The Islamists are coming: who they really are*. Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson Center Press.

Yarden, M., 2014. Taqiyya as Polemic, Law and Knowledge: Following an Islamic Legal Term through the Worlds of Islamic Scholars, Ethnographers, Polemicists and Military Men. *The Muslim World,* 104(1-2), pp. 89-108.

Yavuz, H., 2003. *Islamic Political Identity.* New York: Oxford University Press.

Yavuz, H. and Esposito, J. L. (eds.) 2003. *Turkish Islam and the Secular State.* Syracuse NY: Syracuse University Press.

Yilmaz, I., 2009. An Islamist Party, Constraints, Opportunities and Transformation to Post-Islamism: The Tajik Case. *Uluslararasi Hukuk ve Politicka*, 5(18), pp. 133-147.

Yilmaz, B., 2010-11. *Understanding Islamist Moderation: A Comparative Study of Turkish Islamist Parties From the NOP to the JDP/ thesis.* Ph.D. Universita Degli Studi Di Milano. Available at: <https://air.unimi.it/retrieve/handle/2434/174076/181049/phd_unimi_R07451.pdf> [Accessed 12 March 2019].

Yin, R. K., 1994. *Case Study Research: Design and Methods.* Newbury Park: SAGE Publications.

Yodgor, S., n.d. Oburu va haisiyati HNIT dar mavqe'i munosib ast? [The Reputation of the IRPT is in the good position] *Jumhuriyat.* [online] Available at: <http://www.jumhuriyat.tj/index.php?art_id=7412> [Accessed 10 May 2018].

Zainal, Z., 2007. Case Study as research method, *Kemanusiaan* bil. 9, June 2007. Available at: <http://psyking.net/htmlobj-3837/case_study_as_a_research_method.pdf> [Accessed 19 November 2017].

Zakai, A., n.a. Theocracy, International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences, 2nd Edition, pp. 342-343. [online] Available at: <http://pluto.mscc.huji.ac.il/~msavihu/AvihuZakai/Theocracy-encyclopedia.pdf> [Accessed 22 March 2019].

Zakariya, F., 1997. The Rise of Illiberal Democracy. *Foreign Affairs*, 76(6), pp. 22-41.

Zakarya, F., 2003.*The Future of Freedom: Illiberal Democracy at Home and Abroad*. New York: W.W. Norton.