

Islam And Democracy: Some Important Challenges and Questions

Dr. Mohammad Mohsin Hamid

Assistant Professor of Politics in : Law and Administrative faculty, Birjand Branch, Islamic Azad University, Iran.

ABSTRACT: Democracy , in our world, is the popular paradigm of governing, but since the late nineteenth century, ideologies has been growing fast. There has been non-religious ideologies like communism, and religious ideologies like political Islam. Ideology has some characteristics which can not be united with democracy easily. This paper tries to reveal some contradictions and problems between ideologies, in our case-study political Islam, and democracy.

Problematic

Nowadays there is growing trends towards democracy around the world. In old states , like Iran and Egypt, to new independent states, like South Sudan , you hear about democracy or lack of it. Democracy , has not a sole model, and has been appeared in different models. A famous book about deliberation of different models of democracy is of David Held. The writer there has a good explanation about this subject that democracy has been appeared in many different models during history around the world , from ancient Greece to new appearances. (See: Held, 2006). Ideology, also has not a unique version, and since late nineteenth century , the world has seen many models of ideologies, from non-religious to religious. While popularity of ideologies in nineteenth and twentieth century, many critics of them has been appeared. For instance, Hannah Arendt wrote ‘ The origins of Totalitarianism’, in which she reveals the connections between some ideologies and anti-semitism. (Arendt, 1973). In politics, ideology has been considered gradually as a main obstacle in the road to democratization of a nation-state. The writer, here, discovers dilemma of the relation between democracy and ideology and some main problems and issues which arises from entering an ideology to a political system. Here will be a focus on political Islam and a major instance of it, Islamic Republic of Iran.

1. NECESSITY OF RULE AND GOVERNMENT

There are many famous quotes and proverbs among different languages, which affirms the necessity of rule and governance.

“ Actually there always have to be chiefs.” Mao Tse Tung (February 1967). (Wakeman, Kistory and will 1975, p.315).

There is a famous quote of ‘Ali’, The first leader of Shiite Muslims, which says: There is no choice and option , except to have a governor, just or repressive.” (See: Nahj al-balaqa, the lectures, letters and quotes of Imam Ali). Also ‘Saadi’, one of the most leading classic Persian poets, says:” There is no avoid from having a boss or head, because without this, there won't be order in matters of a country.” (See: Saadi's collection of poems).

This historic background is important to build a political basis for a political structure. “ Many familiar ideas about liberalism and democracy are shaped by background narrating that highlight some distinctions and obliterate others.” (Vernon, , p. 13).

It seems that modern ideologies and democracy, both consists on the necessity of governance, in most of ideologies, except some rare example of ideologies like Anarchism.

2. LEGITIMACY OF GOVERNMENT

Legitimacy is a main basis for governing, in any kind of governance and government. “ The property that a regime's procedures for making and enforcing laws are accepted to it's subjects. The term is derived from Weberian sociology. As ‘Weber emphasized, legitimacy constituted the basis of very real differences in the way in which power was exercised. There was a generally observable need for any power to justify itself there were broad grounds for exercising authority, based on: tradition, charisma; and rational legal authority, resting on a belief in the legality of enacted roles and the right of those in positions of authority to issue commands.” (Maclin, ..., p.281).

In any political reading of Islam, there must be clarified legitimacy of governors and their decisions comes from where: God or people. We can find some spheres and cases that will and intention of people and order of God overlap, but the problem arises when people want something that it is against orders in Quran or the Narration (Hadith), or at least some interpretations and readings of Islam say that Allah say this or that. In the preamble of Islamic Republic of Iran's Constitution is some points that we can consider a double source legitimacy for government and governors, but in some fundamental articles, like fourth Article, Islamic law (Shariat)

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is predominant on any rule and legal codes and also legal practices in Islamic Republic of Iran. In comparison, you can look at the first lines of USA's constitution, as the first modern constitution in the world. This says: "We the people of the USA determined."

So in any cases which people's wills and Shariat's rule is contradicting, how you should act? For example, if people want to legalize drinking wine or alcohol, while Shariah bans it, it's a main challenge, meanwhile in USA, people changed this rules as they want.

3. LEGITIMACY CRISIS

Governing is combined to challenges and overcoming crisis, and a main crisis in our world, is legitimacy crisis. Legitimacy crisis: "A theory developed in the mid-1970s by the German Marxist Jurgen Habermas, a leading member of the 'Frankfurt school'. He suggests that people expect governments to intervene successfully in the economy to try and ensure economic prosperity. Failure to succeed can cause the validity of the capitalist system to be questioned thus understanding it's legitimacy". (ibid, p.268).

It can be supposed a cause in which governors are not able to overcome economic and socio-political challenges, but they resort to ideology and religious jurisprudence to gain legitimacy. May be at least in the beginning of a revolution that religious justifications bring legitimacy for government, but nowadays people ask their government economic prosperity.

In recent years in Islamic Republic of Iran, some officials whom were criticized by public opinions on their failure in specially economic sphere, restored to these justifications and said that the purpose of government is not material objectives like economic prosperity.

4. PUBLIC GOOD

Government is a collective, general and public institution or co-related systems, and must consider all members of the society as it's members and try to increase their public good. Public good in Politics terminology is defined as: "Any good that, if supplied to anybody is necessarily supplied to everybody, and from whose benefits it is impossible or impracticable to exclude anybody. A third requirement often added to the definition is that "each individual's consumption leads to no subtraction from any other individual's consumption of that good (Paul Samuelson, 1954)" (ibid, P. 412).

If we accept this definition of public good, we must suppose that the state and it's government and agencies should consider all parts of the society, all it's members and settlers with all their socio-political and religious differences, As a whole, and do not act on their behaviors on the basis of any discriminations. They should not allocate public goods on any other basis except the membership of the society. In other words, a religious or ideologic state should not allocate public goods on the basis of ideologic differences.

5. SOCIAL WELFARE POLICY

Ideology always dictates some ideologic priorities which goes beyond nation-state, For-example, world communism, Islamic movements, etc.; but a nation has people and population who are the main population of the country. In modern political theories a social welfare policy, in addition to crucial matters of war and peace, the promotion of economic prosperity, and the protection of civil rights of citizens, governments also grapple with questions of the distribution of wealth and the protection of the poor, the elderly, and the sick." (Ibid, p. 205).

If you ask about the priorities of the people around the world, welfare is a main priority for population of a country, and their expenses and money should not prepare the prosperity of the ideology-belivers around the world..

6. THE LAST WORLD AND DECISION IN A NATION-STATE

In a democracy, the last choice and decision is in the hand of the people of the nation-state, who can exercise their power in a constitutional assembly.

"On 28 October 1954, Pakistan's Governor-General Gholam Mohammad ordered the police to bar the members of the constituent Assembly from entering their meeting hall in Karachi. The sole item in the agenda of their aborted meeting was a formal vote on the published draft of Pakistan's new constitution, which had been approved at the Assembly's previous session. Dissolution of the Assembly was legitimized in the following year by chief justice Mohammad Munir and the majority of his colleagues of the Federal Court. Thus ended the nation's existence under the domination constitution which had served as the basis for governing since independence. Under that constitution, Pakistan had ruled itself as a flawed but functioning parliamentary democracy." (McGrath, 1998, introduction).

In an ideologic political structure, mostly the power of last word is in the hands of person or persons who represent as the symbols of ideolog. So, in most cases may be no space and opportunity for wills of people.

7. MINORITY RIGHTS

In a political structure usually a majority is getting overwhelming on policy and bureaucracy. Gradually society is getting divided to majority and minorities." One definition of minority that seems to have hung on since it's inception 50 years ago and that

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remains vital and remarkably serviceable was provided by socialist Louis Wirth. According to Wirth, a minority is a "group of people who, because of their physical or cultural characteristics are singled out from the others... for differential and unequal treatment and who therefore regard themselves as objects of collective discrimination. (This) implies the existence of a corresponding dominant group enjoying social states and greater privileges... The minority is treated and regards itself as people apart... Although... ethnicity and racism are relatively new concepts. Strict biological classifications of groups by race are scientifically untenable. However, the social construction of images of people based upon attributed racial characteristics are quite real." (Monk, 2002, pp. xxi-xxii).

In Rousseau's political thought, majority has the right to govern and liberty and freedom is to obey the decisions of majority, and also it is rightful to force minority to follow the way of majority because it is really the freedom of minority. In recent decades it is officially accepted in liberal democracies that majority has the right to rule, but rights of minority should be observed.

In an ideologic structure, this problem will be duplicated. First is that we mentioned just before, and another is that majority may say that its will is according to ideology and it's the right way, and never should be acted against it in the name of minorities' rights or so on. Although we must consider that in Islamic jurisprudence minorities have some rights, but it's not as much as we can put it like a liberal democracy.

8. POLICY OF GOVERNMENT

Governing is connected with policy. From old to new era, governors have been known as someone who have policies which should be observed. 'What is it that people are trying to label when they term something 'policy'? We can see three central elements in the ways that term is used: order, authority and expertise... In this way, policy is seen to set limits on the behavior of officials at the same time. It frees them from the need to make choices... second... to speak of something as policy implies that it has the endorsement of some authorized decision-maker. It is the authority which legitimizes the policy,... Third, policy... does not exist in a vacuum, but in relation to some identified field of practice, and it implies knowledge, both of the problem area and of the thing that might be done about it (Colebatch, 2002, p.10).

"The relationship between congress and the president has many faces. It may reveal a consensus between branches and swift, concerted action. It may reflect cooperation, tough negotiation, and compromise. It may reflect Presidential leadership of a reluctant congress. It may reflect Congressional leadership of the policy process with or without the support of the president or it may reveal pervasive stalemate grinding the process of governing to a halt, requiring some extraordinary means to resolve deadlock over essential policy decision patterns of interbranch relations have fascinated studies of American politics for more than 20 years, and today the system more complex than ever." (Leloup and Smull, 1998, p.1).

In an ideologic political system, may be some contradictions between what ideology dictates and what experience and common sense show that will be useful. The problem arises in these cases like foreign policy.

9. STATE AND TERRORISM

Terrorism... has some socio-political and international roots. And if an ideologic system wants to govern, in an instance it will find that it can reconcile its arrogance with international system. The existence of pervasion social injustice in Latin America raises serious ethnical questions for contemporary Christianity. In the face of such injustice, many believers attempt to maintain their traditional religious values of assisting the poor and oppressed by actively working for social change. Often such activity runs afoul not only of government policies but of policy of the established church as well." (Shah, 2002, p.63).

Ideologies, including religious or non-religious, have some arrogance towards other ideologies while an ideology has a hegemony in political structure, there may be many positions in which ideology-believers try to push away others from attending political structure. How can be a reconciliation between ideologic system and peaceful live in democratic international community?

"Terrorism by rebel factions of every ideological hue has become the characteristic model of conflict in our time. The international law of war has been developed primarily to suppress or at least to curb terroristic usages of war between states. If twentieth century experience of law of war teaches us anything, it is that the whole noble Grotian project of humanitarian restraints or limits on the conduct of international war has become almost impossible to implement and sustain in a period of such dramatic enhancement of weapons of mass destruction, and ideologies and strategies of total war have increasingly conspired to obliterate the distinctions between combatants and non-combatants, military and civilian, neutral and belligerent" (Giriraj Shah, Vol.2, p.345).

10. SECURITY AND STABILITY

Security and stability are among main demands of peoples around the world from their states. In primary instance of democracy, different and contradicting opinions almost demolishing security and stability, and it is the same and more in the early instance of an ideologic system. Ideologies are often against the established order and try to destabilize the political systems to pave the way for themselves hegemony. But after coming to power, ideologic systems want for themselves stability and may be for other political systems, destabilization, to make other systems like to their ideologic structures.

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In early constitutional era in Iran and early years after independence and democratic period in Pakistan, people have been frustrated from controversial political trends, and thus who speak of security and stability diminished democratic structure.

“From a distance, the day -to-day activities of a politician in a democratic society may appear to consist of little more than meaningless, arguments, jockeying for power, and unprincipled compromises.

That is the picture of Pakistan’s politician’s that exists in the west. Although the reputations of Jinnah and Liaquat have survived untarnished the Perish have not.”(Pro Khan, Mccorath,p.219.).

11. IDEOLOGY AND TERRORISM

The end and mean to achieve it, is another problem. I mean for an objective, you are allowed politically or morally to choose some means, instruments and ways. Someone specially in some ideologies have said objective justifies the mean, which say for a good or accepted objective you can select whatever of means, for example for prosperity of people, you can kill a lot of them.

“It is precisely because terrorists by definition follow a systematic policy of terror that their acts are analogous to crimes. In most legal systems, the typical acts of terrorist groups (such as bombing, murders, kidnappings, wounding, and blackmail) constitute serious offences under the prevailing codes. Without exception, murder is punishable under the legal codes of all states. As terrorism involves systematic, cold-blooded murder, it is particularly repugnant to all societies deeply infused with humanist values.”(Giriraj Shah, Vol.2.p.353). That is why you should firstly determine your position towards terrorism.

12. PRIVACY AND RIGHTS OF OTHERS

One of the most important socio-political attainments of human-kind in recent centuries is the recognition a special sphere, as private sphere or privacy, which government and others don’t have right to intervene in it. Reversely, this principle is recognized that a person, having privacy, doesn’t the right to intervene in other people privacy or harm them.

“There are two positions which inescapably demand attention, as one or other of them, , in some form, is often taken to be a standard feature of liberalism. The first is the ‘harm principle’ which J.S. Mill is usually thought to have offered in “On Liberty”. The second, still recognizably Millian thought different, is Ronald Dworkin’s distinction between the internal (or personal) preferences which democratic majorities may pursue and the “external preferences that are closed off by the imposition of rights. Both might be said, with caution, to express rejection of ‘legal moralism’, if that doctrine means that law should express the moral beliefs of the lawmaker.” (Vernon,ibid, p.110).

13. DIVERSITY OF PEOPLE AND UNIFORM OF IDEOLOGY

Diversity, is a normal feature, not only in human history, but also in whole nature. So ignorance of diversity, is an act against human natural life.

“For four purposes, diversity refers to the rich variety of individual groups, regions, locals, and institutions that constitute our political culture. It also encompasses ... distinction of population, wealth and power. In turn, political culture consists of widely shared beliefs, symbols, and values about the nation and its politics. In our view, diversity helps explain the complexity of our political system as well as the political behavior of citizens, policy- makers, and political institutions.” (Lawrance, 1999, p. 8).

Any nation which you consider is a combination of many groups with different religious, political, cultural and other beliefs while an ideology encourages, and may impose unity in beliefs and life-style. To come to a good -made reconciliation of diversity and unity is not simple. An ideologic government may consider different beliefs and lifestyles of its nation as a threat to the ideologic unity and political structure. “Another way of looking at political diversity is to consider American political culture as a mosaic ... political culture consists of those broadly shared beliefs and feelings about the nation and its government. It represents at least some agreement on the basic values of the political system.”(Lawrance, p.10).

Forexample in today’s American society this is a major fact of politics. “Political scientists, often ignore the importance of geographic factors in explaining American politics. In our view, the geographic diversity of the United States partly explains regional varieties and the political concerns of each regions, the lay of the land itself has political consequences, space and place make a difference.”(Lawrance, ibid, p.10).

14. NEUTRALITY OF GOVERNMENT

In recent centuries there were to contradictory trends: on one side in political though the idea of government neutrality has been growing, and on other side the of governments in many states has been an important factor of governing. “A minimal idea of neutrality was continued in the very idea of democracy: matters can be settled openly through responsive public institutions only if those institutions are not wholly pre-committed in terms of the outcomes that they produce or permit ... this minimal sense of neutrality to equally: only a condition of equal political states allows us to describe public institutions as neutral. Equal political status seems initially to involve the hopeless task of weighing exclusion or in common avoid ideals against each other...Democratic institutions are justifiable to the extent thus they provide for this.”(Vernon, ibid, p. 148).

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15. EQUALITY OF CITIZENS

Emerging the concept of citizen, is a main point in development of human rights for people as members of nation-states. Citizenship refers to this matter that members of population of a country, in spite of their differences, are the same members of their country, as citizens.

“...The equality of citizens as[is referred to] ; that this will lead us to adopt the majority principle, as a device which respects citizens need to be persuaded; and that thus understand that the majority principle does not have to meet the dilemmas that confront either procedural or outcome-based views of democracy.”(Vernon, ibid,p.72).

16. IDEALISTIC APPROACH OR PRAGMATIC APPROACH IN GOVERNING

Governing, specially good governing, requires effective outcomes, but in an ideologic system, it may be an obligation to do some tasks, abide from their consequences, because it has been come in ideologic texts.

“Standard defences of majority rule divide into two broad types . On proceduralist concepts, we are to think of the outcomes of democracy as legitimate because they issue from a process which meets certain criteria (such as equality and fairness), which outcome-based conceptions of democracy advance the claim that democratic processes are legitimate because they have desirable consequences. The justifying arguments run in diametrically opposite directions in the one case, the procedure makes the outcome legitimates the procedure.”(Vernon, ibid, p.53).

In ideologic political structures, there may be appear a problem that someone , based on ideologic doctrine , advice to do some affairs , like spend financial or military support, for or against some groups or nations , which bring very dangers consequences. How do you make foreign policy in ideologic systems, based on rational or ideologic reasoning?

17. Political morality

Nowadays we hear of the term, political morality, “ a term given currency by John Stuart Mill, though put to use more recently in seeks that may not all be the same as Mill’s own sometimes it is taken to refer simply to the conclusions of morality, whatever they are , in their application to politics: political morality would just be what morality requires us to do plus any items that are special the political domain (or else minus any items that do not belong there). Thus understood, the idea of a political morality would seem to belong principally to a content in which there are deep and important disagreements which politics must come to terms with, but which, it is assume, politics cannot resolve? ... The task here, though, is to show it’s fundamental importance for democracy. “(Vernon, 2001, pp. 35-38).

18. FOREIGN POLICY

Nowadays, internal policy of a country is correlated to foreign policy. Many issues like economic is related to good relation with other countries for exchange and trade.

After world war II, in the dawn of the nuclear and cold war, many scholars and political leaders argued persuasively for presidential leadership in foreign affairs most presidents preferred foreign policy. There was ...competition, and they could deal with lofty issues such as world peace rather than welfare checks...”(Lanck, T. Lzlop,p.110).

People and states, in recent decades search for good relations with other people and states to obtain better standards of living through earning from trade and exchange. In an ideologic structure, may be ideology dictates to take some policies which approaches to so some narrow circle of movements and go away from number of countries. Contradiction between ideologic doctrine and realities is not an easy task.

19. CIVIL RIGHTS POLICY

The ability of all citizens to share fully in the nation’s political, economic, and social system- is a critical element of the policy Agenda. The heritage of slavery and racial discrimination in the United States remains at the root of many current political disputes....The 1960 Civil Rights Act reflected this pattern of policy-making Eighteen...other major civil rights legislation in this era (notably) The Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965) resulted from presidential leadership , but with legislative cooperation(Lanck T. Lzlop,p.147).

In modern political philosophy, the source of any power is in the hands of people of the nation-state, but in an ideologic system , ideology is above all. In the first model, constitution affirm the right people, including civil rights, but in the second model, the right of people is surrounded by the ideologic doctrine, may be the ideology gives people some rights, but the determinate element is the ideology.

20. LEGITIMACY OF POWER AND GOVERNANCE

Legitimacy, is a key element in politics. “The legitimate powers of government extend to such acts only as one are injurious to others. But it does not to injury for my neighbor to say there are twenty gods, or no God. It neither picks my pocket nor breaks my legs.”(Monica Bauer,p.39.). As supposed in modern democracies, what makes the acts of a government legitimate, is that the

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government try to follow the demands, wills, and needs of it's people. Adversely in an ideologic structure, the government's legitimacy lays in following the ideologic aims, even against the aims of it's people.

21.POSITION OF GOVERNMENT TOWARDS RELIGIOUS ESTABLISHMENT

What position the government should take regarding the religious establishment? After the separation of church and state, in secular systems, these two has no right to intervene in the area of each other.

“The separation of church and state what the constitution says about religion can be inter number of ways. The first Amendment says this : ”Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise there . The problem arises in the phrase, “establishment of religion”. (Monica Bauer, P.43).

In a religious state, specially while some state officials have records in religious affairs or positions and also taking hold some state positions is connected with religious eligibility, the complexity is getting more. It is a routine in religious state like Islamic Republic of Iran to subsidize religious establishments, asking religious questions in state tests and employment, etc. The problem arises when efficiency and prosperity of people is contradicting with this subsidization. In this paper, the author, tried to uncover the problems which arise from combination and co-relation between ideology, specially religious ideology and democracy.

An establishment of religion occurs ;when the government favors an expression of religion with support in the form of tax dollars or the favorable government treatment of some religions over others. The founders [of American Constitution] knew all too well that struggles to establish an official state religion had drained the blood of several generations of British, French, and German citizens in religious wars of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The Supreme Court has had some disagreements within it's own ranks about how to interpret the establishment clause of The first Amendment, but a majority has hold firm since 1962 that official prayer time in public schools is unconstitutional.” (Bauer, 2001, p.38).

22. GOOD GOVERNING

Politics and governing is a knowledge in wisdom and experiences, and bureaucracy is progressing .To which extend, ideology can accept wisdom and experience in governing?

The institutional presidency: “ As a result of Roosevelt's tenure, the presidency was a transformed into the office we recognize today the white House staff grew from a handful of aides to hundreds of domestic and foreign policy advisors the

Executive Office of the presidency was created in 1993, ...The Budget Office was moved to the EOP and became a powerful instrument for presidential influence over economic policy and budget priorities. ... In 1947, Congress passed legislation creating The National Security (NSC) as part of the institutionalized presidency. ... Franklin D. Roosevelt helped the institutions. His personal leadership helped redefined popular concepts of presidency as a source of policy innovation ... He was also The First ‘Median President’, enhancing his power by effectively communicating with the American people through his fireside chats, broadcast on radio.” (Leloup,ibid, p.50).

Good governing , nowadays can be defined as a kind of governing which with morality, accountable and transparent.

23.SEPARATION OF POWERS

Separation of powers and division of powers, first was set forth in the constitution of USA, has been accepted in recent centuries in constitutions around the world. The basic form of separation of powers could be accepted in ideologic constitutions, and division of power is more fitted to ideologic systems because this model of governing is a hierarchy of power holders. It can be mentioned that this two principle has been set forth in the constitution of Islamic Republic of Iran. The main point here is that three branch of powers are under the supervision of the leader and main powers are in his hands.

“The common starting point for starting point for studies of Presidential -Congressional policy-making is separation of powers-the division of execution, legislative, and judicial branches in the constitution. It is perhaps the most prominent structural feature of American government ...as Richard Neustadt has characterized it, as “as separated institutions sharing powers”. This sharing of powers makes possible the related constitutional doctrine of checks and balances.” (Leloup, ibid, p. 4).

24. POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

Political participation is a main concept in modern democracy. As defined, ‘citizen’, is a person who is eligible to participate in major political trends and decisions of his or her nation-state.“ In general, qualifications for citizenship reflect a conception of the purposes of the political community and a view about which persons are able to contribute to , or enjoy the benefits of , the common good, or the freedom of the city.”(McLean, under the title of citizenship).

We can look at the concept of citizenship from different landscapes. “Political participation is a broad concept that encompasses; Those activities of citizens that attempt to influence the structure of government. The selection of government's officials, or the policies of government ‘. Conventional political participation, includes such activities as voting, giving money or time to a political campaign, writing to a public official, or attending a political rally. Unconventional political participation includes activities that

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range from legal protests, to action designed to embarrass or disrupt, to oust ..., the most common form of conventional political participation is voting.”(Jison , , 201).

25. TECHNICS OF RULING

Methods and technics had a major role in development of differ spheres of human life.

“The techniques by which monarchs today retain their thrones are technically more modern than those which Machiavelli recommended in 'The Prince’, and a half century ago; but they are conceived in much the same disabused terms. Kings today (real kings that rule) survive for any length of time only by a deft balance of repressive capacity and utility. Such legitimacy as they can retain even among their own repressive instruments (army, secret police, state bureaucracy) depends upon their title to unit and thus in the last resort, however caricatured the claim may be in reality. it depends on their claim to represent the inters of their people.”(Dunn,1993, pp. 1-2).

26.CONCLUSION

Relationship between state and ideology, including religious ideology is complex. Church and state conflict was a part of this conflict, and in recent decades appearance of religious ideologies has brought new aspects to this complex relationship. Fundamentalism, in Christian, Muslim, Jewish, etc. pay attention to these aspects, a necessity.

Nowadays, Democracy, in all of it's types, is maintenance in political movement and favorites of public opinions around the world. From another point of view, ideologies in 19th, 20th, and also 21th Centuries is a main flow in political are not. But an important point, here, is someone has tried to combine ideology and democracy is this combination an easy task or possible?

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