

## ISLAM, POLITICS, EDUCATION, AND MODERNITY

### *ISLÃO, POLÍTICA, EDUCAÇÃO E MODERNIDADE*

### *ISLAM, POLÍTICA, EDUCACIÓN Y MODERNIDAD*

Il'dar Safiulovich MAVLYAUTDINOV<sup>1</sup>  
Svetlana Yurievna GLUSHKOVA<sup>2</sup>

**ABSTRACT:** Islamic education consist of a set of concepts and tenets pertaining to human nature, creed, intellect, and attitude, along with spiritual and physical values, all entwined in unified perceptual framework and relying, wholly, in its fundamentals and morals on the Holy Quran. Successfully exploited Islam is drawn into a confrontation from which it is destined to emerge deeply reformed – rethought, or slowly sink into the oblivion of history. Provoked Islamic radicalism can generate and arrange in Europe tens or hundreds of insane terrorists. It is important to show that Islam, as a public religion in international relations and in educational doctrines, can be both a powerful knowledge tool and a dangerous weapon. By delegating a divine blessing to a person, Islam in the eyes of a believer is the only and undeniably true measure of his actions, which determines the temptation to use Islam for educational purposes, giving rise, in turn, to the phenomenon of political Islam. “Radical Islam” will always be in demand where the establishment of an “Islamic order” is required, which is identified by Muslims with educational doctrines, social justice, the equality of all before the law and national equality. The danger of politicizing Islam is that here it plays by the rules of the West and under its control. And as a result – without realizing it, just doing the dirty work.

**KEYWORDS:** Religion. Islamic education. Politics. Social justice. Islamic doctrines.

**RESUMO:** *A educação islâmica consiste em um conjunto de conceitos e princípios relativos à natureza humana, credo, intelecto e atitude, juntamente com valores espirituais e físicos, todos entrelaçados em uma estrutura perceptual unificada e confiando, totalmente, em seus fundamentos e morais no Alcorão Sagrado. O Islã explorado com sucesso é arrastado para um confronto do qual está destinado a emergir profundamente reformado - repensado ou lentamente afundado no esquecimento da história. O radicalismo islâmico provocado pode gerar e organizar na Europa dezenas ou centenas de terroristas insanos. É importante mostrar que o Islã, como religião pública nas relações internacionais e nas doutrinas educacionais, pode ser uma ferramenta poderosa de conhecimento e uma arma perigosa. Ao delegar uma bênção divina a uma pessoa, o Islã aos olhos de um crente é a única e inegavelmente verdadeira medida de suas ações, o que determina a tentação de usar o Islã para fins educacionais, dando origem, por sua vez, ao fenômeno do Islã político. O “Islã radical” sempre estará em demanda*

<sup>1</sup> Kazan Federal University, Kazan – Russia. PhD of sociology, associate professor of the Institute of International Relations, Department of Altaic Studies and Sinology. ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7859-6973>. E-mail: [ildarmav@yandex.ru](mailto:ildarmav@yandex.ru)

<sup>2</sup> Kazan Federal University, Kazan – Russia. PhD of philology, associate professor, of the Institute of International Relations, Department of Altaic Studies and Sinology. ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5187-3632>. E-mail: [vetaelina@gmail.com](mailto:vetaelina@gmail.com)

*onde for necessário o estabelecimento de uma “ordem islâmica”, que é identificada pelos muçulmanos com doutrinas educacionais, justiça social, igualdade de todos perante a lei e igualdade nacional. O perigo de politizar o Islã é que aqui ele segue as regras do Ocidente e está sob seu controle. E, como resultado - sem perceber, apenas fazendo o trabalho sujo.*

**PALAVRAS-CHAVE:** *Religião. Educação islâmica. Política. Justiça social. Doutrinas islâmicas.*

**RESUMEN:** *La educación islámica consiste en un conjunto de conceptos y principios relacionados con la naturaleza humana, el credo, el intelecto y la actitud, junto con los valores espirituales y físicos, todos entrelazados en un marco de percepción unificado y que se basan, por completo, en sus fundamentos y principios morales en el Sagrado Corán. El Islam explotado con éxito se ve arrastrado a una confrontación de la que está destinado a salir profundamente reformado, repensado o hundido lentamente en el olvido de la historia. El radicalismo islámico provocado puede generar y organizar en Europa decenas o cientos de terroristas locos. Es importante mostrar que el Islam, como religión pública en las relaciones internacionales y en las doctrinas educativas, puede ser tanto una poderosa herramienta de conocimiento como un arma peligrosa. Al delegar una bendición divina a una persona, el Islam a los ojos de un creyente es la única e innegable medida verdadera de sus acciones, lo que determina la tentación de utilizar el Islam con fines educativos, dando lugar, a su vez, al fenómeno del Islam político. El “Islam radical” siempre estará en demanda cuando se requiera el establecimiento de un “orden islámico”, que los musulmanes identifican con las doctrinas educativas, la justicia social, la igualdad de todos ante la ley y la igualdad nacional. El peligro de politizar el Islam es que aquí juega con las reglas de Occidente y bajo su control. Y como resultado, sin darme cuenta, simplemente haciendo el trabajo sucio.*

**PALABRAS CLAVE:** *Religión. Educación islámica. Política. Justicia social. Doctrinas islâmicas.*

## **Introduction**

The tradition of Islam, prevailing in the present, offers a comprehensive concept of public life. It doesn't put forward any explicit political goals; politicians generally refuse to acknowledge its autonomous nature. Islam autonomously suppresses political and does not accept disagreements between ruling and governed, moreover it does not accept the presence of economic and ideological differences and disagreements in the community. According to the Islam tradition, it is enough to be a legitimate Muslim in order to overcome those disagreements it. Islam forms a powerful ideological discourse which causes a desire for society, which would be both egalitarian and fair, homogenous and united (ARKOUN, 1986). According to the expression of a famous French anthropologist and sociologist Louis Dumont, this discourse builds up collectivist ideas designed in accordance with the rules of “holistic logic” (DUMONT, 1983).

It is impossible to propose a prepared political model, which is able to open a way to modernism for a Muslim community, by theoretical inferences. This model does not exist apart from its historical destiny. A model like this can only be formed through a historical process, as a result of a gradual **changing** of Islamism by a force of social realities (ADDI, 1992). In Elie Kedourie's opinion, there has not been any transformation due to the facts that the politics of Islam are in a mystical dimension (ELLE, 1983).

In order not only to understand how to deal with the challenges of modernity, but how to act in the face of societal changes and the possible adaptations that are necessary to remain relevant, it is important that there is an analysis of the methods by which Islam can be taught and passed on through the understanding of the globalized world and the new flows of information and cultures that are present, especially in the intense international traffic that is experienced today. The possibility of showing Islam and its relevance can be expanded through a proper analysis of how one can use the experiences that are currently being lived, to build an Islamic education system based on the challenges of modernity, creating bridges between the old generation and the youngest.

## **Methods**

The methodology chosen by the author for his research includes a comparative analysis, which involves identifying the most significant problems in each of the studied aspects of the topic and understanding this process, considering the views and approaches of well-known researchers, and then comparing them for common features and differences. The appeal mainly to qualitative methods, however, implies a dynamic approach to the description of the subject.

## **Results and discussion**

Moreover, being a public religion, Islam dominates in a political culture of Muslim community, legitimacy of which is defined by religious methods. As it was already stated, politics in Islam is not autonomous, and a political space is not differentiated in relation to the sphere of religion. Western sociologists see a way out of this state in establishing a secular law system.

However, most of the western sociologists underestimate the consideration of political Islam exclusively from the perspective of its traditions, or completely ignore the extreme flexibility of Islam and its potential openness to innovation.

By putting forward problematic Islamism, they leave a multi-million world of moderate Islam, Jadidism, in the shadows. Jadidism is a socio - political and intellectual movement, which was developed in the XIX century. It not only proves an ability of Islam to successfully integrate into a modern (western) political and cultural system, but also actively change it by adding its own correctives and values. Some of the most famous representatives of the intellectual Muslim elite, seeking the renewal of Islam were: Afghan theologian Jamal al-Din al-Afghani (1839-1897), Egyptian mufti Muhammad Abduh (1849-1905), Indian poet and thinker Muhammad Iqbal (1877-1938), Tatar theologians Abdul-Nasyri Kursavi (1771-1812) and Shihabuddin Marjani (1818-1889).

Jadids stated that it is necessary to scrutinize Muslim history, that Islam obliges Muslims to seek the principles of the social structure, which are more suitable for each of the historical periods. Having stated that Muslims have departed from the Qur'an, replaced the spirit of the Holy Book with traditions left over from the Middle Ages, the Jadids proclaimed freedom of thought and openness of culture as the central category. They considered jihad as zeal, the struggle against unbelief within themselves, and education as an indispensable attribute of a true Muslim; they declared equality between a man and a woman, a tolerant attitude towards a secular state and other religions (ISHMUKHAMETOV, 1979; EREMEEV, 1991; SCHAMILOGLU, 1991).

Politically, the Jadids were close to European constitutional ideas and parliamentarism, the ideas of which, they argued, underlie the shura, which is a collective decision-making prescribed by the Qur'an and Sunnah.

Thus, there are irreconcilable and diametrically opposing opinions about the internal causes of the decline of Muslim civilization. From the point of view of fundamentalists, the failures and shortcomings of modern Islamic countries are caused by the fact that they adopted alien concepts and customs, separated from true Islam. Modernists and reformers, on the contrary, see the reason for this loss not in deviating from previous customs, but in their preservation and, especially, in the inflexibility and enormous influence of the Islamic clergy responsible for the vitality of beliefs and customs that could be creative and progressive a thousand years ago, but they are still not progressive today (LEWIS, 2003). Modernists do not condemn the religiosity of society and Islam, but fanaticism. Bernard Lewis names two prominent representatives of these poles: Iran and the Iranian revolution and secular democracy embodied in the Republic of Turkey. According to one of the leading Western scholars of Islam, the continuation of the path of fundamentalism will lead Muslim civilization to disaster. Lewis's words on Middle Eastern peoples are also true for the entire Muslim world:

If the peoples of Middle East continue on their present path, the suicide bomber may become a metaphor for the whole region, and there will be no escape from a downward spiral of hate and spite, rage and self-pity, [and] poverty and oppression. If the Middle Eastern peoples can abandon hostility and sacrifice, settle differences, unite their talents, energy and resources in a common process of creation, then they can once again make the Middle East one of the main centers of civilization. For the time being they can make a choice on their own (LEWIS, 2003).

In the modern world the realization of the need for such a reform of Islam, especially in the context of economic development comes in many Muslim countries. From this perspective, Russian Muslims, particularly in Tatarstan, have unique experience that is in demand not only in Europe but also in a number of Islamic countries: Turkey is interested in new ideas and is actively studying the experience of Tatar Islam, trains Jadidism specialists, holds conferences. This happens because tolerant Islam and mutual understanding between Islam and the secular state are the conditions for joining the European Union. The path to achieving this understanding is indicated by Jadidism.

Head of the Center for Arab Studies, Institute of Oriental Studies, RAS V.V. Naumkin points out the peculiarity of the Islamic community, which consists in its organization even in the absence of a unified center for the country's spiritual or religious leadership with the Muslim population (NAUMKIN; MAKAROV, 2007). Established in 1969, the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) has 57 member countries, including two European, two Latin American countries and six countries from the CIS. This organization can be called a UN version just for the Islamic world. It has created a wide system of associated institutions, including the Islamic Development Bank (IDB), as well as its own analogues of UNESCO, the Olympic Committee, the International Red Cross etc. The activity of these organizations has clearly increased in this century. For the two-plus decades of its activity, IDB has provided nearly \$ 35 billion in interest-free loans to OIC member states. In 1996, suggested by Turkish Prime Minister Erbakan, the G-8 of the Islamic world was created. It included Turkey, Iran, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Malaysia, Indonesia - as opposed to the existing G-8 of developed countries. This initiative has not yet been finalized. At the same time, Russia's entry into the OIC as an observer, and then to a number of its industry organizations, was a serious foreign policy breakthrough for Russian diplomacy (NAUMKIN; MAKAROV, 2007).

Researchers of Islam say that during the 1990s, in the Muslim regions of Russia, there was a process of politicization and radicalization (jihadization) of Islam (NAUMKIN, 2006; MAKAROV, 2004). According to researchers, an important role in this was played by the active desire of foreign Islamic movements and organizations, including those associated with

governments, to gain an ideological and political position in the Russian space; the inability of traditional Russian Islam to satisfy the awakened interest, especially of the younger generation of Russian Muslims, in Islam, not only as a creed, but also as an ideology. Also, the impact was exerted by the lack of proper state regulation of the situation in the religious sphere, associated with both a general decrease in the state's legal capacity during the difficult transitional period of the 1990s and an underestimation of the possible consequences of the uncontrolled expansion of foreign Islamic movements (NAUMKIN; MAKAROV, 2007). Analysts also note that the persistence of the phenomenon of jihadist terrorism in the North Caucasus is also because it has become an integral tool for resolving political and economic conflicts between rival political clans, eliminating competitors and manipulating the federal center. At the same time, Islamism is multilayered; there are moderate, radical and extremist wings present in it. Inside, they coexist equally with various trends: extremists seek a legitimate political career; moderate, ready for tough fighting methods (MALASHENKO, 2007; MALASHENKO, 2001).

In the same Islamic organization, there may be units using peaceful, legal methods of work, and conspiratorial structures resorting to terror. For example, the Egyptian radical terrorist groups Al-Gamaa al-Islamiyah and Al-Gihad are structural units of the main organization of the Islamists of Egypt - the Association of Muslim Brothers. Therefore, Islamic movements can easily move from legal to illegal, from peaceful to armed methods of struggle. Islamic radicals often maintain close contacts with local criminal structures, with the international criminal business (arms and drugs smuggling, illegal migration etc.) (DONTSOV, 1997).

Nonetheless, the jihadist project is not capable at present, nor in the future, of becoming a unifying and stabilizing factor for any significant part of the population in the North Caucasus region, where ethnicity and clannishness remain the most important determinants of political behavior. The factor of radical Islamism alone cannot undermine the stability of the current political regimes in the region. However, in the event of a critical aggravation and/or overlapping of social, economic, and ethnopolitical contradictions, the Islamic factor can play the role of the very drop that will overflow the cup of the current very fragile stability.

It should be noted that there are a huge number of publications devoted to the problems of the existence of Islam in the modern political space, its impact on the state and society. Studies of the political role of Islam are often politically biased. The particular view of Western scholars on this issue is raised by the influence of Islam on Western states, its interaction with civil society and the positioning of Islam in the international arena in the face of aggressive attempts to form a unipolar world. Almost all of them are written in accusatory form and

negatively inclined towards Islam, which, in their opinion, is guilty of many problems of the international community (BENIGSEN, 1995; HUNTINGTON, 2003; BRZEZINSKI, 2010).

Other authors on extensive factual material show that today's problems are associated not so much with Islam as with the geopolitics of many states, suggesting that terrorist acts should be separated from the term "Islamic" (DZHABRAILOV, 2004; KEPEL, 2004; USTINOV, 2002; SUKIYAINEN, 2003). V. Dontsov fairly wrote:

Despite the noticeable Islamization of society in most Muslim states and their foreign policy, it is hardly possible to agree with the emerging tradition, which appears among some authors of publications both here and abroad, any foreign policy action of a Muslim qualify the state as Islamic, as a manifestation of the "Islamic factor" in international affairs. At the same time, few people care about the answer to the question of the extent to which the foreign policy of a Muslim state, as well as the activities of any international intergovernmental organization in the Muslim world, are motivated precisely by religious considerations, and not by geo-strategic, ethnopolitical, historical and other factors that have nothing to do with Islam (DONTSOV, 1997).

The Islamic concept of world order proceeds from the divisibility of the world population into two groups: the Muslim community - the Ummah and all other people. The international policy of Islamism is based on the classification of all countries into three groups: "Dar al-Islam" (the world of Islam) - countries with an Islamic form of government. Protecting these countries (the world of Islam) is the sacred duty of every Muslim. "Dar al-harb" (world of war) - this includes states that declared war on Muslims, as well as those states from which a threat to the peace of Islam can come. "Dar al-sulh" (peace treaty) - states in which power is in the hands of hostile, reconciled rulers. At the same time, the precondition for peaceful relations between the Muslim and non-Muslim worlds is the recognition by the latter of monotheism. Islam recognizes the existence of the international community and is active in this community, since the spread of Islam is a religious duty and obligation of the Islamic state (DONTSOV, 1997).

## **Summary**

Both in local and in foreign political science there are different points of view on the phenomenon of Islamic fundamentalism. According to one view, the processes of "politicization of Islam" are considered from the perspective of the revival of Islam. It is noted that modern Islamic fundamentalism is a natural phenomenon that is emerging as a result of

this revival and reflects the desire of Muslims to “true” Islamic values against the backdrop of globalization processes.

Other researchers note that the activation of Islamic movements is supported by the socio-economic interests of various political groups that use the unequal position of Muslim countries in international relations and the unresolved acute social and economic problems as factors of transition to the position of political extremism. The investment of social protest in a religious form, which is a characteristic of authoritarian regimes of the Muslim world, in the absence of really functioning democratic institutions turned Islamism into the only opposition (MALASHENKO, 2007).

Another approach implements an analysis of the geopolitical interests of different countries. According to this approach, there are certain political forces behind various extremist movements that use them to solve their own problems. Extremism, in this context, is considered only as an instrument for pursuing the policy of individual states (both Western and Muslim), aimed at dominating the regions that are vital for them, and establishing control over trade and transport routes, energy resources, and minerals.

An interesting idea is the strong ethnic nuances of Islam. For example, according to the famous Russian Arabist and Islamic scholar Robert Land,

... one of the reasons for the failure of fundamentalists in the entire post-Soviet space will be nationalism and regionalism. In fact, they are very similar and sometimes appear even simultaneously. It is impossible to establish the solidarity of all Muslims of the CIS, or even Islamic fundamentalists in a situation where purely nationalistic sentiments prevail in almost all Muslim republics of the former Union, and within some of them regionalism is stronger than nationalism (LANDA, 1995).

## **Conclusions**

In this article, we did not aim to show all aspects of the relationship between Islam and politics. It is important to show that Islam, as a public religion in international relations and in local politics, can be both a powerful ideological tool and a dangerous weapon. By delegating a divine blessing to a person, Islam in the eyes of a believer is the only and undeniably true measure of his actions, which determines the temptation to use Islam for political purposes, giving rise, in turn, to the phenomenon of political Islam. For sociologists, the line between the “Islamic tool” and the “Islamic weapon” is of interest, the mechanism of this transition from one state to another, the basis of which is the problem of social inequality. “Radical Islam” will



always be in demand where the establishment of an “Islamic order” is required, which is identified by Muslims with social justice, the equality of all before the law and national equality.

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:** The work is performed according to the Russian Government Program of Competitive Growth of Kazan Federal University.

## REFERENCES

ADDI, L. Islamicist Utopia and Democracy. *Annals. Journal of the American Academy of Political and Social*, v. 524, p. 120-130, 1992.

ARKOUN, CF. **M. L'Islam, morale et politique**. Paris: Desclee de Brouwer-UNESCO, 1986. 207 p.

BENIGSEN, A. Muslims in the USSR. **Russia and Tatarstan: problems of asymmetric relations**, v. 2, p. 80-91, 1995.

BRZEZINSKI, Z. **The Great Chessboard**. International Relations, 2010. p. 256.

DONTSOV, V. E. Islam in international relations. Diplomatic Yearbook. **Scientific book**, p. 62-89, 1997.

DUMONT, L. **Essais sur l'individualisme**. Une perspective anthropologique sur l'idéologie moderne. Paris: Le Seuil, 1983. 272 p.

DZHABRAILOV, T. Time to know the truth. **Russian Federation today**, v. 21, 2004.

ELLE, K. **Concluding Remarks**. Islam, Nationalism, and Radicalism in Egypt and the Sudan. New York: Praeger, 1983.

EREMEEV, D. Philosophical aspects of Muslim thinking. **Asia and Africa today**, v. 5, p. 42-44, 1991.

HUNTINGTON, S. **The Clash of Civilizations**. ACT, 2003. p. 603.

ISHMUKHAMEDOV, Z. A. **The social role and evolution of Islam in Tatarstan**. Kazan, 1979.

KEPEL, J. **Jihad. The expansion and decline of Islamism**. Ladomir, 2004.

LANDA, R. G. Islam in the history of Russia. **East Literature of the Russian Academy of Sciences**, 1995.

LEWIS, B. Islam: what went wrong? **Russia in the global guarantee**, v. 1, n. 1, p. 94-101, 2003.

MAKAROV, D. V. The radicalization of Islam in Dagestan: the possibilities and limits of jihadism. **Social sciences and modernity**, v. 6, p. 147-161, 2004.

MALASHENKO, A. V. Islam in the foreign policy of Russia. **Islam in the modern world: domestic and international political aspects**, v. 7, p. 28-32, 2007.

MALASHENKO, A. V. **Islamic landmarks of the North Caucasus**. Gandalf, 2001.

MUHAMETZAYANOV R. R.; USMANOVA I. R. The Problem of Destiny In Ancient Chinese Philosophy. **Revista Publicando**, v. 16, n. 1, p. 617-622, 2018.

NAUMKIN, V. V. Islamic radicalism in the mirror of new concepts and approaches. **Russia and Muslim man's world**, v. 7, p. 182-214, 2006.

NAUMKIN, V.V.; MAKAROV, D.V. The Islamic factor in world politics and the interests of Russia. **Russian Strategy**, v. 7, p. 53-66. 2007.

SCHAMILOGLU, U. **The formation of the historical consciousness of the Tatars: Shigabuddin Mardzhani and the image of the Golden Horde**. Tatarstan, 1991. v. 10, p. 21-29.

SUKIYAINEN, L. The war on terror: Islam against Islamic extremism. **Asia and Africa today**, v. 2, p. 8-14, 2003.

USTINOV, V. V. **Accused of terrorism**. OLMA-PRESS, 2002.

### How to reference this article

MAVLYAUTDINOV, I. S.; GLUSHKOVA, S. Y. Islam, politics, education, and modernity. **Revista on line de Política e Gestão Educacional**, Araraquara, v. 25, n. esp. 6, p. 3448-3458, Dec. 2021. e-ISSN:1519-9029. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.22633/rpge.v25iesp.6.16098>

**Submitted:** 12/04/2021

**Required revisions:** 27/08/2021

**Approved:** 26/11/2021

**Published:** 30/12/2021

**Processing and publication by the Editora Ibero-Americana de Educação.**

Correction, formatting, standardization and translation.

