

## The Uprising of 1920, the Ruḥaniyyat (Clergy) and Arab Nationalism in the Entry of Iraq into the New Era

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### Abstract

The 1920 Iraqi reVol.ution is the most significant historical, political, and social event in modern Iraqi history. It marked the country's entry into a new era and has been analyzed and understood through two analytical perspectives. Some analyses introduce the reVol.ution as a secular and national uprising under the banner of secularism. Others offer a religious and Islamic analytical perspective, using the concept of political Islam to understand the reVol.ution. Through a contextualized reading of the concepts of nationalism, secularism, political Islam, and related concepts, the present study aimed to demonstrate their inefficiency in analyzing and understanding events such as the 1920 Iraqi reVol.ution. From this perspective, the image these analyses represent of the 1920 Iraqi reVol.ution is neither understandable nor interpretable under the banner of secularism or the concept of political Islam. Even those attempting to place it under the banner of Islamic nationalism have become confused in their understanding of it. This reVol.ution effectively demonstrates the inefficiency of these concepts in understanding political and social phenomena in the Islamic world. Efforts have been made to demonstrate the importance of the 1920 Iraqi reVol.ution in demolishing and deconstructing dominant concepts and paradigms in the political sphere. Additionally, the power and potential of this reVol.ution in creating new models of politics and governance at the border between concepts and dichotomies such as secularism and theocracy have been emphasized.

**Keywords:** 1920 Revolution, Iraq, Arab Nationalism, Secularism, Political Islam.

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### Introduction

The 1920 anti-colonial reVolution in Iraq, also known as the "Thawratul 'Ishrīn" in the literature of modern Iraqi history, was the first general uprising of various Iraqi groups and ethnicities in the transition to the modern era. However, regarding its short duration, suppression, and ultimate failure, it was marginalized in the historical analysis of the country's developments in the modern era.

On the other hand, the non-scientific approach and paradigmatic and ideological problems in presenting the reVolution have contributed to its faint appearance in the history of the formation of modern Iraq. Nevertheless, subsequent events that led to the creation and independence of Iraq have made the importance and role of this reVolution in Iraqi history more vivid than ever before.

In the analyses and studies conducted thus far, the ideology and thinking behind this reVolution have been mostly understood as Arab secular nationalism. Such thinking has dominated the minds of both supporters and opponents of this ideology. However, in these analyses, the role of religion and religious institutions and Rūḥānīyyat<sup>1</sup> in these developments was either marginalized and downplayed or ignored altogether, particularly regarding their role among the Shi'a Rūḥānīyyat in the Najaf and Karbala areas.

The main reason for adopting these two major perspectives in understanding the reVolution is the placement of the analysts in the dichotomy paradigm of secularism and theocracy, which remains the dominant paradigm in the study of Islamic developments and Islamic countries. This paradigm and discourse originated from a specific understanding of Western European developments, in which one of the fundamental measures for reaching developed societies was to remove religion and religious affairs from the public sphere, particularly from the realm of politics. It was during this period that the dichotomy between the two concepts of secularism and theocracy took shape and became fixed.

This study aims to revisit the roots and origins of Arab secular nationalism as well as the events related to the 1920 uprising. Its purpose is to demonstrate how the mentality of the actors involved in the

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1. The concept of Rūḥānīyyat entails a complex entity composed of individuals with definable characteristics, possessing specific scientific and practical traditions, and existing in relation to highly abstract notions such as religious Rūḥānīyyat and authority within Shia culture. Its primary function is the religious management of society, at intermediate and general levels. In Christian context, this concept is equivalent to the notion of Church. As the term "Clergy" does not entirely encapsulate this concept, the term "Rūḥānīyyat" has been used in the text. See for example, Mosayyebpour, Ebrahim. "Entry on Rūḥānīyyat." *Encyclopaedia Islamica*, Vol. 20, 1394/2015. Text available at: [insert link]. <https://rch.ac.ir/article/Details?id=14172>

reVol.ution shaped existing analyses, leading to a misinterpretation of the event.

This analysis pays attention to the actors while also focusing on the social, political, and cultural contexts surrounding the reVol.ution. By doing so, it exposes the paradigmatic and discursive errors present in customary analyses and presents a clearer image of this historical event.

This image will reveal the conceptual energies shaped by social and political actions. It allows us to use it as a starting point for historical phenomena and to locate our own point of departure in the world outside of historical analysis. These starting points, which concepts may seek to reveal by either hiding or exposing them, will offer a new image and interpretation of the world and history.

It is important to note that this text does not intend to bridge the gap between modern concepts, such as "Nationalism," and the pre-modern mentality of these concepts through incongruous and paradoxical concepts, such as "Islamic Nationalism." Rather, as previously mentioned, the aim is to break down dichotomy concepts, such as secularism and theocracy, nationalism, and sectarianism, by using methods such as conceptual history<sup>2</sup> or communitarianism<sup>3</sup> currently available.

Lastly, it is important to acknowledge that the scope of this text is limited, and therefore we are forced to restrict our discussion to the methods used. We leave the detailed familiarity with these techniques to the reader.

### 1. Arabs in the Ottoman Empire

The Arab encounter and familiarity with the concept of nationalism in present-day Iraq stemmed from the Ottoman political geography and its history. This happened as a result of issues the empire faced considering its confrontation with the West and the modern era. The Arabs were the second national group in the Ottoman Empire after the Turks.

For the Arabs, especially the majority of them who were Muslim, their primary interest and loyalty were towards Islam and the Islamic empire. The Ottomans were only understandable and interpretable for them within the concept of the "Islamic Caliphate" and a period of "Islamic Empire."

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2. For more information cf. Koselleck, R. 1982. "Begriffsgeschichte and social history." *Economy and Society*, Vol. 11(4): 409- 427; Koselleck, R. 1995. *Vergangene Zukunft Zur Semantik geschichtlicher Zeiten*, Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp.

3. For more information cf. a group of translators; *Socialists and Criticism of Liberalism*, collective translation by translators, Qom, second edition, Research Institute of Islamic Sciences and Culture, 1386.

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Therefore, one can comprehend Arab dissatisfaction and opposition toward certain issues in the empire, as well as their opposition toward some sultans and officials of the Ottomans not as an opposition to the political system<sup>4</sup> but as a form of opposition and struggle within the framework of the political system.

Consequently, the reluctance of the Arabs to establish an independent political system during the Ottoman Empire's dominance can be understood.

Therefore, for any discussion related to the concept of Arab nationalism, it is necessary to understand the historical entry, emergence and expansion of Arab nationalism directly in relation to the background of the decline and fall of the Ottoman Empire. In other words, with the decline and fall of the political system of the Ottoman Empire, various separatist forces and agents began to manifest themselves in different ways. One of the forms in which these forces erupted was through ethnicity and independence movements through nationalist language and concepts. Thus, the concept of nationalism became prominent and highlighted as a modern concept in this period.

During the period of the Ottoman Empire, Arabs had only one advantage over other Muslim communities, which was a kind of social and then political legitimacy as a connection point between the Islamic concept and the Ottoman Empire. "Arabs" and "Islam" were two connected concepts, which the Turks tried to preserve the latter while eliminating the former. They interpreted and justified their own legitimacy of the empire based on Islam, which were the most distinctive and identifying characteristic of their identity.

Hence, this issue would place the Arabs under greater and, of course, more subtle pressure. This was done to keep the Arabs away from the concept of "Islamic Caliphate." It is evident that such care, monitoring, and pressure on the Shia Arabs, regarding being a Sunni religious minority, were more intense and severe. In addition to the discrimination and pressures that were exerted on them during certain periods (Tauber, 1993 AD: 58), Turks, by expanding and strengthening the ideology of preserving the Islamic Empire, sought to suppress any form of dissent and nationalism among the Arabs in general.

Considering the above-mentioned, one can imagine how the latent energy from these accumulated dissatisfactions in the historical and social mindset of the Arabs, in their encounter and acquaintance with the concept of "Nationalism," turns this concept into a powerful and charged idea opposing Turkic dominance, becoming the central concept of

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opposition discourse against the empire and advocating Arab national independence.

This event occurred during Napoleon's invasion of Egypt and confronting of this region of the Islamic world with colonization. The concept of nationalism entered the minds of the Arabs and became a fundamental and foundational concept, guiding and energizing Arab resistance against Turkic despotism and Western European colonialism. The familiarity of the Arabs in the region of present-day Iraq with the concept of nationalism in the Arab world came with some delay. This acquaintance and encounter with the concept of nationalism were related to several political and social events of that time. The first event was the uprisings and protests of various ethnic groups, especially those settled in the Balkan region. These uprisings had a nationalist and independence-seeking aspect.

The next factor was the pressure, harassment, discrimination, especially against the Shia, who constituted the largest religious population of the Arab people in the Ottoman Empire in the present-day region of Iraq; subsequently, the suppression of any form of protest by the Shia regarding these inequalities and their demands. Ultimately, the policies of cultural, linguistic, and ethnic assimilation by young Turks after the 1908 reVolution played a role (Marr, 1985 AD: 87). The final link in this chain of causes and factors was the granting of privileges to the colonizers (Haddad, 1991 AD: 120-142) and their direct presence in the region, which triggered reactions from the Arabs, particularly in Iraq, in the form of uprisings, the notable one being the 1920 uprising.

### **1.1. Arabs during the Adjustment (Tanzimat) Period**

Among the many factors in the formation of Arab nationalism, perhaps the most vital factor can be attributed to the actions taken by the Ottomans in the form of "Reforms" concept during the era of the "Adjustment." The process of reforms, the "Era of Adjustment," and constitutionalism emerged in response to the Ottoman Empire's confrontation with European powers in the modern era. The primary goal of such a project initially aimed at preserving the military power and the empire's authority to maintain and expand its borders.

Regarding the Ottoman Empire's confrontation with European states, or rather the modern era, there are different opinions (Lutsky, 2000 AD/1379 AD: 262; Ross, 1994 AD/1373 SH: 1/609-613; Fast, 2007 AD/1386 SH: 50; Bozorgmehri, 2015 AD/1394 SH: 224). However, what mattered were the effects and consequences of such a confrontation, which gradually infiltrated and spread among ordinary people with the changing living conditions (Lewis, 2017 AD/1396 AD: 287-291).

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Therefore, the concept of progress "Otherness" and "Decline" of the world "Self" and, consequently, the concept of "Reform", with a focus on building and equipping the military force in the form of the new concept of "Army", received attention. The Ottoman's initial inability to confront these emerging military powers made them notice the series and long-range cannons, as well as the order and discipline of the new armies of European countries. The entry of sciences, technologies, and military advisors for training educated officers and producing new military equipment became a priority and a goal for reformists.

### 1.2. Arabs and New Schools in the Period of Reforms

One of the significant actions taken to preserve the traditional system and the Ottoman caliphate, leading to significant changes, was the establishment of new schools to educate young officers. The officers were intended to create a pathway for the introduction and utilization of military equipment and technology, as well as the formation of new military forces under the modern concept of an "Army". As a result, Muslim youth, who had previously harbored hatred towards the unbelieving Franks, were forced to accept them as their teachers, learn their language and read their books upon entering these schools. As a result, these young Muslim students, who had previously learned French and German for their military and engineering studies, gained access to more readable subjects and ideas. These were more explosive than those taught by their coaches in the shooting range (Louis, 2017 AD/1396 SH: 315).

The first wave of Arab nationalism formed within the new schools established by the Ottomans in the second half of the 19th century. During the period of reforms, under the governorship of Midḥat Pāshā (1822-1884) in Baghdad, Arabs, particularly Sunni Arabs, were granted admission to modern schools to acquire new military and administrative skills (Simon, 1991 AD: 151-152).

The content of the courses taught in these schools, along with the ideas and thoughts prevailing in them were nourished by German and French sources. These sources emphasized secular nationalism and a strong government (Marr, 2006 AD/1985 AD: 86).

Consequently, young Iraqis studying alongside Turkish officers were influenced by nationalism and the concentration of power in the hands of a strong government to restore a glorious past. The collaboration and harmony between young Turks and Arabs under these circumstances brought them together in forums and groups like the Arab-Ottoman Brotherhood Association (Jam'iyyat al-Ikha' al-'Arabi al-'Uthmani). This association aimed to ensure equality for all subjects of the empire and

strengthen Arab-Turkish relations within the framework of Ottoman nationalism (Al-Qaysl, 1958 AD: 92-96).

In addition to the sources and instructors of these new schools, educated young Iraqis were influenced by the works of other Turkish intellectuals, including figures such as Namiq Kemal (1840-1888) and Abdulhaq Hamid (1852-1937), and their works. The content of these works created a form of national self-awareness among these young people, emphasising the Arabic language and culture. This was combined with nationalist and glorious historical ideas from the past (Navakhti Moqaddam, 2010 AD/1389 SH: 351-370; *ibid*: 25-26).

### **1.3. Ethnic Politics of the Young Turks and Arab Nationalism**

After the 1908 reVolution and the reconstruction of the 1876 Constitution, Arabs in Iraq considered themselves part of the Ottoman Empire. Particularly, young Arab nationalists saw themselves as members of the Ottoman nationalist movement alongside young Turks. However, this idea did not last long, especially for Arab nationalists. Within less than two years, Turkish nationalists made it clear that their intention was to impose and promote Turkish nationalism (Marr, 1985 AD: 87) while implementing policies of national homogenization and eradication of other national and cultural identities. Arab culture and identity were at the forefront of this cultural and national homogenization policy, resulting in the Arabs being the main victims (Schaw, 1991 AD/1370 SH: 516-522; Tauber, 1993 AD: 58).

These policies of homogenization and national and cultural assimilation inherently present in the concept of Turkish nationalism and other forms of nationalism spawned discord and resistance among other cultures and nationalities, especially the Arab ethnicity, towards the imposition of Turkish language and culture and creating Arab history against Turkish history. In other words, the most significant consequence of Turkish nationalism in relation to Arab nationalism was not the weakening but rather the strengthening of Arab nationalism (Ahmadi, 1990 AD/1369 SH: 127-130; Mowaththaqi, 1991 AD/1370 SH: 1/264; al-Awdat, 2011 AD: 228).

In addition to its cultural impact, this homogenization significantly affected Arab nationalism's political strategy against colonialism, particularly British colonialism. Arab nationalists, who had taken a strong nationalist stance against colonialism before the pressure of Turkish nationalism, weakened this stance. Arab nationalist young officers aligned with Britain's entry into present-day Iraq during World War I and fought alongside the British army against Ottoman and Turkish nationalists.

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Thus, Turkish nationalism, which emerged from Ottoman reforms and the political-social blockade regarding the failure of constitutionalism, aimed to curb religious sectarianism by emphasizing secularism and removing religion from the public arena. However, it instead caused sectarianism and social disintegration and forced the reproduction of despotism, in the form of a strong nationalist, secular Turkish government. As a result, the old tradition could not overcome the epistemological crisis that necessitated the invention or discovery of new concepts and theoretical models to provide orderly and coherent solutions to previously unsolvable problems.

The outcome of this ideological action was the creation and expansion of independent Arab nationalist groups and communities throughout the Arab world, emphasizing and promoting Arab nationalism more strongly. This time, Arab nationalism was a form of anti-imperialism, separatism, and seeking independence to establish an Arab nation-state against the Turkish nation-state.

The establishment of groups such as al-‘Ahd (Ireland, 1937 AD: 228-229), al-‘Ilm al-Akhḍar (founded in 1912), al-Yad al-Sawda’ (founded in 1913), and al-Nādī al-Waṭanī al-‘Ilmī (founded in 1913) and Basrah Hizb Ḥurr Mu‘tadil branch and al-‘Ilm (founded in 1914) (Tauber, 1993 AD: 223) were examples of Arab efforts, especially in Iraq, to establish independent Arab nationalist groups and expand their independence-seeking nationalist ideas (al-Qaysi, 1958 AD: 102).

#### **2.Thawratul ‘Ishrīn (1920 Uprising)**

The 1920 Iraq uprising was a historical turning point that established the foundation for the entry of various tribes and ethnicities into present-day Iraq in the new era, forming the basis for modern Iraq. It was the first significant and widespread reaction of the Iraqi people against colonial rule. Changes in the Ottoman and international political and social situation after the commencement of World War I provided the internal and international grounds for this uprising. The most significant changes included the expansion of the concept of Arab nationalism among Arabs and the replacement of the European powers, especially Britain's strategy of dividing the Ottoman Empire instead of preserving it.

The British occupation of Fāw and Basra on November 6, 1914, at the onset of World War I, the subsequent occupation of Baghdad in 1917, Britain's failure to honor its commitment to grant independence to Iraq after World War I, the establishment of British direct rule over Iraq at the San Remo Conference, and ultimately the protection of Iraq by a referendum declaration were some of the significant historical events that led to the 1920 uprising against Britain (Bigdeli, 1989 AD: 26-29).



However, from the viewpoint of this writing, the 1920 uprising should be considered as starting with the first fatwa<sup>5</sup> of Ayatollah Shirazi.

Following the failure of the Najaf uprising and the presence of Britain in the region, it decided to legitimize its presence in these areas. The decision was made to hold a referendum among the people of Iraq. On December 16, 1918, Major Taylor, the political ruler of the region, held this referendum on acceptance or rejection of British rule over Iraq.

The blatant interference of the British in the referendum caused concern among Muslim scholars and intellectuals. Ayatollah Shirazi issued his first influential fatwa on January 23, 1919, stating that "It is not permissible for any Muslim to choose a non-Muslim for government and sovereignty over Muslims." After the failure of the referendum, he wrote letters along with some scholars to Sharif Hussein and Amir Faisal, as well as the US Consul in Tehran and President Wilson of the United States, expressing the demands of the people of Iraq for complete independence.

Following the death of Ayatollah Sayyid Kazem Yazdi on April 30, 1919, Ayatollah Shirazi assumed the highest religious authority. Britain attempted to persuade him to cease his opposition to British rule, but Ayatollah Shirazi refused to give in. The British arrested six of the Rūhānīyyat and prominent figures in Karbala and exiled them to India. In response, Ayatollah Shirazi threatened to immigrate to Iran. Eventually, the occupying forces were forced to bring the exiles back to Iraq. After confrontations between some tribes and Britain, Ayatollah Shirazi issued his "Defense Fatwa." As a result, the Būḥassān tribes, followed by the Shāmīyyah and Najaf regions, rebelled, and the military governor of Najaf fled the city.

Subsequently, the unrest spread from the mid-Euphrates region to central Iraq. Ayatollah Shirazi announced conditions for a ceasefire, including the return of exiles and negotiations for full independence for Iraq. However, Wilson did not respond favorably. Ayatollah Shirazi also submitted a complaint to the League of Nations, stating the demands of the people of Iraq. Yet, after his sudden death and the creation of division within the ranks of the fighters, the uprising that started in June was suppressed across Iraq in late August (Farahani, 2005 AD/1384 SH: 202-210).

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5 . A religious decree, or fatwa, is a declarative statement of divine judgment given by a fully qualified Islamic jurist through a simple informative sentence. Compliance with and adherence to the fatwa is mandatory for all followers. In the historical context of Shia society, especially during crucial periods, the fatwa has played a vital role. For instance, in modern times, Ayatollah Sistani's fatwa in the fight against ISIS serves as a noteworthy example.

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### 2.1. Thawratul 'Ishrīn, Nationalism and Rūḥānīyyat

The 1920 Iraq uprising has generally been regarded as a nationalist and anti-colonial Islamic uprising led by the Rūḥānīyyat. The acknowledgment of the role of this uprising in Iraq's entry into a new era through the creation of a nation-state has been agreed upon by both analyses. Both analyses acknowledge the necessity of a nation-state in entering the new era, but each group claims to form and take over such a nation-state in its own way.

It should be noted that the requirement to establish a nation-state when entering the new era arose in response to the discourse and paradigm of the West, both internally and internationally. Accordingly, the concept of nationalism was introduced to the Islamic world as the closest concept to creating a nation-state and a country in the new era related to this concept.

The term "Political Islam" not only emerged from modern discourse, but also represents a form of self-victimization in response to the concept of colonization shaped by Western Europe. Additionally, Muslims and Islamic communities have internalized this colonial discourse regarding religion, nation, and state. These communities use the discourse to present an image of them that portrays Muslims and Islamic communities in a terrifying and painful confrontation with colonization and Western Europe. This image is in line with "Orientalism," which has taken the form of the "West" or the discourse of "Occidentalism."

In the Islamic world, the concept of nationalism has generally been the main rival of what is known as political and traditional Islam, which represents secularism. This similarity in thought is a result of the historical experience of the Islamic tradition in the process of entering the modern era, with the formation of Islamic countries through the concept of nationalism. However, all of these concepts that emerged from the discourse originating from the experience of Western Europe with religion and Islam cannot explain phenomena such as the 1920 Iraqi uprising.

The concepts used by the actors in the 1920 uprising, as well as their political and social actions, indicate the inefficiency of concepts such as secularism and nationalism. For instance, the fatwa issued by the late Shirazi on January 23, 1919, stating that "It is not permissible for any Muslim to choose a non-Muslim for ruling and sovereignty over Muslims" was the starting point of the 1920 uprising. This fatwa was issued within the framework of the jurisprudential tradition of the Rūḥānīyyat. It was in response to the consultation of some scholars and tribes about a census that Britain was attempting to conduct to strengthen its authority over Iraq.

In the continuation of the first fatwa, Ayatollah Shirazi issued a second important fatwa. It led the uprising to its next phase with this statement: "Demanding one's rights is obligatory for all Iraqis, and it is incumbent upon them to maintain peace and security while demanding their rights. If the English do not fulfill the people's demands, it is permissible to use defensive force for this purpose."

These two fatwas are noteworthy for their interaction with the political and social conditions prevalent at that time. They can be examined to understand the nature and pattern of the relationship between religion and politics. Upon carefully examining the content of these famous fatwas issued by Ayatollah Shirazi, it is easy to discover the blending of concepts in these fatwas with the political and social conditions, as well as with the actors and activists in the uprising.

The fatwas' universality and reliance on principles accepted by all Islamic sects, as well as human principles such as the rejection of foreign domination over the right to determine a society and nation's fate, the rejection of violence, and the presentation of a non-radical political face while highlighting a non-secular face of religion in the face of Arab secular nationalism, all utilize concepts such as "Rights," "People," "Defense," "Peace," and "Security." They are indicative of the language of the religious community and the active role of religious scholars and their influence in a society like Iraq.

The political actions and messages given between the issuance of these two fatwas, from a peaceful request to enforce their rights to a defensive uprising, domestic and foreign diplomacy in messaging to King Faisal and British rulers, the use of contemporary tools and facilities such as newspaper publication, the establishment of councils to collect the opinions and desires of different ethnic groups and sects, and coordination in action, sending representatives for coordination and negotiation, and bargaining, etc. all indicate familiarity with the domestic and international environment. They also create intellectual and social grounds as an executive guarantee of the issued fatwas. Eventually, this all confirmed the content of these fatwas through action in the political and social arena.

Attempts to present a more realistic interpretation of political and social phenomena in Islamic societies, such as the 1920 Iraqi uprising, often fail due to the dominant concepts and paradigms they utilize and the ultimate necessity to lean toward either secularism or Islamism.

It is important to note that the language of Islamic societies, like Iraq, is both modern and religious, and political and religious affairs are generally inseparable in such language. In contrast, Western society has a different language where political and social affairs are separated from religious affairs. This difference led to the theory that secularization is an

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inevitable and conditional result of modernity (Rawa, 2017 AD/1396 SH: 24). This theory was soon revealed to be a great misunderstanding, and secularization failed to eradicate religion in modern and pre-modern Islamic societies. It led to the revival of religion in various forms and the emergence of a critical intellectual movement against it, known as post-secularism.

Despite this, many intellectuals and thinkers in the Islamic world still present their understandings and analyses in the dichotomies of "Science and Religion" and "Secularism and Theocracy" when attempting to reform these societies. They become trapped in debates that lead to even more confusion on this path; the experience of Arab nationalism, both in the Nasserist and Ba'athist forms, ultimately failed and led to social divisions. Therefore, proponents and opponents of concepts like secularism and nationalism still lack a clear understanding of these modern concepts.

In all forms of nationalism in Islamic countries, including Arab nationalism in the case of Iraq, religious affairs have always been present in a particular way in the political and social sphere. Despite its seemingly secular origin, Arab nationalism could not remain secular considering the social and tribal structure of Iraq and the Arab world.

However, those who attempt to understand and analyze Islamic societies in a modern conceptual framework have not properly understood that religion is expressed within a particular culture and tradition and is blended with it. Religiosity is not expressed in a void and has a social dimension. The religious world is a constant process of reading and recreating symbolic materials and elements (Lezheh et al, 2018 AD/1397 SH: 11). Therefore, its general principles and practices are ultimately related to a particular form and way of life and take on their own form.

Every style of relationship with God is a style of relationship with humanity and life in society. Every theology carries a perspective, implicitly or explicitly, on the social world. The social and political effects of a religious tradition are never permanently and unambiguously determined (ibid: 63).

Ignoring religion in the public sphere and treating it as something separate from the interpretations and beliefs of Muslims, specifically in the context of Islam, by separating these interpretations and beliefs from the historical, social and cultural context and current way of life of these societies has made religion appear pure, detached, and non-historical. This susceptibility to the emergence of interpretations that is now referred to as fundamentalism and political Islam also breaks the relationship between religion and reason and knowledge. Faith and knowledge

reinforce each other, but removing the dialectical relationship between the two eliminates it (Rawa, 2017 AD/1396 SH: 31-38).

Today, many sociologists view religion as being constructed and reconstructed based on the experiences of actors within a specific social-historical context (Lezheh et al, 2018 AD: 10/84-85 and 54-65). This issue is evident in concepts such as "Fatwa," which is embedded within the texts and scholarly and seminary traditions of religion. The text of a fatwa, while concise and encompassing political, individual, and social matters is in a particular linguistic structure and context. The hidden energy in it is suddenly released in organizing Muslims and aligning their desires towards creating a common goal.

Upon careful consideration of the points mentioned above, it becomes apparent that there are various misunderstandings and misinterpretations regarding concepts and phrases, such as relying on the secular and non-political nature of the seminary scholars in Najaf and the lack of distinction between the political behaviors of religious scholars and their different traditions by many analysts when understanding this uprising.

In the dominant discourse, there is an attempt to reduce all different interpretations of Islam in the face of colonization and the West to a single form and appearance. Dichotomies, such as secularism and theocracy, science and religion, and nationalism and sectarianism, are created to do this. However, all the different interpretations of Islam, from Islamism and political Islam to fundamentalism and secular Islam, cannot fit into a general argument. This is because we cannot find an equivalent and documented concept for the modern meaning of governance and ruling in books and traditions.

Moreover, all the interpretations presented by Islamists and political Islam in the modern era, if not in practice, at least in terms of thought, are clearly opposed to popular sovereignty. In Western political and social literature, there is an attempt, within the framework of the concept of post-secularism<sup>6</sup>, to present a new and more effective pattern for analyzing and reconstructing concepts such as government and governance by breaking down these dichotomies.

Therefore, one of the most significant accomplishments of the 1920 Iraqi uprising, from the perspective of this text, is its potential to break the paradigm and dominant discourse in the field of Islamic studies in the political sphere. Understanding and analyzing this uprising in breaking the dichotomy of secularism and sectarianism can serve as a model and

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6. The Future of Religion, Richard Rorty and Gianni Vattimo. Edited by Santiago Zabala. Translated by William McCuaig, Columbia University Press, 2007.

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framework for intellectuals and policymakers in the Islamic world and new Iraq in their move towards the modern era.

While we are forced to describe and analyze events, such as the 1920 Iraqi uprising, within this paradigm and discourse and through these concepts, we must simultaneously criticize this paradigm, discourse, and concepts. This may seem like inconsistency; however, being aware of the inefficiency and misinterpretation in understanding such events can help us create new concepts, discourses, and paradigms for a better understanding of current Islamic societies that are challenged with concepts such as secularism, the West, liberalism, and imperialism in the form of Islamic countries. Through this, we can gradually strive to create new concepts for a more efficient understanding of these events and break free from the domination and framework of these discourses, creating a new window for new interpretations and understandings.

To establish effective politics and governance in modern Iraq, a proper reinterpretation of Iraqi history and its relationship with the past and the West is needed. This reinterpretation should take place outside paradigms such as secularism, theocracy, nationalism, political Islam, and other concepts. In Islamic countries like Iraq, the modern Arab language and culture are intertwined and inseparable. The Iraqi people have grown within this cultural, ethnic, and religious diversity, requiring a policy that employs a particular perspective of multiculturalism and respect for each of these matters within the political and religious traditions of Iraq.

The model presented in the 1920 uprising has the potential to provide an effective model for governance in new Iraq. This model, while involving political participation of all Iraqi sects and ethnic groups, will create a participatory governance structure while maintaining Iraq's independence and respect for all ethnic, religious, political, and cultural groups.

Any political model or plan that ignores religion in Iraq is doomed to fail and deepen social divisions. Policymakers in this country, as well as other Islamic countries, should recognize that secularism, in any form, will ultimately bring about sectarianism, Salafism, and radicalism. At best, it will result in a secular dictatorship or a secular authoritarian government.

### Conclusion

The 1920 Iraqi uprising, as the first general uprising of the Iraqi people in the modern era, is one of the most significant historical, political, and social events in contemporary Iraq in entering the modern era. This uprising has been studied and understood in two analytical spectrums. One group of analyses tries to interpret and analyze the general uprising

as a national and secular uprising for independence and the establishment of a nation-state in Iraq. They employ the fundamental concept of secularism. The other group attempts to present a religious and Islamic analysis of this uprising by using the concept of political Islam. The common point in both of these analyses is nationalism.

In this text, through a pragmatic approach, modern concepts such as nationalism, secularism, and political Islam, and related concepts are re-read, and the inefficiency of these discourses in analyzing and understanding events such as the 1920 Iraqi uprising is demonstrated. This inefficiency is rooted in paradigms and discourses created in Western Europe and their introduction into the Islamic world and Arab society.

The main criticism of this text is directed at the incorrect application of concepts and discourses created in Western Europe with a modern religious language, in the political and social context of Islamic countries. This has caused the activists and political and social actors of the Islamic world to interpret and read these concepts in their own modern religious language. On the other hand, some analysts who attempt to understand and analyze the actions of these actors in the Islamic world within the framework of these concepts and discourses may become confused.

From this perspective, the image represented by these analyses of the 1920 Iraqi uprising does not encompass all aspects of it. While this uprising was based on a particular type of nationalism around concepts like Arabism (Urūbat), it was also an uprising based on the Islamic religion. Therefore, this uprising was neither secular nor understandable or analyzable under the concept of political Islam. Even those who attempt to put it under the concept of Islamic nationalism may become confused.

Ultimately, to understand this uprising, a critical approach and cautious use of modern concepts and paradigms are necessary. In this regard, the importance of the 1920 Iraqi uprising in breaking down and reformulating the dominant concepts and paradigms in the context of secularism, theocracy, political Islam, fundamentalism, nationalism, and similar concepts is significant. This uprising demonstrates the inefficiency of these concepts in understanding political and social phenomena in the Islamic world. Additionally, this uprising has the potential to create new models for politics and governance on the border between concepts and dichotomies such as secularism and theocracy.

Such potential and power can be significant for intellectuals and activists in the political and social arena of Iraq, who strive to achieve an efficient model of governance in a country with a religious and Islamic background and different ethnicities. This issue can be achievable in the

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context of rereading contemporary Iraqi history in a critical and pragmatic way.

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