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Investigating the contrast between the discourse of Shia political Islam and the discourse of Ottomanism in the Republic of Azerbaijan

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Abstract

The collapse of the Soviet Union and the independence of its republics had significant effects on the policies of the neighboring countries in various political, cultural, economic and social fields, so that each of the neighbors tried to establish deep relations with these countries based on their interests. In this regard, the Republic of Azerbaijan, as one of the newly independent countries, due to its geopolitical, geoeconomic and geocultural position, was able to attract the attention of countries such as Iran and Turkey in order to strengthen their relations with the government and people of Azerbaijan. Due to the establishment of secular governments in the Republic of Azerbaijan, Islamic movements have not yet been able to provide a suitable model for adapting their Islamic and national values. Therefore, the Republic of Azerbaijan is

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witnessing the confrontation of different discourses to model political relations. This research seeks to answer the main question, what is the contrast between the discourse of Shia political Islam, especially the discourse influenced by the Islamic Revolution of Iran, and the discourse of Turkish neo-Ottomanism in the Republic of Azerbaijan? The current research is based on the theoretical framework of the discourse and the application of the descriptive-analytical qualitative method. Considering that Shiite political Islam and Ottomanism each have elements and components of the same discourse, they can be analyzed in the form of discourse analysis. Discourse analysis can be considered as the discovery of apparent and hidden meanings in discourse streams that appear in different linguistic and meta-linguistic forms. The findings show that the discourse of Shia political Islam is an authentic discourse in the Republic of Azerbaijan and the discourse of Ottomanism is considered as a rival discourse. Thus, as we have stated, each discourse has a central sign and floating signs that make it cohesive. The central sign of Shia political Islam discourse is *velayat al-faqih*. Also, the floating signifiers of this discourse can be considered as republic and government, rule of law, justice, independence, freedom, anti-tyranny. On the other hand, the central signifier of the discourse of Ottomanism can be considered as liberal political Islam. This type of Islamism entered Turkey's political arena with the victory of the Justice and Development Party in the parliamentary elections of 2002. Liberal political Islam believes that the majority of Islamic rulings are in the field of individual rulings and issues, and Islam does not have a plan for political and social management, and only a small part of it is in the field of government. Liberal political Islam believes in the secularity of the Turkish government, but opposes the removal of religious symbols from public places, such as banning women's hijab in public places. They are not trying to establish an Islamic government. In fact, they have a kind of conservative Islam. Also, nationalism, secular government, democracy and balanced relationship with East and West are the floating signifiers of the discourse of neo-Ottomanism. Considering that the political system of the Republic of Azerbaijan is secular on the one hand, and on the other hand, it is considered the second Shia country in the world, the Islamic Republic tried to support the Shia people of Azerbaijan and finally strengthen its relations with the Republic of Azerbaijan. In this

regard, it also took extensive measures, but the government of Azerbaijan, by changing its foreign policy approach, turned towards the Zionist regime, the West, and Turkey, and also narrowed the space for Shiite Islamists and tried to suppress them. For example, the Islamic Party in the Republic of Azerbaijan, despite the cancellation of its activity license by the government and the arrest of its leaders, has always shown that it has a high level of mobilization ability and enjoys relatively wide support. Therefore, it is considered a significant threat to the government and as a result, it plays an important role in the political life of this country. At the same time, Turkey is promoting and promoting its liberal political Islam model in Azerbaijan with the tendencies of neo-Ottomanism. The influence of the secular reading of Islamism and the religious tolerance of Ottomanism is growing among the young generation and Muslim intellectuals. Despite the restrictions placed on the Shiite parties, the government of Azerbaijan has not imposed any ban on the activities of secular Islamism in Turkey and on the contrary has officially supported them. In fact, this movement has kept itself away from any political confrontation and has pretended that it is not seeking to overthrow the political structure of Azerbaijan. In general, it can be said that there is a kind of indirect confrontation between these two political-Shia-Islam discourses based on velayat-faqih and the liberal political Islam of Ottomanism in the Republic of Azerbaijan.

Key words: Shia, political Islam, Ottomanism, Azerbaijan.