An Overview of the Perception of Sayyid Abū 'l-Aʿlā Mawdūdī in Turkey

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Abstract

Sayyid Abū 'l-Aʿlā Mawdūdī (d. 1979) is one of the leading Islamic thinkers of the Indo-Pakistan subcontinent. He gained an influential place in the twentieth century because of his religious and political thought. His revisionist interpretations of various theological and epistemological aspects of Islamic thought brought about a revolution among Muslims across the world. This article reviews the reception of Mawdūdī's thought in Turkey and its social and political impact. It begins with exploring the fundamentals of Islamism in Turkey and the theological and political variables that influence it. Then the article discusses the process that started with the translation of Mawdūdī's works into Turkish, his recognition in Turkey, and the impact of his thought on the Turkish youth. It also provides a panoramic view of the process in which these translation activities were carried out from the 1960s to the 1990s. It also assesses the arguments of those who consider his thought a deviation from the traditional understanding of religion. The article concludes that Mawdūdī significantly influenced the idea of Islamism, especially among the youth, and that his religious and political views still maintain their importance. On the other hand, some groups, particularly those with traditionalist and conservative views, see Mawdūdī's perspective of religion and politics to be different from Islamic tradition.

Keywords

Abū 'l-Aʿlā Mawdūdī, Turkey, Islamism, religion, politics, Jamāʿat-i Islāmī.

Introduction

Sayyid Abū 'l-Aʿlā Mawdūdī (d. 1979) was a significant Muslim reformer of the twentieth century. He struggled to achieve his goal of reform

through his writings and political activism. In 1932, he started a journal *Tarjumān al-Qur'ān* which played an important role in spreading his ideas. Mawdūdī's views and personality are well-known to Muslims in Turkey. His works were translated into Turkish, and some academic research has been done on him. This article illuminates the impact of Mawdūdī's views in Turkey, the factors that helped spread his thought in Turkey, and the criticism it attracted from Turkish writers.

Mawdūdī was born on September 25, 1903, in Aurangabad, a town in southern India. He was named after his great-grandfather Abū 'l-A'lā (b. 935/1529). Her mother Ruqayyah Baigam hailed from a Turkish-origin family who immigrated to India from Central Asia during the time of Aurangzeb. After completing his private education at home, Mawdūdī started the eighth grade of Madrasah-i Fauqāniyyah in Aurangabad at the age of eleven. He also learned modern sciences such as chemistry, physics, mathematics, and history in the madrasah. Mawdūdī's father enrolled him in Dār al-'Ulūm (Faculty of Theology) in Bhopal. However, after a short while, his father's illness forced him to quit school.[1]

Mawdūdī supported the Indian Caliphate Movement which started in 1919. In his writings, he supported the Turks and criticized the British. He published books *The Situation of Christians in Turkey* (1922) and *Greek Atrocities in Izmir* (1922). Mawdūdī also appreciated the efforts of some organizations like the Khaksar Movement and the Muslim League at that time.[2] Mawdūdī's intellectual journey as a journalist began with the newspaper *al-Jam'iyyah*.[3] He also edited several other journals. For him, *jihād* is a method of reform, in which exploitation, oppression, sedition, and tyranny are eliminated and peace and law are established as social order. This is called Islamic *iṣlāḥ*.[4] Mawdūdī did not imitate any of the

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[1] For details, see Syed Asad Gilani, *Maududi: Thought and Movement* (Lahore: Islamic Publications, 1984), 23-25; Sarwat Saulat, *Maulana Maudidi* (Karachi: International Islamic Publishers, 1979), 1; Masudul Hasan, *Sayyid Abul A'la Maududi and His Thought* (Lahore: Islamic Publications, 1984), 2–3; Anis Ahmad, "Mevdûdî," *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslâm Ansiklopedisi* (Istanbul: Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı, 2004), 29:432.

[2] Seyed Vali Reza Nasr, *The Vanguard of the Islamic Revolution: The Jama'at-i Islami of Pakistan* (London: University of California Press, 1994), 18; Faruk Telci, *Hayatı ve Eserleriyle Ebu'l A'la Mevdudi* (Istanbul: SEDAM, 2020), 6.

[3] From 1924 to 1927, Mawdūdī was the editor of *al-Jam'iyyah*, the newspaper of Jam'iyyat-i 'Ulamā' (an organization of Islamic clergy), a position of "extreme importance and influence."

[4] Anis Ahmad (Vice Chancellor, Riphah University, Islamabad, Pakistan), interviewed by Gülşen Yağir Ahmetoğlu, November 10, 2022.

Deobandi, Barelvi, Ahl-i Ḥadīth, or Shī'ah schools. Anis Ahmad describes the establishment of the Jamā'at-i Islāmī by Mawdūdī as follows:

> Mawdūdī established a small institution in Pathankot where some scholars from all over India were invited to work with him and produce new literature. During this period, he wrote in *Tarjumān al-Qur'ān* that there was a need for a renaissance among Muslims and that they should establish a *jamā'at* for this purpose. This idea led to the establishment of Jamā'at-i Islāmī in 1941. Mawdūdī was not a fundamentalist and extremist person, but a person who advocates peaceful change through democratic means.[5]

An Overview of the Course of Islamism in Turkey

According to the Turkish scholar İsmail Kara, the definition of Islamism (as an ideology) goes back to 1913. In that year, both Mehmet Akif Ersoy and Ziya Gökalp used the term Islamization. Muslim scholars began to use terms like *ittiḥād-i Islām*, *waḥdat-i Islāmiyyah*, *tawḥīd-i Islām*, *iḥyā'* (revival), *iṣlāḥ* (reformation), *tajdīd* (renewal), *intibāh* (awakening), and *najāt* (salvation). The term contemporary Islamic thought, which is mostly used in academic circles today and taught as a course, overlaps with Islamism in content.[6]

The roots of Islamism in Turkey can be traced back to "Young Ottoman Thought," philosophical and political polemics written by Ottoman Muslims in the later years of the Ottoman Empire. Facing the occupation of Muslim lands by ascendant Western powers, Muslims sought to stop or undo the process of Western colonialism. They tried different solutions both in the declining Ottoman Empire as well as in other Muslim lands. Military modernization efforts in the Ottoman Empire during the reign of Selim III (1789-1807) were expanded to administrative and financial reforms during the reign of Mahmud II (r. 1808-1839). The developments that led to the Tanzimat Edict (November 3, 1839) ended with Mustafa Kemal Atatürk's declaration of the Republic.

Some enlightened Muslims, on the other hand, sought isolation during this process. Namik Kemal (d. 1888) and his associates are regarded as the first theorists to change orthodox Islam into Islamism, understood as an ideology. This group of Young Turks aimed to make Islam relevant to the demands of the age and studied Western and

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[5] Ibid.

[6] İsmail Kara, "Türkiye'de İslâmcılık Düşüncesi ve Hareketi Üzerine Birkaç Not," in *Türkiye İslâmcılık Düşüncesi ve Hareketi*, ed. İsmail Kara and Asım Öz (Istanbul: Zeytinburnu Belediyesi Kültür Yayınları, 2013), 17.

modern thought to offer a rational and progressive interpretation of Islam. In contrast to nineteenth-century dominant positivism, they tried to address the intellectual and progressive aspects of Islam in the political and social sphere.[7]

During the reign of Abdul Hamid II (r. 1876-1909), the idea of Islamism became ascendant among Muslim intellectuals, replacing Ottomanism. The idea of the unity of Islam brought the title of "caliph" to the forefront. Abdul Hamid II attempted to make it part of state policy, hoping that Muslim masses would unite and form a unified force against the West. However, the Young Turks and the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP) abandoned traditional religious structures. Later, in the face of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk's renewal policies, the traditionalists were confronted by secularists. The twenty-first century is witnessing this idea of *irtica* or reactionism. Thus, the concept of *irtica* continues to polarize Muslims between left-wing Kemalist secular nationalist perspectives and the conservative right-wing Islamist nationalist perspectives.[8]

Islamism may be analysed from the perspective of the Republican era by breaking it down into four major periods. The first period ranged from 1923 to 1946. During this period, Islamism could not make any significant development because of the rooting efforts of the Republic and its strict secular policies. There was only an effort to survive, struggling to protect religious belief, knowledge, and life. With the introduction of multi-party politics in 1946, a new era began in terms of Islamism. In this period, the beliefs and values of Muslim Turks began to be taken into consideration. The period from 1946 to 1969 can be described as the one in which basic religious needs and demands were fulfilled and religiosity was defined as conservatism, but Islamism was not yet seen as a political identity. However, after 1960, it is observed that politicization was seen in the religious masses with the effect of political conditions. At that time, especially with the wave of communism, "anti-communism associations" were formed in opposition. Therefore, it can be said that the existence of Islamism as an independent political identity in the Republican period took place after 1969. In the years after 1969, Islamism was shaped by the influence of the Muslim Brotherhood of Egypt and the Jamā'at-i Islāmī of Pakistan. With the translation of the works of thinkers such as Ḥasan al-Bannā (1906-

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[7] Ertuğrul Cesur, "Mevdudi, Kutup, Şeriati: Radikal İslamcılığın İdeologları ve Teolojik Temelleri," in *Türkiye'de İslam ve Sol* (Istanbul: Vivo Yayınları, 2014), 17-18.

[8] Ibid., 17-20.

1949), Sayyid Quṭb (1906-1966), and Mawdūdī into Turkish, Islam began to gain an independent political identity. Among the main indicators of Islamism gaining an independent political identity in this period was the establishment of the National Order Party (Milli Nizam Partisi). In addition, the transformation in the National Union of Turkish Students (Milli Türk Talebe Birliği/MTTB) is also important in terms of showing the political transformation experienced in the religious masses.[9]

During this period, similar developments took place in parts of the Muslim world, including Egypt, Iran, and the Indian subcontinent. In Turkey, Mawdūdī's and Sayyid Quṭb's books, which were translated into Turkish in the 1980s and the 1990s, were popular among Turkish conservatives. Moreover, after the revolution in Iran, books by Murtażā Muṭahharī (d. 1979) and 'Alī Sharī'atī (d. 1977) were widely read by the Turkish youth.[10] Islamic movements in Egypt and Pakistan deeply influenced the idea of Islamism in Turkey. The works written on the themes like social justice, criticism of capitalism, the idea of the *ummah*, etc., prepared the ground for the formation of an Islamic identity.[11]

The Role of Mawdūdī's Works in Shaping Islamism in Turkey

Mawdūdī became an exemplary writer in the Muslim world with his intellectual and activist identity. In a short period, about half of his works were translated into Turkish. *Kelime-i Şehadet*[12] was his first work that was translated into Turkish in 1957. After 1970, his ideas were increasingly absorbed into Turkish Islamism.[13] Mawdūdī's other works that were translated into Turkish are as follows: *İslam'da Devlet Nizamı* (State Ordinance in Islam) (1967);[14] *İslam İnkılabının Programı* (The

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[9] Nazım Maviş, *Türkiye'de İslamciliğin Değişen Siyasal Dili: 1990'lı Yıllarda İslamcı Dergiler*, Doktora tezi (Ankara: Hacettepe Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, 2017), 7-8. Güven Gürkan Öztan, "1960'lı yıllarda İslamcılığın Zihin Haritası: 'Milli Olanı' Revize Etme Çabası," *Çağdaş Türkiye Tarihi Araştırmaları Dergisi* 21, no. 42 (2021): 397-433.

[10] Maviş, *Türkiye'de İslamciliğin Değişen Siyasal Dili*, 7-8.

[11] Ibid., 101.

[12] Ebu'l A'la Mevdûdî, *Kelime-i Şehadet*, trans. Hüseyin Atay (Ankara: Hilal Yayınları, 1961).

[13] Ahmet Köroğlu, *Türkiye'de İslamcı Söylemin Oluşumunda Tercümelerin Etkisi* (Istanbul: İstanbul Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Siyaset Bilimi ve Uluslararası İlişkiler Anabilim Dalı, Doktora Tezi, 2020), 58.

[14] Ebu'l A'la Mevdûdî, *İslam'da Devlet Nizamı*, trans. Rasim Özdenören (Istanbul: Hilal Yayınları, 1967).

Programme of the Islamic Revolution);[15] *Tefhîm'ul Kur'ân* (Tafhīm al-Qur'ān);[16] *Kur'ân'da Dört Terim* (Four Terms in the Qur'ān);[17] *İslam'da İhya Hareketleri* (Revival Movements in Islam);[18] *İslam'ı Anlamaya Doğru* (Towards the Understanding of Islam);[19] *İslam Anayasası: Tedvini ve Esasları* (Islamic Constitution: Principles of Teaching);[20] *Halife ve Saltanat* (Caliphate and Sultanate);[21] *İslam'ı Nasıl Anlayalım* (How to Understand Islam).[22]

The idea of Allah's sovereignty on earth, which Mawdūdī repeats frequently in his works, is the ideal of Islamism in Turkey. One sees that ideas such as the Islamic constitution and the Islamic order defended by the Jamā'at-i Islāmī are included in the expressions of some Islamist writers and thinkers in Turkey. Mawdūdī considers the Qur'ān a handbook of the Islamic movement and a constitution,[23] saying that the Prophet had authority both as an administrator and as a judge. These perspectives are also owned by the Islamist thought in Turkey and reveal the influence of Mawdūdī.[24]

The translations of Mawdūdī's works into Turkish and his recognition in Turkey were mostly achieved through the journal *Hilal*. This journal, which started its publication in 1958 by Salih Özcan, had

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[15] Mevdûdî, *İslam İnklabının Programı*, trans. Mikail Bayram (Ankara: Hilal Yayınları, 1969). According to Maviş, after the appearance of this translation, interest in Mawdūdī's works increased. See Maviş, *Türkiye'de İslamciliğin Değişen Siyasal Dili*, 115-16.

[16] Ebu'l A'la Mevdûdî, *Tefhimu'l Kur'an: Kur'an'ın Anlamı ve Yorumu I-VII*, trans. Muhammed Han Kayani, 2nd ed. (Istanbul: İnsan Yayınları, 1991), 341.

[17] Mevdûdî, *Kur'an'ın Dört Temel Terimi: İlah, Rab, Din, İbadet*, trans. Mahmut Osmanoğlu, 2nd ed. (Istanbul: Özgün Yayınları, 1993).

[18] Mevdûdî, *İslâm'da İhya Hareketleri*, trans. A. Ali Genç, 3rd. ed. (Istanbul: Pınar yayınları 1992).

[19] Mevdûdî, *İslâm'ın Anlaşılmasına Doğru*, trans. Mehmet Süslü (Istanbul: Nizam yayınları, 1992).

[20] Mevdûdî, *İslâm Anayasası: Tedvini esasları*, trans. İhsan Toksarı (Istanbul: Nida yayınları, 1969).

[21] Mevdûdî, *Hilafet ve Saltanat*, trans. Ali Genceli (Istanbul: Hilal Yayınları, 2003).

[22] Mevdûdî, *Kur'an'ı Nasıl Anlayalım*, trans. Bekir Karlığa, 8th ed. (Istanbul: İşaret Yayınları, 1997). For details about Mawdūdī's works translated into Turkish, see Gülşen Şahin, "Mevdûdî'nin Din ve Siyaset Anlayışı" (master's thesis, Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, Fırat Üniversitesi, Elâzığ, 2011).

[23] For more information, see Abdülhamit Birışık, "Ebü'l-A'la Mevdûdî'nin Kur'ân Yorumunu Şekillendiren Temal Dinamikler," *Uludağ Üniversitesi İlâhiyat Fakültesi Dergisi* 20, no. 2 (2011): 10.

[24] Gülşen Yağır Ahmetoğlu, *Tarihsel Süreçte Cemaat-i İslâmî* (Istanbul: Şiar Yayınları, 2018), 143-44.

the following subtitle "A Religious, Scientific, Political Monthly Magazine." When Özcan went to Pakistan, he met Mawdūdī and later played a leading role in translating and publishing his books. Thus, it is seen that Mawdūdī's works were published intensively in Turkey between 1960 and 1970 through the Hilal Publishing House.[25] Mawdūdī was first introduced in the eighteenth issue of *Hilal* in 1961 with the article titled "Who is Abu'l Ala al-Mawdūdī?"[26] Writing about Mawdūdī, this article reads, "He created the idea of the Islamic order and the Islamic state in the public opinion." This statement is significant given that the objective of an "Islamic state" was not yet firmly stated in Turkish Islamism.[27]

In the 1960s, the Kuwait-based International Islamic Federation of Student Organizations (IIFSO) began to distribute the books of Mawdūdī and other movement leaders, translating them into languages including Turkish. When the events in Egypt, Syria, and Pakistan came to Turkey's agenda, the works from here were distributed in Turkey by the National Vision Movement, represented by the National Order Party (MNP) and the National Salvation Party (Milli Selamet Partisi [MSP]). The National Vision Movement (Milli Görüş Hareketi), which entered politics as the Welfare Party (Refah Partisi) following the closure of the National Order Party (MNP) twice, entered into closer relations with the Jamāʿat-i Islāmī. The National Vision Movement sent many young people to Pakistan to study for some time and entrusted them to the Jamāʿat-i Islāmī. Mawdūdī and his books influenced the leaders of the National Vision Movement. Necmettin Erbakan's describing his political activities in Turkey as *jihād* reveals this.[28]

The establishment of the National Order Party, which envisions religion and politics as a whole, by Necmettin Erbakan in 1970 is the first example of Islamism being represented as a party in Turkey. When one

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[25] For details, see Bulut Gürpınar, "Hilâl Dergisi ve Dünya Siyasetine Bakışı," *Bilecik Şeyh Edebali Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü* 2 no. 2 (2017): 436-52.

[26] Alperen Gençosmanoğlu, "Hilal Dergisi ve Hilal Yayınları: Yerli Bir Neşriyat Harekâtı Olarak Çeviri Faaliyetleri," in *1960-1980 Arası İslamcı Dergiler Toparlanma ve Çeşitlenme*, ed. V. Işık, A. Köroğlu, and Y. E. Sezgin (Ankara: İlem Kitaplığı, 2016), 293. Also see Mehmet Kuşçu, "Hilal Dergisi 1," *Haksöz Dergisi*, September 1993, https://www.haksozhaber.net /okul/hilal-dergisi-1-479yy.htm.

[27] Maviş, "Türkiye'de İslamciliğin Değişen Siyasal Dili," 139.

[28] Abdulhamit Birışık, "Mevdûdî İslâmcılığının Türkiye'ye Giriş Biçimi ve Türkiye İslâmcılığına Etkisi," in *Türkiye'de İslâmcılık Düşüncesi ve Hareketi (Sempozyum Tebliğleri)*, ed. İsmail Kara and Asım Öz (Istanbul: Zeytinburnu Belediyesi Kültür Yayınları, 2013), 391-97.

looks at the basic arguments of this religiopolitical structure, one sees the traces of Mawdūdī's understanding of religion and politics. The principle of commending right and forbidding wrong, discourses against Western civilization, the principle of establishing an exemplary civilization for the world, prioritizing morality and spirituality, the discourse of *ummah*, and the National Order Party having a communal understanding and character like the Jamā'at-i Islāmī Erbakan are only a few examples of Mawdūdī's influence in Turkey. Being seen not only as a party leader but also as a community *imām* (religious leader) and discourses on establishing an Islamic order and an Islamic state through legitimate means, namely, elections, are indicators of this.[29]

In his article, "The Development Process of the Islamic Movement in Turkey," the Islamist author Ahmet Ertürk shows his interest in Mawdūdī's thought as follows:

> Mawdūdī's "Four Terms in the Qur'ān" are today considered an important turning point for the Muslim generation to understand the Qur'ānic concepts correctly, to show the meaning behind how some concepts in the Qur'ān radically shook the social and individual structure 1400 years ago, and to show the real-life equivalents of these concepts. Mawdūdī, who examined the concepts of Allah, the Lord, worship, and religion and concepts such as *tāghūt* (disbelieving tyranny), *tawḥīd* (God's unity), and *shirk* (polytheism) around them, played an important role in correcting the metaphysical and even mystical equivalents of these concepts in the minds of Muslims, restoring them to their true meaning. This work was a masterpiece that drew Muslims to the idea of *tawḥīd* in the light of the Qur'ān.[30]

Ertürk defined Mawdūdī as someone who carried the flag of Islam based on the Qur'ān. Moreover, Ertürk responded to the critics of Mawdūdī such as M. Şevket Eygi, Hüseyin Hilmi Işık, Ahmet Davutoğlu, and N. Fazıl Kısakürek, saying, "Their defamation of figures such as Jamāl al-Dīn al-Afghānī, Sayyid Quṭb, and Mawdūdī, who waved the flag of the Islamic struggle, with a negative image as 'religious reformists,' easily found support because the history of Islamic thought is a certain belief and *fiqh* tradition."[31]

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[29] Cf. *Dastoor Jamaat-e Islami Pakistan*, *Milli Nizam Partisi Program ve Tüzük* (Ankara: T. B. M. M. Kütüphanesi, n.d.). Also see Ahmetoğlu, *Tarihsel Süreçte Cemaât-i İslâmi*.

[30] Ahmet S. Ertürk, "Türkiye'de İslami Hareketin Gelişim Süreci: 60 ve 70'li Yıllar," *Dünya ve İslam* 4 (1990): 129, https://www.haksozhaber.net/okul/turkiyede-islami-hareketin-gelisim-sureci-60-ve-70li-yillar-126yy.htm.

[31] Ibid., 129-30.

Abdülhamit Birışık argues that if Mawdūdī had been a religiously dangerous personality, scholars from the academic world would have not turned to translate his works in those troubled days.[32]

Between 1970 and 1990, Mawdūdī had an intense influence on Islamism in Turkey. Concrete indications of this influence can be seen from the Islamist press of the time. The Islamist youth of the period especially the National Union of Turkish Students (MTTB) and Akıncılar Association (Akıncılar Derneği) were very influential in their environment. This can be evidenced by journals published in this period such as *Tevhid* (Tawḥīd), *Şura* (Shūrā), *Hicret* (Hijrah), *Sebil* (Path), *İslami Hareket* (Islamic Movement), *Milli Gençlik* (National Youth), *Yeni Ölçü* (New Measure), *Düşünce* (Thought), and *Hilal* (Crescent).[33]

Through the *Şura* journal, Mawdūdī's discourses, like the sovereignty of Allah's laws, the defence of the caliphate, and the statements of the *sharī'ah*, had a significant impact on Turkey. Similarly, in another influential journal *Tevhid*, there is a clear search for Islamic order. It frequently discussed the developments related to the Iranian revolution, the Islamic resistance in Afghanistan, the Palestinian problem, and the problems of Muslims in Islamic countries such as Eritrea, Peloponnese, Chad, Algeria, Tunisia, Arabia, Egypt, Pakistan, Syria, and the Philippines. The same is the case with another journal *Sebil* started by Kadir Mısıroğlu in 1976. In the same way, another journal *Düşünce* emphasized Mawdūdī's understanding of an Islamic order based on the sovereignty of Allah. Another journal that defended similar ideas was *İslami Hareket Dergisi* (Journal of Islamic Movement), the banner of which publishes next to its logo the phrase "Until religion is only for Allah and strife disappears from the face of the earth. . . ."[34]

From 1976 to 1986, Islamism aimed to seize political power with the idea of establishing a religious government in Turkey. After 1990, however, social, political, economic, and cultural changes affected Islamist thought. It started to emphasize democracy and the need for the Islamic sector to be more moderate.[35] By the turn of the second

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[32] Birışık, "Mevdûdî İslâmcılığının Türkiye'ye Giriş Biçimi ve Türkiye İslâmcılığına Etkisi", 395.

[33] Maviş, "Türkiye'de İslamciliğin Değişen Siyasal Dili," 138.

[34] Ibid., 140-48.

[35] See Soner Yağlı, "1990 Sonrası Türkiye'de İslâmi Kimlikte Dönüşüm ve Medyadaki Yansıması," *Yeni Düşünceler* 1 (Fall 2005): 239-49.

millennium, it was observed that Islamist movements shifted from a radical political position to a social and cultural trend.[36]

It may be argued that this change in the Islamist thought reduced interest in Mawdūdī's works. Although intellectuals started to replace the Islamist identity in Turkey after 1990, academic circles still talk about and discuss Mawdūdī's works. For example, many professors from Turkey and Pakistan participated in the symposium on Mawdūdī organized by Medeniyet Vakfı (Medeniyet Association).[37] The proceedings of the symposium organized in memory of the 100th anniversary of the birth of Mawdūdī were published as a book by Insan Publishing in 2007.[38] The fact that Hamira Mawdūdī's *My Father Mawdūdî* was translated into Turkish and published as *Babam Mevdûdî*[39] in Turkey in 2011 shows that Mawdūdī is still being read in Turkey. When the author visited Hamira Mawdūdī, she expressed her delight at the keen interest her book received in Turkey. Hamira Mawdūdī reiterated the statements of her father that no one can destroy Turkey, Pakistan, and Saudi Arabia, demonstrating the significance of Turkey to Mawdūdī.[40] One may conclude that Mawdūdī's thought still has an impact in Turkey, though it is no longer as popular as it was during the 1970s and 1980s. However, academic research on his works continues.

Academic Studies on Mawdūdī and His Views in Turkey

The books and theses written in Turkey on Mawdūdī's thought demonstrate a high level of interest in his thought in Turkey. This section briefly discusses selected works written in Turkey on Mawdūdī's thought because a comprehensive list and analysis of academic studies on his thought call for a separate study.

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[36] Ebru Karadeniz, "1980-2000 Arası İslâmcı Dergilerde Devlet Tartışmaları" (master's thesis, Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, İstanbul Üniversitesi, Istanbul, 2021), 35-37.

[37] https://www.medeniyetvakfi.org/vakif/single-ad-view/faaliyetlerimiz /sempozyumlar/mevdudi-sempozyumu. Participants included M. Beşir Eryarsoy, Ali Kaçar, Abdulhamid Birışık, Mustafa Ağırman, Abdulaziz Hatip, Durmuş Bulgur and Anis Ahmed and İskender Barlas from Pakistan. In the symposium, Mawdūdī's life and ideas were discussed.

[38] Abdülhamit Birışık, ed., *Mevdûdî: Hayatı, Görüşleri ve Eserleri* (Istanbul: İnsan Yayınları, 2007).

[39] Hamira Mevdûdî, *Babam Mevdûdî*, trans. Hülya Afacan (Istanbul: Mana Yayınları, 2011).

[40] Hamira Mevdûdî (daughter of Mawdūdī, Lahore, Pakistan), interviewed by Gülşen Yağır Ahmetoğlu, October 21, 2022.

Abdülhamit Birışık's edited book *Mevdûdî: Hayatı, Görüşleri ve Eserleri* includes the works of many authors presented in meetings held to commemorate the 100th birth anniversary of Mawdūdī.

In her master's thesis, "Mevdûdî'nin Din ve Siyaset Anlayışı," Gülşen Şahin argues that Mawdūdī's understanding of religion is an ideology that encompasses all areas of life and that his whole ideological enterprise was built on establishing an Islamic state based on religion without separating religion from politics.[41] Moreover, in her published PhD dissertation *Tarihsel Süreçte Cemaat-i İslâmi*,[42] Gülşen Yağır Ahmetoğlu surveys the history of Jamā‘at-i Islamī from its beginning to the present era, determining the place of Jamā‘at-i Islāmī in the politics of Pakistan and searching for reasons for its not coming to power.

Mustafa Sönmez's PhD dissertation "İhya Hareketlerinde Mevdûdî"[43] argues that Mawdūdī sought to revive Islam by returning to the Qur'ān and *sunnah* and concludes that he was not a modernist or reformist, but a revolutionary political Islamist and activist.

Mustafa Özel's PhD dissertation "Elmalılı ve Mevdûdî'nin Tefsirlerine Karşılaştırmalı Bir Yaklaşım"[44] compares the Qur'ānic commentaries of Mawdūdī and Elmalılı.

In his thesis, "Kur'an Yorumunun Politik Bağlamı Mevdûdî Örneği,"[45] Ömer Başkan studies how Mawdūdī understands the Qur'ān and how his exegetical views can be transferred to the process of re-establishing religion. He further claims that Mawdūdī's understanding of the Qur'ān is, in a sense, the outcome of his effort to lay down the foundations for the political legitimacy of Jamā‘at-i Islāmī.

Mahmut Ata's master's thesis "Seyyid Ebu'l- A'la Mevdûdî'nin Siyasi Düşüncesinin Teolojik Temelleri"[46] concludes that Mawdūdī tried to find answers to all questions in the Qur'ān and developed an Islamic state theory based on *tawḥīd*. Ata criticizes Mawdūdī by saying that the *tawḥīd*

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[41] Şahin, "Mevdûdî'nin Din ve Siyaset Anlayışı," 191-95.

[42] Gülşen Yağır Ahmetoğlu, *Tarihsel Süreçte Cemaat-i İslâmi* (Istanbul: Şiar Yayınları, 2018).

[43] Mustafa Sönmez, "İhya Hareketlerinde Mevdûdî" (PhD diss., Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, Atatürk Üniversitesi, Erzurum, 1997).

[44] Mustafa Özel, "Elmalılı ve Mevdûdî'nin Tefsirlerine Karşılaştırmalı Bir Yaklaşım," (PhD diss., Social Sciences Institute, Dokuz Eylül University, İzmir, 1999).

[45] Ömer Başkan, *Kur'an Yorumunun Politik Bağlamı Mevdûdî Örneği* (Ankara: Berikan Yayınları, 2010).

[46] Mahmut Ata, "Seyyid Ebu'l- A'la Mevdûdî'nin Siyasi Düşüncesinin Teolojik Temelleri," (master's thesis, Social Sciences Institute, Ankara University, 2006).

should not be interpreted as believing that Allah is the sole legislator and that the purpose of *tawḥīd* is to give correct information about Allah, the universe and people.

In her master's thesis, "Mevdûdî'nin Tefhimu'l-Kur'an İsimli Tefsirindeki Hadislerin Tahriç ve Değerlendirilmesi (IV ve V. Ciltler),"[47] Ayşe Koç argues that most of the *ḥadīth*s Mawdūdī cited as evidence in his Qur'ānic exegesis are sound and that only a small percentage (i.e., 15%) of his cited *ḥadīth*s is weak. Thus, not citing fabricated *ḥadīth*s adds to the authenticity and value of his Qur'ānic commentary.

In his master's thesis, "Mevdûdî'nin Tefhimü'l-Kur'an Adlı Eserinde Hıristiyanlıkla İlgili Bilgilerin Dinler Tarihi Açısından Değerlendirilmesi,"[48] Yasin Öner explains how Mawdūdī dealt with Christianity in his exegesis *Tafhīm al-Qur'ān*.

Esra Keleş's master's thesis "Mevdûdî'nin Tefhîmu'l-Kur'ân Adlı Tefsirinde Ehl-i Kitapla İlgili Ayetlere Yaklaşımı"[49] focuses on Mawdūdī's Qur'ānic commentary *Tafhīm al-Qur'ān* and argues that he only emphasized on the message Allah intended to convey in the Qur'ān about any subject without delving into the details of the issues related to the People of the Book.

In her master's thesis "Abul A'la Mevdûdî'nin Teori ve Pratikteki Siyasal Harekatı,"[50] Parvin Gasımov concludes that Mawdūdī as a revivalist thinker opened a new page in the political thought of Islam but his revolutionary programme failed to bring Jemā'at-i Islāmī to political power.

Abdulhakim Ay's master's thesis "Ebu'l-A'la Mevdûdî'nin Tevhid Anlayışı"[51] emphasizes that Mawdūdī believed that *shirk* (associating others with Allah) and similar thoughts corrupted society and that salvation would only be achieved by making *tawḥīd* dominant everywhere.

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[47] Ayşe Koç, "Mevdûdî'nin Tefhimu'l- Kur'an isimli Tefsirindeki Hadislerin Tahriç ve Değerlendirilmesi (IV ve V. Ciltler)," master's thesis, Social Sciences Institute, Selçuk University, Konya, 2010).

[48] Yasin Öner, "Mevdûdî'nin Tefhimü'l-Kur'an Adlı Eserinde Hıristiyanlıkla İlgili Bilgilerin Dinler Tarihi Açısından Değerlendirilmesi," (master's thesis, Social Sciences Institute, Fırat University, Elâzığ, 2018).

[49] Esra Keleş, "Mevdûdî'nin Tefhîmu'l-Kur'ân adlı tefsirinde Ehl-i Kitapla İlgili Ayetlere Yaklaşımı" (master's thesis, Lisans Üstü Eğitim Enstitüsü, Uşak University, 2020).

[50] Parvin Gasımov, "Sayyid Abul A'la Mawdūdī's Political Movement in Thought and Practice" (master's thesis, Necmettin Erbakan University, Konya, 2017).

[51] Abdulhakim Ay, "Ebu'l-A'la Mevdûdî'nin Tevhid Anlayışı" (master's thesis, Social Sciences Institute, Dicle University, Diyarbakır, 2017).

Hazel Özgür's master's thesis "Mevdûdî'nin Tefhimul Kur'an Adlı Eserinde Kadın Olgusu"[52] analyses Mawdūdī's views on women's rights and freedoms in social and legal life and argues that though Mawdūdī supports women's rights and freedoms, he puts some limits to the involvement of women in social life because, he argues, if no limit is put to their involvement in social life, the structure of family and society will deteriorate.

Fesih Kaplaner's master's thesis "Ebu'l A'lâ el-Mevdûdî'nin Kelâmî Görüşleri"[53] discusses topics like Mawdūdī's concept of *tawḥīd*, *īmān* (faith), *‘amal* (deed), prophethood, hereafter, and the relationship between Allah and the universe.

In his master's thesis, "Kur'an'da Ehl-i Kitap Bağlamında Mevdûdî ve Süleyman Ateş'in Görüşlerinin Mukayesesi,"[54] Hasan Yıldırım compares the views of Mawdūdī and Süleyman Ateş about Ahl al-Kitāb (the People of the Book).

Yakup Küçükdal's master's thesis "Mevdûdî'nin Tasavvuf ve Nefis Tezkiyesi Hakkındaki Görüşleri"[55] deals with Mawdūdī's views about *taṣawwuf* (Sufism) and claims that he is generally critical of *taṣawwuf* believing that it distorts the true meaning of Islam.

Betül Hatipoğlu's master's thesis "Ebü'l-A'lâ el-Mevdûdî'nin Kelami Görüşleri"[56] includes topics like Mawdūdī's views about *tawḥīd*, divinity, authority, polytheism, prophethood, and belief in *ghayb* (unseen), and the importance he attached to the improvement of societies.

Recep Kadiroğlu's master's thesis "Mevdûdî'nin Tefsirinde Kur'ân İlimleri"[57] studies the method of Mawdūdī in his Qur'ānic exegesis *Tafhīm al-Qur'ān*.

In her master's thesis, "Ebû'l-A'lâ el-Mevdûdî'nin Tefhîmü'l-Kur'ân Adlı Tefsirinde Oryantalizm Eleştirisi,"[58] Hüsna Aytaç studies different

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[52] Hazel Özgür, "Mevdûdî'nin Tefhimul Kuran Adlı Eserinde Kadın Olgusu" (master's thesis, Lisans Üstü Eğitim Enstitüsü, Iğdır University, 2020).

[53] Fesih Kaplaner, "Ebu'l A'lâ El-Mevdûdî'nin kelâmî görüşleri" (master's thesis, Social Sciences Institute, Yüzüncü Yıl University, Van, 2019).

[54] Hasan Yıldırım, "Kur'anda Ehl-i Kitap bağlamında Mevdûdî ve Süleyman Ateş'in Görüşlerinin Mukayesesi" (master's thesis, Social Sciences Institute, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan University, Konya, 2019).

[55] Yakup Küçükdal, "Mevdûdî'nin Tasavvuf ve Nefis Tezkiyesi Hakkındaki Görüşleri," (master's thesis, Social Sciences Institute, Çorum University, 2022).

[56] Betül Hatipoğlu, "Ebü'l-a'lâ el- Mevdûdî'nin Kelami Görüşleri" (master's thesis, Social Sciences Institute, Harran University, 2021).

[57] Recep Kadiroğlu, "Mevdûdî'nin Tefsirinde Kur'ân İlimleri" (master's thesis, Social Sciences Institute, Sakarya University, 2020).

works of Mawdūdī, which he responded to the Orientalists' objections to Islam.

In his master's thesis, "İsmet-i Enbiyâ Düşüncesinin Kur'an Yorumuna Etkisi: Mevdûdî ve Tabâtabâî örneği,"[59] Bayram Deniz compares Mawdūdī's and Ṭaba'ṭabā'ī's views about *'iṣmah* (infallibility) of the prophets and argues that Mawdūdī holds that prophets could have sinned but there is no clear information about the nature of sin. On the other hand, Ṭaba'ṭabā'ī holds that the prophets were completely infallible since their birth.

Seracettin Eraydın's master's thesis "İslam Hukuku Açısından Son Dönem Hilafet Tartışmaları: Seyyid Bey, Senhurî ve Mevdûdî Örneği"[60] compares the views of Sayyid Bey, Senhûrî, and Mawdūdī and states that Mawdūdī associates the caliphate issue with the caliphate of humanity on earth and constantly emphasizes the sovereignty of Allah. Eraydın argues that Mawdūdī accepts the practices of the rightly-guided caliphs as the basis of Islamic administration and presents a reformation project, namely "the programme of the Islamic revolution," to return to the first period's practices instead of a new caliphate model.

Emine Yakar's master's thesis "Mevdûdî'nin Tefhîmu'l-Kurân Isimli Tefsirindeki Hadislerin Tahriç Ve Değerlendirilmesi (I-II ve III. Ciltler)"[61] studies 200 *ḥadīth*s cited by Mawdūdī in the first, second, and third volumes of his Qur'ānic exegesis *Tafhīm al-Qur'ān*, translates them, and evaluates their authenticity.

In his master's thesis, "Mevdûdî'nin Hayatı, Eserleri ve İslâm Hukuku ile İlgili Görüşlerinin Değerlendirilmesi,"[62] Lutfullah Kerim Bilgin argues that Mawdūdī compares the views of different law schools and prefers one of them considering the conditions of the age. Bilgin

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[58] Hüsna Aytaç, "Ebû'l-A'lâ el- Mevdûdî'nin Tefhîmü'l-Kur'ân Adlı Tefsirinde Oryantalizm Eleştirisi" (master's thesis, Social Sciences Institute, Dicle University, Diyarbakır, 2019).

[59] Bayram Deniz, "İsmet-i Enbiyâ düşüncesinin Kur'an yorumuna etkisi: Mevdûdî ve Tabâtabâî örneği" (master's thesis, Aksaray University Social Sciences Institute, 2019).

[60] Seracettin Eraydın, "Islam Hukuku açısından son dönem hilafet tartışmaları (Seyyid Bey, Senhurî ve Mevdûdî örneği)" (master's thesis, Social Sciences Institute, İzmir Kâtip Çelebi University, 2018).

[61] Emine Yakar, "Mevdûdî'nin Tefhîmu'l-Kurân isimli tefsirindeki hadislerin tahriç ve değerlendirilmesi (I-II ve III. Ciltler)" (master's thesis, Social Sciences Institute, Necmettin Erbakan University, Konya, 2017).

[62] Lutfullah Kerim Bilgin, "Mevdûdî'nin hayatı, eserleri ve İslâm Hukuku ile ilgili görüşlerinin değerlendirilmesi" (master's thesis, Social Sciences Institute, Marmara University, Istanbul, 2016).

concludes that Mawdūdī is critical of conservatism and imitation and gives an important role to *ijtihād* to ensure the dynamism of Islamic law.

Mine Özer's master's thesis "Çağdaş Dönem Tefsirinde Din ve Vicdan Hürriyeti: Mevdûdî ve Süleyman Ateş Örneği"[63] compares the views of Mawdūdī and Süleyman Ateş about the Qur'ān and *sunnah* and concludes that, unlike Süleyman Ateş, Mawdūdī avoids mentioning controversial issues and repeating classical fiqh interpretations.

One finds that the above studies in Turkey discuss Mawdūdī's views with reference to different disciplines like Qur'ānic exegesis, *ḥadīth* studies, Muslim theology, Islamic law, political science, and the history of Islamic sects. However, it is observed that these studies mostly focus on the Qur'ānic exegesis. Mawdūdī's *Tafhīm al-Qur'ān* is among the popular Qur'ānic commentaries read in Turkey and can be easily accessed. The fact that this work has been translated into Turkish and is easily accessible makes it more attractive to conduct research on it in Turkey. Moreover, *Tafhīm al-Qur'ān*'s style is important. He not only interprets the verses but also includes various subjects, providing information about the places mentioned in the Qur'ān, referring to relevant historical events, and dealing with relevant historical, political, and religious issues. However, the issue of the originality of these theses, which mostly relied on the Turkish translations of Mawdūdī's work, is yet to ascertain.

Critical Perspectives on Mawdūdī's Thought in Turkey

Mawdūdī's ideas were also criticized by different Turkish scholars including Ahmed Davutoğlu,[64] Necip Fazıl Kısakürek,[65] and Hüseyin Hilmi Işık.[66] They particularly referred to Mawdūdī's *Hilafet ve Saltanat* (Khilafat and Sultanate)[67] and interpreted some of his statements about the third Caliph Uthmān as slander on the Companion of the Prophet (peace be on him).[68]

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[63] Mine Özer, "Çağdaş Dönem Tefsirinde Din ve Vicdan Hürriyeti: Mevdûdî ve Süleyman Ateş Örneği" (master's thesis, Social Sciences Institute, Bayburt University, 2013).

[64] Ahmed Davudoğlu, *Dini Tamir Davasında Din Tahripçileri* (Istanbul: Bedir Yayınları, 1997).

[65] Necip Fazıl Kısakürek, *Cumhuriyet'in 50: Yılında Türkiye'nin Manzarası* (Istanbul, Büyük Doğu Yayınları, 1973).

[66] Hüseyin Hilmi Işık, *Dinde Reformcular*, 9th ed. (Istanbul: İhlas Vakfı Yayınları, 1978).

[67] See Mevdûdî, *Hilafet ve Saltanat*, 140-42, 182.

[68] Şahin, "Mevdûdî'nin Din ve Siyaset Anlayışı," 189.

Necip Fazıl, a famous Turkish poet, criticized Mawdūdī in his book *Doğru Yolun Sapık Kolları* (Heretic Branches of the True Path) as follows:

Mawdūdī, whom we call Mardūdī, is one of the representatives of the extermination movement in Islam with his work *Revival Movements in Islam.* . . . His job is to confront the elders of the People of the *Sunnah*. . . . Although he tried to show signs of softening in the second edition of his work after the harsh reaction he received, the rotten metal is always the same. . . . The rest is polished. . . . He admires Afghānī and ʿAbduhu . . . and is in love with Ibn Taymiyyah. . . .[69]

Işıkçılar, the owner of the *Turkey* newspaper, added Ahmed Cevdet Pasha's 19-page treatise "Fâideli Bilgiler" (Useful Information) and said about Mawdūdī in the second part of his book "Diverse Information," "One of the religious reformers in India, the English spy Abu ʾl Aʿlā al-Mawdūdī was a Scottish Freemason. In his book *Revival Movements in Islam*, he introduces Imām al-Ghazālī as a reformer."[70] M. Şevket Eygi criticized Mawdūdī arguing that he reduced the conditions of faith to the five excluding "faith in destiny" from them, saw Islam as a political system, and criticized the Companions."[71] Ebubekir Sifil[72] states that Mawdūdī has some views that do not comply with the creed of Ahl al-Sunnah and that his works can be benefited from, but not everything he says should be confirmed, particularly regarding the Companions.[73] Mawdūdī's book *Revival Movements in Islam* particularly drew a reaction from conservative Turks. His criticism of Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī, who is venerated and accepted as an authority by the traditional circles, has received a severe reaction from some traditionalist writers in Turkey.[74]

Conclusion

Mawdūdī was an important Muslim revivalist thinker of the twentieth century. By reinterpreting many concepts in Islam, he argued that Islam

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[69] Necip Fazıl Kısakürek, *Doğru Yolun Sapık Kolları*, 4th ed. (Istanbul: Büyük Doğu Yayınları, 1990), 153.

[70] Ahmed Cevdet Paşa, Fâideli Bilgiler, and Muhtelif Bilgiler, *İlmi Hey'etimizce Hazırlanmıştır*, 8th ed. (Istanbul: Hakîkat Kitâbevi Yayınları, 2014), 303.

[71] M. Sevket Eygi, "Mevdudi," *Milli Gazete*, June 9, 2009, http://www.alikarahoca.net /sapm%C4%B1%C5%9F-f%C4%B1rkalara/1066--mevdud-m-vket-eygi-milli-gazete.html.

[72] Ebubekir Sifil, "Bazı Şahıslar," June 19, 2004, https://ebubekirsifil.com/gazete-yazilari/bazi-sahislar/.

[73] Eygi, "Mevdudi."

[74] M. Demirbaş, *Başlangıcından Bugüne Mezhepsizler* (Istanbul: Milli Fikir Yayınları, 1980), 21; Ümmehan Tiryakioğlu, "Mevdûdî'nin İtikadi Görüşleri," (master's thesis, Social Sciences Institute, Sabahattin Zaim University, Istanbul, 2017), 156.

should not only be a religion known in theory and limited to worship, but also a determining factor in social and political fields, encompassing the whole life. He showed sensitivity to both the British colony in his country and the problems of other Muslim countries and sought to offer solutions to these problems in his writings.

The recognition and influence of Mawdūdī's religiopolitical views in Turkey are particularly notable after the translation of his works during the 1960s. Considering the political climate in Turkey at that time, Mawdūdī had a significant impact on shaping the idea of Islamism in Turkey and gave a new meaning to the concepts like the Islamic state, God, Lord, religion, and worship. He contributed greatly to the idea that religion covers all areas of life and to presenting Islam as an ideology. This influence increased in the 1970s and continued until the 1990s, particularly after the establishment of the National Order Party in 1970. However, Mawdūdī's reinterpretation of some Qurʾānic concepts, his understanding of religion and politics, his belief that Islam is an ideology, his saying that some Companions (ṣaḥābah) made political mistakes and his not following any of the established schools of law were not well received by traditionalists and conservatives in Turkey.

After 1990, Turkey brought the idea of being more democratic. This situation changed the Islamic segment's way of representation in politics. The idea of being conservative replaced the Islamist identity and the idea of establishing an Islamic state gave way to the idea of individual Islam. This changing process reduced the popularity of Mawdūdī's works in Turkey. Now the Turkish youth generally prefer receiving an education at a good university, finding a job, and living a quality life to believing in ideologies and ideals.

The article concludes that though Mawdūdī's religiopolitical views are still important to some people, traditional and conservative segments believe that his understanding of religion and politics is detached from the Islamic tradition. Another segment holds that his religiopolitical understanding was shaped by his environment and that it does not fit the contemporary Turkish religiopolitical and sociocultural structure. In sum, Mawdūdī's ideas are still being discussed in articles, theses, and books and his thought continues to influence the youth in many Muslim countries, including Turkey.

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