Gabriele Marranci
Editor

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Muslim Societies and the Challenge of Secularization

An Interdisciplinary Approach

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Singapore
01 January 2010

Gabriele Marranci

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Introduction

Gabriele Marranci

Since the so-called 'war on terror' started with the dramatic events of 9/11, a previously scholarly debate has entered public discussion in the form of a reductionist (Roy 2007) question: is Islam compatible with secularism and hence democracy? The question, today, is widely considered and can be found in many spheres; from within academic work (Casanova 1994; Cesari and Mcloughlin 2005; Roy 2007) to Internet forums in various, yet often repetitive, variations. Although from different perspectives, both the academic and the popular debates focus upon Islam in an attempt to find a satisfactory answer to the riddle. In such an effort, Islam, secularism, democracy and the 'West' become pillars of a dangerously essentialised discourse. As in the case of the concept of 'fundamentalism' (see Marranci 2009), Islam, secularism, laïcité (see 'Muslim Thinkers and the Debate on Secularism and Laïcité' by De Poli, this volume) are not, in the mass media as well as in certain academic discourses, discussed as processes but rather as 'things', or in anthropological jargon, 'cultural objects' (Geertz 1973). In *Muslim Societies and the Challenge of Secularization*, the authors, coming from different academic disciplines such as anthropology, sociology, history, legal studies, political sciences, Islamic studies and religious studies, shall offer a debate that attempts to deconstruct the simplified, and often oxymoronic, discussion about the relationship between Islam and secularism and provide a new way to discuss the topic.

In Europe, and in Turkey, the debate over the Muslim 'veil' (see Bowen 2007; Özdalga 1998) has been politically used as casus belli to start an unprecedented debate about the role that Islam may play within the west and the challenge, if not the threat, that it may represent to the western democratic and secular system. Of course the European debate of the position of Turkey within the European Union has also increased the general public sensitivity to a complex social-political debate that is too often popularised by the mass media and Machiavellian political needs. As an anthropologist, I am not so surprised that at the centre of this debate are not Muslims, but rather Islam. As I will try to explain in this introduction, the debate has

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left the theological, scholarly and political arena to become what Mamdani (2002) has called 'Culture Talk'. The main step is to move the debate away from 'Culture Talk', which means to recognise that although the Holy Qur'an and the hadiths play a fundamental role in the lives of Muslims, the texts remain mute without a mind to interpret or read them. In other words, Islam does not exist without a mind to conceive of it[1] (Marranci 2008). Interpretations, processes of identities and emotions (Marranci 2006, 2008), local and global contexts are not just variables added to a defined, textualised eschatology but rather the essence of it.

Instead, within the widespread, and ever spreading, 'Culture Talk' affecting the representation of Muslims both in the west and in Muslim-majority countries, Islam is understood as a blueprint, so that Muslims are reduced to embodied traditions (Bruce 2000). In the debate about Islam and secularism, which is mirrored in the discussion of the compatibility of 'Islam' with 'democracy', 'Culture Talk' has allowed western politicians, commentators and intellectuals to divide the world between 'modern' and 'premodern'. The increasingly predominant view that 'real' Muslims, because of Islam, cannot accept, adapt, or assimilate within democratic systems and consequently that they may represent a danger and threat to them, seems to confirm what Mamdani has highlighted as one of the main characteristics of 'Culture Talk': the idea that Muslims 'made' culture at the beginning of history, but in the contemporary world they are only able to conform to culture,

> According to some, our [Muslim] culture seems to have no history, no politics, and no debates, so that all Muslims are just plain bad. According to others, there is a history, a politics, even debates, and there are good Muslims and bad Muslims. In both versions, history seems to have petrified into a lifeless custom of an antique people who inhabit antique lands. Or could it be that culture here stands for habit, for some kind of instinctive activity with rules that are inscribed in early founding texts, usually religious, and mummified in early artefacts? (2004: 18)

He has rightly noticed that it is this reasoning that helps to provide the argument for a 'clash' between modern and pre-modern, which has been often used to justify colonialism. Modern and pre-modern can also be understood as 'civilised' and 'uncivilised', an opposition which opens the idea of 'civilizing' and 'civilizable'. Here secularism and democracy are presented as the result and product of a secular Enlightenment. Asad has suggested that we can recognise in it an inverted mimicry of Christian theology:

> From early modern Europe – through what is retrospectively called the secular Enlightenment, and into the long nineteenth century, within Christian Europe and in its overseas possessions – the things, words, and practices distinguished or set apart by 'Nature Folk' were constituted by Europeans as 'fetish' and 'taboo'. What had been regarded in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in the theological terms as 'idolatry' and 'devil-worship' (devotion to false gods) became the secular concept of 'superstition' (a meaningless survival) in the framework of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century evolutionary thought. (Asad 2003: 35)

There is an increasingly widespread belief that Muslims, of different extractions and backgrounds, because of a requirement of Islam, claim and advocate the supremacy of the divine law over human law and thus de facto reject both the ideas of secularism and laïcité. As Oliver Roy (2007) has highlighted, since 9/11,

> the critique of Islam is today a rallying point for two intellectual families that have been opposed to each other so far: those who think that the West is first and foremost Christian (and who, not that long ago, considered that the Jews could hardly be assimilated) and those who think that the West is primarily secular and democratic. In other words, the Christian Right and the secular Left are today united in their criticism of Islam. (2007: ix)

Such a reality is also increasingly visible in the academic debate where some analyses show an etic struggle between representation and condemnation; between science, as a quest, and politics, as a plan for action; between endorsement and rejection; between essentialism and relativism; between accusation and absolution; between ideology and utopia.

As I have explained elsewhere (Marranci 2009), the study of Muslim political expressions, particularly in the west, has been affected by two methodological flaws that I have called cultural comparative reductionism and Eurocentric historical evolutionism. In the case of cultural comparative reductionism, analyses are essentially based on an objectification of cultures, historical events, theologies and eschatology that can be reduced to milestones of a particular group. This is so much the case that the comparative reduction leaves the domain of analysis and turns into a map of 'civilisation'. In the most drastic forms of reductionism, processes, often open-ended and developed over time, become 'things'. In the case of the 'West', one of the 'things' from which modernism and secularism also derive is certainly the European, French-born, Enlightenment.

Hence, the Enlightenment becomes a focal point of historical development. History here is manifestly or latently presented as unilinear and progressive, rooted in European historical events and their consequences. Enlightenment becomes essentialised into a sort of civilizational 'Big Bang'. Yet history is not a label; history is a process and dynamic and what we call Enlightenment, secularism or even modernism are labels used to summarise philosophical and political ideas and ideologies which were built through many passages and have never been unitary. Enlightenment in Spain and Italy or Greece had a very different development and is still understood in different ways than in the French, English or American contexts. This is similar to the case of secularism and laïcité, which are expressed, understood and even lived in many different ways, not just between nations but also at both the community and individual level.

We cannot other than agree with Asad when he has urged us to recognise that 'the secular is neither singular in origin nor stable in its historical identity' (2003: 25), and should not be thought of as,

> the space in which real human life gradually emancipates itself from the controlling power of 'religion' and thus achieves the latter's relocation. It is this assumption that allows us to think of religion as 'infecting' the secular domain or as replicating within it the structure of theological concepts. The concept of the secular today is part of a doctrine called secularism. Secularism doesn't simply insist that religious practice and belief be confined to a space where they cannot threaten political stability or the liberties of the 'free-thinking' citizens. Secularism builds on a particular conception of the world ('natural' and 'social') and of the problems generated by that world. (Asad 2003: 181)

Secularism, according to Asad, is what we can call a modus vivendi of which Muslims living in the west cannot avoid and have to face. Indeed, during all my research as an anthropologist, I have found some Muslims who have argued against secularism and secularization, but inevitably, in everyday life, they had to socially interact and adapt to the surrounding environment. This means that, as scholars, we can only study the dynamics existing in the interactions between Muslims and the idea of the secular or secularism as a modus vivendi. This is also true in the case of the theological debates among Muslim scholars such as Tariq Ramadan or Yusuf al-Qaradawi. Indeed, the debate is not purely theoretical, but rather aimed to be practical (see Masud 2005; Chapter 4 by Larsson, this volume; Chapter 3 by De Poli, this volume).

These different Islamic theological approaches to secularism have at least produced, as Olivier Roy (2007: 43–48) has noticed, different solutions that go from a total reformation of Islam to a passive accommodation of the social norms within an Islamic framework. However, we should be careful not to end in generalisations that then become models of 'Culture Talk', within which Muslims can be labelled 'good' and 'bad' according to the necessity of a given political ideology. Indeed, I have clearly stated (2008) the necessity for scholars to, particularly within the social sciences, rediscover the 'human' aspect of social interaction. I have advocated that we need, today more than ever, a paradigm through which we can effectively study Muslims as human beings rather than living symbols of a religion. Indeed, Rapport has rightly argued about 'the universality of the individual as the fount of agency, consciousness, interpretation and creativity in social and cultural life' (1997: 6). To reintroduce the individual or 'human' aspect, we need to observe the dynamics of Muslim lives within societies. This means taking into consideration the relationship that exists between Muslims and their environment.

It is for this reason that in *Muslim Societies and the Challenge of Secularization: An Interdisciplinary Approach*, I have invited scholars from various disciplinary backgrounds as well as those working on different geographical areas to discuss in an innovative and imaginative way such keywords. It is the intention of this collection to provide a debate, rather than to offer answers as such, starting from 'Muslims' instead of Islam and beyond the usual European (Cesari and Mcloughlin 2005), and in particular French (Roy 2007), framework. As we shall see, in this volume the term 'secularism' is not only explored as a sociological dimension (see in particular the introductory chapter by Turner, this volume), but also as an individual assertion of a secular Muslim identity, one of the many Muslim identities that, as Richard Martin has underlined in his contribution, 'goes largely unexamined in most works on Islam and Muslim societies. On the other hand, it is in the writings of novelists, such as Nasruddin Farah, Orhan Pamuk and Naguib Mahfouz, that Western readers learn something about the complex and contested relationships Muslims have with the state and with Islamist, liberal, progressive and secular Muslims, as well as with non-Muslims.'

The book is divided into two parts that develop four different thematic discussions. The first part, *Debating Islam, Secularism, Democracy and Muslim Polity*, opens with an introductory chapter by sociologist Bryan Turner. After observing that

secularisation theories have been narrow in their understanding of religion in a globalised context, Turner, by revisiting Jose Casanova's *Public Religions in the Modern World* (1994), looks at the interconnections between changes in the public or political domain (deprivatization) and transformations of personal religious behaviour in the everyday or social domain. Turner argues that if we want to bypass some of the weaknesses of the secularization thesis of the 1960s, we need to examine the interaction between private piety and public regulation that is between deprivatisation and pietization.

Barbara De Poli, therefore, in Chapter 3, offers at the same time a clear summary of the debate among Muslim scholars, particularly in Europe, in an attempt to observe the 'cultural itineraries' existing within such debate so that we may be able to understand the 'ideological influence on the relationships between Muslims and public institutions in "secularised" Europe'. Göran Larsson in Chapter 4, provides a comparison of the ideas of two influential Sunni Muslim theologians among Muslim minorities in the West: Yusuf al-Qaradawi and Tariq Ramadan.[2] The broad comparison brings, however, Larsson to a very important conclusion, which we have discussed above, 'An analysis of Muslim views of secularisation [. . .] should not be seen as an attempt to show that all Muslims take the same position on secularisation. On the contrary, this chapter illustrates the complexity and diversity that exists within the Islamic discourse.' He also highlights, as Richard Martin extensively does in Chapter 9, the necessity of including within the academic discussion of Muslims and secularism the study 'of so-called secular or "cultural Muslims"', which has been largely neglected in research focusing on both Muslims in the west and in the Muslim world.

In the chapters above we have observed how the theological debate remains fluid regarding the division of 'Church and State' in Islam and the role of democracy. Indeed, as Haifaa Jawad explains in Chapter 5, little exists in the Qur'an and Sunnah concerning the 'Islamic' structure of the Muslim polity. In other words, there is 'guidance' but no blueprints. It is this lack of a clear form of governance that produces the complex contemporary internal debate existing between those Muslims who support secularization as an inevitable or beneficial element of progress and those Muslims who reject any value, whether social or political, linked to the development of a Muslim idea of secularism. Hence, Arif Jamal, in Chapter 6, provides a strong social political argument which challenges the idea that liberal theories are incompatible with Islam or Muslim beliefs and argues that 'any antimonies constructed between "Islam" on the one hand and liberal theory on the other may be somewhat artificial because both of these constructions betray on-going and fluid developments.'

However, Masood Ashraf Raja, in Chapter 7, starting from a deep post-colonial analysis of history (Chakrabarty 2004), shows that the relationship between Muslim societies and Western political models find strong resistance if imposed, since the imposition does not allow sufficient scrutiny needed to readjust the model to the Islamic requirements of the Muslim societies. Yet Raja's contribution highlights another essential point in the study of Muslims and modernity: the impossibility of grasping Muslim modernity within a specifically Western view of history,

according to which the end of history is achieved in the form of liberal democracies, free market economics, and composite nation-states. To understand Muslim history and Muslim modernity, Raja suggests, the temporal structure of history's movement must be complicated to include multiple histories and multiple historical trajectories.

Hakki Gurkas, in Chapter 8, offers us one of these multiple trajectories in which Muslims have found themselves, this time in Europe. Minority Muslims in the west are relevant, as we have also seen in the previous chapters, in developing a new debate about their identity as Muslims living in secular democracies. Gurkas explains how Turkish Muslims in Europe are suffering an increase of Islamophobia, in which the idea that Islam is incompatible with Western secularism, and hence democracy, plays a great role. The author provides, however, an example of how the folkloric religious figure of Nasreddin Hodja, also well known in Europe for his humorous tales and particular cultural position in Turkey, has helped the Turkish Muslims in Europe to re-articulate their ethno-religious identities within a secularised environment without, however, compromising their religious identity.

In the last chapter of this first part, Richard Martin discusses the general lack of interest of the academy in secular Muslims in the social fabric of Muslim societies, despite the fact, Martin argues, that critiques of secularism are not rare among some Muslim as well as non-Muslim Western scholars. Martin suggests three ways in which Muslims express secularism, but invites future scholars to revise the model as more cases are considered. In the intention of the author, this chapter is an 'invitation' to correct the current lack of studies and research on the topic. However, Martin also invites the reconsideration of another aspect often perceived as central to the discussion of Muslims and secularism: how theological belief and commitment relates to Muslim identity.

The second part of this book provides readers with a glimpse of the ordinary, cultural, social and political lives of Muslims in which secularization (Asad 2003) becomes a dynamic experience in their everyday lives. Muslims experience the idea of the secular, secularism as well as secularization not in general terms, but rather as part of local processes, contexts and within different economic realities. These factors, however, cannot be disconnected from global processes and events or from, as Marjo Buitelaar (Chapter 11) and Gail Hickey (Chapter 13) discuss, dynamics of gender.

Here lies the reason for which Robertson (1995) has used the expression glocalization. Robertson has suggested that what he has called glocalization imposes upon the west a new re-imagination of the idea of locality (i.e. nation and national loyalty). He has therefore observed, 'what is often referred to as the local is essentially included within the global. In this respect globalization [. . .] involves the linking of localities. But it also involves the "invention", of locality, in the same general sense as the idea of the invention of tradition, as well as its "imagination"' (1995: 35). Yet, the political emphasis on loyalty that European (though also US and Australian) governments, particularly during the Afghan conflict, have recently pursued has ended up demonizing the vital transnational character of Muslim communities in

these countries. Indeed, the religious, but also cultural, concept of ummah (the community of believers) was mono-culturally interpreted as a treason trigger while, as rightly observed by Werbner (2002: 307),

> British Muslim transnational loyalties have challenged the national polity, I argue, to explore new forms of multiculturalism and to work for new global human rights causes. At the same time such mobilisations have been part of the learning process of becoming a politically effective diaspora. In the long run, then, the Muslim diasporic presence in Britain is a potentially enriching one, and particularly so as the state moves to becoming a post-national, multicultural polity.

It is within this framework of glocalized debates over secularism, democracy and national loyalty that Caraballo-Resto (Chapter 10), Knoblauch and Eden-Fleig (Chapter 12), and Bahfen (Chapter 14) have offered us a discussion, respectively, of Muslims in Scotland, Germany and Australia as far as democracy and secularism are concerned.

Finally, Yildirim (Chapter 15) explains how *laiklik* (secularism) in the legal cases brought in front of the Turkish Constitutional Court have been used to maintain a status quo, for fear of a fundamentalist revival, within, however, an increasingly changing Turkey in which *laiklik* is increasingly challenged as a state doctrine. The legal cases discussed in Yildirim's article, however, start not from theoretical debates, but from the social political interactions among religious and secular Muslims in Turkey, in cases such as the recent dismissal of the headscarf ban in Turkish public spaces.

Notes

1. It is not by chance that even the first words of the revelation to the Prophet was an imperative 'iqra': read, understand, make sense of it.
2. Of course, there are many Islamic scholars who are influential in their own way. It will be important to also refer to other traditions as well, such as the Shi'a Muslims and the relevant case of Iran. However this goes beyond the aim and scope of the present collection.

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Part I
Debating Islam, Secularism, Democracy and Muslim Polity

Islam, Public Religions and the Secularization Debate[1]

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Introduction: The Deprivatization of Religion

By now there is much academic talk about the limitations and failures of the conventional secularization thesis and much has consequently been written about religious revivalism. In the 1960s sociologists of religion like Bryan Wilson (1966 and 1976) confidently predicted the decline of religion as a result of modernization. There is now the general conclusion that the secularization thesis was too narrow and too specific to Europe. Whereas sociologists of religion treated the United States as exceptional because its religious patterns did not appear to support the association of modernity with secularization, we now look towards northern Europe as the principal example of 'exceptionalism'. While the notion that religion would decline with growing urbanization, rationalization and secularization now looks hopelessly inaccurate, secularization itself looks far more complicated and we now have far more sophisticated analyses of the process available in such works as Charles Taylor's two monumental publications – *Varieties of Religion Today* (2002) and *A Secular Age* (2007). While the secularization thesis of the 1960s is untenable, what might be put in its place is not entirely clear and self-evident. In any case we are now far more aware of the impact of the globalization of religion than in the 1960s, and whatever answer we propose has to take far more notice of global than merely national examples (Berger 1999).

In this chapter I look at the interconnections between changes in the public or political domain (deprivatization) and transformations of personal religious behaviour in the everyday or social domain. These developments in contemporary society raise critical issues about the nature of religious authority with modern secularization and I examine these issues with reference to the evolution of *shari'a* especially in multicultural societies (Turner and Vopli 2007).

In retrospect the most important intervention in this debate was José Casanova's *Public Religions in the Modern World* (1994), which provided a robust framework

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for understanding certain key developments that had put religion at the centre of political life in many societies. According to Casanova, sociologists were forced to review their assumptions about secularization in the 1980s with the eruption of 'public religions' in the shape of the Iranian revolution, the rise of Solidarity, the involvement of Roman Catholicism in the Sandinista revolution and the growth of the Christian Right in America. At the same time, there is a certain amount of discontent with the emphasis on the decline in belief and church membership in the conventional approach to secularization. As a result sociologists of religion have looked towards the work of Pierre Bourdieu (1977, 1990) to give them a better framework for understanding religious practice, ritual and habitus. Although Bourdieu's actual contribution to the sociology of religion was slight, his influence has been increasingly seen in recent work such as Terry Rey's *Bourdieu on Religion* (2007). Bourdieu's concepts of practice and habitus as a framework for the study of religion are useful in suggesting ways beyond merely treating secularization as the decline in individual belief in the orthodox system. In this introductory chapter, I shall attempt to lay out a framework for the study of modern Muslim societies that draws critically on the work of both Casanova and Bourdieu.

Casanova rightly warned against a wholesale or reckless departure from the entire secularization thesis and proposed instead that we can think of secularization as simply a sub-theme of the more general notion of modernization and that modernity involved the differentiation of the religious and the secular sphere. He was also critical of the idea that secularization means simply the decline of religious belief and practice. In more detail, he identified three components of secularization: differentiation of various spheres of the social system (such as religion, state and market); secularization as the decline of religious belief and practice; and finally the marginalization of religion to the private sphere. Through a number of comparative studies, he demonstrated that secularization as differentiation is indeed a key component of modern secularization. However an adequate sociology of religion has to evaluate these three components separately and independently.

Employing Casanova's notions of deprivatization and public religions, I argue here that in the debate about secularization it is important to draw a simple distinction between 'political secularization' (the differentiation of the religious and other spheres of society) and 'social secularization' (the secularization of everyday life through for example commodification). Political secularization can be understood to refer specifically to the issue around the historical separation of church and state, or in a more complex way to social differentiation by which we should look at the specialization of the sub-systems of society around politics, culture, the economy, religion and so forth. While social secularization simply refers to questions about practice and belief in everyday life or in Bourdieu's terms to the religious 'habitus'. Political secularization can be interpreted as the cornerstone of the liberal view of tolerance in which individuals are free to hold private beliefs provided these do not impinge negatively on public life. However, because in the modern world religion often defines cultural identity, it is often difficult to sustain a simple and neat division between the public and the private. Furthermore these religious identities are almost invariably transnational and hence they cannot be easily confined within

the national boundaries of the modern state. The eruption of religions in the public domain means that the state, often reluctantly and clumsily, enters into the management of religions, especially where multicultural and multi-faith societies impinge on liberal tolerance. When the diversity of religions in society threatens to disrupt civil harmony, states intervene either implicitly or explicitly in the regulation of religious activities, such as the banning of head-scarves in state schools for example. In Southeast Asia, Singapore is perhaps the most obvious example of this secular management of religious institutions not with the intention of suppressing religious phenomena but with the goal of achieving some control over inter-faith relationships (Kamaludeen et al. 2009).

Social secularization refers to the plethora of conventional sociological measures of religious vitality – church membership, belief in God, religious experiences, and acts of devotion such as prayer and pilgrimage. In this regard, there is in fact little evidence of religious decline outside of northern Europe. However in this discussion I argue that there has been both a commercialization and democratization of religion in the social sphere that renders it increasingly compatible with the lifestyles and practices of consumer society. In Casanova's terms there has been in some cases a 'deprivatization' of religion as religious identities and world-views shape political practices and enter into political movements. At the same time there has also been a commodification of religious practice and religious objects, whereby religion often becomes simply a lifestyle choice among other possible lifestyles. For example the rise of the mega-church in Protestantism often employs management and sales techniques from the secular world thereby offering personal peace, health and material success to its followers (Ellingson 2007). Consumerism and the Internet have brought about significant changes in all world religions making them, I shall argue, part of the late twentieth-century growth of global consumer capitalism. It is possible to argue that religion as consumption is a secular practice and that the tension between religion and 'the world' has largely disappeared or at least the tension has been eroded. Max Weber (2002) in the Protestant Ethic thesis had argued, however tortuously, that the unintended consequence of the division between world and religion in Protestant inner-worldly asceticism was to transform Protestantism into a major carrier of modern rationalization. Once the tension between the ascetic calling and the mundane world had broken down, Protestantism lost its social leverage. Following Casanova, in modernity religion, state and market have become differentiated spheres, but it is the market that is increasingly shaping religion rather than religion shaping the market. Although western social scientists have all too frequently treated 'political Islam' or 'fundamentalism' more generally as a traditional protest against modernity, in fact religious groups have employed modern values and technologies to spread their influence – but often at the cost of their contents.

Casanova's critical examples of public religions included the Iranian revolution, the liberation theologies of Latin America, the Solidarity movement in Poland, and the rise of the Moral Majority and the Christian Right in America. Taking the Christian Right as an example of the deprivatization of religion, he argues that by the 1950s 'the American way of life' was characterized by the plurality

of ways of life, by what could be called 'moral denominationalism' (Casanova 1994: 145) and American religion had to compete in this complex cultural arena – often not very successfully. However, the arrival of television presented a great opportunity to Protestantism that rapidly embraced televangelism and the developed expert marketing techniques to reach increasingly large audiences. By 1979 there were three significant groups on the New Christian Right – the Moral Majority, Christian Voice and Religious Roundtable. Under the leadership of Jerry Falwell, the Moral Majority raised huge funds. Falwell abandoned his old position – Christianity has nothing to do with politics – and began to articulate a conservative political agenda. Public grievances – against homosexuality, abortion, divorce, the women's movement and science teaching in schools – were all built into the fundamentalist worldview. Falwell's preaching said that Christians should do something about the crisis surrounding the family, gender, homosexuality and other matters of moral concern. Casanova argues therefore that having been a privatized religion evangelical Protestantism as the Moral Majority became a public religion. Secularization has not been reverse, but branches of the Protestant Church (re)entered the public domain over moral issues – homosexuality, drink, and general anomie.

The Political Framework of Religious Deprivatization

In this chapter, I extend Casanova's approach by arguing that the character of 'deprivatization' is profoundly influenced by whether it takes place in a context where one religion is more or less hegemonic (such as Roman Catholicism in Poland or Shi'ite Islam in Iran or Sunni Islam in Saudi Arabia) or whether it takes place in nations or regions that are deeply divided by competing religious traditions (such as South Asia or much of Southeast Asia). Casanova is obviously aware that for example the growth of religious pluralism in America is in part a function of the fact that the American Constitution rules out the establishment of any particular religious tradition or Church. In the American colonies the irresistible growth in religious pluralism, the need to attract more migrants and the desire of merchants for more trade between the colonies were the material foundations of liberalism and individualism. In more recent research employing the idea of competition in religious markets, the argument has taken on a more counter-intuitive hue in which it is claimed that 'religious liberty is a matter of government regulation' (Gill 2008: 47). This proposition emerges from the argument in Anthony Gill's *The Political Origins of Religious Liberty* in which he asserts that, whereas dominant religious groups seek state regulation of minority religions, religious liberty will be the political objective of marginalized minority religious movements and groups. In terms of political life, this approach leads to the unsurprising but important conclusion that 'politicians seek to minimize the cost of ruling' (Gill 2008: 47). Governance is clearly more problematic in pluralistic environments where there is plenty of scope for religious competition and conflict (Antoun 2001). Because virtually all modern societies are multicultural and multiracial, the 'management of religion' is an inevitable

component of political secularization (Turner 2007a, b). In other words, there is a paradox that precisely because religion is important in modern life as the carrier of identity, it has to be controlled by the state to minimize the costs of government.

Habermas (2002) in coming to terms with the eruption of religion into public life calls this situation post-secular, because, in order to protect public communicative rationality, it is important for there to be some open dialogue with and between religions. The failure of such a dialogue would in all probability lead to political conflict. Much of Habermas's recent thought on the issue is in fact a summary of the work of social scientists in the field. He has, for example, claimed that the secularization thesis rested on the assumption that the disenchanted world (in reference I assume to Max Weber) rests on a scientific outlook in which all phenomena can be explained scientifically. Secondly there has been (in reference I assume to Niklas Luhmann) a differentiation of society into specialized functions in which religion becomes increasingly a private matter. Finally, the transformation of society from an agrarian basis has improved living standards and reduced risk, reducing the dependence of individuals on supernatural forces and reducing their need for charity.

Habermas notes correctly enough that this perspective has been based on a narrow European perspective. America by contrast appears to be vibrantly religious in a society where religion, prosperity and modernization have sat comfortably together. In more global terms, Habermas draws attention to the spread of fundamentalism, the growth of radical Islamic groups, and the presence of religious issues in the public sphere. He concludes that there appears to be a need to rethink liberalism because the privatization of religion is no longer a viable political strategy in the separation of state and religion. Habermas's solution to the tensions between multiculturalism, tolerance and secularism is to propose a dialogue involving the inclusion of foreign minority cultures into civil society on the one hand and the opening up of subcultures to citizenship in order to encourage their members to participate actively in political life.

In some respects Habermas's debate about the pre-political foundations of the liberal state with Joseph Ratzinger (Pope Benedict XVI) was perhaps more interesting, or at least more revealing. Both men appeared in a conciliatory mood (Habermas and Ratzinger 2006). Habermas recognised that religion had preserved many important values and ideas that had been lost elsewhere and that the notion of the fundamental equality of all humans was an important legacy of the Christian faith. Habermas's response to the Pope can be understood against the background of *Kulturprotestantismus* in which there is a general respect for religion and where religion occupies a more prominent position in public life than is the case for example in the United Kingdom. Habermas's response may have been overly generous, but it did recognize the idea that the state cannot really function without a robust civil society or without a set of shared values. The role of religion, contrary to much critical theory and contrary to the secularization thesis, may continue to be important in providing the necessary cultural and emotional support for social life as such. In this debate, the expression 'post-secular society' does not in fact mean either the end of secularization or the energetic and successful restoration of

religion to the public domain. It simply means for secular rationalists like Habermas that the democratic dialogue must engage with religions, especially with the faith of minority communities.

My second observation is that obviously Casanova was more interested in the political sphere and public religion, but what about the private sphere, everyday life and religious subjectivities? In this chapter, I argue that the way forward out of the narrow secularization thesis of the 1960s is to examine the interaction between private piety and public regulation that is between deprivatization and pietization. How does personal piety express itself in areas where some religious groups are in a minority, or an uncertain majority or in a dominant hegemonic role? In order to try to develop such an approach, I shall briefly consider Muslim piety (primarily female piety) in three national settings: Malaysia where there is a disputed Muslim majority, Bangladesh where there is a hegemonic Muslim majority but a wider legacy of Hinduism and finally Singapore where a small minority of Muslims live in a decidedly secular environment. My argument is a relatively simple proposition that representations of the purity of the human body mark out significant boundaries between competing social groups. Hence personal piety, such as the veiling of women, has a profoundly social and political role in establishing the contours of social membership where power relations remain uncertain and contested. Preserving the boundaries of a social group – and therefore having a clear notion of an inside and an outside – may be fundamental to the survival of that social group. In his famous *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries* Frederik Barth (1998) argued that what defines an 'ethnic group' may have less to do with the presumption of a stable and shared culture as the maintenance of a boundary. The existence of an inside and an outside becomes fundamental to the idea of continuity. Whether members of a group have dissimilar behaviour or values may be ultimately unimportant. What matters is whether 'they say they are A, in contrast to another cognate category B, they are willing to be treated and let their own behaviour be interpreted and judged as A's and not B's; in other words, they declare their allegiance to the shared culture of A's' (Barth 1998: 15). There may be serious disagreements within the Muslim community about what constitutes good behaviour or piety, but adherence to practices that are the products of *shari'a* interpretation – the headscarf, *halal* food and restaurants, and abstinence from alcohol – defines the boundary of the group against other social groups. While Barth's work is very pertinent to this discussion of post-secular society, such a theory of social groups has also to allow for the possibilities of defection, migration and apostasy. The support or otherwise of the state for tolerance and multiculturalism can be the crucial factor in determining whether such social competition for piety spills over into group conflict (Joppke 2009).

If Casanova is useful in directing attention to the public sphere, then Bourdieu's sociology is useful in providing notions about embodiment, practice and habitus, and the competition for influence and authority between social groups in the religious field. It is relatively obvious that the character of Islam – and the impact of secularization, urbanization and consumer society – will vary significantly between Saudi Arabia where it is wholly dominant and Denmark where it is a beleaguered minority. In my view the task of the sociology of religion is to understand the

interaction and outcomes between religion in the public domain and religion in everyday life that is between the national and the personal practice of religion. I shall attempt to conceptualize this interaction in terms of deprivatization and pietization.

Bourdieu's ideas about dispositions and habitus are at least prima facie useful in understanding pietization, but paradoxically what Bourdieu actually says about religion in general is not impressive. Rey (2007: 57) sums up Bourdieu's legacy in the study of religion by saying that his contribution was based on two firm convictions that religion in the modern secular world would decline and that the ultimate function of religious institutions is simply to help people make sense of their position in society. These two convictions could be said to be a crude combination of Marx – religion as an opium of the people and Weber – religion as an aspect of power struggles between social groups over legitimacy (Bourdieu 1987). In addition, Bourdieu's ten essays on religion were mainly confined to Roman Catholicism in France and only marginally to Islam in Algeria. Bourdieu's model would in my view find it difficult to explain religious revivalism globally, the religions of the dispossessed, the restoration of spirit worship in Vietnam, liberation theology in Latin America, Solidarity in Poland and so forth. While Bourdieu was heavily influenced by Marx, he appears to have suppressed Marx's equally important notion that religion is the sigh of the oppressed creature and the heart of a heartless world. Religion is as much about protest against inequality and opposition to oppression as it is about the legitimation of power. More pertinently, it would have problems with religious revivalism in the three countries I have selected. On the one hand I use Bourdieu to argue that bodily practices like veiling by pious women are indeed methods of making sense of their position in the social order, but they are much more than that. These pious practices are creating a new subjectivity and identity that cannot be so easily reduced to status positions. Finally, one further problem with Bourdieu therefore is that he concentrates too much on formal positions, institutions and organized churches (Dillon 2001).

Religious Practice

The definition of 'the religious' is a famously controversial issue. However, Émile Durkheim's definition remains highly influential. In *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life* in 1912, Durkheim (2001) attempted to avoid the idea that religion consisted primarily of holding to certain beliefs about the world and sought instead to direct attention to rituals and the emotions that are generated by and attached to ritual activity. Religion consists of ritual activities with respect to sacred objects and the consequence of these ritual acts is the creation of a social bond or community. Of course, these ritual acts give expression to a conceptual distinction between the sacred and profane, but religion as such is best understood in terms of religious actions and subjectivities rather than religious beliefs. These practices embody beliefs through collective actions and at the same time create collective emotions that contribute to the social glue of communities (Barbalet 1998). In short, the

sociology of religion has invested too much attention into beliefs and not enough into practices and dispositions or habitus.

Religion consists, we might argue, of the pious acts of people, especially in terms of their participation within the religious sphere. The intensity of these religious experiences has perhaps been diminished in the secular environment of consumer societies in the West in which religious participation becomes part of the choices that individuals make to construct lifestyles, but secularization is neither uniform nor universal. In many contemporary Muslim societies, there are important revivalist movements that are reinforcing the sense of communal membership and personal involvement in religious practices. The idea of Qur'anic piety has been central to Islam for centuries, especially through various Sufi movements. However, with globalization, Muslims increasingly live their lives as minority communities, often in hostile or at least secular environments. What it is to be a 'good Muslim' turns increasingly into good practice as negotiated and formulated through an emergent community consensus. This consensus typically emerges out of debates on websites where the details of correct behaviour are debated. These norms of conduct have become problematic for Muslims living as minorities because the probability of pollution and exposure to risk are heightened in such contexts.

These emergent norms of correct behaviour are often dubbed 'fundamentalist' in western social science literature, but in this discussion I prefer to use the term 'piety' which carries less prejudicial and ideological baggage. Piety (from the Latin *pietas*) refers to habitual acts of reverence and obedience, and hence it refers to the habits of the pious. In sociological terms, it can be related to the everyday practices that embody a set of dispositions which in turn determine taste, in this case taste for religious beliefs, practices and objects. In Bourdieu's work, 'the distinction of taste' is largely determined by social stratification through the mechanisms of educational institutions producing a hierarchy of preferences (for leisure, for aesthetic objects, consumer goods and lifestyle). Bourdieu's notion of habitus is ultimately derived from Aristotle who was concerned to understand how virtues can be produced in individuals as a result of education, including the training of the body. Perhaps in incorporating Aristotle into sociology, he has lost Aristotle's notion of virtue. The point of pious practice is not just to define social location but also to produce religious excellence.

There is a close relationship between reverence towards God and to parents. While piety from the early seventeenth century meant devoutness and religiousness, it also therefore conveys the idea of respect for parents and elders. The study of pious acts is an important aspect of the sociology of religion, since the spread or revival of religion in any social group or society requires some degree of pietization, that is by practices in the everyday world that give secular activities (eating, sleeping, dressing and so forth) a religious significance. Women in educating and disciplining children are critically involved in the inter-generational reproduction of these dispositions and hence to understand changing religious practices it is valuable to look at the changing status of women in society.

The conventional distinction between tradition and modernity is unhelpful in understanding Islamic *Da'wa* or the process of revitalization. Women are not

necessarily embracing tradition to counteract or oppose modernity. Women being interviewed in Malaysia are typically modern women being often well educated, with foreign higher degrees, and often opposed to traditional or customary religion. The veil is not traditional; often their mothers did not wear the veil. They embrace aspects of reformist Islam in wanting to define themselves as 'modern Muslims' and to distance themselves from the traditional religious customs of their parents and their secular surroundings. Reformist Islam offers them beliefs and practices that they see as relevant to a modern, urban culture. In this sense reformist Islam is a modernising project. It is the cultural component or religious aspect of a rising middle class (Ong 1990, Stievens 1998, 2006).

Islamic revitalization provides women with codes of conduct and a set of beliefs for making sense of life in a complex urban environment. Islamic codes provide a normative map for guiding them through their urban settings – a map that primarily defines how a 'good Muslim' would behave in a variety of puzzling, often contradictory, new situations. In particular reform Islam offers a set of norms for training their children in a social environment where there are distinctive threats – drug abuse, inappropriate marriages, apostasy, marriage and family breakdown, or alienation of one generation from another. Muslims can now access *fatwas* on the Internet which offer guidance on everything relating to Islamic banking, appropriate holiday destinations, diet, veiling, schooling and clothing. These are pious codes for urban living in often complex and bewildering cultural and social settings.

Although middle-class women are adopting pious lifestyles to cope with urban everyday settings, these lifestyles can also be quite contradictory. In Muslim societies that are going through a process of economic development, pietization often takes place alongside increasing consumerism and an increasingly individualistic culture. The demand for religious services and objects has created a global religious market in which Muslims want to consume services relating to pilgrimage, religious dress, education, holidays and food. There is a global commodification of religious goods and services in which pious Muslims participate. The growth of Islamic banking and marketing is just one illustration. Muslims are consuming both secular and religious commodities – how do they reconcile these developments with their evolving codes of piety?

As women become more educated and more independent they have the opportunity to become more autonomous and empowered. These developments are slow and uneven. However, the significant decline in female fertility and the increase in educational opportunities in Asia allow women to escape from the life-long burden of pregnancy and childcare, and to enter the labour market through qualifications from higher education. To some extent piety allows them to participate in this (traditionally male) world without undermining their own status in the family and their own dignity as Muslims. This demographic revolution also allows them to invest more time into raising their children, including religious education. The larger question is how are women shaping Muslim piety?

One could speculate that pietization in general is having three consequences. The first is to equip lay people with greater social capital in terms of self-discipline, identity and interpersonal confidence. Islamization equips erstwhile rural people

with modest educational achievements to cope better with urban life by giving them social skills as the unintended consequence of acts of piety. The second unintended consequence concerns the implications of piety for interpersonal behaviour with non-Muslims. In formulating an understanding of piety in the everyday world, one assumption might be that pietization would produce increased communal tensions as a consequence of strained social interactions (around pork, dogs, alcohol, and courtship and dating), but one could also read these interactional strategies as in fact defensive mechanisms to avoid conflict. Pietization can have this double implication: causing social tensions in complex societies by drawing attention to pious differences and secondly a way of avoiding conflict with neighbours by having clear rules of public interaction. But we have to take seriously a third consequence that these women are involved in 'technologies of the self' that produce new personalities and subjectivities. In Weber's terms, these changes bring about a new 'personality' in conformity with new 'social orders'.

These issues – female piety in the everyday world and the management of religions by states – come together, because the revitalization of religions (through renewal movements, evangelism, and religious education) changes the character of civil society (and hence cannot avoid becoming involved in politics), and the revitalization of religion is being driven to some extent by the new piety movements. More explicitly, if conversion changes the religious composition of civil society in religiously diverse societies, then the state has a direct interest in managing religion. Conversion in Islam becomes an acute issue in relation to marriage, divorce and parental responsibility for children.

In principle we can measure a person's inspirational worth in terms of 'acts of piety', where piety creates a hierarchy of values or grace. Modern religious revivalism in the Abrahamic religions (Judaism, Christianity and Islam) has spelled out a new piety for lay people to counteract the unorthodox ways of traditional life and the secular lifestyles of consumerism in global capitalism which is or has radically transformed these three societies in the last half century. Individual acts of piety have to be seen and understood within a wider social context and within a deeper historical framework. For example, the modernization of the everyday world (or habitus) in Islam is articulated through acts of piety that create post-traditional lifestyles – religious or pious lifestyles that are in competition with tradition, with the secular habitus of other Muslims and with other religious traditions such as Christianity, Buddhism and Hinduism. Hence there is a tendency towards the inflation of religious acts as the pious demonstrate their superior worth within the religious field. This competitive struggle over the price of piety provides an insight into the pietization of women in modern Malaysia and furthermore helps us to understand why there is a mounting conflict between the secular and the inspirational.

Women's Piety and 'Rituals of Intimacy' in Modern Society

Modern piety movements appear to have a very strong attraction for women. In research into women and piety in Southeast Asia, I have been particularly influenced by Saba Mahmood's (2005) *Politics of Piety*. Mahmood has also employed the

concepts of Bourdieu's sociology to explore the growth and implications of the Muslim habitus for pious women in modern Egypt. Her ethnographic study of Cairo provides an excellent framework for thinking in more global terms about Islamic renewal. Similar arguments could be developed about contemporary Indonesia where Qur'an reading and Qur'an recitation have become significant aspects of popular religion. Qur'anic piety gives the recitation a strong sense of religious value and emotional affect. In her *Perfection Makes Practice*, Anna Gade (2004: 179) argues that

> The processes by which pious Muslims attempt to learn and to apply such idealized formulations as in Indonesia in the 1990s led to an amplification of norms of orthopraxy as well as the energy to realize them. Beauty, improvisation and affect are all stipulated as necessary components of orthoprax vocalization.

Whereas Qur'anic piety had often been associated with the esoteric knowledge of the saints, it is now a more regular feature of popular devotion in Indonesia.

In Egypt, Indonesia and Bangladesh of course Muslims practice within a predominantly Islamic culture in which other groups such as the Copts in Egypt or Christians in Indonesia are minorities, both culturally and politically. In both societies, minority groups outside the dominant Muslim community are marginalized and occasionally subject to ethnic attacks. These minorities are seen to be incompatible with the political objective of making Egypt and Bangladesh free from foreign (secular) influences (Eaton 1996). However, norms of renewal are invoked more sharply when Muslims find themselves in a minority within a larger or more diverse community and hence where the pressures for secularization and assimilation are all that much greater. These group norms are more likely to be invoked when a religious community is a minority or where the majority feels it is under threat by a minority that for example is economically dominant. These everyday norms of pious practice then become especially important for defining religious differences. Piety functions in the context of tensions and competition between social groups as a method of defining membership of a community. Where Muslims are not an overwhelming majority, there are issues in everyday life as to how social groups should interact without compromising their piety. One of the prominent examples is diet because piety involves above all a set of bodily practices for defining social relations that involve some degree of intimacy. For example Malay Muslims living in Singapore have to negotiate interaction in restaurants which may not provide guaranteed *halal* food. In these situations acts of piety may cause friction and possibly conflict with other social groups. Elsewhere I have called these everyday activities that are necessary for sustaining group identities and maintaining the continuity of the group 'rituals of intimacy' (Tong and Turner 2008).

This phrase – rituals of intimacy – is used here to express ideas about social contexts and the expressions of self as manifest in acts of piety from the works of Erving Goffman, especially *The Presentation of Self in Everyday life* (1959). These everyday rituals are part of the drama of representing the pious self in contexts that may be ambiguous, contradictory or dangerous. These rituals or codes of conduct provide a series of answers to questions about how to behave towards strangers who are not co-religionists and how to maintain religious purity in societies that are

secular. Following Goffman (1970) once more, these forms of interaction between the pious and the impious (traditional believers or secular persons) constitute what he calls 'strategic interaction'. These assumptions lay the foundations for a micro-sociology of pious interactions, where two or more 'parties must find themselves in a well-structured situation of mutual impingement where each party must make a move and where every possible move carries fateful implications for all of the parties' (Goffman 1969: 100–101). The interactions are potentially 'fateful' or at least 'weighty' in the sense that they carry within them the threat of impurity (through contact with things that are *haram*). These strategic concerns are especially prominent where interaction between men and women are involved.

Gender relations are a critical aspect of acts of piety because the female body and female sexuality are potentially dangerous dimensions of the everyday world. Being pious involves practices that avoid sexual pollution in various forms. The moral regulation of female sexuality is thus an important dimension of religious activity as such. Women's relationships to piety are changing as a consequence of two critical transformations of the status of women in Southeast Asia. The first is that women are entering higher education in ever increasing numbers. The entry of women into higher education also implies that they are now better trained to compete with men in the labor market and these social changes raise important questions about the correct norms – or rituals of intimacy – by which women can function in the public sphere.

The second change is the radical decline in female fertility in Asia as a whole. We are well aware of the dramatic illustration of Japan, where for example 47.1% of Japanese women in the age group 30–34 are not married and where low fertility and ageing of the population are radically changing the demography of Japan, and similar changes are also taking place in South Korea, Singapore, Indonesia and Malaysia (Jones 2005). For example, fertility in Indonesia fell from 5.6 births per woman in 1967–1970 to 2.8 births in 1995–1997; in Bangladesh fertility fell from 6.66 in the 1950s to 3.4 in the 1990s; and in Malaysia from 6.83 in the 1950s to 3.62 in the 1990s. The total fertility rate (TFR) in Malaysia is predicted to fall from 2.87 (2000–2005) to 2.60 (2005–2010). The lowest projection figures for fertility rates in Indonesia, Bangladesh and Malaysia by 2015 are 1.60, 1.79 and 1.60 respectively. In Singapore, the TFR will fall from 1.35 (2000–2005) to 1.26 (2005–2010).

The implications of these changes are that women's status in these societies will rise and they will begin to compete with men not only for leadership in the secular market place but equally in the religious sphere. Because women are investing less in fertility, they are now free to invest their time in more education and also to invest in both leisure and religious activities. These changes are revolutionary for a number of reasons but one important factor here is that whereas in traditional societies fertility patterns are largely determined by biology and social sanctions, in modern societies fertility is increasingly a matter of personal choice depending on values and resources. Personal choice over fertility is an important aspect of modern individualism (Bourgeois-Pichat 1967). In the 'demand theory' of fertility, choices about reproduction are thought to be aspects of consumption in which the reproductive couple, and not the kinship system, decides how many children to invest in.

As incomes rise, fertility declines and parents conceive fewer children, allocating investments to improve the quality of their children (Becker 1960). If we add to this analysis the fact that women are living longer beyond their child-bearing years, they have more time through the life cycle to allocate to religion. Improving the quality of children for pious parents also means ensuring that they are trained in the correct norms by which to become virtuous and hence there may well be considerable investment in guaranteeing the continuity of piety within the group through conventional forms of socialization, as we will discuss later.

My assumption is that, even with improvements in the quality of children requiring a considerable investment (in education and health), women in particular are enjoying more free time over their life cycle and at least some of this free time is being allocated to religious goods and services. The implication of this analysis is that in large measure the recent upsurge in religious activity (as expressed in acts of piety) especially in Islam in Southeast Asia is a consequence of demographic changes and this increased activity is augmented by the growth of religious markets offering new lifestyle choices, especially to the middle classes. While this argument is generally true, research on pious women in Kelantan Malaysia showed that this particular group of women regard high fertility as a sign of loyalty to Islam and husbands, and they are significantly influenced by a local *imam* who advocates both high birth rates and polygamy. These women can sustain both piety and motherhood because they are among the economic elite and can call upon significant amounts of childcare.

The deprivatization of religion or the emergence of public religion is obviously taking place in Asian societies but especially so among Malaysian, Bangladeshi and Indonesian women. In part the growth of pietization is a response to western consumerism, to secularism and to the radical changes brought about by globalization such as the rapid urbanization of much of Asia. As Asian mega-cities become more complex in terms of culture, ethnicity and religion, there are many new issues relating to appropriate behaviour alongside co-religionists and strangers. In these three case studies, we have seen elite women joining Qur'an study groups as one method of identity formation, but also as a method of defining membership. Pious acts I have argued serve also to define social boundaries in an exclusive fashion. The veil is pre-eminently a social practice that visibly defines membership, but there are other perhaps less obvious markers – rejection of domestic dogs, an emphasis on *halal* goods, and dining and dating behaviour.

In Malaysia the social mixture of religions and ethnicities is unstable, and possibly divisive and fractious, given the policy of the state to Islamize society through critical changes in the law. In such a context, piety has a strongly charged political significance. Bangladesh is clearly far more coherent with a large Muslim majority (Huq et al. 2008). Nevertheless we notice similar issues arising out of the pious practice of elite women. Singapore also has clear religious and ethnic divisions, calling itself a multiracial society. Although the Malay population is largely excluded from the upper echelons of society, the state's emphasis on racial harmony has been a successful policy. However, in Singapore we also find a distinctive movement among women towards veiling and a strong (and largely unmet) demand to send

their children to *madrasahs* to acquire a clear Muslim culture and education. These three examples show clearly that processes of deprivatization can be accompanied by an equally powerful process of pietization, and that the formation of piety cannot be understood without understanding state policies and the ethnic and religious composition of society.

Religious Authority and Globalization

With globalization and the growth in migration, the question of how to live in a Muslim minority community in a secular society becomes more urgent and problematic. Alongside deprivatization and pietization, there emerges an equally important question. A global transformation of modes of religious authority has been taking place in recent years. The social and political implications of the growing dominance of neo-scripturalist discourses on Islam have been particularly evident after 9/11. This evolution of religiosity, which is mediated by mass media and new media technology, creates the conditions for a new form of subjectivity and individualized religious orientations. In this new social context, legitimacy can be more easily disconnected from the traditional institutionalized framework of religious and political authority. Both in Muslim countries and in western democracies, attempts by Islamic activists to make the *shari'a* more relevant to contemporary settings create new opportunities and challenges for legal pluralism. At the same time, the multiplication of Muslim voices claiming to be able to interpret the sacred texts, particularly in virtual Internet communities, creates an increasingly inchoate debate about Islamic orthodoxy.

The slow but seemingly inescapable radicalization of Muslim youth from Iraq to Indonesia or from Morocco to Malaysia is one consequence of this globalization of political Islam (Roy 2004). But these specific developments should not obscure or overshadow an equally important phenomenon: the powerful revival of Islamic identity and membership that has been characteristic of Islam quite independently of the politico-military consequences of such conflicts as the Gulf War, the Iraq invasion, the Afghan war, or 9/11. The pace of Islamic globalization has closely followed the global growth of Islamic institutions of education and training – from the many Qur'anic training institutions in Asia, where the memorization of the text of the Qur'an has a lasting impact on mental and cultural dispositions that constitute the Muslim habitus, to the emerging higher education Islamic institutes in Europe that cater for wealthy and sophisticated Muslim students.

The issue of authority in a globalized world order becomes especially problematic with respect to the interpretation of law (Williams 1956). A principal characteristic of Islam as a religious system has been the centrality of a functional or practical consensus over legal norms. Whereas there was historically no shared term for 'law' in the Indo-European languages, there has been a common assumption about the 'order' underpinning the law-like features of the natural world, the relations between God and human beings, and social relations within communities. This paradigm in which law is equivalent to social order was common to the

three Abrahamic religions, and in these religious traditions there was no distinction between secular laws, rituals and the sacred. In this interpretation, both law and religion refer to custom, to the individual's place in the world, and to order. These social norms of a community are merely manifestations of a greater *Nomos* or Order that shields people from disorder or chaos.

Because Islamic legal systems have been often dislodged, marginalized or reorganized by western positive law as a consequence of nineteenth and twentieth-century colonialism, in the post-colonial period, there has been a significant revival of Islamic legal thinking in order to modernize legal practice and to make the impact of Islamic law more widespread in the community (Bowen 2003). This modernization of the law often resulted in legal pluralism, as for example in Malaysia, where *shari'a* competes with English common law, tribal codes and human rights legislation (Peletz 2002). In the Malay case we might say that Islamic legal practice has been modernized by lawyers who implicitly shared Max Weber's critique of what he regarded the arbitrary character of traditional Islamic legal practice. *Shari'a* has been made more central to the public sphere by lawyers who were typically trained in English legal practice and whose mental attitudes and professional concerns are distinctively western. This development is not to say however that *shari'a* has achieved a dominant or monopolistic position, but rather it is modernized, and shares the legal field with international law, human rights conventions, global corporate law, and an English common law tradition.

The most conspicuous manifestations of this tension between the 'old' and the 'new' modes of social organization today is the debate over multiculturalism in western democracies. At one level the renewed prominence of religiously phrased authority is tied to the thoroughgoing application and implementation of the liberal principles forming the *telos* of these polities. It is simply one aspect of the current discourse about justice and fairness associated with Habermas's notion of a post-secular society, in which religious communities are seen to have the same claim over rights as other socio-cultural groups. From a policy perspective, it is important *not* to invoke arguments about the genuineness of the authority emanating from the Islamic tradition in order to construct a narrative that highlights the contemporary social relevance of this type of communal affiliation, the relevance of these customs to the well being of the community as a community, and the well being of individuals as members of that community. The deliberative rationale of this debate is part of the contemporary liberal attempt to identify all legitimate rights claims and the means to address them in terms of procedural justice.

Seyla Benhabib (2002) has been quite explicitly building on liberal democratic theory to map out the possible avenues and boundaries for a contemporary model for multiculturalism. In any case, such forms of liberal multiculturalism are open to challenge on the grounds that they are too 'shallow' and fail to consider alternative ways of organizing and prioritizing the different public and private goods under consideration. Not surprisingly from an Islamic perspective, there have been other attempts to reconsider the relationship between Muslim and non-Muslim communities in liberal-democratic settings. For example, Tariq Ramadan has been probably the most prominent voice in this debate in recent years, being particularly

careful not to turn the opportunities for political participation available to the Muslim community into a lower form of socio-political engagement in a liberal multicultural framework. In *Western Muslims* he made the startling proposition that 'one gets involved in politics not in the name of "my people" but before God and in conscience, in the name of inalienable principles. As a result, the community of faith is essentially opposed to any form of communitarianism' (Ramadan 2004: 147).

This is the double bind that Muslims increasingly face with the development of a more sustained and generally more open discourse throughout the Muslim community. New forms of communication and a greater accessibility of the Islamic text allow Muslims to take their own development as Muslims in their own hands and become less dependent on established sources of authority and thereby to become more aware of their own cultural diversity as a community. The result is that Muslims are able therefore to produce more subtle and sophisticated Islamic 'doctrine' (Mandaville 2001). These opportunities, however, come at a cost. The evolution of new practices of transnational Islam, and the growth of new concepts of Muslim identity, currently emerging in the online community are free from immediate constraints. However, the discourse about religion and its authority over human life does not occur in a social or political vacuum. Ultimately these online discussions have to be repositioned in order for authority to be displayed in the public space. The competitive claim to legitimacy and authority on the Internet between an infinite number of voices has an inflationary consequence on their claims to significance. The spiral of claims to authority and orthodoxy can inflate the principles by which piety may be ultimately judged.

For ordinary believers to follow these legal judgments requires not only that they recognize the theological credibility of the interpreter but also that they trust his or her capacity to interpret religious texts in changing and uncertain circumstances. This trust is more readily available and effective in close-knit social groups than in newly (re)created Muslim networks, especially global networks. For communities that are well attuned to the world of the mass media and to new information technologies, in contrast to tight-knit communities, each act of interpretation can be immediately challenged by a wide array of readily available plausible alternatives, many of which may also be direct original interpretations from the sacred text. What results is not necessarily the individualization or privatization of authority over knowledge, but rather the multiplication of competing authorities. Adopting the terminology from the modern sociology of risk, we can plausibly call this development not so much the emergence of reflexive modernity but rather the construction of reflexive traditionalism. It does not necessarily entail the defense of mimetic or rote learning and pious rigidity, but attempts instead to defend a version of tradition that is discursively and continuously constructed.

In the previous century, the notion was popularized among scholarly Islamic circles by Afghani and Abduh that 'reason' can provide a reliable indication of the authority of religious interpretation (Abduh 1966; Enayat 1982). The same notion still guides modern Islamic debates. The basic principle is that the Qur'an contains rational prescriptions that can be understood by the rational intelligence of

believers once they have been clearly explained by the proper and appropriate religious authorities. The resulting explanations of the classical texts, once found, are to be conscientiously grasped and preserved. Hence, the main task of the scholarly elite is gradually to construct a cohesive framework of rational interpretations of the scriptures that would reflect the original message of the sacred text for today's community. In this way, regardless of their ability to master the actual text, the faithful can come to rely on an increasingly coherent body of secure interpretations that scholars have build up in order to devise their individual code for various activities. This outcome can be achieved more effectively than were they to consult any particular Islamic scholar. This accumulation of definitive statements on the scriptures – albeit often cut off from the pre-existing body of theological and judicial interpretation- underpins the growth and consolidation of contemporary forms of 'scripturalism' such as Islamism, Wahhabism, and so forth. According to Arkoun (2002), the resulting body of knowledge does perhaps constitute a problematic closure of the Islamic 'archive'.

Although there clearly remains some degree of authority in the religious world, this authority is increasingly mediated by the individual, who becomes the final assessor of religiosity. This individualization of religion has been captured in modern sociology by the notion of de-institutionalized 'spirituality'. In the Muslim context, it also means that once this new freedom of interpretation exists in terms of a wider epistemological freedom of decision rather than simply *ijtihad*, then any restoration of a more structured and institutionalized religious authority is unlikely. Although the growth of personalized and de-institutionalized spirituality is true for all modern religions, it has had a special impact on Islam within which there is no centralized or unified institutional authority such as a church or a pope. Within the Muslim community, social and political competition between scholar-jurists has been the normal practice. In addition, as Muslim communities experience the pressures of global migration, the problem of acculturation and integration in secular societies as religious minorities raises acute and problematic questions regarding proper religious practice.

Conclusion

The traditional secularization thesis – that religion will inevitably decline with modernization – has been decisively rejected by modern sociology. In its place there is recognition that religion has become increasingly important in the public domain. The notion of the deprivatization of religion has replaced the simple secularization argument. In this chapter, I have however developed a distinction between political and social secularization. While secularization (the separation of politics and religion) no longer appears to be clear and obvious in the public domain, religion in the social sphere has become increasingly influenced by individualism and commercialism. The religious lifestyle that emerges from this consumer society is an individualistic spirituality (Hunt 2005). The sovereign individual of market society and of economic theory becomes the model of the religious individual who

constructs their own religious beliefs and practices, resulting in a hybrid, post-institutional and post-orthodox religiosity. Although this development may have had a greater impact on Protestant Christian denominations in America, the relatively low attendance of Muslims at mosques in the West may be an indication that Muslim youth cultures are evolving in a similar direction but perhaps at a lower velocity. I have attempted to suggest therefore that religious revivalism is often compatible with the lifestyles of a commercial world in which the driving force of the economy is domestic consumption. In Christianity, mega-churches have embraced the sales strategies of late capitalism to get their message out to the public.

Similar processes are also present in the case of modern Islam. The Internet has become important in shaping attitudes and practices, especially among minority Muslim communities in the West. On these grounds, religion is corroded by the loss of any significant contrast between the sacred and the world. Following Casanova, we can argue that with differentiation between economy and religion, it is the market that shapes religion as a lifestyle and not religion that shapes the market. Furthermore, these secular developments are global rather than local. The result is a sociological paradox. Religion has burst into the public domain, being associated with a number of radical or revolutionary movements from Iran to Brazil and from Poland to Indonesia, but at the same time religion is subject to subtle changes that have brought about secularization through commodification. Religion has specialized in providing personal services and has therefore to compete with various secular agencies also offering welfare, healing, comfort and meaning. In this competition, religious groups have often taken over the methods and values of secular consumerism. The overall result of these developments has been neatly summarized in the work of Thomas Luckmann (1990), especially in his discussion of 'shrinking transcendence, expanding religion'. With the institutional expansion of religion, is there nevertheless a secularization of the sacred?

Note

1. The conclusion of this chapter draws explicitly but selectively on the 'Introduction: making Islamic authority matter' to the special issue of *Theory Culture & Society* 24(2): 2007 which was jointly edited with Frederic Volpi. It has been extensively revised to conclude this chapter. The main arguments of this chapter will appear in a different format in Bryan S. Turner (forthcoming) *Religion and the Modern World: Citizenship, Secularization and the State*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

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Muslim Thinkers and the Debate on Secularism and Laïcité

Barbara De Poli

The subject of our contribution is the debate about Islam, laïcité and secularism supported by several Muslim thinkers born, living or publishing in Europe. Our aim is the analysis of the prominence, of the main points, of the purposes – and of the occurring limits – of the debate on secularism promoted by Muslim thinkers. Therefore we will not investigate the theoretical compatibility of Islam and *laïcité*/secularism – although the issue seems to be absolutely central in the research of most of the authors we will consider. Our intent is to deepen our understanding of cultural itineraries and to focus at which level they might have some ideological influence on the relationships between Muslims and public institutions in 'secularised' Europe.

Secularism and Laïcité

Before dealing with the above subject, we need to circumscribe the concepts of '*laïcité*' and of 'secularism', which have no univocal meaning or use in Europe (Bianchi 2006; Boniolo 2006; Bruce 1992; Commission de réflexion sur l'application du principe de laïcité dans la République 2003 – known as *Rapport Stasi*; Martin 1978; Preterossi 2005; Rémond 2003; Winock 2004). Laïcité is used primarily in political science to mean the separation of the religious from the political sphere; it regards power relationships and determines the institutional structures which inevitably produce effects in the social sphere. The principle of laïcité has its origins in the French Revolution. It was relative to the conflict of power between State and Church that was specific to France and to the nations of Catholic tradition, taking, in its most extreme phases, the shape of radical anti-clericalism (laicism). In particular, the term 'laïcité', rarely used in the Anglo-Saxon languages[1] but common in neo-Latin ones, was coined in France at the end of the nineteenth century[2] to indicate the emancipation of elementary schooling from ecclesiastic tutelage and,

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successively, it came to designate the separation between the institutions of the State and the Church, ratified by the law of 1905.

Secularisation, on the other hand, indicates a desacralisation of the world, the loss of religious, in favour of profane, influence; it was originally a social and cultural phenomenon that inevitably conditioned the political world. The term is especially in use in the areas of Protestant tradition, where the relationship between government and religious institutions is never put in terms of separation. Protestantism delegitimised the Church of Rome and, insisting upon the religious autonomy of the individual, it raised the issue of spiritual freedom, removing it from the tie of ecclesiastic tutelage. After the Treaty of Westphalia (1648–1649), the problem of the relationship between State and religious institutions was settled by 'nationalisation' of Christianity and its reduction into a ministry of the State. This model could not give birth to anti-clericalism in the French style. Modernity had instead induced a process of progressive secularism without large dissonance between the evolution of the society and the reduction of the role of religion in the social and political areas.

Recently, 'laïcité' has become commonly understood to mean pluralism and tolerance, terms that have almost become its synonyms. In this sense, it approaches the wider meaning of secularism. It gains wide abstract consensus, as it caters to a generalised feeling (respect for pluralism and freedom of conscience), but without identifying clear unique applications (Mancina 2006).

The historical passages and the ideological structures that gave origin to the processes of secularisation and laicization of European institutions should not be ignored or underestimated – as well as their contradictions and limits. It is necessary perhaps to stress that even though the European countries profess and defend *laïcité* or secularisation as binding principles, their application turns out to be rather ambiguous and partial. There is no doubt that, in Europe, secularisation prevails and religion has progressively been distanced from the institutional public sphere and shifted to the private, individual or associative one. Nevertheless, it is also doubtless that Christianity remains as a central component in these countries: from the constitutions founded on the Holy Trinity (Greece, Ireland), to the democracies that conserve a State or recognised religion (Scandinavia, Denmark), to England, where the king (or the queen) – whose coronation is a religious act – is leader of the Anglican Church and where 26 bishops sit in the higher chamber of Parliament. In Italy, the influence of the Holy See in the political sphere is made manifest, for example, in the continuous solicitations on themes such as divorce, abortion and recently on the issues of biogenetics and civil unions. Even in France, the only country in the European Community that declares itself to be secular in its Constitution and does not recognise any religion, the compromises made with Catholicism come to light in the integration of Catholic holidays into national holidays and ceremonies, or in public financing of private Catholic education (today approximately 20%).

Furthermore, in secularized Europe, religious needs, directed to the traditional religious system or to non-traditional experiences, are newly in evidence and this phenomenon is taking the floor in both the academic and non-academic debate

(Norris and Inglehart 2004; Rusconi 2008; Taylor 2007). These European contexts profoundly influence Muslim intellectuals who deal with secularisation and *laicité*, and have some implications in their approach to these fields.

The Classical Theories of Power in Islamic Culture

The classical Islamic theories that deal with the relationship between religion and religious authorities are centred on the question of the caliphate (Bozdémir 1994; Redissi 1998). The Qur'an does not specifically discuss power, nor its possible connotations, and Muhammad, who was a prophet but also a political and military guide of the Muslim community that he founded, died without indicating a successor and without leaving instructions on the nature of the government of the umma, the Islamic community. The caliphate, that is, the political succession of the Prophet, was not determined by precise instructions of a religious order, but was the result of the negotiations and bitter political conflicts that occurred after his death (Djaït 1989).

The theories of Islamic power were elaborated by religious experts in law in the course of the first century of Islam, not only by rational extrapolation (such as *ijmâ'*, consensus of the community, and *qiyâs*, reasoning by deduction and analogy) on the basis of the religious Texts of reference (the Qur'an and the Sunna), but also under the influence of contemporary political leadership. They represent, however, a minor order of treatises within the field of Islamic jurisprudence, and were able to find their place only at the beginning of the eleventh century, when the Abbasid Caliphate, greatly weakened by internal conflicts and hostage to military hierarchies, necessitated a powerful and formal legitimation by the Ulemas, the religious scholars. Publication of an organic manual on the caliphate government was expressly commissioned by a caliph from al-Mâwardî (deceased 1,058), a *qâdî* (Islamic judge) of great fame, close to the court and who, four centuries after the death of the Prophet, arranged the material, producing a volume entitled 'Treatise on the principles of government' (*Kitâb al-ahkâm al-sultâniyya*). Several decades later, the theologian al-Ghazâlî (deceased 1,111) further defined the material, compiling what is considered to be the classic Sunni doctrine on the caliphate (Laoust 1970).

The fundamental points of the doctrine enunciated that the caliphate was imposed by revelation (even though in the Qur'an there is no explicit trace of this) since it was indispensable for the application of the Sharia. After the end of the prophetic experience with Muhammad, the imam was not in any way considered as an expression of God on earth (as some caliphs had insisted), but solely as vicar of Muhammad and custodian of the Sharia.

In this outlook, the caliphate does not bear any intrinsic sacredness, and its figure is of a religious nature only insofar as it is dedicated to enforcing the norms imposed by the Qur'an in the juridical and social areas. The caliphate is a fully political institution (in the sense of the 'art of command' as it is defined in the Arabic dictionary by Ibn Manzûr, *Lisân al-'arab*, of the thirteenth–fourteenth centuries), nevertheless

supported by Islamic ethical principles, to which it is, as a matter of fact, subordinated. Its purpose is not only the material well-being of the Muslims, but primarily their spiritual well-being, accomplished through fulfilment of the Sharia.

Learned Muslims were however aware of the utopian idealism of the caliphate institution and of the fact that history undeniably creates a distance between doctrine and praxis, giving space to temporal forms of power that are a caliphate in name only, or to other openly secular forms of power (sultanates, emirates, etc.). This fact is commented upon several times by the Maghreb historian Ibn Khaldûn (deceased 1,406) in his most important treatise, the *Muqaddima* (1997: 321), and it is confirmed, for example, by the pragmatism of the Egyptian ulemas in the nineteenth century (Delanoue 1994). Due to the decline of the caliphate, while recognising the theoretical necessity of a caliph as a universal Islamic authority, these authors accepted as a matter of fact the plurality of monarchs, and their special concern was that the governors (whatever their title might be) protected Islam and ensured the application of the Sharia, even if in an imprecise and imperfect way.

However, awareness of the distance between ideals and reality never diminished the value of the doctrine – which remained substantially unvaried and accepted until the modern era – and the supremacy of the caliphate power over any other temporal power was never rejected. Only following Western cultural and political influence, new perceptions and theories on power made their entrance into the Muslim world

The Origins of the Debate on Secularism and 'Laïcité' Among Muslim Thinkers

The concepts of *laïcité* and secularisation penetrated the Near East in the second half of the nineteenth century, together with the many ideological and cultural representations of the West, which profoundly influenced political changes in countries of the area and in the contemporary intellectual scene.[3]

In Arabic, the sense of *laicité* or secularism (the adjective 'secular' is also indicated by the expression *lâ dînî*, non-religious) was translated by the neologism '*almâniyya*, which appeared for the first time at the end of the nineteenth century in the dictionary *Muhît al-Muhît*, drawn up by the Lebanese Christian Butrus al-Bustânî. It was derived from the term 'â*lam*, 'world', and was therefore closer to the notion of secularisation than to that of *laïcité*. As time went by, the lack of vocalisation in written Arabic led to '*almâniyya* being read as '*ilmâniyya*, which is currently used. *Laïcité*, in Arabic came therefore to be associated with the term '*ilm*, knowledge, calling to mind the spirit of rationality of secularisation rather than its worldly character, counter to the spiritual one. Because of the semantic approximations that the term '*almâniyya*/'*ilmâniyya* carries with it, many authors today prefer to use the calque *lâykiyya* (which bears a pejorative sense), which unambiguously returns it to its original meaning.

The first concrete use of the concept of separation of powers was by the Turkish Great National Assembly in 1922, which by decree split the sultanate, which it

had identified as secular power, from the caliphate, understood as merely spiritual power; later, the sultanate was suppressed, transferring political power to the Assembly.[4]

In this epochal break announcing the official suppression of the caliphate which took place in 1924, two ideological trends took form that conditioned the perception of power in the coming century. On one side, Rashîd Ridâ, a leading exponent of Salafism, in the work 'The Caliphate or Grand Imamate' (*Al-Khilâfa aw al-Imâma al-'Uzmâ*), published in Cairo in 1923, made the classical doctrine modern once again, contemplating the possibility of concretely instituting that original idealised caliphate which history has never seen realised – opening the path to the vision of the Islamic State that would be proposed by the radicals soon after.

On the other side, the Turkish Great National Assembly, when ratifying the separation of the sultanate from the caliphate, commissioned a work that justified from a religious viewpoint the reduction of the imamate to its exclusively spiritual character. The text was translated and published in Arabic only in 1924, after the abolition of the institution, by 'Abd al-Ghanî al-Sunnî with the title 'The Caliphate and the Authority of the Umma' (*Al-Khilâfa wa-sultat al-umma*). But the work, despite its evident opportunistic value and its being the product of a non-Arab intelligentsia that had chosen the path towards Westernisation, did not cause any particular sensation.

Following the lines of this publication, another work, because of the qualities of its argumentation, its approach and the role of the author, raised unprecedented polemics (Abderrazik 1994). 'Islam and the Foundations of Power' (*Al-Islâm wa usûl al-hukm*), published in Cairo in 1925, was written by the Egyptian 'Alî 'Abd al-Râziq, an ulema and *qâdî* of al-Azhar, the major Islamic university, and dedicated to the conservation and transmission of traditional religious culture.

In his book, 'Abd al-Râziq does not merely sustain – as had others before him – that the caliphate was a utopia that was then translated into a secular institution founded on oppression and military force, but that the doctrine of the necessity of the caliphate was itself a political imposition, consecrated by the ulema of the Classical period in order to condescend to the ruling power. In reality, according to the author, the caliphate has no religious foundation and is not justified either in the Qur'an or in the Sunna, nor is it present in the consensus of the community: further, the Prophet was a religious figure who had found himself having to govern his own community, but the political register was not innate to the role of preaching. The prophetic and political functions in Muhammad were in fact disjoined and if he had truly meant for Islam to be a political state enterprise, he would have left precise indications on the organisation of its government.

According to 'Abd al-Râziq, the prophetic mission having terminated, the death of Muhammad could only be followed by a secular (*lâ dînî*, non-religious) government, and the Muslims were free to give themselves the temporal governments that were the most suitable to their epochs and needs. Regarding the Sharia, he was more ambiguous and, without clarifying its juridical applicability, he assigned it implicitly to the spiritual domain: 'All the articles of faith and the rules of behaviour introduced by the Islamic religion, including the rules of public morality and the

system of sanctions, form a legislative reality of purely religious order, directed towards God and towards the search for salvation in the afterlife' (Ibid., 138).

The importance of and the sensation caused by the theories of 'Abd al-Râziq were largely due to the fact that they had been treated using the traditional approach to argumentation, founded on comparison between Texts (the Qur'an and the Sunna). Whatever the plausibility of his argumentation (which has been met with much criticism – for example, regarding his selection of the verses cited from the Qur'an), 'Abd al-Râziq had made a doctrinal unhinging that was even more serious since it was produced from within, and in a particularly delicate phase for the future of the caliphate institution.

The Council of the Great Ulemas of al-Azhar immediately opened disciplinary proceedings against the author and made an act of public accusation,[5] which had wide resonance in the press, making the 'Abd al-Râziq *affaire* one of the most noteworthy episodes of the turn of the century. The author was expelled from the Islamic university and his title of alim was revoked, which made him lose the right to function as teacher and *qâdî*.

The book continued to be censured for decades in the Islamic world, even once the hypothesis of restoring the institution of the caliphate had ceased to be a topic of discussion since almost everywhere nation-States had been built based on European systems of institutions. Nevertheless, the texts of 'Abd al-Râziq marked a turning point that was destined to influence the doctrinal and ideological debate of the century. They expressed the evolution of the contemporary political and cultural milieu, giving voice to new perceptions of power in a political, institutional and social context, influenced by Western models and subject to progressive secularisation – of which Turkey had given the most determined example.

In the course of his own century, 'Abd al-Râziq was one of the authors most widely cited by Arab and Muslim political analysts and his thought would again be taken up by other authors. But it is especially the concept of *laïcité*, that he had implicitly introduced in the sense of separation between government and religion, that would find new supporters, quite varied by education, orientation and approach.

The Contemporary Debate on Secularism and 'Laïcité'

The Muslim intellectuals (by faith or background) who have contributed to promoting a debate on laïcité and secularisation became especially important in the second half of the twentieth century. Their reflections came to maturity, on one side, when the political and social areas of Islamic countries had already metabolised a marked secularisation (De Poli 2007), and on the other, when migratory movements had brought a significant minority of Muslims to live in Western countries. Faced with these new political and social dynamics, the attention of Muslim scholars who deal with secularisation no longer focuses on the caliphate, removed from the institutional panorama and replaced even among radical Islamists, by the concept of the Islamic State. Rather, they focus on other questions which have become central: the

ideologisation of religion through the Islamisation of politics and the politicisation of Islam, the relationship between Islam and State, reforms, civil liberties, human rights, democracy, the application of the Sharia, and the compatibility between Islam and secularism.

The intellectuals who deal with these themes contribute to an internal debate within Muslim cultures that is an index of the complex dialectic that has always existed in the relationship of Muslims to Islam, and, at the same time, is an undeniable factor in order to understand the complex and profound cultural changes that today's Muslims meet.

Faced with the divided social, political and cultural milieux that the countless Muslim *animae* find themselves living through[6] – in the Islamic countries, as well as in the communities established in Western nations – the scenario of the intellectuals that enliven the Islamic debate on the themes of *laïcité* and secularisation, is extremely divided and complex. As Fouad Zakriya complains (1991:17, 46), a homogeneous and politically organised current of thought on *laïcité* and secularism does not exist. The movement supporting *laïcité* is intellectually heterogeneous, lacking in global tasks and ideological unity, encompassing very different political and ideological viewpoints, involving liberal or apolitical intellectuals, be they atheists or believers – conservatives as well – each with his own project of society.

In this many-sided landscape, our target is not a critical survey of the different views of the authors or a comparison between them. I will rather highlight the main discourses that they produce, giving a theoretical justification to the secularised way of life (in Europe but also in Islamic countries) of contemporary Muslims. I will only point out the authors accepting the substantial separation of the political and religious spheres or anyhow proposing an Islamic *modus vivendi* in a secularised context.

In this perspective, we can differentiate among at least three directions in which the *laïque* and secular positions express themselves: Muslims by culture or origin who defend *laïcité* (explicitly or not) according to a perspective that is itself secular; reformist Muslims who defend a *laïque* or secularised vision of the State from a religious perspective within Islam, to which they give a progressive interpretation; and lastly, conservative Muslims who, while accepting the reality of secularised institutions, propose to Muslims a way to preserve their own religious identity in Western nations as well.

The intellectuals of Muslim origin who defend *laïcité* in a secular perspective belong to academic, literary, mass media or political environments. In particular, the intellectuals who come from academic, artistic-cultural or journalistic environments, blending critical analyses with political militancy (more commonly on the Left, but not only), claim the legitimacy and especially the necessity and urgency of making the Islamic world secular. Their analysis is not so much concentrated on Islamic doctrine, as focused on political and social emergencies, specifically criticising Islamist ideologies and often indirectly accusing the autocratic and illiberal policies of Muslim governments.

According to these authors, *laïcité* is the obligatory path in order to obtain civil liberties, human rights and democracy, to which ideological Islam is considered to

be antithetical. Among these intellectuals, we may mention the Tunisian political analyst Mohamed-Cérif Ferjani, who fights in human rights organisations and is a founding member of the Tunisian branch of Amnesty International, and who in *Islamisme, laïcité et droits de l'homme* (1991: 304) defends the idea of *laïcité* as a 'superior moral value that refuses to accept the differences between human beings as the basis of their beliefs'; Fouad Zakariya, mentioned above, who sees in *laïcité* a 'historical, social and political necessity' (1991: 13, 41); the Tunisian law professor Mohamed Charfi, president of the League of Human Rights and minister of Education from 1989 to 1994, who, in order to build a *laïcité* like the French one, goes as far as proposing the establishment of a sort of Islamic Church with authority that is exclusively spiritual, that may govern religious aspects autonomously from political ones (Charfi 1998: 192–202). In Italy, the well-known journalist Magdi Allam, from the pages of *Corriere della Sera*, defended his position as a 'secular Muslim' (2006c),[7] until his conversion to the Roman Catholic Church in March 2008.

No less trenchant is the discourse on *laïcité* that, although not openly declaring its own militancy, presents the argument for the distinction to be made between political and religious elements, according to a juridical, philosophical, historical or sociological approach. The Moroccan philosopher Abdou Filali-Ansary is translator of *Islam and the Foundations of Power* by 'Abd al-Râziq into French and author of *L'Islam est-il hostile à la laïcité*? (1997), in which he posits that there are no Islamic proscriptions against *laïcité* that are founded upon the Texts; analogous positions have been adopted by Abderrahim Lamchichi (1994) and by the Syrian political analyst Burhan Ghalioun. The latter, from a more moderate and critical position, opposes a French-style laicism – that when identified with anti-Islamism 'can provoke among practicing Muslims a virulent anti-laicism and by its very nature makes every attempt to reach consensus on such a question impossible' (Ghalioun 1998: 144) – but admits that 'the recognition of its own space, safe from every political interference, and that of the State especially, can only permit Islam to find its purity once again, its identity, its internal equilibrium, the reassurance of spiritual renewal' (Ibid., 200).

In the authors mentioned above, there is an explicit demand for the *laïcité* of the State, of society, of politics or of thought. Other intellectuals do not explicitly call for *laïcité*, but one might find it in the essence of their work that is part of a fully secular discourse. This is the case of the writer and filmmaker of Pakistani origin Tariq Ali, editor of the *New Left Review*. His leftist approach within a Marxist framework excludes a priori an institutional role for religion. It is no coincidence that the first chapter of his book is entitled 'An Atheist Childhood', and if he begins by writing: 'I never really believed in God. Not even for a week, not even when, between 6 and 10 years of age, I was agnostic' (2002: 27). In a similar way, Salman Rushdie, the British novelist of Indian origin, did not write *The Satanic Verses* (1988) with the specific purpose of calling for a secular or, further still, anti-Islamic vision of the world; however, actually (due more to the Iranian reactions than to his work itself), he called the attention of the media to the question of freedom of religious belief and expression, on themes that affect Islamic religious sensitivities.

The list of authors that can be associated with one of the lines that we have indicated could continue[8]: it highlights a sphere of thought on Islam antithetic to fundamentalism. Although not having exposure to mass media (except in some cases), it constitutes a movement of thought that, because of its content, is highly incisive.

Apparently moving on a different, though not antithetic front, is the doctrinal approach: intellectuals who support this trend promote a de-islamisation of the institutions of the Muslim nations, the emancipation of religion from politics or the total pertinence of Islamic religiousness in a secular context, from a perspective that is 'within Islam' – according to the words of the scholar of Islam Mohammed Arkoun (Benzine 2004: 96). They proclaim their Muslim faith and do not therefore operate from a secular or a-religious perspective, but from a position that is strongly declared as one that is religious.

Nevertheless, they doubtlessly express a greatly secularised vision: their approach to religion is rational and they re-establish the theological discourse through secular disciplines. They are almost never educated in traditional Islamic institutes, but rather in modern universities, often in Europe, with degrees that are prevalently from humanistic departments.[9] They are historians, philosophers, men of letters, linguists and scholars of jurisprudence who believe that the entire system of Islam must be re-elaborated, through an innovative approach, as they perceive the classical doctrine as obsolete and inadequate when it comes to responding to the questions and needs of the contemporary world. To interpret the Qur'an and the Texts, they use the tools of linguistics, history, sociology, hermeneutics and psychology instead of traditional Islamic exegesis. They apply analytical methodologies shared in the world of academe, but absolutely rejected by the ulema.

During the twentieth century, the historical approach has imposed itself in this field: these scholars consider Islam as a doctrinal and normative system, in its historical milieu, relativising its assumptions, positing that they are a production of human beings and not unchangeable Truth. With the same spirit, they interpret the Qur'an and the Tradition as historical or literary documents, through a process of desacralisation, perceived as blasphemous by the traditional custodians of the faith. The contextualisation of the message of the Qur'an and its destructuring, also from a linguistic point of view, especially induce these authors to distinguish the elements that they consider to be contingent to the Text, pertinent to the cultural context in which they were made manifest, but which appear to be incongruous to today's world (for example the norms on slavery, *hadd* punishment, polygamy), from those that instead serve as a vehicle for a timeless and universal spiritual message. They favour the allegorical reading of the Text above literal interpretation, in that they posit that the former responds to the needs of spirituality, more than a juridical one. Of the strictly legalistic parts of the Qur'an, when the literal meaning is considered to be lapsed, the spirit is nevertheless maintained. For example, regarding women's rights (today's *vexata quaestio*), according to the modern doctrinal scholars, if the Qur'an afforded an important social and juridical recognition of women in tribal Arabia of the seventh century, today it is with the same progressive spirit that their

role in society should be evaluated; they therefore see women's emancipation in a favourable light and guarantee to both sexes the same rights and opportunities.

According to this view, the Algerian Mohammed Arkoun, the Egyptians Hassan Hanafî and Nasr Abû Zayd, the Tunisians Mohammed Talbi and Abdelmajid Charfi, the Syrian Muhammad Shahrûr (to mention only a few of the progressive doctrinal reformists), through specific paths, formulate a new reading of Islam in order to respond to the needs of today's Muslims, minimising the legalistic aspects (or their adaptation), and maximising the spiritual message. Their aim is to de-ideologise Islam, subordinated to politics, so that its religious essence may be restored. As Ghaleb Bencheikh writes (2005: 8), 'even in the land of Islam, a positive legislation must prevail over the religiously inspired rights so that the affairs of the City may be managed.' He defines the seizure of Islam as 'the greatest moral swindle of the century that has just ended' (Ibid., 39).

Even within this current, positions are diversified and at times irreducible, ranging from a modern reformulation of the Sharia (according to Talbi 1988), to its de-institutionalisation, allowing it to maintain only the moral dimension (for example A. Charfi). At any rate, the discourse of doctrinal progressives shows a profound secularisation: putting reason before literal interpretation, they establish the adaptation of religion to human needs. In this sense, they do not impose a new orthodoxy, but call for free thought, and express a new religious understanding that reserves for itself the legitimacy of an independent wisdom.

Another approach is put forth by religious conservatives who theorise a *modus vivendi* for Muslims in a context of *laïcité*. Tariq Ramadan could be considered as the most important representative of this group. The renowned scholar, often identified as the grandson of the founder of the Muslim Brotherhood, Hassan al-Bannâ, does not consider the need to re-interpret the Texts of Islam in a progressive sense, but rather the need to re-interpret them in relation to the structural presence of Muslims in the West. This reformism is dedicated to establishing an Islamic *modus vivendi* in a non-Islamic context, to 'think the place of Islam in the West, within *laïcité*' (Ramadan 1998: 72). According to Ramadan, Muslims must respect the laws of the countries in which they reside, 'in terms of the obligations laid down by the law and which could contradict an Islamic principle (a quite rare situation at present), they present a case study deserving scrutiny in order to identify the principles of priority and/or the prospectives of adaptability' (Ramadan 1998: 32, also 1999: 228). Ramadan therefore does not propose secularising the Islamic religious sphere, but rather highlights the religious identity of European Muslims and the right they have to express their religiousness, bearing in mind that this is perceived with suspicion in contemporary Europe: 'the fact of practising a religion has become so marginal in Europe, that it is hard to identify positively this strange urge for faith on the part Muslims' (1998: 49). He therefore puts himself in an antithetical position to secularisation, favouring the Islamic religious ethic over the materialist hedonism of the West, but at the same time, he recognizes the advantages of secular systems. Western governments, in fact, permit Muslims to freely observe the fundamental principles of Islam (1998: 147; 1999: 214): Muslims may practice, both in private and publicly, the testimony of faith, prayer, fasting during the month of Ramadan,

pilgrimage, the *zakat* (ritual alms), while the use of the veil does not encounter insurmountable obstacles,[10] nor are *halâl* foods prohibited. All of this in an atmosphere of political and social freedom that 'quite often, one does not find in Islamic countries'[11] (Ramadan 1998: 149).

Secularism, for Ramadan, is associated with the rule of law and only law can guarantee the freedom of religious practice. In such a way, the practising Muslim, even if he lives in a secularised social space in which he is in the minority, is able to comply with the essential obligations of his own religion (1998: 166), taking advantage of the right to diversity that does not define itself as *against* Western societies, but within them.

Laïcité and Islam in Europe

The setting that has been described highlights a profound evolution in Islamic thought during the last century. On the opposite front to the Islamists, who consider classical doctrines as part of modernity, reading them in a rigorous light and attempting to impose the Islamic State, other Muslim intellectuals, less visible and less exposed on the political scene, call for or accept the autonomy of the political and religious spheres. If, in their writings, the secularisation (the progressive exclusion of the religious element from society) seems controversial, *laïcité* (the separation of the religious sphere from the political one) instead seems to find wide consensus.

The intellectuals who express a secularised discourse, but especially doctrinal progressives and conservatives, such as Ramadan, who do not deny the legitimacy of the secular systems, through free and autonomous reflection, forge perceptions of the relationships between the individual, the State and religion that are original in the history of Islamic thought.

As we have stated, we are dealing with intellectual production that is not organised but is heterogeneous (clearly, the positions of Tariq Ramadan and Tariq Ali are antithetical and irreducible), a sign of the absence of a homogeneous secular movement – and therefore of the political weakness of secular thought in an Islamic reading. However, on a purely speculative level, it gives witness to the important innovative and proposing energy that emerges from the intellectuals of Islamic culture who, faced with the complexity and contradictions of modern society, occupy a space of open and constructive debate.

The importance of this phenomenon is not limited to concepts. It involves radical consequences on the political, social, cultural and ideological levels, not only in the West, but also in Muslim countries. In most cases, the authors that we have mentioned live and publish in Europe (for example, Abderraham Lamchichi, Burhan Ghalioun, Chérif Ferjani, Muhammad Arkoun, Ghaleb Bencheikh live and work in France, Tariq Ali, Salman Rushdie and Abdou Filali Ansari live and work in London; Tariq Ramadan teaches in Switzerland and England, Nasr Abu Zayd has found asylum in The Netherlands), but only a few were born there: the great majority come from Islamic areas. In their countries of origin, from Morocco to Pakistan,

there is no shortage of debate on the question of secularism, but it involves restricted milieux that often have little visibility. The defence of the secular model by intellectuals is translated into requests for the depoliticization of Islam, for democracy, for rights, for social justice, for civil liberties – including women's emancipation – that the governments do not appear willing to grant. In most Muslim countries, ostracism by governments, ulemas, conservatives and Islamists against the free intellectuals who propose new interpretations of religious matters, has brought about the rejection of these currents of thought, even when their proponents are not actively persecuted. Only in Egypt, a country that is considered moderate, but where in most recent decades Islamist pressure has been more effective, the theses of Abû Zayd have brought about an *affaire* similar to that of Abd al-Râziq, inducing him to seek asylum. In the same country, Muhammad al-Ashmawy lives secluded so as to steer clear of the death threats of the radicals, and Farag Fûda, author of numerous articles that are critical of the application of the Sharia and radicalism and founder of the Egyptian Society for Englightenment, was killed in 1992. Ostracism or persecution is also why some of the authors mentioned, finding obstacles or impossibility to their free expression in their own countries, have chosen to live in the West.

Europe, therefore, as a place of birth or immigration of Muslim intellectuals, is presented as one of the main centres for the development and promotion of Islamic thought on *laïcité* and secularism. But another, still more meaningful aspect highlights the close relationship between European culture and the *laïque* and secular currents of thought in the Islamic cultural milieu. These authors all have a modern education,[12] with studies in Muslim countries that are often followed by further studies in Europe: all the interpreters of the concept of secularism or *laïcité* express a secularised culture of Western roots, of which they employ the scientific tools, the political and hermeneutical categories, even producing antagonistic standpoints.

The influence of Western thought is therefore substantial and it is clear in the approach the diverse authors have to the topic. It is no accident if the French speaking intellectuals we have considered (as, for example, Filali Ansari, Abderrahim Lamchichi or Tariq Ramadan) principally deal with the question of *laïcité* and to a lesser degree with that of secularisation: this stresses a perception of the relationship between state and religion inherited from French culture. Authors more influenced by Anglo-Saxon culture, on the other hand, rather express a secularised vision of the world, without focusing on the interference between the political and religious areas, as exemplified by Tariq Ali.

Lastly, beyond any speculation regarding the theoretical compatibility between Islam and *laïcité* developed by Muslim intellectuals, Europe represents a fundamental testing ground for the Muslim religious experience in a secularised context of *laïcité*, in a system based on the rule of law. This terrain is different from that of some Islamic countries where models of *laïcité* (or of laicism) were imposed in a coercive manner, as in Turkey, for example or, to a lesser degree, in Tunisia (De Poli 2007). The granting of legitimacy to the Islamic lifestyle in a context of social secularism and institutional *laïcité* by Muslims who are well-known members of the academic and cultural worlds inevitably affects the perception European Muslims have of themselves. To propose a re-interpretation of the religious Texts

in the setting of modern society, to reconsider the function of the Sharia, to give priority to the spiritual aspects of Islam above legalistic ones, to favour an Islam practised by the individual to a 'State' Islam (or to the Islamic State) are notions that, in total contrast to the radical postulates, may be able to contribute to building a Muslim identity in harmony with contemporary societies and less conflictive with itself.[13] Of no less importance, the outcome of such an experience may turn out to be fundamental for the political and institutional systems in the Muslim countries as well: a successful integration of European Muslims on social and political grounds could have an effect on the governance of Islam and religious minorities in Muslim countries, offering a model of religious freedom for Muslims.

In Europe specifically, it is important to stress another factor: the relationship between Europe and Muslims is no one way affair. While Muslims are searching for a specific *modus vivendi* in the West, Europe, faced with the new Islamic reality, finds that it is forced to reconsider its own approach to religion. As Olivier Roy states (2006: 34), about France: 'Substantially, Islam is not the cause of the crisis of the French model, but the mirror in which society looks at itself today. France is undergoing its identity crisis through Islam'. The requests made by Muslims to the institutions, based on freedom of religion, imply some religious legal issues alien to European culture (from the use of the veil to *halâl* food) or concessions that change Europe's social-spatial and cultural orders (from the building of mosques to Islamic religious instruction in the schools), and force the countries of the Old World to redefine and confirm the terms of *laïcité*, rethinking their own relationship with religious identity. In the past centuries, this was measured having Christian institutions (and a small number of subjugated minority groups such as the Jews) as a unique counterpart. Such a confrontation conditioned it greatly: both when it turns into laicism (anti-clericalism) as in France, and when effective political and institutional interference by the ecclesiastic hierarchies is present, as in Italy, for example. Islam seems to unhinge this relationship and the established equilibrium, introducing new issues relating to social co-existence and the institutional relationship between the State and the religious community.

The negotiations between European governments and Muslim communities are in act, shaped autonomously country by country and responding to the specific histories of each state and of the Muslim communities as well. But, having Islam no religious hierarchy – at least not comparable to the ecclesiastical one – the process is affected by the absence of a vertical representative of the Muslim counterpart. Practically, no unique or univocal representative and no authoritative Muslim mediator, recognized by the Muslims of Europe or elsewhere, is in the game.

Muslim points of reference in Europe are strictly linked to Muslim religious associations. Their large heterogeneity encompassing radical, traditional and secular approaches is making really complex the dialogue between the parts in the building process of institutional relationships with Islam.

Nevertheless, the European culture can hardly absorb Islam by minimizing it or banning it from the public space – and taking into account the risk of radical exacerbations. Consequently Islam is bound to get out from the present uncertainties and to shape its specific role. One must not ignore Lamchici's words (1994: 64):

'Secularisation, *laïcité*, mean among other things, respect for all beliefs, the concern not to mix faith and law; and not forgetting traditions and religious memory, full parts of individual and collective history.'

The management of the Islamic religious issue in Europe therefore has substantial consequences not only for European Muslims: producing inevitable effects in their countries of origin (to which they transmit – directly or indirectly – their social, political and cultural experiences in the West), on radical tendencies in Europe itself – Islamic, Christian, but also the 'laicist' (anti-religious) ones – and on the future of a continent that will inevitably become multi-ethnic and multi-religious. To give voice to, but also to listen to reformist and progressive Muslims, who accept and call for the *laïcité* of the State, but also for the expression of Islamic identity within it, could reveal itself to be the most effective antidote to fundamentalisms.

Notes

1. The term *laïcité* has been translated in English as *laicism*. Merriam-Webster Collegiate Dictionary (Zane Publishing 1997) dates the term to ca. 1909, and defines it as 'a political system characterized by the exclusion of ecclesiastical control and influence'. However, *laicism* has not become a term of common use, and in the English speaking world, the French word *laïcité* is used.
2. The term *laïcité* is a 'necessary neologism', recorded for the first time in the *Dictionnaire de pédagogie* of 1882–1887, directed by Ferdinand Buisson, in order to qualify the reform of elementary instruction in the *République des Républicains*, in consideration of the fact that, regarding religion, in the past centuries the various functions of public life were being defined as well as their distancing from the tutelage of the Church. Before, the term, derived from the Greek *làos*, people, was used in a Protestant context, in order to indicate whoever did not belong to the ecclesiastic hierarchies and in Italy it is often still used in this manner.
3. On the question of *laïcité* in the Islamic environment, see Arkoun (1991); Bistolfi (1999–2000); Bozdémir (1996); Carre (1997); De Poli (2007); Michel (1997); Tamimi and Esposito (2000).
4. About this event, Nadine Picaudou (1994: 193) points out how the distinction between spiritual and secular power in which two parallel entities were taken directly on loan from the European secular concept, in particular the idea of transforming the caliphate in a purely spiritual institution, similar to the papal institution, without any political function.
5. The accusation by the ulemas brought seven charges. The author was guilty of 1. reducing the Sharia to a law with an exclusively spiritual significance; 2. considering the *jihad* as a political enterprise; 3. affirming that political power at the epoch of the Prophet had a dark, ambiguous and confused character; 4. insisting that the mission of the Prophet was religious; 5. denying the consensus established by the companions of the Prophet, on the necessity of the caliphate; 6. denying that judging is a religious function; 7. affirming that the government of the companions of the Prophet was not religious.
6. It seems superfluous to us to mention that Islam crosses geographic, political, social and cultural areas that are far and diversified from one another, ranging from Africa to Asia, from Europe to the Americas.
7. Magdi Allam – who has incurred frequent criticism, particularly by specialists of the Islamic world, who sometimes accuse him of political opportunism or of fomenting anti-Islamism (Mr Hyde s.d.; Castaldi 2006: 71) – before his conversion to the Roman Catholic Church does not limit himself to defending the *laïcité* of the State, but takes explicit positions of authentic anti-Islamic laicism. He defines the opening of new mosques in Italy as a strategy

of Islamic conquest (2007b), admonishes against the dangers of infiltration of the Islamic Sharia in the country (2007a) and takes sides against the use of the veil by Muslim women (2006a, b).

8. An anthology of texts by Muslim intellectuals of secular or anti-Islamist orientation is edited, for exemple, by Valentina Colombo (2007).
9. Unlike the Islamists, who more often boast a scientific curriculum.
10. The book came out in 1999, before terrorism heightened tensions and the issue of the *hijab* raised polemics in numerous European States.
11. Ramdan reminds us how Tunisian president Bourguiba prohibited public employees from fasting during the month of Ramadan for reasons of economy and productivity.
12. We must mention that the contemporary school systems of the Muslim countries are copies of the European models inherited from the colonial era: education in public schools, of a secular structure, distinguishes itself from the religious education that is received in the traditional Islamic institutes.
13. Roy (2006:87:) is convinced of the fundamental connection of a modern Muslim identity on reformist thought.

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Yusuf al-Qaradawi and Tariq Ramadan on Secularisation: Differences and Similarities

Göran Larsson

Although the great majority of Europe's fifteen to twenty-five million Muslims are not strict observers of Islamic law, Muslims in general are mainly classified along religious lines by non-Muslims.[1] Contrary to this notion, most people of Muslim origin have been much affected by processes of secularisation and can be regarded either as secular or cultural Muslims.[2] By cultural Muslims I am referring to the large group of individuals who have a Muslim cultural background but do not practice Islam on a regular basis. Resembling most Christians in Europe (at least in Sweden) they pay homage to religious (Islamic) norms out of habit, for identity purposes or on specific occasions. For example, it is important to follow religious rites and customs during Ramadan, or in connection with life-cycle rituals, such as birth celebrations, marriages and funerals, but not during the rest of the year. Hence, for 'cultural Muslims' religion is 'no longer an all-encompassing system of meaning, but rather a social subsystem alongside many other subsystems, like the economy, politics, education and the family'.[3] Nonetheless, irrespective of the fact that many individuals with a Muslim cultural background could be described as secular or 'cultural', it is evident that Muslims in Europe are overwhelmingly described and discussed in accordance with religious categories (Maussen 2007). In the media and public discourse, the 'Muslim' is presented as a religious person who follows and pays close attention to the laws of Islam. During the last decade, indeed, immigrants have more frequently been defined according to religious categories than as workers, students, parents or children (Allievi 2006: 37). Yet although this stereotypical image of Muslims in the West should be questioned and criticised as a simplified presentation of a much more complex reality, most outspoken Muslim theologians are eager to underline the importance of religion.[4]

In this chapter I shall describe and analyse how two influential contemporary Sunni Muslim theologians; the Egyptian Yusuf al-Qaradawi (b. 1926) and the Egyptian-Swiss Tariq Ramadan (b. 1962), debate secularisation and the division between religion and politics.[5] Despite the fact that they could both be associated with similar theological positions, which among other things have been influenced

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by the ideas of the Muslim Brothers (Tammam 2009), they still show some relevant differences in works of theirs that address secularisation.[6] To be able to understand the opinions of these two theologians, I argue, it is essential to situate their ideas in their proper cultural setting. By cultural setting I am mainly referring to the language they use, their geographical environment (i.e. where they live) and the audiences they are addressing. One important question here is, are they rejecting secularisation for the same reasons, or are they differing in their views of secularisation?

However, in order to discuss secularisation, it is necessary first to provide an overview of the academic debate on it and the heated discussions over how to define and understand it. Before pursuing this further, we should bear in mind that this is neither a chapter on theories of secularisation, nor a history of secularisation in the Middle East. Rather, the focus of my text is the specific opinions of al-Qaradawi and Ramadan on secularisation. Since in any discussion about secularisation Yusuf al-Qaradawi and Tariq Ramadan are bound to raise several large and difficult questions – for example, are their views comparable, how do they define secularisation, how should we understand the differences between them? – it should be stressed that this chapter does not make any claim to address these issues fully or to answer all the questions and resolve all the problems that might be related to them. From this point of view, this chapter is rather an explorative attempt to highlight some important questions that might be related to the discussion about Islam and secularisation. Without wishing to criticise any colleagues in the field of religious studies, I firmly believe that these questions need to be more thoroughly investigated and analysed in order to understand the contemporary discussion concerning secularisation, Islam and Europe.

What is Meant by Secularisation?

How to define and understand secularisation and secularism is without question one of the most important issues in the modern study of religion. It has been argued that the term 'secularisation came to use in the European languages at the Peace of the Westphalia in 1648' (Wilson 1987: 159), but the scope, degree and effect of secularisation is still a highly debated issue within the political and religious sciences. In its broadest definition, secularism 'signifies that which is not religious', the meaning of the word being rooted in the Latin word *saeculim*, which means 'age' or 'generation' (Smith 1995: 20; Lewis and Short 1966: 1613–1614). The term 'secularisation' is often used to describe the relationship between the government of the state and its religious institutions. According to the sociologist Bryan R. Wilson, sociologists have used secularisation to indicate a:

> variety of processes in which control of social space, time, facilities, resources, and personnel was lost by religious authorities, and in which empirical procedures and worldly goals and purposes displaced ritual and symbolic patterns of action directed towards otherworldly, or supernatural, ends. (Wilson 1987: 159)

The definition of secularisation is also closely related to the definition of religion. Without going further into this at this point, it is essential to keep in mind that religion can be broadly defined either according to substance (i.e. 'defining religion by what it is, not by what it does'[7]) or function (i.e. the function and role of religion in society, for the individual or the group). Furthermore, it is also necessary to make a distinction between secularisation and secularism: while the first category refers mostly to a general separation between church and state or structural changes in society, the second refers to an ideology that seeks to impose a secular world view from above (for example, during the communist regime in the Soviet empire).[8] In the literature and public discourse, secularism and secularisation are often used synonymously, but for the sake of clarity one should keep them separate.

Although most theorists agree that secularisation is a matter of the separation of religion from the state, the degree, condition and driving force of secularisation are clearly highly debated issues. For example, the sociologist Peter Berger argues that secularisation does not automatically result from the separation of religion from the state (e.g. 1999; cf. Stark and Bainbridge 1985). Even though the Church, or religion in general, lost much of its influence over the public sphere from the Enlightenment onwards, people continued to be religious and to pay attention to religion, cultural norms and spiritual dimensions in their private lives. It should therefore be stressed that 'secularisation on the societal level is not necessarily linked to secularisation on the level of individual consciousness' (Berger 1999: 3). Today it is often argued that religion is still very much part and parcel of political and economic realities. This development is, for example, clearly illustrated by the rise of the so-called 'New Religious Movements' in the twenty-first century, but also by the growing strength of evangelical Christianity (a broad term including a great variety of Christian denominations), and various interpretations of Islam and other so-called world religions around the globe (cf. Berger 1999; Stark and Bainbridge 1985).[9]

Although the scientific background and the problem of defining secularisation is of great relevance for our understanding of the academic debate, it has little bearing on my discussion and analysis of the opinions of Yusuf al-Qaradawi and Tariq Ramadan.[10] For example, in Arabic there is no direct equivalent of 'secularisation'. The words *dahriyya*, which means 'materialist' or 'atheist', or '*ilmaniyya*, used of whatever deals with the world or worldly matters, may be used when referring to processes that resemble secularisation in the Arab-speaking world.[11] The word '*ilmaniyya* is derived from '*ilm*, science or knowledge, and since secularisation is often associated with the world or 'worldliness', the Arabic terms '*alamaniyya* or *dunyawiyya* can also be used for it (cf. De Lay 2002: 109; Najjar 1996: 1–2). For both al-Qaradawi and Ramadan, secularisation is primarily seen as a separation between religion and politics. Here, therefore, they are talking about secularisation more or less in the same way as Wilson, quoted above. Our prime concern in this chapter is therefore with a narrow or one-dimensional definition of secularisation that only deals with the separation between religion and the state and that leaves out more complex or multidimensional definitions.[12]

Irrespective of which term the theologians are using, in the words of Charles D. Smith, 'the battle between secularism and religion is today more intense than

ever' in the Arab world (Smith 1995: 21). The debate over secularisation within the Islamic world can roughly be divided into two extreme positions: on the one hand, those who argue that Islam is a matter of personal belief; and on the other hand, those who want to impose *Shari'a* as the common foundation for the whole society (cf. De Lay 2002: 107). However, it is important to note that the first 'secular' position does not contradict the fact that the individual can hold a religious belief. According to Fauzi M. Najjar, most liberal and secular thinkers in the Middle East view themselves as believing Muslims (Najjar 1996). Thus, it is clear that, between the two positions described above, it is possible to find a number of different variations and contradictions. Nonetheless, a number of cases make it clear that it would be problematic, even dangerous, to take a clear stance against religion and to call for secular rule in many parts of the Muslim world. For example, in July 1993 Turkish Islamists burned a hotel that was hosting a conference of Turkish secularists, and in Egypt the author Naguib Mahfouz, winner of the 1988 Nobel Prize for Literature, was stabbed in the neck by an Islamist on Friday 14 October 1994.[13] However, the most debated incident was the assassination, on 8 July 1992, of the journalist and professor Faraj Foda by two members of the organisation Islamic Jihad (Najjar 1996). In the trial, Sheikh Muhammad al-Ghazali, one of Faraj Foda's strongest critics, defended the accused by arguing that secularisation was a capital sin that should be punished by death. In the summary of his testimony before the High Court of State Security on 22 June 1993, it is reported that Al-Ghazali argued that:

> a secularist represented danger to society, and it was the duty of the government to put him to death. He added that if the government failed to carry out that duty, groups or individuals were free to do so. In his [i.e. Shayk Muhammad al-Ghazali's] view, a secularist is an apostate and secularism as separation of religion and state is an unadulterated kufr. Al-Ghazali also argued that whoever kills an apostate is guilty only of an act of 'ifti'at (arrogating to oneself an act which the authorities, which have the best right to do so, have neglected to do) against the authorities. When asked if there is a punishment for 'ifti'at, al-Ghazali answered: 'I do not recall there is any such punishment in Islam.'[14]

However, it is important to remember that Sheikh Muhammad al-Ghazali's opinion, quoted above, is just one argument: the debate over secularisation has many different modes of argumentation. While some have taken a clear stance against religion, others have used Islamic history to argue that Islam has never provided a clear description of a religious state, or that religion and religious law have always occupied a 'restricted social space'. This is more or less the position of classical thinkers such as Husayn Haykal (1888–1956) and Taha Husayn (1889–1976), as well as contemporary writers such as Muhammad Nur Farhat and, to some extent, Tariq Ramadan, who is discussed in this chapter (cf. Asad 2001: 1). It is also argued that the so-called Rashidun (the rightly guided, i.e. the first four Caliphs) were in favour of democracy (derived from the Arabic concept of *shura*), and in line with this argument it is held that the first Caliphs did not call for a government based on religion alone.[15] For example, in his famous book, *Al-Islam wa 'usul al-hukm* (published in 1925), Shaykh Ali Abd al-Raziq (1888–1966) stressed that 'Islam was a religion and not a state, a message not a government, a spiritual edifice, not a political institution'. Because of his views, he was banned from the Al-Azhar

Committee of the *ulama* (Najjar 1996: 1). This way of reading 'history' could thus be used to argue that it is possible for an Islamic society to accept a distinction between religion, politics and the private sphere. Without going into historical detail here, it is clear that the early Islamic history could be used and interpreted in many different ways. On the one hand, it could be used to support the separation of religion and the state (politics), while on the other hand, it could also be used to justify suppressing all forms of secularisation and for arguing that Islam is a unified and all-encompassing system. Let us now turn to our two influential contemporary theologians, both of whom hold strong opinions about secularisation, but tackle the problem from different angles.

Yusuf al-Qaradawi on Secularisation

Yusuf al-Qaradawi is without question one of the most important theologians in contemporary debates over Islam and Muslim affairs.[16] He was born in Egypt in 1926. According to his curriculum vitae, he learned the Qur'an by heart before the age of ten and received his 'Aliyya certificate from the Al-Azhar University in Cairo in 1952–1953. In 1973 he defended his Ph.D thesis, *Az-Zakah wa-Atharuha fi Hall al-Mushkilat al-Ijtima'iyya* ('Zakah and its Influence in the Solution of Social Problems'), at the same university. It is no exaggeration to say that he is a prolific author, his publications including articles, books, pamphlets and *fatwa*s on a large variety of Islamic issues (women and Islam, taxation, Islamic law, etc.). Al-Qaradawi publishes and writes in Arabic, but a large number of his publications have been translated into several Western languages (for example, his thesis mentioned above).[17] Currently he is Dean of the Faculty of Shari'ah and Islamic Studies at the University of Qatar.[18]

Besides his printed publications, Al-Qaradawi is also using the new information and communication technologies to disseminate his interpretation of Islam. Through his homepage (qaradawi.net), which is in Arabic, and the Arabic/English homepage, IslamOnline.net, his ideas have become widely quoted and debated globally (Gräf 2007, 2008). Furthermore, he is also a talk-show host for the television programme *Shari'ah wa al-hayat* ('Shari'ah and life'), broadcast by the satellite television station Al-Jazeera in Qatar (Mariani 2006; Skovgaard-Petersen 2004). Through the Internet and the above-named television programme, al-Qaradawi interacts with a global Muslim audience and responds to their questions mainly by issuing *fatwa*s and other statements. However, his influence is not limited to information and communication technologies, for he is also one of the founders and the head of The European Council for Fatwa and Research, which is currently based in Dublin, Ireland.[19] He is also President of the International Association of Muslim Scholars (IAMS).[20] Because of his extensive publications and use of the new information and communication technologies, al-Qaradawi has earned the label of 'global mufti' (Skovgaard-Petersen 2004) and has become an example of the transnational theologian who uses a large variety of tools and methods to spread the word to the

Muslim community on a global scale. From this point of view, his opinions are important to analyse if we want to understand the internal debate and formulation of Islamic discourses that are taking place among Muslims in Europe today (Caeiro 2009). Even though a number of publications have been focused on the importance of al-Qaradawi's theology, to the best of my knowledge no previous study has explicitly addressed his views on secularisation and the separation of state and religion (Gräf and Skovgaard-Petersen 2009).

Before I turn to al-Qaradawi's views on secularisation, I should stress that my analysis is only focused on his arguments concerning the separation of religion and the state. In order to determine whether the Muslim audience is following his ideas, it would be necessary to conduct interviews or distribute surveys among a large number of people, which I have not done for this chapter. Nonetheless it is evident that a large number of individuals and Islamic groups use more or less the same arguments as al-Qaradawi when they debate Islamic views of secularisation.[21] Also in relation to this issue, it is necessary to be cautious when Muslims talk about Islamic opinion in the singular: we must be aware that it is not easy to find a single Islamic opinion on any question. From an outside perspective, it is more correct to speak about Islamic opinions in the plural. Furthermore – and this is the second caution that we need to introduce before continuing with the analysis – most religious people are eager to present themselves according to an ideal model (of course, this is a general truth for most, if not all people). In other words, when Muslims argue that secularisation is not a part of Islam at all, we should be aware that most people have not reflected on what they are referring to when they talk about secularisation. More importantly, they are most likely to be presenting themselves according to an ideal model, which in real life most people do not live in accordance with. This fact is especially important in trying to analyse and understand the internal Muslim discussion that is going on in Europe. If you belong to a minority (that is, if you are more likely to be poor, unemployed, and reduced to poor living conditions), you are more likely to present yourself in accordance with an ideal model, especially if you are presenting your religion to a representative of the majority society (for example, an academic researcher, journalist or social worker), a notion that is relevant for all people who find themselves in the same position. In this situation, many Muslims seem to think it necessary to make a sharp distinction between 'us and them', i.e. between Muslims and non-Muslims. For Muslims who observe the rules of Islam, secularisation could refer to a separation between Christian and Muslim ways of living. This division is, for example, clearly illustrated in the following quotation from al-Qaradawi's book, *How Imported Solutions Disastrously Affected our Ummah* ('Al-Hulul al-Mustawradah wa Kayfa Janat 'alaa Ummatina')[22]:

> Secularism may be accepted in a Christian society but it can never enjoy a general acceptance in an Islamic society. Christianity is devoid of a shariah or a comprehensive system of life to which its adherents should be committed. (Al-Qaradawi 1983: 121)

As stated in the quotation above, al-Qaradawi is convinced that Christians are more likely to embrace secularism than Muslims. This conclusion is based on the fact that the New Testament (*al-injil*) (Matthew 22:21) accepts a division between

the king (the state, the non-religious leader) and God, as in the famous phrase, 'Render unto Caesar things which belong to Caesar, and render unto God things which belong to God' (Matthew 22:21). Because Christians have not experienced a 'true' government based on religion, they also have fewer problems in accepting secularism than Muslims, according to al-Qaradawi. They have only experienced 'the rule of the clergy, the despotic authority of the Church, and the resulting decrees of excommunication and the deeds of forgiveness, i.e. letter of indulgence' (Al-Qaradawi 1983: 121). On the basis of his reading of Matthew 22:21, al-Qaradawi comes to the conclusion that Islam is different from Christianity by nature: 'Islam is a comprehensive system of worship ('*ibadah*) and legislation (*Shari'ah*), which is not true of Christianity' (Al-Qaradawi 1983: 121).[23] Consequently, those people who accept a division between religion and the state and follow the path of secularisation are merely advocating atheism (*ilhad*) and a rejection of Islam.[24] To embrace this ideology is to work against Islam and is an open 'denial of the divine guidance and a rejection of Allah's injunctions' (Al-Qaradawi 1983: 121). For al-Qaradawi, it is essential to stress that the *Shari'ah* is valid for all periods and that the rise of so-called 'modern society' has not rendered Islamic laws or the guidance of Allah out of date. It is also blasphemous to think that people know better than Allah (this conclusion is based on al-Qaradawi's reading of *sura* 2:140).[25] To stress human reason above divine law is contrary to the essence of Islam. Al-Qaradawi concludes that to accept secularism is 'downright *riddah*' (*ridda sarih*), i.e. apostasy from Islam (Al-Qaradawi 1983: 122). Believers should rather aim for a middle way (in Arabic *wasatiyya*) that enables Muslims to be Muslims without becoming extremists or secularists. As the discussion in this section illustrates, secularism is an example of rejection that will only make Muslims lose their religion (Gräf 2009).

Let us now turn to Tariq Ramadan and his views on secularisation. Although his way of putting the argument resembles al-Qaradawi's in essential respects, it is also possible to identify important differences.

Tariq Ramadan on Secularisation

In analysing the views of Yusuf al-Qaradawi and Tariq Ramadan on secularisation, it is essential to realise that their writings are situated in different cultural contexts. Al-Qaradawi, a theologian working in an Arab context and using the Arabic language, was trained at the al-Azhar University in Cairo, Egypt, and is presently working as a theologian in Qatar. Ramadan, on the other hand, is living in Europe. Although al-Qaradawi's audience is global and although he makes extensive use of modern information and communication technologies to spread his message, he is thoroughly saturated by his Egyptian history and Arab culture. For example, all his communications and publications are in Arabic. To understand his publications and his theological position, therefore, it is vital to keep his cultural and theological background in mind, that is, if we want to comprehend and grasp his theological message and interpretation of Islam. Because of his background too, al-Qaradawi

appears to be less willing to compromise his beliefs and opinions of how Islam should be understood and realised in real life.

Compared with al-Qaradawi, Tariq Ramadan lives in Europe and therefore has first-hand experience of all the problems that Muslims might face in the west. But since he is also well aware of the so-called classical Islamic debate, his goal is to find an interpretation of Islam that is both true to its 'original intention' and possible to realise in western society. Furthermore, he is also aware of the fact that it is important to be sensitive when discussing secularisation and the relationship between religion and state in western societies. Today the function of religion in the public sphere is one of the most highly debated issues in European politics, being closely related to questions of integration, Muslims in the west and the rise of the multicultural society. From this point of view, Ramadan's view of secularisation is very different from al-Qaradawi's. While both agree that secularisation is contrary to Islam, they seek different solutions to the problem. However, before I outline Ramadan's basic ideas on secularisation as expressed in his influential books *To be a European Muslim* and *Western Muslims and the Future of Islam* – the two main sources for my analysis in this chapter of Ramadan's views on secularisation – a short biographical account of his life must be given.[26]

Tariq Ramadan (b. 1962) is the grandson of Hasan al-Banna' (d. 1949), the founder of the Muslim Brotherhood, and his father was Said Ramadan (d. 1995), who was expelled from Egypt by President Nasser.[27] Tariq Ramadan holds both an MA degree in Philosophy and French literature and a PhD in Arabic and Islamic Studies from the University of Geneva, Switzerland. He has also been trained in classical Islamic scholarship by scholars from Al-Azhar University in Cairo, Egypt.[28] Currently he is a Professor in Islamic Studies and a Research Fellow at St Anthony's College Oxford and the Lokahi Foundation in London.[29] He has published and co-authored over twenty books and several articles. Ramadan is also president of the European think-tank European Muslim Networks (EMN), in Brussels.[30] Besides his printed publications, his web page contains a large number of articles and online references in Arabic, English and French.[31]

The most important research question for Ramadan is to give Muslims who live in the west an identity that is both open to non-Muslim society and 'true' to Islamic ideals, norms and values. Muslims today have serious problems in the west because religion is in general perceived as a problem in most European contexts, but especially for them.

> In short, the Muslims should be Muslims without Islam, for there exists a widespread suspicion that to be too much a Muslim means not to be really and completely integrated into the Western way of life and its values. (Ramadan 2002: 184)

The negative perceptions of Muslims are mainly caused by 'spectacular events which take place on the international scene' (e.g. suicide attacks, terrorism).[32] To be a part of the majority society, many Muslims believe, they must adapt to a so-called western way of life and give up their religious identity. The only alternative is to withdraw from non-Muslim society and establish a community separate from it. This development creates only ghettos, isolation and suspicion between Muslims

and non-Muslims alike: 'They are Muslims against the European model and the only way out is to live, although in Europe, out of Europe' (Ramadan 2002: 188). For Ramadan, this outcome is the fundamental problem with the debate over assimilation, integration and isolation in the public discourse. Most laws in Europe are not against Islam or its practice, but instead promote freedom of religious and human rights, which is seldom if ever the case in countries dominated by Islamic and Muslim traditions.[33] For Ramadan, the legal framework in Europe is not opposed to freedom or equality, nor to Islam and Muslim ways of life (cf. al-Qaradawi above). To avoid the negative developments described above and the feeling of inferiority that hampers the integration of Islam in Europe, Muslims are urged to find a so-called middle path that enables them to be both Muslims and western citizens at the same time. To do so, they have to free themselves from interpretations rooted in cultural norms and values and return to a 'sound' interpretation of Islam,[34]

> For Muslims to understand who they are and what they stand for means that they are able to determine their identity per se, according to their Islamic references, and no longer through the image that others develop of them, as if they were but objects of some alien elaboration. It is only by acting in this way that European Muslims will feel that they are subjects of their own history, accountable before God, responsible before mankind. To be subjects of their own history also means that they will eventually go beyond this pernicious feeling of being foreigners, of being different, of being an obvious manifestation of an insoluble problem. By having a clear awareness of their identity, a new sentiment will grow, based on a more rooted self-confidence, and this will enable them to realise that their presence can be positive, that they can provide Europe with more spirituality, and a greater sense of justice and brotherhood along with a greater involvement in solidarity. (Ramadan 2002: 189–190)

The implicit conclusion is that Muslims should not abandon Islam or Muslim traditions, nor isolate themselves in cultural or religious sectarian interpretations, just to integrate themselves into European society. They should rather turn to Islamic history and Islamic sources to find guidance on how to live their lives in accordance with both Islamic and non-Islamic expectations and demands. For Ramadan the fact that secularisation is a fundamental aspect of European identity is not a problem as long as Europe adheres to the principle of freedom of religion and does not force Muslims into a 'total absence of religiosity' (Ramadan 2004: 70). European laws do not prevent Muslims from being Muslims – on the contrary, they support people whether they want to live a religious life or pursue secularisation or atheism, and are therefore not a problem as long as they are not imposed on Muslims. According to Ramadan, freedom is a basic aspect of Islam: since 'Islamic history had never seen any absolute authority such as the church',[35] Muslims should not have a problem with secularisation. However, this should not be read as a call for secularisation or a downplaying of religion – on the contrary, it is only by returning to the sources that one can arrive at a 'correct' understanding of Islam.

Ramadan also argues that Muslims should have no problem in making a distinction between the private and the public. He says:

> Contrary to the widely held idea, Muslims have no particular problem with the principle of distinguishing the various orders of things, even within their sources, because they find these distinctions articulated in the first works of categorization of orders carried out by the ulama as early as the eight to ninth centuries. (Ramadan 2004: 145)

However, although this separation recalls developments in the Christian world (cf. Al-Qaradawi's argument above), there is an important difference. According to Ramadan, 'Muslims continue to find in their scriptural sources principles that inspire their social and political commitment without ever imposing a definitive model, a timeless code, or, more broadly, a dogma for action' (Ramadan 2004: 145). Judging from the quotations in this section, it would be very difficult to say that Ramadan has a clear stance on secularisation. On the one hand he has no problem with secularisation, since freedom of choice is an essential aspect of Islam. On the other hand, however, Ramadan firmly believes that Islam is an all-encompassing system that covers both the public and private spheres. From this point of view there are only minor differences between Ramadan and Qaradawi, and both seem to agree that Shari'ah and Islam cover all aspects of life. However, the first writer emphasises more strongly than the second that it is up to the individual to choose a Muslim way of life.

Conclusions

If we compare the opinions of Yusuf al-Qaradawi and Tariq Ramadan on secularisation, we find similarities, but also important differences. For example, both theologians are convinced that Islam is a religion that covers all aspects of human life and that separating the secular and religious spheres is problematic, if not wrong. They both stress the need to find a middle way that enables Muslims to stay Muslims in the modern world. Hence, it is necessary to establish a moderate interpretation of Islam that on the one hand dismisses extremism and isolation from the world (i.e. interpretations of Islam upheld by jihadist and so-called fundamentalists) and on the other hand rejects atheism and secularisation.

However, the major differences between the two theologians analysed in this chapter lie in their cultural settings and their approaches to the Islamic sources. While al-Qaradawi is clearly writing from a Middle Eastern perspective (even though he is addressing a global audience), Ramadan's thinking is closely related to a European intellectual tradition and the public debate in the west. By underlining this difference, I am not saying that Ramadan is neither trained nor knowledgeable in classical Islamic theology; on the contrary, he is regarded by his followers as well trained in a number of branches of Islamic theology. Another important difference is that al-Qaradawi is more explicit in his writings when referring to the process of secularisation. The analysis and discussion in Ramadan's writings have clearly been composed in relation to questions concerning globalisation processes, integration and migration. In this milieu, secularisation is part and parcel of the European context. From this point of view, Ramadan is formulating his theology in a setting dominated by non-Islamic values and norms. To use the words of Jytte Klausen, he has accepted that 'Islam is a minority religion in Europe, and that Muslims must find their place within the framework of liberal democracy' (Klausen 2005: 205). By emphasising that a Muslim way of life is impossible in a society dominated by

secularisation, at least in theory, Ramadan runs the risk of being associated with those Islamists who are calling for the isolation and separation of Muslims and non-Muslims.[36] In other words, to use secularisation as a mark of distinction between Muslims and non-Muslims could easily backfire on Ramadan. By avoiding any critical discussion of secularisation and Islam, he can argue that Islam and Muslims can and should be part of European society without having to choose between Islamic and European identities.[37] This pedagogical 'problem' or concern is not present in the writings of al-Qaradawi. From his cultural point of view, secularisation and secularism can be used as symbolic epitomes for outlining a clear division, difference and separation between Muslims and non-Muslims. In his rhetoric, secularisation and secularism play a vital role and can be used as a symbolic epitome capturing the essential difference between Muslims and non-Muslims. My reading of al-Qaradawi's and Ramadan's publications are, of course, based on the written word alone. To prove the accuracy of my analysis, it would be necessary to interview both theologians. However, and even if they were able to confirm whether my interpretation was either wrong or incomplete, it is obvious that their writings are situated in different cultural, social and political settings and milieus.

From a methodological and theoretical point of view, the discussion in this chapter illustrates clearly how difficult it is to make comparisons between two theologians who are situated in different cultural contexts and are writing for difference audiences, though belonging to more or less the same tradition. For example, the concept of secularisation has different connotations in Europe and the Arabic-speaking Middle East. Although it would be easy to label the theological position of Ramadan as pragmatic and adapted for a western audience, I believe it is necessary to avoid such simplified analyses and look for deeper explanations. Al-Qaradawi and Ramadan both emphasise that Muslims must stick to Islamic dogma (the essence of that dogma is, of course, debatable). Indeed, they could both be described as pragmatic, but in different ways. While Ramadan could be accused of having adopted a western rhetoric and adjusted his message to a European public, al-Qaradawi has also tried to come up with a theological interpretation of Islam that is suitable for all Muslims in all local contexts. This ideology is clearly illustrated in his homepages and his television show, *Shari'ah wa al-hayat*. From a comparative point of view, al-Qaradawi and Ramadan are both true representatives of the ideology and strategy of the Muslim Brotherhood, one of the main goals of which was to spread the word of Allah and Islam beyond the mosque and traditional Muslim forums. In their use of print media and the new information and communication technologies, both al-Qaradawi and Ramadan are fulfilling this very goal.[38]

An analysis of Muslim views of secularisation (in this case based on a close reading of two Islamic theologians, Yusuf al-Qaradawi and Tariq Ramadan) should not be seen as an attempt to show that all Muslims take the same position on secularisation. On the contrary, this chapter illustrates the complexity and diversity that exists within the Islamic discourse. Nonetheless I still believe that the study of so-called secular or 'cultural Muslims' has largely been neglected thus far in the study of Islam and Muslims in Europe.[39] If we want to understand the diversity and internal discussions that go on within Europe's heterogeneous Muslim communities,

we must also analyse and listen to that large group of Muslims who could be described as secular or 'cultural' Muslims. However, arguing that a large number of those with a Muslim cultural background are secular should not be seen as 'proving' that the so-called secularisation thesis is correct in its conclusions, that is, that Muslims will become secular when they embrace modernity or become assimilated to European culture. Here the voices of al-Qaradawi and Tariq Ramadan should serve as important reminders of the fact that not all Muslims are willing to give up their religious identities when they become part of European societies. They also remind us that we must be cautious in our analysis of Islam and secularisation and that the debate is complex and multidimensional, as shown by the arguments deployed by al-Qaradawi and Ramadan. I end this chapter by quoting the insightful words of Professor Herman De Lay: 'let us conclude that a measure of caution is needed in applying the secularisation thesis in sociological research on present and future developments within European Muslim communities' (De Lay 2002: 109).

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Notes

1. All estimates of the numbers of Muslims in Europe are problematic, and the results always depend on how we define 'Muslims', not to mention the boundaries of Europe. On the methodological problems related to this question, see Brown (2000).
2. According to the figures reported in Klausen (2005), the great majority of Muslims in Germany and France are irreligious or 'fairly religious'. Her conclusion is that: 'European Muslim leaders are overwhelmingly secular in outlook and supportive of core liberal values about individual choice and the separation of religion and politics' (Klausen 2005: 207). However, we should bear in mind that it is very difficult from an academic point of view to estimate and measure either religiosity or secularisation.
3. Karel Dobbelaere, quoted in De Lay (2002: 108).
4. It is also essential to bear in mind that many Muslims suffer from discrimination that is justified by secularism. Cf. De Lay (2002: 110); Klausen (2005).
5. On the influence of Tariq Ramadan, see, for example, Klausen (2005: 162).
6. Even though the Muslim Brotherhood was set up and organized by Hasan al-Banna' (d. 1949) in 1928–1929, it is important to stress the difficulties involved in speaking of a well-defined political line uniting all the members of this organization. The Muslim Brotherhood is rather an umbrella organization that has collected a large number of different political and religious ideas on how to transform Islamic society. Cf. Mohsen-Finan (2002: 211–212); Smith (1995: 23); Zaman (2004: 134).
7. Cf. Aldridge (2000: 29).
8. Bryan Wilson writes: 'Secularisation relates essentially to a process of decline in religious activities, beliefs, ways of thinking, and institutions that occurs primarily in association

with, or as an unconscious or unintended consequence of, other processes of social structural changes. Secularism is an ideology; its proponents consciously denounce all forms of supernaturalism and the agencies devoted to it, advocating non-religious or antireligious principles as the basis for personal morality and social organization. Secularism may contribute in some degree to processes of secularisation, but the evidence, even from officially secularist societies such as the Soviet Union, suggests that it does so only very gradually and much less fundamentally than do broad processes of social structural change such as industrialization and urbanization' Wilson (1987: 159).

9. For Peter Berger, '*counter*-secularisation is at least as important a phenomenon in the contemporary world as secularisation' (1999: 6).
10. In making this statement, I am not trying to say that secularisation has not played any role in the Middle East. Secularism was closely associated with colonialism and imperialism in the Middle East and was frequently used as an 'ideological weapon' against Islam. For example, in the Maghreb the word *laïkiyya* (a transcribed form of the French word *laïcité*) is used as an insult. De Lay (2002: 109–110). See also Tamimi and Esposito (2000).
11. Smith (1995: 21). Cf. Stark and Bainbridge, who emphasise that the term 'secular' is often associated with 'belonging to the world' or 'worldly things as distinguished from the church and religious affairs' (1985: 429).
12. I agree with Peter Beyer, who writes: 'that the question of the relation between religion and modernity could not be subsumed under the simple option of decline or maintenance, that the question of secularization or sacralization was more complex, had more than one dimension, and was subject to different answers depending on what one meant by religion, on region, historical period or social location' (2005: 98).
13. The case of Naguib Mahfouz is discussed in detail in Najjar 1998. More examples are given in Dankowitz (2005); Smith (1995: 22–23).
14. Summary and quotation taken from Najjar (1996: 3).
15. On this debate, see, for example, Smith (1995: 23). On the concept of *shura*, see Bosworth (1997: 504–505); Ayalon (1997: 506).
16. This does not mean that he is accepted by all Muslims; see, for example, Klausen (2005: 190). On the importance of al-Qaradawi on Islam and Muslims in Europe, see, for example, Caeiro (2009); Shadid and Koningsveld van (2002).
17. For example, the Al-Falah Foundation in Egypt has translated several of al-Qaradawi's books into English, French and German. See http://www.falahfoundation.org/Home.asp?zPage=Systems&System=WebPages&WebPage=HomePage&Lang=E (accessed on 2006-11-17).
18. Biographical data on al-Qaradawi are taken from http://www.islamonline.net/FatwaApplication/English/GuestCV/G_01.shtml and Gräf and Skovgaard-Petersen (2009)
19. On this organization, see http://www.e-cfr.org/eng/
20. For a brief description of this organization and its goals, see al-Haliwani and Mohammad (2004).
21. Cf., for example, al-Qaradawi's *fatwa* published on the homepage of IslamOnline.net; see 'How Islam views Secularism', retrieved from http://www.islamonline.net/servlet/Satellite?pagename=IslamOnline-English-Ask_Scholar/FatwaE/FatwaE&cid=1119503545396; also Najjar (1996).
22. This book deals with how the 'import of western ideas' has had a negative effect on the Muslim world. The section that deals with secularisation can be downloaded from a number of different web pages on the Internet in an English translation. The negative influence of secularisation is also indirectly or partly covered in a number of publications, for example, in his book *State in Islam* (Qaradawi 2004). I have chosen to focus on the section from the *Al-Hulul al-Mustawradah wa Kayfa Janat 'alaa Ummatina* because this text is widely distributed on the Internet. It is also an important text because it has been translated into English and it is often used by both Muslims and non-Muslims in debates over Islam and secularisation. This section has also been used in a *fatwa* issued

by al-Qaradawi on Islamonline.net; see: 'How Islam views Secularism', retrieved from http://www.islamonline.net/servlet/Satellite?pagename=IslamOnline-English-Ask_Scholar/FatwaE/FatwaE&cid=1119503545396. I have used the Arabic text published by Al-Qaradawi in 1983: 121–122 to check the translation published on the Internet. All quotations are taken from this translation, but comments and Arabic transcriptions are also given in the text or in footnotes.

23. This section reads in Arabic: 'fa'nna [because] al-islam 'aqida wa-shari'a.' The English translation of '*aqida* given on the Internet is 'worship (*ibada*)', but a more correct translation would be 'article of faith, dogma, doctrine'. It should also be stressed that al-Qaradawi does not use the word *ibada* in his text, but '*aqida* (Al-Qaradawi 1983: 121). However, similar arguments are also used by the Egyptian moderate Islamist Dr Muhammad Imara when he discusses secularisation. On his ideas about Islam and secularisation, see Najjar (1996).
24. In Islamic theology it is a major sin to 'associate' something or someone with God. This capital sin is called *shirk*, and those who accept a division between religion and society and associate anything with God are referred to as *mushrikun* in the Qur'an. See Gimaret (1997). When discussing this problem, al-Qaradawi says that 'the call for secularism among Muslims is atheism and a rejection of Islam' [a-da'wa ila al-'alamani baina al-muslimin ma'naha ilhad wa-muruq min al-islam]; see Al-Qaradawi (1983: 121–122). The word *ilhad* can be understood as both 'apostasy, heresy' (Wehr 1976: 859) and 'atheism' (Karmi 1991: 53).
25. *Sura* 2, verse 140 reads: 'Or do ye say that Abraham, Ismail, Isaac, Jacob and the Tribes were Jews or Christians? Say: do ye know better than Allah? Ah! Who is more unjust than those who conceal the testimony they have from Allah? But Allah is not unmindful of what ye do!' (translation taken from Abdullah Yusuf Ali).
26. It should be emphasised that Tariq Ramadan has dealt with the question of secularisation and *laïcité* in a number of publications and forums, for example, the audio cassette 'Islam and *laïcité*: Comprehension and Dialogue' (Tawhid) and the book *Les musulmans dans la laïcité*. However, my analysis is limited to Ramadan's publications in English because they have a larger audience than his French publications. Furthermore, it is clear that he is using more or less the same arguments in these publications.
27. Mohsen-Finan (2002: 210). He moved from Egypt to Saudi Arabia, where he was elected Secretary of the World Islamic League, a charity and missionary body. From Saudi Arabia he moved to Geneva, Switzerland, to set up the Islamic Center in Geneva. These data are taken from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Said_Ramadan (accessed on 2006-11-20); also Dankowitz (2006).
28. From the bibliography on his homepage, it is unclear whether he himself ever studied at the Al-Azhar; it seems rather than he has been trained by scholars who have earned their degrees from this Islamic institution. See http://www.tariqramadan.com/rubrique.php3?id_rubrique=13; (accessed on 2006-11-17). According to Mohsen-Finan, he is 'not really a religious scholar (*alim*) in the usually-understood sense' (2002: 212).
29. See http://www.lokahi.org.uk/ourpeople.htm (accessed on 2006-11-20).
30. On this organisation, see http://www.euromuslim.net/content.asp?art_id=273 (accessed on 2006-11-20).
31. Biographical data taken from http://www.tariqramadan.com/rubrique.php3?id_rubrique=13 (accessed 2006-11-14).
32. Ramadan (2002: 184). The relationship between global events and local contexts is clearly illustrated by the terror attacks on September 11th 2001. The connection between global terrorism and local anti-Muslim attitudes is discussed in Larsson (2005).
33. Of course, the lack of democracy in the Middle East is not automatically caused by Islam or Muslim cultures. Several World Values Surveys have demonstrated that most people in the Arab-speaking world are positive about democracy and democratic values. In order to understand the absence of democracy in the Middle East, it is necessary to go beyond religion and analyse the impact of colonialism, despotism and political structures on both the local and global levels. (Cf. Tessler 2003).

34. This way of putting the argument is an illustration of the classical debate over how to interpret, understand and elucidate the 'essence' of Islam. Ramadan, like so many other theologians, is calling for a purification of Islam, a return to a 'sound' reading of the sources. From an academic point of view, this debate is a theological question that can, and should, only be answered by the believers themselves – i.e. what is the 'true' understanding of Islam, and how should Islam be manifested in society? However, it is clear that we will not find any one answer to this question, but a large variety of possible answers depending on time and local contexts.
35. Ramadan, interviewed by Hadi Yahmid for IslamOnline, Paris, 5 September 2003.
36. By emphasising 'at least in theory', I am referring to the arguments of many sociologists that European culture and society are saturated with Christian values and norms and that Christian groups are treated as a separate or different category compared to other religious tendencies in the west. (Cf. Klausen 2005).
37. According to his critics, this is the major problem with Ramadan. See, for example, Klausen (2005: 207); Fourest (2005).
38. Mitchell (1969) provides a classic overview of the history, ideology and theology of the Muslim Brothers.
39. A more detailed discussion of this problem is found in Larsson (2006)

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Islam and Democracy in the Twenty-First Century

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The relationship between Islam and democracy is a very complicated subject and has always been fraught with difficulties, primarily because there is no particular consensus among Muslim scholars on the form of democratic system that can be acceptable from the Islamic perspective.[1] Both the Quran and the Sunnah say little with regard to the exact shape or form that an Islamic polity ought to be, giving only some general principles that can be used as guidance for a political system that should ensure justice, equity, and respect for human dignity. This has opened up the door for different interpretations: some are rigid and dogmatic and do not take into consideration either the egalitarian spirit of the faith or the conditions of the Modern age[2]; while others tend to be rhetorical and superficial intended mainly to specific audiences.[3] This has led to confusion, among Muslims and non-Muslims alike, exacerbated by two factors: the reality of contemporary Muslim politics that tend to be generally either secular or religious based authoritarianisms,[4] and secondly, the prevailing essentialist thought, especially in the West, about the perceived inability of Islam to reconcile itself with democratic principles.[5]

Current Visions on Islam and Democracy

Contemporary Muslim scholars and intellectuals are unable to agree on a unified position on the issue. On the contrary, their positions were and continue to be polarised in at least three directions: one position representing conservative and some radical religious forces that adopt a negative view of any shape or form of democratic system, stressing that democracy is a Western product and as such it has to be avoided at all cost since 'the democratic system prevalent in the world is not appropriate in this region. [...] The election system has no place in the Islamic creed, which calls for a government of advice and consultation and for the shepherd's openness to his flock, and holds the ruler fully responsible

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before his people' (Esposito 2004: 96).[6] This group regards democracy as forbidden and something which contradicts Divine Sovereignty; they want 'to start (change) by putting society on trial and convincing it in advance. Their relationship with the society is thus one of tension and clash, expressed in violence and *takfir*' (Baker 2003: 124).

This group has limited grassroots support, as their view does not reflect the opinion of the majority of Muslim people. In fact their active attempt to seek political power by force if necessary, in order to impose a dogmatic version of Islamic rule, goes against the authentic Islamic principles that emphasise the fact that political work means sacrifice and relinquishment, and political power (in the modern understanding of the word) should not be sought. For Muhammad, the prophet of Islam, is reported to have said 'Do not seek to be a ruler, because if you are given authority on asking for it, then you will be held responsible for it; but if you are given it without asking for it, then you will be helped in it' (Bukhari 1994: 1002). The Hadith 'refers to a selfish, egotistic pursuit of power, rather than to the selfless seeking of power for the sake of the establishment of justice for others'.[7] In this context, the prophet acts as a role model for he put his life in danger in order to set up universal justice in a tribal feuding society of the Arabian peninsula, and ended his life in strict poverty in spite of the fact that he could have gained privileges by virtue of his belonging to the Meccan nobility.[8]

Many radicals decided to overlook such an example either deliberately or out of sheer ignorance. Methodologically speaking, their approach to the issue is wrong since they exclude other views, hold their position as the ultimate truth, permit violence to defend it and insist on clergy-led government. In this context, this approach disregards the classical position of the Muslim jurists who recommended patience and peaceful resistance in the face of tyranny or unendurable livelihood. This classical position was based on a Hadith, which states 'Whoever sees something he dislikes in his ruler should be patient, because whoever leaves the community, even by one fraction, and then dies, has died the death of the age of ignorance'.[9] The position is also based on the fear of (*fitna*) or civil war that might divide the Muslim nation (*umma)* if force is used. Although some groups disagreed and challenged this position,[10] it remained the dominant stance until the twentieth century when radical and revolutionary activists violated it and advocated violence for the removal of corrupt rulers in order instead to install clergies.[11]

Traditionally speaking, the religious scholars never asked to rule directly the Islamic polity. They instead played a constructive role in maintaining the balance between the ruling classes and the laity, by informing the ruled about their rulers and legitimised them at the same time using their religious and moral authority to check any authoritarian tendencies.[12] In this context, Tim Winter in an interview eloquently elaborates on this issue by stressing that traditionally Muslims managed to separate the religious institutions from the State institutions. To use the traditional language, one can say that the men of the sword were certainly not the men of the pen or scholarship. For example, during the classical era under the Umayyad and Abbasid dynasties, and later on under the Ottomans and Moghuls, the Caliph or the Sultan, despite the fact that he enjoyed some form of religious character or quality,

had no power to legislate nor had he any control over religion. Religion had no official control over him either.

What has occurred in modern and contemporary situations is that the fundamentalists and radicals have done away with the traditional figure of the Caliph or Sultan as a result of the corruption and decadence of the royal families, such as for instance in Iran prior to the 1979 revolution. In doing so, they created a power vacuum that they themselves stepped into and filled. The radical clergies then felt that for the first time in history they had the chance and responsibility to put things right. Hence, they introduced and imposed the theocratic model or system, the so-called Islamic republican model, to govern the Muslim nations. This model, which can be seen not only in Iran but also in other parts of the Muslim world, is completely new, alien and does not represent the models of traditional Islam.[13] The thinking, interpretation and practices of this group have no doubt perpetuated the prevailing essentialist thought in the West about the perceived notion of the undemocratic characteristics of Islam. For instance, take the Iranian case: after 31 years of Clergy-led government, the outcome is disappointing in every respect. Recent figures show that the number of people attending Friday prayer has dropped drastically compared to the time before the revolution, and there is no real Islamic reformation. The same situation can be found in Sudan where 'religion is now identified with a kind of prison, the pan-optican idea of the man at the centre of the State looking at everybody, Calvin's city of glass, nobody being able to misbehave in a way that annoys the clerics or the mullahs without calling down on them, not just the sanction of heaven, but the repressive capacities of the modern corporate State'.[14]

The second trend, representing mainly secular groups, argues in favour of a wholesale adoption of Western liberal systems. They believe that Islam should be separated from politics; the secular hard liners among them are very critical of Islam and the Islamic trend. They warn that Islam should be preserved from the corruption of the political domain and draw attention to 'Iran and Sudan as states whose attempts to create religious states based on Sharia have degenerated into massive repression and bloodshed' (Baker 2003: 8). They stress that minorities and women would never have justice and equal rights under religious states, and insist on national unity based on non-religious principles of citizenship (Ibid.: 9).

Although this trend gained wide public support in the Fifties and Sixties, in recent years that support has drastically declined; their public policy is discredited among large sections of the ordinary masses. This is chiefly due to socio-economic and political reasons. Currently their public support is very limited and confined to certain sections of the elites, and some groups that are predominately Western educated. Some members of this group go as far as attacking moderate Islamic voices. For example, Sachedina encourages Muslim scholars to 'prod believers to go beyond the normative community, to foster a cross-cultural discourse in which the Islamic tradition, along with Christianity and Judaism, provides a credible voice of guidance, not governance' (Sachedina 2001: 40). In the same vein Bayat confuses the whole issue and emphasises the same approach: 'Both (sides) share in their approach an exclusive commitment to texts, drawing their usually philosophical arguments on the literal reading of sacred scriptures (the Quran and Hadith), and pay astonishingly

little attention to what these texts mean to the fragmented Muslim humanity in their day-to-day lives. There is rarely a discussion, moreover, on how these meanings vary in different historical junctures' (Bayat 2007: 9).

In doing so, it is possible that Sachedina, Bayat and the like are playing into the hands of the fundamentalists, for in this context, they are attacking not only radical Muslims but also moderate Islamic voices. To ignore the difference between the two and treat them as if they are two sides of the same coin is to make more and more moderate Muslims susceptible to the arguments and voices of the fundamentalists. Also it will lend itself to the perceived notion that the West and its illegitimate leaders in the Muslim world are truly against Islam, hence reinforcing the view of the clash of civilisations (Shah-Kazemi 2006).[15]

The hardliners among this group refuse even to listen to the advice of some Muslim intellectuals who advocate dialogue and cooperation with moderate Muslim thinkers for the sake of national unity and social and political stability. For example, Abdullah An-Naim draws attention to this trend and warns them of the gross consequences if they continue to ignore moderate Muslim voices by stating that to 'seek secular answers (to the Muslim situation) is simply to abandon the field to the fundamentalists, who will succeed in carrying the vast majority of the (Muslim) population with them by citing religious authority for their policies and theories. Intelligent and enlightened Muslims are therefore best advised to remain within the religious framework and endeavour to achieve the reforms that would make Islam a viable modern ideology (An-Naim 1990: xii).

The voice of this trend, very often, finds support and sympathy in the West, and the following reflects the point: 'The culture of Islam and democracy are fundamentally incongruent and the choice facing Muslims in the twenty-first century is between modernization and fanaticism. The future of the Middle East will depend on which of them prevails (Hashemi 2004: 51). 'Islam embodies [. . .] a world in which human life doesn't have the same value as it does in the West, in which freedom, democracy, open-ness and creativity are alien' (Bayat 2007: 8). Such statements are counterproductive and self-defeating, for they achieve nothing but further alienation, especially among disenchanted youth.

Methodologically speaking, the secularists are as exclusivist as the fundamentalists they critique: in a recent conference on secularism, Bhargava refused to have any form of dialogue with moderate Muslims and insisted that religion should be kept out not only of the public sphere, but also be changed, if necessary, by the force of the secular state, in order to bring it in line with state policy (Bhargava 2007). Such an attitude ignores the fact that Muslim nations are essentially not secularised, their thinking premises are still religious, not secular, in contrast to the case of Western European nations.[16] As such, to impose a Western secular model will not take Muslims very far; if you force it down people's throats, then the problem is that many of them will try and vomit it up again, to use Murad's phrase. Also, the secularists tend to *principlise* the secular principles, and use them as their point of reference when dealing with religions. The principlisation of secularism is dangerous as it claims to hold the truth to the exclusion of others. Moreover, in dealing with Islam and democracy, they tend to focus mainly on one side of the equation that

is Islam, leaving aside democracy as if democracy is a uniform model that is free of any complexities and could be easily applied to any social and political setting.[17]

In this context, it is important to refer to the view made by the Archbishop of Canterbury Dr Rowan Williams in response to some people who have advocated a wholesale adoption of secular society in Britain. In 2006 and in an article entitled 'A society that does not allow crosses or veils in public is a dangerous one,' he said it was odd that 'commentators were solemnly asking if it were not time for Britain to become a properly secular society'. He contrasted this with the situation in China, which he had visited, and where the people are asking the opposite question: 'is it not time that China stopped being a certain kind of secular society'. For there was a general recognition in China that there existed a vacuum where there should be a cohesive social morality. This was the result of dictating what religions could be allowed, and how they should manifest.

The top-down rule of China ensured that it was religion by political diktat that was enforced, and the Chinese now recognise this cannot work. Here is the key paragraph: 'We in the UK do not have anything like this history of top-down rule by regulation. Yet when people talk about whether we should become a secular society, I wonder if they realise that they are in effect echoing the idea that the basic and natural form of political organisation is a central authority that "franchises" associations, and grants or withholds their rights to exist publicly and legally within the state. Up to now, we have in practice taken for granted that the state is not the source of morality and legitimacy but a system that brokers, mediates, and attempts to coordinate the moral resources of those specific communities, than merely local and the creedal or issue-focused, which naturally make up the national unit. This is a "secular" system in the sense that it does not impose legal and civil disabilities on any one religious body; but it is not secular in the sense of giving some kind of privilege to a non-religious or anti-religious set of commitments or policies. Moving towards the latter would change our political culture more radically than we imagine'.[18] For him, then, a society where public signs of religions are not allowed is a politically destructive society since it 'assumes that what comes first in society is the central political "licensing authority", which has all the resources it needs to create a workable public morality'.

'Few places have tried as systematically as China to set this in stone; and now there is a tacit admission of defeat'.[19] Dr William's aim is to stress the relevance of a politically-open and democratic system in which the state is subordinate to the norms – cultural, religious, moral-and it brokers and co-ordinates rather than enforces and dictates as the secular hardliners would like to see. He concludes with this, 'Here in the UK, the daily reality of faith in ordinary communities is bound up with the maintenance of civil society, with enabling citizens to ask constructively critical questions of the State and to co-operate with statutory bodies to meet urgent needs. We could do with some common sense and realism about this. It would be something of a paradox if we had to look to the emerging China to find it'.[20]

The third vision represents moderate voices that argue for adopting a middle path. This trend has been on the Muslim stage for a long time, but was over shadowed by the secularists and nationalists in the Fifties and Sixties, and

by the fundamentalists in the Seventies and Eighties. Some Muslim intellectuals, academic scholars and moderate religious leaders who believe that there is room for reconciling some Islamic universal principles with democratic political order are championing this trend. Throughout the previous decades members of this group were debating the link between Islam and democracy in the Muslim world. But in recent years, and especially after the terrorist attacks on the US in September 2001, and the subsequent policy of 'war on terrorism', this trend started to gain supremacy, respect and broad grassroots support as a result of its genuine and rational efforts to find a suitable solution to the relationship between Islam and democracy.

The equation of Islam with political violence,[21] the attacks on the integrity of the faith by hardliners from various political and religious persuasions, the unquestioned and uncritical accusations of Islam as a religion that advocates dogmatism and prohibits pluralism and freedom of expression, provoked widespread discussion (within and outside the Muslim world) about the relationship between Islam and democratic principles. It also raised critical questions about the place of tolerance, human rights issues, and the role of religious leaders in Islam and Muslim countries. Currently these issues have become the focal points of worldwide public debate. This group has been influential in this context, attempting to rescue the tradition from the fundamentalists who have betrayed it through their restrictive interpretations. They come to believe in a more constructive role in society and politics; they are prepared to work with the existing political (secular) regimes through participation in elections and formulate political programmes that respect human rights, the rights of minorities and women's rights; they are openly critical of the dogmatic interpretations of radical Muslims, and are working hard to try and broaden the understanding of Islamic concepts such as consultation, justice, equity and accountability in order to make them a basis for their programme. They insist that 'without willpower, inspired vision, and moral commitment there can be no democracy in Islam' (Hashemi 2004: 54).

Although the crisis of September 11, 2001 was severe in its implications for the Muslim world, it did nonetheless pave the way for constructive internal debate among Muslim scholars throughout the Muslim lands, employing the Arabic saying: 'Something good can come out from something bad' and indeed that is what has happened; serious Muslim intellectuals and scholars have decided to take the matter into their own hands in an attempt to come up with credible solutions to the whole issue. In this context we can refer to the work that has been done by the *Wasatiyyah* trend (Middle way or Path) and *Hizb al-Wasat al-Jadīd* (The New Middle Party) in Egypt in recent years, and the current efforts of the leaders of the Islamic movements in Morocco, Yemen, Malaysia (in this context the writings of the Malaysian scholar Hashim Kamali are worth mentioning), Jordan and Turkey. Outside the Muslim world, diasporic Muslim scholars and intellectuals such as the writings of Kalead Abu El-Fadel are of importance; they point in the right direction, and potentially could be a valuable contribution to the overall question of the relationship between Islam and democracy.

In order to look deeply into the endeavours of this trend, I have decided to choose *Hizb al-Wasat al-Jedīd* in Egypt as a case study. Turkey's case as an example is

promising and worth mentioning since it has the potential to be a role model to be followed in other Muslim countries. The present Turkish government is trying to do what the above trend seeks to achieve, but this is coming not from solid reading or observation of it but rather from personal impressions.

Islamic Activism in Egypt: The New Islamic Trend

Historically Egypt is regarded as the birthplace of one of the oldest and most powerful Islamic movements in the Muslim world, namely the Muslim Brotherhood; a schoolteacher called Hassan al-Banna set it up in 1924, and it soon grew in size and power and became a worldwide movement with branches in most Muslim countries, especially Middle Eastern countries. Along with the *Jamati Islami* of Pakistan, it has played an important role in the current Islamic resurgence that has characterised much of the Muslim world since the Seventies. Nearly all-current Islamic movements across the Muslim world, especially the Muslim Middle East, have had its origin in the teachings of the Brotherhood.

Beside the Brotherhood organisation, there are other Islamic groups, but these are mainly considered to be offshoots of the main organisation. They emerged in the Seventies and Eighties as a result of two factors: Sadat's relaxation policy on the Islamists in order to use them against his rivals the leftists and the Nasserites, and secondly, the change that took place in the overall policy of the Muslim Brotherhood movement – namely its relinquishment of violence and acceptance of political means as a better way to gain political power.[22] Some members of the organisation protested at the change and saw it as caving in to the repressive secular regime, hence they decided to go their own separate ways, forming separate groups with radical ideologies. The majority of these groups have very limited public support, primarily because they use force to achieve their objectives. The most famous of these is likely to be 'The Jamaa al-Islamiyya' (The Islamic group), who had violent confrontations with the regime throughout the Nineties, and reached its climax with the Luxor bombing in 1997. This group has officially renounced violence as a means to achieve transformation in 2002, when the group leaders reached agreement with the present government declaring their commitments to political means and promised to persuade their followers to do so.[23]

An exception to these groups are the New Islamists who are part and parcel of the *Wasatiyyah* school and are the prime movers behind the, yet to be legalised, *Hizb al-Wasat al-Jadīd.* The majority of them grew up within the Muslim Brotherhood society, but then came out of it; the reason for such a drastic withdrawal was not because of the change of the organisation policy as other splinter groups implied, but rather because the organisation, from their viewpoint, did not go far enough in adapting its policy to the modern reality of the Arab and Islamic situation. This is, they said, despite their efforts to convince leaders of the movement to be more open to the essential issues, which needed to be re-visited theologically speaking in order to take into consideration the change of time.

Hizb al-Wasat al-Jadīd or The New Middle Party

There are many reasons for choosing *Hizb al-Wasat* as a case for investigation: firstly, the programme of the party concerns itself not only locally, but transnationally; the party hopes that its work would transcend the borders of Egypt to include the wider Arab and Islamic world. Although the ideologues of the party live and work in Egypt, their ambition is to appeal to the wider Arab and Islamic public opinion. Some members, such as Muhammad Salem al-Awa, is already the Secretary General of the international Union of Muslim scholars, an organisation that aims at working collectively towards finding acceptable solutions to the challenges posed by secularism and globalism to Islam.[24]

Secondly, the prime movers and ideologues of the party are mainly intellectuals and some religious scholars who are not seeking to exploit their positions to gain influence and political power. They are not even considered as official members of the party but rather, one can say, sympathisers and advisors. They command respect and popularity among both the elites and grassroots in Egypt and beyond, and have worked relentlessly on these issues. As such, the programme they offer is the result of years of hard work, both on the theoretical and practical levels. In other words, their thinking has gone through different phases that took into consideration the past and present experiences of the Islamic movement in general. They have also played influential roles in times of crises, locally, nationally and internationally, during which they succeeded in avoiding confrontations between the Islamists, their respective governments and the international community. Most importantly, they represent the 'mainstream moderate Islam' across the wider Arab and Islamic world, and this mainstream Islam is called, to use their phrase, *Wasatiyyah*. They 'think of their intellectual school as an outgrowth of the centrist Islamic mainstream, or *Wasatiyyah*. The group is driven by a positive, mainstream vision, which they affirm in thought and practice, rather than by defensive fear.

Rooted in Egypt, the New Islamists address with considerable influence the broader Arab Islamic world' (Baker 2003: 1). Their aim is to succeed in making mainstream Islam the focal point, for they believe that an Islamic project which represents and reflects the view of the majority would certainly answer the demands of the global age. Thirdly, unlike the Brotherhood, the party declares itself to be a political actor rather than a religious group (in contrast to the Brotherhood which was and continues to be identified as a religious society), but with an Islamic authority based on citizenship, where both Muslims and non-Muslims contribute equally to society. Hence, one can observe that some of the early members of the party are women and members of the ethnic minorities, namely the Copts (Mady 2004: 24).

Fourthly, the party accepts the choice of political means. Again unlike the Muslim Brotherhood, where there is no clear democratic mechanism to elect especially prominent members such as the *murshid*, the *Wasat* is fully democratic in terms of choosing their candidates. It also preaches pluralism, fair competitions through the ballot box, and equal opportunity for both women and members of the ethic minorities. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, the ideologues assert that they do not reserve the Truth to themselves or pretend to be the spokespersons of

Islam. Instead, they offer one version among other versions of human understanding of the Divine message. This human understanding is open to public discussion and approval. Anyone who agrees with this form of human interpretation agrees to accept it, and anyone who disagrees is refusing not Islam per se, but this particular human understanding of it. Notice here the concept of *takfīr* has no place in the new thinking of this group, in contrast to militant Islamic groups (Ibid.: 24) As such, they accept differences of opinion, and are prepared to include all political parties, religious and secular, within a democratic framework that insists on national unity and on inclusion rather than exclusion.

The Beginning

This group first started working on the manifesto in the early 1980s, during the Sadat era; they worked collectively to produce a comprehensive document that would be accepted by all rivals. It was essentially based on a number of their various publications that deal with and discuss the essential issues of politics, culture, society, and the economy, as well as their active interventions in public life on behalf of the principles they advocate and believe in (Baker 2003).[25] Because of the difficult circumstances at the time, the document or manifesto had to wait until 1992 to be officially published under the title *A Contemporary Islamic Vision*, bearing the name of the author, *Kamal Abul Majīd*, a renowned constitutional lawyer who commands high respect for his dedication and professionalism. Although the book bears his name, it was in reality a joint effort that included the additional following personalities: the late *Muhammad al-Ghazaly*, considered to be one of the prominent Islamic scholars in the twentieth century, best known to ordinary Egyptian and Arab people, his views on certain controversial Islamic issues, especially the reformed state, women issues, and the status of minority groups in an Islamic polity were challenging and daring. He 'embodied the belief of Egypt's Islamist centrists that only a state reformed on the foundations of Islam can provide Egyptians (and Muslims) with an authentic yet modern and democratic political community' (Ibid.: 5). *Yūsuf al-Qaradāwī*, probably one of the most well-known and powerful Islamic scholars in the Muslim Sunni world; like *al-Ghasaly* before him, his views on contemporary Islamic issues are inviting, and his weekly programme on Arabic satellite television, *al-Jazeera,* is watched by millions across the Muslim world and beyond. As such, he has become highly popular and influential among both the elites and grassroots in the Arab Islamic Middle East. *Tāriq al-Bishry*, an ex-Communist party member, a renowned historian and a distinguished member of the Egyptian judiciary, highly honoured for his dedication to find proper solutions to controversial Islamic issues that have been challenged by modernity. His eloquent and impressive views on these issues have earned him considerable public support among the Islamists, the Secularists, and policy makers in Egypt and beyond. *Muhammad Selim al-Awa,* another prominent contributor who played and continues to play a crucial role in defining the *Wasatiyyah* project, is a lawyer

and professor of Law at *Zagazig* University. His contributions on the legal aspect of the faith are essential to the overall project. *Al-Awa* has written and published countless books, articles and monographs on the so-called *New fiqh and the fiqh of Priority* aiming mainly at explaining some legal issues and their compatibility with the modern age. His impressive style of writing on legal matters[26] and his broad, solid knowledge of both the Western and Islamic cultures have made him one of the formidable spokespersons of the *Wasatiyyah.* He attends on a regular basis conferences and workshops on Jewish, Christian and Muslim relations, and on interfaith dialogue in both the Muslim and Western worlds. *Fahmy Huwaidy* is a prominent journalist and his weekly column in *Al-Ahrām* newspaper has made him one of the best known journalists on the *Wasatiyyah* perspective in both the Arab and Islamic world. In addition, there is the prominent Islamic scholar *Muhammad A'marah*, again renowned for his constrictive contributions to the moderate mainstream voices of Islam, he is highly respected in both Egypt and the wider Arab world. The above individuals form a group broadly considered 'as untarnished by the questionable political practices of either the opposition or the regime [. . .] they are stepping into a widely acknowledged leadership void in Egyptian (and Arab) society' (Baker 2003: 13).

September 11 Attacks and Its Implications

Since the attacks of September 11 on the US, these individuals have been working hard to address urgent issues in light of the changing reality of the Muslim world. Some of these key issues are centred on how to bring about a vision of Islam that is responsive to modern reality. What is the future prospect of 'moderate Islam'? Is a moderate interpretation on crucial questions such as politics, culture, economics, and gender relations conceivable? If so, what could they offer for the future of Islam, Muslim people and their relations with the wider modern world? These New Islamists have dealt with the above issues and have given credible answers for them for sometime now. Their impressive efforts have been largely overlooked or ignored in the West. However, recent books by W. Baker and C. Murphy have managed to highlight and draw Western attention to them, probably because both of these writers have interests in Egyptian Islamic experience.[27] William Baker in his book, *Islam without fear*, reproaches the West for failing to take seriously what this kind of moderate Islam has done. For him:

> There are no sound scholarly reasons for the critical gap in the Western understanding of Islam for which they speak; the historical record is there to be surveyed and assessed. The New Islamists have done more than raising speculative question. In the impressive body of their scholarly work and the record of their active roles in public life, these remarkable and diverse individuals. . .have produced a reformist elaboration of the role of the arts and education in Islam; the character of Islamic Community and the ways in which it should be regulated, gender relation; the status and rights of non-Muslims; the nature of Islamic banking and economics; the relationship of the state and society; and Islam's global role. (Baker 2003: 4)

For him, all of the above questions are clearly dealt with in a professional, qualified and understandable social ambience. Primarily because these Muslim scholars have kept a special relationship with their society as individuals and as a group, their work is located in the modern history of the Middle East, including Egypt. Both specialists and non-specialists can clearly appreciate and value the character and importance of their inputs (Ibid.: 4).

Some Western scholars call this school the centrists, although the name does not accurately reflect the meaning of the Arabic word *Wasatiyyah*, with which the school is identified. Nevertheless, the title refers to the middle way or path between hardliners of both religious and secular trends that have characterised most of the political life and culture in the Arab Muslim world. This *Wasatiyyah* sees the world from a vision and perspective that considers the religion of Islam not only as a system of religious beliefs and legal instructions but also as an intellectual and cultural reservoir, an instructive book and experience of political, economic, and social history, and a moral, ethical and practical criterion for the advancement of life here and now. They are working hard to achieve a deeper, balanced and more rational interpretation of Islam for their followers, and labouring effectively to secure the necessary and correct changes in different domains: social, political and economic structures that inhibit the realisation of a strong and independent Islamic society built on such principles and understanding (Ibid.: 14).

The Main Strategies for Transforming the Muslim Community

The New Islamists categorically condemn the use of force or violence to achieve political and social transformation of society. They believe that the extremists' vision of the Islamic community is deeply disfigured by the gross misunderstanding of the faith. Instead they advocate a model of a just and inclusive Community that is based on a gradual and peaceful transformation of society, through guidance or *tarshīd*. Their tools or strategies to reach this end are made feasible by their fresh approach to the main Islamic sources in relation to the contemporary challenges of modernity to Islam. This approach is based on the understanding that new *ijtihād* on the essentials of the religion by qualified scholars is crucial for the renewal of Islam, and for avoiding the risk of allowing the faith to slip into stagnation and imitation. In this context, they present new ways to read the main Islamic sources (*the Qur'ān, the Sunnah, and the Sharīà*) in connection with modern issues such as Islam and its relationship with the state, the public role of women and the place of minorities in society.

In their approach to these issues, they insist on four premises to be followed, precisely to highlight the legitimacy and practicality of their approach, but also to expose and undermine the flaws of the extremists' approach to the above issues. These premises are: (1) all issues related to Islam have their utmost, final and most secure source in the Quran as it is the rightful and legitimate starting point; (2) since the main objective of the Sunnah was to explain, elaborate and facilitate the

understanding of the Quran, the Sunnah cannot and will not contradict that which it explains or expounds, they must instead be taken together – but ultimately the Quran should and must take precedence; (3) since the Quran and the Sunnah are texts, they might have different meanings and this could lead to different interpretations which must be accepted and respected; (4) the flexibility that ijtihad (human endeavours) generates and affords and the differences within *fiqh* (Islamic Jurisprudence) that it yields illustrates the ability of Islam to answer and deal with human needs at all times and in all places. What remains steadfast and constant are the general purposes and higher values of Islam, expressed and articulated in both the Quran and the Sunnah. The constancy and unity of these comprehensive principles and broad aims, understood and comprehended by the use of the mind, provides overall consistence and coherence to the Islamic tradition and civilisation (Ibid.: 92).

For this school, then, sound methods of the interpretation of the *Qur'ān* and the *Sunnah*, and proper examination and distinction between the *fiqh* (which is ultimately human efforts and judgement) and the Divine and Sacred elements of the law, is essential to strengthen the inclusive and tolerant *Wasatiyyah* vision or approach which they strongly advocate and promote. At the heart of this vision lies their emphasis on the importance of the respect and advancement of women, the rightful and secure place for minorities and the inclusion of all moderate secularists. This vision stands in sharp contrast with the exclusivists approach to these issues.

On women's issues, their aim is to reverse the negative trends that denigrate and consider women as inferior and subordinate to men. They are prepared to challenge a culture that advocates male superiority and an unconstrained domination through a new *fiqh* that supports new thinking on the private and public roles of women in society within the Islamic framework. Their public support of women's rights exposed them to harsh criticism, especially from the extremists, but this did not discourage them. On the contrary, they insisted that they would no longer tolerate those distorted interpretations that have arrested the advancement of women in society.

On the question of minorities, they have made it clear that they reject the views advocated by the conservatives and extremists regarding the historical, 'protected' form of relationships with minorities. For them, the proper Islamic solution for minorities is the following: to accept and abide by majority rule, full and complete freedom of creed and worship for non-Muslim groups, and complete equality between Muslims and non-Muslims in both civil and political rights as citizens. These rights should be safeguarded and guaranteed by the constitution. The Islamic community, they said, is established on civilisational principles within which non-Muslims have a secure and respectable place; they also reminded Muslims that the great Islamic civilisation was a joint product between Muslims and non-Muslims alike. The Islamic civilisational boundaries are not drawn on ethnic, racial or religious lines, but rather on all these factors. Hence, they made clear the distinction between the Islamic state and the religious one, and insisted on the rejection of the latter and acceptance of the former (Ibid.: 83–106).

In dealing with the issues of the nature of the state and secularism, they highlighted the distinction between the *Sharīà*, which contains Divine provisions and cannot be changed, and *fiqh,* which is human and can be changed according to

various circumstances. For them, the compliance of Muslims should first and foremost be to the *Sharīà* (Way of God) and not to the *fiqh* nor the *fuqahā* (religious scholars) who create it (Ibid.: 113). In do doing so, they rejected the calls for the rule of the clerics or the establishment of theocracy, so often advocated impatiently by the extremists. As for the secularists and others outside the Islamic trend, they stress their willingness to cooperate with them in order to achieve some understanding. They 'call those in each creed who seek revival and those in each intellectual school who work for freedom and justice to transcend the boundaries that separate such schools in order to strengthen each other in thought and action [. . .]. Such cooperation must be based on rationality and freedom of minds as well as tolerant behaviour toward others' (Ibid.: 117).

However, this school, despite its common position to cooperate with all political forces and major currents in society, did make differentiation between those hardliner secularists who do not accept the Islamic framework for society, and those moderate secularists who are prepared to abide by it: they made it clear that they are willing to cooperate with the latter but not with the former. They stress, 'An Islamic society cannot allow extreme secularists to take action that undermines the core Islamic commitment to the principle of implementing *Sharīà* on which Islamic public order rests. It does welcome those moderate secularists who have their own contributions to make to build a community with a civic rather than religious character, a democratic political order, and a broad commitment to the enlargement of the sphere in intellectual and social life of reason and all the sciences that make human advancement possible' (Ibid.: 120).

Judging by what we have explained above, there is no doubt that this school has a promising future if the circumstances both internally as well as externally allow them to do so. Internally, they are facing a mountain of opposition, not only from repressive regimes that put all Islamists in one category, but also from both religious and secular hardliners who, for various reasons, have refused to reach a common understanding. Within the school itself, one has to express some concern about the durability and continuity of it, at least in the long run. Most of the ideologues and founding members are reaching the final stage of their careers (some are already retired and in their mid seventies), and one cannot but wonder what the implications will be for the overall trend if they suddenly depart from the political scene. Externally, the essentialist view of Islam is still dominating the worldview of the West; in doing so, the West is certainly playing into the hands of modern fundamentalism.

Conclusion

The relationship between Islam and democracy is a very complicated issue, exacerbated and complicated even more after the September 11 attacks on the US. In this new world where Islamic principles are being evaluated from the point of view of their promotion or otherwise of terrorism, one may find it very difficult to couch the relationship between Islam and democracy. Nonetheless, I begin by stressing that

when we talk about the subject, it is important to highlight the difference between the principle of democratic or popular participation in political life, on one hand, and the variety of its possible forms or shapes on the other. The main point in this context, in my opinion, is not the form or shape that a democratic system has to take, but essentially the level of political participation in political life and freedom from totalitarian state control. In Islam, there are certainly the main principles of justice, freedom of expression, freedom of beliefs (there is no compulsion in religion), and also freedom of popular participation in politics; this latter is explicitly expressed in the Quran as *shūrā* (consultation), where rulers are instructed to consult with the people, and this clearly goes back to the principle of tribal democracy such as it was practised in the pre-Islamic period. The tribal chief was a *primus inter pares* ('first among equals') and though he did indeed rule, it was not as an absolute autocrat, but rather as the one who took final responsibility for executing decisions arrived at through consultation between the elders; and they in turn were respected as representatives of their clans by reason of their consultation with those for whom they were responsible. By the same token, one also has to look at the Prophet – he who least needed to consult men, as he had God instructing him! But even he was told: *Shawirhum fi'l-àmr* in order, precisely, to stress to all leaders that they must consult those over whom they have power – as I said, one only has to look at how the Prophet ruled, and how, after him, the Caliphs (the *khulafā al-rashidūn)*, ruled. The caliphate was open to criticism; there was broad participation in political life, public accountability, concern about human rights in terms of justice, and equality before the law, as well as respect for differences of opinion. This is in contrast to the kingly rule of the Umayyad and later of the Abbasids; particularly the Abbasids, as it was with them that the Persian model of absolute kingship was followed and consolidated to see that 'democracy' in a rudimentary form was indeed being practised.

Taking the above into consideration, there is no reason at all why, in the modern age, one should object to the adoption of certain democratic procedures (elections, polls, etc.), together with such principles as the rule of law, *habeus corpus*, and other human rights within an Islamic polity, to be exercised concurrently with the *Shari'a* as the basis of the judiciary. This is important because Islamic law is a clearly definable entity, whereas there is no such thing as a clearly defined Islamic political system: there are a whole variety of different political systems, past and present, claming to be derived from Islam, but none of them has a 'canonical' or absolute status. The need for *Shari'a* as the foundation for the judiciary is crucial, while leaving the legislature and executive spheres to be determined in accordance *both* with the universal principles of the *Shari'a* and in accordance with the conditions of the age. Now one of these conditions, today, is precisely the widespread expectation and desire for democracy, for freedom, for political and civil rights, etc. Therefore, any successful political system will have to accommodate these legitimate expectations at the same time as uphold Islamic principles.

Also, I would say that this is the kind of government wished for by many moderate Muslims all over the world, and it is when this moderate Islam is crushed (as it was by the Algerian military in the 1990s) that the radicals resort to violence.[28]

To conclude, I would argue that a combination of Islamic principle and democratic procedure is the best recipe for moderation in the Muslim world. The relevance of a politically-open, democratic system, within which Islam will be the dominant socio-religious force for law-making in harmony with the wishes of the majority is essential. The 'sovereignty of the people' is maintained on the level proper to it: the wish of the majority dictates the framework; and the framework chosen freely by the people is one in which God reigns supreme as the true 'sovereign'. In other words: the *sharīà* becomes the source of authority, and within the *shari'a*, the specific weight given to different *maqāsid* will again be dictated by a combination of religious and human sources: scholarly *ijithād*, on the one hand, and *shūrā,* consulting different communities, and their representatives, on the other. A democratic expression of the *Shari'a* can thus be envisaged, or, if one likes, a *Shari'a* expression of democracy.

The implication for any argument about Islam and democracy in the contemporary world is thus: the state must be subordinate to the norms (cultural, religious, moral) which it brokers, co-ordinates, etc. In a Muslim majority state, the norms in question are of course Islamic ones. So the state must be subordinated to Islamic norms, dictated to it by the majority. It must however, ensure that the rights of religious minorities are also upheld, and in this respect it must represent all of the citizens and not just Muslim citizens. It is here that the crucial principle of justice must be exercised by the state, in a manner that contributes to *maslaha*, the general welfare of all- a key *maqsad* of the *Shari'a*, and of course there can be no general welfare if minorities are being systematically marginalized or oppressed. Therein lies one of the major jurisprudential challenges of this attempt to reconcile democracy with the *Shari'a* in the contemporary world. Finally, I would like to end this work by citing what Tim Winter said when he was asked about the issue of Islam and politics in the Muslim world: 'there's a dawning awareness in the Islamic world that the totalitarian model of Islamic government doesn't actually deliver, even on its own terms, and it may well be that many Muslim countries have to work through that experience by themselves, that the West should actually let the Algerians, the Egyptians, the Yemenis, the Pakistanis, and other people, experiment with the model that many of the people clearly want, and after (a while) perhaps they'll come down to earth and they'll see that perhaps there's a more convivial, more sort of compromising, more real politik style of integrating religion with politics that's more open to the outside world and ultimately more humane. But it may take a long time'.[29]

Notes

1. It must be stressed that this issue is not confined to Islam only; other religions are experiencing the same difficulty, especially in developing countries. See for example, Lowly (1996) *The War of Gods: Religion and Politics in Latin America*.
2. See in this context the interpretations provided by the well known Islamic thinkers such as Sayyid Qutb, and Abul Al' Mawdudi.
3. See for example A. Sachedina (2001), *The Islamic roots of Democratic pluralism*.
4. See Esposito (2004: 3).

5. On the issue of the Orientalist/essentialist thinking see Said (1997). For an example of these writings, see Lewis (2002).
6. For more on this issue, see Piscatori (2000), *Islam, Islamists, and the Electoral Principle in the Middle East*.
7. See Tim Winter, *Forgiveness and Justice: Meditations on Some Hadiths* at www.masud.co.uk/Islam/ahm/default.htm, accessed 19.5.2008.
8. Ibid.
9. Ibid.
10. These are: the Mutazilites, the Kharijites and some Twelver Shi'ites.
11. The most recent and clear example in this context was the late Shi'i reformer Khomeini in Iran, the Coalition groups in Iraq in 2003, and nearly all modern radical Islamic groups.
12. See T. J. Winter, *Forgiveness and Justices: Meditations on some Hadiths*, at www.masud.co.uk/Islam/ahm/default.htm, accessed 19.5.2008. Also, see, Gray (2003) and Brown (2000).
13. See Tim Winter at www.abc.net.au/sundaynights/stories/s1237986.htm, accessed 20.5.2008.
14. Cited from Ibid.
15. See also Tim Winter, 'Recapturing Islam from the Terrorists' at www.islamfortoday.com/murad01.htm
16. On the secularisation of the European mind, see Chadwick (1997). On the issue of secularism in the Middle East see, Esposito and Tamimi (2000).
17. For information on the various forms of democracy see Held (1996).
18. *The Times*, October (2006).
19. Ibid.
20. Ibid.
21. See for example J. Keith Akins, *A broader conceptualization of Islam and terrorism*, JFO/issue 45, 2nd. Quarter 2007:www.ndupress.ndu.edu, accessed 19 May 2007.
22. The decision was reached in light of the failure of the organization to reach power by force, especially its violent confrontation with the regime of Nasser in the 50s and 60s.
23. For more information on the history, doctrines, and the change of policy of this group, see the work by El-Awa (2006).
24. See for example, the Constitution of the Union.
25. See some of their various works in this context: Ghasaly (1998, 1994); M. S. Al-Awa, *Islam and the Copts* (1987), *The Islamists and Women* (2000).
26. See for example his good book, *Al-Fiqh Al-Islami fi Tareeq Al-Tajdeed* (El-Awa 1998).
27. For more information see both books, Baker (2003) and Murphy (2002).
28. For more information on the Algerian case see M. Bonner et al. (2005).
29. Cited from T. J. Winter, WWW.abc.net.au/sundaynight/stories/s1237986.htm (accessed 20/5/2008)

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Moving Out of Kazanistan: Liberal Theory and Muslim Contexts

Arif A. Jamal

> *You are free; you are free to go to your temples, you are free to go to your mosques or to any other place or worship in this State of Pakistan. You may belong to any religion or caste or creed that has nothing to do with the business of the State. As you know, history shows that in England, conditions, some time ago, were much worse than those prevailing in India today. The Roman Catholics and the Protestants persecuted each other. Even now there are some States in existence where there are discriminations made and bars imposed against a particular class. Thank God, we are not starting in those days. We are starting in the days where there is no discrimination, no distinction between one community and another, no discrimination between one caste or creed and another. We are starting with this fundamental principle that we are all citizens and equal citizens of one State*
>
> Presidential address to the Constituent Assembly of Pakistan by Mohammad Ali Jinnah, first Governor-General and Head of State of Pakistan, on 11 August 1947.[1]

Introduction

In his work *The Law of Peoples*, John Rawls hypothesised a fictional state called Kazanistan. Kazanistan is a religiously committed state where the predominant religion is Islam. Specifically, in Rawls' Kazanistan: (i) there is no institutional separation between 'church' and state; (ii) Islam is the favoured religion; and (iii) only Muslims can hold upper positions of political authority and influence (Rawls 1999a: 75–76). Given that one of the touchstones of a liberal system is that the state will have no pre-set conception of the good, leaving this matter within the domain of either individual citizens or of associations, with the state remaining uncommitted, the conditions outlined above clearly seem to make Kazanistan a non-liberal place.

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Indeed, Rawls pays particular attention to condition (iii), noting that, 'This exclusion [i.e., condition (iii)] marks a fundamental difference between Kazanistan and a liberal democratic regime, where all offices and positions are, in principle, open to each citizen' (ibid.: 76). Thus, Rawls refers to the Kazanistanis as decent, non-liberal people for whom liberals can have respect and with whom they can reasonably interact.

However, the Kazanistan thought experiment might also be seen as part of a larger argument – of Rawls as well as others – about the problems that can occur if religious convictions are allowed to become part of public policy. In simple terms, the problem is one of recognising pluralism, which Christopher Beem has called the central political problem for liberal-democratic regimes. Recognising pluralism means, Beem notes, that society can no longer be organised around any one conception of the good (1998: 16). In other words, by linking church and state, choosing a particular state religion and stipulating a religious requirement for high offices, Kazanistan is effectively saying to any of its non-Muslim citizens, 'we don't value your beliefs as much and we will not listen to you as carefully – and you will have to live under the norms of a religion to which you may not adhere.' Kazanistan seems to reject pluralism. Many of us, whether religious or not, indeed whether Muslim or not, might be very concerned to live in a Kazanistan, not, to follow Rawls, because the Kazanistanis are not decent, but because we would be uncomfortable with Kazanistan's failure to recognise pluralism and the imposition of a set of values upon those that may not share them.

But Kazanistan might be more than simply a thought experiment now since, as the sociologist of religion José Casanova has demonstrated, the (re)emergence of religion into issues of public importance and of public debate, and of political choices, is a widespread phenomenon. It is Casanova's thesis, in fact, that religions are no longer accepting their confinement to the private realms of life and are seeking to play a direct role in public affairs. Casanova calls this the 'deprivatisation of religion' and finds examples of it in different locations around the world.[2]

It is certainly the case, however, that within any general phenomenon of the deprivatisation of religion, the role and place of religion is a very significant factor in places where Islam is an important religious tradition. This matter that has gained even more prominence in light of several contemporary events, including the Islamic revolution in Iran and the establishment of religious authority as head of the modern nation-state in that country, the independence of majority Muslim nation-sates in Central Asia following the collapse of the Soviet Union, the reworking of political and constitutional orders in light of recent events in Afghanistan and Iraq and the spectre of violence being committed in the name of Islam. Thus, while for the Rawlsian argument Kazanistan did not necessarily need to be a place of Muslim majority, it is perhaps not surprising that it was developed specifically as a place where Islam was the dominant faith. Moreover, it is possible that Kazanistan was in fact modelled on present-day Pakistan, which exhibits the same Kazanistani-type legal conditions in its constitution.[3]

Among Muslims, be they minority or majority populations, the issue of religion's role in public life is also intensely debated against the particular background of the historical encounter of Muslims with the West and the intellectual, cultural and political legacies of this encounter. As Mohammed Arkoun (1995: 453–457) has noted:

> What we call 'modernity' made a brutal eruption in to the 'living space of Islam' with the intrusion of colonialism as a historical fact [. . .] Colonial endeavours of 19th century Europe sought justification in what was called a civilising mission. It was a matter of raising 'backward' peoples to the level of a 'universal' culture and civilisation.

Emran Qureshi refers to this phenomenon as the 'globalisation of Western cultures in Muslim societies', and notes that much of nineteenth and twentieth century 'Islamic' (I would prefer the term 'Muslim' here) intellectual thought was conditioned by the encounter of Muslims with the colonizing West and that, in this regard, '[. . .] there is a contestation of Islamic traditions taking place within the Muslim world' (2006: 13). On the one hand, Qureshi finds 'Liberal Islamic thinkers [who] believed that the West's strengths needed to be emulated or indigenised: whether in reference to the struggle for gender-equality, human rights, or constitutionalism, as democracy was called in the early part of the twentieth century'. On the other hand, there is the 'Islamist/fundamentalist [who has] felt that Western influences needed to be expelled along with the colonizers' (Qureshi 2006: 13–14).[4]

In addition, sadly, though perhaps in part as a result of the above, Qureshi also notes that 'Today, polarizing Occidentalist and Orientalist caricatures and stereotypes have become ascendant within both the Islamic and Western worlds [which] attempt to explain behaviour through "traits" that can be ascribed to a negative reading of the Other's religion or national culture.'[5] And this brings us back to Rawls and Kazanistan. It may seem to some that the choices that Kazanistan has made are somehow a necessary part and parcel of either the religious convictions of its citizens or indeed of their Islamic faith. We might indeed be tempted to think that the Kazanistan model is supposed to represent something inevitable about the relationship of religious convictions and public policy; that it fits a caricature. This might makes us feel that there is something inimical about Islam to liberalism (or of liberalism to Islam) since liberalism is from and of the 'Occident' whereas Islam is of the 'Orient'.[6] But this assessment is misleading. While it is clearly the case that liberalism developed in the West and out of its experiences, rather than in Muslim (or other) societies, as we have just seen, aspects of liberalism – via Western models – have already entered into the debate within Muslim contexts and attracted some to their values. Indeed, the values of the liberal model are no easier to ignore than are other aspects of the (often colonial) encounter between Islam and the West.

It is the purpose of this essay to present, in summary form, some ideas about how Muslims might deal with the role of religion as it relates to public discourse and ultimately the making of law – that is to say with the challenge of pluralism that comes from deprivatisation. To this end, it is one of the contentions of this paper

that the choices that Kazanistan has made are not the choices that it had to make by virtue of its association with Islam, nor indeed that it should have made. I will argue: (i) that liberal theory can be normatively useful to address the challenge of pluralism in Muslim contexts and (ii) that the particularities of Muslim contexts also suggest a re-visiting of some aspects of how liberal theory (at least in some of it formulations) wishes to grapple with the deprivatisation of religion, and that (iii) the above suggests that any antimonies constructed between 'Islam' on the one hand and liberal theory on the other may be somewhat artificial because both of these constructions betray on-going and fluid developments. To this end, we will begin by sketching out key aspects of liberal theory with respect to the role of religion. We will then look at salient facets of the heritage and situation of what I call 'Muslim contexts'. None of the assertions made means, however, that there is a straightforward match between liberal theory and aspects of Muslim heritage – far from it. But there do seem to be possibilities that mean that Muslims can 'move out of the Kazanistan' and be more than decent but non-liberal peoples.

Before moving on to discuss liberal theory we need to look back at the Rawlsian assessment of Kazanistan, which seems also to be potentially misleading as a description of what a liberal state requires. The UK, for example, is considered one of the paradigm liberal states. Let us, however, consider it on Rawlsian grounds. The presence of established churches (the Church of England and the Church of Scotland), and the corollary of the Sovereign as Head of State also being the nominal head of the churches might violate Rawlsian condition (i) of institutional separation of church and state. This may also violate condition (ii) of an established, state religion, albeit in the context of the UK's unwritten constitution. As for condition (iii), might the requirement that the sovereign effectively be a member of the established churches not run contrary to the requirement that high offices are available to all citizens?[7] If the UK fails these tests, is it a non-liberal state like Kazanistan, with decent but non-liberal peoples? If, on the other hand, we are convinced that the UK is a liberal state then might we not have to reconsider the conditions of liberalism, and the way that religion operates within a liberal order? In fact, this seems already to have been done.

More recent political theory appears to have modified and nuanced the relationship between religion and public discourse and its relationship with the state so that falling afoul of Rawlsian conditions formally no longer seems to be so detrimental to liberal status. This in turn suggests that the presence of religion in a state takes various forms among which some are not hostile to liberalism. If this is the case, then the gap between societies of high religious commitment and the liberal model is not really so wide as it might have first seemed. So, whereas above the contention was that there are aspects of the heritage of Muslim societies that open them up to real liberal possibilities, there may also be more nuanced formulations of liberal theory that open up greater convergence with Muslim heritage. It is a further contention of this paper that these reformulations of liberal theory can speak and indeed do speak to the needs and aspirations of Muslim contexts, though they may have to be shaped by these contexts as well.

Liberal Theory

The launching point for liberal theory is the fact of our diversity as to matters of values and principles and a willingness to accept this diversity. This raises the question:

> How is it possible that there may exist over time a stable and just society of free and equal citizens profoundly divided by reasonable religious, philosophical and moral doctrines? This is a problem of political justice, not about the highest good. (Rawls 1999b: xxv)

The answer to this question seems essentially two-fold. On the one hand, doctrines that are unreasonable must be excluded because of their deleterious social effects. More interestingly, however, is the case with reasonable diversity and here I focus on religious diversity. Here liberalism[8] takes the position that given the fact of diversity, it is not reasonable to expect others to support reasons (let alone positions) coming from one's own religious tradition and therefore these arguments should not be made in public political debate. This, as Paul Weithman (2002b) says, is liberalism's conclusion. Nicholas Wolterstroff describes liberalism as not being one position but rather a family of positions, but agrees with Weithman that all of the positions within the family propose a restraint on the use of religious reasons in deciding and deliberating about political issues in public (Audi and Wolterstroff 1997: 75). Thus, as Rawls has put, it:

> we are to appeal only to presently accepted general beliefs and forms of reasoning found in common sense, and the methods and conclusions of science when these are not controversial [. . .] we are not to appeal to comprehensive religious and philosophical doctrines – to what we as individuals see as the whole truth – or to elaborate economic theories of general equilibrium, say, if these are in dispute. (Rawls (1999b: 224), see also Rawls (1997))

This is the 'standard approach' (Weithman 2002a) of liberalism. Practically, as Jurgen Habermas has pointed out, the standard approach implies a secular state, since 'In a secular state only those political decisions are taken to be legitimate as can be justified in light of generally accessible reasons, vis-à-vis religious and non-religious citizens and citizens of different religious confessions alike' (2006: 7).

The importance of the secular framework and the goal it is supposed to achieve is to allow for public discourse that is equally accessible to all, regardless of their religious convictions or lack thereof. This is to be pluralism enhancing because, in theory, it will allow diverse opinions to come into conversation in a mutually comprehensible way. The obvious risk, on the other hand, is that the standard approach can become a sort of 'secular fundamentalism' degenerating into a blunt instrument of 'political estoppel' (Levison 1992: 2077), to exclude all types of discourse or reference coming from religion that it deems outside of its terms. In this sense, it would curtail rather than enhance pluralism and so effectively work at cross-purposes from its original intent. The *laic* models of France and (à la France) of Turkey, which declare the secular character of their states and push out of public discourse religious references are the prime culprits of secular fundamentalism. That is to say that, in an effort to prevent the religiously-derived 'trumps' in public discourse,

these sorts of secular fundamentalisms create their own 'trumps'; different but no less limiting (Connolly 1999: 5).

In recognition of this risk, liberal political theory has moderated the demands of the secular away from necessitating a strict *laic* regime. A liberal secular regime does not necessarily need to exclude principles, ideas or policies that might be derived from religious convictions from public life, nor of course does it insist that they should be there. It need be, in fact, only agnostic both about the truth of religious convictions and their public policy-influencing and law-influencing role (Stout 2004: 93). Thus, it is not correct to see the secular as simply 'anti-religious'. A secular law and politics will have to be one that stands independent from (though not necessarily hostile to) any particular set of religious beliefs and '[. . .] requires citizens be emancipated from state and ecclesiastical diktat; they should be free to believe or to worship according to their conscience and ethical judgments' (Keane 1998: 11).

Moreover, a liberal framework may also accommodate institutional arrangements that seem, on the face of it at least, to be incompatible with a secular state, including the presence of established religions. This gets us back to the importance of the Rawlsian conditions for liberalism. Viet Bader, for example, has noted that church-state relationships are diverse '[. . .] in states that all share the principles of liberal democracy' (2003: 268). Bader further notes the critiques of the 'radical exclusion of religious reasons and arguments from public debate and politics in political liberalism' (2003: 266). As an alternative, he argues for a 'priority for democracy' which takes into account that 'constitutional principles and public morality of liberal democracies [. . .] should be as freestanding as possible with regard to *competing secular and religious foundations* [. . .]' (ibid.).[9] Bader (2003: 271) argues for a normative model based on what he calls nonconstitutional pluralism (NCP) which:

> combines constitutional disestablishment or nonestablishment with restricted legal pluralism (e.g. in family law), administrative institutional pluralism (de jure and de facto institutionalization of several organized religions), institutionalized political pluralism, and the religio-cultural pluralization of the nation.

Continuing, Bader asserts that:

> NCP requires specific information rights for organized religions and corresponding information duties by state agencies regarding contested issues, participation in public fora and hearings, inclusion in advisory councils and corresponding consultation rights and duties to listen, and so on. (ibid.)

Bader favours NCP as opposed to the alternative of nonestablishment and private pluralism (NEEP), which 'declares a strict legal separation of the state from all religions as well as a strict administrative and political separation' (ibid.). It (NEEP) is opposed to the institutionalisation of religion that NCP posits on Bader's account. The model of the US approximates NEEP, while India, Belgium, Australia, Germany and the Netherlands post-1983 constitutional reforms approximate NCP.

What Bader's analysis and position indicate to us is that liberal theory can accommodate institutional patterns that seem to fall afoul of the Rawlsian requirements in *The Law of Peoples*, and, more interestingly for our purposes, that liberal theory can

allow for a richer role for religious convictions in public debate than some of its early formulations envisaged.

In sum, then, we can see that the approach of contemporary liberal theory is to insist upon a certain secular space, in the sense of being free from religious diktat, for public deliberations but not on a total social secularism (as an 'ism') as a normative requirement (Asad 2003: 199). Moreover, liberal theory in at least some of its formulations has sought to allow an institutional means for the expression of religious opinions on matters of public importance. Liberal theory, then, is not so much a doctrine as a work-in-progress. It is grounded in a social and political history but it itself has a history from which it develops out of.

Muslim Contexts: Contexts of Diversity

To what extent, then, might liberal theory as we have now explained it, speak to the needs and aspirations of Muslim contexts? Why indeed would it even be important?

I would like to suggest that there are certain aspects of the heritage of Muslim contexts to which liberal theory may be very relevant. The first response to the above questions is that the issue to which liberal theory has addressed itself is common to these contexts. In fact, as we have noted above, the role of religion is an issue of particular salience now in Muslim contexts where, perhaps more poignantly than in other environments, the deprivatisation of religion is being felt today.

Additionally, as we have seen, liberal theory has been primarily concerned with the consequences of deprivatisation in situations of diversity. Some contend that this is a difference between Muslim contexts and those of the West. After all, by even referring to something like Muslim contexts are we not already conceding that there is an absence of diversity? In fact, this is incorrect. Muslim societies today actually exhibit a great deal of diversity and plurality, though they are not always seen to do so. That this should be so for societies spread over such geographical area, having such a rich history and consisting of about one billion people is hardly surprising. Indeed, that Muslim societies should be a monolith considering these factors would be a shock (Ernst 2003: 12). Nor is this plurality new. It has existed since centuries as Islam spread to different parts of the world where it encountered different cultures and traditions. For example, as Clifford Geertz (1971: 13–14) has noted in his study of Morocco and Indonesia,

> to say that Morocco and Indonesia are both Islamic societies, in the sense that everyone in them (well over nine-tenths of the population in either case) professes to be a Muslim, is as much to point to their differences as it is to locate their similarities. Religious faith, even when it is fed from a common source, is as much a particularizing force as a generalizing one

What is more recent, perhaps, is the (greater) recognition of this plurality including (perhaps especially) that which is by Muslims themselves. As Riaz Hasan has noted, globalization – presumably through the means of vastly improved modes of communication and travel – is showing Muslims the diversity in Islam and allowing

them to experience the reality of different Islamic cultures (2002: 243). To return to a point made above, we can thus see that there is not a singular 'Islamic' response or answer or position, but rather that it is better to speak of the responses (answers, positions) of Muslims. And of course, we are not dealing in all Muslim contexts with just Muslims. While there are several locations like Geertz's Morocco and Indonesia that are overwhelmingly Muslim, Muslim contexts also include places of Muslim majority with significant non-Muslim minority populations (e.g., Malaysia), places where there are substantial Muslim minority populations (e.g., India and Nigeria) and to places where there are significant but still small in percentage terms 'diasporic' Muslim populations (the UK, France, Germany etc). Muslim contexts then encounter both intra- as well as inter-religious diversity.

Indeed, on this point, it is important to remember that Islam, because it emerged historically after Judaism and Christianity, self-consciously sees itself as part of a message that explicitly *includes* its Abrahamic cousins. The Quranic text has numerous references both to the Biblical prophets as well as their messages and confirms these as coming from the same source; hence the concept of the *ahl al-kitab* (Peoples of the Book).

Liberalism does not rest, however, just on admitting plurality but rather on accepting pluralism. Plurality itself is not pluralism; the former may be a fact, but the latter is an attitude and hence an option. Herein lies an important potential faultline. Michael Cook (2003: 114) notes that Islam (and the same may apply to any religion) within certain limits tells people what to believe and how to live, while liberalism, also within certain limits, is about leaving people to work this out for themselves. He goes on to note, however, that Western culture as broadly secular and liberal is not necessarily irreligious (something we have discussed above) and in this sense seems readily compatible with a *non-fundamentalist* allegiance to Christianity, Judaism or Islam (Cook 2003: 163). This is an important distinction. While there may be some Muslims (as some of other traditions) that would seek to impose fundamentalist interpretations on their faith, this does not make Islam incompatible with a liberal culture per se. A fundamentalist tradition would squelch religious plurality by imposing orthodoxy and orthopraxy and to do this it would need to appropriate social and political institutions to fulfil this end. This, however, has not been the heritage of most of Muslim history.

Muslim Contexts: Political and Religious Authority

Let us look at the relationship between political and religious authority. It is often pointed out that Islam has never known a 'church' in the Christian sense of an organised, hierarchical and authoritative body. Indeed, since its early years, after the period of the so-called 'Rashidun' or 'Rightly guided' caliphs (the last of whom, Ali b. Abi Talib, died in 661CE) a de facto split between political and religious authority has prevailed. Casanova acknowledges and asserts that, in its early days, Islam was both a religious as well as a political community, with Muhammad having the roles

of both a political as well as religious leader. Nonetheless, he argues that since the time of Muhammad there has been differentiation between political and religious roles within Muslim societies.

Other commentators have observed this differentiation as well. Roy Mottahedeh has reminded us that the Islamic tradition has all the rich diversity of fifteen centuries of history within which real combinations of spiritual and political leadership in Muslim history have been rare and are usually fraught with compromise (1995: 115, 126). Ira Lapidus (1996: 3–27) has noted that 'Despite the common statement [. . .] that the institutions of state and religion are unified [. . .] most Muslim societies did not conform to this ideal, but were built around separate institutions of state and religion.' Eqbal Ahmed agrees with this assessment holding that the absence of such a fusion – of religion and political power – is a historically experienced and recognized reality, which shaped the tradition of statecraft and the history of Muslim peoples (1995: 19). And Nikki Keddie baldly calls the near identity of religion and the state in Islam more 'pious myth than reality for most of Islamic history' (1994: 463–487).

Thus, while the political leadership (caliphs, sultans, amirs) have not been religiously uncommitted, as there has almost always been a clear sense of Islam's presence in the state, as L. Carl Brown has pointed out, Muslim rulers have usually avoided deciding issues of creed and have tolerated minority religious communities and this, he notes, has meant the separation of state and religious community (2000: 80). This does not mean, however, that the pre-modern Muslim states have not been committed to Islam and to the application (on Muslims at least) of norms coming from juristic understanding of the Sharia. What it does mean, however, is that the state and the political leadership has not been the repository of religious authority. Of course, however, Islamic political thought and experience has been much richer and has expressed more opinions than this quick summary, but the synopsis of its essential conclusion about the relationship of religious and political authority is correct.

Those who wrong-step this history, therefore, are those modern-day fundamentalists (and sometimes their critics) who are wrong in presenting the view of an essentialist, unchanging Islam in which political authority both defines and enforces religious orthodoxy and orthopraxy. Thus, we might indeed say that the heritage of Muslim contexts has known secularisation, in the sense of a separation between political and religious authority, though perhaps not sought to declare it as such because of the negative associations with which this term has been linked in Muslim experience.[10]

The distinction between religious and political authority does not mean that religion does not have an important social place and hence potential political role in Muslim contexts and Muslim heritage. In a speech given in Canada, His Highness the Aga Khan, Imam (spiritual leader) of the world's Shia Ismaili Muslims (a branch within the minority Shia Muslim tradition) noted:

> Islam is all encompassing in the direction which it gives to Man's life. It is perhaps this very concept that the West, more familiar with the Augustinian Christian principle which separates the spiritual and material, finds difficult fully to understand and appreciate.[11]

Some suggest that, in this link between the spiritual and material, Islam does not separate 'church' and 'state' in theory, even if in practice it separated religious and political authority. Thus it is asserted that Islam has linked '*din'* (faith) and the '*dunya'* (the world) in a way that cannot accommodate diversity. The *din* and *dunya* nexus, however, may be read differently. It is true, as Amyn Sajoo (2004: 2) points out, that a merging of the sacred and the secular became a 'leitmotif of Muslim civilisational experience' however, as he goes on to assert this does not mean that religion must be linked to the modern *dawla* (state):

> The world's 1.2 billion Muslims are diverse in their cultures and understandings of Islam. But they share a *weltanschauung* in which *din* and *dunya* (but not the modern *dawla*) are merged, so that both secular and sacred resonate in the public domain. Far from precluding the institutional separation of Mosque and State, this perspective takes no ideological position in this regard: the *umma* [the broad community of faith encompassing all Muslims] can thrive in a plurality of political arrangements. In other words, the occidental liberal conception of civil society is not inimical to Muslim traditions simply because it is wedded to secular space [. . .]. However, a radical secularity that banishes social ethics from the public sphere is patently inimical to Muslim society [. . .]. (2004: 45)

Not everyone agrees. Abdulaziz Sachedina, considering the situation of Iraq, says flatly: 'Secularism with its insistence on the separation of "church" and "state" [. . .] is not responsive to a culture that demands keeping religious values at the core of the emerging national culture. To put it differently, the "disestablishment" of Islam will not work' (2006: 19). He does go on to note, however, that the Sharia: 'provides a paradigm of civil religion by separating the jurisdictions in its laws. This principle allows religion to manage God's relationship to humanity without interference from any human institutions, including the mosque and the seminary' (2006: 20). However, he asserts (2006: 21):

> This separation of jurisdictions is the closest the Sharia can come to secularism adopted in Western constitutions. It allows for functional secularity that can generate civic equality and mutual responsibilities at the human-human level of relationship, while maintaining the particularity and independence of the religious tradition from state administration.

Sachedina's conclusion is that 'Islamic heritage must guide rather than govern a modern nation-state.' He cites the Quranic verse (Quran 5:48) as a challenge to religious communities and the way in which they might institutionalise a culture of inclusiveness.

> For everyone of you [Jews, Christians and Muslims], We have appointed path and a way. If God had willed, He would have made you one community, but that [He has not done in order that] He may try you in what has come to you. So compete with one another in good works.

Din and *dunya* links the spiritual and the material, it asserts a place for religious ethics with public life, and for religion in the 'world'. In the experiences of Muslim history it has not meant, however, that a single set of understandings of the religion has been dispositive, nor that a state could appropriate the mantle of religious authority and enforcement. Religious authority has been diffuse and within the province of the jurist-theologian-scholars (*mujtahids, fuqaha, ulama*), not political authorities.

This separation has been represented more practically in Islamic law. Even at its most limited and conservative, Islamic law has never been a fixed, univocal tradition. It grew out of hundreds of years of legal development and it has continued to change and evolve over time. This happened because Islamic law, which is deeply connected to the religious tradition and religious authority in much the same way as Rabbinic Jewish law, did not develop out of state and political authority but rather through the work of legal scholars and jurists (the '*ulama*).

Of course, again, over the centuries the relationship between the state structures and the '*ulama* varied, but the basic structure has been clear – legal and religious authority rested outside state control. And within these circles of authority a range of different schools of interpretation (*madhahib*) expressing different opinions and options have been recognised. The political authorities did of course have to sanction the judges as state functionaries and at various times they tried to impose uniformity on legal developments. However, they did not succeed because, to reiterate, these matters were not in their hands. Even during the times of the Shia empire of the Fatimids, for example, where the caliph of the state was also the divinely-guided Imam (under the special form of authority that developed in Shia Islam), that is to say where you have a near 'caesro-popist' leader, in a sense much more so than in the Sunni tradition, the different legal schools were still recognised, because their strength derived from the authority of the jurist-scholars. Once again, therefore, it is modern attempts to limit this plurality and to impose through political institutions religious authority that are inconsistent with Muslim heritage.

Prospects for Moving Out?

Liberal theory would deal with the central question of how to deal with diversity by insisting that society must be neutral on questions of the good life – the core questions of personal and social ethics – leaving these to the individual. On the face of it, this seems incompatible with any society in which a religious tradition, such as Islam, matters because these traditions do in fact make value claims. Therefore, it seems there can be no fit between a liberal structure that embraces pluralism and a context in which Islam (or any other religion) is going to be allowed to speak on the questions of the good life. In the latter case, we essentially have Kazanistan. As we have noted, however, in dealing with those that have religious convictions, liberal theory has moved beyond a radical secularity to accommodate and allow the expression of religious ideas in public discourse.

We have also seen, albeit very briefly, that in both a theoretical sense as well as more practically, Muslim heritage has elements that seem to open it up to choices that can indeed be pluralism enhancing. A recognition of authentic religious diversity and the validity of other communities of belief (at least amongst the ahl al-kitab), the tradition of diffused religious authority in the absence of a 'church', the acceptance of some range of legal diversity and the separate jurisdictions of political and religious authority were aspects that developed in the heritage of Muslim

contexts over time as part of its own fluid development. Add to this the important idea, as Bader mentions, that there is not necessarily only one institutional model available for a liberal structure (i.e., NEEP or NCP), and any perceived antimonies seem to fade even further.

With the existence of the modern state structures nowadays, in some contemporary Muslim societies, it is the modern state that has sought to control the definition and interpretation of Islam. But this has been problematic because the state has not been seen as the source of religious legitimacy – a point that goes back to the idea of an understood functional social differentiation between political and religious authority. If the modern state with all its bureaucratic and coercive power is not the appropriate forum for meeting the aspirations that Islam should be expressed in the societies what other options present themselves? No *ex cathedra* model that will be determinative of what Islam is and what it may say on important issues would adequately capture the plurality and diversity of Muslim voices in historical or present terms nor can it really fit with a tradition of diffuse religious authority.

This raises two issues. First, among and for Muslims it raises the issue of seeking frameworks that might take account both their heritage as well as the situation of the modern bureaucratic nation state. In this regard, I suggest that liberal theory may be not just relevant but also normatively useful because it has addressed these issues and has, in more recent formulations, come to take religious convictions seriously. Liberal theory has also shown that it can work with different institutional models including those that recognise a religious heritage, something that has developed as part of the evolution of liberal theory. Second, for liberal theory itself, the heritage of Muslims may raise issues that spur rethinking. How might an NCP model work without any institutionalised religious body to act as a representative? And how can it work with a tradition that has never known a sort of church structure and in which, on the contrary, religious authority has never rested unambiguously with a hierarchical clerical establishment but rather with diffuse theologian-jurist-scholars who have been respected for their learning rather than their position per se?

Conclusion

Emphasising their continuing development, Amyn Sajoo calls Muslim societies 'transitional' in that they are going through a phase of tremendous change and rearticulating their values in both a post-colonial context and one in which theoretical structures that had been developed in pre-modern social orders have now to face the reality of new structures such as the modern nation-state. This is perhaps why there are so many titles coming mainly from Muslim authors that have a sense of taking steps towards something, rather than having reached an end or conclusion.[12] As Hassan Hanafi (2002: 74) has noted:

> The major risk for the future is that Muslim societies will be offered only fundamentalist/secularist alternatives. Unless Muslim advocates of a middle course resume the serious task of developing and implementing pluralistic and representative conceptions of state and society from within the Islamic tradition, Islam will offer no conception of civil society.

This paper seeks to make a modest contribution to this effort by showing that in terms of the critical issue of religion's role, liberal theory, though it may have been developed in a different social and cultural milieu, can be normatively useful for Muslim contexts because these contexts face similar issues. Additionally, there are aspects of the heritage of Muslim contexts that have developed in history (and continue to develop today) and the same is the case with requisites of liberal theory, and this may allow for liberal choices to be made (though they have not yet been fully made) in a manner that is not a renunciation of Muslim heritage. Furthermore, the heritage of Muslim contexts might also cause us to reflect on the mechanisms for recognising the role of religion that liberal theory has developed. Finally, I hope to have indicated that there might also be some 'liberal seeds' within the heritage of Muslim contexts that may show that the gap between liberal theory and Muslim heritage is not as large as perhaps it has seemed. In addition to, hopefully, making a modest contribution to enhanced civilisational understanding, these factors should make us remember the importance of history and its continual development. We need to recognise that the history of Muslims is like all histories. Just as liberal theory is a moving form so also is the digestion of the heritage of Muslim contexts, and this points to an on-going evolution of political norms – in Muslim contexts as well as outside. In this evolution, liberal theory has much value for Muslim contexts and offers them more possibilities than Kazanistan.

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Notes

1. Reproduced in *Dawn* (Karachi's English-language daily newspaper), Independence Day Supplement, 14 August 1999. What Jinnah, who died in 1948, might think of the choices his 'State of Pakistan' has made since his address (including changing its name to the *Islamic* Republic of Pakistan) one may only wonder.
2. Casanova (1994). See generally and at 3 and 66.
3. For example, Pakistan's official name is the 'Islamic Republic of Pakistan' (Part I, Article 1 of the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan); Islam is the official religion of the state and, in the language of the Constitution, 'the Injunctions of Islam as laid down in the Holy Quran and Sunnah shall be the supreme law and source of guidance for legislation to be administered through laws enacted by the Parliament and Provincial Assemblies, and for policy making by the Government' (Part I, Article 2); and, the President of Pakistan must be a Muslim (Part III, Article 41). See http://www.nrb.gov.pk/constitutional_and_legal/constitution for the text of the Constitution.
4. Ibid.: 13–14. Akeem Bilgrami has termed this difference of opinion a 'clash within civilisations' (adapting Samuel Huntington's now famous 'clash of civilisations' phrase). See Bilgrami (2003: 88–93)
5. Ibid.: 13. As has been very recently reported, the UN, for example, is to hear a report on how to ease the increasing polarisation of Muslim and Western societies. See http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/em/fr/-/2/hi/europe/6142308.stm

6. Ernest Gellner for example has suggested that Islam imposes 'essential' constraints upon those committed to it. Gellner (1994: 211). See also his claim for the 'social pervasiveness' of Islam, Gellner (1982: 2).
7. We can ignore for the moment the problem that hereditary succession to the Crown also raises here. Query whether the requirement that the President of the United States must be born in the country, a rule excluding all naturalised citizens, also violates Rawls' important condition (iii)?
8. Robert Audi and Nicholas Wolterstroff refer to a family of liberal positions and an alternative family of 'theologically oriented' positions. See Audi and Wolterstroff (1997: ix).
9. Ibid.: 266. See also Bader (1999: 597–633).
10. As Abdou Filali-Ansary has noted, the idea of secularism did not develop in Muslim societies internally, or autonomously. Muslim societies did not go thorough the same historical trajectory that lead to the development of the doctrine of secularism organically. On the contrary, this idea has often either been imposed (through colonial administration), or imported by the state (Turkey is a paradigm example). See Filali-Ansary (1996: 76–80).
11. Speech given by His Highness the Aga Khan at the Foundation Ceremony of the Ismaili Jamatkhana and Centre, Burnaby, B.C., Canada, 26 July 1982. Accessible at: http://ismaili.net/speech/s820726.html. Empirical studies confirm the importance of Islam as core to the value systems of many Muslims.
12. For example, An-Naim's 1996, the reference to Nader Hashemi's PhD work entitled 'Rethinking the relationship of Religion, Secularism and Democracy: *Toward* a Democratic Theory for Muslim Societies' in Browers and Kurzman (2004: 208) or the title of Sajoo 2004: 'Muslim Ethics *Emerging* Vistas'.

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Muslim Modernity: Poetics, Politics, and Metaphysics

Masood Ashraf Raja

> *The truth of the matter is that the latter-day imperialism is but a mask for the crusading spirit, since it is not possible for it to appear in its true form, as it was possible in the Middle Ages. The unveiled crusading spirit was smashed against the rock of faith of Muslim leadership which came from various elements, including Salahuddin the Kurd, Turan Shah the Mamluk, who forgot the differences of nationalities and remembered their belief, and were victorious under the banner of Islam.*
>
> (Sayyid Qutb 1964: 160)

> *The Bush administration's response to bin Laden's Jihad operations did, in fact, lead to an American-led crusade—not a religious crusade to destroy Islam, but a political one intent on modernizing the region.*
>
> (Michael Palmer 2007: 228)

I start with two citations: first from *Milestones*,[1] Sayyid Qutb's manifesto written in 1964, and the second from *The Last Crusade*, a book by Michael Palmer, published in the United States in 2007. These are the two extremes that frame the discussion of Islam in the United States and, to some extent, in the rest of the world. Both these authors, however, share certain striking visions. For Qutb, the nature of Western aggression has changed from the naked form of dominance to something more complex which has replaced the 'unveiled crusading spirit' that underwrote the crusades. For Michael Palmer, it is this crusading spirit that must posit itself as what it is. His idea of Americanism must use the naked force – as a secular crusade – to forcefully modernize the Islamic world. Note that for Qutb, the crusaders were defeated by the guidance and faith of a Muslim leadership transcending national identities, as both of his examples are non-Arab, historical figures of political Islam. Similarly, for Palmer (2007), the Western national divide must also give way to what he calls Americanism in order to defeat the common Islamist enemy. He laments that the 'political divisions in the West continue to undermine [. . .] efforts in Iraq'

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G. Marranci (ed.), *Muslim Societies and the Challenge of Secularization: An Interdisciplinary Approach*, Muslims in Global Societies Series 1,
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(2007: 246). What is fairly obvious in this brief analysis is the striking similarities of these two extremely conservative visions from the Islamic world and the United States. Needless to say, in this binary structure a large mass of the Western and Islamic populations – people who do not subscribe to a Manichean worldview – is silenced.

Specifically since September 11, for the United Sates, Islam has become a major subject of study in the American academy, as well as in the popular domain. This recent interest in Islam and the Islamic world has now developed its own vocabularies, its own logic, and its modes of explication, all attempting to reduce modern Islam in metropolitan languages in order to make it comprehensible. In this frenzy to explain modern Islam, the voice of the modern Muslim subject is silenced and written out of history as the act of articulation is taken over by those who speak in place of the Muslim subject. There is, therefore, a need to study Islam in light of its own textual, cultural, and political signifying practices. Such an approach will not attempt to reduce the Muslim world through a purely Western theoretical construct, but it will rely on texts, praxis, and modes of self-articulation existent in the Muslim world itself. A project of this sort will attempt to answer the important questions about Muslim modernity that seem to be the focus of most of the metropolitan works about Islam.

Using South Asian Muslim literary, political, and religious texts, this essay will attempt to discuss Islam and modernity within the framework of the larger Islamic world, but with a close look at the Muslim culture of the Indian Subcontinent. My main emphasis will be the means of identity formation, general and specific, and modes of encountering, inhabiting, and challenging Western modernity as articulated in literary, political, and religious texts.

It is impossible to understand Muslim modernity within a specifically Western view of history, according to which the end of history is achieved in the form of liberal democracies, free market economics, and composite nation-states. To understand Muslim history and Muslim modernity, the temporal structure of history's movement must be complicated to include multiple histories and multiple historical trajectories. To illustrate this point, as it is crucial to my discussion, a brief reference to Dipesh Chakrabarty's (2004) views on history is helpful. In describing two histories of capital, History 1 and History 2, Chakrabarty opines:

> To the extent that both the distant and the immediate pasts of the worker—including the work of unionization and citizenship—prepare him to be the figure posited by capital as its own condition and contradiction, those pasts do indeed constitute History 1. But the idea of History 2 suggests that even the very abstracting space of the factory that capital creates, ways of being human will be acted in manners that do not lend themselves to the reproduction of the logic of capital. It would be wrong to think of History 2 (or History 2s) as necessarily precapitalist or feudal, or inherently incompatible with capital. If that were the case, there would be no way humans could be at home—dwell—in the rule of capital, no room for enjoyment, no play of desires, no seduction of commodity. (2004: 67)

The most important aspect of this particular theorization of history is certainly that it, as Chakrabarty (2004: 67) suggests, 'gives us a ground on which to situate our thoughts about multiple ways of being human and their relationship to the global

logic of capital'. I suggest that it is such a nuanced approach to history that will help us answer the complex question of Muslim modernity, for instead of suggesting that Islam is counter-modern or pre-modern, we can then theorize and describe the particulars of Islamic modernity as a different form of existence in the world of high capital. In fact we can trace the tensions between Islam and the West within this model of multiple histories. It is not that Islam has a separate history, but that Islam has refused to completely erase its own 'History 2' for the sake of 'History 1': the march of global capital. Furthermore, in most of Islamic thought and politics, the History 2 actually remains the main narrative that responds and reacts to History 1.

It is for this particular approach to world history that European colonialism becomes one of the most significant experiences in the history of the Islamic world. Albeit scholars like Palmer (2007: 235) believe that the 'Islamic world fell behind the West because of its own problems, problems inherent *within* Islam', and not because of colonialism, Western colonialism did create a historical situation in which the universalist drive of the West – History 1 – developed a conflictual relationship with Islamic ideas of selfhood and belonging, Islam's History 2. Hence, as Western modernity was introduced into the Islamic lands under a colonial mandate, the resistance to its Western-ness also became inscribed within the cultural, political and religious debates of the Islamic world. Within the Indian context, for example, the establishment of the East India Company's ascendancy prompted Shah Abdul Aziz, the leading *Mujtahid*[2] of his time, to issue the following Fatwa in 1803:

> In this city [of Delhi] the *Imam al-Muslimin* wields no authority, while the decrees of the Christian leaders are obeyed without fear [of the consequences]. Promulgation of the command of *kufr* means that in the matter of administration and the control of people, in the levy of land-tax, tribute, tolls and customs, in the punishment of thieves and robbers, in the settlement of disputes, in the punishment of offences, the *kafirs* act according to their discretion. [. . .] From here to Calcutta the Christians are in complete control. (Metcalf 1982: 46).

Quite a lot can be gleaned from this one response to the establishment of the East India Company administration in parts of nineteenth century India. Note that Shah Abdul Aziz's opinion is clearly jurido-politcal. A new power has established itself in parts of India and its writ has become the law. How should the Muslims live under such changed circumstances? This juridical opinion draws on the idea of a Muslim sense of belonging to a polity based on the concept of *Darul-Islam*, the abode of peace. What the *Mujtahid* must define for Muslims of India is whether or not India – due to the rise of the East India Company's political power – can still be considered a part of the *Darul-Islam*, for if it is no longer an abode of peace then it has, for all practical purposes, slid into *Darul-Harb*, a state of war in which the Muslim responsibilities are different. As is obvious from Aziz's fatwa above, in his opinion India of 1803, or at least parts of it, could no longer be considered *Darul-Islam*, for the laws were now being promulgated by the *kafirs.* My point here is not to trace the historical impact of this particular *fatwa* or its validity, but rather, to highlight the complexity of Muslim responses to the rise of colonial power.

As the colonial powers take control of the Muslim lands, the Muslim scholars must discuss this change in juridical terms for the lay Muslims: for the Muslims

of the colonized spaces, interacting with the colonial powers is a politico-religious process which can only be normalized if the Muslims' own view of the world – their History 2 – can be accommodated in this negotiation. This view of *Darul-Islam*, of course, is based on the history of Islamic jurisprudence. It is this history that comes into conflict with the new mandate brought in by the colonial powers. This return to the basic texts of Islam is what I (for lack of a better term) call the metaphysics of Muslim colonial experience. The loss of political power in the Muslim lands also shifts the balance of political power from the Muslim ruling elite to the *Ulema*, the religious scholars. Abdul Aziz'z *fatwa* is one such example of the exercise of this power by a scholar. In fact this power to guide and sometimes dictate Muslim life, as the *Ulema* had no power within the colonial political realm, became normalized within the reform institutions created by Muslims in India. In one case, the *Ulema* of *Darul-uloom Deoband* 'assumed a position of great authority through their pronouncement of *fatawa'* and 'at the conclusion of its first century, the school counted a total of 269, 215 *fatawa* that had been issued' (Metcalf 1982: 146) by Deoband's *Daru'l-ifta,* the Office of Juridical Opinions.

A *fatwa*, it must be noted, is not a verdict; it is rather a juridical opinion given by a religious scholar about an issue of Islamic faith. Traditionally, only the rulers could, after having sought the opinion of the *Ulema*, implement one particular *fatwa*. The way the scholar reaches an opinion is also very important to understand, for the process always involves a comparative study of the question according to the dictates and precedence available in the entire history of Muslim jurisprudence.[3] Hence, a *fatwa,* a priori, juxtaposes any new influences in the Muslim society – European History 1, for example – with the living texts and praxis of the Muslim History 2. Fazlur Rahman (1982: 8) defines this as *ijtihad* as follows, 'The effort to understand the meaning of a relevant text or procedure in the past, containing a rule, and to alter that rule by extending or restricting or otherwise modifying it in such a manner that a new situation can be subsumed under it by a new solution.'

The important aspect of this definition, and this is a more enlightened definition as compared to the one offered by the Taqlid school scholars, is that any new knowledge or issue in Islam can only become a generalizable current rule after it has been compared to all the available historical precedence and rules contained in the core texts of Islam. Therefore we can argue that there is a logical progression in retrieving a juridical opinion about any modern issue. As a rule, the scholar takes the issue as a proposition and then looks for any pre-existing rules about the same question in the two most respected sources of the Islamic jurisprudence: the Qur'an and the Sunnah.[4] If there are clear rules provided about a practice in the Qur'an, then that takes precedence over any other source.

For cases that have no direct precedence in these two sources, the scholar then uses qi'yas, or analogy. It is in this process that the scholar might use more of his own knowledge and imagination, but even this will be guided by the core texts and core concepts of Islam. What this brief discussion of the juridical process highlights clearly is that for the Muslim sense of belonging, in this world all aspects of Muslim life must pass through this process of filtration through, what I have called, the 'Muslim metaphysics'. Shah Abdul Aziz's *fatwa*, then, is a historical example

of Muslim response to the colonial mandate. As modernity came to Muslim lands under this mandate, then modernity must also pass through the same metaphysical filter to be either rejected or subsumed within the Islamic system.

This metaphysic, the tendency to test Western knowledge against the intrinsic criteria of Islam's own sense of belonging to the world – Islam's history 2 – prevails at all levels of Muslim thought and praxis. In fact, I would dare to suggest that this comparative consciousness could very well be termed the Muslim 'political unconscious.'[5]

It is this political unconscious that plays a major role in the articulation of a Muslim identity in the colonial and postcolonial world, and it permeates not just the religious textual production but also the literary texts and the political tracts. In the case of India, this sense of a different Muslim history, and hence an exceptional Muslim identity, is accentuated after the Indian Rebellion of 1857. For the Muslims of India, the Rebellion was a monumental event: after the rebellion, the nominal Muslim rule – the rule of Bahadur Shah, the last Mughal King – was abolished and India became a part of the British empire, as Queen Victoria adopted the title of the Empress of India. For the Muslims of India, this was the first time that they did not have a Muslim political authority – even a nominal one – under which they could claim to live a Muslim life. It is in this attempt to define a viable Muslim political identity under the British that the idea of Indian Muslim exceptionalism takes hold, an idea that can be generalized to the rest of the Islamic world under colonialism as well as in the current phase of high capital and neo-imperialism.

This tendency to make sense of a Muslim life under direct British control finds itself centered immediately in the Muslim letters after the 1857 Rebellion. To challenge the exclusion of Muslims from the new dominant regime forms the first struggle of the Muslim elite: the quest for inclusion into the new order, an inclusion that can only be affected through the language of loyalty. Hence, while for some *Ulema,* Shah Abdul Aziz for example, the new change of rulers transforms India into *Darul-Harb*, for poets and scholars after the Rebellion, the main concern is to find ways of coping with this change. It is this tendency to see the world around them as hostile and dangerous – both physically as well as spiritually – that informs Muslim cultural production. It is also important to note that for the Muslims of India, this struggle is not just in the domain of culture: it is always political. In that sense, the rise of Muslim exceptionalism in India is on a different trajectory than the culturist leanings of Indian nationalism that Partha Chatterjee (1993: 6) explains in the following words:

> By my reading, anticolonial nationalism creates its own domain of sovereignty within colonial society well before it begins its political battle with the imperial power. It does this by dividing the world of social institutions and practices into two domains—the material and spiritual. The material is the domain of the "outside," of the economy and of statecraft, of science and technology, a domain where the West had proved its superiority and the East had succumbed. [. . .] The spiritual, on the other hand, is an "inner" domain bearing the "essential" marks of cultural identity. The greater one's success in imitating Western skills in the material domain, therefore, the greater the need to preserve the distinctness of one's spiritual culture. This formula, is, I think, a fundamental feature of anticolonial nationalism in Asia and Africa.

In essence, this resort to cultural nationalism allows Chatterjee to theorize the possibility of a native agency even when the material domain is under the political control of the colonizing powers. But for the Muslims of India, save a few exceptions, this negotiation within the material domain could not be divided into public and private, for being a Muslim, in a way, means inhabiting both the public and the private – the spiritual – at the same time. One cannot be a Muslim in private and a modern British colonial subject in the material world: in order to be a good Muslim, both the private and the public aspects of one's Muslimhood must coincide and coexist. Hence, for the Muslims of India, a purely spiritual approach to cultural nationalism was not possible, and this conundrum is resolved – in politics and poetics – by forcing modernity to allow a space for a purely Muslim identity. In fact, the early Muslim Urdu novels are a good representation of this attempt to articulate a Muslim life under foreign rule. There is, however, a tendency to go back into the history of Islam to retrieve the myths, stories, and instances of particular Muslim behaviors that do form the basis of many Muslim writings under colonialism and even in today's world, which suggest that as a global community, the Muslims are not only a spiritual community, but a larger community of culture that draws on shared supranational historical mythologies both in works of fiction and in every day writings.

I suggest that Muslim particularity and its interface with the colonial power was the main concern of the novels of Deputy Nazeer Ahmad, the first major Indian Urdu novelist.[6] Ahmad is the first author who converts Muslim storytelling from an epic mode to the mode of a realist novel by incorporating two important aspects of the novel, as suggested by Ian Watt (1957: 26), 'time and space'. Nazeer Ahmad narrates the realistic experiences of his real-life characters across a political landscape governed by the British, and in doing so articulates an imaginative idea of Muslim particularity and exceptionalism within the Raj. Hence, the Urdu novel from its very inception is a didactic tool to consider the particularity of Muslim experience in British India. The novels of Nazeer Ahmad, therefore, focus on the lives of particular individuals and on their negotiation of the British power structures. It is important to note that for Nazeer Ahmad, as well as for later novelists, the two modes of inclusion into the British system are either heroic or mundane.[7] Nazeer Ahmad's first novel, *Miratul Urus*,[8] traces the mundane aspects of material success in the new politico-economic system, while his later novel *Ibn-ul-waqt* [The Time-Server], traces the impact of an expedited, heroic entry into the British political and cultural realm.

Considering *Ibn-ul-Waqt* a representative novel of Nazeer Ahmad, Saleem Akhtar (2004: 36), the editor of *Majmua* [Collected Works of Nazeer Ahmad], suggests the following about its immediate context:

> Nazeer Ahmad finished this novel in 1888. By then the Rebellion had ended and the English government had become an irrefutable reality. The defeat had wiped the Muslim minds of any delusions of power and government and the deeds of the Mughal Empire had become the tall tales of Arabian Nights. The Muslims were left only with a few customs and traditions that they considered instrumental in saving their national pride. [. . .] It is within this

context that Nazeer Ahmad matured as a literary figure, and hence he was champion of utilitarian[9] literature.

Ibn-ul-Waqt is Nazeer Ahmad's most overtly political novel and openly deals with the post-Rebellion Muslim dilemma of negotiating the British ascendancy. Within this struggle, Nazeer Ahmad also highlights the problems faced by the Muslim reformers, the limits of native assimilation, and the popular view of the Muslims about Westernization. It is in this complicated view of the British system by a native that a more overt representation of post-Rebellion Muslim particularity finds its most coherent and cogent expression. The novel starts with the following declaration, 'Nobody would have noticed it during our time, but the reason Ibn-ul-Waqt got so much notoriety was because he adopted the English ways at a time when learning English was considered *kuf'r* and when using English things was similar to *irtadad*' (Nazeer Ahmad 2004: 51).

This first sentence captures two very important aspects of the Muslim Post-Rebellion condition; it implies that the current views of Muslims are different and furthermore, the story is about a time when Muslims distrusted the British system. Being a British civil servant, this clarification of the narrative time ensures that Nazeer Ahmad's work could not be construed as a critique of the current British policies, while still giving him the freedom to look at the immediate past – of Muslim-British relationships – with a more critical insight. The last part of the sentence is also instructive, for it gives us a representation of the Muslim views of the British in the past. The Muslims of the narrative time of the novel saw an interaction with the British within the general rubric of two cardinal sins: *Kuf'r* and *irtadad*. Kuf'r signifies the world outside Islam: all those, except the people of the book, who are in a state of *kuf'r*, or non-belief. Hence, during the narrative time of the novel, the British system and any association with it was, in popular imagination, equal to being in contact with *kuf'r*. *Irtadad*, meaning apostasy, signifies the impact of dealing with the British or using British things or materials: one feared the loss of one's religion. Hence, Nazeer Ahmad informs us that our hero, Ibn-ul-Waqt lived in the times of these two extreme views of the British by the Muslims, and that is why his story became a public scandal.[10]

The novel is set in Delhi and the narrative starts in the middle of the Rebellion. The rebellion provides Ibn-ul-Waqt, a member of a noble family who works for the Mughal court, a chance of heroic entry into the British world by saving the life of a British official. This altruistic act of compassion grants Ibn-ul-Waqt instant access to the British power structures immediately after the British rule is restored. He rescues Mr. Noble and nurses him to health certainly under very dangerous conditions. This post-Rebellion mode of altruistic heroism is certainly based in reality: Sir Sayyid was one such native responsible for saving the lives of two English ladies. What is important about its rendition in fiction is that it provides us a vision of the British expectation of the natives during the rebellion. Even though the East India Company had not done much to create a hegemonic relationship with the natives, in the post-Rebellion world, the only way for the Muslims to prove their loyalty was to prove beyond doubt that they had helped the local British during the rebellion. Hence, with

very limited means of mobility available, the Muslim movement into the British system, especially immediately after the rebellion, was pretty much based on such heroic measures.

As a reward for saving the local magistrate, Ibn-ul-Waqt finds himself to be the center of British attention after the rebellion. He is given land and becomes a personal friend of Mr. Noble, the British official he had saved. Thus, suddenly, Ibn-ul-Waqt, who until then had been a devout Muslim and lived with his extended family, finds himself at the center of the new dominant power in Delhi, and the reward precipitates his move into the British influence. He eventually buys a house in the city and adopts the British ways: living alone in a large secluded house with house servants, wearing English attire, keeping dogs,[11] and entertaining British officials.[12] All these aspects of urban life were considered strictly European, especially keeping dogs in the same house as one lived, and could be culturally read as *irtadad*, apostasy. Now this move into the British system and especially adopting the British ways cannot be sustained unless rationalized through its linkage to the public good: the public imperative. Ibn-ul-Waqt, therefore, on Mr. Noble's insistence decides to become a reformer.

Similarly, in real-life politics, any acceptance of a Western idea must pass this test: it must be acceptable according to the teachings of Islam and then it must be legitimated in the name of the people. The idea does not necessarily need to be purely Islamic, but its adoption must not contravene any of the core Islamic teachings. An idea that is perceived to be inherently opposed to the core of Islamic teachings will be practically unacceptable, even if one could prove its benefits to the people. Hence, it becomes obvious that the limit of the liable political and social positions in Islam depends on two factors: the comparative acceptability of an idea and then its implementation for the good of the Muslim community. It is this particular metaphysic that plays an important role in the texts mentioned above and also in the practical communication between the Islamic world and the West. What this makes clear is that the Muslim particularity – the Muslim history 2 – is always alive and provides a comparative matrix to judge the value of anything offered by the West. Coupled with the legacy of Western colonial history, this is a recipe for a very strong opposition to a Western idea, especially if mandated through force. Hence, Islam's mistrust of the West and its politics is not necessarily based on the inherent nature of Islam, but is rather more experiential and philosophical. The past experiences and the Muslims' own sense of self ensure that everything offered or mandated by the West will go through a certain degree of scrutiny before being accepted or rejected.

A good example of this approach to the West is the Muslim responses to the idea of the nation-state, the main signifier of modernity and the modern identity. Quite a few Muslims see the nation-state as a product of the West that serves to divide the Muslim world – or the Muslim *Ummah* – into small nation-states. Those on the extreme of the Islamic political spectrum consider the idea of the nation-state completely un-Islamic. In fact even the moderate and enlightened poets and philosophers have been traditionally very critical of dividing the Muslim world into small territorial nation-states. The great twentieth century Muslim poet, Muhammad Iqbal

(1972: 60), opines as follows in one of his poems, '*Wataniat: Watan Behasiat aik Siasi Tasawwur Ke'* [Nationalism: Country as Political Concept], about the concept of nation-state[13]:

Country is the greatest new god
Its tunic is the shroud of religion
This idol carved by the new civilization
Is the destroyer of the Prophet's house
You, whose hand is strengthened by *Tauhid*
You Mustafwis[14] whose country is Islam
Show this world a hidden sight
And smite this idol into dust

Iqbal's approach here is comparative. He is clearly juxtaposing the two competing principles of nationality-forming: the Western nation-state model and the Islamic concept of *Ummah*. For him the Western model is akin to Ibn-e-Khaldoon's *asabiya*, which he terms *wataniat*; both these concepts are similar because they invoke a particularly territorial and thus limited sentiment. For Iqbal, then, the concept of a territorial nation-state is a major threat to the larger Muslim universal. This particular poem is an indictment of the flagship of Western political accomplishment: the nation-state.

This emphasis on the pan-Islamic Muslim identity is strictly political, for the *Ummah*, by definition is the global Muslim community joined by law. Iqbal also draws on the most enduring Islamic myth of *Hijra*: migration. Based on prophet Muhammad's migration from Makkah to Madina, territorial loyalty cannot supersede the loyalty to the *Ummah*, and if life becomes hard in one's territorial abode then one must, like the prophet, leave for a place where one can live according to one's conscience. There are several recorded sayings of the prophet about *Hijra*, which due to their importance in Islamic jurisprudence make it imperative on a Muslim to migrate in the name of God. A larger Muslim universal, therefore, is a necessity for a Muslim to exercise the option of migration. Iqbal's poem also highlights one of the important principles of nationality-forming: 'existence of one or more other groups from whom the group is to be differentiated' (Brass 2005). The creation of this other, Iqbal asserts later in the same poem, becomes the means to rationalize the imperial nation-state's mercantile and exploitative drive. Against the divisions generated by the nation-state, Iqbal reasserts the idea of human unity. At another place in his works, in a poem entitled 'Makkah or Geneva,' Iqbal (1972: 519–520) opines:

In these times the nations have proliferated
And the unity of Adam has been hidden
The wisdom of the West to divide the people
Islam aims only at the nation Adam
Makkah sends this message to Geneva:
Would it be Union of the People or Union of Nations?

This unity is certainly political and transnational, for if it were only cultural, then there could be no threat to the larger Muslim culture even if divided into nation-states. Here it should suffice to suggest that Iqbal displays the same kind

of dual approach to modernity that most of the Islamic world faced as it entered Western modernity under colonialism. Al-Ahsan (1992: 29) describes this feeling as follows, 'With the development of nationalism, and in particular the Muslim nation-state, the Muslims seem to have become somewhat confused about where their first loyalty lies – whether primary loyalty belongs to the *Ummah* or to the nation-state'.

Al-Ahsan is particularly writing about the postcolonial phase of Islamic nations. In Iqbal's case, this anxiety was already a part of the elite consciousness. I think this schizoid view of the nation is inherently inscribed in the Muslim encounter with colonialism. As we have seen in the literary works discussed above, the colonial encounter forces the natives to return to a pre-colonial universal myth. In the case of Muslims, this myth does not need creation, for it is present in their history and their daily rituals and cultural symbols. Since Iqbal takes it upon himself to speak to the people, he must then invoke the ideal historical symbol: the *Ummah*. I, therefore, do not see these two competing claims of loyalty as part of a Muslim confusion, but rather as a strength of political Islam: its power to keep its History 2 alive even after the long colonial encounter.

The same privileging of Islam's History 2 can be seen in most of the political texts from the Muslim world, both during and after the end of Western colonialism. In fact, Abul-A'la Mawdudi (1939), one of the most important twentieth century Islamic reformers, discusses the clash of Islam and Western modernity quite frequently in his works. In one particular work, while discussing the plight of Muslims under colonialism, Mawdudi explains this situation in the following words[15]:

> The Muslims of today are caught in this dual slavery: In some places they are under the sway of both intellectual and political slavery, and in other places the degree of mental slavery is higher than that of political slavery. Unfortunately, there is not even a single Muslim community in the world that is completely free, intellectually or politically. Wherever they are politically free, they are still mentally enslaved. Their schools, offices, bazaars, societies, homes, and even their bodies, symbolize the power of Western thought, Western knowledge, and Western know-how. They think with a Western mind, see with Western eyes, and walk, consciously or unconsciously, on the paths created by the West. In all it has been imprinted on their minds that truth is what the West considers truth, and false is what the West considers false. (1939: 6)

Mawdudi's analysis of this particular condition of Muslims is expressed within the political climate created by colonialism, the method through which, as I have stated above, Western modernity is introduced into the Muslim world. Hence, for Mawdudi, a blind and uncritical emulation of Western modernity is one of the biggest challenges of the Islam of his time. During his life, Mawdudi offers numerous methods of saving the Muslim way of life – Muslim History 2 – from what he perceives as the pernicious influences of the Western civilization. What is instructive in this brief reference to Mawdudi is not necessarily the veracity of his claims but rather the knowledge that Western modernity is not seen as transparently neutral and universal by Muslim scholars and historians. It is rather a powerful discourse that works by eliminating particularities of Muslim identity, in producing the kind of Muslim subjectivity ideally suited for the hegemonic impulse of colonialism.

Hence, foregrounding Islam's History 2 becomes an important defensive strategy under such circumstances.

This brief discussion of certain specific textual responses to modernity from the Islamic world is enough to suggest that Islam's interface with modernity is never really a politically innocent engagement. It is also clear that Islam has its own specific modernity, which was partially articulated against the dominating impulse of the Western colonial modernity. This experience, coupled with the corpus of religious, literary and political texts, informs the modern Muslims about the larger world and their place in it. No amount of social engineering is likely to erase this particular way of belonging to the world. All attempts at modernizing the Islamic world forcefully, as articulated by Michael Palmer and many of his cohorts on the American right – by attempting to supplant Islam's History 2 with the History 1 – will eventually fail. No total erasure of Islam's History 2 is possible. The Islamic world, on the other hand, will have to find its own way of negotiating and accommodating modernity. It will be a painful process, and it will certainly follow a different temporal trajectory. The Islamic world will also maintain its regional and historical particularities, but in the end the change will have to come from within the Islamic world, rather than the unsustainable interventions mandated from the West.

Notes

1. In Arabic *Ma'alim fi-l-Tariq.* This translation does not provide the name of the translator.
2. A *Mujtahid* is a Muslim religious scholar learned enough and recognized for his learning to give a juridical opinion about the matters of Muslim faith and life. According to Barbara Metcalf, Shah Abdul Aziz is probably the most important and most revered religious scholar in the Indian context; all major factions of Indian Islam traced their institutional legitimacy by establishing a link with Shah Abdul Aziz's teachings. For details see Barbara Metcalf (1982).
3. In fact even during the First Gulf War in 1991, the *Ulema* had differing opinions about whether a Muslim nation – Saudi Arabia – could ask for help from a non-Muslim nation – the United States – in a war against another Muslim state. Dr. Ahmad Deedat, the South African Scholar, then produced a video justifying, through a few verses of the Qur'an, that it was OK to ask non-Muslims' help if the Muslim nations did not have the capacity to do so. The important point about this discussion is that, even in the twentieth century, the policy decisions of one Muslim nation-state still needed rationalization through a scholarly interpretation of core Muslim texts.
4. Sunnah or Sunnat is the tradition of Prophet Muhammad. In a nutshell, it is his practice of the Islamic teaching. Most Muslim scholars consult the books of hadiths – Prophet Muhammad's recorded sayings – in order to find precedence.
5. The term political unconscious, of course, is borrowed from Fredric Jameson. For details on the term itself see Jameson (1981).
6. My discussion of the novel and the Muslim identity is heavily informed by Benedict Anderson's work on the novel and the nation-state. For details see Anderson's (1983/1991).
7. By heroic I mean an action, usually altruistic, that causes instant approval by the British and an immediate entry into the power system. The most often repeated heroic action in the post-Rebellion fiction and reality was the attempt by the native to have saved a British official or any of their dependents during the rebellion. This heroic deed becomes a constant trope in Muslim fiction, especially in terms of explaining someone's sudden rise within the post-Rebellion political system. In real life, Sayyid Ahmad Khan's actions to save two British ladies became the strongest proof of his loyalty to the British in the Post-Rebellion period. Surprisingly,

even the postcolonial Urdu writers use this trope in tracing the rise of certain Indian Muslim families in post-Rebellion India, one good example of which is Abdullah Hussain's *The Weary Generations.* What I have called the mundane method of vertical mobility is also made possible through loyalty but is dependent mostly on acquisition of education.

8. All citations from Nazeer Ahmad's works are in my translation.
9. Saleem Akhtar uses the Urdu word *Maqsadiat*, which literally means something with an aim. I have translated it as 'utilitarian' because it is the utility of literature as a tool for public betterment that is meant by the Urdu term.
10. According to Aziz Ahmad the main character also makes fun of people like Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan who had adopted a 'bicultural' way of life. For details see Ahmad (1967: 36).
11. In most Islamic cultures dogs are considered unclean and are not permitted in the inner sanctum of the house. Keeping dogs as household pets, therefore, was seen as an obvious example of Westernization.
12. During the narrative time of the novel eating together with the foreigners was also considered un-Islamic in popular imagination, which was probably a strong Hindu influence on Indian Islam. Nazeer Ahmad and Sayyid Ahmad Khan tried to dispel this prejudice by arguing that as the British were people of the book, breaking bread with them could not be considered a contaminating experience. Sayyid Ahmad also asserted that this practice of not sharing food with non-Muslims was strictly un-Islamic and was caused by a Hinduization of Indian Islam.
13. My translation.
14. Followers of prophet Muhammad who was also known as Mustafa.
15. My translation. This translated passage has also appeared elsewhere in my published work. For details see Raja (2007).

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Turkish Secular Muslim Identity on Display in Europe

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Introduction

Nasreddin Hodja[1] is a popular folkloric figure in tales, anecdotes, and humor stories told and loved in many parts of the Middle East, Central Asia, Balkans, and North Africa. Hodja has a religious significance and he is considered to be a protective saint in Aksehir, Turkey and is venerated by local people. Furthermore, in the stories attributed to him, he appears as a minor cleric and plays merry pranks in some stories similar to the German trickster figure Till Eulenspiegel. Nineteenth-century French and German orientalists, such as Basset, Horn, and Wesselski, introduced him and his stories to Europe about a century ago (Basset 1987; Özgü 1996). However, Nasreddin Hodja recently gained a new visibility in Europe.

In 2005, Turco-European Muslims inaugurated the Nasreddin Hodja Festival in Rotterdam, Netherlands. During this festival, a representative Nasreddin Hodja – a white-bearded, round-faced and big-bellied man wearing a huge turban, a green caftan, and carrying a rosary in his hand – paraded the streets of Rotterdam, talked to people, and delivered messages of peace and tolerance, as well as secular wisdom. In 2006, the inauguration of a Nasreddin Hodja statue, mounted on his donkey, facing backwards, on *Rue Galait* in Schaerbeek, Brussels, took place with similar secular, humanist messages of peace and tolerance. Currently, this Muslim clerical figure watches over the European Muslims and inspires peace and tolerance.

How did a Muslim cleric come to symbolize peace, tolerance, and secular wisdom? Why did Turco-Europeans feel the need to publicly appropriate a secular Muslim cultural icon? This paper inquires about the answers to these questions in the sociopolitical and historical contexts of the new visibility of Nasreddin Hodja in Europe. First, I will discuss the significance of the increased xenophobia targeting European Muslims and Islamic cultural signifiers in the aftermath of the tragic 9/11 attacks. The reactions to increasing global terrorism undertaken by Islamist

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radicals also resulted in a reactionary radicalization among conservative and orthodox European Muslims. Hence, Muslim people face a dilemma in Europe: the rising Islamophobia requires Muslims to embrace and defend their cultural and religious selves; however, publicly embracing Islam through the display of cultural/religious signifiers risks being perceived and targeted as 'fundamentalist' as well as to be expropriated by anti-secularist Muslim fundamentalists.

In this respect, I hypothesize that the tension between these two groups places moderate European Muslims under significant stress and leads them to rearticulate their ethno-religious identities via a new cultural signifier; in other words, by the cultural re-appropriation of Nasreddin Hodja.

Then, I will discuss the polyvalence and polysemy of the Nasreddin Hodja figure as a cultural signifier. The plurality embedded in this signifier provides a new venue for Turco-European Muslims to construct their difference not only from the non-Muslim majority but also from 'Muslim fundamentalism'. In this respect, I contend that Nasreddin Hodja as a cultural signifier provides moderate Muslims with a space where they can resist xenophobic attacks and Islamist misappropriations of Islamic cultural signifiers. Lastly, I will discuss the role that Turkish secularization played in the reconstruction of Nasreddin Hodja as a secular humanist figure, which allowed Turco-European Muslims to re-imagine their identities and negotiate with the larger societies within which they live.

Overall, I will argue that as Turkey developed a larger and a nationally more influential culture in the twentieth century, the Nasreddin Hodja figure has developed a secular humanist character, and the European appropriation of Nasreddin Hodja as a secularized religious icon is a punctuation, interrogation, and domestication of the developmental modernization. As Arjun Appadurai puts it, 'The megarhetoric of developmental modernization [. . .] is often punctuated, interrogated, and domesticated by the micronarratives [. . .] of expressive forms, which allow modernity to be rewritten more as more vernacular globalization and less as a concession to large-scale national and international policies' (Appadurai 1996: 10).

The Ascent of Islamophobia and Islamism in Europe

Anti-Muslim prejudice has existed in Europe for a long time, but it came to be known as Islamophobia in the 1990s.[2] Several studies conducted in different parts of Europe suggest that the terrorist attacks on September 11th, 2001 in the United States and the following attacks in England, Spain, and Turkey elevated Islamophobia and discrimination against Muslims. The terrorist attacks by Muslim fundamentalists did not cause Islamophobia, but affected the lives of Muslim minorities living in Western Europe and elsewhere. Anti-Muslim prejudices became stronger and Islamophobic attacks increased in countries hosting large Muslim communities, such as Britain, as well as in countries having quite small Muslim minorities, such as Sweden and Slovenia.[3] The circulation of the globalized images

of fundamentalist terror and the public vilification of Islam fueled Islamophobia and the victimization of local Muslim settlers.

Islamophobia and its cognate predispositions do not only target individual Muslims, they target collective cultural symbols, such as mosques or headscarves. In the European media, mosques are depicted 'as the lion's den, in which bearded fanatical throat cutters are meeting to organize the next plot against Western civilization' (Marranci 2004: 113). This representation contributes to the 'cultural divide' and may prepare the ground for more intense attacks. After the murder of the controversial filmmaker Theo van Gogh, more than twenty Muslim buildings, including mosques, were set on fire in the Netherlands. In addition to physical attacks on mosques, the construction of Muslim religious buildings were continuously prevented in some parts of Europe.[4] The persistent resistance of politicians and public figures to the construction of mosques suggests that the problem of Islamophobia is much stronger and deeper than a temporary racist backlash; it is symptomatic of deeper fears about identity and a larger culture of *phobia*.

Jörg Stolz (2005) argues that Islamophobia, at least in the case of Switzerland, is largely due to a traditionalist world view. He states, '*Islamophobia is part of a larger phenomenon called xenophobia*. Xenophobic rejection of out-groups is found in all western societies. The specific groups which are rejected, however, vary from country to country, region to region and may even change quickly within a certain country in the course of history' (Stolz 2005: 553). Similarly, Gabriele Marranci argues that Islamophobia is related to European anxieties on 'the myth of a Europe founded on Judaeo-Christian values' (Marranci 2004: 106). The integration of Muslims into Europe is closely related to the creation of a real multicultural environment, where true Muslim participation can be achieved. However, a European identity that is imagined as inherently Judeo-Christian inevitably marginalizes Muslims, Muslim identity, and Muslim cultural/religious signifiers.

Muslims are neither from a single ethnic origin nor are they of a single race. As a result, cultural and religious signifiers are crucial for the expression of a Muslim-self and the development of Islamophobia (Marranci 2004: 107). The tension between the European demand for integration of the Muslim minority and the European fear of the transculturalisation, which would occur along with the integration of the Muslim minority, create a vicious circle: as the integration of Muslims increases the visibility of Muslim cultural/religious signifiers in public places, the Islamophobic responses of the public also increase. This vicious circularity is partly due to the Islamist misappropriation of Islamic signifiers.[5] Islamist circles consistently represent Islamic signifiers, such as the mosque and headscarf, as monolithic signifiers of Islamism. However, neither attending a mosque nor wearing a headscarf is necessarily a referent of fundamentalism. These signifiers bear multiple meanings (Mandel 1989; Maussen 2004). Such signifiers refer to Muslim identity, but they are inadequate in representing the Muslim identity. Many Turco-Europeans identify themselves as Muslim even though they do not attend a Mosque or do not wear

a headscarf. Muslim identities demonstrate a high level of heterogeneity both in discourse and in praxis. For instance, as Christine Ogan states:

> Many Turkish migrants in Amsterdam do not go to the mosque or pray on a regular basis. Yet they are thought of as a part of a community of Muslims (which could also include Morroccan migrants), as part of the hegemonic discourse. And certainly different types of Islam are practiced. In Amsterdam, as in other parts of Europe, there exist the Nurcus, the Suleymancis, the Milli Gorus, and the Alevis, each subscribing to a different version of Islam. (Ogan 2001: 8)

Islamist discourse erases the polysemy embedded in Islamic signifiers by suppressing the plurality in Islam(s) and different Muslim voices in the community. 'In Amsterdam, for example, those Turks who sought to increase the number of mosques or to establish Islamic schools with public subsidies portrayed the Turkish migrants as a community of devout Muslims' (Ogan 2001: 8). Because of this, Islamist usage of Islamic signifiers such as the mosque and headscarf are misappropriations. On the other hand, Islamophobic circles consistently refer to the monolithic Islamist constructions of these signifiers in the public sphere. As a consequence, the public sphere quite often reifies the Islamist misappropriation/Islamophobic misrepresentation of Islamic signifiers. In this way, Islamist and Islamophobic discourses construct *the mosque* as a 'key symbol,' which becomes elemental for organizing individual experiences and for communicating them (Ortner 1973). This interplay between Islamists and Islamophobes, and the mosque-oriented representation of Islam, sets a trap for the rest of the society by spatially structuring the social imagery.

Ayşe Çağlar has already demonstrated how the notion of the 'ghetto' organizes other elements and symbols of cultural diversity in the German polity and political culture and how it situates minorities in stigmatized ethno-cultural sites (Çağlar 2001). According to Çağlar, the trope of the ghetto literally arrests the imagination in public debates, social policy-making, and in scholarship on immigrants. 'The idea of cultural enclaves preventing the full incorporation of immigrants in German society pervades the work of scholars [. . .]. All the parties involved in these discussions [. . .] remain trapped within the same topos of the ghetto coupled with ethnicity and /or spatialised cultures' (Çağlar 2001: 605). This entrapping notion of ghetto, she notes, prevents the public from seeing the transnational spaces of German Turks that allow them to re-imagine their sociality and belonging (Çağlar 2001).

Similarly, the mosque-centered perceptions of Islam dominated by Islamist and Islamophobic worldviews dominate the social imagery and undermine secular Muslim possibilities. In this way, secular Muslims who feel a need to express their difference in a public place through cultural/religious signifiers face a dilemma: they either lose their Muslim-voice/Muslim-self in public or they become a potential object of Islamist expropriation or Islamophobic misrepresentation and even discursive and physical assaults. Islamophobia, in parallel to Islamism, erases the polysemy of the Islamic signifiers. Hence, for the Islamophobic public, mosques become 'the palaces of hatred' and Muslim men and women affirming their cultural/religious identity in public places become a threat to secular order.[6] Therefore,

the construction of alternative cultural/religious signifiers, resistant to Islamist misappropriation/Islamophobic misrepresentation, is a necessity for Muslims.

In the aftermath of the September 11th terrorist attack, Muslims in Europe came out of the private sphere in order to defend themselves and Islam from Islamophobic prejudices and attacks. Larsson notes, 'Muslims in Sweden in the aftermath of September 11th became their own spokes persons [. . .]. Muslims were invited on several occasions to take part in media debates on Swedish national television and radio. For the first time in Sweden, it is now possible to argue that Muslims have become their own experts on Islam and Muslim cultures' (Larsson 2005: 29). Tariq Modood also confirms this new pattern of Muslim assertiveness within the context of Britain (Modood 2005). However, Muslim assertiveness also results in the deprivatization of Islam (Asad 2003). Muslim identities and discourses, which are not always compatible with liberal values, become more visible in the public sphere. In Northern Ireland, for instance, Pakistanis abandoned their local, apolitical communal stance and appropriated a more assertive, public, and political stance, which in some cases implied or explicitly signified political and religious radicalism (Marranci 2005). The existence of Muslim fundamentalist religious signifiers in public started a controversy around British politician Jack Straw's statement where he asked Muslim women at his Blackburn constituency surgeries if they would mind removing their veils. Does the deprivatization of Islam, especially radical Islam, threaten modernity? This is a real concern from the perspective of radical secularism and can be transcended through a redefinition of Europe in a more plural way. A reaffirmation of multiculturalism seems necessary to overcome the problems posed by the emerging Muslim assertiveness. However, resistance against multiculturalism is rising in Europe, even in the countries that have implemented multiculturalist policies for decades.

In many European countries, a rigid and monolithic secularism, which is inconsistent with multiculturalism, remains alive. Perhaps France is the most visible, but certainly not the only practitioner, of this kind of approach to the existence of cultural/religious signifiers of Islam in public. Germany, Austria, and Italy have similar policies towards Muslim minorities and Islamic signifiers. Other countries, such as the Netherlands and Belgium, have more open policies towards the immigrant populations (Avci 2006; Jacobs et al. 2006; Wets 2006). The Netherlands has implemented multiculturalist policies in the early 1980s in order to achieve the integration of the immigrant populations through the creation of a multicultural society and the compensation of disadvantages. In Belgium, there was a more complex system partly due to multi-leveled governance. The Flemish authorities, similar to the Dutch authorities, encouraged the collective mobilization and self-organization of the minority groups. However, the Francophones implemented policies encouraging the individual assimilation of the immigrants. In both countries, nevertheless, Muslim minorities in general and Turkish minorities in particular remained alienated, marginalized, and disadvantaged. The failure of the multiculturalist policies fueled a backlash in politics and contributed to the contestation of a 'multicultural' society. 'Assimilationist' approaches returned to the political debates. First the extreme right, and then the liberal-conservatives, started to ask

for tighter immigration policies. Subjects like headscarves in schools, new too-large mosques, and Islamic schools started to frequent the pages of newspapers. In other words, Islamophobic assumptions and sentiments gradually infiltrated the public sphere in the Netherlands and Belgium during the last two decades.

In this context, it is surprising that the economically and socially alienated Turkish minorities of Belgium and the Netherlands are affirming their Muslim identity in public and thus showing positive signs of healthy cultural integration to the larger society. It seems plausible to argue that this is a consequence of the inclusivity of the participation in the events. Both the festival and the inauguration of the statue reflect the participation of the local Turco-European community, host society, and Turkey. This tripartite participation is a significant step towards transculturation in Europe. It would be an over-emphasizing of the Nasreddin Hodja figure to contend that Hodja made this cultural tryst possible. However, it cannot be refused that the heterogeneity of this figure plays an important role in this process.

Polyvalence and Polysemy in the Nasreddin Hodja Figure

Both the Nasreddin Hodja Festival in the Netherlands and the Nasreddin Hodja statue in Belgium promote a medieval religious figure. The long white beard and costume of Nasreddin Hodja signifies his social and religious affiliations. In the festival, the representative Nasreddin Hodja has a long white beard and wears a huge turban, a green caftan, and red shoes, which indicate that he was a member of the *ulema*, Muslim learned men. In addition, Nasreddin Hodja was historically a strong figure in the popular religious tradition of Turkic people. Several other communities both within and outside of Turkey have their own local Nasreddin Hodja folklore (Kurgan 1986). For instance, in addition to the one in Akşehir of Turkey there are other Nasreddin Hodja shrines in Tebriz of Iran, Gence of Azerbaijan, Semerkand of Uzbekistan, and Alma Ata of Kazakhstan. These multiple shrine sites strongly suggest that he was a part of popular religion. Therefore, Nasreddin Hodja is a polysemic cultural symbol signifying both orthodox and folk Islam, yet not Islamism or Muslim fundamentalism. While the polyvalence and polysemy embedded in this figure make him an inclusive cultural signifier, a system of folk images also contained in this signifier makes him resistant to the Islamist misappropriation. Nasreddin Hodja is an invitation to plurality and cultural encounter. However, he is also the trickster who keeps the gateway between the worlds. The door that he keeps is closed to dogmatism, homogeneity, and parochialism.

Nasreddin Hodja is historically both a folk literature protagonist and a folk religion saint (Araz 2000; Başgöz 1998; Boratav 1995; Konyalı 1945). However, neither the Dutch nor the Belgian representations of Nasreddin Hodja have explicit cognate references to his saintly identity. Instead, both refer to and celebrate him as a humorist – in reference to the body of humorous stories quite well known in the Balkans, Anatolia, the Middle East, and Central Asia – and his most recently

developed secular character as a global thinker. During the festival, the representative Nasreddin Hodja participates in cultural activities, tells humorous stories, and converses casually with people. Similarly, the Nasreddin Hodja statue celebrates secular values of modern Europe in addition to his Turkish roots. An inauguration statement of the statue was published in Belexpresse Politique on September 26th, 2006.[7] This inauguration addressed Nasreddin Hodja as a master of didactic humor, a global personality with a cunning intelligence who incites thought and laughter spontaneously. Behind his religious attire, there is a rational and profane character. The Nasreddin Hodja of Turco-Europeans is a Muslim secular character delivering didactic messages in humorous anecdotes. Perhaps the most important message that Nasreddin Hodja delivers is 'peace.' The Nasreddin Hodja figure became a proponent of peace and tolerance through the Nasreddin Hodja Festival in Akşehir, Turkey. In the 1990s, the representative Nasreddin Hodja raised his voice against the violence and the bloodshed within and outside of Turkey and voiced the need for tolerance, love, and peace in the world. In 1995, for instance, he stated during the rite of fermenting Lake Akşehir, 'Both in the world and in our country people are killing each other. Blood is coming off the water jug [. . .]. Lets ferment the lake for love and tolerance.'[8] In addition, UNESCO proclaimed 1996 as the year of Nasreddin Hodja due to his humanist messages (Conrad 1998: 410). In this respect, in 1996, the festival motto was 'The world peace will be leavened in Nasreddin Hodja's lake.' The repetition of this rhetoric of peace also contributed to the transfiguration of Nasreddin Hodja into a proponent of peace and tolerance in Turkey. The European reincarnations of Nasreddin Hodja draw on this discourse of tolerance and reaffirm secular and tolerant Turco-European Muslim identity in public. The formation of this identity was a long and gradual process, which required the transformation of the Nasreddin Hodja figure both in folk literature and folk religion.[9] On the one hand, the trickster stories in folk literature were eliminated and Hodja was transfigured into a sage. On the other hand, the saint of the popular religion was suppressed and the two facets of Nasreddin were merged into one and sacralized in the Akşehir Festival, where the Rotterdam festival originated.

Transfigurations of Nasreddin Hodja

Nasreddin Hodja stories are popular over a large geography, encompassing the Balkans, Anatolia and Central Asia, as well as the Middle East and North Africa. People, of every age, class, and ethnicity adore those stories. They are short, formulaic, and sometimes startling. It is also very easy to remember the Hodja stories; they are casually exchanged during work, rest, and play. Indeed, many of them are transfigured into proverbial sayings. They circulate among people, and sometimes only serve the purpose of sharing a relaxing laugh. The Nasreddin Hodja figure is, indeed, a trickster character living in the same way with common people, challenging the official culture, and transcending every boundary imposed by the society through his

instrumental foolishness and spontaneous cleverness. The humor deployed in Hodja stories help the power balances stay in equilibrium by motivating political transformation through the ridicule and mockery of what is official and by discharging the tension among the oppressed portions of the society (Marzolph 1996). However, Hodja stories are polyvalent: they have multiple functions and plural sides. The relaxing imagery of Hodja also contains subversive inversions of the given cultural codes and pertinent social relations. The 'head-downwards' image of Hodja invokes laughter most of the time.[10] Yet, this image also contains an alternative interpretation of the world, which spontaneously undermines the dominant cultural codes and keeps a mischievous and transgressive spirit alive. During certain times of social crisis or major turmoil, the folk imagery functions as a mobilizing discourse and acts as an agent of change.

Nasreddin Hodja stories are not only polyvalent, but they are also polysemous. Nasreddin Hodja literature is not a clear-cut representation of popular opposition to official culture. The subversive character of Hodja stories is disguised within the contingency of meanings and the fluidity of identities. The Nasreddin Hodja figure is a representative of both official religion and simple folk, and at the same time is a village *imam* (Basgoz 1998). Besides, the meanings embedded in these stories have an amorphous character. According to the context, their meanings or the reception of these meanings can change drastically. The mystical interpretations of Hodja stories are ideal examples for this situation (Shah 1966). The stories that we tell and laugh at as corporeal stories are perceived as religious didactic stories within the context of mysticism. In this respect, it is quite hard to anticipate a definite reading of these stories. They signify multiple voices and shifting contexts. The ambiguity of Hodja stories originates from this plurality of voices and diversity of cultures that are represented. Nasreddin Hodja not only spontaneously symbolizes official religion and simple folk, but he also represents two contradictory cultures: pre-Islamic nomad culture and settled agrarian Islamic culture (Yüce 1997). Nasreddin Hodja negotiates between cultures and provides continuity in discontinuity. Therefore, trickster figures play an important role during transition periods. They bridge the gap between the old, dissolving order and the new, emerging one. Tricksters challenge, transgress and destroy the order just to renew it.

The content of Nasreddin Hodja stories is varied. A corpus of them is noteworthy with their erotic, satirical, and grotesque character (Boratav 1995). In these stories, Nasreddin Hodja is associated with an abusive imagery aimed at all basic institutions of society, including religion, as well as family and justice. The sexually explicit Nasreddin Hodja stories diachronically consist of two groups; earlier and later stories (Karabaş 1990). The former group depicts how Nasreddin Hodja becomes cognizant of human sexuality. The latter group celebrates the human body and sexuality. In these stories, Hodja exposes his penis; has sexual relations with his donkey; advises a child to defecate at the mosque; and mocks a grand mosque with phallic imagery. All these grotesque images degrade the official orthodox culture.[11] They destruct its seriousness with their gay character. Nasreddin Hodja appears as an amoral trickster character and desecrates the sacred

place. A trickster's acts of desecration profane and debase the too elevated, over purified religion. Periodic profanization of the sacred was not uncommon in old wisdom, for example in mythology, trickster stories, and tribal rites.[12] The grotesque Nasreddin Hodja stories, similarly, must have desecrated the sacred signifiers of the medieval orthodox Islam and helped the rejuvenation of religion among the popular masses.

However, the amoral trickster evolved into a cunning philosopher along with the appearance of printed copies in the first half of the nineteenth century (Marzolph 1998). During the transition to the print, the erotic and grotesque Nasreddin Hodja stories were left out along with many others. The elimination of the grotesque stories was intertwined with both the perception and representation of national and cultural identities in Turkey. In the process of the collapse of the Ottoman Empire in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Turkish nationalism promoted Turkish ethnicity and Islam as the two sources of Turkitude, the Turkish national and cultural identity. This trend continued, along with additional national discourses, after the foundation of the Turkish nation state, the Republic of Turkey, in 1923. In the republican era, Nasreddin Hodja has become an emblematic cultural signifier of Turkitude.[13]

Scholars imagined and constructed Nasreddin Hodja as exclusively Turkish and disregarded the cultural hybridity and historical continuity of the Hodja figure(s). This Turkification process has never come to a stop, but it significantly slowed in the second half of the twentieth century. Along with the revival of political Islam in the late 1980s and 1990s, the efforts for the Islamification of Nasreddin Hodja significantly increased. Scholars who believed that Islam is an integral part of Turkish cultural and national identities envisaged Nasreddin Hodja as a devout Muslim (Şahin 1996; Tandoğan 1996; Turan 1997). In this way, they intended to melt the Turkish understanding of Islam and the Turkish ethnicity in the character of Nasreddin Hodja, and to make him an emblematic symbol of Turco-Islamic synthesis. During the same period of time, the social status of Nasreddin Hodja also became a source of concern for some scholars. They found the well-known representation of Nasreddin Hodja on a donkey offensive to Turkish national identity and tried to socially elevate him to the status of a respected judge, a professor, and wise philosopher. These efforts inevitably resulted in a frenzy of cleansing of the Hodja stories from 'inappropriate' elements (Sakaoglu 1997). Consequently, the scholarly efforts of Turkifying, Islamifying, and socially elevating Nasreddin Hodja transformed him from a cunning trickster into a devout folk philosopher during the course of the twentieth century. Of course, this transformation did not happen in a sociopolitical void. The Turkish revolution of the early twentieth century played a significant role in this process. During the early decades of the century, Turkish nationalism and secularism strongly opposed the primacy of religious elements in society. Politically, socially, and culturally influential figures faced strong political pressure and were forced to dissolve into other social forms or just vanish. In this context, the religious importance of Nasreddin Hodja came under pressure too.

The Forgotten Folk Cult of Nasreddin Hodja in Akşehir

There is supporting evidence showing that Nasreddin Hodja was traditionally a protector saint for the local people (Araz 2000; Konyalı 1945). He was considered to hold powers such as the ability to break a chronic drought, grant wishes, heal ailments, and protect people during long journeys. Rain prayers are common in Turkey. Generally an *imam*, who leads prayers in a mosque, leads the prayer, which often takes place in the fields. In Akşehir, people used to perform rain prayers on the tomb site. Towns people would unite in a common prayer to break the drought that had the state at crisis point. It was another common popular practice to tie small pieces of cloth on the railings of the tomb representing wishes asked of Hodja. In 1892, according to İhtifalci Ziya Bey, the iron railings over the tomb's wall were completely covered with such wish ribbons.[14] He indicated that it was not possible to see the actual railings. The pictures of the tomb, which were taken before the 1905 renovations, also support Ziya Bey's eyewitness account about the practice of tying wish ribbons on the railings.[15] In an outside picture of the tomb, the railings are covered with wish ribbons. In an inside shot, it is seen that this practice was not limited to the outside railings. The wooden barriers enclosing the *merkad*, last resting place, were also covered with wish ribbons. The Nasreddin Hodja figure and his tomb were especially integrated in the local wedding rituals and beliefs about reproduction. The betrothed used to cordially invite him to their wedding ceremonies before everybody else. An *okuyucu* (the person who was chosen to pray) would visit his tomb and pray to him first. Then, s/he would ask him to join the wedding ceremonies along with his pupils. The *okuyucu* would say, 'Our Hodja, please come and join us in our wedding along with your pupils.' On the day of the wedding, the groom and his best man would also visit Hodja's tomb and pray for a happy marriage and healthy children and ask for his blessings. Parents would bury the umbilical cord of their first-born child nearby to Hodja's tomb. Boys, who were about to be circumcised, were also among the regular visitors of Nasreddin Hodja. People who were about to leave for a long trip, and those who had just returned from one, would visit his tomb to ask for his blessings before traveling and thank him after their return. People with health problems would rub some dirt from his tomb to heal themselves. Apparently, Nasreddin Hodja was considered to be a saint who protects them from major dangers and assures their fertility and wellbeing. His tomb was a very popular shrine.

However, today, this popular religious aspect of Nasreddin Hodja and his tomb is little known even among people who consider themselves Nasreddin Hodja's grand sons and daughters.[16] Not only have the popular religion practices come to an end, but also they were erased from social memory. It has even become a topic for a local newspaper editorial (Ak 1969). This represents the degree of the alienation of the people from the local popular culture. Many people not only did not know about these popular religious practices, but they also considered these practices offensive. An interviewee, Fatma, stated, 'I have never heard any of these practices [of wish ribbon tying, umbilical cord burying, and applying dirt from the tomb to heal ailments]. There are no such things. These are mere superstitions and are not related

to Hodja. You should not even mention such things.'[17] Another interviewee, Ali, asserted that he has heard about the practice of burying a piece of umbilical cord in the tomb site.[18] However, he explained the practice in a way that it was detached from Hodja. According to him, this practice was not related to him, but the graveyard, where the tomb was located. These responses suggest that popular religion practices are considered unfit for Nasreddin Hodja since he is only considered a member of the *ulema*. The extent of this social amnesia is quite surprising. When and how did this loss of culture happen? In order to understand this process we need to inquire about the larger social context in the history of Turkey.

Turkish Secularization and the Suppression of Popular Religion in Modern Turkey

The *Millet* system, which categorized the Ottoman society into religious communities and hierarchized their relations, has played a very important role until its abolition in the mid-nineteenth century. However, during the Islamic reconstruction of Abdulhamid II, Islam not only regained its significant position in the society, but it also made its way into the political discourse. During the reign of Abdulhamid II, Pan-Islamist ideology dominated politics in the empire and restored the respectability of religion. The Young Turk revolution in 1908 removed Abdulhamid II from power and the dominant political ideology was replaced by Turkish nationalism. The Young Turks' nation-state building project was interrupted by WWI, but Mustafa Kemal and his supporters politically completed this project in 1923 by founding the modern Turkey on laic and republican principles. Next, the Turkish nationalists carried their project to a new level of social engineering. Similar to the reconstruction of political legitimacy on laic principles, they initiated a process of redefining of the society on secular terms (Oran 1988). It was a three-tiered process. Subjugation of the orthodox religious authority to the political authority through the abolition of the caliphate was the first step. The elimination of unorthodox religious institutions and destruction of the informal religious networks constituted the second, and the eradication of low ranking clerics was the third and final step.

Institutional religion, which was organized around mosques and historically allied with the State, was subjugated to the secular political authority. In 1924, the abolition of the caliphate, which was the highest religious echelon in the new state and had a strong political potential, was an important step in controlling the political Islam in the new nation-state. Only after this dismantling was the weakened official form of religion supported and protected by the State, which was not against religion in principle but rather the clerical and institutional aspects of it. In 1923, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, founding father of the new nation, stressed this point in an interview with the French writer M. Pernaud: 'Turkish nation should be more religious, that is to say, should be religious in its all purity. I believe in my religion just as I believe in the truth. There is nothing in my religion against conscious [sic] and in

conflict with progress' (Arsan 1961: 70).[19] His emphasis on the rationality of the pure Islam might be interpreted as a precursor to the liquidation of the political and social aspects of religion in the modern Turkey. While the new nation-state sought ways of weakening and controlling institutional religion, it also discredited popular religion. Atatürk in his interview with Pernaud was also setting the discursive basis of this attack on popular religion: 'This Asian nation that gave independence to Turkey bears in itself another, more complex, [and] artificial religion made of superstitions. However, these ignorant, these poor [people] will be enlightened when it is the time. If they cannot reach the light, that is to say, they would ruin themselves. We will save them' (Arsan 1961: 70).[20] Popular religion was seen as superstitious and faced with political oppression and elimination from the public sphere. In the new regime, there was an open hostility towards the folk cults organized around the tombs of saints. Atatürk, during his August 30, 1925 speech in Kastamonu, clearly expressed this hostility towards saint cults. He stated, 'It is a blot to hope for help from the dead for a civilized community' (Arsan 1961: 218).[21] Three months later, dervish lodges, tombs, and shrines were banned and closed down. Lastly, anticlerical policies of the nation-state brought religious education to a halt in Turkey between 1924 and 1930. Hence, the new state also eliminated the dissentient class of low ranking clerics, who contested the political authority on several occasions during the Ottoman era.

This process 'pushed the faith dimension of the religion to the margins of the society, nominal Islam remained central to Turkish society as its culture and identity' (Cagaptay 2006: 15). The new regime's secularism and positivism also led to the emergence of a new elite 'endowed with a cultural capital rather than a financial power, who were faithful to the interests of the nation-state and were dedicated to the values of secularism and progress' (Göle 1997: 50). In the second half of the century, as a result of the democratization in politics and liberalization in economy, Islamist movements appeared and contested both the nominal Islam and the secular elite. The Islamist movements trained their own elite – engineers, intellectuals, and covered women – to counter the secular elite. However, the new elite began to acquire the same cultural capital as the republican elites through secular education, parliamentary politics, and participation in public sphere. This acculturation process, according to Göle, resulted in a de facto *secularization* independent from the will of Islamists. However, this interactive development resulted in the emergence of two different understandings of secularism in Turkey (Kuru 2006). On the one hand, the Kemalist elite developed a rigid and monolithic secularist understanding perceiving secularity as the containment of religion and the religious in their *proper places*: respectively the individual's conscience and the private sphere. On the other hand, the Islamist understanding of secularity evolved towards a state neutrality toward religion and tolerance of the visibility of religious signifiers. The struggle and negotiations between the two also took place in the cultural sphere. In result, cultural signifiers such as the Nasreddin Hodja figure are formed out of these negotiations and also registered this process.

Islamic Restoration and the Appropriation of the Local Culture Through the Festive Space

The pressures on popular religion relatively loosened along with the transition to a multiple political party system in 1946. In this democratization atmosphere, the new regime's approach to religion changed too. This process might be regarded as a beginning of an Islamic restoration. For instance, *Ezan*, the call for prayer in Arabic, was allowed after 18 years. The ban on the tombs was removed and they were opened to visitors in this period. However, the removal of the bans was limited. Only the tombs of the historical figures were opened. Religiously significant places, such as shrines, were excluded from this process. The tomb of Nasreddin Hodja was opened to visitors during this process. The removal of the ban on his tomb suggests that he was considered as a historical figure rather than a religious figure in the local folklore. It is not very plausible to assume that the popular beliefs were forgotten within two decades. However, it is probable that the pressure on these practices continued. Cem, a former guard of the tomb, asserted that he witnessed people throwing coins into the tomb before making a wish.[22] He also claimed that he constantly tried to prevent this since the government was against the use of the tomb as a medium for popular religious practices. Hence, even though the tomb was open to visitors, popular religion practices were not allowed on the tomb site. It is plausible to argue that during the secularization and modernization movement the tomb had been desacralized as a space. It ceased to be a religious space and was turned into a mere touristic site. The tomb was regarded as a building that people visited for non-religious, recreational reasons. The initiation of the Nasreddin Hodja Festival in 1959 had become a means of reviving the suppressed aspects of the local culture. Turning the tomb into a core ritual site made it possible to recover some aspects of the outlawed popular religion practices in new, festive forms. Nasreddin Hodja also regained his respected position in the community.

Conclusion

This appropriation or re-appropriation of the local culture is not a mere reintroduction of the suppressed aspects of the culture. In a sense, the festival mediates the rebirth of an old space in a new form. It helps local people to construct new symbols, meanings, and webs of significance on the old ground. Hence, the festive space functions as a bridge between the past and the present as well as between the traditional and the novel. While the people of Akşehir raise Nasreddin Hodja from the dead, they do not bring a saint back to life, but a sage, a secular humanist who is much more respectable than a saint in secular Turkey.

The European reincarnations of the Nasreddin Hodja figure rely on this novel formation of Nasreddin Hodja and construct their difference not only from the non-Muslim majority but also from Muslim fundamentalism. The Nasreddin Hodja

figure is instrumental in this construction on two levels. First and foremost, Nasreddin Hodja proves to be an inclusive cultural signifier. It is acceptable not only for the members of the Turkish minority holding different ideas about their ethno-religious identity, but also for the members of the host society. The humanist discourse constructed around the Nasreddin Hodja figure as well as the archetypical old wise man embodied in this figure, which exists in every culture, facilitate the acceptance of him as a cultural/religious signifier of Turco-Europeans. The Nasreddin Hodja figure also provides an opportunity for being selective: it resists Islamist misappropriations while representing Islamic values. Therefore, Turco-Europeans find a relevant means to construct their difference not only from the larger non-Muslim society, but also from Muslim fundamentalism.

The Nasreddin Hodja Festival in Rotterdam and the statue in Brussels allow Turco-Europeans to perform and display their cultural difference as well as belong to the locality. This is a beginning of a successful cultural integration. Because, as Homi Bhabha puts it, 'Terms of cultural engagement, whether antagonistic or affiliative, are produced performatively. The representation of difference must not be hastily read as the reflection of *pre-given* ethnic or cultural traits set in the fixed tablet of tradition. The social articulation of difference, from the minority perspective, is a complex, on-going negotiation that seeks to authorize cultural hybridities that emerge in moments of historical transformation' (Bhabha 1994: 2).

Notes

1. Nasreddin is the first name of this figure and Hodja is indeed his title that shows that he is a Muslim cleric. However, his ranking is a little ambiguous since the title, Hodja, is used for judges, professors, and officiating leaders of a mosque.
2. The term first appeared in a periodical in the United States in 1991. In 1996, the Runnymede Trust, which is an independent research and social policy agency in the United Kingdom, formed a committee to contest the popular anti-Muslim prejudices and note the dangers of these prejudices for the society. The committee published a report in 1997 and defined Islamophobia as a form of racism, hatred of Islam, and dislike of Muslims (Runnymede Trust 1997).
3. In Britain, a study investigating the levels of self reported racial and religious discrimination demonstrates that in the aftermath of the September 11th attack, UK Muslims experienced a significantly increased discrimination ranging from ignoring and staring to insults and physical attacks (Sheridan 2006). Muslims in Sweden also became the object of an intensified Islamophobic discrimination and violence (Larsson 2005). The terrorist attacks also changed the lives of Muslims living in Slovenia, where the latent intolerance of Islam gradually increased and first became explicit, then institutionalized (Dragos 2005).
4. In Slovenia, the public and politicians have continuously denied the Muslim minority's demand for a mosque for more than 35 years. 'In Slovenia, there are around 3,000 Catholic Churches for 1,135,626 Catholics (as recorded in the last census in 2002), which means approximately 378 Catholics per church. To ensure the same ratio for the country's 47, 488 Muslims, approximately 125 religious buildings would have to be made available to them. And yet they still do not even have a single one' (Dragos 2005: 299). Similarly, the Muslim community of approximately 200,000 people living in Athens has been continuously denied a religious building. The city has several mosques from the Ottoman period. However, these mosques are currently used as museums, where praying is not allowed.

5. The distinction between Islam and Islamism needs to be emphasized: Islam signifies a body of religious beliefs and cultural codes; However, Islamism refers to politico-religious dogmatism.
6. Dutch populist politician Geert Wilders called mosques 'palaces of hatred' after the murder of filmmaker Theo van Gogh.
7. The inauguration declares, 'Grande fête ce samedi après-midi pour lińauguration de la statue de Nasreddin Hoca juste en face du local PS rue Rubens. Nasrettin Hoca est un maître dĺumour plein de sagesse, la personnification de la conception du monde et de la vie typiquement turque, pleine dińtelligence et désprit, qui incite à réfléchir tout en faisant rire'. Retrieved 20 December 2006, from website of the Belgium newspaper *Belexpress*: http://www.belexpresse.be/go.php?go=20504d7&do=details&return=summary&pg=2
8. '. . . Ama dunyada ve ulkemizde insanlar hala birbirlerini kirip dokuyor. Testiden de su yerine kan akiyor. . . sevgi ve hosgru mayamizi calalim (Pervasız [Akşehir], 5 July 1995: 1).'
9. For a discussion of the difference between mystical and folkloric religion see, Certeau (1988: 24) and for a discussion of the folklorization of religion see (171–172).
10. A friend asked Hodja, 'How would you like to be buried when you die?' Hodja answered: 'Head downwards. If we are right way up in this world, I want to try being upside-down in the next'.
11. According to Mikhail Bakhtin 'grotesque realism' is a mode of corporeal representation of the body. It forms a basis for abuses, oaths, and curses. It shapes an abusive and degrading language. It is a mode of bodily humor. Grotesque representations of folk humor have a degrading effect. The lower parts of the body degrade and destruct the seriousness. However, they are also related to the fertilizing and regenerative imagery of genital organs. Because of this, images of urine and excrement are related to birth, regeneration, and welfare (Bakhtin 1984: 27–31, 148).
12. Hermes, a mischievous trickster figure in mythology, a farting, shitting baby, sullied the Greek god Apollo. In Shinto mythology, Susa-nö-o spread his feces in the halls of the palace of Ameterasu, goddess of the sun, and defecated on her throne. In Zuñi dirt rituals, participants drank urine and ate excrement. During the medieval Feast of Fools, the Catholic Church and clergy were desecrated. The ritualistic or symbolic desecration of the sacred was regenerative. Dirt debased the elevated gods, goddesses, religions, or the religious elements. It was instrumental for change, alteration, and periodic renewal (Hyde 1998: 173–199).
13. For an account of the formation of Turkish national identity during the late Ottoman and republican eras see Cagaptay (2006); Karpat (2000).
14. İhtifalci Ziya Bey states, 'Duvarin ustundeki demir parmakliga rasgelen bir bez parcasi, puskul teli, pamuk ipligi baglamis oldugundan parmaklik gorunmez olmustur.' İhtifalci Ziya Bey, quoted in Konyalı, *Akşehir*, 467.
15. Konyalı notes that the inside shot was originally published in *Malumat Mecmuası*, 397 (1316 [1900 A.D.]). However, there is an inconsistency between the year and the issue number that Konyalı cited. The last issue of 1316 was 271. Therefore, there must be a mistake or misprint in either the year or the issue number that Konyalı cited.
16. People of Akşehir and their descendents, even if they settled in other parts of the country or world, often refer themselves as grand daughters or grand sons of Nasreddin Hodja especially in order to make a point about humor.
17. I changed names of interviewees in this study in order to protect their privacy. I used actual names of people when citing professionals in the media and in the government. Interview by author, 02 September 2006, Istanbul, tape recording in the possession of the author.
18. Interview by author, 20 September 2006, Akşehir, tape recording in the possession of the author.
19. 'Türk milleti daha dindar olmalıdır, yani bütün sadeliği ile dindar olmalıdır demek istiyoruz. Dinime bizzat hakikate nasıl inanıyorsam, buna da öyle inanıyorum. Şuura muhalif, terakkiye mani hiçbir şey ihtiva etmiyor.'

20. 'Türkiye'ye istiklalini veren bu Asya milletinin içinde daha karışık, sun î, itikad-ı batıladan bir din daha vardır. Fakat bu cahiller, bu acizler sırası gelince tenevvür edeceklerdir. Onlar ziyaya takarrüp edemezlerse kendilerini mahv ve mahkum etmişler demektir.'
21. 'Ölülerden medet ummak medeni bir cemiyet için şindir.'
22. Interview by author, 23 September 2006, Akşehir, tape recording in the possession of the author.

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Hidden Bodies in Islam: Secular Muslim Identities in Modern (and Premodern) Societies

Richard C. Martin

This chapter begins by asking why there has been a general lack of interest in secular Muslims, especially among historians of religion and Islamicists.[1] This, despite the unconfirmed belief by many observers that a very large percentage of the world Muslim population do not adhere strictly, if much at all, to the fundamental beliefs and practices of their religion. That is, while retaining some form of Muslim, if not Islamic, identity, they lead secular lives and think through most of life's problems and challenges by means of secular world views, though they may not necessarily renounce their faith or think ill of family and friends who are religious. The significance of secularism among Muslims goes largely unexamined in most works on Islam and Muslim societies. On the other hand, it is in the writings novelists, such as Nasruddin Farah, Orhan Pamuk and Naguib Mahfouz, that Western readers learn something about the complex and contested relationships Muslims have with the state and with Islamist, liberal, progressive and secular Muslims, as well as with non-Muslims. In religious studies, Islamic beliefs and practices, the *usul al-din* and the '*ibadat*, have been fundamental to the representation of Muslim identities. This paper does not challenge the usefulness of essentialist definitions of Islam based on normative beliefs and practices; it simply asserts that this is not the whole story.

A related concern of this study is that while most Islamicist historians of religion are silent on the roles and contributions of secular Muslims, many have become quite critical and vocal about the threat that secularization and secularism present to Islam and (religious) Muslims, in much the same way that Western theologians like to fret and worry about the threats of the secular modern world to Christian faith and practice. The eighteenth century Enlightenment, and the secular criticism of organized religion it produced, have found serious critics among theologians, postmodernists and some critical theorists. That criticism has been joined by many non-Muslim religious studies scholars. An interesting question is: Why? Is it the case, as Jacques Waardenburg and other scholars have shown, that history of religions scholarship is not only a child of the Enlightenment, but also a product of

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theological constructions of religion?[2] Moreover, may it not also be the case, as some Muslim intellectuals lament and as Clifford Geertz (1982: 25) once amusingly described, that Orientalists with theological backgrounds have wanted less to attack and belittle the Islamic 'other' than (with benign arrogance?) to help and improve it?

These are provocative and unresolved questions. The pages that follow present an introduction to a larger project that seeks to broaden public interest in Islam beyond radical Islamic movements. It seeks an escape from the iron jaws of *synechdoche* – in literary representation, letting the part stand for the whole – or al-Qa'ida for all of Islam. It attempts to see secularism with respect to Islam in history in a different light than usual, and to probe the ethics of scholarship in treating the subject of secularism and secular Muslims.

Introduction

Since August Comte wrote his *Course on Positive Philosophy* in 1830, scholars have been wrestling with the relationship of religion to the secular modern world. The result a century after Comte's project on sociological positivism was secularization theory in the social sciences, which sought to explain the decline of religion in modern times; post-Enlightenment positivism was influential throughout much of the twentieth century. Beginning in the 1980s, with the rise of a number of new cults, evangelical resurgence and the spectacular rise of fundamentalist social movements within virtually all of the major world religions (politically dramatized for Americans on television by the Iranian Revolution and the taking of American hostages), sociologists began to rethink and criticize secularization theory as failing to explain the obvious counter-intuitive evidence that religion, far from being dead, was experiencing vital new life even as its obituaries were still being written in many parts of the academy.

Twenty-five years ago, in a volume edited by Phillip Hammond titled *The Sacred in a Secular Age* (1985), twenty- some sociologists of religion – many of them scholars in religious studies – argued the need to dismantle or readjust secularization theory to accommodate the obvious facts. More recently, in a 1999 volume that featured essays by religious practitioner-scholars, Peter L. Berger went beyond merely announcing the death of secularization theory; his recent writing attacks the secularism of the academy itself, which he describes as university intelligentsia around the world. He differentiates the secular mindset of the academy from the larger society, which he believes is predominantly religious (except in Europe). He posits that, for the past few decades, masses of ordinary people outside the academy have been returning to religious lives or creating new religious movements in defiance of lingering secularism. Indeed, Berger and other religious sociologists of religion have argued that a post-Enlightenment transformation into a secular modernity never really happened.[3] Berger's edited volume is called: *The Desecularization of the World: Resurgent Religion and World Politics*.[4] Along with the Chicago church

historian and creator of the Fundamentalism Project, Martin E. Marty, Berger's critique of secularism is also found among scholars in Islamic studies, for example, in the writings of John Esposito and John Voll at Georgetown University.[5] In this case we have religious and secular non-Muslim scholars, mostly American, joining the project of Salafist and other conservative Muslims who regard secularization as inimical to Islam. One of the aims of the larger project this paper introduces is to make sense of the debate about secularism both among Muslim intellectuals and among scholars in the academy, particularly among scholars in Islamic studies, most of whom are non-Muslim and secular.

The Context of the Debate About Secularism in Recent Religious Studies

In following the many discourses about secularism and religion, Islam in particular, one finds a few major transformations in the study of Islam that have taken place and radically transformed the curriculum. Edward Said's critique of *Orientalism* in his 1978 book by that title is one example. To be in possession of the languages, historical knowledge and textual skills required to be an orientalist prior to 1978 was a matter of aspiration that few attained or disdained. To be accused of being an orientalist after 1978 – about the time that many Islamicist historians of religion of my generation began their teaching careers, often provoked denials and disclaimers by young scholars who, ironically, were trained by such well-known Orientalist scholars as Gustav von Grunebaum, Wilferd Madelung, Josef van Ess, H. A. R. Gibb, and others. Said's critique of Orientalism introduced an important new awareness of the political implications and the complicit involvement of Arabists and other Islamicists with Western imperialism and colonialism in Muslim lands. However, those who have taken up Islamic studies in the wake of 1980 have accepted the critique of Orientalism, primarily on ideological rather than scholarly grounds. Perhaps it was serendipitous, but certainly significant, that 1980 was also the moment of the Iranian Revolution, a time when the graduate students and young faculty of my generation not only turned away from Orientalism but toward the professional pursuit of commentary in the public sphere, particularly the media and as consultants inside the Beltway, on Islamic fundamentalism, regardless of their actual training.

More recently, *religiously justified violence* has become another topic that pervades religious studies discourse, and it has broadened the range of those claiming expertise about religion, especially Islam, to include critical theorists,[6] political scientists, journalists, politicians and other non-specialists in the history and languages of Muslim societies, as public discourse has focused increasingly on religious violence and terrorism. The vital center of virtually every analysis of religion and violence in the past nine years is the attack on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon on September 11, 2001. Very few articles and books on religion, regardless of their central topic, have neglected to mention the impact of 9/11 on the world we now live in. If 9/11 did not 'change everything,' as many commentators have

been fond of saying, it truly has changed a lot in the way we now go about the academic study of religion.[7]

The main purpose of this project is to clarify how *secularism* has become yet another topic that has divided scholars and transformed the way we talk in the academy about Islam. My interest in this topic arose when I began to realize, from firsthand knowledge, that in fact many Muslims I knew or observed when I traveled had secular lifestyles and ways of thinking. I observed that even in predominantly Muslim societies many Muslims did not pray five times a day, rigidly fast the entire month of Ramadan – if at all, or make arguments about their political views and social values from theological premises. Yet in most cases they seemed to be very much a part of, and at home in, the Muslim societies in which they lived. I realized that little was written about secular Muslims or secularism as part of the story of Islam in history. I began to wonder how these apparently 'secular' Muslims related to the Islam we write about in our textbooks – how they ought to be accounted for and presented in narrative histories of Muslim societies. However, I soon realized that the sociology of secular Muslims is disappointingly under-researched. (The best empirical work is being done by Charles Kurzman, professor of sociology at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.) This paper does not gather or analyze empirical evidence about secular Muslims in Europe, the United States, or in African and Asian Muslim societies, although I am very interested in the findings of social scientists on this topic. As a humanist, I look toward other information, such as novels, autobiographies, theological treatises and critical reflections that probe the Muslim human experience of the conflict of tradition and modernity.

Definitions and Positions

Definitions of secularism and secularization, like religion itself, are notably difficult. As concepts, they are contextual and space-time specific. People in different times and places mean different things when they reflect on their experience of the secular and secularism. Nonetheless, let me offer some generalizations that may serve at least as incipit guidelines. The term *secularism* is defined generally in the modern West as post-Enlightenment world views based on the findings of reason, experience and science. *Secularization*, by contrast, is usually defined as the social-historical process of differentiating religion – its institutions and its authority over human affairs – from other social aspects, such as politics, law, economics, and education, and their complete authority over public life. Secularism is regarded by many religious intellectuals as a philosophy that undercuts the moral, institutional and doctrinal authority of religion. I have just mentioned the work of Peter Berger and Martin E. Marty.[8] The project of desecularization, I would submit, bears critical attention as much as secularism. In other words, desecularization and resacralization projects have the potential to become as dogmatic and ideological in this century as secularization theory became in the mid-twentieth century. Put differently, we still need to make space in our interpretations of modern Islam for the reality that many

Muslims have secular identities, and that many such secularists are comfortable with having Muslim identities as well.

Secular Muslims usually share ethnic, linguistic, and national identities with confessing and practicing Muslims, among whom they often live, even in diaspora, and engage in commerce, celebrate religious and national holidays, intermarry, and so on. Secular Muslims are important, I argue, because they continue to be a part of, and interact with, confessing and practicing Muslims in matters that are vital to the larger body of the Muslim societies of which they are a part. CNN and other national and international news organizations are now using (without explaining) terms like 'secular Muslim' and 'secular Shi'ite' in their reportage. Behind the meaning of secular as 'non-practicing' in common parlance lies, I think, a deeper significance in media generated public discourse, namely, a pointed contrast between secular Muslims on the one hand with terrorists and militant Muslims on the other; i.e., good Muslims versus bad Muslims.[9] By contrast to Qur'an-citing 'terrorists,' secular Muslims are usually ignored by historians of religion. Following feminist theory and a touch of Agatha Christy, I refer to the absence of interest in secular Muslims in our scholarship as the case of the 'hidden bodies' in Islamic studies. Probing further, I want to know if that is an academic oversight or if there is perhaps some lingering theological motif of anti-secularism that has become a less than fully articulated subtext in post-Enlightenment history of religions scholarship?

The analytical application of the concept of 'Hidden Bodies' has been pilfered from feminist theory.[10] Women are often absent or consigned to the sidelines or supporting roles in male dominated historical narratives, literary and religious texts. The task of feminist criticism has been to excavate the existence of women and, more importantly, their roles in otherwise male-dominated narratives and histories. Similarly, this paper calls for the recognition of the existence of secular Muslims, against the background of an historiography that has by and large neglected the question of Islam and the secular, or taken a defensive stance against secularism as a perceived threat to religious authority and identity in contemporary society. The problem of secular Islam differs from feminist criticism in one significant respect. The assertion that women are important, if often unreported, actors in religious texts, literature and prevailing histories requires little imagination for the modern academic mind. But can the same be said of secular Muslims? What – or who – is a secular Muslim? Can a Muslim who holds secular world views be said to be a Muslim, to count as an important topic in our textbooks on Islam? To claim that they do is more contested and harder to establish, although bringing some clarity to these issues is long overdue, especially in history of religions scholarship.

Tapestries of Secular Muslims

Although definitions of 'secular Muslim' are as yet unrehearsed in the literature, preliminary research indicates at least three observable ways many Muslims embrace the secular modern world while at the same time retaining some sense of

Muslim Identity. For the sake of discussion, the following is a provisional *typology* of what 'secular' means when applied to certain Muslims. At this stage the analysis is quite experimental and is perhaps best seen in the more fluid and dynamic sense of *tapestries* or variations of broadly distinguishable patterns of secularism and Muslim identity woven into the fabric of Muslim societies. For the sake of analysis, then, three types of Muslim secularism are examined for common characteristics.

The examples discussed here are modern and indeed contemporary, but a corollary of the main thesis is that these patterns of Islamic secularism are not simply products of Muslim religious world views encountering modernity and the West. Similar critical *secular* ideas and engagements with Islamic religious authority and configurations of power existed in premodern Muslim societies as well. In other words, arguments made by proponents of desecularization and resacralization (or in Weberian terms, *re-enchantment*), by scholars such as Martin E. Marty and Peter Berger, referred to above, are wrong at least in the sense of the explicit claim that secularism is exclusively an historical result of eighteenth-century Enlightenment modernity.

The first type is the *hard secularist*, who denies the validity of traditional Islamic belief and practice. In Islamic theological and legal discourse they are *kafirs* (deniers of religion, ingrates) or *munafiqun* (blacksliders) and as such the judgment of religion against them is severe. The hard secularist usually professes atheism or agnosticism, although seldom publicly. One who is open about disbelief in the *usul al-din*, the theological fundamental beliefs of Islam, is the British screenwriter Hanif Kureishi, who will be discussed below. Another notorious example is Tariq Ali, the leftist, Marxist British Muslim writer and public intellectual, who writes criticism, fiction, and non-fiction works on Muslim figures and historical topics. A third is the Syrian philosopher and critic, Sadeq al-'Azm, an openly secular and agnostic Muslim intellectual who nonetheless engages religious intellectuals, such as the respected Egyptian jurist Yusuf al-Qaradawi, on their own terms, in the traditional manner of Islamic disputation and debate. Other examples will be discussed in the larger project. Taken together they form a rich tapestry of secular criticism of religious beliefs and practices, particularly (but not exclusively) Islam, yet in various ways they retain Muslim identities.

In his 2003 book, *The Clash of Fundamentalisms: Crusades, Jihads, and Modernity*, Tariq Ali excoriated both Usama bin Ladin and George W. Bush and their agendas and supporters. In an introduction worthy of Voltaire's wilting criticism of the eighteenth-century French clergy and pious frauds, Ali states that as a child in Lahore, raised in a communist family, he never bought into the Islamic beliefs and practices of the Muslims he grew up among in Lahore. In several vignettes, he describes his amused disdain for pious relatives and parasitic mullahs alike, though he expresses regret that because of his disdain for religion he never learned Arabic – a tool he might have used more to his advantage in his historical writing and religious criticism. He recalls that although he became a humanist when he left Lahore for college in Britain, his interest in Islam lay dormant until the First Gulf War of 1990, which he refers to as the Third Oil War.

Like many Islamic scholars in the West who write empathetically about Muslim struggles against Western imperialism, colonialism, and post-colonial social and cultural upheavals across Muslim societies, Ali was distressed by the fact that, in his words, '[t]he 1990 war was accompanied by a wave of crude anti-Arab propaganda. The level of ignorance displayed by most pundits and politicians was distressing. I began to ask myself questions which, until then, had barely seemed relevant.' Ali goes on to explain his awakening concern with what, for him and for several other secular Muslims, was 'the Islam problem' in modern history:

> Why had Islam not undergone a Reformation? Why had the Ottoman Empire been left untouched by the Enlightenment? A reply necessitated long hours in the library. I began to study Islamic history quite obsessively, and later travelled to the regions where it had been made, concentrating on its clashes with Western Christendom. My study and travels, which helped greatly in writing the first three novels of my planned Quintet, are not yet over. (Ali 2003: 23)

The tendency among some Muslim secularists to worry about the lack of a period of Enlightenment in Islamic history is a topic this project must address, for it relates to the thesis to be argued elsewhere that aspects of secular Islam are premodern and thus indigenously *Islamic*.

In concluding this discussion of what I have termed 'hard' Islamic secularism, it is important to note two things. First, it is not uncommon for secularists who deny religion to engage intellectually and socially with Islam, its political history and especially its history of encounters with Christianity and the West. The occasion for this concern is the realization of hard secularists, like Tariq Ali, that politicians, media pundits, and non-Muslims – especially Europeans and Americans – do not understand Islam; they get it wrong, and in misrepresenting Islam they encourage political violence.

In this urge to resist non-Muslim criticism of or ignorance about Islam – to set the record straight about Islamic history, society and culture – lies the basis for a form for Muslim identity, a secular identity to be sure, but nonetheless a feeling of ownership of aspects of Islamic civilization, of one's cultural heritage, such as the scientific and cultural achievements of the Abbasid empire, the often peaceful symbiotic social and political relationships with non-Muslim religious communities in Spain and elsewhere in the middle ages, the poetry and spiritual lives of Sufis, and even the cadences and palpable rhythms of daily life in Islamic environments, for example the call to prayer and the reciting of the Qur'an and poetry on special public occasions. In his opening paragraph, after lamenting the noisy intrusion of microphones and loudspeakers at the disposal of muezzins in urban spaces crowded with mosques, Tariq Ali nonetheless can say: 'The early morning call of the muezzin was like a pleasant sounding alarm clock' (2003: 15).

The second type of Muslim secularist may be termed the 'soft secularist', who also the may or may not be open about being a secularist non-believer/non-practitioner. Soft secularists generally choose to be silent about or simply not focus on their personal religious commitments or lack thereof; they are not selling a view of religion. However, they are generally concerned about what they regard as dangerous political and social tendencies in radical Islam. A soft secularist may wish to

construct his or her identity as a Muslim in a more political sense, such as opposing corrupt post-colonial or Islamist theocratic governments. Or they may seek in secularist affiliations a defense against radical and absolutist tendencies among Islamist groups. Soft secularism among Muslims shares with hard secularism various patterns of living a secular life. The chief difference between these two types in the present analysis is that whereas hard secularists openly deny religion, soft secularists do not.

One example that pops right up out of the Internet with the click of a mouse is a Beliefnet.com definition of a secular Muslim. In an article titled 'What Kind of Muslim Are You?' Beliefnet provided the following characteristics for a secular Muslim:

> You are a cultural or secular Muslim. You might identify yourself with the Muslim community, but like Kareem Abdul Jabbar, you have no problems with beer commercials. Islam provides you with more of a social setting or community than a set of religious beliefs. You may live by many of the basic principles of Islam, but you do not necessarily choose to attribute them to Islam. You are probably not too comfortable with many of the social restrictions often associated with Muslim organizations or societies.[11]

A more nuanced characterization of secular Islam, generally of the soft secularist variety, has emerged from Muslim humanist organizations. One example is Tewfik Allal, a French trade unionist originally from Morocco, born of Algerian parents. With his wife and feminist activist Bridgette Bardette, Allal published a secularist manifesto with Islam as the main religious referent in the 'International Humanist News' on November 4, 2004, in which they asserted the following;

> We are of Muslim culture; we oppose misogyny, homophobia, *anti-Semitism* and the political use of Islam. We reassert a living *secularism*. Some of us are believers, others are agnostics or atheists. We all condemn firmly the declarations and acts of misogyny, homophobia, and anti-Semitism that we have heard and witnessed for a while now here in France, and that are carried out in the name of Islam. These three characteristics typify the political *Islamism* that has been forceful for so long in several of our countries of origin. We fought against them there, and we are committed to fighting against them again – here.

The statement went on to offer a political explanation as to why the secular way of life for most Muslims in France (and Europe generally) was difficult and opposed in favor of Islamism:

> Islam has not received sufficient recognition in France. There is a lack of places to pray. There are not enough chaplaincies nor enough cemeteries. We are aware that young French people, the sons and daughters of Muslim immigrants, are still held back socially and suffer discrimination. All monitoring bodies recognize this. Consequently, "French-style" secularism has lost a great deal of value in the eyes of these young people.

The advice of the secularist-humanists to the Islamists of France was to join ranks with other secularists in Europe rather than continue pursuing Islamist visions of an imaginary Muslim umma, which runs against the stream of modern European social and political society.[12]

In April of 2007, again under the sponsorship of a broader humanist organization, the Center for Inquiry,[13] a group of politically conservative non-Muslims and secular Muslims met in Florida and produced a longer, more nuanced but similar in tone statement called 'The St. Petersburg Declaration.' In part, it read:

> We are secular Muslims, and secular persons of Muslim societies. We are believers, doubters, and unbelievers, brought together by a great struggle, not between the West and Islam, but between the free and the unfree. We affirm the inviolable freedom of the individual conscience. We believe in the equality of all human persons. We insist upon the separation of religion from state and the observance of universal human rights. We find traditions of liberty, rationality, and tolerance in the rich histories of pre-Islamic and Islamic societies. These values do not belong to the West or the East; they are the common moral heritage of humankind.[14]

The two main keynoted speakers were Ibn Warraq, author of *Why I am not a Muslim* [15] and several other critical assaults on Islam, and Irshad Manji, author of *The Trouble With Islam Today: A Muslim's Call for Reform in her Faith* (2005), a feminist critique of male suppression of Muslim women that nonetheless seeks to secularize (that is, modernize) and reform Islam from within. While Ibn Warraq is a hard secular Muslim and Irshad Manji would seem to be a soft secular Muslim, most who attended the conference that produced the Declaration (attended by this author as an observer) were non-Muslim political conservatives who, in discussions, expressed strong negative criticisms of Islamists, whom they often seemed to equate with all Muslims. Indeed, one of the problems secular Muslims have in being taken seriously by other Muslims and by scholars of Islam is clear: because some of them offer critiques of certain aspects of Islam, they are fawned over by political and cultural conservatives in the West, who see secular Muslim critics of extremist and even traditional Islam as validating anti-Islamic political, cultural and religious attitudes.

One of the first times a group of Muslims said to this author in public that they were secular Muslims was at Stanford University, where I was a visiting scholar in the winter and spring of 2003. I had given a public lecture on Islam and secularism to an audience of about one hundred persons from the university and surrounding community of Palo Alto. I made the case that the phrase 'secular Muslim' was not an oxymoron and tried to define what being a secular Muslim might mean. At the end of the talk I took questions – with some trepidation, for secular Islam has its critics even at Stanford! In the first row in front of the lectern were half a dozen middle aged South Asian adults. One woman raised her hand immediately. 'That's what we are,' she said, gesturing to those sitting around her. I didn't get what she was trying to say, at first. After a moment I realized that she was offering to validate the point of my lecture. It occurred to me later that this may have been the first time she and her friends were allowed to have, or had been recognized as having, a Muslim identity by an Islamic studies scholar. Nonetheless, it seems to be the case that secular Muslims such as those in the audience at Stanford, far from being alienated from confessing and practicing relatives and friends, often participate in the '*ids* or religious holidays, send their children to mosques or Muslim schools or centers to learn about their heritage, and show pride in their combined national-ethnic-religious heritage. In other words, the largest sector of the tapestry of soft secularism does not consist only of Muslim scholars, novelists and public intellectuals, but rather ordinary citizens of societies where most of their time is taken up with quotidian concerns. Nonetheless, one does not find in my textbook, *Islamic Studies: A History of Religions Approach* (1982), or in other such texts,[16] much if any discussion of this topic, but one often does find critiques of secularism.

Political Secularism

Another form of Muslim secularism, related to soft secularism deserves brief mention in this paper, with more attention in the larger project, namely, political secularism. This type of secularism has grown in recent years among Muslim liberals who may or may not be personally religious but generally they are not deniers of religion or deniers of the importance of religion in contemporary Islamic states. Political secularists believe that, in the modern political realities of nation-states, a public policy of secularism is an important guarantee for all religious communities among citizens to practice their religion – or not – without interference by either anti-religious or extreme religious policies informing the workings of the state. One example of a political secularist is Saad Eddin Ibrahim.

Like the secularists behind the St. Petersburg Declaration, Saad Ibrahim advocates his view of the need for secularism in Muslim societies through an organization, in his case the Ibn Khaldun Center in Cairo.[17] The richness of the tapestry of soft secularism is illustrated by Ibrahim's focus on democracy and international guarantees of human rights, rather than organizations affiliated with secularist humanism, which target organized religion in their projects. In other words, although Ibrahim is a secular human rights advocate and democrat, he does not advance criticism of Islamist religious and political agendas. To the contrary, Saad Ibrahim has criticized Islamic governments for repressing Islamists and excluding them from having a democratic voice in the affairs of society and the state.

In an interview published by 'Worldpress.org' with Ibrahim when he was released from prison a few years ago, where he had been incarcerated for acting against the Egyptian government of President Hosni Mubarak,[18] he told about the experience of being in prison with large numbers of Islamists and members of Ayman al-Zawahiri's *Jama'a Islamiyya*. Saad Ibrahim, regarded as a secular Muslim, was director of the Ibn Khaldun Center, then in Zamalek, Cairo, which, among other things, sought to help members of *Jama'a Islamiyya* deprogram and enter back into Egyptian public life and citizenry, able to take part as committed Muslims in democratic society. Ibrahim was asked by the interviewer: 'What was your relationship with Islamist political prisoners as a secular rights activist?' He replied:

> Everybody in prison has a common sympathetic temperament toward everybody else. They're all in the same boat. You get the standard thing that you read about—that everybody's innocent. I was the only one who wasn't innocent. I have done everything that the government was saying I did—the election monitoring, the reporting on human rights in Egypt. So that [truthfulness] also was refreshing for the [Islamists].

Although apparently he did not pray with his Muslim and Islamist fellow prisoners, who included those who participated in the assassination of Anwar al-Sadat, those who killed Western tourists at the Egyptian Museum, and those who attacked and tried to kill the Egyptian Nobel laureate for literature, Naguib Mahfouz, there was considerable empathy and mutual appreciation between the Islamists and the secularist for a shared sense of the violation of an Islamic sense of justice and an

ordered society. Earlier, in the 1970s, Saad Ibrahim had interviewed and analyzed President Sadat's assassins and published a widely read analysis of their motivations. Even though he was known to be a secularist and non-practicing, they trusted him and he in turn developed a rapport and, I would submit, a common partial identity with them as Muslims – both he and they being at the polar extreme ends of Muslim identity.

Secularism in relation to the *shar'ia* is the centerpiece of an important new project by Abdullahi an-Na'im, which illustrates another example of political secularism. An-Na'im's analysis is concerned to locate the role of the *shari'a* in modern Islamic states. In addition, Abduh (as he is known to his colleagues and friends) wants to define the positive role of the secular in partnership with religion in modern Islamic societies. He is currently writing a work of extreme importance and broad circulation even in early drafts on understanding secularism from a Muslim perspective, to be published by Harvard University Press. Since that work is not yet available for quotation,[19] I will concentrate on a recently published article in which he outlines his project on the synergistic relationship of human rights, religion, and secularism.[20] His project as a liberal Muslim is to deny that human rights and Islam are inimical and to establish that the *shari'a* can serve the religious and moral interests of Muslims in a secular state context. Indeed, he claims that the synergistic relationship of human rights, religion and secularism is necessary for any of the three components to properly exist in the modern nation state. His definition of secularism is worth quoting at length:

> Since historical experience has shown that the exclusivity of religion tends to undermine possibilities of peaceful coexistence and solidarity among different communities of believers, secularism has evolved as the means of ensuring the possibility of pluralistic political community among different religious communities. The key feature of secularism is its ability to safeguard the *pluralism* of political community, subject to significant differences as to how that might be achieved in practice. ... [H]owever, secularism must be understood in a *dynamic and deeply contextual* sense for each society, rather than preconceived notions, such as the so-called strict separation of "church and state", to be transplanted from one setting to another.[21]

Toward the end of his paper, an-Na'im takes up the nagging popular view that Islam and secularism are incompatible.[22] He argues against the tendency to define secularism narrowly as growing out of the experience of the Christian context of Western Europe and America since the eighteenth century, leading to legal requirements of separation of church and state and/or the disestablishment of religion. He believes this makes room for the possibility of Islamic models of synergy between human rights, religion, and secularism. He also notes 'that the term "secularism" in its European and North American sense has come to Africa and Asia in the suspect company of colonialism'. To redress this problem, an-Na'im's project is to encourage each society to analyze (interpret) its traditional and religious sources in order to emphasize the values and teachings that support conceptions of civil and human rights that are essential in modern, democratic, secular states. He does not see this as an ideal so much as the proper understanding of the potential working relationship of human rights, religion and secularism.

In short, the main thrust of political secularism among Muslim intellectuals, such as Saad Ibrahim and Abdullahi an-Na'im, is the claim that democratic secular states offer the best opportunities for Muslims, either in the majority or minority, to preserve the rights and values of religious communities. While some hard and soft secularists are critical and even dismissive of especially the more extreme elements of Islamism, both Ibrahim and an-Na'im have constructed views of secularism that reach out to religious Muslims, including Islamists, to insist on including their voices in debates in the democratic marketplace of ideas. While Saad Ibrahim has nonetheless maintained a secular identity, Abdullahi an-Na'im has made public his Sunni Muslim religious identity as well as his traditional Sudanese cultural identity. Given the number of titles of books and conferences on Islam, human rights, and democracy, political secularism may prove to be a large and growing tapestry of common, though indeed contested, cause among Muslim intellectuals.

Belief and Muslim Identity

Another major problem of secular Islam is the relationship of religious belief to Muslim social identity. An anecdote told by the British/South Asian screen writer Hanif Kureishi raises the problem in an interesting way. In a semi-autobiographical article titled 'My Uncle the Muslim Atheist' which appeared in *The Guardian* eight years ago, Hanif Kureishi mentions a favorite uncle he spent some time with when he visited Karachi in the 1980s.[23] Kureishi was the screenwriter for the recent film 'Venus' starring Peter O'Toole as well as 'My Son the Fanatic' and many other films, books and articles. Kureishi's uncle was, by the 1980s, a disillusioned Marxist; he inspired a character in Kureishi's earlier film, 'Sammy and Rosie Get Laid.' The uncle's disillusionment led him ironically to embrace Thatcherism and Reaganism in the late 1980s. (Many other leftist Muslim intellectuals ended up advocating Islamism.) Kureishi reports a conversation with his uncle that captures the complexity of relating religious identity to theological beliefs:

> I have often been asked how it's possible for someone like me to carry two quite different world-views within, of Islam and the west; not, of course, that I do. Once my uncle said to me with some suspicion: "You're not a Christian, are you?" "No," I said. "I'm an atheist." "So am I," he replied. "But I am still Muslim." "A Muslim atheist?" I said. "It sounds odd." He said: "Not as odd as being nothing, an unbeliever."

The story is interesting for many reasons, among them that religion, atheism, and secularism all share a characteristic: such 'isms' have no existence in the world apart from the social actors who comprise them. But are atheism, agnosticism and religion mutually exclusive? Can individuals in Muslim or Christian societies adhere to more than one of the above? Belief systems are terribly slippery things to grasp and analyze. A central claim of this paper is that if someone can identify both as a Muslim and as an atheist or an agnostic, then certainly she or he could be a Muslim and hold secular world views. Another way to put that is to acknowledge that Muslims

share with Christians, Jews and others the social fact of living in the modern, secular world; some more than others. This social fact applies to Tariq Ali, Rashid Ghannouchi **and** Ayman az-Zawahiri, albeit with quite different patterns of Muslim identity.

It may be useful to our consideration of this topic to distinguish between Islam and its attribute 'Islamic' on the one hand and 'Muslim' as a qualifier on the other. In a forthcoming book on debating Islamism featuring essays by Don Emmerson, a Stanford University political scientist, and Daniel M. Varisco, an anthropologist at Hofstra University, Emmerson points out that *Islam* looks vertically to a transhuman ideal, while *Muslim* looks horizontally to social beings who live in the world. Throughout much of this paper, reference has usually been made to *Muslim* identities, and *Muslim* social movements, such as Islamist reform movements. It is in that latter, social, historical dimension – the dimension that can be observed and analyzed by Muslim and non-Muslim scholars – that we can speak about secularization, secularism, and secular Muslims, along with Islamists, Islamic modernists, liberals, and progressives.

Akeel Bilgrami, a philosopher at Columbia University in New York, has written on the problem of religious identity, and Muslim identity in particular. He argues that identity with Islam, or any religion, is contextually determined. In an article titled 'What is a Muslim? Fundamental Commitment and Cultural Identity,' Bilgrami, a hard secularist in the terms of this paper, tells how years ago he was surprised to hear himself once say, 'I am a Muslim' (1992: 822). There are certain contexts that more forcefully than others require us to identify with, or not, a religion, ethnic group, or a national citizenship. He tells of looking for a room in a pension in India in a neighborhood of predominantly lower-class Hindus who were openly hostile to Muslims. The landlord had asked him what his religion was. In Bilgrami's words:

> It seemed hardly to matter that I found Islamic theological doctrine wholly noncredible, that I had grown up in the home dominated by the views of an irreligious father, and that I had for some years adopted the customary aggressive secular stance of those with communist leanings. It still seemed the only self-respecting thing to say in that context. It was clear to me that I was, without strain or artificiality, a Muslim for about *five minutes*. That is how negotiable the concept can be. (1992: 822)

In a footnote, Bilgrami mentions other contexts, as for example when one feels shame at the action of Muslims, or pride in the fact that, despite the lack of pious commitments, one's family has taken part in Muslim politics for many years (ibid.).

Bilgrami, a Rawlsian post-Enlightenment liberal political philosopher, is interested in the question of identity because of political interest in the reform of Islam. He concedes that there may be some for whom Islam is nothing short of total commitment, overriding all others when Islam and other 'sources of the Self' come into conflict – to give a nod toward that splendid work by philosopher Charles Taylor, *Sources of the Self: The Making of Modern Identity* (1989). This is what Bilgrami refers to as the *absolutist project*. He avers 'the absolutist project is the exception in a highly diverse and internally conflicted religious community. For the most part, there is no reason to doubt that Muslims, even devout Muslims, will and do take their commitment to Islam not only as one among other values, but also something

that is itself differentiated internally into a number of principle, negotiable detailed commitments'(1992: 823–824).

Bilgrami asks: what difficulties do recent (i.e. 1992) absolutist assertions or reassertions of Islamic identity pose for the 'prospect of Islamic social and legal reform?' I am interested in his question because Bilgrami the hard secularist Muslim shares with other liberal and modernist Muslims the belief that critical thought must be applied to the foundational texts, such as the Qur'an, Hadith, and the classical books of jurisprudence. However, Bilgrami (1992: 824) levels his sharpest criticism not on Islamists but rather on moderate Muslim intellectuals: 'to what extent is the relative absence of reformist thinking among moderate Muslims responsible for the susceptibility of Islamic politics to constant threat from powerful minority movements – which assert that Islamic identity is, for the most part, nonnegotiable?' This has led beyond the conflict between absolutist and moderate Muslims, but more dangerously, Bilgrami believes, to conflict among moderate Muslims. The essence of this conflict, Bilgrami believes, is the inability of moderate Muslims to stand back and criticize fundamental commitments. In other words, Bilgrami the philosopher is advocating, not surprisingly, that among the sources of a devout but moderate Muslim's fundamental commitment to Islam today would be some sort of philosophical, critical thinking, independent of the *usul al-din*, the foundations of religion, but nonetheless in dialogue and conversation with them. To advance such criticism would not need to be simply an application of Western critical theory to traditional Islamic texts and theological systems; it also amounts to a reactivation of the Mu'tazili theological school of Sunni and Shi'i thought in early and medieval Islam.[24]

In closing, we return briefly to the point made in the introduction about the importance for humanists to consult literature and poetry about the lives of Muslims in colonial and post-colonial modern, secular settings, as well as essays by Muslim intellectuals reflecting on the colonial and modern experiences of Muslims in various national and ethnic settings. The Nobel laureate in literature Orhan Pamuk is one among many secular Muslim novelists to treat the complex relationships between the state and secular and religious Muslims in specific cultural settings. My favorite in this regard is the novel *Snow*. The setting is Kars, a city on the Soviet frontier that is experiencing political violence between Islamic and secular government forces, as well as a rash of suicides by young Muslim women who refuse to remove the veil, as ordered by the government and secular society. The protagonist is an early middle-aged Turk, a poet, who has just returned from self elected exile in Germany, and has taken an assignment from an Istanbul newspaper to write about the suicides in Kars. He is identified as a secularist, although throughout the narrative it is unclear to him and to the reader exactly what that means, that is, as the narrative progresses, his identity seems to be negotiable, as Bilgrami argues it is in complex societies. Moreover, as Pamuk probes the motivations for the suicides by high school and college-aged young women, religion emerges less sharply than resistance to state and male power. Religion, state power, secularism, and sexuality are intertwining themes that show just how complexly bound up the question of secularism is with religion in a modern Muslim society.

If Orhan Pamuk's achievement has been to show in *Snow* how social forces collide in modern Turkish society, Naguib Mahfouz is a master at developing characters and the evolution of their inner struggles with British colonialism, traditional religion, authoritarian fathers and husbands, and the opening up of new ideas encountered in the influence of Europe on the new curriculum and literature available from Europe after the first world war in Egypt. In his trilogy *Palace Walk*, which was particularly mentioned in the Nobel Prize award, Naguib Mahfouz follows a family and their friends from the moment of closing of traditional Islamic society in Egypt under British protection at the end of World War I to mid-century – three generations. The main players in the story fall into all of the types or tapestries of secularism. And of course, some, even within the same family, are socially bound up with some very traditional and some very modern Muslim religious convictions. Mahfouz shows how religious identity, including secular identities, must be negotiated every day, with stern fathers, pliant mothers, querulous brothers, and wealthy globe-trotting classmates at university. A particularly interesting figure as he develops throughout the trilogy is Kemal, the youngest son in the family as the novel opens. Kemal early in life easily dismisses Islam as a personal world view and way of life, but he just as easily lives among family and friends who are religious, and we get the sense that he does not think of himself as a non-Muslim. Perhaps like Hanif Kureishi's uncle he would regard himself as a Muslim atheist.

Looking Ahead

This essay introduces a discussion about the general lack of interest in the academy in secular Muslims in the social fabric of Muslim societies, even though critiques of secularism are not rare among some Muslim as well as non-Muslim Western scholars. The main purpose of this introduction has been to propose three ways Muslims express secularism – really, three broad patterns of being secular or of embracing the secular. This attempt is provisional and will need revision as more cases are considered. Nonetheless, projects such as this must start somewhere. The paper has also introduced the problem of how theological belief and commitment relates to Muslim identity, or indeed whether it does at all. As a project that is rooted in religious studies scholarship and thus primarily the humanities, attention has shifted from hard data about secular Muslims – of which there is very little anyway – to literary treatments of secularism in Muslim societies by novelists, poets, and public intellectuals.

Even within the limited range of what it has set out to do, this paper has left out much that is essential and that must be introduced and analyzed in coming chapters. To name just one vital contribution to the debate about Islam and secularism, the work of Talal Asad, has been left out of the discussion above. Asad, has critically challenged the Western narrative of post-Enlightenment secularism as the standard by which the modernity of Muslim societies would be judged.[25] A full consideration of Talal Asad's work on Islam, Christianity, and secularism is essential to the larger

project. Charles Taylor's *A Secular Age* approaches the problem of religion and secularism more from the Western liberal philosophical tradition of John Stuart Mill and John Rawls. Taylor is more mindful of relating the argument of liberalism to non-Western societies than are the others, and in this sense he is closer to Abdullahi an-Na'im's positive construction of the secular than Talal Asad's approach, which is critical of Taylor's and Western liberalism's Eurocentric approach. The Social Science Research Council has recently convened a working group on 'Religion, Secularism and International Affairs,' which will focus on a critical assessment of Taylor's forthcoming work. Among members of the working group, in addition to Taylor, are Talal Asad, Jose Casanova, John Esposito, Mark Juergensmeyer, and Saba Mahmoud.

Also left for more comprehensive consideration is the role of secular Muslims in what journalists have dubbed 'the War Within Islam' – the conflict between extreme Islamists and more liberal and progressive Muslims. Calling for a serious study of secular Muslims and Islamic forms of secularism is almost certainly a contentious move. Conflicted academic projects remind us of the old quip that the reason scholarly discourse is sometimes so bitter is because the stakes are so low. However, for many Muslims, in one way or another, secularism seems to matter very much. That is the compelling reason for this study.

Notes

1. I follow the general usage in the academy of referring to those who study and write about Islam as *Islamicists* and those Muslims who urgently call for living and acting in the world strictly according to Traditionalist Islam as *Islamists*.
2. See Jean Jacques Waardenburg (1978); Waardenburg demonstrates how deeply theological van der Leeuw's phenomenology of religion was, and that suspending one's personal religious beliefs for the sake of analysis of another religion implies returning to those beliefs in the final judgment about other religions.
3. An important collection of essays arguing the case that the Enlightenment was solely an adversary of religion is Smith (2003). On the counter-intuitive growth of religion during the eighteenth century, see the review essay by Sheehan (2003).
4. Berger's introduction restates the case he has been making in several previous writings against the secular premises of the global academic world which, he argues, is at odds with the religious world views and ethos of the larger global societies.
5. On Voll, see John O. Voll, 'Islam and the End of Secularism,' a Presentation to the Philadelphia Society, April 22, 2001 (http://www.phillysoc.org/Voll%20Speech.htm, last viewed August 13, 2007).
6. See Susan Buck-Morss (2003).
7. An early and, I think, significant contribution to how to do religious studies in the wake of September 11 by an historian of religion who does not specialize in Islam is Lincoln (2003), *Holy Terrors: Thinking about Religion after September 11*. See the critical review that nonetheless extols the importance of the topic by Mark Juergensmeyer (2003).
8. See Peter Berger (2000), in Azzam Tamimi and John L. Esposito, *Islam and Secularism in the Middle* East. A recent example from political science is Euben (1999).
9. See Martin (2004); Mamdani (2004).
10. I am indebted to Kim[berly Q.] Hall, who, following a presentation of a much earlier version of this paper given at Appalachia State a couple of years ago, observed that feminist criticism has had to grapple with a problem similar to the one I had been speaking about, namely,

the absence of women in much of Western literature, despite their obvious presence in the societies that produce the literature. See Leder (1990).

11. Found at http://www.beliefnet.com/story/54/story_5424_1.html (last viewed on August 18, 2007).
12. http://www.iheu.org/node/1172. (last viewed on August 18, 2007).
13. The CFI advertises itself as '*A Global Federation* Committed to Science, Reason, Free Inquiry, Secularism, and Planetary Ethics.' Its website is http://www.centerforinquiry.net/ (last viewed on August 21, 2007).
14. http://www.secularislam.org/blog/post/SI_Blog/21/The-St-Petersburg-Declaration.
15. Ibn Warraq (2002). The title and work is an obvious calque on Bertrand Russell's (1957) *Why I am Not a Christian*, although Ibn Warraq engages Islamic history and doctrine in his critique more faithfully than Russell did with Christianity.
16. Trade and textbook Introductions to Islam have proliferated since the Iranian Revolution in 1979, and especially in the past decade. Among the most popular are Frederick Mathewson Denny (2005) and John L. Esposito (2004) *Islam: The Straight Path, With New Epilogue*.
17. See the official website for the Ibn Khaldun Center at http://www.eicds.org (last viewed on August 18, 2007).
18. http://www.worldpress.org/Mideast/457.cfm (last viewed on February 5, 2007).
19. See the home website for the project, where drafts of the chapters can be found and downloaded: http://www.law.emory.edu/staging-area/fs-home/english.html, last read on August 19, 2007.
20. Abdullahi an-Na'im, 'The Synergy and Interdependence of Human Rights, Religion and Secularism,' *Polylog: Forum for International Philosophizing*, Online: http://www.Polylog.org¨hem/2/fcs7-en.htm (viewed September 15, 2002, September 20, 2005).
21. An-Na'im, 'Synergy,' Sect. 2 (in lieu of original pagination, I am citing the numbered sections and subsections), also found in the original.
22. An-Na'im, Sect. 5.3.
23. *The Guardian*, April 5, 2002. On line at http://www.guardian.co.uk/friday_review/story/0,3605,678644,00.html (last viewed August 21, 2007).
24. See Martin and Woodward (1997).
25. See Talal Asad (2003), *Formations of the Secular: Christianity, Islam, Modernity,* and *Powers of the Secular Modern: Talal Asad and His Interlocutors*, esp. the appendix, 'The Trouble of Thinking: An Interview with Talal Asad,': 243–303.

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Part II
Secularization and Dynamics of Muslim Lives in Glocalised Contexts

Contentions in the Making: Discussing Secularism Among Scottish Muslims

Juan F. Caraballo-Resto

Introduction

Secularism is usually assumed to be a constructive feature of modernity. The idea that religious considerations should be excluded from civil affairs is regarded by many as a central characteristic of most Western democratic states. This is so, as the institutionalization of secularism is often accepted as a means of ensuring social equality and tolerance; especially in the so-called multicultural and globalized societies (see Ali Engineer 2005; Bruce 2002; Custers 2006).

However, this political compromise is anything but modern. The uneasy relationship between state and religion has been an issue in the 'West' ever since Christianity was legalized by Constantine, and later officialized by Theodosius II in fourth century Rome. Unsurprisingly, the term 'secular' that emerged from European philosophy finds its origins in the Latin word *saecularis*, which relates to the word *saeculum*, meaning age or generation (Shiner 1973). Despite its uncomplicated etymology, nowadays the 'secular' is articulated in Western Europe through a complex rhetoric that is based in three levels of discourse: differentiation, hierarchization, and privatization. Though different, these ways of approaching the 'secular' entwine and create a persuasive semantic that proclaims a partition between matters of religion and state.

Undoubtedly, there is no consensus in Europe on the exclusion of religion from the public sphere. However, many Europeans generally signify the 'secular' as a differentiation that attempts to construct social life in a twofold manner which requires religion and politics to operate as separate entities.[1] Secondly, the idea of the secular is further understood in Western Europe as a superimposition of state power over religious authority.[2] Finally, the apparent separation between religion and state and the legal containment of the former by the latter, is a compromise that for many

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Europeans is to lessen the involvement of religion in public affairs. Thus, religion is to become a private matter.[3]

However, Talal Asad explains that 'the secular is neither singular in origin nor stable in its historical identity' (2003b: 25). Therefore, there is no single way to understand and articulate it. Instead, there is a multiplicity of perspectives; all depending on the surrounding cultural, historical, political, ethical, and religious milieus. Hence, secularism is not always regarded as beneficial. In contexts where religion is still considered to be a social agent of great importance, secularism may be viewed as destructive.

This is the case for the first generation Muslim migrants living in the Scottish city of Dundee. Their perception of secularism, far from being a constructive ideology, is that of a 'dehumanizing force'. In this article, based on my recent anthropological fieldwork conducted in Scotland, I shall explain how first generation Muslim migrants form their own rhetoric of secularism; how they believe their perception differs from the rest of non-Muslims in Europe; and how their rejection of secularism has affected their understanding of Islam.

At a time when Muslims continue to establish Islam's multifaceted presence in Western Europe, it is worthwhile paying attention to how Muslim groups signify and adjust the concept of secularism in their daily lives. After all, to truly grasp the meanings of this concept, we must start by discovering what different peoples do with, and to, such an idea and practice. Furthermore, at times when some scholars (see AlSayyad and Castells 2003) suggest that Muslims living in Europe should develop a *Euro-Islam* – an apparently reformed version of Islam that is compatible with the 'modern' and 'secular' realities of Europe (Tibi 2003) – it is important to pay attention to how Muslims living in this part of the world structure the individual, religion and God.

In sharing this anthropological work, I wish to provide an analysis of the 'secular' that is entangled with the individual. Centering on agency, this work elucidates the social negotiation processes that are inherent to the ways in which Islam is enacted in Scotland. In doing so, I wish to contribute to a discussion that will challenge the mainstream understanding of secularism, as well as the contentious proposal of a Euro-Islam that feeds it.

Islam and Muslims in Dundee

Setting foot in Dundee is like entering one of the paintings of Davy Brown. The unexpected ways in which its rugged coastlines, gentle lowlands and Highland glens come together, certainly make research in this city a worthwhile experience. Interestingly, Dundee's contrasting landscape is home to an equally complex and diverse Muslim population.

According to the 2001 census published by the General Register Office for Scotland, there are 42,521 Muslims living in Scotland alone.[4] Nonetheless, there are debates about this figure and some estimate the number could be around 60,000

people. According to this census, Dundee has 145,515 inhabitants, out of which 2,877 (1.98% of its population) are Muslims. But this percentage also seems to be an issue, as Dundonians affirm there are around 4,000 Muslims.

This census also identified Pakistanis to be the largest ethnic group among Muslims in Scotland, as they represent 66% of the Muslim population; followed by white[5] Muslims with almost 10%. Furthermore, the census also showed that 50% of Muslims in Scotland are born in the United Kingdom and 50% are born outside. These statistics reveal a turning point for the Scottish Muslim population, as the sons and daughters of Muslim migrants, as well as Scottish converts have amounted to half the population. Currently, there seems to be a balance between foreigners and natives, something not characteristic of other religious groups.[6]

To cater for this particular and diverse Muslim population, Dundee has three mosques and five prayer rooms. In addition, the city also holds the Al-Maktoum Institute,[7] a twinning agreement with Dubai, an Arabic school for children, three *Qur'an* schools and several *halal* (meaning lawful or allowable) butchers.

In a country where there are approximately more than 1.6 million Muslims (Nielsen 2004: 43), it would be the height of folly to suggest that the Islamic experience in Dundee is homogeneous. Although all mosques in Dundee are of Sunni background, they follow different factions within this group. Hence, it will be important to understand these divisions in order to account responsibly for their diversity, history, and conflicts.

Jamia Masjid is Dundee's central and only purpose-built mosque, which holds more than 700 people.[8] Although the majority of its members are of Pakistani descent, many Arab, Malaysians, Scottish and Nigerians attend as well. Most Muslims in this mosque follow the *Deobandi* School, a religious group that originated in India during British rule.

It was in the town of Deoband, where the first Deobandi *madrasah* (school) was erected in 1867. Its founders, Muhammad Qasim Nanutawi and Rashid Ahmad Gangohi were strict followers of the Hanafi School (Thornton 2005), which began in Iraq and later spread to Syria, Turkey, Pakistan, Afghanistan and sub-continental India (see Waines 2003: 74). Given India's colonial status during the nineteenth century, it should not be surprising to learn that one of the initial aims of the Deobandi was to promote and preserve Islam from external forces. For example, both founders had strong problems with the ideals of 'Western' education and regarded its 'secular' values and aims to be grave sins (Pike 2005).

Jamia Masjid Tajdar-E-Madina is Dundee's second mosque and it came into being as a division from the above mentioned group. With the influx of a more diverse group of Muslims to the city during the 1980s and 1990s, strong theological differences soon crystallized. Around this time some Pakistani Muslims, who were dissatisfied with the ways Islam was being taught, separated and established a new place of worship. The result was a new mosque that follows the *Barelwi* School.

Founded in the late nineteenth century, the Barelwis derive their name from the hometown of their founder, Ahmad Riza Khan of Barelwi. Although the Barelwi – like the Deobandi – come from the Sunni Hanafi School of thought, they also hold

strong links with *Sufism* (a branch of Islam characterized by mysticism). This is so, as the founder of this school was also a member of the *Qadiri Sufi* order (Ahnaaf 2005). To account for this merger, David Waines (2003) explains that by the fifth century C.E., Lahore had become a very important centre for Sufism in northern India. Hence, many Muslim groups in modern Afghanistan, Pakistan, and India still have connections with this tradition of Islamic mysticism. In fact, many Barelwis validate some major Sufi traditions as authentic *tariqas* or orders.

In sharp contrast with Deobandi principles, most Barelwis recite a text written by their founder after some prayers. Furthermore, Barelwis in Dundee celebrate *Eid-e-Milad* (the birthday of the holy prophet), and accept the role of saints as intercessors between humans and *Allah* (Ahnaaf 2005). These, among other rituals are certainly considered *haram* (forbidden) by several Muslims in the city. Thus, many religious ceremonies that stem from these beliefs tend to be a matter of dispute between Barelwis and Deobandis in Dundee.

Finally, the city's third mosque is *Jama Masjid Bilal*. This congregation is part of the *Minhaj-ul-Qur'an* movement, a subgroup of the Barelwi that was established in 1980. In an interview with the *imam* of this mosque, I learned that Minhaj-ul-Qur'an is an international organization based in Pakistan. He explained that Minhaj-ul-Qur'an is 'an international, educational, cultural, social, welfare, religious, as well as political, organization; working in more than 80 countries' (Ahmad, 42, from Pakistan). The headquarters of the movement are in Lahore and its founder and still patron-in-chief is Dr. Muhammad Tahir-ul-Qadri, a Pakistani Muslim scholar.

As expressed by its imam, Minhaj-ul-Qur'an is a movement that has a 'more progressive approach towards certain issues than other groups'. He further explained that they believe in *ijtihad*, while others who are 'obsessed with old traditions' do not. In other words, they believe in the exercise of independent judgment with regard to Islamic law, as a means of obtaining new and fresh alternatives to specific issues in the modern world. He maintained that this innovative approach is pivotal to Minhaj-ul-Qur'an's revivalist mission; a matter that creates tension with other Muslim groups.

Interestingly enough, despite the theological differences and administrative points of dissent already mentioned, the ways in which my informants approach the concept of secularism resonates from one group to another. In the sections that follow, I will explain how different first generation Muslim migrants develop their own rhetoric of secularism, a discourse legitimized by their interpretations of the Qur'an and the *Sunnah* (meaning tradition), as well as the social implications of their perspectives.

Muslim Contentions with Secularism in Dundee

During a conversation with the imam of one of the Barelwi mosques, he said:

> *Ladiniyyat* or secularism is an attitude; it is an attempt to exclude religion from life. To become secular you have to try not to relate yourself with the practices or beliefs of any

> religion. But, the problem with this attitude is that whoever assumes it lacks the capacity for good judgment because Islam is what enables people to make good decisions in life. You can be well educated, but without Islam, you cannot separate the right from wrong. If you take Allah away from life, then you are lost. (Ahmad, 42, from Pakistan)

Mufid, a 35 year old father of two from Pakistan, argued:

> [Secularism] is a choice. You either decide to live your life with Allah and Islam, or you don't. And I am not talking about the belief in God; many people can say 'I believe', but still push the obligations of believing aside. Rejecting secularism is about recognizing that Allah is the only source of power and justice; and that everything in life should respond to Him. (Mufid, 35, from Pakistan)

Anan, a woman who arrived in the United Kingdom from Iraq 13 years ago and attends the Deobandi mosque, was more specific in her account when she said:

> Secularism is *al-Ilhād* [. . .] it is to live life without Allah. A secular society is one that has no religion, one that doesn't believe in God. If you say you believe in Allah, it is not enough to only say it; you must also obey Him and always try to follow the path that He has laid for you [. . .] A person is not a believer if it only insists on having God as an important part on Sundays at Church or when going to the mosque to pray. Being a Muslim is about letting Allah be the director in every part of life; when you sleep, when you cook, when you are studying, at work, with your neighbours [. . .] in everything you do. I cannot see myself saying, in this part of my life I'll be Muslim and obey Allah; but in others, I will not. (Anan, 34, from Iraq)

Through a rich use of words in various languages, we firstly learn that secularism is perceived by first generation Muslim migrants in the sample to be an attitude towards religion and life in general. Informants argue that secularism, like Islam, is a stance from which life is enacted and evaluated. In other words, and to use a term employed by Clifford Geertz, secularism and Islam are perspectives; they are modes of seeing, discerning, apprehending, understanding, and grasping life (1973). Nevertheless, when juxtaposed, informants maintain that both secularism and Islam are quite distinct and each entails a very different attitude.

Secondly, despite the fact that there is no exact Arabic translation for 'secularism', often Arab Muslims in the sample approached the concept by referring to the Arabic words *al-Ilhād* (the belief in no God) and *alamāniyah* (the separation between the worldly and divine). Pakistanis, on the other hand, referred to the Urdu terms *ladiniyyat* and *bedini* to name the separation between the mundane and the holy. However, often informants were puzzled trying to find an accurate translation in their languages for 'secularism'.

This elucidates that the concept of secularism is not part of the interpretative framework (i.e. concepts and meanings) of some informants. This gap is due to the fact that history in most Muslim majority cultures lacks the blazing ruptures that occurred between the European kingdoms and Christianity during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries; all of which account for the creation of secularism in the 'West'. Hence, many of the neologisms created in non-Romance languages as an effort to translate 'secularism' are insufficient in their quest. As a result, the Muslim rhetoric of secularism discussed here is enriched with a multiplicity of words.

Finally, through these accounts we uncover how informants develop their own rhetoric of secularism. During the course of my fieldwork, I realized that the informants' understanding of secularism also fluctuates between three levels of discourse: opposition, deliberateness, and extirpation.

First of all, informants perceive secularism to be opposed to Islam. In other words, if the former exists, the latter is corrupt. This is so, as respondents consider secularism to be an attitude which either denies that there is a God, prophethood and revelation or declares that the role of these is limited to the personal lives of Muslims; thus preventing Islam from playing any fundamental role in politics or the wider society.

In this light, some informants mirrored secularism to the Arabic term of *kufr*, which stands for the wilful and conscious refusal of a Muslim to appreciate the bounties that God has granted humanity. Although this term is employed to name Muslims who renounce Islam, many informants also extended it toward non-Muslims. The reason for this is that respondents maintain that every person is born a Muslim because we are all created by Allah. Hence, those who do not follow the way of Islam are to be considered *kafir* or astrayed Muslims who have wilfully despised the bounties that God has granted humanity.

The link that informants establish between secularism and their understanding of kufr uncovers a second level of discourse in the Muslim rhetoric of secularism. Just as respondents understand kufr to be an intended and conscious act, they also view secularism as an act of volition; a wayward and heedful decision to refuse God's message. This is most dramatically seen in Mufid's answer, when he affirms secularism to be a choice that everyone has to take, and one where there are no grey zones. For him, it is quite simple, people either embrace Islam integrally, or they do not.

This approach contrasts sharply with the theoretical models of secularization established by sociologists like Weber (1958), Wilson (1982), and Bruce (2002). Whereas the latter think of religion's decline in society to be the direct outcome of modernity, my respondents perceive it as a personal choice regardless of capitalism or increasing social differentiation. For the first generation Muslim migrants of Dundee, one can live in modernity, sustain democratic political systems, live in a pluralistic society, and still consider religion to be a social agent of great importance. For Ahmad, Mufid, and Anan, humans are not passive beings in social scenarios. Thus, the choice to assume a secular attitude cannot be devoid of individuality and the will of human agencies.

Finally, informants point out that secularism is characterized by an attempt to compartmentalize life and disjoint religious values and teachings from specific instances. Undoubtedly, my informants have difficulty with structuring life in a dualistic way. Some even hastily explained that segregation between Islam and politics is not to be contemplated as an option, as one has to implicate the other.

In an attempt to sustain this argument, some respondents commented how the Prophet Mohammed was a man who made no distinction between politics and religion, as he was not only a Prophet, but also a statesman. They stressed that the reason he became a political leader in Mecca and Medina was precisely to enforce

God's all encompassing message. Even more, they commented on how Islam has no clerical structure and consequently a separation, even hierarchization, between religious and political powers is impossible. For informants, Allah's message holds political implications that cannot be ignored. In other words, the divine – if one insists in maintaining such a category – must also partake in civil and political affairs.

Through these accounts we quickly learn that in a religious tradition that affirms that 'good' is whatever Allah and His prophet allowed, whereas 'wrong' is whatever they forbade (Cook 2003), secularism stands as an antagonistic force to Allah's all encompassing message and Mohammed's holistic example. On this point, Abida, a woman from Malaysia who attends the Deobandi mosque, argued that this divisive practice is wrong and worthless. She affirmed:

> Islam gives you the answers to everything; from how to raise children, how to bathe, how to eat, pray, even go to the toilet. By separating religion from the things I do in life, I will be doing something wrong [. . .] I must take Islam as a whole; not just some parts. Just as Allah asks from us that we surrender ourselves to Him fully, we must also receive his revelation, teachings, and bounties completely; not just some parts. I cannot say to you "My husband and I want you to come to dinner with us, but you have to leave your legs at your house". That would be impossible. The same thing happens through secularism; it attempts to divide the indivisible. To become secular I would have to try to divide and limit Islam, I would accept only some chapters of the Qur'an, some *ahadith* (important source of revelation that contains the words and deeds of Muhammad and other early Muslims), and exclude the ones that are not sound with politicians, the media, or my own will as a person. What kind of religion is that? It is certainly not Islam.

From Abida's witty account we learn that Islam is what my informants call *dīn*, an Islamic way of life. In analyzing the morphology of this polysemous word – usually mistranslated to English as 'religion' – we learn that dīn stands for: obedience disposition, indebtedness, account, judicious power, and reward (Al-Attas 1993). Therefore, dīn implies that living in *obedience* to God is an *obligation indebted* to Him, for which people will be taken to *account*, *judged*, and *rewarded*. In deconstructing these significations, we uncover that dīn encompasses belief, thought, character, behaviour, and deeds. Hence, more than a religion, Islam becomes an indivisible lifestyle based on religious precepts that cannot be segmented. If so, informants affirm, it stops being a stance and becomes merely a set of vacuous religious rituals.

Through secularism, informants argue, Islam loses its wholeness, as it entails the fragmentation of God's message into false assumptions of 'pure politics' and 'pure religion'. My respondents believe that God blesses only those who fully submit to Him. Thus, the submission to God, for which the word *Islam* stands for, must occur integrally. Otherwise, eternal life is in jeopardy.

Uzma, a woman from the United Arab Emirates, highlighted that those who live under secularism break up with dīn and become hypocrites. She explained:

> In Islam, everything one does should worship Allah. To adopt a secular way of life means that I have to take Allah out of my life in specific moments; I would need to acknowledge that Allah is not all encompassing. And I cannot do that; it's wrong.

> Islam is who I am; it is what my life is about. For me, to be detached from Allah would be a dehumanizing act. Taking Him away from me would be like losing myself.
>
> But you know what the funny thing is? Even if I wanted to, I don't know how to stop being religious. I don't know how to be secular without being a *hypocrite*. I don't think secularism is true. If you are religious, you are religious and that is it; end of the story.
>
> Can you explain me how this separation is possible without being a hypocrite? (Uzma, 40, from UAE).

For Uzma, the segregation of life into religious and non-religious compartments is futile, as her conception of the individual self is not free from political or religious considerations. Hence, when she compares the fragmentation which secularism entails to a hypocritical act, she sees such differentiation as a fraud. It is interesting that she chooses to employ the term 'hypocrite' to describe those who assume the attitude of secularism. Certainly, her choice of words is not random, as the term 'hypocrite' is highly condemned in the Qur'an.

During one interview, Uzma brought the Qur'an with her and read with solid excitement the seventy fourth verse of the ninth *sūrah* (chapter), which says:

> The hypocrites swear by God that they have said nothing [wrong]; yet most certainly have they uttered a saying which amounts to a denial of the truth, and have [thus] denied the truth after [having professed] their self-surrender to God: for they were aiming at something which was beyond their reach. And they could find no fault [with the faith] save that God had enriched them and [caused] His Apostle [to enrich them] out of his bounty! Hence, if they repent, it will be for their own good; but if they turn away, God will cause them to suffer grievous suffering in this world and in the life to come, and they will find no helper on earth, and none to give [them] succour (The Message of the Qur'an 9:74).

Uzma's interpretation of this text was that hypocrites deny God's all encompassing message and fake self-sufficiency by affirming that there are realities outside Allah's tutelage. For her, to become secular is synonymous to becoming a hypocrite who commits the cardinal sin of *shirk*, which stands for one who holds there are realities independent of Allah. This is so, as for her attempting to separate religion from politics, law, or even knowledge is an act of aloofness that endows people with sin. For her, this is obviously a serious fault that brings worldly and eternal suffering to people.

Nearing the end of our conversation, she said: 'secularism is an apostasy; it dehumanizes people'. Intrigued by her words, I asked her what she meant by 'dehumanization'. To explain it, she opened the Qur'an again and read the fiftieth sūrah, verses 31–33. She explained that those verses emphasize that human beings are divine creations worthy of salvation only if we are grateful to Allah, acknowledge He is the creator, keep Him constantly in our minds, stand in awe in front of Him although He is beyond the reach of our human perceptions and go unto Him with a full heart of contrition.

Uzma seems clear in saying that by exemplifying a 'secular attitude', she would not be living up to these tasks. Firstly, she would be rejecting God and His revelation as the sources of ever present guidance. Secondly, by fragmenting the message

that God and His Prophet did not fragment in the first place, she would not be showing gratefulness and repentance to God, as she would be refusing the wholeness of Islam. For her, these are sins that hold undesirable consequences and provoke the cancellation of God's intentions for humanity. By throwing away the tools that help her structure life, Uzma suggests that Islam ceases to be an important perspective with which to grasp, apprehend, and discern life. For her, this is akin to living as a being that opted to shift from a whole state to an incomplete human condition. But how does this understanding of the secular affect the way in which informants go about their lives in a predominantly non-Muslim city? How is the Muslim rhetoric of secularism instantiated in daily life?

Channelling Secularism Through Islamic Systems of Order and Discipline

As it has been illustrated up to this point, respondents perceive secularism in a different way from the majority of Europeans. For Muslims in the sample, Islam and secularism entail contrary perspectives from which to enact life. Furthermore, informants believe that without deference to Islam people do not have the ability to discriminate between right and wrong. Therefore, individuals allow temptation to lure and entice them. Obviously, this brings mishap and misfortune, as the incessant succumbing to sin leads to the removal of salvation. Due to these circumstances, it is mandatory for informants to seek protection in Islam as a way to counteract and resist the corruption that besets them.

Undoubtedly, this has an impact on the ways in which people go about their lives in a Muslim minority context. Hence, at a social level, this approach to secularism produces an ethical differentiation between respondents and non-Muslims. Although Muslims and non-Muslims in Dundee engage in quotidian interactions that educe a sense of 'community' and belonging, informants perceive the wider society around them to be secular; therefore, partaking in haram, the forbidden.

In this light, informants attempt to successfully withstand secularism by 'filtering' their social relations and daily life through Islam. By establishing Islamic systems of order and discipline, using both the Qur'an and the Sunnah as catalysts, informants sift – rather than block – their social relations to separate and discard the corruption they believe is suspended in the wider society. In doing so, they ensure their Islamic way of life in Dundee to be a continuum, rather than a fragmented part of their lives.

For me, this social strategy crystallized in one conversation with Su'ad, an Egyptian woman who attends the Deobandi mosque, when she told me:

> Once, we went to a party from the workplace of my husband and we were the only Muslims [. . .] they [non-Muslims at the party] were good people, but then they started drinking, smoking, and cursing. I didn't feel comfortable. From then on, I said 'That's it. If I don't like it, why do I have to force myself to be in an environment that is not right?" I am not saying that being [Muslim and] different prevents me from having contact with non-Muslims or having friends that are not Muslim, but it definitely sets me apart. I live within

> Dundee; I am part of the city, but I don't need to be like them [non-Muslims] to belong, be happy, or progress in life. We share with them [non-Muslims], but under our rules; Islam's rules. I have non-Muslim friends and so do my children, but we are clear where to draw the line (Su'ad, 34).

Su'ad's account unveils a negotiation process. Despite the existing conceptual opposition between Islam and secularism, this antagonism does not produce ethnic segregation. Muslims in Dundee do not isolate themselves and they are far from ghettoized. Daily life in this city is not enacted on the basis of a binary vision of *us* versus *them*. However, informants express that being Muslim entails a compromise with God to accept His divine revelation, which in turn demands from them the enactment of an indivisible code of conduct and character. Therefore, the wider social context ceases to be the object of the personal loyalty of informants. They do not feel the need to accommodate their lives to the exigencies of a non-Muslim environment in order to account for their happiness, validation and self-value. Instead, informants argue, life should be channelled through dīn, a lifestyle based on an Islamic system of order and discipline.

In this light, Muslims in the sample affirm that living in a place where Islam is the exception instead of the rule compels them – at least in an urgent and deliberate effort – to develop a self-awareness of the obligations that Islamic canons ask from them. Since Dundee is a Muslim minority city it is up to each individual to be his or her own enforcer of Islamic rule.

However, the many interpretations of the Qur'an and the preference of some ahadith over others elucidates that there is no single vision for an Islamic system of order and discipline to counteract secularism. Hence, all normative systems are moulded by the beliefs and interpretations each one of the three Muslim communities in Dundee proclaims. In the section that follows I will show how the group of Minhaj-ul-Qur'an addresses the issue of secularism in a collective manner.

Collective Contentions Instantiated

In an interest to strengthen Islam's influence in a context they describe as 'secular', the group of Minhaj-ul-Qur'an emphasises the complementation of all systematic knowledge (i.e. religious and secular), which in Arabic is known as *ilm*. Members of this group believe that the British secular model of education is deficient in as much as it is not based on the divine principle of *ayah* (the evidencing of God in nature). In this respect, they affirm that the British model of education needs a supreme reality (i.e. Allah) to fix its vision on, a valid scripture (i.e. the Qur'an) to confirm and affirm life, and a human guide (i.e. prophet Mohammed) whose words and deeds serve as a model to follow. For this group, the combination of both Islamic knowledge and secular education is the only way in which Muslim societies in the contemporary world can develop in a responsible manner that obeys God, while at the same time caters to the exigencies of the modern world.

As a result, the members of Minhaj-ul-Qur'an think that to counteract the effects of living in a secular society, they must restructure the educational programme for

their children. Guided by the idea of ilm, the imam of this group created a daily Qur'an class for children; an event in which the offset of secularism is all the more evident.

Every week, from Monday to Saturday, children from the ages of six to fifteen meet for two hours of Islamic teachings and learn the Arabic recitation of the Qur'an. For the imam, this course is the only way in which children are able to integrate religious teachings with the academic curriculum that their public schools provide. This is not to say that by emphasizing the importance ilm, the people of Minhaj-ul-Qur'an are suggesting that the Scottish public system of education is a failure. On the contrary, some parents say that they are contented to provide their children with an academic opportunity they did not have when growing up in their home countries. However, they also affirm the secular academic experience provided by the British government can be bettered through the inclusion of Islamic education.

During one of my visits to this class, children were learning from Qur'anic and hadithic texts how to eat, self-clean and conduct themselves with their parents. After the recitation of several maxims, the imam stressed to the children that there is an order to, and a purpose for, everything they do. He explained that every act must show respect and thanks to Allah. The imam asked the children to observe the manners discussed that day in order not to transgress the 'Islamic way of life'. He made clear to the children that as Muslims, they had to be different from 'others'; that they should not imitate everything 'others' do.

While participating and observing this event, I could not help but wonder how the children would digest these teachings as they continue to grow in a context like Dundee. For the imam, this Qur'anic school was a foundational experience in the lives of these children; one that intends to strengthen and perpetuate the Islamic rhetoric of secularism in Europe. But, how would it be articulated by the sons and daughters of these migrants a few years from now? Would they restate the Muslim rhetoric of secularism? Would they continue to filter social relations without faltering? Or will the increasingly heard calls for a 'reformation' to secularize Islamic thought and practice find a place in their minds? Without a doubt, as time progresses and British Muslim children continue to grow, new ways of living and understanding Islam and secularism in Europe will continue to surface.

Conclusion

In this work I have argued that there is no single approach to secularism. More specifically, I have presented how non-Muslim Europeans and Muslims in the sample have created two distinct understandings of the secular. From the stand point of Western Europeans, secularism is defined by virtue of a division of powers by which the state surpasses religious authority, relegating the latter to a 'private' sphere. However, Muslim respondents construe secularism as the futile compartmentalization of life into religious and non-religious spheres, thereby wilfully opposing to God's all encompassing message.

I further propose that the Muslim understanding of secularism produces an ethical differentiation between informants and non-Muslims in Dundee. This is so, as the first generation Muslim migrants in the sample perceive the wider society around them to be secular; therefore, partaking in haram or forbidden attitudes. To counteract the corruption that besets them, respondents resort to Islamic systems of order and discipline as a means to filter the social relations they perceive to be opposed to Allah's message and deleterious to human existence; while at the same time, allowing the sinuous passing of elements they think to be constructive.

This shows that Muslims in the sample are willing to improve, advance, and be an integral part of Dundee, but not to the detriment of their religious identities. To negotiate their selfhoods, informants look at their different interpretations of Islam, their cultural features and social exigencies; adopting and affirming what they are akin to and rejecting what they abhor. Such a strategy educes that while informants understand Islam and secularism to be contending incompatibilities, they also believe that being Muslim in Scotland does not have to be. In other words, informants do not see democracy, tolerance, social equality and Islam as binary oppositions. For respondents these are not the issues at stake, but rather a wider socio-political context that in the name of secularism urges them to disregard some visible or public traces of their Muslim identities.

Undoubtedly, this negotiation process will continue to bring about transformations to the ways in which Muslims interpret and practice Islam in Europe. Even more, with the growth of new generations, new ways of living Islam and understanding secularism may surface. Thus, it will be interesting to further this study with their inclusion, as well as the insertion of Scottish converts. Their perspectives on secularism would bring new arguments to the fore and present a holistic appreciation of the Muslim understandings of secularism in the United Kingdom. Moreover, at times when the younger generations appear to have a prominent role in the spread of Islamic extremism in Europe, it will be worth researching what their understanding of the secular is and its role in the formation of 'fundamentalist' identities.

Notes

1. Although there is vagueness and permeability about where the boundaries between the two are to be laid, people make sense of the secular by juxtaposing public principles to religious dogmas, ceremonies and symbols. This is the case of the law of *Laïcité*, ratified by the French Parliament in 1905. This legislation, which still persists to this date, allows a separation between state and religion by censoring religious discourse, symbols, or ceremonies from all public spheres (Cesari 2002). Consequently, the schooling of children has been affected, as religious education in state schools was abolished and replaced by general ethical courses (Tamini 2000).
2. This means that the sacred and the mundane are not only to be kept apart, but also that the former has to surrender its supreme powers to the latter. So, the authority of the Church, once the principal enforcer of rule in Europe, enters a contested terrain. With the instauration of constitutional laws, a hierarchy that restricts religious competency is created. For example, in Norway, according to the Law Pertaining Religious Communities of 1969, the state finances

religious groups, but in return makes clear that religious practice cannot interfere with laws granting public order (Vogt 2002).
3. The term *privatization* has little to do with the enclosure of religious practice in a concealed quarter, but rather with the intention to enclose reason; the process through which religious beliefs are individualized and the theological and metaphysical become impervious to the public scrutiny (Casanova 1994).
4. These percentages derive from an optional question on Religion contained in the 2001 Census. As a result, all percentages are a close estimation, rather than exact.
5. 'White' in the 2001 Census, is comprised of 'White Scottish', 'Other White British', 'White Irish' or 'Other White' (General Register Office for Scotland 2003).
6. The Church of Scotland was the group with the highest percentage of UK born followers (99%), while Hindus were the group with the most people born outside the United Kingdom (70%).
7. This academic institution, the first of its kind in Scotland, opened in 2002 as an initiative of his Highness Shaikh Hamdan Bin Rashid Al-Maktoum of Dubai. It currently confers postgraduate degrees in Islamic Studies, Islamic Jerusalem Studies, and Arabic.
8. This group resulted from the relocation of the city's first Muslim congregation that was constituted in 1972, in a residential area called Hill Town.

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Muslim Women's Narratives on Religious Identification in a Polarising Dutch Society

Marjo Buitelaar

Introduction

As elsewhere in Europe over the last decade Islam has become the dominant marker of identity attributed to Dutch citizens of Muslim descent. Besides 9/11 and the subsequent 'war on terror', several local incidents have influenced the dominant Dutch discourse on Islam. In 2002, it shook the nation when the liberal-rightist politician Pim Fortuyn, who spoke in very negative terms about Muslims, was killed. Even though the murderer was an environmentalist of Dutch background, Fortuyn's death is often associated with the perceived danger posed by the presence of fundamentalist Muslims in the Netherlands. Then, in 2004, the Dutch filmmaker Theo van Gogh was killed by a radicalised young Muslim man of Moroccan descent. Van Gogh was the producer of the film *Submission*, which contains shots of Qur'anic texts written on a naked female body. The film-script was written by Ayaan Hirsi Ali, a Dutch member of parliament of Somalian descent. *Submission* was part of what she called her '*jihad'* against Islam's oppression of women. Most recently, another rightist member of Dutch parliament, Geert Wilders produced an anti-Islam film and called for a ban on the Qur'an.

In the course of these recent turbulent years the Dutch debate on Islam has been narrowed down to a limited number of vexed questions concerning issues which are perceived to pose potential threats to secular society. Recurring topics are for example the duty of *jihad,* the inseparability of religion and state, the penal 'code' in the Sharia, and the oppression of women and homosexuals. Particularly since the murder of Van Gogh, Muslims in general are perceived by many as fundamentalists and potential radicals (cf. Buruma 2006).

While negative, essentialist imagery of Islam has obviously increased since 9/11, Dutch representations of Islam as inherently inimical to norms and values claimed to be rooted exclusively in the 'European Enlightenment' long predate the attack

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on the Twin Towers (cf. Sniderman and Hagendoorn 2007). Discussing the unease triggered by the presence of Muslims in Europe, Asad (2004: 168) argues that the discourse on European identity is characterised by what can be summarised as 'a grammar of selfing and othering' in which Muslims represent the excluded other (cf. Baumann 2004). In order to suggest an unchangeable European essence, Islam may be *in* Europe, but it can never be *of* Europe (Asad 2004: 164). Hence the 'threat' posed by millions of Muslims who claim European citizenship.

Most Dutch Muslims, of course, do not identify with a representation of Islam in terms of the small set of highly politicised 'hot issues' that spring to the minds of most non-Muslims whenever Islam is mentioned. In their daily lives, Islam is first and foremost a source of comfort, inspiration, and a guideline for ethically sound conduct.

Since identity is always constructed in dialogue with others, however, European Muslims cannot avoid responding to the dominant Western discourse on Islam. Most research on religious identifications of Muslims in the Netherlands concentrates on Muslim youths (cf. Buijs et al. 2006; De Koning 2008; Ketner et al. 2004). In this article the focus is on a different cohort: the first women of Moroccan descent who graduated from Dutch universities.[1] I will address the question how these 'pioneers' construct their religious identity against the background of the dominant Dutch discourse on Muslims as 'the other'. I am more particularly interested in how they articulate the relationship between their religious background and Dutch citizenship.

In what follows, portraits will be sketched of four women whom I first interviewed between 1998 and 2000, and then again in January 2008, by which time all four women were in their late thirties or early forties. The portraits are based on narrations produced in the context of a research project on the legacy of migration in life stories of Dutch-Moroccan women. In total, twenty-eight women participated in the first phase of the project, fifteen of whom have so far been re-interviewed in 2008. The research question is how the interviewees represent their shifting, multiple social identifications in what McAdams (1993) would call their 'personal myths': the continuously revised biographical stories of those behaviours and episodes in life that form answers to the question: 'Who am I?'

Using McAdams' model to organise a life story as if it were a book, in the first interview session(s), the women were only provided with a general framework for telling their stories. The stories thus produced were the basis for a session which focused more specifically on gender, ethnic and religious identifications.

In what follows, narrations on religious identifications will be analysed by using the concept of the dialogical self (cf. Hermans 2001). The self is dialogically constructed, because people always develop their identity in response to how they are addressed by others. They speak through the collective voices of the various groups to which they belong, using the rules, conventions and world-views held by these groups. Since individuals apply these discourses in their own specific context, they are simultaneously co-producers of those collective voices.

Here, the focus is on how Dutch-Moroccan women develop a religious identification by appropriating collective voices from various cultural repertoires. Although

many of the elements in the narratives presented here also feature in the life stories of the other interviewees, the portraits should not be read as representing all interviewees, let alone women of Moroccan descent in the Netherlands in general. While certain patterns can be discerned in such narratives, one of the fascinations of studying life stories is that recurring themes feature in the lives of each individual in a unique fashion.

Zohra: Personal Contact with Allah

At the time of the first interview in 1999, Zohra was 36 years old. She worked as a therapist in mental healthcare, was married and had three children. Except for her age, this short bio had not changed in 2008. When Zohra came to the Netherlands at the age of eight, she was enrolled in a Catholic school. She proudly relates how quickly she made friends and learned Dutch. In the eyes of her mother, this happened rather too quickly. On the day that her daughter addressed her in Dutch for the first time, she decided to transfer the girl to a Muslim school where half of the lessons were given in Arabic and where Qur'an lessons were part of the curriculum.

Except in relation to the shift in schools, Zohra does not mention religion in her description of 'life chapters'. A closer look at Zohra's life story shows that it is typical for the way she organises her life that in presenting herself to a Dutch interviewer she focuses almost exclusively on her career, and does not readily volunteer much information about her religious identification.

Fortunately, enough trust was to develop between her and me during the interviews that by the time we arrived at the theme of a philosophy of life, she discussed extensively her faith in God, whom she consequently referred to as 'Allah'. Two recurrent themes in Zohra's narrations on religion are the importance of following the rules that Allah imposes upon Muslims and the strength she experiences through her personal contact with Allah. When asked to compare what it means to her as an adult to be a Muslim with what her parents taught her as a child, Zohra responds in an agitated manner that there is no difference. Islam means this to her:

> Islam is the best religion there is. Islam stands for peace, salâm, you know. That gives me strength. Being a Muslim means observing the five pillars, that is, to believe that there is one Allah, and that His messenger was Muhammed, sllâ ᶜalîh wa sallam [blessings and peace be upon him, MB]. Secondly that you perform your prayers, thirdly that you give alms, fourthly that you fast every year, and live in the spirit of the fasting month and seek contact with Allah, and, fifthly, if it is financially feasible, you perform the pilgrimage and put it all together there, so to say. Besides I find it very important that a Muslim should be honest and have an open attitude. Because that peace stands for something, that salâm. Also, one should be able to abstain from things that are forbidden.

Zohra elaborates particularly on the meaning to her of the *salât*, the five daily prayers.

As she is getting older, she experiences performing the prayers as a kind of personal communication with Allah that gives her strength:

> When I ask Allah for favours in my prayers I strongly feel that He tends to grant them. I am being heard, being taken seriously. My self-confidence has increased; I have more faith in myself and in Allah. For example, I remember when I had to pass an exam and could not concentrate, I would perform the ablutions and do my prayers. Afterwards I would be able to concentrate. It relaxes me to perform my ablutions and prayers.

Although Zohra prefers to perform the prayers at the right time, she has never undertaken action to demand special treatment or facilities to be able to pray at work. Most of her colleagues do not even know that she sometimes prays in her office:

> I have a key, because I wouldn't like to be disturbed whilst praying. [. . .] Also [. . .] I wouldn't want that some of my colleagues would say: 'Gee, what is she up to?' I don't feel like having to explain, that's not important to me. I feel like, well, it is something that I do, it's nobody else's business. It's not that I am afraid of discussions [. . .] but, well, I would not like to give them something to talk about.

Zohra stresses several times that religion is a personal affair and that she feels no need to express her faith publicly. Her religious identity is not something for which she seeks recognition from Dutch people. Several statements similar to 'I would not like to give them something to talk about' suggest that emphasising her personal relationship to Allah also functions as a strategy of self-restraint that enables Zohra to cope amongst Dutch colleagues who may not particularly appreciate her Muslim identity.

This comes to the fore most when she tells about considering to begin wearing a headscarf. As in the case of two other women whose portraits will be sketched here, her visits to Morocco play a major role in her reflections, 'Over there I am surrounded with women who wear a headscarf, all except me wear one. So the big question is always: when will I put it on?' Besides practical considerations, she fears the reactions from her colleagues,

> I would be bombarded by questions. Time and again I will have to explain to everyone why, why, and again why. That's such a nuisance. Also, I just cannot get used to that thing yet. Covering my ears is something that I still have to get used to.

Why is it that, despite these two hindrances, she would still want to wear a headscarf?

> Ultimately, it's about that contact with Allah. The fact that Allah asks it of us, or rather demands it. It's really got to do with something between Allah and me, with my own consciousness.

The next part of Zohra's answer consists of a dialogue with both Dutch and Moroccan voices that question her on the subject:

> I would only wear the headscarf because it is demanded of me by my religion. To me, it does not symbolise suppression, nor emancipation or what have you. I can only see it this way: I'm working on a puzzle that I want to complete. I don't care what others have to say about it. It is the thing I have with Allah.

Like all interviewees, Zohra constructs her religious identity by positioning herself in relation to Muslims and non-Muslims. Yet unlike most, she puts little to no effort to combine elements in her own world-view with non-Muslim voices. Of all

interviewees, she is the only one, for example, who does not speak about the similarities between Islam and Christianity. She is also the only one to declare without reserve that Islam is the best religion. While the other interviewees without exception indicate that they find it hard to believe that eventually God will not allow non-Muslims to enter Paradise, the issue is plain to Zohra:

> Everything that is kafr, from atheist to Christian and Jew, I am sorry to have to say it, but they will all go to the *nâr* [the fire, MB]. That's how it is literally stated [. . .] *Allah yu'allam* [God knows best, MB]. To tell you the truth I don't want to go deeply into that matter. I find it hard to look at things at that level. It's not that I doubt what is written in the texts. I know one thing: Islam is the ultimate religion. There has been no fiddling in the Qur'an as there has been in the Bible.

In summary, two things stand out in the 1998 interview with Zohra: emphasising her personal relationship with Allah allows Zohra to keep the contacts with her work associates separate from her membership of the community of Muslims. Also, she insists that her religious views and practices do not differ from what her parents taught her.

When I met Zohra again in 2008, her head was still uncovered, her colleagues still didn't know that she performs the *salât* in her office and once more she presented her personal contact with Allah as a source of strength. The 2008 follow-up interview also contains narrations indicating changes. Over the years, Zohra seems to have developed a firmer personal stance in her dialogues with both Moroccan and Dutch voices. While in the 1998 interview she struggled with the question whether she should live up to the expectations of her Moroccan relatives by putting on a headscarf, 10 years later she has decided that she carries the modesty and self-discipline symbolised by the headscarf in her heart and that she has no need for outward signs.

Also, she appears less concerned to take religious regulations literally and carry them out exactly as prescribed. When her brother died unexpectedly in 2007, for instance, she insisted on attending his funeral, even though this goes against Moroccan interpretations of the Sharia. Again, she refers to her self-discipline to explain why she felt she could go against Moroccan traditions. According to Zohra, women are banned from funerals because they are very emotional and may create a scene at the grave. Confident that she could restrain herself, she decided that doing what felt best to her was more important than what others might say.

While in the first interview Zohra refused to ponder the question about possible differences between her own religiosity and that of her parents, in the follow-up interview she volunteers information on differences she now perceives. Referring to her attendance at her brother's funeral, she states:

> My generation has learned to break taboos. Little by little we try to create space. To women of my mother's generation, it is important to stick to the rules. For my mom, that's what feels good, and I respect that.

When asked how she feels about the recent turbulent years in Dutch society, Zohra heaves a big sigh before telling me about the shock it had been to hear the Dutch members of a fitness class she had joined talk extremely negatively about Muslims. Convinced that personal contacts could remedy this, she had proposed to

the coordinator of the community centre where the fitness class is given to organise meetings between Muslim and non-Muslim residents in the neighbourhood. But then, however, Theo van Gogh was murdered by a Muslim extremist. Zohra was despondent, 'I realised that whatever I'd say, this act of a madman would confirm their views. So I thought: who am I to try to make them change their mind? I'll never succeed, and I guess I don't even want to: it's not my job. So I gave up.'

Zohra attended the fitness class to improve her physical condition, not to make new friends. As in the first interview, the follow-up interview contains no narrations about non-Muslims friends. When referring to non-Muslims, Zohra speaks about 'them' and she describes 'western culture' as 'the other': 'Western culture may think "we'll accomplish this or do that". I think science is a good thing, mind you, but they have never found a way to control death. They try, but won't succeed. That's why Allah exists, it must be, mustn't it?'

Zohra's life story contains strikingly many Arabic-Islamic terms.[2] Unlike most other interviewees she never speaks about 'God' but always of 'Allah', and when referring to the prophet Muhammed, invariably she adds the formula *slâ ʿalîh wa sallam*, Blessings and Peace be upon Him. This bespeaks a strong commitment with Islam with only limited exploration. The death of her brother has recently made her favour the spiritual dimension of Islam over going strictly by the rules. Emphasising her personal relationship with Allah, Zohra positions herself in Dutch society by distinguishing between a public and personal self. She is not interested in a dialogue with non-Muslims about the religious dimension of her identity and perceives 'western culture' and Islam as mutually exclusive world-views. She has, in other words, no need to translate the Arabic-Islamic terms that structure her life into Dutch.

Layla: A God for All People

I first interviewed Layla in 2000, when she was a school principal. She was then and still is single. When Layla came to the Netherlands at the age of seven in 1974, like Zohra she was admitted to a Catholic school. Unlike Zohra's mother Layla's parents did not fear that this might jeopardise their daughter's Muslim identity. She recalls the following:

> Praying every morning, crossing yourself, saying Hail Marys – I can do that without thinking! And going to church of course. If they took the Holy Communion, I'd go along, but I'd get Smarties! What was so nice about it was that my parents bought me a pretty dress and a watch on the occasion of the first solemn Communion, because that's what the other parents did.

Layla realised, however, that she should not tell her parents everything about school. She kept silent, for example about the class visits to church:

> I never told them that the parish priest gave us lessons. I was afraid my parents would object to that and then I would be different. Besides, I really enjoyed those lessons. I remember themes like love your neighbour, use your talents, etc. And stories about Jesus. I was crazy about Jesus, I thought he was really cool!

She developed the following strategy not to deny her Muslim identity in these Catholic surroundings:

> I decided that everything they said that was the same, must be true, and all that was different, was not true. As for praying, I would first pray in Dutch, because soon I could express myself best in Dutch, but then, just to make sure, I repeated what I wanted from God in Arabic, cause what if it turned out that He doesn't speak Dutch!

Layla describes her parents as 'moderate' Muslims who emphasise the need to be good to one's neighbour:

> They stick to fasting during Ramadan and perform all the rituals that go along, like praying and all that, but the most important message I received from my parents was that you should be good in life, and that Islam is a part of that. What counted was what you could do for others. In our home, everyone was welcome.

Despite their open attitude, her parents did distinguish between Muslims and non-Muslims, something Layla remembers questioning as a child:

> They would use Islam when they felt driven into a corner. Then they would say: 'We are Muslims so we don't do this or that.' I would reply: 'Well, that won't do for me. Why don't Muslims do these things?' What I did with all the things I was taught was to decide: what of this is just crap? You know, like Muslim women not being allowed things that Muslim men- of course – are allowed. No one has ever been able to explain that to me nor do I want to understand it. I've put aside that kind of things.

Layla states that even as a child she could not believe that non-Muslims would go to hell: 'I said to myself: it just can't be that those Dutch people go to hell! That must be a flaw in the reasoning of Moroccans!' Layla answers the question what Islam means to her as an adult as follows:

> I don't like rituals and that sort of thing. I'm sure other people have good reasons for liking them, but personally I don't see much use in them. However, my Islamic upbringing has been fundamental to who I have become and how I think. Thanks to that, I have become a person who feels responsible for others. As to Islam as a religion [. . .] well, I always say: religion is a house, and a house always has more than one entrance. I don't believe that God prefers one religion over the other. If God exists, he's there for all people. Important to Him is how your care for the people around you. I believe He couldn't care less whether you go to church on Sundays, pray five times a day or make a pilgrimage to Lourdes. As I said, God is like a house. Muslims enter it coming from this side, Hindus come in from another side.

In sum, Layla's 1999 narrations indicate that to her Islam has more to do with acting as a committed Dutch citizen than with identity. It doesn't mean much to her that she happened to learn 'to act decent' by being brought up as a Muslim. She can also identify with people of other backgrounds. In 2008, Layla still does not care much for the religious dimension of Islamic rituals, but she has come to value them as family traditions:

> To me, the *ʿîd al-adha* (the sacrificial feast, MB), has as few religious connotations as Christmas has for most Dutch people: it's all about family life. In Moroccan culture it's important that you go home for the ʿîd. My parents want me to visit them, so that's what I want as well.

This quotation points to a development between the first and second interview that Layla shares with most women who participated in the follow-up interviews. When I first met her, Layla had only recently liberated herself from what she experienced as the restrictive regime of her parents. In 2008 she feels more secure about her own position in Dutch society. Her parents have learned to accept her lifestyle and are proud about her career. Now that she no longer feels the need to defend herself, Layla, in turn, is more able to put herself in their position. She also feels more secure in the Dutch networks in which she participates and is less driven by the urge to prove herself.

She is, however, also disappointed in Dutch society. She finds the harsh tone which characterises the Dutch debate on Islam worrying. She feels that it is no longer possible to deal with her Muslim background in a creative and flexible way, but that different groups in society force her to take sides. She finds it disturbing to be caught between a Muslim and a non-Muslim 'camp' where both claim definitional power over her:

> As a person of Muslim background, you were not allowed time to think about your personal view on 9/11 or the murder of Fortuyn. Before you realised what was happening, they poured waves of insults over Muslims. And guess what, I am a Muslim too! You never got a chance in the Netherlands to be moderate, time and again I feel cornered. So I pulled out.

Layla also feels cornered by people who feel that Muslims should act as one body:

> What we have is a'redeployment'. Take all those girls who wear headscarves these days. I'm sure that the majority of them has no religious reasons for doing so but that it gives them a sense of belonging and appreciation. The headscarf has come to distinguish 'righteous women' from 'bad women'. And guess who the bad woman is?! Me again. It really pisses me off.

While she criticises what she experiences as communal pressure and subscribed to Hirsi Ali's campaign against the oppression of Muslim women, Layla would never call herself an 'ex-Muslim' as Hirsi Ali does, nor does she approve of how Hirsi Ali depicts Islam in negative terms only, 'The Islam my parents taught me has beautiful dimensions. Like all religions it employs universal values. I believe that all religions were created to regulate society, to ensure that people live together peacefully and do not kill each other.'

Over the years, then, Layla has become more explicitly a 'cultural Muslim'. While in the first interview she still stated that 'if God exists he is a God for all people', 10 years later in a Durkheimian sense she perceives religion as a cultural repertoire to enhance social cohesion. She is not religious, but cherishes Islam as part of her cultural heritage and identifies with those dimensions which in her view refer to universal values and call for responsible citizenship. Layla is very much an individualist and defies the 'redeployment' of Muslim and non-Muslim groups in Dutch society that try to force on others their definition of what a Muslim is or should be.

Tahara: The Mission of a Muslim Girl with a Headscarf and a Big Mouth

Tahara is a well-known unmarried politician who was born in Amsterdam in 1972. She characterises the pedagogical regime of her parents as a '*semi laissez-faire* upbringing' in which she was given much love, freedom and trust. She depicts her two older brothers as mediators between the Moroccan world at home and the Dutch and wider world outside.

Religion features prominently in Tahara's life story. Within five minutes of our first interview session she dwells at great length on how much she has profited from the Arabic and Qur'an lessons her parents had her take. In her 1999 life story, Tahara presents herself first and foremost as 'a Muslim girl with a headscarf, brains and a big mouth'. From the perspective of the dialogical self, the personage of the self-confident and independent Muslim girl is, amongst other things, her 'answer' to being addressed in terms of the dominant image in the Dutch discourse on Islam as the oppressed, segregated and ignorant foreign Muslim woman. Simultaneously, it is her answer to being addressed in terms of the dominant image in the discourse of Muslim migrants of the obedient, caring Muslim woman who stays clear from public space in order to protect her reputation and prevent defilement by Dutch influences.

In one particular instance we can literally hear her entering into a dialogue with voices addressing her according to different representations of 'the Muslim woman':

> You can find me engaged in a debate with three men at eleven o'clock at night. Does that look like I'm being oppressed? No, actually it doesn't. I am the living proof that all those ideas that we used to have about women and headscarves were just a lot of nonsense. Maybe such ideas held some truth in the past, I won't deny that, but it was not just the headscarf that oppressed women. It was simply men oppressing women! So what we do is give it (the headscarf, MB) different connotations. That's not making it easy on yourself, believe me! What I do is challenge society.

Like Layla's memories of her religious upbringing, many narrations in Tahara's story express the view that Muslims should take good care of fellow citizens. In contrast to Layla, Tahara also speaks a lot about 'spirituality'. When asked what spirituality means to her, Tahara answers:

> You know, this awareness of God. The realisation that God exists and how you let that reflect in your own life. There are these ninety-nine beautiful names of Allah. What you do is try to make as many of these characteristics part of yourself: to be forgiving, generous, that sort of thing appeals to me, honesty, justice, wisdom, you know.

Like most interviewees, Tahara describes her teenage years as a time for experimenting with lifestyles and finding her own place in society. Her search focused on the religious dimension of her identity. She relates how the adolescent Tahara began to develop a critical stance towards what she had been taught about Islam and longed to read more about her religion.

During a summer visit to Morocco, 16 year old Tahara has a religious experience while she is out in the mountains near the natal village of her parents: she senses

the presence of God. She realises that while she feels blessed for growing up in a country which has so much to offer, she feels much closer to God in this simple Moroccan village. Wishing to preserve this feeling and bring it home with her, she decides to begin wearing a headscarf. She also takes it as her 'mission' to testify to others about the beauty of Islam.

Tahara's religious experience is presented as the main anchor point in her life story. It is the episode around which her complete story is organised both in content and in form. What she tells us about her life in the text preceding it leads up to the moment of her decision to cover her head, while nearly everything that she describes in the text following it is interpreted as having resulted either directly or indirectly from this decision.

Tahara's narration about her religious experience illustrates how collective voices and stories are appropriated in the construction of identity. In the vocabulary and images that she uses, various parallels can be found with the life story of the prophet Muhammed. She recalls realising, for instance, that she has *een boodschap*, a message. In Arabic the prophet Mohammed is referred to as the '*rasûl Allah'*. This is usually translated by Dutch speaking Muslims as '*de Boodschapper van God'*, the Messenger of God. In several instances elsewhere in her life story she repeats having a 'message' or 'mission'.

Another parallel with the life story of the prophet Muhammad is when Tahara describes how she withdrew into the mountains 'to philosophise'. This is what the Prophet is also said to have done often. In fact, it is believed to have been on one of these retreats that he received his first revelation. Tahara does not speak about her religious experience as a revelation, but she does mention that her retreats helped her feel very close to God and led to the insight that putting on a headscarf was the right step to take in starting to do something with her message.[3]

The prophetic voice is dominant in Tahara's life story. It is exactly this voice that allows Tahara to translate the Islamic discourse in her story into a social democratic discourse that sounds more familiar (and less threatening) to her Dutch audience:

> I am here with a message, because why has God bestowed all those blessings on me? I was raised in a European country. I've had all the chances that one could wish for: good parents, a good upbringing and a good education. I have to do something with that. I can't just keep it to myself. Because, as you can tell, I am a social democrat by origin: share and share alike!

Tahara describes how her headscarf is met with negative reactions. She experiences this as a 'wake-up call' which gives the impetus to a political career in which she demands respect and 'a place of their own' for Muslims in Dutch society.

A recurrent theme in Tahara's 1999 life story is the importance to be seen and heard. She proudly relates how she 'launched Moroccan girls who not only wear headscarves but even have outspoken views on matters' on Dutch television. Her political mission is motivated by her wish for recognition. According to Taylor (1994), the 'politics of recognition' concerns the demand for dignity and authenticity. Dignity is related to a politics focused on the equalization of rights, while authenticity focuses on the right to a distinct identity and requires a politics of

difference. The underlying demand is the right not to be ignored, glossed over or assimilated to a dominant identity (ibid.: 38). The right, in other words, to 'get into the picture', as Tahara puts it. To her, this means full participation in Dutch society, not *despite* the fact that she is a Muslim woman with a headscarf, but *as* a Muslim woman who wears a headscarf.

Tahara's 1999 life story creates the image of a person who is engaged in an ongoing question and answer dialogue with members of the various groups she identifies with in order to negotiate the meaning of being a Muslim Dutch citizen. During the first years after the 1999 interview, I frequently came across newspaper articles and television interviews with Tahara. In recent years, however, this has been much less the case. During the 2008 interview, Tahara explains what has become of her seemingly indefatigable identity politics as a Muslim citizen:

> The world has changed tremendously in the last ten years, and that has affected me a lot personally. I grew up believing I was an Amsterdam-girl. But after 9/11 I became a Muslim. I remember well receiving the first call after the attacks from a journalist who wanted to know how I, as a Muslim, felt about what had happened. I was being reduced to a single label: I was no longer simply a town councillor, but 'the Muslim' town councillor. That hurt a lot.

The filmmaker Theo van Gogh often ridiculed Tahara in his newspaper columns. Consistently calling her 'the whore of the goatfuckers,' he criticised her for having been in favour of cancelling a stage play which might have insulted Muslims. After Van Gogh was murdered, Tahara received numerous threat-mails and phone calls. For several months, the Dutch state provided her with two body guards who accompanied her wherever she went:

> I felt unsafe. I had always been so proud of being Dutch, but now my country was changing. People were not talking about me, Tahara, as a person, but as a representative of a group that was singled out to pile shit on. For the first time in my life I felt that in the eyes of others I did not belong. I got scared and lost my trust in people. For a while I also lost my trust in God. I could not get in touch with my spiritual power: before I had always felt that whatever I'll find on my path, God will guide me. But now I became a control-freak, always alert. That was not Tahara! My spirituality had always been my greatest source of inspiration. 'When the going gets tough, Tahara gets going' was how it used to be. Well, those days were over.

It took Tahara two years to 'get going' again. Slowly her fear made way for anger, and later for the idea that maybe God was testing her:

> Having been trained so well in my own tradition, I figured maybe I could heal myself by reverting to Islam to regain my spirituality. Maybe the meaning of it all was to make me grow and change my ways. Because even before this all happened, I was always pressed and running. I no longer enjoyed doing things this way, so I decided to go back to the old Tahara. And my religion helps me do that. Performing my prayers is like a constant reminder 'Check: what are you doing?' Every prayer is a little retreat which helps me get closer to my Creator and to myself. Fortunately, God has become my buddy again.

While Tahara is still inspired by religious convictions to serve her community, she no longer wishes to speak out publicly about Islam:

> I gave up. There are many young smart people out there who can take over. Professionally, it's back to core business: my work as a town councillor. If you want my view on projects to improve this town district, fine, but if you want my opinion on Muslims or Islam: go find someone else.

In 1999 Tahara still believed in her mission as an interpreter of the various collective voices of the groups she participates in for others. In order to 'launch' young Muslim women like herself in Dutch society, she presented herself as a 'Muslim with a headscarf, brains and a big mouth'. In 2008, she realises that she has less power to define herself than she thought she did. Rather than being recognised as a full Dutch citizen of Muslim background, Tahara feels reduced to being a spokeswoman for 'her kind'. As a result she has changed her identity politics. For religious reasons, she still covers her head, but she keeps the fact that she is religiously inspired to do her job as a town councillor to herself.

Farida: The Muslim Community from Safe Haven to Home Base

Farida worked for a local migrant community centre when I first met her in 1998. She was married and had a daughter who was 2 years old at the time of the first interview. Farida was 7 years old when her father, who had migrated to the Netherlands before Farida was born, moved his wife and six children to the Netherlands in 1974. Like the other interviewees who were born in Morocco, Farida organises the narrations on early childhood in Morocco in her first 'life chapter' and those about her arrival in the Netherlands as the passage to subsequent chapters. Unlike the others, she does not formulate this arrangement in terms of differences between the two countries. For her, migration was a watershed marking the entrance of her father into her life. She depicts him as a 'tyrant' who 'terrorised' his children in order to make them benefit most from the educational facilities that the Netherlands had to offer:

> Grades were never good enough for him. If you had seven out of ten for something, he'd say: next time that better be eight out of ten. And when it was eight, he wanted a nine. So then you had to work even harder! There was never a good incentive. When you did well, like get eight out of ten, then it was not your own doing but a sign of God's grace!

Also, he used Islam to intimidate his children and warned them that as Moroccans they were different from the Dutch and should therefore stay clear of Dutch culture:

> Whenever my father had something important to tell, he'd line up all six children, including the smallest. And then he'd say: 'My name is not Piet, my name is not Jan, my name is Ahmed'.[4] Meaning: you shouldn't think that you can do the same things as Dutch children, who were too free and rude in his view. Stating his name was Ahmed was really saying 'This is me: I am strict and these are my rules'.

Farida's childhood recollections indicate that her father's pedagogical regime failed to allow her to develop a feeling of basic trust and self-esteem. Farida's mother was being ill-treated by her husband and only partially capable of creating a safe environment for her children. Farida depicts her childhood self as a frightened

young girl, driven by a compulsive urge to do her utter best but who time and again experiences that she is nonetheless failing.

While recollections about discrimination in the narratives of most interviewees refer to adolescence, Farida remembers incidents from a much earlier age. The lack of basic trust that she suffered as a child may account for the fact that she remembers receiving insulting remarks that seemed to confirm her father's warning that she was different when she was only 8 years old:

> Confronted with discriminatory remarks by other children, and sometimes by teachers, you begin to realise you're different and your ethnic background gets important. It gives you a feeling like, to them I am only a dirty Moroccan. As a child, one can make things like that really big.

Stories always develop in the interaction between the storyteller and her audience (cf. Ochberg 1994). In life-story interviews, interviewer and interviewees respond constantly to each other's verbal and non-verbal messages. Thus both contribute to the story (cf. Chanfrault-Duchet 1991). This can be recognised in the last quoted sentence where Farida qualifies her feelings at the time to tone down using the word 'discrimination' in speaking to an interviewer who represents the category of people whom she is talking about.

Memories of being excluded not only feature in Farida's recollections of childhood. Her narrations about adulthood also indicate that she feels not recognised for who she really is:

> First I had to prove myself to my father, and now I have to prove that 'oppressed migrant women' can do well. There is a certain representation in Dutch society of Moroccan women, much of which concerns Islam. All kinds of really small details convey the message that you are not accepted as a fellow citizen. That's how you get the feeling that you belong neither here in the Netherlands, nor elsewhere. I don't belong in Morocco either, I couldn't live there, I'm used to living here. This is my home, but I feel as though I do not belong here.

Being Moroccan has negative connotations in Farida's mind; it is related to the restrictions and threats she experienced at home, and the insults and exclusion she experienced outside it. As a result, she rejects any ethnic classification and emphasises her religious identification:

> To me, being Moroccan means being attached to Morocco. Which I am not. Nor am I Dutch. I am profoundly aware of the fact that I am different. I'm being labeled non-Dutch everyday. Neither am I Dutch-Moroccan or Moroccan-Dutch. These terms have only been invented to pigeon-down people. If I were free to give myself an identity, I'd prefer my Islamic identity.

Like most interviewees, Farida began to question Islam during adolescence. Similarly to Tahara, a visit to Morocco marks a turning point in her life story. At the age of nineteen, she spends a few months with her grandmother in Morocco to recover from a burn-out. Two cousins who have become *ikhwanât*, Muslims sisters, introduce Farida to a religious approach that is very different from the 'do & don't Islam' of her father. This marks the beginning of a strong identification with Islam:

> Before, Islam had connections to me with my father: the do's & don'ts. And all of a sudden I was confronted with the fact that Islam isn't about do's & don'ts, but about reading and thinking a lot. I returned home praying, all my own decision!

Against the background of Farida's life story, it is not difficult to understand why she puts her Muslim identity first. First of all, it is crucial to her that being a Muslim is her own choice:

> You can't say I'm Moroccan, so I'm Muslim. One is not by definition a Muslim. It all depends on whether you want to be a Muslim or not.

In this respect, Farida deviates from the dominant Muslim view that children of a Muslim father are born as Muslims. For her the *niya*, the intention to be a Muslim is fundamental. Studying Islamic texts allow her to find out what Islam entails for her instead having to accept the restrictive meanings her father forced upon her. This helps Farida to liberate herself from her oppressive father:

> Muslim women are not necessarily creatures who should walk around covering their heads and wearing long dresses. It's got a lot to do with niya. You can cover your head and wear long dresses and that sort of thing, but that's got not much to do with faith.

Another reason why being a Muslim appeals to Farida is that in her view it precludes parochialism and discrimination. According to her, contrary to Dutch society, the Muslim community is open to everybody. In this sense, it provides her with a sense of belonging that she previously lacked:

> Being a Muslim is universal, anyone can be a Muslim; this religion relates you to everybody. Despite the feeling that one doesn't feel at home in this or that country, one's Muslim identity tells one that there is a home somehow. To me, that is a sense of security and protection. Islam is a kind of haven for me.

When I met Farida again in 2008, there were three important changes in her life that she wanted to tell me about. The first concerned the death of her father shortly after the first interview. What Farida had been waiting for all her life happened then: on his deathbed, her father asked his daughter's forgiveness for his harsh upbringing and told her how proud he was of her. Secondly, Farida now wears a headscarf. After mentioning that she could do with 'a shot of sunshine', in 1999 Farida's husband took her on a surprise trip to Mecca for the *umra*, the small or voluntary pilgrimage. Like all female pilgrims, Farida wore a headscarf, but she removed it when she returned home. This, however, felt 'as though something was missing':

> There is this *hadith* (narration about the deeds and words of the prophet Muhammed, MB) which states that if people ask something, Allah cannot refuse. So when I feel bad or have a problem, I ask God's guidance. But if He cannot refuse us when we seek His help, how can I refuse to wear a headscarf if He asks that of me? So it was an act of obedience. Not a way to 'cover my adornment' or anything. That doesn't mean much to me. It was purely an act of obedience.

Thirdly, in 2006, after having been to Mecca for the *umra* twice already, Farida performed the *hajj*, the obligatory pilgrimage. This time her husband could not accompany her, so she enjoyed 'the experience of her life' in the company of a multi-ethnic group of Dutch Muslim women. The women still meet, and some have become very close friends. Ten years after the first interview, then, for Farida the Muslim community is no longer predominantly a mental space but has taken the shape of a concrete network of friends.

In 2008, Farida finally feels truly at home in Dutch society. Inspired by her faith and wishing to create a better environment for her daughter to grow up in, she has become actively involved in projects to fight the current polarisation between Muslims and non-Muslims:

> If you want to practise Islam, you should wish for social cohesion. In the Qur'an it says: 'We have made you peoples and tribes that you might know one another' (S49:13, MB). So I joined a Muslim organisation that cooperates with churches to combine our efforts as a shared Abrahimic tradition to do community work. But after some years I got the feeling that I was living in a cocoon too much. It's okay to work in a strictly Muslim organisation, but I myself wanted to move on.

Farida now works as a coordinator for a Dutch organisation which organises projects to enhance social cohesion on a grassroots level. Islam continues to inspire her and still plays a major role in her private life. However, from being a 'safe haven' where she could retreat from what she experienced as a hostile Dutch environment, the Muslim community has now become a home base that serves as a point of departure for active Dutch citizenship.

Analysis: Accommodating the Islamic Heritage in a Changing World

The narratives presented here were selected because they illustrate most prominently the different ways in which the first highly educated daughters of Moroccan migrants in the Netherlands who have reached adulthood have accommodated the Islamic heritage in their lives. The stories of the other interviewees in the life-story project tend to be a mixture of the trajectories and identity strategies presented here. In general, the interviewees' narrations on religious identification point towards the development of what is sometimes called a 'Dutch polder Islam' but which in fact can be recognised both elsewhere in Europe and in countries with a Muslim majority population. Among educated middle class young adult Muslims a trend can be observed towards an individualisation of religiosity that focuses on self-realisation (cf. Bourqia 1999; Roy 2004). Like Layla and many Dutch citizens of Christian descent, some interviewees mention mostly social reasons and references to family traditions when explaining what Islam means to them. They view their heritage predominantly as a valuable part of their upbringing.

In the stories of others, religious motives feature more prominently. These narratives likewise point to the incorporation of different collective voices representing the various groups in Dutch society in which the interviewees participate. While Tahara is exceptional in calling God 'her buddy', several interviewees have likewise adopted the rather informal, egalitarian manner of speaking in which social relations are styled in the Netherlands nowadays. Some women called God their 'friend' and one stated that she 'has some tough questions for God'.

Also, not all motives forwarded by women who observe religious prescriptions refer strictly to obeisance to God. Nearly all interviewees ascribe (additional)

meanings to Islamic rituals that go beyond religion. The five daily prayers for example, were often valued for creating a moment of reflection or meditation. Of the five religious duties prescribed to Muslims, the fast during Ramadan is best observed among Moroccan Muslims (cf. Buitelaar 1993). With only two exceptions, all interviewees observe the fast. Regardless of whether they do so for cultural or religious reasons, all consider a valuable aspect of fasting that it promotes reflection on eating habits and priorities in one's life such as the question whether to opt for a hectic life focused on a swift career, or to choose to spend more time with family and friends. Such motives and explanations point to a process of individualisation in which religion is part of a self-realisation project (cf. Mahmood 2005).

A biographical approach to the study of religious identity provides valuable information on how identification processes are informed by specific combinations of personal and societal circumstances. The stories of all portrayed women indicate that pedagogical regimes and parental attitudes towards non-Muslims and Dutch society play a considerate role in how the interviewees position themselves as Dutch citizens. Zohra stands out in remaining close to the Islam that her parents taught her. As has been reported for descendants of Muslim migrants elsewhere in Europe, during adolescence most other interviewees began to differentiate between what they labeled religiously dressed cultural traditions and 'the pure Islam' which allows them more freedom of movement (cf. Jacobson 1999; Roy 2004; Vertovec and Rogers 1998).

This indicates a shift in power relations between the generations due to educational and economical changes. Farida is exceptional among the interviewees in having performed the *hajj*. Both in Morocco and the Netherlands, however, a growing number of young adults perform the pilgrimage. This is frowned upon by older people who feel that these young people cannot be 'ready' to do so (cf. Pektas-Weber 2006: 106). Piety, however, is no longer restricted to those categories of people who traditionally enjoyed higher status, and is now accessible to all.

Deciding to go to Mecca when thinking of a holiday, as Farida's husband did, is criticised by some as shallow consumerism which has very little to do with piety. For Farida, however, as for other young Muslims who perform the pilgrimage, modern notions of leisure have made it possible to combine a holiday and a spiritual journey. Particularly for Muslims in the west, going on *hajj* may function as a 'situational cue', an event of connectedness that activates their personal identification as a Muslim (cf. Brubaker 2002).

The four portraits also illustrate that religious identifications tend to continue to develop over the life course. As people get older the balance in their life stories between the basic themes of agency and communion tend to shift towards more narrations concerning communion (cf. McAdams 1993). In line with this, the narratives produced in the first round of interviews focus predominantly on professional achievements and individual successes. Narrations on Islam were often related to finding one's own place in Dutch society and liberating oneself from restrictions imposed by parents. The follow-up interviews contain more reflections on the deeper meanings of life and the importance of living in peace with oneself and one's loved

ones. Like Zohra and Farida, many women have by now experienced the death of a close relative. For most, Islam has been a great source of comfort in these circumstances. Many follow-up interviews contain narrations on how faith in God or performing Islamic rituals helped the interviewees to come to terms with the loss of loved ones.

The emphasis on spiritual and ethical dimensions of Islam may also be interpreted as a strategy to avoid having to take sides in the present polarisation that characterises Dutch society. Nearly all interviewees stated in the follow-up interview that the present socio-political climate allows them less freedom and flexibility to choose how to present themselves as Dutch citizens of Muslim descent than 10 years ago. Like Tahara, many declared that the current Islamophobia makes them feel less at home. Except for Zohra, however, not one interviewee has opted to retreat into a personal network of Muslims only. Zohra also stands alone in speaking consistently in 'us-them' terms when talking about Muslim and non-Muslim Dutch citizens. While many, like Layla and Tahara, have grown tired of acting as bridge builders between various groups in society, others, like Farida have responded to the present situation by getting actively involved in social projects.

The emphasis on spiritual and ethical issues that can be recognised in the narratives of most interviewees introduces what Baumann (2004: 35) would call 'a ternary challenge' to the binary grammars of selfing and othering in the present Dutch debate on Islam. Refusing to get caught in an ideological struggle over classificatory grids, the interviewees selectively appropriate the discourses of the various groups in Dutch society that they identify with to create space for themselves. Thus they have become co-producers of these collective voices. Contrary to the individual autonomy usually associated with self-realisation, stressing spiritual and ethical issues that transcend the specificity of Islam allows the interviewees to remain loyal to the various groups they participate in (cf. Mahmood 2005).

The life stories of female 'pioneers' illustrate that identification processes tend to be differently patterned in subsequent generations of migrants (cf. Van Oudenhoven 2005). The women portrayed here differ not only from their parents, but also from the present generation of Muslim adolescents in the Netherlands. As a teenager, Tahara was quite exceptional for her cohort in presenting herself explicitly as a 'Muslim girl with brains, a headscarf and a big mouth'. Often being the only girl of Muslim descent in their class, the majority of interviewees tended to attract as little attention as possible to their background as a strategy to be accepted by their predominantly Dutch classmates (cf. Buitelaar 2007).

In contrast, Muslim youths have now entered Dutch schools in great numbers. Shared experiences lead many to respond to the present polarisation in Dutch society by collectively emphasising their 'otherness' and developing a defiant Muslim youth culture (cf. Boubekeur 2005). Similar to the cohort of pioneers that preceded them, they distinguish between cultural traditions and 'pure Islam' (De Koning 2008). Unlike the pioneers, however, they tend to focus on what is *halal* or *haram*, permitted or forbidden in Islam (De Koning 2008).

Peer pressure to stick to ingroup 'rules' is, of course, characteristic of youth cultures. Generally, youth cultures are limited to a temporary stage in life which

the vast majority of people outgrow. Research has shown, however, that for individuals who have had more than a passing association with a particular youth style, their specific cultural project of youth is often transformed into a template of ideas and ideals that is continued in later adult life (Bennett 2007: 26). Since Muslim youth cultures are based on an existing Islamic cultural repertoire rather than being created from scratch, it is likely that many young Dutch Muslims will continue an Islam-inspired life style in adulthood. Whether they will continue to formulate predominantly oppositional identifications as Muslims or adopt a 'ternary challenge' like the pioneers whose narratives on religious identification were presented here, remains to be seen. Since identity is always dialogically constructed, much will depend on whether the present Islamophobia in Dutch society will persist or subside.

Notes

1. This particular cohort was chosen for several reasons: first of all, while much interest focuses on deviant Moroccan youth, information on what contributes to the success of university graduates may also provide insight in the mechanisms which lead to marginalisation. Also, the stories of successful women can provide future cohorts with role models. Furthermore, I wished to contribute to the documentation of acculturation processes of different generations of Dutch citizens of Moroccan descent.
2. On the basis of the c.v. attached to my invitation letter to participate in the project, all interviewees knew that I speak Moroccan-Arabic. Yet in all cases, they preferred to speak Dutch during the interview. Nearly all stated that this is the language they can best express themselves. They speak Arabic or Berber only with their parents and other people of that generation. Amongst siblings and peers, most speak predominantly Dutch, mixed with Arabic or Berber phrases. Some women used Arabic words or phrases at particular instances during the interview to convey the meaning of words which do not have the same emotional 'taste' for them in Dutch. Obviously, such 'dialogical moments' were particularly informative.
3. For more parallels with the life story of the Prophet in Tahara's story, see Buitelaar (2006). For accounts on the tendency to fashion life stories according to a prophetic template, see Hutch (1997), and Peacock (1984).
4. Jan and Piet are common Dutch names.

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Hamburg, Muslims and Imams: The Challenge of Secularism

Elisabeth Knoblauch and Wiebke Eden-Fleig

Introduction

Islam has been a subject of heated debate in the social and political discourse of Germany ever since the first Muslim foreign workers arrived in the early 1970s. Like elsewhere throughout the world, the debate surrounding Islam has become even more central to the national discourse after the fall of the Soviet Union and the disintegration of the so-called Iron Curtain. After the attacks on the World Trade Centre in New York on September 11, 2001, and the discovery that some of the terrorists involved in these attacks had lived in Hamburg, the debate gained a new, more contentious dynamic.

Following the attacks of 9/11 as well as those that took place in Madrid and London in 2004 and 2005, mosques and Islamic cultural centres have been under the particularly close supervision of German internal security. In addition, average citizens and neighbours of Muslim individuals became extremely suspicious and – speaking very generally – have often equated Muslims living in Germany with Islamists and terrorists.

In Germany, which today hosts the second largest European Muslim minority after France, the reputation of its 3.5 million Muslim citizens within the Christian-secular majority society is far from positive. In addition to the aforementioned terror attacks, difficulties of assimilation among immigrant children in public schools, the fear of Islamist infiltration and the so-called ghettoisation of the larger cities have further strained the already fragile relationship.

Daily news about domestic violence, forced marriages and hostility towards non-Muslim Germans has further damaged the Muslim community's image. Also, the attacks in London and Madrid and the murder of the Dutch filmmaker Theo van Gogh in 2004 have been followed by a debate within German society and its political parties about the failed policies of multiculturalism and integration, which is still ongoing and impassioned.

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Islam in general has become one of the most popular topics covered in the German media. Often it is demonized and anticipated as a threat as demonstrated by *Der Spiegel* (Mekka Deutschland, 2007), one of the largest news magazines in Germany, which in March 2007 featured a story entitled, 'Mecca Germany: The Silent Islamisation.' The article circles around such boiling questions as: How much 'foreignness' can German society tolerate? How much accommodation can the state ask for or expect from its immigrant communities and how much accommodation can its immigrants expect from it as well?

It is these societal problems that are mirrored in public discussions, which are often further enflamed by visual symbols: at times, the symbol may be the headscarf worn by some Muslim women while at other times public anger is ignited by the Muslim community's desire to build mosques that are clearly recognizable as such from the outside with the construction of domes and minarets. Some discussions have even bordered on the absurd, like a decision to drop the Berlin staging of the Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart-opera 'Idomeneo' in 2006 because one scene shows the be-heading of Mohammed. The experience after the so-called cartoon crisis, and the hysteria that followed, has made people fear 'Muslim revenge'. According to the authors of the *Spiegel* article, a development has taken place in the name of religious freedom that has lead to group privileges which are actually opposed to the equality precept of a secular legal system.

However, this is only one side of the story. Taken from another angle, the question could be asked if the dilemma of this polarisation between secularism and religion is new. For Muslims, it might also express Europe's imperial gesture that uses its achievements, including enlightenment, reason of thought, democracy and human rights, in order to secure its supremacy. It could also be argued that the never-ending debate over the Islamic headscarf (*hijab*) serves to highlight the inability of the secular, civil society to accept and integrate the religious symbols of its fellow Muslim citizens.

This chapter will elaborate on how the previously mentioned problems developed. One reason for the problems of integration that the Muslim immigrant communities in Germany are experiencing might well be put to the point by asking whether this may be related to the fact that some of the imams preaching in German mosques are actually brought in from abroad, from such countries as, for example, Turkey, Bosnia or Iran. Do these imams 'import' their particular view of the state and religion with them to their respective host countries? What is their view on democracy and secularism, two central pillars of German and European concepts of statehood? Since integration always needs two parties to work together, namely the immigrants and the new society in which they are living, it should be noted that German society and politics have made a serious mistake by not considering itself a nation of immigrants for decades; a misperception that clearly distorts reality.

Taking the views of five Hamburg imams, we will highlight the role secularism and democracy play in the work of Islamic leaders in Germany today. A short theoretical discussion will be followed by the examination of their roles in and views of German secular, as well as Muslim, society.

Theoretical Context

The long-standing debate surrounding Islam and its compatibility with modern ideals, especially Western definitions of democracy and secularism, has been and is currently being addressed by numerous Arab and Muslim intellectuals who have attempted to resolve the issue by freeing the religion from traditionalist and legalistic interpretations.[2]

In doing so, they have reinterpreted religion according to ideals of democracy and human rights. The result may be summarized in the development of concepts of a 'cultural' or 'elucidated' understanding of belief (Zaid 2005). This chapter presents three schools of Islamic thought as represented by three Muslim scholars living in Europe. The theoretical review provided herein is reflected in the questionnaire used in the research interviews with the five imams in Hamburg in order to see if any of these or similar concepts play a role in their theological interpretation of Islam and/or duties as members of the clergy.

The Algerian philosopher and professor Mohammad Arkoun, living in France, is one of the most active representatives of a new, modern and interdisciplinary approach to Islam that critically analyses Islamic religious writings as well as Muslim cultures and traditions. His primary concern is the deconstruction of the 'unthought' and the 'un-thinkable' within classic and contemporary Islamic thought. Within this framework Arkoun seeks to establish a fundamentally new approach that not only addresses the issue of finding new ways of thinking about 'tradition' or 'the Quran', per se, but also 'Islam' (Arkoun 1994, 2002).

Abdullah al-Naim, a Sudanese scholar and well know human rights activist living in the USA, advocates the amendment of Islamic law (*Sharia*) in order to make it compatible with international law and human rights. He argues that Sharia laws are not currently compatible with real life in the twenty-first century and that, moreover, the rule of Sharia, as propagated by Islamists, actually contradicts international law (Naim 2006).

Al-Naim does not agree with the opinion that the concepts of citizenship, human rights and international law, which he intertwines in his revision of Sharia, are considered the product of secularism and the Western modern spirit. Instead, he clearly separates the reform of Islam from the modern spirit and tries to develop these concepts in the context of a reconstruction of Sharia itself by reading and re-interpreting traditional texts and Islamic sources. In other words, al-Naim tries to drape secular answers – which he is actually opposed to – in an Islamic robe (Zaid 2005).

A third figure that is especially present in the current debate is the author and professor of Egyptian origin Tariq Ramadan, who lives in Switzerland and France. He promotes a 'European Islam' or a 'Euro-Muslim' way of life (Ghadban 2006). His aim is the creation of an identity that unites Islam and 'European-ness'. What this means, according to Ramadan, is that people have to reject the dichotomy purported by certain Islamic thinkers who define Islam as the antipode to the West (Ramadan 2005). Ramadan believes that these principals could be overcome by dissociating Islam from its cultural context and its countries of origin in order to anchor Islam in contemporary Europe.[3]

The following chapter is based on field research, which was originally intended to include qualitative interviews with a large number of imams in Hamburg, in order to find out what exactly their personal views on secularism are and what their experiences are living as Muslims in a secular society.

Early on, however, certain problems became clear. Many of the imams were not ready to talk about these issues. Some feared surveillance by the Office for the Protection of the Constitution while others were not comfortable expressing themselves on these issues due to a language barrier. And some of the mosques in Hamburg do not even have an imam, since it is unaffordable for them. Therefore, the number of respondents was reduced to five.

All five imams who were chosen to take part came from different backgrounds. Participants included one Turkish imam who grew up in Germany, a Turkish imam born and raised in Turkey but who completed parts of his studies in Germany, a German female imam who was born Christian but converted to Islam very early in life, an imam from Libya who left his home for political reasons, and the Iranian Ayatollah of the Hamburg Shia community.

As previously mentioned, the interview questions were intended to explore whether the concept of secularism actually plays a role in the work of these five imams. Implicitly, their answers give an indication of if and how the question over the separation between Islam and the state is dealt with. An interesting aspect of the research is also the imams' exposure to the reality and complexity of German life and its influences on their beliefs. In other words, how do, if at all, these experiences actually influence their sermons and/or advisory duties within the Muslim community. Furthermore, we seek to answer the question of whether there have been changes in their view of Islam and their actual work during the last couple of years, especially after the terror attacks of September 11 and those that occurred in London and Madrid.

History and Organization of Hamburg's Mosques

Hamburg, a city of approximately 1.7 million inhabitants, is host to some 130,000 Muslims of different national and ethnic backgrounds. The majority, about 60,000, are originally from Turkey while those from Iran and Afghanistan total approximately 36,000. Roughly 10–15% are Muslims who regularly pray in the city's 50 mosques. Only 1% of the Muslim population in Germany is considered Islamist (Bundesministerium des Innern 2005).[4]

Hamburg's mosques are organised as micro-societies. Many of them are subdivided in associations. In 1999, a body consisting of 40 mosque communities and Islamic associations was founded in order to be able to face the challenges posed by the Muslim communities in Hamburg. It is known as the SCHURA – Rat der islamischen Gemeinschaften in Hamburg, which roughly translates to the SHURA – Council of Islamic Communities in Hamburg.[5]

The oldest mosque in Hamburg is also one of the oldest in all of Germany: The Imam-Ali Mosque right in the city's centre.[6] The initiative to build the mosque came in 1953 from some Iranian businessmen who settled in the Hanseatic city.

Construction of the mosque and its affiliated Islamic Centre began in 1961 and was finally completed in 1979. Both are sponsored by the Islamic Republic of Iran. The mosque's imams are chosen and sent by high Iranian clergy. One of the mosque's former imams, who headed the Islamic Centre from 1978 to 1980, later went on to become the Iranian President Ayatollah Khatami.

Due to the large Turkish community in Hamburg, the Turkish mosques have ultimate authority. The majority of those mosques are actively supported by the Turkish state and are organised under the umbrella of the 'Turkish Islamic Union for Religious Affairs' (DITIB).[7]

Because the German state is lacking effective channels of communication with its Muslim population, the state has attempted to open dialogue through religious bodies that represent the interests of only a minority of Muslims. For too long it has outsourced the management of Islam by relying on the Turkish Islamic Union for Religious Affairs, which can be considered an extension of the Turkish state, to refer to the religious needs of their community (International Crisis Group 2007: 2).

This actually underscores the fact that people of Turkish origin are treated as resident aliens, which is also due to a restrictive concept of citizenship, which persisted until 2000, that made Germany an example of immigrant exclusion in post-1973 Europe. Until recently, the German state defined its citizens by 'genealogical rather than territorial coordinates' (Brubacker 1992). For more than 40 years, Turkish permanent resident citizens were considered 'guest workers' or simply foreigners. Even as the total foreign population grew to 9% in the 1990s, government led by the Christian Democratic Union (CDU) affirmed that Germany was not a country of immigration.

A second important union of Turkish communities is the Islamische Gemeinschaft Milli Görüs (IGMG).[8] The Cologne-based dissident organisation IGMG, which is rooted in political opposition to the secular Turkish state, promotes a visible, central role for religion in daily life (Koopmans and Statham 1999). The IGMG, which is an arch rival of DITIB and has been linked to a series of Islamist parties in Turkey associated with the former Prime Minister Necmettin Erbakan, has been the target of investigations for anti-constitutional activities at the federal level as well as in nearly every federal state where it is active. Many of its members and leaders are 'objectively well integrated – German speaking and aware of their rights – but thought to be working to build up an Islamist parallel society' (International Crisis Group 2007: 11). The 2005 governmental report of the Verfassungsschutz – the Office for the Protection of the Constitution – notes an alleged support of Bosnian and Algerian extremists during both countries' civil wars; anti-Semitism in the *Milli Gazete*, a Turkish daily newspaper which is also published in Germany and is accused of being one of the IGMG's press organs; use of Turkish in educational materials; the advocation of their particular conception of gender relations and the segregation of the sexes; and the assumption that the IGMG aims to eventually found a political party.

At this point, it is important to note, however, that most of the mosques in Hamburg are independent. Obviously, independence provides certain advantages to these mosques but it also carries disadvantages as well, particularly those of a

financial nature. In the case of independent mosques, they are often situated next to a grocery shop, hairdresser, or book shop, etc. in order for them to secure funding.

Imams as 'Imported Goods'

Having briefly discussed the social and financial organization of these mosques we now will turn to the nature of these imams' work. The imam's main task is to lead the community in prayer five times each day. In addition to this, he or she is expected to function as the community's principal. Alongside family issues like marriage and divorce, he or she is tasked with counselling individuals on religious and/or personal matters, as well as with the organisation of funerals and pilgrimages.

In most cases, imams who are working in such an environment have achieved a high level of education from different universities or theological seminaries throughout the Islamic world.

Due to the amount of responsibilities tasked to these imams, especially those who serve as their community's principal, they are expected to serve the Muslim community in this capacity full-time as their primary work. Their salary should derive from donations of the community that belongs to the mosque, which varies broadly in numbers of members. As there are Muslims from many different ethnic and national backgrounds living in Hamburg and not all of them have dedicated mosques, some mosques are more popular than others. The number of people attending Friday prayers however varies (interview Ucar, March, 2007).

For those Hamburg mosques that are financially supported by foreign states (especially the Turkish mosques belonging to DITIB), this is not a problem. In Hamburg alone nine mosques are sponsored by the DITIB, which, again, maintains close ties to the Chair of Religious Matters in Turkey (Diyanet Isleri Bakanligi/DIB). From there imams are sent to Germany – sometimes for a couple of months and sometimes for up to 1 year or longer. These imams are actually considered civil servants of Turkey and are strictly controlled by the Turkish state as exemplified by the fact that their Friday sermons are written in Turkey and sent to Germany in advance.

One negative effect of this transnational sponsorship becomes evident when the headquarters of the DIB in Turkey espouse policies that are counterproductive to the integration of Turkish Muslims in Germany, for example, by writing sermons for German mosques that deal with matters relevant in Turkey, but not in Germany.

However, most of the mosques in Germany and their affiliated Islamic associations are not supported by foreign states. They exercise total independence but, in doing so, must rely on the donations of the community's members for their salary and the maintenance of the mosque and any affiliated Islamic centres. As such, many mosques cannot, therefore, afford an imam who can serve as the community's principal. Often times, the only solution to this problem is to 'import' an imam for a defined period of time from abroad. Usually, since these 'imported' imams reside in Germany for only a limited time period, they leave their families behind in their

original home countries. For them, living in Germany on a very low budget, it is a chance to earn additional income abroad.

Imam Ali Özdil, Chairman of the 'Islamisches Wissenschafts- und Bildungszentrum' (Centre of Islamic science and education), describes the resulting problems: 'Except for a few, most of these types of imams cannot imagine living and dying in Germany. They come with the intention of going back to their countries in a couple of years. An imam staying for 4, 5, or 10 years with the same community in Germany is not the norm, but the exception' (interview, March, 2007). In other words, most imams do not feel the need to engage in the German society of their host country, in order to better understand and solve their community's problems.

Some mosques, like the IGMG's Zentrum-Moschee, support themselves by employing retired imams. These imams enter Germany with a so-called green passport as civil servants but usually stay and work illegally once their visa expires after 3 months. Since they have neither social security nor health insurance, they are forced to return to their home countries, leaving the mosque without an imam, if they fall ill.

In addition to problems associated with the illegal status of these imams, the communities they serve also face serious problems of communication with them. Most of these imams do not have much knowledge of either the German language or German society. Current German political debates, state institutions and laws are not well known or understood by foreign imams. The Libyan-born Imam Abu Ahmed al-Jakobi admits that 'the imams actually tell rather nice stories and share memories from their home countries, which have great entertainment value, but no practical relevance whatsoever' (interview, March, 2007).

Most prominently, the problem of communication between the imam and his or her community is reflected during the month of Ramadan when most of the mosques invite guest imams from Muslim countries to celebrate the month of fasting with them. According to al-Jakobi, this has a very destructive effect: 'These people do not have the slightest idea what everyday life here looks like'.

Financial difficulties are compounded by structural ones. Even if the communities were able to pay a German-speaking, fully-integrated imam, it would be nearly impossible to find one. There is no place in Germany where individuals who aspire to become imams may receive an adequate theological education. According to Ali Özdil 'all we have [in Germany] is to provide further training to foreign-educated imams and this, of course, cannot replace an education. It can only have a supplementary effect'.

The only place where the subject of Islam is taught is actually intended for the education of German school-teachers to be able to understand Islam and teach what it is to their students. In addition to this, there is now the first Professorship of Islam in all of Germany available at the Johann Wolfgang Goethe University in Frankfurt. However, this program of study is affiliated with the Department of the Study of Protestantism and has to be studied within the framework of Jewish-Christian religious studies.[9]

Progress, however, is being made to address the language barrier. Since May 2002, Turkish imams affiliated to the DITIB are now receiving roughly 300 hours

of German language-training before their arrival in Germany. They study German within the framework of 'intensive language courses designed for Turkism imams with a regional programme,' offered by the Goethe Institutes – German cultural centres abroad associated with the German state – in Turkey. This project that was initiated by the Turkish Office for Religious Affairs, Diyanet, to better prepare Turkish imams for working in Germany turned out to be so successful that an intensified programme and a follow-up course in Germany are currently being planned.[10] One of the corresponding projects started off in February 2007 in Hamburg. Sponsored by the Turkish Community Hamburg (TGH), a collective of social and cultural associations, the project provided further training to eleven male and two female imams of the DITIB in a 600-hours German course (Gräff 2007: 21).

The Development of a German Islam?

The majority of Muslim residents in Hamburg are second, third and, to a lesser extent, fourth generation migrants. For the most part, they consider Germany their home and speak German as their first language of communication. Often, these individuals have not spent substantial time in the countries of their origins; instead, visiting them on occasion for vacations or special events. In some cases, they do not speak the language of their countries of origin fluently, if at all.

Thus, it is very important to them that their imam speaks German and is familiar with and knowledgeable of German society. If not, he or she cannot fulfil his or her task of advising the community adequately. As this is too often the case, many young Muslims in Germany seek out the assistance of someone other than their mosque's imam for advice. Abu Ahmad al-Jakobi comments that he knows of many young people who are searching for their own 'personal imam', often through the use of the internet.

However, this is not without repercussions for local Muslim communities. If an imam is no longer viewed as the generally-accepted advisor to Muslims in his/her area, it may lead to confusion within the community over leadership and may diminish the imam's effectiveness to guide his/her community. This issue, however, is seemingly being addressed by Muslims throughout Germany. For Friday prayers, many mosques try to invite German-speaking imams to lead prayer at least once a month. In some cases, weekly sermons and prayers are translated into German, which helps the congregations better understand the services especially since many Muslim communities consist of individuals from different national backgrounds. As such, there is a demand for imams with a German outlook among the Muslim community, a community that consists of believers born and raised in Germany.

Another problem that has arisen in Muslim communities throughout Germany, which is resulting in the further development of a German Islam, is the disagreement within the Muslim community itself over differences in Islamic practices. Muslims that come from abroad not only recognize that 'in Germany many things are different, but that there are also great misunderstandings among the different

communities – like for example the way people pray', says Halima Krausen. According to Krausen, 'Muslims who come here sometimes clash. And what comes out of this is a certain development. Muslims from abroad do develop roots here, you can call it a growth process' (interview March, 2007).

Ali Özdil takes this a step further. Although he recognizes that the concept of a 'Euro-Islam' is provocative to many, he also believes that there 'has been an Islam with a European imprint for centuries in countries like Albania or Bosnia,' and so, he also feels that it is highly likely that there may develop something like an Islam with a German imprint too. This is so not only Language-wise and with regard to culture, but also with what concerns the interpretation of Islamic schools of law. For Muslims residing in Europe, cultural diversity and the confrontation with the heterogenity of Islam has led to another way of thinking.

Another example of Muslims interested in the development of a German-oriented Islam, can be found among the youth council of the SHURA. Under the name of 'Life Mecca' it initiated a series of society-relevant projects. There are also more examples that point to the development of a uniquely German Islam that can be found among theoretical and theological discussions, as demonstrated by the debate that took place in Northern Germany over the issue of correct prayer times. Ali Özdil described what took place:

> During the holiday season of Ramadan, the morning prayer took place before sunrise at 4.30 am. The night prayer occurred at 11.30 pm. That means that children prayed until midnight and then had to get up again at 4.30 am the next morning. Even if they went to sleep directly after the morning prayer, four and a half hours of sleep are not enough at all.
>
> Germany is located at a latitude of 45° north of the equator in a transition zone. Theoretically the night prayer never takes place. Islamic law states that the prayers have to take place at their designated times. But what happens if the time never comes? Does that mean the believers do not have to pray? Or does it mean, and this has been discussed since the 13th century, that you don't have to follow the sun? This is a question that has been discussed by Muslim scholars for centuries because Muslims have historically travelled a great deal due to trade. While travelling, they must have thought: something is wrong here. We simply cannot follow those zones that are close to the equator, since there day and night are equally long. For those imams coming from Turkey it is totally normal to fast 13, 14 hours during Ramadan but in Northern Germany it could happen that you would have to fast for 21 hours during the summer. The day only consists of 24 hours. How would it be possible to pray the night prayer, sleep, have breakfast and pray the morning prayer all before sunrise?
>
> Therefore in 1980, the representatives of the four Sunni law schools sat down together and issued a *fatwa* (Islamic legal decree) stating that in Germany Muslims do not have to follow the sun for their prayer times but, instead, the times of prayer that are the same in winter and summer. Imams working in Germany have to learn that here things work differently. It is an ijtihad that has to be done (interview March, 2007)

In addition, academic discussions over the reform of Islam also play a role. Theoretical discussions in Europe are reflected partly in the debates held within even conservative Muslim circles. Even though secularism as a concept is often understood as a Western ideology that Islam should not accept, it is nonetheless present in discussions on religion. As al-Jakobi explains, it is important for modern Muslim

communities in Germany to be led by an imam who is living in his time – 'time-conforming Islamic thinking', as he calls it. 'The European humanistic heritage is something very precious and Muslims should learn from it'.

Another important factor not to be underestimated in the emergence of a German Islam is the dialogue between the Islamic clergy and those of other religions as well as the dialogue between Muslim communities in general and those of other faiths; a dialogue that is very well supported by the German state. While the state supports dialogue between Muslims, Christians, Jews, among others, for the purpose of integration, something else may develop out of this dialogue as well. Ramzan Ucar explains: 'During the Easter holidays, the congregation of a nearby Christian church came to us and their priest held their service in our mosque and we all prayed together. The next day, our congregation visited the church and one of our imams led our service there where both communities prayed together, the Christian and the Muslim communities.' This would have been 'unthinkable' just a few years ago, as Ucar says, and it demonstrates once more that not only has German society and life been influenced by the presence of the Muslim minority but that this Muslim minority has been influenced as well (interview March, 2007).

Due to all these factors – the interaction within the German-Muslim community itself, as many different individuals from diverse nationalities meet in German mosques; the realities of life in Germany, such as the length of the days and nights during the summer months that affect Muslim prayer and fasting rituals; and because of the current dialogue between Muslims and Germans of other faiths – the development of a uniquely German-oriented Islam is well underway.

Ayatollah Ghammaghami: An Exception Among Hamburg Imams

The imam of the Imam-Ali Mosque and head of the Islamic Cultural Centre, Ayatollah Seyyed Abbas Hosseini Ghaemmaghami, has a different point of view regarding his work in Germany. Ghaemmaghami, who has lived in Hamburg since 2004, only has a very basic knowledge of German but, for him, this is not a problem as he states that, 'understanding is not only about knowing a language. It is about being open to understanding the other' (interview March, 2007). This scholar, who has a profound knowledge of German philosophy and a high level of academic and religious training, is somewhat of an exception among Hamburg's imams. For him, it is important that neither his work is considered a charity nor his mosque considered a 'welfare organization.' This distinctive way of approaching his work also sets him apart from other imams in Hamburg. For Ghaemmaghami, it is his goal to assist the Muslim community he serves to develop a deeper understanding of, and connection to, their Islamic beliefs.

In his own words, he compares his role in the community to that of a bridge whereby he serves to create a connection between various elements of the different cultures. As he explains, 'It is a bridge that you actually have to cross over, not one

that you have to tear down and not one that you should walk back over once you've crossed it'. Although he believes that a certain willingness to learn together with openness towards and knowledge of the German language and culture are essential for his work, he is simultaneously unsure of what he thinks of the idea of preparatory courses on German language and culture for imams in their respective countries of origin before leaving for Germany. Ghaemmaghami feels that the nature of such courses would have to be questioned, openly and honestly, in order to make sure that they are not made in a way that would push the participants into a certain direction that would impose a 'Western' idea of what Islam should be.

As opposed to most of the other imams in Hamburg, Ghaemmaghami's educational background is reflected in his theological discourse. He has thoroughly elaborated on and broadly discussed the issue of secularism and Islam. He is convinced that in certain cases – like the German case – there has to be a separation between state and religion. By drawing from Islamic sources, he argues that in order to have a just, religious Islamic state, you must have the legitimate support of the people. In other words, there is a need for democracy – a democracy legitimised by the majority. Furthermore, it is my interpretation that he explains that not all dimensions of societal life should be derived from religious teachings, 'Basically, the Islamic view regarding the different aspects of societal life is rational. Islam confirms and assigns social traditions and agreements that are based on rationalism.'

Secularism also has another side to it that Ghaemmaghami feels is worth discussing. While he thinks that the Muslim woman should be free to decide whether to wear the *hijab* or not, he also insists that society should allow this woman to have the freedom of choice. This stands in contrast to societies such as France, where secularism prohibits their choice to express certain Islamic beliefs in public institutions, such as the wearing of the veil. However, he says, the prevailing secularism of German society allows for everybody the freedom to practice his or her religious beliefs in a manner that is more open than the secularism of France and other European countries.

Parallel Society and Implications of 9/11 Terrrorist Attacks

The development of an Islam with a German imprint is hindered by the fact that most Muslims living in Germany rarely leave their (mostly Turkish) cultural circles. This can, however, partly be explained by the way that German society deals with its foreign citizens. The statement given by Ali Özdil, when asked whether his work has changed after 9/11, demonstrates what is understood by the term 'Parallelgesellschaft' (which could be translated into 'parallel society'): 'I would argue that basically nothing has changed. But the reasons for this are different from what you might think. Most imams are not reading *Stern* or *Spiegel* (German news magazines) or anything like it. They (the Turks) know what is happening in Turkey. But usually they do not know what is going on in Germany. In their world of thought another world dominates'. Asked whether there are no discussions in the mosques

on such topics as for example the terrorist attacks in London or Madrid, he states that there is no reference to them at all-not even during Friday prayers.

However, Ali Özdil does not see the reasons for this in the existence of a Parallelgesellschaft but prefers to explain it with the Muslim's view on terrorism in general: the majority distance themselves from any terrorist activity and feel that such acts do not have anything to do with their understanding of Islam. As Özdil puts it, 'Most people think: we are not Islamists, not fundamentalists. We do not even know if Muslims were responsible for these attacks. Maybe they were Muslims, maybe not. Why should we deal with it?' At the same time Özdil argues that, in their understanding, terror is nothing unusual. Terror attacks in Turkey and even the Arab world play a vivid part in their understanding and judging of the world.

However, 9/11 has led to radical change within German society and state in dealing with its Muslim citizens. This becomes especially evident when looking at the work of the Verfassungsschutz in Hamburg. Before 9/11 there was only one person responsible for questions concerning Islam and Muslims. Today about 40% of the Verfassungsschutz's attention is focused on Hamburg's Muslim communities. Besides a general assessment of the situation and understanding of the Islamist scene, according to Manfred Murck, Deputy President of the Hamburg Office for the Protection of the Constitution, most attention is given to the prevention of planned terror attacks (interview March, 2007). A big difference is made between those groups that do not hesitate to use violence and those who subtly aim at propagating an Islam that is incompatible with the German constitution.

Since Islamists do not operate openly and many projects, if not considered within a greater context, seem harmless, it is very important to take into consideration all of the actions, work and publications of a group when trying to determine the threat posed by such a community. As the Verfassungschutz explains, some groups, although currently in line with the democratic constitution of Germany, may come into conflict with it when religious understanding and legislation are no longer compatible. This implies, as confirmed by the research associate Denis Engelleder, a consultant for questions concerning Islam at the Hamburg Office for the Protection of the Constitution, that a certain amount of speculation is included in the Verfassungsschutz's assessment of the overall situation (interview March, 2007).

Overall the constitution officers, who observe a number of Hamburg's mosques after 9/11, confirm that in general the imams have a 'calming influence' and serve as a cushion between more radical voices and the overall majority of so-called moderate Muslims. Since the mosques often depend on donations, it is important for the communities to look for an imam with good rhetoric skills who is able to promote the mosque/community and represents the position and belief that the majority of its members uphold. Apart from this 'self regulation' most mosques are aware that they are under observation and are therefore keen to have a 'clean image'. That is why they search for moderate imams in order to develop control mechanisms for their respective mosques. Internally there are numerous discussions on 'what is allowed and what is not allowed' in order not to harm their mosque's image.

During the interviews with the imams it became clear that the Office for the Protection of the Constitution and especially its reports are playing an important role for their work. 'Political issues such as Jews and Israel are sensitive topics', states Ali Özdil. He says that in advanced training, imams are instructed to deal 'carefully with these topics in Germany'. Terms like sharia or jihad should be avoided when speaking to the media for example. 'We try to teach them how to manage their daily work without getting into trouble. Those who are observed have more difficulties in doing their work.'

So the overall experience is that radicals do not have an audience. Their global propagation that 'we are attacked and have to defend ourselves' is not what the average Muslim in Germany can identify with. Although the question of identity became more important after 9/11, and although it can be asserted that the global level in some respect is reflected on the local level, most Muslims show their identity publicly. For example, women often insist on following the Islamic dress code, although they might be discriminated against by their neighbours and/or confronted with stereotypes and prejudgdements by large segments of the non-Muslim society.

Although it seems certainly fashionable to be radical in certain circles, in general the average Muslim disapproves of the use of any violence whatsoever. The Office of the Protection of the Constitution also confirms this fact. It is also only a tiny minority that dreams the ideological dream of establishing an Islamic state for example. The majority of resident Muslims distance themselves from terror and even though they might feel rejected on various levels, they do not express a wish to get involved in international terrorist networks.

According to Ramazan Ucar, the primary goal of the young generation is to establish a firm financial position through employment thereby allowing the start of a family. At this point they seek support, advice and help as opposed to an ideologically grid-locked theory.

Radical Islam, as argued by Abu Ahmed al-Jakobi has degraded itself through its 'rigid, simple, Wahabi teaching and the brutality it showed in certain actions. Most Muslims cannot identify with this superficial and simple view of the world'. On the contrary many Muslims wish for a more serious interreligious dialogue and interaction with the non-Muslim German population.

It should be mentioned that one imam did hold a different opinion on the possibility of separating politics and religion. For Halima Krausen, ethics are defined by her religion and therefore her actions are influenced by that understanding. 'My conscience is tied to my religion. And I am responsible for my actions in front of God. If I had a political post I could not forget about my conscience. For me this cannot to be separated.' However upon further questioning she stated that the constitution is the relevant regulatory framework. She understands the Sharia as an ethical and judicial system, which does not always correspond with the German constitutional law. 'If there is something allowed in the German constitutional law, but ethically prohibited for us, then it is forbidden. If something is prohibited by German law and allowed in Islam, then, of course, the boundaries of the constitutional law are binding for us' (interview March, 2007).

Conclusion

The above findings lead us to conclude that in every day situations, discussions about democracy and secularism do not play a role for Muslims living in Hamburg. There are also, as far as we were told, no discussions about the possibility of establishing an Islamic state among the Muslim majority. While the German state is not the centre of attention, the constitutional law is the set benchmark for all actions. In cases of insecurity regarding religious questions and interpretations, the German constitutional laws are binding for those imams who are actually familiar with them. For those imams interviewed, this is the case since they believe – also from the viewpoint of religious studies – that they have to adapt to their respective environments. But again, this only applies to those imams who are planning to spend the rest of their lives in Germany.

It is also evident that there is a development process within the Islamic community. In other words, there are signs of a new trend. But for this positive development to continue it is essential to offer theological education for imams in Germany itself and to establish a theological professorship. German authorities are not showing any serious interest in this idea so far, although this would doubtlessly be beneficial for them. First of all, German-speaking, integrated Muslims – as shown in the examples presented in the previous chapters – take stock in creating something individual, independent and specifically tailored for their (German) environment that helps to consolidate their belief without confining their life in a secular, mostly Christian, society. Secondly, from a security-political, not only from a multiculturalist, point of argument this would at the same time automatically lead to more transparency. And, last but not least, it would greatly benefit the assessment of the situation, for the non-Muslim society as well as for authorities, if the language of choice in such debates is German.

However, what can be seen is a change. Muslims do not just live in Germany, they instead want to be part of the society. Therefore they aim at making a difference by engaging in inter-religious dialogue, as well as in social and welfare projects. Concluding, one can say that there is no discrepancy between Islam, secularism or the state in Hamburg. A great majority of Muslims want to integrate and become a part of their surrounding society. Therefore it is not only the imams influencing their respective communities, but the communities that challenge their imams in reinterpreting Islamic sources as well, in order to make them look into the subject of the compatibility of Islam with democracy – and secularism as a part of the latter.

Notes

1. **Abu Ahmad al Jakobi,** member of the Shura Hamburg, engages mostly in inter-religious dialogue. He also teaches the Qur'an in German and regularly sermonizes the Friday prayer in the Muhajirin Mosque. Interviewed March, 28, 2007, *Hamburg-Bergedorf.*

   Ramazan Ucar, head of the Zentrums Moschee.
   Recorded interview, March, 28, 2007, *Hamburg-St. Georg.*

Ayatollah Seyyed Abbas Hosseini Ghaemaghami, head of the Islamic Centre Hamburg (IZH). Recorded interview March, 29, 2007, *Hamburg-Uhlenhorst.*

Halima Krausen, Imam at the Imam Ali Mosque, responsible for the German speaking community. Recorded interview, March, 15, 2007, *Hamburg-Uhlenhorst.*

Ali Özgür Özdil, Chairman of the 'Islamischen Wissenschafts- und Bildungszentrum', a private institution for retraining teachers, educators, and Imams. Recorded interview, March, 7, 2007, *Hamburg-Harburg.*

2. For an overview see: Yared, Nazik Saba (2002) Secularism in the Arab World (1850–1939) London.
3. Details can be found online at: http://www.tariqramadan.com/welcome.php3 (accessed 1 April 2007).
4. Bundesverfassungsschutzbericht für 2005, May 2006. The term Islamism is an umbrella term commonly applied to a variety of Islamic movements that are actually quite diverse. Examples of movements commonly grouped under the 'Islamist' heading are Saudi Wahhabism, al-Qaeda, the Muslim Brotherhood, Hizb ut-Tahrir, the Taliban and less militant Muslim groups. Sometimes the term is used so broadly as to include the revolutionary doctrine of the Iranian regime (a radical form of Shi'ism). The most useful definition of Islamism is encapsulated in the synonym 'Political Islam', which refers to those political movements that treat Islam as their political ideology. Indeed, this definition differentiates Islamism from secular political groupings such as socialism and from mainstream/traditional Islam. The term Islamism does not necessarily imply militancy.
5. For more information see: www.schura-hamburg.de (accessed 27 April 2007).
6. The oldest mosque in Hamburg belongs to the Ahmadiyya-Muslim-Community, which was founded in 1889 in India by Mirza Ghulam Achmad. Whereas the Ahmadiyya see themselves as a reform movement, they are usually considered an Islamic sect, which is why we didn't include them in our survey. However their Mosque, the 'Fazl-el-Umar-Mosque' was established in Hamburg-Stellingen in 1957 and could therefore be considered the first mosque of Hamburg. It is also the first mosque ever built in Germany.
7. For more information see: http://www.ditib.de (accessed 1 April 2007).
8. For more information see: http://www.igmg.de (accessed 1 April 2007).
9. For more information see: http://www.evtheol.uni-frankfurt.de/fachb/portrait/index.html (accessed 1 April 2007).
10. For an example see: http://cms.ifa.de/fileadmin/content/informationsforum/auswaertiges_amt/AuswaertigeKulturpolitik2003.pdf (accessed 1 April 2007).
11. There is a difference however when it comes to civil servants as shown by the decision of a German court, which prohibited a Muslim teacher to wear her veil while at work. In May 2006 the parliament of the federal state Nordrhein-Westfalen passed a law which commits teachers to appear religiously neutral. Similar decisions were made in Bavaria, Bremen, Hesse, Lower-Saxony and Thuringia. The reasoning behind this law is that the veil might be understood as a sign of oppression and intolerance. The attitude of the bearer however is not important. How to deal with the veil in public institutions is left to each of the 16 German federal states.

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American Muslim Women: Narratives of Identity and Globalisation

M. Gail Hickey

During the past 50 years, advanced industrial societies such as the United States have been moving toward a greater secular orientation. At the same time, large numbers of Muslims from Asia and the Middle East have settled in the United States, bringing with them non-Western perspectives of gender and family. Muslim women immigrants' perspectives tend to be marginalized in the U.S. Westernized, secular, female dynamic. This chapter gives voice to feminist counternarratives by first- and second-generation U.S. Muslim women in an attempt to document and analyze how these women negotiate new racial and gendered politics within the adopted society. Many interrelated themes emerged during analysis of these intergenerational interviews. In this chapter, the theme of gendered socialization is emphasized.

Prior to the tragic events of September 11, 2001, the Western world evidenced scant curiosity about the place of religion in contemporary society (Melleuish 2005: 16). In fact, during the past half century the United States and other advanced industrialized nations have moved consistently toward a secular orientation (Norris and Ingelhart 2004: 154). The 1965 U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Act, on the other hand, opened the door to large numbers of immigrants of Asian and Middle Eastern descent – many of whom are Muslim (Hickey 2006). Consequently, at the same time that the Western hemisphere is moving rapidly toward a secular orientation, it acts as host to an ever-increasing religious population with origins in the Eastern hemisphere.

The modern Muslim diaspora differs from the large waves of European immigration that swept the United States at the turn of the twentieth century. Early European immigration to the U.S. was characterized by males who settled in the New World and, after establishing themselves in the host society and economy, sent for their spouses and perhaps other family members to join them. This practice of separating families during the upheavals that accompanied migratory experiences resulted in the neglect or discard of various ethnic traditions, ways of commemorating significant events, and even religious observances. Contemporary immigrants are more

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likely to arrive in family groups and, by virtue of intact social units, continue to perpetuate traditional ethnic practices and belief structures to succeeding generations (Hickey 2006). In a strongly democratic, egalitarian, and individualistic society such as the U.S., Muslim women often find themselves navigating 'another mode of being female' (Lazreg 1994: 6).

As Zine (2004: 167) attests, current notions of the category 'female' have been articulated 'in ways that privilege a particular construction of womanhood based on Western, liberal, secular notions.' Thus, even as social scientists demonstrate an increased interest in the U.S. Muslim immigrant population (Ahmad and Szpara 2003), few studies have explored the gendered experiences and perceptions of U.S. Muslim women immigrants (Read 2003). This chapter explores female Muslim immigrants' identity negotiations and renegotiations in U.S. American cultural settings in an attempt to illuminate gendered issues of immigration. How are Muslim women affected by the primary discrepancies between the value systems and cultural frameworks of their countries of origin and those of mainstream U.S. society? What effect, if any, does exposure to these differing value systems and cultural frameworks have on Muslim women's sense of self vis-a-vis gender or familial roles? In what ways do Muslim women's experiences with tradition and/or transition affect their interactions with others in the home, school, and society?

To explore these questions in a meaningful fashion, I invited two generations of U.S. Muslim women immigrants to discuss their experiences and perspectives while living in a secular Westernized society. The women needed an opportunity to tell their stories and articulate their perspectives within a safe, conversational format (Boute 2002). Researchers need to hear, from the women themselves, how they perceive and reconcile the Islamic world with U.S. secular society. To listen to these women's stories and to gather their perspectives within a conversational one-on-one environment, I implemented an oral history project[1] with South Asian and Middle Eastern Muslims living in the Midwestern United States.

Theoretical Frameworks

Migration to a different country results in challenges to one's values, beliefs, and social constructs (Rosenthal et al. 1996). These challenges are dependent on a variety of factors, such as the degree of cultural distance between the immigrant's birth culture and that of the host culture, the extent of exposure to the host culture following resettlement, perceptions of discrimination or prejudice (Kagitchibasi and Berry 1989), gender, and age at migration (Bouma and Brace-Govan 2000).

Newcomers to the United States historically were expected to assimilate into the Judeo-Christian cultural setting often described as 'American'. Sociologists Portes and Rumbaut (2001) describe this immigrant phenomenon as the expected path toward absorption into an alleged mainstream. Most researchers who study contemporary U.S. immigration trends agree, however, that culture can no longer be perceived as a static property shared by all members of a given society, but

as a dynamic process co-constructed by each individual (Boesch 1991; Bruner 1996; Cole 1996; Schweder 1990). The ways individuals think and act are governed largely by early socialization experiences, and these experiences happen within the context of culturally-determined boundaries. As Bierbrauer and Pedersen (1996: 401) aver, 'Culturally learned assumptions control our life with or without our permission [and even] our perception of reality is culturally learned'.

Each individual belongs to several different cultural groups (e.g., ethnic, religious, social, educational), yet the importance of each culture is likely to change over time (Bierbrauer and Pedersen 1996). How one perceives and interprets behaviors in specific social settings depends to a great deal on one's cultural perspectives. In short, our behaviors 'result from expectations that in turn result from values which have been learned in a cultural context' (Bierbrauer and Pedersen 1996: 410–411). Differences in immigrants' host culture and birth culture values can be vast. Social behavior and related constructs of values, belief systems, gender and familial roles, differ significantly between the collectivist birth cultures of many U.S. Muslim immigrants and the individualistic culture found in mainstream American social settings (Berry 1997; Triandis 1990). Consequently, South Asian and Middle Eastern Muslims living in a predominantly Judeo-Christian environment may experience acculturation differently from other immigrant subgroups.

Muslim immigrant youth in the United States typically experience different opportunities for exposure to U.S. American mainstream culture than do their parents. Research suggests young immigrants acculturate at a more rapid pace than their parents (Matsuoka 1990), often leading to intergenerational conflict (Nguyen and Williams 1989; Phinney 1990). Immigrants from collectivist cultures tend to perceive children's Westernized socialization as a major contributor to intergenerational conflict, especially in relation to gender and familial roles (Felix-Ortiz and Newcomb 1995).

Religion plays a central role in identity development as immigrants deal with elements of cultural change (Kurien 1999). Religion is, according to Uphoff (1999: 87), 'any faith or set of values to which an individual or group gives ultimate loyalty.' Religion serves as a vehicle for cultural transmission and facilitates the formation of ethnic communities (Mearns 1995; Vertovec 1995). Muslims are followers of Islam, a monotheistic religion that espouses the oneness of Allah (*tawhid*) as revealed to the Prophet Mohammad in the Qur'an. The Qur'an and the Sunnah provide the framework for *Shari-ah*, or sacred law of Islam. In Muslim countries, there is no separation of Church and State as exists in the U.S., nor is there a church hierarchical system such as exists in the Judeo-Christian traditions that predominate in the U.S. *Shari-ah* governs every aspect of the observant Muslim's life – social and religious, private and public (Mordecai 1999). Devout Muslims observe the five duties of Islamic teachings: profession of faith (*Shahadah*); ritual prayers (*Salah*); giving to charity (*zakat*); fasting during Ramadan (*Sawm*); and pilgrimage to Mecca at least once during one's lifetime (*hajj*) (Mordecai 1999).

Islam is the state religion for almost two dozen countries worldwide.[2] This circumstance, combined with the Muslim diaspora, has resulted in a diverse U.S.

Muslim population representing different geographic regions, ethnicities, sects, languages, and socioeconomic classes. These diverse Muslim groups residing in the United States, however, continue to be united by basic universal Islamic teachings (Admad and Szpara 2003).

During the final quarter of the twentieth century, Muslim families and individuals formed communities in large urban U.S. cities, such as New York City, New York, Los Angeles, California, Chicago, Illinois, and Detroit, Michigan. In the wake of the September 11, 2001 tragedy in New York City, American society has not been especially welcoming toward Muslim immigrants. This situation resulted in U.S. Muslims being subjected to misunderstandings, stereotyping, and prejudice, detention and even deportation.[3]

Methodology

Ten self-identified Muslim female immigrants residing in the Midwestern region of the United States participated in oral history interviews between 1997 and 2002. Four mother-daughter pairs from India, Pakistan, and Lebanon participated; in addition, two women from Iran representing first- and second-generation immigration participated in the interviews. The mothers' median age was 38, and daughters' median age was 18. At the time of her interview, each daughter was a student in a U.S. school or university.

Potential informants were identified using Ogbu's (1991: 4) definition of *immigrant*, in which the word refers not only to those who are actual immigrants, but also to 'those whose parents were immigrants and who continue to maintain a separate group identity.' All interviewees were identified through snowball effect as part of a larger study on South Asian immigration (Hickey 2006).

The major data sources were eleven recorded and transcribed oral history interviews. Additional data were obtained via informed consent forms, informal conversations at ethnic social events, field notes, and e-mails. An open-ended questionnaire, combined with a semi-structured interview design, facilitated the collection of richly textured narrative. Drawing upon Minister's (1991) feminist frame for oral history interviewing, I used a conversational format to interview women immigrants in interviewees' own homes and, when requested, in their native language (Anderson and Jack 1991; Gluck and Patai 1991). (On the two occasions when an interview was conducted in the interviewee's native language or dialect, a female Muslim research assistant conversant in multiple languages served as both interviewer and translator.) Interviews were later transcribed and, where necessary, translated into English.

Transcripts were analyzed for patterns and coded using the constant comparative method (Creswell 2005). In the constant comparative method, theory is grounded in the data itself, although the literature on immigrants' adjustment factors and on multicultural education can provide hypotheses about possible patterns. Because a semi-structured narrative format was used, the interview questions themselves

suggest some of the coding categories.[4] Each interviewee checked her individual transcript for accuracy and clarity.

This study supports a commitment to accurate reflection of the views and perspectives of interviewees involved. I am committed to the production of 'a story or narrative that constitutes a theoretically informed interpretation of the culture of the community, group, or setting' (LeCompte and Schensul 1999: 8). This descriptive narrative technique is particularly appropriate when the results of the study should be accurate and useful to members of the community and institutional settings in addressing related research issues.

Findings and Discussion

Three questions served as a focus for the study: How are female Middle Eastern and South Asian Muslim immigrants[5] affected by the primary discrepancies between the value systems and cultural frameworks of their countries of origin and those of mainstream U.S. society? What effect, if any, does exposure to these differing value systems and cultural frameworks have on Muslim women's perspectives regarding gender roles or familial roles? In what ways do female Muslims' experiences with tradition and/or transition affect their interactions within the home, school, and society?

During analysis, patterns emerged to illuminate U.S. Muslim women's perspectives and experiences related to the focus questions. The overarching theme of gendered socialization, along with related subthemes of paid employment and child rearing practices, are emphasized in this chapter. While issues identified by the subthemes listed above are not mutually exclusive and are, at times, intertwined, much can be learned by exploring Muslim immigrant women's experiences and perspectives of being 'female' via counternarratives posed during oral history interviews. Each theme is discussed below and, where applicable, viewed through the lens of relevant literature.

Gendered Socialization

A body of research demonstrates that gender differences between the U.S. and immigrants' birth cultures may be as great or greater than interethnic differences (see, for example, Barringer et al. 1990; Yao 1989; Sodowsky and Carey 1987). Interviewees of both generations support this conclusion. Gail, a daughter from Lebanon, believes relationships between males and females represent the greatest difference between U.S. culture and her own. Tahira, a mother from Pakistan, says 'Women are very independent here; they get to go out and do things on their own. [. . .] Over there women don't get to do this.' Farah confirms that when given a choice of new homes upon leaving Iran, she chose the United States because 'I like the freedom I have here as a woman.' Mehjabeen, an Indian daughter, decides

gender represents the major difference between mainstream Indian and American societies when she says, 'The culture over there is so different from over here. Here, basically, whatever you want to do, you can go and do it. [. . .] You can be more independent.'

The most powerful discourse of appropriate femininity within Muslim families is the emphasis on daughters as guardians of the family honor or *izzat* (Dwyer 1999; Wilson 1978). This emphasis is manifest in constant monitoring of young unmarried women's behavior and attire – especially when they are outside the home.

A Muslim woman's veil, or *hijab*, is perhaps the most visible Islamic symbol of appropriate femininity. Women's seclusion from the eyes of men other than their husbands, however, is more accurately connected with political regimes than with Islamic teachings. Ethnic tradition continues to link Muslim females' dress and demeanor with religious piety. In this way, forms of veiling (via scarf and/or physical seclusion) continue to define conventions of Muslim womanhood. Virtually all interviewees in this study wore headscarves, and most wore ethnic dress. 'Girls [who are] about 10 years old have to wear a scarf when they go to school,' Farah explains of her native Iran. Zahra, who came to the U.S. from Iran 17 years later than Farah, confirms the style of clothing for females in Iran now 'is very much the same [as when I left].' Shahnaz, a mother from Pakistan, admits, 'I never wear an American outfit. [. . .] Even now I wear Pakistani dress to work.' 'I tell my daughter [Gail], "Dress like our dress"', states Fatima. Perhaps because she has never visited her parents' home in Lebanon or spent time with Muslim relatives in the U.S., Gail does not always heed her mother's advice. She predicts, however, 'If I was in Lebanon, I would probably be wearing a scarf on my head. All my aunts and girl cousins wear it there. I want to here, but not in high school. I want to wait until I get into college.'

For Muslim daughters, the pressure to live by ethnically imposed rules is especially intense because family expectations carry a mixed message - so what does it mean to be a Muslim daughter in an individualistic, Westernized culture? Kotash (1992: 59) notes that being a Muslim daughter means being 'modern, Western and successful – outside the home, [but] you come home and you're supposed to be traditional.' U.S. Muslim daughters in this study receive similar mixed messages, which give substance to the dual identity they and their Muslim peers experience while growing up. Mothers often want their daughters to have more freedom than they themselves were allowed (or wanted) to have. Immigrant mothers also hope their daughters will take advantage of the many U.S. opportunities for education and career advancement not readily available to women in their country of origin. Yet, the mothers insist on keeping their daughters close to home and continue to carefully monitor the daughters' social activities, thus sending many mixed messages about 'knowing your limits'. Zohra, from India, elaborates on her own children's understanding of familial expectations: 'Yes, I am very proud of them. [. . .] They have American friends, but they know the limits they can go to. We both have taught them the [Muslim] values.' While Zohra is proud that both her adult children know how to behave, she is especially proud of her daughter Mehjabeen: 'I can say one thing about my daughter, she follows [her father's] rules. She tries very hard to please us,

even if she doesn't want to do it. I think these values were instilled in her from back home.'

Daughters are acutely aware of what their mothers mean by 'limits.' Many times, daughters use the word 'limits' themselves when describing acceptable behavior. Gail says, 'My mother's [. . .] always worried about us [. . .] where we are or who we are with. She wants us to go to school and then come right back after that. She wants us basically to be around Muslims, as much as we can. That's hard to do here, though.'

Married Muslim females earn *izzat* by consistently adhering to the tenets of preferred behavior. Zohra came to the U.S. from India as a young wife and mother. She believes married women achieve *izzat* for themselves and their families through constant attention to their socially prescribed roles as wives and mothers. Zohra's adult children are now in graduate school, yet they continue to live at home and depend on their mother's caregiving. Zohra says, 'I prefer to stay at home and take care of the household. I think it is important for the mother to take care of the kids. If the mother is not home, who will instill the values and the culture? The mother is a very important person in the child's life.' Shahnaz, a mother from Pakistan, explains Muslim women's *izzat* in this fashion: 'After you get married, you just do things for your husband and your kids – you forget about yourself.' Zohra's daughter Mehjabeen discusses *izzat* from her observations of Muslim women's roles as wife and mother in India: 'I think [Muslim] ladies in India want to go out and get into the careers, but I still see them more at home, the caring and nurturing. [. . .] It is a career in itself, running a household, cooking, cleaning, taking care of the kids, the husband. That is a full time job.' Zahra, from Iran, agrees: 'Most women stay at home, take care of the kids, and take care of most everything that has to be done inside the house. [. . .] Their main responsibility is to take of the family and keep the family together. They're a housewife, they're a teacher, they're a nurse – by that I mean that's the type of work they need to do at home – which is very fundamental to the lifestyle of Iran. The family are very much together. It's the unit of society.'

While more Muslim women abroad than ever before are completing college degrees and post-graduate studies (Yao 1989), not all use their training to pursue careers. Shahnaz confirms this when she says: 'Girls have medical degrees and they aren't practicing, they mostly stay at home. They just stay at home.' Shahnaz admits she was surprised there are 'so many working women here in America.' While it is acceptable for an Iranian woman to complete a university degree and then have a career, Zahra feels, 'not many women decide to go that way. Most of them, even if they *would* go to college, would [afterwards] decide to stay at home. So when I say women don't work outside [the home], I mean they decide *not* to. They choose not to. There are a lot of women who choose to stay at home.' Tahira earned a bachelor's degree in Pakistan before her marriage, and uses her education to 'help out' in her husband's U.S.-based import business. Tahira's daughter Aliyah confesses, 'Since my dad has done a lot of things [at work] beforehand, my mom's days are pretty relaxing. Like when she wants to go to work, she can go for a few hours. She doesn't have to do much.'

Gendered expectations are communicated early and repeatedly to Muslim daughters. Much of the discourse on Muslim women in the available literature emphasizes 'appropriate femininity', and identifies the home as the site wherein appropriate female identities are determined (Dwyer 1999). Not only is the home the primary location of domestic labor, but Muslim women also are perceived as guardians of cultural and religious integrity. From a Muslim daughter's preschool years, 'preparation for the only acceptable role for her – wife and mother – begins. She is groomed to be a good wife: docile, obedient, and self-sacrificing. She will learn that her brothers come first in everything, and that even her younger [brothers] hold sway in her life' (Goodwin 1994: 46). Tahira recalls that once she reached the age of 12 she was expected to drop out of school in preparation for marriage. 'When the girl [turns] twelve, you know, she has to stay home,' Tahira says. 'She's not allowed to go out and see any boys or men or [. . .] talk to them at all. [. . .] She'd have to learn to cook and get ready to get married and things like that [because] women are not to go out. In my case, [my parents] wouldn't let me go out to get [an] education [beyond fifth grade].' Fatima's parents insisted she stay with her younger brother while visiting friends in the U.S. when she was 19. 'Doesn't matter [whether the male is] old or young – just so someone [chaperoned me],' Fatima explains.

Developmental psychologist Gilligan (1982) defined the process by which girls in patriarchal societies are taught the expectations of a 'good woman'. These expectations include 'that a woman should be quiet, unassuming, and lacking in strong opinions that place her in conflict with others' (Ahmed 1999: 41). Gilligan refers to this process as 'loss of voice' (Jack 1991: 94). Other researchers who study young Muslim females' socialization observe that family members and others expect Muslim daughters to develop 'a modest demeanor [. . .] speak in a controlled low voice and walk with short steps, keeping their arms at their sides and their heads bowed [. . .] not act like boys' (O'Kelly and Carney 1986: 237); 'cultivate *sharam* or shame in order to safeguard the good name of the family' (Raheja and Gold 1994: 32); 'walk, talk, and dress unobtrusively – [be] invisible . . . be like water, unresisting . . . tak[ing] on the shape of the container into which it is poured but [having] no shape of its own' (Goodwin 1994: 47). Young Muslim females consistently are reminded of the importance of their modesty, obedience, and reticence (Ahmed 1999; Ganesh 1999).

Aliyah was born in the U.S. of Pakistani parents. Even though she has lived in the U.S. for her entire life, Aliyah still is aware that her parents' female behavior standards are different from the standards of non-Muslim U.S. classmates and friends' parents. This awareness is evident when Aliyah explains that, as a Muslim daughter, she is required to 'act different' from other girls. In Pakistan, unmarried girls 'walk on the other side of the street [from boys].' According to Aliyah, 'if you run into a boy while you're out, your parents think you are flirting [with him].'

Mehjabeen, like Aliyah, compares her life as a Muslim daughter in the U.S. to that of her female cousins' lives in Pakistan: 'Well, girls can go out [of the house] here. We can hang out with girls.' Aliyah's parents prefer she and her girlfriends socialize inside their home while the parents are present, which is consistent with the preference of other Muslim mothers in this study. Nida, whose parents also are

from Pakistan, says 'I always have to stay home and do work [rather than] go out with friends' as her peers do.

Gail's mother Fatima moved to the U.S. from Lebanon before her marriage. 'I need[ed] someone to go with me every place,' Fatima recalls. 'I don't let Gail go anywhere by herself – only if my sons or my husband go with her.' Gail confirms that she understands the expectation that unmarried females should be chaperoned when they leave the family home: 'In Lebanon, if the [unmarried] girl goes out to her friend's house, her brother will always go with her. Over here, they are more open. [. . .] But if you go to a Muslim environment here in America, you'll see it is similar to what it is back in Lebanon.'

Nida's parents place fewer restrictions on her young brother's movements outside the house than on her own activities. Her parents sometimes suggest she go out with her brother, but never permit Nida to go out alone. Muslim daughters in this study want to benefit from advantages perceived in both cultures – the comparative freedom and independence enjoyed by their female peers in the U.S., and their parents' desire their daughters remain insulated and protected within the family home. After further reflection, Nida demonstrates her wish to conform to both sets of ideals, and reveals her own means of negotiating the internal conflict this poses, by indicating a 'good daughter' would never leave her parents at home alone. Nida says, 'Someone has to stay with my parents. You know, they kind of get lonely if there aren't any children in the house. If my brother is gone, then the family would be incomplete if I left too.'

The mothers in this study spent much parental effort on training their daughters in ethnically appropriate modes of behavior, from how to treat one's elders to how to select friends. Mehjabeen remembers being trained in appropriate rules of conduct for girls during her first 7 years of life, while still in India. She recalls her early discomfort with U.S. social practices, especially her ambivalence about gender relations in the U.S. school environment, explaining that U.S. girls are 'a lot more aggressive [than Muslim girls in India]. They get involved in sports and do a lot of things that guys do. In India [. . .] there is a set of rules of how to behave and what kind of activities [girls may] participate in. You wouldn't see [Indian Muslim] girls jumping into sports or playing on soccer teams.'

Gail's description of Lebanese Muslim girls' socialization is similar to Mehjabeen's. Gail's parents met in the 1970s when her mother visited relatives in the United States. A war began in Lebanon during that visit; Gail's mother decided not to return to her home. At the time of this interview, Gail was 16. Gail's mother stopped working when her children were born in order to devote her life to appropriate child rearing practices. Gail was taught to dress in the traditional Muslim fashion, covering her body in public from the age of 10. She is not allowed to visit friends – either girls or boys. 'Hardly any of the girls drive [in Lebanon], so they don't have cars like the guys would. I think in Lebanon the guy is treated better than the girls,' Gail decides.

While still in Lebanon, Gail's mother predicted Gail would like living in the United States. '[Mother] said I would like it a lot because [Americans] are all one culture,' Gail declared. 'I don't know about that though, because [Americans'] *ways*

are still *American*. When you [are in Lebanon] they expect you to act differently – like the girls are supposed to do this and this.' With these comments, Gail indicates she understands her behavior as an unmarried Muslim female residing in the U.S. carries certain restrictions. Even though she had lived in the U.S. for only a few years at the time of her interview, Gail was intensely aware her Muslim gendered identity set her apart from her American-born non-Muslim female peers.

First-generation interviewees also remark on differing social restrictions women observe in the birth countries as opposed to those observed by Muslim women in the United States. Tahira reveals that she has found a way to negotiate the conflict between her desire to conform to ideals of a 'good woman' and the relative independence enjoyed by her female colleagues and neighbors. 'Over there,' she says, 'it's not safe [for a woman alone] to go out. But here, you can go out anytime.'

While Tahira appears to be comfortable with the concept of greater female mobility in the U.S., Zohra fears the changes such mobility might bring. 'Women back home,' Zohra insists, 'are protected and well taken care of. There is always a man figure who would always help her and take care of her [. . .] first, her father, then her husband, and later her sons or her brothers. [The women in India] don't have to go out and work.' Zohra contrasts her own life in the U.S. with Muslim women's lives in India, saying, 'They have an easy life compared to here [. . .] they have help with their household duties and get a lot of support from their [extended] family members. Here in America, women are left alone to take care of themselves. Even an 18-year-old girl [in the U.S.] becomes independent and has to pay off her bills and live on her own.' Zohra's tone and facial expressions convey that she would find such independence frightening.

Aliyah was very young when she and her mother left Pakistan to join Aliyah's father, who had established a business in the U.S. She has visited extended family in Pakistan several times over the past decade. When asked about differences between teenagers in Pakistan and the U.S., Aliyah focuses on differences in gender expectations between Pakistani and American society rather than commenting on generalized differences. Her response indicates Aliyah's perception of herself as a *Muslim female* carries far more weight than her perception of herself as an adolescent: 'You have to act different,' Aliyah announces. 'Girls can go out [in the U.S.].' In Pakistan, Aliyah's young female relatives are confined to their home unless accompanied by a male relative. 'Here,' she explains, '[Muslim girls] can hang out with [non-Muslim] girls' without needing a brotherly chaperone. While attending school and living with her parents in the U.S., Aliyah is not permitted to socialize with males. Her comment about 'hanging out' with non-Muslim girls, however, indicates that in the U.S., Aliyah has experienced a degree of freedom unavailable to her Pakistani female relatives. At the same time, Aliyah's mother Tahira advises her regarding 'appropriate' friendships, making it clear some acquaintances may become friends while others must remain mere acquaintances. 'You can't be friends with everyone,' Tahira tells Aliyah. 'You have to be careful who you choose as your friends – they keep to their faith, and we keep to ours.'

Nida's family situation is very similar to Aliyah's. Nida also has observed differences in gender expectations between the U.S. and her native Pakistan. In her

parents' birth culture, Nida explains, when visitors 'come over to your house', her role as a daughter of the house would be to 'ask them if they need or want something.' She would have to behave very formally, remembering to moderate her speech and demeanor. 'Here [in the U.S.]', Nida states, the daughter of the house behaves 'more like friends' when visitors arrive.

These young Muslim women describe how their individual behavior and movements are scrutinized as well as restricted. Once a young Muslim girl reaches puberty, her movements become even more severely circumscribed. U.S. Muslim mothers shield their daughters from that American adolescent tradition known as *dating*, insisting strict adherence to ethnic behavioral codes is essential to their daughter's chances for a 'good' marriage.

Even though U.S. Muslim immigrant daughters may have more freedom than their non-U.S. peers, one American tradition that continues to be banned is dating. 'Until she is married,' Brookes (1995: 131) writes, 'a devout Muslim girl is expected to avoid even making eye contact with a strange boy. She will never so much as shake hands with a man, much less go out on a date or share a kiss.' Interviewees – both mothers and daughters – strongly support the Islamic taboo on dating prior to marriage (Mehra 1997; Yao 1989). Middle Eastern and South Asian Muslim cultures stigmatize unsupervised mixing of males and females as 'improper and promiscuous' (Das gupta 1997: 590). Mehjabeen elaborates: 'Over there, everything revolves around the family. Over here, there is a lot more freedom. Dating is one big difference [between U.S. and Muslim culture]. We were not allowed to do it,' she states. 'Sometimes I had a problem with [not dating while in college], because a whole group of friends were going out to dinner. That was not really a big thing [to them], but that is forbidden in our religion', Mehjabeen continues. 'So, it was very difficult. [. . .] At home, it was always emphasized [to me] "This is who you *are*, and this is how you *behave*."' As Mehjabeen's mother Zohra reveals, 'all my family has arranged marriages.'

The dating taboo was true for other first-generation women, as well. Shahnaz, for example, was never alone with her husband before their marriage. She and her future husband met during Shahnaz's trip to the U.S. to visit her brother. Under normal conditions, Shahnaz's family would have researched possible mates and their backgrounds before formally introducing her to potential suitors. This meeting was different. 'He saw me [with my brother],' she says, 'and asked my brother if he could marry me. Then his brother in Boston came to meet me. I had finished school,' Shahnaz concludes, 'so we got married.'

One study (Gupta 1999) found 94% of U.S. South Asian immigrant daughters whose parents had an arranged marriage were willing to submit to an arranged marriage. Tahira hopes her daughter will honor family preferences concerning a future mate and will agree to an arranged marriage: 'I worry [. . .] if she is going to find someone [to marry]. As long as they can pray and follow the religion together.' Her observations about mixed marriages within the local Muslim community underscore this interviewee's strong stand concerning the importance of common religious beliefs for marriage partners: 'There are some American women here who have married Muslim men; they come to the religious functions, but they think it is just

a dinner. They don't realize why they are really here. What will they teach their children? Then the next generation will be more American, and more and more American.' Tahira's daughter, Aliyah, admits, 'My mom talks about getting me engaged but it will be a couple of years [because I am still in school]. [. . .] I think they wouldn't mind if I [suggested a potential husband] as long as he was Muslim.' Zohra wants both her children to have arranged marriages.

The daughters in this study accept arranged marriages as a form of appropriate parental control over one's life. Arranged marriages continue among certain ethnic groups in the U.S. (Gabaccia 1994). In traditional Asian societies, marriages are most often the products of family agreements. A marriage broker (who was a member of the community and had been hired by one or both families) might play an important role in the marital negotiations. A favorable match meant that both families gained prestige and/or wealth – thus, concern for parental responsibility and respect for one's elders are far more important traits than romantic love. Indeed, a marriage arranged for love alone is unthinkable for many families (Mordecai 1999).

For Muslim mothers in this study, religious affiliation is a serious criterion for selecting children's marriage partners (see Yao 1989). Shahnaz expects her daughter Nida to marry a Muslim. 'It doesn't matter from where, as long as he is Muslim and they can pray and follow the religion together,' Shahnaz says. '[If he is not Muslim], what will they teach their children?' Tahira agrees, stating it is her intention for her children to have arranged marriages – especially her daughter Aliyah. 'We are worried if we can even find a Pakistani Muslim [suitor] here,' Tahira frets aloud.

Shahnaz talks about whether her daughter Nida will have an arranged marriage. Her response sheds light both on the more contemporary arranged marriage model, and on why U.S. Muslim daughters seldom reject potential spouses chosen by their parents. 'Well, I know this is the [twenty-first century]. I will tell Nida what is good and what is bad about this or that boy [after] I inquire about that guy. Parents see so much more [than their children]. They don't just look at one thing,' Shahnaz explains. 'Like, you have to see both the boy *and* his family. You have to see how he is brought up. Parents see all these things. When you are young, you only see [. . .] positive things. Here in America, all these things look colorful – like dating [or] going out. These things are temporary, not your real life. *Real life* is something else. I think parents will always [do what is] best for you,' she sighs, but adds, 'Then Nida will have to choose for herself.'

Shahnaz's explanation effectively illustrates a habit exhibited by many U.S. Muslim parents. These parents maintain an illusion of children's active involvement in the mate selection process by stating the final decision rests with the children. Mandelbaum (1988), however, found prospective brides and grooms virtually never refuse a spouse presented by their parents. Mehra's (1998) study of South Asians living in Chicago found parents give lip-service to the modern arranged marriage model while continuing to socialize their daughters toward unquestioning acceptance of parental authority. While there is general agreement among interviewees in this study that a daughter still has some choice in the matter of an arranged marriage, Das Gupta (1997) found that daughters who refuse their parents' preferred husband and select their own groom are perceived as disobedient and disrespectful.

Such perceptions will, in turn, bring dishonor upon the daughter's family and may damage female relatives' chances for making good marriages. Shahnaz's story about a female relative who chose her own husband confirms Das Gupta's finding about the kinds of disruptions a daughter's behavior may bring: '[O]ne of my husband's cousins in Chicago, in this picture,' she says, pointing, 'his daughter is very beautiful. Hundreds of [suitable men] wanted to marry her. But she married an American. Because of that her dad had an ulcer. They don't even talk to her [. . .] anymore.'

Muslim girls often feel pressured to marry by a certain age, and their compliance with this cultural expectation further ensures their willing participation in the arranged marriage process. Farah talks about her own marriage, arranged by her parents in Iran. Among the various pressures she felt at the time were maintaining her family's honor, her advancing age and its eventual negative effect on family honor, and her personal desire to be free from constant behavioral restrictions. When Farah was 17, she was obliged to be in bed by 10 p.m., and only permitted to attend twice-yearly birthday parties given by relatives. 'I couldn't go out with anybody [. . .] [couldn't] go to [a] movie or *anything* with any guy,' Farah recalls. 'My family was one of the [higher class and better educated families in that part of Iran], and we had freedom [to go] out of the country.' Still, Farah couldn't do anything but stay at home or go to school. 'It was time for me to pick somebody [to marry],' Farah decided. Friends of her parents had seen Farah at the mall with several girls and one boy. 'Everybody knew about it,' she remembers, 'and [here I was] graduating from high school. [. . .] My mom got married when she was 12 years old, and she had me when she was 13 years old. [. . .] Nobody there gets married [at] 25 or 30 – by then, you're too old to get married. Also, I was tired of my dad pushing me [to constantly follow behavioral restrictions for unmarried women] – "You can't do this. You can't do that. You can't talk to anybody outside our family."'

Once neighbors knew Farah had been seen at the mall with a male who was not a family member, her father placed even greater restrictions on her movements. At about this time, two eligible males expressed their desire to marry Farah. 'He told them,' Farah says, '"You want to see my daughter, you want to talk to my daughter, you come in *my house*. I'll let you sit in my living room and talk [to her] all you want. You are not gonna see each other *anywhere* but *in my house*."' In this regard, however, Farah believes her dad was being more than fair. 'In the Middle East, in Turkey, [fathers] won't even do that much. The boys have to talk to the parents,' she explains. Ultimately, the conversations her would-be suitors had with her parents helped Farah make what she now believes was a wise decision. She had first seen her future husband when she was 13 years old. Four years later, she still had never talked with him and never been alone with him. 'Everybody in the town,' she says, 'knew he that loves me. But we never talked. Just think about it! *How* can somebody *love* somebody else when they never talk?'

Farah's experiences as a daughter eligible for marriage brings up another important issue for Muslim women: chastity. Chastity is the most highly valued virtue for Muslim brides. All Western adolescent rites of passage, such as flirting or dating, are taboo in orthodox Muslim families.

Being seen without a chaperon in mixed company or behaving in some other inappropriate fashion can cause a Muslim daughter to ruin not only her own chance for a good marriage, but her sisters' and female cousins' chances as well. A daughter's reputation among the local and broader Muslim community must be one of chastity, obedience, and appropriate behavior. Behaviors deemed 'immodest' for Muslim females include 'talking too much, laughing loudly, or, in general, failing to be properly demure' (Ahmed 1999: 39). One's daughter's reputation in the community must constantly be guarded. 'If a daughter steps out of line,' Bhopal (1997: 65) writes, 'she not only jeopardizes her own chances of marriage and respect from the community, but also the chances of her siblings and the standing of her parents.'

Daughters in this study feel their behavior outside the home is open to misinterpretation by others, and thus has the potential to bring dishonor upon their families. On the other hand, all daughters are conscious of opportunities open to young American women that may not be available to young women in their birth countries. As a high school and college student in the U.S., Mehjabeen has been encouraged by her father to explore opportunities both in and outside of school. Although she feels (and accepts) certain limitations imposed on young unmarried women, Mehjabeen believes the opportunities open to her far exceed those available to her female peers in India. 'It is very open [in America],' she enthuses, glad for the opportunities to experience activities such as 'swimming and gymnastics – my dad was like, "Whatever you like, do." I wouldn't be able to do that in India.'

Muslim mothers perceive their children's U.S. classmates' influence, and the U.S. media's influence, as detrimental to parental teachings. Muslim parents believe their influence with their children is undermined by children's peers at school and in the neighborhood. In the sending culture, children are obliged to follow the word of the father and the mother, but once in the U.S., they may be influenced by their American peers and/or the mainstream media to develop their own ideas about appropriate behavior. Many parents go so far as to forbid their daughters from socializing with non-Muslims in an attempt to maintain control over their daughters' exposure to belief systems viewed as detrimental to Islamic behavioral codes. Tahira reflects, 'Here in America everyone is very independent. Children want to do everything here. Being Muslim, we can't do some of these things. [. . .] There are not many Muslim kids [in this town], so [our] kids can be influenced easily by the American kids.' Shahnaz feels similarly, saying, 'TV over here isn't very good, and kids learn what is on TV. Then they learn from their friends at school.'

When asked whether she identifies herself as a Lebanese-American, Pakistani-American, Iranian, or something else, all interviewees insist they think of themselves as Muslim first and only consider their ethnic identity second. When asked whether there were any teaching – cultural or religious – they wished to impart to their children, U.S. Muslim mothers interviewed seemed to agree certain values are more important than others. Fatima strongly emphasizes the importance of teaching 'my children about their religion.' Zorah says, 'For us, following Islam is very important. [. . .] It's important for them to know their Islamic identity. If they lose their identity, they won't know who they are [or] their values or their roots. [. . .] I think family is very important and no one can take their place.' Shahnaz wants

her daughter Nida 'to be proud of who she is. No matter where she lives or where she works – I want her [. . .] to be proud of being a Muslim and being a Pakistani. Family is very important, too.'

Conclusion

Intergenerational oral history interviews with U.S. Muslim women of Eastern origin living in a secularized Western society reveal information about how issues of gendered socialization, paid employment, and child rearing practices intersect with one's female identity and sense of self. These counternarratives illuminate the perceptions and experiences of a small sample of Muslim women immigrants residing in the Midwestern United States. Analyses emphasize how some U.S. Muslim women – particularly second-generation unmarried Muslim daughters – live their childhood and adolescence between two cultures. These young women find ways to weigh values inherent in their ethnic and religious backgrounds with the Westernized values and traditions of their resettlement culture and, in the process, create a delicate balance between the secular and the religious. First-generation Muslim mothers value the freedom of mobility and decision making experienced in the U.S. cultural milieu, yet continue to impose strict social and behavioral limitations on their daughters. Daughters react to parental limitations in varying ways, tending to develop their own unique coping strategies for dealing with the dichotomies of dual acculturation. Foremost among these coping strategies is the tendency to respect parents' wishes and attempt to comply with behavioral restrictions while, at the same time, completing educational programs and enjoying a modicum of social experiences. A college student whose parents are from Lebanon, for example, copes with ethnic behavioral restrictions in a conservative religious city by transposing these restrictions into religious teachings. A young woman whose parents are from India also finds her non-Muslim peers are more respectful toward her lifestyle when she communicates parental behavioral restrictions as religious teachings.

Although limited in size and geographic region, this investigation serves to illustrate how feminine identity negotiations among Muslims in the U.S. are different from those of Muslim males, from other immigrants, and also different from those of their American-born peers. Muslim immigrant parents restrict activities and behavior on the basis of values and lifestyles consistent with the family's religious beliefs. When these restrictions conflict with mainstream American values, Muslim immigrant families may experience intergenerational conflict and even interpersonal conflict.

For the female U.S. Muslim immigrants interviewed, the definition of woman, and the roles and expectations the word implies, is an ever-evolving concept. Emergent themes in this study provide scholars with information about how Muslim immigrant women define themselves and their place in American society, and suggest further research in this area is needed. Their identities are being shaped

through experiences and mental frameworks associated with family, opportunities for women, child rearing practices, and religious orientation, in ways that only these Muslim women – speaking in their own words – can describe.

Notes

1. Oral history studies are an effective primary source of data in qualitative studies (LeCompte et al. 1999), and offer insight into people's interpretation of their personal and historical experiences (Portelli 2001). Klassen and Burnaby (1993) argue the need for qualitative studies on immigrant families since data generated from quantitative studies provides information about general trends but fails to offer insight into immigrant families' daily lives. This qualitative study draws upon both the feminist framework and oral history research methodology to record and analyze Muslim immigrant women's perspectives and experiences, in an attempt to elucidate issues associated with identity formation and acculturation.
2. These countries include Afghanistan, Algeria, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Libya, Malaysia, Mauritania, Maldives, Morocco, Oman, Pakistan, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Sudan, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates, and Yemen (Mordecai 1999).
3. For a broader discussion of these events, see, for example, Rohde, D 2003, 'Threats and responses: crackdown, U.S. deported Pakistanis', *The New York Times*, 20 January, p. A1; or Kilgannon, C 2003, 'All-American? U.S. says no', *The New York Times* 19 April, p. D1.
4. For example, an interviewee's response to 'Tell me about teenagers in your birth country and in the U.S.' might be placed into a category labeled 'child rearing'.
5. Hereafter referred to in this chapter as 'Muslim'.

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A State of Islam: Modernity and Muslim Life in Twenty-First Century Australia

Nasya Bahfen

Introduction

In the modern era religion and religious identity is complex: it is spoken of in conjunction with national or ethnic identity, and aspects of it incorporate (or are often mistaken for) cultural identity. An Australian Muslim sees him- or her-self in a multiplicity of ways beyond merely a person who takes on an Islamic identity and is referred to as a Muslim. Above the fundamental definition of a Muslim being a person who professes or adheres to the Islamic faith, the word 'Muslim' itself means different things to different people and in different contexts. In Australia, a Muslim might use terms such as nominal, practicing, secular, non-practising or pious to describe the 'type' of Muslim a person is (Dunn 2004). Australian Muslim identity can therefore be viewed as a constructed identity – it is an amalgam of cultural and ethnic association and theological and ideological positioning. How do we then respond to the question of a modern Australian Muslim identity, and how does the diaspora Muslim community in Australia respond to the role played by modern Islam in a secular nation?

These are the key ideas that I want to explore, by first presenting the characteristics of the Australian Muslim community, followed by a discussion on conceptualizations of what Islam represents, and what modernity entails. After this I make the argument that Islamic teachings and practices are not incompatible with modern Australia. Finally, I suggest ways to overcome the gulf between Islamic principles and teachings, and how these principles can be practiced by Australian Muslims living in a state of modernity.

Australian Muslim Communities

Terms such as *modernist*, *traditional*, *nominal* and *practicing* are indicative of the multiplicity seen in the discourse on Australia, Muslims and modernity. Muslims

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are a minority in Australia, where they constitute around 1% of the population of 20 million people (Haque 2001). Despite this, the presence of the religion in the country is not as 'foreign' or as new as is traditionally thought. Australia has had contact with Islam as early as the eighteenth century of the Christian era when Muslim fisherman from the Indonesian island of Makassar came to trade with the indigenous Australians (Matthews 1997; Saeed 2002). In terms of settling in Australia and bringing the religion with them, between two and four thousand Pashtun Muslim cameleers from Afghanistan and the Punjab region of pre-partition India arrived in the late nineteenth and first decade of the twentieth centuries, 'when the use of the camel as a means of transportation was at its peak' (Matthews 1997), to provide outback transport. While many of the cameleers returned home, others stayed in Australia working as farm hands, hawkers or setting up their own farms. The practice of Islam amongst this community of early Australian Muslims diminished and eventually disappeared (Cleland 2002). The years following World War II saw migration to Australia of Muslims from places including Lebanon, Turkey, Bosnia, Pakistan and Indonesia (Saeed 2002). In addition to migrants, Australian born Muslims and converts have added to the Muslim presence 'down under'. According to 2001 census data, more than one third of the 300,000 Muslims in Australia were locally born. The same census figures indicate that Muslim communities in Australia represent some seventy national backgrounds and comprise 1½% of the total Australian population (Musheer 2004).

Although often spoken of as a homogenous group, the Muslim community in Australia is disparate and consists of several sub-communities, with more than sixty countries of birthplace and speaking fifty-five languages (Dunn 2004). Just as internationally, Islam encompasses different cultures and parts of the world, Australian Muslims are multicultural and ethnically diverse: 'the global diversity of Islam is reflected in Australia' (Keely 2006). On the surface, Muslims in Australia are divided by national affiliation, as well as cultural/linguistic groupings – for example, Australian Muslims identifying themselves as Malay may come from Malaysia, or Singapore. They may interact or work together with Australian Muslims identifying themselves as Indonesian in origin, because of the shared linguistic and cultural heritage of Malay and Indonesian Muslim societies. For instance, the 2003 Melbourne concert of Malaysian religious vocal group 'Raihan' was organised by an Indonesian student body with the help of other community groups including the Malay Association of Victoria. Identity for a Muslim in Australia, as a member of a community where two thirds of the members are overseas born, does not stop at 'Muslim Australian' and instead takes into account other definitive layers: racial, ethnic and country of (parents' or own) origin in a process of what Abdel-Fattah (in Schwarz 2005) defines as hyphenated identity.

In addition to the first level of division amongst Muslim Australians (i.e. division by cultural or national differences), Muslim communities in Australia are also divided amongst theological fault lines that may seem at times either blurred or pedantic to an outsider. The concept of *bid'ah* or innovation illustrates some of the varying viewpoints: there are Muslim Australians who believe the method of ritual prayer and *dzikr* (remembrance of Allah through reciting specified phrases

of praise) should correspond to the way shown by Prophet Muhammad and not encompass, for example, group recitations which were not conducted during Muhammad's time; there are also Muslim Australians who believe that group gatherings are an innovation but one which they classify as a positive *bid'ah*. It can be said that the extent to which an Australian Muslim negotiates the practice of Islam varies considerably among Muslim communities. McMichael (2002: 180) observed the critical role played by physical manifestations of faith as an anchor in the lives of newly arrived Muslim migrants from Somalia:

> the expression of Islam was immediately apparent through material practices: women attend mosques, buy their meat at *halal* butchers, wear veils, and fast and feast during Ramadan; children are sent to Islamic weekend schools to learn the Qur'an; and sheikhs are called upon to recite the Qur'anic texts for good fortune and during times of crisis.

In other Muslim communities in Australia, notably those from Southeast Asia, veiling, the purchase of halal meat, and mosque attendance all varies and is not the overriding norm.

The fundamentals of Islam are agreed on by Australian Muslims in principle if not always in practice – belief in one God and Muhammad as the Messenger of God, *sholat* (ritual prayer) five times a day, *sawm* (fasting) in the month of *Ramadhan*, *zakat* or giving to the poor, and performing the *Hajj* or pilgrimage to Makkah if a Muslim is financially and physically able. However, beyond these fundamental beliefs the semantic details of life as a Muslim in twenty-first century Australia are discussed at length by Muslims in the course of their daily lives. Members of Australian Muslim communities engage in rigorous, sometimes passionate, debate amongst themselves, and with non-Muslims, about virtually everything to do with practice and belief in Islam. Popular topics of discussion are methods of interaction with non-Muslims; matters pertaining to the individual and collective rights and responsibilities of Muslim men, women and children; their roles as Muslim Australians and how these roles, rights and responsibilities are navigated by Muslims within a non-Muslim society. Although Muslim organisations in Australia were initially constructed on the basis of shared culture or ethnicity (Dunn 2004) today parity of opinion about Muslim roles, rights and responsibilities together with factors such as shared occupations, campuses or demographics can also constitute the basis of formation of Muslim organisations. For example, there are Australian Muslim societies with Lebanese, Bangladeshi, Fijian Indian or Indonesian orientations (some of which have quite specific – and in a few cases, such as the Lebanese Muslim Association, exclusionary – membership requirements).

There is also little disagreement among Australian Muslims about the basic Islamic worldview, which sees human beings are God's vicegerents on earth, who have been given the gift of free will (Saeed 2002). Human beings have a choice as to whether they want to live in respect of and submission to principles laid out in the Qur'an and in the traditions of Muhammad. In doing so, they fulfill a 'contract' or covenant with God. This contract includes the principles of faith (*iman*) in Islam including accepting Muhammad as the last in a series of messengers sent by God, referred to as 'Allah' in Arabic (Ruff 1998); and belief in God's Books or

Scriptures. While Muslims acknowledge and respect the Books brought by previous messengers, they believe that these Books have been tainted by the agency of human interference. On the other hand, the Book known as the Qur'an, which Muslims view as having been revealed to Muhammad via the archangel Gabriel (Rehman and Dziegielewski 2003), is seen as the uncorrupted word of God. Muhammad, the last messenger of God, is viewed as the perfect Muslim and the walking example of the Qur'an (Esposito 1998). Studying Muhammad's way was a precise and specific science. His practices are known as the *sunnah*; his sayings known as *hadith*. For the early *imams* or scholars who compiled hadith it was crucial that sources close to Muhammad were documented in the recording of hadith, as well the trustworthiness and character of these sources. Hadith were evaluated on the credibility of the individuals reporting them, their links to Muhammad (did the chain of people reporting a particular saying eventually lead directly back to Muhammad?) and whether or not they contradicted other known hadith or Quranic verses. There are six collections of hadith which were eventually accepted by the great majority of Muslims as authentic (Dickinson 2002).

Definitions of Modernity

In order to critically evaluate the argument that Islam and modernity are incompatible, it is necessary first to define what modernity necessitates. There are almost as many definitions of modernity as there are nation-states aspiring to be modern. The rise of modernity can be traced to three seventeenth century tracts: Bacon's championing of nature as the source for scientific research in *New Atlantis*, Descarte's insistence on the primacy of procedure and rationality in *Discourse on Method*, and Locke's elaboration on the autonomy of the self in *Second Treatise of Civil Government*. Thus Bacon's tribute to defining inventions (gunpowder, printing, the compass) and Descartes' appeal to reconstruct knowledge on human reason posits the birth of modernity in the late seventeenth century, with its crystallization and impact in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (Smith 1998).

The most basic and fundamental theme arising in definitions of modernity concerns technological progress. Modernity can be described as hinging on the fascination with the new while at the same time divorcing (of lifestyle and of society) with the old (Touraine 1998). The ideal in modernity is economic, technological, political and cultural progress and development, while the set of characteristics that enables a culture or a nation to be 'modern' (an advanced and growing economy, industrial competence, a robust democracy) could be seen as the outer manifestations of this ideal. Technological progress is one of the outward signs of a society attaining the state of modernity (Wallerstein 1995).

In addition to the modernity of technology, modernity also encompasses development in the realm of human thought, or ideology. The championing of reason and logic as the motivators of ideology is one of the recurring themes in the definition of modernity. From about the end of the eighteenth century onwards, modernity

was conceptualised as not only a state of technological advancement but also as a state of unravelling thought from tradition which was seen as an impediment to the progress of the mind. The modernity of ideology centred on a presupposed gulf between traditional thought and reason. The effects have been termed by Mouzelis (1999) as 'institutional differentiation' as the economic, political, social, cultural and religious spheres become discrete. The cultural dimension of modernity stresses such supremacy of logic and reasoning, in a process that can be termed 'massive secularization'. This cultural and social dimension of the modernity of ideology has also resulted in an increase in what Mouzelis refers to as social Darwinism: the reduced emphasis on social responsibility and a reduction of the welfare state (1999). Habermas (1990) was of the view that modernity arises from an evolutionary form of thinking that denotes reason as being distinguished by different values: analytical/scientific, moral/interpretive and aesthetic/expressive.

Related to the modernity of ideology is the modernity of secular practice. Nation-states that have attained the state of being modern are those such as Australia who have delineated religion into the public and private domains. On an administrative and official front, Australia as a modern nation-state shies away from overt demonstrations of religious devotion, although citizens may practice religious affairs on a community and private level. The separation of church and state symbolises the break with tradition. Given that human beings are believed to be capable of rational thought, the notion of a Supreme Being having to guide the nation-state appears outmoded, so in those societies where the onset of modernity is a developed fact, religion is strictly relegated to the sphere of the home with no place in public life. This of course is an ideology that is at loggerheads with the Islamic viewpoint, which does not support the notion that the church and state ought to be separated.

Islam and Modernity in the Globalised World

Differing viewpoints on the church and state in themselves are not indications that political Islam has no effective role to play in the modern era. Islam's effect on culture – for example, in Malaysia or Indonesia – is inextricably linked to some societies' conceptualisations of the nation-state. This does however differ to the notion put forward that modernity is 'an internal reform of Christendom [. . .] in which Western moderns, through the superseding of an earlier social imaginary, gain new possibilities for understanding themselves' (Houston 2001: 78).

A similar reform could not be applied to the Muslim world, at least not without jeopardising some of Islam's core tenets (e.g. the compulsory alms giving, or *zakat*, that financially able Muslims must pay). Rather, the modernity of secular practice must be foregone in favour of a recognition that in Islam the public vs private debate on the role of religion is moot, because all matters pertain to *iman* (faith) and *ibadah* (practice) irrespective of whether they are deemed public or private according to secular appraisals.

In the nation-state therefore lies the ground where the tenets of modernity will either clash with those of Islam, or operate in conjunction with it. Modernity, after all, is a state to which developing and poorer nations aspire. In the face of globalisation, free trade by multinational giants, and the ease of movement between countries, set against the backdrop of Islam's creed of equality and a borderless, singular *ummah* or community, one may well ask if the nation-state will continue to exist beyond a mere legal entity or political technicality. However, if primacy of the market, triumph of secularism and rule by democracy are the key factors of modernity, then these factors would precipitate the continued existence of the nation-state.

While aspects of modernity can be – and have been – embraced by Australian Muslims without compromising their *dīn* (faith) there are other facets of modernity that pose problems for Islamic societies. Modernity has been the focus of debate in Muslim societies – for example Turkey (Gole 2003), Indonesia (Fuad 2002) and the Gulf states (Ouis 2002) where two of the main concerns amongst Muslims about the modernity practiced by Western countries are the focus on linear structuralism and the concentration on the individual.

Both technological advancement and the emergence of civil society are positive and concrete signs of modernity. But where Australian Muslims and non-Muslims might differ in this regard is the exclusion of faith from the equation. The seeking of discoveries and the gaining of knowledge, especially where such knowledge acts to aid humankind, is particularly supported by Islam. Putting this into context is the way Muslims believe that the current re-embodiment of their religion began when Muhammad was 40 years old and an angel revealed the word of God to him. The first verse of the Qur'an (96: 1–5)[1] ever revealed was

> Read! In the Name of your Lord
> Who has created man from a clot (a piece of coagulated blood)
> Read! And your Lord is the Most Generous
> Who has taught by the pen
> He has taught man that which he knew not.

Several of Muhammad's most famous hadith (traditions or sayings) are those to do with the pursuit of knowledge ('Seek knowledge even in China', 'Seek knowledge from the cradle to the grave' and 'Verily the men of knowledge are the inheritors of the prophets', to name a few). Being part of a holistic belief system, however, Islam asks its adherents to remember why it is that such discoveries are taking place as well as why human beings should study the world to begin with: the implication is that the pursuit of knowledge aids humankind and aiding humankind pleases God.

A modern society is a society where progress can be quantified, measured and observed in detached, clinical terms (Mehta and Darier 1998). The development of mobile telephones with smaller handsets and increased connectivity and digital cameras with better quality resolution and a seamless transfer of atoms from lens to computer screen bear testimony to modern society's obsession with progress. In addition, procedure is also characteristic of modernity. It could be argued that

the insistence on technological development and human-made method, without acknowledging divine power, is an aspect of modernity that is too far removed for a belief system that has as its foundation the relationship between a human being and God. At the same time that Islam discourages faith without reason (Arberry 1977), it also rejects reason without faith.

God-less development aside, the focus on the individual presents modernity's second area of concern for Australian Muslims. Because modernity denotes the historical period in which reason and science triumphed over dogma and tradition (Mouzelis 1999; Tester 2002), the freedom-loving and knowing individual lies at the heart of modernity. This component of a modern nation-state is a citizen 'whose experiments can penetrate the secrets of nature and whose work with other individuals can make a new and better world' (Appleby et al. 1994: 201). Some tenets of individualism can be found within Islamic teachings – each person is accountable for his or her own deeds and will have to bear in mind the consequences of his or her own actions. However, individualism that is based on rights (at the cost of responsibility), and is practiced at the expense of the rights of society at large, does not sit comfortably within a community-based society such that Islam espouses. Within the faith there are individual obligations, such as the five daily prayers, as well as important communal ones such as charity and sighting the moon for the fasting month.

Islamic Ideals Versus Muslim Practices

It is easy to see how the Muslim world could be dismissed as extremist in that it has not grasped the concepts of modernity: what is not as easy to see is why Islam as a belief-system stands accused of being against modernity. Sadly, with few exceptions, many countries whose leadership and majority population profess adherence to Islam operate on a positively pre-modern scale (Al-Braizat 2002; Rahman 1983; Tessler 2002) with authoritarian governments, lack of awareness of civil and human rights, negligible scientific and technological developments, gender inequality, and lackluster economic performance. Yet close examination of Islam's values and how they were practiced and put into place among the Muslim communities that existed during the life of Muhammad and in the four hundred or so years after his death would lead to the unexpected conclusion that Islam is not just compatible with modernity – many of its teachings are the very essence of modernity. Concerns about linear progress and the primacy of the individual aside, there is much in the modern project that can be – or has been – appropriated by Muslims, and used within a religious framework, such as in the case of Iran.

Islam is not against modernity per se: rather, many facets of the modern project are wholeheartedly encouraged by the Qur'an and Hadith. Market economics, gender equality and human rights, democratic principles, and promoting advances in science and technology constitute aspects of modernity that are fulfilled by the principles governing Muslim life found in the Qur'an, the Hadith and the opinions and

rulings of Islamic scholars. For example, the idea behind capitalism is that the fair allocation of resources would be decided by the rules of demand and supply in an informed market setting. Islamic teachings on business and trade were not directed against capitalist enterprise – but against the possibility of unethical business, and against the *unfair* allocation of resources and potential abuse of customers, partners or staff that result from, say, a monopolistic market. Not only did Islam recognise the need for the free movement of goods and services – after all, Muhammad himself was a merchant who traded goods on behalf of his employer and future wife Khadija – but it quite possibly was the first religion to introduce something akin to fair trading or consumer protection legislation. The Qur'an states explicitly that 'Allah has made business lawful for you' (2:175) and it is via the Qur'an and the sayings of Muhammad that Islam laid down rules and guidelines for honest and ethical mercantile transactions. Muhammad told his followers that it was not 'permissible to sell an article without making everything clear nor is it permissible for anyone who knows about its defects to refrain from mentioning them [in the course of selling the article]' (Hannan 1997: np)

The Qur'an also encouraged the signing of contracts in front of witnesses to avoid business disputes. Islamic rulings also defined what could and could not be legally sold according to values shared by those who professed to be members of Muslim communities: for instance the provision of services of a sexual nature, or substances of abuse, contradicted Islamic teachings. However, Islamic teaching also declared that the provision of some 'services' were not to be conducted by private enterprise, but were the collective responsibility of the community and its leadership – services such as welfare of orphans and the unemployed – through the collection of zakat (a 2% levy for charity) imposed on the Muslim citizens. If these teachings were practiced, a society whose economy operated in line with the principles of the Qur'an would be similar in characteristic to many modern nation-states.

Human rights and gender equality are issues that are intricately linked with discourses of modernity and democracy (Faqir 1997; McPhillips 1999; Tester 2002). Western articulations of human rights such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) are frequently invoked as a supposedly unanimous global treatise (Ignatieff 2001; Sabet 2003). The presence – or lack – of gender justice and human rights is seen as one of the most important parameters of how 'modern' a society or nation is (Abdelkader 2003; Faqir 1997). Many of the rights enshrined in the UDHR are found in Islamic legal principles (Shakir 2003), such as the right to religious freedom: the Qur'an (10: 99) explicitly warns against forced conversions by stating, 'if your Lord had willed, everyone on earth would have believed; will you then compel people to believe?' Also included in Islamic teachings are rights that support the notion of gender justice (Ahmed 1992). Muslim women, for instance, argue that the hijab is a way of retaining their independence and that it empowers rather than oppresses them (Weiss 1994). Rights to freedom of religion, economic freedom, and holding rulers accountable for their actions, can all be found in the Qur'an or in the Hadith. Muhammad also taught his followers how prisoners of war should be treated – an example that was upheld by later Muslims such as Salahuddin.

The culture that surrounded early Muslim rulers was a democratic culture that encouraged people to have access to their rulers, in keeping with the principles

of the Qur'an regarding decisions of the Muslim community: 'their affairs shall be decided through mutual consultation' (42: 38). Some scholars have argued that the idea of ruling by the people for the people is alien to Islam due to the fact that Muslims believe in the supremacy of Allah. However, in the Islamic world there are a number of different viewpoints regarding democracy and its relationship with Islam (Goddard 2002; Grant and Tessler 2002). The Muslim perception of humankind is as 'God's vicegerent' who administers Divine concepts on earth (Qur'an 27:62 and 2:30; Huda 2003; Kerr 2000; Osman 2003). The ethics and morality of leadership constitute an area to which much Islamic scholarly reflection is devoted (Kerr 2000), and the Qur'an (3:159) urged Muhammad to consult people in secular matters, or matters relating to the community: 'Had you been severe and harsh-hearted, they would have broken away from about you; so pass over (their faults), and ask (Allah's) Forgiveness for them; and consult them in the affairs (of the state)'.

The implication is clear: that the gap between the rulers and the people was to be minimized (Rahman 1983). As practiced by early Muslim communities, the concept of *shura* or consultation was exceptionally 'democratic' in the sense that the decentralization of authority was rejected, and an atmosphere of tolerance, openness and public discussion encouraged (Ahmad 2000; Tessler 2002). Thus it is important to be skeptical of the assertion that Islam shares a causal relationship with the lack of democratic, egalitarian states in Muslim countries such Saudi Arabia or Pakistan (Ahmed 1992; Al-Braizat 2002; Tessler 2002). Within Islamic teachings, 'such concepts as *shura* (consultative body), *ijma* (consensus), and *masliha* (utility) pointed to an affinity between Islam and democracy' (Moaddel 2002).

While the Qur'an is not restricted in its focus to science, it is not against technological development and scientific progress. Rather it calls for development and progress to take place within an Islamic framework: like the gaining of knowledge, the advancement of scientific pursuit is a means to remind Muslims that nothing was created except with a purpose. Observation and experimentation have long been the cornerstones of scientific discovery. It was the Arabs who were credited with the formulation of scientific method, used by Muslim scientists such as Ibn-i-Hazm in the *Scope of Logic* and Ibn-i-Taimiyya in his *Refutation of Logic* that stresses induction as the only sure form of argument. In the Qur'an itself, as pointed out in 1934 by poet and philosopher Iqbal (Lari 1989), the approach is inductive and utterly different to the philosophy-oriented (deductive) method of the ancient Greeks:

> [. . .] for the purposes of knowledge, [Islamic culture] fixes its gaze on the concrete [. . .] the birth of the method of observation and experiment in Islam was due not to a compromise with Greek thought but to prolonged intellectual warfare with it. (Iqbal 1930: np)

The quest for scientific discovery is thus not foreign to Islamic culture and Islamic teachings. In practice, religious knowledge was often placed higher in the hierarchy than earthly knowledge, causing scientific or technological pursuits to decrease in significance over time in Muslim societies. Yet as the Golden Age of Islam shows, striving to do well in both this world and the next is far from being either incompatible or impossible.

Australian Muslims: Against Modernity?

Because Islamic law is derived from two sources which originated 1,400 years ago, and because the rituals and practices which govern the way of life of Australian Muslims have remained for the large part intact since the time of Muhammad and his followers, the question has been asked as to whether Islam as a system of regulatory beliefs is compatible with modern Australia. This question arose in part because Islam has tended to be portrayed as a politicised faith, due to there being no separation between church and state of the type that took place within Christianity. Theoretically, Australia is a secular nation. The 'church', in Islam's case, has always been a part of the state, and to claim that it should be otherwise is tantamount to refuting Islam's teachings – for example, Muslims throughout the world and not just in Turkey were dismayed when the caliphate was dismantled, seeing the political impact of the modernity of secular practice as an attack on Islam's theological soul.

Conversely, Islam represents entirely different things to non-Muslim Australians. Many of the core beliefs held by Muslims appear inextricably linked to a bygone era based on societal values that have disappeared into time. The argument has thus often been made that Islam, or an Islamic way of life, is incompatible with Australia and its modernity. The role of Islam in today's world is one that is hotly contested. Nassef (2004) and Rippin (1993) both place Muslims into various categories: traditionalist, modernist and fundamentalist. Muslim views on modernity and secularism are simplified and grouped under the rubric of these categories: modernist or progressive Muslims see no incompatibility in incorporating modernity with an Islamic flavour, while traditionalist Muslims view modernity as undesirable. While it needs to be mentioned that such categories are not discrete and can overlap, the reality of the situation is far more complex than simply grouping Muslims into 'inclinations'. There is an immense array of viewpoints amongst Muslims in Australia about extremism, modernity and the role of Islam. Muslims adhere to the core belief that Islamic teachings are revealed to Muhammad in a general form that could be modified and used for all time without their core essences being diluted; differences exist not in the basics or the fundamentals of Islamic practice, but in the interpretation and application of these teachings to modern Australia.

Specific circumstances regarding Australia's Muslim community indicate the fallacy in assuming the existence of an out-and-out discrepancy between 'modernity' and 'Islam'. Juxtapositions of Islam with the West, and Islam with modernity, are questions relevant to Australia, as a country with an expanding Muslim minority. Post September 11, twenty-first century Australia has become more questioning about Islam, in both a positive and a negative sense. With Australia's Muslim community in the glare of the media spotlight there is a distinct need for understanding about Islamic beliefs and practices. Unfortunately, Islam represents a way of life that the media describes as extremist and, by extension, incompatible with today's world (Abdelkader 2003; Haque 2001; Kampmark 2003), despite being practiced by one fifth of the world and despite the numbers of adherents to Islam constantly growing (Haniff 2003; Rajaram and Rashidi 2003). The contradiction between extremist,

anti-modern Islam as portrayed by certain sections of the Australian media and the scope and breadth of Islamic practice in the country collectively raise the question of how a way of life that is described as anachronistic can be growing in Australia, and have a billion adherents worldwide.

My view is that there is an inherent fabrication behind the belief that humanity is divided into homogenised faith-based blocs pitted against each other due to disparities in social, cultural, economic and political realms, with one side reactionary, violent and anti-modern, and the other a progressive shining beacon. Taking this myth at face value (whether intentionally, or obtusely), George W. Bush told a joint session of the US Congress that the people responsible for the attacks on the World Trade Center on September 11, 2001 hated 'our freedoms. Our freedom of religion, our freedom of speech, our freedom to vote and assemble and disagree with each other' (Paulson 2002: np). There is no doubt that those who carried out the September 11 attacks hated the United States, and what it represented (although what it represented to the terrorists and what it represented to Bush might not be the same thing). But abridging the terms of this hatred to such narrow and simplistic roots and ascribing a pure hatred of modernity to large chunks of an entire civilisation ignores the multiplicity of views that existed (and still do exist) in the US, Europe and other Western countries on appropriate measures and strategies to build or develop links with Islamic and other non-Western countries. It ignores the rejection of labels such as 'extremism' by Muslims, who sometimes feel that by simply practicing their religion they are deemed extremist, and therefore, anti-modern. An Australian Muslim student once told me, 'If praying five times a day, wearing my hijab to uni, and supporting the Palestinians means I am a fundamentalist, then I am a fundamentalist'.

The 'You're either with us or with the terrorists' school of thought also disregards the complexity of the grievances that exist among Muslims in Australia against the United States, or against the United States' foreign policy. In the west, civic organizations in nations with Muslim minorities, such as church groups, have promoted the cause of interfaith dialogue and argued for long term positive relationships with the Muslim world, with Muslim organisations responding in similar fashion (Lewis 2003). Islamic societies are too multifaceted to be spoken of in such simplistic, one-dimensional terms (Esposito 1997; Roberson 2002), as those employed by Bush. As Modood (2001) explains, 'the idea of Islam as separate from a Judeo-Christian West is as false as it is influential. Islam, with its faith in the revelations of Abraham, Moses, Jesus and Muhammad, belongs to the same tradition as Christianity and Judaism' (Modood 2001: np).

In the days after September 11, US President George W. Bush exemplified falling victim to the epidemic of reducing a highly complex socio-political issue to crude binary terms, arguing that terrorists 'are clearly determined to try to force the United States of America and our values to withdraw from the world' (Saletan 2001: np). His views were echoed by Australian leaders such as John Howard and Alexander Downer. For the relationship between Muslims and non-Muslims in Australia, the danger of employing such reductionism is apparent. At best, it obscures a comprehensive understanding of the reasons behind many areas of conflict between

Muslim and Western populations. At worst, it prevents governments from reaching an understanding of anti-Western feeling and motivation that can be useful in determining relevant long-term courses of action and strategies to prevent future atrocities. The notion that the Western and Islamic worlds are at constant disagreement and war, and that Australian Muslims are intent on destroying modern, non-Muslim Australia, is one that deserves careful scrutiny.

Conclusion

Given that Islam is not against modernity, and that there are aspects of modernity that can be embraced by Muslims, where does that leave Australian Muslims in terms of the chasm between the purity of Islamic ideals and the substandard practices of Muslims? The most pressing question for Muslims in Australia is the reconciling of Islamic principle and Muslim practice. According to the theory and not the practice, it would seem that there is no problem in a pluralistic Australian Muslim community living and breathing Australian modernity. Islam's values are not so foreign to what are commonly ascribed to the Australian national character, including individual and collective freedom within the bounds of the law and an emphasis on mateship and community building – communities, forged on shared values and accumulated insights, provide moral and practical wisdom beyond what societies of fragmented individuals can ever obtain. However, looking at the practice, freedom is conspicuous in Muslim societies because of its absence. According to Khuri (1998) this is the result of a 'trivialised and diminished version of modernity' and of a revolt against this modernity by an 'equally shallow version of Islam'. Muslim societies are caught in a double bind: on the one hand the pragmatism of secular modernity calls, but on the other traditionalism's appeal still reigns – Australian Muslim communities are not alone in facing this dilemma. Freedoms that were enshrined in the Qur'an and demonstrated by Muhammad and his followers have been diminished over time in the Muslim world. Modernity's insistence on a worldly version of science, reason and economic development has reduced these freedoms to one-dimensional terms (compared to the Islamic reading of science, knowledge and development which argued for knowledge within the context of faith).

Yet the most pressing current concern of Australian Muslims is living in a state of Islam and not necessarily an Islamic polity that has all the paraphernalia of the modern nation-state. To live in a state of Islam is to live in a community of believers who practice and uphold certain principles and concepts. Remembering that modernity's single minded pursuit of linear development may be incompatible to Islam's pluralism and holistic faith-based worldview, Muslims are rightfully wary of wholesale adaptation of the modern nation state (Lawrence 1998) because this in its current incarnation bears no relationship to the 'state' of the Prophet Muhammad – which was a community organised on the basis of law and order, and shared rights and responsibilities, and not solely a cult of *fiqh* (jurisprudence). The discourse on

Islam and modernity, and where the two are headed, can be legitimately engaged in by Muslims who want to further the cause of Islam because Islamic societies are subject to global influences and are as diverse as those from other religious traditions.

This is not as esoteric as it sounds. Al-Azmeh (1996) asserts that three of the key ideas from western modernity (reason or logic, freedom, and perfectibility/evolution) are often coded to situate Islam from a position where it negates these ideas. Islam and Muslims are therefore seen as illogical, autocratic, and living in stasis. Where are Muslims headed today? Will they embark on a journey of rediscovery of the pluralism that is intrinsic to the Islamic worldview? Will they discover the elusive intersection of Islam and modernity, minus secular dogma and a focus on materialism, but instead infused with the faith-based reason that Islam encourages and endorses? While Muslim societies can come across as hostile to the modern project, there is no reason why they cannot creatively manipulate modernity to nullify both the influence of Western-centred secular fanaticism and destructive sabotaging of Islamic principles by rulers and nations claiming to be Islamic.

Note

1. All quotations are taken from A.Y. Alis's translation of the Holy Quran (1990).

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The Search for Shared Idioms: Contesting Views of Laiklik Before the Turkish Constitutional Court

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Laiklik,[1] Turkish secularism, as it has been constructed, upheld and sustained by the Turkish state, and especially the Court, has become the mechanism through which all those who would like to see a shift in its definition and boundaries have been rendered the unacceptable and integrity-threatening *other* of Turkish society. I am interested in how the subjects of the law, as well as the interpreters and the sustainers of the law, perceive the Turkish concept of secularism, *laiklik*, and how these perceptions inform the cases before the Court. Therefore, first I shall provide a brief discussion of the history of *laiklik*, and how the Turkish Constitution (hereinafter 'the Constitution')[2] defines it. Then, my primary focus is on the language used to define, defend and attempt to deconstruct and redefine *laiklik* in the cases that have been before the Court.

In Part I, I discuss the theoretical concepts that help me view *laiklik* in a light outside the Islamist-secularist dichotomy, and outside the passionate descriptions of the Court. In Part II, I discuss the historical background of *laiklik.* In Part III, I give an overview of *laiklik* as constructed by the Turkish Constitution, and I explain the organization and the authority of the Constitutional Court. In Part IV, I discuss nine cases where the Court, the petitioners and the respondents construct what their views of *laiklik* entail. In this analysis, I have evaluated only those cases where the Court and the parties discuss *laiklik* in detail. I conclude by arguing that on the issue of *laiklik*, there is a linguistic and epistemological disconnect between notable or perhaps even significant portions of the public and those who want to maintain the politico-legal status quo, the most important signifier of which appears to be *laiklik*.

Part I: Power, Law and Citizen Acts of Deconstruction

Secularism is generally spoken of in dichotomy with religion, religious order or theocracy. It is represented as the stage following religion, as a product of modernity, a necessity for the attainment of individual freedoms.[3] The initial constructors

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of Turkish secularism were also informed by this dichotomous situating of religion and secularism. Referred to as the founder of the Turkish Republic, Mustafa Kemal Ataturk and those who believed in his vision for the nation, the Kemalists, advocated that the new Turkish Republic could only progress if it left behind its political affiliation with Islam. Turkey's predecessor, the Ottoman Empire was officially an 'Islamic' empire, where the ruler claimed legitimacy based on his position as the Caliph, or the leader of Muslims.[4] The Kemalists believed that religious interference in state affairs was a main cause of the Ottoman decline, and the separation of religion from state affairs was a necessary condition of modernization and progress (Yildirim 2005).

Perhaps religion and secularism are not as dichotomous, or even hostile. Talal Asad argues that the secular 'is neither continuous with the religious that supposedly preceded it [. . .] nor a simple break from it [. . .] the secular [is] a concept that brings together certain behaviors, knowledges, and sensibilities in modern life' (Asad 2003: 25). Asad's definition provides an ample explanation as to how political parties with predominantly Muslim identities utilize the language of democracy, human rights and even secularism when demanding more freedom and recognition from the state.[5]

In the context of contemporary states, it is also possible to approach varying identities of secular and religious in terms of emerging conceptualizations of rights and related identity formations. Saktanber makes this argument regarding Islamic circles in Turkey (Saktanber 2002: 157). Moreover, Yavuz argues that with the political and economic liberalization in the last two decades, new 'opportunity spaces' have enabled the formation of these identities (Yavuz 2003).

One could also view these emerging identities related to religion as the outcome of what Michel Foucault referred to as the 'insurrection of subjugated knowledges' (Foucault 1980b: 81). These subjugated knowledges are 'those blocs of historical knowledge which were present but disguised within the body of functionalist and systematizing theory and which criticism [. . .] has been able to reveal.' With this term, Foucault also refers to 'a whole set of knowledges that have been disqualified as inadequate to their task or insufficiently elaborated: naïve knowledges, located low on the hierarchy, beneath the required level of cognition or scientificity.' A subjugated knowledge is 'a particular, local, regional knowledge, a differential knowledge incapable of unanimity and which owes its force only to the harshness with which it is opposed by everything surrounding it- it is through the reappearance of this knowledge, of these local popular knowledges, these disqualified knowledges, that criticism performs its work' (Foucault 1980b: 82).

For Foucault, '[e]ach society has its own regime of truth, its own politics of truth' (Foucault 1980a: 131). Moreover, '[t]ruth is to be understood as a system of ordered procedures for the production, regulation, distribution, circulation and operation of statements. Truth is linked in a circular relation with systems of power, which produce and sustain it, and to effects of power, which it induces and which extend it. A regime of truth' (Foucault 1980a: 133). '[T]he domain of law' is in effect the domain of power. Power is exercised through law (Foucault 1980b: 96).

When the secularism-religion question is approached using Foucault's framework, what has been often referred to as the rise of political Islam can be viewed as the insurrection of subjugated knowledges, voices discredited as incompatible with modernity and progress, at least in the Turkish context. Moreover, it is crucial to remember that secularism is first and foremost realized through law. It is the laws of the new nation that tell the masses what they are and are not allowed to do with their religious beliefs and practices. Even where the law promises freedoms, these freedoms are after all within the law's domain to take. This inherent conflict in the legal concept of individual rights and the use of secularism to secure them becomes very dominant in the cases concerning *laiklik* before the Turkish Constitutional Court.

Although law may be an expression of power, it also owes those it governs a duty to be just. Jacques Derrida agrees with Foucault that law is an exercise of power, but he is also concerned about how to distinguish law from justice. He argues that justice should be thought of as 'outside or beyond law,' as something that cannot be deconstructed or subverted (Derrida 2002: 242–243). He adds that 'the violence of injustice has begun when all the members of a community do not share, through and through, the same idiom' (Derrida 2002: 246). He recognizes that such a unitary and unifying common idiom is not possible, but justice must be the unceasing effort towards it.

This concern about the law's relationship to power shared by Foucault and Derrida, and the simultaneous concern for justice through law, can also be analyzed by focusing on the process of writing or constructing law. Law consists of myriad details, allowances and prohibitions, mostly written in language inaccessible to those it governs.[6] The details of the written text which list prohibitions, allowances, duties, rights and punishments are themselves the permanent marks of many acts of power by a few who construct the law- the lawmaker (whether a tyrannical ruler or a democratically elected parliament) and the judges who decide the application, limitations, and expansions of the law. The law is the exercise of power. However, merely because it is not known or accessible to those it governs or that it is based on and advocates idioms not commonly shared does not mean that those it governs do not subversively utilize it to bring about its very metamorphosis. The very selection of issues contested before the courts, as well as the linguistic choices used to convey contestations and claims are themselves acts of power, utilized in an effort to achieve justice - even though the substance of justice may be unstable. The cases discussed below from the Turkish Constitutional Court should be viewed in this light.

Power is necessarily non-inclusivist because it must exclude in order to maintain itself. Law reflects this characteristic of power, as it is the main expression of power.[7] According to Derrida, the state is 'law in its greatest force' (Derrida 2002: 268). Moreover, law needs force and at times violence to enforce itself, and to be enforceable (see Asad 2003; Derrida 2002). However, subversive utilization of the law might in time shift the non-inclusivity of the law and hope to utilize the law's coerciveness to the benefit of the excluded. The arguments by those seeking to redefine *laiklik* before the Court reflect this effort. The cases show us that Islamic circles are responding to law's non-inclusivity by hoping to shift the meanings of unshared idioms, specifically the idioms of state and religion in Turkey.

Part II: The Republic, the State, the Military and Law Without Religion

Kemalists centered their efforts to build the new Turkish Republic around Ataturk's six principles, one of which was secularism.[8] They undertook a thorough process of secularization, by eliminating and banning institutions of Islamic influence, such as the Caliphate, and by placing all main Islamic institutions, including mosques, under government control. To this end the office of the Department of Religious Affairs was established as part of the State apparatus (Yildirim 2005: 355). Many changes were made over time, as the new Turkish government transformed the Ottoman society, based on religious identification and religiously legitimized rule, into the Turkish Republic with universal suffrage and its concept of the citizen whose main source of identity was the republic.[9]

Although the changes were radical, they were also to some extent a continuation of reforms from the Ottoman Empire. During the latter periods of the Ottoman era, there were already numerous changes that caused a gradual erosion of the influence of religious law (see Berkes 1998; Yildirim 2005). Regardless, the Kemalist reforms changed what it meant to belong to the new republic, and their effects to this day are undeniable.

At the time of the revolution, the masses were not the moving force behind the Kemalist reforms. Mustafa Kemal enjoyed tremendous support within Turkey as the leader who had mobilized the masses to resist European invasion. His ideas and ideals, however, were mainly foreign to the Ottoman masses, a notable number of whom were illiterate and did not speak European languages, like French and German, the works of which had greatly influenced the Kemalists (Yavuz 2003). When the laws of the new Republic were selected mainly from European codes, though modified in part, they demanded knowledge of ideas, like secularism, mostly foreign to the masses. Not only did the masses not 'share the idioms' of the law, they were not even familiar with the concepts constituting most idioms of the new Republic (see Derrida 2002: 246).

Although law must always at least threaten the use of force to maintain its authority, the law instituting a revolution must be even stricter in its insistence of obedience and readiness to employ force. Thus, not just the State's police force, but also its military must be strong and unified in their commitment to the revolution and the new regime. This has certainly been the case with the Turkish military. The military has always been the protectors of what it perceived as the Kemalist *laiklik*, as well as other Kemalist principles and the status quo that the military perceives as Kemal's legacy (Yavuz 2003). During Republican history, the military has not been shy to intervene when it perceived that political stability could not sustain itself. The last of these overt coups was in 1980, a new constitution was drafted and accepted in 1982, and the military allowed a return to multi-party politics in 1983.

This latest era, 1983 to present, has witnessed a few identifiable shifts in the Turkish socio-political terrain. There have appeared what Yavuz refers to as 'opportunity spaces,'[10] which have enabled ethnic (for e.g., Kurdish) and religious (for e.g., Alevi) differences to be vocalized in the public arena, and has enabled new

modes of socio-economic and cultural mobilization among religious Turks (Yavuz 2003). Parties whose policy objectives include overt and insistent references to Islam have become the most popular, enjoying a very secure voter base. The current ruling party, Adalet ve Kalkinma Partisi, or AKP (Justice and Development Party), is the latest example of this evolution of Muslim political expression (Yavuz 2006).

The issue concerning secularism is often presented as a struggle between the 'religious' who want the socio-political ordering to be based on divine dictate, versus the 'secular,' who want to see religion to remain in and be confined to the private sphere. When the politico-legal order is declared 'secular,' however, the contested issues are far more complex. As the below analysis of the cases suggest, the citizens, whether religious Muslims or not, are most concerned with the definition of *laiklik*, and more importantly their resultant freedoms as individual citizens.

Part III: The Law and the Court

(a) The 1982 Constitution

Before returning to multi-party elections, the military rule drafted a new constitution, which 'was accepted by 92% of the Turkish public in a referendum on November 7, 1982' (see the Constitution of the Turkish Republic). Pledging absolute loyalty to the reforms of 'Ataturk, the immortal leader and the unrivalled hero,' the Preamble of the Constitution states that 'as required by the principle of secularism, there shall be no interference whatsoever by sacred religious feelings in state affairs and politics.' Article 2 states that 'the Republic of Turkey is a democratic, secular and social state.' Article 10 establishes the equality of all citizens before the law, irrespective of religion and sect (among other qualifiers) and that 'no privilege shall be granted to any individual, family, group or class.' Article 14 prohibits the abuse of fundamental rights and freedoms to endanger 'the existence of the democratic and secular order of the Turkish Republic.' Article 24 guarantees freedom of conscience and religion. Freedom of worship, religious services and ceremonies is guaranteed, provided they do not violate Article 14. Accordingly, 'no one shall be compelled to worship, or to participate in religious ceremonies and rites, to reveal religious beliefs and convictions, or be blamed or accused because of his religious beliefs and convictions.' Moreover, all religious education is placed under state supervision and 'instruction in religious culture and moral education' is made compulsory in primary and secondary schools. All other religious education is made voluntary. Finally, Article 14 prohibits the exploitation and abuse of 'religion or religious feelings, or things held sacred by religion, in any manner whatsoever, for the purpose of personal or political influence, or for even partially basing the fundamental, social, economic, political, and legal order of the state on religious tenets.'

Article 136 establishes the Department of Religious Affairs 'within the general administration' of the state, which is to 'exercise its duties prescribed in its particular law, in accordance with the principles of secularism, removed from all political views and ideas, and aiming at national solidarity and integrity.' This department serves as an advisory body, undertakes the administration of mosques and issues opinions on religious matters.[11]

Article 174 incorporates all the laws that enacted Kemalist reforms as unalterable parts of the Constitution. It states that '[n]o provision of the Constitution shall be construed or interpreted as rendering unconstitutional Reform Laws [. . .] which aim to raise Turkish society above the level of contemporary civilization and to safeguard the secular character of the Republic.'

(b) Turkish Constitutional Court

Articles 146–153 establish the organization, functions and authority of the Constitutional Court. Under Article 148, the Court has the authority to 'examine the constitutionality, in respect of both form and substance, of laws, decrees having force of law, and the Rules of Procedure of the Turkish Grand National Assembly.' Constitutional amendments may only be scrutinized as to form, and the Court has no authority over decrees having the force of law issued during 'a state of emergency, martial law or in the time of war.' The judgments of the Court are final. The parties who can petition the Court are also enumerated by the Constitution. Under Article 150, an action for an annulment of a law, a decree carrying the force of law or Rules of Procedure of the Turkish Grand Assembly may be brought by 'the President of the Republic, parliamentary groups of the party in power and of the main opposition party and a minimum of one-fifth of the total number of members of the Turkish Grand National Assembly,' within 60 days after the publication of the law in question in the Official Gazette. Under Article 152, contentions of unconstitutionality of an existing law may be brought before the Court at any time, by any general, administrative or military court trying a case involving the law, or any of the parties involved in the case.

The third type of Constitutional Court case is that of the dissolution of political parties.[12] According to Article 68, '[t]he statutes and programmes, as well as the activities of political parties shall not be in conflict with the independence of the state, its indivisible integrity with its territory and nation, human rights, the principles of equality and rule of law, sovereignty of the nation, the principles of the democratic and secular republic.' Article 69 gives the Constitutional Court the authority to dissolve parties upon a successful petition by the Office of the Chief Public Prosecutor of the Republic, claiming that a party has violated the conditions of Article 68.

The petitioner's briefs, and in party dissolution cases of both the petitioner's and the respondent party's briefs, and the oral arguments (if any) are included in the published decisions of the Court. The justices may issue dissenting opinions or opinions

agreeing with the majority's decision based on different reasons. Thus, the decisions where *laiklik* is at issue provide significant insight into the justices' various reasons for their opinions, and the positions of both the petitioners and the respondents-whether they are political parties speaking on behalf of their constituents or judges from lower courts speaking on behalf of the litigants.

Part IV: The Cases

(a) The Dissolution Solution (?)

Turkey first returned to multi-party politics in 1983.[13] New parties were formed and elections were held on November 6, 1983, and the Constitutional Court decided the first political party dissolution under the 1982 Constitution. The petition for the dissolution of Huzur Partisi claimed that some of the statements in the party programme violated *laiklik* (Case no. 1983/2, Decision no. 1983/2, October 25, 1983). Specifically at issue was the statement that Huzur Partisi did not 'believe that education should be secular as in some socialist countries' and promised that if elected it would ensure that the educational system would be informed by 'Turkish Islamic traditions.'

In its defense, Huzur Partisi argued that its programme did not violate *laiklik*, and that it merely wanted the Turkish youth to be well informed about their traditions, in which 'Turkish' could not be separate from 'Islamic.' Further, 'it is the state that is *laik*, the people can teach religion.' The Court was not convinced. In rejecting Huzur's defense, the Court emphasized that although *laiklik* was inspired by concepts from abroad, it was unique to the Turkish context. The Court reasoned that in the Ottoman Empire, religious authorities had abused their power by issuing opinions that prevented 'civilizational' progress, and even had attempted to prevent independence efforts at the end of World War I. The Court assessed that it was a 'reality' that 'some circles' were constantly aiming to abuse religion for private gains, thus the Constitution was strict in its insistence of *laiklik.* It added that 'the main goal in Ataturk's revolution is to be free of backwardness, and to reach the level of modern civilization.' Based upon this rationale, the Court found it unacceptable to think that this goal could be obtained at a certain point, thus relieving the nation from the reformist battle. The Court then added that '*laiklik* lies at the heart of Ataturk's revolution, and this principle constitutes the main stone of the reforms. Even the smallest amendment from *laiklik* could cause the derailment and annihilation of Ataturk's reforms.' The ideals and definitions of *laiklik* set forth by the Court in this case have become routine references for later decisions.

In the case for the dissolution of Demokratik Baris Hareketi Partisi (Democratic Peace Movement Party), the Prosecutor claimed that the party programme, which argued that the Department of Religious Affairs (hereinafter DRA) should not be a state institution, was contrary to *laiklik* (Case no. 1996/3, Decision no. 1997/3, May 22, 1997). The Prosecutor argued that the DRA is a state institution established

by the Constitution and is necessary for the sustenance of *laiklik*. The respondent argued that the DRA, an office within the state, issued legal opinions and engaged in religious activities. Moreover, it had become a center of propagating the principles of the Hanafi school of law of the Sunni branch of Islam, rather than working for the benefit of all Turkish Muslims. The existence of this office as part of the state apparatus constituted an exclusionary policy as regards the non-Muslim Turkish citizens.

Referring to the current Turkish state as only 'half-*laik*,' the respondent argued that the Constitutional article establishing the DRA is not one of the immutable articles, and could therefore be amended or abrogated. The Court rejected the petition by concluding that the aim of the party is to further *laiklik*, rather than threaten it. A dissenting opinion signed by three justices explicitly stated that the party should be dissolved because it threatens *laiklik* as it is structured in the Turkish context. The DRA is necessary to this structure because it is through this office that the project of changing the minds of the Muslim masses can be achieved, so that modernization can be achieved. This dissenting opinion is most telling in its honesty that the Kemalist revolution was and remains a project of social and cultural engineering.

Another similar case is the dissolution of Demokratik Kitle Partisi (Democratic Masses Party) (Case no. 1997/2, Decision no. 1999/1, February 26, 1999). The part of the complaint regarding the violation of *laiklik* concerned the party's advocacy of the dissolution or the modification of the DRA. Based on similar reasoning by the prosecutor, the respondent and the Court, the part of the petition concerning the violation of *laiklik* was rejected.

The petition for the dissolution of Refah Partisi (Welfare Party) was a special case for the Court. Refah Partisi had gained momentum with the 1994 municipal elections, later becoming the ruling party in the 1995 national election.[14] The military and Kemalist circles were very uncomfortable by this apparent increase in the appeal of overtly Islamist politics. Following a speech by a Refah mayor and his guest, the Iranian Ambassador, the Turkish military forced the arrest of the mayor and expelled the ambassador. With the media contributing passionately to the debate, and the National Security Council declaring Islamic fundamentalism the biggest threat to the nation, a strange soft-coup was set in motion. As Hakan Yavuz puts it, '[a] major characteristic of the 1997 coup was that judges and journalists, rather than bullets and tanks, supported and implemented it' (Yavuz 2003: 244). It was in this context that the Court heard the case against Refah Partisi.

The prosecutor, Vural Savas, cited numerous speeches that various party members had given over the preceding few years (Case no. 1997/1, Decision no. 1998/1, January 16, 1998). He claimed that Refah had become a center of anti-*laik* activity and that it had to be dissolved permanently. Among the many statements he quoted was one by the party leader and Prime Minister, Necmettin Erbakan, in which Erbakan argued that legal pluralism is better suited to Turkey and that the citizens should have the right to choose which legal system they want to be governed by. Prosecutor Savas also emphasized that many party members had advocated lifting the ban on headcoverings in educational institutions.

Refah's defense is most telling of the tensions between different perceptions of *laiklik.* In its defense, Refah argued that their statements had never been contrary to *laiklik*, and that they were exercises of freedom of thought and freedom of religion. It pointed out that 'with more than 4 million registered members, [it had] earned the title of the biggest party in Turkey and even the world.' Refah emphasized that their voter base had grown gradually and at the time of the hearing, they had the largest number of seats in the National Assembly. In other words, the party's focus was its democratic legitimacy and representation of a significant portion of the Turkish masses. Moreover, Refah argued that the term *laiklik* is a foreign word and there has never been an attempt to find a Turkish equivalent for it. As a result, it has been often misunderstood and 'in the mass psyche, it has been perceived as atheism and animosity against religion [. . .] these perceptions have not dissipated.' Refah's arguments centered around the freedom of conscience element of *laiklik,* and claimed that all their statements and activities had been accordingly protected. After citing international human rights documents and numerous Turkish and foreign scholars, Refah argued that there are different kinds of secularisms and what matters is the protection of individual freedoms of religion and conscience.

As expected under the political climate of the day, the Court found that Refah had violated the principle of *laiklik* and dissolved it permanently. In its reasoning, the Court discussed the importance of *laiklik* to the Kemalist reforms and the Turkish Republic, in an almost verbatim replica of its discussions in the earlier cases discussed above. The Court found all speeches arguing against the ban on headcoverings in violation of *laiklik*. It also emphasized that Erbakan's statements on the desirability of legal pluralism must be rejected in the Turkish secular context, where the equality of all citizens demands that they all be subjected to the same laws.[15]

After Refah was dissolved, its members formed a new party, Fazilet (Virtue) Partisi.[16] Fazilet's fate was similar to Refah's. In Fazilet's dissolution case, the arguments were very similar, at times identical, to those in the Refah case (Case no. 1999/2, Decision no. 2001/2, June 22, 2001). Prosecutor Savas petitioned the Court and asked that Fazilet be permanently dissolved for violating *laiklik* on numerous grounds. The Prosecutor's evidence focused on the elected Refah representative Merve Kavakci's arrival at the National Assembly Hall wearing a headscarf for the parliament members' swearing in ceremony. The evidence included numerous speeches by Kavakci and other prominent members of the party to show that the events of that day were planned beforehand as a protest. Coupled with numerous speeches of various party members on the need to lift the ban on headcoverings, the Prosecutor argued that Fazilet aimed to bring Islamic order to Turkey.

Similar to Refah's defense, Fazilet focused on the significance of religious freedom in a democratic and secular society. It distinguished between *laiklik* that is necessary to the functioning of democracy, which includes freedom of religion, and 'totalitarian *laiklik'* which is based on the belief that religion is 'a bad, harmful and backward social force,' and thus its influence must be eradicated to allow for progress. Citing Turkish and foreign scholars, including John Locke, Fazilet argued

that *laiklik* was about government neutrality regarding religion, and must be interpreted in a way that is consistent with human rights and democracy. Consequently, 'criticizing the law regarding headcoverings alone cannot constitute anti-*laik* behavior. If we [Fazilet] argue that all women must cover their hair, then that would constitute a violation of *laiklik*.' Moreover, '*laiklik* is a principle that limits the state, and determines how the state cannot act.' Thus, a *laik* state cannot impose upon its citizens a religious or secular view.

In response, the Prosecutor discussed at length the dangers of terrorism and extremism. It is unclear how his discussion of terrorism is relevant to Fazilet's activities, although the obvious implication is that religious discourse is necessarily a gateway leading to religious terrorism. Fazilet raised the same objection as Refah to these arguments, emphasizing that they are a legitimate political party with a significant electoral base, and are not engaged in terrorist acts. The terrorism argument is necessary to Prosecutor Savas' main thesis that considering the possibility of a total annihilation of Kemalist Turkey, in the face of any anti-*laik* behavior, there is a need for 'militant democracy.' By this he means that arguments about personal freedoms and the innocence of opinions cannot be taken seriously and the only outcome that matters is whether *laiklik* is kept rigid in its established definition and that its boundaries not be altered based on any new interpretation of any part of the law or social reality.

Despite Fazilet's thorough and convincing defense, the Court accepted the Prosecutor's interpretation of the law, and his definition of *laiklik*. After reproducing its definition and view of *laiklik* from previous cases, the Court focused on the headscarf debate and found that Fazilet had continued to engage in behavior similar to Refah, despite the Court's clear decision in the Refah case. The Court reiterated that allowing headcoverings in higher educational institutions would equal coercion and would constitute separatism based on religion. The Court concluded that the headscarf was 'used as a political symbol' by Fazilet and that Kavakci's arrival at the National Assembly Hall wearing a headscarf could only be considered political activism to disturb the *laik* nature of the state. The Court further noted that because Fazilet enjoyed 'a significant voter potential,' the activities and speeches of its members posed an especially dangerous threat to the *laik* democracy. Consequently, Fazilet was dissolved permanently.

(b) Hair, Marriage and Identity: Petitions to Annul Laws

The Court heard cases about the headcoverings debate long before the dissolution cases of Refah and Fazilet parties. In 1989, President Kenan Evren petitioned the Court to annul a law that allowed the covering of hair and neck in higher educational institutions (Case no. 1989/1, Decision no. 1989/12, March 7, 1989).[17] Evren argued that the very nature of the Republic was at stake, and that 'modern dress' is such a crucial element of Kemalist revolution and principles that it cannot be waived. His clear implication was that modernity and progress cannot include covered hair,

which is a symbol of religion, an extra-public reality. Thus, *laiklik*, as defined in the Constitution, could not be interpreted to allow headcoverings, clearly a non-modern, non-progressive occurrence.

Agreeing with Evren's analysis, the Court stated that 'the most important of Ataturk's principles is *laiklik.'* For the majority, *laiklik* is not simply the most important Kemalist principle but it is also the heart of progress whereas religious dogma prohibits progress. Further, 'with *laiklik*, intellectual and humanist values have replaced dogmatic ones, and religious feelings have found their untouchable place in the heart of the individual.' In other words, the rules and regulations of religion, and in this case Islam, are to be a personal and private matter. Indeed, the Court explained that *laiklik* cannot be construed as simply the separation between state and religion. 'Its dimensions are much bigger, its extent is a much larger area of civilization, freedom and modernity.' Given the significance of what is at stake, clothing that is not in harmony with modernity (such as headcoverings) cannot be allowed in educational institutions, where it is the state's responsibility to give proper (i.e., Kemalist and specifically, *laik*) direction to young minds. To that end, state control of education and the demands of protecting all that *laiklik* establishes and protects cannot be deemed an unjust limitation of religious freedom.

The sole dissenting opinion by Justice Mehmet Cinarli pointed out that the Department of Religious Affairs had issued an opinion stating that Islam requires covering a woman's hair. Cinarli asked how the Court could consider people's actions politically motivated when a state institution had advised them to behave as such. Moreover, he stated that rather than preventing potential separatism in the classroom, the ban discriminated against Muslim women as the only class of citizens affected by it.

The same issue of headcoverings came before the Court in another petition in 1991. This time, the main opposition party brought the complaint that two addendums to an existing law would unconstitutionally allow headcoverings in educational institutions because they allowed freedom of attire (Case no. 1990/36, Decision no. 1991/8, April 9. 1991). The petitioner party, Sosyal Demokrat Halkci Parti (Social Democratic Populist Party) argued that attire was a 'revolutionary problem' for Turkey, and that the government was attempting to bypass the Court's earlier decision on the issue by this new addendum to law.

The majority opinion simply found that since their earlier decision, the preceding case discussed above, was clear as to the law on the issue of headcoverings in institutions of higher education, and since the addendum included the phrase 'provided it does not violate existing law,' this new provision could not be interpreted to allow headcoverings in universities. Thus, there was no violation of *laiklik*. This time, three justices dissented with the reason that the law should be struck as it clearly is an attempt to circumvent the Court's earlier decision, and constitutes a violation of *laiklik.*

A source of ongoing debate both in Muslim contexts and elsewhere is polygamy. The Turkish Civil Code renders polygamy legally impossible, as it requires that each of the prospective spouses be single.[18] Moreover, a civil marriage is required before a religious marriage ceremony can be legitimately conducted. The Turkish Criminal

Code demands obedience to these provisions by making it a crime to conduct a religious marriage ceremony prior to a civil one. In a 1999 case, a lower criminal court petitioned the Constitutional Court contesting the constitutionality of this Criminal Code provision (Case no. 1999/27, Decision no. 1999/42, November 24, 1999). The petitioning court argued that this prohibition is contrary to *laiklik* because it limits freedom of religion and freedom to partake in religious ceremonies. In a unanimous decision, the Court rejected this argument and found that since the law does not prohibit the religious ceremony but only requires that it be preceded by a civil ceremony, there is no limitation on religious freedoms. The Court simply quoted from the reasoning for the law enacting the prohibition in 1936 that 'some [men] continue to marry more than one woman despite its prohibition [in the 1926 Civil Code]. Although these marriages carry no legal value, the magnitude and significance of their impacts on family law is evident. It is necessary to take prohibitive measures against such unions that shake the core of our social structure.'

Petitioned by an appeals court, a 1995 case involved a citizen's attempts to register himself as Bahai, as opposed to Muslim, on the 'religion' column of the national registry (Case no. 1995/17, decision no. 1995/16, June 21, 1995).[19] Although he succeeded in having 'Islam' erased from the registry, he could not succeed in registering 'Bahai' in its place. He took his case to the appeals court, which then petitioned the Constitutional Court.

The petitioning appeals court argued that the very existence of the column 'religion' on the national registry violated *laiklik* and a citizen's right to be free from forced disclosure of his or her religious beliefs or the lack thereof. It stated that 'the protection of freedom is only possible if the individual has the right not to disclose any religious identification or the lack thereof.' The Constitutional Court, however, disagreed. The majority found that religion is just one of the many pieces of information the registry asks for and to that extent it is no different than asking for a citizen's parents' names. Thus, it is in no way a coercion to disclose one's religious identity. The five dissenting justices all argued that the practice in question is the very definition of coerced disclosure because unless a citizen fills out all the columns in the registry questionnaire, he or she cannot partake in the various aspects of daily life, from registering one's newborn to registering for school.

Part V: Searching for Common Idioms

The battle over the meaning and boundaries of *laiklik* continues. In February 9, 2008, the ruling AKP, with the support of Milliyetci Halk Partisi, one of the opposition parties, passed amendments to the Articles 10 and 42 of the Constitution, outlining freedom of religion and the right to education, respectively (Law No. 5735).[20] The amendments were passed to allow students to wear headscarves in higher education institutions. On February 27, 2008, two opposition parties, Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi and Demokratik Sol Parti, petitioned the Constitutional Court to annul the amendments after very public opposition speeches that claimed *laiklik* was at risk.[21] On June 5, 2008, the Court found that the amendments were

in violation of *laiklik* as set up by the Preamble and various other amendments of the Constitution (Case no. 2008/16, Decision No. 2008/16, June 5, 2008). Despite maintaining its traditional stance confirming the prohibition on headscarves in educational institutions, the Court's other major decision in 2008, regarding the dissolution of the ruling party, AKP, was the product of a more accommodating approach.

On March 14, 2008, the Chief Prosecutor petitioned the Court for the dissolution of the ruling party, AKP, for threatening *laiklik*.[22] In a plurality decision, the Court ruled that although some of AKP's activities were contrary to *laiklik*, these actions did not warrant the dissolution of the Party. (Case no. 2008/1, Decision no. 2008/2, July 30, 2008). The Court noted that AKP had continued other praiseworthy efforts, such as pursuing membership in the European Union. Due to AKP's questionable anti-secular activities, however, the Court ruled that the governmental financial support to AKP would decrease by half. Six justices signed dissenting opinions arguing that AKP had violated the *laiklik* principle and dissolution was warranted. Chief Justice Halim Kilinc was the sole dissenter (albeit concurring in the opinion), arguing that expressing counter-majoritarian views should not be interpreted as a violation of *laiklik*. Perhaps the outcome of refraining from dissolution, yet decreasing governmental support to AKP as a form of mitigated punishment, is the first sign that eventually the meaning of *laiklik* will have to include those who do not fit the Kemalist mold and its vision of a country where citizens live their beliefs behind closed doors.

According to a Turkish proverb, 'where there is no justice, there is misery.' Yet, justice is and must be ever elusive. Made imaginable, accessible and at the same time placed out of reach by the law, justice is what all litigants seek in a courtroom. Even before a constitutional court with a limited specialized jurisdiction, justice is the claim, the defense, the reasoning and the demand of all participants in the process of juridical meaning construction. The participants in the above cases are all seeking to define the concept of *laiklik,* which, though solidified in laws and practices, remains an abstract ideal for all involved.

In the party dissolution cases, especially in the later cases of Refah and Fazilet, it is clear that the prosecutor and the justices constituting the majority opinion believe that the definition and the meaning of *laiklik* is set, and that this definition must be kept intact with rigid and unfaltering loyalty. There is almost a paranoia that any consideration of a shift in meaning will necessarily lead to an overthrow of *laiklik* and consequently, all freedoms will erode. In their defense, Refah and Fazilet, and even Huzur, all emphasize freedom of religion and remind the Court that *laiklik* is about the nature of the state, rather than the thoughts and speech of the citizen. There is repeated reference to democracy, human rights and individual freedoms in the arguments of these alleged anti-*laik*, thus anti-freedom, respondents. The Court, however, has rejected that these concepts of justice can co-exist with an overt, publicly displayed, discussed and politicized Muslim identity. The prosecutors and the Court repeatedly state that *laiklik* is necessary for progress and modernity, implying that Islam and the Muslim identity, especially when publicly displayed as with a headcover, can only exist in the hearts and private practices of the citizen. The

citizen who wants to challenge this understanding of *laiklik* and wants to argue that the constitutional provisions on freedom of conscience can give a different, more flexible meaning to *laiklik,* is rendered to the category of at best the naïve who needs further education, or at worst a threat to the very existence of the Republic. Thus, when Refah and Fazilet, parties with a voter base of millions, are before the Court arguing that those who voted for them want more religious freedom and a more flexible definition of *laiklik*, they voice, in Foucault's words, subjugated knowledges.

Ironically, once voiced, these subjugated knowledges are no longer simply on the periphery of knowledge formation, or 'located low on the hierarchy' (Foucault 1980b: 82), but they are now subversive forces shaking the secure-base of power. This is also true of the other cases discussed above. After all, it is not just Islamist circles that wish to amend the meaning and scope of *laiklik.* Demokratik Baris Partisi and Demokratik Kitle Partisi both criticized *laiklik* for its inadequacy in separating religion from state affairs, specifically challenging the very existence and nature of the Department of Religious Affairs. The Bahai citizen wanted his own religious identity recorded in the national registry, and the appellate court he petitioned thought that, according to the Constitution, no citizen should be forced to reveal his or her religious beliefs or the lack thereof. A criminal court judge thought freedom of religion and the constitutionally afforded right to participate in religious ceremonies must mean that a couple could marry with a religious ceremony only and that foregoing the civil ceremony should not be a crime. These varied contentions coming from different political orientations and from varying understandings of justice, democracy and even constitutionality, show that secularism as a socio-political order is accepted in the Turkish psyche. The litigants do not wish to eradicate the order, but rather redefine its details.

The arguments of the prosecutors and the Court's opinions display a passionate rigidity about maintaining the definition of *laiklik*. Very much the portrait of Foucault's 'regime of truth' (Foucault 1980b: 96), the Court refuses to hear the varied voices of the citizens who wish to redefine the law to better suit their reality and enable them to better attain their constitutional rights. With its most recent decision annulling the constitutional amendments, the Court has once again refused to accept the possibility of shared idioms. If *laiklik* is indeed the heart of the Kemalist revolution and the Turkish Republic, then in order to sustain it in a just manner, the Court, as the arbiter of power, must allow the citizens to find shared idioms and redefine what *laiklik* should mean for them.

Notes

1. The Turkish word for secularism is *laiklik*, named after the French concept of *laicite.* For definitions of and differences between secularism and laicite, see Berkes (1998): 5, and Yildirim (2004): 902. I choose to use the Turkish term, *laiklik*, throughout this paper, because the argument that the Turkish concept of secularism or *laiklik* is unique to Turkey and its socio-political and cultural history appears as a constant theme in the cases studied in this paper. *Laiklik* is the noun, and *laik* is the adjective.

2. For an official English translation of the Constitution of the Republic of Turkey, please see: http://www.byegm.gov.tr/mevzuat/anayasa/anayasa-ing.htm
3. For a critique of the religion-secularism dichotomy, see Asad (2003) and Yildirim (2004).
4. Only Sunni Muslims recognized the Caliph as their legitimate religious leader. For further discussion on the Kemalists, see Yildirim (2005).
5. For a discussion about these dynamics in the current ruling party, Adalet ve Kalkinma Partisi (Justice and Development Party), see Yavuz (2006).
6. See Peter Goodrich's similar argument that 'few ever read the law, none ever read all of it' Goodrich (1991: 251).
7. Here, I use the term 'non-inclusivist' as opposed to 'exclusivist' because I mean some state of inclusion between inclusivism and exclusivism. Power and law do not need to intentionally exclude in order not to include. It could be that some voices and realities and truths are not even recognized, or are the subjugated knowledges Foucault talks about, and are therefore seen as not relevant, not includable in power structures and in legal constructs, including the written legal text itself.
8. The six Kemalist principles are republicanism, nationalism, populism, statism, revolutionism and secularism (Yildirim 2005: 347).
9. The Kemalist Revolution involved numerous changes in everyday life, from the calendar used to the prohibition of the traditional fez, and its mandatory replacement with the European-style hat for men. The changes are too many to list here. For a more detailed discussion of these changes, see Yildirim (2005: 355–357), and Berkes (1998: 461–478).
10. Yavuz argues that changes began in the 1960s but have taken a transformative character since the 1980 coup. He identifies two major developments: 'the new liberal political opening conceded by the secularist state and the subsequent appropriation of these new opportunity spaces by Islamist groups and intellectuals' (Yavuz 2003: 8).
11. For more information on this office, see http://www.diyanet.gov.tr/english/default.asp, its official English website.
12. For a critical analysis of dissolution of political parties in Turkey, see Kogacioglu (2004).
13. The cases discussed in this section are about a variety of issues, including but not exclusive to *laiklik*. My sole focus is on how the justices and the parties to the cases understand and define *laiklik*. Therefore, I leave out all discussion related to other legal issues and arguments that may be involved in the cases. Moreover, I have excluded some Constitutional Court cases where *laiklik* is discussed but the discussions are brief and do not add to the discourses provided in the included cases. All cases can be electronically accessed on the database at http://www.anayasa.gov.tr/general/kararbilgibank.asp, the official website of the Court. The cases are available in Turkish only, thus all English quotes in this article are my own translation.
14. Refah was the new expression of an earlier movement, Milli Gorus (National Outlook). See Yavuz (2003) and Yavuz (2006).
15. For the argument that despite the official non-recognition of Islamic law, people remain committed to fulfilling its mandates, see Yilmaz (2005).
16. Following the 1999 elections, Fazilet entered the National Assembly with what turned into a scandal. One of its members, Merve Kavakci, entered the Assembly Hall with her headscarf on. Members of the other parties in the room started to beat their desks and scream for her to leave. To control the commotion, the Chair called for a break, at which point Kavakci left. She was later stripped of her citizenship on a technicality that she had not reported her United States citizenship to the Turkish authorities. For an autobiographical account of the events, see Kavakci (2004).
17. The leader of the 1980 military coup, Evren was the Head of State until the multi-party elections in 1982. In 1982, he was elected the President of the Republic, and remained so until his retirement in 1989. He has always been a fervent advocate of the headscarf ban. The prohibition on headcoverings in government buildings and educational institutions has become one of the most contested issues in Turkey, and the most significant symbol of citizens' feelings

about secularism- whether they oppose or support the ban. In this article, I only focus on the cases where this debate comes before the Constitutional Court. For further information and detailed analysis of the debates surrounding this issue, see Arat (2005); Saktanber (2002); Ozdalga (1998) and Gole (1996). Anavatan Partisi received sufficient votes to form the government at the 1983 elections. The new government was interested in economic and cultural liberalization and saw it necessary to bring more freedoms. Also during this period, the Higher Education Authority issued regulations to prohibit female students and academic personnel from covering their hair in educational buildings. However, different universities either interpreted the regulation differently or followed it to varying degrees. The law in question was passed in the National Assembly as an attempt to both lift the ban and to bring uniformity of practice. As the complaint in this case also outlines, a previous, more flexible version of the law was vetoed by Evren in late 1988 and returned to the National Assembly for revision. The National Assembly approved the latter version of the law, and Evren petitioned the Court.

18. For an extensive discussion on the family law provisions of the Turkish Civil Code, see Yildirim (2005). For a discussion of marriage practices including polygamy in Turkey, see Yilmaz (2005: 83–123).
19. In Turkey, the Bahai faith is legally considered a sect of Islam, thus not a minority religion. For more information on the Bahai community in Turkey (Turkiye Bahai Toplumu), see their website at http://www.tr.bahai.org. For a general discussion of religious minority rights in Turkey, see Yildiz (2007).
20. The law can be accessed at http://www.tbmm.gov.tr/kanunlar/k5735.html
21. For these speeches and media announcements, see Demokratik Sol Parti's website at http://www.dsp.org.tr/MEP, and Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi's website at http://www.chp.org.tr
22. See news reports at http://www.cnnturk.com/TURKIYE/haber_detay.asp?PID=318&haberID=438074, and http://www.sabah.com.tr/2008/03/14/haber,639D9597C1EB477BA2605B67C94B1994.html

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Afterword

Gabriele Marranci

On 29th November 2009, through a referendum, Switzerland introduced a specific ban on minarets to its constitution. The Swiss People's Party (SVP), the largest party in parliament, has argued that minarets symbolise the Islamisation of Europe and defined Islam as a religion antithetic to liberal democracy since it rejects secularism. The minaret ban has been the first successful political act towards the restriction of religious freedom for Muslims out of other requests in various European countries such as, among other things, the ban of the Qur'an.[1] The minaret ban, however, reveals more about the contradictions existing today between Western liberal democracy and anti-liberal temptations derived from the latent or manifest belief in a clash of civilizations (Marranci 2004). Indeed, as Turner has suggested in Chapter 2 of this book, to understand this complex reality which Muslim communities, particularly if a minority, have to face in their everyday interactions with both the local and global dimension, we need to look at the interconnections between changes in the deprivatization process (both in public and political domains) and the transformation existing within personal religious behaviour (Turner and Volpi 2007). Casanova (1994) has suggested that secularization, at least within the western context, should be understood as formed by three components instead of a single monolithic process, such as a decline in religious practices. These three elements consist of the differentiation of the social system (such as religion, state and market); the decline of religious belief and practice; and the marginalization of religion to the private domain. Starting from this observation, Turner has drawn a distinction between what he has called 'political secularization' and 'social secularization'. The former is the central idea that Church and State should remain separate, while the latter refers to an individual process in which religion loses its relevance through, for instance, commodification.

In the first section of this book, the discussion has focused more on 'political secularization' and the debate existing among Muslims, from a theological (see the contributions of De Poli, Larsson and Raja) to a political debate of identity (see the

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contributions of Jawad, Jamal, Gurkas and Martin). The second section, by contrast, has provided an ethnographic glimpse of how Muslims, living in western societies, engage, challenge and often resist 'social secularization'. While the political and theological debate often remains at a fairly theoretical level, it is the individual, with his or her emotions, feelings and understanding who creates 'Islamic spaces' which we may come across in our cities, workplaces, schools and so on (see Marranci 2008). So, for instance, Caraballo-Resto, in his ethnographic account and analysis of Muslims in Dundee, Scotland, shows how different Muslim groups possess different views on 'secularism' but at the same time many of his respondents, who were first generation migrants, seemed to have difficulties in making sense of the idea of 'the secular' in itself.

Different identities and different genders mean that we cannot simply represent and analyse the abstract categories of 'Muslim' and 'secular'. Indeed as the contributions by Buitelaar and Hickey demonstrate, secularism, and a degeneration of its understanding, often directly challenge Muslim women's identities for whom the scarf often represents a resistance to what Turner has called 'social secularization'. In fact, although few Muslims overtly contest 'political secularization', a great majority reject the social dimension (see 'A State of Islam: Modernity and Muslim Life in Twenty-First Century Australia' by Bahfen, this volume). As this book has shown, a considerable number of Muslims today reject the idea of a privatisation, often as a logical and moral fault. In fact, many Muslims perceive their faith as the epicentre of being not only good Muslims, but also good citizens. As we have observed in some of the chapters of this book (see 'Contentions in the Making: Discussing Secularism Among Scottish Muslims' by Caraballo-Resto, this volume; 'Hamburg, Muslims and Imams: The Challenge of Secularism Imams and the West' by Knoblauch and Eden-Fleig, this volume), some Muslims emphatically oppose the 'idea of the secular' (Asad 2003) not only ideologically but also, we may say, 'ethically'. Often central to a person's 'feeling of being Muslim' (Marranci 2009), Islamic ethos is perceived as a monism in which actions, thoughts and beliefs cannot be divided in the flow of life. Hence, secularism is often understood as arrogance, hypocrisy and a rejection of deep values for mere formalities. In reality, the increased fear that Islam, as a religion, may be a threat to the 'western way of life' originates in misunderstandings of the conceptual frameworks in which 'secularism' has been shaped in recent years. Therefore, *Muslim Societies and the Challenge of Secularization* has tried to offer a debate more than an answer to a question, which unfortunately is indeed often asked in terms of whether or not Islam is compatible with western democracy.

Note

1. In the Netherlands, but also in Italy under the Lega Nord of Umberto Bossi, there have been calls to ban the Qur'an, which has been misrepresented as comparable to Mein Kampf by, for instance, MP Geert Wilders.

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