

international institute

ISIM REVIEWfor the study of islam
in the modern world

Students at
l'Université
d'Alger,
June 2004

Youth

Music, Movements, Politics,
Practices, Cultures, Consumption

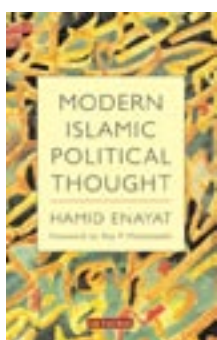
6
Miriam Gazzah
Maroc-Hop

14
Scott Kugle
Queer Jihad

34
Moustafa Bayoumi
In Beirut's Tent City

40
Noorhaidi Hasan
Salafis, Jihad, & Drama

New Books from I.B. TAURIS PUBLISHERS



Modern Islamic Political Thought

Hamid Enayat
Foreword by Roy Mottahedeh

The revival and power of religious feelings among Muslims since the Iranian revolution presents a complicated and often perplexing picture of the politics of the Islamic world. What are the ideas which have influenced the direction of these trends? This book provides an answer by describing and interpreting some of Islam's major political ideas.

JULY 05 PAPERBACK 216 X 138MM 185043 466 2 224 PP £14.95

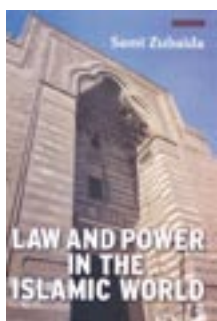


Iraq Confidential

The Untold Story of America's Intelligence Conspiracy
Scott Ritter; Intro by Seymour Hersh

After the 1991 Gulf war Ritter helped lead the UN weapons inspections of Iraq, and found himself at the centre of a dangerous game between the Iraqi and US regimes. As he reveals in this explosive book, Washington was only ever interested in disarmament as a tool for its own agenda.

OCTOBER 05 HARBAND 234 X 156MM 184511 088 9 256 PP £17.95

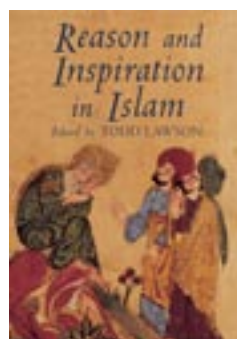


Law and Power in the Islamic World

Sami Zubaida

Islamic law (the Shari'a) and its application is a central issue in contemporary Islamic politics and culture. This book examines the origins and evolution of the Shari'a and the corpus of texts, concepts and practices in which it has been enshrined. Drawing on modern examples, Zubaida explores how the Shari'a has evolved and mutated to accommodate the workings of a modern state.

MAY 05 PAPERBACK 234 X 156MM 185043 934 6 256 PP £14.95



Reason and Inspiration in Islam

Theology, Philosophy and Mysticism in Muslim Thought
Todd Lawson (Ed)

In all the current alienating discourse on Islam, often depicted as a source of extremism and violence, this book takes a timely and refreshing look at the traditions of Islamic mysticism, philosophy and intellectual debate. Tackling the major figures of Islamic thought, it sheds light on hitherto unconsidered aspects of Islam, utilising in the process new source material.

SEPTEMBER 05 HARBAND 234 X 156MM 185043 470 0 576 PP £42.50

To order these and other titles from I.B.Tauris, please contact:

Thomson Publishing Services Ltd, Customer Services
Cheriton House, North Way, Andover, SP10 5BE
DIRECT SALES LINE: +44 (0) 1264 342932 FAX: +44 (0) 1264 342761
EMAIL: tps.ibtauris@thomson.com

NOW AVAILABLE FROM IDC PUBLISHERS

British Intelligence on Russia in Central Asia, c. 1865-1949

India Office Political and Secret Files and Confidential Print

Editor: Penelope Tuson, Former Curator of the Middle East Archives, Oriental and India Office Collections, British Library



Some highlights of this collection:

- ◆ Bolshevik and Pan-Islamic movements and activities in Central Asia, 1919
- ◆ Historical summary of the Central Asian question, India Office, 1874
- ◆ "Who's who" in Central Asia, Simla, General Staff India, 1929
- ◆ Creation of Soviet Central Asian Republics, 1924-1926
- ◆ *Secret and confidential* intelligence reports, maps, memoranda and handbooks

- Approx. 19,200 exposures
- 395 microfiches or 34 microfilm reels
- Including online EAD Finding Aid at www.idc.nl



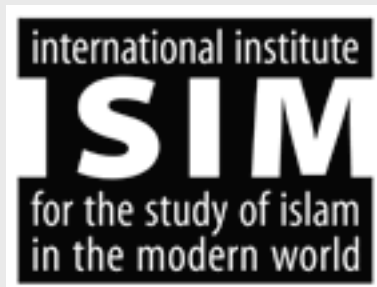
For more information please contact

IDC Publishers | 2301 EE Leiden
P.O. Box 11205 | The Netherlands

Phone +31 (0)71 514 27 00
Fax +31 (0)71 513 17 21

Internet www.idc.nl
E-mail info@idc.nl

Contents



University of Amsterdam
Leiden University
Radboud University Nijmegen
Utrecht University

ISIM Review 16
Autumn 2005
68 Pages
ISSN 1 388-9788

Editorial Office

Visiting Address
Rapenburg 59
Leiden
Postal Address
ISIM, P.O. Box 11089
2301 EB Leiden
The Netherlands
Telephone
+31 (0)71 527 7905
Fax:
+31 (0)71 527 7906
E-mail
review@isim.nl
Homepage
www.isim.nl

Editors
Dick Douwes
Linda Herrera
Copy and language editor
Sanaa Makhoulouf
Desk editor
Dennis Janssen
Design
De Kreeft, Amsterdam
Printing
Dijkman Offset, Diemen

Coming Issue

ISIM Review 17
Deadline for Articles
1 November 2005
Publication Date
Spring 2006

Author Guidelines

Authors are invited to submit original articles to the *ISIM Review* for publication consideration. Articles should deal with issues relating to contemporary Muslim societies and communities from within a social science or humanities framework. Of especial interest are research and debates dealing with culture, social movements, development, youth, politics, gender, religion, arts, media, education, minorities, migration, public intellectuals, and popular culture. Please consult the ISIM website for the style sheet.

The *ISIM Review* is published by the International Institute for the Study of Islam in the Modern World (ISIM) and represents a forum for scholarly exchange. The *ISIM Review* is free of charge.

Disclaimer

Responsibility for the facts and opinions expressed in this publication rests solely with the authors. Their views do not necessarily reflect those of the Institute or its supporters.

© 2005, ISIM. All rights reserved. Nothing in this publication may be reproduced without the permission of the publisher.

ISIM

- 4 **Editorial** / Linda Herrera
- 5 **What is Post-Islamism?** / Asef Bayat

YOUTH CULTURES

- 6 **Maroc-Hop: Music and Youth Identities** / Miriam Gazzah
- 8 **Heavy Metal in a Muslim Context** / Pierre Hecker
- 10 **Black Crow to Barbie: Changing Student Norms in Iran** / Saeid Golkar
- 12 **Cool and Competitive: Muslim Culture in the West** / Amel Boubekeur

SEXUAL ETHICS

- 14 **Queer Jihad: A View from South Africa** / Scott Kugle
- 16 **Rape and the Loss of Agency** / Sanaa Makhoulouf
- 18 **Sexual Torture: Rendering, Practices, Manuals** / Garay Menicucci

MINORITIES & MIGRATION

- 20 **Ethnicity and Success in Higher Education** / Tariq Modood
- 22 **Buried Alive: Multiculturalism in Germany** / Schirin Amir-Moazami
- 24 **"Domestication" of Space: Arab Migrants in Milan** / Barbara Caputo

AT THE GRASSROOTS

- 26 **The Baraza: A Grassroots Institution** / Roman Loimeier
- 28 **Culture of Hope in West Africa** / Knut Graw
- 30 **Islamic NGOs in Chad** / Mayke Kaag

POLITICAL CULTURES

- 31 **Student Politics in Indonesia** / Kristian Morville
- 32 **Freedom, Justice, and Good Governance in Arab Countries** / Nader Fergany
- 34 **In Beirut's Tent City** / Moustafa Bayoumi
- 36 **Syria: Another Regimefall Looming** / Ammar Abdulhamid
- 38 **The Sufi and the President in Post-Soviet Uzbekistan** / Alexandre Papas
- 40 **Salafis, Jihad, and Drama** / Noorhaidi Hasan

RESEARCH APPROACHES

- 42 **Islam along the South Asian Littoral** / Brian J. Didier and Edward Simpson
- 44 **Weber and Islam** / Ernest Wolf-Gazo
- 46 **Bridging the Academic Mediterranean** / Imco Brouwer

TRAVEL WRITING

- 47 **Revisiting Pro-Muslim British Orientalists** / Geoffrey P. Nash
- 48 **Harem Literature and Women's Travel** / Reina Lewis
- 50 **Hajj: Only at this Sacred Time and Place** / Na'eem Jeenah

ARTS & ARCHITECTURE

- 52 **A Muslim Voice in Bulgarian Poetry** / Marta Simidchieva
- 54 **Mosques and Muslims in Marseilles** / Marcel Maussen
- 56 **A Mosque Between Significance and Style** / Akel Ismail Kahera
- 58 **Museums, Women, and Empowerment** / Carol Malt

ISIM PAGES

- 59 **Muslim Fashions - Fashionable Muslims** / Annelies Moors
- 60 **The Making of Muslim Youths** / Asef Bayat & Martijn de Koning
- 61 **Islam in Africa** / Marloes Janson
- 62 **Iran on the Move** / Anna Enayat & Soraya Tremayne
- 64 **Rights at Home Website** / Mariëtte van Beek
- 65 **NWO Funding for Research on Muslims in Europe** / Nathal Dessing

- 66 **Editors' Picks**
- 67 **Art** / Arab Image Foundation
- 68 **Photo Commentary**

LINDA HERRERA

Youth have long been treated as a social problem. Much of the scholarly and media attention to youth, particularly from the "global North," has focused on issues such as juvenile delinquency, unemployment, drug abuse, and high-risk sexual behaviour. The situation, however, has been changing. Notwithstanding the persistence of—and continued attention to—the older problems, newer areas of research also underline youth as agents of change, creators and consumers of new technologies, trendsetters in the arts, music, fashion, and innovators of new forms of political organization and social movements towards greater social and economic justice. More notice, in other words, is being paid to the productive and positive aspects of youth cultures. Despite new inroads in youth studies, representations of youth from Muslim societies or Muslim communities in the West, tend to emphasize issues of security, religious extremism, and violence, reinforcing a single-minded approach to youth. The prevalence of a "problem-oriented" or crisis perspective is made abundantly clear if one examines the visual representations of Muslim youth from major international press agencies.

In our search for a cover image for this issue of the *ISIM Review* on urban Muslim youth, the editorial team scanned thousands of photographs taken over the past five years. We began the search naively thinking it would be simple to find an image of a group of young people from a Muslim society or community in a basically "normal," non-agitated state of being, socializing, enjoying themselves, looking hip and attractive in a way that young urbanites tend to look: we were wrong. With a handful of exceptions (some of which appear in this issue), the images we came across with persistent regularity under combinations of search terms including "youth," "students," "young people," "university," "Muslim," "gatherings," from regions as diverse as Europe, the Middle East, North Africa, Southeast and South Asia, and Africa were of angry crowds with raised fists, mouths open shouting protests, bloodied bodies being carried away in stretchers, crowds zealously burning or stomping flags and effigies

(usually of the US and Israel). Perhaps images do not lie, but they can tell a heavily selective and unsatisfactory story.

To be sure, young people from Muslim communities have plenty to be upset about; anxiety about the future, political repression, foreign occupations and wars, corrupt governments, poverty, restrictions on their movement and choices, racism, poor quality schooling and health care, to name just a few. These conditions at times impel youth to take to the streets, to express anger, and, at times, to turn to violence or radicalism. But this is just part of the story.

Whether through their efforts to influence national politics (Bayoumi, p.34), their advocacy for progressive, inclusive forms of Islam (Kugle, p.14), or their roles in tapping new markets for "ethical" and "ethnic" goods (Boubekeur, p.12), young people are contributing in concrete ways to political, social, and economic changes at both the national and transnational levels. They are similarly active producers of the graphic, visual, and performance arts, including music. Throughout Europe and North America Arab and Muslim musicians articulate, through fusion Arab/Eastern hip-hop rhythms, instrumentations, and lyrics, their experience of living as ethnic and religious minorities in oftentimes antagonistic environments. In the Netherlands, hip-hop by local youths of Moroccan origin has materialized into the distinct genre of "Maroc-hop" and provided a public platform whereby youths narrate their lives with a mix of angst, anger, humour, and nostalgia (Gazzah, p.6). Youths also assert their rejection of religious and cultural conservatism and strive to imagine—and live out—alternative lifestyles (Hecker, p.8).

Youth involvement in the arts, economy, a range of social movements from progressive to radical Islam, all merits serious scholarly attention. A major challenge facing scholars is to more thoroughly explore at what point, under what structural, political, socioeconomic, and institutional conditions, youth identify with one or another tendency. For youth are motivated in a multitude of ways to act on the world, with all its injustices and hardships, promises and possibilities.

ISIM

The International Institute for the Study of Islam in the Modern World (ISIM) conducts and promotes interdisciplinary research on social, political, cultural, and intellectual trends and movements in contemporary Muslim societies and communities. The ISIM was established in 1998 by the University of Amsterdam, Leiden University, Utrecht University, and Radboud University Nijmegen in response to a need for further research on contemporary developments of great social, political, and cultural importance in the Muslim world from social science and humanities perspectives. The ISIM's research approaches are expressly interdisciplinary and comparative, covering a large geographic range which includes North Africa, the Middle East, Sub-Saharan Africa, Central Asia, South and South East Asia, and Muslim communities in the West. Broad in scope, the ISIM brings together all areas of disciplinary expertise in anthropology, sociology, religious studies, political science, and cultural studies.

ISIM Staff

Asef Bayat
Academic Director
Dick Douwes
Executive Director
Nathal Dessing
Education &
Islam in the Netherlands
Martijn de Koning
Researcher Ethno-Barometer Project
Linda Herrera
Editor of *ISIM Review*
Dennis Janssen
Publications & Projects Officer
Rapti Miedema
Office Manager
Ada Seffelaar
Secretariat
Yvonne van Domburg
Secretariat

Rights at Home Project

Abdulkader Tayob
Project Director
Laila al-Zwaini
Primary Consultant
Mariëtte van Beek
Project Manager

ISIM Chairs

Asef Bayat
ISIM Chair, Leiden University
Martin van Bruinessen
ISIM Chair, Utrecht University
Annelies Moors
ISIM Chair, University of Amsterdam
Abdulkader Tayob
ISIM Chair, Radboud University Nijmegen

Board

A.W. Kist (Chair)
President of Leiden University
S.J. Noorda
President of the University of Amsterdam
J.R.T.M. Peters
Vice President of Radboud University Nijmegen
Y.C.M.T. van Rooy
President of Utrecht University

LINDA HERRERA

Linda Herrera has this summer left the ISIM. During her time with us, Linda made a very significant contribution to the further development of the institute. This is particularly true of her involvement in our flagship publication, the *ISIM Review*. Her editorial skills, her feel of topical themes, and her ability to mobilize her many friends and colleagues have brought a new dynamic that is clearly reflected in this current issue. Next to her editorial work, Linda has also contributed to other ISIM activities, especially in the field of outreach to our academic and other audiences, and her absence will be felt. Linda has taken up the position of Senior Lecturer in Development Studies with a focus on Youth Studies and Development at the Institute of Social Studies (The Hague) and we wish her every success in her future work.

Dick Douwes

What is Post-Islamism?

In 1996 I happened to write an essay entitled "The Coming of a Post-Islamist Society,"¹ in which I set out to discuss the articulation of the remarkable social trends, political perspectives, and religious thought which post-Khomeini Iran had begun to witness—a trend which eventually came to underpin the "reform movement" of the late 1990s and early 2000. My tentative essay dealt only with the societal trends for there was nothing at the state level that I could consider "post-Islamist." Indeed as originally used,

post-Islamism pertained only to the realities of the Islamic Republic of Iran, and not to other settings and societies. Yet the core spirit of the term referred to the metamorphosis of Islamism (in ideas, approaches, and practices) from within and without.

Since then, the term post-Islamism has been deployed by a number of prominent observers in Europe to refer primarily to a shift in the attitudes and strategies of Islamist militants in the Muslim world. While the term's currency may be welcome, the particular way in which it has been employed seems to have caused more confusion than clarity. For some (e.g. Gilles Kepel), post-Islamism describes the departure of Islamists from the *jihadi* and *Salafi* doctrines, while for others (such as Olivier Roy) it is perceived in terms of the "privatization" of Islamization (as opposed to Islamization of the state), where emphasis is placed on changes in how and where Islamization is carried out, rather than its content. Often used descriptively, post-Islamism has been presented and primarily perceived—including in my own earlier work on Iran—as an empirical rather than an analytical category, representing a "particular era," or an "historical end."

Partly due to such narrow conceptualizations and partly for its misperception, "post-Islamism" has attracted some unwelcome reactions. Critics have correctly disputed the premature generalization about the end of Islamism (understood chiefly in terms of the establishment of an Islamic state) even though they have acknowledged a significant shift in the strategy and outlook of some militant Islamist groups. What seems to be changing, they argue, is not political Islam (i.e., doing politics in an Islamic frame) but only a particular, "revolutionary" version of it. Others have argued that post-Islamism signifies not a distinct reality, but simply one variant of Islamist politics.

In my understanding, post-Islamism represents both a condition and a project which may be embodied in a master (or multi-dimensional) movement. In the first instance, it refers to a political and social condition where, following a phase of experimentation, the appeal, energy, and sources of legitimacy of Islamism get exhausted even among its once-ardent supporters. Islamists become aware of their system's anomalies and inadequacies as they attempt to normalize and institutionalize their rule. The continuous trial and error makes the system susceptible to questions and criticisms. Islamism becomes compelled, both by its own internal contradictions and by societal pressure, to reinvent itself, but does so at the cost of a qualitative shift. The tremendous transformation in religious and political discourse in Iran during the 1990s exemplifies this tendency.

Not only a condition, post-Islamism is also a project, a conscious attempt to conceptualize and strategize the rationale and modalities of transcending Islamism in social, political, and intellectual domains. Yet, post-Islamism is neither anti-Islamic, un-Islamic, nor is it secular. Rather it represents an endeavour to fuse religiosity and rights, faith and freedom, Islam and liberty. It is an attempt to turn the underlying principles of Islamism on its head by emphasizing rights instead of duties, plurality in place of a singular authoritative voice, historicity rather than fixed scriptures, and the future instead of the past. It wants to marry Islam with individual choice and freedom, with democracy and modernity (something post-Islamists stress), to achieve what some have termed an "alternative modernity." Post-Islamism is expressed in terms of secular exigencies, in freedom from rigidity, in breaking down the monopoly of

On 26 April 2005 Asef Bayat presented his inaugural lecture at Leiden University entitled, "Islam and Democracy: Perverse Charm of an Irrelevant Question," presented here in extracted form. He posits that Islamist movements in Muslim societies are undergoing a post-Islamist turn characterized by rights instead of duties, plurality in place of a singular authoritative voice, historicity rather than fixed scriptures, and the future instead of the past. The full text of the lecture will be available through ISIM and Leiden University.

religious truth. In short, whereas Islamism is defined by the fusion of religion and responsibility, post-Islamism emphasizes religiosity and rights. Post-Islamism may find expressions in various social practices, political ideas, and religious thought as in post-Islamist urban rationale, youth and students movements, feminist practice, or theological perspectives.

Historically, the end of the war between Iran and Iraq (1988), the death of Ayatollah Khomeini (1989), and the

programme of post-war reconstruction under President Rafsanjani in Iran marked the onset of what I called a "post-Islamist" turn. As a master movement, Iran's post-Islamism was embodied in remarkable social and intellectual trends and movements—expressed in religiously innovative discourses by youths, students, women, and religious intellectuals, who called for democracy, individual rights, tolerance, and gender equality, as well as the separation of religion from the state. Yet instead of throwing away religious sensibilities altogether, they set out to push for an inclusive religiosity—one which came to subvert the Islam of officialdom. The daily resistance and struggles of ordinary actors compelled the religious thinkers, spiritual elites, and political actors to undertake a crucial paradigmatic shift. Scores of old Islamist revolutionaries renounced their earlier ideas lamenting the danger of the religious state both to religion and the state. The Islamic state generated adversaries from both without and within who called for the secularization of the state but stressed upon maintaining religious ethics in society.

Is post-Islamism, then, an exclusively Iranian phenomenon? The truth is that while the Islamic Revolution acted in the 1980s as the demonstration effect to bolster similar movements in other Muslim countries, Iran's post-Islamist experience has also contributed to an ideological shift among some Islamist movements (such as the Tunisian Al-Da'wa Islamic party led by Rashed Ghannouchi). Nevertheless, internal dynamics and global forces since the early 1990s have played a greater role in instigating a post-Islamist turn among individual movements in the Muslim world. The new pluralist strategy of Lebanese Hizbullah in the early 1990s leading to a split in the movement, the emergence in the mid-1990s of Al-Wasat party in Egypt as an alternative to both militant Islamists and the Muslim Brothers, the inclusive policy and practices of Islamic parties in Turkey (Rifah, Virtue, and Justice and Development Parties), or the emergence in Saudi Arabia of an "Islamist-liberal" trend in the late 1990s seeking a compromise between Islam and democracy, each display some diverse versions of post-Islamist trends in Muslim societies today. In each of these cases post-Islamism denotes a departure, however varied in degree, from an Islamist ideological package characterized by universalism, monopoly of religious truth, exclusivism, and obligation. Post-Islamist movements acknowledge, in other words, ambiguity, multiplicity, inclusion, and compromise in principles and practice.

The categories "Islamism" and "post-Islamism" serve primarily as theoretical constructs to signify change, difference, and the root of change. In practice, however, Muslims may adhere simultaneously to aspects of both discourses. The advent of post-Islamism does not necessarily mean the historical end of Islamism. What it means is the birth, out of the Islamist experience, of a qualitatively different discourse and politics. In reality we may witness for some time the simultaneous processes of both Islamization and post-Islamization.

Note

1. Asef Bayat, "The Coming of a Post-Islamist Society," *Critique: Critical Middle East Studies*, no. 9 (Fall 1996): 43-52.

Asef Bayat is the Academic Director of ISIM and the ISIM Chair on Islam and the Modern World in the department of Languages and Cultures of the Middle East (TCMO), Leiden University. His forthcoming book is titled, *Post-Islamism: Social Movements, Islam and Democracy*. Email: a.bayat@isim.nl

ASEF BAYAT

Maroc-Hop

Music and Youth Identities

MIRIAM GAZZAH

Dutch-Moroccan hip-hop, or "Maroc-hop," was put on the musical map in the Netherlands in 2002 with the release of the hit-record, "K*tmarokkanen" ("F*king Moroccans") by the 25 year old Dutch-Moroccan rapper, Raymzter. He wrote the song in reaction to a Dutch politician's remark that was accidentally picked up by a microphone and aired on national television in which he referred to Moroccan youths as "those f*king Moroccans." The enormous success of Raymzter's rap cleared the way for other rappers of Moroccan origin who have been active in the production of a growing hip-hop musical scene. In addition to hip-hop, a vibrant subculture has been constructed around Arab/Moroccan popular folk music known as *shaabi* and which includes dance events, websites, and magazines. Maroc-hop and shaabi contribute in different ways to the construction of identity of Dutch-Moroccan youths within the specific context of contemporary Dutch society. While shaabi music gets used as a way to reinforce elements of an ethnic past and celebrates a Moroccan identity, Maroc-hop is infused with angst and is becoming an important means for youths to voice their frustrations with Dutch society.

Shaabi music

The word shaabi is the Arabic word denoting "of the people," and refers, when describing music, to "popular" music. In the specific context of Morocco, shaabi represents a category of music consisting of different genres from different regions including, for instance, *reggada* music from Oujda and Berkane, and *rewaffa* music from the Rif. Various factors contribute to the popularity of shaabi music in the Netherlands: its musical composition, its lyrics, its availability, and, more especially, the events organized around it.

Shaabi music is readily available in the many Moroccan music shops in major cities of the Netherlands. Dance events are also key to shaabi's popularity among mainly second generation Dutch-Moroccans aged between 18-30. Organizers of these events attempt to create a Moroccan and Arab-Islamic environment by providing, for example, Moroccan food and the famous mint tea, stands where people can sell Moroccan and Arab music, books on Islam, or jewellery. At most occasions there is no alcohol sold and people who are intoxicated are refused entrance. Dance parties, festivals, and concerts of famous shaabi artists such as Najat Aatabou, Senhaji, or Daoudi which can attract crowds of up to 3000, occur regularly.

Different types of shaabi events take place, among which are women-only parties, or "*Hafla Annisa*." Mothers, friends, daughters, children, aunts, and nieces find in these women-parties a space where they can enjoy themselves, dance,

sing, and interact with other women without any kind of male interference. Although the main attraction of these gatherings is the performance of shaabi music by both female and male musicians, the ingredients of these parties are somewhat different from the regular shaabi events. For example, there might be a fashion show demonstrating the newest Moroccan fashion or a workshop on how to apply henna.

Why does this music mobilize such large crowds of young people? If you ask young Moroccans why they go to these parties or listen to shaabi music, the answer often includes phrases such as, "I feel Moroc-

Two musical forms highly popular among youths of Moroccan origin in the Netherlands, "Moroc-hop," and *shaabi*, permit youths to express specific and multiple identities in local contexts. Whereas these youths are often identified primarily as "Muslims" in the debates on integration and minority issues, they identify themselves according to very different categories.

can when I hear this music. It evokes a sense of solidarity with other visitors."¹ Thus, these events satisfy a desire to be in, or return, to Morocco, even though it is only for a short time. Shaabi parties, in other words, represent a celebration of Moroccan identity.

The actual musical performance does not appear to be the central concern of the audience. The audience is usually

more caught up in interacting with each other and often dance with their backs to the performers, seemingly not interested in what is happening on stage, but more concerned with becoming absorbed in the atmosphere and losing oneself in the moment. The performance of the artist thereby becomes part of the background while the performance of the crowd moves to the foreground. This losing oneself in the atmosphere of dancing enhances the feeling of solidarity. Shaabi musical events therefore enable youth to create a kind of coherent Dutch-Moroccan community. The emphasis here is on "coherent," because outside the context of concerts and dance events, one can hardly speak of a unified and coherent community. The Dutch-Moroccan community is quite heterogeneous with the majority representing Berbers from the Rif, and the others a mix of mainly Arab speaking peoples from different regions. Historically the Berber speaking population has had a strained relationship with the Arab population. When Dutch-Moroccan youths come together in these musical contexts, internal differences seem to temporarily disappear.

Shaabi music also allows young people to incorporate elements of their parents' culture into their own youth cultures. Shaabi, a traditional musical genre, is infused with nostalgia for Morocco. In such a way shaabi music plays a significant role in the assertion and preservation of a Moroccan identity among Moroccan-Dutch youths, some of whom have never even been to Morocco. By means of music and events, these youths can express an identity that focuses more on being Moroccan in the Netherlands than on being Moroccan in Morocco. Additionally, they can glorify part of the culture of their parents without actual interference of their parents, and thereby retain their autonomy and independence.

Maroc-hop

Hip-hop music occupies another important arena of popular music for Moroccan youths in the Netherlands, yet with a distinctly different history and effect. Hip-hop is an eclectic music known for its bricolage of sounds, beats, and text fragments. It originated in African American neighbourhoods in New York when, in the 1970s, youths started the genre by rapping over drumbeats. Hip-hop often incorporates bits and pieces from other songs, films, TV programmes, commercials, and street sounds, a technique referred to as "sampling."² Nowadays hip-hop can be divided into several sub-genres: the so-called "boast rap" which thrives on materialism, and "message rap" which is characterized by social engagement and social criticism. Minority groups worldwide have found in "message rap" a vehicle to articulate frustration about their oftentimes difficult position in society.

The type of hip-hop that has been growing among Dutch-Moroccans can be called "Maroc-hop," since it has appropriated and adapted many elements from American hip-hop culture in specifically local ways. The emphasis on self-definition, for example, whereby the artist chooses a stage name that defines his role and persona, is emblematic of general hip-hop.³ Many hip-hop scholars consider these names to be a tool for marginalized youths to create prestige and status. They argue that most hip-hoppers come from lower class communities and have limited access to legitimate forms of status attainment in society and

Maroc-hop [creates]
links with American
or global hip-
hop culture and
[creates] alliances
with a local ethnic
community.



PHOTO BY JOOST VAN DEN BROEK, © HOLLANDESE HOOGTE, 2005

**Dutch Moroccan
Hip-hop group
Mo-squad,
The Hague,
April 2005**

consequently resort to taking on new identities and names that enable them to obtain "street credibility" or "prestige from below."⁴

Rappers usually choose names that relate to their coolness, power, street smart, or supreme qualities as a rapper such as Ali Bouali (Ali B.), Brainpower, or Ladies Love Cool James (LL Cool J). Sometimes names relate to local neighbourhoods or cities (Den Haag Connections/ The Hague Connections). Also, some artists choose self-mocking names or names that implicitly comment on society. For example, Ali B. chose this name referring to the way Dutch media speak about criminal suspects by reporting a first name and last initial, mocking the stereotypes about Moroccan youths as criminals.

Self-definition in Maroc-hop is based both on creating links with American or global hip-hop culture and on creating alliances with a local ethnic community. Many rappers have adopted an American style of self-naming, using abbreviations and American hip-hop terms, for example MC (i.e. Master of Ceremony) Berber. On the other hand, others have deliberately decided to maintain their "Moroccan" names, affirming an alliance with their ethnic background. For example, Soussi-B, refers to the southern Moroccan Souss region. Yes-R is a wordplay on the Arabic name Yasser. Equally interesting is that these stage names often refer to hometowns of the rappers, signifying a connection with a Moroccan and a Dutch background.

The messages

Among the recurrent themes of Maroc-hop are racism, Dutch politics, the war in Iraq, 9/11, and the Israel-Palestine conflict, revealing a considerable political consciousness. Many rap bands have written songs about Bush and Sharon in especially angry terms. In the repertoire of underground bands whose music largely circulates on the Internet such as Nieuwe Allochtoonse Generatie (New Foreign Generation) and The Hague Connections, several tracks blame Bush, Sharon, and the Jewish people in general for the misery of the Arab world. These songs reveal a strong identification with the Arab and Palestinian people and with Muslims in general. Islam is passionately defended by rappers who lash out at everyone who "attacks" Islam in whatever form. Moreover, there are many songs dealing with local topics such as Dutch politicians Pim Fortuyn and Ayaan Hirsi Ali. Both Fortuyn (murdered 6 May 2002 by an animal rights activist) and Hirsi Ali are known for their critical attitude towards Islam. Other rappers try to invalidate stereotypes about Moroccan youth, such as Ali B.'s song "Geweigerd.nl" ("Refused.nl") criticizing the policy of many Dutch discotheques to refuse entrance of groups of young Moroccans. Others have a more humorous way of

addressing social issues, as illustrated in Samiro's rap, "Couscous." This song hilariously tackles stereotypes harboured by both the Moroccan and Dutch communities of each other. In the below verse (translated to English from the original Dutch), Samiro sings in a broken Dutch accent typical of a Moroccan migrant:

*He is fed up and only wants couscous
No French fries with chicken and no applesauce either (typical
Dutch food)
He is fed up and only wants to eat couscous
They say: low fat, but that is just an excuse
I do not like French fries or Brussels sprouts (typical Dutch food)
That is not good for me and I will never eat it again
My friend invited me over for a fondue Bourguignon
Afterwards I spent the night on the toilet
Me, stomach-ache and nauseous, me shout: oh, no!
I have to buy couscous, thank you very much, yes please*

A great deal of Maroc-hop's repertoire could thus be seen as a reaction to the exclusion of Moroccans in public debates about Islam, particularly since 11 September 2001. It represents an "artistic," if sometimes blunt, contribution to the debates. Maroc-hop, however, does not limit itself to political topics. Many songs glorify sex, violence, crime, drugs, love, and women. Rather than present themselves primarily as "Muslim," or "Moroccan," these rappers invoke identities based on local areas and "boast and brag" about their group of friends, their rap crew, and their rap qualities ("flow"). Members of this music culture, in other words, exhibit a strong identification with their Dutch context. Maroc-hop has attracted a growing audience because of its ability to offer its listeners a repertoire of identities as a hip-hopper, a foreigner, a Muslim, a young Moroccan, or just a young person in the Netherlands. Maroc-hop can simultaneously support, strengthen, and deny all of these identities, offering listeners the choice to select whichever identities suit the mood or the times.

Notes

1. From interview fragments conducted with shaabi concert-visitors by the author, summer 2004.
2. T. Rose, *Black Noise: Rap Music and Black Culture in Contemporary America* (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 1994), 2-3.
3. *Ibid.*, 36.
4. *Ibid.*

Miriam Gazzah is a Ph.D. candidate at ISIM.
Email: M.Gazzah@isim.nl

Heavy Metal in a Muslim Context

PIERRE HECKER

Towards the end of the 1980s the young caricaturist Abdülkadir Elçioğlu became one of the main protagonists of Heavy Metal in Turkish society. Elçioğlu, better known as "Aptülika"—a pseudonym chosen in respect to the American band Metallica—is the father of the cartoon Grup Perişan. The Grup Perişan was published in Turkey's leading satirical magazine *Hibir*, which had a weekly circulation of up to a 100,000 copies. At that time, the Turkish cartoon and comic culture was still unchallenged by private TV and radio programmes that eventually lead to its decline. *Hibir* was particularly popular among the younger generation, in part due to its low price and nation-wide availability, but probably more due to its (sexual) permissiveness and declared mission to criticize cultural values, politics, and the ordinary way of life.

Aptülika's cartoon tells the story of three young "losers" sharing the same flat in Istanbul during their student years (see Cartoon # 1). Each of them—Soyut, Dangal, and Mazhar—embody certain stereotypes of Turkish society. Soyut plays the role of the confused intellectual, and Dangal represents the naive and dumpy, but nevertheless, likeable guy from the Anatolian countryside. Above all stands Mazhar, the real hero of the cartoon who embodies all the features of a young, rebellious Rocker. Uncompromising in his individual way of life and always on a collision course with the surrounding society, he goes through, and get into, a lot of trouble. The author leaves no doubt as to who is supposed to be the reader's favourite. He endows Mazhar with a cheerful, carefree character that enjoys life to the fullest degree. In this way he shows the ultimate success of a lifestyle determined by individual freedom and self-determination.

Making Mazhar the indisputable hero of the cartoon was not unintentional. Aptülika is a rocker and Metal lover himself. In the particular period of the mid-1980s up to the early 1990s, when Metal was something completely new for Turkish society, he and his friends experienced many problems and conflicts quite similar to those depicted in the Grup Perişan. Although there is a clear exaggeration in the humorous situations and character portrayal, the Grup Perişan depicts day-to-day life with all the conflicts of a changing society.

The Grup Perişan's visual imagery conveys the cultural code and meaning of a specific popular culture. Aptülika filled the background of the cartoon—by way of posters or writings on the wall—with some "hidden" information about bands, up-coming concerts, and the latest record releases. Going beyond the scope of the cartoon, he began to use the blank margins of the magazine pages for some extra draw-

Since its emergence in the late 1960s, heavy metal has witnessed a worldwide spread, including to countries of the Middle East. Modern means of media and communication systems convey its specific cultural codes to a global audience. The "new" codes and symbols get appropriated and sometimes assume contradictory meanings in local contexts.

ings and verbal information. The written text includes Turkish translations of songs, band biographies, and the latest news. Band photographs were substituted by caricatures. Over the years, Aptülika portrayed almost the whole Metal world. When the editor intervened to try to curb the Metal theme, he faced massive protests from

the readers and finally gave in to Aptülika's idea of transforming the cartoon into a unique sort of "Metal Magazine."¹

How codes collide

Aptülika's cartoons are part of a global process of disseminating popular cultures through the means of modern media and communication systems. The global availability of cultural resources provides the individual with a variety of new identity options. Identifying with one of those global popular cultures involves the act of appropriating its specific codes. These consist of a set of symbols, sounds, and styles demarcating one popular culture from the other. These codes assume meaning in a local context where they meet and challenge the dominant codes of the surrounding society.

The Grup Perişan illustrates how the two codes collide in the everyday life of Turkish society. In Cartoon # 2 where Mazhar is surrounded and verbally insulted by several men, the illustrator uses different styles of beards to comment on different social/ideological groups. The style of beard gives a Turkish man the opportunity to express his political affiliation. Accordingly, the two men in the upper right corner of the picture can be identified as members of the far right-wing nationalist movement. The man in the lower left corner is clearly a representative of the Islamist faction. The other two protagonists, one with a huge moustache and a newspaper under his left arm, and a second in a police uniform, must be seen as representing the socialist left and the authoritarian state. The men react to Mazhar according to their various political-cultural orientations: "the policeman" observes him with a sceptical look, "the socialist" criticizes his non-political attitude, "the Islamist" denounces him as a heretic, and "the fascists" threaten to physically harm him.

Flaunting his appearance as a "Metalhead," Mazhar exhibits a disregard of the dominant social and cultural codes. The most striking and in some ways rebellious feature of a male Metalhead is his long hair, since short hair is the norm among Turkish men. Long hair, interpreted from a traditional, conservative point of view, is coded as feminine and therefore contradictory to the Turkish ideal of manliness. The feature of long hair is associated with stereotypes such as homosexuality or simply religious disbelief. A second cultural-historical reference to long

Cartoon #1:
The three main characters of Aptülika's comic strip Grup Perişan: Soyut, the confused intellectual, Dangal, the likable country bumpkin, and Mazhar, the rebellious, heroic Rocker

OF OF OF YA...



© HIBIR MAGAZINE

* DOMATES, BİBER, PATLICAN



Cartoon #2: The rocker Mazhar is surrounded and verbally insulted by men with different political affiliations as represented by their style of beard.

hair is the Turkish socialist movements of the 1970s when long hair was, and continues to be, coded as an expression of political ideologies such as communism and anarchism. A third, more recent way of interpreting long hair is directly linked to the emergence of the Turkish Metal scene. Following the suicides of several teenagers and the "ritual" killing of a young woman in an Istanbul cemetery in 1999, long hair has been widely associated with Satanism.² During the public media hypes succeeding those events even Aptülka himself was accused of promoting Satanist ideas.

Aptülka further challenges social codes and norms in his cartoons by allowing his characters to act out in ways that are considered inappropriate by traditional society. In a cartoon (not shown) Mazhar and his girlfriend hold hands and kiss each other in a number of public places, thus violating the dominant codes of acceptable social behaviour. Their behaviour is met by vulgar verbal and physical insults by "respectable" men on the streets, exposing the hypocrisy of mainstream society and also addressing contrary notions about gender relations. The cartoon finally affirms the desire of young people for freedom from public censure. The couple eventually end up in a private room, alone, where they can act on their sexual desires in a manner that is self-empowering.

Appropriating anti-Christian symbols in a Muslim context

Aptülka's cartoons depict the Metal scene's cultural codes and include a heavy dose of Christian symbols. These symbols seem out of place in the context of a predominantly Muslim society, a fact that even most Turkish Metalheads agree on. From its early days in the late 1960s when Heavy Metal arose from the urban working class districts of England, it has challenged Christian tradition by appropriating anti-Christian symbols. The anti-Christian iconography represents a rebellious act of throwing off the moral chains Christianity imposes on a self-determined fulfilment of individual needs and dreams. In their rejection of Christianity many bands even began to refer to Nietzsche's philosophy. Common to the Metal scene's cultural code are symbolic representations of evil such as depictions of the devil, the inverted cross (which refers to the Roman Empire's execution of St. Peter by having him crucified with his head down as an act of mocking his religious belief), and 666, the number of the beast (which derives from St. John's book of revelation and symbolizes the approaching Apocalypse). To such symbols are added elements of pre-Christian pagan traditions such as the Pentagram, or Thor's Hammer. Also common are explicit sexual illustrations and various forms of human and animal skulls.

By being transferred from one context to the other the symbols undergo a shift of meaning. Why, if they lack their original defiant meanings, are anti-Christian symbols being appropriated in a Muslim context? The former vocalist of the Turkish band, Witchtrap, provides a quite simple explanation: "We worked hard on finding an anti-Muslim symbol, but we couldn't find anything. We tried something with the crescent, but it didn't look good!" An Israeli metal musician similarly notes that the symmetrical shape of the Star of David did not allow it to be distorted as a religious symbol, so Israeli Jewish Metalheads had to use instead the symbol of the inverted cross!

Another aspect that needs to be mentioned here is the appropriation of pagan symbols and concepts. Central to this phenomenon is the extreme, but marginal sub-genre of Black Metal, which has been

dominated by Scandinavian bands for years. One of Black Metal's main features is a bold rejection of Christianity by desecrating its symbols and referring to pre-Christian pagan codes. In a Scandinavian context this means the use of symbols and deities from Northern European mythology. The popularity of Scandinavian bands in Turkey results in a small number of bands simply adopting the image of so-called "Viking Metal." Some other bands transfer the concept of their Scandinavian idols to a Turkish context, and consequently refer to pre-Islamic, Shamanist mythologies.

Symbols can become highly politicized and lead to serious misunderstandings. In recent years the Pentagram, coded as a sign of evil, became known to a wider Turkish audience due to the increasing popularity of western horror movies and sporadic media coverage of Satanism. Interestingly, some observers had even misinterpreted it as the Star of David (the Hexagram). In parts of the Arab world, where Metal has also been associated with Satanism, a number of newspaper commentators depicted the Hexagram instead of the Pentagram, claiming a connection between the emergence of Satanic ideas and their Zionist arch enemy. In Morocco, on the other hand, the Pentagram functions as a national emblem that even decorates the country's flag. From a Moroccan Islamic perspective the five edges of the Pentagram are attributed to the five pillars of Islam.³ Meanwhile, the public media in Morocco falsely connects Heavy Metal with the Star of David.⁴

Secularization and self-empowerment

The participation of Turkish youths in Metal culture serve as a source of self-empowerment. The new codes enable the individual to symbolically resist social and moral constraints while appealing to the individual's social and emotional needs for group affiliation and self-expression. The Metal scene's appropriation of cultural codes can further be read as a demarcation from the dominant, particularly religious, codes of society. Through Metal, youths seem to be expressing their desire for a secular society and asserting their refusal to accept religious conservatism and Islamism. The Metal scene may also be contributing to an opening of society; the dominant social and cultural codes gradually adjust to new codes, some of which are dispersed through Metal culture, and, possibly, make way for changes of social and moral standards.

Notes

1. See Aptülka's website: www.aptulika.com.
2. For more information, see T. Deniz Erkmen, "Construction of Satanism in Turkish Secularist and Islamist Newspapers," ISIM Newsletter, no. 8 (September 2001): 16.
3. See Gerd Becker, "Das Pentagramm in Marokko: Religiöses Symbol - politisches Emblem - magisches Zeichen," in *Jahreshefte der Gesellschaft der Freunde Islamischer Kunst und Kultur*, Jahrgang 1993-1996 (München: Eothen, 1998), 7-13.
4. For example, "Mağraba ya'badüna aš-šayÖän," aÖ-NaİdFa, no. 73 (July 2002): 1, 5-8.

Pierre Hecker is a Ph.D. candidate at the Centre for Higher Studies in Leipzig, and affiliated to the Department of Oriental Studies.
Email: Pierre.Hecker@eurient.info

Black Crow to Barbie

Changing Student Norms in Iran

SAEID GOLKAR

Following the 1979 Islamic revolution in Iran the regime sought to Islamize universities to engender social change.¹ Some new institutions were established, many teachers were expelled or retired, texts were changed, and new Islamic curricula were added to produce "Islamic" students. As Ayatollah Khomeini announced in his criticism of the universities of the former regime, "Our universities cultivate the western (*gharbzadeh*) people, ...our young don't have the Islamic manner, ...our universities must change fundamentally and be rebuilt again. We need universities that cultivate (the) Islamic student."

With the assistance of the moral police and on-campus "order" committees, the regime set out to inculcate university students with a sense of Islamic civility and to generate in them Islamic discipline (*tarbiat Islami*). Yet twenty-five years after the revolution universities in Iran have failed to "Islamize" the student body. The regime's aim of producing an "Islamic generation" has in fact yielded contrary manifestations as the universities have become contested—and some would say hostile—spaces for the regime. By the time they reach their graduation many students are entirely different from the desired ideals of the Islamic system. Even at Imam Sadiq University which was established by religious conservatives in 1982 to train new Islamic governmental elites and emphasizes high Islamic moral standards as selection criteria, many students are against the state's conservatism and right wing policies. Some among them "celebrate" the end of certain courses on

Iranian universities underwent a systematic process of Islamization after the country's 1979 revolution. Today, a quarter of a century later, rather than inculcating youth towards modes of Islamic civility universities often appear more as sites where large portions of students express hostility to the regime and experiment with global urban youth cultures.

Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh*) and Arabic by burning study texts and dancing around the fire.

One of the elements of Islamic civil-ity as defined by the state is the dress code. The state promotes modesty in dressing and attempts to enforce clothing for male and female students that is wide (*ghoshad*) and does not cling to

the body so that the contours of the body are not visible to strangers. The preferred colour for men is usually white and for women it is black. The term "hizbullahi style" (*teapae hizbualhi*) is used to refer to "Islamically attired" men, while the term "black crow" (*kalagh -e siyah*) refers to those women who cover themselves from head to toe in black. In the current period such attire is mostly found among women who work for university institutions that check moral behaviour on campuses. Ir-respective of such moral surveillance, Iranian students' mode of dress-ing has changed drastically in the last several years. When I entered university myself in the early 1990s I was not allowed to wear jeans and t-shirts, but today they are a common sight.

Cartoons and youth politics

The changing style trends among Iranian university students have been well documented in popular media, including that of cartoons. Cartoons (*karicature*) are a powerful and sometimes highly political media in Iran; every newspaper and magazine allocates a special space to them and many popular websites carry cartoons.²

One particular Persian language website (<http://www.niksalehi.net/fun/daneshjoo.htm>) frequented by the Iranian youth collects cartoons, pictures, and songs and is visited by more than 2500 people daily, 63% of whom are from inside Iran. A set of cartoons, one depicting women and the other depicting men, show how students undergo an identity transformation in the four years spanning from university entrance to graduation.

Cartoon #1 portrays, on the far right, the ideal type of student in an Islamic discipline. He dons a beard and a mous-tache, symbols of Islamic maleness. His hairstyle (short and usually cut from one side), dress (the simple wide *gos-had* with the shirt hanging outside the trousers), and rosary represent a pious person who prays regularly. His eyes are cast downwards, which is consid-ered good manners since avoiding eye contact with the opposite sex helps to avoid sinful thoughts. In my own expe-rience as a first year student in Tehran University I recall our clergyman pro-fessor who taught a course on Islamic knowledge. His gaze was always down-

Cartoon # 1



ward to avoid eye contact with female students who sat in the first row. One day when a majority of students were napping during a boring lecture, the professor exclaimed loudly to a female student whose pant leg was creeping slightly up her leg as she slouched in her sleeping position, "Ms. Ahmadi, Please take off your trousers!" (Meaning instead to pull the trouser down). The class roared with laughter to such an extent that the teacher could not continue the class and left.

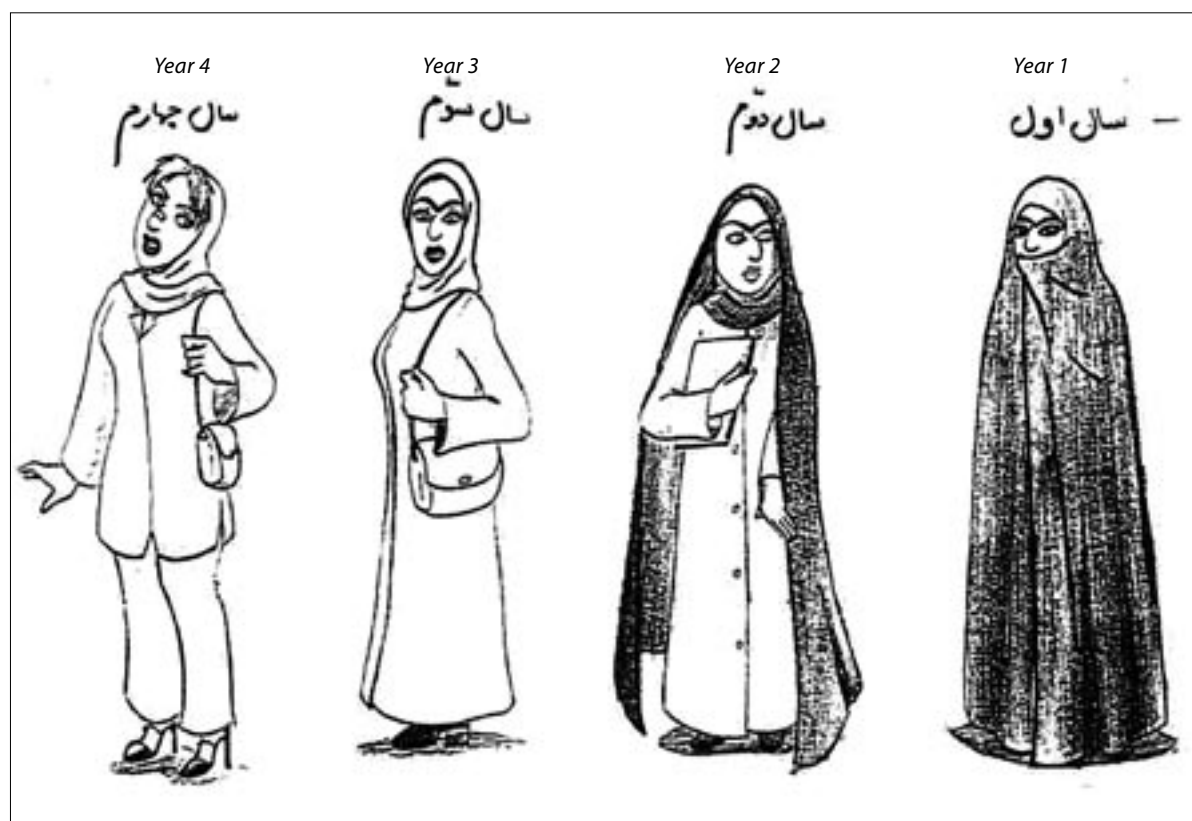
By the second year in the university the male student slowly changes. He has cut his beard but not his moustache, his dress is narrower but remains simple, and the rosary has been replaced by a book; a symbol of independent thinking and learning. By the third year the student has further deviated from the Islamic Republic ideal. His hair (parted in the middle) and dress (short shirt with jeans and shoes) are symbols of becoming part of a globalized western youth culture (*gharbzadeh*). The mobile phone indicates a relationship between the student and the outside

world or with a female friend. In Iran, as in other societies, the mobile phone enhances the possibility of having a relationship with the opposite sex without familial control. Finally, the last picture in the frame shows the student in his final year, with his punk look, bare feet, cigarette, and long hair, having completely deviated from the model of the proper Islamic student.

In the early 1990s few dared to sport jeans and t-shirts or to wear their hair long because if they did they would have to answer to the Islamic associations and the discipline committees in universities. Nowadays even the members of Islamic associations wear jeans and t-shirts and have girlfriends, even though the latter is said to be especially immoral. Last year, in a bold move by the standards of Iranian cultural politics, some students and one member of an Islamic association in the Faculty of Law and Political Science wore a tie, that iconic symbol of west-struckness (*gharbzadigi*).

Women undergo a similar transformative experience at the university. Cartoon #2 shows how, in the first year (the far right), the woman wears a complete head to toe hijab as promoted by the government. This attire represents the student who refrains from wearing makeup and speaking to boys. In the first year of my studies in 1992 male and female students did not know how to address each other and were even unsure about using terms like "brother," "sister," "Mr.," "Ms.," and "Mademoiselle." Not knowing the appropriate form of address hindered communication and was a source of anxiety for the students. On today's campuses collegial relationships between the sexes are far more common, and students study in small groups and address each other on a first name basis, even though it might be frowned upon by the older generation.

Like her male counterpart, the second year female student carries a book. She appears more confident and is less careful about covering herself. By the third year the student replaces the long chador with the more convenient and fashionable "manteau," a form of dress that is unacceptable in high government positions. During the sixth parliament of Iran, for example, some reformist women wore the manteau and created a serious reaction by conservatives and Islamists. The student's



Cartoon #2

manteau in the cartoon is long and tight (*tang*), revealing her figure. The last frame is of a final year student sporting a short manteau, high heel shoes, and makeup. This style of dressing is called the "Barbi model," and is very popular among young women.

Both of these cartoons amuse us with their depiction of the transformation of student behaviour, manner, and thought. Hence, despite the Islamic system's desire to Islamize and control the students and cultivate them as a new Islamic generation, the students have become a headache for the moral policies of the government. It is not an exaggeration to assert that during their

four years in a university, students go through a process that has the opposite effect of what the formal system intends. The reasons for this transformation can be explained by the everyday resistance of youth against the imposed, "Islamic system" into their everyday lives. They often do whatever the Islamic system refuses and reject whatever it promotes. If the Islamic system promotes the chador as the best form of covering for females, the students opt for wearing the short manteau; if it rejects makeup in public space, they wear excessive makeup. Their resistance is also a resistance against the previous generation. But these represent only partial explanations for the choices of youths. The university is a place for learning new ideas and ways of being. It is an opening to a

The regime's aim of producing
an "Islamic generation"
has in fact yielded contrary
manifestations... [M]any
students are entirely different
from the desired ideals of
the Islamic system.

new world. The more the student learns, the more s/he strays far from the Islamic system's desired path. Despite the Islamic system's efforts to change and "purify" the type of knowledge students encounter by censoring texts and adding copious Islamic subjects to university syllabi, it cannot prevent students from gaining knowledge and forming and experiencing a new world.

Saeid Golkar is a Ph.D. candidate in the Department of Political Science at the University of Tehran and was an ISIM visiting fellow in 2005.

Email: sgolkar@ut.ac.ir

Notes

1. I would like to thank my friend Kamran Asdar Ali for his help in preparing this essay.
2. It is commonly known that Iranian cartoonists have been jailed for their political cartoons. For example, Nikahang Koser was arrested because he drew a cartoon ridiculing a conservative clergymen, Mesbah Yazdi. In addition, one of the editors of *Hayat-e-No* newspaper was arrested for publishing a cartoon that depicted Imam Khomeini.

Cool and Competitive Muslim Culture in the West

AMEL BOUBEKEUR

In contrast to the austerity of traditional Islamists who recommend asceticism and marginality vis-à-vis western culture as a pure form of commitment, a new Muslim elite are arising bringing with them a new urban Muslim culture from within the Occident. These elites have launched companies and projects which are "ethislamic," inspired by an ethic of diffusion and production resulting from their Islamic commitment. They might also be actors of the Society of the Islamic Spectacle which uses non-traditional media such as music, theatre, or television, for preaching.

Performing Islamic modernity

The new urban Islamic culture, strongly inspired by popular American aesthetic standards, has produced specific products that contribute to the performance of a "cool Islam." Among the new products and markets are those promoting Islamic street wear, Islamic soft drinks, Muslim pop idols, religious songs, Muslim rappers, and even Muslim comedians. More than ever the new Muslim cultural actors aspire for a prominent space on the global western stage. They make their values accepted through a new Islamic culture that presents itself as cool and fashionable (i.e. modern), along with being competitive (i.e. powerful and dominant). These "cool and competitive" actors internalize the notion that the West is in a position of political, economic, and cultural dominance over them.

After the failure of political Islamism these new actors have sought to express themselves via identity categories that give a new dignity to Muslim culture. These identity categories are no longer founded in the global Islamist Utopia, but in standards considered as modern and efficient. In other words, Islam has been embedded in capitalist markets. Islamic goods and services promote an ethical point of view resulting from an Islamic faith, but at the same time they are embedded in the market of the global western culture, thus making Islam a competitive faith.

In the world of the ethislamic, the Dawah Wear jogging suit, a brand founded by three African Americans and whose French branch has just been launched by Tarik Abdelwahad, the basketball player star of the NBA, acts for many as an alternative to the Saudi *qamiss*. The Capsters, a brand from the Netherlands, will manufacture a velcro hijab that provides the consumer with a choice between the skater, tennis, or aerobics model for sporty Muslim women.

Concerning the Society of the Islamic Spectacle, they organize numerous festivals of Islamic songs in Europe where, for example, Yusuf Islam (Cat Stevens) or Sami Yusuf, one of the UK's leading modern *nashids*, perform "Islamic songs" in English in competition with the traditional Arabic *nashids*. Traditional Muslim preachers see their public turning to "Islamic art festivals" where one-man showmen act out pastiches on the ummah's deficiencies. On Islamic websites art and culture has occupied a dominant place which testifies to the weakening, since the 1990s, of Muslims' requests for a purely normative and intellectualized religious knowledge.

This new western Islamic culture represents a form of secularization. Being based on supports belonging to the secular world, this new culture will allow new elites an integration and an easier diffu-

Muslims in Europe and the United States have been trying to redefine their political aspirations through a new urban-based western Islamic identity, especially since 9/11. They are attempting to move away from traditionalist Islamist categories by forging a new urban Islamic culture based both on an individualistic ethic that promotes economic success and a certain conception of spiritual well-being.

sion in western public space in the face of the stigmatization of the traditional religious Islamist identity. For the consumers, this culture will also give them a pride to be westernized Muslims in an Islamic and non polemical way, and also provide comfort and well-being through services corresponding to their daily lives.

Crossing Islamic and secular spaces

This mode of secularization with its performance of a "cool" Islam does not mean that the Islamic reference as a religious system is abandoned. On the contrary, the new elites will increasingly insert this Islamic reference in a cultural imaginary which is finding ways to get in touch with their identity as modern Muslims and at the same time with their daily western and competitive cultural choices. The traditional values of the corpus will be reinterpreted by, for example, referring to the ideal of the Prophet Mohammed as a great merchant. Such an association with the Prophet transforms their commercial or artistic actions into an Islamic ethic allied with cultural globalization.

The most important changes brought about by this redistribution of values relates to the notion of solidarity for Islamic cause (which was the preoccupation at the heart of the Islamist movements). The traditional intra-Islamic modes of action and mobilization, such as aggressive street demonstrations and political militancy, make less sense. The new Islamic elites reinterpret their relations with the non-Muslim outside community, or even with the other competing Islamic currents in terms of networks and partnerships. Notions of partnership will develop according to standards of competence and competitiveness, and no longer merely on the adherence to the same religious or ideological world.

The tension between the active presence of the new Islamic elites in a secular world and their religious ethic can be detected in the logos and slogans of their brands. The motto for Muslim Gear is "believe in what you wear" (see photo) and the logo for Dawah Wear is a series of numbers which would not hold significance for non-Muslims. However Muslims would recognize them as representing the four positions of prayer: *sujud*, *ruku'*, *wuquf* and

iqamah. Likewise, Mecca Cola's French slogan is "Drink with commitment !" (thus very close to Nike's "Just do it!"), but in Arabic the slogan will be "*Ishrab Multazim*" (which could mean "Drink faithfully !") which is clearly making reference to a religious domain. In this way this new Islamic urban culture only makes sense Islamically for those who wish to consider it as Islamic; the others could easily understand it as part of a western common urban culture in the long term (or at least as ethnic products).

This new capacity to manage two worlds, the West and the East, the Islamic and secularized spaces, also has an effect on the Islamic norms. To a growing extent the normative references and traditional concepts of the Islamist thought will be taken outside the theological world and transposed on the secularized supports of this new Islamic culture. For example, *da'wa* (call to the "true" Islam) is no longer made in an active and moralistic way, but through the exhibition of personal success (people will love God because they will want success that God gave me). The hijra (the migration which the Prophet made from Makkah

"Cool" Islam ... is the
revalorization of the personal
pleasure of consumption, success,
and competitiveness.



© MUSLIMGear.COM

where he was persecuted to Medina) is no more purely religious but economic, thus the boss of Mecca Cola explains that the company made its hijra by moving its head office from the French suburb of Saint Denis to Dubai. The filet-o-fish sandwiches sold by McDonald's become "haram" (not Islamically permissible) because of the position of the USA in the war in Iraq. One will be able to gain *hassanat* (some "good points" that you gain for entrance to paradise) by wearing ethislamic clothing; the zakat (the alms, one of the five pillars of Islam), for example, could be replaced by the purchase of products which make donations to charitable associations.

Redefinitions of the relation of politics to Islamism

Taking into consideration this focus on culture and consumption, it thus seems that the Islamic identity need no longer be represented as political, ideological, and institutional, but as the choice of an individual consumer. Western Islamic identity appears to be departing from Islamism and to be no longer concerned with Islam's political side.

It is possible, however, to question this supposed departure from Islamist utopianism with regard to other forms of struggle and activism.¹ Drinking Mecca Cola might also be a way to boycott the perceived imperialism of Coca Cola, and might especially be done to support an Islamic company's donations to the Palestinian cause. This "consumerism" might very well be in the process of reconstructing a strong mythic ummah. The new Islamic urban culture may constitute a "detour" toward the invention of new forms of competitive political behaviour in the West. In fact, Islamic socialization through politics has failed, and this failure has led a Muslim elite to withdraw from classical forms of political commitments. They have repositioned their claims within the market without the baggage of their Islamist predecessors.

Where the traditional Islamist militancy was heavy, expensive, and very framed, the Islamic identity suggested by this new culture sets up mobilizations, identifications, modes of actions, and participation that is less expensive, less stigmatizing. The classical notions of Islamism,

such as the sacrifice for the cause and the suffering, weak, and dominated, disappear. What is proposed is the revalorization of the personal pleasure of consumption, success, and competitiveness. We also observe new modes of political organization that differ from the pyramidal and strongly hierarchical structures of Islamists. These new cultural elites composed mainly of young people born in the West, were often dismissed by Islamists who came most notably from the Arab world. They had to develop a logic of partnerships and networks in order to promote their modern Islamic ideal.

The effective political strategy is no longer to find an utopian and holist Islamist project vis-à-vis the State or the political sphere; now the promotion of Islamic references is done through spontaneous micro-projects with strong advertisement. Thus Dawah Wear will form a partnership with schools in the USA and participate in anti-drug prevention for children. Some songs of the modern nashid tour organized in France speak to the suffering of veiled girls in France, and of the plights of immigrants and exploited workers. The discourse is no longer grounded in classical Islamist topics of decadence and the necessity of purification, but rather advocates that inequalities be addressed through a political discourse, in particular in the economic and social areas. The first and stronger ambition of this new Islamic culture, and that is why we speak about performance, is to give a positive image of the success of the new Muslim elites. The traditional authorities, with their sometimes oppositional, too erudite, and immobilizing religious knowledge, can be undermined and replaced for many by these new cultural elites whose notoriety and economic success serve as their religious credentials.

Amel Boubekeur is a Ph.D. candidate at the EHESS and the Ecole Normale Supérieure, Paris writing a thesis on New Islamic Elites in the West. She is the author of *Le Voile de la Mariée, Jeunes musulmanes, Voile et Projet Matrimonial en France* (L'Harmattan, Paris, 2004.)
Email: Amel.Boubekeur@wanadoo.fr

**MuslimGear
Advertisement,
2005**

Queer Jihad

A View from South Africa

SCOTT KUGLE

Gay and Muslim. Do those two words belong together? They belong together because they form the basic identity of actual people in Muslim communities throughout the world. As one can imagine, such lives are a struggle—a queer jihad. “Queer” is broader than the more technical term “homosexual”

and has been used in academic and advocacy discourse to denote lesbian, gay, and transgendered people who draw together into an alliance, each questioning patriarchal assumptions about what is normal, natural, and moral in human society.

South Africa has a long-standing Muslim minority community living under a new secular democracy. The South African constitution is decidedly progressive, and specifically protects citizens from discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender. The constitution was adopted in 1996, and by 1998 a group of Muslims in Cape Town organized the first queer Muslim support and advocacy organization, Al-Fitra Foundation. This organization has matured into The Inner Circle and has expanded to include branches in the major cities in South Africa. At their second annual Islamic retreat in March 2005, I was privileged to meet thirty members of the organization and conduct interviews with some of them. Their stories place the legal and theological issues pertaining to queer communities in a much-needed depth of human experience.

The constitution of South Africa protects the right of citizens to practice their religion. It might appear that South African Muslims who are gay, lesbian, or transgendered are empowered by their new constitution to assert their identity and rights. Yet most members of the Muslim community interpret religious freedom as the right to regulate internal and community affairs according to Islamic custom. For most queer Muslims in Cape Town this has meant that when they “come out” voluntarily or are “outed” by force, they concomitantly leave their families and Muslim community. They find little scope to play roles and live with dignity and honesty with their sexual orientation or gender identity within their religious community.

Muslim youth activism

Queer Muslim activists are notably young (from 20-35) and have tended to clash with most of the elders of their communities and established institutions such as the Muslim Judicial Council that speak for “orthodoxy” in Cape Town. Many of them have endured censure, abuse, and sometimes violence or its threat, often without recourse to protection from the state despite its progressive constitution.

Most pre-modern Muslim religious authorities asserted that homosexual sex (whether between two men or between two women) is prohibited by Islamic law. In the modern context, most go further to declare that homosexual orientation (as a personal understanding of one’s self through emotional and psychological forces) is sinful and reprehensible.

Muslims in Cape Town, South Africa, explore ways to be openly lesbian, gay, and transgendered and still be part of a Muslim community. Advocacy groups there assert their place as interpreters of Islam in a way that is open to diversity and engaged in a quest for justice.

A non-patriarchal Islam will
be a recovery of true Islam, or
at least a progressive Islam...
Lesbian, transgendered,
and gay Muslims can...create
a social niche in which they can
practice Islam in ways that grant
them dignity.

Support groups like Al-Fitra Foundation and The Inner Circle contend that this condemnation is based more on patriarchal presuppositions than upon a clear reading of scriptural texts, especially the Quran. They, along with feminist and pro-democracy activists, are contributing to an alternative vision of Islam that

is not based on patriarchal values.

This project is made even more urgent by two forces for social change that are pulling the Muslim communities in South Africa in contrary directions: the AIDS pandemic, and the push for Muslim Personal Law. The organization, Positive Muslims, calls for an Islamic “Theology of Compassion” that refuses to stigmatize people, such as those suffering from HIV and AIDS, with conventional moralism (see the Positive

Muslims website www.positivemuslims.org.za). Queer Muslims join them in defining what an Islamic theology of compassion might be, especially in regard to sexuality, sex education and health, and sexual ethics. They raise the possibility of Islamic same-sex marriages (with great disagreement of whether this would be called *nikah*), the Islamic legal permissibility of “civil partnerships” (for South African law treats homosexual and heterosexual partners with no distinction), and the risks of promiscuity. Such controversial topics are threatened by the push to have the South African state officially recognize Muslim Personal Law, based upon the classical sharia governing family, marriage, divorce, and inheritance, as the defining feature of the Islamic community.¹

Queer Muslim support groups function at many levels. While members of such activist groups may be small in number, this does not mean their impact is small. Even as they grapple with what a non-patriarchal Islam might be like, activist Muslims who are lesbian,

gay, or transgendered are certain that it can exist. They faithfully assert that it will be a recovery of true Islam, or at least a progressive Islam and join a long tradition of liberation theology centred upon the Quran which has been especially strong in post-Apartheid South Africa.

Reinterpreting religious texts

Muhsin Hendricks of the first Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgendered, Queer and Questioning Muslims (LGBTQ) support group in Cape Town in 1998 was one of the founders of Al-Fitra. The name Al-Fitra, an Arabic term meaning one’s “original and essential nature,” points to the core philosophy of the group. *Fitra* is used in the Quran to describe how God created all things, distinct in their individuality yet making up a harmonious whole. *So set your face toward the moral obligation in a true way, according to the original nature granted by God, upon which God fashioned people, for there is no changing the creation of God! That is the original and steadfast moral obligation, but most of the people do not understand* (Quran, *Surat al-Rum* 30:30). Traditional theologians read such a verse dogmatically, to assert that Islam is the “original and steadfast” religion, *al-din al-qayyim*, which uniquely conforms to the requirements

of human nature that is the same for all people. However, LGBT Muslims read it differently (though just as literally!) to assert that God creates each being with an original nature that cannot be changed, and that the “original and steadfast” religion is to return to God in harmony with one’s inner nature. They hear the Quran affirm this, even if living and worshipping in accord with their inner nature is in contradiction with the surrounding society, as *most of the people do not understand*.

Muhsin serves as spiritual advisor and organizer, saying, “Homosexuality is not just about sex. We have very spiritual people among us. I pray five times a day, read the Quran, fast, and attend mosque regularly.” Along these lines the group employs certain organizational practices of the Muslim Youth Movement (MYM) founded in 1970. It organizes lectures on sexuality and spirituality, weekly *halaqat* or small-group discussions, and *dhikr* sessions of meditative chanting (a Sufi practice that is central to Islamic practice among Cape Town’s Muslims). It also makes full use of the internet to provide spiritual and social counselling while protecting anonymity in an unprecedented manner.

Most LGBT Muslims assert that their sexual orientation and gender identity are essential components of their personality: either an innate quality they were born with, or an unalterable character from childhood before rational cognition. Muhsin affirms that he was born with a same-sex sexual orientation, knew he was different from the age of five, though “was sixteen before I realized they called it gay, and came out of the closet years later, at twenty-nine.” His story confirms a common pattern of a disturbing feeling of difference that sets one apart in childhood long before it can be recognized in concepts, articulated in language, or accepted in one’s heart. For LGBT Muslims like Muhsin, spiritual growth is a process of stripping away the sense of having a “false self” that is imposed by family, society, and religion, in order to free a “true self” through which they can sincerely turn to God.

Coming out

Nur, a member of Al-Fitra, recalls the internal struggle and liberation that accompanied his decision to “come out.” He recalls, “I came out to my mother when I was twenty-eight, which for me was like a rebirth... I was born into my truth, whereas before I was living someone else’s truth, their truth.” Nur’s comment captures a paradox: his search for truth is driven by religious belief yet appears to be in conflict with conventional religious morality. He continues, explaining, “I had in my 24-27 year period a great turmoil within myself, between my homosexuality versus me wanting to be God-fearing, or perceiving myself to be God-fearing.... But before I could sit [my mother] down, I had to sit myself down! In front of the Creator. Not for Islam, not for my family, but for me. For my internal health.”

The Quran rises above conventional Islamic mores and speaks to the existential search for a path toward living sincerely according to one’s own inner disposition: *Say, ‘O Lord, allow me to enter in sincerity and to leave with sincerity, and make me draw close to you with the authority of divine aid. And say, ‘Truth has come and falsehood melts away—truly falsehood is insubstantial!’ We reveal with the Quran that which provides healing and compassion to those who believe, but this only increases the oppressors in loss... Say, ‘Each lives by his own disposition, thus your Lord knows who is guided along a right path* (Quran, *Surat al-Isra* 17:80-84). This is exactly what Nur implied when he spoke of sitting himself down in front of the Creator in sincere honesty. “It’s like looking in the mirror and coming clean—no lies. Truth. I only have one life... I always felt that if I should die or my mother should die, I would never forgive myself if I hadn’t have told her, and come clean with my Creator and with her.”

While some keep this search for a true self hidden out of fear, others face the difficulty of a bewildered family and often hostile community. Muhsin relates that by age twenty-eight, “It was very hard, but the conflict within me was so great that I had to tell them the truth.” Others

come out at a much earlier age. Nafeesa, a transgendered person who was raised as a boy but now considers herself a woman, wears *hijab* to the mosque and prays in the women’s section. She calls herself a typical coloured girl raised in the Cape Flats, but in the body of a boy. She was in denial until fourteen, accepted her sexual attraction to men at sixteen, and came out to her parents as “gay” at eighteen, soon after which she began to wear women’s clothes and changed her self-assessment to transgendered rather than simply gay. “When I was eighteen and coming out my mother just didn’t know how to handle it. She wanted to get me an arranged marriage. I said, ‘Hell no, darling! Over this dead body! I would rather kill myself.’ I’d rather lower my *iman* [faith] and kill myself than do something like that. I said, ‘you wouldn’t like your daughter to be embarrassed, hurt, crushed every second night by her husband who behaves like a *moffie* [an effeminate gay man in Cape Town slang]...or catch her husband in her own wedding dress!’” Not everyone in the support organization is as brash as Nafeesa or as bold as Muhsin; lesbian women, in particular, face hurdles asserting themselves as independent women above and beyond struggling for dignity with their sexual orientation.

Gay Muslim outreach

Al-Fitra Foundation has merged with a separate organization based in Johannesburg, Gay Muslim Outreach, which had been more social in orientation and less spiritual, and has emerged as The Inner Circle, with branches in Cape Town and Johannesburg, and with plans to open a branch in Durban. It joins an international network of queer Muslim support organizations including Al-Fatiha in the USA, Salam Queer Community in Canada, Imaan in the UK, the Yoesuf Foundation in the Netherlands, and Helem in Lebanon. They focus on building confidence, creating support groups, raising consciousness, and encouraging *ijtihad* in the interpretation of religion and law. The Inner Circle believes that being a South African based organization with a Muslim constituency, it is uniquely placed to advance the international debate harnessed by South Africa when it became the first country to safeguard the freedom from discrimination based on sexual orientation in its Bill of Rights. Accordingly, The Inner Circle is an advocate for a minority within minorities along a three-dimensional plane—gay and Muslim, while simultaneously offering the world the “unique South African experience” (www.theinnercircle-za.org).

It is not certain whether lesbian, transgendered, and gay Muslims can help create a more open and accepting atmosphere in Cape Town or wider South Africa. However, they will certainly create for themselves a social niche in which they can practice Islam in ways that grant them dignity. Whether or not they are recognized by other Muslims as equal partners in faith, they will highlight the need for Muslim communities towards placing an ethical focus on sexuality.

Note

1. Abdulkader Tayob, “The Function of Islam in the South African Political Process: defining a community in a nation,” in *Religion and Politics in South Africa: from Apartheid to Democracy*, ed. Tayob and Wolfram Weisse (Munster, New York: Waxmann Verlag, 1999).

Scott Kugle is a postdoctoral fellow at the ISIM and Assistant Professor in the Department of Religion, Swarthmore College. He is currently working on a comparative study of gay, lesbian, and transgendered activists from Muslim minority communities in the European Union, North America, and the Republic of South Africa.

Email: skugle1@swarthmore.edu



© CAPEPRESS.COM

Rape and the Loss of Agency

SANAA MAKHLOUF

Two curiously similar reactions to violence against Muslim women appeared in the summer of 2004, although they originated in markedly different contexts. In Europe the late Dutch filmmaker, Theo van Gogh, released *Submission*, a film written and narrated by Somali born Dutch parliamentarian Ayaan Hirsi Ali. *Submission* narrates the stories of four Muslim women's encounters with different acts of violence.¹ At nearly the same time Saudi Arabian society was shocked by the film of an actual rape of a young Muslim woman. The crime was filmed by the "director's" mobile camera-phone to publicly dishonour the victim and it circulated via the Kingdom's mobile phone network.²

Submission evokes the impression that its primary aim in commenting on acts of violence against Muslim women is to expose the "evil" character of a religious culture that perpetuates and condones these acts, and to, thereby, imply that western culture and values are superior. In Saudi Arabia the societal response to the "reality" rape film was not, as one might expect, to provoke self-reflexivity and criticize that part of itself which produced the crime, but rather to launch a counterattack on the imported "other," the camera phone. This piece of technology was largely accused as being the culprit for infiltrating the traditionally sealed personal spheres and exposing its women to public viewing, thereby bypassing the watchful eyes of the guardians of morality. In response to the shocking crime, the Saudi government reinforced a ban on the sales of camera phones, arguing in a sense that the "evil" that needed to be combated was the imported technology.

Though originating from different situations and seemingly pursuing different ends, both "western" and "eastern" commentary on crimes of violence against Muslim women employed strikingly similar strategies, motifs, and symbols. Grounded in a standard modern rhetoric on rape and crimes of sexual assault against women which views women as victims without any agency, the two fail to address the "criminality" of the crimes. Both look at the "other" as the primary force behind acts of violence and do not search within themselves for culpability or for agency from within the perpetrators. These responses to acts of violence therefore beg the question: To what extent is the discourse on rape part of the problem of violence against women?

Mobilizing cyberspace

Two Saudi and heavily Wahhabi toned websites, "shaytan link," posted on *Islamweb* (*al-Shabakah al-islamiyyah*), and *Hamlat al-miliyun didd al-radhila* ("The Campaign of the One Million against Vice"), posted on the youth targeting *Nabd al-Wafa'* (Heartbeat of Loyalty), have expressly adopted the cause of "the protection of Saudi society." More to the point, they warn about how the camera phone, which they argue intrudes into the private sphere of the female domain, is used as a

The dominant narrative dealing with crimes of violence against Muslim women in both the Europe and the Middle East employs strikingly similar strategies, motifs, and symbols, especially when it comes to the issue of rape. Such similarities beg the question: to what extent is the discourse on rape part of the problem of acts of violence against women?

"whisperings" of her mobile caller, suitably called "shaytan-link" ("devil-link"), about a "world out there" without fully realizing its danger. She is lured by his promises into a man's den where he gorily crushes her shell.³ In this way, the would-be victims are stereotyped as innocent beings who naively succumb to the guiles and promises of love and agree to leave their protective shells to meet the very demons who will violate their virtue.

On its campaign against "vice" page, *Nabd al-Wafa'* presents the picture of the culprit, the camera phone, and displays a recording of an excited exchange between young males talking about their latest exploits which include sending and receiving photos of stealthily photographed women, and sexually explicit clips. The web-page offers tapes of a sermon recorded by Wahhabi Shaykh al-Munajjid against this vice (which can be obtained for one riyal through the site), banners expounding virtue, an online chat-group that exchanges moral lessons, and a variety of spam messages that anti-mobile zealots may send out in order to clog the inboxes of mobiles spreading the message that condemns the free exchange of words and images between men and women.⁴ The messages refer to a fatwa (available on the same website) which states that men or women who have "foreign" (i.e., unrelated) persons of the opposite sex listed on their mobile address book and communicate with them are committing a haram (forbidden) act (since their "virtual" clandestine meeting may end in illicit sexual encounters).

Virtual public and private space

Cyberspace, as represented by these websites, is both public and private. It provides "virtual" *khalwah* (secluded space), where men and women can meet in encounters which are otherwise forbidden. Yet, the same space is also considered by Wahhabi religious leaders as "public" space. The implication being that this space must be surveyed and guarded so that virtuous Muslims, male or female, are not tempted to break the laws of *hayaa'* (modesty) through their virtual travelling on the global communication networks. Innocent guileless Muslim women should not be left free to move/travel in cyberspace without a *mahram* (male consort). Those who travel unattended, even virtually, are asking for trouble and must have a licentious intent. The victim of sexual assault is thereby complicit in the crime against her. Similarly, the voice that narrates the story of the raped girl in *Submission* contains the suggestion that she is the not completely unwilling victim of her rapist's sexual advances.

In public debates the two lifestyles, "Middle Eastern" and "Western," are presented as binary opposites of virtue and vice. The possibility that crimes of sexual assault could originate from one's own society or culture is, thereby, safely excluded.

Loss of agency

Searching through the *fatawa* and *is-tisharat* (consultations)-sections of the above website a coherent and standardized discourse on rape and violence against women emerges. The Islamic cyber-discourse which denounces crimes of violence against women by putting the main blame, not on the actual perpetrator, but on the technological instrument used to broadcast it, has curious points of contact and similarity with its western counterpart, as represented by *Submission*. Both are characterized by the shift of agency away from the male assaulter and by its substitution through other forces. On *Nabd al-Wafa'* the demonized camera phone is itself both the medium of disclosing the assault and the evil force behind it. And while the voice-over by the now notorious Hirshi Ali in *Submission* tells of the tragic abuse of (certain) women by (certain) men, the message is conveyed that rape and sexual assault "happen" through some abstract agency called "evil." If the culprit is in one case a religion, here, Islam, or, in the other, a technological gadget, here, a mobile phone, in neither case are the actual perpetrators of the act called to responsibility and condemned outright. Even seemingly good-willed attempts to understand and to explain such violence seek answers only in the women. They find fault with their way of dressing, their voice, their intrusion into public space. All insinuate, thereby, that the victims were "asking for it."

The standard discourse on rape treats sexual acts of violence almost exclusively as a gender issue. In the cyber debates surrounding the Saudi Arabia case, men are more condemned for giving in to the frivolities of a carefree "western lifestyle" and forgetting the sharia than for instigating acts of violence. One posting on *Nabd al-Wafa'* shows a video clip that reminds a youth of death and depicts graphic scenes of "his" burial interspersed with flashbacks of a wasted life spent in typical "western-style" playing billiards and socializing with friends.⁵ The lyrics that accompany the images ask him to repent from a life of waste before death visits him. In the final scene, reminiscent of *Submission*, though with different intent, the young man, now dressed in traditional Saudi dress, repentantly stands on a prayer carpet raising his hands in supplication.

The male's vice thus construed consists in having succumbed to the temptations of a western lifestyle whose permissiveness and frivolity implicitly identify it as the life of the sinful "other" which invites rape and sexual assault. In public debates the two lifestyles, "Middle Eastern" and "Western," are presented as binary opposites of virtue and vice. The possibility that crimes of sexual assault could originate from one's own society or culture is, thereby, safely excluded. Sexual violence is effectively confined and exiled, that is, placed beyond a cultural divide. And, as if that is not far and safe enough, another barrier is erected, the barrier of old age. Older married men, well established in the society, are presented as being well beyond committing such crimes. The problem, then, is presented as one of decadent youth culture.

Finally, the very character of the assault, that is, its criminality, is hardly ever dealt with. The fact that there is a crime committed, no matter what, and that the perpetrators could be held responsible for it as they would be for crimes of theft or murder does not seem to enter into the account. None of the religious voices consulted on these websites search in the men for motives for a calculated act of aggression. Even though the men who committed the above rape were punished by law and received jail sentences, the discourse remains centred around the corruptive forces of western technology. The men are guilty of having forgotten Allah, or not having protected themselves sufficiently against temptation by marrying. The guilt is not located within the agent of the crime, just as in the narrative rhetoric of *Submission* it is displaced. Curiously, the discourse on rape focuses on the women and remains fixated on them.

Opaque transparency

The traditional Islamic juristic understanding which defines rape as a crime of assault and banditry, i.e. one that "relies on terror and the helplessness of its victim to achieve its illegal objective," is completely absent from the contemporary discourse on rape.⁶ Muslim jurists have almost all recognized certain forms of sexual assault as "crimes of terror" or "forms of terrorism," some even arguing that the crime of rape "deserves the worst possible penalty" holding that "those who use threat of harm or terrorize their victims in order to commit rape are bandits as well," thus unequivocally defining crimes of sexual assault as perpetrated by male agent(s) that reflect on his/their character.

Modern Islamic discourse addresses crimes of rape and sexual assault almost exclusively on a "moral" level. Its distinctive moralizing tone suggests that matters could be resolved if only lessons are learnt. It advises young men to seek the virtuous life in marriage, to resist the temptations of western lifestyle, and to turn to their faith; while girls must learn to act in ways that do not expose them to assault; they must don the veil, walk and talk modestly, and preferably, stay at home. If they deviate from the proper code of behaviour then, they are warned, they finally will have to pay the price. The moral battle against imported vice can be won only if youth abide by "virtuous life" guidelines. The western discourse of *Submission* is also driven by moralizing idealism: Islam is "bad" for women and therefore, violence against them could disappear, if Muslim women (men as well?) were to only forsake their dark faith and take a western enlightened stance.

This modern discourse does not allow any real insights to the growing prevalence of such gendered violence. How should that be possible, when they are not even looked upon as crimes of intent with full agency ascribed to those who perpetrate them? Whether issuing from "Western" or "Islamic" sources, it is lacking in depth, or in any real concern. It is as if this way of dealing with violent acts of undressing and assault is mainly motivated by the need to re-cover as quickly as possible, instead of truly opening the matter in a self-reflexive manner.

Sanaa Makhoul is Writing and Research Instructor in the Department of English and Comparative Literature at the American University in Cairo.
Email: sanaly@aucegypt.edu

A driver in Saudi Arabia plays a sex clip on his mobile phone. Riyadh, 2004.

PHOTO BY PATRICK BAZ. © AFP, 2004

Notes

1. For a more detailed analysis of this film and the cultural debate it triggered see Moors, "Submission," *ISIM Review*, no. 15 (Spring 2005).
2. "Saudi crackdown on camera phones," *BBC News* 20 July 2004; "Jail for Saudi cameraphone rapes," *BBC News* 7 Jan. 2005, <http://www.newsbbc.co.uk>
3. *Shaytan link*, <http://www.islamweb.net/flash/r1.swf>
4. *Nabd al-wafa'*, <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/Nabd-alwafa/message/3123>
5. "Farshi al-turab," (My bedspread is the earth), lyrics by Ahmad al-Kandari, sung by Meshary al-Rada posted by Best Life on 15 Nov. 2004, <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/Nabd-alwafa/message/3095>
6. See Khaled Abou El Fadl, *Rebellion and Violence in Islamic Law* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 253, 260, 337.

Sexual Torture Rendering, Practices, Manuals

GARAY MENICUCCI

In May 2001, in a case that gained international attention, Egyptian police rounded up dozens of men suspected of homosexual activity. According to a Human Rights Watch report, suspects were “tortured with electroshock on the limbs, genitals, or tongue. Guards encouraged other prisoners to rape suspected homosexuals.”¹ This case

was widely treated as an isolated incident until the April 2004 revelations of the sexual abuse of Iraqi prisoners in Abu Ghraib. It became apparent that a sub terra network of international state actors and security agencies that deploys sexual torture against Arab and Muslim detainees as a routine psychological technique intended to extract information or to shame prisoners in a manner that manipulates perceived notions of authentic Arab/Muslim masculine identity, undeniably exists.

The US has played a key role dating back as early as 1993 in rounding up suspected members of Islamic underground groups and “rendering” them to countries where torture is commonly practised and less scrutinized than in the US. Moreover, in 2002 the *Washington Post* alleged, “in recent years, US agents, working with Egyptian intelligence and local authorities in Africa, Central Asia, and the Balkans, have sent dozens of suspected Islamic extremists to Cairo or taken them to the United States.”² The US does not act alone. Both the US and Israel have a long history of covert third-country abduction of suspects—the Israeli practice dating back to the abduction of Nazis like Adolf Eichmann and then gaining routine momentum after its invasion of Lebanon in 1982. In the post-9/11 US-led “war on terror,” the most common destinations for “rendered” prisoners have been Egypt, Jordan, and, more surprisingly, Syria.³

Patterns of torture

Interrogators of the Israeli General Security Services, known as “Shin Bet,” have long employed sexual torture both against Palestinians detained in the Occupied Territories as well as in secret prisons like the notorious 1391 interrogation centre whose existence became known in 2003. The practice of sexual torture may even date as far back as the beginning of the Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza in 1967. Sexual torture was thought to be an effective method of coercing Arab prisoners into divulging information about others and creating collaborators who would be so shamed by their sexual violation that they would not reveal their torture—even to intimates. In actual fact, the use of rape has not served its primary function of extracting information and shaming the detainee. In the end, it has been the Israeli state that has been shamed and not the victims of sexual torture.

The Israeli media focus on sexual torture began in 2003 when a former Lebanese Amal leader, Mustafa Dirani, brought a civil court suit against his torturers, in particular, the especially sadistic man known only as “George.” Dirani was part of a group of Lebanese and Palestinian prisoners that Israel exchanged at the end of January 2004 for an Israeli businessman being held captive in Lebanon and the remains of three Israeli soldiers who had died in Lebanon during or after Israeli military incursions. Dirani was kidnapped in 1994 from his home in the Lebanese Beqaa Valley by a special Israeli commando force and then brought to Israel where he remained in the now notorious secret prison until the 2004 prisoner exchange. He was never charged with any crime and never brought to trial. Israeli intelligence presumed that Dirani, who was the head of Amal intelligence in 1986, knew the whereabouts of a downed Israeli pilot, Ron Arad. It was thought that Arad was captured and that Dirani had ordered his transfer to Iran. Although Israeli security sources denied that Dirani was of any intelligence value in the

A sub terra network of international state actors and security agencies deploy sexual torture against Arab and Muslim detainees. Such methods are intended to extract information, enlist informants, or shame prisoners in a manner that manipulates perceived notions of authentic Arab/Muslim masculine identity.

Ron Arad disappearance, he continued to be held while the Arad family launched a multi-million dollar media campaign designed to tie Dirani to the fate of their son.⁴

With the exception of the Lebanese press, hardly any international media noted the Dirani torture allegations. Yet a Tel Aviv court appearance by

Dirani on 27 January 2004 became an Israeli media sensation when the presiding judge refused to put a halt to an open hearing on the complaint as requested by the Israeli government. The Dirani sexual torture allegations gave a rare public glimpse into the internal conflicts within the Shin Bet over the use of sexual torture and provided rare description of the agents who were forced to perpetrate, witness, or record the acts of torture. With the Dirani torture allegations out in the open, the Israeli media tried to explain to its own public how Israeli soldiers could engage in humiliating acts of sexual torture.

The Dirani sexual torture case demonstrates in dramatic fashion that the ultimate responsibility for ordering torture in the first place goes straight to the highest levels of the Israeli government. Indeed Shin Bet “is accountable directly and exclusively to the office of the Israeli prime minister.”⁵ Although Israeli human rights groups have stated that the Dirani case is the first in which there are clear allegations of male rape and sodomy as specific forms of torture, the testimonies of other prisoners detained in 1391 indicate a long-standing pattern, possibly dating back several decades.

From facility 1391 to Abu Ghraib

The February 2004 Lebanese-Israeli prisoner exchange drew attention to both the pervasive and systematic use of sexual torture and sexual humiliation in Israeli prisons, and to a system of region-wide collaboration in meeting out torture. Former inmates of Israeli prisons made immediate connections to Abu Ghraib in Iraq and noted how the American torture methods were strikingly similar to Israeli methods.⁶ Besides the anecdotal stories of ex-prisoners held in Israeli detention centres, there is prima facie evidence of collaborative links between American and Israeli interrogators in Afghanistan, Guantanamo Bay, and Iraq.⁷ Seymour Hersh’s disgruntled Pentagon and intelligence sources have spoken about an elaborate American-Israeli secret programme to mount a counter-insurgency campaign in Iraq that included tactics of interrogation and cultivating informants: “According to American and Israeli military and intelligence officials, Israeli commandos and intelligence units have worked closely with their American counterparts at the Special Forces training base at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, and in Israel to help them prepare for operations in Iraq. Israeli commandos were expected to serve as ad hoc advisers—again, in secret—when full-field operations began.”⁸

As with the case of “George” in the Dirani torture case, Pentagon and Bush administration officials have sought to limit investigations of torture in Iraq to only one facility, Abu Ghraib, and to only implicate low-ranking soldiers in an effort to portray the evidence of torture in Abu Ghraib and elsewhere as aberrant, not systematic, and carried out by rogue untrained enlistees. The highest ranking US officer to be implicated in the Abu Ghraib scandal was Brigadier General Janis Karpinski, commander of the National Guard unit that ran the prison. Initially, rather than take the fall for higher officials, Karpinski began timidly implicating others in the torture scandal before she finally went silent. She tried to insinuate that Israelis were the lead interrogators for Iraqi high security prisoners and that Israelis were the main consultants on the ground for specific methods of torture that should be deployed to elicit useable information. After resigning her post, she told the BBC

that she had personally witnessed Israelis interrogating Iraqi prisoners at a secret US facility in Baghdad.⁹ Her allegations were widely covered in the Arab media, but not covered at all in the US.

Robert Fisk of *The Independent* has determined that some interrogators in Iraqi prisons were working for “at least one company with extensive military and commercial ties with Israel.” He further asserts, “We know the Pentagon asked Israel for its ‘Rules of Engagement’ in the occupied West Bank and Gaza.” Israeli officers briefed their US counterparts and, “in January and February of 2003, Israeli and American troops trained together in southern Israel’s Negev desert.”¹⁰ What distinguishes the Abu Ghraib scandal from the Dirani case is the sheer volume of documentary material and evidence that demonstrates the systematization of torture at Abu Ghraib and provides excruciating details of the fixation on sexual torture.

Sexual torture and legitimizing texts

An integral part of the public discourse on the revelations of torture at Abu Ghraib has centred on the motivations for inflicting sexual torture on the Iraqi victims. The very act of public disclosure of sexual torture generated a running Orientalist commentary on what the Abu Ghraib torture revealed about Arab male sexuality in general. The photographs of the Abu Ghraib prisoners released on the Internet depicted male prisoners forced to masturbate in a group and also a naked prisoner who appeared to have been forced into performing oral sex on another naked prisoner. Prisoners were forced to perform such acts in front of women guards and every sexually degrading act was photographed. The torturers were trained to regard homosexual acts such as sodomy and male-to-male oral sex as particularly effective forms of torture for Arabs because of the perceived essential homophobia of Arab culture. Even critics of the torture such as Seymour Hersh, found Middle East “experts” to verify that “homosexual acts are against Islamic law” and that “it is humiliating for men to be naked in front of other men.”¹¹

At the centre of the US Army psych training programme at Fort Bragg, North Carolina for interrogators in Iraq, Afghanistan, and elsewhere is the quintessential Orientalist text, *The Arab Mind*, by Raphael Patai. Originally published in 1973, the book has witnessed a renaissance of mass distribution since 9/11. *The Arab Mind* was rapidly reissued by Patai’s estate in 2002 with a new preface by US Army Col. Norvell B. De Atkine who trained officers for the war in Iraq at Fort Bragg, North Carolina and who remarks on the utility of the book as a kind of psychology manual. Patai purports that Arab culture has an essential homophobic character and also signifies that public exposure of Arab male masturbation will emasculate the person who is identified with the act since “masturbation is far more shameful than visiting prostitutes. Whoever masturbates, however, evinces his inability to perform the active sex act, and thus exposes himself to contempt.”¹² It is not surprising that if *The Arab Mind* has been used as a basic text for US Army interrogators that prisoners in Abu Ghraib ended up being raped, forced to perform oral sex, and made to masturbate in groups.

Seymour Hersh contends that the US government policymakers in the Pentagon and the White House who advocated going to war in Iraq very literally applied the lessons of *The Arab Mind* to specific practical strategies in prosecuting the war and even in the more mundane matter of the daily torture of prisoners for, “It was thought that some prisoners would do anything—including spying on their associates—to avoid dissemination of the shameful photos to family and friends.” Nevertheless, as Hersh points out, the strategy was far from effective

as “the insurgency continued to grow.” It has clearly not proven to be a reliable method of social control nor has it been effective in breaking social solidarity or yielding “serviceable intelligence.” Sexual torture, far from serving as a means by which to “shame” the victims, has served as a way of exposing the transnational networks of torture that operate in gross violation of every canon of international law.

Notes

1. In a Time of Torture: The Assault on Justice in Egypt’s Crackdown on Homosexual Conduct (New York: Human Rights Watch, 2003), 6.
2. Rajiv Chandrasekaran and Peter Finn, “U.S. Behind Secret Transfer of Terror Suspects,” Washington Post Foreign Service, 11 March 2002, A01.
3. Jane Mayer, “Outsourcing of Torture: The Secret History of America’s ‘Extraordinary Rendition’ Program,” New Yorker, Fact, 7 Feb. 2005.
4. “Lawyer: Obeid, Dirani Not Linked to Arad,” Jerusalem Post, 9 November 2003.
5. Lisa Hajjar, *Courting Conflict: The Israeli Military Court System in the West Bank and Gaza* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), 69.
6. Larry Johnson, “A Severe Torture, Only This Was in Lebanon: Past Prisoner Says Israelis Used Similar Techniques,” Seattle Post-Intelligencer, 18 May 2004, A5.
7. See Craig Pyes and Mark Mazzetti, “U.S. Probing Alleged Abuse of Afghans,” Los Angeles Times, 21 September 2004, A1, A8, A9.
8. Seymour Hersh, *Chain of Command: The Road from 9/11 to Abu Ghraib* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers Inc., 2004), 279–80.
9. “Israeli Interrogators ‘in Iraq,’” BBC World News, 3 July 2004.
10. Robert Fisk, “The Things Bush Didn’t Mention in His Speech; The Re-Writing of Iraqi History is Now Going on at Supersonic Speed,” *Independent*, 26 May 2004.
11. Hersh, 23–24.
12. *Ibid.*, 144.

Garay Menicucci is Assistant Director of the Center for Middle East Studies, University of California, Santa Barbara.

Members of Amnesty International stage a protest against mistreatment of prisoners at Abu Ghraib, Barcelona, 28 April 2005.

PHOTO BY ALBERT GEA, © REUTERS, 2005

Ethnicity and Success in Higher Education

TARIQ MODOOD

A manifestation of the success of non-white ethnic groups in the UK is their high level of entry into higher education. Up to the 1990s Britain had one of the lowest rates of participation in higher education amongst industrialized and industrializing countries. It is still relatively low and is seen by the government to be a weakness in the country's long-term economic position, especially in the increasing global

competition with East Asia and India. As a result, Tony Blair—whose 1997 election slogan, “Education, education, education!” has been repeated in the 2005 contest—set himself the target of getting 50% of young people into higher education by the age of 30.

An extraordinary situation has since emerged whereby the white majority are far from achieving the government target but all the minority groups, with the exception of two, have very nearly achieved or greatly exceed the target. Indeed ethnic minorities now represent almost one in six of non-overseas undergraduates in England, almost double their share of the population. Table 1 shows the state of play by ethnicity. In the year, 2001-2002, the likelihood of whites entering higher education was only 38 percent, a figure not just much lower than that of the ethnic minorities taken together, but also lower than every single minority group. Sometimes it was not much lower—as compared to Bangladeshis and Black Caribbeans—yet in comparison to Black Africans and Indians, for example, it was nearly half as low. This is not to mention the “Asian Other,” a term which includes disparate groups such as Sri Lankans, Vietnamese, and Malaysians.

T A B L E 1

**Higher Education Initial Participation Rates (HEIPRs) ¹
For England, full time and part time, 2001-02**

Ethnic Group	Male	Female	All
White	34	41	38
All minority ethnic groups	55	58	56
Black Caribbean	36	52	45
Black African	71	75	73
Black Other	56	72	64
Indian	70	72	71
Pakistani	54	44	49
Bangladeshi	43	33	39
Chinese	47	50	49
Asian Other	74	94	83
Mixed ethnic	35	44	40
All (known ethnicity)	37	43	40

The high participation of ethnic minority students in higher education represents a real achievement for ethnic minority families. However, there exist very significant differences between minority groups. Additionally, ethnic minorities are less likely than whites to enter the more prestigious universities, are more likely to drop out, and if they last the course, they are less likely to get a high grade degree (though all these things are less true of the Indians and the Chinese than of the other groups). Moreover, black groups are more likely to be part-time or mature students—conditions that do not produce the kind of high-flying careers that some associate with graduate status. Moreover, ethnic minorities are very unevenly distributed across subjects. They are disproportionately in medicine and health related subjects, law and business, engineering and ICT, but are under-represented in the pure sciences and the humanities. Therefore only a few universities and a handful of disciplines can truly claim to be multi-ethnic.

Higher education is a major success story for ethnic minorities in Britain, a little known fact to most scholars in Britain and elsewhere. Since 1990 when university entry data began to record ethnicity the success of minorities has been apparent. Despite evidence to the contrary, some sociological analyses persist in the assumption that non-whiteness (the “race” factor) is equated with educational underachievement.

This does not mean that ethnic minorities are necessarily in the less competitive subjects and institutions. Indeed, most minorities, male and female, are over-represented, sometimes significantly, in the most competitive subject, medicine, and in other vocational disciplines that produce higher earnings than more “pure” subjects, but again this is most true for Indians and Chinese and least true for Caribbeans.

The geographical location of ethnic minority settlements, as well as personal choices, means that the minorities are mainly in the big city universities. Indeed, more than a third of all higher education students in the London area are not white. They are well represented in its world class institutions—such as the LSE, Imperial, UCL, London medical schools—but are especially concentrated in the less prestigious, post-1992 universities. Some of the latter, such as the University of East London, London Metropolitan University, and University of Westminster, in fact now have a majority of non-white students.

The causes of such disparities are due to many factors including students' pre-entry attainment levels, education choices at 16 (do you stay on in school? do you follow an academic or a training pathway?), subject preferences, geographical distribution, and aspirations are all key issues. I would just like to discuss two factors, socio-economic class, and institutional filtering.

Class

Socio-economic class is a strong factor in determining who gets where; for the white population it is a strong predictor of educational outcomes. For example, two-thirds of white students come from white collar backgrounds. But class does not always work in the same way for ethnic minorities. Two-thirds of Pakistani and Bangladeshi students (nearly all of whom are from Muslim families) come from homes where the parents are either employed in manual work or are unemployed. One consequence of this is that while, as Table 1 shows, Pakistanis and Bangladeshis are among the less successful of ethnic minority groups (and indeed are disproportionately in the less selective institutions and subjects) they are doing much better than their white working class peers, some of whom are not likely to be in university at all.

Institutional bias

Nevertheless, when all the main factors are controlled for, there has been shown to be a bias against ethnic minorities in the pre-1992 universities and in their favour in the new universities. Table 2 shows the probability of an offer to candidates with identical attainment scores, type of school background, age, gender, parental occupation, and applying to the same course in the same type of institution. It reveals that even when all these things are controlled for there are ethnic biases in the likelihood of a university offering a place to a candidate. These biases vary across groups and are radically different across universities.

If we divide Britain's hundred-plus universities into those that have always been universities (“old universities”) and those that were polytechnics until 1992 (“new universities,” which are less wealthy and less selective than the old), we see that in the former, whites are more likely to get an offer than other identical candidates. For example, while a white student has a 75 per cent chance of an invitation to study, a Pakistani candidate, identical in every way, has only a 57 per cent chance of an offer. In the new universities, however, ethnic minorities are actually preferred though the scale of bias is less.

T A B L E 2

Institutional "Bias" ² RATES OF SUCCESS/UNIVERSITIES' PECKING ORDER	
Old universities	New universities
Most preferred: Whites (0.75)*	Most preferred: Indians (0.85) Chinese (0.83) Bangladeshis (0.82)
Less preferred: Chinese (0.68) Black Caribbeans (0.65)	Less preferred: Pakistanis (0.77) Black Africans (0.76) Black Caribbeans (0.75) Whites (0.73)
Least preferred: Indian (0.58) Bangladeshis (0.57) Black Africans (0.57) Pakistanis (0.57)	

PROBABILITY OF INITIAL OFFER TO IDENTICAL CANDIDATES FOR EQUIVALENT COURSES

Interestingly, qualitative studies such as the Leverhulme Migration and Ethnicity Research Programme project on Gender, Social Capital and Differential Outcomes 3 suggest that for many young Asians Islam is appealed to—both by girls and boys—as a source of educational aspirations and the motivation to improve oneself and lead a disciplined, responsible life. It is particularly used by girls to justify and negotiate educational and career opportunities with conservative parents, often of rural backgrounds with little knowledge of the scriptures; and by boys to distance themselves from the temptations of street youth culture, a primary obstacle to an academic pathway. Those boys that do not follow academic paths are not less but more likely to be assimilated into white working class lifestyles.

Hence, we must be careful in making any generalizations about Islam being a religion of a new European underclass. In Britain, at least, it is finely poised between a religion of a ghetto and a religion of social mobility—a kind of "Protestant ethic"—capable of sustaining the hope and discipline that the taking up of opportunities requires.

Notes

1. Source: H. Connor, C. Tyers, T. Modood, and J. Hillage, *Why the Difference? A closer look at higher education minority ethnic students and graduates*, DfES Research Report RR552, 2004, www.dfes.gov.uk/research/data/uploadfiles/RB552.pdf.
2. M. Shiner and T. Modood, "Help or Hindrance? Higher Education and the Route to Ethnic Equality," *British Journal of Sociology of Education* 23, no. 2 (June 2002): 209–32.
3. See <http://www.bris.ac.uk/Depts/Sociology/leverhulme>.

Tariq Modood, University of Bristol, UK, is the author of *Multicultural Politics: Racism, Ethnicity and Muslims in Britain* (Univ. of Minnesota Press, 2005).
Email: t.modood@bristol.ac.uk

It is difficult to explain these biases and the processes by which they occur. Racism against a phenotype or "colour" does not explain them. Firstly, most higher education offers do not involve face-to-face interviews; application forms do not contain photographs of candidates. Secondly, there is no suggestion that people of a certain appearance or "race" are equally (dis)preferred, for why should the black African suffer a lesser rate of success than the black Caribbean? Research in relation to medical schools has suggested that the strongest correlation with offers is a "non-European" surname. The most plausible hypothesis, then, is that some selectors in old universities more critically scrutinize forms, which suggest that the candidate is "ethnic," including the presence of non-European surnames. They persuade themselves that such candidates are not good enough to be offered a place or need to demonstrate a higher performance in school examinations before they can be admitted. This would explain why South Asians and Africans suffer a larger penalty than the Caribbeans, who largely have "Anglo-Saxon" names.

It is quite possible that such assumptions are unconscious, but they do seem to exist more in some institutions than others. They seem to be reflective of the culture of more elite institutions, where the idea of maintaining standards and pursuing excellence might itself be the source of its own undoing. The culture of selecting the best must sometimes be perverted by a tendency to make ethnic minority candidates more rigorously demonstrate that they have the necessary quality to enter "excellent" institutions. It seems obvious that racial discrimination is incompatible with meritocratic selection; but negative assumptions about ethnic minorities may be brought into play precisely by those who see themselves as defending standards.

The post-1992 universities are much more likely to have developed a different culture, one in which issues of access and equity, awareness about the possibility of bias and the willingness to take remedial action sit alongside meritocratic concerns. That, together with their less competitive position, may be a factor in their different admissions profile. In any case, British universities clearly need to review their methods of selection to identify and eliminate the sources of biases.

It should be noted that about a third of non-whites in the UK are Muslim (though most Middle Easterners identify themselves as white). About two-thirds of Muslims are of South Asian origin, mostly Pakistanis. By most socio-economic measures Asian Muslims are amongst the most disadvantaged of the ethnic minorities. For example, over 60 per cent of Pakistani and Bangladeshi households are in poverty—compared to 20 per cent of whites—and have the highest proportions of school leavers without any qualifications. Even that solid proportion of these two groups that are entering higher education are most likely to be in the less resourced institutions. Nevertheless, what the above analysis shows is that there is and continues to be a large-scale familial and personal investment in education and a determination to achieve social mobility by means of higher education.

ADVERTISEMENT



McGill University Institute of Islamic Studies Canada Research Chair in Islamic Studies

The Institute of Islamic Studies, McGill University, seeks to fill a Canada Research Chair (Tier 1) in Islamic Studies, to be held in conjunction with a tenured professorship at the Institute of Islamic Studies. Starting date: August 1, 2006. The term of the Canada Research Chair (Tier 1) is seven years, and is renewable. (For more information on the Canada Research Chair Program, go to: <http://www.chairs.gc.ca>).

Applications and nominations of candidates in all fields within Islamic Studies are welcome. However, the Institute has particular needs in the following areas: Modern and Contemporary Islam; History of Islamic Science and Medicine; Qur'anic Studies and Hadith; Islamic Art and Architecture; Sufism; Islam in Southeast Asia. The successful candidate will be a senior scholar with a distinguished record of research and teaching and with a compelling program of future research. Interested candidates should submit a letter of application detailing current and future research plans, as well as a complete CV, to Robert Wisnovsky, Director, Institute of Islamic Studies, McGill University, 3485 McTavish St., Montreal, Quebec, H3A 1Y1 Canada. Nominations and informal inquiries may be directed to Professor Wisnovsky at (514) 398-6077 and robert.wisnovsky@mcgill.ca. **Application deadline: September 23, 2005.**

McGill University is committed to the principles of employment equity.

Buried Alive

Multiculturalism in Germany

SCHIRIN AMIR-MOAZAMI

Since the murder of the Dutch filmmaker Theo van Gogh, one gets the impression that German public opinion has finally found a solution to all its problems generated by the enduring settlement of people from “different cultures,” i.e. “integration” instead of “multiculturalism.” It is now argued, that Germany should learn its lessons from the experiences of the Netherlands: stop being as “naïve,” and face the problems unavoidably generated by its immigrants. At the heart of this “anti-multiculturalist mood” are Muslims and, more specifically, publicly visible Muslims, whose forms of life and religious practices are often considered contradictory to the normative foundations of western liberal democracies. These foundations are preferably labeled as being derived from a “Christian-occidental” heritage—a reference that is predominantly used in counter-conceptual terms to distinguish between “German” and “Muslim” cultures. This discourse is interestingly not only produced by rightwing or conservative circles, but seems to emerge from other diverse political and intellectual scopes as well.

The “model” rhetoric

The discourse on the failure of multiculturalism implies blame for other countries that have promoted it in the past, in that particular case, The Netherlands, for its construction of multicultural policies, frequently categorized as the “Dutch model.” Such labels reflect a common tendency within European rhetoric to describe immigration policies of other countries as “models.” This practice is particularly widespread in France, where the rejection of the so-called “Anglo-Saxon” model of multiculturalism often serves as an opportunity to restore the Republican ideal.¹

A closer examination of various national policies reveals, however, a more complex picture. The so-called “Anglo-Saxon” model is by no means a one-dimensional and linear way of simply promoting group rights, unanimously shared by all “Anglo-Saxon” societies.² The Netherlands model, which has recently been criticized the most, actually reflects a diversified approach to dealing with growing religious and cultural plurality. Indeed multiculturalism itself, entrenched with logics of protecting cultural differences, had come under pressure in Europe long before the murder of Van Gogh.

Contrary to the French case, the German critique of diverse models is not even based on a clear-cut conceptualization of a “counter-model” that would serve as a remedy. The rhetoric that “everything would be fine, if just the ‘Dutch model’ were not adopted” is de-legitimized by the simple fact that German politicians had not adopted the Dutch model in the first place. They had not even attempted to construct a coherent strategy of dealing with the effects of post war immigration.

What is German multiculturalism?

This brings us to the second unrealistic dimension of the current rhetoric, i.e. the assumption that Germany had practised, or even institutionalized multicultural politics, which it should now give up as soon as possible. A brief survey of the German experience shows that notions of multiculturalism were taken up in the early 1990s by a small number of scholars and politicians as a counter-discourse to the dominant conception of (German) culture as a homogeneous entity.³ Their concepts of multiculturalism focused on the modalities of citizenship within the framework of the restrictive citizenship tradition in Germany. They called for a change in ethnically defined concepts of nationhood and for a substantial reform of the citizenship law. The major goal was thus to emphasize that Germany had turned into a country of immigration,

Recent discussions in Germany around modes of dealing with the growing cultural-religious plurality reveal a widespread consensus that the so-called Dutch “model of multiculturalism” is a complete failure. However further examination reveals that this current backlash against multiculturalism is more of a symptom for a widely held discomfort caused by the realization that Islam has become an integral part of German society.

hence, into a de facto multicultural society, a reality that most conservative politicians still tend to deny today.

Apart from probably pushing forward the reform of the citizenship law of 1999 their calls went, mainly, unheeded. They were unable to effect much noticeable change in policies governing cultural and religious plurality. Moreover, the recognition that cultural and religious plurality would unavoid-

ably affect the national self-understanding and, in the longer run, also transform the normative premises of the “recipient societies” was basically absent from these approaches. Some authors even contributed to the shaping of a folkloristic version of multiculturalism, condensed into the term *multikulti*. The notion *multikulti*, which has become a part of everyday German speech, occasionally celebrated compatible cultural differences, and promoted a folkloristic co-existence of Germans and their *Ausländer* (foreigners). However, neither substantial changes on the institutional level nor the conflictual character of cultural-religious plurality were envisaged in the original *multikulti* notion, which was referred to in the very-telling formulation, the “Döner-principle.” As Mark Terkessidis puts it “only those differences were recognized, which could enrich the national culture. All other cultural differences—especially those, which derived from the wider context of Islamic religion—were considered as expressions of a narrow-minded, potentially violent, “pre-modern” tradition, which first should be tamed by normative Westernness, in order to become finally a private life-style like one’s own culture. Put differently: there is a good difference, which is embodied in the Döner-principle, and a bad one, which is expressed through the headscarf.”⁴ This perception indicates the general problems encountered by most applied forms of multiculturalism. While trying to cope with the articulation of cultural or religious particularities, multiculturalists tend to domesticate differences by managing a consensus based on secular norms. Specific to the German context is, however, the lack of any serious analysis of the problematic implications of top-down multiculturalism, preceding the final current rejection of the concept.

Muslims turn into active citizens

Muslims in Germany have for quite a long time pragmatically settled within the *multikulti* framework as *Ausländer*. Their self-ascription as *Ausländer*, or as Turks, is still virulent amongst second and third generation Muslims.⁵ This has, however, not prevented them from quietly establishing structured forms of religious life. Moreover, the newer trend to assert their identity as Muslims will probably be further reinforced by the growing number of German-born Muslims, even if these have, to a certain degree, internalized the public perception as outsiders. Their comparatively high degree of social power and competence such as networking and interacting with the rest of society, familiarity with the legal and political tools, and, especially, a mastery of the German language, enables the young generation of Muslims to raise these demands by referring to basic principles and by using the structures provided by the state under the rule of law. The increasing demand by Muslims to be publicly represented has definitely challenged the idea of a “friendly” coexistence between the “abstract, antiseptic Other” and members of a pre-established consensus, as implied in the German *multikulti* version.⁶ Consequently, the questioning of certain norms—ranging from food regulations in educational institutions to a reconsideration of gender mixing—has turned Muslims into “real Others,” i.e. very concrete citizens. In fact, it seems to be precisely this process which has encouraged wide parts of the public opinion to conceive of “multiculturalism” as a failure, as witnessed by the increasing protest

against headscarves, or the consistent blaming of certain Muslim organizations for their hostility to the constitutional order.

It is important to note that the relatively advanced institutionalization of Islam is the result of the historically shaped close relationship between the Church and the State in Germany, and not the result of any structured attempts to institutionalize multiculturalism.⁷ The comparatively privileged role that the Christian Churches have traditionally held in German society has obviously encouraged other religious groups to struggle for a similar status and to demand spaces for practising religion on a similar public level as Church based institutions. The issue of Islamic instructions in state schools is a case in point, further indicating the active involvement of Muslims in German society. The only subject in state schools, guaranteed by the German constitution, is "religious instruction." The demand made by Muslim groups to teach Islam in state schools is accordingly backed by recourse to basic principles, and not in reference to particular group rights, as entailed in most concepts of multiculturalism. Even the decisions held by Supreme Administrative Courts that allow Muslim girls in some cities to abstain from coeducational sports lessons, or the recent decision on the right of Muslims to slaughter according to religious rites were legitimized through claims of basic principles (i.e. freedom of religious expression), and not of group rights. Although such decisions are, indeed, a step towards the (legal) recognition of certain Muslim practices in Germany, they are examples for successful claim-making in the name of national or supranational norms. Moreover, as such examples quite significantly show, the responsibility for "multicultural" concerns in Germany has been mainly left to court institutions, instead of forming a part of systematic political programmes. What has developed from there is some kind of de facto multiculturalism that clearly goes beyond the multi-kulti version, and that especially expands the dominant understanding of religion as just a "secularized" version of Christianity.

The longing for a "Euro-Islam"

It seems to be exactly the fact that Muslims increasingly speak from within German society, claiming rights for practising a "non-German" religion (while referring to German principles), which irritates the public opinion most. The capability to use the very tools provided by the state, under the rule of law for becoming an integral part of German society as "Muslims," could be interpreted as a sign for their "integration" into German society. It is, however, precisely not the type of integration that most public authorities and media discourses are heading for. The recurrent paradigm of a "Euro-Islam" may serve as one of the most pertinent indicators for this assumption. This concept has predominantly figured in the German public sphere as part of the same discourse that lashes out at multiculturalism. Moulded by one of the most popular Muslim public intellectuals in Germany, Bassam Tibi,

this version of "Euro-Islam" only legitimizes one particular model of Islam, that which is oriented towards an "enlightened European system of values" and in harmony with "secular constitutions."⁸ The problematic is not only that a large number of Muslims, who do not fit into this notion, have been excluded from the process of shaping the implications of "Euro-Islam," it is also not at all clear, whether the (German) "Euro-Islam" should be based on "universal" (i.e. western) principles, or whether it should be nationally shaped, as suggested by the attempts to merge Islamic organizations into the German church-model, and the recent appeal that imams should preach exclusively in German language. The dominant lines of "Euro-Islam" reflect the same problematic as that of the integration paradigm, which is now offered as an "alternative" to multiculturalism. They both reflect a one-sided, one-way process, which presupposes the ability and willingness of Muslims to submerge themselves into the dominant norms of the recipient societies. Yet, the concrete contents of the "western," "European," or "German" outlook, into which Muslims are asked to integrate, is much more contested than implied in the wishful thinking about the emergence of a tamed "Euro-Islam." The rhetoric of the failure of multiculturalism can thus be interpreted as an expression of the discomfort at the demise of an illusion of a "monocultural" society, and the fact that multiculturalism in Germany with all its conflicts, misunderstandings, and fears has become an irreversible social reality.

Schirin Amir-Moazami holds a Ph.D. from the European University Institute in Florence. Currently she teaches at Europa-Universität Viadrina, Frankfurt (Oder) and Humboldt-Universität, Berlin. Email: schirin.amir-moazami@iue.it

Students participating in a cultural youth project rehearse ballet with the Berlin Philharmonic, 2004.

Notes

1. See Eric Fassin, "Good to Think": The American Reference in French Discourses of Immigration and Ethnicity," in *Multicultural Questions*, ed. Christian Joppke and Steven Lukes (London: Oxford, 1999), 224-41.
2. Multiculturalism has been theorized as a top-down solution to the "problem" of minorities, or in terms of reification of "culture," or as part of a more liberal tradition aimed at avoiding re-groupings of separate communities.
3. See Claus Leggewie, *Multi kulti: Spielregeln für die Vielvölkereublik* (Berlin: Rotbuch, 1990); Daniel Cohn-Bendit and Thomas Schmid, *Heimat Babylon* (Hamburg: Hoffmann und Campe, 1992).
4. Mark Terkessidis, *Die Tageszeitung*, 1 August 1998.
5. See Schirin Amir-Moazami, "Reaffirming and Shifting Boundaries: Muslim Perspectives on Gender and Citizenship," in *Yearbook of Sociology of Islam*, 6 (Bielefeld: transcript; Hamburg: Lit/New Brunswick; London: Transaction (forthcoming).
6. Slavoj Žižek, *Ein Plädoyer für die Intoleranz* (Vienna: Passagen, 1998).
7. The most important elements of article 140 of the German Constitution which regulates the status of religion are the "freedom to associate into religious communities" and the status of a "corporation of the public law." The status of the corporation of public law guarantees privileges such as the collection of church taxes or the organization of religious instructions in state schools, as regulated more systematically in article 7(3) of the Constitution.
8. Bassam Tibi, *Der Islam in Deutschland: Muslime in Deutschland* (Stuttgart and München: Deutsche Verlagsanstalt, 2000), 36.

“Domestication” of Space Arab Migrants in Milan

BARBARA CAPUTO

The first mosque of Milan was established twenty-five years ago in the area of via Padova, situated in the northeast of Milan, a working class area characterized by traditional Milanese courtyard flats. The area has progressively transformed into a neighbourhood inhabited by numerous Arabs. During the last ten years Arab shops, halal butchers, and restaurants have sprung up, replacing the traditional small groceries and bakeries. Muslim students who founded the mosque acted as mediators between Arab immigrants and apartment owners, to lend assistance in the difficult search for housing. Arabs, often turned away from landlords in better areas, were forced to rent apartments in the via Padova area which became a place where mainly young and unmarried male immigrants could easily find accommodation. This started a chain reaction: new Arab immigrants found it easiest to find apartments in the via Padova area since they had contacts with other Arabs who already lived there. Apartment owners started to consider it more and more convenient to rent flats in poor condition to groups of immigrants. A correspondence was created between an immigrant group, a social class, and a spatial area, as often occurs in urban areas.

Amongst others groups, petty criminals have also found it advantageous to live in via Padova. For this reason, and because of the fact that many immigrants get drunk in the evening, via Padova, without becoming a real slum, is considered an undesirable place to live in, both by immigrants who live elsewhere, and by Italians. The image of the area and the value of its property have also decreased because of the high number of male immigrants.

Those Arabs who live in poor housing conditions consider via Padova as a temporary residence. Very often they do not trust other immigrants living in the area, and prefer to have Italian neighbours. They can always find and visit Arab friends and relatives in other areas. The young Arab males try to accumulate enough money to buy or rent a home in the hinterland of Milan, and finally to marry or to have the possibility of bringing their wives and children to live with them. They want to adopt the same life-style as Italian middle-class families. Therefore, instead of remaining confined in their area, in their spare time Arab migrants move extensively in other parts of the city.

During weekends families tend to go shopping in the centre of Milan. In their free time they also like to go to out-of-town supermarkets, even if at the same time they might prefer to buy certain kinds of food from Muslim shops. They enjoy passing the day in the public parks and leisure areas spread throughout the city. They also move continuously outside the city to visit friends and relatives. Through their movements, these immigrants accomplish an act of liberty and resistance. Refusing to live in via Padova or leaving the area to go to more bourgeois or agreeable places, they demonstrate their wish to improve their social status; and as they cross urban spaces, they declare their desire for a better lifestyle, different from both that of their country of origin and the present one. Despite their forced residences in an undesirable area, immigrants construct their own routes and residential strategies. Instead of marking a specific area of Milan with traces of Arab-Muslim culture, Arab immigrants, through their diffuse establishment of mosques and shops selling halal meat and imported Arab foods, mark the entire city with places which constitute stopping points in the urban routes of immigrants. The new foreign inhabitants hybridize the pre-existing urban spaces, making new spaces for not only themselves, but also for the existing inhabitants. This process of hybridization and “multilocality,” as Nadia Lovell notes, serves to “mobilize loyalty to different communities -and ... to different places—simultaneously.”¹

Arab immigrants in Italy, forced to live in a rough area of Milan, try to enlarge their territory through urban routes. They cross social and spatial borders in their attempts to move to less ethnic areas and to improve their social status. They combine and position pieces and signs of their original culture throughout the city. Their residential, leisure, and consumer spaces contain elements of resistance and hybridity.

How important is a religious centre?

Scholars often take for granted that a religious centre plays a strong role in the choice of residence.² This assumption risks hiding other social dynamics and factors of attraction for immigrant groups. The mosque in via Padova, for instance, constitutes a point of attraction mainly for people who come from other parts of Milan and the suburbs. It

is well known that among Muslims it is largely the men who go to the mosque to pray on Fridays and other days, whilst women pray at home. Men can pray in different masajid, according to their desire to meet other people, and to their preferences for particular imams. The women who go to the via Padova mosque on Fridays and other occasions are few in number and know each other. They travel to via Padova from distant areas to meet friends, and to make arrangements about jobs such as hairdressing or clothes selling. For these women, the mosque represents a space of sociability, even if they do not go there every Friday. Similar to the men, it is not their only space for meeting and prayer. They often also meet at homes to visit each other, even if they live in distant localities. For those women to whom the mosque does not represent a main reference point in the area, they find a sense of belonging in everyday practices. Therefore, a religious centre serves as part of a wide network of religious and also secular places that symbolically and culturally mark the city.

Gendered spaces and paths

Arab immigration in Milan has stabilized in recent years, and 47% among them have a full-time or stable job generally requiring a low-skill. Most Arab workers are men. Women usually come after their husbands. Nevertheless, some 9.2% of Arab women arrive in Milan alone and 7.2% demand the help of friends and acquaintances.³ As is well known, male spaces and female spaces are not quite the same. Their paths, their cognitive maps, and their manoeuvring and appropriation of space differ. Men, when they arrive in the city, already have social networks, find jobs very quickly, start to learn Italian, and find help to orient themselves in the city. The rapid learning of the local language allows them to move around more easily.

Women with or without a family, on the contrary, often get lost in the first year after their arrival in Milan. They often lack social networks or occasions to listen to or speak Italian, because they do not start working immediately and tend to remain at home for a long time. They often fear, in the first period, to go shopping in non-Arab shops. The space is perceived as hostile and somewhat dangerous. Some of them told me that they suffered agoraphobia and panic attacks their first time out in Milan. The women who adapted more quickly to the new environment had the help of their husbands who showed them the main places of Milan and how to get around, such as how to use public transportation. Further help was provided by the Italian Language courses.

Female spaces are defined by daily tasks. Even if they have a job, they always have to buy food, to take children to school and to the park, to prepare food, and to attend to other domestic tasks. The space of via Padova is ambivalent to them. On one hand they dislike it, on the other hand it is a space of belonging, the space of daily life, where they feel at ease. They are familiar with the best places to do their shopping, and the best places where they can bring their children to play. The situation of women, who live alone, without a family, is quite different. Generally they do not move without a definite purpose, and only go out if they have a specific task to perform. They avoid public places during their free time and tend to stay at home on the weekends. For them, moving around the city alone is not morally correct. Male public



Via Padova,
Milan, June
2005

© CUBO IMAGES, 2005

spaces are also gendered spaces; they include the Sunday market of San Donato, or the cafes that are often frequented by people of the same nationality.

To understand the spatial behaviour of Arab Muslim immigrants, it is important to consider both cultural hybridization and personal choices, independent from the place of residence. Even when we observe the choices concerning shops and food purchase, it is important to make a distinction between those who pray and those who do not. The former always go to Muslim butchers to buy halal meat. The latter buy meat according to their personal tastes, and to the desire of finding familiar tastes from home. They might go to the halal butcher just to buy spices and mint for their tea, and then buy their meat in the supermarkets. In both cases, people do not always choose butchers close to home. They choose their butcher according to trust, based on his (or her) nationality, or because of practical reasons, such as the closeness to the mosque or to the place where they work. Moreover, Arab immigrants often go to supermarkets and hypermarkets outside Milan, carefully evaluating the merchandise, prices, and preferences. The places of shopping vary according to the situation.

Moving identities and wide spaces

The perspective generally adopted in social studies about the meaning of space in immigration is that immigrants tend to recreate as far as possible the same milieu of their country of provenance, building religious centres, establishing commercial activities, and developing the same habits and temporalities. People would continue to reproduce the same cultural habits of their country of origin. In totally accepting this point of view, we inherently accept the idea of an unchangeable culture. But, as we know well, "pure products go crazy."⁴ The habits of the country of origin hybridize with those of the country of immigration. The result is a hybrid citizen who adds urban Italian habits to the ones s/he owned before. They produce, through a bricolage, mixed identities and new social positions for themselves, creating new meanings in space. Immigrants' routes, and their importance, are not limited to the borders of the city. Their spaces go further, as far as they have social relations. Arab migrants do not always dream of returning home when they have free time. They also like to spend their weekends in other cities or regions, and their holidays in other European countries,

where they can find friends and familiar people living there. Their world is not an in-between world, but a wider one.

Many scholars consider immigrants as people who always tend to recreate a circumscribed and definite space as close as possible to that of the country of origin and strongly anchoring themselves to it. By doing so, they risk acquiring a limited perspective about the ways in which immigrants live their space. Similarly, attributing a central importance to religious centres in the determination of places of residence can contribute to the idea of a closed and homogenous culture. They risk not seeing the processes of cultural hybridization and thus may generate a rather ethnic reading of immigrant settlements in new contexts, whilst not showing enough awareness of the phenomena of cultural change.

Barbara Caputo is a postdoctoral researcher and teacher in the Department of Epistemology and Hermeneutics of Training at the University of Milano-Bicocca.
Email: barbaracaputo@yahoo.it

Notes

1. Nadia Lovell, ed., *Locality and Belonging* (London and New York: Routledge, 1999), 3.
2. See Kathy Gardner, "On Bengali elders in East London," *Oral history*, no. 27 (1999).
3. Data collected by the ISMU Foundation, www.ismu.org.
4. James Clifford, *The Predicament of Culture: Twentieth-Century Ethnography, Literature, and Art* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1988).

The Baraza

A Grassroots Institution

ROMAN LOIMEIER

Sociological debates have long been dominated by categories of "formal" and "informal." This dichotomous approach, with its focus on the spectrum between "obvious" extremes, has eclipsed other ways of coming to terms with social life and the institutions therein. The *baraza* (pl. *mabaraza*), an important feature of Zanzibar's "public sphere," provides a way for understanding social institutions as a continuum of "realizations" that escape clear cut sociological definitions. Even the term *baraza* has many different notions that again reflect a spectrum of possibilities of social, spatial, and temporal organization.

In spatial terms, the *baraza* represents a spectrum of places where people meet, such as the verandah in front of a house. In *shamba* (countryside) areas the *baraza* would likely refer to a place near the local mosque, such as some benches, often under a simple shelter. Inside a house, a *baraza* would be a parlour for receiving visitors such as, again, the "audience chamber" of the Sultan of Zanzibar, or a part of the courtyard (*ua*), where women would meet in "their" *baraza*, the *uani*.

In organizational terms, a *baraza* may represent different degrees of formality and informality, institutionalization, and abstractness. A *baraza* might be a simple (informal) "meeting" of people, but it could also be a "council," or, in historical times, the "audience" of the Sultan of Zanzibar that was described as a *baraza*,² although such a *baraza* would also be called a *majlis*. Finally, it could refer to a vast range of clubs, unions, or associations such as the *Baraza la Kiswahili la Zanzibar* (The Kiswahili Association of Zanzibar) or the *Baraza Kuu la Waislamu wa Tanzania* (The Muslim Supreme Council of Tanzania), where membership is defined in more or less formal terms.

In temporal or time-linked terms, a *baraza* is connected with the specific times of the day when its members meet, such as the *baraza za wazee*, the "old men's *baraza*," at Jaws' corner that is frequented daily

Public or semi-public places where people meet to chat, communicate, quarrel, sit, and watch may be found in many societies: the Piazza in Italy, the beer-garden in Bavaria, or the majlis in Arabia, represent a few such examples.

Zanzibar's *baraza* is a place for the negotiation and observation of the ordinary as well as the extraordinary. Sitting in a *baraza* provides an opportunity to experience every day life at its most local.¹

between *asr* and *maghrib* prayers. In fact, a single *baraza* (in the spatial sense of the term) could be occupied in the course of a day by different groups of *watu wa barazani*, "people of the *baraza*." Different concepts of day and night are important for the constitution of *mabaraza* as the members of the respective *mabaraza* meet in "their" *baraza* at a specific time of the day/night, and may arrange for meet-

ings at these times. Indeed each *baraza* is linked with the stories of that specific place and its people, and, thus, with local history. A *baraza* may be regarded, thus, as a "space" that has come to life as a "place."³ Consequently, a *baraza* has stopped to be "something in between," i.e. pure (undefined) "space," and has become "something," namely a distinct "Platz," a place that is known for the stories associated with it, for its specific history, as well as for the people meeting there.

Mabaraza represent thus a broad spectrum of different forms of organization, as well as different notions of place and space that are again defined in different temporal terms. *Mabaraza* may consequently appear to represent a rather vague notion of the organization of the "public sphere" in Zanzibar. Yet, *mabaraza* are not entirely amorphous for they follow a distinct set of rules and are linked to a distinct code of behaviour. These rules and codes apply to the Zanzibar Stone Town street *baraza* that meets in the oldest part of Zanzibar Town. Stone Town is characterized by its cosmopolitan population of about 20,000 inhabitants that include Africans, Indians, and Arabs, and by the numerous picturesque multi-storeyed houses, the dozens of small mosques and Quran schools, and a multitude of shops that increasingly cater to tourism. Although Stone Town may comprise only one square kilometre in size, the length of the narrow alleys add up to more than 20 kilometres, not considering the huge area of Ng'ambo, "the other side," the urban agglomeration of approximately 380,000 people that is also home to numerous *mabaraza*.

When walking through Stone Town, it is rather easy to meet *mabaraza* "in session." In fact, it might be said that virtually every house in Zanzibar has its own *baraza*. Alas, most of these *mabaraza* are mainly intended for the people of the house, both men and women, although sitting is gendered. "House *mabaraza*" are thus not really "public" and would be attended only by those people who actually live in a specific house, or some passers-by who greet somebody from the house. "Communal *mabaraza*," by contrast, would not be necessarily associated with a specific (private) house, but would attract people from diverse backgrounds within a specific neighbourhood. Communal *baraza* would also often be situated at strategic points, such as a small opening in an alley, where a coffee-maker would sell his coffee and attract members of the neighbourhood. "Public *mabaraza*," on the other hand, would denote all those *mabaraza* that attract people from an even greater geographic scope. Out of a total of some

Typical family home in Stone Town with Baraza, Zanzibar



PHOTO BY ROMAN LOIMEIER, 2004

300-400 mabaraza in Stone Town, only 50-60 of them can be said to be "communal" and even fewer are "famous" public mabaraza, such as the mabaraza at Mskiti Ruta (Ruta mosque), where religious scholars meet, the baraza of the "intellectuals" close to the "Manispa" (the "City Hall" baraza), the "Passing Show Hotel mbao players baraza," or the "poets" baraza of Bwana Mkelle. These represent mabaraza that are famous for their "members," their particular orientation, or their long history. It is, thus, necessary to differentiate between "house" mabaraza and "public" as well as "communal" mabaraza, although boundaries are fluid.

While mabaraza may have existed in the shamba areas of Zanzibar even before the nineteenth century, when Zanzibar was the centre of the 'Umani-Sultanate of Zanzibar, they were a comparatively recent feature of Stone Town where they started to develop only after the revolution in 1964. This revolution not only put an end to the rule of the Sultans and caused the death and the expulsion of thousands of "Arab" and "Indian" Zanzibaris, but also led to the political unification of Zanzibar and Tanganyika to form the Federal Republic of Tanzania. On account of these events, the structure of the population in Stone Town changed dramatically after 1964: while Stone Town had been, until 1964, an area for the rich and aristocratic who would never sit "in the street" as they had their in-door majlis, the "poor" and "common" people from Ng'ambo who moved into Stone Town after 1964 brought along their mabaraza. Before 1984, mabaraza had largely been confined, in Stone Town, to the market areas, the mosques, and public places, or the poorer and "popular" quarters in Stone Town. The development of mabaraza has to be seen, consequently, as a feature of social change (and development), characterized for parts of Stone Town such as Shangani where mabaraza scarcely existed before 1964, as a development from "majlis to baraza" (i.e. from meeting and sitting inside the house to meeting and sitting outside the house). In a broader sense, a change in social context will also influence the character of the mabaraza of a specific locality. As the "rich and aristocratic" disappeared from Stone Town after 1964, so too did the majority of *majlis*. The number of mabaraza, on the other hand, has multiplied considerably, although some old and famous mabaraza such as the baraza of Sayyid Bâ Wazîr close to Mskiti Barza, or the baraza of Shaykh Mas'ûd b. 'Alî ar-Riyâmî disappeared after 1964 when most of their members were killed or exiled in the revolution. The constant influx of people into Stone Town after 1964 has led to the formation of new mabaraza that "go with time" (*wanakwenda na wakati*), such as the baraza of the "fans of Manchester United" in Malindi, or the baraza of the *mbao*-players in Jaws' Corner that was formed in the 1980s when the police station at this central intersection of Stone Town was removed as part of the "Stone Town Conservation Programme."⁴

With respect to the contemporary social character of the Zanzibar Stone Town baraza, membership may appear again to be rather informal: there is no formal membership, and there are no membership fees or membership cards. Yet, membership is defined all the same. Everybody may theoretically join any baraza. Mabaraza in fact provide platforms of communication for virtually everybody, old and young, rich and poor, men and women, even if mabaraza are usually gendered (I have so far not heard of mixed mabaraza and well-known womens' mabaraza are still rare in some parts of Stone Town), even if they tend to unite "members" of similar occupational and social backgrounds. At the same time, mabaraza may be rather heterogeneous when it comes to political, ethnic, or religious orientation, though again not necessarily so. A baraza usually develops a specific character over time, and some mabaraza may be more "open" than others. Thus, some mabaraza may be perceived as rather hermetic, and their members will probably stop their conversation, possibly on sensitive issues such as politics, when an unknown person would try to join. Recruitment into such a



PHOTO BY ROMAN LOIMEIER, 2004

baraza is a process of conscious inclusion initiated only by its members. Living in a specific neighbourhood, regular passing by a specific baraza and respectfully greeting the members, sticking to the rules of *heshima* (respect) and *adabu* (proper and good manners), having a friend or friends in the baraza, or having similar occupational, religious, political, or other interests and orientations may help to speed up the process of being invited to join a specific baraza, but are not an automatic bridge from non-membership to membership, from exclusion to inclusion.⁵

For the most part mabaraza are open and would welcome any "non-member" to join, either on a permanent or a temporal basis (i.e. for short slots of time only), although some degree of continuity of residence in a specific area may help to speed-up integration into a specific baraza. The varying open/closed-ness of mabaraza shows again that it is very difficult to translate the concept of the baraza into one of Max Weber's "ideal types." Most of what is said about the mabaraza may be true for most mabaraza, but not necessarily for all. Due to the semi-public, semi-formal, and semi-open character of the mabaraza, the baraza escapes efforts of categorization. Mabaraza may acquire, thus, a multitude of forms that have in common that its members constitute a group of people who follow specific rules of conduct that are binding for all members of the baraza. As such, mabaraza are natural networks of people who have known each other for some time and consequently trust each other. Mabaraza are, thus, the most basic institution of Zanzibari society.⁶ They have acquired considerable political importance and were, in fact, prohibited in 1967 by the "Revolutionary Government" of Zanzibar as possible cells of political protest. Since the early 1980s, the mabaraza have reappeared and are waxing stronger than before, not only as the most basic social institution of Zanzibari society but also as the most important venue for public political debates. Many mabaraza represent debating clubs where a range of political (and religious) issues are discussed, and can be conceptualized as a fundamental element for the development of democratic structures in Zanzibar from "below."

Baraza in session, Stone Town, Zanzibar

Notes

1. An extensive presentation of the baraza will be published under the title "Sit Local, Think Global: The Baraza in Zanzibar" in a volume edited by A. Tayob on "Islam and Public Life in Africa."
2. Emily Ruete, *Memoirs of an Arabian Princess from Zanzibar* (Zanzibar: Gallery Publications, 1998), 125.
3. Marc Augé, *Non-Places: Introduction to an Anthropology of Supermodernity* (London: Verso, 1995), 79ff.
4. Conversation with E. Meffert, 7 August 2004.
5. Conversations with Abdul Sheriff, 22 July 2004 and Mwalimu Idris, 20 May 2004.
6. Conversation with Fatma Alloo, 11 March 2003.

Roman Loimeier is a research fellow in the Department of Islamic Studies at the University of Bayreuth.
Email: roman.loimeier@uni-bayreuth.de

Culture of Hope in West Africa

KNUT GRAW

In many (Middle Eastern) Islamic societies, the activities of healers and diviners are looked upon with suspicion by the representatives of their respective religious orthodoxies. Sometimes they are even banned by the state. In Senegal and Gambia, however, divinatory and therapeutic ritual unfolds in the centre rather than at the margins of Islamic practice. A number of reasons account for this situation. Historically, in most West African societies Islam first spread through scholars who were schooled in the Islamic esoteric sciences (*ulum al-asrar*) and who offered their services to the leading members of local non-Islamic aristocracies. Due to this early identification of Islamic ritual specialists with esoteric knowledge and service, practices such as divination and the making of protective amulets have been associated with, and seen as a proof of, the power of Islamic religion. This strong link between West African Islam and the arts of divination and healing is also reflected in the fact that even diviners and healers without specific knowledge of the Islamic literary corpus and Arabic writing are, as long as they are perceived to operate within an Islamic cultural framework, generally referred to with the same titles that are used to refer to persons renowned for their Islamic education and expertise in the Islamic literary tradition.¹ In other words, both in Senegal and Gambia, being a specialist in divination or healing is practically synonymous to being a religiously learned person and vice versa. Furthermore, it is interesting to note that even those divination techniques that are historically not associated with the Islamic esoteric sciences, such as the widespread practice of cowrie-shell divination, refer to the Islamic charitable practice of *sadaqa* as their most important ritual remedy. Although pre-Islamic in origin, cowrie-shell divination thus works through, and within, an explicitly Islamic ritual idiom.

The personal significance of divinatory consultation

For the majority of people in Senegal it is common to consult divination specialists either on a regular basis or at certain crucial moments in life. This is especially the case when no other remedy can be found as, for instance, in the case of a persistent illness that western style medicine fails to

cure. Other problems that are frequently approached through divinatory consultation include decisions concerning marriage and divorce, issues of health, work opportunities and migration. In general, the concern lies on the question how one's personal situation will develop in the future and what can be done to assure a positive development of one's personal affairs. Herein Senegambian divination differs markedly from central and southern African divinatory traditions that aim primarily at exploring the hidden cause of past events.

Common questions posed are, for instance: Is the person that I have in mind the right marriage partner for me? Will my marriage recover from its present strains? Will my child soon recover from his illness? Will I be able to pass the final exams? Will I find an employment in the near-by future? Will I get the chance to travel to Europe like so many others?

Divination is one of the most resistant institutions of ritual life in West African countries such as Senegal and Gambia. Rather than being practised at the margins of an Islamic orthodoxy, Senegambian divination is embedded in and integrating other forms of Islamic ritual. By focusing on the existential value of these practices rather than on their outward formal aspects, divination and Islam come into view as sharing in the construction of a cultural space of hope and prospect that allows the subject to deal with his or her most urgent concerns, predicaments, and afflictions.

Such probably universally common questions have a particular currency in the Senegambian context where the financial and general economic situation of many people is chronically unpredictable, where traditional agricultural modes of subsistence seem to fail to provide sufficient income, where regularly paid jobs are unavailable for most, and where the only hope for the young and yearning seems to lie abroad, in Europe or North America. As divination is able to respond to these individual concerns and predicaments,

the art of divination forms one of the most persevering institutions of traditional ritual practice in Senegal and Gambia. While other forms of ritual expression and action such as initiation rites, spirit possession and healing cults are in many postcolonial contexts under threat due to ideological power struggles and often harsh and socio-culturally uprooting economic conditions, divination thrives.² No neighbourhood without one or several diviners specializing in different divinatory techniques that reach from Islamic geomancy (*ramalu* in Mandinka and Wolof) and dream divination (*istikhara*), to cowrie divination and other casting techniques working with objects such as roots, sticks, ground nut shells, coins, etc. Faced with this panoply of different divination techniques, each with its specific logic and technical requirements, the question arises as to what do all these different forms of divination have in common? How far do these different forms constitute culturally coherent divinatory praxis? What is divination and what does it bring about?

Divination as hope

The development or programme of a divinatory consultation can be shown as consisting of several consecutive steps. The consultation starts with the pronunciation of the "intention" (*nganiyo*) by the client. This "intention," i. e. the reason or motivation for the consultation, has to be pronounced in silence, unheard by the diviner who is supposed not to have prior knowledge of the exact reason of his client's visit. Thereupon, it is the task of the diviner to locate the client's "intention" through his divinatory abilities. For the client, with the silent articulation of his most intimate and urgent personal concern, the divinatory encounter opens up a cultural space that allows the subject to realize and confront the issues which are at the core of his concern or affliction. The divinatory performance is referred to as an act of "looking at" or "viewing" (*jubeero* in Mandinka, *seet* in Wolof). An act that must not primarily be understood as direct visual perception but as a complex process of interpretation and intuition based upon the individual diviner's technical ability, experience, and general insight into the client's moral and material life conditions. As the diviner succeeds to address the issues and questions that are most significant for his client, different paths of thought and reflection appear and start to complete and reshape the subject's understanding of his or her own personal situation. By naming and referring to different aspects of reality such as the body, the house, the family, dreams, spirits, the heart, or the mind of the person, out of and through the concrete articulations of the divinatory enunciation, the personal and cultural life-world originates anew.

In the attempt to gain insight and to spell out the possible developments of the client's future, divination is in itself "chrono-poetic," time-making, i. e. shaping and re-shaping the subject's consciousness of the future with every consultation. The significance and potential power of this time-making quality of Senegambian divination comes into view if one considers the situation of desperation and depression that

The divinatory
encounter produces
prospects for the
future and enables
the subject to
develop new hope,
and thereby lies
its power.



PHOTO BY KNUT GRAW, 2003

**Samba Nguer,
a cowrie-diviner
demonstrating
his art,
Serekunda,
Gambia, June
2003.**

the closed temporality of doubt, uncertainty, and affliction with a new divinatory temporality of prospect and hope. In my opinion, this perspective on (Islamic) divinatory praxis highlights the existential value of divination. Moreover, this understanding of divinatory praxis, due to Senegambian divination's embeddedness in Islamic ritual, also bears the potential for a more encompassing understanding of the existential significance of other aspects of Islam in Senegal, Gambia and, possibly, elsewhere.

In this context, it is important to note that the charitable practice of *sadaqa* is not the only explicitly Islamic dimension of divinatory ritual. Another practice that is linked to divinatory praxis is, for instance, that of supplicatory prayer (*du'a*). This prayer is performed by the client before the actual distribution of the objects, as well as, at least ideally, by those receiving them. While being an integral part of divinatory ritual, the practice of *du'a* also plays a highly significant role in religious festivities and ceremonies, when parting on a journey, as response to a gift, or for the general importance that is attributed to the (non-divinatory) consultation of marabouts. While divination can and should be perceived as a distinct cultural practice of great cultural elaboration, one should not overlook its intrinsic relation to other (Islamic) practices. A relation that is not only practical or instrumental. Through practices such as *sadaqa* and *du'a*, but also through much more spectacular events of religious life such as the famous *magal* of Touba, the annual pilgrimage to the capital of the Senegalese Mouride-brotherhood, Senegambian Islam contributes to the same cultural space of hope and prospect that is aimed at, and generated in, the divinatory encounter.

The proposed anthropological and phenomenological perspective on divinatory praxis thus opens up the possibility to recognize the existential dimension of religious life and signifying praxis. A dimension that is often eclipsed by studies of religion and rituals which focus primarily on the historical, theological, symbolical or political content of what, for the cultural subjects

themselves, is, first of all, a fundamental attempt of meaningful being-in-the-world. A cultural way of being also, that allows the subject (and society as a whole) to deal actively with the predicaments of a postcolonial globalizing world, providing elements of empowerment in the struggle for a better life.

overcomes someone in a situation where the promise of a future has seemingly ceased to exist. As an answer to such situations, divination comes into view as a cultural technology of hope and prospect, offering perspectives that can be further pursued. The divinatory encounter produces prospects for the future and enables the subject to develop new hope, and thereby lies its power. In this sense, divination brings about a situation that is qualitatively different from the pre-consultation condition.

The consultation ends with the prescription of formalized ritual action in the form of the distribution of *sadaqa* (*sadaa* in Mandinka, *sarax* in Wolof), i.e. the charitable distribution of objects that range from sugar cubes or candles to cloth and food to be given to others so that the predictions can realize themselves and the predicted developments can be positively influenced. As such, divination does not exhaust itself in a discursive field of predictions but rather obliges the consulter to act. By allowing and forcing the cultural subject to actively pursue his or her own personal "intention," divination opens up a cultural space that responds to the subject's most existential concerns. It empowers the subject where for many the contemporary postcolonial life-world seems to have nothing on offer but false promises, marginalization, and exclusion.

The existential value of divination and Islamic ritual

Our anthropological understanding of divination as a cultural field of hope and prospect shows that divination is not just an abstract search for knowledge but forms a much more encompassing and fundamental cultural praxis of understanding and empowerment. A cultural praxis that, in shaping the subject's relation to his or her own personal future, replaces

Knut Graw is a researcher at the Africa Research Center of the Department of Social and Cultural Anthropology at the Catholic University of Leuven, Belgium.
Email: knut.graw@ant.kuleuven.be

Notes

1. Titles of respect that are used are, for instance, *mooro* in Mandinka, *serigne* in Wolof, and *thierno* in Pulaar. The Arabic derived term "marabout" that is often used by francophone Senegalese, as well as by western scholars, can equally refer to religious specialists in the strict sense as well as to divination and healing specialists.
2. For a study of the culture of spirit possession threatened by Islamic religious hegemony cf. for instance A. Masquelier, *Prayer has Spoiled Everything: Possession, Power, and Identity in an Islamic Town of Niger* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2001). For the transformations of traditional ritual institutions in popular culture and religious life in a non-Islamic environment cf. F. De Boeck and M. F. Plissart, *Kinshasa: Tales of the Invisible City* (Ghent: Ludion, 2004).

Islamic NGOs in Chad

MAYKE KAAG

The image of an European development worker sitting under a tree in an African village conversing with members of the local population is a familiar scene. Much less familiar is the scene of a Saudi aid worker in a similar situation. On an afternoon in April 2004 a team of the Makka al-Mukarrama Foundation (Foundation of the Holy City of Makkah) visited the village of Koumi in southern Chad. The Foundation's director addressed the assembled men and expressed his satisfaction that a large number of the population had turned to Islam. As a reward, the Foundation was willing to finance the building of a mosque and a madrasa. The men from Koumi and the surrounding villages expressed their gratitude most eloquently, while the women and children followed the event from a distance. After the afternoon prayer the team departed in their 4x4s.

The Makka al-Mukarrama Foundation is one of the eleven transnational Islamic NGOs—which include one Libyan, three Sudanese, one Kuwaiti, and six Saudi organizations—that have been working in Chad over the last two decades. While transnational Islam is often written about with a focus on migration networks or questions of belonging based on being Muslim in Europe,¹ these Arab NGOs provide a good example of alternative ways in which transnational Islam is being shaped. In combining material aid with proselytizing activities, their work is embedded in ideas about transnational solidarity and the importance of enhancing the ummah, the global community of the faithful. They

Transnational Islamic NGOs have recently become targets in the War on Terror for their alleged role in supporting terrorism by channelling funds to terrorist groups. Yet for a long time these organizations have been working on the ground in Africa and elsewhere combining charity with proselytizing activities, as illustrated by the case of Arab Islamic NGOs in Chad.

which is predominantly Christian and animist, the missionary activities are first and foremost directed towards the non-Muslim population. Organizations such as Makka al-Mukarrama, the Kuwaiti Agence des Musulmanes d'Afrique (AMA), and al-Muntada al-Islamiyya (Islamic Gathering) have centres for recent converts. One of the strategies involves sending preachers to the villages. Those

village men who show an interest in becoming Muslim are brought to their centres where they receive room and board for one to nine months while they take a course on Islam. After the course they return to their villages and start spreading the message themselves. Another strategy is to approach local power holders as it is assumed that if they convert their family and partisans will follow suit. Part of the incentive process can include the offering of presents or money, the promise of an airline ticket to Makkah, or a community project.

In Chad, Arab Islamic NGOs may benefit from the fact that since the Northerners seized power in the 1980s, the Muslims have come to dominate the political, social, and economic situation and state authorities are likely to receive them favourably. The fact that Islam is associated with power and success means that there is a category of people who are open to their Islamizing message. On the other hand, in a situation in which religion is highly politicized and where a sharp polarization exists between the Muslim North and the Christian South, their intervention is a sensitive issue and may add to the tensions between the different groups, particularly in the south. Rivalry between Christian and Islamic NGOs is particularly acute in this region. The Chadian Muslim establishment which predominantly belongs to the Tidjaniyya Sufi order is not always happy with the Arab NGOs; while the latter are welcomed as helping to further the Muslim case, their interventions are also partly perceived as a threat to Sufi authority. Rivalry is usually not overt or confrontational, and some collaboration between the Muslim Council and the Arab NGOs exists.

Transnational Islamic NGOs have become increasingly visible in Chad as they build large, clearly marked, educational centres and mosques, and raise their banners whenever they organize activities. This visibility, however, must not be taken at face value. In the capital N'Djamena, smoothly running centres do exist but in the countryside many mosques are never open and integrated centres often suffer from a lack of staff and financing. Conversions tend to be rather superficial since the reinforcing mechanisms needed to make these conversions last are not in place. By themselves, the activities of these NGOs have a limited impact. The real importance of Arab Islamic NGOs relates to the fact that they are part of broader processes of Islamization and Arabization. Through their visibility and financial and other opportunities they provide, these NGOs enlist supporters who profit from them and "ride the wave." Their ultimately political importance relates to the fact that they represent, and are part of, a larger phenomenon of Islamization and Arabization that, depending on one's point of reference, is either dangerous or desirable.



PHOTO BY MAYKE KAAG, 2004

A team of the Makka al-Mukarrama Foundation visits the village of Koumi in southern Chad, April 2004.

generally disseminate a Salafist "brand" of Islam and in so doing, link local believers to other parts of the Muslim world. These organizations can, therefore, be considered both an expression of, and a vehicle for, transnational Islam.

As far as material aid is concerned, most organizations invest in the care of orphans by either sponsoring orphanages or through programmes for orphans who live with their relatives. They build mosques, sponsor schools and teachers, and intervene in health care activities such as organizing health caravans or running hospitals. Their missionary activities are directed towards Muslims who, in the eyes of these organizations, have only a very limited knowledge of Islam. This implies a kind of re-Islamization with an accent on "proper" dress and behaviour, and on knowledge of the Quran and the Arabic language. In the south of Chad,

Note

1. R. Grillo, "Islam and Transnationalism," *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 30, no. 5 (2004): 861-878.

Mayke Kaag is a researcher at the African Studies Centre in Leiden, the Netherlands.
Email: kaag@fsw.leidenuniv.nl

Student Politics in Indonesia

Robert W. Hefner in a recent article, "Muslim democrats and Islamist violence in post-Soerharto Indonesia," laments the fact that Indonesia's democratic achievements "may never be widely recognized because the movement for a democratic Muslim politics was soon overshadowed by a rash of sectarian violence."² The main challenge for Indonesia's moderate and democratic Muslims, according to

Hefner, has been the move to pacify the sectarian and authoritarian fringes of the Muslim community. One way to take on this challenge has been for educated Muslims to demonstrate Islam's compatibility with democracy and pluralism and pose as role models for the rest of society. Processes of democratization occur under a variety of conditions and within different segments of society, but students have a history of being on the vanguard of social and political change. Since 1965 students have played a prominent role in the struggle for democratic reforms in Indonesia.

Plurality in a student association

One example of what a democratic organization might look like in practice can be found among the members of Indonesia's oldest and biggest Islamic student association, the *Himpunan Mahasiswa Islam* (HMI). HMI was founded in Yogyakarta in 1947 and split in two in 1986 over the issue of whether to give in to the pressure of the regime to replace the Islamic basis of the organization with the national ideology of *Pancasila*. HMI-MPO is the fraction that stood up against the government and as a consequence was forced to go underground for twelve years. HMI-MPO is a cadre-training organization that concentrates on political, religious, and intellectual training of members (cadres) by way of formal training courses and informal discussions. It is well represented in the country with thirty-eight branches spread all over Indonesia. Its Yogyakarta branch is the biggest branch with 3000 active members dispersed over forty-two secretariats (*komisariat*) at different universities and colleges. The sheer number of members gives the branch a certain substance. But the fact that Yogyakarta has a reputation of housing the most liberal, free spirited, and intellectually innovating milieu in the country has also led to the expectation that the Yogyakarta branch should play a leading role in the political and ideological leadership of the organization.

HMI-MPO has a decentralized structure with a high degree of autonomy at the branch level where a great deal of variety exists. Some branches are known for their intellectual or political characters, while others are better known for their religious or Sufi orientations. There is room for a large degree of experimentation and variation on the training courses, and it is generally understood that students join the organization for various reasons. Some are in search of a deepened understanding of Islam, whereas others are attracted by the intellectual discussions, the political leadership training, or the social activities. The training component of the organization has two unstated objectives: to encourage and enable students to reflect on political and religious issues like globalization, neo-capitalism, social injustice, morality, Islamic politics, and religious socialism, and to endow them with the talents to argue their cases and present their viewpoints. The organization aids students to cultivate the art of critical reflection and argumentation, competencies that are difficult to acquire alone within the normative system of education where an authoritarian "yes-man" culture still persists.

The notion that HMI-MPO functions as a forum for academic, political, and religious discussions is not surprising. Indeed one would expect this to be a dominant aspect of a Muslim student organization. However, the idea of HMI-MPO as a place of diversity, and one that challenges the students and gives them a chance to meet and interact with fellow students of different religious or political backgrounds is notable because

Recently there has been a great deal of talk on the need to accommodate, modify, and pacify the radical elements of Muslim communities. Yet it is not well understood how a process of accommodation should be carried out, or by whom? Student groups, who have long been on the vanguard of social and political change in Indonesia, can serve as a living example of democratic accommodation.¹

it inadvertently causes a great deal of confusion and anxiety. When asked why they joined the organization, students frequently cite their desire to meet people who are different from themselves. As one student explained, "I wanted to get to know people with different backgrounds from mine." Another student noted, "I wanted to learn how to discuss and debate." These statements reveal the democratic nature of the organization. You need a difference of opinion (plurality) to create a fertile ground for discussion, and you need respect (and curiosity) for other people's opinions to understand and appreciate the value of diversity.

Religious mediation

The debate-society aspect of HMI-MPO combines with a religious identity which has been sharpened by the rebellious history of the organization. HMI-MPO has a reputation for being Islamic because it was the only organization out of the two that had the courage to stand up against the regime and defend its Islamic basis and because it still maintains a mild form of gender segregation (female members are not allowed to shake hands or ride bikes with male members). At the same time, it is heir to a theological renewal movement from the 1970s that challenges its members to find their own religious truth and encourages them to rationalize and scrutinize their own religious practices. As one student recounts, "I was shocked at first. One exercise was called 'A day without God' and the idea was to encourage us to experience what that felt like and teach us not to take God for granted. The point was that we should always have a reason for what we do. And some of my friends who didn't know how to digest this exercise haven't done their daily prayers ever since. They just swallowed it raw without chewing on it and they keep saying, 'There is no God.'"

Not everybody is up for the intellectual and spiritual challenge. Some members might leave the organization or simply join several organizations simultaneously.

One student who defected from HMI only to return to it a year later explains, "The training course at HMI made me confused. I was urged to join a discussion on God, and afterwards I was confused as to whether God really exists or not, so I left HMI and joined KAMMI. But they turned out to be too extreme and too exclusive. All we ever talked about was religion. Intellectual discussions were not allowed, so after a year I went back to HMI."

It is the combined position towards critical inquiry and religious identity that enables HMI-MPO to bridge the gap between the liberal and the fundamentalist elements among the students and contribute to a moderating and dialoguing process internally within the organization as well as externally among other student organizations. The HMI-MPO is able to facilitate a dialogue between the organizations due to its own internal plurality, which makes it credible among the liberal Muslims, and also because it has a reputation of being Islamic, which gives it credibility among more conservative Muslims.

Notes

1. This article is based on ethnographic research for a Ph.D. dissertation. The fieldwork was carried out among Muslim university students in the Central Javanese town of Yogyakarta from September 2003 to August 2004.
2. Robert W. Hefner, "Muslim democrats and Islamist violence in post-Soeharto Indonesia," in *Remaking Muslim Politics: Pluralism, Contestation, Democratization*, ed. Robert Hefner (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005), 273-301.

Kristian Morville is a Ph.D. student at the University of Copenhagen in the Center for Comparative Cultural Studies. Email: Morville@hum.ku.dk

KRISTIAN MORVILLE

Freedom, Justice, & Good Governance in Arab Countries

NADER FERGANY

The essence of an Arab renaissance in this critical era of the history of the Arab nations is a historic shift towards a society of freedom and good governance. Freedom is taken here in the comprehensive sense of the eradication of all forms of curtailment of human dignity. This comprehensive sense not only incorporates civil and political freedoms (in other words, liberation from oppression) but also the imperative that the individual be liberated from all means by which human dignity may be curtailed, such as, hunger, disease, ignorance, poverty, fear and, above all, injustice. Hence, operationally, respect of freedom thus defined can be embodied in the strict adherence to the entire body of International Human Rights Law (IHRL) which should take precedence over national legislation. In this sense, freedom is synonymous with human development, and is perhaps the quintessential public good demanded in less developed countries.

An individual can only be free in a free society. Societal freedom operates on two dimensions: the first is the protection of freedoms of subgroups and subcultures—terms that I prefer to the current category, “minorities.” Secondly, national liberation and self determination are perceived as essential components of freedom, especially in the Arab nation, where infringement of national liberation is conspicuous.

Freedom is, however, one of those superior human culmination outcomes that requires the presence of societal structures and processes that will attain and safeguard it, ensuring its uninterrupted continuance and promotion. These societal structures and processes guaranteeing freedom are summed up in the good governance regime embodied in synergy between the state (comprising the government, elected representative councils, and the judiciary), civil society, and the private sector, all running respectful of the principles of rational public administration. This good governance regime is founded on the principle of protection of key freedoms which include:

1. the freedom of opinion, expression, and association (assembly and organization in both civil and political society) in harmony with the international human rights law;
2. full representation of the people in governance institutions;
3. institutions that work efficiently and with total transparency and that are subject to effective inter-accountability based on the separation of powers and direct accountability before the people via periodic open, free, and honest elections;
4. application of the law to all without exception in a form that is fair and protective of human rights;
5. a competent, honest, and totally independent judiciary to oversee the application of the law and implementation of its rulings efficiently vis-à-vis the executive authority.

This model of good governance ensures both freedom as well as justice. Since justice is the paramount value in Islam, this concept of freedom, incorporating justice and the associated model of good governance, would be inherently suitable for predominantly Muslim societies such as those of the Arab countries.

Democracy or good governance?

Liberal democracy has, for good reasons, acquired negative associations in the Arab world because of the possibility of democracies co-ex-

Justice is the paramount value in Islam. A concept of freedom that incorporates justice and the associated model of good governance would be inherently suitable for predominantly Muslim societies such as those of the Arab states. The pure model of freedom, in its comprehensive sense, and the model of good governance guaranteeing such freedom, both face significant conceptual and practical challenges in Arab countries, due to a combination of global, regional, and local circumstances.

isting with significant violations of civil and political liberties. In Arab and other “less developed” countries “democratic” arrangements have been utilized to prop up despotic regimes. More alarmingly, western liberal democracies of the US, UK, Italy, and Spain that have long been considered models of freedom and democracy, were all partners in the invasion and occupation of Iraq. Such countries have lost all credibility to preach freedom and democracy

to the rest of the world, as it has become clear that such preaching is nothing but a thin veil for imperialist ambitions and designs.

Instead of the concept “democracy” which is often relegated to “electoral democracy,” we might instead speak of “good governance.” Historical experience shows that elections, even if fair and honest, are not sufficient to attain good governance, especially in regard to the dimensions of freedom and justice. In the context of US imperialism, managed elections have often been used as a cover for sordid US meddling in other countries affairs. It is difficult to imagine, for example, how elections can be fair and honest under the yoke of foreign occupation, in itself a sinister violation of the fundamental constituent of freedom as we define it: national liberation and self determination. As such, it has become the latest confirmation of the western hypocrisy and double standards that western powers insist that Syria withdraw its forces from Lebanon as a prerequisite for free and honest elections, while turning a blind eye to elections taking place under similar conditions of occupation in Palestine and Iraq.

“Oriental Despotism” and the Arab societal context

The pure model of freedom, in its comprehensive sense as adopted here, and the model of good governance guaranteeing such freedom, both face significant conceptual and practical challenges in Arab countries due to a combination of global, regional, and local circumstances. Since the fall of Baghdad in the mid-thirteenth century and until the collapse of the Ottoman state, the Arab situation was characterized by the absence of freedom and the receding of an intellectual culture of reason, faced with the spread of a culture that emphasized the metaphysical and the mythical, and a state of intellectual inflexibility as a result of “closing the door of independent reasoning and interpretive scholarship, or *ijtihad*.”

Despotism came to be considered the principle element in explaining the slow progress or underdevelopment in the “East.” This explanation was buttressed by the suffering imposed on the Arab East by despotic rulers and governors, and given further support by the dominant influence of obsolete customs and practices in people’s lives, not to mention the absence of freedom, in its comprehensive sense. At the same time, this freedom was spreading widely, to varying degrees, among countries of the West. As a result, we are now facing two binary syndromes: “freedom/progress” and “despotism/retardation of progress,” metonyms for the “East/West” duality.¹

This severance between “the East” and freedom (or democracy) gained new purchase with “the clash of civilizations,” and efforts to play up and magnify this distinction since the catastrophic events of 11 September, especially given that the present US Administration’s chosen response was to launch what came to be known as the “global war on terrorism.”

Many expressed the view that the Arabs and the Muslims are not democratic, and we can hardly take issue with that. But more seriously, a few claimed that Arabs and Muslims are not capable of being democrats, for the very reason of being Arab ("the Arab mind") or being Muslim, as though they had a genetic flaw or inherent aversion to freedom and democracy. Such a flawed but habitual linkage betrays an absence of thoroughness on the part of the researcher and can be compared to the erroneous conclusion that repression and piety were inextricably linked with Catholicism in certain countries in Latin America, Eastern Europe, and East Asia thirty years ago, when some falsely attributed despotism to Catholicism, precisely as some people now attribute despotism in Arab countries to Islam.

Democracy and religion

Democratic institutions must be able to create and formulate policies freely and independently, within the boundaries set by the constitution and human rights. Specifically, there should be no privileged position for religious institutions such as would permit them to dictate policy to a democratically elected government.

By the same token, individuals and religious groups must be guaranteed independence vis-a-vis both their government and other religious groups. This independent arena must protect the right of people and groups not only to worship as they wish in private, but also to promote their values in civil society by creating organizations or movements within political society, provided that such activity has no negative impact on the freedom of other citizens or breaches democratic rules and principles. Institutional principles of democracy mean that it is unacceptable to prohibit from the outset any societal group, including religious groups, from forming a political party. It is only permissible to impose restrictions on political parties once their actual conduct has led to acts inimical to democracy, and where it is the judiciary, and not the ruling party, that makes the ruling.²

Interestingly, in advanced western countries that are incontestably democratic, religion is not at all distant from political society—to the point, in fact, that some theorists argue that no existing western democracy can claim to have a hard-and-fast separation between church and State, having reached the point where "freedom of religion" does not end with practicing religious rites in privacy, but extends to the right to organize in civil and political society. Indeed, some theorists maintain that neither "secularism" nor "the separation of 'church' from State" constitutes an essential property of democracy.³

Democracy and Islam: potential for harmony

Islam, in the Sunni sects prevalent in Arab countries, has no "clergy" and no "church," and consequently the concept of religious authority or rule does not arise. Even in Shiism, contemporary *ijtihad* or scholarship favours "the authority of the ummah (nation)," rather than "the authority of the *faqih* (jurisprudent)." Such is the opinion of Ayatollah Muhammad Mahdi Shamseddin, Head of the Shiite Supreme Council of Lebanon, who ruled that, "During the period of occultation, the ummah, or nation of Muslims, reclaims governance authority (*wilaya*), and appoints the ruler or rulers by means of choice and election. Through its will the nation (ummah) grants the ruler(s) a *wilaya* whose duration or substance is limited."⁴

If Islam does not set out a detailed and comprehensive system for good governance in its sacred text, the dominant trend in Islamic jurisprudence is supportive of obligatory consultation and freedom, without prejudice to the rights of others. The essential principles thus include obligatory consultation (*al-shura*), respect for freedom, and accountability of the ruler. Specifically, enlightened Islamic interpretations find in the tools of democracy—when used properly—one possible practical arrangement with which to apply the principle of consultation (*al-shura*). From these fundamental principles (from which may also be derived governance systems and detailed regulations) derive the realization of justice and equality, the assurance of public freedoms, the right of the nation to appoint and dismiss rulers, and guarantees of all public and private rights

for non-Muslims and Muslims alike without either addition or subtraction and including the right to hold public office.⁵

Even in the Prophet's saying (hadith) concerning obedience to rulers, the utterance "Obey the person in charge," which is often exploited to give credence to the existing rule "no matter how oppressive," and to incriminate "the Arab/Muslim mentality" on governance, is in fact only one part of the hadith. The text stipulates obedience only "in what accords with the truth" and indeed goes beyond that to incriminate the bad ruler.

The trap of the one-off election

The "trap of the one-off election" has been employed in relation to Islamic societies to alarm the societal groups who are apprehensive about the rise of fundamentalist Islamic groups to the seat of power, as it has been used too to justify foreign interference to prop up authoritarian Arab regimes. This has been used on the pretext that opening up the public sphere to all societal forces—among the most active of which is the Islamic movement—will end with these forces assuming power, followed by oppression, such that democratic competition becomes history after the one and only election. The fear of this "trap" is undoubtedly real, and indeed finds some justification in contemporary Arab experience.

However, those indulging in such scare-mongering have also not hesitated to accuse the majority of Arabs and Muslims of being extremist "fundamentalists," overlooking the pivotal role democracy provides for the majority and, whether out of ignorance or deliberate misrepresentation, wronging Islam and the Arab identity by making Muslims and Arabs appear fanatical and violent.

Space permits only two passing observations. First, the religion that decrees "there is no coercion in religion," protects freedom first and last. Second, in the historical period in which Islam was contemporaneous with Christianity across what are now European countries, religious tolerance was both more widespread and deeply rooted under Muslim rulers than under Christian rule, which gave rise to censorship of publications (under religious authority) for the first time, as well as the notorious Courts of Inquisition.

Societal impediments to democracy?

Arab societal structures undoubtedly present obstacles to freedom. But then they are built by human hands, and are therefore neither sacred nor infallible. They must be reformed, and this can be effected through a genuine project of Arab renaissance. But it is equally certain that Arabs crave an end to authoritarian rule, and long for a democratic form of governance, as the results of the World Values Survey, indicate.⁶ According to the results of this study, Arab respondents were decisively on the side of knowledge acquisition and good governance. Among the nine regions, including the countries of the advanced West, the Arabs headed the list of those who agreed that "democracy is better than any other form of governance." By the highest percentage, the Arab respondents rejected authoritarian rule (a powerful ruler unconcerned with and unhampered by a parliament or elections). These results are entirely logical: it is only natural that those who bear the scars of authoritarian rule and tyranny will be the more intent on having freedom and good governance.

Nader Fergany is the Director of the Almishkat Centre for Research (www.almishkat.org), Egypt, and the Lead Author of the *Arab Human Development Reports 2002, 2003, and 2004*.

Notes

1. See Mahir Hanandah, *Mafhum al-Hurriyya fi al-Fikr al-Falsafi al-'Arabi al-Mu'asir* [The Concept of Freedom in Contemporary Arab Philosophical Thought] (Al-Mustaqbal al-'Arabi, October 2002).
2. Alfred Stepan, *Arguing Comparative Politics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 216-7.
3. See for example Stepan, 223.
4. Muhammad Salim al-'Awwa, ed., *Al-Fiqh al-Islami fi tariq al-tajdid* [Islamic jurisprudence on the road to renewal], 2nd ed. (Cairo: Al-Maktab al-Islami, 1998), 61-63; Muhammad Shamseddin, 199.
5. Al-'Awwa, 58-59, 72.
6. An extensive international study, the *World Values Survey* provides an opportunity to assess the relative preferences of Arab people in comparison with people of other regions and cultures, on issues of freedom and governance. The results presented in this study are based on field surveys conducted in a large number of countries in the world, including four in the Arab world (Jordan, Algeria, Morocco, and Egypt) (see World Values Survey Association, 2004. *World Values Survey, 1995-2001*, World Values Survey Association (WVSA), Stockholm, website: www.worldvaluessurvey.org).

In Beirut's Tent City

MOUSTAFA BAYOUMI

It is late March 2005, and I am in the Virgin Megastore in downtown Beirut. Across the street is the tent city that protesters against the Syrian presence in Lebanon pitched soon after the Valentine's Day assassination of Rafik Hariri, the former prime minister. A few steps away, the enormous Muhammad al-Amin mosque soars up. Hariri is buried there, and because it is less than forty days since his death, Quran reciters still sit outside underneath a canopy while men and women of every confession continue to pour in to pay their respects. Nothing has united the country more in recent years than his death.

Hariri was not without his critics, however. Often blamed for plunging the country into massive foreign debt, he was also said to have ignored the poor when he rebuilt Beirut after the civil war. For most of his political career Hariri backed the Syrians; but last year began moving cautiously towards the opposition. Syrian President Bashar al-Assad reportedly told him last August that, "if you and Chirac want me out of Lebanon, I will break Lebanon." The opposition, which is made up of Christian, Druze, and Sunni parties, has been organizing in earnest since last September, when under Syrian pressure parliament extended the term of Emile Lahoud's presidency by three years.

In visible opposition to the government, hundreds of young people, most under 25, are camping out in the tent city. They will not leave, they say, until Syria does. (And on 30 April, days after Syria withdrew its last troops from Lebanon, the tent city was dismantled and the campers were awarded medals in a ceremony hosted by the opposition and the camp's leadership.) The opposition movement depends heavily on these young people, an emergent political force in Lebanon drawn mostly from the middle classes. Somewhat aware of their past and tired of their present, the youth desperately want to forge their own future. Waheed and Hisham, two young men who see themselves as independents rather than part of the "official" opposition, are among them. Although both are Druze, they do not support Walid Jumblatt's Progressive Socialist Party. Instead, they are interested in finding their own way, but are unsure how to do this without direction (or, as they fear, manipulation) from older leaders. Waheed is frustrated by his lack of historical knowledge. He wants at the very least to have a copy of the Lebanese constitution, and this is what has brought him and Hisham to the Virgin Megastore.

Youth and Politics

After a short conversation about modern Arab history, they invite me to the camp. Hisham studies at the American University of Beirut but has hardly gone to class since coming to the camp. Waheed is 26 and dropped out of high school when his father could no longer afford the fees and now works at a bakery—or at least he did before he pitched his tent at the camp. With them are Wassim, a Lebanese born in Venezuela, who had just deferred his military service to join the protest, and Bassam, who has a shaven head and an elaborate tattoo on his right shoulder.

Waheed walks around the camp conversing with people in other tents, or inviting their representatives to visit his. It is easy to do this because the camp has an established geography—most of Lebanon's major political parties (except, of course, the pro-Syrian factions) have representatives here. Hariri's Future Movement has a large tent. The Free Patriotic Movement, the party of General Michel Aoun, is well represented, as is the Lebanese Forces Party, a civil war offshoot of the right-wing Phalange Party. Neither Amal nor Hizbullah, the Shia parties, has an official presence, but a young Shia shaykh has recently arrived with his entourage.

On the day I arrive, Waheed invites Kamal, a representative of the Lebanese Forces Party, to tell us about the party's platform. Salaams are exchanged, and we sit on white plastic chairs around an unlit campfire. Waheed starts by asking Kamal a deceptively simple question: "What's the Lebanese Forces' plan for the future?"

Kamal is 20 and has lost his job as a printer's assistant because being at the camp has kept him from work. He is fashionably unshaven and wears his hair in long loose curls. Hanging off the zip of his jacket is

Middle class youth are emerging as an oppositional force in Lebanon. Somewhat aware of their past and tired of their present, the youth desperately want to forge their own future. Hundreds of young people, most under 25, camped out in a tent city in Beirut in an attempt to influence the course of political change in Lebanon.¹

the Lebanese Forces symbol, a crucifix with a jagged edge at the bottom. Kamal answers by saying that the Syrians must leave with their intelligence services, all the militias must be disarmed, and the elections must be free and fair. These goals line up with freedom, sovereignty, and independence, the mantra of the newly founded Inde-

pendence Uprising. (No one here calls what is happening the "Cedar Revolution," a phrase Washington seems to have invented.)

He counts off three more demands: an increase in the minimum wage, the return of Aoun from exile, and the release of Samir Geagea, the head of the Lebanese Forces who was imprisoned 11 years ago after a trial that Amnesty International ruled unfair. "If Geagea doesn't come out of jail, we will have a civil war again. Trust me," Kamal says, less as a threat than as a statement. His intensity frightens me. The last two demands, which are often made by the Lebanese opposition, are potentially divisive. Aoun and Geagea have plenty of blood on their hands.

Waheed slumps in his chair. Kamal has not given him much idea what the future Lebanon would look like. "I respect your opinions," he says earnestly, "even if I don't necessarily agree with them."

After the meeting, Kamal tells me to come back to the camp later. The Lebanese Forces group will put up a large, metal-framed tent and Kamal thinks that the police will try to stop them because of the metal frame. "CNN is coming," he says. "The police will be there." I return in the evening, but see no police and witness no violence. Instead, I watch a bunch of young men with portable drills erect a large, solid looking tent, which, incidentally (or not), has the effect of dwarfing the tents of the independent group.

The camp's problem was by this time clear to me. The history of Lebanon is one of deep, almost unbridgeable, sectarian divisions, which people believed—"hoped" is perhaps a better word—could finally be overcome after the Hariri assassination. The killing of the former prime minister illustrated the need for a strong and unified Lebanon. Unity is repeatedly called for at the camp, but its geography demonstrates the same confessional divisions that exist in the country itself—which is what makes the independent group all the more exceptional. On the other hand, it would be wrong to say that there is no significance in what is happening here. In Lebanon, according to Muhammad Ali Khalidi, a philosophy professor at the American University of Beirut, it is rare to meet members of other sects. Here, they are not only meeting but also talking to each other.

Memories of War

The people in the camp are too young to have fought in the civil war, although many remember it. Waheed and Hisham told me it was a lot of fun. Waheed collected spent cartridges, jammed rifles, and missile casings, hiding them in a makeshift fort of branches and leaves. Hisham used to sneak out of his house to watch Israeli and Syrian planes dog-fighting.

By the time I left Beirut, three bombs had exploded in predominantly Christian neighbourhoods, and with each blast talk of a new civil war increased. But almost everyone I spoke to, both inside and outside the camp, had an easy—perhaps too easy—answer as to why there would never be another civil war. We have unity now, I heard people say again and again. When I suggested that unity is easier with Syria as the common enemy, and that once Syria leaves, there will be real difficulties, most people said that the Lebanese are too smart for war now. "I don't think you have two civil wars within living memory of each other," Professor Khalidi assured me. Besides, he said, none of the parties except Hizbullah has many weapons, whereas in 1975 the militias and the Palestinians were armed to the teeth. Still, with each bombing, I heard more stories of well-heeled Lebanese making plans to leave the country if the situation got worse. And according to the Daily Star, sales of personal weapons have risen by as much as 70 per cent since the first bombing. A revolver's not a rocket launcher, but it is still a revolver.



**Young people
in Beirut's
Tent City,
March 2005**

PHOTO BY MOUSTAFA BAYOUMI, 2005

The afternoon after the second bombing, a particularly large group is discussing the prospects for civil war, and the opinions are often complex. Reine, a sophisticated 16-year-old, expresses profound scepticism about the camp's mission. She is sure that war is inevitable, and the problem is that young people are blindly following the leaders who brought the country to disaster before. I later ask Reine why, if she's so convinced of the inevitability of civil war, she is at the camp? "No one has the right to tell my country what to do," she says simply, as if I had asked a stupid question.

On Saturday night another bomb explodes in the predominantly Christian area of Sad el-Bouchrieh. Everyone at the camp is spooked by the blast. "Did you hear about the bombing?" Bassam asks me soberly. "We heard it, you know," he says. His eyes focus on somewhere off in the distance. "I don't know, man," he says after a pause. "Syria has to leave." He takes a deep drag from his cigarette. The orange glow from the tip lights his face for a moment in the dark. "I don't know if I'm ready to die, you know," he says, blowing smoke. "All they would have to do is put a bomb right here and it would be over. I don't know how long I can do this."

The next day, the group rents a van with a driver. Hisham and Bassam have talked a lot over the last few days about showing me other parts of Lebanon. Thirteen of us pile into the van. We stop and pick up food for a barbeque. By the time we reach Hisham's house in the mountains, it is clear that the trip is really for them, another way of blowing off steam. No one mentions last night's blast.

Hisham's house has been locked up for a while, but it is large and commands amazing views. While taking me on a tour, he tells me a story that must have been repeated many times in the family. During the war, the village below was a Lebanese Forces stronghold, and they had Hisham's Druze village under siege. One night, when it was known that Geagea was in the village below, one of Hisham's cousins along with four other men collected some guns, faked Lebanese Forces insignia on their uniforms, and sneaked down to the village. His cousin, he said, had a clear shot at Geagea, but as he was about to fire, a sniper hit him squarely in the chest. Hisham pokes me in the breastbone. The other Druze began shooting, fighting their way back up to their village. "The Lebanese Forces thought they were being attacked by a whole army," he says with pride, "but there were only five of them." Four, I think, after his cousin's death.

We return to the camp just in time for dinner and pick up pizzas from one of the larger tents. I notice that the Lebanese Forces tent now has two flags inside: a Lebanese flag and the banner of the Lebanese Forces, a flagrant breach of camp rules. The flags are pinned to the tent and between them is a cross. Since it is night time and the tent is lit, the flags shine through the white canvas. I point them out to Hisham, who snorts in disgust.

I leave Beirut later that night with the smell of campfire smoke still clinging to my clothes. Before I go, I run into Kamal in the Virgin Megastore. "Professor!" I hear behind me, and there he is, clean-shaven and now looking younger than his 20 years. Another Lebanese Forces member is with him, about the same age and with the same cross hanging from the zip of his jacket. "Come with us to the camp," he says warmly. I tell him I am on my way home. "To your hotel?" "New York." I am surprised by the look of regret that passes over his face. "I'll miss our discussions," he says, "really. When are you coming back?"

And I begin to wonder and to worry. In what circumstances will I find these young people the next time I am in Beirut? My optimism has been slowly fading since I arrived. I think about how, a few minutes before, I had been eating dinner with the independents. When they had finished their pizzas, the camp residents threw the cardboard boxes on the campfire. Maybe it was fatigue from our trip, or maybe it was anxiety about where the camp is heading, but everyone was quiet, staring blankly ahead, mesmerized by the flames, watching the boxes slowly turn into ash.

Note

1. A longer version of this essay was first published in the *London Review of Books* 27, no. 9 (May 2005): 35-36. Reprinted by permission.

Moustafa Bayoumi is Associate Professor in the Department of English at Brooklyn College, City University of New York. He is co-editor with Andrew Rubin of *The Edward Said Reader* (Vintage, 2000).

Email: bayoumi@brooklyn.cuny.edu

Syria: Another Regimefall Looming

AMMAR ABDULHAMID

After so many years of talking, writing and quibbling about the necessity of democratic reforms in the Arab World and the “Broader Middle East,” observers really need to concede what should by now be quite obvious to all, namely that reform in this bedlam region needs to affect the entire political spectrum and culture hereabouts as well as all the groups involved in shaping them: regimes, opposition groups, individual dissidents, and the society at large.

In a country like Syria, for instance, forty years of Ba’th oppression has practically decimated the country’s “professional” political class replacing it with a closed junta of corrupt militaristic ruffians of rural background who simply lack the necessary education and sophistication to envision and lead a viable and credible political reform process.

Their interest, their ideological predilections and their basic worldview, still mired in anti-imperialist and anti-Zionist rhetoric, have made it virtually impossible for them to show the minimal amount of pragmatism required to help “lure in” some new faces from outside the usual ranks of the regime, to help chart a new course for the future of the country.

Lack of vision

The few haphazard attempts that took place in the 1990s, under the late President Hafiz Al-Asad, and those that his son and successor, Bashar, has engaged in have come to naught. The lack of a future vision, a sustained methodological approach and the willingness to trust and stand by the new figures that were brought in to help produce the needed vision and advice on the reform process, gradually weakened the hands of these reform elements and hindered their ability to produce any viable change in the institutions in which they were infused.

In truth, the two presidents were simply more interested in maintaining and concentrating power in their hands, than in the reform process they have supposedly launched.

As often occurs, opposition groups that managed to survive the dark years of Ba’th oppression, which reached its climax in the 1980s, had long before become mere pathetic copies of the regime itself. Indeed, and with regards to their basic structure, ideology, and operation mechanisms, opposition groups often betray the same traits exhibited by the ruling Ba’th regime.

Corruption and nepotism are endemic; lack of transparency and inefficient organizational structures are basic qualities of Ba’th institutions; lack of necessary leadership skills and exposure to changing realities in the world and the region are readily visible even to the most casual of observers.

Failing opposition

Islamist parties aside for now, all secular oppositions groups are either Nasserist, socialist, or communist in their ideological orientation. Still, and despite the long-heralded failure of the Nasserist dream and the catastrophic collapse of the Soviet Union, none of parties involved engaged in any introspective effort or dialogue, or any serious attempt at reassessing their basic vision and platform in light of these critical developments. As such, opposition groups remain mired in outdated rhetoric that is as equally cut-off from reality as that of the ruling regime.

Despite the fact that conditions seem to have improved somewhat since the arrival of President Bashar Al-Asad to power with regard to the greater degree of tolerance shown to opposition groups, none of these groups have so far managed to modernize its operations and its

In the absence of credible alternatives, “regimefall” is not something to look forward to. Still, when regimefall has been made inevitable by the very internal logic of the regime involved, one cannot but watch, with a certain amount of awe, sorrow, and macabre fascination, the unfolding event.

platform. Indeed, none of them has been able to formulate even a rudimentary platform.

The failure of the new President to offer any vision for reform throughout the five years that elapsed since his assumption of power or to show the necessary leadership skills, will, and

gumption that were expected of him, have provided opposition figures with a unique opportunity to attempt to fill the gaps themselves. Instead, five years have elapsed and the regime managed to drive the country into international isolation, and yet, the best thing that opposition figures and groups had been able to do at this stage was to rally behind the regime in a foolish though predictable show of solidarity and patriotism.

A similar stance was also adopted by most individual dissidents, who, despite their own criticism of opposition groups for their inability to modernize their parties and their programmes, and despite their occasional finger-pointing at the regime for paving the way to this untenable situation, still could not divorce themselves from their former ideological garb and could not help but fall in line with the usual “patriotic” stand that Syrians have been accustomed to for the last four decades.

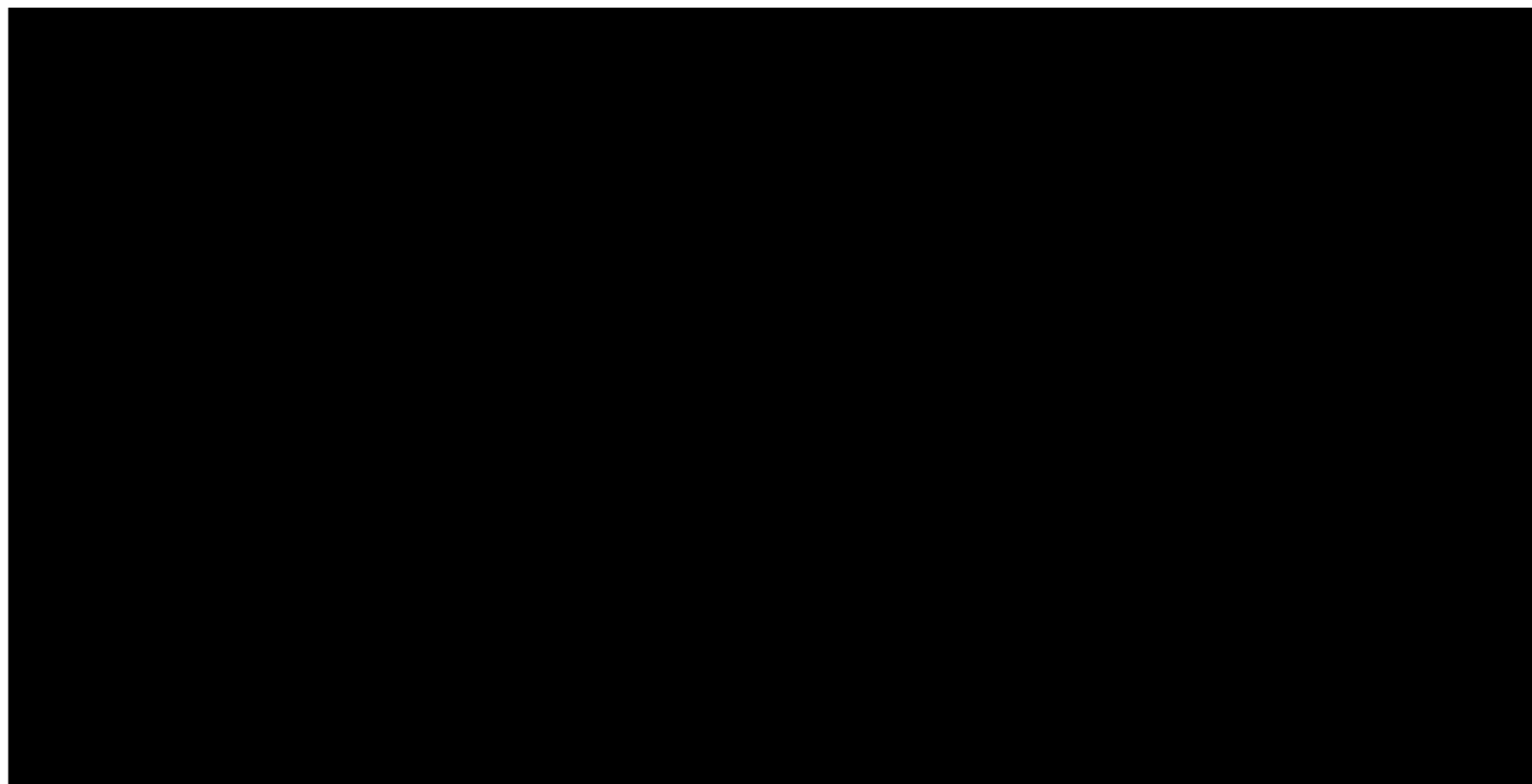
Thus, and despite being directly responsible for drawing up the policies that led to the adoption of the US sanctions against the country and of the UN Security Council Resolution 1559, not to mention the humiliating withdrawal from Lebanon, the Syrian President was given the opportunity to fall back on old tactics and mobilize, unchallenged, the population in his favour, by organizing “popular” demonstrations wherein people reiterated the old chant of “our blood and souls are yours.”

Riots and protests

Meanwhile, there have been signs for years now that the Syrian Street is growing restless. Indeed, mere months after the arrival of President Bashar to power in 2000, trouble broke out in the Southern province of Suweida, where Bedouin clans and Druze farmers clashed over land rights. The situation was quickly contained though by security forces sent from Damascus. The student demonstrations that took place on the Damascus University Campus were also put down and a number of students were arrested.

Coupled with the previous crackdown against the dissidents of the by now “infamous” period known as the Damascus Spring, that brief period of relaxation that followed the young President’s inauguration, the regime appeared firmly in control. Indeed, it was never the regime’s own control of society that was in question at the time, rather it was the degree of control that the President himself seems to have exerted. Most Syrians were willing to admit at the time that the only reason these events and crackdowns took place was the fact that the young President was not yet fully in charge of the situation, and that he simply needed more time to exert his will and vision upon the old guard around him and appoint his own people.

Still, mere months after these events had taken place, the Syrian streets witnessed an unusual phenomenon, namely: student organized rallies in support of the Palestinian Intifadah. Though, this was not exactly an opposition movement, most of the participants were young university students who were behaving at their own initiative. The authorities were indeed right in seeing the “danger” of this phenomenon and they launched a campaign of intimidation against the students who organized and took part in the various demonstrations and sit-ins and eventually forced them to put an end to their activities. Had these



© AFP PHOTO, 2005

demonstrations been allowed to continue, the demonstrators might have indeed stumbled in time upon a domestic agenda, a development that could have spelled plenty of troubles for a regime that bases its legitimacy upon a mythical popular approval.

As it were then, the regime remained to appear firmly in control of the security situation in the country until March 2004, where riots broke out between Kurds and Arabs in the northeastern parts of the country. The riots soon spread to other parts of the country as well, including the capital Damascus. Specifics notwithstanding, the main issue was clearly the growing dissatisfaction of the country's Kurdish minority with their status as second class citizens whose region remains as one of the country's most neglected parts, and who have no right to speak their own language, not to mention study it, at school.

Indeed, for a long time, the country's Kurdish Question lay forgotten and dormant, but developments in Iraq seem to have put an end to that. The development could not be said to have come as a complete surprise to the Syrian authorities. Indeed, and mere days before the US-led invasion of Iraq, the Syrian President paid a visit to the Kurdish regions of the country for the first time since his ascent to office and called for and stressed the importance of "national unity." The authorities, therefore, seem to have been quite aware of the growing potential for trouble in those regions, but they did nothing on the grounds to prevent the situation from imploding.

Months later, it was the turn of the country's Assyrian community to riot. More recently, clashes took place between the country's Alawite and Ismaili minorities in the historic town of Misyaf.

Despite the fact that at the heart of all these issues lie some well-documented socioeconomic grievances, the fact that the rioting took place along sectarian and ethnic fault lines is pretty telling. Moreover, the failure of the local or central authorities to predict or prevent these riots is also pretty revealing. Despite the fact that the situations were always contained from a security point of view, with relative ease, the political fallouts have always been grave. The frailty of this regime can now be seen by one and all. Indeed, there is a growing sense in the country that no one is in charge, which gives ample room for individual initiative.

A divided majority

In the absence of organized and capable opposition movements, however, and, in the absence of charismatic figures that inspire popular approval, and in view of the growing streak of extremist and atavistic trends among the country's various confessional groups, most notably the Sunnis, which form more than 75% of the population, the situation does not augur well for the future. The initiative is more likely to be seized by demagogues acting on the local level and fomenting communal hatred.

Still, and despite the fact that they seem to form the overwhelming majority, the Sunnis are far from being a homogenous group. Indeed,

they are themselves divided along ethnic, tribal, provincial, and ideological lines. Many are committed secularists. Others, though religious, are not necessarily in favour of establishing an Islamic state, being aware of the divisive nature of such an aspiration. For their part, the Sunnis of al-Jazira (as the northeastern parts of Syria are known) do include many Kurds, who identify themselves more as Kurds than Sunnis. The al-Jazira Arabs, on the other hand, tend to be more tribal in allegiance than their counterparts in Damascus, Aleppo, and other major cities in "western Syria." The Arabs of southern Syria are also tribal, but they belong to different tribes. Meanwhile, the Sunnis of the central and western Syria tend to be divided along ideological lines. Some are Sufis of different types, while others are Wahhabis and Salafis of different types as well. Some still yearn for the "good old days" of the Muslim Brotherhood, while others have shifted their allegiance to Hizbul Tahrir. Some follow this shaykh, while others follow that shaykh, and so on. The majority, that is the Sunnis, is only real vis-à-vis other confessional groups. Internally though, the Sunnis do not represent a singular community.

So, what does that exactly mean for the country, and for the future of the opposition movements in the country? Well, in the absence of an organized political opposition, and in the absence of a strong ruling regime, people, unsurprisingly, are falling back upon atavistic forms of belonging. But, in view of the increasing external political pressures being brought to bear on the country at this stage, and in view of the worsening socioeconomic conditions therein, a situation made even worse by the influx of hundreds of thousands of Iraqi refugees, the most likely scenario for the country at this stage seems to be implosion. Both regime and country seem poised to collapse under the increasing weight of their own internal contradictions. The conference of the Ba'th Party's regional command last June, and despite the hopes being hinged upon it by so many commentators and observers, demonstrated, once and for all, the total impotence and sterility of the current regime with regard to its ability to reinvent itself and provide a new vision for the country's future. As such, it is more likely to hasten rather than slowdown the eventual implosion.

In order to prevent such a catastrophic development, the Syrian opposition has to provide the missing vision and leadership needed to help this country pull itself out of the current quagmire. Considering our previous analysis, however, the opposition seems simply incapable and ill-equipped to do that. Consequently, we may not be simply witnessing the end of another Arab regime, but the death pangs of an entire country, that was nothing more than an artificial creation to begin with.

Ammar Abdulhamid is a Syrian novelist based in Damascus; he is coordinator of the Tharwa Project, a programme that seeks to foster a greater civic awareness in the broader Middle East.

Email: ammar@daremar.org

**The Ba'th Party
top at the
conference of
its Regional
Command,
Damascus,
6 June 2005**

The Sufi & the President in Post-Soviet Uzbekistan

ALEXANDRE PAPAS

Sufi masters and Sufi orders have historically played an important role on both popular and elite levels in Central Asia. In particular Naqshbandi branches were strongly involved in Uzbek court affairs in Tashkent and Bukhara. Historically, Sufi shaykhs (*ishon*) were leading the forces of opposition against Russian colonization of the area, as well as several popular uprisings, particularly in Ferghana valley. During the Soviet period they went underground preserving their brotherhoods in secrecy.

The cover of Najmiddin Komilov's book, *Najmiddin Kubro* (Toshkent: 1995)

Immediately after the dissolution of the Soviet Union in August 1991, Uzbekistan declared its independence. The First Secretary of the former Uzbek Communist Party, Islam Karimov, became president of the Republic of Uzbekistan and set up an authoritarian presidential regime. Since then Karimov's state has systematically and violently oppressed any political opposition, including movements that find inspiration in the various trends of political Islam. In fact, the mantra of "the dangers" posed by Islamic activists, or "terrorists," is today used to curb any man-

Uzbekistan is experiencing an ambiguous revival of Sufism; while people are rediscovering their religious traditions and Sufi groups are recomposing themselves, at the same time a form of state Sufism is emerging. Great mystical masters are celebrated as role models for today's citizens and their teachings are reinterpreted in a politically correct way. In this respect, post-Soviet Uzbekistan is reinventing itself through its Sufi heritage, while preserving political habits from the recent Soviet past.

ifestation of popular discontent. Last May, the regime even legitimized the brutal suppression of protests in the town of Andijon claiming—without producing any validation as such—that "Islamic terrorists" aiming at the destabilization of the Ferghana Valley provoked the violence. The "war on terror" has given the US cooperative Karimov regime a further license to continue suppressing any opposition using the same old Soviet tactics.

The 1991 constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan guarantees "freedom of conscience and religious association," which allows Sufi orders, Sufi gatherings, or pilgrimages to Sufi mausoleums to take place despite the opposition of some of the clergy. The question as to whether the Uzbek state has no need to suppress Sufi organizations and practices because Sufism does not pose a "danger" to the present political order is difficult to answer. One of the problems is that researchers have only limited access as yet and, consequently, field data are not ready at hand. Contemporary Sufism, as in the past, is not necessarily a *sui generis* or a sub-cultural, a-political inclination. To the contrary Sufism can be organized and even directed by the State. Today in Uzbekistan certain trends in Sufism are endorsed by the state and used to sanction official politics. Not unexpectedly, Uzbek state Sufism is highly rhetorical in its manifestations.

Sufism as heritage

Uzbek state officials, together with some intellectuals and religious authorities—engaged in a quest for salving national heritage (*meros*)—initiated a policy to rehabilitate and take advantage of the rich Sufi heritage of Central Asia. In September 1993, President Karimov and the state mufti, Abdullah Mukhtar Khan, pompously celebrated, in his mausoleum near Bukhara, the 675th anniversary of the birth of Baha' al-Din Naqshband, founder of the Naqshbandiyya order. Another Sufi master was commemorated when the year 1994 year was officially declared the "Yasawi year" after the eleventh century Sufi master Ahmad Yasawi, who became at that time the subject of numerous conferences throughout Central Asia. President Karimov described the saint as a symbol of "the strength of spiritual heritage."¹ The famous fifteenth century Naqshbandi poet and administrator, Alisher Navoi, is ubiquitously mentioned and quoted in order to illustrate the model of a Sufi figure occupying an official position and loyally supporting the court, e.g. the State.

Although some Sufi masters were also commemorated during the Soviet period as being part of the cultural heritage of the area, the current handling of the Sufi heritage takes place in a larger and fully different experience of patrimony making. State reconstructed Sufism is now represented as part of the Uzbek spiritual heritage: by comparing Sufi masters with western philosophers like Kant, Hegel, Feuerbach (it is notable that these thinkers in particular were severely criticized by Marx and Engels and consequently condemned by the Soviet orthodoxy), the young Republic of Uzbekistan re-shapes the spiritual masters' image to serve its own convenience. Sufi sheikhs—in addition to conquerors and writers such as Tamerlane and Pahlavon Mahmud—are included in the celebrated group of the founders of the Uzbek nation, recreating a medieval and illustrious past to a state that was created no earlier than 1924 as part of the Soviet Union. This official discourse on Sufism remains silent on instances of subversive, oppositional, and autonomous activities of the Sufi leaders and their following throughout history. Indeed, authorized historiographies often encourage a complete (religious, social, as well as political) Sufi model of loyal citizenship.

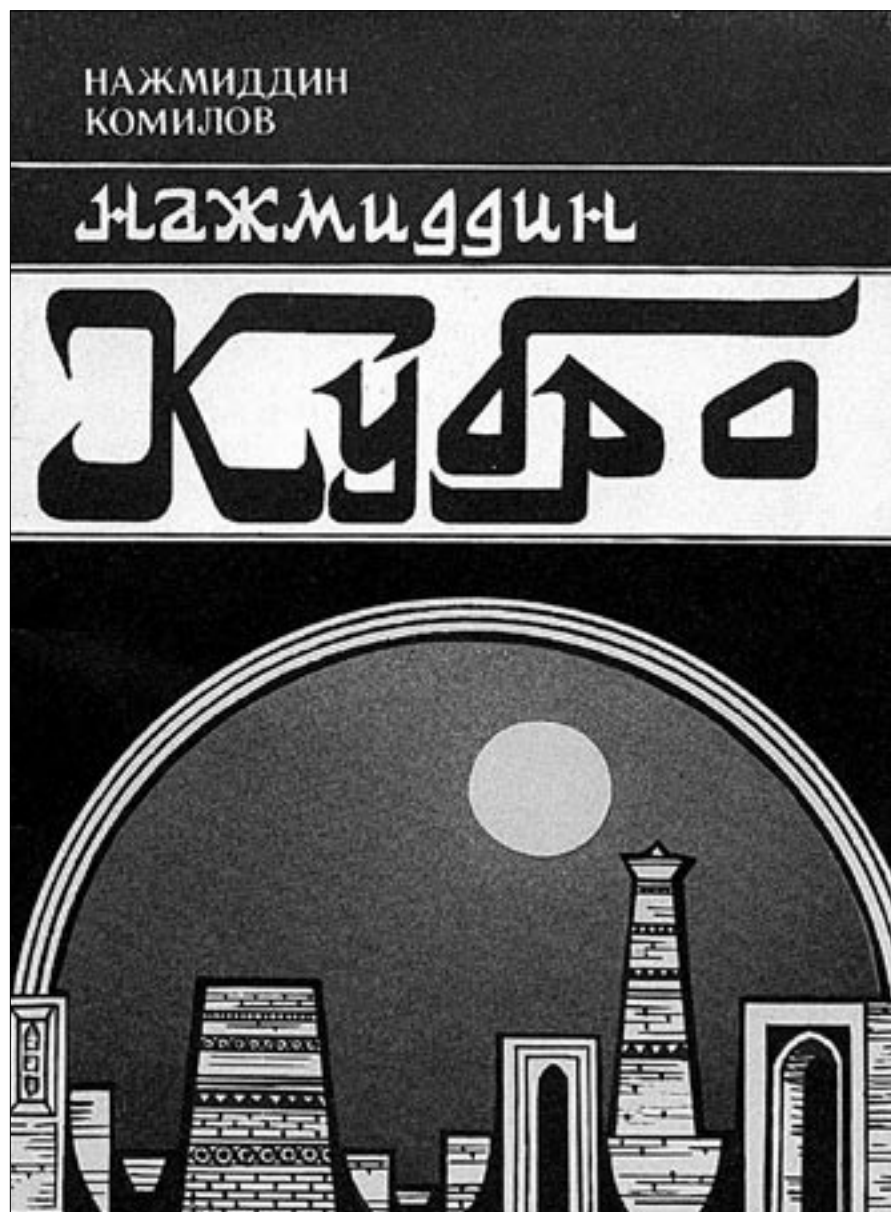


PHOTO BY ALEXANDRE PAPAS, 2005

Re-writing the Sufi sayings

Since the early 1990s many books and pamphlets on Sufism have been published in Uzbekistan. Among the most prolific authors are the poet Sadriddin Salim Bukhoriy and academic Najmiddin Komilov, an advisor to Islam Karimov on cultural and religious issues. Both authors regularly publish treatises on the life of Sufi shaykhs, their teachings, their roles in history and on more general aspects of Sufism, including doctrines. These treatises are diffused in bazaar bookstalls, at holy shrines, and mosques. One of the principal rhetorical techniques used by the authors is quoting Sufi writings in combination with other, often sacred, texts. An example of this neo-classical method is Bukhoriy's *Dilda Yor (The Beloved in Heart)* in which he explains the Naqshbandi spiritual path through a didactic question-answer construction, combining Sufi poetry, Medieval court poetry, Quranic references, hadith (sayings attribute to Muhammad) and *tafsir* (commentary) extracts.² Embellished with various Sufi anecdotes, such publications have the appearance of a traditional Sufi hagiography except that the substance and the aim are very different. If the traditional hagiography presents a model of sainthood, the modern hagiography puts forward a model of "mankind" and "citizenship." The text is not aimed at the Sufi disciple to show him the spiritual path but at the pious citizen to explain the proper way to live a submissive life. Typically, in one story of a shaykh imploring the help of Baha' al-Din Naqshband against the Bolsheviks, Bukhoriy makes the appearing saint answer that the bad situation of Uzbek Muslims is due to their lack of faith: neither jihad—inner or outer—nor any other action but the restraint of the believers and the total submission to God offers a way out.³ Thus these writings teach an obedient Sufism that would validate in the name of God the established political order.

Sufism as conformism

In two publications, *Tasavvuf 1. yoki Komil Inson Ahloqi (Sufism 1. or The Virtues of the Perfect Man)*⁴ and *Tasavvuf 2. Tavhid Asrori (Sufism 2. The Secrets of Unicity)*⁵, Najmiddin Komilov develops his views on mystical Islam. He firstly formulates an essential distinction between "correct" Sufism and "incorrect" Sufism; whereas the former promotes the progress of humankind, the latter leads to religious dogmatism and fanaticism both of which are to the prejudice of the labour class. By criticizing, on the one hand, the principle of the renunciation of the world in terms of socially disastrous behaviour and, on the other, the excessive influence of the spiritual guide on people as fanaticism, the author promotes a kind of middle-of-the-road Sufism, which consists, basically, in private spirituality and in loyalty to the public authority. Komilov also revisits the notion of *futuvvat*; by distorting the classical meaning of "spiritual honour code" or "spiritual chivalry", he attributes to it a conformist model of citizenship, which enhances the values of labour, camaraderie, and sense of duty. Such rhetoric—Sufi vocabulary aside—has an all too familiar sound in a former Soviet republic.

In an interview, Komilov stated that "...our honoured President Karimov, speaking about the necessity for us to learn and to get progress, ... said that both mature and young people have to study, but they should not forget their Uzbekness (*özbeklik*) and should bind together spiritual accomplishment and humanism."⁶ Sufism, in this perspective, should be considered as a form of Islam promoting modern education and patriotism. And that is how the Sufi spirituality, as the president suggests, comes to crown the moulding of the Uzbek citizen. This is the direction given to the nation by both the President and the Sufi: a politically correct and correctly political Sufism at the service of a Republic where public opinion is not allowed to opine.

Sufism as anti-extremism

Within the state supported Sufi discourse Sufism is also presented as an antidote to Islamic extremism. Significantly, for the celebration of the 900th anniversary in 2003 of the birth of 'Abd al-Khaliq Ghijduwani, a master of the Khwajagan-Naqshbandiyya order, the imam khatib of the great mosque of Bukhara, Abdulghafur Razzoq Bukhoriy, published *Tariqatga yo'llanma (A Guide to the Sufi Path)*. In this didactic volume, the scholar points out that two Islamic political movements, Wahhabism and Hizb ul-Tahrir, have been recently introduced in Uzbekistan and represent a danger for Uzbek Islamic traditions. In order to counter these "foreign" trends, Sufism is presented as the right path because it consents to various rituals of Uzbek believers (especially the

cult of the saints), it disagrees with the notion of an Islamic state or Caliphate, moreover, it respects the existing state and social order.⁷ This official discourse deliberately mixes different types of argumentations and relies on an overtly oversimplified vision of Sufism in Central Asia. Clearly, by obscuring facts and features of religious history, the state's aim is to encourage through mystical Islam society's submissiveness to the state. Here, Sufism appears as an artificial Islam, and the Sufi as a creature of the President.

Notes

1. See Thierry Zarcone, "Ahmad Yasavi, héros des nouvelles républiques centreasiatiques," *REMM*, 89-90 (2000).
2. Sadriddin Salim Bukhoriy, *Dilda Yor (Hazrat Bahouddin Naqshband)* (Toshkent: 1993), 80.
3. *Ibid.*, 43-44.
4. Najmiddin Komilov, *Tasavvuf 1 (yoki Komil Inson Ahloqi)* (Toshkent: 1996).
5. Najmiddin Komilov, *Tasavvuf 2. Tavhid Asrori* (Toshkent: 1999).
6. *Milliy Tiklanish*, 21 October 1997.
7. Khoji Abdulghafur Razzoq Bukhoriy, *Tariqatga Yo'llanma. Naqshbandiyya ta'limoti asosida* (Toshkent: 2003), 18-21. With a foreword by Najmiddin Komilov.

Alexandre Papas wrote his Ph.D. dissertation on Sufism and politics in Eastern Turkistan (EHESS, Paris). He is currently a postdoctoral fellow at the Centre for Advanced Studies in Religion, Piacenza, Italy, and conducts a seminar on the intellectual and religious history of Central Asia at the EHESS, Paris.
Email: alex.p@club-internet.fr

ADVERTISEMENT

NEDERLANDSE MOSLIMS

OVER GELOOF, DAGELIJKS LEVEN EN INTEGRATIE VAN MOSLIMS IN NEDERLAND

Met aandacht voor onder andere islamkritiek, vrouwenbesnijdenis, en jongerencultuur.



inclusief cd-rom met onder meer:

- tv-fragmenten van Ayaan Hirsi Ali en Ali B.
- filmfragmenten van het suikerfeest en een bezoek aan de moskee

ISBN 90 5356 761 5 * 19,50 euro * paperback * 176 pagina's * verkrijgbaar in de boekhandel

Salafis, Jihad, & Drama

NOORHAIDI HASAN

The rise of the Laskar Jihad, which from April 2000 until its disbanding in October 2002 mobilized more than 7,000 members to fight jihad against Christians in the Moluccas and other Indonesian trouble spots, perfectly represents an attempt made by a group of people to negotiate their identity through the call for jihad and the particular kind of violence it enacted. This paramilitary organization is an extension of and transformation from an "apolitical" Salafi *da'wa* movement concerned primarily with the purity of *tawhid* and the subsequent moral integrity of individuals.

The Salafi movement began to exert its influence throughout Indonesia in the mid-1980s. Its efflorescence cannot be isolated from Saudi Arabia's immensely ambitious global campaign for the Wahhabization of the Muslim *ummah* that finally aims at reinforcing its position as the centre of the Muslim world. Thanks to skyrocketing world oil prices, which provided considerable economic benefits during the 1970s, the Kingdom sponsored a variety of *da'wa* activities throughout the Muslim world, working with local agents. In this way Wahhabism was exported and disseminated. This campaign was later intensified, particularly in the aftermath of the Iranian Revolution and the takeover of al-Haram al-Sharif in Mecca in 1979.

Signs of the expansion of the movement were first and foremost strikingly seen in the appearance of young men wearing long flowing robes (*jalabiyya*), turban (*imama*), trousers right to their ankles (*isbal*) and long beards (*lihya*), and women wearing a form of enveloping black veil (*niqab*) in public places. Initially its presence was most significantly felt on university campuses where it formed an exclusive current of Islamic activism. Under the changing political circumstances during the first half of the 1990s, the movement spread beyond campuses. Members openly organized meetings, called *halqas* and *dauras*, in mosques located on city outskirts and rural villages. As a result, enclaves of members sprung up, followed by the construction of mosques and Islamic schools under the banner of the Salafi movement. Through religious activities organized systematically and openly, a sense of solidarity and group identity was born that fostered a growing network. The publication of pamphlets, bulletins, journals, and books provided communication channels through which Salafi messages were disseminated to a broader audience.

The attraction of the Salafi movement is rooted in its ability to provide a domain in which a resistance identity is created through discourses, symbols, and everyday practices. Within this context members are required to organize themselves into small tight-knit communities that stand distinctly apart from the "anything goes" open society around them. To some extent it can be identified as a sect, demanding complete loyalty, unwavering belief, and rigid adherence to a distinctive lifestyle. As its name indicates, it is a kind of refuge for pure believers who undergo an internal hijra (migration) to shelter themselves from the stains and temptations of the outside world.

The fast currents of modernization and globalization, which provided the opportunities for young people from rural villages to migrate to big cities in order to pursue higher education or seek jobs, contributed to the growth of the movement. Ironically, the social mobility of these youths has been mired in the failure of the New Order regime to fulfill its development promises, particularly to make good on its promise to distribute public goods and resources for all. This deficiency has been aggravated by rampant corruption and a lack of public accountability. The upshot is that many of the young rural migrants have become discontented and frustrated. Globalization accelerates their frustration to the extent that their identity is shaken. These deprived youths have tried to release their frustration. One option is to establish an enclave, a closed system, which distinguishes itself by an exclusive pattern of dress, interactions, and rela-

Jihad is often perceived as an expression of religious fanaticism and is mostly associated with the outrageous act of irrational, insane individuals inspired by their firm belief in radical religious doctrines. Although there is some plausibility in this perception, it fails to uncover the deeper meaning of jihad. Jihad is also a language of protest that can be used by marginalized individuals to construct their identity and thereby their position in the public sphere. For them, jihad is a message conveyed to display attempts to transform and empower their marginalization and break out of their own sense of frustration. Through its public display of violence the Indonesian Salafi movement, Laskar Jihad, illustrates this particular use of jihad.

tionships. By doing so, they achieve control over the social space by shrinking the world to the size of their community. Doubtless this passive resistance can be activated through the art of mobilization.

Towards political mobilization

The Salafis began to make their appearance in the arena of the Realpolitik of Indonesia shortly after the collapse of the New Order regime in May 1998. In response to the escalation of the bloody communal conflict in the Moluccas, which erupted in January 1999, they issued a jihad resolution and established the Laskar Jihad (Jihad Army) organization. The pre-existing

informal social network built among them emerged as the key to the success of Laskar Jihad formation. Centres of Salafi activism served as the recruitment pools through which voluntary fighters were recruited. The cohesiveness of the network reduced the free-riding problem. All Salafis associated with the network felt themselves necessarily part of the mobilization. It was therefore natural that they competed to clamber on board the ships that would take them to the Moluccas. The magnificence of jihad, which had frequently been discussed in religious lectures and glorified in their religious publications, had apparently borne fruit.

Despite the importance of the network, the establishment of Laskar Jihad benefited enormously from the political conditions following the collapse of the New Order regime and its ensuing transitional processes. This dramatic event stimulated the growth of a free political space, which enabled all members of Indonesian society to discuss and develop opinions on issues affecting their lives. Consequently, a variety of groups, identities, and interests emerged, competing for the newly liberated public sphere. Paradoxically, this openness offered the remaining powers of the status-quo (the old elite) room to manoeuvre and orchestrate a game that could hold the seeds of the destruction of the emerging civil society and help them, in turn, to recover their lost power. The key to reach this end was to manipulate the public sphere, the main arena in which ideas, interests, values, and ideologies are formed and relations of civil society are voiced and made politically efficacious.

The Salafis sought to frame their actions by placing the Moluccan issue coherently within the context of global conflicts in the Muslim world. In what can be described as a manifesto they stated that having succeeded in winning the cold war against the Soviet Union, the United States lost no time in proclaiming itself the sole superpower. And it continued to say that this superpower had thereby given itself the right to subjugate Islam which it saw as the greatest and most dangerous enemy of the globalized world. The Salafis interpreted the success of the United States as a victory of Zionists and (Christian) Crusaders, who had long been nurturing a hatred of Islam. Conflicts and violence that had erupted in different parts of the Muslim world, including Bosnia, the Philippines, North Africa, and Chechnya, they declared, were all evidence of the fierceness which the enemies of Islam displayed in their efforts to eliminate all Muslims from the face of the earth. Confronted with the complexity of the Moluccan conflict, the Salafis saw no solution except jihad. They were convinced that with jihad the manoeuvres of the enemies of Islam seeking to undermine the growth of Islam in Indonesia could be halted and, at the same time, the fate of Moluccan Muslims could be turned.

Drama of jihad in the Moluccas

Under the banner of Laskar Jihad the Salafis started their mission in the Moluccas by staging a spectacular collective action in the Senayan Main Stadium in Jakarta on 6 April 2000. At that time they presented



Laskar Jihad at the Indonesian Legislative Assembly, Jakarta, 10 April 2000

PHOTO BY BERNARD CHANIAGO, © TEMPO, 2000

themselves majestically: a sea of swarming, writhing people clad in white, absorbed in chants of “Allah Akbar” whose echoes reverberated throughout the stadium. Sunlight flashed from their swords like strobe lights. In the background banners and posters fluttered magnificently, emblazoned with the slogans “Wage *jihad fi sabil* Allah” and “Defend Muslims in the Moluccas”. At the height of his public exposure, commander-in-chief Ja’far Umar Thalib mounted the podium and delivered a speech in which he decried the “disaster” afflicting Moluccan Muslims, confronted as they were by a genocidal threat.

The Salafis’ mission to fight jihad in the Moluccas is better conceptualized as a drama, because this apparently frenzied action was motivated not so much by the hope for a resounding victory as by the intention to fabricate a heroic image. It was the moment in which the Salafis proclaimed their rightful place in the political arena of Indonesia. Through the staging of theatrical scenes, they emerged on the political scene as a bunch of militant youths willing to martyr themselves for the cause of God. Wearing the distinctive uniform (white *jalabiyya* and turban) complete with arms on proud display, they portrayed themselves as the most heroic jihad combatants, aching to go to the frontlines.

The Salafi fighters, cast as heroes or villains destined for some great ideal according to differing scenarios, acted in a plot that could end either in a happy or in a tragic ending. The plot might have been written beforehand or it might have been improvised, or it might have crystallized only after the drama was underway. Any of these possibilities is of little account as long as there is no public to side with the play’s main character and applaud their warring spectacle against the hegemonic global order.

The main actor in this drama was no doubt Ja’far Umar Thalib, himself a sign among signs. But it was the drama of jihad that created him, raised him from the ranks of a modest Salafi *ustaz* (teacher) to an icon of jihad, for without this drama the image of the hero could never have taken form. Nevertheless, in order to leave a lasting impression, he needed to mobilize, and more importantly be seen mobilizing, the forces that would carry him on the political stage. Mobilizing men for jihad was, thus, his primary task. The flow of fighters from various provinces in Indonesia, who came to proclaim their support for this call to action, contributed to both strengthening his position as the icon of jihad and to facilitate the process by which he could claim central leadership among Indonesian Muslims.

As players in a drama, the Salafi fighters acted intentionally to capture public attention. They enjoyed the coverage in the media, including television, radio, newspapers, bulletins, and magazines, although their

underpinning doctrine should have prevented them from doing so. They warmly welcomed reporters from the media who used the event (and at times sensationalized it) to sell their publications. Yet, ironically, because most of the Salafi fighters were actually unskilled combatants, their only success lay on the symbolic level, that is, in creating propaganda that influenced public opinion through the media.

Even this success was only partial; for the rise of Laskar Jihad by no means indicated the success of militant Muslim groups in taking control of the Indonesian public sphere. It served instead to highlight the marginal position of militant Muslims and their unsuccessful efforts to gain hegemony for their discourse of glorifying militancy and violence. Because these militants pursue their struggle through spectacular violence, jihadi Islam remains on the political periphery and may never succeed in actually changing the strategic landscape of the country. It certainly did not change the map of Indonesian Islam. Nor has it changed the secular system of the Indonesian nation-state. The majority of Indonesian Muslims remain tolerant and opposed to the use of violence, let alone terrorism. The wave of militancy and violence that has engulfed Indonesia has instead encouraged Indonesian Muslims to work more systematically and consistently for the dissemination of discourses on democracy, gender equality, and human rights.

Noorhaidi Hasan successfully defended his dissertation *Laskar Jihad: Islam, Militancy and the Quest for Identity in Post-New Order Indonesia* at Utrecht University, the Netherlands on 14 June. He is currently affiliated to the State Islamic University Sunan Kalijaga, Yogyakarta, Indonesia.

Email: Noorhaidi@hotmail.com

Islam along the South Asian Littoral

BRIAN J. DIDIER &
EDWARD SIMPSON

It is a mystery of modern South Asian studies that so little is known about the Muslim communities inhabiting the coastal regions of the Indian subcontinent. Historically, the Muslim communities of littoral—which we take to include the Gujarati, Konkan, Malabar, and Coromandel coasts, Sri Lanka, the islands of Lakshadweep, and the Republic of Maldives—served as important entrepôts in the flow of goods, ideas, and religious personnel around the Indian Ocean. Today, the Muslims of this region continue to orient themselves along very different lines of cultural and political influence than those shaping Islam in the northern hinterlands. Overshadowed by their co-religionists in the north and long ignored by anthropologists and historians alike, these Muslim communities stand in need of sustained academic attention. Our aim in this essay is not so much to repair the neglect, but to highlight its existence and suggest some directions for future study. Additional study of the littoral communities will enhance under-

The Muslim communities inhabiting the littoral regions of the Indian subcontinent represent unique and uniquely neglected nodes in the broader network of South Asian and Indian Ocean Islam. Shaped by the maritime forces of the Indian Ocean, and largely independent from their northern co-religionists, these communities appear to have developed a distinct Muslim politics that is little understood.'

standing of the spatial and temporal transformations of Islam and allow for a more sensitive analysis of contemporary patterns of polity, social loyalty, and religious transformation.

Why the neglect?

Given the abundance of experts working in the subcontinent, it is worth considering why there have been so few studies of Islam along the littoral. His-

toriographical lacunae can be explained by the scant supply of source material, particularly for the pre-colonial period. It is fair to say that while we know roughly how and when Islam arrived—Arab seafaring merchants would have included Islam in their wares not long after Mohammad's message reached the southern ports of the Arabian Peninsula and perhaps even before Muslim rulers reached Sind in the eighth century—we know virtually nothing of early processes of conversion and Islamization. Primary evidence for the pre-colonial era tends to be culled from mythical accounts and a few prominent texts such as Ibn

Battuta's fourteenth century account of Muslim social life in Malabar, the Maldives, and Sri Lanka. While the lack of sources is clearly acute, scholarly work on early periods of the spread of Islam—especially between the Hadhramaut and India's western coasts—should provide some clues for historians of the subcontinent. Additionally, although dominant forms of oral tradition along the coast are often noticeably tainted by the concerns of authenticity, nationalism, and chauvinism, these traditions may also reveal truths about early Islamic history.

In a more encompassing sense, however, the neglect of littoral Islam appears to be the result of the kind of centre-periphery models that have affected the study of Muslim societies in general. It is often assumed, for example, that textual and ritual practices of the southern parts of the subcontinent are inferior to those of the northern scholastic traditions—in a rather similar fashion to the subordination of South Asian (the periphery) traditions in relation to those of the Middle East (the core). The recent scholarship of Barbara Metcalf, Francis Robinson, Richard Eaton, and others has gone some way toward demonstrating that the subcontinent has substantive textual, theological, and legal traditions of its own, but this work too has focused largely on the north, the legacies of Mughal rule, and the doctrinal and textual traditions of Delhi, Lucknow, and Bengal. Evidence from the littoral, however, questions the existence of clearly defined divisions in Muslim practices and thought between the north and south

Gujarati vessels voyaging between Zanzibar and western India in the 1950s.



PHOTOGRAPHER UNKNOWN, PHOTO COURTESY OF DNARAN DHAMJI KHARWAR

of the subcontinent; it also challenges the more generic idea that the peripheries necessarily equate with vernacular traditions and centres with the authentic.² The conventional academic division of the subcontinent into northern and southern zones is based largely on the geographies of language, kinship practices, and Hindu ritual traditions. For Muslims, the geography of the subcontinent appears to be rather different, albeit currently poorly understood. India appears to be divided into different zones in which different schools of Islamic law dominate and where certain practices, sectarian interests, and cultural traditions are emphasized. These zones overlap with other kinds of religious geography such as networks and hierarchies of shrines, scholarly circuits and, as in the past, trade and migration. The littoral communities also remain intimately connected to wider Indian Ocean networks as the following ethnographic example illustrates. A Gujarati Muslim trader with contacts in Calcutta took a skeleton crew to the Andaman Islands in 2001. Once there, they took command of a dhow from a shipyard in Indonesia, ordered from unseen faces known to them only through association. The vessel was taken to Colombo because its new owner was displeased with the vulgar Indonesian carving on the prow and wanted it removed before he could consider the vessel auspicious and thus seaworthy. The vessel was then commissioned and today steers a regular course between Mumbai, Dubai, and Saudi Arabia, returning annually to Gujarat for the monsoon months.

A “littoral” world-view?

The kind of comparative exercise required to understand the broader effects of such movements of people, ideas, and resources faces a number of difficulties. For example, attempts to identify parallels, similarities, and differences among the many Muslim communities in the region often reinvent “Galton’s Problem.” This problem, dating from the nineteenth century, suggests that particular traits diffuse across “cultures” and therefore we can never know absolutely if such cultural traits arose independently as adaptive responses or were a result of diffusion. The comparative project raises other questions as well. Are there, for example, distinct South Asian conditions that create a littoral sociology, a littoral religiosity or a littoral worldview? How can we analytically distinguish between movements of people, ideas, and religious forms? What would a sacred geography of South Asian Islam look like? Furthermore, in what ways is it connected to other geographies? Are there common threads in either patterns of cosmopolitanism, orthodoxy, or expectation that tie littoral communities together?

An approach that dissolves the dominance of the centre-periphery model, escapes the over-determination of the north-south split, and allows us to examine independently the development of particular nodes through their interaction with others is to examine movement and interaction within a network of multiple core areas, each with its own spheres of influence. This approach requires that we understand each of the nodes on the network and distinguish between unique and shared cultural traits. Vernacular literary traditions, distinct architectural patterns, and ritual practices might indeed mark a littoral worldview. Here again, our limited knowledge of the region prevents us from moving from hypotheses to firm conclusions.

There are, however, points of broad consensus upon which to build further analyses. For example, scholars working in the region agree that these coastal communities were shaped in an environment largely determined by maritime trade patterns and Arab merchants, not in the crucible of land-based military conquest undertaken by Turkish and Persian Muslims. These coastal communities were clearly not hermetically sealed. Many of the merchant communities had contact with each other. Many—such as those in Gujarat and parts of Tamil Nadu—also had relationships of sorts with the larger power brokers of the Delhi Sultanates and Mughal Empire. Asymmetries of power between the north and the coastal regions do not, however, tell us much about patterns of religious consumption. We cannot assume, for example, that there was a “trickle-down” religious economy where Islam in the north sustained communities on the coast or in the south. While it is clear many of the connections on this South Asian network need to be explored, it also appears that the communities of the littoral developed in relative independence and far from the influence of their hinterland co-religionists. The processes of conversion and early Islamization were sustained not by a Muslim ruling elite, but rather by itinerant traders, clerics, and Sufis with few if any connections to these empires.

Scholars also agree that distinct histories of the littoral continue to shape contemporary religious politics. If it is true, for example, that the Muslim communities of the South Asian littoral have long inhabited worlds apart, distinct from the religious and political environment in north India and the Deccan, then one might imagine that such differences are manifest in the sphere of religious, communal, or public politics. Consider, for example, the experience of Muslims during the reign of the Delhi Sultanates and the Mughal Empire. Most of the communities on the littoral did not enjoy the glory or benefits of imperial rule. In trying to account for modern reform movements, either in the subcontinent or in the wider Muslim world, scholars have often argued that the loss of power and prestige that accompanied the decline of Islam’s imperial age and the rise of European colonialism has produced an “Andalus syndrome” or “Muslim malaise.” In turn, this malaise helps to explain why many Muslims in the contemporary period have sought, through a variety of reform or revival movements, to re-impose a golden age of Islamic rule thought to have existed in the seventh and eighth centuries (AD). Many pundits have even gone so far as to suggest that this malaise handicaps modern Muslims living under secular regimes or as minority communities in non-Islamic states. Evidence from the littoral suggests that coastal Muslims have been shaped by different forces and may be less susceptible to the anxieties and the antagonisms afflicting their co-religionists in the north. Has living on the littoral as minority communities better equipped these Muslims to navigate the hazardous waters of religious pluralism and competitive communal politics that characterize much of the subcontinent?³ Additional study of the littoral would help confirm, or deny, this intriguing possibility.

Finally, how have these communities influenced worlds beyond the shores of the littoral? It is quite clear that currents of Arabian influence shaped littoral Islam for centuries and that contacts with the Emirates continues to condition local beliefs and practices. Unfortunately, the details of such encounters have gone largely unrecorded or have been lost. Scholars have determined that the Muslim communities in this region served as important nodes in a broader Indian Ocean network that extends from the South Arabian Peninsula to Southeast Asia, yet we have little sense of how Islam as a product of exchange was altered as it passed through the hands of the Muslims in Gujarat, Malabar, and the Maldives. At the moment, it is uncertain what impact the forms of Islam found in these regions have beyond regional zones. As far as we can tell, for example, there is no littoral equivalent of the Deoband or Tablighi Jama’at. And yet, Sufi groups, madrasas, and Islamic reform movements in Lakshadweep, Malabar, Tamil Nadu, and Sri Lanka have certainly influenced each other, and have sent their delegates as far as Singapore and Kuala Lumpur.

The analytical neglect of this region can no longer be justified. A wave of new scholarship by historians and anthropologists suggests that it is time to reassess the relationships between the littoral Muslims, their exchange partners abroad, and their north Indian co-religionists. It also suggests that the environment of the littoral continues to shape minority and Muslim politics in ways well worth exploring.

Notes

1. The authors would like to thank the participants and audience of the round table discussion entitled “Islam along the South Asian Littoral” that took place at the 2004 Conference on South Asia held at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. In addition to the authors, the participants included Stephen Dale, Dennis McGilvray, Filippo Osella, and Paula Richman.
2. Bruce Lawrence’s article “Islam in South Asia” is one of the few exceptions to this rule of centre-periphery thinking, in *Oxford Encyclopedia of the Modern Islamic World*, ed. John L. Esposito (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 278-284.
3. Ashutosh Varshney’s recent work on the Muslims of Calicut strongly suggests this possibility, *Ethnic Conflict and Civic Life: Hindus and Muslims in India* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002).

Brian J. Didier is an adjunct professor in the Department of Anthropology at Dartmouth College. Currently, he is serving as a research associate in the Faculty of Shariah and Law at the Maldives College of Higher Education.
Email: brian.didier@dartmouth.edu

Edward Simpson is a lecturer in social anthropology at Goldsmiths College, University of London. His latest research is on the political and social consequences of a devastating earthquake in Gujarat, western India, in 2001.
Email: e.l.simpson@lse.ac.uk

Weber and Islam

ERNEST WOLF-GAZO

2005 is the year we celebrate the 100th anniversary of Einstein's relativity theory, the commemoration of Jean-Paul Sartre's birthday and, not least, Max Weber's famous and controversial monograph, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*. Weber's thesis, groundbreaking and controversial ever since its publication in 1905, states that a specific protestant puritan Christian ethos provided the basis for a modern rational lifestyle. The "Spirit of Capitalism" provided an essential attitude that promoted the disenchantment of the ancient world. The world of fairytales, myths, and saga had to give way to scientific realism. Of course, the specifics are more subtle but the controversy around the Protestant Ethic centred on the issue of whether Weber's claim that a modern rationalist lifestyle was possible only in north-western Europe could be plausibly defended. Despite many disclaimers, the idea of a specific religious ethos and attitude relating to rationalist economic activity remains alive in the social sciences and philosophy.

Max Weber (1864-1920), a lawyer and economic history professor at Freiburg, Berlin, Heidelberg, and Munich was a prolific thinker, lecturer, writer, and public speaker on contemporary political matters. Weber was highly innovative and accomplished an extremely sophisticated methodology that enmeshed historical studies—specifically economics and religious beliefs and attitudes—in a systematic framework. Weber, however, was not only interested in the specifics of economic history of western Europe and its relationship to religious belief, especially puritan protestant Christianity, but also in world religions such as Hinduism, Buddhism, Taoism, Judaism, and, lastly, Islam. Unfortunately Weber did not live long enough to complete his studies on Islam. What we have are fragments, unpublished manuscripts, letters commenting on the subject matter, and the great biography by his wife and fighter for women's rights in early twentieth century Europe, Marianne Weber.

Influence of German *Orientalistik* literature

Max Weber's sources on Islam were based on the contemporary writings of central and eastern European scholars who wrote in German such as Carl H. Becker, Julius Wellhausen, Theodor Noldeke, and the great Hungarian, Ignaz Goldziher. These scholars whose body of work fit under the rubric of Islam and Near Eastern civilizations, or *Orientalistik*, concentrated mainly on original religious and literary texts, translating, commenting, and interpreting their contents. For many, the original interest was drawn by the Holy Land, Christianity, and Hebrew literature. Yet, they quickly realized that they had to deal with Islam as an important element in the formation of the Near East, as it was known in those days. These German-speaking scholars of Islam do not qualify simply as Orientalists in the ideological sense used by Edward Said. In fact Said, in the second edition of his well known book, *Orientalism*, points out the great achievements of German-speaking Islam scholars and apologizes for leaving them out of the original manuscript since their inclusion would lead to a tripling of the book's size. A more plausible explanation is that the German Orientalists would not have fit well into Said's original scheme of a Eurocentric Islam scholarship by the British and French. Since Germany did not maintain colonies with a Muslim population, the German situation was quite different. More important, the origin of German Oriental studies can be traced to the romanticism of the early nineteenth century as a critical movement of industrialization and modernization of central Europe. Here we see the appearance of the Grimm brothers and Friedrich Rueckert, one of the first great German Orientalists translating Persian poetry used by Goethe. From Rueckert we can trace a direct line to the late Annemarie Schimmel via Becker and Goldziher. This is the tradition within which Max Weber moved and derived his sources and information.

On the occasion of the centennial of Max Weber's *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, philosopher Ernest Wolf-Gazo examines the possible contributions of Weber to a sociology of Islam.

Towards a sociology of religion

Weber treated the world religions as cultural phenomena or cultural entities that emerged under certain historical conditions and developed into certain

types of formations that included respective dogma, law, attitudes, and traditions. Religious doctrine took on a rationalist form that was to put an end to idolatry, myth, and legend. Weber was not of the opinion that religion was merely a type of opium for the masses, but regarded it as something that helped to discipline the masses from sheer savagery, lawlessness, and chaos. Religion gave the people a sense of meaning. For Weber there is a rationality in the form of religion in contrast to magic, shamanism, and mythology. It is a rationality no better or worse than the one emerging out of western Europe, it is just different. Protestantism in its Calvinist, pietistic or puritan form provided an inner-worldly asceticism that promoted the salvation of humankind on earth through hard work deferring instantaneous gratification. Weber sees Islam as transforming itself more and more into a legalistic religion oriented towards feudal property. Yet, Weber's specific concentration was not simply on rationality, or a rational lifestyle, but a modern lifestyle that encompasses politics, economics, aesthetics, social life, and the military and bureaucracy, as well as professional attitudes in scientific research and ethos.

The modern rationalist ethos, which had developed in Europe, was Weber's central concern in developing his political sociology, his economic history, his sociology of law, and exclusively, his sociology of religion. It is within that framework of the religious ethos of specific religions and their promotion of a certain kind of rationality within the context of their respective tradition, that other religions, be it Hinduism or Islam, became part of Weber's research project in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. He did not live to complete his ambitious project, but Weberian themes, issues, and topics abound everywhere in the social sciences. Weber lived to see the fruition of his publications on Hinduism, Buddhism, Taoism, and Judaism, but not so his studies in Islam. Accordingly, the literature and secondary studies on Weber and Islam are scarce and wanting. Some have initiated the respective topic yet comprehensive and more specialized studies are needed to

highlight aspects of Islamic civilization in the spirit of Weber.

In the 1970s and 1980s isolated publications on Weber and Islam have appeared, especially in Anglo-American sociological literature, to draw attention to the relevance for Weber studies. In the meantime it is not only Weber studies, but also Islam studies that are badly needed in terms of a dialogue of civilization. In the process we can incorporate the work of one of the great western sociological minds of the twentieth century into studies of Islam and Muslim societies.

What is needed is to go beyond Weber in terms of the methodology of the social sciences and relate new methods to old, but unsolved problems, such as political authority in Islam in the modern context, legitimacy and human rights in Islam in the modern context, and not to mention individual rights within the community of believers in modern terms.

Rationality in a comparative perspective

It is an open secret that serious problems confront Muslim societies worldwide. Some of the issues these societies grapple with are: Is modern capital-

ism possible within an Islamic framework? Are commercial laws, freedom of supply and demand and other corporate economic activities of the private sector, possible in a modern version of Islam (if such a term is applicable)? Capitalism is not unique to the western world, but a specific type of commercial activity that controls the natural resources of

The importance
of Weber lies
in his rigorous
methodological
approach to all the
world religions,
including Islam.

our planet is very much a rationality of domination that did not appear in the Near East or Asian Civilizations. Weber was Eurocentric, but only in the sense that he felt that a certain type of rationality, a certain type of rational law, a certain type of corporation such as the medieval city, appeared in Medieval European civilization. The rational understanding of citizenship, obligations, rights and responsibility in the context of rational normative mandates, rules, imperatives, and laws, was specific to western European culture. Indeed, the difference between the private and the public, the separation between religious institutions and institutions of the state, are considered very specific formations of the western world.

Rationalism based upon a puritan spirit that calculated quantitatively in the name of Descartes and praised nature as in the glory of a mighty *Pantokrator* in the name of Newton was specific to the ascetic puritan calculative mind. Deity was integrated into the laws of nature and the natural philosopher of the scientific revolution accommodated the spiritual in the name of Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*. The respective economic rationale of Adam Smith followed. It was this unique combination of a technology of domination over nature and a puritan Christian mindset that promoted professional work ethos that promoted the airplane, solar cell, the laser, and not to mention the computer, and lastly, cloning. Of course, Weber did not live to see these developments but his insights and spirit of research into crucial issues concerning social activities of humankind is very much at the forefront in our century. For Weber it is the human being above all else, his needs and values, that stands as paramount. To be more specific, the interrelations between needs and values, under certain historical conditions, provide insights and valuable knowledge for application to the study of contemporary and future societies. Weber, following Kant, asked about specific condition under which societies are formed and what sort of structures these societies generate?

Weber maintains that rationalism was prevalent in Confucian as well as Islamic civilization, but it was of a different kind or type of rationality than the one emerging out of the puritan ascetic Christian lifestyle (the German *Lebensführung* is more descriptive and apt at this point). It was the type of rationality that confronted the cosmos and transformed it into the laws of nature by the transcendental subject as scientific researcher. Hindu and Islamic civilizations found deistic powers in form of monotheism and godly spirits, but left nature to its natural processes and works. There was not an attempt at usurping a higher power in the figure of Dr. Faustus. Could we imagine an Islamic Faust? No, it was a specific puritan ethos of Calvinist Christian denomination that laid the foundation for a systematic rationalist approach to social, political, economic, and religious life emerging from western Europe. In that sense we can say, it was not a better rationality, but very different in intention and nature from the rest of emerging civilizations.

The outstanding tradition of the systematic study of religions, magic, and mythology which started in the mid-nineteenth century with the voluminous works of Max Mueller, Sir James Frazer, E.B. Tylor and moving into the twentieth century, Emile Durkheim, Wilhelm Schmidt, Rudolf Otto, Joachim Wach, then Freud, Dumezil and Mircea Eliade, continues in works by contemporary scholars such as Werner Stark, Thomas Luckman, Peter Berger or S.N. Eisenstadt. Here we see a development treating religion systematically in its historical form, in its ethnological development, as a phenomenological human occurrence, towards a science of sociology of religion. It was Max Weber who realized a rigorous methodological framework in which to sort out the concrete elements of a religion that make up its society, its politics, and its economics. With and after Weber's publication of his *Collected Essays on Sociology of Religion* in 1920-1, religious studies took on a scientific dimension in the German sense of *Wissenschaft* (i.e. a systematic body of knowledge about a specific type and form of social phenomenon). Islam was somewhat neglected until the latter part of the twentieth century and that is the reason why the topic "Weber and Islam" is of greatest urgency and relevance, considering the re-emergence of Islam as a political and ideological force. Weber and Islam is at present an open-ended theme that needs to be explored carefully with professionalism and, if possible, non-ideological finesse.

Much of Weber's information on Islamic society is insufficient, incomplete and patchy; yet, the importance of Weber lies in his rigorous methodological approach to all the world religions, including Islam. Studying carefully the complete work of Weber, especially on China,

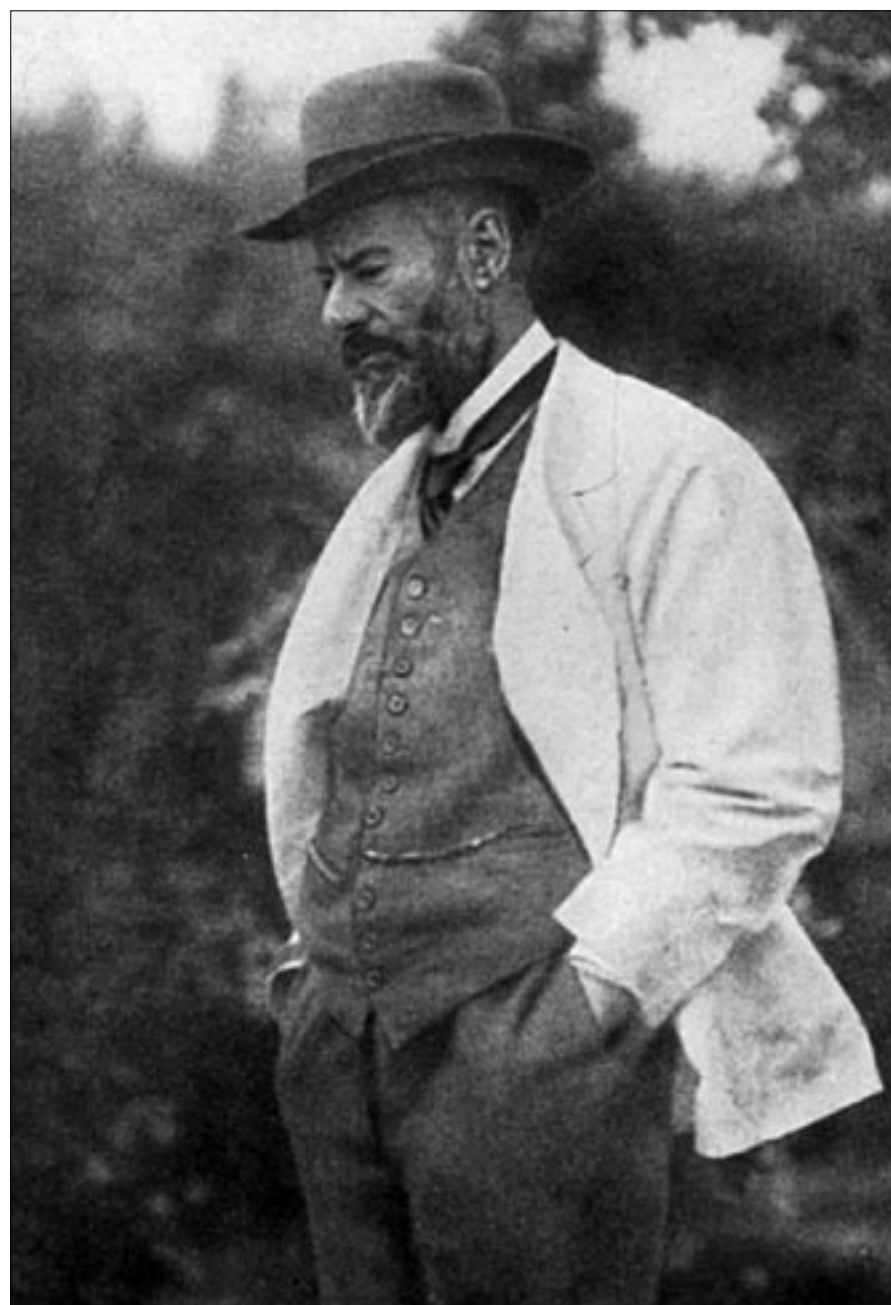


PHOTO BY MARIANNE WEBER, DATE UNKNOWN

Max Weber

India and Palestine, which he completed, we can sense a methodological frame of reference that can guide us in tackling our own Islamic research and studies, considering we are in a much more fortunate position than Weber was regarding our source material and living experience. Serious and provocative studies in Weber's spirit are needed, especially in Islamic studies, which would provide for a lively and critical platform contributing to the ongoing dialogue of civilizations and cultures. No doubt, if he were here today, Weber would have been at the forefront of such a dialogue.

Ernest Wolf-Gazo is a professor of philosophy at the American University in Cairo.
Email: wolfgazo@aucegypt.edu

Bridging the Academic Mediterranean

IMCO BROUWER

In Europe numerous (bi) annual social science research meetings are held on the contemporary Middle East and North Africa. Among them are the French Association Française pour l'étude du Monde Arabe et Musulman (AFEMAM), the British Society for Middle Eastern Studies (BRISMES), the German Deutsche Arbeitsgemeinschaft Vorderer Orient (DAVO), the European Network of Middle Eastern Studies (EURAMES), the Italian Società per gli Studi sul Medio Oriente (SeSaMO), and the Dutch Vereniging voor de studie van het Midden-oosten en de Islam (MOI). While all these meetings represent important forums, a more intensive, comparative Middle East and North Africa (MENA) and European, as well as network oriented type of scholarly meeting appeared to be lacking. The Mediterranean Programme of the Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies (RSCAS) at the European University Institute (EUI - Florence, Italy) set out to fill this gap through setting up the annual Mediterranean Social and Political Research Meeting (MSPRM). To date six sessions have been held since 2000 accounting for approximately one thousand participants. Some (75%) of workshops have focused mainly on the MENA region, followed by topics dealing with relations between Europe and the MENA (17%) and, finally, the situation of Muslim migrants in Europe (8%). Among the results of the programme have been the forging of new networks and the production of new scholarship, which addresses both ongoing and emerging issues in the social sciences and humanities.

A different academic model

Each session of the MSPRM contains up to 15 workshops, the vast majority of which are selected from 45 applications received on the Call to Run a Workshop. Each workshop is made up of between 10 – 12 participants and 2 directors and focuses each on a different topic. All participants are obliged to submit a paper (in English, French, and sometimes Arabic) well in advance of the session and workshops meet between 14 to 17 hours (as opposed to the panels of other meetings that generally meet for 2 hours). The MSPRM “workshop model,” adapted from the Joint Sessions of Workshops of the European Consortium of Political Research and as opposed to the “panel model” adopted by virtually all other international meetings concerning the MENA, has allowed to strike a sound balance between the to circumscribe definitions of a specific topic and, at the same time, accommodate the need to attract a sufficiently varied body of participants who would present an ample range of contributions, from theoretical to methodological, from case studies to comparative analyses, all from diverse angles of the different disciplines.

The topics covered over the 77 workshops held in the past six years (2000-2005), have varied both in consistency and diversity. Among the core, recurring themes have been those dealing with migration, gender, public sphere, political regimes, and economic reform. Other topics emerge more in response to specific contemporary developments and which necessitate new venues of analyses. Such topics include general categories as well as sub-categories of cinema, land reform, industrial relations, education, legal education and knowledge, tourism, *awqaf*, Islamic capital, territorial governance, foreign policies, intellectuals and intellectual movements, the role of the military in politics and economies, cultural productions and policies, subalterns and social protest, as well as democracy promotion, information technology, and telecommunications.

In terms of disciplines, approximately 30% of workshop participants have been oriented towards political science, political economy, and international relations, while a near equal 29% have been from fields of soci-

The Mediterranean Social and Political Research Meeting has become a major venue for European, Middle Eastern, North African, and American social scientists who are experts on the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) and on the relationship between Europe and the MENA, to exchange original research. The Meeting finds ways of overcoming persisting challenges resulting from, among other things, different levels of academic development, different schools of thought, and different language capacities.

ology and anthropology (29%), followed by economics (19%), history (9%), law (8%) and demography (5%). However, workshops tend to be multidisciplinary and attract participants from a variety of disciplines.

Promoting diversity

In order to achieve balance and diversity in terms of nationality and place of residence, MSPRM has first of all insisted that workshop directors complement each other in terms of place of residence

and nationality. The result has been that among some 160 workshop directors 53% of them held a nationality of a MENA country, 35% of a European country, and approx. 12% a US or Canadian citizenship. These percentages change when looking at their place of residence. Thus 38% resided in the MENA region, 45% in Europe and 17% in the US or Canada. In reference to their age and career stage, the majority of participants have been junior scholars (Ph.D. students and recent post-graduates (roughly 60–65%) followed by mid-career (roughly 20–25%) and, finally, senior scholars (roughly 10–20%).

The commitment to the principle of regional diversity and support to participants from the South clearly requires an equal financial commitment. The Tuscan Regional Government has contributed to the costs of the MSPRM since its first session, and important funding has come also from the general Mediterranean Programme resources (provided by a number of private and public institutions). The contribution of fellow institutions –including European Cultural Foundation (ECF, Amsterdam), the Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Network (EMHRN, Copenhagen); the Institut Europeu de la Mediterrania (IEMed, Barcelona) and the Social Science Research Council (SSRC, New York)– for the organization of joint workshops has increasingly become important and the MSPRM aims at their further increase.

Despite the high degree of diversity and clear successes of the programme (measured among other things by the huge amount of applications), MSPRM also faces certain challenges, one of which has to do with outreach. The programme would like to attract more participants from underrepresented MENA countries such as Algeria, Libya, and Syria. The continued need to work towards narrowing the gap of scholarship quality between the Northern and Southern shore (and within Europe) has become more apparent. A third major challenge is to reduce the language barriers between scholars from the different parts of the Mediterranean and attempt to reduce the dominant role of English in the workshops. A fourth challenge, linked to the previous one, is to encourage more mingling among francophone and anglophone speaking scholars so that they can break out of their respective linguistic and academic boundaries.

Meetings such as the MSPRM provide critical opportunities to forge networks, talk, strategize, and pull intellectual resources to address critical issues and challenges in the regions of MENA and Europe. These meetings serve as a way to build strong academic bridges.

For more information: <http://www.iue.it/RSCAS/Research/Mediterranean/Meetings.shtml>

Imco Brouwer is the Scientific Co-ordinator of the MSPRM at the European University Institute, Florence.

Email: brouwer@iue.it

Revisiting Pro-Muslim British Orientalists

Since Edward Said's *Orientalism* was published in 1978 a great deal of controversy and debate has resulted from his central thesis, the existence of a western Orientalist discourse. Said's deconstruction of the politically motivated denigration of Islamic faith and culture by the likes of Cromer, Balfour, and Curzon remains central to any discussion of Victorian imperialism. Yet the official Orientalist discourse was not as dominant as Said suggested. Rana Kabbani and Ali Behdad have written on the predisposition of an establishment renegade like Wilfrid Scawen Blunt—toward eastern culture and political freedom.¹ Blunt—who only receives passing mention in Said's work—is an obvious figure in the development of a new perspective on Orientalism and Islam in the age of imperialism. Locating such figures within the frame of colonial and postcolonial discourse allows for a continuing debate about the West's relations with the Islamic world.

Other equally important figures whose writings and activities might be used to demonstrate a tolerant, even radically favourable, disposition toward Islam during a period when the East appeared increasingly vulnerable to western encroachment have been misinterpreted or neglected. From the 1830s to the late 1850s, David Urquhart, traveller, M.P., and Turcophile, became a foundation figure for discourse(s) that developed later in the nineteenth century arguing that Muslim practice should be the basis of reform in the East. Urquhart's role in the promotion of Ottoman Turkey as a fit, and in some ways, superior partner to Christian Europe has long been known by historians, though rarely rehearsed today. Yet Urquhart had begun a pro-Turkish trend in politics that continued well into the twentieth century, and from which devolved a narrative of western betrayal of eastern "awakenings."

Arguably this narrative, which attempted to re-set the record straight vis-à-vis Turkish "atrocities" against Balkan and Armenian Christians by laying a fair (and perhaps sometimes rather more than fair) share of blame on the latter and their western European allies, has been eclipsed by the anti-Islamic narratives of our own time. So deeply was pro-Turkism ingested by one British gentleman, Marmaduke Pickthall, that he went a step beyond Blunt and Urquhart and converted to Islam. Where Blunt had favoured the Arabs, Pickthall saw the Turks as the agency best suited for piloting modernist Islam. Curiously, he anticipated the Young Turk programme's potential as a force of revolutionary Islamic modernism, rather than a secular nationalism, later to be subsumed in Attaturkism.

Variegated discourse

Confirmation that Orientalism was not a monolithic and stable discourse emerges from investigating the pro-Muslim writings and agitations of figures like Urquhart, Blunt, and Pickthall. Moreover, new readings of well-established contributors to Orientalist discourse can also yield less rigid interpretations. The half-Jewish, quondam

New readings of well known Orientalists and of lesser known challengers can yield more flexible interpretations of western imperialism. A pro-Muslim trend begun by the Scotsman David Urquhart in the early nineteenth century was later expanded upon by the anti-imperialist travellers and Orientalists, W.S. Blunt and E.G. Browne. While some wished to preserve an authentic and picturesque Orient under the auspice of imperialism, by the late colonial age Marmaduke Pickthall had gone so far as to promote Young Turkism as the vehicle for Islamic modernism.



Jesuit traveller to Arabia, William Gifford Palgrave, is reputedly a bitterly anti-Islamic polemicist. But this view is founded on readings of his canonical travelogue, *A Narrative of a Year's Journey to Central and Eastern Arabia* alone. Palgrave's later sojourns as British Consul in Trebizond and Abkhazia gained him an expertise in new developments in Ottoman Islam and its peripheries which he articulated in much more sympathetic terms in essays for *MacMillan's* and *Fraser's* magazines in the late 1860s and early 1870s. Even

arch-imperialist establishment figures like Curzon and Mark Sykes allowed Muslim structures, albeit conservative patriarchal ones, to impact in their travel writings of the period 1893-1915. Curzon proposed a dichotomy, in his travel philosophy, between a political and an aesthetic Orientalism, the latter shaping his representations of Muslim societies in terms of past glories and present decay. Sykes, likewise, wished to preserve authentic Muslim expression within the diverse racial constituents of the Ottoman empire (before the outbreak of hostilities in 1914 impressed upon him the fatality of the Ottomanist project).

The Cambridge Orientalist, Edward Granville Browne's propagandist endeavours on behalf of the first Iranian revolution of 1906-1911 have been expounded by the Iranian scholars, Mansour Bonakdarian and Abbas Amanat. His polemical argument with expounders of the Saidean type of Orientalism, such as Curzon and the *London Times* foreign affairs journalists of the early 1900s, lends evidence to the existence of diverse, sometimes contradictory

discourses within Orientalism.

By re-phrasing and re-positing the different writings of Orientalist travellers and imperialists within the hundred years between the end of the Greek revolt and the final eclipse of the Ottoman empire by Atatürk, it is possible to observe more complexity in British writing on Islam and the East than the mainly hostile corpus proposed by Said. One of the beneficial effects of so doing should be to demonstrate that pro-Islamic western voices able to challenge the negative and chauvinistic pronouncements of those who denigrated Islam as part of their project to rule over the East did, in fact, exist.

Note

1. See Rana Kabbani, *Europe's Myths of Orient* (London: Longman, 1986); Ali Behdad, *Belated Travelers: Orientalism in the Age of Colonial Dissolution* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1994).

Geoffrey P. Nash is Senior Lecturer in English at the University of Sunderland, England. His forthcoming book with I.B. Tauris is entitled, *From Empire To Orient, Travellers To The Middle East 1830-1926*.

Email: geoff.nash@sunderland.ac.uk

GEOFFREY P. NASH

E.G. Browne in Persian dress, courtesy of University of Cambridge Library Syndics

Harem Literature & Women's Travel

REINA LEWIS

The production, distribution, and consumption of literary depictions of the Middle Eastern harem in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries relied on a number of local and international social and cultural developments, not least of which was the market in the "West" (in this case Europe and North America) for what is known as "harem literature." Generally characterized by first person narration, harem literature emerged by the mid-nineteenth century as a sub-genre of travel writing: one that especially favoured women whose gender gave, and was held to give, them special access to the harem's segregated spaces. Following many of the conventions of the emergent field of travel literature, harem literature offered western women a chance to claim for themselves a specialism within Orientalist knowledges that could be both generalist and scholarly. Central to the pull of women's harem literature was the explicit assumption that their gender-privileged entry to the sites that no western man could visit guaranteed the authenticity of their reports.

In the early years of harem literature, when writing for publication was still a potentially unrespectable activity, and when women novelists knew that their work would be judged within the marginalized sphere of women's rather than general writing (both reasons for the use of a male pseudonym by writers such as Charlotte Brontë in the 1840s), harem literature was a field where the gender of the author was emphatically recognized as a selling point. In contrast, men's harem accounts were

commonly acknowledged to be fictional. This set of circumstances, combined with the technological developments that made travel easier, safer, and cheaper, produced a buoyant market for women's writing of this kind.

Western women write about the harem

The premium on women-authored accounts did not guarantee that women's writings were always taken seriously: western women knew that their accounts could also be diminished as less scholarly on grounds of their gender, and sought often to align themselves with male authorities. Hence, one of the earliest observers of Middle Eastern female life, Sophia Lane Pool, in 1844 began her two-volume tome, *The Englishwoman in Egypt: Letters From Cairo*, by highlighting the role of her famous Orientalist brother Edward William Lane. Anticipating that she would

be able to see "many things highly interesting in themselves, and rendered more so by their being accessible only to a lady," he urged her to write, gave her access to his notes, and guided her in the selection of materials to be used in the book. As Pool records in the forward to her book, "The present selection has been made by him; and I fear the reader may think that affection has sometimes biased his judgement; but am encouraged to hope for their favourable reception, for the sake of the more solid matter with which they are interspersed, from the notes

The existence of a substantial body of women's writings from and about the Middle Eastern harem challenges the western Orientalist stereotype of harem women as isolated, uneducated, passive, sexualized, and uniformly oppressed. Taken together, these sources provide valuable evidence of the range of women's participation in the popular literary cultures that accompanied, tried to make sense of, and contributed to the (gendered) debates about empire, nation, and statehood which marked a century dominated by the variable fortunes of competing imperial models of East and West.¹

of one to whom Egypt has become almost as familiar as England."

Apparently self-deprecating, the preface sees off challenges of unwomanly ambition (such as must have driven a project of this scale) by presenting her work as undertaken solely in response to brotherly requirements, simultaneously emphasizing the value of her work and harnessing the intellectual credit offered by the endorsement and participation of the esteemed Lane.

Pool was joined in increasing numbers by other women writers over the second

half of the nineteenth century who found success with respectable publishers, serving a middle-brow readership keen to find out more about the territories known as the "Orient." With opinions ranging across the political spectrum, women travel writers took diverse positions on matters of empire, colonization, female suffrage, and religion, often using the East as a foil through which to evaluate and discuss the status of women in the West. Their political stance and the extent to which they displayed challenges or allegiances to Orientalist codifications varied, as did the level of their investigations and the tone of their texts. Emmeline Lott, governess in 1865 to Ibrahim Pasha, son of the Khedive Ismail, Viceroy of Egypt, produced a gossipy self-serving narrative whose snide judgements about the viceregal household were determined more by concerns with shoring up her own status than by those of accurate reportage. In *The English Governess in Egypt. Harem Life in Egypt and Constantinople* (1865), Lott provides the detailed description of sumptuous costumes, fabulous jewels, and elaborate plate that was a regular feature of women's harem accounts, but contrasts these splendours with the vulgarity of behaviour she attributes to the princesses: "their tout ensemble was even more untidy than that of hardworking washerwomen at the tubs; nay, almost akin to Billingsgate fishwomen at home, for their conversation in their own vernacular was equally as low" (177). Determined to be shown "proper respect" by all members of the household, Lott took it as her due that she would join the princesses in their own carriage when the family decamped to Alexandria, but, when she was honoured with an invitation to join them for lunch—eaten with their fingers on the floor—she declined, "first because my health would not allow me to eat Arab diet; and, secondly, because it would have been utterly impossible for any European lady to have felt the slightest inclination to partake of the refreshment in such a barbarous style" (181).

In contrast, a few decades later the extensive ethnographic studies of Lucy Garnett, such as *The Women of Turkey and their Folklore in the 1890s*, marked a shift towards a social science model and away from the personalized autobiographical narrative. As the century turned, western women's harem literature became more overtly professionalized, with opportunities for state- or voluntary sector-sponsored research, such as Ruth Frances Woodsmall's broad-ranging 1936 survey of women's lives in, *Muslim Women Enter a New World* (1936). Funded in 1928 by the Laura Spelman Rockefeller Foundation and the American University of Beirut, Woodsmall's ambitious project surveyed developments in women's education, employment, and social status in India, Iran, Turkey, Egypt, Syria, Palestine, and Trans-Jordan. Spending many years in the Middle East, holding senior positions in international organizations, and undertaking several major research projects, Woodsmall's authoritative accounts rely on social science methodologies (using interviews and independent and government surveys) instead of the impressionistic and personal observations that characterized work of the previous century.

These sources . . . are
complex, mediated
cultural commodities
with specific and often
transcultural conditions of
production, distributions,
and reception.

But the stylistic developments in harem literature were not exclusive or distinct: there were many overlaps, such as are seen in the work of the British feminist Grace Ellison, whose journalism and books in the 1910s and 1920s combined many of the elements of nineteenth- and twentieth-century writing. Offering political commentary on the progressive gender politics of the “Young Turk” government, whose support for female emancipation was directly contrasted to the appalling record of the British government, she embellished political diatribe with personal observations about key politicians and a discernible delight in the accoutrements of Ottoman harem life and the women there who befriended her. Notably, she also paid particular attention to Ottoman women writers, quoting them in *An Englishwoman in a Turkish Harem* (1915) and helping some of them to be printed in Britain.



Writing from the harem

For Middle Eastern women of the increasingly educated elite, literate in local and European languages, stereotypes about harem life were a source of perpetual irritation, as they were to progressive men from their communities who knew that western misapprehensions about the nature of segregated society influenced everything from personal interactions to western foreign policy. As foreign literature found its way into the region during the last century of the Ottoman Empire, and competency in foreign languages grew among the educated elite, more and more women started to write in English, aiming to reach a foreign and domestic audience. By the time social developments had increased female literacy, western harem literature was a well-established field and provided a forum for Middle Eastern women who wished to tell their stories. It is here that the dual nature of this area of publishing is shown most acutely, for, if western women, like Grace Ellison, knew that “a chapter, at least, on harem will always add to the value of the book” even if they set out specifically to explain that the harem was not as the West imagined, women from within segregating communities found themselves publishing accounts in a genre that specifically relied on stereotypes to sell their work.

It was not unusual for books to be marketed in ways that were in direct contradiction to the sentiments of their authors. Zeyneb Hanoum’s *A Turkish Woman’s European Impressions* was sold in 1913 with a gold embossed picture of her in a yashmak on the front cover, whilst the words inside told of a life spent wearing French couture (with appropriately modest outerwear when needed). These contradictions were to be found also in personal interactions. Middle Eastern and western women encountered each other in increasing numbers from the second half of the nineteenth century, in meetings whose complexity—always about more than just alien social mores—found its way into published accounts. The ways in which social status, for example, was not recognized, or did not travel, is seen in the outrage of Musbah Haidar, a princess of royal blood whose haughty disdain for the arriviste wife of a high-ranking American diplomat (visiting the family during the Allied occupation of Istanbul in 1918) reveals a frustration with western assumptions regularly experienced by Middle Eastern women of all classes. Recounting the tale in her memoir *Arabesque* (1944), Haidar pillories the American who admitted that she had “never been in such a cosmopolitan and elegant circle as she found herself to be in Stamboul.” When confronted by refreshments presented on a Sèvres tea service, the visitor “could not longer restrain herself”:

“What a gorgeous tray! Oh, my! What a museum-piece! And those cups and saucers, and these dear little gold knives and forks! You know, I can hardly believe my eyes. The appointments of the house and your dresses! My!!” What did these people imagine they would find or see? thought Musbah. Women in gauzy trousers sitting on the floor? In their abysmal ignorance these foreigners did not realize that many

of the veiled ladies of the Harems were better born, better read, spoke several languages, dressed with a greater chic than some of their own most famous society women.

As this late extract demonstrates, for Middle Eastern women, self-consciously intervening in western cultural codes, the types of stereotypes they had to negotiate changed over time but did not go away. Richly varied, running from the clearly fantastical to the more verifiably reliable, these sources raise a series of methodological issues that go to the heart of interdisciplinary postcolonial studies. At the most straightforward level, books like these tell a great deal about women’s lives and their encounters with each other, providing traces of a dialogue between women that was as often contestative as it was collaborative. But they should not be read simply as evidence: they are complex, mediated cultural commodities with specific and often transcultural conditions of production, distribution, and reception. Studying these sources is therefore a dual project of historical recuperation (the quest to locate women’s harem literature and travel writing is by no means completed) and postcolonial cultural analysis. Having traversed languages, communities, and genres to come into being, these books merit the rigorous critical attention that would be paid to “high” cultural texts within any of their original or destination societies. Concerned with the complicated narration of a female self, and reframing variant definitions of public and private, these sources offer a chance to reconsider the historical tensions between eastern and western cultures and bring nuance to the understanding of their current manifestations.

Image from Ruth Frances Woodsmall’s 1936 survey *Muslim Women Enter a New World* showing how the end of veiling in Turkey was linked to creating employment for women.

Note

1. Several of the authors mentioned in this article are extracted in the author’s co-edited volume with Nancy Micklewright, *Gender, Modernity, and Liberty: Middle Eastern and Western Feminisms 1837-1937, a Critical Sourcebook* (IB Tauris, forthcoming 2006). Full text editions of some of these authors are also available as part of *Cultures in Dialogue*, series co-edited by Reina Lewis and Teresa Heffernan (for a full list of titles see www.gorgiaspress.com).

Reina Lewis is Professor of Cultural Studies at the University of East London, and author of *Rethinking Orientalism: Women, Travel and the Ottoman Harem* (London: IB Tauris, 2004). Email: Reina@uel.ac.uk

Hajj: Only at this Sacred Time and Place

NA'EEM JEENAH

For more than fourteen centuries, Muslims from all over the world have been converging in the city of Makkah to perform the hajj pilgrimage. While the pilgrimage itself is a gruelling five-day period during which a number of rituals are performed, for most pilgrims the journey has been much longer and more involved. While today the "Jet Age Hajj"¹ is most common, until well into the twentieth century the journey often involved many months of travelling as pilgrims soaked up various cultures and natural wonders along the way.

My hajj, in 1997, was of the "Jet Age" variety, taking us from Johannesburg to Jeddah in a matter of hours. And, like most other pilgrims, my wife Shamima, and I spent more than just five days in the land of the pilgrimage, dividing our three weeks there between Makkah—the City of God—and Medina—the City of the Prophet Muhammad.

The hajj rituals are exhausting and include various rites that need to be performed in the burning Arabian heat, e.g. the circumambulation of the Ka'ba, the prayer at Arafat and the pelting with pebbles of the stone pillars representing Satan. Performing these with two million other people—all trying to do the same things at the same times—adds to the challenges associated with hajj. But it also adds to the spirit of community that pervades the performance of this, the fifth of the five pillars of Islam. My hajj was further enhanced and made unique by the fact that I was engaged in this once-in-a-lifetime journey with the human being closest to me: my life partner and beloved. But hajj is characterized by many events and moments that are unique.

During our hajj, I saw something that reminded me of a statement made by Abdulkader Tayob at a conference on "Islam and Civil Society" in South Africa in 1994, referring to the period of South Africa's first democratic election and the inauguration of Nelson Mandela as president of South Africa as "this sacred time when everything seems possible."

"Same-same"

I recalled this statement while observing the chaotic arrangement of men and women during the prayers at the mosque in Makkah. Typically, I would see a few women seated, then a man, then another woman, then a few more men, or any combination of the above in virtually every row of the prayer. There was absolutely no gender separation! And, except for a few cleaners or a few conservative, scowling men, no one seemed to give a second glance.

Once, a Bengali man sat right next to my wife Shamima and our friend A'isha. A'isha pointed him to a row in front where there were more men. "No problem," he responded, "man-woman same-same." Unfortunately, his companionable philosophy made Shamima uncomfortable as A'isha ended up sitting almost on top of her. This was not the norm, however. Usually there was a one-person space between a "strange" man and woman or no space between spouses. Only "at this sacred time and place when everything seems possible."

Where else in the world would one find Muslim men and women squeezed as tightly together as during many of the rituals of hajj: most

Committing to paper one's experiences and memoirs of the hajj pilgrimage, belongs to a long-established rich genre. The classical tradition comprises descriptive travelogues and devotional treatises. By the twentieth century the genre had expanded to predominantly include personal reflections on, and observations of, this grand collective ritual. One moving account of such a memorable experience is *Journey of Discovery: A South African Hajj* (2000), co-authored by Na'eem Jeenah and his late wife, Shamima Shaikh. This article expounds upon their "journey of discovery."

especially during the *tawaf* (circumambulation) but also during the *sa'i*—the running between the hills of Safa and Marwa on the edge of the mosque and during the pelting of the stone pillars in Mina? And unlike at any other time or place, such gender mixing is accepted as the normal thing. There are many other aspects which are peculiar to the hajj. The five days of hajj is the only period, for example, when men are prevented (by the rules of hajj) from covering their heads and faces and women from covering their faces.

Also, Muslims are normally expected

to say their prayers in full in their home towns, but are permitted to shorten these when they are travelling. It is only during the hajj that people prefer to shorten certain prayers regardless of whether they are residents or travelling pilgrims. Makkah during the pilgrimage is also the only place in the world where Muslim men sometimes pray half-dressed, covered simply from the navel to the knee. While, technically, this is the accepted minimum dress for men in terms of the Sharia, it is only a brave man who will attempt such a prayer fashion at any other mosque in the world and be prepared to face the consequences.

It is also only at the mosque in Makkah that one will observe the imam leading the prayer with part of his congregation praying in front of him. At this mosque, for almost all occurrences of the two afternoon prayers—*zuhr* and *asr*, the imam stands in a little room away from the Ka'ba with a large group of congregants praying in front of him. For the *fajr* (pre-dawn), *maghrib* (sunset), *isha* (night) and *jum'a* (Friday afternoon) prayers, he stands next to the Ka'ba. Apparently the imam finds the

heat oppressive during the *zuhr* and *asr* prayer times so he prays in this room at the edge of the courtyard that surrounds the Ka'bah, with rows of worshippers between him and it.

An Abrahamic commemoration

Interestingly, the hajj is also the only one of the five pillars of Islam that follows a pre-Islamic example in the manner in which it is conducted. Most of the hajj rituals are modified versions of rituals that were already being performed by the pre-Islamic Arabs during the hajj months. And it is the only one of the pillars at which almost every ritual commemorates a human event. None of the other five pillars—bearing witness to the Unity of God; prayer; the compulsory alms-giving; or fasting—is based on such a commemoration. Most of the rituals of the hajj are linked to some act or event from the life of the Prophet Abraham and his family. And, to place this ritual on an even greater level of distinction, only in the hajj are there specific rituals which, in total, commemorate and emulate the example and struggle of a woman; many hajj rituals recall the experience of Hajar, the wife of Abraham.

We observed, further, that the hajj is the only time and place in which people attempt (and are, in fact, forced by the requirements of the ritual) to look the same, and during which the validity of the ritual depends on such equality. Indeed, there is no hajj without the ritual dressing, which for all men is two pieces of unstitched cloth. It is the occasion at which everyone would willingly give up her or his physical individuality simply to become part of the mass.

A heart-warming sight at Arafat
for me was the number of couples
standing and praying together.



PHOTO BY MOHAMED EL-DAKHANY, © HOLLANDSE HOOGTE, 2005

Pilgrims gather in the Plains of Arafat outside Mecca, 2005.

This sacred time and place has a magical quality that makes it unique, a uniqueness that is evident not only in the rituals and in the broad and general ways in which the pilgrims relate to each other. We found that there were more specific ways with regard to personal psychology and interpersonal interaction which added to this sense of enchantment. A good example is the Johannesburg woman in Shamima's tent at Arafat, whose face had been badly disfigured by acid. The woman was fasting at Arafat. Apparently, the *maulana* who was leading her delegation advised her that she could. The fact that we were languishing in temperatures of over 40 degrees Celsius and, more importantly, that the Prophet Muhammad forbade pilgrims to fast on the Day of Arafat seemed lost on him.² Sometime during her stay at Arafat, the woman burst into tears. A few doctors rushed to assist her. Shamima suggested that the woman should break her fast, but she refused. Shamima then suggested that they try to "get permission" from the maulana for the woman to break her fast, thinking that it was necessary to find some way of relieving the woman's plight on this glorious day.

One of the doctors then explained that the reason for the woman's apparent distress was not the fast. The face of this once beautiful woman had been burnt twenty years earlier when a neighbour had thrown acid on her as a result of some feud. The woman was crying because, on this day at Arafat, twenty years later, she met the acid-thrower, and forgave her! Only "at this sacred time and place ...?"

Spirituality

With all these unusual aspects of the hajj, however, one cannot allow oneself to forget that the fundamental purpose of the pilgrimage is spiritual. And it was the spiritual that left the strongest impression on my mind. Many people had told us, before our departure, of particularly intense episodes of spirituality. Although we had intended that hajj would be an exceptional experience, we were not expecting anything terribly unusual. But I got more than I had bargained for.

Seeing millions of people covering the plains of Arafat was an impressive sight. But as people began their standing-supplication (*wuquf*) in the afternoon sunlight, it felt as if a strongly spiritual atmosphere pervaded the air. The *wuquf* involves standing in the open, hands raised, praying to the Creator for one's deepest desires. A heart-warming sight at Arafat for me was the number of couples standing and praying together. The heat is virtually unbearable and I, like most others, would stand in *wuquf*, then rest before resuming.

My own *wuquf*, both when I stood alone and with Shamima, was deeply satisfying. In these moments, everything disappeared from my thoughts, from my vision and my hearing; I was singularly focused on communicating with The Unseen. With Shamima by my side and our hands joined, that concentration was further enriched. It was a communication with The Divine, done with another of His creatures to whom I felt a profound closeness. These were unique and treasured moments.

Another deeply spiritual experience for me was on our last day in Makkah. The Friday congregational prayer was to be my last prayer at the haram (the sacred mosque) and my farewell to the Ka'bah. Somehow, I had reached the haram a little later than I would have preferred, and found that there was space available only on the roof. I was surprised that the roof was fairly empty, until a few minutes after I seated myself and felt the sun beating down on my head. Hats, scarves, and umbrellas did not help the other pilgrims. Wearing a hat because I had recently shaved my head as part of the rituals, I walked to the front, which was devoid of any shade from pillars or walls. Since most people disliked this full sunlight, I had an unobstructed view of the Ka'ba.

I sat there for the next hour and a half, through an Arabic sermon that I could make only little sense of, and after the prayer I lifted my hands to God. It was amazing that simply gazing on the Ka'ba could affect me so profoundly—emotionally, psychologically, and even physically. I forgot the desert sun and the people around me and—for the last time—filled my senses, my mind and my heart with the sight of this shrine to The Divine. And God gave me brief access to His Grace in those moments.

In thinking back to these moments I remember—as I and Shamima did many times during the hajj—of a piece of advice given to us by a friend, Amina Wadud, before we had left South Africa. "Don't have expectations about what you want to achieve from the hajj," she had said. "If you do, you might find what you are searching for, but you may never find what Allah wants to show and give you."

Notes

1. Michael Wolfe (ed.), *One Thousand Roads to Mecca: Ten Centuries of Travelers Writing about the Muslim Pilgrimage* (New York: Grove Press, 1997).
2. The Prophet Muhammad referred to the Day of Arafat, the Day of Sacrifice, and *Ayam Tashriq* (the tenth, eleventh, and twelfth of the month of *Dhul Hijjah*) as "the days of eating and drinking."

Na'eem Jeenah is a lecturer in Political Studies at the University of the Witwatersrand and was a visiting fellow at ISIM in 2005.
Email: jeenahn@social.wits.ac.za

A Muslim Voice in Bulgarian Poetry

Tash's poetic talent emerged in testing times, during the final stages of the so-called "Revival Process"—the state-sponsored attempt at mass assimilation of Bulgarian Muslims, carried out in the last decades of authoritarian rule. The Pomak (whose mother tongue is Bulgarian) and the Muslim Roma were forced to relinquish their "alien" names in the 1970s. The Turks were subjected to the same measures in 1985, when Tash was twelve. He wrote his first poetry in high school—not in Bulgarian, but in "rudimentary, yet melodious English," in "linguistic revolt" against those who had changed his name.² His subsequent engagement with Bulgarian literature Tash credits to his first poetic mentor Christo Stoyanov, who did not hesitate to acknowledge openly

Aziz Tash (Aziz Nazmi Shakir) was born in 1973, in the city of Smolyan, where he graduated from an English-immersion high school. He holds a BA in Arabic and Turkish philology from the University of Sofia, and a Ph.D. in the History of Science from the University of Istanbul, where he currently teaches. His mother tongue is Turkish, yet Tash maintains a notable presence on the Bulgarian cultural scene, publishing poetry, prose, and translations from the Arabic, Turkish, English, and Russian.

are intelligible to Jews, Christians, and Muslims alike. Besides, the author seems aware that only the most pivotal cosmic events of sacred history—the Creation, the Fall, the Flood, the Exodus—could be readily summoned in popular consciousness. Fifty years of robust state atheism under Communist rule placed the foundational religious texts—the Bible, the Gospels, and the Quran—beyond the reach of the laity. Thus—at the end of the 1980s—three

generations of Bulgarians of all confessions had little way of knowing the scriptural legacy of the great religious traditions, to which they nominally subscribed. Although still carried on, religious observances had sunk to the level of folk practices and popular customs. Next—to ensure the uninhibited empathy of his diverse audience—the author endeavours to override even the mythopoeic "context" of the Bible. The familiar Biblical stories are fragmented and rearranged into quizzical surrealistic patterns. Tash's enigmatic, laconic, yet oddly evocative writings arguably aim to incite empathy rather than understanding. The density of religious allusions and imagery in his poetry is a startling "innovation," which sets him apart from most Bulgarian authors published over the last five decades.

Tash's latest book, launched by the innovative Bulgarian publishing house Stigmati in May 2004, accentuates more openly his dual identity. It comprises two collections of poetry, and has two titles: one on the front cover, the other on the back. The first title—At 22—flanks a view of the Galata bridge in Istanbul, Turkey. The second—Rain Apocrypha—hovers above a photo of the distinctive spindly oaks of the eastern Rhodope mountains in Bulgaria, Tash's birthplace. However, the designations "front" and "back," or "first" and "second" are arbitrary. The two cover designs (and their respective sections of the twin poetry collection) stand back to back, "head to toe," both facing the reader, who is left to decide on which to confer precedence. From either side, this slender volume looks like any other Bulgarian book. But at the heart of it, at the point of conjoining, an opaque page-divider emblazoned with a swirling calligraphic design

in Arabic script, proclaims the Muslim credo "La ilaha illa'l-Lah" (There is no god but God).

Each collection comes with a different biographical note. The flap-jacket of Rain Apocrypha imparts the essentials of Tash's curriculum vitae in dry and precise legalese. The biographical note of At 22, on the other hand, bears the hallmark of Tash's ironic and often bemusing style. It challenges our cultural preconceptions; establishes the author's creative pedigree; and states his poetic credo: "[Born] at the end of the 14th century of the Muslim calendar, this author was named after a great-grandfather of his, who went missing in Yemen in the 19th century after Christ, while on a 7-year tour of duty [in the Ottoman army]. Said author took his first literary steps on a stone dislodged from the garden-wall of his grandfather's house, and eventually assumed the nom de plume Tash ([Turkish for] stone) ... A. has no quar-

Riptide

To Yashua

"We accept baptism only from God..."
(Quran 2:138; Tr. A. Tash)

Our souls, overgrown with thorns and stones,
we crucify within our living bodies.
The tears, shed inwards, we wall up inside,
and the thorns blossom inwards in the mud.

And there—swarms of reapers cut
and gather the blossoms—herbs of death.
She gathers her apprentices along:
The living take the harvest instead of her.

And weighed down with tears and those who reap,
we baptize our bodies in rivers of mud.
But who of those immersed will live to see
the day his body crucifies his cross.

to acknowledge openly Tash's Turkish identity, include the young poet in his literary workshop, introduce him to the literary circles in Sofia, and eventually serve as editor of Tash's first published collection, *Grounds for a Sky* (1993).

The slow-burning rage, which permeates this collection, finds expression in startling surrealistic imagery, rooted in the chronology of the Revival process. The forcible name-change resonates in allusions to baptism in mud, or crucifixion of souls within the bodies ("Riptide"). The loss of identity evokes images of death or drowning (an oblique reference to the use of water in the Chris-

tian ritual of baptism). The mass exodus of Bulgarian Turks in the summer of 1989, which brought the regions of mixed population to a standstill, can be gleaned in veiled allusions to the Biblical Exodus. Recurrent images of a purging "flood" evoke the tidal wave of popular protests in the fall of 1989, which swept away authoritarian rule in Bulgaria, as in the rest of Eastern Europe ("Before a flood"). A major component of that "flood" were the mass demonstrations of Bulgarian Muslims, demanding the reversal of the Revival Process.

An important feature of Tash's poetry is its ability to engage audiences across ethnic and religious divides. His early work addresses topical issues of the late 1980s with a raw immediacy, as if birthed in the throes of the unfolding outrage. Yet none of the poems is dated. Events are not directly mentioned. Tash treats reality as unprocessed ore: It must pass through the crucible of poetic imagination to be transformed into art which is compelling, rather than merely topical. He then casts the smelt in the mould of religious parables, meant to lend universality to the message. Curiously, most religious references in his first collection are not to Muslim sources, but to Biblical stories from the Old Testament: Common lore to all "People of the Book," they

I have always lived
on the cusp of
two languages,
two cultures, two
religions, and that
has made of me an
advocate for each to
the other.¹

rel with the traditional view that poets write out of a need to be admired, but he also believes that the written word should call to mind the Creator of the Word.”³

As in his first collection, reproduced here under the title *At 22*, few clues link individual works to the reality from which they arise. Apparently, this “denial of context” is a matter of principle. Tash views poetry as “an attempt at sanctification of the words,” which otherwise “lose their original gravity to daily usage.” He makes a conscious effort to “guard all his writings from the tyranny of the topical and the concrete,” because “the glut of the mundane, of information as such” often hampers our ability to communicate meaningfully with each other, and with our own souls.

Rain Apocrypha presents newer pieces, many in poetic prose. In the “Metaphysics of the Bridge,” an old man spends a lifetime building a bridge from river stones with his only arm. His efforts are aided by a mysterious force—perhaps his own resolve, compensating for his missing arm and for all his human frailties. The bridge seems to be life itself, hence the old man can never cross it (and return). Stepping on the other shore is tantamount either to death, or to the mystical state of non-existence—*fana*—which dervishes strive to attain. For Sufi mystics, *fana* is an ecstatic state of momentary union with the Divine, when the limitations of physical existence fall away, and with them—all distinction between “this side” and “the other,” “here” and “beyond,” “now” and “then.” The old man attains his goal only when he abandons the bridge—his lifelong labour—to the surging river, forgets his fears, and boldly follows his resolve across, walking upon the waters.

“Rain Apocrypha” is yet another parable. Its opening statement echoes the popular saying, “If the mountain would not come to Muhammad, Muhammad would go to the mountain.” The next line, which alludes to the loving first encounter between the unnamed prophet and the mountain, counters a long-standing assertion of the Bulgarian grand-narrative that Islam was introduced in the Rhodopes through violence and forced conversions. The vignettes which follow bring together the prophet, a Gypsy fortune-teller and a stonemason. The narrative weaves together allusions to local Muslim folk rituals like the communal “rain prayer,” and oblique references to the mass exodus of the Muslims, and their subsequent return. There is a powerful affirmation of belonging—of Muslims to the mountain; of the Rhodopes to the people of the mountain. The turbulent memories of the author are still there, but his vehemence, which in earlier work churned just under the surface, has subsided. The central themes of this parable are self-discovery and reconciliation.

The collection *Rain Apocrypha* abounds with religious references that are predominantly and specifically Muslim. Tash’s poetic imagination—while still exuberant—is less idiosyncratic, and thus these pieces are easier to decode. The explicitness of Tash’s Muslim sensibilities is predicated not only on the greater openness of Bulgarian society to the evidence of religious sentiment, but also on the knowledge, that his potential audience is more familiar with Islam and its cultural legacy.⁴ Many of the symbols and images Tash utilizes grow from recognizable Muslim referents. Thus “The Dervish, His Jugular Veins, and...” has three thematic foci: the whirling dance of the Mevlevi dervishes with its complex system of cosmic symbols; the need for spiritual enlightenment, expressed in Quranic terms; and the Sufis’ yearning for a mystical union with God (“the target” of their ecstatic quest). The religious consciousness, which irradiates these writings, is that of a seeker, and not of a preacher: A seeker for whom the unity of all being is a reality, and its diversity is not an obstacle but a miracle. There is sincere religious commitment to this poetry, but no zealous desire to spread the Word. Muslims would find here plentiful reminders about the Creator of the Word. To the rest of us Aziz Tash speaks of our shared humanity; of the ethical fibre that holds our universe together; of love and rage; of remembrance and reconciliation; of our frailties, and never ending quest for enlightenment.

Notes

1. Aziz Tash, interview by Emilia Mateina, *Etno Reporter* (Sofia), May 2004.
2. Personal letter, 12 December 1995.
3. Aziz Tash had a strong bond with his paternal grandfather, who was an amateur stonemason who restored a number of small rural mosques in the eastern Rhodopes.
4. The Qur’an was translated into Bulgarian by Tsvetan Teofanov and published in Sofia in 1997.

Before a Flood (excerpt)

With our bodies we await a flood
so that we can return to earthly life.
But they re-bury us—one life after another—
alongside our borrowed gods.
With our bodies we await a flood...

Metaphysics of the bridge (excerpts)

6.

“As for the bridge. God gave the bridge the purest of shadows. And gave a river to the bridge. And to the river—a bridge. Then He took some of the shadow of the bridge, and gave it to the river. In the name of God, most benevolent, ever merciful.”

God makes the heavenly bodies move. The shadow of the bridge moved with them also: the bridge caressed the waters of the river. God created the heavenly bodies to deepen the shadows. And to the river he gave the shadow of the bridge. Before that shadow, the waters felt impure. They kept passing under its veil, and—seeing the wedding ring placed there by the old man—they sped on with the hope that some day, after a torrent upstream, they’ll stop parting with the bridge before they depart. On that day, they would reach the shadow purified and heavy with the greetings of all waters unable to attend.

7.

And also: What makes him set out, every morning, after the communal prayer, towards the river (with the words): “In the name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful, if you see me coming back again—if you see me coming back without having crossed the bridge—then kill me with the stones.” And—so they say—he would point to the pile of river stones, heaped in the middle of the village. By these stones the villagers kept track of the days. Each stone marked a day after the building of the bridge. The villagers measured by them the passage of time, while the old man measured by them his powerlessness.

Rain Apocrypha (excerpt)

1.

The mountain did not go to the prophet: He himself came to the Rhodopes, caressed the stones, and fell asleep in their arms. When he awoke, the Gypsy maiden was leaning over him, reading quietly the lines on his palms. The prophet looked at her. He didn’t even lift a hand to check on his ribs, for he was sure that she was a part of him. And then I understood the saying about Mohammed and the mountain: The mountain always wanted to come, but first he had to tear it away from his eyes, in order to see it and to understand that he was a part of it.

The Dervish, his jugular veins, and...* (excerpt)

To Mesha Selimovic

1.

I swear upon the revolving orbit, the footsteps, and the road; I swear upon the dervish’s dance; upon creation, the Uncreatable and the created, both; upon the dervish who revolves and turns, coiling creation around his jugular veins; I swear upon the road, which turns and winds upwards—from the feet towards the sky, towards a sky the road to which remains still untrodden. That’s why the dervish would rather dance—the road winds and remains untrodden, untrampled by his feet. The dervish moves lightly. His jugular veins point the way towards the moving target, and the target dances in sync with the swelling tide of roads. From below and downwards.

* See Quran 50:16 “We verily created a man and We know what his soul whispereth to him, and We are nearer to him than his jugular vein.” (Tr. M. M. Pickthall)

Marta Simidchieva holds a Ph.D. in Iranian Studies from the Institute of Oriental Studies, Soviet Academy of Sciences, Moscow (1989). Currently she teaches courses on Islamic culture and civilization at the University of Toronto at Mississauga, and at York University, Toronto.
Email: msimid@yorku.ca

Mosques and Muslims in Marseilles

MARCEL MAUSSEN

French colonial rule was legitimized by the idea of a civilizing mission, which supposedly served to bring inferior cultures into the paths of civilization and progress. Colonial societies and cultures were represented as part of a wider French identity sphere, and at the beginning of the twentieth century France positioned itself as a Muslim Great Power. In the overseas territories, colonial administrations established a spatial separation between indigenous and European communities. When colonialism came back home similar strategies of spatial segregation were drawn upon. In France, colonial workers and soldiers were usually housed in special barracks or camps, which were clearly demarcated from their surroundings, and at the colonial expositions indigenous cultures and societies became objects on display, to be viewed and experienced by European audiences.

Against the background of these colonial representations, the Chamber of Commerce of Marseilles issued a report in 1916, which laid down a detailed plan to build a copy of a Kabyle village outside the city. On the central square a bathhouse and a café would be established, as well as a typical North African mosque with arched windows and a 20 meters high minaret. The Chamber of Commerce hoped that the prospect of living in an "Arab village" would attract new Algerian workers.

The architects drew on several detailed French studies on the indigenous house, and on images of elaborate complexes of Arab villages displayed in the colonial expositions. At these exhibitions natives were invited to staff the replica villages in order to create an interesting *tableau vivant*. Colonial workers would now be invited to come and live in a genuine version of a Muslim village. However, the French war efforts prevented the materialization of the project in 1916.

In 1922, the National Colonial Exposition in Marseilles—a follow up on the successful exposition of 1906—attracted some 2 million visitors. The exposition contained pavilions, which represented the French colonies and protectorates. The Tunisian pavilion displayed a replica of a mosque and a courtyard with trees, which—according to the contemporary commentator André Dubosque—gave visitors the impression of being on the other side of the Mediterranean.¹ Commentators praised the simplicity and accurateness of the indigenous houses on display in the Algerian pavilions, as well as the finesse of the ceramics that decorated the minaret of the mosque in the Moroccan section.

Monumental mosques

Whilst the colonial exhibition in Marseilles was taking place, the construction of the Mosque of Paris had also begun. A variety of reasons underlay the establishment of a Grand Mosque in the centre of Paris—financially supported by the French government and the municipality of Paris. The mosque was intended to be a monument for the colonial soldiers who had fought in the French armies as well as a symbol of a pro-French loyalist Islam that could function as a counter weight to anti-colonial Muslim movements in North Africa. Thus the co-opted Algerian Si Kaddour Ben Ghabrit became the rector of the new Mosque of Paris until his death in 1954. The mosque was also to be enjoyed by the Parisian bourgeoisie, who could visit the steam baths or drink a mint tea in the Moorish café. Ironically, the new mosque did not primarily serve the religious needs of the Algerian colonial workers in Paris, and the poor Muslims who showed up at its doors were turned away because of their shabby clothing.²

Islamic presence in western Europe is usually perceived as a post-war immigration phenomenon. However, early in the twentieth century Muslims were also sojourning on a regular basis in Europe, where they founded provisions and accommodations for their religious needs. The French city Marseilles is an interesting site for a historical reconstruction of representations about Islam and mosques in Europe. In colonial times, Muslims—mostly colonial workers or soldiers in the French colonial armies—frequented Marseilles. Since the 1950s, large numbers of Muslims arrived in the city as migrant labourers, and many settled there to become permanent residents.

The inauguration of the Mosque of Paris in 1926, gave an impetus to similar mosque projects in other French cities. In 1937, the founder of a real estate group in Marseilles, Louis Cottin, created the Comité marseillais de la Mosquée de Marseille. Cottin was joined in his efforts by a local Algerian shopkeeper, named Talmoudi. The "mosque of Marseilles" would provide for the religious needs of the colonial workers, be a "testimony of the French recognition towards our Muslim brothers who have died for the fatherland," as well as, contribute to the "moral unity" of the North Africans in the city.³ Local

architects developed a mosque complex, which also included a hostel, a restaurant, several dormitories, and medical facilities. Despite the fact that the Mayor of Marseilles and the prefect of the Bouches-du-Rhône department supported the project, it soon became entangled in the party-political struggles that divided the city in those days.

Plans to establish a mosque re-emerged after the Second World War, when the idea was taken up by a new Comité de reconnaissance aux soldats ayant combattu pour la France. The Mayor of Marseilles, Michel Carlini, spoke out in favour of the new mosque and designated a plot of land in the centre of the city on which it could be built. Members of the municipal council hoped that the mosque might become an enrichment to the "artistic patrimony" of the city. Despite the availability of funds for the project, a problem arose in the expropriation of the real estate. By the early 1950s the rector of the Mosque of Paris, as well as the French secret service, fearing that a mosque in Marseilles might become an instrument in the hands of Arab nationalist movements, also raised new objections to the project.

"Guest workers" and migrants

Migratory fluxes towards Marseilles continued during and after decolonization. To provide for the cultural and religious needs of the Muslim "guest workers," prayer rooms were established in the foyers for migrant workers. A larger house of worship in Marseilles was established in 1977. Located in an old commercial building in the centre of the city, it became one of the first sites of contentious struggles over the visible presence of Islam in Marseilles in the postcolonial period. In the early 1980s the leaders of the Mosque Committee wanted to enlarge the mosque and to decorate the entrance with a new façade. This was not to the liking of the Mayor of Marseilles—Gaston Defferre—who, as rumour has it, said to the president of the Mosque Committee: "make a place... but don't make it there... it is the entrance of the high way... I don't want the tourists who come to Marseilles to see the Arabs leaving the mosque."⁴

Despite the growing number of small houses of worship in the city, the idea that Marseilles should have a real mosque re-emerged by the late 1980s. In October 1989 the Mayor of Marseilles—Robert Vigouroux—declared that he was in favour of the establishment of a mosque: "like the one in Paris. I want it to be beautiful. In the first place, for the city. Moreover, such a mosque must be a symbol for the Muslims of Marseilles. A bit like the Cathedral is for Christians."⁵

Less than ten days after the Mayor had expressed this sentiment, a local Algerian businessman—Mustapha Slimani—presented a project for a mosque, which combined a religious, commercial, and cultural complex. The project included a huge mosque with a ground surface of 9,000 square meters and a 50 meters high minaret, which would provide for 15,000 to 17,000 worshippers. Slimani's megalomaniac project was completely out

of touch with the ideas and expectations of the representatives of Muslim associations in Marseilles. However, somewhat unfortunately, in public discourse this project became understood as an illustrative embodiment of the future "Cathedral Mosque" of Marseilles. Public and political protest against the project grew rapidly, and representatives of the extreme right Front National argued that the Muslim newcomers threatened the Christian identity of Marseilles. Confronted with public protests and arguing that the Muslims in Marseilles were not able to come up with a joined project, the municipality decided to call off the project in 1990.

An Islamic religious and cultural centre

The issue returned on the local public agenda in the late 1990s. This time the demand for a Grand Mosque was articulated by members of a new elite of local politicians of Moroccan and Algerian descent. They framed their demand in terms of the need for an adequate and respectable place for Islamic worship, as well as the need for a symbolic gesture of recognition towards the Muslims in Marseilles.

The new round of discussions took place against the background of discussions about Islam in France, and the need for a national council of Muslim representatives. Accordingly, the municipality of Marseilles decided to start a consultation among representatives of Muslim associations in Marseilles and other local stakeholders. The idea was to build a central mosque that would be administrated by a council of local Muslim representatives. The religious centre would be combined with a cultural centre, which would be subsidized by public authorities, and help stimulate dialogue.

In 2002, an opposition arose between two different factions of Muslim associations in Marseilles. Local Mosque Committees affiliated to the Mosque of Paris—predominantly representing Algerian Muslims—claimed to represent the silent majority of Muslims in Marseilles. Moreover, Soheib Bencheikh—an employee of the Mosque of Paris who since 1996 claimed to be the "official mufti of Marseilles" but who was not recognized as such by most of the local Mosque Committees—supported the idea of establishing an Islamic cultural centre in the image of the Institut du Monde Arabe in Paris. This centre would be open and transparent and would contribute to the development of a liberal Islam. Those committees were opposed by local Muslim associations, which claimed to represent younger generations and different ethnic communities. The associations led by younger Muslim representatives, founded a Council of Imams of Marseilles. The Council of Imams primarily wanted the new Grand Mosque to become a religious centre, which would contribute to the unity of Muslims in Marseilles and would illustrate the public recognition of Islam in France.

In the post-September 11 context, the diverging ideas of the Council of Imams and the Mosque Committees affiliated to the Mosque of Paris, were increasingly framed in terms of an opposition between extremists and liberals. The media spoke of the "mufti" as a proponent of a liberal Islam and the *New York Times* portrayed him as "an Algerian cleric who is clean-shaven and wears a suit and tie" who wants a mosque combined with a cultural centre with "poetry readings, concerts and dance performances." The Council of Imams was now represented as an ensemble of "fundamentalist clerics," and the chairman—Mourad Zerfaoui—as a "bearded Algerian biologist" whose "followers" try to "lure teenage boys toward the cause of conservative Islam."⁶

Islam de proximité

In 2003, it became clear that the municipality intended to sign an agreement with the Mosque Committees affiliated to the Mosque of Paris and the "mufti." However, when the Council of Imams and their allies came out victorious in the elections for a regional Muslim coun-

cil in the Bouches-du-Rhône department, municipal authorities could no longer afford to bypass these associations. The municipality of Marseilles now argued that perhaps the idea of establishing a Grand Mosque was outdated anyhow. Many of the existing houses of worship in Marseilles had been renovated or enlarged, and a number of new projects had emerged for middle-sized mosques in Marseilles. In June 2004, the Mayor of Marseilles—Jean Claude Gaudin—declared that he had decided to acknowledge the need for a multiplicity of houses of worship and for an "Islam de proximité." The municipality now wanted to support the establishment of an "Islamic cultural centre" in combination with an existing project for a new museum of immigration in Marseilles.⁷

Historically, it appears as if Islam in Marseilles had come full circle. Ordinary Muslims in Marseilles would now worship in the existing "neighbourhood mosques," whereas the dialogue between Muslims and French society would take place in a cultural centre that is to be linked to "a museum." Much like the colonial exhibitions of the beginning of the twentieth century, Islamic culture would be transformed into an object on display in order to allow for exchanges between Muslims and non-Muslims in Marseilles.

Marcel Maussen is a Ph.D. candidate at the Amsterdam School for Social Science Research (ASSR). This article draws upon his dissertation *Constructing Mosques: Negotiating Islam and Cultural Diversity in the Netherlands and France (1900-2004)* (forthcoming 2005).

Email: M.J.M.Maussen@uva.nl



PHOTO BY ROGER VIOLET, 1922

The Moroccan Pavilion at the National Colonial Exposition in Marseilles, 1922

1. André Dubosque, *Revue Économique Française* 44, no. 3 (May-June 1922): 202.
2. See Mustafa Bayoumi, "Shadows and Light: Colonial Modernity and the Grande Mosquée of Paris," *Yale Journal of Criticism* 13, no. 2 (2000): 267-292.
3. Letter of the "comité de patronage" to the prefect of the Bouches-du-Rhône department, dated 22 June 1937, signed by Louis Cottin.
4. M. Mohand Alili (son of the former president of the Mosque Committee M. Hadj Alili), interview by Gaston Defferre, Marseilles, 23 March 2002.
5. Robert Vigouroux, *Profession Politique*, no. 52 (29 October 1989).
6. "Muslims remaking old France," *New York Times*, 10 April 2003.
7. "Le temps des 'mosquées cathédrales' semble révolu," *Le Monde*, 17 June 2004.

A Mosque Between Significance and Style

AKEL ISMAIL KAHERA

The style of Quranic inscriptions on a North American masjid (mosque) in North America represents a dialogue between two equally valid frames of reference; the tradition of Islamic art, and the Muslim Diaspora. The Islamic Center of Washington DC represents one of many interesting examples of the use of inscriptions in North America. Conceived in 1949, the building was inaugurated by President Eisenhower in 1957. The principal client was a Palestinian Muslim, but the financial sponsors of the building were several Muslim ambassadors from the Middle East, Turkey, and the Indian subcontinent, who were assigned to Washington, DC. Although not the first masjid to be established in the US, it was the first one to appear in a major American city. The inauguration of the Washington masjid signalled a major turning point

The meaning and interpretation of the inscriptions on a mosque in North America provide some insights into the concomitant qualities of belief, order, space, and form. Mosque inscriptions reveal the American Muslim community's concern with the expressive nuances of Islamic art and architecture, for this community has long recognized that the extreme stylistic characteristics of an inscription—except with little variation—can be expressed in any medium.

in the development of masjid architecture in America.¹ The first historical document about the Washington masjid was published by Muhammad Abdul-Rauf (1978), former Imam of the Islamic Center of Washington DC; it explained the intriguing history of the building. More recent publications are intended to enable art historians to understand the "pluralistic" genres of the North American community and the complex features of aesthetics treatment.²

Islamic Center,
Washington DC



employed in the Washington masjid can best be understood by studying the inscriptions that depict both meaning and style. The meanings of the inscriptions allow for an interpretation of what is actually represented as well as for the construction of a history of the American masjid. However, like similar religious buildings elsewhere, difficulties remain with regard to interpreting the stylistic qualities of the North American masjid, which are mainly derived from a "mixed bag" of conventions, from Muslim Art and from the circumstances of Diaspora in North America.

Deciphering the text of any inscription is surely overwhelming for a faithful believer who is not adept in reading Arabic or recognizing the nuances of a writing style from among the seven major styles—which could mean the majority of American Muslims. Although each inscription is primarily addressed to the community with the intention of furthering its knowledge of the religious tradition, it is necessarily of interest to art historians who are also concerned with deciphering aesthetic elements. Close ties bind together the religious customs of a Diaspora Muslim community with those of the larger global community (ummah). It is primarily for this reason that inscriptions are indeed informative, even if the style remains essentially conventional, or defies straightforward interpretation. It is also in this sense that there is something impressive about the attempts made by the builders of the Washington masjid to engage the mind in contemplation; every inscription enhances the spirit of devotion.

Dialogue: religious significance and style

The Washington DC masjid was designed by Mario Rossi, an Italian Muslim architect, who also designed several buildings of this type in Alexandria and Cairo between 1940 and 1950. Rossi's design for the building is reminiscent of Mamluk architectural vocabulary from twelfth-fifteenth century Egypt while it clearly ignores the American architectural context: it makes no effort to invoke American architectural language. Insofar as possible traditional crafts and materials were imported from Turkey, Iran, and Egypt, along with skilled craftsmen, needed for the making of the building.

The three-*iwan* (vaulted hall) plan is framed by an exterior double *riwaq* (arcade or portico open on at least one side), which serves as an extra-mural space or *ziyadah*. The arcade remains parallel with the street, but the plan of the masjid is purposely tangential to conform to the qiblah axis, which was calculated by using the Great Circle to face Makkah. Typically, a Mamluk building would have a *sahn* or courtyard open to the sky, sharing a contiguous function and circulation with the iwans. Owing to the climate in North America, a clearstory dome encloses the *sahn* of the mosque. A *riwaq*, consisting of five contiguous arches serves as a horizontal entry portal, and street facade. For additional emphasis an inscription band of Kufic script is placed at the upper part of the facade. It reads: "In houses of worship which Allah has permitted to be raised so that His name be remembered, in them, there [are such who] extol His limitless glory at morning and evening" (*Surat*

PHOTO BY AKEL ISMAIL KAHERA, 2002



PHOTO BY AKEL ISMAIL KAHERA, 2002

al-Nur 24:36).

Several verses of the Quran have been arranged in a symmetrical configuration and in various patterns on the interior walls and ceilings of the masjid. The Divine Names of Allah (*asma'i Allah al-husna*) and many often-quoted verses from the Quran are inscribed in large framed borders of *thuluth* script along with smaller framed panels of ornamental Kufic script. Two inscription bands run horizontally across the face of the mihrab. The one at the top reads: "Verily we have seen the turning of your face to the heaven" (and the lower band, just slightly higher than a man's height, continues) "surely we shall turn you to a qiblah that shall please you." (*Surat al-Baqara* 2:144). The mihrab is a hybrid element: its decorative treatment employs Iznik and Bursa traditional glazed tiles—blue, red, and green—which are commonly found in Classical Ottoman buildings. As a whole, the Washington masjid epitomizes an array of Muslim aesthetic themes; moreover, the inscriptions evoke a rich symbolic meaning, which creates a quiet, devotional atmosphere.

One of the defining elements of inscriptions that we have discussed is the simulation of two modes of aesthetic reasoning: one "universal" and the other "particular." Firstly, the aesthetic image of the "universal" embraces convention and origin; it expresses its own mimetic essence as well by asserting meaning and truth. It is self-evident in its relationship to the world and therefore, it maintains the right to exist. Secondly, the "particular" mode of expression, which seeks to find its own American identity, in the face of obvious social and cultural realities, is a dynamic gesture that represents innovation and change.

The Washington masjid provides a convincing narrative. Firstly, the skilful use of inscriptions can be traced back to an earlier epoch. Clearly Rossi felt free to use a variety of inscriptions to create a nostalgic composition, which borrows from a different place and time. Secondly, the edifice provokes a number of questions concerning the syncretic use of extant features in an American masjid. Thirdly, it evokes cultural values related to time, space, memory, and beauty. In the production of religious art and architecture, the American Muslim community claim one or more of these values. Memory is crucial to Muslims in the Diaspora, because it can be used as mechanism for maintaining various cultural habits and customs thus keeping these sentiments alive in an alien environment. Finally, the principles that underlie sacred art and architec-

ture are fundamentally linked to religious communities in the "East" and the "West." Variations in space, form, and aesthetic expression may be affected by varying geographical or regional conditions while the operative tenets of dogma remain constant. Dogma transcends aesthetic considerations, although aesthetic considerations are recognized as being inseparable from belief. Sacred aesthetics are inextricably linked to sacred symbols and forms, and are thus reflected in the laying-out of sacred space. Within the character of sacred space we often find principles of "traditional" form. That is, religious practice invariably influences the principles and the processes of art and architecture. In the design of the contemporary mosque, we observe the search for a "new" taxonomy of content. In the Muslim world, it is often "historicism" and the struggle to deal with cultural and regional building traditions; in the West, it can easily be a fusion of "kitsch" with "postmodern aesthetics" which dominates the aesthetics genre. In both cases, there is a need to extract the underlying formative and generative aesthetic principles, which have been rooted in the mosque as an authentic typological model or archetype. Art is not created ex-nihilo.

Islamic Center, Washington DC

Notes

1. See Muhammad Abdul Rauf, *Al-Markaz al-Islami bi-Washington* [The Islamic Center of Washington] (Washington, DC: Colortone Press, 1978).
2. See, Akel Ismail Kahera, "The Arts III: Visual and Religious Art," in *Encyclopaedia of American Immigration*, ed. James Ciment and Immanuel Ness (New York: M.E. Sharpe, Inc., June 2001).

Akel Ismail Kahera is an architect/historian and Professor of Architecture at Texas Tech University, College of Architecture. He is the author of *Deconstructing the American Mosque: Space, Gender and Aesthetics* (University of Texas Press, 2002).
Email: akel.kahera@ttu.edu

Museums, Women, and Empowerment

CAROL MALT

Early museums in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region began in Ottoman Turkey. They developed in the larger cultural centres of Cairo, Baghdad, Jerusalem, and Beirut in the early twentieth century and proliferated after the 1980's. At first, these museums were bastions of male power containing objects representative of male craftsmanship and significance—attracting mainly a male audience. The mid-twentieth century saw a marked change in the philosophy, audience, and contents of museums as more ethnographic museums were founded, displaying objects made by and for women. Undoubtedly, this change, along with the economic situation and increased educational opportunities, played an important part in attracting women to museum work. Indeed a high percentage of women work in MENA museums. In Morocco for instance, 20 of the 29 museums are curated or administered by women and four were founded by women.

How does this feminization of the cultural workforce impact women's equality? With the emergence of women in professional organizations and in the workforce as government employees in the cultural arena, museums can be used as agents for women's empowerment in several ways. Women can use their newly appointed positions as curators, volunteers, administrators, and founders to develop their museums into institutions that represent women equitably, and help to educate, employ, and prepare women for the changing world.

From global to local

Museums can be effective agents of women's change. Firstly, women in patriarchal societies can use their positions in museums to influence change through participation in international museum organizations, such as the International Council of Museums, and secondly, by reevaluating their local museum programmes to readdress the image and level of participation of women. Further, they can become instruments for the promotion of women's issues through creating cooperative liaisons with existing women's organizations—perhaps even collaborating in the development of exhibitions and publications. Museum facilities represent safe meeting places where both men and women of different social backgrounds can share the same space and view culturally important objects and images together. The museum experience encourages the sharing

Museums are a public space within the public sphere. Yet they also embody many aspects of the private sphere. This duality, (or perhaps neutrality), makes them appropriate as change-agents in the segregated arena of Muslim society. Museums belong to a universal and growing movement that societies can use to develop a common voice about social concepts such as those relating to women's equality.¹

of ideas. As such, museums can be conceptualized as incubators of democracy that promote both intellectual and social interaction across gender and social divides.

To become agents of change and really make a difference, those who administer museums need to rethink, redirect, reuse, and reinvent their facilities, exhibitions, programmes, and philosophies.

By using their collections, their exhibitions, their publications, and trained personnel, they can develop programmes that project a more inclusive, democratic, and positive image of women and develop relevant programmes that address the problems women face in their private, familial, and economic lives. Examples of some existing programmes include vocational training and literacy classes, the sale of artistic products, and exhibitions that dispel stereotyping and subservience of women.

"Typical" exhibitions

Many MENA ethnographic and history museums contain exhibits described as the "typical" environments of men and women. For instance, at the National Heritage Museum and the Salt Folklore Museum, both in Jordan, the women's display includes women at work cooking, washing, grinding, and sewing while the men's display depicts them at leisure lounging, smoking, and drinking coffee. At the Ethnographic Museum of Tetouan, Morocco, however, the new curator replaced the old "typical" display of a woman seated on the floor doing domestic work with one of a well-dressed woman in her home, seated at a table, and taking refreshment. What messages do these "typical" exhibitions give to their audiences? Where is the balance between continuity of heritage and subservient stereotyping?

Museums as educators

Museums, as public spaces, offer appropriate places for educational programming. Museums constitute ideal spaces for adult literacy classes. These classes might incorporate the museum's collection in its teaching curriculum so that students learn about their history through the display of objects while learning to read. Literacy classes are being offered at the American Legation Museum in Tangier. The Museum of the Religion and Spiritual Heritage of the North of Morocco in Tetouan, now under development, offers an example of how museums can be used for education and women's empowerment. The Museum will contain a library with legal and religious texts that will be available to a wide audience as well as to feminist scholars interested in the role of women in Islam. Another recent Moroccan initiative is the Museum of the Middle Atlas in Azrou; a cross-roads for travelers where there is a rich tradition of artistic production in the area—particularly in weaving. Women who have participated in the development process will be served economically by the sale of their rugs and through training opportunities at this new site.

Museums in the MENA region area are increasingly playing ever-new education functions, testifying to their role in cultural production. Museums clearly hold great potential to serve their audiences in new ways and to help promote women's empowerment through inventive and comprehensive use of their facilities and programmes.

Note

1. A longer version of this paper was presented at the workshop "Women's Activism and the Public Sphere: Local/Global Linkages" at the 2005 Sixth Mediterranean Social and Political Research Meeting in Montecatini, Italy.

The author in a display of men at leisure, Heritage Museum, University of Jordan



PHOTO BY CAROL MALT, 2004

Carol Malt is a museum director/curator and also teaches at the University of West Florida. She is the author of *Women's Voices In Middle East Museums* (Syracuse University Press, 2005).
Email: c.malt@juno.com

Muslim Fashions – Fashionable Muslims

"We can dress as well as you do," was an argument Ozlem Sandikci often encountered in discussions between Islamist women with Turkish secularists. Whereas Islam and fashion tend to be seen as standing in a relation of tension with each other, the papers presented at the workshop proved the opposite.

Avoiding the conventional framings of "headscarf debates," textual approaches, and easy dichotomies of "fashion in the North versus dress in the South," they showed how under conditions of globalization fashion is everywhere; even the anti-fashion stance of conservative Islamists represents a reaction to fashion. Young Muslim women wearing Islamic dress in Europe as well as in Muslim majority countries are not simply conforming to notions of Islamic propriety, but are also involved in developing new styles of Islamic fashion or hybrid forms of fashion that include Islamic elements. At the same time, fashion in Muslim societies is not restricted to styles of dress that are linked to or inspired by Islamic dressing codes. Other forms of fashionable dress are prominently present as well, whether imported from abroad or developed by up and coming local fashion designers. Everywhere youth are involved in developing their own styles of dress through a creative fusion of multiple sources of inspiration.

In the first session on "Commodification, citizen-subjects and their aesthetics," Banu Gökarişkel addressed the development of an Islamic fashion industry and the commodification of Islamic dress in Turkey in the 1990s where she investigated the implications of the new veiling fashions for the construction of subject-citizens in Istanbul. Özlem Sandikci and Güliz Ger zoned in on one particular item of dress, the headscarf. Rather than dealing with its symbolic meanings, they focused on the aesthetic practices involved, drawing attention to women's struggles with ethics, politics, and aesthetics in selecting headscarves and in choices regarding how to knot, pin, and wear them.

The next session on "Commodification: religious consumerism or critique?" included work on Egypt and Indonesia. Maha Abdelrahman located the development of Islamic fashion in Egypt within the broader context of the rapidly rising popularity of Islamic goods and services. In her view, the transformation of the Islamic project from a collective, political organized movement to one of fragmented individuality steeped in material fulfilment, fits well with the increasing integration of Egyptian society into a global market economy. Carla Jones, focusing on middle class urban Java, pointed to the shift from Islamic dress as a youth critique of a corrupt older order in the early 1990s to a now highly visible and fashionable presence in women's magazines, television shows, and on the streets. She argued that in this setting, dress styles have become a form of debate and counter-debate about femininity, piety, and propriety.

"Authenticity: constructions of the ethnic and the religious" was the theme of the third session. Mona Abaza firmly located Islamic fashion within the broader field of lifestyles in Egypt. Starting with the comment that the Egyptian middle class does not have a "national dress," she discussed a variety of new fashion projects that link ethnic or religious "chic" with claims to authenticity. Dorothea Schulz addressed the controversies in Mali about "fashionable and modern" versus "decent" Islamic dress. She explored how Malian women interrogate and redefine conventional understandings of femininity and proper Muslim observance, and of an enlightened-yet-authentically "African" identity. Annelies Moors addressed the tensions between the anti-fashion stance of the authors of conservative Salafi booklets sold in Yemen, and the ways in which San'ani women themselves link their sartorial practices to Islamic and San'ani authenticity.

The fourth session, "Performing gender and modernity," brought us to Euro-American settings, where Muslims find themselves in the position of a minority. Emma Tarlo investigated the sartorial biographies of three

The ISIM and the Amsterdam School for Social Science Research (ASSR) jointly organized the workshop, "Muslim Fashions - Fashionable Muslims" which was held 15–16 April. The workshop took place at Amsterdam University with additional financial support by the International Institute for Asian Studies (IIAS).

Muslim women in the contemporary British cultural scene. Each had forged distinctive appearances that take distance from the ethnically inspired dress of their parents whilst at the same time incorporating and interrogating stylistic elements they consider to be both fashionable and Islamic. Kimberly Huis-

ANNELIES MOORS

man dealt with the meanings of dress and modernity for Bosnian Muslim refugees in Vermont, underlining how these women through their fashionable dressing styles simultaneously keep their distance from "old-fashioned" ways of dressing in Bosnia and from the informal and relaxed styles of dress in Vermont. Focussing on "Islamic Barbie" Amina Yaqin employed the notion of gender performativity to point out how this project engages with different levels of stereotypes. While some stereotypes about the female body are subverted, other notions of gender and sexuality are normalized.

The last session dealt with fashion shows and their publics. Here Alexandre Balasescu showed how notions of gender segregation structure the ways fashion shows work in Tehran and Paris. While in Tehran locally organized fashion showrooms both enforce and transgress requirements of gender segregation, in Paris fashion houses with a Middle Eastern clientele create a gender-segregated space in order to accommodate the sensibilities of their customers. Caroline Osella's overview of the fashion scene of Calicut in Kerala, brought us back again to a discussion about "Muslim aesthetics." Linking fashion to gender segregation and women's life cycle, she also showed how young girls may function publicly as would-be fashion show models, a practice their mothers could not engage in.

Annelies Moors holds the ISIM Chair at the University of Amsterdam
a.c.a.e.moors@uva.nl

Models display dresses designed by Gilang Kenchalias, Kuala Lumpur, 2004.

© REUTERS, 2004

PAPERS PRESENTED

- **Banu Gökarişkel** (University of North Carolina, USA)
"Islams, Neoliberalism and Transnationalism: The Making of Subject-Citizens and Tesettür Fashions in Istanbul"
- **Özlem Sandikci and Güliz Ger** (Bilkent University, Ankara)
"Aesthetics, Ethics and the Politics of the Turkish Headscarf"
- **Maha Abdelrahman** (American University in Cairo, Cairo)
"Consumerism, Islam and Fashion in Egypt Today"
- **Carla Jones** (University of Colorado, USA)
"More Than Fabric: Debates on Baju Muslim in Contemporary Urban Java"
- **Mona Abaza** (American University in Cairo, Cairo)
"Fashion, Consumer Culture and Life Styles in Egypt"
- **Dorothea Schulz** (ISIM/ Free University Berlin)
"The 'virtuous' and the 'authentic' women: Competing constructions of femininity through dress practices in Mali"
- **Annelies Moors** (University of Amsterdam/ISIM/ASSR)
"Islam and Fashion on the Streets of San'a, Yemen"
- **Emma Tarlo** (Open University, London)
"The Fashioning of New Muslim Identities in Britain"
- **Kimberly Huisman** (University of Maine, USA)
"Dress, Islam and Modernity: A Case Study of Bosnian Muslim Refugees in Vermont"
- **Amina Yaqin** (School of Oriental and African Studies, London)
"Islamic Barbie: The Politics of Gender and Performativity"
- **Alexandru Balasescu** (Royal University for Women, Bahrain)
"Gendered Space and Fashion Catwalks: Paris and Tehran"
- **Caroline Osella** (School of Oriental and African Studies, London)
"The Fashion Scene of Calicut, Kerala: Aesthetics and Objectification"

The Making of Muslim Youths

ASEF BAYAT &
MARTIJN DE KONING

The workshop examined the central, and complex, place of the “young generation” in the politics and culture of Muslim societies and communities. Due to a combination of the shifting moral politics at home and the process of globalization, youth cultures are developing in novel, yet little understood ways.

While often referred to as the “builders of the future” by the power elite, the young are also stigmatized and feared as “disruptive” agents who are prone to radicalism and deviation. Although gender, class, and cultural divisions may make it untenable to render youths homogenous as an analytical category, it is equally true that the young do share a certain important habitus, which both the young themselves as well as the political and moral authority recognize.

The workshop, which dealt with cases from the Middle East, Africa, and Europe, was divided into the overlapping and related themes: youths and cultural politics, and Muslim youths in Europe. In the first session Mounia Bennani concentrated on how youth has been constituted as an object of study. She argued that “youth” is not a coherent and uniform unit. Furthermore, when the young are constituted as “a problem,” they are relegated to playing behind-the-scenes roles. In another paper dealing with issues of youth and authority, Linda Herrera, through an examination of the new mandatory Values and Morals (al-Qiyam wa al-Akhlaq) course in Egyptian schools, considered how curriculum development is increasingly becoming a multinational undertaking. Despite its claims to instill liberal democratic virtues such as “tolerance” and “active citizenship,” the curriculum often reflects highly anti-democratic processes and practices.

Turning to music and youth identities, Pierre Hecker analyzed the appropriations of Metal music and culture in urban Turkish society (see his article on page 8). Despite being widely tolerated by the Turkish authorities, several incidents incited “moral panics” about Satanism

The ISIM, in collaboration with the International Institute for Asian Studies (IIAS), organized a workshop, “The making of Muslim Youths: Youth Cultures & Politics in Muslim Societies and Communities.” The workshop took place 18 to 19 February at Leiden University and was convened by Asef Bayat.

entering Turkish society through the gates of Metal music. The national media presented the emergence of Satanism as part of a wider process of “Westernization,” particularly cultural globalization. Also relating to Turkey, Ayse Saktanber’s paper (read by Asef Bayat) dealt with elite students of the

Middle East Technical University (METU). While these students are assumed to reflect western/universal values and norms, they are also influenced by religious trends.

Asef Bayat challenged the assumption that youths are necessarily agents of political transformation. Invoking the case of Iran, he argued that although youths did develop a social movement, a “youth” movement, it was not necessarily a force for political change. The youth movement, rather, has been about claiming “youthfulness.” Iran’s youth movement was expressed, during the 1990s, in strong collective identities, often in defiance of moral-political authority, as displayed in fashion, underground music, and reinterpretation of religion and religious rituals, what Bayat conceptualized as “subversive accommodation.” Pascal Menoret, bringing the issues to the case of Saudi Arabia, suggested that political Islam has emerged in Saudi public and social life as a counterculture. A counterculture is measured by its capability for deconstructing the dominant culture, or for criticizing it from inside more than from outside. Reform rather than revolution, is defined by its efficiency more than by any symbolic inversion, rebellion or subversion. Youth Islam is, in a way, the self-consciousness of a larger counter-culture that is deconstructing and criticizing the dominant culture from inside. Turning to Morocco, Sonia Hegasy presented the results of a quantitative survey on royal authority in Morocco. She argued that Mohammed VI is making attempts to establish himself as the cultural representative of globalized Moroccan youth. Young women in particular favour the opening up of the monarchy and its new political iconography. With regard to Nigeria, Hameed Agberemi examined the radicalization of the youths in Nigeria and how the public space is contested on the university campus by Islamists.

The second half of the workshop focused on Muslim minorities in Europe. Nikola Tietze, drawing on research of young Muslims in France, showed that youth constantly re-negotiate ways of action in French society. She discussed the various forms of Muslim religiosity that can become vehicles for demanding respect within a set of social and political relations that is perceived as effectively marginalizing youths of Muslim origin. On the case of the UK, Mohammed Amer spoke about the religious families of Pakistani background where the Bollywood movies and other media are part of the household in East London. He challenged the assumption that UK born South Asians, mostly Muslims, have a confused identity. The final two presentations dealt with the popular culture of Muslim youth in the Dutch context. Martijn de Koning focused on different fields of negotiating: the internet, between the

Lebanese high-school students celebrate Valentine’s Day at a Beirut café, 14 February 2001

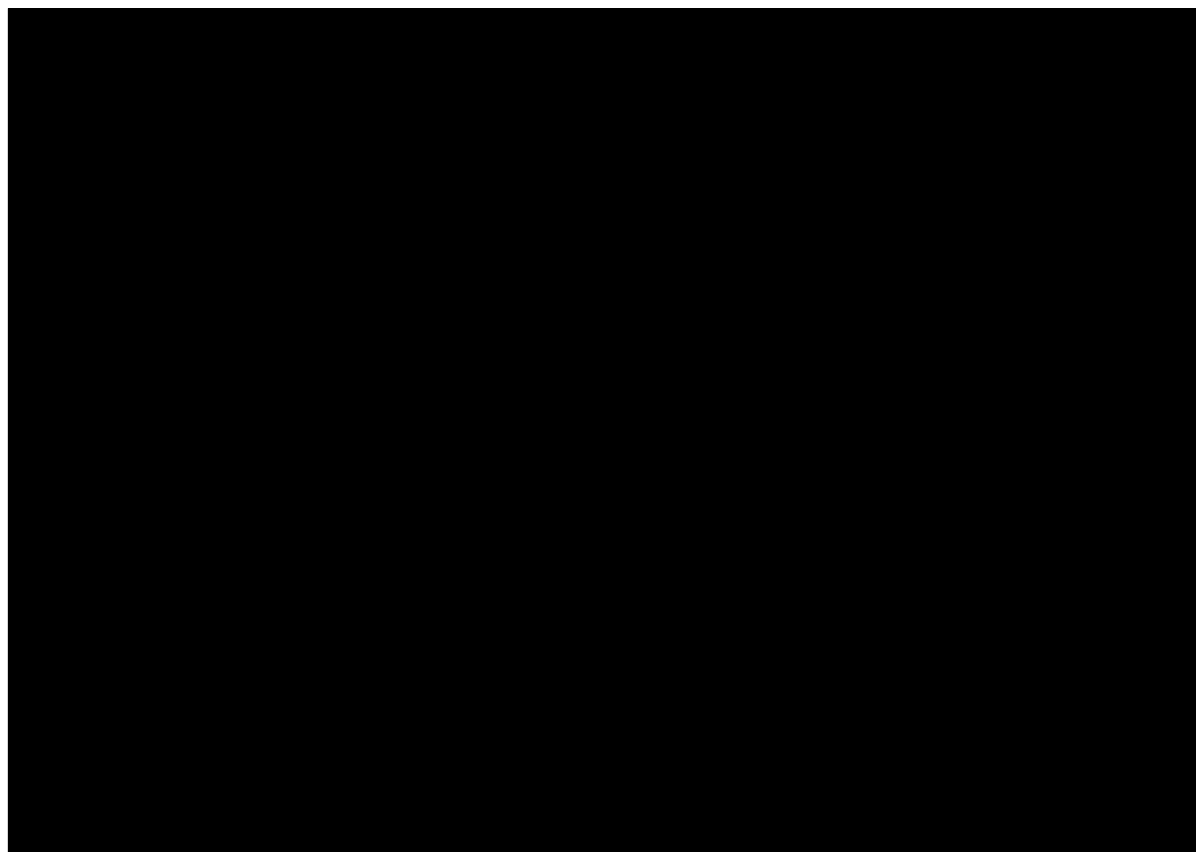


PHOTO BY JAMAL SAIDI, © REUTERS, 2001

researcher and researched, between men and women, among Muslims in general and between Muslims and non-Muslims. He argued that identity politics should be taken to mean the negotiations about the definition and interpretation of ideas, practices, and experiences that constitute a certain identity. In her paper, Miriam Gazzah dealt with the cultural politics of Moroccan youth in the Netherlands, based on two musical genres, namely Moroccan popular folk music ("shaabi") and Maroc-hop (see her article on page 6). She concluded that both these musical forms permit young Moroccans in the Netherlands to express specific identities in local contexts. She pointed to the importance of the concept of multiple identities and that Dutch society has not (yet) recognized these multiple identities of young Moroccans and it keeps referring them as Muslims, although Moroccan youth may give priority to very different identities.

Shahnaz Rouge summed the workshop discussions, highlighting the relationship between the researcher and the researched and questioning concepts such as "Muslim" and "youth." She pointed out that it is important to keep asking ourselves why are we interested in youth, how do we see "youth," "habitus" and "space," and how do gender and class factor into these categories?

ISIM, in cooperation with IIAS and the African Studies Centre at Leiden University, and CODESRIA, will organize a follow-up workshop in 2006. This will be a larger workshop to be held in Dakar, Senegal. The workshop will be open to direct application from interested young scholars on a competitive basis.

Asef Bayat is the Academic Director of ISIM and the ISIM Chair at Leiden University.

Email: a.bayat@isim.nl

Martijn de Koning is a researcher at the ISIM on the Ethno-Barometer Project.

Email: m.dekoning@isim.nl

PARTICIPANTS

- **Mounia Bennani-Chraïbi**
"Young Moroccans and Religion"
- **Linda Herrera**
"The Making of Moral Youths: The Politics of Schooling in Egypt"
- **Pierre Hecker**
"Taking a Trip to the Turkish Metal Underground: Appropriation of a Global Youth Culture in a Changing Muslim Society"
- **Ayse Saktanber**
"Negotiating Muslim Identity and Youthfulness: The Cultural Dilemma of Muslim Youth in Turkey"
- **Asef Bayat**
"Subversive Accommodation: Cultural Politics of Muslim Youths in Iran"
- **Pascal Menoret**
"Political Islam and Youth Culture in Saudi Arabia"
- **Sonia Hegasy**
"Young Authority: Youth and the State Power in Morocco"
- **Hameed Agberemi**
"Campus Islamisms in Southwestern Nigeria: Contests over Public Space"
- **Nikola Tietze**
"Young Muslims in France: Youthfulness, Religiosity and Recognition"
- **Mohammed Amer**
"Imported in-Laws, Bollywood and Islam: Faces of Identity among Muslim Youth in London"
- **Miriam Gazzah**
"Rap and Rage: Cultural Politics of Moroccan Youths in the Netherlands"
- **Martijn de Koning**
"For Me and Allah: Identity Politics of Young Moroccan-Dutch Muslims"
- **Shahnaz Rouse**
Conclusion and Sum-up

Islam in Africa

The major point of deliberation of the workshop concerned the ways in which Islam is represented as both a religion and culture in (inter)national, regional, local, and gendered public spheres. Three invited speakers presented case studies. Gerard van de Bruinhorst (Ph.D. fellow ISIM, Leiden) presented a case study on hajj-linked rituals in Tanzania where, increasingly, more importance is paid in Swahili discourse to the standing-supplication (*wuquf*) on the plain of Arafat rather than to the day of Sacrifice (Eid ul-Adha). For instance, a political demonstration of Tanzanian Muslims held on 4 March 2001 in the capital Dar es Salaam was modeled on the Arafat rituals, performed at exactly the same time in Saudi Arabia. Muslim dissatisfaction with the national government, which is perceived as being Christian, was expressed through the powerful religious metaphor of the sanctity of human life. Van de Bruinhorst concluded that policy makers should be aware of the polyvocal nature of religious rituals in order to prevent political clashes.

Dorothea Schulz (Free University, Berlin/visiting fellow ISIM) presented a case study on Islam's "female face" in Mali. Islam as a publicly articulated moral idiom has a growing appeal among Malian Muslim women. An increasing number participate in neighbourhood groups in order to study the Qur'an and receive instruction in the "proper" performance of rituals. While the increased public prominence of female preachers challenges conventional understandings of female religious practice, but it has not increased their political influence in the national arena. Females use their appearance in the public arena to stress the importance of personal piety and the individual responsibility in moral reform. Their public interventions should not be seen as merely a move

The ISIM workshop on "Islam as Religion in African Public Spheres" (held on 16 June 2005 in Utrecht, The Netherlands) explored how both the nation state and transnational trends change the nature of religion in new public spheres in Africa. The media through which these changes occur include ritual, telecommunications, education, and law. The workshop was organized by Abdulkader Tayob (ISIM Chair at Radboud University Nijmegen) in collaboration with Karin Willemse (Erasmus University Rotterdam) and José van Santen (Leiden University).

towards greater public representation, but rather as a manifestation of more complicated, at times even paradoxical, societal dynamics.

Abdulkader Tayob examined the meaning of religion in South Africa by means of a challenging study of the Constitutional Court's interpretation of religious values and practices in three landmark cases since 1994. The first case dealt with the selling of liquor on Sunday, the second with corporal punishment in Christian schools, and the last case with the smoking of marijuana

by Rastafarians. The court judgements revealed an emerging approach to religion in general in South Africa in which the distinction between the public and private practice of religion has become blurred. This has also affected the state's view on Muslim Personal Law as illustrated by the recent official recognition of Muslim marriages. Given the absence of representative official Muslim institutions in South Africa issues of sharia remain the subject of civil rather than religious debate.

During the closing discussion, chaired by Van Santen, Tayob concluded that contrary to what many Muslims believe, Islam is a particularistic religious tradition comparable to, for example, Christianity. As such, religion can be used as an analytical category and therefore a cautious distinction can be made between the religious and the non-religious. As a consequence it is more appropriate to speak about public spheres (in the plural) because some spheres are more religious, others more political, whereas these spheres sometimes coincide, as the cases dealt with in this workshop illustrate.

Marloes Janson is a postdoctoral fellow at ISIM.

Email: m.janson@isim.nl

MARLOES JANSON

Iran on the Move

**ANNA ENAYAT &
SORAYA TREMAYNE**

The Iran conference brought together a multidisciplinary group of social scientists, including demographers, sociologists, geographers, anthropologists, historians, and political scientists, all specialized on contemporary Iranian studies. Convened by Asef Bayat, Anna Enayat, Soraya Tremayne, and Abbas Vali, the conference was sponsored by ISIM, Leiden University, the Iran Heritage Foundation, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office in the UK, and the University of Wales.

The point of departure for the conference was the exceptionally rapid change, which Iranian society has undergone over the past quarter or a century, especially in the social and cultural realm. A revolution, several years of war with Iraq, rapid population growth, and the growing impact of globalization (Iran, although dominated by an authoritarian and Islamist ruling establishment, is not a closed society) have all left their mark, contributing to the emergence of new social formations and new values. The result is a dynamic society whose constant and rapid changes have taken specialists—and the ruling establishment—by surprise.

Some aspects of the social, political, and cultural changes that are taking place in contemporary Iran—most notably politics and the position of women—have been covered extensively by scholars both inside and outside the country. Other, equally important dimensions, have either been overlooked, or have been dealt with in isolated pieces of research, which do not locate them in the broader context. There has been only paltry attention (beyond the very general, and often very ideological writings) of how monopolistic, and in many respects archaic political, economic, and juridical structures are attempting, or failing, to deal with the challenges posed by these changes. The aim of the conference, therefore, was to take a modest step towards filling this vacuum by drawing together some of the work on these various

The ISIM, on the occasion of the inaugural lecture of Professor Asef Bayat, and in collaboration with Leiden University, University of Oxford, and University of Wales (Swansea), organized a conference, Iran on the Move: Social Transformations in the Islamic Republic. The conference took place in Leiden from 27–28 April 2005.

strands of change and trying to make sense of it in an overall context.

The keynote lecture provided a sociological overview of the past 70 years emphasizing that social change has been shaped by long-term as well as post-Revolutionary trends. It pointed to the modification of social strata, the

emergence of new social classes, new social actors—particularly women, youth and new intellectuals—and new discourses. All of these transformations have created a basis for new thinking about the evolution of Iranian society, including political and philosophical discourses about the relationship between state and religion, development and democracy, the need for a re-interpretation of Islam among religious thinkers, and new reflection among secular intellectuals and some religious thinkers about the path to modernity.

The papers covered four main themes—demography and family, changing urban society, centre and periphery, and social classes and groups.

The session on demography and the family began with an analysis of the dramatic changes that have taken place in population structure and went on to explore topics such as changing family structure, marriage patterns, and divorce. The interface between religious ideology and women and youth, and the closing gap between rural and urban areas in practices such as the use of contraception and education for women were discussed. The role of the Iranian diaspora and its influence on the shift towards a child-centred model of family was raised. Micro studies of various parts of the country provided insights into the complexities of change and the need for an in-depth understanding of the processes, which ultimately dictate people's choices in matters such as reproduction, marriage, and family relations. The papers also highlighted the way paradoxes in official policies clash with customary practices and give rise to tension and vulnerability.

PARTICIPANTS

- **Djamchid Behnam** (formerly Professor at the Universities of Tehran and Paris)
Keynote Speech: "Introduction to Social Transformations in Post-Revolutionary Iran"
- **Amri Mehryar and Shirin Ahmad-Nia** (Population Studies & Research Centre, Ministry of Science, Research and Technology)
"Social Transformation, Women, and Demographic Change"
- **Vida Nassemi** (Freelance researcher, Paris)
"Changing Pattern of Iranian Family Home and Diaspora"
- **Soraya Tremayne** (University of Oxford)
"Health Politics: Global Demands and Local Realities"
- **Masserat Amir Ebrahimi** (Tehran University)
"Evolution of Public Spaces in Tehran"
- **Soheila Shahshahani** (Shahid Beheshti University)
"Music as an Arena of Social Expression and Dissent"
- **Nilufar Ashtari** (Brussels)
"Marmulak in the Iranian Cinema, and a Display of Photographs of Tehran from Iran"
- **Eric Hooglund** (Institute of Palestine Studies, Washington DC)
"Changing Rural Social Structure"
- **Kaveh Ehsani** (University of Chicago)
"The Nation and Its Periphery: Revolution, War and Provincial Urban Change in Iran"
- **Abbas Vali** (University of Wales at Swansea)
"Kurds and Power in Post-Revolutionary Iran"
- **Touraj Atabaki** (University of Amsterdam)
"Ethnicity and Pluralism in Post-Revolutionary Iran"
- **Arang Keshavarzian** (Concordia University)
"Out from Under the Shadow of Shamsol-Emareh: The Tehran Bazaar Since the Islamic Revolution"



Professor Asef Bayat (far right) at his inaugural lecture escorted by Rector Magnificus Prof. D.D. Breimer and the Pedel of Leiden University, 26 April 2005.

© LEIDEN UNIVERSITY, 2005

The three papers on urban society focused on the use of space in public places as a forum for social expression and the social and political significance of cultural activity, particularly music and cinema. The evolution of public spaces in Tehran such as parks to create one's private space in public, mountains which are the sites of hiking groups on the weekends, football stadiums, cemeteries, and street celebrations reflected a move from the private home to the private public space. Cinema has emerged as a vehicle of social criticism and an effective medium for exploring the strategies people adopt in their daily negotiations to make sense of the myriad paradoxes in society. Music gives the public a voice for social expression and acts as a marker of change.

A third set of papers looked at centre-periphery relationships beginning with a theoretical exploration of the nation state, concepts of sovereignty, the power structures of the centre, and the problems they pose for the preservation of minority rights. Viewing the issue from a historical and comparative perspective, a second contribution drew attention to the relative absence of grass-roots ethnic tension in Iranian society arguing that this has been a factor that has helped the country maintain its territorial integrity. Nonetheless, tensions between ethnic communities and the state in post-Revolutionary Iran have meant that the call by ethnic minorities for equal social and political opportunities and equal cultural status has continued and has now become a part of the discourse of reform. The focus then shifted to rural-urban relationships and social dynamics in provincial cities. The rapid change that has been triggered by state policy in the structure of rural communities, the blurring of lines between the rural and the urban, and the impact of rural values in urban life were discussed. A debate on questions of approach and definition together with a plea rooted in a study of provincial towns in Khuzistan, for a consideration of concrete structures, and entrenched and contested interests at the local and the national levels, brought this session to a lively close.

The attention shifted to the analysis of a key structure of the urban mercantile classes, the Bazaar. At issue was how space has structured social relations in the Tehran Bazaar. Due primarily to state policies over the last quarter century the space of the Tehran Bazaar has become less conducive to producing long-term, crosscutting, and multifaceted interpersonal relations that were constitutive of its organization in the 1960s and 1970s. Meanwhile, the transformation of space and social networks has undermined the historically significant mobilization capacity of the Tehran Bazaar.

The multidisciplinary conference testified to the value of working across disciplines and narrowly focused interests. Yet, at the same time, it brought to the fore how greater effort is required for practitioners of different disciplines to adjust to the language and concepts of others. The quality of reflection and analysis evident in the papers and discussion brought optimism for the future of social sciences in and on Iran.

Anna Enayat is an independent researcher, University of Oxford.

Email: anne.enayat@onetel.net

Soraya Tremayne is an anthropologist, University of Oxford.

Email: soraya.tremayne@anthro.ox.ac.uk

ISIM PUBLICATIONS

The following ISIM publications are available in hard copy. Please use the order form on the ISIM website.

Publications in the ISIM Papers Series include:

- *Islam, Islamists, and the Electoral Principle in the Middle East* (ISIM Papers 1) by James Piscatori
- *Thinking about Secularism and Law in Egypt* (ISIM Papers 2) by Talal Asad
- *Shar'ia, State, and Social Norms in France and Indonesia* (ISIM Papers 3) by John R. Bowen
- *'Traditionalist' Islamic Activism: Deoband, Tablighis, and Talibs* (ISIM Papers 4) by Barbara D. Metcalf
- *The Role of Islam in The Public Square: Guidance or Governance?* (ISIM Papers 5, available Autumn 2005) By Abdelaziz Sachedina
- *Local Contexts of Islamism in Popular Media* (ISIM Papers 6, available Autumn 2005) By Lila Abu-Lughod

Special ISIM Publications include:

- *Muslim Jurists' Quest for the Normative Basis of Shar'ia* (ISIM Inaugural Lecture) by Muhammad Khalid Masud
- *New Voices of Islam* by Farish A. Noor (Interviews with Muslim Intellectuals)

ISIM Cooperates in New Islam in Africa Project

KARIN WILLEMSE

The project Islam in Africa: Globalization and Moving Frontiers has been awarded funding from the NWO Programme "The Future of the Religious Past" (2006-2009). The project's main applicant was Prof. Dr Peter Geschiere (Amsterdam School for Social Science Research), with Prof. Dr Abdulkader Tayob (ISIM) and Dr Karin Willemse (Erasmus University Rotterdam) as co-applicants. Together with the latter, the research team exists of Dr. Guèye (Université Anta Diop, Senegal), Dr. Shamil Jeppie (University of Cape Town, South Africa), and Dr. José van Santen (Leiden University). The outline of this project was formulated during a three-month ISIM Atelier, which culminated in the international seminar Muslim Communities, Globalization, and Identities in Africa held in 2001 (see ISIM Newsletter 8, p.5). These meetings were followed up by the workshop on Islam and Public Life in Africa, held in September 2004 (see ISIM Review 15, p.55).

The new project focuses on the ways in which Muslims are engaged in the reconstruction of their identities in the context of different forms of glo-

balization and modernization. In Cameroon, Senegal, Sudan, and South Africa, which are taken as case studies in this project, these dynamics are most tangible in the struggles between nation states and—in particular—young Muslim citizens over the redefinition of the public sphere. The authority of religious institutions and the nation state to decide on how to interpret "Muslimhood" in relation to modernity is, in particular, highly contested, while the search for alternative identities is facilitated by access to the new media. The growing engagement of local Islamic communities in transnational networks circumventing the control of the nation state also impacts upon the way in which the public sphere is redefined. Flows of goods, information, and migrants influence local ideas about "tradition" and "modernity", while the state tries to influence processes that are increasingly outside their control.

Karin Willemse is Assistant Professor at the Erasmus University Rotterdam.

Email: k.willemse@fhk.eur.nl

NEW FELLOWS

The ISIM welcomes the following new fellows:

Visiting Fellows:

- **Kamran Asdar Ali**
Labor Struggles, Ethnic Violence and Religious Identity: A Social History of Karachi, Pakistan
1 January 2005 – 1 January 2006
- **Armando Salvatore**
Approaches to Religion and Politics from Axial Age Theory to Multiple Modernities
1 June – 31 July 2005
- **Ali Asghar Saeidi**
The Development of Islamic Charities in Modern Iran
15 August – 15 October 2005
- **Cristina Maria de Castro (CAPES Fellow)**
The Brazilian Muslim Community: A Study of its Identity Towards the New World
15 June – 1 October 2005

Affiliated Fellows:

- **Anwar Alam**
Accommodating Religion in Social Transformations
1 – 15 September 2005
- **Eric Roose**
Mosque Design and Identity in The Netherlands
From 1 July 2005



New ISIM
Headquarters at
Rapenburg 59
(corner building),
Leiden

PHOTO BY DENNIS JANSSEN, 2005

Rights at Home Website

MARIËTTE VAN BEEK

The meeting of the Editorial Board of the RaH website was hosted by the NGO Sisters in Islam Forum Malaysia (SIS). Initially, the website was set up as a tool for human rights activists in Southeast Asia, as an alternative for the RaH Capacity Building Workshops (CBWs) in Yemen and Tanzania. It was to become a reservoir of progressive Islamic documents for civil society groups engaged in Islamic and state law reform related to human rights. Given the extent of internet connectivity in the region, the website was going to be used as a tool for building a community for the promotion of human rights.

As the process developed, it was felt that the Yemeni and Tanzanian trainees of the CBWs would also benefit from the tool. Consequently, the eight female website trainees who took part in the website training in Cape Town, February 2004, were recruited from all three target regions of the project. Representatives of the RaH counterparts in Tanzania, Malaysia, and Yemen contributed by submitting website materials in Kiswahili, English, and Arabic on the priority issues of domestic violence, early marriage, inheritance, and women in public life.

While the content building of the website moved on steadily, its tech-

The Editorial Board of the website of the ISIM project "Rights at Home: An Approach to the Internationalization of Human Rights in Family Relations in Islamic Communities" held its third and last meeting in Kuala Lumpur in April 2005. The meeting met to discuss the functioning of the website, and to plan for its future beyond the Rights at Home (RaH) Project.

nical development faced some major obstacles and challenges. The whole project turned out to be much more complex than initially envisaged. Visitors of the site may still experience some inconvenience since construction is going on. Moreover, a major crash on the UWC server which has been hosting the site has set the project back for a while. But

work is in process to have the site re-established on a Malaysian server.

On a positive note, the number of registered users and reactions from the RaH counterparts and their grassroots members confirmed that there is a great demand for the website. A similar body of progressive literature is not available elsewhere. Moreover, the users are no longer limited to the initial target countries either. SIS received a request from Egypt about the issue of domestic violence and more questions from the Middle East are expected in the future. The same applies to Islamic communities elsewhere, including the West.

Next to the document and link sections, a chatroom and a discussion board are already available on the site. The RaH Advanced Training manual, which also contains specific parts on advocacy will soon be loaded. Moreover, the website's Editorial Board, in its final meeting, considered the possibility of featuring current developments, like Amina Wadud's khutbah. In such cases, juristic opinions regarding women in the role of imams or women in the public space can be added so that arguments for a progressive Muslim view are developed and made available.

Since the RaH Project ends on 30 September 2005, the future management of the website was to be one of the main issues of the Editorial Board meeting in Kuala Lumpur. SIS seemed to be the most suitable candidate to be charged with the ownership of the site, and the Editorial Board resolved to do so. The network of activists, academics, and resource persons related to the website is expected to stay engaged on the long term. During the final phase of the RaH Project its team will continue supporting SIS in organizational matters.

The website will be available through www.rightsathome.org.

Mariëtte van Beek / Project Manager Rights at Home project
Email: m.van.beek@isim.nl

EDITORIAL BOARD OF THE R@H WEBSITE

Editorial Board of the Rights at Home website (until 4 April 2005):

- **Prof. Dr Nasr Abu Zaid** (Utrecht University, the Netherlands)
- **Cassandra Balchin** (United Kingdom)
- **Yasmin Busran-Lao** (Al-Mujadalah Development Foundation, the Philippines)
- **Syafiq Hasyim** (International Centre for Islam and Pluralism, Indonesia)
- **Salma Maoulidi** (Sahiba Sisters Foundation, Tanzania)
- **Prof. Dr Muhammad Khalid Masud** (former ISIM Academic Director, Pakistan)
- **Prof. Dr Ebrahim Moosa** (Duke University, USA)

Webmasters

- **Adibah Syarifatul** (SIS, from 1 March 2005 onwards)
- **Pia Zain** (until 1 March 2005)

NWO Funding for Research on Muslims in Europe

NATHAL M. DESSING

An ISIM research proposal on "Individualization, Fragmentation of Authority, and New Organizational Forms among Muslims in Europe" has been selected for funding by the Nederlandse Organisatie voor Wetenschappelijk Onderzoek (NWO, Netherlands Organization for Scientific Research). The research programme aims to advance our understanding of Muslim religiosity in Europe, focusing on individualization, fragmentation of authority, and belonging. These complementary and partially conflicting phenomena have attracted great scholarly attention as determining factors of religion today, but have never been systematically studied for Muslims in Europe.

The ISIM research programme consists of three component projects, each of which focuses on a new organizational and participatory form among Muslims in Europe today: institutions of Islamic higher education, Muslim student associations, and Muslim women's organizations. These three settings constitute important discussion fora in the migration setting where the identity of Islam and the nature of being a Muslim are explored in new ways. These sites are thus exemplars of religious renewal. The research will be carried out in the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, and France.

The research project on Muslim women's organizations will be conducted by Dr Nathal Delsing (ISIM), the main applicant and coordinator of the programme. The projects on Islamic higher education and on Muslim student associa-

tions will be carried out by Ph.D. candidates. The ISIM invites applications for the two Ph.D. posts in this research programme (see advertisement on this page). The team further consists of Dr Nico Landman (Utrecht University) and Dr Thijl Sunier (University of Amsterdam): they are co-applicants, academic advisors, and supervisors of the two Ph.D. projects. Prof. Martin van Bruinessen, ISIM Chair at Utrecht University and Prof. Annelies Moors, ISIM Chair at the University of Amsterdam will act as promoters of the Ph.D. candidates.

The funding from NWO for this research programme totals € 450,000 over four years. The funding is awarded within the framework of the NWO thematic programme titled "The Future of the Religious Past: Elements and Forms for the 21st Century". This aims to encourage research on manifestations of religious life today. It directs attention to the renewed participation in traditional religion as well as to the advent of new forms of fragmented religion and personal spirituality. Some thirteen research projects have so far been funded within this thematic programme, on subjects ranging from conversion careers in Pentecostalism to the renewed interest in Marian pilgrimage and from discourses on ecology and genetics to the advent of new spiritual music.

ISIM PH.D. FELLOWSHIPS

The International Institute for the Study of Islam in the Modern World (ISIM) invites applications for two Ph.D. posts within the research programme on "Individualization, Fragmentation of Authority, and New Organizational Forms among Muslims in Europe". This programme is funded by the Nederlandse Organisatie voor Wetenschappelijk Onderzoek (NWO, Netherlands Organization for Scientific Research). One Ph.D. candidate will study the relation between individualization, fragmentation of authority, and the wish to belong in institutions of Islamic higher education in the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, and France. The other Ph.D. candidate will study the same phenomena in Muslim student associations in the same countries.

Successful applicants become junior members of staff of the ISIM for a period of four years. They receive a salary of approximately € 1,000 per month after tax, and pay no university fees. They are provided with office space, a personal computer, and telephone on the premises of the ISIM in Leiden. Financial support for approved fieldwork is available.

Applicants for both Ph.D. posts should have:

- an M.A. degree or equivalent in Islamic studies, cultural anthropology, or religious studies;
- demonstrable experience in conducting research among Muslims in Europe;
- excellent command of the relevant languages.

Applications should include:

- A letter of application
- A curriculum vitae
- A copy of the MA thesis and/or copies of other written work
- Authenticated copies of all relevant degree and other certificates
- A certificate of English language proficiency (for non-native speakers)
- A photocopy of the pages of the applicant's passport showing identity details and expiry date
- Letters of two academic referees

There will be one application procedure for both posts. Candidates are asked to indicate in their application in which post they are interested.

Applicants should send all material to:

Dr. Nathal M. Delsing
ISIM
P.O. Box 11089
2301 EB Leiden
The Netherlands

The deadline for applications is 1 October 2005.

For further information, please contact Nathal Delsing at n.m.delsing@isim.nl

ISIM EVENTS

2–3 September 2005

Workshop

(In)Visible Histories:

The Politics of Placing the Past

Venue: Room Heren 17,
Oost-Indisch Huis, University
of Amsterdam

Organisers: ISIM, ASSR & IIAS

Convenor: Vazira Zamindar

29–30 September 2005

Conference

Modern Islamic Intellectual

History in Comparative

Perspective

Venue: Leiden University,
The Netherlands

Convenor: Abdulkader Tayob

30 September–1 October 2005

Workshop

Religious Authority in Islam in Western Europe

Venue: Leiden University,
The Netherlands

Convenors: Frank Peter &
Elena Arigita

8–14 December 2005

Training workshop

Social Change and Identity in Muslim Societies

Venue: Beirut, Lebanon

Organizers: ISIM, SEPHIS & OIB

December 2005

ISIM Annual Lecture 2005

by Mahmood Mamdani

(Date to be announced)

22–26 March 2006

Workshop

Public debates about Islam in Europe: Why and How

'Immigrants' became 'Muslims'

ISIM-supported workshop at the
Seventh Mediterranean Social and
Political Research Meeting

Venue: Florence and Montecatini
Terme, Italy

Convenors: Stefano Allievi and
Martin van Bruinessen

For more information on these and
other events please consult the
ISIM website or contact the ISIM
secretariat at:

Tel: +31 71 5277905

Fax: +31 71 5277906

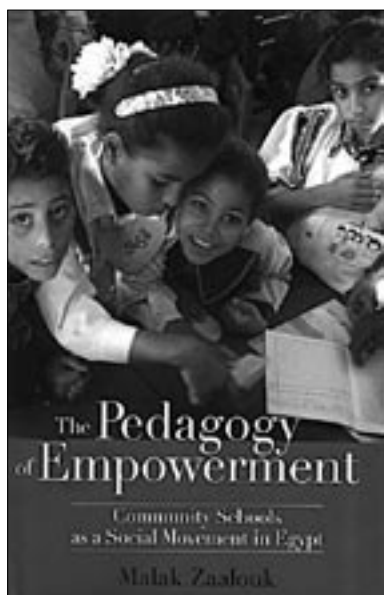
E-mail: info@isim.nl

www.isim.nl

The Pedagogy of Empowerment: Community Schools as a Social Movement in Egypt

By Malak Zaalouk
Cairo and New York: The American University in Cairo Press, 2004

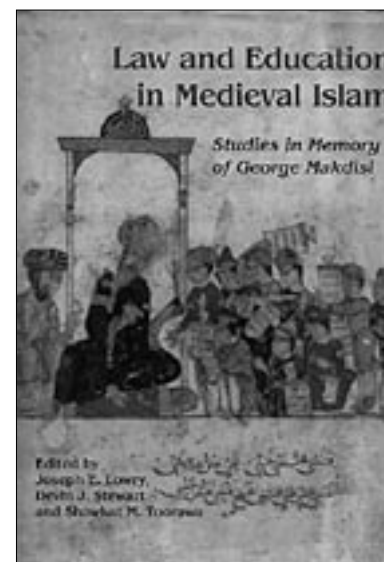
Written by the Chief of Education at UNICEF, this study documents the community school movement in rural Upper Egypt. It provides insight into how alternative arrangements for schooling can lead to more participatory types of citizenship building, particularly among disadvantaged groups. The experiment in community schooling also serves as a model for long-term reform in Egyptian education.



Law and Education in Medieval Islam: Studies in Memory of George Makdisi

By Joseph E. Lowry, Devin J. Stewart, Shawkat M. Toorawa (Editors)
Oakville, CT: David Brown Book Company, 2005

This volume has been compiled in honour of George Makdisi (1925-2002), a leading historian of Islam's institutions and practices of learning and foremost scholar of Islamic law, theology, and education. The chapters, written for the large part by his former students, deal with a range of subject matter including colleges of law, the Medieval Muslim elementary school, the etiquette of learning, modes of instruction and discipline, and knowledge transmission.



Muslim Networks: From Hajj to Hip Hop

By Miriam Cook and Bruce B. Lawrence (Editors)
Chapel Hill and London: The University of North Carolina Press, 2005.

Muslim networks have constituted the building blocks for Islamic identity and social cohesion. From the earliest networks organized around Mediterranean trade routes, to transregional routes for pilgrimage, scholarship, and conversion, networks have long complemented and reinforced each other. This volume which deals with networks organized around issues as diverse as "Hajj to Hip Hop," provides ways to understand and imagine the future of the ummah, or global Muslim community.



The Sufi Dance

The Journal of the History of Sufism, Number IV
Edited by Thierry Zarcone, Arthur Buehler, Ekrem Işin
Paris: Librairie d'Amérique d'Orient, 2005

This special issue presents a delightfully wide range of historical studies and contemporary observations of Sufi dance. The issue is dedicated to the late Turkish scholar Tahsin Yazici (d. 2002) and opens with a French translation of his paper on the Sufi dance at the time of Mawlana Rumi. The essays highlight the place of the dance among Sufis and Sufi orders from places as varied as Turkey and the Balkans, Pakistan, Zanzibar, Kazakhstan and Xinjiang.

Le Grand Voyage

Directed by Ismaël Ferroukhi
2004

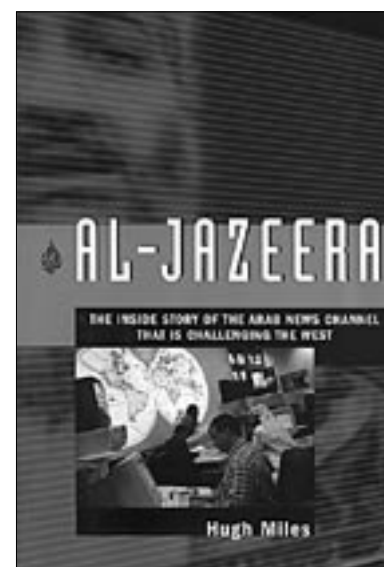
In this film the protagonist Réda, born and raised in France, drives his aging father to Mecca for the hajj. Réda has little interest in his father's religiosity, while his father resents his son's "French" ways. Their journey through the Balkans and the Middle East leads to an uneasy rapprochement. In Mecca the father disappears in the crowd of pilgrims, only to be found later in a mortuary. This remarkable road movie examines cultural and generational disparities, while challenging preconceived ideas about migrants and Muslims.



Al-Jazeera: The Inside Story of the Arab News Channel that is Challenging the West

By Hugh Miles
New York: Grove Press, 2005

Al-Jazeera is one of the most widely watched news channels in the world with more than fifty million viewers. This book traces its meteoric rise and its influence in shaping public opinion and politics in the Arab and Islamic world.



Mapping Sitting



© ARAB IMAGE FOUNDATION, 2005

In Mapping Sitting, photographic works are presented to raise questions about how portraiture photography functioned in the Arab world as a commodity, a luxury item, an adornment, a description of individuals and groups, and as the inscription of social identities. Photographic representations were indicative of new notions of work, leisure, play, citizenship, community, and individuality.

The Arab Image Foundation is a non-profit organization that was established in Beirut (Lebanon) in 1997 to locate, collect, preserve, interpret and present the photographic heritage and visual culture of the Middle East and North Africa from the early 19th century to the present.

For further information see: <http://www.fai.org.lb>

A project by Akram Zaatari and Walid Raad, Arab Image Foundation



© ARAB IMAGE FOUNDATION, 2005