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Downveiling: Shifting Socio-Religious Practices in Egypt

Copious studies on Islamic resurgence throughout the Muslim world deal with new veiling, a socio-religious practice which has been explained as a form of both resistance and submission to patriarchy, an assertion of cultural authenticity, a reaction against Western imperialism and local secular regimes, a genuine desire by women to live more piously, and a practice born out of economic necessity.
While there is a degree of plausibility in each of these theories, especially when taken in tandem, another dimension should be added to the debate on new veiling, and that is a subtle and seemingly growing tendency among many urban Egyptian women towards what can be called 'downveiling'.

Middle East

LINDA HERRERA

Downveiling refers to the shift by Muslim women to less concealing and conservative forms of Islamic dress – or to changing embodied religious practices – and is indicative of the complexity and dynamism with which socio-religious change occurs in contemporary societies. It points to a transformation in Egypt's Islamist trend.

PHOTO: ANONYMOUS, 1992

A class of first graders at a private Islamic school.

PHOTO: ANONYMOUS, 1994

The same class in the third grade following the *hijab* ban by the Ministry of Education.

A fourteen-year resident of Cairo, I first became aware of downveiling in the mid-1990s when a number of acquaintances from diverse social and professional backgrounds began shifting to lesser degrees of veiling, and even sometimes 'unveiled' or eliminated their head covers altogether. My understanding of this practice was anecdotal until I began conducting research in schools on the Islamization of education. While schools are by no means the only – or even necessarily the most commonplace arenas – of downveiling, they provide a compelling social context in which to trace this practice which is increasingly observable throughout urban Egyptian society.

Schools as contested cultural spaces

The past two decades have witnessed the increased Islamization of public spaces and social institutions, one manifestation of which has been the Islamization of the nation's schools. Numerous government and private schools have institutionalized Islamic practices, such as enforcing an Islamic uniform (*zayy Islammy*). Schools often require female students, staff and sometimes even students' mothers to don a head cover. Veiling has multiple gradations and ranges from a *hijab*, a scarf that covers the hair and is pinned under the chin, to a *khimar*, a substantially longer nylon scarf that drapes over the torso and arms, to a *niqab*, a face veil with ankle-length dress.

The Ministry of Education (MOE), in its attempt to curb the Islamization of schools and as part of a larger state strategy to control and monitor the Islamization of public spaces, politicized the issue of Islamic uniforms. In 1994, the MOE enacted a ministerial order prohibiting girls from wearing the *hijab* to school at the primary stage (grades 1-5), requiring that students at the preparatory level (grades 6-8) provide written permission by their guardian if they wear the *hijab* (thereby giving the parents rather than the school authority over the girl's religious attire), and forbidding teachers and students from wearing the *niqab* on the grounds that it presents a security risk by concealing the wearer's identity and prevents teachers from effectively teaching since it covers the face.

The new uniform regulation was strongly contested in the press and courts, but was ultimately ruled constitutional in a case that reached the Supreme Constitutional Court, and was therefore enforceable. To ensure its compliance, MOE inspectors and state security forces were dispatched to schools throughout the country; guards stood outside school gates to inspect students' attire and to prohibit anyone in defiance of the regulation from entering their school. Many school communities reacted to the state's actions with outrage and some unveiled students even took on the veil in protest. However, over the longer term, the new regulation served as a catalyst for many who had been wanting to downveil, as will be illustrated in the case of a private Islamic school in Cairo.

The state as a catalyst for shifting socio-religious practices

Since its establishment in 1981, the school uniform for girls from first grade at a 'private Islamic school' in Cairo, a fee-paying general school that incorporates Islamic rituals and symbols into its daily life, consisted of a long blue-grey smock, pants and a mini-*khimar*. The school's founder and director, Sheikh Mohammed, selected this uniform so that the female child would get used to comporting herself according to the teachings of her religion because, as he proclaims 'in Islam there is no grey, everything is black or white. The *hijab* is a requirement, not a choice.'

In 1994, the sheikh initially resisted implementing the new uniform regulation, convinced that he, not the government, was religiously in the right. However, when faced with the possibility of the MOE taking over his school's administration, he eventually eliminated the headscarf for girls at the primary level. Nevertheless, with the parents' cooperation, the veil remained mandatory for girls at the preparatory stage. Despite a pervasive sense among staff, parents and students, that the government was unjustly interfering in the school's internal policy and in their private lives, an unexpected shift occurred among a number of them: they began modifying their own style of dress by downveiling.

The older students (ages 11-14) were the first to downveil. Backed by the law, the overwhelming majority of girls immediately substituted their uniform *khimar* for a simple headscarf and, in an act of defiance against school policy, decided among themselves to replace the regulation grey smock uniform, which they described as 'ugly' and 'old-fashioned', for a more 'normal' and attractive uniform of a tailored long grey skirt and white blouse. Thereafter, members of the school staff also began downveiling. Two senior administrators – school disciplinarians and tacit role models – gradually substituted their dark ankle-length skirts for shin-length cotton skirts, and, in gradations, replaced their thick nylon *khimar*s that extended down to their thighs, with shoulder-length scarves. They had both begun sporting the *khimar* just prior to being employed at the school in the early 1980s, in part to show their commitment to working in an Islamic environment, but also because they could not justify wearing a lesser degree of clothing than the children under their authority. When the primary school children ceased wearing the *khimar* and the preparatory girls downveiled at their own initiative, the need to dress religiously on par with the students no longer existed. A number of their colleagues, over time, also modified their dress to less concealing and more functional forms of Islamic dress.

The general tendency among the staff towards downveiling has had the effect of hindering others from upveiling or adapting 'higher', more concealing and virtuous forms of Islamic dress. One senior teacher in her mid-40s has been expressing a desire to upveil from her current *khimar* to the *niqab*, a form of dress which she believes to be a religious obligation. However, with her peers substituting their *khimars* for simpler and shorter headscarves, she is not encouraged to upveil and is not only putting it off, but is even practising her own downveiling. She recently began wearing loose-fitting pants instead of a skirt under her *khimar*,

Continued on page 32

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ISIM Newsletter 9
Deadline: 1 June 2001
Published: October 2001

The ISIM solicits your response to the ISIM Newsletter. If you wish to contribute to the Newsletter, style sheets may be obtained upon request from the ISIM Secretariat or on the ISIM website. In order to offer update information on activities concerning the study of Islam and Muslim societies, along with news on vacancies, grants, and fellowships, the ISIM relies on its readers. The information will be made available on the ISIM Website.

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Editorial

DICK DOUWES | *Editor*

The question of whether political Islam should be interpreted as a truly successful movement in the Muslim world has been matter of debate for nearly a decade (See 'Vingt Ans Apr s…' conference in Paris p. 3). Those who speak of its failure tend to argue that Islamist groups have failed to realize their goal of Muslim unity through the revival of the *umma* as a political entity and, on the national level, find great difficult in creating a workable alternative to nationalist or other political trajectories. Whatever ones' viewpoint on the issue of failure or success, the impact of political Islam on politics in Muslim countries and beyond is undeniable. This is partly due to the perception of the phenomenon as a threat to dominant ideologies and structures by its opponents. It is clear that political Islam, both as a discourse and a practice, is established in an increasing number of Muslim countries, but the ways in which Islamic notions exert themselves and relate to local political infrastructures varies greatly. The political discourses of many Muslim countries are experiencing a shift towards a more religious-oriented vocabulary. Opposition movements in some of the few truly Islamic states have also internalized Islamic motifs. In countries such as Iran, where the state system is to a large degree moulded by the clergy, opposition movements have as yet little alternative but to articulate their aspirations in terms of religion. This process may have facilitated one of the more dynamic intellectual and societal discourses in the Muslim world, but its dynamism is limited in terms of political reform (Kian-Thi baut, p. 23; Alamdari, p.22). In sharp constrast with Iran, nearby Afghanistan witnessed the demise of any kind of national debate except that of contending militia organizations, such as the Taliban, in which tribal allegiances are inextricably intertwined with individualist loyalties (Shahrani p. 20-21).

Their use of religious imagery as well as the seemingly cynical uses of Islamic symbol in some other states, indicates that consistent reference to Islamic metaphors is part and parcel of current political parlance. However, political symbolism may merely represent a mechanism for disciplining the populace by way of rituals which are evidently devoid of meaning (Wedeen p. 25). Muslim activists, for instance in the Comoros Islands, are on the alert for – what would be in their eyes – improper appeals to divine principles by those in power (Chanfi, p.16).

One of the main effects of the emergence of political Islam is that, in effect, religion was reinstated as a key instrument of political action. As an instrument, it also now serves groups which are not considered 'Islamist' or 'fundamentalist', including the more heterodox Muslim groups, such as Alevism (Massicard, p. 29).

The increased political participation of what have historically been seen as traditional groups seems to have become a global phenomenon. It may be that these groups have finally adapted themselves to the general conditions of post-colonial rule and are regaining lost ground. Sufism has been part of the Muslim response to the challenges of modernity from the outset (Yavuz, p. 7). The present developments may be partly explained by the renewed attraction that Sufism holds for the emergent urban classes. This trend appears to be global, affecting national politics in countries as far-reaching as Senegal (Samson, p. 28) and Indonesia (Howell, p. 17), albeit in variant manifestations according to established local political cultures.

A new academic debate about the use and function of the so-called new media is emerging. As a result, a fresh body of literature on Islam is becoming available, including 'digital age' versions of time-honoured institutions like *fatwa*-giving (Bunt, p. 12). The new media are limited in relevance, given that the vast majority of Muslims have little or no access to them. Having said that, cyber discourses and satellite images are affecting the lives of an increasing number of Muslims, particularly the youth. For diasporic communities, the Internet may be used as an aid for the creation of a virtual homeland (Khosravi, p. 13). The increased relevance of both old and new media is becoming apparent in countries like Mali, where women's religious organizations have created their own niche in the broadcast media (Schulz, p. 27).

This *Newsletter* offers a bird's-eye view on various other topics in the lives of Muslims over the globe, including matters of health (Hoffer, p. 8) and death in Western Europe (Andrews and Wolfe, p. 15). The complexities of carving out space in host societies for the identities of immigrants, whether in Switzerland (Haenni, p.31) or Argentina (Brieger, p.) remain an important field of research, one on which the ISIM is currently designing a project entitled the 'Production of Islamic Knowledge in Western Europe' (to be announced shortly on the ISIM website). ✦

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Summer Academy: 'The Local Production of Islamic Knowledge'

The Working Group Modernity and Islam and the ISIM, in cooperation with Yildiz University, are organizing a joint Summer Academy on: 'The Production of Islamic Knowledge'. The Summer Academy will be held in Istanbul, from 3-14 September 2001, under the direction of Prof. Martin van Bruinessen and Dr Altan Gokalp. In a multidisciplinary exchange between the humanities and the social sciences, supervised by a group of internationally-renowned scholars from various disciplines, participants will be given the opportunity to present their projects and to discuss new research as well as issues of theory and methodology relevant to their field of study. Travel and accommodation expenses will be offered to the participants.

Theme: The production of local knowledge

With the expansion of Islam through conversion and migration, Islam has taken root in many parts of the globe. With this spread to a large variety of societies and cultures, Islam has undergone a dual process of universalization and localization, a process which is still ongoing. Its universal message was – and continues to be – adapted to local needs. This also holds true for areas in which Islam was introduced in the modern period, in particular Western Europe and the Americas. Divergent historical trajectories have meant that each region may have its own distinctive Islamic practices, discourses, and infrastructures. Diasporic communities, in the West as well as in predominantly Muslim countries, add to the complexity of the interplay between local and transnational contexts in which Islamic knowledge is produced. The new media – and some of the old ones as well – play a crucial role in this production.

Conditions of application

The programme addresses postgraduate (doctoral) and postdoctoral researchers in Islamic as well as relevant area studies, history, anthropology, law and social science. The researchers' work should be clearly relevant to the theme as described above. A broader outline of the theme, including sub-themes, can be found on the websites of the ISIM (www.isim.nl) and the Working Group Modernity and Islam (http://www.wiko-berlin.de/). The working language of the Summer Academy is English. A completed application form (either to be requested from the ISIM secretariat or downloaded from the ISIM website), accompanied by a curriculum vitae, a five-page outline of one's current research project with a brief summary thereof, and two letters of recommendation from university faculty members should be submitted, in English, by 15 January 2001 to:

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The working group Modernity and Islam (Arbeitskreis Moderne und Islam) is a research network of Berlin universities and extra-university institutions committed to promoting a deeper understanding of Muslim societies, their cultures, history, and social and political orders.

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E-Mail: khalil@wiko-berlin.de

ISIM Master Class: 'Key Issues in Human Rights'

The ISIM invites applications for the ISIM Master Class 'Key Issues in Human Rights' by Professor Abdullahi An-Naim (Charles Howard Candler Professor of Law, School of Law, Emory University). The class is to be held for 12-15 PhD students.

Dates: 27-30 November 2000
Time: Daily from 11:15 to 13:00 and from 14:15 to 16:00
Venue: In Leiden, to be announced

Course Outline

Objective:

In addition to giving a general introduction to human rights, this course will focus on key issues (economic and social rights, and rights of the child) in order to emphasize the evolving and far-reaching implications of human rights to global social, political, and cultural development.

Description:

During the first two days, the course will cover the concept of human rights and their universality and cultural/contextual relativity; give an overview of the main treaties and their implementation; and discuss the role of non-governmental organizations, all with special reference to Islamic societies. The third day will focus on a discussion of economic, social, and cultural rights, and the fourth day on children's rights issues, in a comparative national context (European and developing countries). Professor C. Flinterman and Professor F. van Hoof of the SIM, Faculty of Law, Utrecht University, will lead the course discussion on Wednesday and Thursday.

Course materials:

Henry J. Steiner and Philip Alston, *International Human Rights in Context: Law, Politics, Morals*, 2nd edition. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2000. A detailed outline, prescribing specific readings from this book will be distributed to successful applicants at least four weeks prior to the course for advance reading.

Fee:

The fee for the master class is NLG 750.- Fee waivers may be granted in certain cases.

Applications:

The ISIM invites PhD students wishing to participate in the master class to send a brief curriculum vitae and an explanation of why they wish to attend to N.M. Dessing at the ISIM by 1 November 2000.

Conference Report

'Vingt Ans Apr s ...' An Assessment of Modern Islamist Movements

From 21-24 June 2000, a group of international scholars met in Paris to discuss modern Islamist movements in a conference under the (translated) heading: 'Twenty Years After ...'. The idea was to review and assess the 20 years of the studies of Islamist movements, taking the Iranian Revolution of 1979 as a hypothetical point of reference. These movements, collectively known as 'Political Islam', have been used synonymously with terms as varied as 'fundamentalism', 'alternative modernities', 'Islamic revivalism', and so on. It has been perceived as a 'threat', a force opposing Western culture in the 'clash of civilizations'. The more militant groups, with their calls for 'jihad', are often – and erroneously – considered representative of Political Islam as a whole.

A number of scholars have come to the conclusion that Political Islam has been less successful than expected in attaining some of the main aims, in particular the revival of the umma as a viable political entity. The conference dealt with the varying assessments of these movements in these years. For most of the scholars, who have been studying these movements for the last twenty years, the conference provided an occasion to share their personal recollections and concerns about the past and future of their fields of research on the subject

The international conference 'Vingt Ans Après ...' was jointly organized by the Programme Doctoral du Monde Musulman (PMM), the Institut d'Études Politiques in Paris, and the ISIM. Gilles Kepel, Olivier Roy and Muhammad Khalid Masud chaired the conference. The sessions were organized by region. Andrée Feillard, together with Martin van Bruinessen and David Camroux, covered the Southeast Asia. Masud chaired the session on South Asia: The *madrasas* of Pakistan were dealt with in a paper delivered by Mariam Abou Zahab. Muhammad Qasim Zaman also gave special attention to Pakistan in his paper on the religio-political activism of the Sunni ulema in the contemporary Muslim world. William Maley and Pierre Centlivres both dealt with the Taliban. This series of papers on the Afghan context became more visually manifest when excerpts from a documentary called *Inside Afhganistan* by François Margolin were shown. Azadeh Kian-Thiébaut and Farhad Khosrokhavar gave presentations on the transformations in post-Islamist Iran and the Iranian intellectuals of the 21st century, respectively. The situation in Turkey was addressed by Ruşen Çakir, with a view to the Welfare Party (RP) under Erbakan, and by Elise Massicard who spoke about the Alevis of Turkey. For the Palestinian context, the post-*intifada* period was evaluated by Jean-François Legrain. Mona Harb-el-Kak and Bernard Rougier presented the situation in Lebanon, where the Hezbollah both competes with and complements the government. Patrick Haenni and Ahmad Moussalli addressed the situation in Egypt. The assessment of the Islamist movements in Egypt 'Twenty Years After ...', according to Moussalli, was that arguments are made either in cold war or essentialist terms, neither of which further the understanding of the Islamist movements. His hypothesis was that Islamism has not yet begun. Gérard Prunier and Saeed Ya'qoub then gave an overview on the situation in Sudan. Mamoun Fandy's focus was on the relations between state and society in Saudi Arabia, under the heading of 'cyber resistance', i.e. the Saudi opposition between globalization and localization. Renaud Detalle addressed the historical context of the Islamist movement in Yemen, which Bernard Haykel subsequently evaluated in his role as discussant. Gudrun Krämer gave an overview on the cross-border activities of the Muslim Brotherhood, also with a view to problematizing the hypothesis that political Islam has failed. Martin Kramer linked in with the previous presentation, as he dealt with the pattern of the sudden rise (or internationalization) and fall (or localization) of the Islamist movements. The attempts at mass mobilization in North Africa on the part of the Islamist movements were addressed (specifically in the Algerian context) by Gilles Kepel, and (for Morocco) by Mohammed Tozy. On the last day, Xavier Bougarel introduced a series of papers on the post-communist world, starting with his own presentation on Islam and politics in the Balkans. Nathalie Clayer specifically focused on the Albanians of the former Yugoslavia. The issue of Islam in the former USSR was problematized by Aleksei Malashenko. The final paper presented at the conference was Dale Eickelman's contribution on mass media, the Internet and the emerging public sphere. He affirmed that the new media have transformed the ideas and practices of religious and political authorities throughout the Muslim world. Olivier Roy then gave a general synthesis and chaired the closing debate.

The discussions and debates initiated in the conference will continue on the ISIM website: http://www.isim.nl/ ◆

Workshop Report

Family and Family Law in Asia and the Middle East

The workshop on 'Family and Family Law in Asia and the Middle East', convened by ISIM and the Working Group Modernity and Islam (30 June – 1 July 2000) at the Institute for Islamic Studies, Free University of Berlin, aimed at creating a network of scholars and scholar-activists currently based in the West, who employ a social science methodology and perspective in the study of family law, its history, its regional developments and its interpretation by courts.

PHOTO: LAILA AL-ZWAINI

Annelies Moors and Lynn Welshman participate in the workshop.

The two-day workshop was divided into a series of roundtable discussions, each session assigned to participants, who used their own research questions and findings as well as pre-circulated reading material to enable a comparative and interdisciplinary debate.

The first theme was devoted to 'Western Historiography of Family Law in the Middle East'. Bettina Dennerlein expounded three major paradigms that stand out in Western literature on family law in the Middle East, and contrasted them with discourses about family law in the region itself. The three paradigms reflect the development of the complex relationship between the state and the family, varying from a patriarchal-nationalist, to a contractual-individualized approach. These developments are visible, for instance, in the shifting definitions of marriage and the effects on the position of women and their active participation as social actors.

The second theme concentrated on the 'Marriage Contract and its Registration'. Léon Buskens approached the topic from three different perspectives: *fiqh*, state legislation and practice, with the example of Morocco. The radical shift from oral to written marriage contracts, and the legislative measures towards homogenization and central registration of the contracts, as illustrated by the most recent version of the Mudawwana, are clear manifestations of the increasing control that the state exerts over the family. However, people still find space for their own perception of the rules and practices regarding marriage.

Annelies Moors discussed the increased practice of registering token dowers in the marriage contract among urban and rural Palestinian women, whose motives and effects vary according to time, setting, level of education, profession, and so on. The practice is further closely inter-linked with socio-economic developments and the changing view on what a 'good' marriage involves, with an increasing emphasis on the conjugal aspect of the marital relationship. Another important feature of the token dower is its symbolic meaning regarding a woman's autonomy, which can be seen as an important sign of modernity.

The third session covered the issue of marital offences and violence in the family. Tazeen Murshid argued that acts of domestic violence against women in South Asia are usually linked to the male perception of 'possessing' the female body, and embedded in conceptions about honour and property relations. Occurrences of violence can, moreover, gain ground because they are often sustained by public institutions such as the law, the courts, and the police. The discussion evolved around questions such as: what constitutes illegal cq. illegitimate forms of violence in the family? How can legislation ensure the protection of women? What is the link between private and public violence? Do court verdicts reflect the offence or put the women on trial?

The fourth theme was related to illegitimacy, the topic of research and professional concern of Jamily Bargash. The Sunni *fiqh* literature shows a large degree of elasticity in arguing around the possible status of an illegitimate birth. Although the erasure of natal descent and the fiction of parenthood is not allowed, in practice this was solved by employing *hiyal* (legal devices), such as the *kafala* (lit.: gift of care), through which a child could attain an accepted social status. The codification of Maliki law and the compulsory registration of marriages and births have, however, created gaps between law and social practice. For instance, through the fixation of a specific period for pregnancy, no room is left for the fiction of the 'sleeping child', thus generating an unprecedented social stigma for both the 'illegitimate' child and its mother.

The final theme on divorce, legal activism and reform was jointly presented by Lynn Welchmann, Abdellahi An-Naim, and Ziba Mir-Hosseini, scholars who combine their academic approach from an 'insiders' perspective with effectively partaking in legal reform programmes, especially in Palestine, Iran, and Egypt.

By the example of practices of *talaq* (divorce) in Palestine, Welchman illustrated that codified law and the institutionalization of courts can also positively affect women's position, e.g. by making certain apprehensible (*makruh*) moral duties legally enforceable on men, or conversely by applying administrative measures to discourage men from divorce.

Mir-Hosseini explained how the various re-codifications of civil and family law in the 20th century have constantly challenged Iranian judges to reconcile in their decisions between *fiqh*, popular *sharīʿa*, and the codes, and how women equally make use of *sharīʿa* in their strategies before the court. Her co-directed film 'Divorce Iranian Style', a vivid illustration of her argument, was shown to a larger audience at the conclusion of the workshop.

Illustrated by a field study about the initiation, trajectory, and debates around the latest Egyptian Family Code, carried out for his 'Islamic Family Law Project', An-Naim also confirmed that no sustainable social change can take place without addressing the issue of *sharīʿa*. How then to harmonize *sharīʿa* with the official codes, on the one hand, and social reality on the other? What does this imply for the nature of Islamic family law (Can it still be called *sharīʿa*? Who determines it?), and for the conception of the state (Does it act autonomously or as an agent of other social forces?)?

These questions will be further explored in the second Islamic Family Law workshop which will take place in March 2001 in Florence, Italy. ◆

Laila al-Zwaini is projects officer at the ISIM.

ISIM Sounding Board

Religion and Economic Practices in Southeast Asia

After Beirut and Cairo, the ISIM held its third Sounding Board Meeting in Jakarta from 14-16 August 2000, in close with cooperation with the Center for the Study of Religion and Society (PPIM). Through these meetings, the ISIM aims to forge links with academic institutions in the South that are actively engaged in the study of contemporary developments in Muslim societies. Moreover, they provide an opportunity to discuss current and future research plans with academics and intellectuals.

The three-day programme comprised a workshop (August 14) and visits to the relevant institutions (August 15-16). The primary objectives of the workshop were consultation and discussion of the possibility of conducting a larger conference on religion and economic practices in the Muslim world. Scholars and experts from Indonesia, as well as from Australia, Singapore, Thailand and Malaysia, participated in the discussions. The choice of topic was prompted by the intense economic activity experienced in Southeast Asia in the last decades of the 20th century, which has earned a number of economies in this area the sobriquets of 'Tiger' and 'Dragon'. Although the boom was followed by a dramatic crash, most economies in the region appear to be steadily recuperating. In many discussions, economic mechanisms in Southeast and East Asia were partly explained by reference to Asian values. Among Muslim populations, particularly in Malaysia, notions of what is called 'Islamic economics' became a topic of public debate. In Malaysia, and to a lesser degree in Indonesia, some of these principles (particularly in the fields of banking and finance) were put into practice, thus following earlier experiments in the Muslim Middle East and Pakistan.

In his keynote speech, Dr Abdullah Saeed presented an overview of the Muslim discourse on Islamic economics. He reviewed the diversity of attitudes and approaches to modern issues and problems in the field. He argued that the basic tenets of Islamic economics merit further critical research. Dr Karnein, keynote speaker of the second session, reviewed *sharicʿa*-based economic activities in Indonesia. Both speakers highlighted the tensions between legalist and more society-oriented approaches to the issues of Islam and economy. The representatives of banks, insurance and welfare agencies all stressed that expert *sharicʿa* committees be formally involved in their activities in order to guarantee religious rectitude in accordance with *sharicʿa* requirements. A practitioner present felt that it was important to stress that *sharicʿa*-based economic activity in Indonesia was not simply a pious effort, but was in fact market driven. This is because a growing group of devout Muslims find it increasingly difficult to seek the services of non-Muslim financial institutions. Nonetheless, it was generally recognized that the *sharicʿa*-based economic institutions are still in their initial phase and as yet only play a marginal role.

The various issues suggested as possible themes for a forthcoming conference can be summarized as follows:

- Islamic economics as a discipline: In recent decades Islamic economics has begun to be included in the curricula of universities in various Muslim countries. Several theories, models and legal instruments were offered by the Islamic economists as alternatives to the modern economic theories. Its efficacy as a discipline, however, is disputed – as is the term as such.
- The tensions between *sharicʿa* and state law with respect to economic practices.
- Islamic economics and the global economy: To what extent do global economic conditions allow space for experiments in the field of Islamic economics?
- Hermeneutics of Islamic economics: The problematic in interpretation of the authoritative sources (Qur'an, *sunna* and *fiqh)*, which lie in the question of preference of legalism over societal orientation.

In all approaches, case studies of actual practice are to be included, varying from grassroots welfare organizations to more formal institutions, like Islamic banks and *musharaka* companies.

In addition to the workshop, several institutions were visited; among them were IAIN, the Dompet Dhuafa of Republica, Takaful Insurances, the Bazis (Badan Amil Zakat Infak dan Sadaqah), and the *sharicʿa* branch of Bank Indonesia. ◆

Participants
- Amin Aziz *(Bank Muamalat)*
- Masdar F. Masudi *(Pusat Pengembangan Pesantren dan Masyarakat (P3M))*
- Murasa Sarkaniputra *(IAIN Jakarta)*
- Bakhtiar Effendy *(PPIM)*
- Azyurmardi Azra *(IAIN Jakarta)*
- Eri Sudewo *(Dompet Dhuafa)*
- Karnaen Perwata Atmajda
- Jamhari Makruf *(PPIM)*
- Hussin Mutalib *(University of Singapore)*
- Abdullah Saeed *(Australian National University)*
- Imtiaz Yusuf *(Assumption University, Bangkok)*
- Muhammad Khalid Masud *(ISIM)*
- Dick Douwes *(ISIM)*
- Mulya Serigar *(Bank Indonesia)*
- Nasirwan *(Bank Indonesia)*
- Hani *(Dompet Dhuafa)*

Activities

ISIM Journalists Day

In cooperation with the Scherpenzeel Media Foundation, the ISIM held its first Journalists Day on 5 June 2000 in Utrecht. Aimed at journalists with an interest in contemporary Islam, the main topic of the day was political Islam in the Middle East and Central Asia with a special focus on Iran and Afghanistan. The Journalists Day was unique in that it brought together scientists and reporters who work in the same field and under similar circumstances, though often with different goals. The input of the speakers – Salah Negm, Olivier Roy and Nazif Shahrani – gave substance to interesting discussions, although it became apparent that scholarly and media discourses do not always coincide. Bertus Hendriks (Radio Netherlands) chaired over all sessions.

PHOTO: WIM VREEBURG

Nazif Shahrani being interviewed by a student of journalism.

The programme consisted of two main parts: the first being a closed morning workshop dealing with political Islam and the second being an open forum on the Middle East and Islam in the Dutch media. Political Islam was chosen because it tends to dominate the media as well as recent academic studies. Iran and Afghanistan also offer a broad view on the subject, as recent developments here prove the diversity of political Islam.

The afternoon sessions were directed in particular towards students from the schools for journalism and offered two video-contributions: a public relations video of the Al-Jazeera channel and a short presentation on television coverage of Middle Eastern events by Jelle Visser (TROS Broadcasting, Hilversum). A journalists' panel (in Dutch) concluded the programme.

Closing panel
- Hans Jansen *(Leiden University, HP/De Tijd)*
- *Jan Keulen (Scherpenzeel Media Foundation/ University of Groningen)*
- *Moustapha Oukbih (freelance/De Volkskrant)*
- *Carolien Roelants (NRC Handelsblad)*

The cooperation between the ISIM and the Scherpenzeel Media Foundation in organizing this event resulted from their shared goal of rendering non-Western societies more accessible to Western audiences. The Scherpenzeel Media Foundation was founded to improve the media representation of the South. The following issues were discussed: How can foreign Muslim political culture be rendered accessible to a wider audience, without becoming oversimplified and stereotyped? To what extent do journalists make use of the expertise of scientists, and vice versa? How are Western journalists and academics perceived in the countries concerned?

As the chief editor of Al-Jazeera channel in Qatar, Salah Kamel Negm presented a practical and up-to-date contribution on Middle Eastern media. He discussed the expectations a Western journalist and a Middle Eastern journalist may have with regard to the authorities and the populace in Middle Eastern countries. How can both types of reporter function efficiently in areas where the prevailing rules and attitudes towards the press are unfavourable and censorship prevalent. He concluded his talk with tangible field experience of Al-Jazeera in Iran and Afghanistan – the channel just having opened an office in Kabul.

Less aimed at the practice of journalism, but more on the manifestation of political Islam in the Middle East, was the contribution of Olivier Roy (Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique (CNRS)). Roy argued that the wave of political Islam that seemed to have engulfed the Middle East at the end of the 1970s did not lead to the emergence of a new unified Islamic block. Instead of realizing the re-creation of a Muslim *umma* above nations and ethnic groups, as the Islamist movements claimed to fight for, these groups turned into 'Islamo-nationalist' movements. 'Empowerment led to pragmatism', according to Roy, because the more Islamist movements integrated into national politics, the more they lost their ideological radicalism. However, one must not draw the conclusion that normalization of 'Muslim politics' automatically leads to the disappearance of ideological radicalism. There still remains enough space for outcast and uprooted militants who cannot identify with a state or nation, such as Usama Bin Laden and his network of itinerant militants who travel from one jihad to another. But Roy does not see in this group a strategic threat, because they are unable to root their fight in a society. Nazif Shahrani (Indiana University, USA) elaborated on the very specific case of the trajectory of political Islam in Afghanistan, culminating in the rise of the Taliban movement (see p. 20-21). Turaj Atabaki (Utrecht University) gave a short note on the way the European press covered the developments in Afghanistan from the Soviet invasion to the Taliban take-over. Paul Aarts (University of Amsterdam) and Jan Keulen (Scherpenzeel Media Foundation/University of Groningen) acted as discussants. ◆

Book Presentation

MUHAMMAD KHALID MASUD

Travellers in Faith:
Studies of the Tablighi Jamaᶜat as a Transnational Islamic Movement for Faith Renewal

The Tablighi Jamaᶜat founded by Mawlana Muhammad Ilyas (d. 1944) in a rural setting in Mewat, India, in the early 20th century spread over the entire globe in less than a decade. With its centre in Delhi, the Jamaᶜat currently operates in more than 80 countries. Attended by millions, its annual conference has now become the second largest Muslim congregation after the Hajj.

In the absence of official writings and the movement's abstinence from media publicity, academic studies on the Tablighi Jamaᶜat have been completed only by participant observations – a phenomenon confirmed by the many Master's theses and PhD dissertations from universities in the UK, France, South Africa, Malaysia, Germany, Pakistan and the Netherlands during the last two decades.

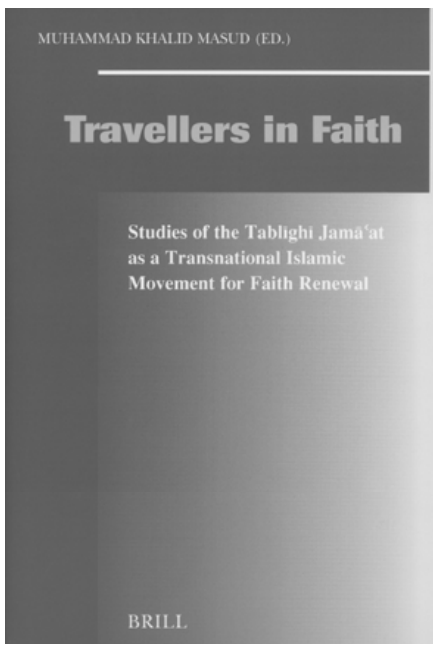
Travellers in Faith, which stemmed from papers read at a workshop on Tablighi Jamaᶜat, held in London on 7-8 June 1990, offers studies on the Jamaᶜat in India, Britain, France, Germany, Belgium, Canada, Morocco and South Africa.

Studying the historical and social growth of this movement in India, its transnational transformation and the development of its ideology, particularly on the questions of conversion, gender, religious diversity, organization, communication, adjustment with the local environment and personal transformation, the volume offers fascinating information about contemporary *daᶜwa* in Islam.

Transnationalism and travel are two distinct characteristics of this movement. It adopted transnational travel and physical movement as a means of *daᶜwa*. Reports about the gatherings of the Jamaᶜat in the news media carry pictures of the Tablighis walking on the roadside with bedding on their shoulders or riding the trains in spectacularly large numbers. Groups of Tablighis knocking at neighbourhood doors, inviting people to come out to the mosque, is a common sight in South Asia and in many countries of other regions. The most important and frequent activity of an adept of the Jamaᶜat is going out for God's sake.

A combination of time and space, 'travel' has a special meaning in the Tablighi discourse. It is a physical movement from one's present space (house, city, and country) to other areas. It is comparable with the concept of Hijra, both in the sense of migration and withdrawal. It is travel within one's self. One temporarily migrates from *dunya* (worldly pursuits) to *din* (religious concerns), a favourite dichotomy among the Tablighis. It is a migration from corruption to purity, withdrawing from worldly attachments to the Path of God.

Reform of self becomes feasible when one travels out of one's present environment. Staying in one's usual setting hinders the ability to discriminate between what is vital and what is trivial in one's life. This temporal withdrawal enables one to give up the trivial (*tark la yaᶜni*), one of the fundamental principle of the Jamaᶜat. While going out, meeting others and speaking to them, one is urged to continually address oneself. Knocking at others' doors, one is expected to arrive at one's own doorsteps.



A Tablighi crosses several types of frontiers in this journey. For example, the boundaries of gender disappear as the Tablighi assumes certain roles and modes of behaviour that, in his original setting, belong to the opposite gender. He also travels across the frontiers of ethnicity by becoming aware that he can transcend national, geographical, and language boundaries. But he also becomes sensitive to the bond that creates an 'imagined' boundary, bringing the global Muslim community closer together. Finally, the transnational linkages reaffirm the Tablighi's conviction of the legitimacy of his *daᶜwa*. ◆▶

Travellers in Faith: Studies of the Tablighi Jamaᶜat as a Transnational Islamic Movement for Faith Renewal
Editor: Muhammad Khalid Masud
Leiden: Brill, 2000
ISBN: 90-04-11622-2

Muhammad Khalid Masud is ISIM Academic Director.

Travellers in Faith includes the following chapters:

- *The Growth and Development of the Tablighi Jamaᶜat in India*
  Muhammad Khalid Masud
- *Tablighi Jamaᶜat and Women*
  Barbara D. Metcalf
- *Construction and Reconstruction of the World in the Tablighi Ideology*
  Mohammad Talib
- *Ideology and Legitimacy*
  Muhammad Khalid Masud
- *The Transformation of Tablighi Jamaᶜat into a Transnational Movement*
  Marc Gaborieau
- *Close Ties and New Boundaries: Tablighi Jamaᶜat in Britain and Germany*
  Elke Faust
- *Sequences of a Quest: Tablighi Jamaᶜat in Morocco*
  Mohamed Tozy
- *Tablighi Jamaᶜat in Belgium*
  Felice Dassetto
- *Foi et Pratique: Tablighi Jamaᶜat in France*
  Gilles Kepel
- *Worlds 'Apart': The Tablighi Jamaᶜat in South Africa under Apartheid (1963-1993)*
  Ebrahim Moosa
- *A Movement or a Jamaᶜat? Tablighi Jamaᶜat in Canada*
  Shaheen H. Azmi

Workshop Announcement

The Application of Islamic Law in Muslim Courts

Students of Islamic law sometimes observe that Islamic law is not law in the proper sense. This observation primarily refers to the distinction between 'jurists law' and 'judge-made law', the latter being the only proper law. The observation also reflects that our knowledge of Islamic law is derived more from studying the *fiqh* texts on legal doctrine than from the actual workings of the *qadi* courts. One may wish to research the actual *qadi* judgments, but will quickly notice that few critical studies of these judgments are available.

Historical studies of the administration of justice and accounts of the actual practice of the courts are also lacking. The time has come for serious study of the application of Islamic law in Muslim courts.

It is for this reason that the ISIM and Cornell University are co-organizing a workshop on 'The Application of Islamic Law in Muslim Courts', to take place in October 2001. The workshop is to be convened by Muhammad Khalid Masud and David S. Powers.

Call for papers

The papers are expected to focus on selected court judgements. Although the workshop is not limited to any one particular country or period, the more readily available judgements mostly belong to the modern period. Nonetheless, papers dealing with court judgments in the pre-modern period are also welcome. Papers should briefly describe the background (namely the case, the parties involved, the *qadi*, his training and appointment) and the application of Islamic law with reference to actual judgements and cases. Some of the questions and themes are outlined below, but contributors are free to develop their own approach to dealing with these issues.

The papers should be approximately 30 pages in length (9000 words), including notes. Where possible, each essay should present a translation of a relevant and exemplary document or documents (e.g. court judgment, appointment of a *qadi*, text of a contract).

Themes and questions

The following is a suggested list of themes, the treatment of details being left to the authors. Although the list is open to discussion, actual court documents must be used in discussing the chosen theme.

The themes are as follows:

- *Qada: What are the nature, authority and the jurisdiction of a qadi? How does his training and affiliation to a madhhab influence his judgement? What is his relationship to the state? How is he appointed? What is the nature of his relationship with other legal authorities like the muhtasib?*
- *Procedural Law: What constitutes proof? What are the court procedures? Is there a distinction in procedure with reference to different cases (e.g. criminal, obligation, inheritance, etc.)? What constitutes evidence? Witnesses? Oath? Written documents? Circumstantial evidence? Medical findings? What are the requirements relating to the qualifications of witnesses? Is cross-examination allowed? What constitutes idhar and iqrar? Is the court bound by a certain procedure?*
- *Composition of the courts: Is it a single judge court or more than one judge? Who are the judicial officers: advisors, mushawars, muftis, Clerks, police, executionists? Is there a plurality of courts? Are there different types of courts? How are they distinguished? Is the distinction based on jurisdiction, procedure, laws, or persons? How are they related with each other?*
- *The court case: How does the development of the litigation (khusuma) take place? How the claim is defined in the court? Is there a legal representation of the litigant? What is the process of summons? How and on what basis the parties are defined as claimant and defendant?*
- *Judgement (hukm): Is the judgement written? Dictated to someone? How is it preserved and delivered to the parties? What are the form, contents and structure of the qadi judgment? Does the judgement explain the reasons for the judgement? Does it mention any sources? Are they scriptural texts, fiqh texts, local customs?*

◆▶

Abstracts should be sent as soon as possible to the ISIM, the final deadline being 20 January 2001, to which a reply will be sent by the end of April. The full papers of participants will be expected by 15 September 2001. The precise date (in October) and venue (in The Netherlands) will be announced on the ISIM website: www.isim.nl

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Atelier

Africa and Islam: Moral Discourses and Construction of Identities

The ISIM atelier, 'Africa and Islam: moral discourses on Islam and the construction of identities in local, national and transnational perspectives', will take place from February to May 2001. The focus will be on the dynamic relationship between supposedly global processes like Islamic resurgence, seemingly uniform Islamic and Islamist discourses, and the construction of local identities and transformations from the perspectives of local groups and communities.

One of the challenges of this atelier, in which researchers from the South and the North will participate, is the possibility of formulating a research proposal with researchers from different African areas. Such a proposal could further develop methodologies in an interdisciplinary perspective. Emphasis is placed especially on analysing texts in relation to contexts.

Resurgence of Islam

In the last decades, both the popular media and academic works have focused on the so-called resurgence of Islam. In these discussions, emphasis has been on areas that are traditionally associated with the Middle East, including North Africa, while large parts of the Islamic communities outside this area (e.g. Sub Saharan Africa) are often ignored. In 'peripheral' regions, challenges posed to Islamic communities by processes of modernity, modernization and globalization in some cases differ from and in others resemble processes taking place elsewhere in the Islamic world. One such issue is the Islamic resurgence also referred to as fundamentalism, political Islam, or Islamism.

Islamist movements make use of 'moral discourses' which prescribe the 'right' attitudes, beliefs and conducts of Muslims. Similarities in rhetoric within these discourses which occur in different parts of the Islamic world might suggest uniformity both in the way they construct Islamic subject positions and in the meaning of Islam in everyday life. Nevertheless, differences in historical background have their bearing on current political, social-economic and cultural processes, and in turn influence the interaction of local groups with these Islamic discourses.

When studying Islam in Africa, Orientalist debates intersect with ideas related to 'Africanism'. The imagery related to Orientalism/Africanism results in diverse and peculiar notions and presuppositions among scholars about the ways in which Islam in Africa has influenced local communities and the formation of group identities.

Textuality

Related to the problem of Orientalism/-Africanism is the implicit association of Africa with oral traditions. Though the latter are unmistakably of great importance for the dissemination of all kinds of knowledge, the existence of written traditions in various Islamic societies and the centuries-long existence of Islamic Universities in Africa should not be ignored.

Another assumption related to the neglect of textuality is that syncretism of Islam with local oral religions is seen as characteristic of 'African Islam'. Moreover, this local Islam, perceived by scholars as accepted and practised by all members of certain Islamic communities, is presented as homogeneous and static. Deconstruction of these presuppositions is necessary in allowing for greater understanding of simultaneously-occurring globalizing and localizing tendencies. Comparison of phenomena in specific contexts, and specific historical periods, is vital to understanding perceptions, interpretations, and reflections on Islam by diverse groups in African societies.

Conference

During the 3 months of the atelier, two scholars from the South will be invited for more in-depth discussion, study, and analysis. Towards the end of that period (April 2001) a conference will be held with the (yet provisional) title: 'Standing on heaven/pulled into hell: Islam, globalization, and the construction of multiple identities'. The conference also takes as point of reference the transformations occurring all over Africa due to the processes of 'globalization' and 'modernization'. The main question is to what extent Islam and Islamic principles form part of processes of constructing identities of social groups in the face of current political, economic, social and cultural changes. How do different groups relate to Islam? Can new social groups be detected and how does Islamic identity converge in these new configurations? What other identities are of importance to understand the processes of identity constructions in Islamic societies and communities? What are the similarities and differences when comparing these processes of identity construction in different parts of Africa, and in different eras?

The outline of the conference is set, but as the coordinators of the atelier want it to be a conference with discussions on new themes and current issues, they will leave room for input from other colleagues, especially those working in Africa. The final programme will therefore be formulated once the major research topics of conference participants have come to the fore.

Format of the atelier

The atelier is based on current research conducted by José van Santen, coordinator of the atelier, who has vast research experience in Islamic Northern Cameroon (since l986); and Karin Willemse has conducted fieldwork in Darfur, Sudan, since l985. Two researchers from the South will be added as soon as possible.

The main mode of exchanging ideas and experiences will be the workshops, held once every fortnight with members of the atelier and other invited scholars. They will be organized by contacting members of different networks both in the Netherlands and abroad. ◆

Those interested in participating in the regular discussion may contact the ISIM or one of the organizers:

– José van Santen, Department of Cultural Anthropology, University of Leiden
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EDUCATION AND TRAINING

ISIM MPhil Programme in Islamic Studies

The one-year ISIM MPhil programme in Islamic Studies was inaugurated in November 1999. The first group of ISIM MPhil students obtained their degrees on Monday, 24 July 2000, with a graduation ceremony in the historic Academy Building in Leiden. The ceremony was followed by a reception at the Hortus Botanicus. The academic quality of the MPhil students as well as their enthusiasm and hard work greatly contributed to the success of the programme in this first year. A group photograph of the students and the titles of their theses can be found on the ISIM website under the link 'Education and Training'.

Seven students, from Germany, Pakistan, Sudan, Taiwan, the USA, and the Netherlands, were admitted to the MPhil programme in 2000-2001. Professor Johan ter Haar (Department of Languages and Cultures of the Islamic Middle East, Leiden University) delivered the opening lecture on 'Recent Developments in Iran: Progress in the Persian Style'. This year, the programme consists of eight courses and a thesis. A number of scholars from abroad, including Professor Maribel Fierro (Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, Madrid), Professor Abderrahmane Lakhsassi (Université Mohamed V, Rabat), and Professor William Roff (University of Edinburgh), will contribute to the programme. The dates of their lectures will be announced on the ISIM website.

The MPhil prospectus for 2000-2001 and an application form for next year can be found on the ISIM website; a paper copy may be obtained from the ISIM office. The deadline for applications for the MPhil programme is January 1 of the calendar year in which one wishes to begin the programme. ◆

ISIM PhD News

The first ISIM PhD students, Welmoet Boender and Gerard van de Bruinhorst, started their research in September 2000. Welmoet Boender's research project is entitled 'The Role of the Imam in Turkish and Moroccan Mosque Communities in the Netherlands and Flanders', and is supervised by Professor Sjoerd van Koningsveld (Faculty of Theology, Leiden University); Gerard van de Bruinhorst's project is entitled 'Animal Slaughtering and Sacrifice in a Modern Islamic Society: Textual Knowledge, Ritual Practice and Collective Identity in Tanga (Tanzania)', and is supervised by Professor Léon Buskens (Faculty of Law, Utrecht University, and Department of Languages and Cultures of the Islamic Middle East, Leiden University).

PhD Students' Conference

The ISIM held a conference on 14 June 2000 for PhD students at Dutch universities working in the field of Islam and Muslim societies. The conference was attended by 40 PhD students of the universities participating in the ISIM, as well as the Erasmus University of Rotterdam, the Free University of Amsterdam, and Tilburg University. The morning session included lectures by Muhammad Khalid Masud on 'Islam or Muslim Societies? A Question for the Students of Islam in the Modern World', by Sami Zubaida on 'The Idioms of Democracy and Civil Society in Modern Islamic Discourses', and by Professor Martin van Bruinessen on '*Ulama* and Muslim Intellectuals'. Four PhD students presented papers on their research in the afternoon session: Karin Willemse on 'One Foot in Heaven: Gender, Islam, and the Construction of Multiple Identities in Darfur, West Sudan', Paul Schrijver on 'Governmental Policies towards Islamic Education in Sudan', Clementine van Eck on 'Honour and Honour Crimes among Turkish People in the Netherlands', and Oussama Cherribi on 'Moroccan Imams in Amsterdam'.

This one-day conference for PhD students will take place twice per year. It aims to promote communication and the exchange of ideas among Dutch-based researchers. If you wish to be kept informed of the PhD students' conferences, please contact Nathal Dessing (dessing@rullet.leidenuniv.nl) at the ISIM.

Key Issues in Human Rights: Master Class by Professor Abdellahi An-Naim

Professor Abdellahi An-Naim is the principal lecturer and convenor of a master class for PhD students on 'Key Issues in Human Rights'. The course will take place in Leiden from 27-30 November 2000. It will cover the concept of human rights and their universality and cultural/contextual relativity. Furthermore, it will offer an overview of the main treaties, their implementation, and the role of non-governmental organizations, with special reference to Islamic societies. (See for the announcement of the masterclass p. 2).

The ISIM invites PhD students who wish to participate in the master class to send a brief curriculum vitae and an explanation of why they wish to attend to Nathal Dessing (dessing@rullet.leidenuniv.nl) at the ISIM by 1 November 2000. The fee for the master class is NLG 750.- Fee waivers may be granted in certain cases. ◆

Modernity

HAKAN YAVUZ

Being Modern in the Nurcu Way

One of the defining conflicts of modern Turkish life is the great tension between society and the state. This tension has been articulated in terms of the conflict between Islamic social movements and the state ideology, Kemalism. Alberto Melucci argues that social movements constitute an active resistance that seeks to free everyday life from colonization by central government so that individuals may realize their unique potential and assert their collective identity.[1] This aptly describes the Nurcu movement, an Islamic faith movement based on the writings of Said Nursi (1876-1960). Nursi suffered persecution at the hands of the Kemalist elite and was eventually exiled. Even his dead body posed a 'security threat'. After his death, his body was exhumed by military coup leaders in 1960 and reburied at an unknown location.

Said Nursi in 1952.

Why did Said Nursi and his followers represent a threat to the Kemalist State? What are the major characteristics of the Nurcu movement? How has the Nurcu movement remained the most powerful faith movement in Turkey? The following seeks to answer these questions.

A challenge to Kemalism

In order to understand the perceived threat of Nursi to the state, it must be understood that in Turkey, Kemalism is as powerful as Islam; it is Turkey's official ideology, functioning as a state religion. Therefore, a movement that strengthens Islamic identity is a challenge to state ideology. Said Nursi, founder of the Nurcu movement, stressed the significance of reading and writing. His works, known as the *Risale-i Nur Kulliyati* (The Epistles of Light), were believed by him and his followers to be bestowed by God and were thus considered semi-sacred. The writings of Nursi have three interrelated goals: to raise the consciousness of Muslims; to refute the dominant intellectual discourses of materialism and positivism; and to recover collective memory by revising the shared grammar of society, Islam. Responding to the penetrating impact of positivism in the Ottoman educational system and the total collapse of the Islamic educational system, Nursi tried to demonstrate the compatibility of science and religion, freedom and faith, modernity and tradition. He updated the idioms of Islam in terms of the dominant universal discourses of science, human rights, and the rule of law. In sum, the *Risale-i Nur* constitutes an alternative basis upon which Muslims can build their personality, and redraw the boundary between the state and society.

The writings of Said Nursi

There is no clearly articulated political design in the writings of Said Nursi; the purpose is rather to protect Islam from the fanaticism of traditionalist religiosity, and modern knowledge from unbelief. His writings constantly try to build a Muslim personality that is pious and modern; tolerant but firm about the core virtues of Islam. Nursi's books were his refuge and have become the avenue to fulfilment for soul-searching Turks. Mehmet Kırkıncı, a prominent second generation Nurcu, has referred to Said Nursi's works as the 'light' which helps to overcome the darkness of Anatolia. Nursi's books are the 'home' in which many Muslims find their self-identity. As Kırkıncı claims, 'I free my loneliness through these books. I examine myself and my history within and between the lines of *Risale-i Nur*.'[2] In a way, these books have become the architects of the Anatolian Muslims' heart and soul.

According to his writings, there are three ways of acquiring Islamic knowledge: the Qur'an, the Prophet, and the universe which he usually refers to as the 'Grand Book of Universe'. He used the laws of nature to explain the power of a creator. By replacing the text with ulema (or sheikh), Nursi tried to respond to the fragmentation of religious authority in Islam. In response to the prevailing tendency toward scepticism and the discursive shift from a religious to a secular worldview, Nursi attempted to develop a new conceptual terminology that would bring religion and science together. According to John Voll, Nursi tried 'to see connections between science and religion', rather than refuting the laws of science. Nursi stressed the multi-layered meanings of the Qur'an and taught that nature had no meaning in itself but rather signified *mana-yı harfi*, the existence of order and the presence of God. He always supported freedom of speech and considered it the necessary framework for genuine faith. He tried to protect secular education from unbelief and religious education from fanaticism by reconciling faith and science.

Although Said Nursi was reacting to an originally European materialist philosophy and atheism, he was very careful not to reject Europe *intoto*. He differentiated between the good and bad institutions and practices of Western civilization. Nursi expected to transform society by raising Muslim consciousness. He had always felt himself in *gurbet* (estrangement) and explained how he overcame this sense of isolation through dynamic belief, trust, and patience. Belief, for Nursi, was the guide that shapes the individual life. His struggle in life offers a powerful model for other Muslims to follow in overcoming loneliness and alienation by becoming conscious of God.

Nursi, as a native Kurd and pan-Islamist, witnessed the collapse of the multicultural Ottoman Empire, the formation of the Kemalist republic, and a decade-long experiment of democracy. A discussion of Said Nursi is, in effect, a discussion of the modern history of Turkish society. Nursi embodied the varying strategies – whether engagement, withdrawal or opposition – employed by an Islamic movement in response to oppressive Kemalist policies that sought to wipe out the collective memory of Anatolian Muslims. Nursi, by abridging a shared Sufi tradition and contemporizing Islamic concepts for the Anatolian Muslims, sought not only to preserve but also to update Turkish memory in new public spaces.

Nursi's teachings have helped to create a neo-Sufism in Turkey. His books have freed Islamic knowledge from the hegemony of the ulema and have thus democratized this knowledge. He popularized science by reframing it within Islamic idioms. Nursi represents the seismic shift from the *tekke* (Sufi lodge) to text, and from oral Islam to print Islam. Although his ideas evolved within Nakşibendi and Kadiri Sufi *tekkes*, his thought transcended the traditional framework of questions and answers. His writings reach the most dynamic and refined level of Anatolian and Ottoman Sufi Islam. Most of Said Nursi's teachers belonged to the Khalidi Nakşibendi order, but he also read the writings of Abdul Kadir Geylani, the founder of the Kadiri order. He was heavily influenced by the writings of Nakşibendi leaders, such as Ahmed Sirhindi of India and Ahmed Ziyaeddin Gümüşhaneli.

After identifying the enemies of Islam as ignorance, fragmentation, and poverty, Nursi presented education, hard work, and consensus as a solution. Nursi's Islam is personal Islam. Even his understanding of sharia reflected this personal commitment. In *Isarat-ül Icaz*, Nursi defines sharia as way of determining right from wrong, good from bad, and licit from illicit through consciousness rather than force. In other words, a just society is not built by force, but by righteous men and women.

Dershanes: sites of Islamic modernities

The Nurcu movement represents a dynamic conceptualization of the interaction between modernity and religion. The movement can be considered modern in that it espouses a worldview centred around the self-reflective and politically active individual's ability to realize personal goals while adhering to a collective identity. It seeks to shape local networks and institutions in relation to the global discourses of democracy, human rights, and the market economy. In this sense, we may say that Nursi is the founder of modern religious discourse in Turkey. The Nurcu movement has responded effectively to the search for identity that has been a salient characteristic of Turkish politics since the collapse of the Ottoman Empire. Through religiously rooted and socially shaped networks, the Nurcus (participants of the Nurcu movement) have sought to establish a sense of community within a laic state. The Nurcu reading circles, or *dershanes*, have become the institutions that integrate the individual into society and polity. They can be analysed as textual communities formed around Nursi's *Risale-i Nur Kulliyati*.[3]

The word *dershane* in modern Turkish can refer to a special apartment floor or a one-floor building and a congregation of people who meet there to read and discuss the writings of Nursi. This process of discussion is called *sohbet* (conversation) and generally takes place after work or on Friday evenings. Although almost all conversations start with the writings of Nursi, they take different directions and most likely end with political or business exchanges. The *Risale-i Nur* becomes a basis for conversation and provides a shared vocabulary to discuss socio-political events in and outside Turkey. Conversation is an important aspect of Turkish socio-political culture, and the *dershanes* are central to Nurcu identity as they facilitate the formation of close relationships among followers, who form bonds of trust and civility. As informal networks of people, ideas and capital, *dershanes* help to institutionalize a pattern of conduct in society.

Before the 1983 economic liberalization instituted by Turgut Özal, Nurcus met in private homes. With the help of newly accumulated capital, the Nurcus began to buy separate buildings where they could assemble and discuss social issues from the perspective of the *Risale-i Nur*. These *dershanes* led to the emergence of a new Nurcu elite and gave greater visibility to the new Anatolian bourgeoisie.

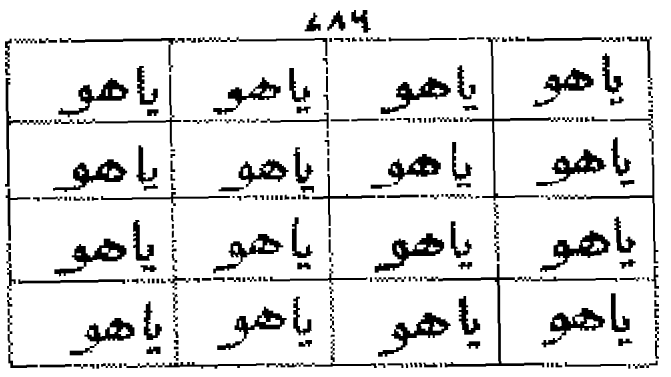
Continued on page 14

Health

COR HOFFER

Religious Healing Methods among Muslims in the Netherlands

In search for Islamic healers, inquiries made at mosques and Islamic organizations revealed a striking contradiction. In these places, it is generally said that the activities of these healers have nothing to do with Islam. Direct contact with Islamic healers through healthcare workers, however, revealed that they themselves are of the opinion that what they do fits fully in the Islamic tradition. In actual practice, the formal taboo on Islamic healing methods is often ignored at the informal level.



Amulet for curing measles.

A division is often made between 'official Islam' and 'popular belief' in Islamic societies. It is understood that the term 'official Islam' refers to the belief as propagated by the *ulama* and imams in mosques – representing the orthodoxy. On the other hand, 'popular belief' consists of, ostensibly, pre-Islamic elements, local customs and traditions. In practice, the drawing of the boundary between the two is problematic in that it depends on the perceptions of those involved. In the course of time, diverse theological arguments have been put forward by the (Sunnite) orthodoxy to delineate the boundary between Islam and popular belief. The fundamentally monotheistic character of Islam is emphasized. Thus, practices such as fortune telling, magical rituals and saint worship are labelled pre-Islamic, *bidᶜa* (unlawful innovation) and *shirk* (idolatry). However, in the common religious perception of many Muslims, so-called official Islam and popular belief go hand in hand. For them, there is only one Islam, namely the one that they themselves experience.

Amulet against the evil eye or *jinns*.

The theological argument used against, or for, popular belief also has sociological and ideological traits. The habit of orthodox scholars of labelling practices of popular belief as 'pre-Islamic' can thus be seen as a form of marginalization and as an attempt to protect their own interests and positions. Those who have limited or no access to the dominant religious system may resort to alternative religious interpretations and beliefs. Apart from reformist tendencies, practices of popular belief are viable alternatives. Popular belief can thus be a part of the struggle of interests between different religious and political groups.

In the period from 1990-1994, Cor Hoffer conducted research regarding Islamic healing methods in the Netherlands on assignment from the Dutch Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sports. The study was primarily oriented towards aspects of Islamic healing methods that are of importance to healthcare policy. The findings of the research were published in the book: *Islamic Healers and Their Patients: Healthcare, Religion and Giving Meaning,* Amsterdam: Het Spinhuis, 1994 (in Dutch).

With the financial support of the Netherlands Organization for Scientific Research, Hoffer successfully defended his PhD thesis at Leiden University in February of this year: *Popular Belief and Religious Healing Methods among Muslims in the Netherlands: A Historical-Sociological Analysis of Religious-Medical Thinking and Actions.* Amsterdam: Thela Thesis, 2000. (in Dutch with a summary in English.) On the basis of interviews and observations, he collected data regarding 39 Islamic healers (34 men and 5 women) and 65 of their patients. In addition, he conducted a written questionnaire among 227 patients.[1]

The dichotomy between Islam and popular belief is arbitrary and capricious. Whether or not the division is made, and where the border is drawn, depends on religious (theological) interpretations in combination with social and political factors. In practice, this implies that Islam is given different forms in different societies under the influence of local, social, political and economic factors. In the course of the history of Islamic societies, certain variants of Islam have dominated over others in conjunction with the power structures. Following Bax, it can be said that a struggle exists between religious (sub-)regimes that alternate power positions.[2]

Islamic Healing Methods in the Netherlands

The relationship between Islam and popular belief in Islamic societies offers a vital background for understanding the recent emergence of Islamic healing in the Netherlands. The term 'Islamic healer' can be understood here as one who bases his or her work on power inspired by Islam (for example, an inherited healing gift, which is said to go back to the Prophet Mohammed); has an Islamic vision with reference to the work of healing; and describes himself or herself as a healer either informally (via family and acquaintances) or formally (via advertisements). Islamic healers differ from regular healthcare workers in their views on certain illnesses and problems. They distinguish between illnesses with natural (physical or psychological) causes and those with supernatural causes (the evil eye, magic, or *jinns*). From the viewpoint of Islamic healers, people consult a doctor for the former, an Islamic healer for the latter. An important element in the treatment by Islamic healers is the use of Qur'anic verses which they believe to bestow *baraka*, blessing power. They use these verses for faith healings and the making of amulets. Most Islamic healers are of the opinion that they may not ask for money for their work; they believe that Allah is ultimately the One who heals – not the therapist.

Islam and popular belief in the Netherlands

The ambivalent relationship between 'official Islam' and 'popular belief' also manifests itself among Muslims in the Netherlands. In the absence of Islamic scholars, the imams, as the religious officials in the mosques, propagate the official doctrine here. In contrast, Islamic healers can be considered exponents of Islamic popular belief. However, despite their official reticence, individual conversations with 31 imams revealed that the majority considers the techniques of Islamic healers permissible – and some even applied these techniques themselves. Although imams, as representatives of official Islam, may not openly associate themselves with practices of popular belief, they apparently deviate from this rule when practice necessitates. Thus, the formal taboo on Islamic healing methods appears to be ignored at an informal level.

How can this apparent contradiction be explained? Apart from their personality and vision, the social position of imams in Dutch society plays an important role. As a part of the institutionalization of Islam in the Netherlands, certain views and interests of the Islamic orthodoxy from the countries of origin are making their entrance. In conjunction with the formation of Islamic institutions such as mosque councils, interest groups and educational institutions, a Sunnite orthodox elite is developing – an elite which is appropriating control over the Islamic inheritance. A struggle between 'Islamic sub-regimes' also presents itself in the Netherlands. Recently, Dutch publications have been appearing (available in Islamic bookstores), in which, in accordance with strict orthodox views, the belief in the power of *jinns* and saints, for example, is considered *shirk* (idolatry). At the same time, the emphasis is placed on the fundamentally monotheistic character of Islam, which is expressed by the concept of *tawhîd*. [3]

These developments imply that given the official Islamic disapproval of the practices in question, imams cannot permit themselves to be openly associated with these practices because of their religious and social positions. With regard to their appointments, they are after all dependent upon either the authorities in the countries of origin or on local mosque councils. Imams, however, are also involved in common practice in which they are confronted with the unorthodox views of believers, for example, through requests to write amulets or to perform certain rituals. Sometimes, they fulfil these requests in an informal way. It can be argued that imams personally experience that the theological/normative division between official Islam and popular belief does not exist in the common belief system of some Muslims in the Netherlands.

Islamic healers in the Netherlands find themselves in a completely different position than that of the imams. Their thinking and practices are determined through a combination of societal needs, individual motives, social interests and religious interpretations. Islamic healers meet specific needs of their patients centred on the conferring of meaning and offering help to persons who have run into medical and social difficulty. In contrast to imams, who are the representatives of official Islam, Islamic healers pay homage to religious viewpoints that are related to popular belief. There are two aspects to be found in the ways in which they legitimize their work: first, the power upon which they base their work; second, an Islamic vision. Three types of Islamic healers can be defined with respect to the former: healers with an inherited gift (for example, as a descendant of the Prophet Muhammed), healers with a teacher (for example, as a member of a Sufi order) and healers who have taught themselves. As to their visions, all healers refer to passages from the Qur'an and the *hadîth*. Most healers state that payments in return for their treatments contradict the religious basis of their work. They may, however, accept a 'reward' for their work, something that occurs frequently.

Islamic healers consider their work to be in harmony with Islam. For them, no division exists between that which they do and Islamic doctrine. It has been argued that, given the absence of shrines of Muslim saints, popular Islam will have difficulty taking root in the Netherlands, since saint worship is one of the main pillars of popular religious belief and practice.[4] However, another important pillar of Islamic popular belief has been overlooked: namely, the ideas and practices of Islamic healers and their patients. Their activities are manifestations of the gradual development of Islamic popular belief developing in the Netherlands. ◆

PHOTO: A.A.G. MOINUDDIN CHISTI, *THE BOOK OF SUFI HEALING*, NEW YORK: INNER TRADITIONS 1991, 136-137

Notes

1. It is difficult to indicate how many Muslims in the Netherlands use the services of Islamic healers. In a number of studies, it has been concluded that approximately 5% of the Turkish and Moroccan population consults Islamic healers. There are doubts as to the accuracy of this figure (not everyone admits publicly to visiting an Islamic healer and the belief in Islamic healing methods is also dependent on the situations in which people find themselves.) It can, however, be stated that a minority of Muslims in the Netherlands uses these services (Shadid & Van Koningsveld (1997), *Moslims in Nederland. Minderheden en religie in een multiculturele samenleving.* Houten/Diegem: Bohn Stafleu Van Loghum, p. 198)
2. Bax, M. (1985), 'Religieuze regimes en staatsontwikkeling: Notities voor een figuratiebenadering', *Sociologisch Tijdschrift* 12 (1), pp. 22-47.
3. See, for example, translations of works by M. Ashour (1986) and I. Hoesien (1998), the latter was published by the El Tawheed foundation.
4. Tennekes (1991), 'Een antropologische visie op de islam in Nederland'. *Migrantenstudies* 7(4), pp. 18-19; and Nico Landman (1992), *Van mat tot minaret. De institutionalisering van de islam in Nederland.* Amsterdam: VU Uitgeverij, pp. 190-191; 1992b, pp. 34-39.

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Gender

EMINE ONARAN İNCIRLIOĞLU

Village Women in Central Anatolia: Reality, Models, Anomalies[1]

A large body of literature on gender relations in rural transformation points out women's disadvantaged position in market production and in the mechanization process of agriculture, more specifically in capitalist transformation. Feminist literature concerning the concept of patriarchy is similarly extensive and focuses, amongst other issues, on the emergence of Semitic monotheisms stemming from Abraham (namely Judaism, Christianity and Islam), in which women's status rapidly declined. In both groups of literature, ethnographic descriptions run the risk of particularizing asymmetrical and exploitative gender relations in the studied communities, while in the case of Anatolia, for example, there is nothing particularly rural, Turkish or Muslim about these relations.

PHOTO: EMINE ONARAN İNCIRLIOĞLU, 1992

A Sakaltutan family.

'Reality' is infinitely complex and full of contradictions. Models, whether they be descriptive or causal, are simplifications of that reality at different levels of abstraction, for different purposes, and to be used in different contexts. Models are meant to be efficiently expressive, straightforward, decidedly 'parsimonious,' and consistent representations of reality. In some ways, writing, including ethnographic writing, is like model production, as it is a selective process of simplification. The trouble, of course, is to account for the anomalies that are left out of our clear-cut models, yet are well and alive in 'reality'.

The case of village women in Turkey is a good example.[2] There seem to be two powerful models for 'village women'. Both make sense in different contexts; both leave out important elements of 'reality', and both may be (and are) used (and abused) for different purposes. One model portrays 'the village woman' as insightful, wise, powerful, and confident; the other as overworked, undervalued, ignorant, and submissive. The view of women as powerful stems from Kemalism, which focuses on village women's participation in the labour force since the Ottoman period when upper class urban women were confined to the 'private domain'. The view of village women as downtrodden is probably more common, not only in the media but also in social science literature. It is interesting to note that the same themes are used in the construction of both images, albeit with different implications and consequences: gendered division of labour, illiteracy, separation of public-private domains, and Islam.

Anis Belik, Sakaltutan with daughter and neighbour.

PHOTO: EMINE ONARAN İNCIRLIOĞLU, 1992

The two Kayseri villages where research was conducted for this study provide ample ethnographic evidence against both of these models. Although division of labour by gender defines what men and women are culturally expected to do, it is by no means rigid. Depending on the household composition, men and women may do each other's work, and villagers understand that the conditions override the norms. Moreover, the norms do not yield clear-cut explanatory models. Both men and women are involved in farm work, as long as they have rights over land, and the so-called public-private dichotomization does not explain the gender division of labour in the village. Other dichotomizations such as 'production versus reproduction' or 'paid versus unpaid' work for market exchange and subsistence, respectively, are not applicable to the situation either. It is perfectly acceptable for both men and women to be involved in paid work, and in the case of some households, carpet weaving, which is predominantly women's work, is the only source of income, making women the only bread-winners while men are involved in unpaid work in subsistence agriculture. Furthermore, long-term fieldwork has suggested that village women's work is not undervalued, contrary to arguments in the literature.

Illiteracy, used synonymously with ignorance, is usually considered as a major depravity in most social science literature, which holds that it incarcerates women into submission. Education, then, is seen as a consciousness-raising, liberating force. Similarly, Islam is associated, whether it be implicit or explicit, with the 'backward' and 'traditional' image of village women, while it is implied that their urban sisters have surpassed those 'primitive' stages. Underdevelopment in Muslim societies, women's subordinate position, their covering and restricted formal education, are portrayed as functions of Islam. The irony is that, while the early Republican images of 'powerful village women' were linked with isolation from Islamic influence, those of 'subordinate village women' are associated with the persistence of Islamic influence in villages. It does not take long-term ethnographic fieldwork, however, to realize that there is more to both education and status than basic literacy and schooling. Likewise, what passes as Islam is highly diverse and negotiable, very much dependent on the bargaining power of those involved.

Numerous ethnographic accounts that focus on the relative power of 'the village woman' through division of labour and spatial segregation further her ambiguous image. Her informal power in the 'domestic sphere' and control over the household income are seen as evidence of her access to significant power resources. Her autonomous social organization outside of her husband's network is seen as countering the image of powerless village women.

The problem with these representations is their selective use of ethnographic evidence. Because the images created in these models present consistent patterns, they, at the same time, create anomalies, namely everything that remains outside the patterns. The exceptional cases, however, would not be labelled anomalous if there were no models that defined the norm. In other words, if statistically infrequent cases are excluded from our models, those models will not represent a reality that is able to accommodate the so-called anomalies.

Unfortunately, these models of village women in Turkey, whether they portray powerless, helpless, subordinate images of women or emphasize 'women's power', are equally detrimental and disregard inequalities. They not only misrepresent village women in Turkey, but are also politically damaging. Neither ignoring nor dwelling on anomalies will alleviate gender inequalities. ◆

Notes

1. Parts of this article are adapted from an earlier work by the author: 'Images of Village Women in Turkey: Models and Anomalies', pp. 199-223, in: Zehra F. Arat (ed.) (1998), *Deconstructing Images of 'The Turkish Woman'*, New York: St. Martin's Press.
2. The author's research in two agricultural villages in the Kayseri province began in January 1986, when the late Paul Stirling, British anthropologist, hired her as his research assistant to continue his longitudinal study of the villages since 1949. The author's native language, Turkish, facilitated her task of gaining an understanding of the local village women.

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Science

MUZAFFAR IQBAL

The Center for Islam & Science: A New Initiative

The Center for Islam & Science (CIS) is dedicated to a creative exploration of the Islamic view of science and to a renewal of links with the intellectual tradition of Islam. The CIS supports research and activities aimed at enhancing our Islamic and scientific understanding of nature and the human condition. Recognizing an underlying unity in all domains of knowledge, the CIS does not construe 'Islam' and 'science' as two unrelated entities that need to be artificially linked through an external methodology. This fundamental unity stems from *tawhid* (unicity of God), the foundation of Islamic epistemology. The CIS, therefore, recognizes, honours and builds its vision and strategy on this unifying principle. Accordingly, it considers the physical world (the subject matter of natural sciences) a part of the hierarchy of beings which must be studied in relation to other parts as well as to the greater whole.

The Center takes the religious, cultural and historical matrix in which science operates as a fundamental component of scientific inquiry and hence an integral part of its operative methodology. Lying outside the domain of experimental science, these deeply rooted theoretical constructions inform all branches of contemporary science – from cosmology to genetics and from neuroscience to artificial intelligence. The Center, therefore, pays special attention to these epistemological underpinnings and explores the foundations of contemporary science from an Islamic perspective in relation to these deeply imbedded precepts. In particular, the Center is interested in examining the underlying principles of those branches of contemporary science which have direct bearing on our notions of the cosmos and the human person.

CIS considers the reconstruction and renewal of the Islamic scientific tradition a fundamental aspect of its mission. Taken as a whole, this tradition provides the framework for articulation of Islamic perspectives on contemporary issues. The CIS, therefore, endeavours to renew links with the traditional sources that once gave birth to and nurtured the Islamic scientific tradition. The Center considers the renaissance of the Islamic tradition of learning as the key element in this process of renewal, for it was this tradition of learning that had given birth to the Islamic scientific tradition. Based on *tawhid*, this tradition of learning takes God as the source and origin of all branches of knowledge. The Center, therefore, carries out and supports activities that use an integrated approach to learning both the transmitted as well as the intellectual sciences (*culum al- caqliah wa culum al-naqliah*).

The Center serves as a catalyst for this process of renewal through objective studies that focus on the broad matrix in which the Islamic scientific tradition was born, and through study projects that focus on the relevance of this tradition to the contemporary issues dealing with the notions of cosmos and human person. The Center also considers articulation of Islamic perspectives on contemporary issues a part of this process of renewal and hence it supports activities that seek to inform the general public and engage academic community in creative ways which explore contemporary science from Islamic perspectives.

CIS takes for its motto the Prophetic supplication, 'O God, show me the nature of things as they really are.' This prayer, which reverberates throughout the history of the Islamic intellectual tradition and which was encapsulated by the 10th/15th century Persian poet and scholar ᶜAbd al-Rahman Jami (d. 1492) in his Lawaᶜih (Flashes of Light), eloquently captures the *raison d'être* of the Center for Islam & Science: 'O God, deliver us from the preoccupation with worldly vanities, and show us the nature of things as they really are. Remove from our eyes the veil of ignorance, and show us things as they really are. Show us not the non-existence as existent, nor cast the veil of non-existence over the beauty of existence. Make this phenomenal world the mirror to reflect the manifestation of Thy beauty, not a veil to separate and repel us from Thee. Cause these unreal phenomena of the Universe to be for us the source of knowledge and insight, not the causes of ignorance and blindness. Our alienation and severance from Thy beauty all proceed from ourselves. Deliver us from ourselves, and accord to us intimate knowledge of Thee.'

Research and publications

The research and publication plan of the Center grows out of its fundamental goals. The Center envisions two distinct but complementary series of publications.

The first, 'Islamic Perspectives on Contemporary Science', explores those fundamental contemporary scientific notions that seek to redefine our understanding of the nature and purpose of cosmic and human existence. This involves, but is not limited to, investigation of ideas, theories and concepts, which have arisen through advance scientific research in areas such as cosmology, evolutionary biology, neuroscience and genetics, from Islamic perspectives.

The second series, 'Studies in Islamic scientific tradition', is designed to produce contemporary editions of major works from this tradition. These are not mere reproductions or translations; rather, the aim here is to provide scholarly editions of these classics for a creative rebirth of the ambience in which these works were produced in the first place.

Bibliographic resources

The CIS is compiling bibliographic resources to facilitate research on all aspects of Islamic scientific tradition. These periodically updated web-based resources include annotated bibliographies of major works, book reviews, biographical studies and databases designed to provide global access to a wealth of literature that has hitherto remained inaccessible. Interlinked summaries, annotations and cross-references facilitate the use of these databases. Work is also in progress on a source guide to the available translations of the classical works which deal with various aspects of Islam and science.

Conferences / workshops

The CIS organizes and supports conferences and workshops to promote academic research and scholarship on various dimensions of Islam and science. These conferences and workshops are geared towards the emergence of a fraternity of scholars and scientists who are interested in the goals of the Center and who wish to interact and collaborate on various projects.

Branch offices

Envisioned in the strategic plan of the Center is a network of branch offices in various regions of the Muslim world. The objectives of these branch offices are (i) to establish closer ties with various institutions and scholars of that particular region and (ii) to produce material suitable for local needs. This will include translations of various CIS publications, sponsorship of regional seminars, and workshops and conferences. ◆▶

The Center for Theology and the Natural Sciences (CNTS)

mission of the Center for Theology and the Natural Sciences (CTNS) is to promote the creative mutual interaction between contemporary theology and the natural sciences. The Center for Theology and the Natural Sciences (CTNS) strives to bridge these two disciplines. CTNS is a non-profit international membership organization dedicated to research, teaching and public service. It focuses primarily on the relation between contemporary physics, cosmology, technology, environmental studies, evolutionary and molecular biology and Christian theology and ethics. As an affiliate of the Graduate Theological Union (GTU) in Berkeley, California, CTNS offers courses at the doctoral and seminary level in order to bring future clergy and teachers to greater awareness of this important interdisciplinary work. Founded in 1981, the Center is supported by grants and donations. Members receive the quarterly scholarly publication, the CTNS Bulletin, the quarterly CTNS News, and discounts on CTNS-sponsored conferences and audio tapes.

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Science

LEIF STENBERG

Science in the Service of God: Islamizing Knowledge

On the London subway a passenger recites verses from the Quran. He does so in a low voice and smiles as he recognizes the divine words of his faith. The verses were reproduced in a book, entitled *The Bible, the Quran and Science*, a pseudo-scientific work claiming to examine the Holy Scriptures in the light of modern knowledge. This book by the French convert to Islam, Maurice Bucaille, is popular in Muslim countries as well as among Muslims in Europe and North America. It is commonly referred to and even recommended by Muslims almost anywhere in the world when discussing matters concerning Islam and science. However, in most cases, the person recommending it has not read the book him or herself. Instead, someone he/she trusts, at the local mosque or at the university, has told him of its content.

PHOTO: LEIF STENBERG

Two girls at the Department of Chemistry at Aleppo University in Syria.

The book by Maurice Bucaille belongs to that apologetic genre of literature that attempts to Islamize knowledge, science, technology and education. In contemporary European and North American Muslim environments, more or less apologetic literature on the relationship between science, knowledge and Islam is flooding the market. Literature and pamphlets on the Islamization of these phenomena are present in almost every Muslim bookshop. In general, the literature is written in English and the authors are primarily Muslims from Europe, North America, Malaysia, India and Pakistan. The fact that these discussions are mainly carried out in English points to it as the language of communication among Muslims worldwide.

Since the 1960s, discussions of Islam and science in the European and North American contexts have been dominated by the Iranian-American scholar Seyyed Hossein Nasr, the Malaysian academic Sayyid Muhammad Naguib al-Attas (who claims he was the first to introduce the concept of 'Islamization of knowledge'), the American-Arab scholar Ismail Raji al-Faruqi (d. 1986), the British-Pakistani author Ziauddin Sardar, the Iraqi-American scholar Jabir al-Alwani and the Pakistani Nobel Prize laureate Abdus Salam (d.1996). Yet they represent a variety of ideological and philosophical outlooks that have different aims.

In the study of the many relationships between Islam and science and knowledge, it can be suggested that we are witnessing an evolving 'discourse'.[1] That is, if discourse is seen as a constantly changing practice that redefines basic terms primarily concerned with power relations, a number of presuppositions that constitute the foundation for a new discourse on Islam and science and knowledge can be found. Of course, there are differences, but the common premises are focused upon here.

Interpretation

The participants in the discourse imagine the contemporary world as fragmented. The world needs to be put together in a systematized way, totality under the unity of 'Islam'. Firmly rooted in an organic world picture, the participants criticize science and social structures in Europe and North America and contrast them with an idealized 'Islam'. They believe there is nothing wrong with Islam, but that the problem is that Muslims do not practice it. Islam is understood as an objective reality. Through a correct interpretation of the revelation (the Quran), human beings can gain understanding of the true meaning of the world. Hence, the work of interpreting the Quran is seen as an ongoing activity.

The idea that existence has a meaning (a teleological dimension) influences the participants' view of history. They all turn to history to find the true norms and values of Islam. The idea is to return to the early history of Islam and interpret it (allegorically) with the 'Muhammadan' society of Medina as the norm. The aim is not to establish a copy of the so-called Medina State, but to transfer the conditions, the norms and values of the state to the present time. The result is an anachronistic projection of contemporary conditions and problems onto history. In their perspective, the conditions of postmodernity are assimilated and internalized in the framework of Islam. At the same time, their contrasting views of how to interpret the early history of Islam, as well as their interpretation of Islamic terminology and its Quranic grounding, reveal their differences.

In the practice of science, a Muslim scientist should strive towards Islamization. The stress on this obligation links the performance of the individual to the greater jihad, the endeavour of every Muslim in the service of Islam. The participants use the principle of *ijtihad* (reinterpretation) to the extent that the discourse can be characterized as a struggle concerning the meaning of Islamic terms. All participants strive to appropriate the vocabulary of the Quran and they all use a form of realism in the philosophical sense of the word. Words in the Quran are dealt with as if they had an objective and eternal meaning. The basic idea in using Islamic terminology is to evoke 'Islamic' feelings, associations, and memories, in order to make Muslims support that particular form of Islamic science and knowledge. At the same time, a scientific vocabulary is appropriated and mixed up with the Islamic terminology.

Tradition

Most of the participants do not have a formal religious education. Their loose connection to established scholarly traditions makes room for relatively independent interpretations of the sacred sources. They also hold a trump card by their ability to print and distribute their books through international publishing houses or through their own organizations. In order to spread their message, they all utilize the means of consumer culture – a culture they paradoxically often criticize. All of them share a fierce critique of the traditionally educated religious scholars, the *ulama*. Their attitude can be designated as anti-clerical. The religious scholars are stereotyped as a negative and reactionary force within Muslim society.

Their conceptual innovations not only affect Islamic but also scientific terminology. The meaning attached to the term 'the West' has a similar purpose. This stereotype is strongly emphasized. The aim is to fabricate a dichotomy between the culture (and science) of Europe and North America and the culture and science of Islam. Contemporary science is seen as a 'technocratic wasteland', a phenomenon that has nothing to offer humanity but alienation and enslavement.[2] That science is perceived as provisional, temporary, questioned, re-examined and forwarded by a multitude of methods and theories, all of which is regarded as weak and unstable. 'Science' is objectified in the sense that a specific Islamic science means a divinely ordered activity founded on a variety of interpretations of the word *tawhid* (unity). Disciplines cannot, therefore, ideally contain a set of different methods. There has to be one method that can be utilized to arrive at definitive answers. The 'single method of science' is based on the Quran, and as a consequence science that contradicts the word of God will not be tolerated. However, the question of determining which research goes against Islam is not settled, i.e. judgements and agreements on which research may be seen as Islamic varies over time and space.

Alternatives

The construction of an Islamic alternative to modern science is characterized by an arbitrary use of a variety of sources and an appeal to the ideas of such disparate thinkers as the American philosopher Paul Feyerabend and the Egyptian Islamist Sayyid Qutb. Often, a writer will back up his or her views by restricting the references to other people who share the same idea and belong to the same ideological position. This is an important strategy because it reveals the artificiality and pseudoscientific character of the discourse as well as the nature of the basic struggle to authoritatively define Islam.

Outcome

These ideas constitute the basic core of the project known as the Islamization of science and knowledge. They constitute a foundation for understanding modern science, and they create a framework for comprehending research on phenomena like DNA and postmodernity. But what has come out of more than 30 years of discussion on the establishment of a specific Islamic science? In Muslim countries, a number of Islamic universities have been established. In most cases, 'Islamic' signifies a university founded on a model containing religious education, on the one hand, and technology and the natural sciences, on the other. In more repressive countries, an 'Islamic' social science seems to be unwanted. In contrast, within the European and North American contexts, one finds a number of educational institutions focusing on religious education, while attempting to establish 'Islamic' social sciences.

On a more abstract and global level, the result of the discourse is a huge mass of literature. But the ideas put forth have little substance and the critique expressed concerning the content of, for example, an 'Islamic anthropology', offers little to distinguish it from any other anthropology.[3] It appears that in the social sciences, but especially in natural sciences, the Islamization process has to do with ethical perspectives, the use and abuse of research results, the role of the scientist in society, choice of research area, etc., and not so much with research methods and theories. Moreover, Western Creationists have influenced the Muslim discourse to the degree that some Muslim organizations have more or less cooperated with Christians representing a Creationist view. For example, in Turkey one can find authors who claim to be 'Muslim Creationists'.

The discourse on the meaning of Islam in relation to science and knowledge has also created a group of free-floating intellectuals. Muslims like Sardar, Nasr and representatives of the International Institute for Islamic thought (IIIT) belong to an international Muslim jet-set going from conference to conference or government to government presenting their form of 'Islamic' science. Somewhat humorously, they can be seen as prolific individuals parading on a global 'Islamic' catwalk constructing a Muslim intellectual fashion of the day. And it comes as no surprise that Nasr, Sardar and the IIIT have all been to Malaysia as advisors of some sort in the build up of Malaysian Islamic institutions.

One of many conclusions regarding the pursuit of these individuals and institutions concerns their interpretations of Islam, especially how they produce and communicate 'Islam'. Their activities suggest that the idea of a geographically located Muslim world, or of a centre and periphery, becomes obsolete. It is therefore better to regard the Muslim world as one of practices, ideas and thought, a discursive world constantly in flux, changing through interpretations and reinterpretations of Islam. In addition, in spite of the fact that the discourse on the Islamization of science and knowledge has not been successful in terms of building clearly 'Islamic' educational institutions or research facilities, the discourse has filtered down to the local level and become internalized among Muslims all over the world. Perhaps it is more important that the discourse serves Muslims, like the man on the subway, with a confirmation of their religious identity than viable new educational institutions. ◆▶

Notes

1. Stenberg, Leif (1996), *The Islamization of Science. Four Muslim Positions Developing an Islamic Modernity*, Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell International.
2. Elzinga, Aant and Andrew Jamison (1981), 'Cultural Components in the Scientific Attitude to Nature: Eastern and Western Modes?', *Research Policy Studies, Discussion Paper no. 146*, Research Policy Institute: Lund, p. 9.
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Internet

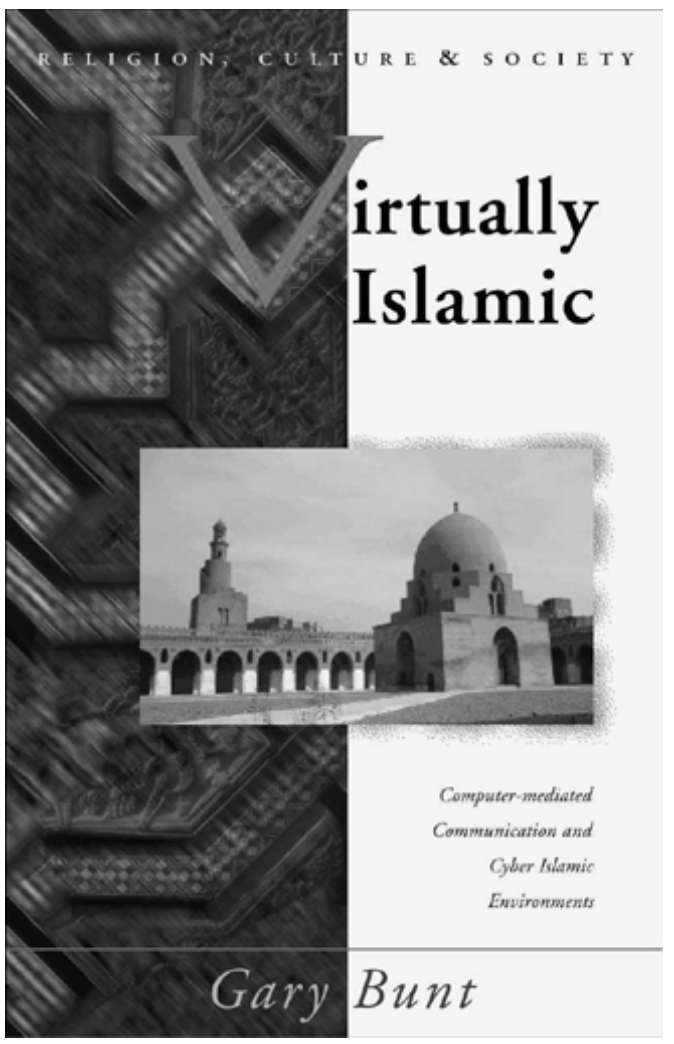
GARY R. BUNT

Interface Dialogues: and the Online *Fatwā*

What makes a web site 'Islamic'? Significant issues emerge in answering this question and delineating Muslim cyberspace, associated with identity, language, patterns of behaviour, and the utilization of textual and ideological sources. In addition, the cyber Islamic environment may be shaped by the application of 'Islamic' symbols, images, sound files, and different conceptual approaches towards defining 'appropriate' Internet interfaces. These components illustrate diversity with respect to interpretative, cultural, political, and linguistic concepts associated with Muslim identities.

The extent to which the Internet has an impact on Islam in the modern world is difficult to quantify, given the different global levels of individual access and utilization, as use of the web continues to expand. There is currently an assertion for position in cyberspace both amongst parties seeking to establish themselves as key resources and Internet portals for Muslims. Research has sought to interpret these initial phases in the evolution and growth of Muslim cyberspace in order to anticipate possible future developments in the light of new technological interfaces becoming available.[1] These include the integration of 'new' technology – such as ADSL, WAP phones, and the MP3 sound format – in providing access to Islamic resources.[1]

Certain 'orthodox' proponents of Islam benefit from promoting their worldviews via the Internet, whilst others find that their influence is threatened. Increased Internet access undoubtedly presents challenges in the form of divergent concepts and interpretative approaches from outside of established cultural-religious frameworks. This is not a phenomenon exclusively associated with the Internet, but combines with access to other media (such as digital television) where forms of censorship and control can be circumvented. The Internet – via web pages, e-mail and chat rooms – is already providing a forum for discussion on significant issues of concern to contemporary Muslims, and a platform through which ideas can be expressed and propagated. Although the Internet has been dominated by the use of English-language materials (this article's focus), other languages relating to Muslim interests are now present on the web. For example, in relation to Arabic speakers, HTML composition tools in Arabic have slowly improved.[3] In the Middle East, the use of personal computers has increased, and Internet Service Providers have opened up lucrative new Arabic-speaking markets – incorporating 'religious' web page content as part of their online services.



Groups that may be defined as being outside 'mainstream' orthodox Islam are also making use of the Internet, ranging from the 'homosexual Muslim' activists, 'Queer Jihad', to various political Muslim platforms and diverse popular religious expressions. Whether intended for a mass audience or a specific interest group, cyber Islamic environments are influenced by unique technical, aesthetic and content-related factors associated with Muslim identity. Some sites may be created as a resource for daily access to news and comment, and be associated with ideological political-religious platforms: for example, the Taliban in Afghanistan and Jamaat-i-Islami Pakistan provide regularly updated sites. Governments are utilizing the Internet in propagating their own approaches towards Islam for domestic and international audiences (including the governments of Iran, Pakistan, and Malaysia). Several web sites promote their interpretations of 'Islam' and their translation of the Qur'an as definitive, linked to specific searchable Qur'an resources that reinforce their specific worldviews. A variety of perspectives compete online to be the authoritative resource for 'Islam' as a whole, a phenomenon that links the Internet with other historical and contemporary trends relating to Islam within academic, political and/or religious discourse. These web sites may be presented as representative of 'Islam' as a whole, a phenomenon that links the Internet with other historical and contemporary trends relating to Islam within academic, political and/or religious discourse.

The online information marketplace

The substantial financial investment in the Internet by various Islamic organizations and platforms represents their attempts to secure online ideological advantages, and indicates a jostling for position in the information 'market place', although theoretically an individual's homepage on Islam can carry the same weight and interest to a 'neutral' surfer. This is particularly apparent when approaching issues relating to decision making and interpretation of Islam, and the 'qualifications' (if any, and if relevant) of those providing online advice to Muslims and others. It may be difficult to determine the credentials of an online Islamic 'authority', and this introduces a significant contemporary issue for Islam. Within a Sunni context, in particular, it can present concerns associated with the formulation of *fatāwā* (sing. *fatāwā*) or legal opinions produced by religious scholars and authorities. In various Shia contexts, authorities are strategically investing time and resources to present their own online conceptual approaches towards interpretation to a global audience.

The extent to which a Muslim surfer will apply or be directly influenced by the Islamic knowledge acquired in cyberspace is difficult to quantify. Advice on a key issue might be solicited on different sites: this may be through searching database archives of *fatāwā* opinions, questions and answers – or by e-mailing a site with a question. One advantage for petitioners and the curious is that the Internet *can* be anonymous. Issues which could be considered dangerous or embarrassing within a domestic framework can be presented to an 'authority' – locally, globally, or indeed from a different cultural-religious outlook. However, local knowledge is also significant when decision-making processes are considered.

Online *fatāwā*

Several Islamic web sites present a searchable listing of *fatāwā*, and a key word search should bring the surfer to the subject of interest within the site. The influence of Saudi Arabian scholars is evident on one of the most technically proficient Islamic 'advice sites': Fatwa-Online contained 479 *fatāwā* at the time of publication, with new content being added to the site on a regular basis. The site includes content obtained from at least eighteen scholarly sources, from Ibn Taymiyyah through to the *fatāwā* of Shaykh Ibn Baz and his former students – well connected to the Saudi Arabian Permanent Committee for Islamic Research and Fatawa. The site is searchable, with an easy-to-navigate interface containing ample user assistance. All the materials are in English, and there are no 'Islamic' images or Graphic Image Files (GIFs) on the site – conforming to some Muslim perspectives on 'images' as well as accelerating its download time. According to the site's counter, it had received over 30,000 hits from surfers between October 1999 and August 2000. Fatwa-Online's current emphasis is on translating scholarly opinion from Arabic resources.

This indicates an enthusiastic audience for online *fatāwā*, and that significant questions are not answered satisfactorily off-line. Amongst the guidance available is a prominent selection of materials for 'New Muslims', together with sections on women's issues, marriage and worship. Recent topics include: 'Does a new Muslim have to separate from his wife if she does not accept Islam?'; 'Is it permissible for a Muslim to visit his Christian neighbour when he falls ill?'; and 'Is it permissible for a Muslim to offer hospitality to non-Muslim companions by offering them alcoholic drinks which Islam has made unlawful for him?'. An e-mail list informs subscribers of new topics to be found on the site.

The production of *fatāwā* is not the preserve of Saudi scholars, however; although their influence is pervasive on other Sunni sites. Examples emerge from diverse global contexts relating to forms of decision making. Another *fatāwā* site prominent on search engine listings is the As-Sunna Foundation of America. This has a list of over twenty *fatāwā*, drawn from *Muslim Magazine*, on subjects ranging from fasting and mosque attendance to more controversial topics, including 'Revealing Intimate Marital Details', 'He smokes… is he right for me?' and 'My wife was molested'.[5] Some of the titles are linked to associated sites, such as the Kalimat site for Muslim women.[6] There are hyperlinks with over a hundred questions and answers, based directly on questions sent in by e-mail. These are useful indicators of contemporary concerns, and present an overview of traditional topics: 'The Veil in Islam', 'About Homosexuality', and 'Assisted Suicide' indicate the breadth of questions received and answered by As-Sunna Foundation staff on their regularly updated site.[7]

Whilst many Islamic sites are produced in the United States, significant English-language resources are also produced in other Muslim minority contexts and provide other shades of opinion. *Fatāwā* in languages other than English and Arabic can easily be located on the Internet via search engines (in Farsi, Malay, Turkish, Urdu, and Thai languages). For example, within Iran, religious scholars such as Ayatollah Hossein Ali Montazeri are asserting their opinions online, despite efforts by the Islamic Republic's government to suppress 'dissident' views.[8] There are a number of sites containing *fatāwā* in Western European languages other than English – with original content, as well as translations.

New notions of community via Internet?

The extent to which a web site's author's location is actually relevant can be questioned, given the nature of globalization and common concerns of Muslims in diverse contexts. Specific Muslim interest groups and interpretative strands can dialogue and form new notions of community via the Internet. Traditional routes of authority can be transcended, whilst surfers are also exposed to forms of knowledge and Islamic understanding beyond conventional boundaries. Those living in environments hostile to their religious worldview may find comfort, advice and inspiration through the content of web pages. The influence of scholars, and others giving advice based on Islamic principles, can extend from their own (micro-)communities and be placed before a global audience. Analysis, observation and recording of developments such as the online *fatwā* in cyber Islamic environments represents a significant future research area in Islamic Studies. ◆▶

Notes

1. Bunt, Gary R. (2000), *Virtually Islamic: Computer-mediated Communication and Cyber Islamic Environments*, Cardiff: University of Wales Press, http://www.virtuallyislamic.com. The writer acknowledges the editorial input of his wife, Yvonne Howard-Bunt, in the preparation of this article.
2. ADSL, or Asynchronous Digital Subscriber Line technology, rapidly accelerates web download times. A WAP phone can download Internet content. The MP3 format can download digital music with applications in other information retrieval contexts (such as digitized Qur'an recordings, or sermons).
3. HTML, HyperText Markup Language, forms the basis of web page construction. Arabic HTML is discussed on Arabic Gateway, 'Arabic on the Internet', http://www.al-bab.com/arab/comp2.htm.
4. Fatwa-Online, http://www.fatwa-online.com.
5. As-Sunna Foundation of America, http://www.sunnah.org/fatwa/. This site was prominent on the popular Google search engine's listing, http://www.google.com.
6. Kalimat, http://kalimat.org.
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Internet

SHAHRAM KHOSRAVI

www.iranian.com
An Ethnographic Approach to an Online Diaspora

While exile refers to a glamorous return to the 'real' homeland, diaspora creates an alternative homeland, an imagined one. Exile denies 'here' and mourns for 'there'. Diaspora lessens the unbearable nostalgia by constructing a community based on the networks which link the dispersed. Exile emphasizes a centralized relationship with the spatial homeland. In diaspora, through the romantization of the 'promised land', emphasis is placed on a cobweb of relations amongst the scattered. Diaspora suggests deterritorialization, which does not mean geographical displacement – as it is for exile – but refers to the collapse of a fixed link between identity, culture, existence and a single place. In other words, diaspora is a deterritorialized World Wide Web.

SOURCE: WWW.IRANIAN.COM

Regarding diaspora from this perspective, it is vital to look at how the Internet has reshaped the landscape of the Iranian diaspora, its impact on the relationships within the Iranian diaspora, as well as between the diaspora and the homeland.

The Internet offers more convenient, more effective and cheaper ways of communication than any other medium. Moreover, this relatively 'democratic' form of communication goes beyond political, religious, or ethnic borders. The Internet offers an opportunity for the creation of a transnational public space/sphere. It is a social field for political, commercial, and socio-cultural interactions, stretching from Los Angeles to the Gulf states, from Japan to Scandinavian countries, from Sydney to Tehran.

The significant role of the Internet among the Iranians should be seen in the socio-historical context of the public sphere in Iran. In a harsh political climate and under an intense state control of mass media, the existence of public spheres – in the Habermasian sense – in Iran has been obscure and unattainable. Nonetheless, Iranians, like other peoples, discuss matters and exchange information in private meetings (parties), semi-private assemblies (for instance, during religious rituals), or in public places such as coffee-houses and mosques. These 'public spheres', or rather 'public spaces', are dominated by Muslim, middle-class, middle-aged men. Women, youth, and other ethnic or religious groups have, nonetheless, their own 'public spaces'.

As newcomers, Iranians in diaspora find themselves outside the mainstream public sphere of their host societies, despite the fact that the cyber public sphere is – at least theoretically – accessible to everyone. Women, non-Muslims, youth, non-Persian speaking Iranians and even non-Iranians can participate in the cyber public sphere. Cyberspace gives Iranians a chance to enter into and exit from public discussion anonymously. It is a virtual public sphere for Iranians, where they can talk about political issues or taboo subjects such as homosexuality (www.homan.com) and pornography (www.iransex.com) without the risk of persecution. It also offers the only opportunity for harshly split Iranian opposition groups to encounter one another. The Internet has, furthermore, managed to bridge the gap between exiles and the Iranian state – an otherwise impossible task. While exiles avoid any 'real' connection to the Iranian state, they can enjoy 'virtual' access to Iran's official sites, and vice versa.

Transfer of heritage

English, the chief language of the Internet, makes this cyber public sphere accessible for the young generation to open dialogue with the first generation. In the conventional Iranian media in diaspora, the second generation is generally absent. This new media has become a sphere wherein two generations of Iranian emigrants face each other. They talk about their lives, identities, past and future. 'How to be Iranian' is a ubiquitous issue for debate. In the same manner, first generation Iranians also see the Internet as a means to connect with their children and to transfer their cultural heritage to the next generation.

A case study

The number of Iranian sites and homepages online is inestimable and ranges anywhere from chauvinist to pornographic sites, and from socio-political sites to personal homepages. To gain more insight into the role of the Internet in the changing landscape of the Iranian diaspora, a quick brush-stroke picture is given here of one of the Iranian sites.

www.Iranian.com is one of the most serious online magazines, created by Mr Javid in September 1995. Javid is a journalist in his late thirties living outside Washington DC. The site is updated daily with features, news on Iran, poetry, fiction, photos, letters, and of course various links to other Iranian sites. 'Diaspora' is a popular section in the magazine, where contributors offer articles, fiction, or poetry about their diasporic experiences. One significant potential outcome of this site is an increasing consciousness of the diaspora.

In the news section, there are links to more than 150 other online Iranian media, both from inside and outside Iran (31 radio, 8 TV, 50 magazines, 22 periodicals, 39 dailies). Nowadays, one's keyboard is one's café. Iran's newspapers appear online several hours before they are available in print in news-stands in Tehran. Through the Internet, one can access *Radio Payam*, (Tehran's local radio) as well as *Radio Seday-e Iran* (a 24-hour radio station located in Los Angeles, whose broadcasts cover only North America). Since a few years ago, *Radio Seday-e Iran* has placed its programme on the Internet. In Stockholm, daily Iranian local radio stations download programmes and rebroadcast them on air for Iranians. Moreover, there is a collaboration between *Radio Seday-e Iran* and the Persian section of *Radio Israel*. While the latter broadcasts a selection of programmes of the former to Iran, *Radio Seday-e Iran* resends Persian programmes of *Radio Israel* in North America for the Iranian Jews living there. In this delocalized diasporic space, where is the homeland?

The Internet is a more interactive media than any other of its kind. The Internet offers an opportunity for immediate feedback. On *www.Iranian.com*, this is mostly apparent in the section of 'Letters',which is updated daily with a large number of comments and critiques on features, news, or other materials published on the site. The letters are sent by faithful Iranian readers from around the world. The interaction is even more instantaneous in the 'Chat Room', where Iranians participate in dialogue in English or Penglish (Persian + English).

Furthermore, *www.Iranian.com* has conducted an annual 'man-of-the-year' survey, in which Iranians could vote to their favourite candidate. Another interesting cyber-interaction is what I call cyber-movement, a means through which Iranians are mobilized to participate in political activity. This could be to protest against the Iranian state or to support press freedom in Iran. For instance, the section 'In the Name of Pen' was started to help an imprisoned journalist in Tehran. Iranians were asked to send e-mail protests to President Khatami's homepage. Fortunately, thanks to all protests from the diaspora, the journalist was freed and reunited with his family in Germany.

'Nostalgia' and 'Pop-culture' are two photo-sections included in this site. Here, the 'golden age' of pre-revolutionary Iran is illustrated. Present-day Iran is presented in the section 'Photo of the Day' through photos received from readers or acquired from other sites. In addition to pictures, a large map of Iran can be brought up on the screen to reinforce the national imagination of Iranians. To complete the 'imagination' of homeland, current weather information of any part of Iran is also available.

Although the Internet is deterritorialized, it seems that there is still a passion for locality. The chat room is named 'Darya Kennar' (seaside), and refers to the coast along the Caspian Sea, a very popular vacation resort in the pre-revolutionary time. Another chat room bears the name of a popular coffee house in Tehran, 'Café Naderi', which has been a meeting place for intellectuals and artists since the 1950s. In both cases, one can witness a nostalgic reference not only to specific places but also to specific eras.

The section 'Abadan' is an apparent manifestation of this nostalgic gaze. Abadan was an oil-refinery boomtown, located at the Iran-Iraq border. The modern Abadan, almost a colonial town, was built by the British after the Second World War. This beautiful city was entirely destroyed during the Iran-Iraq war (1980-1988). Mr Javid, himself an Abadani, has dedicated a section of his site to Abadan. In this section, former Abadanis write their personal memories and 'historical tales' of their hometown. Perhaps this feeling is most transparent in the photo album of the section. There, old pictures from pre-revolution time as well as pictures of post-war Abadan are displayed. There are pictures of streets, squares, hotels and clubs, but also photos of the Abadan football team, a student group in the 1970s, and a 'typical house'. Throughout the section the visitor is struck by anguish and a nostalgic mourning for a beloved city, which no longer exists, but has gained a new virtual life.

Homeland in homepages

(Re-)production of the past is perhaps the main axle of the diasporic project. Collective history and culture are the cement which ties diasporic communities to each other. Cyberspace is used as a field to preserve this collective identity, not at least in the usage of symbols. Not identifying themselves with the current Iran – stigmatized by fundamentalism and terrorism – Iranian sites attempt to (re)construct a Persian profile by using tokens, symbols, and signs from the pre-Islamic cultural heritage. The national anthem and flag, art, history, and illustrations of landscapes are available online. This cyber-museum, like the conventional national museums, 'objectifies' the Iranian culture and history, making them 'immortal'. Thereby it creates an 'eternal authenticity', which in turn affirms the durability of the diaspora.

Diaspora, like the Internet, has neither a beginning nor an end. Nobody knows when an exile turns into a diaspora or when a diaspora becomes extinct. So is the Internet. Both constitute a waved pattern of sites and links. The nature of both is an ongoing process, always becoming, always in between. There is no final destination on the Internet. There are, rather, always other links to journey along and other sites to travel to. Likewise, in diaspora, homecoming is unrealizable. The Internet and diaspora defer.

Paradoxically, homeland is the dilemma of the diaspora. While the diasporic discourse is grounded on the return to the homeland, forging an imaginary homeland is the primary project of the diaspora. The Internet might be a challenge to this dilemma. While 'return' does not seem to be realized by Iranians in diaspora, 'virtual return' has become a reality for many of them. Iranians have found a homeland in the homepages. ◆►

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Internet

MUNAWAR A. ANEES

Huruf:
An Interactive Global Portal

The Internet, as a defining technology, is a powerful information broker. Within its unique architecture, it encompasses the entire spectrum of information, communication, and knowledge. That the Internet may be rightfully equated with the Industrial Revolution or the Gutenberg invention is a modest claim. In the rapidly evolving 'virtual' world, Muslims have a rather insignificant presence. Access to the Internet remains a function of their disproportionate technical and economic capabilities. However, as the transnational flow of free information gains momentum, the Muslim world will be forced to bring down technical, economic and political barriers to diffusion of information.

Muslim presence on the Internet leaves much to be desired. Whereas there is a number of active homepages devoted to Islam and Muslims, there is hardly a site that depicts the Muslim world in the vastness of its religious, cultural and social heritage. Not a single one of the sites reflects upon the contemporary or the future trends of Islam.

Taking into account the intrinsic value of the Internet and its inevitable future, a major initiative towards the development of a global Muslim presence on the Internet has been proposed. The conceptual matrix of this project is envisioned as the first undertaking of its kind for the Muslim world.

Huruf, an Internet-based service, jointly managed by Knowledge Management Systems (KnowSys) and ITLogic, offers a focal point for informed opinion on the religious, cultural, social, economic, and political affairs of the Muslim world, while encouraging open inter-civilizational dialogue.

The policy of *Huruf* is rooted in one of the fundamental tenets of Islam: freedom of belief and expression. In editorial matters, it does not discriminate on the basis of creed or colour. The portal exists to broaden participation of both Muslim and non-Muslim people according to the norms of civilized discourse. Disputations are welcome where no misrepresentation of facts is apparent or implied. Any expression, whatever the form may be, amounting to sacrilege, animosity towards a particular race, ethnicity or gender, ethnic stereotyping or pornography, falls outside the domain of this portal.

Huruf greatly emphasizes the importance of an interactive forum. The Internet is ideal for such an interactive milieu – as opposed to a monologue. It is, therefore, proposed that almost all editorial formats offered by the portal have an express provision for online user interaction. The portal will be offered in, but not limited to, the following formats:

- *Harf al-Awwal*: a clearinghouse for the fundamental sources of Islam available on the Internet such as the Arabic text of the Holy Qur'an and collections of *ahadith;* their respective translations; books and documents on *tafsir, sira*, *fiqh, tarikh, kalam* and *fatawa*.
- *Harf al-Lisan*: an online language aid service. It will provide access to learning resources for the Arabic language in addition to the major Muslim languages such as Turkish, Urdu, Farsi, Swahili, Bahasa Indonesia, etc.
- *Huruf: An Interactive Magazine*: a monthly online publication. Addressed to common readers, it will carry a mix of well-researched pieces on current affairs, analytical articles on topics of enduring interest, media reviews, conference reports and miscellaneous features. All contributions to the publication will remain open to user interaction, both online and offline. There will be a print as well as a CD-ROM version.
- *Huruf Review*: a quarterly publication based on a wide variety of reviews of currently published books. There will be 10-15 in-depth reviews made available for online and print or CD-ROM versions.
- *Huruf Abstracts*: a monthly publication of abstracts (200-250 words) of selected articles and other features.
- *Huruf BiblioServe*: a service responding to subscribers' requests for both retrospective and current bibliographies.
- *Huruf Alerts*: designed as a current awareness service for subscribers, it will be entirely based on user profile and may include any assortment of articles from the online publications, with the option of using material from other sources.
- *Huruf Meets*: a periodic online conference on topical issues sponsored by a group, an academic institution, or a commercial entity. Proceedings of these online conferences will be available by subscription for online, CD or print versions.
- *Huruf Refs*: a major referral service in domains such as education, legal aid, health, finance, and interpersonal relations. It will serve the global Muslim community and other users to enhance their networking capacities.

An International Editorial Advisory Board, comprised of eminent Muslim and non-Muslim writers and academicians, is now being formulated by *Huruf*. We expect this Board to be a mark of distinguished scholarship. We welcome and solicit suggestions and contributions from all interested persons. ◆▶

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Continued from page 7: Being Modern in the Nurcu Way */ by Hakan Yavuz*

The proliferation of *dershanes* coincided with the fragmentation of the Nurcu movement along class, gender, ethnic and regional lines. The *dershanes*, formed as textual-communities, create new public spaces which are able to empower Turkish civil society. They have played a crucial role in the evolution and pluralization of Islamic movements in Turkey and have also been instrumental in the formation of a counter-elite in Turkey. It is significant, for example, that *dershanes* have been used as dormitories for university students. *Dershanes*, as urban networks of Sunni Islam, do not separate religion from everyday life; rather, they seek to shape everyday life through Islamic idiom and practice. *Köprü*, the most serious journal devoted to the *Risale-i Nur*, has a circulation of 5,000 – some 3,500 copies of which go to the *dershanes*.

Print Islam and the emergence of communities around the text are very much an urban phenomenon. Increased literacy, an expanded market economy, and the proliferation of information technology have not lead to the secularization of society, but have rather facilitated the emergence of Islamic movements. Due to greater access to available resources and the flexibility of Islamic terminology, the Nurcu movement is rooted in urban centres. Its main goal is not to return to an Islamic past but to Islamicize the present by reinterpreting the shared language of Islam. Nursi helped to create and nurture an oppositional and insurgent consciousness within the limited public sphere under the domination of the Kemalist state.

The strengthening of market forces in Turkish society has turned the *dershanes* into centres of economic as well as social activity. People meet to discuss business issues and disseminate new information to other members. In other words, *dershanes* provide avenues for the realization of individual interests as well as the preservation of a collective identity. *Dershanes* are connected to a specific group of people and represent religiously shaped new public spaces that quickly become integrated into the surrounding community. *Dershanes* help to create social energy – the willingness of human beings to act from their ideals.

In Germany and Holland, I have visited several *dershanes* run by the community of Fethullah Gülen.[4] They fulfill multiple functions and aim to attract Muslim university students. They are successful among the Turks and some Turkified Kurds. *Dershanes* in Europe function as *kervan saray* where Turks may enjoy coffee and socialize. They have the multiple function of disseminating information, finding jobs, facilitating new friendships, and allowing access to diverse social networks. Personal trust and communal control are brought together. These *dershanes*, spread across Europe, help Nurcus locate each other. In some *dershanes*, maps can be seen on which *dershanes* in other European cities are identified with green stickers. By marking the map of Europe with *dershanes*, Nurcus start to see Europe as a familiar territory – even a second homeland. Being organized horizontally, not hierarchically, *dershanes* stress solidarity, participation, and integrity. In a way, they help to build sustainable communities. These networks facilitate coordination and amplify information about the trustworthiness of other Nurcus.

Being Muslim in the Nurcu way

Being a Muslim in the 'Nurcu way' means becoming a conscious Muslim in good deeds and knowledgeable in science, culture, and business. Recognizing that modernity does not acknowledge God, the Nurcus want to overcome this by calling Muslims to rationalize the Qur'an and take science seriously.

The Nurcus have been trying to institutionalize new ethics and 'pious activism' through a worldly asceticism. Religious salvation, for Nursi, assumes contemplative action and hard work. The Nurcu way reconciles religious contemplation and activism as mutually constitutive. Nursi defines Islam in terms of tolerance, love and reason.

After Nursi's death in 1960, due to varying regional, class, and ethnic identities, the Nurcus fragmented into several sub-communities with different interpretations and positions on political issues: ranging from a tolerant Fethullah Gülen (b.1938) to radical Aczmendi groups. Since 1983, the movement has undergone a division along ethnic Turkish and Kurdish lines. The Kurdish Nurcus tend to treat Said Nursi as a Kurdish nationalist, whereas the Turks stress his pan-Islamism. Many Kurdish nationalists interpret Nursi's exile and persecution as the example of the persecution of the Kurdish identity. However, the court cases show that his persecution was the result of his struggle to renew Islam against the social engineering of Kemalist reforms. Moreover, some Turkish Nurcus, such as Yeni Asya of Mehmet Kutlular and the Fethullah Gülen community, reimagined the movement as a 'Turkish Islam' and nationalized it. When a religious movement seeks legitimacy in the eyes of laic state, which either excludes religion from the state structure or seeks to control it through inclusion, the only method of gaining legitimacy and support from the state is nationalism. In other words, religious groups seek to maintain their relevance and legitimacy before the state by stressing their contribution to nationalism and national culture.

The Nurcu movement, with its 5 million followers, is undergoing a transformation: a process of ethnicization along Turkish and Kurdish lines; seeing the European Union as the hope for shaping a democratic Turkey; and 'going global' through expanding their networks and internalizing global discourses of human rights. The modernity of the Nurcu movement is also a testimony to the catastrophic success of the Kemalist project of creating a European nation. ◆▶

Notes

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Cemeteries

AHMED ANDREWS AND
MICHELE WOLFE

Muslim Graves in Sweden and the United Kingdom

It is estimated that the UK is home to more than one million Muslims from diverse geographical backgrounds, but of which the cultures of the Indian subcontinent are predominant.[1] Sweden, on the other hand, is home to an estimated 250,000 Muslims, the largest groups of which are Bosnian, Turkish and Iranian.[2] These observations take on greater importance when seen within the framework of the fundamental Islamic concept of the *umma*, the united worldwide Muslim community, which perhaps supersedes any notion of nationality or ethnic identity.[3] It is clear, however, that despite the apparently overwhelming common attachment to the concept of *umma*, Islam remains fragmented along both theological and cultural lines, affecting many aspects of life – and even some aspects of death.[4]

1. Close-up of headstone Saffron-Hill

PHOTO: AHMED ANDREWS

2. Stapenhill

PHOTO: MICHELE WOLFE

3. Malmo Cemetery

PHOTO: AHMED ANDREWS

4. Dundee East

PHOTO: MICHELE WOLFE

5. A Muslim Grave on All Saints Night (Malmo)

PHOTO: AHMED ANDREWS

One thing that virtually all practising Muslims in Europe fear is that they might become absorbed into a secular culture. However, when living in diaspora, religious rites often become all the more important. Rites, including death-related ones, serve a variety of functions. For example, they inform children of the collective customs from their religious and cultural background, rather than the sentiments of the host society. Durkheim posits that when an individual dies, the whole of his of her group is affected and that death upsets the social equilibrium, threatening the strength of communal identity.[5] Hence, rites ensure the perpetuation of Islamic identity outside of the homeland. Subsequently, the need to restore equilibrium and reinforce communal identity arises. More often than not, grave markers are found at the place that marks the burial of the community's deceased and can be seen as emblematic symbols which are imbued with the collective sentiments of the community. They are reflective reminders of the reality of the community, *ergo*, encouraging the make-up and continuity of group consciousness. Furthermore, grave markers, as well as recording the history of the community, demarcate an area of sacred space – a piece of Muslim earth in an often profane and alien land.

The following aims to draw attention to some of these variations and to offer some preliminary explanations for them, although this material will eventually be located within a wider discussion on graves as statements of both individual and collective identity. To illustrate these variations some comparisons are drawn amongst three cemeteries in the UK, which predominantly come under local authority control and one in Sweden, where cemeteries are, for the most part, both public and owned and operated by the Church of Sweden.

Saffron Hill: Leicester (UK)

This cemetery is located on the south side of Leicester and contains the city's only Muslim burial site. It also boasts a purpose-built *janazgah* (funeral mosque). The city's Muslim community is predominantly Sunni, originating from the Bulsar district of Gujarat, India (approximately 16,000 people). There is also a significant Sunni Pakistani community (approx 4,000) and a Bangladeshi community (approx 2,000). The earliest burials appear to have taken place in the 1970s. The burial area is characterized by small white headstones, a close-up example of which can be found in photo 1. The inscriptions on these stones are limited to Qur'anic text, often the first surah, and the name of the deceased alongside the dates of birth and death.

Leicester's Gujarati Muslims mostly follow the Hanafi school of thought, and adhere to a Deobandi interpretation of this school of *fiqh*.[6] The researchers were told by a member of the community that this style of grave marker was common to Muslims of the Gujarat and reflected the 'puritanical' ethos of Deobandi thinking; hence the grave and its marker are simple and unadorned, bearing only minimal information on the life of the deceased.

Stapenhill Burton Upon Trent and East Dundee (UK)

There are approximately 2,500 Muslims in Burton Upon Trent, mainly of Pakistani origin. Unlike the Gujaratis of Leicester, their understanding of Islam is rooted in the folk traditions of the Barelvi movement[7] although they are also Sunni Muslims of the Hanafi school. Unlike the Deobandis, the Barelvis see the Prophet Mohammad as more than a man, a part of the divine light of Allah. This doctrine gives rise to a form of Islam that provides a space for holy men and esoteric practices and graves appear to be often more ornate than those found within Deobandi communities, at least within the context of the UK.

Dundee also has a Pakistani Barelvi community of around the same size, and as photos 2 and 3 show, the grave markers are very similar in the two cemeteries, both differing from those of the Deobandis found in Saffron Hill. Within the Muslim area of Dundee East cemetery, decoration and flowers are common, as are British style gravestones.

It has also been noted that grave markers are more likely to denote the social or socio-economic status of the deceased within the Pakistani community, and close scrutiny of photo 3 reveals a grave marker that is considerably taller than those surrounding it. The grave in this case belongs to a deceased Pakistani millionaire.

Malmo (Southern Sweden)

Sweden's Muslim community has its roots in the country's recruitment of labour during the early 1960s and 1970s, and also in the role Sweden has played in receiving refugees.[8] This has resulted in the country's Muslim community being very diverse, consisting of people from Arab, Iranian, Turkish, Asian, and Bosnian origins. A survey of Malmo's Muslim burial sites shows patterns of grave markers that clearly reflect the ethnic identity of its deceased, most notably for the Bosnians.

Photo 4 shows graves of a very different design from those previously considered, most mirroring local Swedish designs. Many carry the emblem of Bosnia or Turkey, and some follow a European tradition of including a picture of the deceased. Another characteristic noted on Muslim graves in Sweden is the presence of a foot marker as well as one at the head of the grave. In addition, there is no evidence of Arabic or Urdu script. Thus, what is portrayed is a Muslim identity rooted in European culture. One phenomenon witnessed in Malmo and worthy of mention is that of Muslims participating in the Swedish 'All Saints Day' ritual of decorating the grave with flowers and lights (see photo 5).

It is apparent that Muslim grave designs vary considerably. Some reflect that which constitutes an appropriate grave marker in the cultures of origin. For example, the Gujarati graves in Leicester follow traditional Gujarati designs, while others such as those in Dundee and Sweden appear to reflect designs current in the host communities. It can be argued from evidence so far collected that, while in both the UK and Sweden grave markers contain statements regarding religious/cultural identity, in the UK such statements are likely to include Arabic script and verses of the Qu'ran, while in Sweden national symbols and crests are employed. Moreover, by their participation in 'All Saints Day' rituals, it may be argued that Muslims in Sweden are also seeking ways to make statements regarding their sense of being Swedish as well as being a Bosnian or Turkish Muslim, and are hence participating in what might be termed 'Civil Religion'.[9]

Furthermore, while Muslim burial areas may be seen as fulfilling the functions outlined by Durkheim (see above), it can be noted that distinct variations in the nature of grave markers do exist, as revealed when comparing Muslim grave markers even within the UK. The variety extends from those that are clearly designed out of religious motivation, to those that vary little from Western secular graves. ◆►

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Notes

1. See, for example, Nielsen, Jorgen (1994), *Islam and Europe*, Selly Oak: CSIC Papers.
2. Estimate given to the authors by Jonas Otterbeck, University of Lund, Sweden.
3. Hewer, Christopher (1994), *Recent Developments Amongst Muslims in Britain*, Selly Oak: Birmingham, p. 9.
4. Jonker, G. (1997), 'The many faces of Islam: Death, Dying and Disposal between Orthodox Rule and Historical Convention', in: Parkes, C. (et al), *Death and Bereavement Across Cultures*, London: Routledge, pp. 147-65.
5. Durkheim, Emile (1976), *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life*, 2nd edition, London: George Allen and Unwin, p. 399.
6. The term Deobandi denotes adherence to the teaching of the Deoband school in India.
7. Named after Ahmad Raza Khan of Bareilly, who defended traditional Islam against the Deoband.
8. See, for example, Freyne-Lindhagen, in: R. Barot: *Religion and Ethnicity*, Kok Pharos: Kampen Netherlands
9. See for example Bellah, N. (1970), *Beyond Belief*, New York: Harper and Row.

Indian Ocean

ABDALLAH CHANFI AHMED

Daʿwa in the Comoros Islands

The post-independence period from 1976 to 1985 was witness to a great number of young Comorian students heading for the Arab world, particularly to Medina, to receive the necessary training to become the future ulema of the Comoros Islands. Their return home began to have an impact even during their summer vacation, a time during which the *daʿwa* (mission) could be spread and during which they, having studied in different countries, manifested differing influences.

The Comorians had the tendency to distinguish between those studying in Medina, having the reputation of being the least evolved of all, and those studying in other cities in Saudi Arabia or in Kuwait, considered to be the 'evolved youth'. The latter were said to be comparable in intellectual terms as well as in their mentality to those who came from France and those educated in the *lycées français* of the country. Indeed, those not coming from Medina emphasized their difference by dressing in the latest European fashion and bringing with them the latest modern gadgets: radio-cassette recorders, hi-fi stereo systems, cameras, and the like. Their mannerisms starkly contrasted them with their Medinian counterparts: the Wahhabis. The latter wore sombre clothing consisting of a white robe and skullcap. They stayed in their villages to carry out preparatory work, first amongst their families, for their definitive return. The 'apprentice cleric' defined himself as an adversary of traditions and he expressed this within, among others, his female family members by attempting to impose the veil and preventing them from frequenting men outside of the family. Furthermore, he tried to put an end to the marabout practices, which his family may have resorted to in the case of need.

His intervention would then be carried out at the village level: the mosque, the *école française*, and the public square. At the mosque, he would ask the village *ʿālim*, who generally administers religious instruction between the *maġrib* and *al-ʿišā* prayers, to accept being replaced by him during the school vacation. The same went for instruction, such as the *tafsīral-qurʿān*, which takes place at the mosque during the Ramadan. As with every period of school vacation, the local students organize a special course at the *école française*, where the young Wahhabi would propose to administer Arabic courses. In the public squares, he would set up debates on a topic relating to local religious practice. During the month of the Prophet's birth, the *maulid* month for Comorians, he would seize the occasion to preach. In this sense his preaching indicates a capacity to adapt his strategy to the reality of the country: although the Wahhabi ideology condemns the practice of the *maulid*, young Wahhabis were happy to participate in it with the intention of taking advantage of the podium offered them to propagate their message. The same holds true for the *dāyira* ceremonies or for the religious ceremonies of the grand marriages (locally called (*madjlis*).

The Wahhabis thus challenged local practices, customs, and institutions judged as contrary to pure, original Islam. However, these reformist claims of the Wahhabis in the villages strongly contrasted their absence on the national scene. Their silence at the level of the state is especially remarkable in a country that calls itself an 'Islamic Republic'. The entire field of contestation of the political regime was occupied by the Marxists of the ASEC and the groups emanating from it, such as the Front Démocratique. But as the Wahhabis were home on vacation, it was not reasonable to risk imprisonment or being stopped from returning to Medina. It was thus necessary to keep a low profile. This, however, would no longer be the case after 1985.

The *daʿwa* after the Wahhabis definitive return home

From 1985 on, when some of the Wahhabis completed their studies and returned home, they began to attack the regime, criticizing the – by now – Islamic Republic for not applying the *sharīʿa*. In their point of view, the term Islamic Republic was pompous and had, for those who had invented it, but two objectives: to legitimize their policies by means of Islam, and to attract financial aid from the oil-rich monarchies. Indeed, this intention cannot be excluded considering the volume of aid that Abdallah's regime received from these countries. For example, the total amount of aid he received from the Gulf monarchies amounted to 93.2 million dollars in 1981 and did not cease to increase until at least 1986. Apart from a few infrastructure projects such as expanding the port of Mutsamudu, the money mostly landed in the pockets of the government officials. Furthermore, the Wahhabis' accusation launched against the government was confirmed and rejoined the comical public criticism that called the republic, instead of a 'République Féderal' (Federal Republic), a 'République fédarile' (*feda rile*: literally, money, let's guzzle it).

This description of the way Wahhabis spread and are still spreading their propaganda brings at least three permanent factors to the fore:

The nostalgic desire to perform their *daʿwa* as the Prophet Himself did. First, they tried to impose their doctrine within their families: the Prophet did so for Islam first with his clan. Then, they spread to the village level: the Prophet had done so for Mecca. Finally, they spread their message to the national level: here again, the Prophet had done the same after his immigration to Medina. In all of these steps, there would certainly be obstacles that the Wahhabi *dāʿī* would face with respect to the means demanded by the state of the power struggle: persuasion or physical confrontation. All would depend on the opportunity presented. Even this was inspired by the Prophet. The origin myths, the obsession with the founding act, and the supposedly perfect paradigmatic model which must be reproduced, are common to all proselytizing doctrines that promise adepts the 'great eve'. This dream feeds their desire to re-institute in the here and now the prophetic State of Medina, the ideal City.

The second permanent factor is the denunciation the Wahhabis perform at the place of the elder ulema. This is done despite the fact that most of the latter were teachers who, in the *madrassas* they had founded, gave these Wahhabis a solid basis in the Arabic language and a modern religious education – in comparison with that which they themselves had received from their own predecessors. They had sought out scholarships for these young Wahhabis and organized their departures for the Islamic centres in the Arab world. Today they consider their former students ungrateful.

The third permanent factor is the fascination, with all the envy and rejection the term implies, that the Arabophones or *arabisants* hold for the Francophones or *francisants*. The latter alone monopolize the state apparatus carrying the name *école française*, considered to be the sole legitimate educational institution. Yet, (as the Arabophones justly hold) the state belongs to all citizens and not merely to one caste. And while the ulema that had founded the *madrassa*s were attracted and recruited to the political parties of the period ranging from internal autonomy to independence, and while the new Arabophones (other than the Wahhabis) believe themselves to be obliged to borrow the mannerisms of the new generation of the 'Jules Ferry school', the young Comorian Wahhabis distance themselves from such attitudes. They want to mark their difference in every way. Nonetheless, in many ways, they resemble the youth of the Marxist ASEC-FD. The former oppose their elder ulema, the latter contest their elders in power and the political establishment. All are against French imperialism. The Wahhabis are against French imperialism based on the ideology of the Muslim Brothers which combats the *ġazwil-fikrī* (colonialization of the spirit of Muslims by that of Westerners, especially through their schools). The youth of the ASEC-FD do the same, but based on Marxist ideology which is anti-colonialist, being understood that the imperialism, for this Marxist ideology, is the 'supreme phase of capitalism'. Both movements were to invent a 'counter-culture': on the one hand, the 'new culture' (*msomo wa nyumeni*) of the ASEC-FD, which is a mixture of anti-conformist behaviour slightly hippy-like and a revolutionary Marxist militantism; and on the other hand, the Wahhabi puritanism of the 'Medinians'. It seems that the Wahhabis have imitated the young Marxists of the ASEC-FD in their propaganda and in their mode of organization: firstly, by their seasonal propaganda during the school vacation and then by their transformation into a political party. They generated the FNJ (Front National pour la Justice, National Front for Justice) in the same way that the ASEC produced its 'Front', that being the FD (Front Démocratique, Democratic Front). However, in their criticism of the magico-customary traditions (*mila na ntsi ugangi*) such as the grand marriage, they are much closer to revolutionary Ali Soilih than the youth of the ASEC-FD, which consider this domain as secondary. For the latter, it was necessary to defeat French imperialism as well as its 'Comorian servants', meaning the elders of the political establishment, to install a 'true democracy' (*demokrasi mpiya*).

The greatest difference that separated the youth of the ASEC-FD and the Wahhabis is an attitude of political culture. The Wahhabis are, just as their elder ulema and the politicians that evolved from internal autonomy to independence, much closer to the 'oral political culture' than the 'written political culture'. When it comes to expressing a political opinion, they often use verbal means (preaching at the mosque or on the national radio) rather than written means. But the youth of the ASEC-FD are the genuine promoters in the country of a 'graphic political culture' as witnessed in their journals such as: *Usoni* (Up Front), *Ushe* (The Twilight), and *Darbini* (Microscope). They came to master the art of tract making. The famous 'Voice of the People' (*sauti ya umati*) that so annoyed the Abdallah regime is one illustration of this. That did not, however, stop them from joining the written political culture with the oral, particularly in their records and tapes of folklore music and revolutionary songs. Another difference, and not the least important, that distinguishes them is their atheism, they so like to show, and their preaching thereof to those younger than themselves, the members of the ASEC-FD were in a way deicidal, which is contrary to the Wahhabis. However, the militants of the two movements are both parricidal and liberticidal. Parricidal, because the members of both movements aspired to taking the place of their elders, the traditional ulema for the Wahhabis, and the politicians for the members of the ASEC-FD. Liberticidal, because both movements aspired to the power and installing a supposedly salvational dictatorship: the dictatorship of the proletariat for the ASEC-FD and the dictatorship of the *shariīca* for the Wahhabis. But the inauguration of the 'Shariatocracy' is not possible in a 'deus ex machina'. For that, a political combat in the framework of new democratic era must be lead. ◆▶

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Southeast Asia

JULIA DAY HOWELL

Indonesia's Urban Sufis: Challenging Stereotypes of Islamic Revival

News coverage on Indonesia since the resignation of former President Suharto has been filled with images of sectarian violence and separatist agitation linked to 'fundamentalist' Islam. The ascent of Abdurrahman Wahid, former head of the 'traditionalist' Muslim clerics association, the Nahdlatul Ulama, to the Presidency of the nation at first suggested a shaky vigour in 'moderate' expressions of Islam. But as his second year in office begins, grave doubts loom as to the strength of the middle ground between so-called 'secular' and 'extremist Muslim' forces.

Telling the future of this nation in turmoil is fraught with difficulties, not least because of the likely manipulation of religious sentiment by cynical contestants for power. Attempts to understand how popular commitments grounded in religion become mobilized in political contests are also hampered by our limited vision of what religion *means* in daily life in Indonesia today. Not only are terms such as 'fundamentalist,' 'traditionalist,' and 'secular' loosely defined and likely to carry inappropriate implications when reading from the experience of one country to another, but even within Indonesia the religious landscape has been rapidly changing. Some 'traditionalists' (like the pluralist Wahid) are looking incongruously progressive, while 'modernists' (such as in Muhammadiyah) have been accused, even by their own avant-garde, of getting stuck in outmoded visions of reform.

While differences still nettle relations between 'traditionalists' and modernists, remarkable commonalities have nonetheless emerged. These have been best documented in the areas of public piety in the Muslim community at large and in the debate amongst the intelligentsia on interpretation in Islamic law. The rapid spread of literacy through the state school system, especially since the 1970s, and the requirement that pupils study their nominated religion (in nearly 9 out of 10 cases, Islam) at every level of formal studies, have made for a more doctrinally informed and 'bookish' *ummat*. At the same time, the depoliticization of religion under Suharto's New Order lowered social barriers between 'strict' Muslims and others. These factors, plus the rising world prestige of Islam after the Iranian Revolution, supported an efflorescence of popular piety that has cross-cut old religious/secular party politics and runs across the social class hierarchy. Veiling has spread from the *kauman* (the old 'strict Muslim' quarters of cities) to the university campuses; employees in Jakarta office towers as well as batik manufacturers in Solonese *kampung*s take time off for Friday services. As for intellectual engagement in issues of interpreting and applying Islamic law in a modern society, the degree of convergence in approaches is signalled by the frequent use of a single term, 'Neo-Modernism,' to characterize both progressives within the 'traditionalist' camp (such as Wahid) and those coming out of the Modernist movement (such as Nurcholish Madjid).

The upsurge in interest in Sufism

What is perhaps the most surprising change in contemporary Islamic religiosity, however, and one that has played a significant role in convergences in popular piety *and* jurisprudence, is an upsurge of interest in Sufism. Particularly remarkable is the fact that this interest is evident in the cities, not just in the countryside, and is pursued by cosmopolitan sophisticates as well as by provincials. Being a modern Muslim in Indonesia does not necessarily imply *salafi* fundamentalism; 'outward' signs of intensified piety may well betoken a new commitment to 'inner', Sufistic engagement with the faith.

Some of the most influential sociological representations of the Islamic world in the 20th century, notably those of Ernest Gellner and Clifford Geertz, cast Sufism as a predominantly rural phenomenon. At mid century they saw it fading away along with tribal and peasant life as Muslim societies underwent modernization. In these views, Sufism, originally propounded by urban sophisticates, after its distant heyday receded into the hinterlands and was compromised by its tolerance toward folk customs. Once a disciplined path of asceticism for spiritual purification, Sufism became in these constructions a set of magical practices suited to inspiring petty political loyalties; once a means of mystical knowing, it became merely a form of quick emotional release through suspect rituals.

Gellner argued that the 20th century was particularly fateful for Sufis. Although they have always been vulnerable to purification movements led by urban clerics (*ulama*) because of their lax attitude towards customary practices and the spiritual pretensions of reckless *syech*s, before the 20th century chastened Sufis were able to rebound. However, after the turn of the 20th century, he observed, modernist reform movements took a more uncompromising approach, seeking to delegitimize Sufism entirely and to establish legalistic (or 'scripturalist') constructions of Islam as definitive of orthodoxy.

Geertz's highly influential ethnography of Javanese society around the town of Pare in the 1950s graphically illustrated this image of Sufi decline in the face of Modernist reform. The traditional centres of Muslim education he observed (the *pesantren* or *pondok*) were cast as vehicles for basic learning in law and theology, while the Sufi orders (*tarekat*), once commonly associated with these schools, appeared to have nearly died out. Not only were there very few *tarekat*, but his characterization of the ones he did observe as 'a kind of old man's *pondok*'[1] strongly suggested they would not be around much longer. When those elderly, poorly educated farmers passed away, so would Java's Sufi orders. The Javanese penchant for esoteric learning might well survive in the numerous syncretic mystical groups (the *golongan kebatinan* or *kepercayaan*), but not within the fold of Islam.

The spread of Sufism amongst the intelligentsia

That this might not have come to pass (or perhaps never was impending) was impressed on my attention in the late1980s after having spent some years researching the mystical groups and their association with the Hindu and Buddhist reform movements. It was at that time that I met the respected Gadjah Mada University economist and former Rector of the Universitas Islam Indonesia in Yogyakarta, Professor Aceh Partadiredja. By then he was himself a new member of the Tarekat Qodiriyyah-Naqsyabandiyyah (TQN) centred on Pesantren Suryalaya in West Java. He introduced me to several young lecturers, including my research colleague Drs. Subandi, MA, and other young Yogya professionals involved in TQN and other orders. I learned that the widely reported Islamic revival on the campuses (and elsewhere) included an intense interest in 'inner' religiosity. It seemed that in the 1980s *kebatinan* (literally 'inwardness' but more broadly 'mysticism outside the fold of Islam'), had largely failed to attract the younger intelligentsia, but Islamic devotionalism and Sufi mystical practices *were* engaging them. Sufi books were amongst the fastest selling of the religious titles; students organized lectures on Sufism along with other Islamic topics; and orders like TQN were attracting members of the educated middle class and even Jakarta elites.

Through the surveys we carried out on the Yogyakarta and Tegal regional branches of TQN Suryalaya in 1990 and 1997, we were able to confirm the involvement of well-educated, occupationally middle-class people, both old and young, in this order. In 1997, nearly two-fifths had junior high or high school education, and just over 10% had at least some tertiary education. Five had actually done an MA and one had a PhD. Occupations covered the full spectrum; and ages ranged widely, from 16 to 97, with the bulk of the membership between 35 and 64. Substantial numbers of women were in the survey, along with men. Significantly, both the overall membership numbers for these branches and the proportion of urbanities grew over the 1990s.[2] This *tarekat,* at least, was hardly 'an old man's *pondok*' confined to a disappearing peasantry.

The new 'neo-Sufism'

Although demographic survey data on other orders are not yet available, several scholars, including Martin van Bruinessen, have recorded their impressions that Sufis orders are enjoying a new appeal in urban areas. Zamakhsyari Dhofier and others have also provided evidence of the continuing vitality of Sufi devotionalism in the *pesantren*s at mid century and the vigour of the *tarekat*s. Indeed in 1957, at the very time that Geertz was engaged in his Javanese field project, the Nahdlatul Ulama formed its first council to coordinate the affairs of the *tarekat*s run by member *ulama*s.

Apparently there is something to Anthony John's wry comment about Sufi orders, that 'Rumors of their impending death…are very much exaggerated'.[3] But the issue of the appeal of Sufism to cosmopolitans needs to be taken beyond the study of Sufi orders, and even beyond the devotional life of the *pesantren*. Indeed a whole range of novel activities identified with 'Sufism' or *tasawuf* are now popular in Indonesia's major cities: from reading reflective and 'how-to' spiritual books, to attending academically-styled private courses, to joining informal prayer groups or healing workshops using *dzikir* chanting, to accepting the spiritual direction of non-traditional teachers outside the conventional *tarekat*. The key features of these new-style 'Sufi' activities are their stated link with *shari'a*-based Islam, their pursuit of an experiential or 'inner' dimension to religious life, and a moving away from, or even rejection of, the supposed hierarchy, authoritarianism and 'other worldliness' of conventional *tarekats*.[4] This last feature distinguishes the Neo-Sufism of past generations (that attempted merely to distance Sufism from idolatrous local practices and reassert the centrality of the *syari'a* without attempting major institutional change) from this *new* 'Neo-Sufism'. The new 'Neo-Sufism' (as some indeed call it; it is also called 'Tasawuf Positif' or 'Practical Sufism') responds specifically to the new conditions of Indonesian urbanism. Notwithstanding the ideological imperatives of nation building for an unambiguous, prescribed religious identity, people are propelled into privatized styles of religiosity by their experiences of social and geographical mobility, exposure to global economic forces and cultures, and participation in international cultural activities. ◆▶

Notes:

1. Geertz, Clifford (1960), *The Religion of Java*, Glencoe: The Free Press, p. 182.
2. Howell, Julia Day, Subandi and Peter L. Nelson, 'Indonesian Sufism, Signs of Resurgence', in: *New Trends and Developments in the World of Islam,* edited by Peter B. Clarke (1998), London: Luzac Oriental; and Howell, Julia Day, Subandi and Peter L. Nelson, 'New Faces of Indonesian Sufism: A Demographic Profile of Tarekat Qodiriyyah-Naqsyabandiyyah, Pesantren Suryalaya in the 1990s', forthcoming.
3. Johns, Anthony, 'Tareqah', in: M. Eliade and C. Adams (eds.), *Encyclopedia of Religion* vol. 14, New York: McMillan, pp. 342-352.
4. See also the talk by Jalaluddin Rakhmat's 'The Revival of Sufism: Does It Help? A Glance at the Modern Sufi Associations in Indonesia' (ISIM web site).

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South Asia

SHANKER THAPA

Ethnic Variation of Nepal's Muslim Minority

Muslims in Nepal are comprised of Indian migrants and their descendants. A large majority of them live in the southern plain areas, while a certain percentage of the Muslim population live in certain villages of the hill districts and the Kathmandu Valley. This geographic range has a profound impact on their lifestyles, cultural activities and even their religious practices. The Muslims of Nepal are categorically divided into different ethnic types, distinguishable by religious behaviours, language, beliefs, and relations with the local Hindus.

PHOTO:SHANKER THAPA

A *madrasa* in a Tarai village near India.

The Kashmiri Muslims arrived in the Hindu state of Nepal in the 15th century. Although historians differ on the date given for their arrival, there is no doubt about their being the first Muslims to arrive in Nepal. Babu Ram Acharya, a prominent historian, holds that a Muslim saint built the Kashmiri *Pancha Taquia*, the first mosque in Nepal, in 1524 AD.

These early Kashmiris, whose descendants still live in Kathmandu, used the city as a centre for trade with Tibet and India.[1] As far back as the 18th century, they had earned a formidable reputation for their efficiency in commercial activities and were thus allowed to enter Kathmandu under condition that they would not undertake missionary activities or interfere in Hindu affairs in any way. Indeed, this condition was upheld. However, under the rule of a new conqueror, Prithvi Narayan Shah, founder of modern Nepal, the Kashmiris began to fear persecution – a fear which compelled them to shut down business and move to India. The new king, having considered the fact that the Kashmiris had such prosperous relations with the deposed Malla Kings of Kathmandu[2], imposed various restrictions that led two Kashmiri trading houses to remain in Kathmandu after 1774 AD.

The Kashmiri Muslims today

The Nepali Kashmiris maintain a definite social status. It is even said that they entertain a sense of superiority over the other local Nepali Muslims.[3] They have their own mosque and a separate burial ground in Kathmandu. Nonetheless, very much influenced by indigenous local Nepali culture, the Kashmiris are not indifferent to the process of cultural assimilation. They have adapted several Hindu tenets to their cultural practices, but maintain a preference for matrimonial and other social ties with families of similar status. Thus, they are found to be rather conservative in contracting marriages, although some cases of marriages with non-Kashmiri Muslims do exist.

Their long history of residence in Kathmandu has contributed to a genuine blending of their culture and language with the local people. But their entire set of family relations and religious activities are generally limited to the Kathmandu Valley.

The Tibetan Muslims

Tibetan Muslims can also be found in Nepal. They are mostly Tibetan refugees who fled Tibet after the Chinese occupation began in 1960. Historical evidence suggests that the Lhasa envoy of King Ratna Malla invited certain Tibetan Muslims to come to Kathmandu in the 15th century. The Tibetan Muslims today maintain a distinct Tibetan culture, although their extended stay in Kathmandu has resulted in a certain degree of blending culture with that of the Kashmiri and Indian Muslims. There are altogether some 100 Tibetan Muslim families in the Kathmandu Valley. They actively participate in various religious activities and collaborate with their Tibetan Muslim counterparts in Darjeeling and Kalimpong in India, who have established a joint association called Tibetan Muslim Welfare Association.[4]

The hill Muslims: *churautey* (bangle sellers)

A large number of Nepali Muslims live in different parts of the western hill region, mostly in the districts of Gorkha, Tanahun, Kaski, Syangja, Dailekh, Pyuthan, Arghakhanchi, Palpa and Nuwakot. The mosques and small *makhtab*s exist in major hill Muslim settlements. The hill Muslims are the descendants of Indian migrants, and are synonymously known as *churautey* (bangle sellers), considered to be a branch of the Churihar of the plains.[5] Common tribes among them are the Mirja and Fakirs, the latter being considered lower in the social hierarchy. The hill Muslims are very much influenced by the surrounding Hindu culture. The *makhtab*s or *madrasa*s and *masjid*s, which exist in the settlements of hill Muslims, have been unable to maintain indigenous Muslim culture. Interaction with the Hindu families is more frequent than that with other Muslims. The hill Muslims and local Hindus regularly invite each other to various rituals celebrations and festivals. However, despite their strong social ties, the Hindus consider the Muslims to be an inferior caste. One manifestation of this is expressed by the Hindus cooking their own meals even when attending feasts at the homes of Muslim neighbours. This sentiment is nonetheless less important nowadays than it was, for example, some years ago.

These emigrant Muslims gradually accommodated themselves to the local conditions. It can be said that their present culture is a confluent of both cultures. They have been strongly influenced by the Hindus in all aspects of lifecycle rituals and in the naming of children, to name but two examples. They even tend to celebrate the Hindu festivals with greater enthusiasm than the Hindus themselves. The Hindus, on the other hand, also participate in Muslim celebrations.

It is worthy of mention that training schools in Islamic fundamentals are not available in hill areas. The lack of proper knowledge of religion is most likely what allowed for their integration of Hindu cultural tenets. Hence, the process of cultural assimilation is more rapid in the hills as compared to that of Muslims in the southern plain. The hill Muslims, despite being considered 'untouchables' by the Hindus, observe certain components of the Hindu death rituals and also worship ancestors. Such observances are deeply rooted in their life pattern.

Tarai Muslims

The Tarai (plain land in the South) Muslims are entirely comprised of descendants of Indian migrants who came to Nepal in search of employment opportunities. At present, the population of Tarai Muslims constitutes almost two million people. They are scattered amongst the 20 districts of the Tarai region. They have cultural, religious and other social ties with the Muslims of Northern India.

The year of arrival of the Indian Muslims in the Tarai region remains unknown. T. A. Ansari has argued that they have been living in there since before Nepal gained political control over the region.[6] The uninterrupted intercourse between the people of the region and Indian states supports this argument.

In the eastern Tarai, the majority of Muslims are Ansari and Mansuri. The Muslims of Tarai have high quality religious education facilities. A large number of reputable *madrasa*s, *masjid*s and *yetimkhana*s (orphanages) have been established in the region. Muslim children first go to the *madrasa*s for religious education, where the Maulvis from India teach. There are also Nepali Muslims trained in India or Saudi Arabia who teach religion at the *madrasa*s. The Tarai Muslims are thus able to maintain their identity as they attempt to avoid cultural assimilation. They can learn Urdu, Arabic, and Persian languages along with the study of the holy Qur'an and the Hadith. But the growing trend of English education in Nepal has brought about certain changes in indigenous religious education: some of the *madrasa*s have introduced the teaching of English and modern mathematics as independent subjects. In these religious schools, girls also have equal opportunity for education.

The Tarai Muslims clearly differ in several ways from the hill Muslims. Such differences are noticeable mainly in physical appearance, language, dress conventions, and cultural practices. It should be mentioned that Muslims in certain remote villages in the hills, in western and far western regions, are completely ignorant of Islamic culture and religious practices.

Apart from the fact that the availability of religious facilities has allowed the Tarai Muslims to maintain their culture intact, they are very much traditional orthodox in religious matters. This, of course, has led to decreased adaptability. Furthermore, they entertain excellent relations with Islamic institutions beyond the boarder. The extra-territorial loyalty of the Tarai Muslims in terms of their religious beliefs remains vital to all of their cultural activities – thereby affecting their identity as a whole. ◀▶

View of the 'Kashmiri Taqia', a mosque of Kashmiri Muslims.

PHOTO:SHANKER THAPA

Notes

1. Gaborieau, Marc (1981), ' Peasants, Urban Traders and Rural Artisans ', *Journal-Institute of Muslim Minority Affairs* 312; Jeddah: King Abdul Aziz University, pp. 199-200.
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3. Ansari, Tahir Ali (1988), 'Muslim Minority in Nepal: A Research in Progress', *Journal-Institute of Muslim Minority Affairs* 9 (1), pp. 160-61.
4. 'Tibetan Muslims' (Jan.-Feb. 1994), *Tibet Bulletin,* Dharmashala, pp. 8-9.
5. Gaborieau, ibid. pp. 242-243.
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South Asia

DAVID WAINES

Non-Formal Education in Pakistan: A Child's Approach

To even the casual observer, public education in Pakistan appears to be in a state of crisis. On a recent trip to Islamabad and Lahore, I noticed state-supported schools seemingly outnumbered by private 'schools' that have sprung up on almost every street corner. These are generally housed in a villa, a bungalow, or a couple of rooms in a building with a billboard and fancy title and logo advertising their wares; Leeds Academy or London College of IT were spotted amongst the forest of signs. Other education indicators reveal Pakistan lagging behind its neighbours in South Asia: it has the lowest literacy rate, the lowest female participation in education, the highest female primary school dropout rate, and the lowest enrolment in tertiary education.

PHOTO: DAVID WAINES

The Golra school of basic education in Islamabad.

Pakistan is the only country in the region where expenditure on education as a proportion of the GNP has decreased since 1990, which makes the discovery of several thousand 'ghost schools' in the Punjab province – which were in practice closed but where teachers had been drawing salaries at a cost, or waste, of 1.4 billion rupees annually – all the more dramatic. These may be some of the reasons for the emergence of a private sector industry of the urban 'school' which is said to be one of the most profitable growth areas in a lacklustre economy. The private 'schools' are also fashionable, regardless of whether or not they are performing their tasks properly. The principal of a well-known government college for girls in Lahore told me that some of her pupils are even absent when the exam period approaches, as they attend private 'tutorial' centres where they seek help in their weakest subjects. The principal was justly saddened by this trend claiming that her own institution still prepared students more thoroughly for their exams than did these virtually unregulated swot-shops.

Revaluing the education sector

There is another, brighter, side to this otherwise bleak educational landscape. Recognizing that the key investment for national and individual social and economic development lies in primary education, the government of Pakistan and non-governmental organizations are attempting to address and redress an historical undervaluing of this crucial sector, especially in rural areas. And most undervalued of all within this sector are the young girls of rural districts. Since 1995-96, the Prime Minister's Literacy Commission has supervised the establishment of more than 7,000 non-formal schools; however much needed and welcome, critics observe that provincial education departments still focus too heavily upon buildings at the expense of delivering quality education through quality teaching. Syed Ayub Qutub, head of the NGO Pakistan Institute for Environment Development Action Research (PIEDAR), argues that only a 'committed, well-trained, village-based female teacher can impart the required standard of education to girls in the countryside.' Male primary schools teachers are by no means excluded when they are trained and motivated as educators rather than simply as employees in education. The key to sustaining the non-formal village school is involvement of the parents. The latter, in return for quality education for their children, usually find the means to contribute towards the salary of the teacher who, with sound training thus develops a growing commitment to becoming a proprietor of his/her own school. Since PIEDAR began in 1994, some 1400 girls are or have been engaged in lessons in reading comprehension and writing in Urdu and in English, and in learning to perform basic mathematical calculations in their heads.

A unique small-scale initiative

A further ray of light upon this scene is cast from a quite unexpected, and unconventional quarter; I learned by chance of a personal and private initiative in non-formal schooling in Islamabad which gave another meaning and restored some dignity to the term 'private'. Four years ago, Zainab and her brother Junaid (then aged 11 and 10 years respectively) encountered a young lad Asif, selling poppadoms in the market. They later met his mother, Zareena, who made the poppadoms to be sold by her husband and son as the sole source of the family's income. The family lived in a squalid community of huts adjacent to one of the expanding modern sectors of Islamabad where Zainab and Junaid lived. Zareena's community had no school. Troubled by this, Zainab and Junaid recognized their own privileged position and saw, with the simple lucidity that only children possess, the injustice of their position compared to that of children in the mud-hut community. Together with Zareena's encouragement and cooperation amongst other parents in the community, they determined to try and change the situation.

During their summer vacation that first year, Zainab, now with Amber, a friend, and Junaid set up their open-air school in the community by the shade of a tree. Junaid recounted some of the challenges of those first difficult weeks: 'We had to convince the children that they would not be beaten in school when they came to learn', a practice he assured me was still far too common in state schools. Moreover, the children were told they should come only if they really wanted to. 'The first thing we taught them was how to hold a pencil and draw a straight line', he added. Then gradually, the Urdu alphabet was introduced using pictures of familiar objects and the initial character of the word for that object. The students reproduced the character and picture and learned the appropriate letter sound. Zainab said she noticed a change in the children's appearance after the school lessons were established; they were washed and wore clean clothes, setting them apart from other children in the community. With the summer vacation coming to an end, the classes also now seemed in danger. The community is very poor; women generally work as domestic help in the nearby modern housing sector, while men find whatever temporary odd jobs they can. Hence, Zainab and Junaid's parents ensured continuity by hiring a teacher and providing the necessary textbooks and stationery supplies; their mother, a professional consultant on gender issues, has become the key organizational support system behind the enterprise which has gradually expanded to three schools in adjoining communities, with five teachers and some 120 students.

Four years on, the original school under a tree is now quartered in the tiny community mosque where children sit in the courtyard when the weather is fine and inside when it is inclement. When we visited the new site, known as the Golra School of Basic Education, students had just finished their lessons. One of the two male teachers, Munawwar, who himself lives locally, told me the children, girls and boys aged from 5 to 14, were instructed in the rudiments of Urdu, English and mathematics.

The second school I visited is the Zobia Private School, near Golra Railway Station. Here the community is slightly better off economically as the men have steady jobs and their wives remain at home. The parents pay very modest fees of 25 rupees per month for the rent of a room and adjoining courtyard in which to hold the classes. Lessons were being given by the two female teachers when we arrived: Rubina was instructing the older children and Zubeida the younger children. One girl read confidently from her Urdu text while a male classmate read several lines in English without hesitation. The school is named after Zobia, a daughter of Zareena who tragically died of a blood disease for which there is no available treatment in Pakistan. It came as no surprise to learn that Zareena, who had moved here from the squatter settlement, where the first school is located, now lives next door to the second school and has also been a influential in this new enterprise. In addition to the material support for these schools, other provisions are necessary. Teacher training and upgrading helps ensure the quality of teaching and the establishment of teacher-parent committees gives parents a crucial stake in their children's education. Behind it all there is the organizational, in addition to the financial, input of Zainab and Junaid's parents, while their children continue to teach and participate in several extracurricular activities during their summer vacations and other holidays.

I left Islamabad reflecting that this private family initiative, galvanized unusually by the energies and caring of these remarkable children, was, in the context of the modern world, a refreshing restatement of historical Islamic social values – not only to seek knowledge for oneself but also to encourage others to seek the same goal, and to provide the means to do so where they are needed. ◆▶

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Central Asia

M. NAZIF SHAHRANI

The Taliban Enigma
Person-Centred Politics & Extremism in Afghanistan

If the process by which we arrive at today's institutions is relevant and constrains future choices, then not only does history matter but persistent poor performance and long-run divergent patterns of (socio-political and economic) development stem from a common source.[1] The meteoric rise of the Taliban (1994-1995) as an extremist Muslim militia movement in post-Soviet Afghanistan remains an enigma to the Afghans as well as to outside observers. What is enigmatic is not so much where they come from, or what internal and external forces might be propping them up, or even the brand of Islam they are brandishing. Rather what remain puzzling are questions such as: What in the Afghan history and political culture provides space and a place for the rise of such an extremely harsh and violent militant movement at the dawn of the 21st century in this beleaguered nation? Is this an expected manifestation of recognizable historical patterns in the country? Or is it an aberration and a product of novel circumstances of post-jihad Afghanistan? If it is not a novelty, as will be argued here, then how can it be explained within the parameters of Afghanistan's social history and political culture?

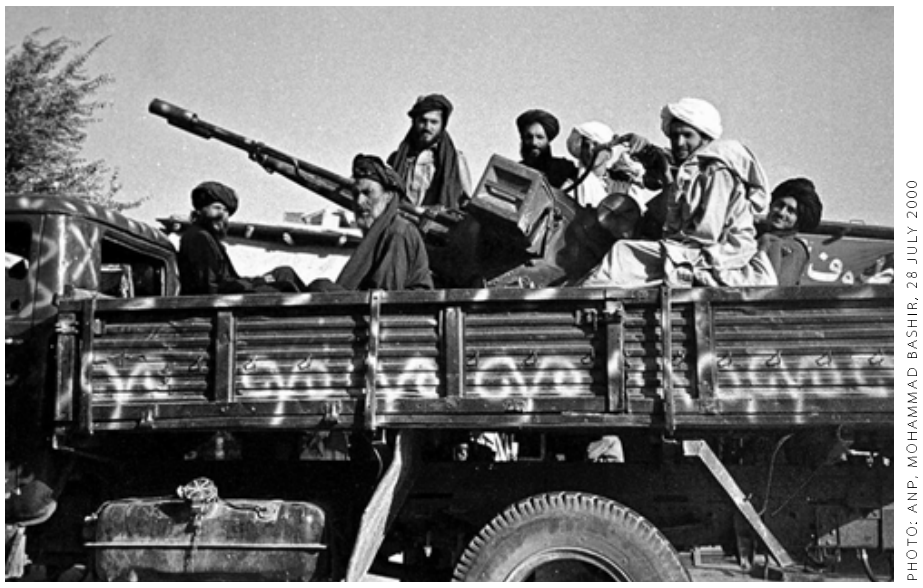

PHOTO: ANP, MOHAMMAD BASHIR, 28 JULY 2000

Afghan Taliban soldiers pose in Kabul on their way to the frontlines north of the capital.

Manifestations of 'extremism' or 'radicalism', whether ideological or behavioural are by definition political and, as such, *relational*, relative, contested and highly contextual phenomena. The most common context giving rise to extremism (religious or otherwise), both historically as well as in the present time, has been the struggle for control of the powers of the institution of state (both traditional and modern). The principal objective of these often violent struggles has been over the rights to control, to re-define, and even to determine not only the basis for political legitimacy and exercise of authority, but also to proclaim what ought to constitute Muslim religious orthodoxy/orthopraxy. That is, their goal is to articulate the nature of the relationship between state and society, to define the limits of the subjects'/citizens' rights against the need to ensure security and sanctity of the state, and to justify it by the particular reading of what is held to be 'the *only* true and authentic' practice of Islam. Therefore, the rise of any form of extremism within a political community must be considered as a calculated response – a very risky response indeed – to either perceived or actual extremist policies and practices of the contestants including the state, within the larger political ecological and socio-economic realities shaping the contest.

Person-centred politics in Afghanistan

Assuming that history and cultural context profoundly condition the trajectories of future possibilities, the following aims to explore, however briefly, the implications of one crucial characteristic of Afghan political culture. This characteristic is person-centred politics within the changing contexts of state-society relations during the anti-Communist jihad as well as the post-jihad political-ecological and political-economic environment that has given rise to the Taliban movement and their particularistic form of Islamic extremism or Talibanism, in Afghanistan today. Person-centred politics, the cornerstone of kin-based mode of Pushtun tribal social and political organization, has been the defining attribute of Afghan politics since the creation of Pushtun-dominated centralized polity in the mid-18th century by a charismatic and able Abdali Pushtun chief, Ahmad Shah Durrani (r. 1747-1773). According to Eric Wolf,[2] the 'Achilles' heels' and 'the diagnostic points of stress' of kin-based politics is that a chief or leader 'draws following through judicious management of alliances and redistributive action, [but] he reaches a limit that can only be surpassed by breaking through the limitations of the kinship order [itself]'. To overcome the limitations of this person-centred kin-based politics, Wolf suggests that the leader 'must gain independent access to reliable and renewable resources [material, monetary, and ideological] of his own.'

Addressing this serious limitation of person-centred, kin-based political economy in Afghanistan has been possible, however brief, by two major means. During the 18th and 19th centuries, it was through the fruits of waging jihad, initially against non-Muslims in the Indian subcontinent, and then internally against the non-Pushtun communities to impose a form of internal colonialism. And during the latter parts of 19th and the 20th centuries it was through solicitation/offer of foreign subsidies, mostly from real and/or potential enemies of the nation. The effectiveness of these strategies, however, has proved to be episodic and transient.

The costs of the failure to resolve this serious problem of political economy of the state for Afghanistan have been very heavy. The primary reason for the failure has been the unwillingness or inability of the leadership to shift from a tribal political culture anchored in person-centred politics to a broader, more inclusive, participatory national politics based on the development of modern national institutions and ideologies. As a result, during its 250-year history of statehood, Afghanistan has suffered through at least 100 years of fratricidal wars of succession and/or pacification (often called jihad by the contestants) with devastating consequences and painful legacies. These bloody internal conflicts, which have facilitated (invited) foreign aggressive interventions (British, Russian and now Pakistani, Iranian and others), even when dressed with ideological justifications (Islamic or otherwise), were fought not for or against any ideological or institutional cause or causes. Instead, they were fought for or against specific individuals, families or clans out of personal, but often rapidly shifting, commoditicized loyalties (primordial and/or acquired/purchased).

The legacies of person-centred politics in Afghanistan

Modern state building efforts in Afghanistan began (in 1880) with unprecedented brutality against large segments of society, especially by violence directed against non-Durrani Pushtun and certain non-Pushtun groups. The rulers utilized the discourses of Islam, tribe/kinship and Durrani kingship to hold together a myriad of linguistic, sectarian and tribal groups in virtual subjugation within a buffer state. Resistance and popular revolts against the state were repeatedly crushed with weapons and money provided to the governments by outside colonial powers, initially Great Britain and later the former Soviet Union. These efforts, however, did not disrupt the kin-based personalized politics of what Edward Banfield termed 'amoral familism'[3] – a tendency to 'maximize material, short-run advantage of the … family [and kin], assuming that all others will do like-wise' – but strengthened them. Indeed, it can be argued that the contradictory policies and practices of state building in Afghanistan have promoted a political culture of person-centred politics to the virtual exclusion of nurturing broader and more inclusive national ideologies, institutions and moral principles. Therefore, it is contended that the rise of Taliban movement during the post-jihad crises of succession, with their form of Islamic extremism or Talibanism, is the inevitable culmination of the historical legacies of the person-centred, Pashtun-dominated, Afghan political culture. The most significant of these legacies, although by no means exhaustive of all the possibilities, include:

Firstly, consistent policies and practices of political mistrust directed against the great majority of Afghan subjects/citizens by state authorities have promoted an attitude of distrust of politics and politicians by the citizens. Such prolonged experiences, in turn have seriously weakened traditional communities of trust (*jamaᶜat*), i.e., civil society. And it has caused the general erosion of trust as a 'social capital' in Afghan society beyond the circles of family and close kinsmen or at most one's own ethnolinguistic group.

Secondly, person-centred, paternalistic politics encouraged commoditization of loyalties, the creation of a political economy of dependency and patron-client relationships at all levels of Afghan society, including the increasing dependence of governments on foreign aid. This situation has been further exacerbated because of the collapse of the state and the rise of multiple centres of power, all of them receiving assistance (economic and military) from numerous governmental and non-governmental international agencies during the more than two decades of a devastating war. This new political ecological condition of continuous warfare has also introduced a new weapon in the arsenals of person-centred political combatants. It is access to a thriving print and electronic media – inside Afghanistan, in Afghan refugee communities around the world as well as the BBC and VOA radio services in Dari and Pashto languages – utilized for a more effective vilification and demonization of the opponent's character. These pervasive attempts at mutual character assassinations have left no room for the possibility of constructive dialogue and discussion about national goals, ideas or strategies, and have led to the inevitable escalation of political contests into violent military conflicts, justified increasingly by adherence to religious extremism and Talibanism.

Thirdly, person-centred politics has placed all ideologies (Islamic and otherwise) and moral principles at the service of preserving self-interest and protection of personal, familial, tribal or ethnic group honour. This has resulted in serious discrepancies between public policy pronouncements of the contending groups and their actual practices. The Taliban claims of being inclusive of all ethnic groups and of bringing peace and security to territories under their control while committing some of the worst ethnic cleansing violence against non-Pushtuns in their conquered regions; and contrary to explicit Islamic principles, the rising production of opium poppies, and the manufacture, sales and trafficking of elicit drugs in the areas under the Taliban control may be a case in point.

Fourthly, the treatment of non-Pushtun citizens of Afghanistan as mere internal 'colonial' subjects (not citizens, at least not 'real Afghans') has produced a deep sense of alienation, resentment, and distrust. Their role in national history was depicted as marginal and their participation in national politics was purposefully undermined. That is, through a well-established policy of demographic aggression, ranging from resettlement of Pushtun in non-Pushtun territories to underestimating the actual numbers by administrative means,[7] their political representation in national assemblies were severely curtailed. At the same time, non-Pushtun groups were subjected to excessive conscription (for military service and corvée labour) extraction by taxation, appropriation, looting and other extra judicial exactions. It is because of these painful historical memories of oppression and injustice that non-Pushtun minorities in

Conference Report
CONRAD SCHETTER AND
CHRISTINE NOELLE-KARIMI

Afghanistan – Country without State?

From 15-18 June 2000, more than 200 persons participated in an international conference entitled, 'Afghanistan – Country Without State?', organized by the Arbeitsgemeinschaft Afghanistan (AGA) and the Mediothek für Afghanistan e.V. in Munich. In the almost 30 presentations given, researchers as well as representatives of NGOs and political institutions addressed the central question of whether Afghanistan is a fail*ed* or fail*ing* state.

Most papers focused on the construction of the Afghan nation state and the political culture related to it. From these analyses, it appeared that the state apparatus that had evolved in the 20th century was a quasi-foreign body that tried to impose various forms of control on the country and its people, but failed to build an Afghan nation. Karl Jettmar (University of Heidelberg) pointed to the necessity of re-examining the existing nation-state structures of Central Asia in general. Rasul Rahim (Wuppertal) discussed the tremendous obstacles that prevented the development of a civil society in each phase of Afghan history. Eckart Schieweck (UN-Special Mission to Afghanistan) analysed the growth of Afghan government institutions and their destruction in the course of the Afghan War. Rangin Dadfar Spanta (University of Aachen) argued that the protracted war has led to the destruction of political culture in Afghanistan, which constitutes the major problem for developing a common idea of state and civil society. The papers of Angela Parvanta (University of Bamberg), Conrad Schetter (Center for Development Research, Bonn) and Rameen Moshref (New York) dealt with the constructed character of the Afghan nation and the equation of Afghan nationalism with Pushtun culture. The role of the state in the notions of political Islam was stressed by Olivier Roy (Centre National Recherche Sociale, Paris). He concluded that political Islam has failed to bridge the gap between tradition and modernity in Afghanistan. He and Neamatollah Nojumi (Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, Somerville) discussed the question of how the failing state in Afghanistan and the interlinked export of international Islamic brigades are affecting the neighbouring states as well as other countries. Almut Wieland-Karimi (Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung), Max Klimburg (University of Vienna) and Bruce Koepke (Australian National University, Canberra) dealt with the effects of the war and Islamist policies on local culture and popular religiosity, which revolves around Sufi networks and saint worship, and, in the case of Nuristan, is rich in pre-Islamic traditions. Two presentations concerned the institution of the *jirga* and its potential as a means of decision making on the local and national levels. Bernt Glatzer (Deutsche Stiftung für internationale Entwicklung) pointed out that the assemblies held in the rural setting primarily serve as a public enactment of a consensus negotiated by the local leadership before the *jirga* is summoned. This process of conflict resolution hinges on the ability of influential men to act as opinion leaders and is entirely local in scope. Christine Noelle-Karimi (University of Bamberg) drew attention to the limitations of the *loya jirga* as a political mechanism on the national level. Initiated as an instrument for promoting government policies in the early 20th century, it by no means represents a time-honoured basis for installing democracy in Afghanistan.

Other speakers focused on the current situation in Afghanistan. Amin Saikal (Australian National University, Canberra) gave a detailed overview of the external actors (e.g. Pakistan and Iran), that are involved in the Afghan conflict and weaken the reconstruction of the Afghan state. Reinhard Schlagintweit (Bonn), as well as Michael Pohly (Freie Universität Berlin) and Citha Maass (Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik, Berlin) discussed the meaning of state for the Taliban and the Northern Alliance. They concluded that none of the war parties had either a conception of state or the capability to assume its responsibilities. Two major sources of support for the Taliban were examined by Ahmed Rashid (Far Eastern Economic Review, Lahore) and Michael Lüders (Die Zeit, Hamburg). Rashid depicted the dynamics at work between the Taliban and the Pushtun tribes. While certain tribal groups made the upsurge of the Taliban possible in the first place, others openly reject their policies. Michael Lüders gave an inside view of the indoctrination young students and potential Taliban cadres are subjected to in the Pakistani *madaris*. Peter Schwittek (Caritas, Kabul) reported on the desperate need for education programmes and the contradictions he encountered at different levels of the Taliban government in his (ultimately successful) efforts to establish schools for 13,500 boys and girls. Heike Bill (Deutsche Welthungerhilfe, Jalalabad) discussed the Taliban policies concerning women. She pointed out that the restrictions imposed on women do not reflect a specific Taliban ideology but have rather had the effect of institutionalizing and legitimizing patterns of oppression already prevalent in Afghanistan before its assumption of power. Michael von der Schulenburg (UN-International Drug Control Programme, Vienna) investigated the factors encouraging opium production in Afghanistan and its rising proportion on the world market. Jonathan Goodhand (Manchester) presented a study on the local level concerning the social and economic transformations a rural village in North Afghanistan underwent with the introduction of opium production.

In summary, the conference has shown that the state has lost its influence on the political, ideological, social and economic affairs in Afghanistan. Therefore, it might be right to claim that Afghanistan is a country without a state, even though a failed state keeps its responsibility by law as Hermann-Josef Blanke (University of Erfurt) emphasized. How to cope with a region in which state structures have collapsed is a salient problem not only related to Afghanistan – as Schlagintweit mentioned – and will pose a challenge to international security systems in different parts of the world (e.g. Somalia, Sierra Leone) in the future.

The papers presented at the conference are in the process of publication. ◆▶

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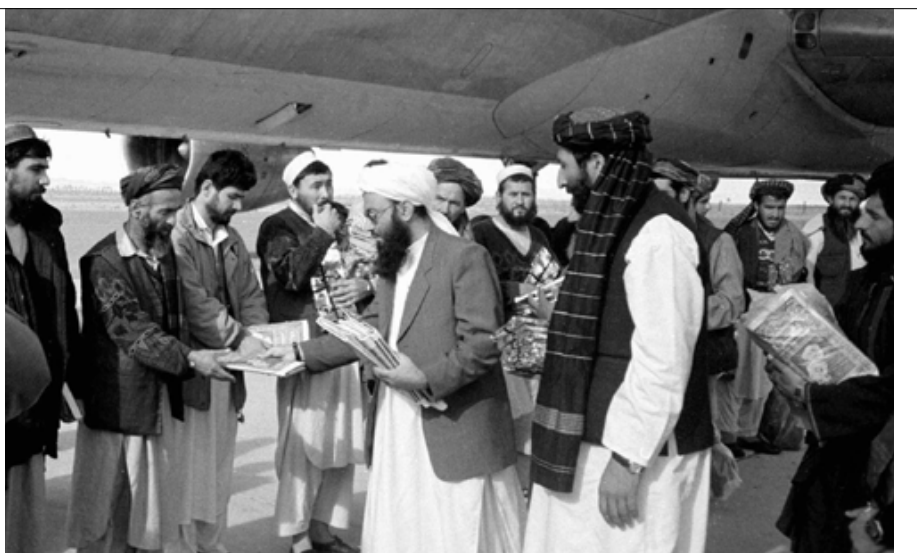

PHOTO: ANP, MOHAMMAD BASHIR, 14 FEBRUARY 2000

Afghan Taliban Foreign Minister, Wakil Ahmad Mutawakel (centre) greets returning Afghan hostages.

Afghanistan are fighting with such powerful determination to resist the Taliban attempt to return the country to the status coup ante, i.e. the conditions of Pushtun internal colonialism before the onset of anti-Communist jihad (1978).

The ultimate product of person-centred tribal Pushtun political culture

Finally, the ultimate product of the person-centred, tribal Pushtun political culture in Afghanistan is the rise of the Taliban militia movement with its enigmatic, and increasingly apotheosized leader and his militantly anti-Shi^{c}a, anti-modern, anti-Western, anti-women, and especially anti-democratic policies and practices. The Taliban's 'divinely ordained' reclusive leader, Mullah Umar, was proclaimed on 4 April 1996, by a gathering of some 1,200 mullahs in Kandahar, the spiritual capital of Talibanism, as the Amirul Mu'mineen (Commander of the Faithful). As such, he is the ultimate source for articulating and enforcing the 'new' Muslim orthodoxy/orthopraxy of Talibanism in Afghanistan – the basis of his legitimacy.

The Taliban project themselves as the bearers of peace and 'true Islamic justice' in the country, a form of justice bent on the enforcement of the harshest principles of *hudud* in the *shari^{c}a*. Such punishments include, for example, amputating the limbs of thieves, stoning to death of adulterers, and public execution of murderers by the victims' relatives in sport stadiums with thousands of spectators. Their real claim to infamy comes from the imposition of a policy of 'Gender Apartheid' directed against the girls and women of Afghanistan. This collective self-image of Talibanism is further buttressed by the projected images of their foreign Muslim allies, the various conservative and radical Pakistani Muslim political organizations. These include, among others, two factions of the Jamiat-e Ulema Islam (JUI) led by Maulana Fazlur Rehman and Moulana Samiul Haq, the two rabidly anti-Shi^{c}a terrorist groups, Sipah-e-Sahaba Pakistan (SSP), and Harakat-ul-Ansar, as well as Ben Laden's military organization, Al-Qa^{c}ida. True to the nature of person-centred tribal political culture, the projected positive 'Islamic' self-images of Taliban are contrasted by demonizing the Muslim character of their many opponents. Ironically, many of those being damned are, in fact, well-known heroes of the anti-Soviet jihad. The Taliban also demonize their opponents' foreign patrons, Muslim and non-Muslim, such as Shi^{c}i Iran, Russia and Central Asian republics, except for Turkmenistan.

The rise and successes of Talibanism, fleeting as it may turn out to be, fits well within the structural patterns and dynamics of wars of succession in Afghanistan, at least during the last 100 years. The mysterious beginnings of the Taliban, and their quick adoption by foreign forces in this instance by Pakistan and Saudi Arabia,[8] have had major precedents in Afghan history.[9] The economic support of foreign Muslim sponsors has made it possible for the Taliban to purchase loyalties from a huge chain of economically desperate and dependent local commanders within the country. These external patrons, by extending official recognition to the Taliban regime, have also condoned the Taliban version of Islamic extremism and have facilitated the recruitment of much needed foreign fighters (Pakistanis and others) from Pakistani Muslim seminaries (*madrasa*s) and beyond.

What distinguish the Taliban and the rise of Talibanism at this juncture in the history of Afghanistan, are the radically altered political ecological and economic conditions, both inside Afghanistan and in the region, following the collapse of the former Soviet Union. That is, the presence of multiple competing foreign Muslim sponsors, with their divergent or conflicting strategic, ideological, political and economic agendas have proved to be the ideal situation for the emergence of an extremist militia organization such as the Taliban within the person-centred tribal political culture of the Pushtun in Afghanistan. Indeed, these same political ecological realities in the region have also fuelled the wars of resistance against the Taliban hegemony, forcing it to resort to increasingly violent policies and practices against women, Shi^{c}is and the non-Pushtun ethnolinguistic communities in Afghanistan. ◆▶

Notes

1. North, Douglas (1990), *Institutions, Institutional Change and Economic Performance,* New York: Cambridge University Press, p. 93.
4. Wolf, Eric (1982), *Europe and People without History*, Berkeley: UC Press, p. 94.
6. Banfield, Edward (1970), *The Unheavenly City: The nature and Future of Our Urban Crisis,* Boston: Little, Brown, p. 85.

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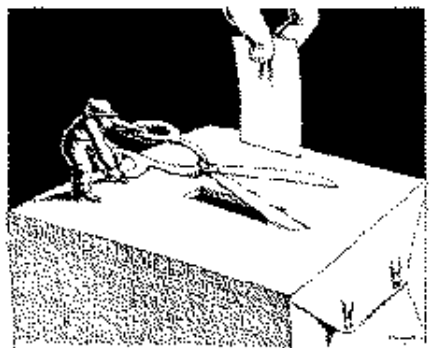
Middle East
KAZEM ALAMDARI

Iran Parliamentary Election: The Third Consecutive Victory for the Reformists

On 18 February 2000, Iran held its 6th parliamentary elections after the 1979 revolution and the founding of the Islamic Republic of Iran (IRI). The elections were yet another challenge to cleric rule. Despite provisional measures, the dominant hard-line conservative faction of the government suffered its third embarrassing defeat of the past three years, the first being the surprise presidential victory of Sayyed Mohammad Khatami on 22 May 1997. Secondly, in the municipal elections of 26 April 1999, reform candidates won a majority of the 200,000 seats in city and village councils across the country. Thirdly, in the recent parliamentary elections, the pro-Khatami reform candidates had a landslide victory. These consecutive triumphs indicate a strong desire among the people for structural change, democracy and secularization in Iran.



SOURCE: *IRAN-E FARDA*

The Conservative Guardian Council nullified hundreds of ballet boxes to change the election results.

In the recent elections, almost 70% (26.8 million) of 38.7 million eligible voters cast ballots. More than 6,000 candidates, including 504 women and 35 non-Muslims, competed for 290 seats of the Majlis-e Shura-ye Islami, or parliament. (Five seats are reserved for non-Muslim religious minorities)[1] Despite efforts of the Guardian Council (whose principal responsibility is to ensure that all the sanctioned laws and regulations of the parliament conform to the Islamic standards and constitutional laws) to prevent reform candidates from entering in the race, the hard-line conservative candidates lost their 20-year-long majority hold in the Majlis to pro-Khatami reformists who unified their policies under reform slogans in 18 political parties and fronts. In the final months before elections, the Guardian Council (GC), along with conservative members of the 5th parliament, passed various laws in a rush move – mainly concerning the free press – aiming to block the change. In doing so, the GC extended its supervision of the elections to supervision of the candidates. These tactics, however, were to no avail.

Elections 'Iranian style'

Approximately 10% of the candidates (571 individuals) – the most outspoken critics of the Islamic regime and popular figures – were rejected by the GC as 'unqualified' or not sufficiently religious to sit in Majlis. Of course, the reasons were political. The GC considered critics as 'outsiders'. Having foreseen this, reformists had many substitutes among the 6,000 candidates. Despite counteractive measures by the conservatives, the primary poll indicates that in the first round some 150 seats were won by reformists (mostly from the Islamic Iran Participation Front), 40 by conservatives, and 35 by independent candidates whose political identities have yet to be determined. Sixty-six seats were left to be filled in the run-off elections.

Of the 225 candidates who obtained the minimum requirement of 25% of the votes, the GC disapproved the election of 11 reformists and changed 2 in favour of conservatives in various cities. But the main difficulty was found in Tehran, where 29 out of 30 seats were won by reformists. The GC placed an unprecedented 3-month hold on the election results. During this period, the conservatives launched a new set of oppressive measures to offset the overwhelming victory of pro-reform candidates: 1) Saeed Hajarian, the leading architect of reform and a key figure for the success of three past elections for president, city council and the Majlis, was shot and seriously wounded by right wing zealots. 2) Seventeen reformist daily and weekly publications were shut down following a speech by the supreme leader and upon conservative judiciary orders. 3) Several reformist and prominent liberal writers and journalists, including two women, (Mehrangiz Kar, an attorney and author of several books, and Shala Lahiji, writer and publisher) were arrested. 4) A plot to assassinate President Khatami was discovered.[2]

After three months and just days prior to the opening of the new Majlis, the GC labelled the elections fraudulent and officially disapproved them, leaving the final decision to Ayatollah Khamenei. Khamenei, realizing the extent of tension surrounding the situation, however, demanded that the election results be respected. The GC did indeed announce the results, but with a few changes, including the cancellation of 534 boxes containing 726,366 votes. It was due to this that Rafsanjani was moved from 30th to 20th place; Alireza Rajaei, a liberal reformist elected in 28th place, was eliminated; and Golamali Haddad Adel, a conservative who was ranked in 33rd place, was moved to 27th place. Rafsanjani, in a surprise move, gave up his seat under the pressure of public opinion. As a powerful figure in the IRI, he is assumed to be responsible for all actions taken against the reformists.

Rafsanjani, a two-term speaker of the House and two-term president of Iran, currently holding the powerful position of Expediency Council Chairman, had entered the race perceiving it an easy victory. He wanted to regain his position as speaker of the parliament while holding his current job, so as to have control over legislation. He wanted to keep it from going beyond the 'redline' – as some, including himself, may dare to question the IRI leaders of doing – in terms of abuse of power during 20 years of rule. Conservatives dominant in the Majlis passed a law exclusively for Rafsanjani, allowing him to stay in his governmental position while running for the parliament. These IRI leaders wish to continue to rule society as the 'godfathers' of the revolution. Rafsanjani and a group of intellectuals and technocrats surrounding him, collectively known as the Executives of Construction Party (ECP), perceive the reform movement as 'bargaining chips' for negotiating with their rival groups in the government, rather than believing in a genuine political democracy.[3]

Rafsanjani finished with a humiliating 30th place among 30 elected members of parliament in the district of Tehran.[4] Even his 30th place was questioned as many believe that there was some 'miscounting' in his favour. Consequently, a recount was ordered. However, the Guardian Council decided to put an end to this, for after 50% of the votes were tallied, it was clear that the candidate placing 31st, Ali Akbar Rahmani, had approximately 6000 more votes than in the initial count. Nonetheless, Rafsanjani's tactics to wrestle political power through illegitimate means have been overshadowed by the people's desire for genuine political development.

Run-off elections

The final tally on run-offs took place on 19 May 2000 for the 66 remaining seats. Reformists won 44 and the rest were evenly divided amongst conservatives and independent candidates. Similar to the first round, the GC did not approve all elected candidates. On 27 May 2000, when the new parliament was convened, there were 22 elected reformists still waiting for official GC approval. The Majlis opened with only 257 of its 290 members. As was expected, the most conservative cleric of the pro-reform groups, Mehdi Karubi, was elected the provisional speaker of Majlis. His victory was the result of a compromise between conservatives and reformists. Karubi was the speaker in the 3rd Majlis for a period of three years. As many argue, he does not fully represent the reform movement.[5]

Secularists

Thus far, the reform movement has created opportunities for pro-reform factions of the IRI and their associates to compete with ruling conservatives for power. A third group (secularists) that completely opposes the 'religious-state' was not allowed to enter the race due to being considered an 'outsider' group.

One may ask why the hard-line monopolist conservatives are willing to allow the 'in-group' of reformists to enter the circle of power? The answer is simple. The IRI has lost its legitimacy that was once based on a traditional and charismatic leadership. Now, in the absence of such leadership, the IRI needs legal recognition. However, the ruling conservatives were not able to win more than 15 to 20% of the popular vote. Therefore, in order to govern they mainly rely upon the military forces' capacity to maintain a constant tension within the society. Moreover, the economy is in a deep crisis from which the youth suffer the most. The conservatives may risk the entire regime if they continue to exclude 80% of the population. Participation of reformists in the government could potentially reduce the tension between the state and society. Also, it may allow space for the secularists to respond to some of the civil and political demands currently not being met.

A comparative analysis of election results of the past three years for president, Assembly of Experts, city council and the parliament, testify to the following distribution of people's support for each political group in Iran: Conservative groups enjoy between 15 to 20%; The pro-Khatami reformists that partially hold power in the government receive between 35 to 40%; All independent groups (collectively referred to above as the 'third group', or secularists) constitute 40 to 45%. During the 20 years of Islamic rule, this group has not been allowed to enter any local or national race. Its members are encouraged, rather, to vote for 'in-group' candidates. Therefore, regarding the policy of choosing between 'the lesser of two evils', the third group, at least partially, has expressly sided with the reformists in all of the past three elections.[6] The reformist slogans of 'Iran for all Iranians' and 'rule of law' have served to contrast the Islamic policy of dividing society into 'in-groups' and 'out-groups' and have encouraged secularists to participate in the elections.

The trend of democracy continues

The 1997 presidential election in Iran constituted a watershed marking a clear break with the past. It signified the failure of Islamic ideology to govern a society by force and marked the end of violence as a means of achieving power by opposition. Furthermore, it opened an indirect political dialogue between the opposition and the government (or part of the government). The elections brought repressed popular sentiments to the fore, which led to public empowerment. The outcome of the presidential, city council, and now more obviously, parliamentary elections thus undermined the position of the conservative religious leaders. Pushing Iranian society to the point of violence is their way to justify a repressive policy in defense of Islam and national security. Elections, however, are now accepted as a means of change for the opposition. The dominant view among the reformers is that reforms can be realized within the current system, rather than through the painful, risky processes of revolution and civil war.

Revolution does not guarantee democracy, and repressive policies may continue regardless of the replacement of an old regime by a revolutionary one. Today, in Iran, the public attitude has become predominantly supportive of reforms, hence shifting the catalyst of change from the state to the level of society itself. This grassroots phenomenon may just make the difference necessary for genuine change. ◆▶

Notes

1. Samii, A.W. (2000), 'Iran's Sixth Parliamentary Election', *Middle East Review of International Affairs* (MERIA) 4 (1).
2. *Bahar Daily News*, 30 May 2000, p. 2.
3. See my article, 'The Impasse of Power and the Failure of Strategy of Violence in Iran', *Mehregan: An Iranian Journal of Culture and Politics* 8 (2/4), Summer/Fall 1999.
4. In Tehran, voters had to choose 30 people from a list of 861 candidates.
5. Saeed Laylaz, *Iran Daily News*, 28 May 2000.
6. For details see my article, ibid.

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Middle East
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Women's Religious Seminaries in Iran

The implementation of the *shariʿah* and the institutionalization of gender inequality in the aftermath of the Iranian Revolution have provoked general discontent among women and triggered their mobilization against segregation laws. As a response to their demands, Islamist women parliamentarians have been forced to prepare motions to defend more adequately women's needs and rights in both the private sphere of the family and the public sphere, maintaining that the teachings of Islam are not respected.

Women not only challenge the institutionalized gender inequalities by emphasizing their activity in the economic, social, and political realms that are not forbidden by the religious and political elite's reading of the *shariʿah*, but they also assert their authority in the religious and judicial realms where women are denied power. Because authorities justify such prohibitions by referring to the Qur'an, the *shariʿah*, the *hadith* (sayings and practices attributed to the Prophet and the imams) and Islamic tradition, the challenge for women necessarily entails debates that revisit and reinterpret Islamic principles. To this end, women *mujtahids* (doctor of jurisprudence) are needed more than ever. Following the death of Mrs Amin-Isfahani, a woman *mujtahid*, in the early 1980s, Iran has been devoid of female religious authorities. This shortage has led some religious women, who believe that such undertakings necessitate the training of women in relevant fields, to create religious seminaries for women. One of the implications of this undertaking is the autonomization of women in the realm of religion. Young women, including university or high school students, increasingly seek religious training and enrol in religious seminaries. In 1996, out of 62,731 students in religious seminaries, 9,995 (or 16%) were women, 34% of whom were in the age group 20-24, and 20% in the age group 15-19. Almost 90% of these women resided in urban areas.[1]

Women's meeting place for prayer and commemoration of the Moharram in Gonbad-e Kavous (Northern Iran).

PHOTO: ISABELLE ESHRAGHI / AGENCE VU, 1999

Fatemeh Amini: founder of the earliest women's seminaries

The first religious seminary for women was founded in Qom in 1972 by Fatemeh Amini. I met her in 1994 at her fifth religious seminary, a modest two-story building in a *bazari* neighbourhood in northern Tehran. Unlike her students who wore a *maqnaʿeh* (headgear), she wore a black chador. They all take their shoes off before entering the main hall and walk around with slippers or socks. While several older women were sewing a traditional Iranian blanket for the trousseau of a poor bride, younger ones were doing paperwork, answering the phone or serving tea. Mrs Amini led me to a huge room serving as a classroom with no furniture, covered with cheap Iranian carpets offered by a *bazari*. We sat on the floor and she explained that in addition to training women, the Mujtahids Fatemeh-ye Zahra religious seminary also financially and morally assists deprived women in order to boost their activity in the public sphere. The seminary has established a credit system which collects money from the pious rich and grants interest-free loans to the poor:

Our interview was constantly interrupted by women who called or came by to seek advice on practical and spiritual matters. Some had serious family problems, others asked religious questions. Fatemeh Amini believes that a woman *mujtahid* should be capable of solving a multitude of problems. The following is a brief account of her involvement: 'With the support of the late Grand Ayatollah Kazem Shari'atmadari, I created Maktab-e Tawhid in Qom. I then founded three more seminaries there before moving to Tehran, where I founded Fatemeh-ye Zahra religious seminary in 1988.'

A divorced woman and a mother of two daughters, Fatemeh Amini is convinced of women's capabilities but regrets the low self-esteem of her counterparts:

'Our Prophet raised the status of women but many of them are still ignorant. Women have not acknowledged their own capabilities yet. They do not value themselves. They have not yet realized that they can be everything they want to be: doctors, engineers, mujtahids. They [men] have not wanted to make women believe in themselves. I am 61 and work over 12 hours a day. I obtained my divorce in 1965 less than two years after my marriage. I worked and raised my children alone with a lot of hardship. But I'm proud of myself because they are both well educated and successful. One is a medical doctor and the other is an engineer. My own parents were against women's education and did not let me go to school. I actually obtained my high-school diploma after the revolution at the age of 47. I was even admitted to university but decided not to enrol. I then worked as a schoolmaster in Qom for 6 years but was not satisfied with my new job and preferred to go back to religious seminary. But I had serious disagreements with others on educational methods and how to manage a religious seminary for women. As a result, my working conditions were not satisfactory in Qom. Besides, my daughters were studying in Tehran. I therefore decided to join them and founded Fatemeh-ye Zahra religious seminary. Our main aim here is to form women mujtahids. According to the Qur'an, men and women are equal. […] The society needs women doctors and engineers as well as women mujtahids. But there is an important resistance against women attaining the degree of ijtihad (interpretation). Without these obstacles, which seriously hinder their training, we could have had at least 50 women mujtahids since the revolution. A lot of young women study at these seminaries but nobody encourages them. When I came to Tehran nobody [no religious authority] supported me either although they all knew me for years. A bazari provided me with a basement flat and a factory owner paid my teachers. One of my students then suggested that we move to avenue Dowlat and introduced me to the imam of the neighbourhood mosque who agreed to help me. He gave me this building, which was falling apart. I worked hard for two months to renovate it and began our courses shortly afterwards. We are independent and have over 250 students, many of whom are also university or high school students. Like at other religious seminaries, they study for four years. In addition to ordinary curricula, common to other religious seminaries, we also offer courses on public health, ecology, home management, and the like. These are taught by university professors. Owing to the lack of financial means, I have not been able to hire an adequate number of teachers. As a result, many of my students have been enrolled for five years without being able to finish all courses. Our aim here is to educate women mujtahids as well as women capable of finding solutions to women's problems, including their social problems. Our goal is to contribute to women's development by giving impetus to their creativity, thereby also increasing their self-esteem.'

The challenging of dominant interpretations

Women's mobilization against 'the dispossession of women of their power in the realm of the sacred'[2] is not limited to training women *mujtahids*. Because several articles of the Civil Code (e.g. men's unilateral right to divorce and polygamy) find their origins in the Qur'anic verses, especially that of *Al-Nisa* (Women), women challenge the dominant readings by the clergy which they consider as distorted. By presenting their own interpretations, they intend to show that Islam accommodates the equality of rights between women and men. Women who have religious training are better equipped to deal with religious issues. For example, *Payam-i Hājar*, edited by Azam Taliqani, the daughter of the late radical cleric Ayatollah Mahmoud Taliqani, was the first to publish an article (in 1992) refuting the legalization of polygamy and proposing a new interpretation of the *Al-Nisa* verse:

'The analysis of the Qur'anic verse on polygamy shows that this right is recommended in some specific cases and exclusively in order to meet a social need in view of expanding social justice. […] Contrary to the ancient time, the modern state and its social institutions are conceived to assist needy families. Therefore, polygamy has no social function to fulfil. […] It has been shown that in reality it is pleasure rather than charity that motivates men to become polygamous.'[3]

Nahid Shid is a lawyer who has both a religious and a university education and has initiated several amendments to the divorce law, in particular *ojrat-ol mesl*, the principle that says when a man files for divorce his wife can ask to be compensated by her husband for the housework she has carried out during the marriage. She maintains that 'the bulk of the enforced laws can and should be changed because they are not divine orders. They are based on secondary orders. Blood money is one of them; it was determined when men were valorized as warriors who contributed to the expansion of Islam. Women, however, were devoid of such social values. Times have changed and the law should reflect this change. This law cannot be functional in a society in which women are medical doctors, university professors, engineers, and the like. Blood money should be the same for men and women.'[4]

By questioning traditional gender roles and identities, and by advocating equal rights, these women are also constructing their own religious models, thereby acquiring autonomy *vis-à-vis* male religious authorities. ◆►

Notes

1. The 1996 National Census of the Population and Housing, p. 77-81.
2. Héritier, Françoise (1996), *Masculin/féminin, la pensée de la différence*, Paris: Odile Jacob.
3. Ebn-Eddin, Forouq (19 Shahrivar 1371/10 September 1992), *Luzum-islah-i qavanin-i talaq, t'addud-i zujat va hizanat* (The necessity for the reform of laws concerning divorce, polygamy, and child custody), *Payam-i Hājar*, pp. 28-29.
4. Personal interview, Tehran, February 1996.

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Middle East
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Photogenic Elections, Men and Status in Lebanon

There are a few trees left in Beirut, but their branches are no longer to be seen. Large pictures of men are hanging on them. There are many grey concrete buildings in Lebanon (we call them boxes). They are now quite colourful thanks to the multitude of men's portraits covering their facades. There is a wonderful old building on Sodeco square: a magnificent skeleton reminding us incessantly of the civil war and its destructive power. It is no longer proudly defying the developers who want to erase it to plague Beirut with another concrete box. It stands there like a desolate past looking helplessly at the ridicule it has to endure: its ornate old columns have been turned into hangers for the pictures of more men, more wishful candidates in the Lebanese parliamentary elections of August 2000.

PHOTO: MAI GHOUSSOUB

Sodeco Square, Beirut, Lebanon.

Walking through the streets of Beirut, driving through the 'autostrade' that takes you to the north of the country or going south of the capital, you cannot avoid looking up towards these large portraits. You are looking up, but they do not seem to be looking down towards you. For despite their thick moustaches and their desperate efforts, they fail to emanate a sense of authority, of traditional notability and status, a tool essential to any *zaim*, or leader of men. Perhaps this failure is caused by the multitude of juxtaposed and competing pictures. A notable or a leader should, after all, be easily distinguishable from 'all the others'. But with so many pictures of candidates exhibited and so many candidates wishing to be selected, are the individual and his message (on the rare occasion when there is a message behind the candidacy) not totally lost and submerged? These candidates seem to be projecting their image more than they project their candidacy or express any societal concern. According to Freud, 'The ego is first and foremost a bodily ego…. The projection of a surface'. Are we not witnessing here a festival of bodily egos, a clumsy and adolescent projection of faces? – face (as in façade) as in *wajiha* and *wajih* (*wajih* = notable or man of status; the root of the word in Arabic is the same as face). Could we be looking at an exuberant, Mediterranean explosion of masculine self-presentation? Are these thousands of faces telling us something about Lebanese politics today and the state of democracy in post-war Lebanon?

Elections are not always about politics

'When something is about masculinity, it isn't always about men' wrote Eve Sedgwick in *Constructing Masculinity*.[1] Looking at the pictures of these male candidates hanging above and around the city, trying to convince us to vote for them in the parliamentary elections, it is tempting to say: 'In Lebanon, when something is about parliamentary elections, it is not always about politics'. What are these pictures, which have changed the landscape and colour of Lebanese streets, roads and public places, telling us about the state of the country, its real or imagined identities, the anxieties of its citizens and the responsibilities of its leaders and representatives? Do they reflect the changing patterns of power and domination after the trauma of war or are they merely caricatures of its old traditions and uncertain modernity? On the surface, one is tempted to believe that these pictures, often carrying no written message except for the name of the candidate, seem to be saying: 'Look at me, I am here, I am a candidate. Thus I exist. I am not a nobody'. But this simple message is very revealing and essential to the assessment of the place of the individual in Lebanese society today. This visual message is an outcry for prestige and social status in a small Mediterranean society, where concepts like reputation and 'what the neighbours say or think' are still very effective and determining factors in people's behaviour. It is a longing for power that is now reconciled with the idea of being reduced to a much smaller scale (the big matters being increasingly decided upon by non-elected forces and often in the interest of neighbouring countries). This visual exhibition tells us about a society that has not cut its umbilical cord with its old traditions in which its leaders and rulers excelled at negotiating authority, gaining access to benefits and wealth through networks and alliances be it under Ottoman rule, during the French Mandate or in the post-colonial era.

Lebanon as a republican fraternity?

'By the end of the 1920s, three conflicted modes of reconstituted authority emerged and stood in tension with one another, based on paternalistic privilege, republican fraternity and universal democracy' wrote Elizabeth Thompson.[2] It is frightening how this description of Lebanon in the 20s could be repeated when looking at our candidates and the multitude of expressions they are bestowing upon us from their studio made or photo-shop portraits. Paternalism is definitely present in some faces that are projecting a secure middle-aged man behind respectable moustaches and the advent – just a touch – of greying hair near his temples. The large, if not gigantic, size of the poster is aiming not only at taking our attention away from the multitude of middle-sized portraits, but also at making us feel like children looking up to their father. The same moustaches[3] above a large smile are definitely aiming at projecting a cool, brotherly atmosphere. The candidate may be the son of an old *bey*, he may be just a rich fellow, or a returning millionaire emigrant, but he is still like us. He seems to be so easy-going that we could give him a tap on the shoulder. Yes! Lebanon is a republican fraternity. Lebanon is indeed a modern country, a universal democracy – look at the portraits: all the candidates are dressed in Western-type suits with austere ties; they are trying to charm us, normal mortals, into voting for them. They are all presenting themselves as free and autonomous individuals. There is no mention of coalitions, of Syrian veto or the influence of large families on these portraits. Like all photographic pictures, they express an indisputable truth, but not all of it.

Perhaps we can try to read what the pictures do not say. The following are statements made by 'citizens' conversing about the elections in August:

'X has made a small fortune in Africa, he thinks that now he can stand on a list instead of the traditional notable of his area.'

'This candidate is hoping to make some money, he is only there in order to be paid off to retract from the race (by a prestigious candidate whose prestige is hurt by the presence of an opponent). Indeed a real notable should not have opponents, his prestige and authority alone should intimidate any pretentious candidate.'

'Who ever heard of … before the war? His father was an office boy. Heads of militias and thieves are now filling our parliament.'

People argue, they make cynical remarks, but they end up voting. They will vote in their village or town of origin. They may have lived and worked for ages in a town where their parents were not born, it does not matter. This system has hindered the development of Lebanese democracy and tied the individual to his or her family's allegiances and concerns. When an engineer, a teacher or a state employee goes to vote for a candidate born in the same place as his father and father's father, the concerns, hopes and frustrations of the large family are more at stake than the decisions and policies of the candidate and his influence on the parliament.

The various tales of masculinity

The photo-portraits present a large array of masculine traits, from the wise intellectual behind professional glasses, to the securing smile of a friendly candidate. One candidate in the Bekaa Valley decided to present himself doing fitness exercises in his garden! If the photographs of the candidates tell us something about men and politics in Lebanon, they speak of conflicting images or more accurately of juxtaposed value systems and of a democracy torn between some of its rooted traditions and its congenital infirmities. The posters speak of men who call for your democratic vote while giving in to clientelism and dictatorial impositions from higher instances. The few female candidates hardly change anything in the male panorama that dominates the facades of the country.

It is significant that the written messages, when available, are as insipid as possible: *Ma bi sih illa as-Sahih* (Only the right thing is right!) is the slogan under the Prime Minister's electoral portrait. Sometimes the messages betray a ridiculous paranoia: the slogan of an incognito candidate tells us 'Don't be afraid, I am with you'. Many large posters on the road to Tripoli contained different landscapes of Lebanon placed, thanks to photo-shop techniques, as a background to the candidate's portrait. One rich immigrant raised slogans calling, out of the blue and in full contradiction with his Clark Gable postures, for women's emancipation.

Lebanon, in this new landscape, seems to be preparing for a carnival rather than for its new parliament. The words of the poet Nadia Tueni come to mind: 'My country tells me…do take me seriously'. In order to feel better about it all, I recall the days, those terrible days, when the facades of my country were covered with the pictures of martyrs and when the red colour of blood was predominant. Then, I look at the pictures of our candidates and indulge in a little smile of amusement. ◆

Notes

1. Berger, Maurice, Brian Wallis and Simon Watson (eds.) (1995), *Constructing Masculinity*. New York: Routlege.
2. Thompson, Elizabeth (2000), *Colonial Citizens, Republican Rights, Paternal Privilege, and Gender in French Syria and Lebanon*. New York: Columbia University Press.
3. On the significance of moustaches and their symbols, see Daoud, Hassan (2000), 'Those Two Heavy Wings of Manhood', *Imagined Masculinities. Male Identity and Culture in the Modern Middle East*, ed. by Mai Ghoussoub and Emma Sinclair Webb. London: Saqi Books.

Mai Ghoussoub is a Lebanese writer and artist who has written widely on culture and Middle Easter issues. Her latest publications include Leaving Beirut and Imagined Masculinities (co-edited with Emma Sinclair Webb).

Middle East

LISA WEDEEN

Ambiguities after Asad

The announcement of Syrian President Hafiz al-Asad's death on Saturday, 10 June 2000, prompted panegyrics to his greatness and public displays of grief. Syrians – those who genuinely admired him and even those who feared him – may have experienced sadness at his passing. Death has a way of generating mournful feelings, or at least of inducing apprehension about the future. Yet the political rituals praising his rule, likening his brilliance to the sun's and stressing his role as a 'man of the people', were not new to Syrians. Asad's image was omnipresent for much of his rule (1970-2000), and the rhetoric of flattery was commonplace. In newspapers, on television and during orchestrated events, Asad was repeatedly lauded as the 'father' and the 'gallant knight'. If only by dint of its repetition, all were fluent in this symbolic language of the Syrian state, which had become a hallmark of Asad's rule.

Asking why a regime would spend scarce resources on a cult whose rituals of obeisance are transparently phony, I have argued that Syria's cult of Hafiz al-Asad operated not to produce belief or emotional commitment – which the concepts of legitimacy, charisma, and hegemony presuppose – but to specify both the form and content of 'civic' obedience.[1] Beyond the barrel of the gun and the confines of the torture chamber, Asad's cult served as a disciplinary device, generating a politics of public dissimulation in which citizens acted 'as if' they revered their leader. By inundating daily life with instructive symbolism, the regime exercised a subtle, yet effective, form of power. The cult worked to enforce obedience, induce complicity, isolate Syrians from one another, and set guidelines for public speech and behaviour.

Syrians under Asad both recognized the disciplinary aspects of the cult and found ways to undermine them. The fact that so many politically critical cartoons, films, and television comedies were published or circulated raised the question of why a regime would tolerate symbolic affronts to its official claims of omnipotence. On the one hand, these practices were politically effective to the extent that they counteracted the atomization and isolation public dissimulation fosters. Whereas seeing others obey may make each feel isolated in his/her unbelief, a shared giggle, the popularity of a comedy skit, the circulation of cartoons and transgressive stories enabled people to recognize that the conditions of unbelief were widely shared. Both permitted and prohibited methods of registering resistance were thus partially effective to the extent that they reasserted this widely shared unbelief. At the moment when a joke is told and laughter resounds in the room, people are cancelling the isolation and atomization manufactured by a politics of 'as if'. They are affirming their shared status as unwilling conscripts. On the other hand, it is precisely this shared acknowledgment of involuntary obedience that can make a cult so powerful. Or to put it differently, Asad's cult was powerful, in part, *because* it was unbelievable. The philosopher Slavoj Zizek points out that even if people keep their ironical distance, even if they demonstrate that they do not take what they are doing seriously, they are still complying, and compliance is what ultimately counts politically.[2]

Asad's cult cluttered public space with monotonous slogans and empty gestures, draining citizens' political energies. The insinuation of formulaic rhetoric and self-serving state symbolism in the daily lives of citizens habituated people to perform the gestures and pronounce the slogans constitutive of their obedience. Representations of power and obedience in Syria also operated to produce power and obedience by disseminating credible *threats* of punishment. The images of citizens delivering panegyrics to Asad's rule, collectively holding aloft placards forming his face, signing oaths in blood, or simply displaying his picture in their shop windows, communicated to Syrians throughout the country the impression of Asad's power independent of his readiness to use it. And the greater the absurdity of the required performance, the more clearly it demonstrated that the regime could make most people obey most of the time.

It is after the regime's defeat of the Muslim Brotherhood at Hama in 1982, and Asad's younger brother Rifᶜat's attempt to seize power in 1984, that the sacred imagery and patently spurious content of official rhetoric left the confines of the Baᶜth Party and became part of ordinary Syrians' political lexicon. Although the proliferation of posters beginning with Asad's coup in November 1970 implied a new personification of power, his cult went increasingly into operation as a mechanism of civic discipline when the rhetoric became both flagrantly fictitious and thoroughly familiar to most Syrians. By the mid-1980s and throughout the 1990s, the regime depended heavily on the disciplinary-symbolic mechanisms constitutive of the cult. Overt coercion – incarceration and torture – declined in the 1990s, effectively displaced, although not replaced, by the insidious forms of social control characteristic of Asad's cult.

The de-politicizing effects of Asad's cult on ordinary citizens suggest that to the extent that political contestations are likely at all in post-Asad Syria, in the short-run they will probably occur among Syria's ruling elite. Political challenges to Bashshar's rule could come from within the family, from among members of the ᶜAlawi intelligence networks, and/or from disaffected parts of the upper echelons of the Sunni bourgeoisie. Although there are some who anticipate that Rifᶜat will return to Syria and lead what he termed 'the greatest democratic revolution', it seems unlikely that Rifᶜat would be able to take or hold power even if he were to try. He is reviled by members of the Sunni commercial classes, as well as by many ᶜAlawi military men. One of the family members on whom Bashshar critically relies is his brother-in-law, General Asif Shawkat. In the intelligence services, Bashshar's key ally is General Bahjat Sulayman, who heads the Internal Branch of the State Security Service; he monitors the ministries, the university, the press, the parties, and intellectuals. According to Asad's biographer, Patrick Seale, Bahjat is credited with being the '"main manager" of the transition, the "master of ceremonies"', for the new regime.[3]

Continuing strategies of compliance

In the immediate aftermath of Asad's funeral, the regime initially seemed committed to continuing the symbolic strategies that normalized external compliance under Asad. In a characteristic moment of acting 'as if', one of Rifᶜat's sons appeared on television and publicly distanced himself from his father. Invoking a well-known familial metaphor from the official rhetoric, he stated: 'We have no father other than Hafiz al-Asad.' Crowds shouting 'Bashshar we love you', Syrians carrying black flags through the streets of Damascus, women kissing Bashshar's photographs – these orchestrated acts of 'spontaneity' attested to people's fluency with the language of the cult. Streets were plastered with the familiar pictures of the three Asads – Hafiz, his dead son Basil, who was killed in a car accident in 1994, and Bashshar. Under Hafiz al-Asad's picture the caption typically read, 'The Leader'; under Basil's, 'The Example'; and under Bashshar's, 'The Future'. These pictures of the trinity have, for the last six years, signaled the regime's dynastic ambitions at the same time that they have worked as guidelines for acceptable public speech and conduct. The fact that the transition has thus far been peaceful suggests the effectiveness of the official rhetoric in generating political compliance.

The new regime's first policy initiatives have been mixed. Bashshar's interests in the Internet and his worldliness imply an opening in discursive space and expanded access to information. But the introduction of new technologies does not necessarily undermine a politics of 'as if', for public dissimulation acquires its force by working not on what people think or know, but on how they act. Nevertheless, Bashshar's influence in constructing a new Syrian government headed by Muhammad Mustafa Miro suggests some new political and economic possibilities. There are ambitious plans to use new investment laws to attract funds from the Gulf and from Syrian capital abroad, to liberalize the banking system, to encourage private sector activity, to revamp the higher education system, to curb corruption, and to develop tourism. Yet there are no guarantees that these plans will be realized.

Bashshar also seems less willing than his father to engage in cult practices. He has reportedly ordered the removal of his picture from all non-governmental buildings, and a new and relatively open Minister of Information has been appointed to enliven the state media. These measures indicate the decline in a cult of personality and the emergence of new, perhaps more liberal mechanisms of social control. As technocrats supplant the Old Guard, the political iconography of *paterfamilias* seems to have ceded considerable ground, to be replaced by advertising images and by new techniques of population management. Bashshar's promise to activate the National Front – a coalition of political groups dominated by the Baᶜth party – may signal the regime's readiness to entertain more diverse opinions in Syrian political life, but it may just mean that citizens and politicians will be expected to act 'as if' Syria is a multiparty state. A recent amnesty granted to political prisoners, including members of the Muslim Brotherhood and some communists, continues a trend begun under Asad. In December 1995, as part of an amnesty marking the 25th anniversary of Asad's rule, approximately 1200 political prisoners were released on condition that they sign an oath of loyalty. Bashshar's recent announcement to increase salaries for public sector employees by 25% means that workers will now earn 100 dollars a month – still too little to live on. Indeed, the optimism that seems to attend the announcement of such moves harks back to his father's early days when Asad's Corrective Movement ushered in the man who was himself viewed as more open and pragmatic than his Baᶜthist counterparts.

On the assumption that state socialism will increasingly give way to the effects of global capitalism, new opportunities for rebellion may also emerge. If resistance to economic changes occur, they would most likely be instigated by those who are hurt directly by market reforms. To the extent that the Asad regime, as opposed to the cult, was able to distribute goods and services in return for some measure of genuine loyalty, a widening gap between rich and poor in a market-oriented, post-Asad era may produce political conflicts among groups that had previously been protected by welfare policies, such as students, teachers, and salaried professionals.

The obedience-based strategies that characterized Asad's Syria may well give way to market mechanisms of social control in the long-run, but building market-based compliance takes time. Cultivating desires for commodities, firing employees who fail to perform efficiently, introducing incentives that foster competition among people who otherwise might collectively organize in opposition – these are the sorts of disciplinary effects that liberal markets tend to generate.[4] Were they to be adopted, liberal markets would also undoubtedly produce novel occasions for transgression, inventive ways of staying safe, and new limits to what appears reasonable, questionable, sayable – or maybe even thinkable. ◆▶

Notes

1. See my *Ambiguities of Domination: Politics, Rhetoric, and Symbols in Contemporary Syria*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999.
2. Zizek, Slavoj (1992), *The Sublime Object of Ideology*, London: Verso, p. 33.
3. Seale, Patrick, 'Bashar's new generation can rouse the country from its long slumber', *The Independent*, 12 June 2000, p. 3.
4. See Michael Burawoy (1979), *Manufacturing Consent: Changes in the Labor Process under Monopoly Capitalism*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press; For a contrasting view see Adam Przeworski (1985), *Capitalism and Social Democracy*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

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East Africa

SHAMIL JEPPIE

Islamic Law in Africa

Because of calls in northern Nigeria for the full implementation of sharia, Islamic law in Africa has received much attention recently. The spotlight usually falls on the other side of the continent – on the Sudan – since the promulgation of the 1983 'legal revolution' of Numayri and where no constitutional debate has been free of major political struggles over the question of sharia. But apart from these two sub-Saharan countries, there is very little general knowledge on or scholarship about the history, ethnography or politics of Islamic law on the continent. Yet because of the Muslim presence, in large or small numbers, in the populations of all African countries, recognition of Islamic laws in many African states has, since independence, been fraught with political controversy. In certain cases, it is part of 'customary law', in others it stands independently but always secondary to state law and maintains a curious relation to customary law. 'Muslim personal law' has been and continues to be a focus of debate in Muslim communities and often a source of tension in national politics.

A project to investigate the history, politics and current situation of Muslim personal law in Africa is underway at the Centre for Contemporary Islam at the University of Cape Town. With the support of the Ford Foundation, the project, under the direction of Professor Ebrahim Moosa, entails a series of studies on the subject. The project has begun by commissioning country surveys and thematic studies from African scholars with follow-up conferences and consultations. The first conference was held in Dar-es-Salaam in the middle of July on Islamic law in East Africa (with papers on Mozambique, Mauritius, Tanzania, Kenya, Uganda, Ethiopia, Somalia, Sudan, and a paper on Zimbabwe).[1]

Islamic law in colonial East Africa

Some common themes emerged from the papers. The heritage of British colonialism has shaped the legal regimes in each country with the exception of Mozambique, which was under Portuguese rule, and Ethiopia, which had no Western colonial power ruling it except, briefly, Italy. The British colonial experience and legacy thus features strongly in any discussion of post-colonial law in East Africa. Was there a unified British colonial policy regarding sharia and specifically Muslim personal law? There was no unified colonial approach although there were unifying elements, most prominent of which was the determination to give Islamic law as narrow a range of jurisdiction as possible. Its applicability was also defined by arbitrary geographical 'facts'. Thus, coastal Kenya and Zanzibar could have Islamic laws but not the Kenyan interior (i.e. beyond the 10 miles that defined the coast) or inland Tanganyika. In the latter, after World War I, 'Mohammedan law' was permitted as part of customary law. The methods and texts used in 'Mohammedan courts' in British India played an influential role in the way Islamic law was implemented in East Africa. There was also some cross-fertilization of colonial practices from other parts of Britain's African empire. The colony of Natal was once looked to for precedents on how to deal with South Asian Muslims in Kenya.

Islamic law in independent East Africa

The major concern of the project is Islamic law in post-colonial Africa. After independence, there was the dominant common law, passed on from the colonial powers, and in most cases customary law, in terms of which Muslim personal law was given scope and/or accepted as an independent set of laws. Tanzania adopted a single unified legal system in 1964, and after the revolution in Zanzibar, parallel secular and Islamic systems were introduced to the island. On the mainland, while there are no courts to handle Muslim issues, a magistrate is required to sit with at least two Muslim assessors. Customary law is recognized in both places and there have been cases of conflict between Muslim personal and customary laws. On the mainland, customary law takes precedence over Islamic law. The former Chief Justice of Zanzibar, Augostino Ramadanhi, reflected on the problems and prospects of what he called the 'dual trends' in the Tanzanian-Zanzibari legal systems. In Kenya, after independence in 1963, Kadhi courts were given a constitutional guarantee of continuation but the question since then has been the jurisdiction of these courts.

The locus of the practice of Islamic law was, and is, the Kadhi courts, known under British rule as 'subordinate native courts'. The history, structure and contemporary role of these courts throughout East Africa featured strongly in most of the papers and discussions. The Kadhi of Nairobi, Kadhi Hammad Qasim, was present at the conference and spoke about his experience as a Muslim judge and the challenges facing these courts. He spoke especially about the experience of dealing with Nairobi Muslim women and covered pressing issues ranging from divorce to AIDS. Susan Hirsch, author of a recent ethnography on women and the Kadhi courts,[2] presented recent work on the state bureaucracies, Islamic law and women in Kenya and Tanzania. She was particularly concerned with showing how law expresses particular concepts of gender and constructs gender identities. Yet she demonstrated how women find their own legal authority through the Kadhi courts even though these courts are run by men. While Islamic law is symbolically connected to men, in Kenya the Islamic courts are seen as places of women; the courts have been 'feminized', as Hirsch argued.

Islamic law is an issue of great importance in East Africa, both within the Muslim communities and in the relations between these communities and their governments. It has always been and will remain an issue that politicians and social movements can use to mobilize Muslim constituencies. This occurred in Tanzania in 1998 when a Member of Parliament from the opposition party introduced a motion for the introduction of Kadhi courts. This has been an issue for manipulation in the Tanzanian elections this year.

The experience of the Muslim communities of Kenya, Tanzania and Zanzibar are strikingly different to those of Mozambique, where both under Portuguese colonialism and Frelimo rule only state law was recognized. However, in March 2000 a draft of the family law recognized 'traditional' and 'religious' marriages. In Ethiopia, Muslim personal law operates under a system of Federal Shariat Courts, which are currently being re-organized. In the Sudan, the state has effectively nationalized Islamic law.

While the statutory acceptance of Muslim personal law has always been part of the broader political process, Muslims themselves have not all been equally concerned with its recognition by the state. In Mauritius, Muslims had their personal laws recognized in 1981 but this was repealed in 1987, causing widespread Muslim reaction. Yet, only 10% of Muslim marriages were sanctified in terms of official Muslim personal law. In Zimbabwe, the Muslim minority has not raised the issued – unlike their counterparts in South Africa, where the question has been subject to heated debate among Muslim organizations since the early 1980s, without much consensus. Indeed, in South Africa, the newest government-appointed commission recently issued its report and awaits the responses from the community. Furthermore, in East Africa, ethnic and sectarian divisions have determined various attitudes. Muslims from South Asian backgrounds, and who are Ismaili or Ithna Ashari, generally do not use the Kadhi courts and have informal structures for their communities while also using the state law.

Conceptual questions

The structural effect of colonialism on the substance, practice and institutions of Islamic law was a recurring theme throughout the conference. Professor Issa Shivji suggested that notions such as 'Muslim personal law' were inventions of a dominant colonial discourse foisted onto Muslim subjects. He called for greater suspicion of the terms of the debates about law. In a similar vein, Professor Mahmood Mamdani suggested that just as 'customary law' was largely a construct of colonialism, so too did British colonial authorities aim to freeze Islamic law into narrowly defined areas minus its autonomous logic. The role and corpus of the legal and missionary scholars who produced the standard works on Islam and Islamic law in Africa, such as Anderson, Coulson, Fitzgerald, and Trimingham, need critical study – as suggested Professor Bruce Lawrence. These authors were present in the contents or footnotes of virtually every paper, yet there was no discussion of the way in which they constructed the field of 'Islamic law in Africa'.

The state and law are closely connected spheres. The contraction and weakening of the African state also witnesses growing claims for more recognition of cultural difference and its inscription into law. Muslims have come to voice their grievances loudly and energetically against a perceived unsympathetic state, often recreating an imagined idyllic African Islamic past as was clear in the papers on Uganda which dealt with the Domestic Relations Bill of 1998. Attempting to exit from the established order is another option. Implicit in many papers was the growth of an 'anti-state' discourse among various sectors of the Muslim public, and calling for 'Islamic law' expressed this desire.

The second conference of the project will be held early in 2001 in Senegal and will focus on Islamic law in post-colonial West Africa. The various conference proceedings will be edited and published. ◆▶

ANNOUNCEMENT

ISIM Online

The ISIM website (www.isim.nl) is in the process of establishing itself online in the field of the study of Islam and Muslim societies. One of the main functions of the ISIM website is to provide a 'cyber-secretariat' offering the latest on ISIM activities and programmes. This means that, even more so than the *ISIM Newsletter*, the ISIM website offers update information on calls for papers and application deadlines, as well as specific and more elaborate information on workshops and conferences. Moreover, after such events have taken place, the ISIM publishes the outcome and papers on the website so as to further disseminate results and follow-up activities.

Application forms for all ISIM activities can be downloaded from the site so as to facilitate the application process. Furthermore, the ISIM questionnaire, which serves as the basis for the ISIM database and mailing list, can be printed out from the site and sent into the ISIM. The ISIM aims at offering its Internet services to all relevant institutes world-wide. In order to do so, we ask that you send any relevant hyperlinks to the following e-mail: isim@rullet.leidenuniv.nl

Notes

1. For more information on the project contact the administrator at the Centre, Ms Nazrina Teladia at cci@humanities.uct.ac.za.
2. Hirsch, Susan F. (1998), *Pronouncing and persevering: gender and the discourse of disputing in an African Islamic court*, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

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West Africa
DOROTHEA E. SCHULZ

Muslim Women's Associations, Mass Media, and Morals in Urban Mali

Since 1991, when multi-party democracy was established in Mali, there has been a remarkable proliferation of Muslim associations that call for moral renewal of Malian society and for spreading the teachings of Islam. Some associations make extensive use of broadcast technology, helping them create transnational communities of believers at an unprecedented rate. Women play a prominent role in these associations, not only as followers, but as self-appointed spokeswomen and models of a new 'Islamic' way of life.

Many members of the Western-oriented elite explain the Muslim associations' current success by the substantial financial support they receive from the Arab world, but the reasons for their prominent position in the national arena are far more complex. They are the most recent expression of a long history of intellectual and material exchange between Muslim West Africa and the Arab world – and more recently, cities of the West.[1] Contrary to their supposed literalist readings of written sources and claims to authentic ritual practices – seen by the associations themselves as countering the corrupting influences of the West – these Malian initiatives can be understood as locally variable incorporations of Western consumer culture and notions of subjecthood and achievement, and of religious symbols and accessories from the Arab world. This heterogeneous and sometimes contradictory legacy of current Muslim movements in Mali is clearly expressed in the field of education, where the struggle for access to political and economic resources in the post-colonial state is predominant.[2]

There are but a few associations that call for the introduction of the *shari'a*. Most of them emphasize faith as a matter of personal conviction and moral conduct. Their view strongly individualizes religious identity. This concern with individual conviction offers an explicitly 'modern' element to the associations' search for identity in a public arena where the government, although controlling educational and broadcasting institutions, does not hold the monopoly over resources of ideological orientation. In fact, the government is deeply ambivalent about the whether, and the extent to which, a 'Malian' path towards modernity should be based on 'occidental ' or 'Islamic' values.

A women's association was invited to perform at a baptizing ceremony.

PHOTO: DOROTHEA E. SCHULZ, BAMAKO, 1998

The public debate over Malian moral values

The competing versions of what constitutes the basis for 'authentically Malian' moral values constitute a central field of contention and ideological struggle among Muslim associations and socio-political interest groups. Central to the public debate is a concern with what is seen as the dissolution of traditional values and social solidarity under the onslaught of Westernization. Instead of criticizing the degrading living conditions which are a source of growing intergenerational and gender conflict, Muslim leaders attract followers by presenting these difficulties as a matter of moral decadence, proposing individual moral betterment as the remedy. Very similar to the moral wars waged in other countries in response to radical changes in living conditions, women, in their roles as responsible mothers and dutiful wives, are given a central role as guardians of tradition. Women's dress code and bodily enactment of chastity become central icons of moral conduct.

The movements differ substantially in their relationships with current political leadership and its decidedly secularist orientation. They also set themselves apart from the leading marabout clans and representatives of the Sufi brotherhoods that form a substantial part of the religious establishment. The new Muslim initiatives are especially critical of the practice of curing illnesses attributed to occult forces, which they perceive as corruption of Islamic practices. That they distance themselves does not necessarily imply that they do not believe in occult forces causing misfortune and illness. Rather, they condemn that many self-appointed marabouts turn the fabrication of amulets and other protective 'medicines' into an expanding, lucrative business.

The new Muslim associations are primarily an urban phenomenon, both in their social basis and in that they address concerns emanating from life in the city. The social background of members varies considerably: while some groups recruit their followers primarily from graduates from Western schools, other groups are composed of people from lower urban classes (artisans, petty traders, people working in the informal sector of town). Apart from regular attendance of group meetings and celebrations, a person manifests his or her membership by adopting a dress and behavioural style considered 'distinctively Muslim'.

A sanctioned space for women

Membership in an association provides access to a network that facilitates income-generating activities across national boundaries, spreading from Mali to its neighbouring countries and the Arab world. While this combination of religious and occupational identities and the resulting economic networks perpetuates a long-standing tradition, some new exchange items have been added to older commodities. These include home-made articles that recombine elements of Western, West African and Arab consumer style, such as all-purpose religious 'print' media in the form of T-shirts, dresses, scarves, posters and stickers featuring *surat*s, religious leaders and their most famous citations. Women's remarkable public visibility and engagement in group activities show that their significance extends beyond the limited status they are accorded by male authorities as emblems of an untouched Islamic tradition. Some older women from wealthy families, having acquired literacy in Arabic, hold gatherings at least twice weekly to teach women appropriate ritual conduct and Arabic. The historical antecedents of these female initiatives date back to colonial times, but they were then restricted mostly to elite women.[3]There are now far more women from various backgrounds publicly proclaiming and enacting their faith. In their claims and teachings, they deal with the dilemmas and difficulties arising from modern life in towns. Their teachings place a strong emphasis on their roles as mothers and wives, invested with greater responsibility as guardians of Islamic values. Self-restriction, patience, modesty, frugality, and submission to the will of one's husband and in-laws are the norms that should guide and express the newly found Muslim identity of these women. In the face of the difficulties and moral dilemmas of everyday life, communal prayers and learning give women a sense of spiritual empowerment and, occasionally, of moral superiority.

Women's group activities can be seen as an attempt to create emotional certainty and normative orientation in a situation where patriarchal authority and ideology are increasingly questioned. Women's increasing contributions to family maintenance, in particular among the lower classes, collides with the ideal of man as the principal provider. A major incentive for women to attend group meetings is that they offer social, emotional and some financial support. Socializing with women with similarly modest life-styles liberates women from the social pressure to prove sociability through their capacity to spend. Also, the small contributions collected during group meetings are given out to members to enable them to overcome financially difficult situations or to start a small-scale trade enterprise. The meetings provide a sanctioned space for informal interaction, the exchange of information, and even gossip. Many men strongly oppose their wives' joining a credit savings group (which even many women distrust because of the many stories of failure and misappropriation of group funds), but no husband can prevent his wife from joining such a group without risking being called a 'bad Muslim.'

Reaching out to a transnational community

A major factor facilitating Muslim women's public prominence is the extensive use of local radio stations and audio-cassettes to disseminate to a larger public their visions of an Islamic renewal and of the role that women should play. These women's credibility as spokeswomen of 'Islamic morals' is widely acknowledged – and often more appreciated than that of male representatives of Muslim associations. Although these female speakers articulate their call for moral renewal in ways that support male authorities' conservative outlook on gender roles and conduct, women's sermons appeal to many men and women, not only members of associations, because they articulate a widespread concern with the loss of social solidarity. Moreover, they represent current difficulties of urban life as something to be resolved by individual women's 'better' conduct. Thus, one implication of women's use of broadcast media is that it allows them to very audibly accord themselves a prominent role in the moral renewal.

Broadcasting changes the character of the sermons, because it dislocates the site of reception, expands the audience, and allows for a recombination of various narrative styles. Audio-taped sermons can be dissociated from the original, often public and male-dominated, setting of its deliverance and may be circulated among a wider audience and in various settings, such as at home, on the market and in the street. As women have easier access to the sermons, they can debate their contents and turn the message into something meaningful to their lives. As many preachers blend various oral genres, religious sermons turn into a type of popular entertainment broadcast on the media and consumed during work and leisure time activities.

The audio-taped (and increasingly video-taped) sermons and proclamations of an 'Islamic renewal' address an audience that is no longer defined by territorial boundaries, but reaches out to a transnational community of believers, with the Arab world as its centre of reference but including expatriates in North America and Europe. In this sense, Malian Muslim associations not only respond to locally specific dilemmas of Malian urban life, but are constitutive of a transnational community that promotes 'religious identity' as part of a modern life-style reflected in the eclectic incorporation of icons of Western consumer and 'Islamic' religious culture. ◆▶

Notes

1. Brenner, Louis (1993a), 'Constructing Muslim Identities in Mali', in: L. Brenner (ed.), *Muslim Identity and Social Change in Subsaharan Africa*, London: Hurst and Company, pp. 59-78; Amselle, Jean-Loup (1985), 'Le Wahabisme à Bamako (1945-1985)', *Canadian Journal of African Studies* 19 (2), pp. 345-357; cf. Otayek, René (1993), 'Introduction', in: R. Otayek (ed.), *Le radicalisme islamique au Sud du Sahara*, Paris: Karthala,.pp. 7-20.
2. Brenner (1993b), 'Representations of power and powerlessness among West African Muslims', in: Jean-Pierre Chrétien (ed.), *L'invention religieuse en Afrique*, Paris: Karthala, pp.213-234.
3. Sanankoua, Bintou (1991), 'Les associations féminines musulmanes à Bamako', in: Louis Brenner and Bintou Sanankoua (eds.), *L'enseignement islamique au Mali*, Bamako.

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West Africa
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Youth, Sufism, and Politics in Senegal

If the Senegalese youth have, in majority, always manifested great fervour for their religion by strong involvement in *turuq*,[1] it seems that today they are rather investing their energies in the new Islamic movements that are specific branches of their original Sufi orders. While retaining close ties with and even reproducing the teachings of the latter, these movements address a specifically targeted audience – urban youth.

Islam in Senegal, by virtue of its historical implantation, is generally practised within the *turuq*, the greatest numbers of followers of which belong to the Tijaniyya and the Mouridis. For more than a century, researchers have shown particular interest in the latter, indigenous to Wolof territory and fascinating for its economic activism and its capacity to adapt itself to social change. However, the Tijaniyya, originating in the Maghreb and divided over several marabout families in Senegal, remains the *tariqa* with the most adepts.

The Dahiratoul Moustarchidina wal Moustarchidaty, gathering at its base young followers of the Tijaniyya (Tijans) who have taken an oath of allegiance to the Sy family of Tivaouane, has set itself apart since 1993 by its political orientation. This has meant severing ties with its affiliated brotherhood and has transformed the Dahiratoul Moustarchidina wal Moustarchidaty into a politico-religious movement.

From religion to politics

The main caliphs of the Tijaniyya in Senegal are all members of the Sy family, a marabout lineage based in Tivaouane. It is thus in this city that the Dahiratoul Moustarchidina wal Moustarchidaty was born in 1973. Its origins as well as its real founders are vague and discourse on the subject contradictory. Nonetheless, it is highly probable that the caliph of that period, Abdoul Aziz Sy, encouraged his grandchildren to regroup themselves in a *daaira* to learn the Qur'an. One of the grandsons, Moustapha Sy, moral leader of the current movement, began to follow in this direction in the early 1980s. In this same period, following the Iranian Revolution, numerous movements of Muslim youth (notably the Mourid youth movement) were created in Senegal. Moustapha Sy, in response to this competition, spread the Dahiratoul Moustarchidina wal Moustarchidaty throughout the territory (from then on the *daaira* became a genuine movement) more particularly in Dakar, where he established his headquarters. He created a pyramid-shaped hierarchy. Moustapha Sy, uncontested leader aided by his advisors, lead his followers with extreme precision in his teachings (e.g. the way one was to dress and to behave). His orders were transmitted to the leaders of each sector, zone and section, from the top to the bottom of the pyramid.

Until the 1980s, the doctrine taught to adepts was that of the Tijaniyya, and Moustapha Sy maintained close relations with Tivaouane from his base in Dakar. In the early 1990s, he improved relations with his father, Sheikh Ahmed Tidjane Sy, who, as a result of a family disagreement, lived in Dakar cut off from Tivaouane. Moustapha Sy aligned himself according to the directives of his father, who then – in his son's shadow – became the veritable leader and was named spiritual guide of the movement.

Since then, the line of conduct of the Dahiratoul Moustarchidina wal Moustarchidaty has changed: being clearly defined as apolitical in its preamble, it suddenly became a religious movement with political involvement. On 13 February 1993, Moustapha Sy intervened in a meeting with Abdoulaye Wade and declared his support of the Senegalese Democratic Party (Parti Démocratique Sénégalais – PDS) for the presidential elections against Abdou Diouf. His discourse was remarkable since, for the very first time, Moustapha Sy presented himself incontestably as a young, modern marabout breaking with the attitudes of the spiritual guides of Tivaouane. He involved himself in the electoral game, haranguing the crowd like a politician and showing a certain attraction for reformist discourse on Islam – despite his being the heir of a Sufi tradition.

Since then, the leader of the Moustarchidine has never left the political scene, which was to lead to his imprisonment and the prohibition of his movement by the government in 1994. In 1996, he reconciled with the Socialist Party (Parti Socialist PS) and the *daaira* was rehabilitated. By 1999, he had announced his desire to found his own political party. With the Senegalese constitution not allowing religious-based parties, he rejoined an already-existing party, the Unity and Rally Party (Parti de l'Unité et du Rassemblement, PUR) of the Diouf Caliphate. He became president of the party and declared, in January 2000, his candidacy for the presidential elections of February 2000. But this was not to last more than three days for Moustapha Sy immediately retreated under the orders of his father.

Explanations of this politicization

During the reign of Ababacar, father of Sheikh Ahmed Tidjane Sy and caliph from 1922 to 1957, serious contention broke the Sy family in two: the father and son on one side, openly opposed to other members of the family, half-brothers of the caliph. This crisis worsened with the succession to the throne since Abdoul Aziz Sy, opposed to Ababacar, was elected caliph. Sheikh Ahmed Tidjane Sy, who was always considered the successor of his father, has since unceasingly claimed his right to the caliphate. As Villalon explains,[2] his entire marabout and political career are interpreted under the angle of his will to compete with Tivaouane by regrouping his father's followers so as to found a sort of parallel brotherhood.

The coming together of Sheikh Ahmed Tidjane Sy and his son Moustapha was accompanied by the latter's break with Tivaouane. The new political line of Dahiratoul Moustarchidina wal Moustarchidaty should also be understood as a strategy still aiming to position the father in the marabout field. In 1993, during the presidential elections, Sheikh Ahmed Tidjane Sy was removed from the public scene. Yet in that period the caliph of the Tijans was aging. The question of succession was soon to be posed. Sheikh Ahmed Tidjane Sy thus had to reinforce his marabout status in the eyes of his followers. But his position of retreat prevented him from doing so. At the same time, Moustapha Sy needed to consolidate his legitimacy. Allying with the opposition allowed him to re-establish ties with urban youth, unhappy with the current regime, and also to recruit adepts for his father by explaining that the political positioning of the movement was a decision emanating from Sheikh Ahmed Tidjane Sy himself.

The strategy of politicization brought with it changes in the movement's proclaimed religious education. From Tijan apprenticeship, strictly religious, the movement oriented its teachings in such a way as to transform adherents into Muslim patriots. The latter learned to rationalize their daily acts in order to correspond to a type of 'perfect' behaviour and to act in service of the community. They became ambassadors of an ideal Islamic society yet to be constructed. The non-religious state was to be combated, society lost in Western atheism to be changed. It became necessary to return to the real values of Islam.

Consequences of politicization

The Dahiratoul Moustarchidina wal Moustarchidaty is composed of two types of followers: those from a relatively wealthy social background and/or those with an occupation allowing them to participate in social life (artists, journalists, academics, etc.); and those from less wealthy backgrounds that generally have an occupation involving them to a lesser degree in social activities. The former, which constitute a sort of elite within the movement, are close to Moustapha Sy in his political choices; while the others, who constitute the majority of followers, are often not completely in step with the positions assumed by their leader, whom they have difficulty in understanding. Most adepts, in fact, consider the movement first and foremost of a religious nature (which is why they adhere to it). They feel that political matters are not of their concern.

How can a movement, declared as politico-religious by its leaders, be non-militant at its base? How can one explain the movement's incessant political turnarounds? How can one understand its discourse, more concerned with social aspects than with political ones? How can one approach such a closed movement, which threatens its detractors while maintaining an image of openness and tolerance?

The attitudes and desires of the Moustarchidine leaders are difficult to read. However, Moustapha Sy does not seem to genuinely want to take power. Politics would be for him a way in which to distinguish himself from other religious guides and to make himself heard at the level of the state: the movement is composed of thousands of followers – and thus thousands of voters.

It is quite apparent that religious leaders are increasingly directly involved in the political sphere in Senegal. This was confirmed during the last presidential election: the religious discourse was extremely present during the electoral campaign and, in addition to Moustapha Sy, two other Muslim guides presented their candidacies. Many wanted to clearly demonstrate that, as citizens, they too had the right to participate in politics. Nevertheless, the *ndigals*[3] have never failed as they did during the last election. It seems that religious leaders' efforts to influence citizenship are no longer within their reach: following their advice, people did indeed vote, but also demonstrated political maturity by considering the act of voting as in individual act. Does the end of the *ndigals* also mean an end to political Islam in Senegal at the very moment that the religious leaders are more mobilized than they have ever been? ◆▶

Notes

1. *Turuq* (plural), *tariqa* (singular): Arabic term designating Islamic brotherhoods.
2. Villalon Léonardo (1996), 'The Moustarchidine of Senegal: The Family Politics of a Contemporary Tijan Movement', paper prepared at the workshop 'Tijaniyya Traditions and Societies in West Africa in the 19th and 20th Centuries', Urbana: Illinois, pp. 18-21.
3. Wolof term designating the voting instructions given by religious leaders to their followers.

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Turkey

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Uncovering Alevism, Covering Difference

The Hacibektaş festival has become, in the last decade, the main public event of Alevism in Turkey. It is characterized both by its undetermined nature between religion, culture, folklore and politics, and by the diversity of its participants and scenes. The process of assertion of a contested identity and negotiation of public space are vital to understanding Alevism as it exists today.

PHOTO: ELISE MASSICARD

Semah ritual dance performance during the opening ceremony of the Hacibektas festival.

Alevis are a large heterodox Islamic syncretistic minority, consisting of approximately 15 million Turkish and Kurdish-speaking members. Isolated communities with a wide range of local customs were bound together by a segmentary structure until massive migration, beginning the 1950s, brought with it (mainly to the cities of Turkey and Europe) the loss of traditional means of transmitting heritage, the weakening of the socio-religious structure and secularization.

A revival movement began at the end of the 1980s under the influence of the fall of the USSR, Islamization of state and society, and the Kurdish movement. Breaking the century-old tradition of secrecy, some Alevis have been trying to assert a collective identity and to re-define their place in society, which has resulted in a process of re-construction of community structures, beliefs, and rituals.

However, this process became very conflictual due to the lack of both a binding text and of a central authority able to lead Alevism and to determine its signification. Many intellectuals from the newly educated middle class with various ideological backgrounds have been trying to define Alevism, thus competing with the holy lineages. As a result, very different conceptions of Alevism coexist nowadays, and are asserted through a selective use of history and traditions: some claim Alevism to be a purely religious matter – a branch of Islam, a religion of its own, or even atheist – while others prefer defining it politically, as a philosophy of resistance, a way of life characterized by tolerance, or the very tradition of democracy. On an ethnic scale, some bring its (Turkish) Shaman features to the fore, while others emphasize the (Kurdish) Zoroastrian elements. Moreover, the fact that this issue has also been argued outside Alevism has increased its politicization.

In this context, while many local rituals and pilgrimages are being re-activated, mostly by city dwellers, the main Alevi meeting point and public event, the annual Hacibektaş festival, is far from being a 'traditional' ritual.

Historical developments

The dervish lodge at Hacibektaş, the headquarters of the Bektashi order, was closed – like all Sufi orders in Turkey – in 1925. However, the site continued to be a place of pious visits due to both its ritual functions and the location there of the mausoleum of the order's founder, Haci Bektaş Veli. In 1958, after a relaxation of the anti-religious drive, the restoration of the lodge began, and a museum was opened in 1964 as a result of a local initiative strongly influenced by Bektashi circles. In August of each year since then, ceremonies of commemoration have been held in honour of this saint.

The organizers had to deny any religious motives in order to persuade the authorities to allow their 'purely touristic' initiative. Thus, pilgrims come together with folk dancers in 'traditional' costumes of varying degrees of authenticity and folk musicians.

In the 1970s, along with a general political polarization in Turkey, the festival organization passed into the hands of young men yearning for radical political change, and left-wingers swept in to disseminate their views. After 1980, the municipality, assisted by the state, took over the responsibility of organizing the festival. More and more ministers and representatives from all parties began attending, making speeches or sending messages – even the President has been attending since 1994. Hacibektaş has become a place for political bargaining, expressing demands and promises.

Alevi associations too have been increasingly active in the festival and use this occasion to mobilize participants and to discuss important issues. The festival has increased in scope with the 'Alevi revival'. Quite interestingly, new pilgrimage practices to Hacibektaş have appeared in recent years. The newspaper *Cumhuriyet* stated that some 500,000 participants were expected to attend in 1998.

As a result, this event has managed to impose its centrality, both within the Alevi community and without. Still, its very developments show its undetermined nature, lying somewhere between a pilgrimage, festival, and commemoration. This imprecision is reflected in the differing names given to it: Haci Bektaş Veli Kültür-Sanat Şenlikleri, Etkinleri, or Anma Törenleri.

Diversity of actors and scenes

This indeterminacy also reflects the diversity of actors, activities, and logics coexisting during the festival. Visitors come from all over Turkey, Europe and beyond (many taking advantage of their summer holiday to Turkey), and from very diverse backgrounds – from peasants to the President. In contrast to an institutionalized pilgrimage like the one to Mecca, there is no rigid procedure to be followed and no obligation to visit all sites. Actually, visitors pursue different activities and concerns. Thus, the festival is characterized by a great variety of scenes (both official and un-official), of constituencies and participatory modes.[1]

The most massive scene is the official opening ceremony, with political speeches and *semah* (ritual dance) performances, reported by the media on a national scale. But there are many other places with different activities: the lodge/museum, where some 'perform their rituals regardless of curious tourists and the objections of museum officials'[2]; private houses, where Bektashis from all over Turkey and beyond gather, exchanging news and views; the streets, mainly a place for commercial and political publicity for parties and movements, through tracts and books; ritual places, where sacrifices and 'superstitious' practices are performed by a chiefly rural population; the public seminar rooms, with leading academicians, writers and leaders of associations; the encampments where political groups, mostly illegal left-wingers, disseminate their publications in order to recruit without being caught by security forces; and concert halls overcrowded with young people.

The divergent opinions on Alevism coexist peacefully during the festival, although most participants are conscious of these differences and criticize the 'others': 'these young people don't even know the signification of the *semah* they are performing, they are perverting Alevism'. Interestingly enough, these differences are rarely publicly expressed during the event, yet they manifest constantly through private discussions.

Central role of symbols and the assertion of community

The lack of consensus concerning the nature of Alevism is covered during the festival by the use of shared symbols – like Atatürk, Ali, Pir Sultan, Haci Bektaş himself (represented by various sculptures and images), slogans, *semahs*, and even words like 'Alevi' – since the assertion of Alevism and one's identification with it are more important, in this framework, than the definition of its content. By their very nature as vehicles for simplifying a variety of meanings, symbols are imprecise and thus provide scope for interpretation. Thus, the same symbol may communicate different things to different people, but common affective sentiments towards it create a symbolic consensus. For instance, some may hold the figure of Haci Bektaş Veli because they see in him a religious saint, others because he is a progressive thinker, or a carrier of Turkish values. Symbols are, therefore, ideal media through which people with diverse backgrounds and concerns can speak a 'common' language, behave in apparently similar ways, and participate in the 'same' rituals, for different or even incompatible reasons.

In the frame of the festival, the use of common symbols permits the assertion of community. Thus, the diffusion of objects carrying standardized images of Ali or Haci Bektaş and functioning as signals of identity, as well as their discursive use, do contribute to this assertive process. Further, a symbolic consensus on community is created by the folkloristic objectification of culture, and made celebratory through the pastoral allegory of cultural loss and the rhetoric of authenticity.

Symbols are used to re-assert Alevi community and its boundaries when the process of change threatens its integrity, when the actual geo-social boundaries are undermined, and especially when its members have been dispersed.[3] Each individual is able to define the community for himself using the shared symbolic forms proffered by the festival. Ritual helps in the reconstitution of the community, because it permits its participants to assimilate symbolic forms to their individual experiences and social and emotional needs. In a context of migration and of individualization and diversification of the constructions of Alevism, the Hacibektaş festival is a prime occasion where the Alevi community is asserted both on a collective and on an individual level.

Negotiating public space

Public folklore, as the representation of folk traditions in new contexts, is used to symbolize Alevi identity to oneself as well as to others; thus, public ritual also serves to reformulate values and self-definitions and to negotiate the relationships with these 'others'. Actually, the festival is, through its centrality and media publicity, the main public point of representation of Alevism to the outside world and, through its politicization, of negotiation of public space for Alevism in Turkey.

Although the multi-vocality of the event permits diverse participants to communicate with different outside audiences, the public negotiation of Alevism with these audiences as transmitted by the media is quasi-monopolized by state agents, who also use celebratory and symbolic language in order to gain a large audience. Alevism is officially interpreted as a tolerant form of Islam reduced to its folkloristic characteristics and is presented as being in keeping with the republic. Haci Bektaş is presented as a state-loyal figure associated with Turkism, which provokes protests against political recuperation of the festival and of Alevism. Many Kurdish Alevis, refusing the assimilation between Alevism and Bektashism, boycott the event. Thus, Hacibektaş is also an occasion where the image of an inclusive, tolerant state is created, for which Alevism is a source of authenticity and Turkishness and a resource against Islamist and Kurdist movements. But on the off-scenes, competitive interpretations of Alevism and (both symbolic and real) articulations with the rest of society are proposed. ◆

Notes

1. Bauman, G. (1992), 'Ritual implicates "Others": rereading Durkheim in a plural society', in: D. de Coppet (ed.), *Understanding Rituals*, London: Routledge, pp. 97-116.
2. Norton, J. D. (1992), 'The development of the annual festival at Hacibektaş 1964-1985', in: A. Popovic, G. Veinstein (eds.) 'L'ordre mystique des Bektachis et des groupes relevant de Hadji Bektach', *Revue des études islamiques* LX (1), pp. 187-196.
3. Cohen, A. P. (1985), *The Symbolic Construction of Community*, London: Routledge.

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Turkey
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Caprice Hotel:
Transforming Islam on the Aegean Coast

In summer 1996, Turkish newspapers, especially those addressing a religious audience, reported the introduction of a new space of consumption: a five-star hotel in Didim (Aydin) designed on the basis of Islamic rules. Fadil Akgunduz, owner of the hotel, announced in a press release on the opening of the facility that this investment was an attempt to enable religious-conservative people to benefit from the blessings of God and use their right to enjoy the worldly pleasures in accordance with their religious beliefs (*Yeni Safak Daily*, 3 July 1996).

PHOTO: ANONYMOUS

Caprice Hotel, Didim, Western Turkey.

Being the first organized and institutional attempt to serve leisure to an public with a particular social base, that is, a newly formed religious-conservative upper middle class, Caprice Hotel assumed a symbolic importance in the understanding of Islam in Turkey during the 1990s. It also highlighted the multiplicity of possible trajectories that Islam may take. In this sense, Caprice Hotel symbolizes the autonomization of a particular formulation of Islam by a consumption-oriented middle class from that form which could be called 'intellectual Islam'. Unlike the Islam of Muslim intellectuals which almost always is taken for granted by over-representational and reductionist approaches as the decisive form(ulation) of Islam, the Islam constructed and performed by emergent Islamic middle classes is far from being critical of consumerism. Yet, appropriation of consumer culture by rich Muslims who enjoy the Caprice Hotel cannot be reduced to a mere embrace of consumerism disseminated by globalization. Rather, it requires an ideological justification which accompanies the re-organization of spaces like beaches. As an entrepreneurial attempt, Caprice Hotel finds, in the words of its owner, its discursive justification *vis-à-vis* established forms of construction of Islamic identity. As already mentioned, Caprice Hotel is presented as a natural and legitimate instrument of enabling rich Muslims to benefit and enjoy the worldly pleasures created for them by God.

The beach at Caprice Hotel is divided into three sections. The first section is for males only. The second section is designated as a mixed beach and is called as the 'family beach'. This section is open to all couples independent of their religiosity and use of headscarves. The third and the most interesting section, though adjacent to the other two beaches, is segregated from them. This part of the beach serves, but is not exclusively for, women with headscarves. Those women who want to swim in female-only beaches also use this beach. Despite expectations of strict moral control of the public sphere by Islam(ism), the case of Caprice Hotel indicates that Islam carves its own space within the existing socio-cultural setting by pluralizing its content. It also shows how the meanings and practices attributed to Islam are contested. Actors from different social and economic backgrounds construct different Islamic discourses.

Discussions over the legitimacy of the Caprice Hotel highlights the tension between the 'theory' of those (such as Ali Bulac and Ahmet Tasgetiren) who attempted to forge Muslim public opinion with an emphasis on piety and solidarity and the 'practice' of the post-1980 religious bourgeoisie which articulated a consumer culture in harmony with Islamic principles. Ahmet Tasgetiren, a columnist of the *Yeni Safak Daily*, argued that as far as the sufferings of Muslims in Chechnya are concerned, the practices introduced by Caprice Hotel are not morally acceptable for Muslims. (See A. Tasgetiren, 'Can you see the Chechnya through the windows of Caprice Hotel?' *Yeni Safak*, 16 August 1996). By juxtaposing Chechnya with the Caprice Hotel, he concluded that the latter is not compatible with the basics of Islam. Despite the criticisms of opinion leaders of Turkish Islamic polity, the Caprice Hotel is no longer the only – though it was the first – five-star hotel to serve religious Turks. A dozen hotel complexes, among them Gulnihal and Sah Inn hotels, followed suit as a response to the boom in the market of Islamic-oriented spaces for leisure.

By emerging as the locus of a new Islam cooperating with consumerism in the age of globalization, Caprice Hotel is a challenge to the construction of Islamic identity based on discourses of exclusion and oppression. It also problematizes the Kemalist understanding of Islam and challenges its version of modernization by symbolically introducing alternative trajectories of be(com)ing modern. ◆▶

Research on Caprice Hotel was conducted by Mucahit Bilici within the framework of a workshop directed and supervised by Professor Nilüfer Göle. Workshop papers were later edited by Nilüfer Göle and published in Turkish as Islamin Yeni Kamusal Yuzleri (New Public Visibilities of Islam) by Metis Publishers in Istanbul in January 2000.

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Western Europe
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Divergent Trajectories **Islam and Ethnicity in Switzerland**

The relations between Islamic revival and ethnic allegiances are all too often presented as being in opposition. Islamic identity – and this dimension is very present in Islamic discourse – is by its very nature dedicated to transcending the centrifugal tendencies of ethnicity, of nationalism or of any form of segmentarism. In the face of ideological discourse, the social imaginaries of the interested parties are contradictory. Arab nationals in Switzerland affirm an engaged Muslim identity by a rejection of national and cultural ethnicities, while the Turks affirm their Muslim identity by borrowing the paths of ethnicity. These divergences from the trajectory of 'Islamization' have less to do with cultural differences between places of origin than with forms of social change that have diversely affected these two populations of Muslim origin since their settling on Helvetic territory.

PHOTOS: PATRICK HAENNI

Turkish mosque in Lausanne.

In the framework of the Turkish immigrants, the reference to Islam was imposed at two points in time. Firstly, by the establishment of a fragmented network of mosques, inscribed in both community and religious strategies followed by small groups that sought to preserve religious practices of the migrants' home community. Later on, the network of Turkish mosques in Switzerland became politicized along ideological lines, but ethnicity continued to play a determining role. In the 1970s, while immigration was essentially a male phenomenon not intended to become a permanent situation in Switzerland, religious practice did not matter much. It was simply placed aside while the immigrants awaited their return home. Religious association, not hegemonic in the least, served as a space for remembering one's origins (the religious space coexisting with friendships, sporting associations, game rooms, and cafés), destined to facilitate the return of an immigrant population. In the 1980s, the Islamic reference progressively acquired greater status as the plans to return became increasingly illusory. This was due to, on the one hand, the political and economic hardship in their country of origin and, on the other hand, the arrival of families and the entirely Swiss education of their children (the second generation). The mosque, having been a place of remembrance of ethnicity and a functional space for 'preventative asocialization' (Dassetto) for the first immigrant men awaiting their return home, became in the 1980s a protective structure, as much for regrouping families as for preserving the identity of the second-generation immigrants heavily exposed to the host society. The reproduction of cultural and social identity of the group thus became the principal function of the mosques. The pennants of the football team in the cafeteria of in the place of prayer, posters of the regions of origin, and the systematic presence of a parabolic antenna, all demonstrate the strength of particularistic identities and allegiances. Turkish Islam from 1970-1980 was an Islam of the community, far from the universalism displayed by their Arab co-religionists (to be dealt with further on). This was to change at the end of the 1980s. From then on, the substance which brought them together was to fall prey to a double dynamic of politization and fragmentation. With the population increasing, political and religious networks lost no time in implanting themselves in this population fully in the process of establishment. This continued until the Turkish community stabilized its core, having reproduced itself within the main lines of the ideological spectre of the political and/or religious field of their country of origin. In Zurich, the immigrant associations were to either join up with partisan or religious networks, or be directly put in place by militant immigrants. Zurich was thus to witness the emergence of 'independent associations'. With the creation of Milli Görush (European wing of the Islamist Party of the Prosperity of Islamist Obedience) in 1973 in Germany, some associations were to re-attach to this organization. Soon after, the Dyanet, State Ministry of Religious Affairs, with its imams and places of worship, appeared on the Swiss scene. The fragmentation was not to stop at this bi-polarity of state Islam / Islam of opposition. Contrary to what was occurring in French-speaking Switzerland, the fragmentation was then to continue simultaneously along religious and political lines. The Nurcu movement (see p. 7 of this *Newsletter*, Yavuz), known as an ideological 'think-tank' of Rifah, was to leave the Milli Görush, for its ideology was too dogmatic in their eyes. The Suleymancies, a third important network in Turkish Islam both in Turkey and elsewhere in Europe, proposing a popular Sufism, was also to secede, just as the Grey Wolves, an ultra-nationalist political party which already in 1978, founded its second Swiss political antenna in Zurich. Nurcus, Dyanet, Milli Görush, and Suleymancies contribute to the complexity of Turkish Islam in Switzerland, but all seem to come together on one point: they make Islam congruent with Turkish culture, where the Arabs tend to render Islam autonomous from other aspects of their heritage and identity.

Islam in Switzerland: a few statistics

In a 1980 census, the population of Muslim origin in Switzerland had tripled within 10 years, passing from 17,000 to 56,000 persons. In the 1980s, nationals of Muslim origin continue to flow in at the same rate as in the 1960s: 157,000 people affirmed their membership to Islam in the national census, which means 2.1% of the entire population. By 1996 Switzerland counted approximately 200,000 Muslims – slightly more than 2.5% of the entire population. Amongst them, 40% have permanent residency, 15% are refugees or asylum seekers, 45.7% are of Turkish origin, 36.4% are of Yugoslav origin, and 9.2% are from Maghreb or Machrek countries. 76% are based in German-speaking Switzerland, 14% in French-speaking Switzerland. Turkish nationals are mostly found in German-speaking Switzerland, while the Arab-speakers are concentrated in French-speaking Switzerland.

Arabs Islam in Switzerland

Arab Islamic institutions emerged in Switzerland from 1960-1970. Two dynamics, one political, the other social, contributed to this: in the first place, Islam in French-speaking Switzerland initially developed in the wake of conflicts that formed the Arab political landscape. Saïd Ramadan, son of Hassan Al-Banna, founder of the Muslim Brothers, created the first Islamic centre in 1961 in Geneva, fleeing from repression in Egypt. When relations deteriorated between the Muslim Brothers and the Saudis in the 1970s, Saudi Arabia founded its own mosque in Geneva. The polarization between official and unofficial religious institutions which, until the present, remain a central point of conflict of the political systems in the Arab world, reproduced themselves in the crucible of Arab Islam in Switzerland. The dynamic of Islamization amongst Arab immigrants did not take the same path as that of Turkish populations. In the Arab-speaking community, there exists a direct constitution of a religious field relatively unified both ideologically and in terms of identity, and in clear opposition with the pre-migratory heritage and identity. Contrary to the situation amongst the populations of Turkish origin, the Arab nationals experienced a rapid alteration of their pre-migratory social structures. This occurred as part of the process of individual assimilation. By tradition, however, parents still endeavour to prevent their children from marrying Swiss partners, although the notion of free choice, having been assimilated by that generation, means that the family directives are not accepted without contestation. Many young people have opted for individual integration in the host society either parallel to, or as a substitute for, family ties. This can be the result of marking one's position in relation to parents or simply because one has come to the host society alone for study or for work. However, it has not necessarily rendered the youth laic. Some, whether stirred by such occurrences as the Gulf War, the stigmatization of Islam by the media, or simply because of repeated questioning about their origins or their religion – a quest for an existential ethic – have chosen to play the card of the 'reborn Muslim'. For these young people, it is not a question of returning to the traditions of their parents, generally rejected for their old-fashioned ways, nor is it a way to launch a community project. Neither the demand for, nor the offer of, Islam in the Arab-speaking Islamic groups in Switzerland is fundamentally destined for 'separate development' (even if certain tendencies of this sort do exist). All members of the Arab-speaking Islamic network insist upon the necessity of participation in the Swiss social domain and upon cooperation with Swiss authorities. Thus the affirmation of an Islamic network – open to the host society and socially active – is at the root of the decrease in traditional social control. Islamization, advocating specificity by dialoguing with the host society, and individualization are not conflicting. In this case, they mutually reinforce one another.

The forms of Islamization amongst the populations of Muslim origin in Switzerland are thus diverse – this is no surprise – but the interest lies less in plural Islam than in the syncretisms that the unique situation (of ethnic heterogeneity under the Islamic reference, while spatial differences are abolished) risks engendering. Islam in Europe is confronted with the challenge of internal diversity (and not so much with secularization), that is to say with intra-religious multiculturalism amongst ethnic or national communities placed in contact by their migratory experience. After 30 years of maintaining particularisms, that ideological unanimism will manage to impose a vision of Islam that is both particularist and homogenous is highly unlikely. ◄►

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Balkans

XAVIER BOUGAREL

The New Balkan Islam

The appearance of Muslim populations in the Balkans dates back to the presence of the Ottoman Empire in the region (14th century – beginning of the 20th century) and is due to the conversion of local populations to Islam (essentially Albanians and Slavs) or to the settlement of Turkic-speaking Muslim populations from Anatolia.

In the early 1990s, the number of Muslims in the Balkans was estimated at 8,250,000, or approximately 13% of the total Balkan population. Muslims represented the main religious community in Albania (approximately 70%) and in Bosnia-Herzegovina (45%), an important minority in Macedonia (30%), in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (20%, concentrated in Kosovo and in the Sandjak) and in Bulgaria (12.5 %), and a small minority in Greece (1.5%) and in Rumania (0.2%). They were divided into three main groups, namely the Albanian Muslims (4,350,000, in Albania, Kosovo and Macedonia), the Bosnian Muslims (2,350,000, in Bosnia-Herzegovina, in the Sandjak and in Kosovo) and the Turks (1,050,000 in Bulgaria, Macedonia, Greece et Rumania), to which other smaller groups can be added: Muslim Romas spread all over the Peninsula, Slavic-speaking Muslims in Bulgaria (Pomak) and Macedonia (Torbesh), and Turkish-speaking Tatars in the Dobrudja (Rumania).

From the Turks of Bulgaria in 1989 to the Albanians of Kosovo ten years later, not to mention the Bosnian Muslims between 1992 and 1995, Balkan Muslims figure amongst the main victims of the forced deportations and the massacres that have marked the region in the last decade. These dramatic events were presented in a rather simplified manner: whereas some raised the menace of a 'green diagonal' linking fanaticized Muslim populations, others presented Balkan Islam as a haven of tolerance threatened by an orthodox Crusade. In both cases, the internal diversity and the recent transformations of Balkan Islam were neglected, even denied. These two points are thus insisted upon here by demonstrating that the Muslim populations are not only victims, but also actors in the current Balkan crisis.

The political awakening of Balkan Muslims

Indeed, the emergence of the Balkan Muslim populations as autonomous political actors is one of the most important developments of the last decade. In the interwar period, these populations remained withdrawn into their religious identity and their religious institutions, and maintained a clientelistic and obedient relationship to the new Balkan states. Only the Muslims of Bosnia-Herzegovina had their own political party. Communist modernization allowed for a cristallization of Albanian, Bosnian Muslim or Turkish national identities as well as the emergence of new secularized Muslim elites (teachers, physicians, etc.), but it was not until the 1980s that the first mass mobilizations of Muslim populations were to occur in favour of a 'Republic of Kosovo' (in 1981 and then in 1989-90) or against the brutal assimilation campaign of the Bulgarian communist party between 1984 and 1989.

After the collapse of the communist regimes in 1989-90, the mobilization of the Muslim populations resulted not only in the constituting of political parties in all Balkan states, but also in the formulation of national claims – going as far as demands for an independent state (Bosnia-Herzegovina, Kosovo) or an autonomous territory (Macedonia, Sandjak). It should, however, be noted that this wave of national claims amongst the Muslim Balkan populations is for the most part reactive: the awakening of an intolerant and aggressive Serb nationalism, in particular, has largely contributed to the desires for independence of the Bosnian Muslims and the Kosovo Albanians. Inversely, the end of the forced assimilation of Turks in Bulgaria and the recognition of their political and cultural rights explain the moderation of their political leaders and their progressive integration into Bulgarian political life.

Likewise, throughout the Balkan countries, this political mobilization of the Muslim populations was accompanied by the reshaping of the relationship between national identity and religious identity. In Bosnia-Herzegovina, the Party of Democratic Action (SDA) constituted itself around a pan-Islamist movement that had appeared at the end of the 1930s, and of which the main figure is Bosnian President Alija Izetbegovic himself. Elsewhere, the parties representing the Muslim populations were created by members of the new secularized elites which had appeared during the communist period. In general, however, national identity and religious identity tended to come closer together. This tendency is most clear in Bosnia-Herzegovina where, paradoxically enough, the replacement of the national term 'Muslim' by that of 'Bosniak' was coupled with an increased insistence upon Islam as a founding factor of national Muslim/Bosniak identity, and a bringing to the fore of the religious dimensions of the war (cult of *chehids* – martyrs of faith, evocations of jihad – holy war – and creation of re-Islamized 'Muslim brigades' within the Bosnian army).

Amongst the Turks (Bulgaria, Macedonia, Greece) and the Albanians (Albania, Kosovo, Macedonia), the re-Islamization of national identity remains more limited and discrete. In the Turkish case, the transformations of identity currently taking place reflect the debate which, in Turkey itself, occurs between the partisans of Kemalist secularism and those of a 'Turko-Islamic synthesis'. In the Albanian case, the classical nationalist ideology of the 19th century, incarnated today by such intellectuals as Ismaïl Kadare or Ibrahim Rugova, is characterized by its rejection of Islam and the Turko-Ottoman heritage. Nowadays, however, it has to compete with a new 'Islamo-nationalist' ideology that seeks to associate national Albanian identity and Muslim religious identity, by presenting the conversion of Albanians to Islam as a defence mechanism in the face of assimilation efforts of the orthodox Greeks and Serbs.

The paradoxes of re-Islamization

Nevertheless, this re-Islamization of Balkan Muslim national identities should in no case be conceived as linear and based on consensus: on the contrary, it is accompanied by virulent conflicts within each community and appears to be paradoxical in several ways. First of all, this re-Islamization of collective identities does not really reverse the results of a half century of authoritarian modernization and secularization. Following the re-establishment of religious freedoms, the Islamic religious institutions were of course able to resume some religious activities (opening of mosques and religious schools, resumption of Sufi pilgrimages, etc.), but nowhere they were able to recuperate legal competencies (sharia courts) or real estate (*waqfs*) which had been taken away after the war. Even in Bosnia-Herzegovina, the tight collaboration between the state apparatus and religious Islamic institutions did not result in a true religious revival, but on the contrary in a strong resistance to the attempts of the SDA at re-Islamizing everyday life.

The Bosnian example also shows that the arrival in the Balkans of *mudjahidin* and Islamic humanitarian organizations did not lead to an 'Iranization' or a 'Saudization' of society, but rather to a widespread incomprehension and multiple incidents between the local population and foreign preachers. More generally, the development of new links between Balkan Islam and the rest of the Muslim world has favoured the renewal of religious activities (translation and edition of religious literature, opening of mosques or religious schools, sending of students to Islamic universities in the Muslim world, etc.), but also has confronted official religious institutions with new competitors supported by various Muslim states (Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Iran, etc.) or re-Islamization movements. It has thus contributed to the internal pluralization of Balkan Islam and compelled the Balkan Muslim populations to better define the features of an 'European Islam' which is largely yet to be invented.

Although Islam remains at the foundations of the Muslim collective identities, faith itself is thus becoming increasingly individualized, and the renewal of certain collective and ostentatious forms of religious practice should not mask a strong tendency towards secularization shared with all other European populations. ◆◆

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Continued from front page: Downveiling… / *by linda Herrera*

something she would have considered inconceivable just a year ago.

Many of the women with whom I spoke, both inside and outside the school, cited a number of largely profane reasons for downveiling: some noted that the tight nylon *khimar* caused their hair to thin and in some cases resulted in their getting bald patches; others who routinely walked long distances to and from work complained of excessive sweating under the *khimar*; and still others pointed out that their form of dress was too cumbersome and restricted them from moving about as they required. A number of unmarried *niqab*-wearers (*munaqabaat*) felt their prospects of being approached for marriage were diminished when men had no chance of seeing their faces. The decision to downveil, in other words, was never explained in association with a crisis of faith or a retreat from religion, and the women routinely emphasized that they continued to perform their religious rituals as before. Rather, downveiling appears to be more of a relaxing of socio-religious practices spurred largely by practical reasons. While some women have experienced social exclusion from peers following their decision to downveil, in both subtle and dramatic ways, it appears that as more women engage in downveiling, it is becoming an increasingly more socially accepted practice.

The trend of downveiling has caused something of a crisis of moral authority on the school grounds. One seventh grade student remarks, 'Our school has changed. In the beginning it was very strict and all our teachers wore the *khimar* or the *niqab*. Now a lot of our teachers who once wore the *khimar* wear very tight clothes with a little scarf', to which her friend adds, 'a very, very little scarf'. An eighth grade girl complains that the vice-principal scolded her for wearing a uniform skirt that fits too snugly around her hips and for not buttoning her blouse to the neck and asks, 'How can she comment on my appearance when she herself used to wear the *khimar*, took it off, and now only wears a scarf? She tells us not to wear tight clothing, but she sometimes wears very tight skirts with sandals.' These same students do not see any conflict in their own downveiling since, as they point out, the Islamic uniform was imposed on them; they did not adopt it of their own will as their teachers had.

In more complex ways, however, many women took on higher degrees of veiling not so much because it was imposed on them, but because it had become the normative practice of their professional and community milieus. Women began downveiling due to a complex process involving state intervention, changes in community and public norms, and mundane and sacred considerations. The recent trend of downveiling among Cairene women is suggestive of the ways in which gendered practices respond and contribute to socio-religious change and indicates a relaxation, or changing of form, of the Islamist trend in Egypt. ◆◆

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Latin America
PEDRO BRIEGER

Muslims in Argentina

Most studies on immigration to Argentina[1] tend to associate Muslims with Arabs, without distinction. This error has its origins in the way immigrants from Arab countries arrived, especially from Syria and Lebanon. Before the Ottoman Empire territories were divided by national frontiers, all Arabs that arrived here were considered Turkish for the simple reason that they carried Turkish documents. Still today, Arabs in Argentina are popularly known as 'Turks', without necessarily any pejorative connotation. Argentina having been composed by waves of immigration, most new incoming groups were donned sobriquets: Jews were 'Russian', Italians 'Tanos', the Spaniards 'Gallegos', and the Arabs 'Turks'.

The first official data on Arabs in Argentina mentions '17 Ottomans' who arrived at the port of Buenos Aires in 1887.[2] In the first censuses Muslims do not even appear in the registers, since only Jews and Christians were offered specific categories. Muslims were considered as 'others', and were thus indistinguishable.

Today, the Republic of Argentina has only a small Muslim minority, and obtaining a clear picture of the Islamic community is still somewhat of a problem, although the national census does offer Islam as a clear choice. According to Imam Mahmud Hussain,[3] there are currently about 450,00 Muslims in Argentina – less than 25% of the population – and only 40,000 consider themselves believers. According to Mujamad Hayer, director of the Oficina de Cultura y Difusión Islámica (Office of Culture and Islamic Diffusion), there are between 650,000 and 700,000.[4]

Arab immigration to Argentina was quite considerable in the late 19th century, after World War I and up to the mid-20th century, having become its third most important immigration wave. Of these immigrants, 40% are estimated to have been Muslims or children or grandchildren of Muslims.

Late 19th – early 20th century

Syrian-Lebanese immigrants in Argentina created institutions that denoted their cultural-geographic, more than their religious, origins. Indeed, Muslims, Jews and Christians comprised these institutions, joined by their 'Arab' identity. There were, however, properly Islamic institutions. These were established to preserve the religious legacy, including the Arabic language, that was being lost as years went by: most children of Syrian-Lebanese immigrants no longer spoke Arabic at home and were not interested in learning it. They clearly manifested an increasing tendency toward adopting the culture and customs of their host country.

Chronicles from the 1940s mention that it is rare for a Muslim Arab not to drink wine.[5] And while the 'melting pot' tendency expressed itself in many ways, each immigrant group (even to this day) claimed its own specific part of the national mythology. For example, the gaucho, a farmer whose symbolic image includes the horse, the spear and his equestrian skills, is claimed by certain Muslims as their own, as they see similarities between the gaucho and the Bedouin. Some even maintain that the obscure origins of the word 'gaucho'[6] are rooted in Arabic.

Carlos Saul Menem's presidency

The diffusion of Islam as such began as recently as 1973, with the foundation of the Centro de Estudios Islámicos (Centre of Islamic Studies) headed by Imam Mahmud Hussain, and has also served to attract Argentineans of non-Muslim origin to Islam.

But until the 1989 elections, Muslims in Argentina went virtually unnoticed. Their institutions were only known in the neighbourhoods in which they functioned, or by the members of the community who attended the small Arabic or Islamic study centres.

However, this was to change when Carlos Saul Menem became President of Argentina. Of Syrian origin, his father, Saul Menehem, and his mother, Mohibe Akil, had arrived from distant Yabrud at the beginning of the century and settled in La Rioja, a small, rather poor, province close to Chile. Menem's entry into power, beyond any ideological issues, revolutionized the country. Argentina now had a president of Muslim roots. Although Menem had embraced Catholicism, which he repeated whenever given the chance (up until the 1994 constitutional reform demanded that the president be a Roman Catholic), to people he was still a Muslim. His wife, who never abandoned Islam, professed her religion openly, and his son, who died in 1995, was buried in an Islamic cemetery.

The 'Arab-Muslim' aspect of the president's origins and close environment also began to acquire public resonance. Menem promised to visit Syria after becoming president, and one of his assistants admitted that Colonel Muammar Ghadafi had contributed 4 million dollars to the electoral campaign. In addition, his sister-in-law Amira Yoma became government staff member, and her Syrian husband Ibrahim al Ibrahim – despite not knowing a word of Spanish – accepted a high position at the Buenos Aires International Airport (until he resigned in the middle of a scandal and fled the country). His brother was president of the Senate and his other brother, Emir Yoma, was his private secretary until he fell from grace due to money laundering accusations. His cousin Rima Siman was appointed to the Argentinean Embassy in Italy, while another cousin, Amira Akil, was employed at the embassy in Syria. These are but a few examples.

Menem played on ambivalence, not completely denying his roots. He even said that he was a descendant of Mohammed and appeared on very popular television programme dancing with an Arab odalisque. Meanwhile, *kebbe*, *laban* and *arak* were being served at the presidential residence when entertaining guests.

The controversial government of Carlos Menem resulted in its being rejected by certain sectors of Argentinean society. It also spurred scornful chanting about his Muslim roots in street demonstrations by the opposition: 'Traigan al gorila musulman para que vea, que este pueblo no cambia de idea, lucha y pelea con las banderas de Evita y Perón.'[7]

Still, it was not until the attacks on the Israeli Embassy and the central building of the Jewish community that Muslims made their grand public appearance in Argentinean society. On 17 March 1992, a bomb destroyed the Israeli Embassy in Buenos Aires, killing 29 people. About two years later, on 18 July 1994, an attack caused the death of almost 100 people at AMIA (Asociación Mutual Israelita Argentina – Joint Jewish Argentinean Association). Iran was accused of being responsible from the very beginning. There was talk of an international connection and a 'local' connection that would necessarily imply participation of members of the Islamic community in Argentina, although no one was incriminated.

With the objective of finding information on the 'fundamentalist Islamic' cells at any cost, Argentinean journalists travelled en masse to Ciudad del Este, a Paraguayan city near the border, since it presumably harboured terrorists. But no one found anything besides merchants of Lebanese origin.

Muslims in Argentinean media

The Islamic community – which up to then had been ignored by the media – as well as the words Shia and Sunna began appearing almost daily in the Argentinean media. Certain community leaders were invited to appear on major television programmes to explain the purported link of Islam with terrorism. The term 'fundamentalism' began to be used synonymously with Muslim, and the Islamic community became stigmatized because of its 'apparent' link to the attacks. In the first six months of 1996, *Diario Clarín*, the most important newspaper in Argentina, mentioned the word fundamentalism in 104 articles as a synonym for fanaticism, extremism and, in more general lines, religious Muslim extremism. In those 6 months, only 3 articles failed to associate fundamentalism with Islam,[8] thus marking a tendency with regard to the association of a phenomenon with a community as a whole.

Islam today

The number of Muslims in Argentina is decreasing, and this is due to several factors. Firstly, in families of Muslim origin, customs are being lost, from the Arabic language to food and drink. Secondly, there is relatively little reading material on Islam available in Spanish. There is a growing tendency toward mixed marriages in which children lose all references to Islam, and there are too few study centres for disseminating Islam. This may, however, change in the future with the construction of the new Islamic Cultural Center King Fahd, financed by the Saudi government, which includes a school and a mosque with a minaret in the heart of Buenos Aires. It is considered to be the largest of its kind in Latin America.

The 1990s marked the 'public' appearance of Muslims in Argentina but, because of the attacks and the stereotypes created, Muslims were more worried about proving their innocence than about spreading their religion. But despite all of this, the last few years have witnessed an entirely new phenomenon: Islam has incorporated itself into Argentinean society as something more natural and acceptable. There is no longer an element of surprise when someone publicly claims to be a Muslim. Besides, the children and, especially, the grandchildren of Muslims are beginning to look for their roots and are trying to get closer to their own history and that of their ancestors, a phenomenon common to the both North and South America. ◆

Notes

1. The first Muslims to arrive in Argentina were probably descendants of the Moors that came with the first Spanish conquistadors before the country became independent. This, however, is uncertain.
2. Morandini, Norma (1998), 'El harén, los árabes y el poder político en la Argentina'. Ed. *Sudamericana*, Buenos Aires, p. 22.
3. Imam Mahmud Hussain is ex-president of the Asociación para la difusión del Islam en América Latina (Association for the diffusion of Islam in Latin America), and director of the Centro de Altos Estudios Islámicos de la Argentina (Centre of Advanced Islamic Studies of Argentina) and the magazine *Sufismo Viviente*, and is currently translating the Koran into Spanish. Interview by the author, 11 august 2000.
4. Interview by the author, 30 August 2000.
5. Peralta, Santiago (1946), 'Influencia del pueblo árabe en la Argentina, apuntes sobre inmigración', Buenos Aires, p. 297.
6. Public conference of Imam Mahmud Hussain, Buenos Aires, 24 September 1996.
7. 'Bring the Muslim gorilla so he can see that this people changes no ideas, struggle or fight with the flags of Evita and Perón.' The expression 'gorilla' refers to a contemptuous expression against the military that overthrew General Juan Perón. The enemies of Perón's followers are usually called gorillas. Although Menem comes from the peronista movement, many consider that his government has left the political banners of Perón and his wife Eva Duarte, better known as Evita.
8. Brieger, Pedro (1996), 'Some Reflections on the Diario Clarín and Fundamentalism'. MSANEWS (msanews@faith.mynet.net), Ohio.

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Book Presentation

NADJE AL-ALI

Secularism, Gender and the State
The Egyptian Women's Movement

In Egypt, as in many other parts of the formerly-colonized world, numerous tensions and conflicts revolve around gender issues. Women are often caught between the pursuit of modernization, attempts at liberalization, a pervasive nationalist rhetoric of 'authenticity', processes related to Islamization and ongoing imperialist encroachments. Those women who are actively engaged in contesting existing gender relations and social injustice are particularly vulnerable to being stigmatized as anti-nationalist and anti-religious. Indeed, contemporary women activists in Egypt have increasingly been accused, particularly by Islamist movements and conservative nationalist forces, of collaborating with Western imperialism by importing alien ideas and practices and disseminating them throughout society.

But how do the women themselves perceive these tensions and conflicts? How do they cope with accusations of being 'Westernized'? What do 'the West' and 'authenticity' mean to Egyptian women activists? These and many other questions were paramount in my mind when I embarked upon PhD research on which my recently published book is based.[1] My own involvement in the Egyptian women's movement (from1992 to1994) provided the initial impetus to pursue academic research. Yet, my specific focus and interests grew out of a sense of disenchantment with depictions of secular constituencies in much of the literature on the Middle East. If not omitted altogether, secular constituencies tend to be essentialized (those who are not Islamist) and portrayed in a homogenized manner (thereby glossing over political, social and cultural differences within secular constituencies).

Redefining secularism in Egypt and the Middle East

My research, then, reflects the pursuit of several aims. On one level, it presents the attempt to problematize and re-define the notion of secularism in Egypt and within the wider context of the region and the 'Muslim world'. In addition to exploring the range of interpretations, politics, lifestyles and beliefs of one specific secular-oriented constituency, the book provides a detailed ethnographic account of the context, content and political significance of contemporary women's activism.[2] This is mainly achieved through an analysis of interviews with more than 80 members of women's groups and individual activists. In these interviews, questions pertaining to women activists' goals and motivations, their political outlooks and affiliations, their activities as well as allegiances and animosities were asked. In this context, women's activism cannot be analysed without contextualizing it in the wider political culture in which it takes place. Therefore, a range of factors was explored, such as the historical and political development of the Egyptian state and its relation to the women's movement, the role of Islamist constituencies and the political left, as well as international organizations and agendas. All these elements, in one way or another, have an impact upon the forms, content and discourses of contemporary women's activism.

But what is actually meant by 'secular-oriented' activists? Initially, a working definition was used referring to those who advocate a separation between religion and politics, which does not necessarily denote anti-religious or anti-Islamic positions. Furthermore, it was expected that secular women activists do not endorse *shariʿa* as the main or sole source of legislation, but that they would also refer to civil law and human rights conventions as frames of reference for their struggle. However, the research findings indicate that this definition glosses over a great level of variation in terms of understandings and manifestations of secularism among Egyptian women's activists. Rather than juxtaposing secular with religious, the research reveals the continuum of religious and secular beliefs and practices in women's every day lives.

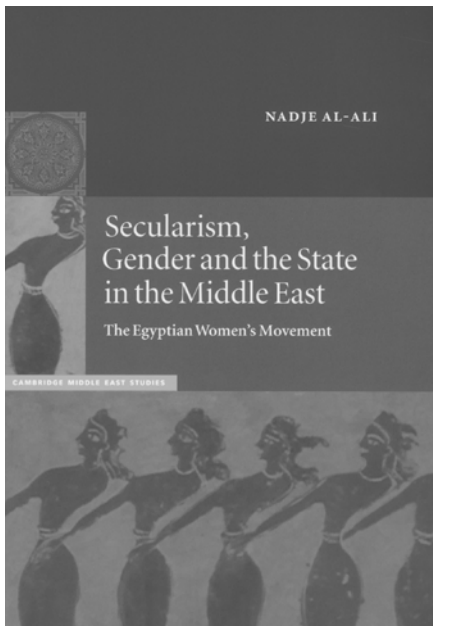
Often, as in my own assumptions prior to fieldwork, non-religious frameworks of political action are presumed to derive from comprehensive worldviews and doctrines, like socialism, or specific documents, such as the international convention of human rights. Many of the leftist-nationalist activists interviewed explained that they would still take a Marxist approach in their analyses. However, most emphasized that they had moved away from earlier certainties concerning the direct relationship between economic exploitation and women's liberation. Their own experiences within the political parties and with their 'progressive' husbands at home changed their outlooks in a way that, today, they argue for the necessity of an independent women's struggle. A number of women interviewed stressed that their values and concepts were not based on a specific doctrine or on the international declaration of human rights, but emerged out of the various experiences of collective and individual struggle. As Hania K.,[3] a member of Markaz Dirassat Al-Marʾa Al-Gedida (The New Woman's Research Centre) told me:

> *Islamists solely use the text and this is their framework. Their judgement of the value system comes through the text. My frame of reference is based on certain abstract concepts, such as egalitarianism, humanism, human rights, pluralism, tolerance, etc., which have come from my everyday experiences. Of course, these concepts did not come out of a void, but emerged from different schools of thought. However, I do not uphold a certain ideology, because it would reduce the forms of oppression and the complexity of reality. My values and concepts are as much part of my personal development as they grew out of collective struggle. (p.146)*

In this context, Hania K. and other activists complained about the tendency among Western scholars conducting research in Egypt to dismiss individual everyday experiences and the capacity to creatively synthesize from various value systems. Human agency is mainly framed in terms of collective ideologies – whether secular or religious – and very little space is given to individual improvisation and resistance.

Overcoming the culturalization of political issues

Throughout my analyses of the notion of secularism and the political culture in which the Egyptian women's movement is embedded, I attempt to achieve a further goal, i.e.



to transcend notions of cultures being bounded entities and to acknowledge the entanglements and creative encounters between and within cultures. Being of mixed cultural background myself (Iraqi-German), I have been extremely sensitive to and saddened by the essentialized rhetoric of 'us vs. them'. I do, of course, understand the historical and current power relations, colonial and neo-colonial configurations and imperialist policies upon which these notions and sentiments are based. Yet, to my mind, neither orientalism nor 'occidentalism' – essentialist constructions of the West – appear to be constructive ways forward.

Unfortunately the attempt to legitimize their struggle and defend themselves against charges of 'aping the West', often results in women activists reproducing essentialist notions of 'our culture' vs. 'Western culture'. For Egyptian women activists, the notion of 'cultural specificity' becomes more than a tool in the attempt to demarcate themselves from 'the West'. It is also employed to affirm positively one's own culture, somehow homogenized and defined as a monolithic entity, thereby discarding cultural differences within Egypt among different social classes, generations, gender, rural and urban people and so forth. Yet, there is also evidence to the various ways in which some women attempt to overcome the prevalent 'culturalization' of political issues. Randa K., for example, is one of numerous women who believe that the notion of cultural specificity is used as a tool by men to reinforce their power over women. Raga N., on the other hand, deeply despises the eclecticism and selectivity of intellectuals and political activists when deciding what is universal and what is not. As she states: 'We scream: "Our values!" when it clashes with existing power positions, but when it is beneficial to the same group, they adopt it, despite it being Western.' (p. 213) Against the backdrop of these and many other views expressed by the women I talked to, this book is as much about unsettling a rigid East-West divide and its implications as it is about secular Egyptian women's movement and the political culture it is embedded in.

By focusing on one specific, yet heterogeneous, segment within postcolonial Egypt, namely secular women's activism, I hope to unravel many of the tensions and conflicts that mark the complex processes of decolonization and continue to shape contemporary political culture. Egyptian women's activism today is very much shaped by the fear of transgressing the norms and values deemed permissible within the national fabric. The question of identity is as central to their activism as concrete struggles over women's rights and aspirations. Much is at stake for secular women activists as their rejection of Islam as the only possible framework for political struggle and nation-building evokes suspicion and doubt about their belonging within the indigenous landscape of 'traditions' and 'authenticity'. ◆▶

Notes

1. My main fieldwork took place in Cairo in 1995 and 1996 over a period of 14 months. I have since then returned several times. In addition to gathering data through interviews and conversations, I participated in many activities and events organized by various women's groups and networks. I also visited several projects run and organized by women activists, which aim at improving the living conditions of women from low-income areas in Cairo.
2. My use of the term 'women's activism' rather than 'feminism' is related to the fact that many of the women I interviewed reject the label of 'feminist' for pragmatic and ideological reasons. The English term 'feminism', evokes antagonism and animosity, and sometimes even anxiety. A great number of women seem to have internalized the way feminists are being portrayed in prevailing Egyptian – but also European and North-American discourses, namely man-hating, aggressive, possibly obsessed with sex, and certainly Westernized women. The resistance of many Egyptian women to identify themselves with feminism is not only related to its negative image in society, but it is also linked to the conviction that it detracts from 'larger issues' such as imperialism, class struggle and Zionism.
3. All names have been changed.

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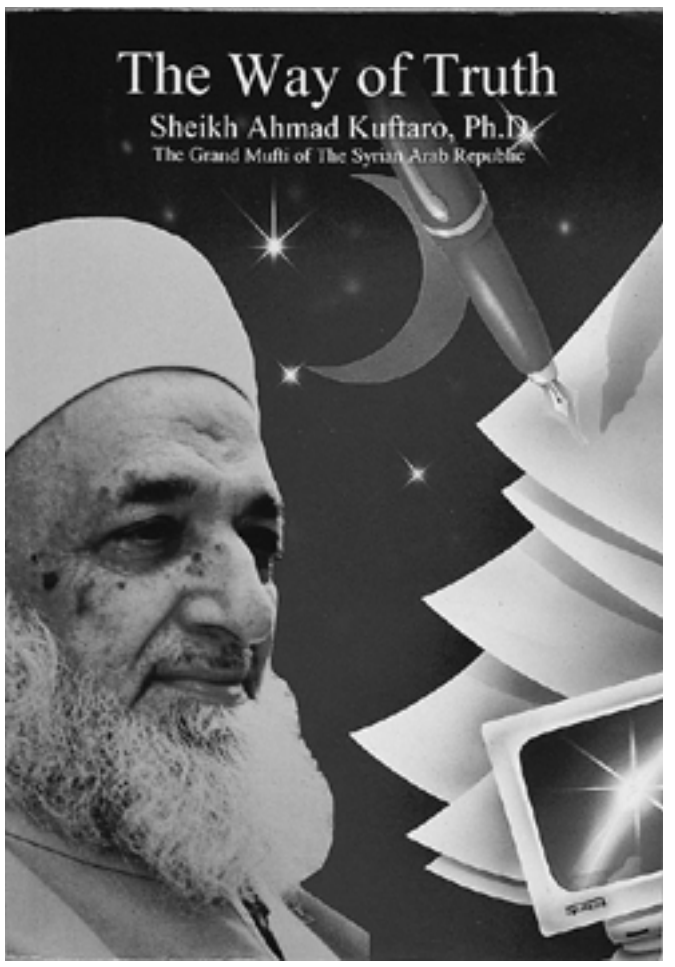
Book Presentation

ELISABETH ÖZDALGA

The Naqshbandis in Western and Central Asia

The Naqshbandi order constitutes one of the leading Sufi orders *(tariqa)* in the Muslim world. Baha'al-Din Naqshband (d. 1389), the order's eponym, originated from Bukhara in Khorasan. During the 15th and 16th centuries, the order developed into a world-wide organization, spreading to areas as culturally and geographically distant as Central Asia, Eastern Turkestan, India, China, Afghanistan, and the then Ottoman Empire (including the Balkans).



SOURCE: ELISABETH ÖZDALGA (ED.), *NAQSHBANDIS IN WESTERN AND CENTRAL ASIA: CHANGE AND CONTINUITY*, ISTANBUL: SWEDISH RESEARCH INSTITUTE IN ISTANBUL, 1999, P. 107

Cover of Sheikh Ahmad Kuftaro's bestseller from 1997.

Of great importance for the diffusion of the Naqshbandi order was Sheikh Ahmad Sirhindi (d. 1624) from India, who, at the turn of the first millennium (Hijra) became one of its great innovators, thence gaining the epithet *mujaddid* (re-newer). He is, as so many other leading Naqshbandi figures, well-known both for his great wisdom and his powerful involvement in social and political affairs. Ahmad Sirhindi had an influential predecessor in Khoja 'Ubayd Allah Ahrar (d. 1490) from Samarqand, who is also remembered as a great religious personality and powerful community leader.

Another prominent Naqshbandi sheikh and re-newer was Mawlana Khalid (d. 1827), who belonged to a Kurdish tribe in what is today northern Iraq. Since he spent his most influential years in Baghdad, he has been endowed with the epithet 'Baghdadi'. Like Ahmad Sirhindi, he was influential enough to initiate a new Naqshbandi sub-branch, the Khalidiyya. It was to a great extent under the influence of the Khalidi branch that the Naqshbandi order markedly increased its influence over 19th century Ottoman society. Its legacy is still strong in both present-day Turkey and Syria.

Preserving tradition

In today's world, where social relationships are highly fluid, it is remarkable to notice the existence of a viable religious movement with roots several hundred years back in history. It is only by reflecting over the immense transformations taking place within economic relationships, political structures, settlement patterns, communications, science, technology and even family relationships over the last 100 to 150 years, that one can truly appreciate the extraordinary fact that a Sufi order like the Naqshbandiyya has been able to preserve its traditions since the 15th century. This highlights the fact, so easily overlooked in times of powerful secularization, that religion represents a strong force in the formation of social and cultural identity – even in modern society.

Outsiders trying to understand the role of the Naqshbandi order in today's society often mistake its members' involvement in worldly affairs (as economic entrepreneurs, state officials, or political activists) for simple worldliness; as if religious involvement was nothing but a pretext or cover for their economic or political power interests. However, this picture is over-simplified. A characteristic feature of the Naqshbandi is indeed the emphasis of a double responsibility: towards this world *and* the other world. This position seems to be as valid now as it was hundreds of years ago and constitutes an important key to the remarkable perseverance and integrity of the movement.

The Naqshbandi order could not have preserved its core identity so persistently, had it not been for a good share of flexibility. Its capacity to adjust to changing social conditions is just as remarkable is its endurance. The openness towards change has been especially observable during the last century, and especially the last couple of decades, when representatives for the Naqshbandi *tarikat* have been involved in a range of high technology enterprises, advanced institutions of higher education and the latest innovations in media technology. Studying the Naqshbandi raises intriguing questions not only about how change and continuity are balanced against each other, but also how concerns for this world and the next are combined against the challenges from an increasingly secularized society.

Background and content

The articles on which the book, *The Naqshbandis in Western and Central Asia: Change and Continuity*, is based are papers read at a conference entitled 'Patterns of Transformation among the Naqshbandi in Middle East and Central Asia' held at the Swedish Research Institute in Istanbul from 9-11 June 1997. The conference was part of a two-year programme of activities at the Institute focusing on 'Islamic culture'. The aim of the conference was to address problems of recent change among the Naqshbandi in the Near East and Central Asia. Keeping in mind the long history of this institution, the aim was to encourage analyses in a *longue durée* perspective. In light of that objective, studies focusing on Central Asia gained special significance, since these areas are the original homeland of the Naqshbandi. But it was crucial to focus on Central Asia for yet another reason, which concerns the fact that its peoples have only very recently come out from a 70-year-long communist dictatorship, in which religion was severely suppressed. Stemming from this fact are many questions related to what will happen to Islam in general, and the Naqshbandi in particular, as conditions in this part of the world have the opportunity to normalize.

The book opens with a chapter by Hamid Algar, where attention is drawn to how 'global' people, living many generations before us, in fact were. Hamid Algar presents an analysis of how Sheikh Nidai of Kashgar (d. 1760), in the capacity of a wandering mendicant, for more than 40 years travelled to a large number of holy sites in Turkestan, later on turned to Kirkuk, Mosul, Aleppo, Jerusalem and the Hicaz, and how he finally settled in Istanbul, where he was appointed the first sheikh for a newly opened *tekke* (lodge) in Eyüp. This example illustrates how the Naqshbandi order, for many centuries, bound together the three main regions of the Sunni Muslim world: the Ottoman Empire, Central Asia, and the Indian subcontinent.

Dhikr (zikr) – the repetitive invocation of the name of Allah – is widely practiced among Sufis. The *zikr* ritual is most often practiced collectively, with intensive and emotion-laden expressions, where the partakers move their bodies rhythmically as they loudly pronounce the names of Allah. In contrast to such expressions, members of the Naqshbandi order have generally been regarded as being more sober and orderly, practicing the so-called 'silent' rather than the 'loud' *zikr*. However, even if silent *zikr* generally has been referred to as one of the most characteristic marks distinguishing the Naqshbandis from other Sufi orders, such as the Qadiriyya ('whispering' as opposed to 'jumping' dervishes) historical records show that both forms of *zikr* in fact have been practiced by Naqshbandi dervishes themselves. This intriguing question is addressed by Isenbike Togan, who, by referring to developments in Eastern Turkestan and China of the 17th and 18th centuries, draws attention to the fact that the question of 'silent' versus 'loud' *zikr* could even stir up controversy between various Naqshbandi groups.

Jo-Ann Gross discusses the well-known *waqf* (foundation) of Khoja Ahrar (d. 1490) in Samarqand, and its reorganization after the Russian conquest of Central Asia in the 1860s. Khoja Ahrar was an influential and venerated Naqshbandi sheikh, whose *khanaqah,* or tomb complex, has been a place of pilgrimage for over 500 years. The fact that the Russian colonial administration, for the sake of control, initiated a special investigation of the *waqf*, bears witness to the social and economic importance of the *waqf* holdings. The effect of Russian colonialism was, however, that the Naqshbandi communities, for the first time in their long history, were seriously threatened. Following is a chapter by Butros Abu-Manneh, which approaches this *waqf* leader from a different point of view, namely through a widely read hagiography, *Rashahat Ain al-Hayat* (Trickles from the Fountain of Life), written by Kahshiifi, one of Khoja Ahrar's disciples.

Questions related to what happens to Naqshbandi networks in Central Asia after the collapse of the former Soviet Union are discussed by Vernon Schubel. Based on his own recent research, Schubel discusses how written sources in the form of popularized hagiographies play an important role in the process of reconstructing the Naqshbandi tradition in Uzbekistan. He also discusses the dilemmas facing today's Uzbek authorities, who in their newly begun nation-building projects, are anxious to support the new interest in Islam, without leaving the fields open to religious radicalism and fanaticism.

Outside Central Asia

This volume also contains chapters on the Naqshbandis in three areas outside of Central Asia, namely the Kurdish areas of Iraq and southeast Turkey, Syria, and Afghanistan. Ferhad Shakely gives a detailed description of the relation between the sheikhs of Hawraman and other Sufi orders like the Qadiriyya and their cultural and political influence in the Kurdish areas until today. Leif Stenberg analyses the Syrian branch of the Naqshbandi order, centred at the Abu an-Nur Foundation in Damascus, led by Sheikh Ahmad Kuftaro, and the Grand Mufti of Syria. Bo Utas' account of the Naqshbandi order in Afghanistan is unique. Having spent time in Afghanistan in 1977 and 1978, he happened to be in the country on the very day of the coup d'état, 27 April 1978. For a couple of months, he travelled around and visited 12 *khanaqahs,* 7 of which are Naqshbandi. Bo Utas' observations took place at a very critical point in time and contain information about groups and social networks that are now lost forever.

The book also contains three chapters on modern Turkey. Hakan Yavuz problematizes the role of different Naqshbandi groups in terms of economic, political and intellectual life in post-war Turkey, placing this against the background of an historical exposé of the Naqshbandi order. Fulya Atacan presents a portrait of a contemporary Naqshbandi sheikh, Osman Hulusi Ate_ (1914-1990), who was born in a small town in the province Malatya.

Korkut Özal, former MP for the National Salvation Party and Minister of Internal Affairs in one of the coalition governments of the 1970s, focuses on yet another leader, namely the well-known Sheikh Mehmed Zahid Kotku (1897-1980). Professor Özal offers more than just a portrait of a prominent Sufi leader. He also gives an account of his own experience of being Kotku's *murid* (disciple) for a period of 20 years.

This book was intended as a modest follow-up of the impressive work , *The Naqshbandis* (Gaborieau, Marc, Alexandre Popoviç and Rierry Zarcone (1990) It is hoped that as such it will help in carrying the scholarly discussion of this powerful branch of Islamic mysticism a bit further. ◄►

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Muslim Centres in Europe

In the last decades, Muslim centres have been established all over Western Europe. Apart from being centres of religious, social, and cultural activities, the intention is often to establish and maintain relationships with non-Islamic surroundings, such as local governments, churches, and schools. Through these institutional embodiments, active spokesmen try to meet the needs of Muslims as citizens of host societies. Islamic centres in Europe thus play an important role in the emancipation of Muslim communities. The *ISIM Newsletter* is now launching a series of articles on Muslim centres in Europe, the first of which is authored by Mamoun Mobayed, director of The Belfast Islamic Centre in Northern Ireland, introducing his centre.

Muslims in Northern Ireland:
The Belfast Islamic Centre

BIC
MAMOUN MOBAYED

Northern Ireland, which is known for its 300-year religious conflict, is now going through what is called 'The Peace Process'. It has become a pluralistic society with multi-religious diversity. The Muslim Community forms the second largest religious group after Christianity and has always supported the peace in Northern Ireland.

PHOTO: ANONYMOUS

Three generations of Muslims outside Belfast Islamic Centre.

The Muslim Community

The famous Muslim historian and sociologist Ibn Khaldun (1332-1406) called the island of Ireland *reslandah* in his *Muqaddimah* (the introductory volume to his *Kitab al-Ibar* (Universal History).[1]

It is difficult to know when the first Muslims arrived in Northern Ireland, but there are some indications that this was in the 1940s. We know that some Muslims celebrated Eid al-Fitr in 1953 at a small house on Cromwell Street in Belfast. Early Muslims were mainly students from the Indian subcontinent, South Africa and the Middle East, studying at Queens University of Belfast.

The Muslim Community has grown in size since then. There is no accurate statistical information on the exact number of Muslims, but the estimate is approximately 3000. The majority live in Belfast, while the rest are in Craigavon, Londonderry, Ballymena, Coleraine, Bangor and Lisburn. They belong to different ethnic groups from Pakistan, India, Middle East, Africa, Malaysia, Gulf, Turkey and others. There are also small numbers of Irish/British that have recently become Muslims, yet have not formed a unified community. All of these Muslims are fully integrated together by sharing of mosques and Sunday school (*madrasa*) yet they have diverse cultural traditions and customs. Many of the Muslims have either Irish and/or British citizenship, some of them through marriage.

The Muslim Community in Northern Ireland has certain features which distinguish it from other Muslim minorities in Europe. Since Northern Ireland did not bring over cheap labourers, as is the case with England, France and Germany, for example, the majority of the Muslims are professionals who decided to come voluntarily. They work in medicine, university teaching, engineering, or business. The students form the biggest group among the non-residents. It is a young community, as they represent the upcoming third generation. These factors make it possible to prevent some social, educational and economical difficulties which are faced by Muslim communities elsewhere in Europe.[2]

Belfast Islamic Centre

The current Centre was established in the early 1980s, and it serves the Muslims in Northern Ireland. It is registered as a charity organization, and has a mosque, a small Islamic library, a few rooms for teaching, and a section for women. It holds the usual activities of a mosque and an Islamic centre, ranging from worship, Qura'nic teaching, *eid* prayers and celebrations, as well as social and cultural activities. It holds a Monthly Meeting when a guest speaker is invited. On the first Sunday after Eid al-Fitr, the Centre holds the Annual *eid* Dinner when many non-Muslim friends of Belfast Islamic Centre are invited, including the Lord Mayor of Belfast.

The Centre has a Sunday school (*madrasa*) called *Dar al-Uloom*, where Muslim children attend three sessions: Qur'an, Islamic Studies and Arabic language.

Belfast Islamic Centre has a Women's Group which organizes various activities or training for the Muslim women in Northern Ireland. Belfast Islamic Centre also has a popular website.[3]

The Centre has established good relationships with the Northern Irish Community, and institutions, such as universities, several colleges, and the police. The Queen's University of Belfast has recently run a short course on 'Islam and Islamic Cultures', and the Ulster Museum, for the first time, recently had an Exhibition on Arabic Calligraphy.

Along with other ethnic and religious minorities the Belfast Islamic Centre has established two important organizations. The first is the Northern Ireland Interfaith Forum (established in 1993), with the first chairman from the Muslim Community.[4] This Forum has recently opened a multi-faith prayer room at Belfast International Airport, the first of its kind in Northern Ireland. The second organization is Northern Ireland Council for Ethnic Minority (established in 1994.)[5]

Belfast Islamic Centre is a founding member of the Muslim Council of Britain, established in 1997. It is also a member of the European Council of Islamic Cooperation in Strasbourg. It has a close relationship with the Muslim communities in the Irish Republic, and throughout UK.

The Centre is run by volunteers, consisting of three trustees and an Executive Committee, elected every two years.

Future projects

The Muslims in Northern Ireland are actively involved in the building of a new mosque. They would like it to combine the Islamic architecture with the Northern Irish heritage, and this should reflect their Islamic Irish identity.

The Centre would like to arrange an 'Open Day' to invite non-Muslims to visit the mosque and see first hand what type of work it offers to the community at large.

Muslim children in Northern Ireland still have unmet needs regarding their Religious Education, as the Syllabus of Religious Education in Northern Ireland is exclusively Christian. It is under review now, and Muslims are working with other minorities to identify the needs of their children, and subsequently to meet them. Many Muslims are not in favour of segregated schools provided that their children receive Islamic religious education at their local schools.

The Muslim Community in Northern Ireland is an example of the peaceful coexistence of different cultures and religious systems. ◆

Notes

1. Ibn Khaldun, *Muqaddimah.*
2. Nonneman, G., T. Niblock and B. Szajkowski (1997), *Muslim Communities in the New Europe.*
3. The address of the website: www.iol.ie/~afifi
4. Maurice Ryan (1996), *Another Ireland.*
5. Maurice Ryan (1996), *Another Ireland.*

Dr Mamoun Mobayed, is an Associate Psychiatrist, lecturer, author and President of Belfast Islamic Centre.

PUBLICATIONS

Book Presentation

ISHTIAQ AHMED

Islam Outside the Arab World

Islam originated in the Arab peninsula in the 7th century. Currently, of the 175 million speakers of the Arabic language, some 90% are Muslim. The fact is, however, that they constitute only 15% of the estimated 148,750,000 Muslims of the world. As the second major proselytizing religion (second only to Christianity) to emerge within the Semitic tradition, Islam, in the past, spread to the various regions of the world through peaceful as well as military means. In that very long phase, it established itself primarily in Asia and Africa. Of the six most populous Muslim countries of the world – Indonesia, Pakistan, India, Bangladesh, Turkey and Iran – none are Arab, and in sub-Saharan Africa, Nigeria has more Muslims than any of the Maghreb countries of North Africa.

Since the Second World War, a major route to the internationalization of Islam has been the migration of Muslims in large numbers to Europe, North America, Latin America, Australia and New Zealand. The Muslim immigrants comprise various sorts of economic migrants as well as political and humanitarian refugees. Today Muslims are to be found in all corners of the world. They form the second major religious group in almost all European countries as well as in the United States and Canada. They observe the Islamic obligations such as fasting during the month of Ramadan in places as far-reaching as Anchorage, Rio de Janeiro, Cape Town, Stockholm and Christchurch.

The contemporary processes of economic globalization, on the one hand, and political universalization of human rights issues and democracy, on the other, are exerting contradictory pressures on states and societies to develop appropriate mechanisms for dealing with an increasingly variegated and complex social order consisting of diverse faiths, practices, attitudes and aspirations – a new situation to which both Muslims and non-Muslims have to respond. The responses are not always benign and productive, but adjustment and understanding have been improving.

Islam Outside the Arab World fills a major lacuna in the study of contemporary Islam and Muslims, which hitherto has concentrated on the Middle East or the Arabic-speaking world, by its focus on all regions of the non-Arab world. The following areas are examined:

– Africa, including Somalia, Nigeria, Senegal, Tanzania and South Africa;
– Asia and Oceania, including Turkey, Turkic Central Asia, Iran, Afghanistan and Tajikistan, China, Pakistan, India, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Maldives, Indonesia, Malaysia, Australia and New Zeeland;
– Europe and the Americas, including Bosnia-Herzegovina, Germany, Austria, France, Great Britain, Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Finland, Russia, Transcaucasia, the United States, Canada, the Caribbean Islands, Trinidad and Tobago, Central Americas, Venezuela, Guyana, Surinam, Brazil, Argentina and other places where significant Muslim presence exists.

About the authors

The authors, who have been selected from all over the world and are country or area specialists, belong to disciplines as diverse as history, anthropology, political science, theology, peace and conflict research, history of religions, linguistics and languages, ethnography, and Islamic and comparative religions. They probe, within a comparative framework, common themes such as the Islamic revival, the sectarian divisions within Islam, the common rites and rituals of the various groups and sub-groups, the position of women and religious minorities within Muslim-majority states and of Muslim minorities in non-Muslim social and political orders. Special emphasis is given to Sufism as an alternative approach to Islam.

Islam Outside the Arab World is a very ambitious undertaking. Each author has produced, in an easily accessible language and style, information-rich descriptions and sophisticated analyses of their particular case studies. Historical backgrounds are provided, but the main emphasis is placed on the current period. In this sense, the book is a unique work of scholarly collaboration, which is likely to become the standard reference on this vast subject. French and German translations are soon to follow. The introduction to this work is authored by Dr Ishtiaq Ahmed. ◆

Islam Outside the Arab World, David Westerlund and Ingvar Svanberg (eds.), Richmond: Curzon, 1999.
476 pages including index.
ISBN 0 – 7007 – 1124 – 4 (Hbk)
ISBN 0 – 7007 – 1142 – 2 (Pbk)

Dr Ishtiaq Ahmed is associate professor of Political Science, Stockholm University, Sweden.
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Obituary

LIZ KEPFERLE

Hanna Batatu: 1926-2000

Hanna (John) Batatu passed away on Saturday, 24 June 2000, in Winsted, Connecticut, after a brief battle with cancer. Batatu was born in 1926 in Jerusalem; his first employment was as a staff officer with the Palestine Mandatory Government in Jerusalem in the 1940s. Following the creation of the State of Israel in 1948, Batatu immigrated to the United States, living with relatives and working as a manager of a carpet company in Stamford, Connecticut, until 1951, when, at the age of 25, he entered Georgetown University's Edmund A. Walsh School of Foreign Service. After earning his BS degree (*summa cum laude*) from Georgetown in 1953, he continued his higher education at Harvard University, where he earned a PhD in Political Theory in 1960.

Dr Batatu's early scholarly interests involved the United States and the Soviet Union. In his doctoral programme he shifted his focus to the Soviet Union and the Arab East. His dissertation was entitled 'The Shaykh and the Peasant in Iraq, 1917-1958'.

Apart from research fellowships at Harvard, MIT, and Princeton, Batatu held two major teaching appointments: at the American University of Beirut (1962-1981), and at Georgetown University's Center for Contemporary Arab Studies (1982-1994). At Georgetown, he held the Shaykh Sabah Al-Salem Al-Sabah Chair of Arab Studies, and was named Professor Emeritus upon retirement. He remained in the Washington area until the fall of 1999. Dr Batatu was to be honoured on June 28 by the American University in Beirut as one of their Millennium Scholars.

Hanna Batatu's detailed published research is invaluable to students and scholars of the modern Arab East. The first of his two major works, *The Old Social Classes and the Revolutionary Movements of Iraq* (1283 pages, Princeton, 1978), is regarded by many scholars as one of the most significant works of recent times dealing with Middle Eastern society and politics. Actually three volumes in one, it is one of the few books to have received the distinction of having an entire conference held to discuss its implications – at the University of Texas at Austin in March 1989. The proceedings of this conference were later published as a book entitled *The Iraqi Revolution of 1958: The Old Social Classes Revisited*, edited by R. Lewis and R. Fernea (London: Tauris, 1991). Batatu's masterpiece has been described as 'an indispensable foundation for any thoughts regarding the creation of a new Iraqi political order' (L. Bushkoff, *Christian Science Monitor*, 3/4/90).

Last year, Dr Batatu published a counterpart to his Iraq study, *Syria's Peasantry, the Descendants of Its Lesser Rural Notables, and Their Politics* (Princeton, 1999). Dedicated 'To the People of Syria', the book traces the rural roots of Syria's ruling Ba'th party, exploring the characteristics and power structure of the Asad regime. As in his study of Iraq, Batatu relies heavily on extensive interviews with individuals at all levels of Syrian life, in the process providing valuable insights into this critical Arab country. The noted political scientist Rashid Khalidi writes: 'This is a profound and comprehensive study of modern Syria that is unlikely to be surpassed for a very long time. It is a model of how social history should be written, and of how it can be used to explain the politics of a complex society like Syria.'

Hanna Batatu is survived by his brother and sister-in-law, Anthony and Bertha Reynaud of Winsted, Connecticut, and many nieces and nephews. ◆

Liz Kepferle works at Georgetown University, where since 1993 she has helped coordinate the Master of Arts in Arab Studies programme.

Programme

GILLES KEPEL

Institut d'Etudes Politiques
Doctoral Programme on the Muslim World

The Doctoral Programme on the Muslim World, created in 1985, is a part of the doctoral school of the Institut d'Etudes Politiques in Paris. It has given many young francophone academics and researchers training in both epistemology and in fieldwork. The most prominent among them, Malika Zeghal, Mounia Bennani-Chraïbi, Dina El Khawaga, Luis Martinez, Yves Gonzalez-Quijano, Séverine Labat, Xavier Bougarel, Philippe Droz-Vincent, Laetitia Bucaille and others have gained status and authored major works in this field of knowledge. The programme also aims to train professionals who will staff private corporations or work in public service, in sectors relevant to the modern Muslim world.

Launched by Professor Rémy Leveau, the programme is now headed by Professor Gilles Kepel, and has been widely restructured to meet the new challenges of the field. It recruits a dozen students per year, offering them a syllabus which includes courses and seminars on politics, economy, religious and social issues, together with Arabic language lessons (students willing to study other languages of the Muslim World register for that purpose in other Parisian universities, to which the programme is linked) and a tutorial in English.

Professors Ghassan Salamé, Olivier Roy, Malika Zeghal, Christian Décobert, Ruth Grosrichard, amongst others, teach and give tutorials together with Professor Kepel. The duration of studies is one year for the Diplôme d'Etudes Approfondies (DEA), and three to four years for the PhD dissertation.

The DEA year includes a collective two-week fieldtrip, and an individual four to six-week fieldwork journey to a Muslim country. In February 2000, students and instructors went to Southern Morocco: they mixed with students of the doctoral programme in Political Science from Casablanca University and shared their experience and worldviews. In May and June, students will go individually to such countries as Lebanon, Yemen, Sudan, Libya, Algeria, Morocco, and Mauritania. Upon their return, they will write a *circa* 100-page paper, to be publicly defended in the fall. The best students willing to specialize in academia will then be invited to join the PhD programme.

Admission is conditional to the completion of a master's degree in the humanities, the knowledge of one of the languages of the Muslim world, and a TOEFL level of English. French is the main language of instruction, though students are encouraged to develop their writing and speaking abilities in other languages as well. Generally half of the student body is foreign – whether from European countries or other countries of the Muslim world. Interviews for admission are conducted in late June and mid-September. The academic year commences in mid-October. ◆

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Conference Report

SUSAN RUTTEN

18th RIMO Conference

The Dutch Association of the Study of Islamic Law and the Law of the Middle East (RIMO Association) held its annual meeting on 26 May 2000, in Leiden, the Netherlands. Approximately 55 individuals from various disciplines, such as law, Middle Eastern Studies, Islamic Studies and Islamic Law, participated in the conference. Five lectures were presented by specialists who attended the conference from different parts of the world. Each lecture was followed by discussion with the audience and was presided over by the conference chairman, Ruud Peters. The morning session began with two lectures devoted to theoretical aspects of Islamic law, while the afternoon sessions were devoted to an exploration of issues of the application and practical relevance of Islamic law.

The conference was opened by Muhammad Khalid Masud, academic director of ISIM, who spoke about the doctrine of *siyasa* in Islamic law. The second lecture was presented by Wael Hallaq, who spoke about changes in Islamic law: Has it ever been changed? Can it be changed at all? Or can we speak of a structural change? Who is qualified to change Islamic Law? What methods can be used? These and other thought provoking questions were raised and discussed by Hallaq.

The afternoon sessions of the conference opened with a lecture by Maurits Berger, who engaged the audience in his presentation of Egyptians' inter-religious choice of laws on marriage and divorce. According to Berger, if one spouse is Muslim, Islamic law will prevail and the marriage will be governed by it. Christian or Jewish law can only be used in the case of both spouses sharing the same religion. The lecture was enlivened by many illustrative and practical examples.

The second lecture of the afternoon session was presented by Jamila Bargach. Her lecture concerned the *kafala* in Morocco. Since adoption is not legally recognized in Moroccan (and Islamic) law, other means had to be devised in order to assist abandoned, orphaned or neglected children. Other individuals can then take over the care of these children by means of *kafala*. In practice, this 'gift of care' is often offered to young girls as they can be of practical use within their new families.

The conference was closed by Frans van der Velden of the Dutch Ministry of Justice who spoke of the cooperation between the Netherlands, the Moroccan Embassy and the Government of Morocco. Specifically, he spoke of the cooperation designed to resolve issues emanating from marriages and divorces of Moroccan citizens residing in the Netherlands. He also mentioned Moroccan proposals to modify Moroccan family law in order to improve the status of Moroccan women.

The RIMO Conference 2000 provided stimulating and interesting presentations and discussions about issues related to Islamic law. The texts of the lectures will be published in English and in Dutch by the RIMO Association. ◆

Susan Rutten is secretary of the Association for the Study of Islamic Law and Law of the Middle East (RIM) and lecturer in law at Maastricht University, the Netherlands.
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Art & Culture Agenda

THE NETHERLANDS

Exhibitions

Theater Cosmic
Nes 75, Amsterdam
Tel: + 31-20-623 72 34

6 – 8 October 2000
- *Maroc opens its doors. This Festival features Moroccan music, stand-up comedy theatre, lectures, a suq, fashion show and for children Berber stories and food.*

World Art Delft
Rotterdamseweg 205, Delft
Tel: + 31-15-285 01 14

3 September – 23 December 2000
- *Arabesk. Contemporary art from Iran, Iraq, Lebanon. Art from non-western countries as source of inspiration for Dutch artists. Lectures, music, workshops and for schoolchildren the opportunity to work with mosaic. Programme on request.*

Den Haag Gemeentemuseum
Stadhouderslaan 41,
2517 HV The Hague
Tel: +31-70-338 11 11/365 89 85

25 November – 11 March 2001
- *Glass from the Orient. Islamic glassware.*

Continuing
- *Islamic crafts. The renewed exhibition from its own collection, in particular ceramics. Other objects illustrating Islamic art.*

Zijdemuseum Grijpskerke
Kerkstraat 1, 4364 AJ Grijpskerke
Tel: +31-118-59 33 05
E-mail: info@zijde.net

30 May – 30 September 2000
- *Oman: Silks from the desert*

Wereldmuseum Rotterdam (before: Rotterdam Museum of Ethnology)
Willemskade 25
3016 DM Rotterdam
Tel: +31-10-270 71 72
Fax: +31-10-270 71 82
E-mail: mediatheek@wereld-museum.rotterdam.nl

26 November 2000 – 25 March 2001
- *Buitenlandsche Zaaken (Foreign Affairs). The exhibition concerns rare documents from diplomatic and trade contacts between the Netherlands and the Islamic world since 1600. The often exquisitely decorated documents belong to the Dutch State Archives and include manuscripts from the Dutch East India Company. Paintings, engravings and maps illustrate the longstanding historical connection.The museum will reopen on 26 November 2000 with a permanent exhibition of Islamic art from its own collection.*

Galerie A
Oldenzaalsestraat 256
7523 AG Enschede
Tel: +31-53-341 37 88

Continuing
- *Intercultural art*

Lectures/Societies

Nederlands-Arabische Kring
Secretariat:
H. Zwaardecroonstraat 17
2593 XK Den Haag

NAK Magazine:
Korte Jufferstraat 42
3512 EZ Utrecht
Tel: +31-30-231 95 53
E-mail: raz@casema.net

- *Organizes lectures and other activities in five regional branches: Amsterdam, The Hague, Groningen, Nijmegen, and Utrecht.*

Music

RasaNetwerk Non-Western Music
Pauwstraat 13a
3512 TG Utrecht
Tel: +31-30-233 01 23
Fax: +31-30-233 01 22
E-mail: rasa@rasa.nl

Throughout the years 2000-2001
- *Music from Uzbekistan, Iran, Turkey, Morocco. Concerts are organized in a number of cities in the Netherlands and Belgium. Programme to be obtained from Rasa.*

BELGIUM

Exhibitions

Royal Museums for Art and History
Jubelpark /
Parc du Cinquantenaire, 10
1040 Brussels

17 October – 29 October 2000
- *Modernity and Authenticity in Harmony. Exhibition on the occasion of 30 years of Renaissance in Oman.*

CANADA

Exhibitions

Musée de la Civilisation
85, rue Dalhousie
C.P. 155
Québec G1K 7A6
Tel: +418-643 21 58
Fax: +418-646 97 05

Through January 2001
- *Syria, Land of Civilizations, assembles more than 400 cultural treasures to present one of the oldest cultural centres. The exhibition views 12,000 years of history from various viewpoints: political, economic and spiritual. It also highlights the West's intellectual and scientific ties to Syria. 'Contemporary Syria' explores everyday life, particularly from the perspective of young people.*

FRANCE

Exhibitions

Institut du Monde Arabe
1, Rue des Fosses St-Bernard
75236 Paris
Tel: +33-1-40 51 39 60/33 10

21 September – 12 November 2000
- *Gaza Mediterranée. Exposes the results of archaeological excavations in Gaza since 1994. This event is a result of the French-Palestinian cooperation. The most spectacular exhibits are mosaics from the Byzantian period.*

Festivals

Rue de Rivoli
75001 Paris
Tel: +33-1-53 45 17 00
Fax: +33-1-53 45 17 01
E-mail: www.festival-automne.com

20 September – 30 December 2000
- *The Festival d'automne is partly devoted to Iran. Performances of the Tazieh, a unique form of traditional tragedy from the Muslim world and music from Khorassan, a region in north Iran.*

Musée Goya
Castres
France

Through 8 October 2000
- *Music and Figurative Arts: Music and Society in Spain from the Middle Ages to the Year 2000, presents more than 100 old, or reproductions of, musical instruments as well as paintings, sculptures and other music-related objects. The importance of the travelling musician and the large contribution of Arabo-Andalusian music in repertoire, rhythms and instrumentation, are highlighted.*

GERMANY

Exhibitions

Vorderasiatisches Museum
Entrée Pergamonmuseum
Museuminsel
Am Kupfergraben
Berlin-Mitte
Tel: +49-30-20 90 54 01

Tentatively 15 May 2001 – 30 September 2001
- *Agatha Christie and the Orient. Criminology and Archaeology traces those two strands in the life of the 'Queen of Crime', displaying diaries and hitherto unpublished photographs of Christie and her husband, archaeologist Max Mallowan; more than 200 artefacts from his excavations in Iraq and Syria; and a compartment from the Orient Express.*

Museum of Islamic Art
Museuminsel
Berlin-Mitte
Tel: +49-30-20 90 54 01

Continuing
- *This continuing exhibition is dedicated to the art of Islamic peoples from the 8th to 19th centuries. The works of art originate from an area stretching from Spain to India.*

Bayerisches Armeemuseum
Neues Schloß
85049 Ingolstadt
Tel: +49-841-350 67 69

Through 15 October 2000
- *Islamic Art from private collections in Germany. An exhibition to commemorate 10 years of the Society of Friends of Islamic Art and Culture.*

Museum fur Islamische Fliesen und Keramik
Westerhof-Klinik
Olaf-Gulbransonstrasse 19
83684 Tegernsee
Tel: +49-80 22 18 10

Continuing
- *Dr Theodor Sehmer collected, since the 1950s, Islamic ceramics, in particular tiles from Turkey, Iran and Iraq. Some 300 pieces of this very interesting collection dating from the 10th – 19th centuries are to be admired at the Westerhof-Klinik.*

Ifa-Galerie Stuttgart
Charlottenplatz 17
70173 Stuttgart
Tel: +49-711-222 51 73
Fax: +49-711-222 51 94
URL: http://www.ifa.de

Continuing
- *Exhibitions and contemporary art from the Middle East*

IRAN

Exhibitions

Islamic Period Museum
Tehran

Continuing
- *Continuing exhibition of e.g. Qur'anic manuscripts, ceramics, metalwork and textiles*

ISRAEL

Exhibitions

The Israel Museum
P.O. Box 71117
Jerusalem
Israel
Tel: +972-2-670 88 11
Fax: +972-2-563 18 33
URL: http://www.imj.org.il

26 September – December 2000
- *'Have a Nargileh' – Water Pipes from the Islamic World. This exhibition shows the origins of the water pipe, an object closely associated with the Orient, which has recently become popular among certain sectors of Israeli youth. In addition to a wide variety of some fifty ancient and elaborate water pipes, the exhibition also presents Orientalist paintings depicting images of smokers.*

JORDAN

Exhibitions

Darat al Funun Amman
URL: http://www.daratalfunun.org/

20 September – 17 November 2000
- *Artists from Bilad al-Sham, Part 2, highlights Lebanese, Palestinian and Syrian artists in a survey of contemporary Arab-world arts, with an emphasis on painting.*

KUWAIT

Exhibitions

Dar al-Athar al-Islamiyyah
Mahboula
Kuwait
Tel: +965-565 30 06

Continuing
- *Al-Sabah Collection of Islamic art*

The Tareq Rajab Museum
Hawelli 32036
Kuwait
Tel: +965-531 73 58
Fax: +965-533 90 63

Continuing
- *Arts of the Islamic world: Qur'ans, calligraphy, pottery, metalwork, glass, ivory and jade carvings, costumes, textiles, embroideries and jewellery. The exhibitions include also relevant objects from Tibet, Nepal and Bhutan.*

MALAYSIA

Exhibitions

Islamic Art Museum
Pusat Islam Malaysia
Jalan Perdana
50480 Kuala Lumpur
Tel: +60-3-22 74 20 20

Continuing
- *Collections of local and international Islamic art objects. The museum periodically holds local and international exhibitions.*

RUSSIA

Exhibitions

The State Hermitage Museum
St Petersburg
Tel: +812-110 90 79/96 25
Fax: +812-312 15 50
URL: http://www.hermitage.ru/

Continuing
- *Art of the Near East is represented in the museum by an excellent collection covering the 7th – 19th centuries, including several exquisite masterpieces.*

SINGAPORE

Exhibitions

Asian Civilisations Museum
39 Armenian Street
Singapore 179939

From November 1997
- *Calligraphy from the Tareq Rajab Museum Kuwait. The Qur'an was central to the development of the art of beautiful writing. This exhibition explores the various scripts that developed over the centuries, and also calligraphy as a decorative motif on various media, such as ceramics and metalwork.*

TURKEY

Exhibitions

The Museum of Turkish and Islamic Art
Istanbul

Continuing
- *Exhibition of Ottoman and Islamic Art, Folk Art and Folk Life*

UNITED KINGDOM

Exhibitions

British Museum and Museum of Mankind
Great Russelstreet
London WCIB 3DG
Tel: +44-171-412 71 11
Fax: +44-171-323 86 14/84 80

Continuing
- *Continuing exhibition of the Oriental collection. Its Islamic pottery is considered the best outside the Islamic world.*

Victoria and Albert Museum
Cromwell Road
London SW7 2RL
Tel: +44-171-938 85 00
URL: http://www.vam.ac.uk/

Continuing
- *The collection includes a rich collection of Islamic metalwork.*

Brunei Gallery
London
Tel: +44-207-898 40 20
URL:
http://www:soas.ac.uk/Brunei/exhibitions.html/

16 October – 8 December 2000
- *Strokes of Genius. Throughout history, Mesopotamia has been referred to as the 'Cradle of Civilization' and its art, treasured in museums worldwide, is praised as one of the greatest achievements of mankind. Today, Iraqi art forms an important part of global contemporary art to which the artists contribute with a diverse, yet distinct, vocabulary formed by their unique artistic, cultural and religious roots.*

Egee Art Gallery
9 Chelsea manor studios
Flood Street
London SW3 5SR
Tel: +44-171-351 68 18
Fax: +44-171-376 85 10
URL: http://www.egeeart.com/

Continuing
- *Arabic Calligraphy 2000 – The Saudi Show. Presentation of a breathtaking beauty and diversity collection of calligraphy. Contemporary and antique Middle Eastern art.*

UNITED STATES

Exhibitions

Harvard University Art Museums
Arthur M. Sackler Gallery
Cambridge, Massachusetts
Tel. +1-617-495 94 00

8 June – 15 October 2000
- *A Decade of Collecting: Recent Acquisitions of Islamic and Indian Art showcases important works of art from the Stuart Cary Welch Collection.*

Continuing
- *Harvard's collection of Islamic and later-Indian art is small but magnificent. It comprises a broad range of works, from Samanid pottery and Mamluk calligraphy to Qajar lacquers and Ottoman textiles. Its masterpieces include a group of miniatures from the extraordinary 14th century Great Mongol ('Demotte') Shahnama, the Safavid masterpiece; Mir Sayyid-'Ali's Nighttime in a Palace, and the miniatures of the 'pocket-size' Divan of Anvari produced for the Mughal emperor Akbar. The department also has one of the most important representations of Rajasthani painting in the world.*

Wexner Center for the Arts
The Ohio State University
1871 North High Street
Columbus, Ohio
Tel: +1-614-292 35 35
Fax: +1-614-292 33 69
URL: http://www.wexarts.org/

16 September – 31 December 2000
- *Shirin Neshat: Two Installations. This Iranian-born artist first commanded attention through photographic series questioning the representation of women in Islamic culture. She then turned to moving images, such as these video installations exploring relationships between men and women in Islamic culture.*

The Detroit Institute of Arts
5200 Woodward Avenue
Detroit, Michigan 48202
Tel: +1-313-833 79 00
Fax: +1-313-833 14 54

30 July – 8 October 2000
- *Empire of the Sultans: Ottoman Art from the Khalili collection. The magnificence of the Ottoman Empire comes alive in the major exhibition. Over 200 objects ranging from Qur'ans adorned with elegant calligraphy, to scientific instruments, carpets and textiles, embrace every aspect of Ottoman art of more than six centuries.*

The Arthur M. Sackler Gallery and Freer Gallery of Art
Smithsonian Institution
Washington, DC, 20560
Tel: +1-202-357 48 80

17 September 2000 (long term)
- *Fountains of Light. Islamic Metalwork from the Nuhad Es-Said Collection. This collection – arguably the finest private collection of Islamic metalwork – consists of 27 inlaid brass, bronze and steel objects dating from the 10th to the 19th centuries.*

Through 29 October 2000
- *The Heroic Past: The Persian Book of Kings looks at the historical figures who became legendary in the great Persian epic Shahnama, composed in 1010 by the poet Firdawsi. Coins, paintings, metalwork and ceramics are on display.*

3 May 1998 – Indefinitely
- *Arts of the Islamic World. Some 60 works – Qur'an pages, metalwork, ceramics, glass, paintings, and calligraphy – from the 9th to 17th centuries, explore Islamic artistic traditions. Themes include the forms and functions of the works of art, the role of calligraphy, the use of figurative decoration, and the meaning of abstract designs.*

Continuing
- *Metalwork and Ceramics from Ancient Iran: 45 metal and clay artefacts, created in western Iran between 2300 and 100 BC are closely linked technically and aesthetically. Metalwork influences ceramic forms, colours and surface treatment; works in both media share shapes and decoration inspired by images of animals or imaginary creatures. Objects in the exhibition are on loan from private collections and from the Sackler Gallery's permanent collection.*

Continuing
- *Luxury Arts of the Silk Route Empires: In these two galleries connecting the Freer Gallery of Art and the Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, examples of metalwork and ceramics from the collections of each museum illustrate the effect of multicultural interaction on the arts of the first millennium AD Ornaments, bowls, cups, bottles, jars, mirrors, ewers, and ritual objects in gold, silver or silver and gilt, earthenware, or porcelain from Iran, China, Turkey, Syria, and Afghanistan are included in this exhibition.*

Yerba Buena Center for the Arts
San Francisco

30 September – 1 October 2000
- *Silk Road Festival features lectures, dance, theatre, books and regional cuisine.*

The Saint Louis Art Museum
1 Fine Arts Drive
St. Louis, Missouri
63110-1380 USA.
Tel: +1-314-721 00 72
Fax: +1-314-721 61 72

1 August – 25 February 2001
- *Oriental Carpets from the James F. Ballard Collection. This manufacturer from St Louis was one of the most prominent American collectors of Oriental carpets at the turn of the century. The exhibition includes rare examples of a 16th century Mamluk carpet, a 15th century Spanish carpet and early Turkish pieces known as Holbein and Lotto rugs.*

UNITED NATIONS

Magazines

Museum International
UNESCO, Paris
Blackwell Publishers
108 Cowley Road
Oxford, OX4 1JF
United Kingdom

The Agenda is produced by the Centre of Islamic Culture in Rotterdam, The Netherlands. Please send all information with regard to activities related to culture and art in the Islamic World to:
The Centre of Islamic Culture,
P.O. Box 361,
3000 AJ Rotterdam,
TheNetherlands
Fax: +31 10 270 71 82
E-mail: mediatheek@wereld museum.rotterdam.nl

Academic Meetings

Recent Conferences and Public Lectures

The Center for the Study of Islam and Democracy 1st Annual Conference

Date: 30 April 2000
Sponsored by: International Cultural Center at Georgetown University
Washington DC
Information: Sana Abed-Kotob
10026 Parkwoods Lane
Burke VA 22015, USA
Fax: +1-703-425 19 92
E-mail: sakotob@aol.com
URL: www.islam-democracy.org/

The 6th international conference of the International Boundaries Research Unit
Borders, Orders and Identities of the Muslim World

Date: 12 – 14 July 2000
Venue: The University of Durham
Information: Ms Michelle Speak, External Relations Officer
International Boundaries Research Unit, Suite 3P
Mountjoy Research Centre, University of Durham
DH1 3UR, UK
Tel: +44-191-374 77 05
Fax: +44-191-374-77 02
E-mail: michelle.speak@durham.ac.uk
URL: http://www-ibru.dur.ac.uk/ (BRCME)

Seminar on Religion and Economy

Date: 14-15 August 2000
Venue: Jakarta, Indonesia
Sponsored by: ISIM, Pusat Pengkajian Islam dan Masyarakat (PPIM), IAIN Syarif Hidayatullah
E-mail: ISIM@rullet.leidenuniv.nl
URL: http://www.isim.nl/

Fifth International Conference on Sudan Studies

Date: 30 August – 1 September 2000
Venue: Durham
Information: Dr Justin Willis, Senior Research and Development Associate
Department of History
43 North Bailey, Durham DH1 3EX, UK
Tel: +44-191-374 24 37
Fax: +44-191-374 47 54.
E-mail: Justin.Willis@Durham.ac.uk

Religion and Society in Qajar Iran

Date: 4-6 September 2000
Venue: Clifton Hill House, Bristol University, Bristol
Sponsored by: The British Institute of Persian Studies, The Iran Heritage Foundation
Information: Dr Robert Gleave (conference coordinator), Department of Theology and Religious Studies, University of Bristol, Bristol BS8 1TB, UK
Tel: + 44-117-929 78 50
Fax: +44-117-928 81 68
E-mail: r.m.gleave@bristol.ac.uk

Muslims of Europe in the New Millennium

Date: 9-10 September
Venue: Islamic Cultural Centre of Ireland, Dublin
Sponsored by: Association of Muslim Social Scientists (UK), Islamic Cultural Centre of Ireland
Information: The Association of Muslim Social Scientists
P.O. Box 126
Richmond, Surrey TW9 2UD, UK
Tel: +44-208-948 95 11/2
Fax: +44-208-940 40 14
E-mail: amss@dial.pipex.com

The Emergence of the Stereotypical Image of the Alleged Enemy in the Conflict surrounding Palestine

Date: 6-8 September 2000
Venue: Technische Universität Berlin
Hauptgebäude: Strasse des 17. Juni 1935
10623 Berlin, Hörsaal H 3010, Germany
Tel: +49-30-314 258 54
Fax: +49-30-314 211 36
E-mail: Lindner@zfa.kgw.tu-berlin.de
URL: http://www.tu-berlin.de/zfa/

Middle East Popular Culture

Date: 17 – 21 September 2000
Venue: The University of Oxford
Information: The Administrator, Near Eastern Studies Programme
The Oriental Institute
Pusey Lane, Oxford, OX1 2 LE, UK
Fax: +44-1865-27 81 90
URL: http://users.ox.ac.uk/~ near-east/conferen.htm/

The International Association of Middle Eastern Studies (IAMES) Congress 2000
Dialogue Between Cultures

Date: 4-8 October 2000
Venue: Berlin, Germany
E-mail: iames@zedat.fu-berlin.de
URL: http://www.iames.de/

Cinema and the Middle East

Date: 11-12 October 2000
Venue: Campus of the University of Mainz
Sponsored by: The international research network on 'Cinema and the Middle East'
Information: Prof. Dr Anton Escher, Centre for Research on the Arab World (CERAW), Institute of Geography, University of Mainz, 55099 Mainz, Germany
Tel: +49-6131-392 56 54
Fax: +49-6131-392 47 36
E-mail: davo.congress@geo.Uni-Mainz.de

7th Annual Congress of the German Middle East Studies Association (DAVO)

Date: 12-14 October 2000
Venue: Mainz
Information: Prof. Dr Anton Escher
Geographisches Institut, Universität Mainz, Germany
55099 Mainz, Germany
Tel: +49-6131-392 56 54
Fax: +49-6131-392 47 36
E-mail: davo.congress@geo.uni-mainz.de
URL: http://www.geo.uni-mainz.de/davo

Islam and Society in the Twenty-First Century 29th Annual AMSS (Association of Muslim Social Scientists) Convention

Date: 13-15 October 2000
Sponsored by: Georgetown University, Washington DC
Information: Deonna Kelli, AMSS Conference
PO Box 669
Herndon, VA 20172
Fax: +1-703-471 39 22
URL: http://www.iiit.org/callpapers.htm/

The Second International Conference of the Human Rights Movement in the Arab World Human Rights Education and Dissemination 21st Century Agenda

Date: 13-16 October 2000
Venue: Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies (CIHRS), Cairo
Sponsored by: UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Network (EMHRN)
Information: CIHRS
P.O. Box 117 (Maglis El-Shaab)
Cairo, Egypt
Tel: +20-2-7954 37 15/795 11 12
Fax: +20-2-7954 200
E-mail: CIHRS@idsc.gov.eg

Muslim Communities, Power and Politics in Africa

Date: 14 October 2000
Venue: Oxford Centre for Islamic Studies
George Street, Oxford, UK
Tel: +44-1864-27 87 30

Islam and Peace

Date: 23-27 October 2000
Venue: Islamic Peace Forum
4545 42nd St. NW #209
Washington DC 20016, USA
Information: Dr Karim Crow
Tel: +1-202-244 09 51
E-mail: nonviolence@igc.apc.org

Fall meeting of the Southeastern Regional Seminar on African Studies (SERSAS)

Date: 27-28 October 2000
Venue: University of Tennessee, Knoxville
Contact: Jonathan T. Reynolds, Kathy Skidmore-Hess, Aran MacKinnon
E-mail: ReynolJo@NKU.EDU, cskid@gsaix2.cc.gasou.edu, amackinn@westga.edu
URL: http://www.ecu.edu/african/sersas/homepage.htm/

The Dialogue of Civilizations

Date: 27-28 October 2000
Venue: Islamic Centre England, London
Sponsored by: Institute of Islamic Studies, London (UK), Institute for Political & International Studies (Iran), Shahid Beheshti University (Iran), Allame Tabataba'ee University (Iran) and the Islamic College for Advanced Studies (UK)
URL: http://www.islamic-studies.org/confer.htm/

Upcoming Conferences, Lecture Series and Public Events

Portugal, Spain and Morocco – the Mediterranean and the Atlantic

Date: 2-4 November 2000
Venue: Universidade do Algarve
Faro, Portugal
Information: Prof. Teresa Judice Gamito

God, Life and Cosmos: Theistic Perspectives

Date: 6-9 November 2000
Venue: Islamabad, Pakistan
Sponsored by: The Center for Theology and the Natural Sciences (CTNS), the Islamic Research Institute of the International Islamic University and the International Institute of Islamic Thought
Information: Muzaffar Iqbal
Tel: +1-780-922 09 27
Fax: +1-780-922 09 26

The Fifth Conference of the Indian Congress of Asian Pacific Studies
Asia into the 21st Century: Challenges of Peace and Transformation

Date: 8-10 November 2000
Venue: University of Jammu
Jammu, India
Contact: Brij Tankha
E-mail: btankha@yahoo.com

The US and the Middle East after the Gulf War

Date: 9-10 November 2000
Venue: La Plata University
Middle East Department, Argentina
Contact: Dr Virginia Petronis
Tel: +54-21-423 06 28
E-mail: iri@isis.unlp.edu.ar

History and Theory 2000: Disrupted Identities and the Question of the Universal

Date: 11-12 November 2000
Venue: University of California, Irvine
Information: University of California, Irvine
Department of History – History and Theory 2000
200 Humanities Office Building
Irvine, California 92697-3275, USA
Fax: +1-949-824 28 65
URL: http://www.hnet.uci.edu/history/history&theory/

Communication and the Culture of Democracy

Date: 12-15 November 2000
Venue: Journalism and Mass Communication Department of Yarmouk University
Irbid/Amman, Jordan
Sponsored by: AUSACE, The Department of Communication, The Center for International Media Education, and the Middle East Center for Peace, Culture, and Development, Georgia State University, USA
Information: Dr Issam Mousa, Yarmouk University, Dept. of Journalism and Mass Communication, Irbid, Jordan
Fax: +962-2-727 46 82
E-mail: issam@vu.edu.jo

Middle East Studies Association Meeting (MESA) 34th Meeting: Representations of the Middle East

Date: 16-19 November 2000
Venue: Orlando, Florida
Information: Middle East Studies Association of North America, University of Arizona, 1643 East Helen Street, Tucson, Arizona 85721, USA
Tel: +1-520-621 58 50
Fax: +1-520-626 90 95
E-mail: mesana@u.arizona.edu
URL: http://www.mesa.arizona.edu/

A Critique of the Mosque Institution in Malaysia

Date: 20 November 2000
Sponsored by: The Aga Khan Programme for Architecture
Venue: Massachusetts Institute of Technology, room 3/133
Massachusetts, USA
Tel: +1-617-253 1400
E-mail: akpiarch@mit.edu

The United States and the Middle East: A Cultural Encounter

Date: 8-9 December 2000
Venue: Yale University, New Haven, USA
Sponsored by: Yale University, Hofstra University
Information: Magnus Bernhardsson
Tel: +1-516-463 56 07
E-mail: Hismzb@Hofstra.edu

Third International Conference on Gender and Equity Issues

Date: 5-7 January 2001
Venue: Radisson Hotel, Bangkok, Thailand
Sponsored by: Srinakharinwirot University and Salisbury State University
Information: Dr Amporn Srisermbhok, Faculty of Humanities
Srinakharinwirot University, Sukhumvit 23
Bangkok 10110, Thailand
Tel: +66-2-260 01 26
Fax: +66-2-260 19 14
E-mail: ampornsr@swu.ac.th
Contact: Dr Thomas L. Erskine, English Department
Salisbury State University, Salisbury, Maryland 21801, USA
Tel: +1-410-543 63 71
Fax: + 1-410-548 21 42
E-mail: tlerskine@ssu.edu

Qadhafi's Libya

Date: 23 January 2001 (provisional)
Sponsored by: Society for Libyan Studies
Information: Society for Libyan Studies, c/o Institute of Archaelogy
31-4 Gordon Square, London WC1 0PY, UK

Southeast Asia Across Borders: Transnational Islam in Southeast Asia

Date: 1 March 2001
Sponsored by: Netherlands Institute for War Documentation, International Institute of Asian Studies (IIAS)
Information: Dr Peter Post, Netherlands Institute for War Documentation
Tel: +31-20-523 38 00
E-mail: p.post@oorlogsdoc.knaw.nl
URL: http://www.oorlogsdoc.knaw.nl/

Muslim Minority Societies in Europe

Date: 2-3 March 2001
Venue: Erfurt University
Contact: Prof. Jamal Malik, Chair of Islamic Studies
Erfurt University, P.O. Box 900221
99105 Erfurt, Germany
Tel: +49-361-737 41 00
Fax: +49-361-737 41 19
E-mail: jamal.malik@uni-erfurt.de

International Conference on Medical Ethics and Medical Law in Islam

Date: 19-21 March 2001
Venue: University of Haifa, Israel
Sponsored by: The Department of Arabic Language and Literature and the Centre for Health, Law, and Ethics at the Faculty of Law, University of Haifa, Israel
URL: http://hcc.haifa.ac.il/islammed/ http://research.haifa.ac.il/~webhum/arabic/research.htm/

Second Mediterranean Social and Political Research Meeting

Date: 21-25 March 2001
Venue: Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies
European University Institute
Information: Imco Brouwer, Mediterranean Programme Coordinator
Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies
European University Institute
Via dei Roccettini 9
50016 San Domenico di Fiesole, Florence, Italy
Tel: +39-055-468 57 83
Fax: +39-055-468 57 70
E-mail: brouwer@iue.it

XXVIII. German Orientalists Day

Date: 26 March 2001
Sponsored by: Deutsche Morgenländische Gesellschaft
Contact: Maurus Reinkowski
An der Universität 11
96045 Bamberg, Germany
Tel: +49-951-863 21 96
Fax: +49-951-863 51 82
E-mail: dot2001@split.uni-bamberg.de

Considering Consumption, Production, and the Market in the Constitution of Meaning in the Middle East and Beyond

Date: March – June 2001
Venue: The Department of Middle East Studies at Ben-Gurion University
Information: Dr Relli Shechter, Department of Middle East Studies
Ben-Gurion University
Beer-Sheva, 84105, Israel
Tel: +972-7-647 77 63
Fax: +972-7-647 29 52
E-mail: rellish@bgumail.bgu.ac.il

Arab Legal Systems in Transition

Date: 5-6 April 2001
Sponsored by: The Center for Contemporary Arab Studies
Georgetown University
Contact: Ms. Anne Marie Chaaraoui, Symposium Manager
Georgetown University, Center for Contemporary Arab Studies, ICC 241
37th and O Streets, NW, Washington, DC 20057-1020, USA
Tel: +1-202-687 57 93
Fax: +1-202-687 70 01
E-mail: ccasinfo@gunet.georgetown.edu
URL: www.ccasonline.org/

Workshops in South Asian Islam
Challenging the Narratives of National and Religious Hegemony

Date: 13-15 April 2001
Venue: The University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill
Contact: Tony K. Stewart, Director North Carolina Center for South Asia Studies
Triangle South Asia Consortium
Campus Box 8101, North Carolina State University
Raleigh, NC 27695-8101, USA
Tel: +1-919-515 63 35; +1-919-513 87 23
Fax: +1-919-513 43 51; +1-919-513 14 47
URL: http://www2.ncsu.edu/tsac/slam.html/

Islam in Africa
A global, cultural and historical perspective

Date: 19-22 April 2001
Sponsored by: The Institute of Global Cultural Studies (IGCS)
Information: Michael Toler, Tracia Leacock
Institute of Global Cultural Studies
Binghamton University
PO Box 6000 LNG-100
Binghamton, NY 13905, USA
Tel: +1-607-777 44 94
Fax: +1-607-777 26 42
E-mail: igcs@binghamton.edu

Religion and the State in the Arab World: Conflict or Accommodation?

Date: 28-30 April 2001
Sponsored by: The Egyptian Historical Society, The Higher Council for Culture, Cairo, Egypt
Information: Assem Desouki
E-mail: lollafarida@yahoo.com

Sexualities in Transition

Date: 12-16 June 2001
Venue: Dubrovnik, Croatia
Information: Dr A. Stulhofer
The Kinsey Institute
Morrison Hall 313
Bloomington, IN 47405-2501, USA
Tel: +1-812-855 76 87
Fax: +1-812-855 82 77
E-mail: AStulhof@Indiana.edu
URL:http://www.csun.edu/~sr2022/events.html/

Education and Training in the Arab World: Challenges for the 21st Century

Date: September 2001
Venue: Marrakech, Morocco
Sponsored by: AMIDEAST (America-Mideast Educational and Training Services, Inc.), under the High Patronage of H.M. Mohammed VI, Kingdom of Morocco
Information: Ruth Sexton, Vice President
Public Relations and Development
1730 M St. NW, Suite 1100
Washington DC 20036, USA
E-mail: Rsexton@amideast.org

Encounters: Germany and Arabia
An Interdisciplinary Symposium

Date: 29 September – 4 October 2001
Venue: Al-Ain
Sponsored by: The University of the United Arab Emirates, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences
Information: German – Arabic Symposium
c/o Dr Muhammad Abu al Fadl Badran
Department of Arabic, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences
UAE University, PO Box 17771, Al-Ain, United Arab Emirates
E-mail: MBadran@uaeu.ac.ae

The Middle East Studies Association of North America (MESA) 35th Annual Meeting

Date: 17-20 November 2001
Venue: Hyatt Regency, San Francisco, USA
Information: Mark Lowder
Tel: +1-520/626 62 90
E-mail: mlowder@u.arizona.edu

Workshops in South Asian Islam: Music and Literary Production

Date: 12-14 April 2002
Venue: North Carolina State University
Contact: Tony K. Stewart, Director North Carolina Center for South Asia Studies
Triangle South Asia Consortium
Campus Box 8101, North Carolina State University
Raleigh, NC 27695-8101, USA
Tel: +1-919-515 63 35, +1-919-513 87 23
Fax: +1-919-513 43 51, +1-919-513 14 47
URL: http://www2.ncsu.edu/tsac/slam.html/

First World Congress for Middle East Studies

Date: 11-14 September 2002
Venue: Mainz, Germany
Sponsored by: The Middle East Studies Association of North America (MESA), The European Association for Middle Eastern Studies (EURAMES), The British Society for Middle East Studies (BRISMES), The German Middle East Studies Association (DAVO)
Information: Gunter Meyer, Centre for Research on the Arab World
Institute of Geography, University of Mainz
55099 Mainz, Germany
Tel: +49-6131-392 46 35
E-mail: davo@geo.uni-mainz.de
URL: www.geo.uni-mainz.de/davo/

Images of Loss and Reconciliation:
Political and Literary Representations of Forced Migrations in Comparative Perspective

Date: September 2002, April 2003
Venue: University of Bath, England, UK
Information: Prof. Ian Wallace and Dr Stefan Wolff
E-mail: S.Wolff@bath.ac.uk.

Workshops in South Asian Islam: 'Imaginaire' in South Asia

Date: 18-20 April 2003
Venue: Duke University
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If you wish to have a formula sent by e-mail, fax, or post, please contact the ISIM Secretariat:
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Contents

ISIM Events

Arrival of ISIM Visiting Professor, Abdellahi A. An-Naim
Date: 1 October 2000

Inaugural Lecture: *Muslim Jurists' Quest for the Normative Basis of Shariᶜa*
Muhammad Khalid Masud, ISIM chair, Leiden University
Date: 20 October 2000
Venue: Leiden

ISIM Annual Lecture by Talal Asad
Date: 30 October 2000
Venue: Leiden

Guest Lecture by Gilles Kepel
Date: 2 November 2000
Venue: Leiden

Inaugural Lecture: *Muslims, Minorities and Modernities*
The restructuring of heterodoxy in the Middle East and Southeast Asia
Martin van Bruinessen, ISIM chair, Utrecht University
Date: 21 November 2000
Venue: Utrecht, The Netherlands

ISIM Master class by Abdellahi An-Naim: *Key Issues in Human Rights*
Date: 27-30 November 2000
Venue: Leiden

Atelier: Africa and Islam: Moral Discourses and Construction of Identities
Date: February – May 2001

Summer Academy: *The Local Productionof Islamic Knowledge*
In cooperation with the Working Group Modernity and Islam
Date: 3-14 September 2001
Venue: Istanbul, Turkey

Workshop: *The Application of Islamic Law in Muslim Courts*
In cooperation with Cornell University
Date: October 2001
Venue: The Netherlands

For more information on these and other ISIM Events:
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for the study of islam in the modern world

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