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for the study of islam
in the modern world

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Muslim migrants in Europe are often represented as people who move from a bounded cultural and physical location to the global world, where they are seen as either resisting or absorbing global (Western) cultural traits. This holds particularly true when it comes to representations of migrant women from Islamic countries. Indeed, in popular and often in academic understandings, there is a growing tendency to perceive Muslim women who adopt Islamic symbols as embodying an 'authentic' and traditional culture, as opposed to secularized women who, on the contrary, are often seen as hybrid or westernized – and therefore 'modern'. These discourses find an echo in a trend that is forcefully taking place in the Middle East.

Confronting Modernities
Muslim Women in Italy

RUBA SALIH

In the last few years, there has been a plethora of arguments maintaining that by combining Islamic behaviour with the quest for self-determination, Muslim women are attaining a more 'culturally authentic' path towards a self-determination that rejects westernization and the homogenizing processes inherent in globalization.

In the context of migration, 'multicultural' perspectives reinforce this kind of understanding by perceiving Muslims as embodying an essence, claiming respect for a set of static and immutable traditions that they would automatically and uniformly reproduce in continuity with supposedly past practices and beliefs. Although disguised by the narrative of respect for cultural difference, these representations 'reduce the *history* of the present to the *nature* of an invariant essence' (Al-Azmeh, 1996 [1993]: 62).

This article draws upon extended research conducted between 1996 and 1998 among Muslim women, predominantly of Moroccan origin, residing in the Emilia Romagna region in the north of Italy.[1] One of the aims of the larger research project was to show how, far from being a shared identity, being Muslim implies a battlefield for contesting and opposing discourses on authenticity, tradition and modernity. Very often at stake in these representations are the definitions of the boundaries that mark belonging to a 'community' or national group.

In the Middle East, secular oriented women's movements have been historically accused of threatening the cultural homogeneity of the national community by introducing Western models and behaviour, and therefore they were and still are labelled as culturally inauthentic, or 'westernized' by the establishment (see Al-Ali, 2000). For Muslim migrants in Europe, the processes of contestation surrounding 'authenticity' and 'tradition' may be amplified, since the boundaries of the 'community' are more in danger of being jeopardized and, therefore, certain Islamic symbols may be actively chosen or imposed as crucial markers of cultural difference.

Indeed, an understanding of Muslim women's multiple attitudes towards Islam could not dismiss the role played by migration and travel (Eickelman and Piscatori, 1990) and by the new place women inhabit (Metcalf, 1996). The articulation between Islam and discourses around authenticity and tradition is also a significant arena through for grasping, among other things, the diverse processes of identity-renegotiation through which Muslim women respond to a new life in a new place (Salih, 2000).

PHOTO: MARCEL VAN DEN BERGH

Muslims and Islamists

For some Moroccan women, and indeed also for some Italian or other Arab Muslim women, Islam is the most crucial aspect of their identity. These women are usually young and well educated, wear a *hijab*, regularly meet in the mosque to study, and endorse what could be defined generically as an Islamist discourse.

These women could be defined as 'Islamist'. They interpret their involvement in learning and knowing the religious texts as the modern way of being a Muslim woman. At the same time, it seems that only by being truly Muslim can a woman be modern. Study is synonymous with knowledge and modernity. But knowledge can only be Islamic. As one woman stated:

The atmosphere in our families is not really and completely Islamic. Instead of taking a break in our days from our duties to read and study the Qur'an, we are always watching television, handling the remote control. If we continue behaving in such a way, we will remain ignorant, at a low level. We won't learn anything.

Although Islamic practices are shaped by the new local space they inhabit, Islamist women claim that their life in a new country where Muslims represent a minority did not play a role in their rediscovery or reinforcement of an Islamic identity. They perceive themselves as part of the *umma*, an imagined transnational community scattered all over the world, and often insist on defining Islam as a universal religion, with no local variations.

For other women who are not involved with activities in the mosque, who usually do not wear a *hijab*, and only sporadically practise some or all of the pillars of Islam, being Muslim in Italy either remains or becomes a generic sign of belonging. They might define themselves first as Moroccans or Arabs, and then as Muslims, although their reflections and thoughts about themselves and others often revolve around Islam since in their day to day life in Italy, Islam is the primary frame through which their identities are filtered. These women are nonetheless Muslim, as they consider themselves spiritually, culturally and socially as such. This is important since it is a first way to stress that, although they negotiate religion in various ways *vis à vis* the Italian society, these women are neither hybrid, as they are sometimes defined in other contexts (cf. Khan, 1998), nor westernized. The term hybridity, used to describe these secular attitudes, is misleading for it assumes Islamism is historically and naturally 'authentic', denying its political and profoundly modern nature, whereas women who adopt secular stances are described as deviating from the 'norm'.

Confronting modernities

'Tradition' and 'Islam' are often erroneously seen as overlapping. By attributing different meanings to Islam, women display and articulate different narratives of modernity. For Islamist women, modernity is possible only through knowledge and devout practice of Islam, which is nonetheless presented as a break with past traditions. This new Islam represents their way to progress and to social, cultural and spiritual self-fulfilment. Other women, on the contrary, are engaged with modernity as a fracture, a process of ongoing crisis between past certainties and current challenges, between the refusal of assimilation and the impetus for secularization, and they express this tension through a constant negotiation of and reflection upon diverse cultural models and practices.

Women who embrace Islam in Italy do so in an attempt to distinguish themselves from Western society, asserting a project of

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Editorial

DICK DOUWES | *Editor*

On 27 November 2000, sixty years after the Leiden Professor Cleveringa delivered a speech protesting against the dismissal of all Jewish professors by the Nazi regime, the chair dedicated to the memory of this scholar was granted to Nasr Hamid Abu Zayd, the most well known refugee scholar in the field of Islamic Studies. The prestigious Cleveringa Chair is awarded to defenders of freedom of thought and conscience.

Abu Zayd's inaugural speech was devoted to the Qur'an 'as a channel of communication, where God and man meet without being one. I mean without God being humanized, nor man being divined.'* In this speech he designed a Qur'anic model inspired by the philosophical system of the famous mystic Muhyi al-Din Ibn al-ʿArabi. By presenting the Qur'an as a mode of communication between God and man that goes beyond mere law and politics, Abu Zayd sought to prevent locking 'the Word of God in the moment of its historical annunciation.' Only towards the end of his speech did Abu Zayd take a firm position in the conflict that forced him to leave his country; the polarization between Islamists and secularists. He critiques the Islamist discourse, in particular literal interpretations of the Qur'an, arguing that 'if everything mentioned in the Qur'an is to be literally followed as a divine law, Muslims should re-institute "slavery" as [a] socio-economic system.' But on the whole, Abu Zayd was careful not to be too provocative. Since his audience consisted primarily of Dutch university faculty and students, his few critical remarks directed against the Islamists were received favourably. His having placed Cleveringa's historic speech in the context of the current violence inflicted daily upon Palestinians was far more provocative for parts of this audience.

Within the span of five weeks, Leiden University welcomed its second professor from the Muslim World, Muhammad Khalid Masud having given his inaugural speech on October 20 (see p. 5). Masud addressed the contradictions between sharicʿa ideals and social norms in Muslim societies. Similar to Abu Zayd, Masud critiqued the divinization of the sharicʿa by Islamists. In particular, he pointed to the problem of social norms that have been incorporated into the sharicʿa now being 'considered immutable or divine, due to the conception of the Sharicʿa as divine'. Masud called for a larger public participation in the process of law making.

With the inaugural speeches (see p. 5) of Muhammad Khalid Masud, ISIM Chair at Leiden University, and Martin van Bruinessen, ISIM Chair at Utrecht University, the ISIM has confirmed its place within the participating institutions, while at the same time profiling its internationally oriented research programmes. Van Bruinessen highlighted responses from among heterodox communities to modernity, focusing on the Alevis of Turkey and the Kebatinan movement in Indonesia, both being indicative of the rise of learned varieties of local traditions.

With the appointment of Annelies Moors to the ISIM Chair at the University of Amsterdam (see p. 3), the ISIM is able to develop programmes in the fields of 'gender, state formation, and Islamic law', and 'media, visual representations and cultural politics'.

The ISIM Chair at the University of Nijmegen (see vacancy announcement, below) will pave the way for further expansion of the ISIM. Peter van der Veer (see below) has joined the ISIM as co-director in order to help to sustain the growth of the Institute. ◂▸

* The entire text of 'The Qur'an: God and man in communication' can be found on http://www.let.leidenuniv.nl/forum/onderzoek/jan/2.htm

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Vacancy

ISIM Chair at the **University of Nijmegen**

The ISIM and the University of Nijmegen invite applications for the ISIM Chair 'Social Processes in the Contemporary Muslim World' at the University of Nijmegen. The chair is to be established at the Department of the Middle East of the Faculty of Arts in cooperation with the Faculty of Social Sciences and the Faculty of Theology.

The International Institute for the Study of Islam in the Modern World (ISIM), based in Leiden, promotes and conducts research on contemporary social, intellectual, and religious trends and movements in Muslim societies and communities. The ISIM's research approaches are expressly interdisciplinary and comparative and cover the Muslim world in its entirety, including Muslim communities in Europe. The Institute has already established ISIM chairs at Utrecht University, Leiden University and the University of Amsterdam.

The Faculties of the Arts, Social Sciences and Theology at the University of Nijmegen organize more than 20 degree programmes and conduct a series of research programmes at 6 institutes. Together these faculties employ over 750 permanent staff members and count more than 7000 students.

Candidates should:
- have an established international reputation in the study of contemporary Muslim societies and communities;
- have extensive knowledge of one or more regions and be well versed in comparative social science research;
- have a strong record of field experience;
- have wide-ranging international academic contacts;
- have an excellent command of languages relevant to their field of research as well as fluency in English; and
- have experience in teaching and supervising research.

The holder of the ISIM Chair will be expected to carry out the following tasks at the University of Nijmegen:
- initiate and develop research programmes and conduct research within the framework of the cooperation between the University of Nijmegen and the ISIM;
- teach classes and provide supervision to undergraduate and graduate students; and
- contribute to various other academic activities such as conferences and special lectures in cooperation with the other ISIM chairholders.

Foreign candidates are expected to acquire a working knowledge of Dutch within two years.

This ISIM Professorship is a full-time position at the University of Nijmegen for a maximum of five years. Continuation of the chair after five years will be subject to review by the University. Female candidates are especially encouraged to apply.

Review of applications will begin on 27 April 2001.

Applicants should send a full CV, including a list of publications, copies of three key publications, and the names of two referees, to:

Prof. Muhammad Khalid Masud
ISIM
P.O. Box 11089
2301 EB Leiden
The Netherlands

For further information, please contact the ISIM:
Tel: +31 (0)71 527 79 05
Fax: +31 (0)71 527 79 06
E-mail: isim@rullet.leidenuniv.nl

Applicants may wish to consult the internet sites of the ISIM (www.isim.nl) and the University of Nijmegen (www.kun.nl).

Appointments

ISIM Co-Director **Prof. Peter van der Veer**

Prof. Dr Peter van der Veer has been appointed co-director of the ISIM, commencing 1 February 2001, for a period of 2.5 years. His task will be to cooperate with the ISIM Academic Director, Professor Dr Muhammad Khalid Masud, in providing leadership to the ISIM and enhancing its visibility in the Netherlands and Europe in general. His activities will focus mainly on the development of relations with the ISIM participating universities and the expansion of relations with other national and international institutions. Furthermore, his function will include the presentation and presence of the Institute in public debates.

Van der Veer is professor of Comparative Religion at the University of Amsterdam, director of the Research Center Religion and Society (website: www.pscw.uva.nl/gm), which he founded in 1993, and dean of the Amsterdam School for Social Science Research (website: www.pscw.uva.nl/assr/reports.html).

Having initially studied Indo-Iranian languages at the University of Groningen, Van der Veer obtained his PhD in anthropology from the University of Utrecht in 1986. He has conducted fieldwork in South Asia (Ayodhya, Surat) and in the Netherlands (The Hague) among Surinamese Hindus. His primary research focus is the study of religion and nationalism in South Asia. He has taught anthropology at the Free University of Amsterdam, the University of Utrecht and the University of Pennsylvania, USA. Moreover, he has held visiting positions at the London School of Economics, the University of Chicago and the Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales in Paris. Among his numerous publications are: *Gods on Earth* (London 1988), a study on Hindu pilgrimage; *Religious Nationalism* (Berkeley 1994), which is a study on Hindu and Muslim nationalism in the Indian Subcontinent; *Nation and Migration* (Philadelphia 1995); and *Conversion to Modernities* (New York 1997). Together with Hartmut Lehmann, he edited *Nation and Religion* (Princeton 1999). His new book, *Imperial Encounters*, will be published by Princeton University Press in June 2001.

Appointments

ISIM Chair at the University of Amsterdam
Annelies Moors

Annelies Moors' interest in the Middle East dates from the 1970s when she travelled extensively in Turkey, Iran, Iraq, Syria, Lebanon and Jordan. Having spent time with Arabic-speaking people in southern Iran, she decided to study Arabic. Initially she did so through an Arabic language programme at the University of Damascus. After returning to the Netherlands, she continued studying Arabic and Islamic studies at the University of Amsterdam, but soon decided to make a disciplinary move to anthropology in order to be able to work not only with texts, but also with people. Her first fieldwork brought her to the Nablus region (West Bank) where she conducted research on transformations in family relations and the division of labour in the rural areas. After graduation, she was appointed as part-time lecturer at the Department of Anthropology at the University of Amsterdam.

In 1987, she received a PhD research grant and returned to the Nablus region to begin her doctoral research on women and property. This project set out to investigate under what circumstances women claim property rights, when they are prevented from doing so, and in which contexts they give up property in order to gain other advantages. While ethnographic fieldwork, including the collection of topical life stories of women from very different walks of life, is central to this study, her use of court records has enabled her to address major historical changes in women's ability to negotiate their rights to property. In 1992, she obtained her PhD from the University of Amsterdam; a revised version of her dissertation was published under the title: *Women, Property and Islam. Palestinian Experiences 1920-1990* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995).

The following years, Annelies Moors also held appointments at the Department of Anthropology at Leiden University and the Department of Theology and Religious Studies at the University of Amsterdam. Her work on women and property led her to further develop two lines of research. As gold jewellery turned out to be a major form of property that a large number of women have access to, she further investigated the material and emotional meanings of gold jewellery to its wearers. Shifting notions about the value of different types of gold have not only implications for women's economic security, but are also central to processes of identity formation and negotiations of status. Next to this, her work on the Nablus *shari'a* court led her to continue work on gender and family law, and, more specifically, to address the relations between processes of state formation, the nature of legal texts and women's individual and collective strategies.

In 1995 Annelies Moors obtained a research grant to work on 'the body politics of photography'. Dealing with a great variety of published photographs, such as early 20th -century picture postcards, Israeli and Palestinian postcards from the 1970s-1990s, illustrations in *National Geographic* magazine, and photo-histories published by various interested parties, this project investigates how such imagery represents Palestinian women as emblems of national, religious, class and local identities. In many, sometimes ambiguous and even contradictory, ways these pictures are implicated in debates about modernity and cultural authenticity.

Starting in 1998 Annelies Moors was invited to teach at the Women's Studies Centre of the University of Sana'a. She designed and taught three intensive courses (in Arabic) on qualitative social science methods and on analysing gender in text and images. Advising students about issues of methodology for a wide variety of research projects was a great opportunity for her to be engaged in Yemeni society. It also enabled her to conduct research on women's narratives about covering or uncovering the face, and to analyse how these changing styles of dress relate to notions of modernity and women's involvement in the public sphere.

Apart from her publication on *Women, Property and Islam*, Annelies Moors is the co-editor of *Discourse and Palestine: Power, Text and Context* (1995). She has also published numerous articles on Islamic family law, visual representation, cultural politics, and the biographic method. Her appointment to the ISIM Chair at the University of Amsterdam commenced on 1 January 2001. ◆▶

MISCELLANEOUS

Human Rights and Islam

Workshop Report

KITTY HEMMER

Every orthodoxy starts as a heresy', as Abdullahi Ahmed An-Na'im pointed out at the workshop 'Human Rights and Islam', organized by the ISIM on 22 January 2001. With this remark, addressed to an audience of Dutch ambassadors residing in the Asian and Middle-Eastern Islamic countries, An-Na'im wished to stress that the acknowledgement of universal human rights by Islamic countries is a process, and that Western diplomats should be attentive to, and create spaces for, dissenting voices from within. This stance was shared by the other two speakers at the workshop: Cassandra Balchin, Deputy Office coordinator of the NGO Women Living Under Muslim Laws, and Karim Ghezraoui, coordinator of regional projects for the Arab and Asia-Pacific regions at the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner of Human Rights (OHCHR) in Geneva.

The workshop was part of the annual Ambassadors Conference in which all Dutch ambassadors convene at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in The Hague. Given that human rights are important to Dutch foreign policy, the Ministry and the ISIM decided to devote a morning session to the tension between universal rights and local cultures, with particular reference to the Islamic Middle East and Asia.

An-Na'im opened the workshop with a strong argument on the necessity of the legitimization of human rights in Islamic societies, because without strong political support governments are unlikely to accept these rights as legally binding. Moreover, forcing human rights on other societies is considered a violation of the basic right to self-determination. According to An-Na'im, reconciliation between the Islamic and human rights perspectives is possible: the problem is not so much theological, but political. Those who challenge the prevailing notions of Islam need human rights to protect them. An-Na'im, as did the other speakers, also pointed out the disproportionate attention given by the West to political and civil rights, with disregard of the equally important economic, social and cultural rights (see p. 6 of this issue).

Karim Ghezraoui explained the lines of policy of the UN concerning human rights in the Asia-Pacific region, including the Arab world. The OHCHR believes in national capacity-building for promotion and protection of human rights, but also fosters regional exchanges of experiences between national human rights institutions, and cooperation with regional partners.

'Human rights and domestic violence' was the theme of the last speaker, Cassandra Balchin. Balchin offered significant examples of how the West tends to view the Islamic world from a 'liberal-relativist' position, and often simplistically targets a particular culture or religion as the cause for certain human rights violations. For instance, a Netherlands-sponsored UN draft resolution on the obligation of states to prevent honour crimes was introduced to the delegations in such a way that it pit some Arab and other Muslim countries against industrialized countries, which consequently led to the abstention of their votes. 'Try to work out a consensus instead of pushing governments against the wall', Balchin argued. Another general misconception, she continued, is that secular laws are viewed as less discriminating than Islamic or Islamicized laws. Turkey, a secular state, acknowledges *mitigating* circumstances for the perpetrator of an honour crime, whereas in Pakistan, an Islamic state, the law attaches a harsher punishment for the same crime due to *aggravating* circumstances. It may be evident that violations of human rights have nothing to do with religion or culture, but everything with power.

The session was concluded with a forum discussion which revolved around, among other issues, how to build consensus while allowing for the expression of a critical voice, and how to develop consistent policies. To all participants it was clear that the acceptance of human rights as *really* universal is a time-consuming process. ◆▶

Kitty Hemmer is currently doing an internship at the ISIM. She is finalizing her MA on modern history of the Middle East at Leiden University. E-mail: kaka@wxs.nl

The Local Production of Islamic Knowledge

Summer Academy

Seventy-five doctoral and postdoctoral researchers from 33 countries have applied (the deadline having been on January 15) to this year's international Summer Academy, co-organized by the Working Group Modernity and Islam and the International Institute for the Study of Islam in the Modern World. The Summer Academy will be held in cooperation with several European research institutes in Istanbul and the Department of Political Science and International Relations of the Yildiz Technical University, also in Istanbul.

The Summer Academy, which will take place from 3-14 September 2001, will offer the opportunity to 24 young researchers to meet and discuss their research for two weeks in an international and interdisciplinary setting. Martin van Bruinessen (ISIM), Altan Gokalp (Centre Marc Bloch, Berlin) and several faculty members of the host University, including Professor Kemali Saybasili, Dr Fulya Atacan and Dr Gencer Özcan, will be joined by the following tutors:

- *Professor John Bowen* (Center for the Study of Islamic Societies and Civilizations, Washington University in St. Louis)
- *Dr Ayşe Caglar* (Institut für Ethnologie, Freie Universität Berlin)
- *Professor Dale Eickelman* (Dartmouth College/ currently a fellow at the - Wissenschaftskolleg zu Berlin)
- *Professor Anke von Kügelgen* (Institut für Islamwissenschaft und Neuere Orientalische Philologie, Universität Bern)
- *Professor Joergen S. Nielsen* (Centre for the Study of Islam and Christian- Muslim Relations; Selly Oak Colleges; Birmingham)
- *Dr Günter Seufert* (Orient-Institut der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft in Istanbul).

The Academy will be mostly devoted to discussions within working groups, of five to seven participants and two tutors, where the projects of the participants and the general themes are debated. As the Academy should have the character of a workshop, the major challenge for every participant will be to present and rethink his or her work, which in most cases is highly specialized, relating it not only to the overall topic of the academy but also making it relevant to the other participants. The discussions will be based on the projects of the participants and a collection of essential readings. The project descriptions of the participants will be made available in a volume of the journal *Istanbuler Almanach*, edited by Orient Institute of the DMG (Deutsche Morgenländische Gesellschaft), and on the ISIM website.

A number of guest lectures by Turkish scholars will familiarize the participants with ongoing debates in the host country on the theme of the Academy. The cooperation with the Orient Institute of the DMG, the Institut Français d'Etudes Anatoliennes, the Swedish Research Institute in Istanbul, and the Netherlands Historical-Archaeological Institute will be an opportunity to become acquainted with their researchers, research facilities, and programmes. Tutors will be asked to give one lecture related to the theme of the Academy. These lectures will be open to the public. ◆▶

Requests for a programme of the Summer Academy may be requested, no earlier than July 2001, from either Georges Khalil (khalil@wiko-berlin.de) or Dick Douwes (douwes@rullet.leidenuniv.nl).

Post-Doctoral Project

KARIN VAN NIEUWKERK

Migrating Islam
Changes in Religious Discourse

In the Western nation-state, the government, the media and the dominant culture determine who is regarded as a minority and what constitutes difference, whether ethnic, religious or otherwise. The attributes of groups used as markers of difference can change over time, but increasingly religion is used as an immutable marker.

What is at stake in discourses about religious difference is an underlying concept of a reified and essentialized culture. According to Bauman (1999), there are two theories of culture: the essentialist and the processual theory of culture. That is, culture is comprehended as something one has, or as a process one shapes.

The interesting point Bauman makes is that the social scientist should not make a simple choice between the 'wrong' essentialist and 'right' processual notion of culture, but should study the reasons and processes by which people change from an essentialist discourse into the processual discourse and vice versa. People are endowed with a 'dual discursive competence'. They know when to reify their own religious identity and when to query their own reification.

The study on 'Migrating Islam: Changes in Religious Discourse among Moroccan Migrant Women in the Netherlands' focuses on the 'discursive competence' of the study group. The religious perceptions, practices and identifications of female believers are relatively neglected in current research. Women often symbolize and demarcate boundaries between social, religious and ethnic groups. In many studies, women are therefore particularly analysed as symbols. 'Women as religious actors' is a less well-documented phenomenon. This study perceives women as agents who actively shape religious practices.

'Migrating Islam' will be investigated at two intertwined levels: that of speaking about Islam and its central tenets and that of religious practice. Upon migration, Islam undergoes a dual process of universalization and localization. Among young generations, there is a tendency to reject the parents' conformity to pre-migration cultural traditions. They strive for an authentic universal Islam. Thus, the change in religious discourse among the generations should be systematically compared.

This research consists of two parts. The more general part will analyse the main changes in religious experience and practice as a result of migration to the Netherlands. It focuses on the way women speak about Islam, its perceived adaptability to new circumstances, its changing meaning in daily life. It will particularly focus on such central conceptions as *halal* and *haram* and document changes among the generations.

The second part provides an in-depth study of the religious concept of *ajr* (religious merit). *Ajr* points to the spiritual compensation one obtains for meritorious deeds. Collecting *ajr* is particularly important in the religious experience and practice of women. There are indications that this central concern of spiritual life in Morocco changes upon migration to the Netherlands. In general, it appears to be more difficult to collect *ajr* in the Dutch context. Several means of gaining merit, such as by visiting graves, is almost absent in the new context. New forms of meritorious deeds, mostly related to dress code, appear to gain prominence in the new secular circumstances. Distinctions between the universal and essential versus the cultural and non-essential in religious doctrines appear to be sorted out. Changing practices of collecting merit thus provide insight into processes of localization and universalization of Islamic discourse. New local productions of Islamic discourse appear to take on a universal form. ◆▶

Karin van Nieuwkerk is a lecturer in social anthropology, Middle East Studies and Mediterranean Studies at Nijmegen University, the Netherlands, and is a fellow at the ISIM. She is author of A Trade Like Any Other: Female Singers and Dancers in Egypt, *Texas University Press (1995).*
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Post-Doctoral Project

MATTHIJS VAN DEN BOS

Anthropological Exploration of Modern Self

The anthropological research about to undertaken in this project centres around modern Shiᶜite Sufi identity in Iran, which will be dealt with by exploring the construction of modern self in the Soltanᶜalishahi order. This and possibly other Iranian orders will be compared. Also compared will be two instances of modernity: the coming into being of the nation-state in early 20th-century Iran (particularly 1905–1911 and 1921–1941), and the re-emergence of a civil society since the last decade of the 20th century (especially since 1997). It is presumed that the former periods evidenced state-oriented identity formations, while the latter period witnessed more anti-statist ones. These are two variations of a modern Sufi orientation towards the Iranian nation.

Many classical monographs in the anthropology of Islam have, explicitly or implicitly, juxtaposed Sufism and modernity. At first sight, the contemporary construction of Shiᶜite Sufi self and the modern nation-state may seem unrelated: Sufi representations of the self apparently have been marked by a persistent distancing from the 'here and now', while (Iranian) nation-state modernity has been characterized by an activist appropriation of it. It can be argued, however, that the two have been intimately related.

The construction of self in modern Iran has been closely related to 'alterity', taking the shape of either a nativism that demonized the West, or an appropriation of Western traditions in order to – paradoxically – attain 'authenticity'. This latter line of reasoning was expressed by an early 20th-century Sufi, Keyvan-e Qazvini, who criticized the following of Sufi masters and proposed rational authority on a Western educational basis that would benefit the Iranian nation. The background to these concerns was the perception of Western success in social, military and administrative order. In propagating worthy subjects of the Iranian nation-state, Qazvini epitomized Reza Shah's modernity.

While the case of a state-oriented 'positive alterity' seems well represented by early 20th-century Sufis such as Qazvini, the nature of the attitude towards the West in present-day Iranian Sufism remains, in the first instance, an open empirical question. However, there are several indications that allow for calculated guesses. 'Mysticism' has been used by Iranian intellectuals such as Ahmad Fardid and Reza Davari – both paradoxically influenced by Heidegger – to argue for the authentic legitimacy of the Islamic Republic *vis-à-vis* the West. A contrary trend has been established in the writings of Iran's most famous intellectual, ᶜAbdolkarim Sorush, who identified authentic Shiᶜite religiosity in Sufism while simultaneously defending Western traditions of pluralism and civil society. Sorush favours the Soltanᶜalishahi order, having even made a trip to its centre in Khorasan to meet with the spiritual master.

In the Safiᶜalishahi order, I witnessed a recent trend in which freedom and personal choice were made central in informal sessions that allowed for an atmosphere of free debate and implicit criticism of authoritarianism in the state. My analyses will focus on practices surrounding and discourse about the most important article of faith in Shiᶜite Sufism: Friendship with God/guidance (*walayat*). Practices of and discourse about *walayat* are the locus *per se* for studying Sufi self because they potentially clash with juridical (and state) conceptions of spiritual authority. For this reason, they provide a view on what particularizes Sufism within Shiᶜism. Although Friendship with God is by definition an individual, non-social affair, I hold that discourse on and practice of Sufi spiritual authority in fact incorporate the context of the nation. Lastly, studies of modern uses of *walayat* are as yet unavailable. This project aims at providing such a study in an anthropological exploration of modern self. ◆▶

Dr Matthijs van den Bos studied Cultural Anthropology in Amsterdam and Iranian Studies in Utrecht. His PhD dissertation comprises a fieldwork-based study on the comparative, modern social and cultural history of two Iranian, Shiᶜite Sufi orders (entitled Mystic Regimes*). The author welcomes any suggestions on his post-doc research project description.*
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ISIM Fellowships

The ISIM invites applications and research proposals for various programmes. Applications from candidates in the social sciences, humanities, and religious studies will be considered.
Applicants should be competent in academic English.
The ISIM fellowships and their respective application deadlines include the following:
– *PhD fellowships* (1 September 2001)
– *Post-doctoral fellowships* (1 Sept. 2001)
– *Visiting fellowships* (1 Sept. 2001)
– *Sabbatical fellowships* (1 Sept. 2001)

For more information on the various fellowships, please consult the ISIM website: http://www.isim.nl/
All those interested are invited to apply. Application forms may be downloaded from the website or obtained upon request from the ISIM secretariat:
ISIM Fellowship Programmes, P.O. Box 11089,
2301 EB Leiden, The Netherlands

ISIM Annual Lecture Talal Asad

On 24 October 2000, Prof. Dr Talal Asad gave the Annual ISIM Lecture at Leiden University. The full text of his lecture, entitled 'Thinking About Secularism and Law in Egypt', will soon be available as the second publication of the ISIM Papers Series (n.2). The following is part of his introduction, which expressed the main objectives of his presentation:

'I want to talk about secularism and law reform in Egypt, a subject about which I have recently begun to think in a systematic way. I shall stay clear of contemporary political debates about instituting the *shariᶜa* as the law of the nation-state – although I shall say something on that matter briefly. Instead, I shall take up some theoretical questions relating to changes in the 19th century and the first few decades of the 20th century. In my view, an anthropological approach to such a theme requires one to pay attention to social concepts and institutional arrangements that derive from Western history. This is not because they are standards for measuring the progress of Egypt, nor because they have polluted the purity of Egyptian culture, but because they were inserted into Egypt's modernity in singular ways. I want to see the reform of that law neither as a story of progressive liberalization, nor as a reflection of continuing failure to modernize properly. I want to see it as a dimension of secularization – in particular, of how 'secularization' reflects changing connections between state power, legal institutions, moral norms and religious authority.'

Talal Asad teaches anthropology at the Graduate Center of the City University of New York.

ISIM PhD News

Three new ISIM PhD students have joined the ISIM from 1 March 2001 onward:
– Joseph Alagha
(American University of Beirut, Lebanon)
Hizbullah and Iran: Holy Matrimony or Strategic Alliance?
– Egbert Harmsen
(University of Nijmegen, The Netherlands)
The Social Challenge of Political Islam in Jordan: The Jordanian Islamist Movement in Civil Society
– Mareike Winkelmann
(University of Kampen, The Netherlands)
The Construction of Knowledge in a Women's Madrasa in Modern India (see p.14)

For more information on the PhD students and their research projects, please consult the ISIM website: http://www.isim.nl/

ISIM Papers Series

The ISIM is inaugurating its ISIM Paper Series with the publication of *Islam, Islamists, and the Electoral Principle in the Middle East* by Prof. Dr James Piscatori, a fellow at the Oxford Centre for Islamic Studies and at Wadham College, Oxford. This publication began as a paper given at the ISIM conference on 'Islam and the Electoral Process', which took place in Leiden in Dec. 1999.

For more information on this publication, please contact the ISIM Secretariat.

Inaugural Lecture

MUHAMMAD KHALID MASUD

Muslim Jurists' Quest for the **Normative Basis of Shari^ca**

Muhammad Khalid Masud, ISIM Chair at Leiden University and Academic Director of the ISIM, delivered his inaugural lecture on 'Muslim Jurists' Quest for the Normative Basis of Shari^ca' on 20 October 2000. In the lecture, he argued that the conception of the Shari^ca as divine law has problematized the binding nature of law in Islam because it conceals its material bases in the social norms. It also obscures Muslim jurists' continuous efforts to maintain general acceptance of Islamic law by bringing the legal norms closer to social norms. He argued that the current debates on the Shari^ca are also triggered by this conception as it ignores the inner contradictions between legal and social norms emerging in contemporary Muslim societies. The following contains a few excerpts from this lecture.

PHOTO: WIM VREEBURG

Islamists regard the Shari^ca as binding for all Muslims simply because it is divine. This conception of Islamic law is quite close to the theories of legal positivism. It is not by coincidence that those who hold this view also believe in the necessity of the Islamic state and define sovereignty in the framework of law and authority. For Sayyid Qutb, a major Islamist ideologue, the sovereignty of God is synonymous with the sovereignty of the Shari^ca. The Islamists call for a reconstruction of the Shari^ca, which is not founded on the traditional Fiqh, but rather on a new interpretation of the Sunna. They insist on the elimination of the artificial legal norms created during the colonial period and under the dictates of nationalism and modernity. In order to understand the modernity of the Islamist view, it must be compared with the traditionalist view of the Shari^ca.

On the social level, slaves, women and non-Muslims suffered most from the inner contradictions between Shari^ca ideals and social norms in Muslim cultures. The ideals of Shari^ca called for freedom, equality and justice, but social stratifications in Muslim societies on the basis of status, sex and religion did not allow these ideals to be fulfilled. Under the impact of these social norms, Islamic law developed a legal structure of multiple personal status. As the then global legal culture also adhered to a similar hierarchical approach to legal rights, the contradictions remained unchallenged.

The contradictions in Shari^ca law, as manifested in the differential treatment of women, non-Muslims and slaves, became unavoidably conspicuous only in the 19th century. As one may notice from the debates on the abolition of slavery in the early 19th century in the Muslim world, the conception of Shari^ca as divine did not allow reform in the Islamic laws on slavery. The problem is that when these social norms were assimilated into the Shari^ca, they also came to be considered immutable or divine, due to the conception of the Shari^ca as divine.

On a religious level, the Sufis, pietist Muslim mystics, were the first to point out the contradiction between legal norms and Islamic ethical values. The Sufis were critical of the jurists' literal and legalist approach to religious obligation. They suggested an emphasis on the inner meanings of the Shari^ca and personal commitment as a motive for obedience to Shari^ca laws, instead of punishment and coercion. They criticized jurists' reliance on worldly power. Contrary to the jurists, who lived in the world of text, the Sufis were closer to the masses and their norms. In most Muslim societies, Sufis represented a popular and liberal view of Islam.

It should be noted that although ideas of liberalism, democracy, and public reason have certainly progressed from the medieval period, they are still too absorbed in discussing the phenomenon of law making and are thus less focused on the acceptability of law and its role for the general masses. Rawls, who stresses the significance of the role of liberal and reasonable people in the development of law, found it difficult even to include non-Europeans in this category. He had to create a new category of 'decent people' to include Muslims. Lawyers, philosophers, and Muslim jurists are not ready to include the masses in the category of reasonable people. Fred D'Agostino, the author of a 1996 Oxford publication on *Free Public Reason,* dismisses the role of the general public and proposes a 'community of interpreters as the custodians of public reason.'

The basic element in a legal system is its being accepted by the people to which it applies. For this reason, public participation in law making and law reform is inevitable. In Muslim societies today, the construction of the Shari^ca is no longer an intellectual exercise conducted by specialists. In fact, an increasing proportion of the Muslim populace is already participating in this exercise. Non-*ulama*, neo-*ulama* and lay persons including women and the youth are contributing their voices to legal issues. In Muslim communities that live as minorities, new constructions of the Shari^ca and Fiqh have emerged. ◆▶

This lecture is soon to be published by the ISIM. For more information, please contact the ISIM Secretariat.

Inaugural Lecture

MARTIN VAN BRUINESSEN

Transformations of Heterodoxy

On 21 November 2000, Martin van Bruinessen, ISIM Chair at Utrecht University, delivered his inaugural lecture entitled 'Muslims, Minorities and Modernity: The Restructuring of Heterodoxy in the Middle East and Southeast Asia'. The lecture compared Alevism in Turkey with *kebatinan* in Indonesia, where adherents of heterodox folk belief and practice – rather than gradually shifting towards scripturalist, *shari^ca*-oriented Islam – were transformed into distinct religious minorities deliberately distancing themselves from orthodox Islam. The following is composed of excerpts from the lecture.

PHOTO: WIM VREEBURG

The related processes of urbanization, mass education and the rapid development of print and electronic media have completely changed the structures of authority and belief in the Muslim world. Among the believers, there appears to be a general trend away from various heterodox beliefs and practices and towards conformity with scripturalist Islam, although scriptural authority is contested. The authority of the *^culama*, the guardians of orthodoxy, is challenged by other categories of learned men (and women).

Some Muslim communities have rejected not only the authority of the *^culama* but orthodoxy as such, in the name of a deviant, esoteric interpretation of Islam. Alevism in Turkey and *kebatinan* mysticism in Java, Indonesia, represent two varieties of 'folk' Islam that, under the influence of political developments, reversed an earlier shift towards scripturalist Islam and defined a sharp boundary to separate themselves from it. Both have fought for recognition as distinct religious minorities on equal grounds with Sunni Islam. Both have been seen as potential allies against the rise of political Islam by the secular nationalist elites of their countries and have been praised as representing an authentic national tradition. At the same time, however, they both have been politically suspect because of their perceived predilection for the left and extreme left. Heterodoxy, after all, is always potentially subversive.

In the early 20th century, Java witnessed the appearance of the first *kebatinan* movements. Mystical teachers with a smaller or larger following had been a common phenomenon, but now several such followings were organized into formal associations that outlived their founders. They established rules for membership, regular meetings at set times, and standardized meditation exercises. Some movements established chapters in other towns and even villages, organized by a mystical bureaucracy that institutionalized itself. The teachings were – and this is another novelty – written; several have their own sacred scripture. Reading and studying these texts became part of the practice of *kebatinan* adepts – something I like to think of as the scripturalization of *kebatinan*.

After independence, most *kebatinan* movements joined in a confederation that lobbied for official recognition with a status comparable to religion. In the context of the political struggle between the Muslim parties and the Communists and Nationalists, the boundaries separating *kebatinan* from Sunni Islam were sharpened, most *kebatinan* movements affiliating themselves with the Communist or Nationalist parties. The Islamic element in their belief system, which had always existed, was often deliberately played down.

The name Alevi is a blanket term for a variety of heterodox communities, formerly relatively isolated one from the other, that are found all over present-day Turkey. Islam has strongly marked their belief system, but they have distinctive rituals that are very different from those of Sunni Islam. A long history of oppression made Alevi identity a stigma that many wished to conceal. Some communities assimilated, at least formally, to Sunni Islam; most Alevis enthusiastically embraced Turkey's secularism that appeared to give them equal rights.

It was as recently as the late 1980s that there suddenly emerged a strong and successful movement to redefine, reconstruct and perhaps reinvent Alevism as a religious identity. This movement may be seen as a response to two developments that deeply affected the Alevis: the radical left, in which many Alevis had found a political home, was destroyed after the military coup of 1980; and in an attempt to pre-empt radical Islam, the new regime embraced a conservative brand of Sunni Islam which it imposed – though unsuccessfully – even on Alevi citizens.

In response to this, a new type of organization emerged: the Alevi cultural association, spearheaded by intellectuals of Alevi background and financed by Alevi businessmen. It was these associations that reinvented Alevi ritual in the new urban context. The Alevis' traditional religious authorities, a caste of holy men whose status was inherited, were involved in the process but no longer in leading roles. Lay intellectuals published numerous books and articles defining what Alevism was and what Alevis believed, interpreting their rituals, developing something of an Alevi theology. From a largely orally transmitted folk religion, Alevism appears to be developing into a scripturalist version of itself, a distinctly modern phenomenon.

The cases of Alevism and *kebatinan* represent an interesting variation on the gradual but inexorable shift from folk Islam to scripturalist Islam predicted by, for instance, Gellner's well-known model of Muslim society. The emergence of a learned variety of the local tradition appears to be an alternative. In both cases, political developments were of crucial importance in the process. Under other circumstances, it may not have occurred. And even in establishing this alternative, the communities concerned had to engage scripturalist Islam and were to a large degree shaped by it. ◆▶

Debate

ABDULLAHI A. AN-NA'IM

Islam, Human Rights and Secularism Does it have to be a Choice?[1]

While the reasons for the political and social reality of tension between religion, human rights and secularism are to be appreciated, an argument can be made for focusing on the interdependence of these three paradigms in the Islamic context, rather than making a choice between them. Each of the three paradigms needs the other two for fulfilling its own rationale, and sustaining its relevance and validity for its own constituency. The difficulties facing this proposition can be overcome through an internal transformation within each paradigm. This process should be deliberately promoted in order to achieve political stability and development as well as individual freedom and social justice.

The obvious reason for avoiding any reference to religion in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948 is the exclusive nature of religious traditions. Since religion divides rather than unites human beings, the argument goes, it is better to avoid it altogether in order to find common ground for the protection of human rights among religious believers and non-believers. But this does not mean that human rights can only be founded on secular justifications, because that does not address the question of how to make human rights equally valid and legitimate from the perspectives of the wide variety of believers and non-believers around the world. Rather than viewing secular and religious foundations of human rights as incompatible rivals, it is suggested here that we emphasize the interdependence of all three.

For the limited purposes of this discussion, secularism can be defined as a principle of public policy for organizing the relationship between religion and the state in a specific context. Since historical experience has shown that the exclusivity of religion tends to undermine possibilities of peaceful co-existence and solidarity among different communities of believers, secularism has evolved as a means of ensuring the possibility of pluralistic political community among different religious groups. The problem is that the same minimal normative content that makes secularism conducive to inter-religious co-existence and solidarity diminishes its capacity to support the universality of human rights without reference to another source of moral foundation. That necessary quality of secularism fails to address the need of religious believers to express the moral implications of their faith in the public domain.

The transcendental aspect of religion should refer to the actual experiences of believers, and can only be understood in the concrete historical context and material circumstances of each religious community. Competing interpretations of religious doctrine and their normative and behavioural implications are bound to reflect existing human power relations within each religious community. Human rights and secularism are critical for the fair and sustainable mediation of these competing claims within the framework of prevalent power relations within and between different communities. The consequent religious transformation, in turn, would facilitate the interdependence among all three.

The ISIM would like to solicit your reactions to the debate found on this page. We ask that you please communicate your response via E-mail or regular mail to one of the addresses mentioned on the front page of this *ISIM Newsletter*.

The approach proposed here is premised on a belief in the ability of human agency to promote understandings and practice of religion, human rights and secularism that are conducive to mutual interdependence of all three of them. One challenge is to prevent the purported moral superiority of a religious community from diminishing the human dignity and rights of those who do not subscribe to that faith. Secularism is critical for maintaining the equal human dignity and rights of believers and non-believers alike, but its ability to play a role in political communities depends on its legitimacy within all segments of the population, including religious believers.

To play its constructive role, secularism also needs the normative guidance of human rights and moral justification of religion. The importance of human rights standards is obvious because secularism, by itself, may not be enough for safeguarding individual freedoms and social justice, as illustrated by recent experiences with totalitarian secular regimes, from Nazism in Germany to Marxism-Leninism in the Soviet Union and beyond. What is not sufficiently appreciated is the importance of a religious justification and rationale for secularism. While the material conditions of co-existence may force a level of religious tolerance and diversity, this is likely to be seen as temporary political expediency by believers unless they are also able to accept it as at least consistent with their religious doctrine. Thus, sustained secularism needs a religious justification for believers. This is not as difficult as it may seem, for secularism and religion are, in fact, fundamentally overlapping and interacting, as is true regarding Islam.

Interdependence in the Islamic context

Islamic societies should affirm their principled commitment to the protection of human rights and openly acknowledge the realities of secularism in their religious as well as political life. But this can only happen through internal transformation, and not external imposition. There is a theological and political dimension to internal debates about these relationships. On the theological side, while such debates need to occur within an internal frame of reference (Qur'an and Sunna), human agency has always been central to Muslims' understanding and practice of Islam. Muslims believe that the Qur'an is the literal and final word of God, the Sunna being the second divinely inspired source of Islam. But the Qur'an and Sunna have no meaning or relevance in the daily life of individual believers and their communities except through human understanding and behaviour. The Qur'an was revealed in Arabic, which is a human language that evolved in its own specific historical context, and many normative parts of the Qur'an were addressing specific situations in Mecca and Medina when they were conveyed by the Prophet. The Sunna had to respond to the immediate issues and concerns that emerged in that context, in addition to any broader implications it may have. It is therefore clear that human agency was integral to the process of revelation, interpretation and practice from the very beginning of Islam in the 7th century.

The right to self-determination

In this light, it is apparent that a sharp distinction between the religious and secular is misleading. Religious precepts necessarily respond to the secular concerns of human beings, and have practical relevance only because those responses are believed to be practically useful for the people they are addressing. In other words, religious doctrine is necessarily implicated in the secular, and the secular is perceived by believers to be 'governed' by religious doctrine. Muslims who find this proposition disturbing tend to think that it undermines the divine quality of the sources of Islam. But that apprehension fails to recognize that the Qur'an and Sunna are intended to redress human imperfections, and are not simply manifestations of the divine in the abstract. This point is critical for the theological basis of the relationship between Islam and both human rights and secularism.

One cause of the commonly presumed incompatibility of Islam and secularism is the tendency to limit secularism to the experiences of West European and North American countries with Christianity since the 18th century. In fact, there are significant differences in the terms and operation of the relationship between religion and the state/politics among European and North American countries due to historical and current experiences in this regard. Each of those societies also continues to struggle with the social and political role of religion in public life, as none of them has attempted to – much less succeeded in – eliminating that role.

From this perspective, it is suggested that secularism be understood in terms of the type of relationship between religion and the state, rather than a specific way in which that relationship has evolved in one society or another. It should also be emphasized that the form that relationship should take in pluralistic societies has to be the product of organic development over time, and be accepted as legitimate by the population at large, instead of expecting it to drastically change immediately by constitutional enactment or political rhetoric. This view of secularism would redress much of the apprehension about the concept as a tool of Western imperialism, thereby facilitating possibilities of internal transformation to promote the proposed interdependence with human rights and religion.

It is commonly claimed that Islam mandates the establishment of an 'Islamic state' which will implement and enforce the *shari'a* as the law of the land. It can be argued that the notion of an Islamic state is a contradiction in terms since the *shari'a* ceases to be the normative system of Islam by the very act of enacting it as the law to be enforced by the state.[2] Because there is so much diversity of opinion among Islamic schools of thought and scholars, any enactment of *shari'a* principles as law would have to select certain opinions over others, thereby denying believers their freedom of choice among equally legitimate, competing opinions. Moreover, there is neither a historical precedent of an Islamic state to be followed, nor is such a state practically viable today. The fact that there was never an Islamic state accepted as such by all Muslims, is beyond dispute once it is appreciated that the state the Prophet established and ruled in Medina was too exceptional to be a useful model in practical terms. The implementation of the *shari'a* as the official state law is also untenable in economic and political terms for the modern nation-state in its global context, as revealed by the recent experiences of Iran, Pakistan and the Sudan.

Islamic societies certainly have the right to self-determination, but that can be realized only when exercised with due regard to the realities of their national and global context, and through viable constitutional and political institutions. In my view as a Muslim, the realization of this right should be founded on a clear and categorical acknowledgement of the interdependence of Islam, human rights and secularism. ◆▶

Notes

1. This article is a drastically abridged version of a longer draft that can be requested from the author by E-mail.
2. Abdullahi A. An-Na'im (1998-1999), 'Shari'a and Positive Legislation: Is an Islamic State Possible or Viable?', *Yearbook of Islamic and Middle Eastern Law* 5, pp. 29-41.

Abdullahi A. An-Na'im is professor of law at Emory University, USA, and visiting professor at the ISIM. He is the author of Toward an Islamic Reformation: Civil Liberties, Human Rights and International Law *(1990), and editor of* Human Rights in Cross-Cultural Perspectives: Quest for Consensus *(1992). E-mail: aannaim@law.emory.edu*

Translation
DALE F. EICKELMAN

Muhammad Shahrur and the Printed Word

Until 1996, six years after the publication of Muhammad Shahrur's *Proposal for an Islamic Covenant*, his sense of public was as austere as that expressed by Immanuel Kant in his famous essay on the Enlightenment. Kant argued that the printed word, unlike direct speech, offers the 'public' the possibility of judging ideas independently from the status or authority of their authors. Muhammad Shahrur acknowledges his lack of credentials in Islamic scholarship. Despite this deficiency, his courage in entering an arena of public discussion, previously reserved for trained jurists, has incited strong interest in his ideas among many educated speakers of Arabic throughout the world.

PHOTO: DALE F. EICKELMAN

Muhammad Shahrur at his Damascus office, March 1996.

Born in 1938, Shahrur attended primary and secondary school in his native Damascus, and was sent to Moscow at the age of nineteen to study engineering. He returned to Syria in 1964, but left again in 1968 to study for MA and PhD degrees in soil mechanics and foundation engineering at the University College in Dublin. Upon his return to Syria in 1972, he became a faculty member at the University of Damascus, from which he retired last year.

Shahrur in Arabic: thick description

His first book, *al-Kitab wa al-Qur'an: Qira'a Muᶜasira* (The Book and the Qur'an: A Contemporary Interpretation),[1] immediately became a best seller in 1990. The first printing in Damascus sold out in three months. By 1993, sales of the authorized editions published in Damascus, followed by Beirut in 1992, totalled nearly 30,000 copies. To these figures must be added the thousands of photocopies circulating in countries where the book was banned, such as Saudi Arabia. By 1994, an attractively produced pirate version had appeared in Cairo. In addition to his first book, Shahrur published two sequels in 1994. A fourth book, concerned with jurisprudence related to women, including inheritance, appeared in 2000.[2] Together these four volumes total approximately 1,600 pages – daunting even for dedicated readers. The first book received numerous reviews and newspaper commentaries. It also generated works opposing Shahrur's interpretive approach and challenging his authority, usually on the basis that he ignores centuries of established jurisprudence and commits errors of interpretation.[3] Shahrur responds in kind, explaining that he has chosen to continue articulating his comprehensive project of interpretation rather than engage in time-consuming responses. As for *fiqh*, he refers to the juridical tradition that was solidified in the early Islamic centuries as the 'oppression of [systems of] knowledge' (*al-istibdad al-maᶜrifi*).[4]

English: Shahrur lite

In spite of recent appearances on an Egyptian satellite channel with clerics from al-Azhar and several public appearances, Shahrur's basic method of communication remains the printed word. Until recently, few of his writings have been available in English. His *Proposal for an Islamic Covenant* is the first readily available public statement of his views in English.[5] The document was originally produced upon the invitation of the International Forum of Islamic Dialogue in London in mid-1999 as part of its 'Islam 21' discussion group formed to create a 'morally binding' charter to implement Islamic principles in the contemporary world.

Shahrur's *Proposal* is blunt. In the Arab Muslim world, he argues, 'entrenched oppressive regimes' flaunt slogans of modernity, science, and development, but accomplish nothing. The Islamic 'revival,' for its part, is 'hopelessly lost in protest and bargaining over secondary issues such as the Islamic veil, the republication of ancient texts by the millions, and in perpetrating senseless acts of violence with obscure goals' (p. 5). Shahrur argues that the role of human reason, as exercised by individual believers, is key to moral and civic development. God has a covenant (*mithaq*) with humankind based on reciprocal, binding trust in which compulsion plays no role (p. 11).

Shahrur is especially harsh in his condemnation of the traditional *fiqh* literature. He treats it as homogeneous, characterizing it as failing to explain the concepts of 'freedom, knowledge, and legislation' so central to God's covenant with humanity. This clear contractual covenant 'is distorted and badly explained in heritage literature (*turath*) and by those traditional jurists (*fuqaha*) who were closed to the participation of the laity and satisfied with reductive notions of freedom.' They saw freedom merely as the exemption from slavery, commonly practised in an earlier historical era, and did not explore its more basic meaning – 'to choose between belief and disbelief', and 'obedience and disobedience' (pp. 12-13).

Yet societies in different historical periods need freedom, knowledge, and legislation 'according to their level of understanding' (p. 12). From Noah to the Prophet Muhammad, anyone who commits themselves to believing in God as the only God, to believe in Judgement Day, and to 'do right (*yaᶜmalu salihan*) among themselves and for the rest of mankind' is a Muslim (pp. 14-15). Diversity in religious practices, including pilgrimage, 'is a natural law affirmed by God Himself: "Had your Lord willed, He would have made mankind one nation: but they will not cease differing"' (Sura 11, Hud, v. 118) (p. 17). In this sense, all believers – be they Christian, Muslim, Jewish, or the followers of other faiths – are Muslims. Islam as a faith (*iman*) is a specific covenant between God and believers who specifically follow the prophecy of Muhammad.

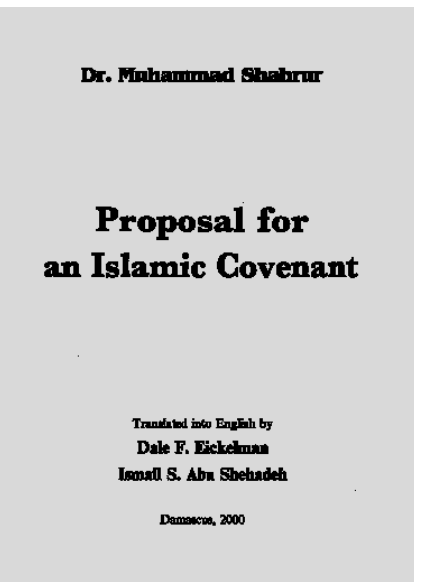
Shahrur bases the authority of his approach entirely on his interpretation of the Qur'an: 79 verses are cited in 43 pages, nearly one-third of the text. Having established the role of reason in understanding Islam and the diversity of Islamic religious practices in his first 22 pages, Shahrur's proposal for an Islamic covenant takes up the latter half of the book. Basic to this project are the 'absolute values' of justice and freedom, which 'man practices in his society in a relative way' (p. 27). These include consultation (*shura*), the encouragement of good and the prohibition of evil.

In his expression of these moral principles, Shahrur reads like any number of Islamic modernist thinkers. The strong divergence begins when he unequivocally identifies *shura* with democracy, stating that it is 'the best relative form of government in which humankind can practise shura' (p. 28). Democracy unequivocally means the presence of genuine opposition, 'political pluralism, freedom of opinion and expression, and the freedom to express ideas peacefully through the available means of communication, and unbribed and non-corrupt committees that can freely oversee state apparatuses.' Without such institutions, 'one cannot adhere to the Islamic precepts of encouraging what is good and forbidding what is wrong, and consequently one cannot establish the optimal democratic government' (p. 29).

Shahrur makes a strong argument for the necessary and essential use of reason and public debate. The sanctity of the Qur'an's legislative verses is eternal, but the interpretation of 'what is valid for one era may be irrelevant for another.' Consequently, 'the interpretation of the legislative verses and their application is a human activity.' Interpretation is therefore always fallible and can only be 'relatively right'. It can never be accepted without discussion, and no individual, political party, or institution is above questioning (p. 30). Islam – in the sense of God's covenant with all humankind – is not subject to time or place, but states and societies always are in need of 'adaptive legislation that does not exist in the Qur'anic text.' The Prophet Muhammad did this for the conditions in Medina in the 7th century, and it remains for people and their democratically constituted parliaments to establish civil law suitable for other places and times.

Beyond norms

Compared to most other Islamic thinkers, Shahrur is a radical. He dispenses entirely with the *fiqh* tradition and invites all Muslims to commit themselves to those elements least developed in traditional jurisprudence – democracy, adaptive legislative institutions, and human freedom. Shahrur's *Proposal* was originally written in Arabic. In the English version, which Shahrur reviewed with care, he explicitly reaches out to Muslims outside the Arab world, urging them to think beyond normative statements of Islamic doctrine. An honest legislature, capable of mistakes and errors of judgement but also self-correcting, is the ultimate statement of Islam. In its full realization, Islam in the sense of God's covenant with humankind, there is no place for the state regulation of belief or cultic practice. Like Immanuel Kant, Shahrur believes that the unadorned printed word speaks for itself. He leaves to others the implementation of his call for a greater voice for discussion and debate in public and civic life. One can challenge his blanket rejection of the *fiqh* tradition as a timeless monolith. Views such as Shahrur's may not constitute the dominant voice in public debates about the role of Islam in society, but they are increasingly acknowledged as an important element in the public sphere, even if only to be contested and challenged. ◆►



Notes

1. Damascus: al-Ahali Printing, Publishing, and Distribution, 1990.
2. Muhammad Shahrur, *Dirasat Islamiyya al-muᶜasira fi al-dawla wa-l-mujtamaᶜa* (Damascus: al-Ahali Printing, Publishing, and Distribution, 1994), *al-Islam wa-l-iman: manzumat al-qiyam* (Damascus: al-Ahali Printing, Publishing, and Distribution, 1994), and *Nahw usul jadida li al-fiqh al-Islami: Fiqh al-mar'a* (Damascus: al-Ahali Printing, Publishing, and Distribution, 2000).
3. Shahrur, *Dirasat Islamiyya*, pp. 15-46.
4. Ibid., p. 222.
5. Translated by Dale F. Eickelman and Ismail S. Abu Shehadeh (Damascus: al-Ahali for Printing, Publishing, and Distribution, 2000). Also available on the Web at http://www.isim.nl/isim/publications/other/shahrur/

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Perspectives

JOHN CALVERT

Sayyid Qutb in America

One of the most interesting and least-examined episodes in the career of Sayyid Qutb (1906-1966), the influential Egyptian ideologue of Islamism, is his sojourn in the United States from November 1948 to August 1950. Egypt's Ministry of Education had sent the 42- year-old Qutb to the US to investigate American instructional methods and curricula, a task for which his career as an educator in Egypt had well prepared him. A number of materials exists that allow the researcher to reconstruct the main lines of Qutb's itinerary in the US and to explicate his thoughts on the essential nature of American society and culture. These include articles, 'letters home' written by Qutb and published in the Egyptian periodicals *al-Risala, al-Kitab,* and *al-Hilal* and, interestingly, documentary materials available at the University of Northern Colorado, where Qutb studied in 1949.[1]

PHOTO: COLORADO STATE COLLEGE OF EDUCATION BULLETIN, NO.12 (17 OCTOBER 1949)

The administrators of the Colorado State College of Education noted Sayyid Qutb's presence on Campus.

What becomes evident upon examining these sources is that Qutb infused his reportage of life in America with commentaries and images designed to distance Egyptian culture conceptually from the civilization of the West. Although Qutb accepted many features of modernizing the Egyptian nation-state, he also believed that history in general, and the Qur'an in particular, had stamped Egyptians and other Muslim peoples of the East with a 'spiritual' outlook on life. This differed appreciably from what he felt to be the abject materialism of Western and, more particularly, American life.

Such a stance was consistent with Qutb's long-standing concern with the identity of the national Self, which he believed was endangered by the steady encroachment of Western political and cultural power on Egypt. As early as the 1930s, Qutb had composed articles that severely questioned the Mediterranean and Western identities grafted onto Egypt by writers such as Taha Husayn. By honouring the indigenous and the culturally authentic over the foreign, Qutb constructed a classic boundary mechanism that marked off politically marginalized and economically distressed Egyptians from the westernized political culture favoured by elements within the dominant order. In so doing, he provided the quest for Egyptian national empowerment with a 'cultural affect', grounded in the self-validating sentiments of pride and identity. We need not agree with the often-repeated contention that Qutb's stay in the United States was the formative experience that converted him to Islamism. Yet the trip did contribute to his sense of national exceptionalism by generating experiences that confirmed the vertical lines of distinction that he had long believed separated his authentic, moral self from erosion by Western 'otherness'.

'The taste of Americans'

Qutb's first direct experience of America was in New York City, where he arrived by sea during the Thanksgiving and Christmas season of 1948, only months after the completion of his first explicit Islamist work, *al-ʿAdala al-Ijtimaʿiyya fi al-Islam*. Although Qutb had never before travelled to a Western country, his previous journalistic efforts to evoke, from afar, the essential characteristics of Western civilization provided him a template with which to understand and assess what he was now seeing and experiencing first hand. In a published letter, Qutb described New York as a 'huge workshop', 'noisy' and 'clamouring', and explained how he pitied the city's pigeons which, like its people, were condemned to live their lives joylessly amidst the traffic and hustle of the urban landscape. In much the same way as many modern-era Europeans who travelled to and wrote about the 'Orient', Qutb either purposefully ignored or simply did not see anomalies that contradicted his view of America as the moral 'Other'.

Early in 1949, Qutb enrolled at the Wilson Teacher's College, presently the University of the District of Columbia. His priority there was to improve his English language skills. In Washington, Qutb appears to have suffered his first real pang of homesickness. In a letter penned to the well-known Egyptian author Tawfiq al-Hakim, Qutb explained how he yearned for the 'spirit of the East' and for a friend with whom he could discuss literature and the world of ideas. As Qutb writes, 'How much do I need someone to talk about topics other than money, movie stars and car models.' Americans, Qutb opined, were crass people, generally disinterested in life's aesthetic and spiritual dimensions. As evidence, he painted for al-Hakim a vivid picture of an American youth seated at a nearby table whose torso, barely concealed by his sweater, was covered with the gaudily coloured tattoos of a leopard and an elephant. 'Such', says Qutb to his friend, 'is the taste of Americans.'

Greeley

Qutb's feeling of estrangement from his host society deepened as he made his way westward to Colorado. After a short stay in Denver, he travelled to Greeley, a prosperous agricultural and ranching community shadowed by the Front Range of the Rockies, where he enrolled at the Colorado State College of Education. He spent the summer session following an elementary English composition course, which appears to have further enhanced his competence in English, for, as he wrote in a letter, it was during his Colorado stay that he began for the first time to feel comfortable with the language. Qutb involved himself in campus life. He was a member of the college's International Club and contributed a short article to *Fulcrum*, the magazine of the English Department's literary society. In the simply written article, Qutb castigated the West for its support of Zionism and alerted his college hosts to Egypt's rich spiritual and intellectual heritage.

Greeley was obviously very different from New York and Washington DC. Established as a utopian community in 1870, the city proudly maintained in the 1940s the moral rigour, temperance, and civil-mindedness that were the hallmarks of its founding fathers. Greeley's highly touted civic virtue, however, made very little impression on Qutb. In his mind, the inhabitants of Greeley, far from representing a kinder and gentler population of Americans, carried within themselves the same moral flaws of materialism and degeneracy that were characteristic of Occidental civilization in general. He explained, for example, how the care Greeley's citizens devoted to their residential lawns was symptomatic of the American preoccupation with the external, material, and selfishly individual dimensions. He also explained how the pastors of Greeley's many churches would compete for congregants in much the same way that store owners competed for customers. He recounted how he once attended a church dance and was scandalized by the occasion's 'seductive atmosphere'. As Qutb wrote, 'the dancing intensified,' and the 'hall swarmed with legs'. In order to create a 'romantic, dreamy effect', the pastor dimmed the lights and played on the gramophone the popular big band dance tune, 'Baby, it's cold outside'. Qutb's American writings are laced with such anecdotes, which reveal a strong concern with moral issues, especially concerning matters of sexuality.

The shallow American

After departing from Greeley, Qutb spent time in the Californian cities of San Francisco, Palo Alto, and San Diego. Judging from his essays and letters, Qutb saw much of the United States during his 20-month visit. He was genuinely taken by the vastness of the land and by the inventiveness and organizational expertise of its people. But all of these traits and accomplishments, he believed, had been gained at the expense of basic human values and moral and aesthetic depth. 'High culture', Qutb says, 'must be imported from Europe, and it is only America's great wealth that makes this possible.' In his view, it was 'logical' that the one art form in which Americans excelled be the movies, combining, as they do, 'craftsmanship and primitive emotions'. Qutb admitted taking a liking to select films such as 'Gone with the Wind', 'Wuthering Heights', and 'The Song of Bernadette'. Yet he derided the Westerns and police thrillers that were the staple of the American movie industry. He condemned white America for its racist attitudes towards black Americans. He wrote about how he was astounded at the bright, vivid colours of American fashion, which 'were more outrageous' than anything to be found in the Nilotic countryside. 'I am afraid', Qutb summarized, 'that there is no correlation between the greatness of American material civilization and the men who created it.'

It would be easy to dismiss Qutb's characterizations of American society as simplistic and even cartoonish. Yet for all of its caricatures and gross generalizations, his discourse on the United States bore a degree of logic, for beneath the exaggerations and historical reductionisms lay a number of truths that discomfited Qutb and other Egyptians. These truths included the dominance of the Western-oriented elite, which was either unable or unwilling to push effectively for Egypt's full independence. Additionally, they included the post World War II emergence of the United States as a power with global interests and reach. Qutb was particularly chagrined by America's support of Zionism. As the British philosopher Terry Eagleton has said of the myths that gird other examples of nationalist and communal struggle: 'However retrograde and objectionable [these might be] they are not pure illusion: They encapsulate, in however reductive, hyperbolic a form, some substantial facts.' Following Eagleton, we may regard Qutb's discourse on America as providing opposition-minded Egyptians with a motivating mythology for their struggle against political and cultural forces that they considered responsible for the desperate condition of Muslim peoples in modern times. For, Eagleton continues, 'men and women engaged in such conflicts do not live by theory alone…it is not in defense of the doctrine of base and superstructure that men and women are prepared to embrace hardship and persecution in the course of political struggle.' They require collective symbols that encapsulate and define their social being.[2] Qutb appears to have recognized this fact, if only intuitively, in fashioning portrayals of America that facilitated the setting of community boundaries. In so doing, he laid the groundwork for his later, radical Islamist equation of the moral universe of Abd al-Nasir's secular Egyptian Republic with the *jahiliyya*, the 'cultural barbarism' of the peninsular Arabs prior to the advent of Islam. ◆

Notes

1. For a study on Qutb in the US, see Calvert, J. (2000), '"The World is an Undutiful Boy!": Sayyid Qutb's American Experience,' *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations* 11 (no. 1), pp. 87-103.
2. Eagleton, Terry (1991), *Ideology: An Introduction*, London: Verso, p. 190.

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Research Approaches

HANIA SHOLKAMY

Why is Anthropology so hard in Egypt?

The political difficulties of writing anthropology and ethnography in Egypt persist despite the newly found fame of certain anthropological methods. These difficulties are about readership and about the consumption – not just the production – of texts. Missing from the 'universal' anxiety over power and representation, often referred to as post-modernism (Clifford and Marcus 1986; Rabinow 1991; Said 1991, 1989), are considerations of the anthropologist in her/his national setting when this is a non-Western one. Also missing is the problematization of audience and readership for the non-Western national working at home. The consequences of such collegiate exclusion can be explored by examining the structures and considerations marking the borders of anthropological research written by locals working locally.

An implicit assumption in recent post-modernist contemplation is that all researchers are writing for the same kind of audience. But how different is the problematic of power and representation in the absence of a Western readership and in an often less than sympathetic, sometimes oppressive national context? And how does the possibility of an other-than-academic/Western audience condition the diversity of discourses that could emanate from ethnographic and anthropological inquiries in Egypt? The possibility presents a double challenge. It challenges current theories in anthropology on writing, representation, and power. It also challenges the acceptance of anthropology and its qualitative methods by policy makers, development researchers, and other players in Egypt.

To make the point here, it is important to discuss the experiences of researchers who seek an audience and presence in places other than the corridors of Western academia. Many would like to engage in a dialogue with peers, executives, projects, and publics in our local, national, or regional contexts. In the absence of the traditions of reading and writing established in Western intellectual, political, and academic circles, from where can we derive security, support, and where can we engage in serious criticism?

The Egyptian setting

The travails of anthropologists in Egypt have been dwarfed by the tragedy endured by a fellow sociologist. The recent case brought against Dr Saad-Eddin Ibrahim, the prominent Egyptian sociologist, has brought into sharp focus the problems of research in Egypt, and perhaps elsewhere. This article is not about the merits of the case or the lack thereof. It is also not about the civil and basic human rights of which Dr Ibrahim has clearly been deprived. The intention is to voice concern in light of this and many other incidents for the viability and mere possibility of social science research, particularly for a discipline as amorphous and vibrant as anthropology.

The issue at hand concerns the right of representation and the authority to shape and give currency to 'truth'. The Egyptian press has atrociously covered the case of Dr Ibrahim. Coverage not only demonized the accused, it also criminalized his whole profession. They conveyed that it was not only Dr Ibrahim who was guilty of wrong doing, but all those like him who conduct research in towns and villages, defame the national image of their country and attend conferences abroad where they describe and share their research findings.

This sad situation expresses a crisis in the understanding of research and in the proscription of a censorship of its findings. It dramatically illustrates common misunderstandings prevalent among circles of readership in Egypt. Many appreciate the verbatim quotes that interviews and observations supply, with their 'straight from the horse's mouth' colour and freshness. Focus groups are favourites because they can cram many subjects into busy schedules and because they are supposed to capture conflict, decision-making processes, and the complexity of human interaction. But venturing into the naturalistic context is unpopular, as are questions of multiplicity and relativity of truth and meaning. These tools are used in a positivistic framework and are made to render the same kinds of enduring facts and information that numbers are made to do.

Leaving aside the misuse of methods and looking at the difficulties of ethnographic and anthropological research, we can easily trace three reasons why it is held suspect. The first is the reign of modernist 'scientistic' thinking that finds strength and meaning in lots of numbers. This ideology of undisputed facts and streams of numbers is still prevalent in many academic and public discourses. This is in spite of, or perhaps because of, the way qualitative methods have inched their way into a degree of recognition as scientific, perhaps credible, and often useful.

PHOTO: WWW.IBNKHALDUN.ORG; TAKEN FROM THE *AHRAM WEEKLY ONLINE*

Saad behind bars at the trial with his wife Barbara next to him.

The powerful few

The second reason for suspicion is a case of misconstrued intentions that politicize qualitative data collection and its use. Here the sensitivity lies in the details and the voices that are the flesh and blood of qualitative methods. Descriptions of poverty or of divergence from the norm are often seen as acts of denuding and exposition, as challenges to structures of authority such as the government or the family, or to idealized norms and customs. Moreover, the words of the poor, the dispossessed, or the suffering are too much, too vulgar, too disturbing. But they are the research subjects with whom many of us work. After all, an interview with an urban slum dweller is research; with a minister or another official, it is a proclamation to be read in the daily papers.

While anthropologists have always been interested in both the rich and the poor and have studied the mundane as well as the profound, the common along with the rare, they have always done so from critical perspectives that retain the potential to unsettle and question. Hence even the few studies that exist of the not-so-poor are still studies that question and, for some, are ones that expose.

The preference for 'scientific' research methods and the distaste for subjectivity and details are part of the third major problem, that of readership. Public consumption of social science research is very low for several reasons. The first is that reading is not a popular pastime among even the literate of the still largely illiterate public in Egypt. Another obstacle is that of the Arabic language and social science. Perhaps because of the practice of importing social science concepts or the lack of effort invested in using concepts in a reader-friendly manner, social science, anthropology included, makes for very unattractive reading in Arabic.

As long as readership is limited and specialized, and texts about daily life are distant, the current situation in which anthropologists do not write in Arabic – and when they do, as did Dr Ibrahim (through authorship or translation) they are judged by a powerful few – will continue. The term 'powerful few' implies here people who have access to and/or control of various public forums and media. This means academics, politicians, journalists, and policy makers; people who can dismiss work as being subversive, slanderous, Orientalist, biased, or dangerous in some other way. This proxy readership is perhaps the most obstructive element to the publication of ethnographies in Egypt and perhaps elsewhere. This brings to mind all the research that is written up in Egypt in English, but that goes un-translated because it is too 'sensitive' or because it is liable to be 'misunderstood'. Some of the examples cited in the longer paper, from which this article is taken, illustrate the perils of powerful and limited readership.

In Egypt, it is as though qualitative methods and insights are acceptable if they are constructive and complacent, but not if they are unsettling or critical. Policy makers, journalists, senior and not-so-senior officials and development workers are interested in knowing that mothers-in-law influence decisions concerning female fertility, for example, but are less keen on facing facts concerning the political threats posed by street sub-cultures. To re-phrase once more, one could say that the observations of anthropologists are fine but their analysis is unwanted.

Rendering readership problematic can draw attention to the serious dangers of limited readership whereby the powerful few read and can censor on behalf of the many. If more anthropology was written and read by specialists and non-specialists in Egypt, the sensationalism of intimate details and the impact of graphic renditions of daily life would lose their sting and become normalized in the democracy of interpretations.

Why is anthropology so hard in Egypt? My very personal answer is because I am as yet unable, whether due to circumstances or capabilities, to share my work with others in Arabic in Egypt without making changes and accommodations. If these changes were made to accommodate the privacy or sensibility of my studied community, that would be advancement. But they have been made on behalf of a readership that presumes the right to control and censor qualitative work by virtue of power or position. Meanwhile my fellow sociologist, who often chose not to make such concessions, is being prosecuted. ◆►

The article is taken from a longer publication by the same name, which appeared in Shami, S. and Herrera, L. (eds.) (1999), Between Field and Text: Cairo Papers in the Social Sciences*, Cairo: American University in Cairo Press.*

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Gender

ASMA SAYEED

Early Sunni Discourse on **Women's Mosque Attendance**

A modern-day visitor to Jamiᶜ Amr ibn al-ᶜAs mosque in Cairo during the month of Ramadan can not miss the overt female presence in the women's quarter. That Muslim women of all ages attend this and other congregational mosques throughout the world is a fact that clearly contravenes a legal consensus arrived at during the formative period of Islamic law. After deliberation on the legality of women's attendance at mosques for congregational prayers, the majority of jurists, both Sunni and Shi'ite, concluded that women – particularly young, attractive women – should avoid mosques for fear of the social unrest (*fitna*) associated with their presence there.

The prescriptions of the legal consensus may not have been universally followed and have been modified and tempered by some jurists in the modern period. Nonetheless, it is important to revisit some of the early debates on women's presence in mosques as they clearly reveal the social forces and mentalities that shaped one area of juridical discourse regarding women's mobility in the public sphere.

The *ijmaᶜ* of major Sunni and Shi'ite *madhhab*s, from the second century AH to the modern period, on women's prayer at home being preferable to their prayer at the mosque, is certainly in keeping with other Shari'a injunctions that limit women's visibility in public spaces. This *ijmaᶜ*, however, contradicts numerous *hadith* that indicate that women did attend mosques in the time of the Prophet, and that they were not discouraged from doing so. We are thus faced with what appears to be a discrepancy between the Prophet's practice and Shari'a recommendations.

The first indicator of Islamic law, the Qur'an, does not directly address the issue of women attending mosques to perform the five daily prayers. In contrast to the absence of Qur'anic references, a number of *hadith* either explicitly or implicitly deal with the issue of women's presence in mosques.[1] These *hadith* can be arranged into the following categories: those indicating women's presence in mosques during the time of the Prophet; those favouring permission for women to go to mosques; those prescribing proper behaviour for women who go to mosques; and those discouraging women from praying in mosques. The *hadith* in the first three categories – those indicating that women can and did attend mosques – outnumber those in the final category in which women are encouraged to pray at home. Moreover, the reports in the last category do not occur with great frequency in the six well-known collections and are often narrated via problematic *isnad*s. Nonetheless, the *hadith* in the final category have played a greater role in guiding and justifying early Sunni discussions regarding the legality of women's participation in *jamaᶜat*.

Various Sunni stances

Of the four main Sunni schools, the Hanafis, the Malikis, and the Hanbalis can be grouped together as their reasoning is largely similar. They differ primarily in the severity of their prescriptions: the Hanafis emerge as the most restrictive, the Hanbalis as more lenient, and the Malikis as adopting a more moderate position. In general, all three schools are opposed to the presence of women at congregational prayers. *Fitna* resulting from women's presence at the mosque is the primary reason cited for this disapproval. Jurists of these schools further specify that young women, in particular, are to avoid *jamaᶜat* while older women can attend if there is no fear of *fitna* from their presence. Finally, in the case that older women do go to the mosque, they should do so at darker times of the day, for the Fajr, Maghrib or Isha prayers. During these times, the darkness provides a natural veil for the women and their presence in the public arena is therefore less conspicuous than it would be otherwise. The various jurists referred to for this research focus resolutely on the disorder that may result from women's attendance at mosques and pay little or no attention to domestic duties that may prevent a woman from joining congregational prayers. Thus, they are more concerned with preserving a sense of public order or morality rather than with addressing how a woman may balance her religious and spiritual duties with her material, specifically domestic, obligations.

The fourth main Sunni school, the Shafiᶜis, maintain a position – as articulated first by al-Shafiᶜi (d. 204) himself – that is perhaps the most elaborate rationalization of the view that women can indeed be prevented from attending mosques. Al-Shafiᶜi says that the *hadith* which advise men not to prevent women from attending mosques are not general *hadith*. He argues that other *hadith* that prevent women from undertaking journeys without *mahram* necessarily limit the application of the following *hadith*: 'Do not prevent the women of God from the mosques of God.' Interestingly, according to al-Shafiᶜi's deductions, the Kaᶜaba is the only mosque to which men must permit women to go. Because Hajj is a *fard* imposed on every capable Muslim, male or female, a man cannot prohibit his wife or daughter from undertaking the journey to the Kaᶜaba.[2] Al-Shafiᶜi also points out that the obligation of attending *jumᶜah* is dropped for women and contends that since this is not required, their attendance at the five daily prayers as well as the voluntary prayers is also not required. The Shafiᶜi opinion conforms to that of the aforementioned *madhhab*s, meaning that congregational prayers for women in mosques are neither obligatory nor recommended.

Ibn Hazm

In contrast to the chorus of the four major Sunni schools, the Zahiri *madhhab* permits and even gives preference to women's participation in *jamaᶜat* at mosques. In an articulate exposition of the Zahiri view, Ibn Hazm (d. 456) first clarifies that prayer in *jamaᶜat* is not a *fard* for women. Ibn Hazm's brief convergence with the four Sunni schools terminates at this juncture. In his characteristically unequivocal style, Ibn Hazm condemns those who hold that women's prayer in the home is preferable, thereby preventing women from going to mosques. His proof is found in the *hadith* which affirms that congregational prayers are preferable to solitary prayers by 27 degrees. This report is general and cannot be applied only to men. Ibn Hazm also refers to several *hadith* that confirm women's prayer in mosques during the Prophet's lifetime. Thus, the Prophet's Sunna provides Ibn Hazm with further proof that women attended congregational prayers with men and that they should not be prevented from continuing in this fashion. Two arguments in Ibn Hazm's discussion render his treatment of this subject unique. The first involves the often-quoted *hadith* of A'isha which holds that had the Prophet seen the corruption which occurred after him, he would have forbidden women from going to the mosques.[3] Contrary to the positions of other Sunni jurists, Ibn Hazm argues that this *hadith* cannot serve as proof for preventing women from going to mosques. According to him, God Himself has knowledge of the future, and He did not inspire His Prophet to prevent women from going to mosques. Since the Prophet did not forbid this and in fact continued to allow women to attend *jamaᶜat* until his death, ᶜA'isha's report does not suffice to abrogate the Prophet's practice. Also, *zina*, the worst type of corruption, existed during the Prophet's time, and this did not lead the Prophet to ban women from the mosques. Ibn Hazm, through his elaboration of this view, emerges as the lone advocate for women's participation in congregational prayers. His is perhaps the only early juridical stance that does not allow the concern for *fitna* to prevail in formulating *ahkam* on this topic.

This discourse, to a certain extent, influenced the historical practices of Muslims. However, as in all other areas of law, practice did not always conform to theory. The architectural layout of many mosques throughout the Muslim world clearly indicates that provisions were made for women's attendance and supports the view that women attended mosques in spite of the weight of legal discourse which discouraged them from doing so. In addition, the fact that *fatawa* throughout Muslim history address this issue further attests to women's mosque attendance. Presumably, if the issue had been laid to rest by early Sunni discourse, there would be no need for *fatawa* on this topic.[4]

In summary, the issue of *fitna* prevails in shaping the early legal discourse on women's participation in *jamaᶜat*. While this fear of social disorder has determined the outcome on most legal discussions when it comes to women's mobility in the public sphere, it is particularly interesting when it comes to women's presence in mosques. In this case, the traditional sources for Islamic law are subverted to an overarching purpose of limiting *fitna* as defined by the predominantly male jurists. The *hadith* that strongly indicate a positive preference for women attending mosques are only minimally considered by most jurists in favour of preserving a general sense of social order. In the more recent legal discourse, those *hadith* which were earlier conferred secondary importance are being recalled to reclaim women's rights to attend mosques. In this sense, *hadith* become handmaidens in the service of jurists who wish to advocate a temporally determined sense of social order and social good. Depending on how jurists choose to incorporate these ascriptions, *hadith* can either serve to support women's participation in mosques, or to discourage it. ◆▶

Notes

1. Unless otherwise cited, the following editions of *hadith* collections were used for this article: Ibn Hajar al-ᶜAsqalani, *Fath al-Bari bi-Sharh Sahih al-Bukhari,* Cairo: Maktabat al-Kulliyyat al-Azhari, 1978. *Sahih Muslim bi-Sharh al-Nawawi*, Beirut: Dar al-Maᶜrifa, 1994. *Musnad al-Imam Ahmad Ibn Hanbal*, Beirut: Maktab al-Islami, 1993. Abu Dawud, *Sunan*. Homs: n.p.
2. Al-Shafiᶜi, *Ikhtilaf al-Hadith*, Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-ᶜIlmiyya, 1986, 103-5.
3. Ibn Hazm, *Muhalla bil-Athar*. Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-ᶜIlmiyya, 1988, 3:112, 115-6.
4. See, for example, *Fatawa Imam Rashid Rida*. Beirut: Dar al-Kitab al-Jadid, 1981, 2:436-7.

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

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 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 the dissemination of results and follow-up activities.

Application forms for all ISIM activities can be downloaded from the site. 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 to 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

Modernity

MARK SEDGWICK

Against Modernity
Western Traditionalism and Islam

There are many varieties of traditionalism in the West, but only one that really deserves a capital 'T', and only one that modified the understanding of both Islam in the West and modernity in the Islamic world. This is 'Guénonian' Traditionalism, the fruit of the marriage of 19th-century oriental scholarship with the Western esoteric tradition, a movement established by the work of the French religious philosopher René Guénon (1886-1951). Born in the provincial French city of Blois, Guénon lived the last twenty years of his life in Egypt, where he died a Muslim and an Egyptian citizen just before the 1952 Revolution. Despite this, his books and articles draw far more heavily on Hinduism than Islam, and were all written in French and published in Paris. At first, Traditionalists were all Europeans, mostly converts to Islam; today, their number includes born Muslims in the Islamic world and the West.

PHOTO: ANONYMOUS

Ren Gu non in Cairo shortly before his death.

Traditionalism is at its heart a view which reverses the usual connotations of the terms 'traditional' and 'progressive,' so that 'traditional' is good and 'progressive' bad – or rather, an illusion. There is indeed a progression in human affairs, but the direction is invariably one of decline, and 'progressive' thus becomes a synonym for 'corrupt'. The impact of Traditionalism derives from this essence; once the modern world is understood in terms of decline rather than progress, almost everything else changes. For a Traditionalist, truth is to be found not in the future or in the trivial discoveries of natural science, but in the past. That this is so little recognized today is a natural consequence of the final Dark Age in which we live – an age identified with the Hindu final age, the *kali yuga* – where (in many senses) quantity reigns and quality is eclipsed. To the extent that it is possible, salvation lies in salvaging what remains of the past from the general collapse of the present. For the individual, this means following an orthodox master in a valid 'initiatic' tradition. Guénon believed that the last chance of the West as a whole lay in the influence of a spiritual and intellectual elite composed of such individuals.

Traditionalism appeals almost exclusively to disenchanted intellectuals, some of whom join – or form – Traditionalist groups. For others, the encounter with Traditionalism may be a stepping stone to some other religious or political destination, often mainstream Islam.

Traditionalist groups commonly take the form of institutes or centres, and – in the case of Muslim Traditionalists – of Sufi orders. Some sort of institute is often the public face of a Sufi order, occasionally connected with a Masonic lodge. Many institutes have websites* or publish books or journals; members of these groups often write books of their own for the general public, teach at universities, or engage in other public activities. When addressing the general public, however, Traditionalists rarely identify themselves as such.

The Maryamiyya

In institutional terms, the most important result of the encounter of Traditionalism and Islam is without question the Maryamiyya, a Traditionalist Sufi order which derives from an Algerian order, the Alawiyya of Ahmad al-Alawi (1869-1934). Most other important Traditionalist Sufi orders begin their history with the Maryamiyya, and all major Muslim Traditionalist writers were at some point associated with this order or one of its derivatives. The Maryamiyya would, it was hoped by some, be the spiritual and intellectual elite that might save the West.

The Maryamiyya was established by Frithjof Schuon (1907-1998), a Swiss who joined the Alawiyya in Algeria in 1932, and – under somewhat controversial circumstances –established his own branch of this order in France and Switzerland in the years before the Second World War. Among his early Muslim followers were his contemporaries Michel Vâlsan (1907-74), Titus Burckhardt (1908-84), and Martin Lings (born 1911) – a Rumanian, a Swiss and an Englishman. Vâlsan later established his own order; both Burckhardt and Lings remained with Schuon, and wrote books on Islam which were well received by the general public, books in which Traditionalism is rarely explicit but is nonetheless very present.

By the end of the Second World War, Schuon's Alawi branch had become his own order – the Maryamiyya – and Vâlsan had parted with Schuon and established his own Alawi branch in Paris. Vâlsan's influence is limited to France, where his followers have written for both academic audiences and the general public, and are chiefly responsible for the surprisingly large number of French translations of classic Sufi texts which have been published by general publishers.

Schuon did not begin to attract a following among scholars in the United States until the final decades of the 20th century, when a number of professors of religious studies and of other subjects in American universities became followers of his. The two most famous of these are probably Seyyed Hossein Nasr and Huston Smith, whose *The Religions of Man* (1958) has now sold over 1,750,000 copies under its original title and its current title, *The World's Religions*. As is the case with other best selling works by Traditionalists, *The Religions of Man* is not overtly Traditionalist, but is inspired by and permeated with Traditionalism. Nasr is one of the most publicly prominent Muslims in the United States, and the author of various well-known books. He is also remarkable as the first major Traditionalist to be Muslim by birth rather than conversion.

The consequences of Traditionalism in the West

Muslim Traditionalists have had little impact on the development of Western civilization, but have been successful in providing an alternative understanding of Islam to that normally found in the West, one with which most Westerners find it far easier to sympathize. Although this has rarely been recognized, it has sometimes been more of a Traditionalist than an Islamic alternative.

In addition to the books on Islam written by Traditionalists such as Nasr and Lings, there have been events such as the 'World of Islam Festival' held in England in 1976, the message of which – Islam as a beautiful and traditional civilization – reached a wide public: the Festival involved many of London's major museums as well as the Archbishop of Canterbury and Queen Elizabeth II, and received wide media coverage. Major events such as this are infrequent, but nonetheless significant. Ten years later (in 1986) for example, an Italian Traditionalist, Felice Pallavicini, happened to be part of the Muslim delegation to a Day of Prayer held in Assisi by Pope John Paul. As a result of this, he received wide and sympathetic coverage in the Italian press for some time. Much of what was then reported as the view of Islam was in fact more Traditionalist than Islamic.

Traditionalism in the Islamic world

Western Traditionalists tend to be reticent about both their Islam and their Traditionalism, especially when they are academics. In contrast, Traditionalists in the Islamic world feel no need to be reticent about their Islam, and have little choice but to be open about their Traditionalism, since the background knowledge of their audiences means that they are unlikely to mistake Traditionalist interpretations of Islam for mainstream interpretations. Traditionalism in the Islamic world also differs from that in the West in terms of its organization. A Western Traditionalist in search of a Sufi order is likely to choose a Traditionalist order for geographic, linguistic and cultural reasons. In the Islamic world, a Traditionalist has plenty of existing mainstream orders from which to choose.

The most important Traditionalist organization in the Islamic world was not a Sufi order but the Imperial Iranian Academy of Philosophy, established in 1974 by Seyyed Hossein Nasr with the support of the Shah. This Academy was a well-financed body, which not only began a project for the study and restoration of Traditional sciences, but also attracted major figures from overseas. Although Nasr fled Iran at the Revolution and has never returned, the Imperial Academy survived with a change of name, and Iranian Traditionalists today participate in debates such as that on religious pluralism, and are regularly interviewed in a number of publications. Their views are regarded with some sympathy from circles within the Basij militia to the Qom seminary.

Traditionalism is also important in parts of the Islamic world where there are no Traditionalist organizations, as for example in Turkey. Large numbers of Traditionalist works were translated into Turkish during the 1980s and 1990s; whilst they have not achieved massive sales, they are widely available, and present a direct if subtle challenge to the fundamental principles and values of the modern Turkish state. They are generally read not by old-fashioned Turkish Muslims but by the educated elite. In the same way that in the West Traditionalism generally appeals to intellectuals, in the Islamic world it generally appeals to Westernized intellectuals, or at least to intellectuals familiar with Western currents of thought.

Traditionalism and Islam

In Western terms, Traditionalism is primarily an intellectual explanation and justification of that alienation from contemporary modernity that certain Westerners feel, and a path into Islam for many of those who find this explanation convincing. In Islamic terms, it is not just a condemnation of Western modernity, but also a reaffirmation of one particular variety of Islam. It is of little interest to radical or political Islamists, endorsing as it does what may be called pre-Salafi Islam. Even in these terms, however, it differs somewhat from mainstream interpretations, most obviously in its emphasis on the so-called 'transcendent unity' of religions. For a Traditionalist, Islam is but one among many expressions of an essential religious truth that is in certain senses greater than Islam. Such views have caused real tension between Muslim Traditionalists and other Muslims. ◆

Notes

* Surveyed and linked at my site: www.traditionalists.net

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Southeast Asia

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Islamic Radicalism and the Crisis of the Nation-State

A young student wearing ripped jeans, with long hair and an earring, was called on by a group of people wearing long flowing robes while he was having dinner at a food stall in a street of Yogyakarta. The group of people harassed him and forced him to leave his food. They accused him of being the troublemaker of the crisis and disaster facing Indonesia today. This situation occurred at the beginning of August 2000, when the first national congress of mujahidin was to be held on the re-establishment of the *shariʿa* in Indonesia.

Approximately two thousand people representing various 'radical' groups that are particularly in the public eye at moment, attended the congress. Amongst the participants were Laskar Santri (Santri Paramilitary Troops), Laskar Mujahidin (Mujahidin Paramilitary Troops), Kompi Badr (Badr Company), Brigade Taliban (Taliban Brigade), and Pasukan Komando Mujahidin (Mujahidin Command Force). A number of influential Muslim figures gave talks at the congress, such as Deliar Noer, Mansyur Suryanegara, Syahirul Alim, and Alawi Muhammad. They discussed one central theme: the application of the Islamic *shariʿa* as highly necessary in order to solve various problems and disasters occurring in Indonesia today.

Recently, almost every week in Jakarta, the Front Pembela Islam (The Front of the Defender of Islam) conducts *razzia*. They go to cafés, discotheques, casinos, and other venues which they accuse of being dens of iniquity and break up the on-going activities without being hampered by security agents. A few months ago, a major force called Laskar Jihad (Jihad Paramilitary Troops) even openly trained its members to engage in combat and stated its readiness to go to the battle field in the Moluccas. Several times, similar groups wearing white long-flowing robes and turbans took to the streets in protest against President Abdurrahman Wahid's policies, such as his proposal to withdraw the MPR (People's Consultative Council) decree on the banning of the PKI (Indonesian Communist Party). They also recently protested against the position taken by KOMNASHAM (National Commission for Human Rights) in dealing with certain crucial issues.

Islamic radicalism

The phenomenon of Islamic radicalism in Indonesia has emerged since the multi-dimensional crisis facing the country in 1997, which resulted in the collapse of Soeharto's regime. This movement marked a new phase of the relationship between Islam and the state, after the severe long-term repression of political Islam by the state. Since then, the existence of radical groups on the political scene has become increasingly remarkable and even 'attractive'. But what is the background of the emergence of such groups and is there any link between them and the changing socio-political and economic situations within the historical course of the nation?

The efflorescence of Islamic radicalism in Indonesia cannot be disassociated from the fast current of modernization and development projects run by the state during the last 30 years. In the past, the state has not provided sufficient space for all segments of society to express themselves and their interests in terms of modernization and development. The expression of political Islam, for instance, was often marginalized and repressed by the authoritarianism of the state.

However, this apparently could not be maintained, as there were moments when the state had to face the so-called legitimation crisis, which has increasingly expanded since the end of the 1980s. In order to restrain the spread of this crisis, the state should seek out new means such as, for example, promoting a strategy of conservative Islamization, particularly focused on the accentuation of the Islamic symbols in the public discourse, or accommodating the religious socio-political powers. A number of organizations and institutions using Islamic symbols have come to the fore. The Islamic Court Bill was introduced, followed by the presidential decree on the Compilation of Islamic Law. Islamic *shariʿa* banks and insurance companies were created everywhere, and thousands of mosques were built under the sponsorship of the state. In a very short time, the state drastically moved away from its former secular position and Muslim figures began to run the political scene.

Behind the conservative Islamization project run by the state at that time, there were many groups which, after losing hope, affiliated themselves to the project, or at least felt that they were going in that direction. Indeed, many groups saw this as a promising opportunity. Muslims who had been forced to remain in the periphery and who were given limited space in national politics found a new way to enter the political, social and economic arenas of the state. Those Muslim groups that had lost hope were bureaucrats, politicians, merchants, businessmen and even military, to name but a few. They believed that in this way they would be able to change the fate of their society, their nation, and their state – not to mention their own.

Within these groups, there were also subgroups which had been active in their resistance to the state before the mid-1980s and had struggled to give voice to the establishment of an Islamic state. At certain times they resorted to violence, as demonstrated by a group of young people led by Abdul Qadir Djaelani, calling themselves the Pola Perjuangan Revolusioner Islam (The Pattern of Revolutionary Islamic Struggle), who rushed the People's Consultative Council's assembly in March 1978. Two years before, the actions of the Komando Jihad (Jihad Command), led by H. Ismail Pranoto, erupted but were suppressed only in 1981. In that same year, a group of people who were loyal to Imran M. Zein carried out a set of attacks on police stations and other governmental services. The attacks culminated in the hijacking of a Garuda Indonesia aeroplane on 28 March 1981. Yet another attack took place in 1984 in Tanjung Priok, North Jakarta, when hundreds of people, commanded by Amir Biki, demanding the liberation of their four colleagues were fired at by military troops. This tragedy cost dozens of lives. They did not stand a chance in the face of the state repression. The peak of their impotency occurred when the state forced all socio-political organizations to accept the Pancasila. As a result, many, hiding their real faces, became active in the underground.

Radical neo-fundamentalism

When the crisis erupted, all that they had worked to achieve was suddenly put to an end. A number of sub-segments within the wave of conservative Islamization began to experience deep frustration due to this dramatic turn of events. Their aspirations of slowly taking control over the economy were shattered and their hopes of running the political scene were destroyed. Despite the last general election having demonstrated attempts to accommodate all socio-political powers, not all groups were satisfied. This was mostly due to a general feeling of not having acquired sufficient representation. They felt they were being marginalized again in the current of reformation, which led Abdurrahman Wahid to the presidency.

Taking the aforementioned historical processes into account, we can regard the phenomenon of Islamic radicalism in Indonesia as a site of resistance to the hegemony of the state by marginalized segments of society within the context of major political, social and economic change. The aim of this radicalism is to make these marginalized voices heard in the public sphere. Since hegemony functions through discourse, Islamic radicalism often attempts to produce a counter-discourse by criticizing secular-national expression and offering alternatives to it.

Olivier Roy, a French political scientist, has encountered a similar phenomenon in many Muslim countries today, which he calls 'radical neo-fundamentalism'. He defines it as a movement attempting to re-Islamize society at the grassroots level, through the re-establishment of the Islamic *shariʿa,* without being formed within an Islamic state. This phenomenon arose from of the failure of Islamism, a modern political Islamic movement which claims to re-create a true Muslim society, not merely by the application of the Islamic *shariʿa,* but also by creating a new Islamic order through the revolutionary and militant political actions, if necessary. The proponents of the movement do not see Islam as a mere religion. Rather, they see it as a political ideology that should be integrated into all aspects of society. However, Roy adds that even though Islamism has failed since the 1980s, particularly in terms of its original target of creating an Islamic state, its resistance and criticism to the authoritarianism of the state have succeeded in forcing the latter to introduce a conservative Islamization policy. Ironically, such policies did not succeed in eliminating Islamism; on the contrary, they have broadened its constituency and supporters.

Roy indicates that radical neo-fundamentalism combines political and militant jihad to protest against the secular West, with a very conservative definition of Islam. He also purports that it is a supra-national movement, working beyond the borders of the nation-state. There is a sort of international network in which the actors of the movement are trained and given financial support. Furthermore, the movement attempts to demonstrate the failure of the nation-state, seen as caught between national solidarity and globalization.

In the recent bombings in several major cities in Indonesia these days, many suspect the Indonesian Islamic radical groups. President Wahid even commanded the chief of police to arrest an influential figure of the Front of the Defenders of Islam, Sayyid Ali Baaqil. No one knows what the future holds for Indonesia, but one thing is clear: the violence, to quote Roy, 'is more a sign of weakness than the harbinger of a new wave of Islamic militancy'. Because political Islam remains in the periphery, it may never succeed in changing the strategic landscape of the Muslim world. ◆

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Southeast Asia
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Politicizing Islam in Malaysia

The ruling party in Malaysia, the United Malays' National Organisation (UMNO), has set up a website to demonstrate its various jihad efforts. The mere act of creating such a website – regardless of its content – reveals much about the competition for 'being Islamic' in Malaysia these days. Since it is primarily political parties that are the protagonists in this competition, Islamization in Malaysia has become a highly political issue rather than a direct outcome of Islamic social movements. UMNO and PAS, the Islamic Party, oppose each other vehemently.

There is an underlying societal demand for stronger Islamic commitment on the part of Malay politicians. The term 'Malay' should be stressed in this context, as it is mainly the ethnic Malays (55% of the Malaysian population) who consider themselves *the* Muslims of the country. Among the other ethnic groups – Chinese (30%), Indians (7%) and indigenous people – Muslims form a minority. A Malay is defined by the religion of Islam, and since the political power is in the hands of the Malays, Islam has been constitutionally declared the official religion of Malaysia. The semantics of Islam have transcended the aura of Malaysia's mosques, *suraus*, and private Muslim spaces and entered into the realm of the political public as a whole.

In a column headlined 'Dr M: PAS "jihad" a disservice to Muslims' in the (government-friendly) mainstream newspaper, *The Star,* on 12 August 2000, the Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad was quoted complaining that what PAS committed was not a holy war, but were rather activities that advocated a split in the (Malay) community. On the other hand, he held that UMNO's struggle could be considered a real jihad, 'more structured and long term in nature, and aimed at both developing the country and empowering the community with the latest knowledge and skills to ensure that Muslims were respected by others.' The reason for hoisting the battle flag is the fear of disunity among the Malay community. A disunited Malay community poses a potential threat to political stability, hence to the balance of ethnic power relations.

Loss of hope

Responsible for the change of tide are the recent domestic developments which have affected the Muslim as well as the non-Muslim public. In particular, the sacking of and verdict on former Deputy Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim provoked a cry of indignation. When Anwar was co-opted into UMNO in 1982, he had been known in the country as an extraordinarily charismatic leader of the Islamic Youth Movement ABIM. In view of the multi-ethnic society in Malaysia, Anwar introduced a model of a civil society that was devoted to the acceptance of the diversity of religions and traditions. In his writing on *masyarakat madani,* he emphasized that a multi-ethnic nation-state such as Malaysia necessitates civil and societal integration, while at the same time accentuating his personal affiliation to Islam which has played a pivotal role in his political career.

A Muslim youth leader, Anwar could be integrated perfectly into the programme of modernization and Islamization the Malaysian government sought to carry out. Until Anwar's being dismissed in 1998, the Mahathir and Anwar orchestra performed a symphony of mutually sustainable and beneficial concerns. By the mid-1990s, Malaysia had become considerably Islamized without getting caught in the trap of Islamist extremism. When Anwar joined the government as Deputy Prime Minister, the dominant reference in the state's agenda was a combination of 'Malay' and 'Islamic' with a developmentalist orientation. It was urbane, modernist and democratic in character, and bound to an Islamic and ethical framework. The ousting of Anwar from government and from UMNO is still viewed as a dismissal of reformist Islamic and democratic principles. Muslim morale has been severely affected by the fact that Anwar was accused of sodomy. Malays cried shame on Prime Minister Mahathir for this accusation – regardless of whether there was some truth to it or not – non-Malays also joined in supporting Anwar as the most integrative figure of the ethnically heterogeneous society. Putting him in jail for 15 years symbolized the loss of hope that half a nation had until then maintained for political change embedded in Islamic moral principles.

The spreading orthodox mood

During field work in Malaysia, two years after this watershed-like incident, it became clear that changes had taken place but in quite another direction than was intended in the late 1990s. Observing the scenes at public universities, the drastically increased number of female students wearing the *tudung* (headscarf) and male students wearing the *kopiah* (skullcap) was striking. Teachers admit that a trend of demonstrating one's Muslim identity has emerged and that it has become exceptional even for female Malay teachers not to wear the *tudung*. Campus events such as annual gatherings are accompanied by loud *nasyid* music, the Malay version of Islamic pop music, whereas proposals to celebrate the Chinese lantern festival on the campus are declined by university authorities. The 'new juvenile theocracy' at the public universities, as political scientist Farish Noor has dubbed them, mirrors the atmosphere of a rapidly growing Islamic assertiveness and conviction among the Malay populace. In a do-it-yourself manner, ultra-conscious Muslims seem to be determined to counterbalance the indecent liberties that are expected to arrive with the free use of IT and the internet. In a Malay-dominated primary school, new rules on non-*halal* food have been declared which remind the non-Muslims not to bring in such food during break time. This continued to the extent that reminder notes were placed on the canteen pillars. On the other hand, no one shows concern when Muslim pupils happily munch their beef sandwiches while sitting next to classmates of Hindu-Indian origin.

The spreading orthodox mood and assertion reflect non-material demands of a society which has become increasingly aware of the arbitrariness of state power in times of crises. Asking young urban Malays why they are fond of the Islamic party, the reply is that PAS leaders are able to attract the people spiritually. Spiritual attraction can translate beliefs into action, and for many Malays this is exactly what is required to lead the nation out of its current crisis. Non-Muslims also appear to appreciate the rhetoric of PAS, despite some highly provocative remarks of party leader Nik Aziz Nik Mat. Nik Aziz almost regularly draws the attention of the nation and the media towards himself by expressing that, for example, pretty women should not apply for good jobs because they can be married by rich men who are able to care for them, and that women who expose their belly buttons in public must not be surprised when they are raped by men. He does not have to wait long before the voices of protest make themselves heard, but still his party enjoys an increasing number of followers and huge audiences wherever PAS leaders address the people. A popular saying holds that UMNO leaders pay the audience for attending a convention, whereas in the case of PAS, the audience pays for attending.

New opportunities

For those who want to discuss and to be informed but do not have access to non-mainstream media, let alone the internet, the mosque is the place to go. Censorship is hardly extendable into the mosques, and if it were, a mass exchange of *imams* would have to occur to replace the current ones with exclusively 'non-political' ones. The humiliating fate of Anwar Ibrahim and the consequent formation of a large opposition movement have given birth to a coalition of forces opposed to the government – and PAS is an important part of it. Together with, among others, the Chinese-dominated Democratic Action Party (DAP), the multi-ethnic People's Party (Parti Rakyat Malaysia, PRM), which is preferred by many intellectuals, and the National Justice Party (Keadilan), PAS forms the Alternative Front (Barisan Alternatif). What keeps the coalition together is the opposition to the ruling coalition (of which UMNO is the de facto ruling party) and the struggle for an accountable, transparent, and pluralist political system.

Holding such divergent parties together is not an easy task, particularly when multi-ethnicity is to a large extent associated with a multi-religious setting. The government camp tries to take advantage of the internal conflicts in the opposition coalition and reunite the Malays under UMNO's roof. For this reason, the ruling party is now committed to jihad.

The current competition for religious and ethical merit and distinction forms a fertile ground for all sorts of religious-political ideologies to spread, be it in the direction of Islamic radicalism or politically-enriched cults and mysticism.

The possibility of articulating interests in an Islamic rhetoric and the aggregation of these interests through parties, organizations, and networks offers a political opportunity structure which the existing political system does not provide. Functioning as a valve to release emotions that have been bottled up, non-Muslims can utilize this opportunity structure as well. Through a process of 'Islamic lingualization' (islamische Versprachlichung, R. Schulze), a political discourse that lacked public recognition has now been brought before a mass audience. By way of a coalition, a symbiosis of reform movement and Islamic movement has evolved. Whether this symbiosis is heading in an 'exclusive' or 'inclusive' direction remains to be seen. An exclusive direction would mean that the Muslims and non-Muslims in Malaysia remain separate from each other once the aim of toppling the current government has been achieved. This would no doubt add fuel to the fire of those who sternly believe that politics in Malaysia are ethnically divided – and they are many. An inclusive direction would mean that the opposition forces would be able to form a viable multi-ethnic coalition. For the time being, the nation is witness to a competition between the two major Malay parties, UMNO and PAS, both seeking to win the 'best Muslim party' award. Sadly, the ethnically and culturally integrative and progressive ideas of a civil society, embedded within an Islamic ethical framework, are increasingly ridiculed in politically instrumentalized jihads and by radical ideologues that take advantage of the attractiveness of Islamic rhetoric. ◆▶

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South Asia

MAREIKE JULE WINKELMANN

Visiting a Women's Madrasa in Southern India

Can a woman become an *alima*? While there is a vast amount of information and literature on the subject of Muslim men's learning in *madrasas,* this is not the case for the women's religious schools. A visit to a women's *madrasa* called Jamiatul Banaath, located in India's sixth largest city, Hyderabad, is the basis for further research on this topic.

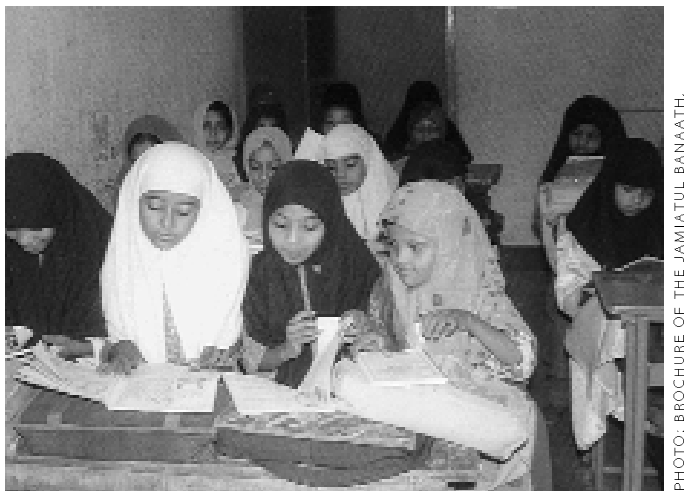

PHOTO: BROCHURE OF THE JAMIATUL BANAATH.

Making an appointment to visit the *madrasa* requires a great deal of patience. For a week, almost every phone call went unanswered, and those that were answered often revealed that the person in charge was absent. On the last possible day, with the help of an editor of the local Urdu newspaper *Siasat*, which is also known for its affiliated educational trust, some goodwill materialized as one of the teachers of the Jamiatul Banaath voiced a welcoming invitation over the phone. While making clear that due to the upcoming exams the students were given a day off, he nonetheless offered a guided tour and a meeting with the faculty members. A long rickshaw drive through one of the more backward areas of Hyderabad followed; and the narrow streets generated anxiety as well as curiosity with a view to this first meeting.

The Jamiatul Banaath is located in a residential area. The already narrow road that leads to the building is flanked by school buses that pick up and bring home those among the more than 1200 students who live in the more far-off areas of the twin cities of Hyderabad and Secunderabad. The buses look out of place on this particular day, as there are no students around. With a friendly and welcoming smile, one of the teachers offers me a handful of brochures about the school, adding that he would appreciate their distribution abroad, so that people would come to know about the school's mission. He then begins to lead the small group – the rickshaw driver, a reporter of the *Siasat* and myself – on a guided tour. Every now and then a glimpse could be caught of women wearing their *burqa*s and *niqab*s, crossing the extensive inner court in the direction of the staircase. Respectfully and quietly they greet the teachers.

The first stop is the library, where books are stacked in padlocked glass cases. The shelves are filled with numerous Qur'an volumes in Arabic, *hadith* collections, and books on *fiqh* in Arabic and Urdu. This is all there is time to identify, since only moments after entering the cool hall, a veiled woman comes rushing in. Only by her eyes one can tell that she is smiling. The group is urged to go upstairs, in the direction of the staff room, which is situated at the end of the long gallery. On the way, an unveiled woman who is obviously not a student lifts the heavy curtains separating the classrooms from the gallery, allowing us to look inside the small, empty rooms. One of the male teachers kindly lifts the curtain that separates the staff room from the gallery, his gestures stating politely that he has to stay behind. Some of the women who are gathered inside speak English as they point to an empty chair. There is a lot of giggling in the room now, bringing me to the realization of how difficult it is to guess the age of a woman who wears a *niqab*. Apparently the women in the staff room are still very young. This guess is confirmed when a number of them suddenly take off their *niqabs*, exposing their broad smiles to the outsiders. One of their first questions is neither about my name, nor about my home country or profession, but why I, as a foreigner and non-Muslim, am so interested in conducting research on a women's *madrasa*. The question seemed important to them and to me it was a relief that they asked it so directly. Once the young women were given the answer that someone coming from a different cultural and religious background could still be genuinely interested in this project, we went on to talk about the school. The girls can study up to the university level at the Jamiatul Banaath and are awarded the *alima* degree after four years of Islamic studies and the *fazila* degree after two more years. The syllabus encompasses subjects similar to the standardized syllabus of the *madrasas* for men. In other words, the girls study Arabic and Arabic literature, the Qur'an, *tafsir*, the *hadith* traditions and *fiqh,* but in addition to these subjects the teaching includes English as well as 'Home Science' (childcare, sewing and cooking). Most of the teachers are former students of the Jamiatul Banaath.

It seems that the aim of the Jamiatul Banaath is not merely to shape the students into good housewives, caring mothers and good preachers; they are encouraged to take up a profession. One of the main questions in subsequent research will be to what extent this encouragement is limited to a separate female sphere in society. This separate female sphere can be asserted, because in their roles as teachers, doctors and social workers, which seem to be the most prominent professions among young educated Muslim women, they mainly work among other women. ◆▶

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South Asia

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The Deendar Anjuman Between Dialogue and Conflict

Early in the year 2000, a series of bombs went off at twelve places of worship, mostly churches, in different towns in South India. Police officials claimed to have discovered evidence that a hitherto little-known Muslim group, the Deendar Anjuman, was involved in masterminding the blasts. Leaders of the Deendar Anjuman based at the group's headquarters in Hyderabad strongly denied the allegations, claiming that the Anjuman was actually set up for the purpose of promoting peaceful relations between people of different faiths.

The present controversy concerning the Anjuman's alleged role in the bomb blasts must be viewed in the context of the sect's origins. Siddiq Hussain, founder of the Anjuman, was born in 1886 at Balampet in the Gulbarga district, then part of the Nizam's Dominions. As a young man, he joined the Qadiani community, but soon renounced his membership, accusing the Qadianis of being *kafirs* for considering Mirza Ghulam Ahmad as a prophet. It is likely that he, at this time, moved closer to the rival Lahori branch of the Ahmadis, who split off from the main Ahmadi *jamaᶜat* over the question of the status of the Mirza. Unlike the Qadianis, the Lahoris, led by the well-known Islamic scholar Maulana Muhammad ᶜAli, insisted that the Mirza was not a prophet but simply a *mujaddid* (renewer of the faith). It is possible that Siddiq Hussain might actually have formally joined the Lahori *jamaᶜat*, for in his tract, 'Aᶜada-i-Islam' ('Enemies of Islam'), dating back to the mid-1920s, he wrote that he and members of his Anjuman believed that Mirza Ghulam Ahmad had been sent by God as the *mujaddid* of the 14th Islamic century. He also indicated that he continued to hold the Mirza in great esteem.

Launching of the Mission

In early 1923, the Arya Samaj, a militant Hindu chauvinist group, launched a massive drive to bring into the Hindu fold hundreds of thousands of Muslims. Muslim leaders responded by launching efforts at countering the Aryas through various Islamic missionary (*tabligh*) groups. Alarmed by the growing success of the Aryas, Siddiq Hussain set about launching his own missionary campaign among the Hindus, seeking to bring them into the Muslim fold. He first turned his attention to the Lingayats, a group of Shiva-worshippers living mainly in the Kannada-speaking districts of the Nizam's Dominions. Once, while on a trip to the shrine of Kodekkal Basappa, known to his Muslim followers as Muhammad Sarwar, a Sufi highly venerated by the local Lingayats, he reportedly heard that the Sufi had predicted the arrival of a saviour of the Lingayats, in the form of 'Deendar Channabasaveswara', who would be born in a Muslim family and would 'make the Hindus and Muslims one'. This, he announced, was a prophecy heralding his own arrival, claiming that in a dream God informed him that he had been appointed as an avatar of the Lingayat saint Channabasaveswara to bring all the Hindus of India to Islam. He now also claimed to be the saviour of the Hindus, the Kalki Avatar, who would herald the arrival of the age of truth (*sat yug*) in 1943, with only those who accepted Islam being saved. The Deendar Channabasaveswara, along with his army of Pathan followers would, as he claimed that the Hindu scriptures foretell, 'empty the treasuries of the [temples of] Tirupati and Hampi', and ensure that 'there is not one idol left standing in any temple' in the country. He would then set about 'uniting all the 101 castes [*zat*]', by making all Hindus Muslim. In the process, the power of the Brahmins would be completely destroyed. Finally, the Deendar Channabsaveswara would be recognized as the 'king of kings' (*badshahon ke badshah*).

It is possible that, not finding a warm response to his appeals among the Lingayats, Siddiq Hussain turned his attention to other Hindu groups as well. As in his missionary work among the Lingayats, Islam was presented here not as the negation, but rather as the fulfilment of Hinduism. In a booklet intended for a Hindu readership, Siddiq Hussain wrote that God had sent prophets to all peoples, and that they all taught the same religion (*din*), al-Islam, and that the last of these was the Prophet Muhammad. All the previous scriptures, he claimed, had predicted the arrival of Muhammad as God's last prophet for all mankind. Therefore, it was the duty of all non-Muslims to accept Muhammad and his teachings in accordance with what their own prophets had predicted about him. He argued that the coming of Muhammad as the universal saviour had been predicted in many Hindu scriptures. Quoting liberally from them, he remarked that the arrival of Muhammad as 'the World Teacher' had been 'prophesied so vividly and in such detail' in the books of the Hindus as 'cannot be found in any other religious texts'. Hence, Hindus had to convert to Islam if they were to be saved and if they were to remain true to the commandments of their own scriptures.

The Muslims, whom Siddiq Hussain had looked to for support in his mission, seem either to have ignored him or to have come forth in open opposition. Numerous *ᶜulama* issued *fatawa* of *kufr* (infidelity) against him on account of his claims to being an avatar of Channabasaveswara, declaring him to be a crypto-Qadiani, an allegation that he strove hard to refute. An enraged Muslim even went so far as to attempt to kill him. Despite this, Siddiq Hussain persisted in trying to convince Muslims of the legitimacy of his claims and of the importance of his mission, presenting his work as being in line with orthodox Islam. Siddiq Hussain stressed that he had been sent on a divine mission, declaring that the Prophet Muhammad himself had appointed him as the *imam ul-nas* (imam of the people) and the *imam-i-aqwam-i-ᶜalam* (imam of all peoples of the world) and, in that capacity, as the 'brother (*bhai*) of all Muslims'. Despite his efforts, Siddiq Hussain seems to have been greatly disillusioned with the lukewarm support he received from the Muslims of Hyderabad, which may have been the main reason for his subsequent decision in 1932 to leave the state and head northwards to Yaghestan, in the Pathan borderlands.

Hijra and Jihad

Anjuman sources describe Siddiq Hussain's migration, along with several of his close followers, to Yaghestan as an emulation of the Prophet's Hijra from Mecca to Medina in order to stir up the Pathans. Then, at the head of a grand Pathan army, he would descend to the Indian plains, presumably to fight the British and establish Islamic rule in the country, with himself as the imam. According to an Anjuman source, some 6,000,000 Pathans are said to have joined his mission of jihad. In 1934, he announced that he had received a divine revelation (*ilham*) that all of India would shortly convert to Islam. 'Rejoice! Oh Musalmans!', he declared to the obvious delight of his followers, 'the whole of India will soon turn Muslim'. Presumably, the time was now ripe for the jihad. His rousing up of the Pathans for war was now taken seriously by British authorities, who arranged for his arrest in 1936 and sent him back to Hyderabad, where he spent the next few years in jail.

In 1939, following his release, he set up a military training centre for his followers in Hyderabad, the Tehrik Jamiᶜat-i-Hizbullah (The Movement of the Party of God). At this time, he also penned two tracts: 'The Practical Science of War' and 'The Principal Armies of Asia and Europe'. Alongside these preparations for war, he kept up his missionary work, dispatching letters to several Indian and British leaders, including Gandhi, the Viceroy and King George V, asking them to convert to Islam.

1947 and after

By the end of 1946, fierce rioting between Hindus and Muslims had spread all across India, and Hyderabad was not left unaffected. Large-scale massacres of Muslims in the western districts of the Nizam's Dominions were reported. Reacting to this, Siddiq Hussain appealed to his followers to commence 'defensive fighting' against 'the enemies of Islam'. In late 1948, Indian troops invaded and took over Hyderabad. According to Anjuman sources, Siddiq Hussain and his followers fought the Indian forces on 27 different fronts, but were soon captured at their headquarters at Asif Nagar and taken into custody. Siddiq Hussain was later released, remaining alive for barely two months, a period in which he prepared an ambitious programme for missionary work in India. In response to the changed political context, he prepared a new method of missionary work for his followers to adopt. This he gave the name of the *Panch Shanti Marg* (The Five Pillars of the Way of Peace). This Sanskrit name was, it seems, deliberately chosen to commend the Anjuman to the Hindus, although it appears to have been modelled on the 'five pillars' of Sunni Islam, including *eko jagadishwar* (*tauhid*, belief in the One God); *eko jagat guru* (belief in Muhammad, the 'seal of the prophets' (*khatm al-nabiyyin*), as the 'World Teacher'); *sarva avatar satya* (belief in all the prophets as true); *sarva dharma granth satya* (belief in all religious scriptures as true); and *sammelan prarthana* ('collective prayer', the Islamic form of worship). In this manner, the missionary agenda of the Anjuman was played down and an impression was created that the Anjuman was genuinely committed to a generous ecumenism transcending all religious barriers.

Siddiq Hussain died in April 1952, and was succeeded by Sayyed Amir Hussain as the head of the community. Under Amir Hussain, the Anjuman continued the missionary activities begun by its founder, projecting itself as a peaceful group, committed to inter-communal harmony, which organizes regular inter-religious dialogue conferences. It was estimated that by the late 1990s, the Anjuman counted some 15,000 members, mainly in Hyderabad and in several towns and villages in South India, including some 100 full-time roving missionaries.

Thus, militancy and pacifism seem to have characterized the missionary strategy of the Anjuman at different times depending on the broader socio-political context. If there is any truth at all to the allegations that the Anjuman was involved in the recent bomb blasts, it would point to a return to Siddiq Hussain's jihadist strategy of the 1930s as a response to the growing challenge of Hindu militancy in India today. ◆

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Central Asia

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Transnational Islamist Debates about the Taliban

In 1995, many Islamists seemed torn about the policies and practices of the emerging Taliban in Afghanistan. On the one hand, the Taliban could be seen as freedom fighters struggling against infidels (and foreign intervention) to create an Islamic society governed according to strict adherence to Islamic law, or *shari'a*. On the other hand, Taliban leaders were implementing extremely repressive measures not only against the Jews, Hindus, and Sikhs – that had long coexisted with Afghanistan's majority Muslims – but also against Afghani Muslims. Why did the Taliban create such uneasiness among Islamists? The following examines transnational dialogues among Islamists as they debated whether or not to support the Taliban.

The late 20th century was marked by a wide range of Islamist frames – incorporating anti-colonialist, anti-leftist, integrativist, revolutionary, and even Marxist ideas – that sometimes competed and sometimes accommodated each other. The integrativist frame, which focuses on working within existing political structures to realize a more Islamist society, dates back at least to Hassan al-Banna in the 1920s. Those who adopted and developed these ideas have been characterized as integrativist because the norms of dialogue, debate, and consensus are embraced as key mechanisms for achieving social change. When, by the mid-1980s, a number of Arab regimes were faced with economic and other crises that brought increasing political dissent, many opted for limited liberalization as a mechanism for channelling dissent into controllable institutions. A number of Islamist groups, many with affinities for Banna's integrativist thinking, opted to enter into these political systems and contest public elections for state offices. They formed political parties, created civil society organizations, and formulated party platforms. Over the next two decades, a distinct public sphere emerged around the dialogue among these integrativists, with such widely heard and engaged voices as those of Rashid Ghanoushi, Hassan Turabi, and Abd al-Karim Soroush.

Within this transnational Islamist public sphere, a consensus began to emerge around the central norms of this integrativist frame. Innumerable voices weighed in on the question of Islam and democracy, while newly formed Islamist political parties shared their experiences, both successes and failures. The late 1990s also saw the emergence of a network of Islamist research institutes, many of which are open to foreign and non-Muslim researchers in an effort to demonstrate their integrativism in practice. Along with mechanisms such as the internet, these research institutes have begun to play a significant role in shaping the content of the transnational dialogues through their conferences and reciprocal invitations to sister institutions in other countries. With such exchanges, transnational debates emerge around 'hot' topics such as civil society, the role of women, local governance, and the environment.

By the time the Taliban emerged in September 1994, integrativist voices were widely heard within transnational Islamist debates. While the dialogue focused on the most appropriate means of bringing about an Islamic society, integrativist arguments demonstrated a significant level of accommodation. Armed struggle, for example, remained acceptable in anti-colonialist and authoritarian settings. When Islamists are not given the opportunity to work within the system, they reasoned, they have no alternative but to struggle against that system. Thus integrativist Islamists have no difficulty justifying the political violence, for example, of Hamas and Hizbollah against Israel (an occupying force), or of the FIS and its many militant offshoots in their struggles against Algeria's repressive military regime.

The problem for integrativist Islamists was not that their strategies directly conflicted with the policies of the Taliban since the contexts of each political struggle were quite different. Rather, difficulties arose around the boundaries of justifiable behaviour. Working through democratic institutions, even if it entails accepting the right of secular or leftist groups to coexist, is justifiable in terms of the Islamic norms of consultation and consensus; political violence is justifiable in contexts in which such opportunities are not available. The contention around the Taliban arose not because of the Taliban's armed struggle to establish a state, but because of its highly repressive domestic policies toward Afghani Muslims. In this regard, three issues of contention stand out as significant in integrativist debates about the Taliban: the role of women, pluralism, and beards.

Women under the Taliban regime

A decree issued in November 1996 by the Taliban's religious police, for example, placed the following restrictions on women:

> *Women, you should not step outside your residence. If you go outside the house, you should not be like women who used to go with fashionable clothes wearing much cosmetics.*[1]

Women have been subjected to virtual house arrest, and movement in public is highly restricted, even when wearing the mandatory head-to-toe *burkha*. Women are forbidden to visit tailors, and tailors are likewise forbidden to take the measurements of female customers. Girls' schools have been closed entirely, as were many boys' schools following the prohibition of female teachers in male classrooms. And of course, women are forbidden not only from political participation, but also from even voicing issues within the public sphere.

This treatment of women has been be extremely problematic for integrativist Islamists not because they hold liberal views toward women, but because they have sought to extend the norms of participation, consensus, and consultation to include the voices of women, who make up half of the Islamic community, or *ummah*. In this regard, the education of women is widely viewed as desirable. While the question of women's political participation is somewhat more contested, the policies of the Taliban toward women are simply not justifiable for integrativists on either strategic or Islamic grounds. While the Qur'an does state that no woman can lead the community, it also praises women whose efforts had been integral to the survival of the first Muslims. Such debates have unfolded in transnational Islamist public spheres including on the internet, at conferences and workshops, and in a range of publications available across national borders. Numerous Islamist web sites, for example, circulated petitions and declarations condemning the Taliban's repressive policies toward women. 'This is not true Islam', they declared to an audience of Muslims and non-Muslims alike.

Pluralism within transnational Islamist debates

The question of women is related to another contentious issue: pluralism. The current integrativist frame was shaped partly in response to the opportunities that opened to Islamist groups beginning in the 1980s. As these 'moderates' deliberated over when and to what extent an Islamist programme can be reconciled with the norms of liberal democracy, they focused on such Islamic notions as consensus *(ijma')* and consultation (*shura*). In the process, the norm of a plurality of voices became central to the integrativist Islamist frame. Of course, all of society should be Islamic, but within such confines a plurality of voices is both desirable and necessary.

Although 90% of Afghanis belong to the Sunni Hanafi sect, Afghani society has always been marked by the presence of numerous minority groups, including Shi'i Muslims, several Pashtun tribes, Tajik clans, Ismaelis, Bukharan Jews, Hindus, and Sikhs. Integrativists' contextual reading of Islam not only allows for a diversity of Muslim voices, but calls for actively engaging other voices in the public sphere. The Taliban, in contrast, are extremely intolerant of even alternative frames within Muslim dialogues. While the debate about the limits and meaning of pluralism has long been prominent within transnational Islamist debates, the issue here is that integrativists have highlighted the desirability of a plurality of voices in a manner that makes the Taliban's repression of such voices difficult to accept.

> *'Growing a beard is the tradition of Islam's Prophet Muhammad that must be followed by Muslims. Men without a beard [at least a fist in length] will not be considered for jobs or services.'*
> Mullah Mohammad Omar,
> Leader of the Taliban[2]

What is Islamic about a beard?

Perhaps the issue that has drawn the most outrage from integrative Islamists concerns the Taliban's demand that men grow their beards. In a decree issued in December 1996, the Taliban declared that men are not only forbidden to shave their beards, but that their beards must be at least a fist in length. To further enforce this regulation, any man who shaves and/or cuts his beard within less than a one-and-a-half-month interval should be arrested and imprisoned until his beard becomes bushy.[3]

For integrativist Islamists, many of whom are clean shaven and/or wear Western-style suits, the beard mandate is patently absurd. Muhammad Zabara, an integrativist Islamist member of Yemen's Islah Party (who sports a trim moustache and no beard), expressed bewilderment with respect to the decree:

I don't understand it. What is Islamic about a beard? Yes, the Prophet Muhammad wore a beard, but what are non-Arab Muslims to do? Does this mean that the Muslims of Indonesia are infidels? It must mean that I am not a good Muslim.[4]

One might have concluded that because these policies of the Taliban clearly conflict with the central integrativist norms, the debate among integrativists within transnational Islamist public spheres would have quickly moved to condemn the Taliban. However puzzling it may be, they did not. Over the course of several years, a consensus did emerge over the idea that many Taliban practices violated the tolerant spirit of Islam, particularly through the contributions of prominent thinkers to the debate. The voice of Rashid Ghounoushi, for example, has been central to debates around the issue of reconciling the norms of an Islamic frame with the norms of liberal democracy. Within transnational debates condemning Taliban practices, his voice has been among the most prominent. Yet early responses to the Taliban were indecisive precisely because the integrativist frame had no clearly articulated position on what policies of a ruling Muslim regime were too extreme for its Muslim citizenry.

As an Islamist group struggling to realize an Islamic society in Afghanistan, the Taliban was welcomed by the broader transnational Islamic community. Only when its policies towards its own Muslim citizenry seemed to violate the central norms of integrativist Islamists did criticism of the Taliban emerge. Personal ties have exacerbated these tensions, as many Islamist groups have members who were trained in Afghanistan in the 1980s (though those connections do not necessarily remain strong). There may also be issues of iconography at work, in that integrativists initially found it difficult to condemn any group that was struggling for Islam in the face of foreign domination, secularism, and general adversity. Yet as the Taliban received considerable attention within international public spheres of debate, integrativists recognized that they faced the challenge of distinguishing themselves from the Taliban in their ultimate social objectives. By 1997, just two years after transnational Islamist debates about the Taliban emerged, integrativists seemed to have agreed that Taliban policies did not reflect, in their view, the true spirit of Islam. ◆▶

Notes

1. Ahmed Rashid (2000), *Taliban: Militant Islam, Oil, and Fundamentalism in Central Asia,* New Haven: Yale University Press, p. 217.
2. Decree reported by Reuters, 6 November 2000.
3. Cited in Rashid (2000), p. 219.
4. Interview with author, 29 May 1997, Sana'a.

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Middle East
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New Social Movements in Iran

The 1979 Iranian revolution ended up in a theocratic regime that mobilized an important part of urban youth for both the war against Iraq and the realization of a utopian Islam. Two decades later, a new type of cultural-political movement, with democratic tendencies, is emerging and is founded mainly on three groups: intellectuals, university students, and women.

Throughout the 1990s, a post-Islamist intellectual movement has been developing in Iran that challenges the foundations of the Islamic Republic as conceived by Imam Khomeini in his theory of *velayat-e faqih* (The Guardianship of the doctor of the law) which legitimizes an Islamic theocracy within a closed political system, despite the existence of universal voting rights recognized by the Constitution.

The intellectuals

Islamist intellectuals, such as Shari'ati and Khomeini, advocated a closed system in which politics and religion are directly linked, whereas the post-Islamist intellectuals try to dissociate religion from politics. These new intellectuals are by and large in their fifties. At the time of the Revolution, most of them were strong advocates of revolutionary Islam and some had extreme leftist tendencies. For example, Abdolkarim Soroush was a revolutionary who participated, at least initially, in the 'Cultural Revolution' which resulted in the closure of universities. The same holds for Mohsen Makhmalbaf, the filmmaker who had fought against the Shah and who, after the revolution, was a radical Islamist. These two, like many others, have now changed sides and advocate a tolerant vision of Islam in contrast to the closed political field imposed by radical Islamists. They contest the strongly advocated notion held by Islamist thinkers, above all by Shari'ati, of the close association between politics and religion that gave birth to the Islamic Revolution. In the 1990s, numerous Islamist intellectuals began to gradually change perspectives and to renounce the revolutionary Islamist ideology.

Lay or clerical intellectuals, such as Soroush, Mojtahed-Shabestari, Ayatollah Montazeri, Mohsen Kadivar, and Eshkavari challenged the Islamic theocracy in the name of Islam itself. These intellectuals split into many groups: the first one consists of advocates of a purely spiritual Islam, who challenge the *velayat-e faqih* in the name of Islam. According to this group, the politicization of Islam only discredits the faith. The second group leans toward a limited, purely legislative, intervention of Islam in society. According to Kadivar and Montazeri, society must organize itself, without the intervention of the *faqih*. The latter has only the right of supervision (*nezarat*), and not of political domination (*velayat*) over society. The third group comprises secular intellectuals who reason in terms of modernity with no reference (or simply a purely instrumental one) to Islam. All three groups agree that the existing regime is breaking the Constitution (1979-80), and that the law should be respected by the state and all other groups. Despite their diversity, the post-Islamist intellectuals are also united in their implicit rejection of the *velayat-e faqih*, in the approval of 'civil society' (or what some of them call 'religious civil society'), and the will to assert the rule of law. This movement has access to journals and publications, most of which have been banned or attacked by violent pressure groups, and the judiciary.

These intellectuals have a deep influence on the young generation of university students, who read their writings and attend their debates at universities, despite all repressive attempts at intimidation, including imprisonment and, in some cases, execution.

The students' movement

The students, who form the second social movement in Iran, are largely inspired by the post-Islamist intellectuals, but their demands are not limited to those of the intellectuals. The latter demand the freedom of expression and the widening of social participation in the political sphere, a demand also shared by the young people. For example, a student association like the Daftar-e Tahkime Vahdat, which was a revolutionary and militant force representing the Islamist university students until the first half of the 1990s, has changed sides, defending Khatami and his reforms against the pressure groups and the conservatives.

The young generation comprises the numeric majority, more than 60% of the population being below 24 years of age. Most of the youth did not experience the Shah's reign. One of the fundamental demands of this movement is that of freedom in daily life – freedom of dress, freedom to meet those of the opposite sex in public space, and the freedom to participate in the modern world, especially in its diverse consumerist aspects – without being harassed by the special Islamic police who guard against overstepping the forbidden boundaries of proper Islamic conduct (such as the Bassij, Komite, Monkerat, etc.).

Before Khatami, young people were constantly pursued and harassed everywhere, in universities, classrooms, streets, and in their own cars by these repressive bodies and they suffered continuous humiliation at their hands. Since Khatami's election, there is some relaxation of this state of surveillance, but many feel that this is a precarious freedom as the vigilantes can harass them on certain days, while on other days they are left alone. And while there is still no guarantee of security, the most humiliating measures against them have been lifted.

The Islamic regime, which used to be the basis of the collective identity of the young revolutionary generation of the 1980s, has been transformed over time into a power opposed to the youth. It is now feared and despised for the violence and repressive rigour it imposes on the new generation.

The women's movement

Finally, there is also a new women's movement, which can be best understood by referring back to the Revolution, when for the first time in Iranian history, women's presence was crucial in street demonstrations. (In the most massive of these, a third of the participants were women.) Nevertheless, at the time, the vast majority of these women had no specific demands based on their gender. Women intellectuals were mostly influenced by Marxism and maintained the corresponding notion that once the proletariat would come to rule, women's issues would be automatically resolved. As for Islamist women, they believed that Islam would adequately solve women's problems by re-establishing the communitarian harmony destroyed by the monarchy. Consequently, there were no specifically gender-based demands among the vast majority of women demonstrators in the 1978-1979 Revolution.

However, the onset of the Islamic regime brought with it serious restrictions on women. Primarily, they were forbidden to occupy certain administrative positions, and those who worked for the state under a contract were laid off or did not have their contracts renewed. With the establishment of Islamic laws, numerous other obstacles were imposed on women, diminishing their equality of status: exclusion from certain jobs (such as being a judge); inequality of divorce (the man can divorce his wife, but not vice versa); inequality of guardianship of children after divorce (the man can keep male children after the age of 2, and female children after the age of 9); unequal laws of inheritance (women receive one-half of a man's share); and the inequality in the face of justice (a woman's testimony counts as half of a man's).

The women's movement in the 1990s began on the precept that the installation of the Islamic regime had led to the regression of women's rights on many levels. At the same time, in fields such as education and health, women's presence has improved. Literacy has increased among both sexes, and women's access to modernity, at least in the field of education, is approaching that of men. Much more than in the past, girls in rural areas have access to schools. There is thus an increasing equalization of access to modernity for women in schools and universities. However, once they enter the labour market, they find themselves excluded by social mores, by men, but also by Islamic legislation. Increasing modernization brings them intellectually and psychologically ever closer to men, making the legal denial of access to equality incomprehensible, even scandalous in their view. As long as women's social and cultural lives were different from those of men, this inequality was perceived as emanating from 'natural' differences. But now, the intellectual status and living conditions of women have changed, especially among the urban middle and lower middle classes, where many women work so as to maintain a decent standard of living in their household. The legal inequality becomes all the more intolerable with the increase in economic hardship faced by those in the urban areas, but also by the vast majority. Despite the difficulty in obtaining equal pay for equal work, women's incomes are vital and sometimes even necessary to pay for children's basic education.

Women's political rights of citizenship are theoretically almost equal to those of the men. On the one hand, a woman's vote in elections, or any other exercise in citizenship, counts the same as that of a man. In the parliament, their rights and voices count the same as any male deputy. However, when it comes to family law, the inequality becomes flagrant: a woman cannot travel without the explicit permission of her husband, she can be divorced without any convincing reason and can be denied the right of keeping her children after divorce. Nonetheless, some of these measures have changed recently due to women's intervention in the public sphere and in the Parliament.

Before the revolution, secular and Islamist women were opposed to one another, but now, facing similar disillusionment with legal inequalities, they are moving closer together.

Towards a new civil society

These intellectuals', university students' and women's movements, while being distinct, do have several things in common. They renounce revolutionary violence and are willing to construct a society based on dialogue and compromise. On the one hand, since Khatami's election in 1997, the absolute majority of the people support the democratic turn. On the other hand, a significant degree of political power remains in the hands of anti-democratic conservatives, including: the juridical branch and the important office of the Supreme Leader of the Revolution, which is in the hands of Ayatollah Khamenei; the Revolutionary Foundations, which have access to significant sums of capital lying outside government control; the Counsel of the Guardians, who can veto all the laws that seem un-Islamic to them; and the Office of the Superior Interests of the Islamic Regime, which arbitrates between the Parliament and the Counsel of the Guardians in case of disagreement between them.

Thus, we are faced with a post-Islamist society, with a divided power structure whose essential instruments nevertheless continue to be in the hands of the conservatives, while all the groups fighting for the opening of Iranian society are losing patience as the promised reforms run into institutional obstacles. ◆

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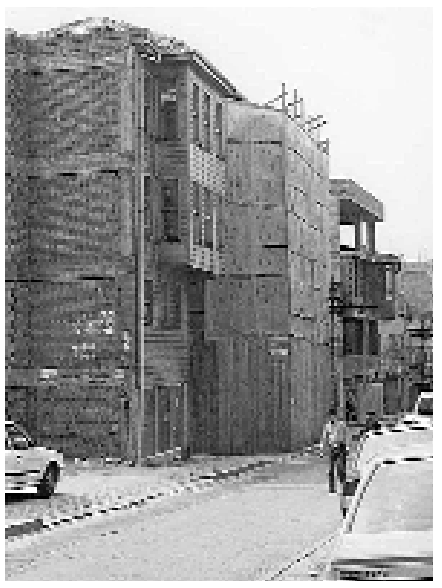
Middle East
AHMED SEDKY

Regional Cooperation of Urban Conservation in the Middle East

The historical city centres in the Middle East are very well endowed with artefacts and significant architecture. The urban fabric found within these rich contexts can be said to be the binding force of cultural heritage, along with the social qualities and values that are integrated into these urban environments. Yet modernity, globalization, and many other vehicles of radical change have severely affected the traditional urban phenomena of the Middle East. Urban conservation has therefore become imperative, surpassing the typical limited concerns of the restoration and preservation of historical buildings in the region.

Anbar Office, Headquarter of the Committee of the Revitalization of Old Damascus.



A deteriorating traditional wooden house away from tourist areas, near Istanbul University.

Modern architecture with a traditional image, Sulaymaniyya Mosque Area, Istanbul, Turkey.

The neo-Islamic building of Mashiyyakhat al-Azhar and the location of the air-condition factory Al-Azhar Tunnel, Al-Azhar Square, a very problematic area, the Revitalization of the Fatimid Cairo Project.

Major conservation project of Suq Barghut Area, Beirut. An example of the private sector conservation projects focusing only on the physical aspects of the area.

Al-Nasr Road, a few metres from the walled Old City of Damascus. Old demolished buildings and complete historical areas eroded before the new development.

PHOTO'S: AHMED SEDKY

Conservation in the Middle East today is generally meant for complete quarters. Several projects have been conducted in the region to confront the swift deterioration of certain areas. The crucial questions now being posed relate to how urban conservation should be carried out and even how to define it within the specific Middle Eastern context: Is it a kind of wide restoration that covers entire buildings and streets? Is its effectiveness determined by whether a synchronic approach to preserving the past is employed? And if not, if we involve people, namely the occupants, in the area of the conservation process, thus inciting urban regeneration, to what extent can we intervene? Another valid question concerns the criteria to be used in evaluating such projects.

An exploratory approach was taken in carrying out the present research, the aim of which was to compile contextual considerations of urban conservation that can emerge from a deep understanding of the studied phenomena, their potentials, problems, and possible answers. Therefore, surveying the conservation conceptions and built-environment problems of different cases proved to be the best tool for exploring the meaning and the actual problems of urban conservation in the Middle East.

It is vital to find a common base for various urban conservation considerations or guidelines. The latter term can tend towards rigidity, whereas the very nature of the conservation process implies variety, including regional variety. This often leads planners and professionals to function in a very speculative mode when responding to problems or suggesting intervention during both the design and implementation phases of urban conservation projects.

In order to avoid presuppositions and to maintain a contextual base for all potential considerations, a naturalistic paradigm of research has been followed, while the exploratory approach allowed for the problems to be defined and answers to be suggested with respect to the given data.

An initial expedition to Istanbul and Antalya, Turkey, was followed by another to the Fertile Crescent Region (financed by the Barakat Trust, UK). These were accompanied by a pilot study of the ongoing 'Revitalization of the Fatimid' project in Cairo. The study covered the projects that have been carried out in the following cities: Amman and Umm Qais (Jordan); Damascus and Aleppo (Syria); Beirut and Tripoli (Lebanon); and Cairo (Egypt).

All of these countries share several similarities, both culturally and in terms of the development process. They were the first to be exposed to European influences before and after colonialism. Moreover, religious and political bonds have played a substantial role in creating strong interaction among different cities of this entire zone of the Middle East even since before the Mamluk Period (1250-1517 AD). It is for this reason that these countries were chosen for the initial phase of the present inquiry – a choice which offered maximum consistency in terms of the urban environments of these countries' historical quarters – almost all of which are experiencing threats to and deterioration of their traditional urban fabric.

Such an undertaking requires deep awareness of the potential and requirements of the given contexts, and the relevant ecological and demographic systems. It is necessary to develop a framework proper to urban conservation, which can only emerge from such awareness. This, however, necessitates the accumulation and integration of knowledge and experiences gained from the various ongoing and completed urban conservation projects in different parts in the Middle East.

What is needed is regional cooperation among the many professionals involved in the urban conservation processes of the Middle East. A forum could contribute to such cooperation by encouraging discussion and presenting the experiences and plans of those involved. Initially, the meanings of the historical quarters, their present function, and what they mean within their contemporary context would have to be clearly defined. Urban conservation as such should also be defined. Furthermore, questions about the type of intervention necessary for sustainable and effective conservation should be raised.

Such an undertaking responds to the strong call for establishing a regional committee on urban conservation, composed of coordinators as well as research members representing each of the concerned Middle Eastern countries. All coordinators with their associated teams would have the task of maintaining contacts and cooperation with the local institutions and NGOs. There are several real attempts already underway to realize this goal. Regional events can also secure the exchange of information as a step towards synthesizing a regional charter on urban conservation.

A practical step has been taken to organize the First Regional Conference of Urban Conservation in the Middle East, under the auspices of the Jordanian University of Science and Technology (JUST) to be held in the fall of 2001. The main objective of this event is to establish a regional link among the professionals and activists in the field and to pave the way for the much-needed accumulation of experiences in the field. ◂▸

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Middle East
BERNARD HAYKEL

The Entrenchment of 'Non-Sectarian' Sunnism in Yemen

One of the salient features of religious life in Yemen in the modern period has been the fading of historically rooted Yemeni forms of Islam. Zaydi scholars, for example, have been reduced to a minority group within the body of the *ulama* and have little say in the running of the country's affairs. The Shafiʿi Sufis of the Hadramaut have faired even worse. The most visible form of Islam, and the one actively promoted by the state, claims to be above the sectarian identities of the Yemenis and ultimately adheres to the Salafi school. This requires explanation since Salafism is not usually associated with Yemen's religious and intellectual history.

The most commonly invoked name in official government discourse on religion and law in contemporary Yemen is by far that of Muhammad b. ʿAli al-Shawkani (d. 1834). Shawkani was the chief judge of the Qasimi imamate in the late 18th and early 19th centuries who had, through his writings and political activities, attempted to mould Yemen's legal and political environment in a Sunni fashion. Shawkani was a Traditionist Sunni, or Salafi, who claimed that his legal and religious opinions were derived from a direct interface with the primary sources of revelation (Qur'an and Hadith), and not from the derivative works of the established schools of law. In so doing, he negates the multiple legal and sectarian divisions of latter-day Muslims. For him, most of the juridical textual legacy from the time of revelation could be ignored in favour of the teachings of *mujtahid* scholars like himself. Embedded in Shawkani's teachings was a call for reform and an overhaul of Islamic legal thought, elements which would later appeal to Muslim states as well as modernist intellectuals, who saw in his ideas a means of reforming their own societies.

Shawkani's vision of social and political order involved establishing a bureaucratic state, the centre of which would be a top-ranking jurist, a chief judge like himself. This jurist would have to have an independent intellect and be the 'renewer' of collective truth; in short, the source to which scholars and rulers alike should properly resort. The shift from Zaydism to Sunnism, which Shawkani had a central hand in effecting, was part of larger transformations in Qasimi state structures. The Qasimi imams, who ruled Yemen from the 17th to the 19th centuries, were interested in establishing a dynastic state in the 18th century. Shawkani's vision accommodated their needs; hence an alliance was struck whereby Traditionist scholars legitimized the rule of the Qasimi imams and in return, the imams provided patronage in the form of appointments and protection.

In the Yemeni context, a clear and distinct chain of Shawkani students has perpetuated his legacy to the present day. Shawkani's status as the symbol of both Yemeni nationalism and pan-Islamic reformist thought in a Sunni Traditionist mode has risen considerably since the Yemeni republican revolution in 1962. In addition to major avenues, schools and university halls being named after him, the republic promotes the editing of his works, and officially subscribes to his Traditionist interpretation of Islam. Appeal to his ideas and symbolic status as a much-recognized pan-Islamic reformer has proven to be an effective tool in silencing the more traditional Zaydi opponents of the republican regime. Briefly stated, the argument against the traditional Zaydis runs as follows: Zaydism's intrinsic moderation and acceptance of *mujtahids* allowed a figure like Shawkani to emerge from within the school and be patronized by the Qasimi imams. Therefore, Shawkani's understanding of Islam is in fact consistent with the *true* teachings of Zaydism. The not so negligible affirmation that Shawkani systematically attempted to demolish the teachings of the Zaydi school in a number of his works is invariably passed over in silence.

Another reason for the allure of Salafi Islam in Yemen is the fact that elements in Shawkani's teachings resonate with specifically modern Muslim concerns about Islam's decline and the necessity for renewal and rejuvenation. By monopolizing his discourse, the Yemeni state has garnered for itself an efficient means to instituting a more standard, or what can be termed 'generic Sunni', interpretation of Islam. And because Shawkani's Salafism has a considerable following across the Muslim world, all provincial and historically rooted conceptions and practices of Islam can be attacked for being atavistic.

The extent to which this 'generic Sunnism' has become dominant in Yemen can be gleaned semiotically by looking at the way most Yemenis pray in mosques nowadays in the regions considered to be Zaydi. Like Malikis – but unlike Shafiʿis, Hanafis and Hanbalis – Zaydis practise the *irsal* while praying (i.e. they do not place the right hand over the left, a practice referred to as *damm*, but keep their hands lowered to their sides). Very few Yemenis practise the *irsal* nowadays, and some even make a point of praying in a non-Zaydi fashion. Though anecdotal, these and other bodily practices are important markers of religious identity and reveal a shift to a more Salafi practice of Islam.

Encounter with a tribesman[2]

In Saʿda, the traditional Zaydi bastion in the country, was a 22-year-old tribesman from ʿUsaymat, historically a Zaydi tribe of Hashid. He had been recently recruited by *al-Amn al-Siyasi* (political security service). When asked about the local Zaydis' complaints that their tombs were being desecrated and destroyed by the students of the scientific institute (where the tribesman had been educated) and other 'Wahhabi' sympathizers, his answer was categorical: 'The Hadawis are practising reprehensible innovations [sing. *bidʿa*] when they visit their tombs and erect grave stones and domes over them. This is contrary to Islam and must be stopped.'

He insisted on referring to the local Zaydis as Hadawis, revealing that he had accepted a feature in the propaganda war that is waged against them by Sunni Islamists. This consists in asserting that Zayd b. ʿAli (the eponym of the Zaydis) did not establish a school or sect – thus no one has the right to use his name – and that it was the ardent followers of al-Hadi Yahya b. al-Husayn[1] who had established a wayward sect, thereby placing themselves beyond the pale of orthodoxy. Furthermore, his statement about visiting tombs clearly indicates that this young man had imbibed and accepted the Traditionist/Wahhabi discourse on graves – an important leitmotif in their literature. The proof offered for his assertions was a recitation of a number of Sunni prophetic traditions about the reprehensibility of erecting and visiting graves. Perhaps the most remarkable feature of this encounter is that this man no longer identified with the historical school to which his forefathers had belonged, and he had the intellectual and scriptural wherewithal to vilify it. In comparison with his tribal ancestors, his knowledge of Islam was more considerable, but the content and the forms it took bore closer affinity with that of a contemporary Islamist in Riyadh.

The way Zaydis have coped

Republican state policies have effectively marginalized traditional Zaydi scholars from the political arena. With few notable exceptions, such scholars have not benefited in terms of administrative or political appointments. Zaydis often speak of a combined onslaught by the state and by the Wahhabis, whose influence has been especially significant in the Saʿda province. The only organized effort by Zaydis to reclaim influence has come belatedly with the establishment of Hizb al-Haqq (The Party of Truth) in 1990 after the unification of the two Yemens. Al-Haqq's general secretary, Sayyid Ahmad b. Muhammad al-Shami, does not mince words in explaining why the party was established:

> *Look, Saudi Arabia is pouring lots and lots of money into Yemen to promote its own version of Wahhabi Islam. This is actually an irrational and uncompromising version of our religion, which we can do without. So, we need to counter those efforts… and to fight intellectual advances by Wahhabism into Yemen.*

It is implicit here that the republican government has allowed this to take place and is therefore guilty by association. Politically, al-Haqq has proved ineffectual. It won only two seats in the 1993 parliamentary elections and none in 1997. In part, this is due to the ambiguous nature of a Zaydi political party operating in a republican context where it is all too easy to identify it with a call for reviving the imamate. In an unsuccessful attempt to clarify matters, al-Shami and other eminent Zaydi scholars issued a statement in which they declare their abandonment of the institution of the imamate. The imamate, they assert, is a historical construct that is no longer valid. The most important matter for the present age is to attend to the welfare (*salah*) and the betterment (*islah*) of the Muslim community. The latter, alone, has the right to appoint a leader, who is not an imam in the strict sense, but rather a hired servant (*ajir*). Finally, this Muslim leader may be descended from any lineage and belong to any race as long as the affairs of the *umma* are safe and sound. The institution which once defined Zaydism was thus done away with in a few pages.

A number of Zaydi scholars do not agree with the positions taken by al-Haqq's leadership, whether it is on the issue the imamate or regarding participation in the political processes in Sana'a. They remain formally outside the party, preferring to lead a life on the geographical and political margins of Yemen. When unable to change an unjust regime, Zaydism advocates the practice of 'emigration' (*hijra*) from the abode of injustice to a more secure area where a life devoted to righteous living can be pursued. A number of leading Zaydis, such as Majd al-Din al-Muʿayyadi and Badr al-Din al-Huthi, live in rural areas where they teach. Thus far, no one has claimed the imamate. Instead, the more senior scholars have encouraged a younger generation of Zaydi activists to pursue activities in the fields of education, religious exhortation, and the editing and publication of Zaydi manuscripts. The two most prominent men of this younger generation are al-Murtada al-Mahatwari and Muhammad ʿIzzan.

By and large, the efforts of traditional Zaydis to resuscitate their vision of religious and political order have been limited and mainly defensive, reacting to policies undertaken by the state or their Salafi opponents. Both in ideological and political terms, the response of the Zaydis has been meagre, being confined to the publication of texts and the establishment of a small number of schools and institutes. The story of the Zaydis and their detractors continues to unfold, but the outcome appears to have been determined in the mid-18th century when the state chose to support Traditionist scholars such as Shawkani, whose intellectual heirs continue to dominate the juridical and political scene in Yemen. ◆▶

Notes

1. Died in 911 CE, the first Zaydi imam in Yemen.
2. This encounter took place in 1994 during the author's fieldwork.

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Middle East
MONA ABAZA

Perceptions of ʿUrfi Marriage in the Egyptian Press

Recent press coverage of what has been coined as 'ʿurfi marriage' seems to bear witness to evolving sexual norms in Egyptian society today. More than to the phenomenon itself, for which no serious statistics are available, our attention should be drawn to the labelling procedures indulged by the press and 'popular literature'. Perceptions of sexuality and *ʿurfi* marriage, and the way in which society is portrayed, reflect an attempt to incorporate the changing norms within a revived Islamic code. Reading the press, one discovers with astonishment an unleashed resentment of and blame on the youth and women.

PHOTO:EGYPTE 100 ANS DE CINEMA, INSTITUT DU MONDE ARABE, EDITIONS PLUME, 1995.

Faten Hamama and Omar Sharif in La Dame du Chateau.

Religious men, prominent sociologists and psychologists are recurrently invited to give not so much a scientific account, but a moral sermon about the deep-seated illness in our morally decadent society. On the other hand, however, issues of youth and sexuality are now publicly discussed and interestingly touchy, though often unaccountable, information is circulated.

A customary Islamic matrimonial institution, which has resisted the centralized registration policies of the modern nation-state by surviving alongside the Personal Status Law, *ʿurfi* marriage requires two witnesses and a third party to oversee the contracting of marriage. *ʿUrfi* marriages can generate social and legal problems the minute conflicts appear, since neither spouse can file a lawsuit to prove the marriage if the other denies the relationship. Other problems arise when women file for divorce or alimony, or claim any of their marital rights. In Egypt, marriage, divorce and inheritance are not governed by the Civil Code but by the *sharīʿa,* as progressively 'codified' in the 1920 and 1929 Laws of Personal Status. Most, if not all, of the marriages covered in the press today are not registered under this law.

That the *ʿurfi* marriage has always existed but was much less widespread before, seems to have been forgotten in the public discourse. For instance, an *ʿurfi* contract has been a practical way for widows to remarry while maintaining the state pension of the deceased husband. It was also a way of matchmaking across classes. In Egyptian films of the 1950s, *ʿurfi* stereotypes portray bosses secretly marrying their lower-class secretaries while maintaining an honourable public face and life with their first wives and children, or engaging in secret liaisons with women with a dubious past. Movies thus conveyed the idea that *ʿurfi* marriage was a halfway solution for all parties, for in the end, it was indeed permissible though not public.

Whether the revival of this customary marriage in a context of great economic pressure is a strategy of youthful social actors eager to avoid moral and religious censorship of 'illicit' relationships, or a plain transgression of socially accepted behaviour, remains to be seen. Indeed, the press in general has placed under the heading of *ʿurfi* marriage, not only all sorts of imported (illegal) marriage contracts presumably flourishing in Egypt as of late, but also new forms of *ʿurfi* marriage. The confusion is such that it becomes unclear whether what is at stake is a problematic acknowledgement of changing sexual norms or a wilful campaign designed to oppose an ill-judged custom. Two such confusing novelties are the *misyar,* an 'ambulant' marriage imported from Saudi Arabia whereby no economic obligations from the man are requested; and the *mutʿa* marriage, which is a contract limited in time, practised among the Shiites, and perceived as being an import from Iran. Parallel to that, Egyptians have acknowledged that they are facing a serious crisis concerning the institution of marriage. Their sexual customs are changing and they seem to face a deadlock in dealing with the growing number of professional, divorced and single women – at least this is what is echoed in the Egyptian press. The spread of what are often mere partnerships, abusively called *ʿurfi* marriages, among young students at the preparatory, high school, and university levels, has become the main target of tabloid and national papers. Because the *ʿurfi* marriage is part of Islamic law, *ʿulamā'* increasingly express their views on the state of matrimonial affairs. This has led to diverging views within their ranks. Scores of often contradictory fatwas have been issued on whether one should validate the new forms of *ʿurfi* or refute them altogether, along with *misyar* and *mutʿa*.

The following story is drawn from ʿAbd al-Wahhab Mutawwiʿ's popular al-Ahram Friday column, 'Barid al-Jumʿa' (Friday's Letters). A far cry from traditional 'Letters to the Editor', these letters often take on the form of biographical narratives seeking solutions to personal dramas and possess all the ingredients and melodramatic overtone of potential Arabic soap opera films.

Deviant youth

The story entitled 'The Unexpected Visit', is told by a 50-year-old woman[1] who says by way of introduction that she has been quite content with her life – a modest and honest one. As a recent widow, she states her pride in having raised her three children who became successful in their professional and personal lives, with the exception of her youngest daughter, who did not obtain the degrees necessary to enter any of the universities in Cairo. The daughter thus decided to complete her undergraduate studies at a provincial university. The mother consented to her daughter's travelling to the province and sharing a flat with other female students. Problems, it seems, began during her second year there, when the mother noticed her daughter dressing up in tight trousers, leggings and short skirts. Doubting her daughter's conduct, she decided to pay her an unexpected visit, only to discover that her daughter no longer lived with her female colleagues. To her dismay, she learned from a letter found in the flat that her daughter had contracted an *ʿurfi* marriage. In a desperate tone, the mother, who has hidden the humiliating story from the rest of her family, writes to Mutawwiʿ, imploring him to provide a solution.

In his answer, Mutawwiʿ argues that if the conditions of an *ʿurfi* marriage are fulfilled, it is then valid. He adds, however, that in this particular case, and as more widely practised today among students, such unions are immoral and invalid, because they are carried out without the acceptance of the family. Moreover, they are not made public. The mother's duty is to inform the rest of the family of the situation so that they may investigate the intentions of the young man. Should he be serious and well intentioned, the marriage should be public and turned into a legally registered contract. Should he not be serious, her daughter should be put under surveillance by returning to her mother's house. According to Mutawwiʿ, the daughter deviated because she had been separated from her family and affirmed that it would be reparable if the daughter be placed again under the family's guidance.

In one possible reading, the story can be said to convey two simultaneous messages: although there is a moral condemnation of youth and women, there is equally a chance to repair the situation. Youths, if left on their own, are bound by definition to immoral behaviour. But it is also possible to see how through this column and other such press releases, society is imposing a new label upon youth and university campuses. The message conveyed here by the press insists on condemning deviant and 'perverse' sexuality as allowed in *ʿurfi* marriage, implying as it were that 'loose' sexual morals are becoming a prerogative of youth in Egypt.[2] The fact that *ʿurfi* marriage (and the recent *khulʿ* or divorce law) became part of public debates in Egypt has brought the 'deviant youth' issue to the forefront. The *khulʿ* law was passed in parliament in January 2000. For the first time in the modern history of Egypt, it is considered that this law will provide a significant freedom of choice to women. The law allows wives to obtain divorces in family courts within three months if they return their dowry and give up their rights to alimony. A clause also provides for divorce in *ʿurfi* cases.

Responses

'ʿUrfi marriage equals legal prostitution' is the title of one of the many al-Ahram articles on marriage in Egypt.[3] While the press constantly associates lustful, mostly European-looking, 'loose' women with magnified and/or invented stories about *ʿurfi* liaisons, thus attracting a promising readership, statistics about such liaisons are seriously lacking. In a recent speech, the Minister of Social Affairs, Amina al-Guindi, stated that *ʿurfi* marriage concerns 17.2% of Egyptian university students.[4] One has to take these official statistics with great precaution since no serious survey was undertaken, nor was there any explanation given on how this conclusion was reached. While the *al-Wafd* newspaper mentions that these liaisons concern 67-70% of the total number of university students,[5] one might wonder whether these exaggerated statistics are

Middle East

ABE W. ATA

Forgotten Christians in the Holy Land

The indignity of American Christians who conveniently drop from their memory tales of oppression experienced by their Palestinian Christian compatriots is striking. The term 'conveniently' may be explained by the following unforgettable experience: I once engaged in a conversation with an Anglo-Christian missionary on a bus trip from Bethlehem to Jerusalem prior to the 1967 War. As a Christian born in Bethlehem, I expressed how privileged I felt to proclaim the honour of my birth place. Gasping with a subdued expression, the missionary muttered: 'And when exactly did you convert to Christianity?'

It was virtually a 'mission impossible' to convince my interlocutor that our 'native' Christian beliefs were not due to missionary work, nor were they due conversions from Muslim beliefs at the times of the Crusades. Palestinian Christian churches and their communities have dotted the Holy Land since the time of Christ. During the last three weeks of January 2001, American (and Australian) public and religious papers alike have failed to acknowledge the presence of Palestinian Christian Arabs, preferring instead the resurrection of cultural, historical and religious divides between Muslims and Jews. A total of 400,000 Palestinian Christians worldwide (approximately 7% of the total Palestinian population) have received no mention: neither in the electronic media, nor in popular or academic discourse. The sense of betrayal has been no less than that perpetuated by Judas.

Again I refer to the term 'conveniently' in the sense that the politics of omission has served its architects in making their subjects endure historical stereotypes and religious misnomers which the Anglo media and churches forced upon them, and made them pay the price for their guilt feelings beginning with WWII atrocities.

As the Christian Palestinian community is destroyed through desperation, forced emigration and spiritual dissolution, their churches have become the 'authentic' caretakers for the tourist museums without worshippers. For example, before l967, the Sunday service at my Lutheran church in Bethlehem attracted 800 worshippers – today only 25 maintain the tradition.

As the remaining Palestinian Christians manage to halt emigration and strengthen themselves through consolidation with Muslim Palestinians under a nationalist umbrella, unsympathetic and unavailing Western missionaries will find themselves with no pastoral role to play.

The holy sites and monuments cluttering about them like limpets no doubt give the land salience to (Western) Christian pilgrims. For us 'native' Christians, the continued presence of fellow worshippers living in the land, whether or not in association with these sites, is our last breath of life.

We still find it hard to forgive the failure of Christian pilgrims to resist the Western war of propaganda war against the 'native' Christian population. Just like our Muslim neighbours, we see the collusion of Christian pilgrims as a long-standing continuation of the march of the Crusaders. After all, it was largely the churches in the West, particularly Australian, which fought for the liberation of the oppressed Christian population in East Timor, Ireland and South Africa.

Perhaps it is more 'convenient' to remain silent with respect to the injustices perpetrated against Palestinian Christians. We ought not forget though that reconciliation demands repair, that peace requires speaking out against injustice. Now is the time for American Christians to reach out for their Christian brothers and sisters in the Holy Land. ◆

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part and parcel of the diffuse ideology condemning the youth.

The general acknowledgement of changing sexual norms has prompted the sheikh of al-Azhar to pronounce a fatwa on the *ʿurfi* issue. The fatwa allows *ʿurfi*-wed women to divorce – a way of reckoning this reality in an attempt to rescue those trapped in it and wishing to remarry legally, without being otherwise liable to charges of bigamy. Earlier, Majmaʿ al-Buhuth al-Islamiyya, al-Azhar's Islamic Research Academy, demanded the inhibition of *ʿurfi* practices in an attempt to quell a phenomenon otherwise permissible from the Islamic standpoint, but which is growing out of control.[6] Sheikh al-Azhar (Sheikh Tantawi), in an interview, questioned the validity of *ʿurfi* marriage since it contradicted the order of the state. He pleaded for the punishment of those who practise it.[7] His statements, however, raised so much controversy that he was obliged to back down. The mufti of Egypt, Nasr Farad Wasil, recently stated again that *ʿurfi* as practised in Egyptian universities, is *fasid* and *batil,* invalid and illegitimate, and that the restoration of the hymen is only valid in the case of rape.[8]

Changing norms

In a society where 65% of the population is under 30 years of age, the youth becomes more visible, and is seen mixing in the reshaped public spaces such as popular cafés, clubs, shopping centres, cinemas, and fast food restaurants, all of which have multiplied in the last decade. Parallel to the growing Islamization of public space, the youth has been equally experiencing a certain 'relaxation of norms', exemplified by the growing cross-class intermingling in Cairo. Young girls wear Islamic attire and move freely, not hiding their flirting with their boyfriends. Sexuality for the middle classes is still very much bound by the notion of chastity, at least officially, as discourses continue about virginity and preservation of the hymen. Furthermore, no marriage is possible without substantial financial assets and a flat: In a country suffering an acute housing crisis, it is no wonder that sociologists have observed in the last decades that the average marriage age is increasing. If it is true that *ʿurfi*-like marriages have become widespread on Egyptian campuses – as the press likes to make us believe – one may argue that this generation has been smart in solving the growing sexual tensions in a society that idolizes marriage and is rigid in conventions regarding the financial requirements of the institution. One may even speculate over the spread of *ʿurfi* marriages as a hidden protest of second-generation post-Islamist youths. Some may be inspired by the example of the radical activists of the 1980s and early 1990s, when certain Islamist groups, through condemning contemporary society as *jahiliyya* (literally, ignorant; contextually, pagan or pre-Islamic), isolated themselves in 'Islamic' communes that allegedly took to matchmaking and exchanging women within the group. In a recent incident, a group of *mutatarrifun* (extremists) was found to be marrying without contracts. The *gamaʿa* consisting of ten members, among whom four were women, justified theft by referring to corruption in society, and thus raided apartments, stealing Qur'ans and watches from mosques to redistribute them within the group.[9] These new Muslim Robin Hoods redefined accessibility of women within the confines of the group and invented their own sexual conduct.

A quick glance at Cairene bookshops reveals that the theme of the 'Woman' has come to occupy a large part of contemporary male Egyptian fantasies. The covers of popular books convey images of women as sex bombs, over-eroticized and devilish creatures. In his *Permissible Prostitution:* The Modern Institution of Marriage in Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Iran (Cairo: Dar al-Khayal, 1997), ʿAbdallah Kamal aims at exposing the various institutions of what he calls 'legalized' prostitution which, according to him, are the *mutʿa, misyar* and *ʿurfi* contracts. He places the major blame on the Saudis, whom he holds responsible for the spread among Egyptians of what he calls the 'contracts of adultery' *(ʿuqud al-zina').*

Apart from so-called *ʿurfi* contracts, *mutʿa* and *misyar,* Egyptian tabloids have made a veritable sport of providing long lists of imported, revived or even invented contracts. The much talked about *misyar*, whereby cohabitation is not required and the wife is not endowed with a residence, was authorized by the late Saudi mufti, Sheikh bin Baz. Many Egyptians saw no reason not to follow this example. Whereas the former rector of al-Azhar, Sheikh Sayyid Masʿud, considered *misyar* improper since housing and alimony were dispensed with, the mufti of Egypt, Nasr Farid Wasil, has authorized it, arguing that there are practical reasons for allowing it. One of his justifications was the scarcity of men, resulting from immigration to the Gulf countries.[10]

Others attribute the success of *misyar* in Egypt to its legitimization by Sheikh Yusuf al-Qaradawi, Egyptian Muslim Brother and Azharite, in his now famous television declaration in Qatar, in which he emphasized the *halal* aspect of *misyar* which lies in the fact that women themselves desire such unions.[11] He justified the *misyar* contract by arguing that if a woman is rich and a professional, she does not need financial support. It is a way for rich women to separate sexuality from obligations. Nevertheless, al-Qaradawi's position stirred strong controversies among other Azahrites, who argued that *misyar* was invalid.

It may well be that television programmes broadcasting pornography are contributing to the evolution of Egyptian sexual norms, but is pornography one of the main reasons why *ʿurfi*-like contracts have spread in Egypt? Egyptians, we are told, are forgetting their religious duties. While the government is busy cracking down on Islamists, the press is openly bringing about the issue of changing sexual behaviour as if it were a national threat. The feminists and some of the *ʿulama'* for once are united by their common stance on current forms of *ʿurfi*, treating them as disguised prostitution. What may really be at stake is the process of circumventing a most powerful institution in Egypt: the eternal and omnipotent family. Yet in the absence of the subversive ideologies that dominated in the late 1960s and 1970s, this generation is far from rebelling against conventions. It might well be that the official religious discourse, while being state supported or at least silently encouraged to cut the ground of the Islamists, is determining strategies of resistance among the youth. By means of *ʿurfi* and similar types of contracts, they seek halfway solutions that at least ease sexual tensions. These are found in re-inventing an elastic code of conduct that still remains within the confines of what is thought to be 'Islamic' and therefore permissible. ◆

Notes

1. *Al-Ahram,* 31 March 2000.
2. Wafa' Shaʿira, *Rose el Youssef,* 12 May 1997; Iqbal al-Sibʿi, *Rose al Youssef,* 16 November 1998.
3. SaʿidSalah, *al-Ahram,* 19 June 1999.
4. *Al-Akhbar,* 30 April 2000.
5. Nadia Mutawwiʿ, *al-Wafd,* 1 October 1999.
6. *Al-Wafd,* 7 May 1999; *al-ʿArabi,* 21 May 1999; *Cairo Times,* 13-26 May 1999.
7. Sami Muhammad Mitwalli al-Shaʿrawi, *al-ʿArabi,* 21 May 1999.
8. *Al-Akhbar,* 18 April 2000.
9. Ahmad Musa, *al-Ahram,* 6 November 1999.
10. *Akhbar al-yawm,* 26 September 1998.
11. *Al-Ahrar,* 24 August 1998.

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Middle East

MAMOUN FANDY

Modernity's Victims
The dilemma of Palestine

Instead of focusing on the details of the current crisis in Palestine, it is important to think broadly about the global implications of this problem. The main observation made in the following is that the Palestinian crisis exposes the deficiencies of the modern international order and the limits of modernity at large. The implications of such an observation reach far beyond Palestine to include almost all the communities that do not neatly meet modernity's requisites.

Modernity implies the expansion of the domain of the written word at the expense of orality and oral tradition. Stripping modernity from all its complexity and reducing it to a matter of writing is limiting. However, language is at the heart of the problem: at the level of communication; at the level of linkages between writing and legality; and between writing and economic and political empowerment. The modern nation-state is the main instrument of this expansion of modernity and the realm of the written word.

The domination of the written word and the discourse of the modern nation-state and of modernity have brought about a new consensus and cosmology that must be questioned if we are to become sensitive to the plight of fragile communities. The consequences of this worldview and the expansion of modernity are fatal for those who are the objects of such transformations.

Modern politics and modern intellectual trends are about eliminating or suppressing everything that defies the language of the state and does not lend itself to categorization. The sovereignty of the nation-state lies in its power to determine anew who is legitimate, to distinguish between who is inside and who is outside, and to make these definitions stick. The latter depend on a specific language and a specific mode of representation. The lucky ones fall within this language definition and are thus represented as legal persons with political and economic rights; the unfortunate ones fall outside the language of modernity and consequently outside legality and property rights. Everything that self-defines or eludes modernity's categorical grasp or the language of the modern nation-state is a challenge.

The Palestinian situation

At the heart of the Palestinian problem is the fact that Palestinians are part of a linguistic community that is inaccessible to the West. For some in the West, Arabic is a 'controversial language'. It is the language of emotionalism, or at least has been represented as such. In the current hierarchy of languages, Arabic, unlike English, is not one that that defines the world today. A language's ranking is not unrelated to the language of contracts, naming places and possessing and dispossessing land. This hierarchy exists even within a single language. Those forms that fall outside of a particular mapping of the world are marginal and unwritten – this marginality eliminates other forms of claims to land and sometimes to existence.

Since the current international system is a function of modernity, the Palestinians become the victims of three layers of an oppressive structure: modernity, the modern international system, and the Israeli occupation. Thus, the Palestinian situation is unveiled as a triple tragedy and its full complexity must be addressed.

One dimension of the problem is in Israeli hands. The other dimensions of the tragedy lie within the larger contradictions of modernity and the current international system, which caters to sovereign states at the expense of various unfortunate yet distinct communities.

If we are to adopt such a perspective, the limitations of the current rhetoric of leaving the two parties to arrive at a bilateral solution on their own become salient and the intentions behind it become obvious. It is misleading to present the problem as a 'Palestinian-Israeli' or even an 'Arab-Israeli' problem and absolve the dominant powers in the current international system (as well as that of yesteryears) from their responsibilities towards a problem that resulted from the expansions and contractions of empires. The modern post-colonial state was certainly written in such a way that it obscured a local history. For instance, present-day Guatemala basically promotes a new history of the state and its boundaries, trampling upon the history of the Mayan Indians that exist both inside and outside the country's borders.

Native inhabitants are victims of displacement, either at the level of time and history or at the level of space and place. Modern occupiers or settlers who are written in the language of modernity have more rights than indigenous or aboriginal people. If one takes the issues of Palestinian refugees, or what Oslo calls 'displaced persons', as an example, and contrasts it with Israeli settlers, the contradictions become more glaring. Most Palestinians who live in refugee camps and want to return to their homes in Palestine may not have the written papers to prove ownership of their own homes. A home that has perhaps been in the family for hundreds of years might not satisfy the requirements of the modern nation-state and its criteria for property rights. Palestinians could offer many witnesses to testify that indeed a particular family resided in a certain home for years, but modern nation states listen only to papers and legal documents they can understand.

The Israeli government was aware of this. Following the June 1967 war, the Israeli military government controlling the West Bank almost immediately terminated a land registration campaign in progress. At the time of the suspension of the programme, approximately 60% of the West Bank was left without a standard form of titled ownership. The systematic demolition of Palestinian homes is also an element of this policy of eradication – an attempt to allow one history to overwrite another. Since the inception of the state of Israel, Palestinian lands were considered *terrus nullus*. It is this notion of emptiness that gave the settlers and the Israeli state the power to take over Palestinian land and homes with very little accountability. Even Palestinian homes that are under the control of the Palestinians are often dead assets.

As Hernando De Soto has shown, this is a larger problem that runs throughout what used to be called the third world. Since the homes are not incorporated into legality, it would be extremely difficult for a Palestinian to sell his home or get a loan against it to better his lot. Hence, the exclusion of the Palestinians from the written world has excluded them from the world of legality. It has also excluded them from the world of transactions (economic or other). Thus, it becomes obvious that the Palestinian home is only recognized within the testimonials of the oral tradition. Its illegibility to modernity and to the language of the nation-state renders it *terrus nullus* or nonexistent. Israeli settlers, on the other hand, have become the written people of modernity, both within and outside of Israel. They have access to all the paraphernalia of modernity that offer them legal, economic and political rights.

The dilemma of the Palestinians is that they aspire to be part of a legal system that does not recognize their existence. The Palestinians call for settlement on the basis of the Security Council Resolution 242, which was the result of interstate wars. This resolution relegated Palestinians to the status of a refugee problem; even the current discussion concerning the Madrid Conference and the subsequent Oslo Agreement has been reduced to a conversation over 'land for peace', with little mention of the people.

As we adopt this state gaze and state-centred language, we become unaware that we are trampling upon various fragile communities who were pushed into unfair arrangements. Albanians, Kurds, and Chechens, native peoples of Australia and Canada, are but a few examples. Across the globe, there are many communities within states that are tightly bound by the words of dominant idioms. Their distinct rights are hidden from view.

For any Palestinian story to be heard, Palestinians have first to be written. Only when a Palestinian refugee is written, can he or she gain access to modernity, become a legal personality and consequently acquire economic and political rights. Thus the issue at hand not only concerns the independence of the Palestinian state, but also, and perhaps even more so, the improvement of the economic conditions of the Palestinians.

Because of its exclusive type of nationalism, Israel does not accept the incorporation of the Palestinians into a bi-national modern state with similar legal and economic rights. Modernity is limited by the nature of the Israeli state and the state of Israel is limited by modernity's parameters. The only recourse for a Palestinian family is to appeal to international law, but international law deals only with sovereign states and the Palestinians have not yet acquired this sovereignty.

By no means is Israel the only modern state in the region that uses violence as a means of domination. The rest of the states in the region, such as Turkey or the Arab states, resort to violence as a way of dominating their own unwritten societies. However, none of these states use helicopter gun ships against stone throwing youngsters. States speak a common language, no matter how many translators they employ to write their treaties. And it is only in moving away from the agreed-upon ignorance of this master tongue, this meeting ground where words are supposed to meet as equals, that we might begin to notice how little our ears can serve us in this case. To really listen implies, not some tricky rejection of these shared ways of forming words and setting them down, but a different way of considering what is real for political actors. How can they hear and how much can their words of state keep them from understanding?

Finally, the politics of reconciliation is about forgetting past atrocities and injuries, but the birth of a modern state is about registering and writing a history and a national narrative through schools and various other institutions. The Palestinians are required to build institutions of remembering the birth of a state and are simultaneously asked to adopt a politics of forgetting for purposes of reconciliation. These are the limits of modernity.

As stated above, the Palestinians are victims of a triple-tiered oppressive structure of modernity, the current international system, and occupation. It is therefore incumbent upon all of us to reflect, not only upon those who are included in the world of modernity, but also upon modernity's victims. ◆▶

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Middle East
SAMULI SCHIELKE

Pious Fun at Saints Festivals in Modern Egypt

Mawlids, traditional festivals in honour of saints, are among the most popular, but also the most controversial Islamic traditions in Egypt. Millions of people – even half of all the Egyptians, according to an unofficial estimate[1] – participate in these festivals. In the public sphere, however, Islamists and conservative men of religion often find themselves side to side with many secularists, both vehemently opposing what they consider a shameful deviation from proper Islamic and/or modern culture.

Mawlids are celebrated annually at saints' shrines. People often travel to these festivals from long distances in order to pay respect to the saint, find a solution to a problem or a cure for an illness, meditate, meet friends and relatives, and just have fun. Islamic *mawlids* – a number of Christian and Jewish *mawlids* exist as well – are closely connected to Sufism: Sufi *dhikr* (meditation) and visits to the shrine of the respective saint, often a Sufi *shaykh,* are central to the festivities. Yet it is insufficient to describe *mawlids* entirely in terms of mysticism and religious practice. These religious aspects are mixed with more profane ones: a *mawlid* is also an important social occasion that offers a great variety of commercial entertainment. On the 'great night', the final evening of a *mawlid*, people crowd the area surrounding the shrine, visiting tents with Sufi *dhikr* and merchants offering snacks and sweets, target shooting and circus performances.

The sacred and profane elements of the festival are mixed in a seemingly unorganized fashion. This impression is shared by the participants: *mūlid* (colloquial for *mawlid*) is a common metaphor for chaos. This mixture of apparently incompatible elements is an essential feature of the *mawlids* and one of the main reasons why many people find these festivals highly irritating.

Antidote for modernity

Since the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the veneration of saints has been a main target of modernist and reformist criticism concerned with traditional Islamic practices. The reformists, in their response to European claims of cultural superiority as opposed to the alleged backwardness, fatalism and superstitions of the Muslims, chose to dissociate true, authentic Islam from the popular religious traditions of the Muslims, the latter being held responsible for the retrogression of contemporary Muslim societies.

Mawlids, perhaps the most visible expressions of saint veneration, became a central issue of this kind of criticism. They were regarded as both unauthentic, thus un-Islamic, and irrational, thus anti-modern: a mere expression of ignorance (*jahl)*, an antidote for the reformist and modernist discourse.[2]

These arguments – equally popular among Islamists and secularists – are fairly well known to students of modern Islam. However, they fail to give a complete picture of what exactly makes *mawlids* so offensive to some people. There is a third, seldom outspoken, but nevertheless very central criterion for the perception of the *mawlid* festivals; namely, the question concerning the aesthetic quality of modern Islamic culture. The importance of this question is revealed in the following.

The *mawlid* of al-Shaʿrāwī

After the death, in June 1998, of the enormously popular television preacher Muḥammad Mutawallī al-Shaʿrāwī, a cult similar to the traditional cult of saints began to develop around him. His picture could be seen almost everywhere. Prayers related to him and books written by or about him flooded the newspaper stands, and reruns of his sermons were shown on television. The funeral of al-Shaʿrāwī was a mass event, and soon a popular cult developed around his tomb in his native town Daqādūs in the Nile Delta. Consequently, the Shaykh's second son ʿAbd al-Raḥīm organized a *mawlid* to commemorate the first anniversary of his father's death.

This *mawlid* took place in mid-June 1999 and the final evening was celebrated on the 17th of that month. The festivities centred on the Shaykh's shrine – at that time still under construction – located next to the Islamic Centre of al-Shaʿrāwī, which is now presided by the Shaykh's son. A continuous stream of visitors passed by the shrine, paying their respects to the Shaykh and seeking his blessing (*baraka*). At the Centre, an official ceremony took place which was set to satisfy reformist standards: addresses were read, al-Shaʿrāwī's religious heritage was discussed, local poets recited panegyrics on the Shaykh, and awards were granted for young authors from the region. The official programme was followed by the recitation of the Qur'ān.

On the street in front of the Centre, the more informal and significantly bigger part of the festival took place. In a large tent, *dhikr* was conducted. Along the street, chickpeas, snacks, sweets, amulets, funny hats and other inexpensive souvenirs were being sold. Steps away, target shooting stands, swing boats and merry-go-rounds had been set up next to a stage where a *munshid*, accompanied by a band, was chanting religious hymns.

Belly-dancing as well as the consumption of alcohol and hashish, which are among the more controversial practices of *mawlids*, were absent from the festival in Daqādūs. The atmosphere was one of a communal gathering with neighbours, families, Sufis and followers of the Shaykh coming together. Especially for youths, the *mawlid* served not only for consolidating existing communal ties but also for creating new ones: facilitated by the relaxation of gender segregation during the festivities, young men and women used the occasion to see and be seen.

'Who will stop this mockery?'[3]

The *mawlid* of al-Shaʿrāwī caused a storm of protest in the religious media. Although the sacralization of al-Shaʿrāwī was greatly encouraged by the pro-government conservative religious current, most of its representatives were certainly not willing to accept the *mawlid*.

They pointed out that the Shaykh would never have accepted such an occasion (in fact, al-Shaʿrāwī's comments on *mawlids* had been quite ambivalent) and that *mawlids* were un-Islamic and immoral. What was presented as particularly offensive in the headlines and commentaries was the turning of a legitimate pious celebration into a popular festival with all its entertainment and commerce. In this sense, the weekly religious newspaper *ʿAqīdatī* commented disapprovingly: 'The *mawlid* of al-Shaʿrāwī turned into an amusement centre of dervishes and a festival of chickpeas, sweets and children's play.'[4]

Any other *mawlid* would have received only a routine condemnation, if any at all. But al-Shaʿrāwī's importance as an icon of the conservative religious current caused a serious clash between the ideal of Islamic culture and living Islamic tradition. According to these critics, al-Shaʿrāwī's memory should be celebrated, but not in such a shameful, un-Islamic way.[5]

Islam and chickpeas

Now what is so shameful and un-Islamic about chickpeas? In fact, chickpeas are a central symbol when describing a *mawlid*. 'Leaving the *mawlid* without chickpeas' is a common expression for doing something while missing the actual point or use of it. Chickpeas – just as sweets and games – stand as an archetype for the commercial and entertaining aspects of a *mawlid*.

This by itself would not be offensive. But in a *mawlid*, chickpeas are part of a religious event. Sacred aspects are so closely connected to profane ones that one cannot meaningfully distinguish between the two. For the visitors to a *mawlid*, the festival is both: entertaining religion and pious fun. It is this synthesis of religion and entertainment that makes a *mawlid* so attractive to some and so offensive to others.

Condemning the *mawlids* is, to a great extent, an aesthetic judgement; the festivities fail to fulfil a modernist ideal of rational, constrained, pious, cultivated, well-organized and well-controlled culture. Based on this criterion of dignity, the modernist/reformist discourse insists that occasions of higher importance – not only religious, but also social, political and private – must be characterized by purity, dignity and educational value. Everyday popular culture may be tolerated, but should definitely not be allowed to enter the sphere of ideal modern Islamic culture.

This modernist aesthetics of culture can be found in a variety of other issues. Commercial mass culture is opposed to the sublime ideal of educational and politically constructive high culture.[6]

Or, to give another example, the discussion on the 'modern city' is preoccupied with issues such as cleanliness, order and organization, representing itself in the dichotomy between educated, civilized citizens walking along wide prospects on one side, and a chaotic *mawlid* in the narrow alleys of a slum on the other.[7]

In a similar way, the apologetic discourse on female circumcision centres around the concepts of beauty and purity and the problem of control.[8]

At this point, more questions arise than can currently be answered. However, two general remarks can be made. Firstly, in contemporary cultural criticism in Egypt, arguments based on aesthetic quality are common and apparently share some identical premises. Secondly, this theoretical ideal of beauty, purity, dignity and order often finds itself in grave contradiction to reality – a reality which is not as similar to modernist clarity as it is to the proverbial meaning of *mawlid* as cheerful chaos. ◆►

PHOTO: SAMULI SCHIELKE, 1999.

Girl in a swing-boat in the *mawlid* of Shaykh al-Shaʿrāwī in Daqādūs, Nile Delta.

Notes

1. Diyāb, Muḥammad Ḥāfiẓ (1999), 'al-Dīn al-shaʿbī, al-dhākirawa-l-muʿāsh', *Suṭūḥ* 30, pp. 16-18.
2. A good example of this argumentation is ʿAbd al-Laṭīf, MuḥammadFahmī (1999, first 1948), 'Al-Sayyid al-Badawī wa-dawlat al-darāwīsh fī Miṣr,' *Maktabat al-dirāsātal-shaʿbiyya* 30, Cairo: al-Hay'a al-miṣriyyaal-ʿāmmali-l-kitāb.
3. *ʿAqīdatī* (22.6.1999), p. 6.
4. Ibid., pp. 10-11.
5. Ibid., pp. 6, 10-11. See also *al-Liwā'al-Islāmī* (24 June 1999), pp. 4-5.
6. Armbrust, Walter (1996), *Mass Culture and Modernism in Egypt*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 165-197.
7. See e.g. 'Baʿd an ikhtalaṭ al-ḥābilbil-nābil. Fawḍā fī maydānRamsīs', *al-Ahrām* (20 June 2000).
8. Wassef, Nadia (2000), *Medical Discourses on the Practice of Clitoridectomy: A Comparative View*, Congress paper at the 7th IAMES Congress, Berlin 5-9 August 2000.

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Middle East
THOMAS EICH

Quest for a Phantom
Investigating Abu l-Huda al-Sayyadi

Abu l-Huda was born in a small village on the margins of the northern Syrian desert in 1850 into a family of humble origins. In his early childhood, he was initiated into the Rifaʿiyya order, which is still widely spread today in the rural areas of Syria and Iraq. He was quick to develop substantial contacts with Rifaʿi sheiks in Aleppo, who dominated certain important posts in the city. In 1874, he became the *naqib al-ashraf* (scion of the descendants of the prophets) there at a strikingly young age. In the following years, he managed to overcome several severe setbacks to his career and finally established himself in the entourage of the new Sultan Abdülhamid II, whose accession to the throne marked the end of the *tanzimat*, a period of wide-ranging administrative reforms in Ottoman history.*

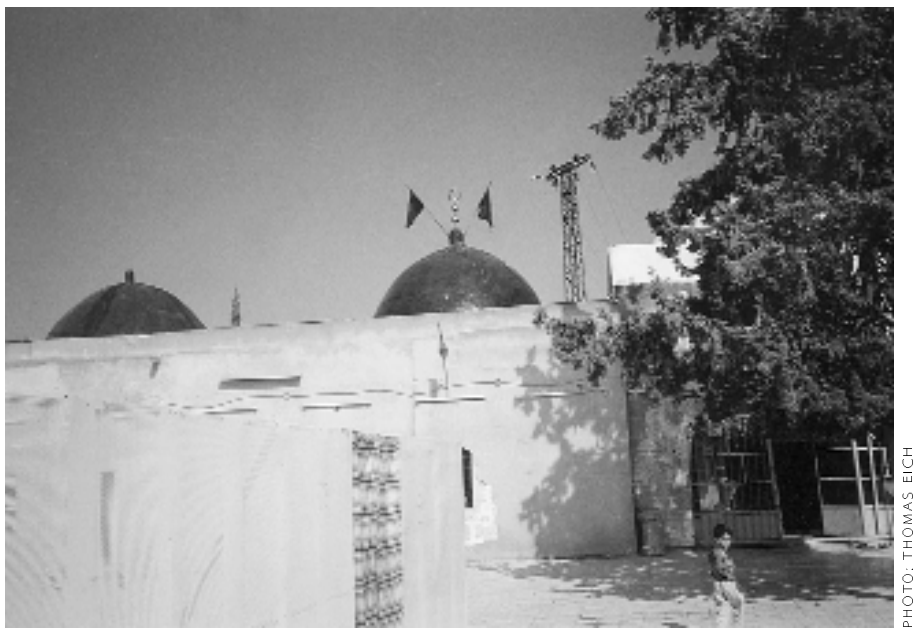

PHOTO: THOMAS EICH

The shrine of Ahmad al-Sayyadi, ancestor of Abu l-Huda, near Huma, the spiritual centre of the Rifaʿiyya in Syria.

Abu l-Huda was allegedly one of the most powerful men in the Ottoman Empire for several years. From 1881 onwards, he commenced vast publishing activities. It is claimed that he wrote up to 200 books, of which approximately 60 can still be found today. In 1909, he died in Istanbul on the Bosphorus island of Prinkipo where he had been exiled by the Young Turks after their *coup d'état*. Apart from this, little is known with certainty about Abu l-Huda.

In existing literature, he has been characterized as a reactionary and obscurantist, who tried to oppose the reformist circles of his time. He is usually juxtaposed with one of the two fore-thinkers of Arab nationalism: ʿAbd ar-Rahman al-Kawakibi or Butrus al-Bustani. By this, he is interpreted as a mere tool in the hands of Abdülhamid II for spreading his pan-Islamic propaganda. Unfortunately this interpretation rests on only one small booklet of Abu l-Huda which, even at a short glance over his publication list, is clearly an exception. No thorough attempts have been made to question how this astonishing career was possible, what happened after Abu l-Huda had permanently settled in Istanbul and what comprised the contents of his writings. It might even be said that, over time, analysis gave way to the development of an 'Abu l-Huda topos', which is generally applied when something negative has to be said or explained away about the political and intellectual developments of the Ottoman Empire and especially its Arab provinces under Abdülhamid II.

The sources

When endeavouring to investigate Abu l-Huda, the reason for these fascinating lacunae in our knowledge of this important period in Middle Eastern history soon comes to light: the sources. To begin with, there is no autobiography and the biographies of some of his followers – once they are discovered – offer little information due to their laudatory genre. Painstaking research is necessary to find a substantial number of his books, and acquiring trustworthy and dated information through interviews poses difficulties. The archives of European consulates in Istanbul consulted thus far contain only material about two or three isolated episodes. Even classic strategies employed by historians of the Middle East, such as consulting *waqf* documents in Aleppo, provide scant results. Investigating Abu l-Huda is indeed a quest for a phantom.

What can be secured from these sources is information about people who had contact with Abu l-Huda. A certain pattern of recurring names reveals itself and many of these men can easily be identified. By such means, the common depictions of Abu l-Huda as an obscurantist and reactionary are severely contested: he obviously had early contacts with outstanding scholars in Damascus who were later to gain fame as the forefathers of the Syrian Salafi movement. After his rise to influence in Istanbul, he supported such famous reform-minded theologians as Mahmud Shukri al-ʿAlusi in Baghdad by providing him with a teaching post at the Sultan Ali mosque, which had been recently renovated and re-established due to Abu l-Huda's intervention. This being said, the similarities between the contents of especially Abu l-Huda's later writings to reformers such as Muhammad Abduh come as no surprise.

The common interpretation of the intellectual history of the Middle East in the late 19th century rests on an assumed rupture between reform-minded *ulama* advocating their vision of an Islam purified of popular practices and superstitious beliefs, on the one hand, and reactionary traditionalists resisting any change, on the other. Abu l-Huda is usually interpreted within this frame as the outstanding representative of the latter. This picture is erroneous.

Since Abu l-Huda was the leader of the Rifaʿiyya order in his time, which was popular especially among the lower strata of society, he undoubtedly represented the more traditionalist camp in this dichotomy. But analysis of his social networks as well as of the development of his writings over time shows that the so-called 'traditionalists' had a permanent exchange of ideas with the reformers, thus developing a new interpretation of Islam. For example, a discussion of findings from the field of European astronomy concerning the distance between the sun and the Earth can be found in Rifaʿiyya writings from the late 1880s. In this sense, the traditional sector of society appears less as resisting the changes of its time and perhaps more as actively contributing to these changes.

Lineage as a tool in the power-struggle

Abu l-Huda built up a network of contacts and followers in the entire fertile crescent. He even tried to take over the mighty Rifaʿiyya in British-controlled Egypt, a move successfully opposed by the Khedive. Usually persons from less influential families, some of whom had experienced a recent loss of influence, were integrated into Abu l-Huda's following. At the same time, a wide-ranging scheme of construction and restoration of shrines took place. Most of the important Rifaʿiyya tombs are situated in Iraq, some of them in Baghdad. On the other hand, the famous shrine of ʿAbd al-Qadir al-Jilani, founder of the Qadiriyya order, had served as an intellectual and political focus in that city over decades, if not centuries. It apparently lost much of its importance during the 1880s and 1890s due to the competition of the new and well-endowed Rifaʿiyya shrines, since some of the most renowned scholars of Baghdad taught at the schools attached to these new shrines. The Qadiriyya's answer to these developments was simple: they claimed that one tomb was fake, that the man buried in the second (the Sultan Ali Mosque) was not the father of Ahmad ar-Rifaʿi, who founded the Rifaʿiyya, and that Rifaʿi himself and consequently all of his offspring were not descendants of the prophet (*ashraf*, sing. *sharif*). Therefore, in the 1880s and 1890s a multitude of publications treating these subjects can be observed. This phenomenon comprised several aspects. Firstly, *ashraf* were exempted from military service and taxes. Secondly, these books were part of a major power-struggle going on in the Middle East at the close of the 19th century. On the one hand, there was the competition of several shrines for pupils and pilgrims at the local level. On the other hand, these books constituted the attempt of an overthrow of Abu l-Huda, himself the initiator of this sudden competition. As already mentioned, he was the *naqib al-ashraf* in Aleppo. He maintained this post until his death in 1909, although he stayed most of the time in Istanbul. The easiest way to get rid of Abu l-Huda was to negate his noble lineage leading back to the prophet via Ahmad ar-Rifaʿi. This was done by reactivating very old debates about the noble lineage of the Rifaʿi that traced back to the prophet. If this undertaking had succeeded, it would not only have meant that Abu l-Huda would have been unemployed in the strict sense of the word. Since the notion of a holy man in Islam is usually connected with the assumption that he is a *sharif*, it would most probably have meant that the recently constructed and renovated shrines of the Rifaʿi all over the fertile crescent would have lost pilgrims, income and importance. Therefore, other competing Sufi orders would have experienced a steep rise in the number of their followers and influence. This means that the debate about lineage in the 1880s and 1890s was not a sign that nothing had changed in the Middle East over the last 500 years when these discussions were conducted for the first time. Even more so, it was a very particular power struggle, which owed much of its force to the socio-economic changes taking place in the Middle East in the late 19th century.

Changing research methods

A network analysis was developed in the late 1950s, originally by anthropologists, as a means for analysing smaller residential groups. It rests on the premise that individuals construct a network of personal relationships and use that network to reach their personal aims. It also rests on the premise that there are certain patterns underlying these networks. Network analysis challenges the structuralist view that individuals are completely determined by society's norms and categories, while trying to avoid the opposite extreme of formalist reductionism, which defines norms as mere by-products of social change. Only recently have the first attempts been made to apply the methodical instruments, developed for network analysis by anthropologists, to the sources of historians of the Middle East. Common pitfalls of historiography, like projecting modern nationalist paradigms such as borders or ethnic community back into the past, can thus be avoided. ◆▶

Note

* In older literature, Abdülhamid's reign was totally juxtaposed to the *tanzimat*-period, while in more recent studies greater emphasis is placed on the continuities between the two periods.

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Middle East

BIRGIT SCHAEBLER

Identity, Power and Piety
The Druzes in Syria

Last November, the Syrian province of al-Suwaida was again in the news – Arab and European news, that is. The Syrian media remained silent on the matter. The province, better known as 'Druze Mountain', is also called 'Hawran Mountain' and 'Arab Mountain', the name confusion already hinting at the complicated identity of its inhabitants. It was, once again, surrounded by army troops. What had happened?

The Druze Mountain has historically been a frontier region, a major contact zone between steppe and agricultural lands. In November, in incidents reminiscent of a century ago, local Bedouins, hard pressed by three years of drought, had led their herds of sheep and goats into the small-scale fruit plantations (*bustans*) for which the province of al-Suwaida, primary wine producing region of Syria, is known. The Druze inhabitants, outraged by the imminent destruction of their plantations, drove out the flocks and attacked the Bedouins. The ensuing skirmishes cost the lives of 5 to 10 people, all Druzes, and injured 150 to 200 persons, mostly Druzes. The fatalities and injuries can be ascribed to the great number of illegal firearms in the hands of the Bedouins. As always, when conflict arose in the area, the main road linking al-Suwaida, capital of the province, with Damascus was closed. The province sent a petition to Bashar al-Asad, the young president of Syria, ensuring him of their support and asking for protection. Druze university students demonstrated in Damascus, demanding government support for their people. President Bashar al-Asad personally called *shaykhal-ʿaql* (highest Druze religious office holder), Husain al-Jarbuʿa, on the phone.

Discourse on the Druzes

This is the gist of the incident, as reported in a number of news articles and by word of mouth in Syria, an obvious conflict between 'desert and sown'. The stories woven into the incident are of major interest. The first articles, for example, reported that Bedouins had seized Druze land and tried to build a mosque there; other stories purported that it all began with Christians, who had been living for a long time in the mountain. The latter stories held that that the Druzes only came to defend the Christians against the Bedouins. Virtually all observers were awaiting a new 'Druze revolt' against the Syrian government (only six months after the death of Hafiz al-Asad). One news report stated that the governor's office was burnt down (the fact is that it was invaded by Druze youths and some windows were broken).

These stories hint at the discourse on the Druzes, both by others and by the Druzes themselves. First, virtually any event involving the province is automatically given a touch of sectarianism, hence the story of a mosque amidst a conflict over land use. Then, on the part of the Druzes, an apologetic discourse evolved early on, which represented them as protectors of the Christian minority in their territory. Sultan al-Atrash, the Druze leader of the anti-colonial 'Great Revolt' against the French in the 1920s, for example, chose as his constant companion and signer of international petitions a Christian from his territory – a political strategy to defuse European sectarian suspicion. Governments, starting with the Ottomans, and including the French Mandate and Syrian president Shishakli in the 1950s, had to deal with Druze revolts, all of which constitute a 'history of rebellion' from which the Druzes continue to derive political capital and which they evoke whenever a crisis erupts. In particular, the revolt against the French under Druze hero Sultan al-Atrash has been skilfully utilized by the Druzes to construct an image of selfless patriotism for themselves.[1]

Sultan al-Atrash, leader of the anti-colonial revolt and President Nasser in 1960.

PHOTO: STUDIO ARAWI

The difference of the Druzes translates itself into the many names of their territory. Jabal Druze is the oldest designation. Yet, the sectarian content of the name is an issue in present-day Syria, where *taʿifiyya* (sectarianism) is one of the greatest taboos, and so the more geographical term 'Mountain of the Hawran' is preferred. The politically correct term is 'province of al-Suwaida', and the term Jabal al-ʿArab (i.e. mountain of the Arabs, stressing the Arabism of the Druzes) was bestowed upon the area by urban nationalists for Druze achievements against French colonialism. The Druzes have clout in Syria. Not all provinces receive personal phone calls from the president in times of crisis.

The role of Sultan al-Atrash

The Syrian Druzes can be seen as the most 'secular' of the Druze groupings in the Middle East. Unlike Lebanon, where sectarianism is built into the political system and where the Druzes are a party-turned-militia-turned-party, and Israel, where the state put them into the position of a special and non-Arab minority, in Syria the Druzes are represented in the political system as a *muhafaza*, a province. As such, al-Suwaida sends six deputies to parliament, and provides one minister and one member of the Ba'th party's Regional Command. The long periods of virtual autonomy that the Druzes enjoyed in Syria, the powerful role as a nationalist symbol assumed by Druze hero Sultan al-Atrash, and the secular political discourse of the present state with its taboo on sectarianism, have encouraged the traditional separation of religious and secular spheres within Druzedom.

Yet it was their religious leader, the *shaykh al-ʿaql*, with whom Bashar al-Asad reportedly spoke, not the (non-Druze) governor of the province, nor the local secretary of the Ba'th party. Until the death of Sultan al-Atrash in 1982, the president's phone call, to be understood as a symbol for who is representing the Druze community, would doubtlessly have been to the latter, a worldly leader. Underneath the official representation as a province lurks the unofficial representation as a religious/ethnic community. This raises the question of power sharing within the Druze community itself, and the relation between religious and secular spheres within Druzedom.

The separation of the spheres

The separation of the religious and the secular has traditionally been expressed in the terms denoting elites. The worldly sheikh was called *shaykh judhmani* (corporeal sheikh), the religious sheikh was being called *shaykhruhi* (spiritual sheikh). While all older men (traditionally above the age of 40) are expected to 'enter the religion' by shaving their heads, donning religious garb and attending prayers, only a select group of religious sheikhs maintain a reputation within the community. A religious sheikh, also called *juwwayyid* (noble, high-minded) establishes himself either by the path of piety and holiness, without this requiring him to know much about the mysteries of the religion, or through expert knowledge of the holy scriptures. The highest rank is held by those able to combine both holiness and knowledge. They lead an ascetic life, nourishing themselves exclusively from the pure products of nature, which they cultivate themselves. Their task is to channel divine blessings to the community through their rituals and meditation, undertaken in the *khalwa*, a sacred place of congregation outside the village and thus removed from the political factionalism of the secular sphere. The spiritual sheikhs are absolutely forbidden to become involved in politics.

The office of the shaykh al-caql

In view of the rejection of worldly power in the sphere of spirituality, the nature of the office of *shaykh al-ʿaql* is somewhat ambiguous. The *shaykh al-ʿaql*s among the Syrian Druzes have historically been derived from three families: the Hajari, the Jarbuʿa, and the Hannawi. The candidates have been chosen from among these families 'following Druze traditions and religious rites', a privilege they defended vigorously against critics from within and the state from without. In Syria, the *shaykh al-ʿaql*s have been much less dependent on powerful families than in Lebanon, where the families of the Junblat and the Arslan nominate their own candidates. The office of the *shaykh al-ʿaql* was in all probability invented by the state, i.e. the Ottomans, who wanted a religious spokesman for the Druze community. The first recorded incident of a Syrian *shaykh al-ʿaql*, al-Hajari, representing the community *vis-à-vis* the state occurred in the sectarian crisis of 1860.

Today's *shaykh al-ʿaql*, Husain Jarbuʿa, was flown back from Venezuela, which is home to a large Druze emigrant community, when the previous office holder in his family died. Since he had been out of the country for years, the family's choice created a stir in the community and gave rise to rumours about his moral and spiritual qualities. He turned out to be politically savvy, profiting from the power vacuum left by the death of Sultan al-Atrash and monopolizing power within the community. This he achieved by reviving and expanding an old Druze 'convent', Ain al-Zaman, into a religious centre.

When in 1991 the Egyptian paper *al-Ahram al-Masa'i* published a fatwa that denied the Druze faith its place within Islam, the confident *shaykh al-ʿaql* Jarbuʿa dispatched a letter to Egyptian president Husni Mubarak, expressing his hope that 'the mufti of Egypt did not know what he was doing by issuing this fatwa. For, if he knew what he was doing, it would be a catastrophe for Islam.' The president's and the mufti's offices looked into the matter. Egypt's president wrote back to the Druzes, stating that the mufti, Dr Tantawi, denied ever having issued such a fatwa. The newspaper printed the explanation that the fatwa in question stemmed from 1936, and that the current mufti of Egypt had nothing to do with it.

Outlook

Since the separation of spheres has been upheld longer in Syria than in the other Druze communities, arguably until the death of Sultan al-Atrash in 1982, the arcane discipline has been strong and reform movements within the religious sphere have been weak. In conversations, a handful of young men are sometimes mentioned who reportedly 'wanted to write', but were discouraged in the end. The Syrian Druzes learned about Lebanese Abdallah Najjar's controversial revelations of the faith largely through Sami Makarim's more moderate 'counter-book', and through his lecture visits.[2]

There are signs, however, of a new debate on the Druze faith in Syria. One book in five volumes about the Unitarians, a term the Druzes prefer, has already been published. Another Syrian book project, treating the Unitarians as Gnostics, was presented at a recent meeting of the American Druze Society. The Syrian Druzes are beginning to debate their faith, further breaking down the separation of the spheres which, for better or worse, likens them to the other Druze communities in the Middle East. ◆▶

Notes

1. See my *Rebellions in the Druze Mountain. Ethnicity and Integration of a Rural Community in Syria from the Ottoman Empire to Syrian Independence*, Gotha: Justus Perthes, 1996 (German), and 'Coming to Terms with Failed Revolutions: Historiography in Syria, Germany and France', Middle Eastern Studies, 1999, pp. 17-44
2. Najjar, Abdallah (1973), *The Druze. Millennium Scrolls Revealed,* and Makarim, Sami (1974), *The Druze Faith.*

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Middle East

ANJA PELEIKIS

Locality in Lebanon
Between Home and Homepage

'By going through this wonderful website, I saw myself walking the street of my village long time ago with my cousins. That was the best time of my life.' 'It gives me a big pleasure to belong to the big family of Joun. I will always have the wonderful days in my memory and my heart that I spent in this dear village. These memories I will pass on to my children and grandchildren.' 'Proud to be a Jouni. It is a wonderful page that reminds me of my village.' These are a few comments found in the visitors book of the homepage of a Lebanese village called Joun (http://joun.leb.net).

The above-mentioned comments were made by people who presently live in the United States, in Europe, Australia or the Arab Gulf States, but feel in some way or other linked to their village of origin. Some of them spent their childhood in this multi-confessional (Maronite, Greek-Catholic, Shiite) Jouni community, which is situated in the southern part of Mount Lebanon, while others grew up in the capital city of Beirut and only spent their weekends in the village before emigrating. For other people, their village came to life only through family tales, always having lived far away.

PHOTO: ANJA PELEIKIS

Inside the Joun internet caf

At present, ten years after the end of the civil war, an increasing number of Lebanese – who once left the country because of the war or due to economic, family or professional reasons as well as those who were born abroad and those who were displaced inside Lebanon – are in the process of rediscovering their villages and redefining their (trans-)local identities. Many travel 'home' for their summer holidays, while some return for good. Others are returning to places that they were forced to leave due to confessional cleavages or wars. How have their images of their home locality changed over time and from a distance and how do these images influence the remaking of their local identities? Why do the Lebanese actually cling to their local identity, re-approaching and redefining it in a globalized world which offers an immense variety of different opportunities for identification?

The emergence of trans-local villages

'I enjoy visiting Joun's homepage and learning more about my village while living in Canada', says a 35-year-old man standing in front of a dilapidated house in the village which he hopes to renovate one day. The old building belonged to his grandfather and fell into ruin when the he died. Other members of the family fled to Beirut during the war in 1985, when the Christian population was expelled from the village. Since the end of the war, the grandson, who has spent most of his life in Canada and has family all over the world, comes to Lebanon regularly for his summer holidays, together with his wife and two small children. They stay in Beirut, but sometimes travel to the village for a short visit. They walk up the old stairs of their house of memories, remember the grandfather taking care of his roses and yelling at the neighbour's children. The village of this Lebanese-Canadian man has turned into an emotional landscape, a place of happy childhood memories, of continuity and rootedness in an ever-changing world. While continuously moving from place to place in the 'real' world due to professional and family reasons, the place from which he and his family originate becomes an important fixed point of reference, providing an imaginary stability in a world of increasing mobility and change. The village becomes a metaphor for social relations, in general, and family and kin relations, in particular.

Large family and kinship groups have always fought over local politics and economics, over influence and power in the different neighbourhoods of the village – and they still do. However, nowadays members of the same family, of the same neighbourhood and the same village, no longer share their everyday life. They live in Joun, as well as in Beirut, in Paris, Berlin, Detroit, Abu Dhabi or Sydney. Nevertheless, family and local identity remain important and kin groups form social networks beyond local, regional and national boundaries.

As a matter of fact, the Lebanese personal status laws reinforce the strong ties to the paternal village of origin, since all personal affairs are registered there and the Lebanese rarely change their place of registration. Documents necessary for the registration of births, marriages and deaths as well as polling cards can only be obtained from the local mayor. The same applies to people who no longer reside in the village or who have never lived there, but whose patrilineage has always been registered there. In the event that migrants in Beirut or abroad need certificates of any kind, they have to go to their village of registration or engage a family relative to carry out the task. Thus, national registration and election practices encourage the establishment of trans-local connections. Elections are actually a typical example of the mobilization of trans-local links: People move from Beirut to their villages of registration or are even flown in from abroad, sometimes at the expense of local political representatives.

In many cases, family members are continuously in touch and interacting, which is made possible by new forms of communication. For more and more people, and especially for the younger generation, using the internet has become exceedingly attractive. They exchange e-mails and voice-mails with friends and family, and they also send photos or make direct calls via the internet. Many have computers in their homes, and in every Lebanese city and in many villages one can find internet cafés. 'Joun online', a local internet café, is the place where the young people of the village send and receive their mail, where they chat with their friends online, exchange the latest local news and also feel close to their peers and kin far away.

One can sense the emergence of 'pluri-local' or 'trans-local' villages where the social sphere no longer coincides with the geographical sphere. Everyday experiences that were once necessarily derived from a close face-to-face relationship are currently being extended. One could argue that people whose life-worlds are closely linked share 'habitats of meaning'[1] and form a 'community of sentiment';[2] they begin to share thoughts and feelings despite the fact that they live hundreds or thousands of kilometres apart. Primarily, these groups can be defined as overlapping, de-territorialized social – often close-knit family – networks of people who strengthen their unity with their discourses on and fantasies about their village of origin. Despite the fact that people are dispersed all over the world, moving between places of residence, places of registration and imaginary places, they are involved in ongoing negotiations and struggles to define and 'produce' the meaning of their village, thereby directly or indirectly influencing local political and social developments.

The struggle over locality

'Got a burning desire to explore the peaceful hill and valleys of Joun and a green nature well preserved? Or wander among the tales of history and its events? Then you've landed at the right place.' (http://joun.leb.net/jmain.htm) 'Joun offers a unique view of the sunset. Hospitality has always been a great tradition. Joun is well known for its virgin olive oil production.' (http://joun.leb.net/jmain1.htm) With these village descriptions on the Joun website, set up by members of the municipality, local politicians assume a certain position in the struggle over locality. Most of the15 members of the district council – doctors, engineers and lawyers – have had migration experiences. Some of them have returned only recently, such as the mayor, a 45-year-old doctor, who grew up in Beirut and spent eight years in France. Presently, he and most of the other district councillors live and work in Beirut and only spend their weekends in Joun. The images of the village conveyed by them have been strongly influenced by their lives in the city and abroad. By pursuing a discourse of nostalgia, praising old traditions and the famous history of the village, they contribute to the formation of emotional landscapes, trying to encourage more people to visit and support their home village. Their local development projects are strongly influenced by this image of the village as a holiday and weekend resort. While restoring old village walls, planting trees and laying out small parks and an impressive sports stadium, the main interest is to transform the village into a beautiful, clean weekend resort full of tourist attractions, with historical sites, an impressive cultural history and a relaxed environment. It is quite clear they are acting in the interest of the other Jounis who, like themselves, live in Beirut or abroad and share their image of locality. Most of the people who actually live in the village have a different image of their locality. It is their place of everyday life, where they have to make their living. They often complain that the municipality does not contribute to economic development or local education. 'They have no time, no experience and are only here at the weekend' is the opinion of many people who live in Joun.

New and conflicting images of locality – resulting from people's movements – can be traced back to the beginning of the 20th century when the first people migrated overseas, and also to rural-urban migration in the 1950s and 1960s. Although these movements were mainly initiated by the Christian population in the village, later all confessions and families participated in these movements. Thus, changing and conflicting views of locality have largely developed trans-confessionally. The situation changed during the civil war when the Christians were expelled and the Shiites remained in the village. To this day, they constitute the majority of the Joun population, while most of the Christians settled in Beirut or elsewhere and presently do not want to fully return to the village. They only come for the weekend and for their holidays, for religious celebrations and elections, and they try to influence local politics from outside. Given this fact, the struggle over locality is at present becoming increasingly confessionalized and the conflicts between confessional groups – built up during long war years – are reinforced, rather than overcome. Here the struggle over the nature of locality in a globalized, de-territorialized world still continues. ◆▶

Notes

1. See Hannerz, Ulf (1996), *Transnational Connections. Culture, People, Places*, London: Routledge, p. 22.
2. See Appadurai, Arjun (1996), 'Sovereignty Without Territoriality: Notes for a Postnational Geography', in: Patricia Yaeger (ed.), *The Geography of Identity*, Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, pp. 8, 40-58.

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North Africa

RABIA BEKKAR

Women in the City in Algeria
Change and Resistance

In the cities of the Arab world, the relationship between public and private is governed by a world of glances. It varies by situation – individual or collective, ritual or random, sacred or profane – and according to specific locations and events. The negotiation of boundaries is subject to those contingencies. Indeed, there is not a strict, systematic separation between the private sphere, a place where women can express themselves, and the public sphere, dominated by the words of men. Urban studies have shown that the relationship between home and outside is surprisingly complex and flexible. Nevertheless, the declension of space into thresholds and gradations[1] in Arab cities is characterized by a social identification of men and women with spaces that are specific to them.

The current social and identity crisis in Algeria is unfolding against the background of spectacular urban growth, which is occurring at the expense of villages, the old city and its hierarchies. The modification of erstwhile alliances and past forms of social interaction, the constitution of new family and generational ties are fuelling societal violence. Confronted with this situation, the political establishment is promoting a social homogeneity that is in contradiction with the diversity and complexity of Algerian society.

One result is that a segment of the population is seeking refuge in the safety of traditional cultural models, which are reassuring and admissible in the city; another is that women – considered competitors on the job market – have been attacked and stigmatized, and are all the more easily relegated to the home insofar as this is in keeping with tradition.

Two generations in the same space: Separate ...

PHOTOS: RABIA BEKKAR

...and mixed.

Space and gender

Gender marks out space with a specific set of firmly established rules and rites of passage from one place to another. The main territorial division accepted by Algerian society attributes the house to women and the public space to men. The former is the place of procreation and everything that is implicit (the sacred and the sexual). The latter is the realm of trade, business, management, and power. This gender-based division of space has become part of both the symbolic order of things and the mentality of men and women, thus providing the structure for a territorial system.

When women leave the domestic space, they must always face the ordeal of becoming visible in the public space. Moving through the streets, they must submit to a code of conduct imposed by the group dominating the urban space. They themselves – still raised according to models of gender separation and the fundamental rules of family honour – have largely internalized these territorial arrangements.

But a gender-based definition of space cannot occur without transgression. When crossing the borders between inside and out, all the senses – vision, speech, smell, touch and hearing – may come into play and thus justify the concern of Muslim society for continually creating material or symbolic separations. The home, with its doors and shutters, articles of clothing, and in particular the veil, are all so many screens established to preserve (or transgress) this strict separation of the sexes. Paradoxically, the *hijab* – like the *haïk* (veil), which was widely worn during the colonial period – provides women with new possibilities for gaining access to the public space. It becomes a means of identification for women moving through the city, a sort of pass allowing them to make use of male territory. Integrated into the complex relationship between the garment and the place where it is worn, the *hijab* expresses an identity. First, it offers confirmation of the fact that the *moutahajibâtes* – women who wear the *hijab* – accept the body's invisibility in the public space. Yet this new way of concealing the body also highlights the difference between these women, those who wear the *haïk* and those who wear neither one nor the other. The *hijab* thus appears to be marking a break with tradition. That is one of its most important meanings. It quite probably represents the emergence of a new female identity. More than a means of movement from the inside to the outside, qualifying the women as 'being from the inside',[2] as the *haïk* was in the colonial villages, the *hijab* is becoming the sign of a new urbanism, a new way of being a woman in the city.

Within the basic division attributing the house to women and the public space to men, we see the introduction of a new hierarchy based essentially on age, marital status and job status. It is confounding the traditional limits in cases where women assume a habitually male role, for example, that of principle breadwinner.

Changing from the inside

Women have periodically swept onto the public stage in the course of Algeria's recent history. In such circumstances, the presence of women in the city is recodified by events (the War of Liberation, demonstrations, etc.). It is then associated with the social values that justify such an intrusion into the public space. These exceptional situations of conflict revolving around the occupation of public space and the public debate in Algeria shake up the limits imposed on women. They momentarily acquire the status of protagonists, even as extremist violence reminds them they are not in their place.

Added to the old customs are more recent ones arising from the new demands of daily life: school, work, travel, political expression, etc., all of which require going out into the public space. The use of the city by women is thus opening a more lasting breach in the repartition and domination of territory. Women's access to education and consequently to economic activity is bringing about a change in their territory. But although women have access to school and paid work, the space still does not belong to them: Crossing the street can be a torment in the face of the many remarks or even attacks to which they are subjected. Professional women certainly have a justified right to the public space, but they can neither linger nor stroll through the city. Offenders are subject to social sanctions. These are sometimes justified by religious and social reasons, and sometimes by the differences between the socialization and education of the two sexes. Women can only evolve within their own group, as their presence outside the home disturbs the social order. They therefore have a strong incentive not to linger in public places. For them, the city is solely a place of transit.

On the basis of these restrictions, the Islamist agenda has turned *separate development* into a system governing daily life and social relations.[3] The radical break with a popular, tolerant Islam rooted in society has led Islamists in Algeria, like the Taliban in Afghanistan, to declare war on women who are visible in the public space. Similar spatial separations have appeared and are defended by Islamist associations in certain Moroccan cities (segregated beaches, for example). One of the consequences of this segregation is the emergence of an image of the city as a place of perversion.

Thus, the expression of women's development as individuals, the source of their fulfilment, is encountering major resistance in Algerian society where the lauded homogeneity of behaviour takes precedence over personal impulses. Faced with this difficulty, the strategies of women in daily life are often implicit, in view of the weight and inertia of society. The practice of making roundabout uses of traditional or modern institutions (the veil, *hijab*, *hammam*, beauty salon, work, etc.) requires various levels of mediation and multiple schemes, given that justifying one's actions assumes particular importance.

The radicalization of conflicts in Algeria over the past decade has crystallized over such issues as the mixed-gender use of public spaces. Yet as in Iran, women's claim to the public sphere is a trend that will endure. The modernization of society has had the effect of expanding opportunities for exchanges with the outside, with increasingly frequent access to urban space. Of course, that process is not always accompanied by significant advances. It can remain mimetic, superficial, and even contribute to limiting women's movements, as has been true in some cases with cars, bathrooms, television and now the internet, technological developments that can actually discourage women from going out. Men will fight against the intrusion of women into their space (the workplace, marketplace, leisure space) as long as there is not enough work for everybody and they consider that the authority is vested solely in them.

Nevertheless, society's ability to recompose, renegotiate and even invent new relationships should not be dismissed. Contemporary Algerian history has shown that women remain at the heart of change. Today the conflict is exacerbated because of the economic crisis, demographic burdens, power plays, opposition from crime networks, the deterioration of living conditions and the inability of governments to meet citizens' basic needs.

Algerian society will not escape the process of renegotiating the identities of men and women who have broken with patriarchy, Muslim communitarianism and the hegemony instituted by colonialism and prolonged by the State. The reclusion of women, defended by some as the symbol of a past frozen by the closed nature of the Islamic debate that is holding the Muslim world prisoner, and bolstered by an Orientalist[4] vision, will not be able to withstand this development, which is changing society from the inside. ◆►

Notes

1. Da Matta, Roberto (1983), *Carnaval, bandits et héros, ambiguïtés de la société Brésilienne*, Paris: Seuil.
2. Bourdieu, Pierre (1980), *Le sens pratique*, Paris: Editions de Minuit.
3. Bekkar, Rabia (1994), *Territoires des femmes à Tlemcen: pratiques et représentations*, Paris: La Documentation Française, *Maghreb/Machrek*, no. 143.
4. Said, Edward (1978), *Orientalism*, New York: Pantheon Books.

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North Africa

BERNHARD VENEMA

Roots of Moroccan Political Institutions

The political institutions of Moroccan tribes are closely intertwined with the central state. By allying with state officials, tribe members actively contribute to state authoritarianism. The state has seen to it that neither the rural council nor the customary village council offers positions for representation of the tribal population. However, the recent *gouvernement d'alternance* of Prime Minister Youssoufi and King Mohammed VI have both declared the introduction of a local government intended to serve the population, instead of controlling it through this non-representation. Nonetheless, in view of Morocco's political culture, it can be argued that this will be a long-term affair.

Since the independence, the political system of Morocco can be described as based on patronage relations. For example, in November 1988, King Hassan II visited Azrou, the most important market place of the Beni Mguild pastoralists in the Middle Atlas, on his way to his palace in Ifrane. On that occasion, the main roads were paved with carpets collected from the Beni Mguild by the *caids* (district officers) and their assistants. Once the King had arrived, the reception ceremony commenced – his donation of a mosque to the town being central. Before leaving, the King allowed men to hand him letters in which they had worded their preoccupations, such as lack of work.

Some days later, several herdsmen were dissatisfied because the hunting expeditions of the King near Ifrane had closed off certain forests. Enraged, the herders set fire to parts of the forests. As recounted by locals, the police responded by rounding up several people in randomly selected villages, putting them into jail for several days.

In exchange for submission – in this case the obligation to lend carpets and the closure of some forests – the population was left with a gift and a certain degree of hope. The belief that having the right contacts with influential people is a precondition for success in life is greatly cherished in Morocco. Indeed, the notion of *pistonnerie* (pulling strings) is essential in Beni Mguild culture (and Morocco in general) and this becomes clearly manifest in Morocco's political culture.

Key role of the Ministry of the Interior

Recent research shows that Morocco's state power remains very hierarchical. The Ministry of the Interior at the provincial level, represented by the governor, operates in an authoritarian fashion. The governor is the guardian of law and order and therefore has a *tutelle sur les collectivités locales* (tutelage of local collectivities). On 9 November 1999, the dictatorial Minister of the Interior was suspended from his office by King Mohammed VI, but the governor still maintains control over his territory. Thus, he supervises the activities of the regional headquarters of the line ministries and it is at the provincial level that the information is gathered on local conflicts. This information is collected by the *caids*, themselves being informed by their assistants, the sheikhs and *moqaddems*. By introducing a less inhibiting territorial administration, the new King did away with almost all governors on 31 December 1999 and appointed new officials that were more open to communication with the population. However, the general secretary, a crucial figure at the provincial headquarters, handles affairs just as he used to do. His influence is unsurpassed in the province. Each time he passes through the provincial headquarters, people hurriedly bow on their knees. When he has a meeting with a *caid*, all notables pay their respects by prostration and hand kissing, a dramatized representation of the obedience to authoritarian power.*

The province's *tutelle sur les collectivités locales* continues to strike at the heart of the local economy. The Beni Mguild's main source of livelihood is sheep farming on the collectively owned pastures. It is the governor, following the instructions of the Ministry of the Interior, who ultimately decides on the criteria of access. According to the governor, people having recently settled in the area may herd on these pastures as well – a move deeply resented by several autochthonous sheep farmers.

At the province hall, one can meet the important men. It is here that the development plans of the province and how they can fit into the national plan are decided upon. Informally, the general secretary has meetings with the chairmen of the district councils, informing them on how to make their local plans coincide with those of the province. Once these men agree, the plan is elaborated. The population is well aware of the decision-making power of the province. The sheep farmers connive with the governor by regularly sending him letters, asking him to redress certain decisions taken by lower authorities which they resent; secret information about countrymen who were their adversaries in disputes often accompany these letters, enforcing the key position of the province in conflict resolution.

What is happening at the level of the province is replicated at the district level. The main function of the *caid* is to maintain law and order in his district. However, many disputes about access to the pastures and other conflicts are directly put forward to him. Especially on market days, his office is crowded with people. Most *caids* find great difficulties in the straightforward handling of affairs as they are confronted with people who opt for other avenues to solve their problems.

The sheikh and *moqaddem* are the mediators between the *caid* and the population. The former represents a clan, while the latter represents a lineage. Both are recruited from among the local population. Despite not receiving any compensation, many compete for these positions because they offer ample opportunities for self-enrichment. Some may even go so far as to tattle on other candidates in order to get into office. Because of the lack of consensus, the village council is not able to nominate a candidate, leaving the appointment to be decided upon at the level of the province. It is for this reason that the population sees the positions of sheikh and *moqaddem* as being equivalent to those of state representatives, although it does not prevent them from making deals with those in office.

Encapsulation of the elected council

The district council (*conseil rural*) is composed of elected members. Among the Beni Mguild, most members adhere to the Mouvement Populaire, a conservative Berber party. Party ideology, however, is not much taken into consideration. The most important factor is what a candidate can do for the voters; therefore entire lineages act as voting banks.

The council has its own funds, including the 30% added value tax it receives and income from forest exploitation. By means of a meeting, the councillors vote on the development plan, already elaborated for them by the province. At such a gathering, the *caid* and technical staff of the province are present. Should the councillors, for example, wish to change budget allocations in the plan, the governor has the right to veto. But because the minutes of the meeting are sent to the province, councillors are reluctant to suggest major changes.

Part of the budget is allocated to inter-district projects, such as a sports stadium in the 1980s and a more recent tourist complex in Ifrane. These projects, however, were not priorities for the local population. Part of the budget is used to pay the staff of the district office, with few funds remaining for small projects, such as street cleaning. For these reasons, the population is very dissatisfied with the council. In addition, there is a general belief that councillors take money from the budget for personal use – a belief that has caused great distrust.

Autochthonous institutions: an alternative?

The Beni Mguild society is segmentary, the minimal lineage being the smallest unit. Formerly, this unit constituted the group that would trek to summer camps. The maximal lineage often coincides with a village at winter sites. Several lineages comprise a clan, the members of which defend their interests in larger pastures. Clans make up a tribe, coinciding with still larger tribal areas. Actually, now that the Beni Mguild have sedentarized, the *jemaa* (village council) has become the most influential local power centre.

Within the *jemaa* are the influential elders who have the reputation of being wise. Those known as religious men will be invited as members too. The *jemaa* still runs internal village affairs such as mosque maintenance and the payment of local irrigation watchmen, and helps in organizing marriages and funerals. One very important task of the council is to elect *naibs*. The task of each *naib* is to control access to collective pastures and to maintain the resting period (*agdal*).

At a higher level, there were tribal councils composed of representatives from the maximal lineages, which would elect a leader by rotating among the lineages. No longer operative, this council had the function of distributing land and water amongst the lineages. Now sheikhs and *caids*, appointed by the government, decide on most matters.

Although the *jemaa* is still operative, several factors have undermined its functions. In the first place, there is the introduction of party politics. Because a lineage generally acts as a voter's bloc, a village cannot nominate one candidate if it consists of different lineages. In such cases, the affair generally ends with one part of the village feeling underrepresented and acting accordingly. Second, people tend to go to the *caid* if they feel the village council has not done justice. Members of the *jemaa* frequently go to the *caid* to look for help with a dispute.

The Berber brotherhood of the hunters (*rmaa*) is still important among the Beni Mguild. *Rmaa* members organize the annual visits to Berber and Arab saints' shrines and the tribal offerings in spring and in autumn. Only men considered religious and honest are asked to become members. Because the *rmaa* members are highly respected, they are important men in the *jemaa*. But nowadays their importance is waning as they are no longer respected by educated people. The latter go directly to the *caid* or to the court if they have a dispute.

Next to the *jemaa* and the *rmaa*, the position of the *naib* is weakening. People are now very reluctant to accept a request of the *jemaa* to take up this post. They know that they will be frequently invoked by the *caid* to help in sorting out access problems, and while the latter ultimately decides, this decision may be contested, the *naib* receiving his share of resentment. In addition, they receive no compensation for their troubles. It is thus that the Beni Mguild no longer have an *agdal*, and the consequences have, among other things, grave ecological implications. ◆▶

Note

* Hammoudi, A. (1997), *Master and Disciple: The Cultural Foundations of Moroccan Authoritarianism*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

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Central Asia
VLADMIR BOBROVNIKOV

Post-Socialist Forms of Islam
Caucasian Wahhabis

The vision of Islam as it is practised in the post-socialist context is very confused at the moment. It is associated either with 'the revival of local pre-modern traditions' and thus with the localization of post-socialist Muslim space, or with 'the spread of Islamism absolutely alien to local Muslim traditions', introduced to countries of the former socialist bloc from abroad and fraught with their Islamist globalization. Post-socialist forms of Islam are often thought of as an 'Islamic threat' opposing all non-Muslim cultures.

PHOTO: WWW.DAGESTAN.COM.RU

Portrait of the former Chechen *mufti* A. Kadyrov.

The so-called 'Wahhabi' movement in the North Caucasus offers particular insight into what Islam has come to mean in this post-socialist era. Its relevance becomes even more clear when discussing the main problems of post-socialist Muslim societies, including the impact of the socialist and pre-socialist legacies on modern forms of Islam, new divisions of the contemporary Muslim space, and the politicization and radicalization of the Islamist movement.The Wahhabis are dissident Muslim congregations that emerged in the Northern Caucasus in the late socialist period. Their *imams* appeal to the 'purification of Islam' from 'non-permitted innovations' (*bidaʿ*), including *dhikr*, pilgrimages to saint shrines (*ziyarat*), *mawlid* celebrations, recitations of the Qur'an in cemeteries (*talqin*), and the use of protective charms (*sabab*). They regard the Qur'an and the Sunna as the only sources of faith (*din*). Sufi *shaykhs* are particularly targeted by the Wahhabis' assaults. Criticizing them for their cooperation with post-socialist authorities, the Wahhabis accuse these 'tariqatists' of selling their religion to the 'infidel' (*kuffar*) government.

The Wahhabis have even challenged the other North Caucasian Muslims by their dress. Their men have beards without moustaches and wear short trousers. Some Wahhabi women are veiled by a *khimar* or a *hijab* and sometimes by a *niqab*. The followers of the movement call themselves 'Muslims' or 'brothers' (*ikhwan*) and consider their congregations as the only communities of the faithful (*jamaʿat*). They are also known as *salafs*, making reference to the first followers of Prophet Mohammed whose way of life they claim to imitate. The movement was named 'Wahhabi' by its opponents amongst the followers of local Sufi *shaykhs*. This term was invented after the name of Mohammed b. ʿAbd al-Wahhab, a reformer of Islam in the 18th century. In the Northern Caucasus, it has a derogatory and negative connotation.

Soviet roots of the Wahhabis

The foundation of Wahhabi congregations in the Northern Caucasus is usually associated with the fall of the socialist regime in 1991. In reality, they date back to the mid-1970s, when proselytizing Muslim groups arose in dozens of Dagestani and Chechen villages situated in the Terek-Sulak lowlands. Their members secretly gathered in houses of local Muslim scholars (*ʿulama'*) while attending their Arabic and Qur'anic classes. Such unlicensed schools also carried out missionary work (*daʿwa*) among the village youth. Fearing the spread of Islamism from Iran and Afghanistan, the Soviet authorities closed down all unauthorized Islamic schools by the beginning of the 1980s. However, in the 1990s some of the teachers, such as Bagauddin Kebedov (b. in 1945), from the village of Pervomayskoe, and Ahmad-qadi Akhtaev (1942-1998), from the village of Kudali, became renowned Wahhabi *amirs*. Initially, they sided with Naqshbandi *shaykhs* who had instructed them in Arabic and *usul al-din*.

It should also be mentioned that the North Caucasian Wahhabis emerged in a context of, though in reaction to, anti-Islamic socialist reforms. Their movement arose in lowland districts of Dagestan and Chechnya where collectivization, resettlement and 'cultural revolution' campaigns were successfully carried out from the 1930s-1970s. About two-thirds of highlanders had resettled there. For instance, Bagauddin Kebedov's parents had moved from their native Dagestani village of Sasitli to Vedeno in Chechnya following the deportation of the Chechens in 1944, and in 1957 resettled in the village of Pervomayskoe in Dagestan. Closed Muslim communities had been formed within collective and state farms in the lowlands and these became the cradle of the 'Islamic revival' movement that arose in the latter years of perestroika.

Under socialist rule, many pre-revolutionary *ʿulama'* were persecuted and most of the Sufi intellectual practices faded away. Both Wahhabis and followers of Dagestani and Chechen Sufi *shaykhs* shared a secular socialist mentality. The impact of the Soviet ideology can be observed down to the very title of the Wahhabi programme, passed in January 1998, called the 'Manifesto of Jamaʿat of Dagestan' after the famous Communist Manifesto.

Redividing Muslim space

The wave of Islamic enthusiasm, which seized Dagestan and other Muslim republics of the Northern Caucasus at the end of the 1980s, divided the region's Muslim society into 'Wahhabis' and 'Traditionalists'. This schism replaced a traditional cleavage of Muslim space into Shiʿites (Azerbaijan and Southern Dagestan) and Sunnites (Northern Caucasus). Under socialist rule, confrontations which had taken place between Caucasian Shiʿites and Sunnites from the Safawid expansion of the 16th-18th centuries to the early 20th century died out. At present, the former Shiʿite places of worship, such as Friday *juma*-mosques in the Dagestani towns of Derbent and Kizlyar, are attended by Shiʿites and Sunnites alike. At the same time, another pre-modern division of the Sunnite Muslims into followers of the Shafiʿite legal school, which had traditionally dominated in Dagestan and Checheno-Ingushetia, and the Hanifite *madhhab* prevailing in the North-Western Caucasus, disappeared.

A new fundamental division of the North Caucasian Muslims has an important political dimension associated with the disintegration of the central power as it occurred in post-socialist Russia. Following the fall of the socialist regime, the Spiritual Board of the Muslims of the Northern Caucasus, dating back to 1943, broke up into several independent republican branches. In turn, some of them split into small ethnic branches. Though legalized by the North Caucasian republican authorities and incorporated into the post-socialist political system, these *muftiyats* have failed to gain the support of all the restored Muslim congregations. The number of unauthorized Friday mosques grew rapidly, as did the new congregations independent from the officially recognized Muslim clergy: only 212 of 1585 restored Dagestani mosques sided with the republican *muftiyat* by May 2000.

Dagestan and Chechnya witnessed the appearance of the Islamist counterparts of the official Muslim clergy – the Wahhabis. From the lowlands, their influence first spread to the highland villages of both republics. By the mid-1990s, their congregations, although small in size, emerged in Ingushetia, Karachaevo-Cherkessia, Kabardino-Balkaria, Stavropol'e and even in the Dagestani migrant community in Astrahan. Before the beginning of the first Russian-Chechen war (1994-1996), the Wahhabis concentrated on their missionary work (*daʿwa*) by imparting Qur'anic education and literature on basic Islamic practices such as Bagauddin's book, *Namaz* (Prayer). This work had been reprinted in hundreds of thousands of copies in 1993, 1994 and 1999. Until 1998, the centre of the movement was located in the Dagestani town of Kizilyurt, where the largest Wahhabi *madrasa*, al-Hikma, comprising more than 700 pupils, had been set up by Bagauddin Kebedov in December 1991. By the mid-1990s, some Wahhabi congregations established close contacts with the missionary centres and foundations from abroad including Tayba, al-Haramain, and al-Igasa al-Islamiyya, which began to sponsor their educational and publishing activities.

Radicalization of Islam

From 1994-1998, a number of armed conflicts occurred between Wahhabi and Sufi factions in the towns and villages of Dagestan and Chechnya. Since the mid-1990s, the Wahhabis have been subjected to systematic repression by the local official Muslim clergy. Gradually, outbreaks of fighting within village and town communities were reproduced at the level of the republic and subsequently expanded to the regional level. Thus from 1997-1999 the Wahhabi *jamaʿat* of Karamakhi, Chabanmakhi, Kadar and Durangi villages expelled representatives of the Dagestani authorities and proclaimed 'a separate Islamic territory governed by the Shariʿa' (or the so-called Kadar zone). By 1998, the initiative in this struggle was captured by 'Traditionalists'. The official Muslim clergy lobbied for a new federal religion bill and a Dagestani version was passed in Moscow and Makhachkala in September-December 1997. Wahhabi congregations and other 'non-traditional confessions' were to be officially registered.

In December 1997, Bagauddin Kebedov had to leave Kizilyurt for Urus-Martan in Chechnya. This exile and the ensuing death of Ahmad-qadi Akhtaev in March 1998, resulted in a rapid politicization and radicalization of the movement. There had always been a political dimension, but its form and programmes now changed. While Khasbulat Khasbulatov's 'Jamaʿat al-Muslimin', Kebedov and Akhtaev's Islamic Revival Party and Akhtaev's 'al-Islamiyya' movement had been founded in the period from 1989-1996 to represent the North Caucasian Muslims to the Russian state authorities and to spread Islamic knowledge among the North Caucasian highlanders, 'Islamic Jamaʿat', established by Bagauddin Kebedov in 1998, announced a holy war (*al-jihad al-asgar*). This war was to be waged against the 'unbelieving secular government' of Dagestan and for the establishment of an 'Islamic caliphate in the Caucasus'. Supported by Chechen field commanders, the Wahhabi leaders organized 'Islamic peace-making troops'. Some famous terrorists such as ʿAbd al-Rahman ibn al-Hattab, originating from the Chechen diaspora in Jordan, and Shamil Basaev entered the movement. The former Chechen *mufti* Kadyrov, siding with the 'Traditionalists', formed a 'tariqatist' regiment that actively fought with the Wahhabis.

From 1999-2001, the Wahhabis based in Chechnya and Dagestan were involved in the second Russian-Chechen war, which started with a raid by military Wahhabi groups in northern Dagestan. Federal forces rapidly defeated their troops and destroyed villages of the Kadar zone, but failed to abolish the movement whose leaders escaped to Chechnyan territory. They are still active in the underground, functioning simultaneously 'everywhere and nowhere' (cf. M. Gilsenan). Paradoxically, the militant Islamist ideas and practices are shared by both Wahhabis and their religious and secular adversaries. Such enigmatic and destructive tendencies in modern North Caucasian forms of Islam deserve greater attention in research on the process of re-Islamization in the post-socialist context. ◆

This article is dedicated to the memory of Tatiana Shafarevich who tragically died in January 2001.

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Turkey

CATHARINA RAUDVERE

Space, Place and Visibility
Islamistic Women in Turkey

When the resurgence of Islam in Turkey is debated, Islamistic women's appearance and visibility in public life often forms one of the core topics on the agenda. Discussions all too often end with a fixed assertion about the presence of 'covered' women. But how are place and space claimed in women's religious activism?

The platforms established during the last decade have had a considerable impact on social practice as well as on theology and ritual performance.[1] In most cases, women's interest groups established in the post-1983 period function as non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and it is these that have had such an impact on social practice in Turkey.

The veritable explosion of NGO activism over the last ten years has caused some confusion in public discourse as regards women's interest groups' relations with the state. This became apparent during the preparations for the UN Habitat conference held in Istanbul in June 1996, when groups representing very different concerns and strategies in policy making cooperated and discovered – what sociologists had pointed at before – the similar conditions under which they were acting. The legislation for foundations with non-commercial cultural or social activities and the consequences of the liberal changes in economic policies have left extensive amounts of private money available to the NGOs. Through their mere presence in civil life, these groups, with their various agendas, have been an open political challenge outside the traditional party system.[2] Thousands of groups are registered as active and have played a determining role in the formulation of political arguments. The changes during the Özal regime and thereafter brought about spheres of social autonomies and initiatives of a kind that had never been seen before in the Turkish republic.[3]

Compared to the situation for female religious activists in Turkey some 10 or 15 years ago, the activities are not only larger in scale but also considerably more visible and public. They are also undoubtedly part of global events. The situation reveals more than one paradox. On one hand, in contemporary Turkey there are more possible choices of religious life than ever: an apparent individualization with emphasis on personal preferences exists at least in the major cities. In poor areas too, though often viewed with a biased gaze as culturally homogeneous, there are options for variety in religious life. Different Muslim associations compete with various theological and ideological programmes for attention and support. On the other hand, not everything that comes after high modernity is pluralism: what the highly visible religious groups teach today is often quite authoritarian, more or less radical, Islamistic universalism. Women within the Islamistic movement are empowered – from the perspective of their local community – but they seldom claim formal power at any institutional level.

'Covered NGOs'

Most religious NGOs in contemporary Turkey are constructed as pious foundations, *vakıflar*. A distinct feature in the new situation is comprised by the many women in charge of foundation activities. The increasing number of 'covered NGOs', *çarşaflı NGO*, as one Turkish journalist has named them,[4] run by Islamistic women, concentrate their activities on small-scale community work, often far away from the eyes of the general public. The women offer basic religious education programmes and elementary social welfare such as food supplies, clothing, school grants, legal advice, etc. They execute voluntary work at all levels of society and if not in direct political power, they seek to influence local society. An apparent process of formalization of religious activism has taken place, i.e. a transformation from private to public. For covered women, the establishment of a *vakıf* is often the only way of taking part in local political discussions. Few of the active women go public, and those who do often attain an iconic status as well-known authors, journalists or television personalities on the religious stations. The women must stand firm when in the focus of debates, such as the situation was for Merve Kavacı when she entered the assembly hall of the Parliament in Ankara wearing her headscarf.

Women's NGOs and access to public space

Women's grassroots activities and voluntary work are too often explained as determined by their sex and their poverty rather than as the result of conscious choices. The activities are neither informal nor occasional and the importance of the organization as such can not be overestimated. The strength comes from the members' ability to establish long-lasting loyalties outside the family in combination with the specific legal status of a foundation. The fact that the *vakıf*'s legal and economic status is regulated cannot solely be interpreted in terms of control since the legislation also protects the activities from local criticism.

Through the *vakıflar,* the less well-known women gain not only stability and structure to their activities, but also local public recognition and opportunities to address wider audiences. This change has meant a shift from meetings in family houses or apartments according to very traditional patterns to conquests of spaces such as university campuses and modern media. Nilüfer Göle has noted the Islamistic groups' 'attempts to reappropriate control over the orientation of the cultural model problematizing the relations of domination in spheres of lifestyle and knowledge.'[5] For women's forms of assembly, these changes are apparent and have raised questions about access to urban space. Increasingly larger parts of the city have become accessible to covered women, and women have begun to move over great distances to be able to reach the groups of their choices. More significantly, a *vakıf, as a* relatively stable economic organization, provides opportunities for women to establish rooms of their own. Mono-gendered space is an indisputable condition for prayer meetings as well as social welfare work. With rooms that protect moral values such as decency and purity, the leading women can present the message of their groups without fear of criticism from male family members of their prospective supporters. They can speak with authority and claim legitimacy when invited to activities and balance their urge to contribute to local society while manifesting absolute recognition of the rules of proper behaviour.

Combating master narratives

A shift in focus of interest can be noted in the academic discussions about Islam in contemporary Turkey. Elite Muslim women have been interested, since long ago, in local discourse and practice – an interest now taken up by academicians. The women's groups are not easily defined in conventional socio-political categories as they mobilize over and above class boundaries; they are far from being hailed by the Islamist party; and their agenda embraces both radical and traditionalistic issues.

The small independent Muslim groups represent, in general, a heterogeneous counter discourse between the combating master narratives in Turkey: state Kemalism and the conventional interpretation of Islam as formulated by the Directorate for Religious Affairs. Both of these hegemonic discourses seem to have difficulties in offering relevant images of history and in depicting recognizable visions of life. In the wake of this failure, new arenas and platforms have opened for interpretation of theology and faith. Consequently, women's religious activism at a local level is provocative – even if it is not intended to be – since it challenges the establishment, be it the representatives of the secular state or local religious authorities. ◆▶

Notes

1. The author's fieldwork in Istanbul consisted of following a small and independent group of Muslim women in Istanbul over some years during the 1990s, and serves as the basis for the author's forthcoming monograph: *Under My Sisters' Protection: Sufism and Zikir in Contemporary Istanbul.*
2. Toprak, Binnaz (1996). 'Civil Society in Turkey', in: A.R. Norton (ed.), *Civil Society in the Middle East*, vol. 2, Leiden: Brill. pp. 87-117. Cf. White, Jenny B., 'Civic Culture and Islam in urban Turkey' in: Dawn Chatty and Annika Rabo (eds.), *Organizing Women: Formal and Informal Women's Groups in the Middle East,* Oxford: Berg. pp. 143-154.
3. Shankland, David (1999), *Islam and Society in Turkey*, Huntingdon: The Eothen Press.
4. Ulusoy, Aslı (1996), 'Haldun Hoca'nın çarşaflı, NGO's', *Aktüel* (275/96), pp. 20-27.
5. Göle, Nilüfer (1996), 'Authoritarian Secularism and Islamist Politics. The Case of Turkey', in: A.R. Norton (ed.), *Civil Society in the Middle East*, vol. 2., Leiden: Brill, p. 41.

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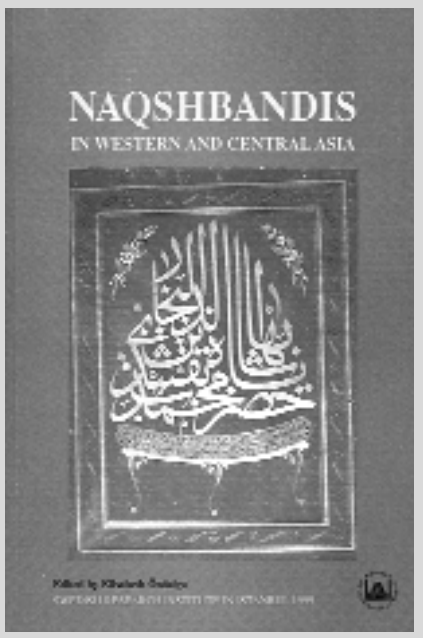
RECTIFICATION



On page 35 of the *ISIM Newsletter 6*, a book presentation by Elisabeth Özdalga was published. The full title of the publication was not mentioned in the main text. The following is the title as it should have been published:

Elisabeth Özdalga (ed.) (1999), *Naqshbandis in Western and Central Asia: Change and Continuity*, Istanbul: Swedish Research Institute in Istanbul.

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Western Europe
SONIA NÛRÎN SHAH-KAZEMI

Untying the Knot
Divorce and Muslim law in the UK

Severing the ties of marriage in any context is a trying process, while in almost proportionate contrast, obtaining marital status is nearly always relatively easy. If Muslim women in the UK are unable to obtain an Islamic divorce (*talaq*) from their husbands, they are obliged to go through a complex set of procedures in order to dissolve their Islamic marriage contracts (*faskh* of *nikah*). If the women are recognized as legally married according to UK civil law, they must take steps to change that status as well by undergoing the civil divorce process.

'Surely there is some part of Muslim law to look after women's rights and general and personal needs.' (Case 715) The results of a two year investigation into what Muslim women experience whilst trying to divorce their husbands reveal that although women may be unaware of many facets of the Shariah applicable to the dissolution of the *nikah* contract, they are conscious that there must be some way of terminating their Islamic marriages, and are active in finding solutions:

> *The time has come that I have chosen to marry again…My solicitor has advised I can get a divorce from (X) on the basis of English Law using the grounds of five-year separation or grounds of indecent behaviour. I have decided to file my divorce on the grounds of five-year separation. However, I am a Muslim, and according to Islam, only the man has the right to divorce, but there must be a way in which a woman can divorce herself from the man under special circumstances (like the trouble I've been through).*
> *(Case 8145)*

The study focuses on applicants to the Muslim Law (Shariah) Council (MLSC), an independent body established by the Muslim community in the UK in 1985. The fieldwork comprised two stages: the first stage involved examining over 280 detailed case files of women who approached the organization during the period from 1985-1996; and the second was to conduct in-depth interviews with over 20 women whose cases were being processed during 1999 and 2000. Although men do apply to the organization, and many husbands communicate in detail with the MLSC, the findings in this summary focus on the women applicants.

The MLSC comprises *imams* (authoritative religious figures) and *fuqaha'* (jurists) from all over the country representing the five schools of law (Hanafi, Maliki, Shafi'i, Hanbali, and Ja'fari). One central aspect of the MLSC's work is the ability to facilitate a divorce according to the Shariah, and to act in the capacity of an Islamic judge (*qadi*) and function as he would in an Islamic court of law. The majority of applicants are women who approach the MLSC with a view to securing their intervention in marital disputes. The women come from different areas of the UK and many are from outside London. There is also a considerable number of enquiries from elsewhere in Europe.

The case files demonstrate that the women come from a variety of socio-economic backgrounds, ranging from qualified professional women to those with minimal formal education. The ages of the women range from the very young (16-18 years) to women in their forties and fifties. Similarly, the women's cultural backgrounds are diverse, with applicants from South Asia, the Middle East, Africa, migrant refugees from the Balkans and ethnic UK* women who have converted to Islam. In addition, there is also a number of ethnic UK* women who marry Muslim men, but do not become Muslim. They are aware that their Muslim marriages may have no legal status in this country, but nonetheless feel personally compelled to obtain Islamic divorces in order to sever their marriage ties. This may be done in addition to obtaining civil divorces in those instances where these women were also married according to civil law.

> *Now we have been separated for three years. I would like a divorce certificate issued. I would now like to seek your guidance and help on this matter and would be grateful if you would issue a divorce certificate in order to dissolve the marriage.*
> *(Case 728)*

The vast majority of women who apply to the MLSC are unable to obtain a *talaq* from their husbands. This can be for a variety of reasons such as the husband's desertion or intransigence. In the latter case, the MLSC seeks to facilitate negotiations between the parties in order to resolve the conflict. The women often approach the MLSC without having taken other prior formal steps. They seek the supportive intervention of the organization in order to help them negotiate a divorce with their husbands and obtain the support of their families. This role is comparable to approaching the family solicitor upon a breakdown of the marriage, but it is also parallel to mediation facilitation inasmuch as the woman maintains a high degree of participation in the process, thereby differing from the act of 'handing over' matters to the solicitor. In all cases, the MLSC insists on communicating directly with the woman, even is she is not the one who first approaches the organization. Although the MLSC is keen to keep the door of reconciliation open, in almost all the cases where this is not a possibility, they then seek to persuade the husband to divorce his wife. If this is not so straightforward and the parties still require the intervention of the MLSC, they will continue to mediate in the dispute. In a small minority of cases, the MLSC negotiates what is called a *khulla* agreement, whereby the wife releases herself from her marriage by paying an agreed sum of money (usually returning the amount of money received as dower, the *mehr*). However, in the vast majority of cases, the MLSC acts to terminate the *nikah* contract for the wife.

The MLSC's intervention can result in the man divorcing his wife, but should he refuse, the MLSC acts to dissolve the *nikah* contract by declaring a *faskh* of *nikah*. The MLSC considers the husband's refusal to pronounce a *talaq* a deliberate act intended to harm the interests of the wife and is therefore considered valid grounds for terminating the *nikah* contract. In almost all applicable cases, the MLSC also encourages applicants to institute civil divorce proceedings according to English law if they have not already done so. However, this is irrelevant to a category of women who are not married according to English civil law and whose Muslim marriages are not valid in the UK. These women have no option but to approach organizations like the MLSC. These women, in addition, often seek supportive counsel from the MLSC as well as its intervention in facilitating divorce. The majority of women perceive themselves, to varying degrees, as practising Muslims; sometimes it is a question of deep faith and a need to comply with religious laws in every aspect of their lives. The women consider their ability to approach the MLSC an empowerment to which they are without question entitled:

> *Because of this help and my faith in Allah (SW), I have now found the courage to ask for a divorce as I believe this to be my God-given right.*
> *(Case 8173)*

From the case files, it became apparent that in those cases where women had a strong adherence to Islamic religious values, they confided in the MLSC by offering many details about their marriage and their own feelings. This was often in contrast to the sparse and perfunctory information given to the solicitor to set in motion civil divorce proceedings. In interviews, the women expressed a reluctance to divulge information about immigration matters, or about the breakdown of family customs as they complained that those advisers who were not Muslim would 'not understand'. While they were reluctant to make the effort to challenge the prevailing stereotypes of Muslim women's lack of autonomy, many considered themselves independent and free of any burden of stigma attached to divorce:

> *Actually there is someone I would like to marry, but I cannot until I am free from this matter because I do not wish to do anything against Islamic Law, which I greatly respect and believe in with all my heart.*
> *(Case 779)*

Where the women's religious adherence was not strong, but they nonetheless chose to approach the MLSC because of a desire to comply with cultural community norms, they did not provide the MLSC with many details about their emotions and the reasons for marital breakdown. Often, concomitantly, their civil divorce documentation revealed a more intimate relationship with their solicitors. These women often approached the MLSC after having approached civil lawyers, or at about the same time, but rarely before doing so.

Parameters and empowerment

The MLSC is constrained both by a lack of resources and to a certain extent by the self-imposed parameters of its current role in the Muslim community because it cannot function as a fully equipped court of law. Its activities have been hindered by the exigencies of operating within a different 'host' system. It is reluctant to become involved in disputes pertaining to property or other financial matters, other than writing letters urging frankness and fairness on the part of the disputants. Both the applicants and the MLSC itself vest the organization with a morally prescriptive role regarding the welfare of the Muslim community. However, it is apparent that the disputants attribute to the organization a wider remit than it defines for itself. Predicated on achieving a moral consensus amongst the Muslim community members, the MLSC's role has evolved over the years, responding to the ever-changing needs of its applicants. The interaction between the MLSC and the larger social matrix within which it is situated is a dynamic process that continually refines the nature and function of this organization.

It is evident from the range of ideas, emotions and demands expressed by the women in this study that such organizations as the MLSC can serve to empower those Muslim women who make their demands within the framework of the Shariah. Obviously, the sample could not include women who choose to ignore the precepts of the Shariah and for whom a civil divorce suffices. However, for those who approach the MLSC and those women whose marriages are only recognized by the Shariah, the MLSC is the only recourse. ◆

Note

* The term 'Ethnic English' was coined by Fatima Hussain and Margaret O'Brien, and is useful because it signifies that 'white' British people have an ethnicity; and it also avoids the notion of racial origin as a determinant of cultural identity. See their valuable report (1999), *Muslim Families in Europe: Social Existence and Social Care*, University of London Press. In their glossary of terms they state: '(this term) is used to emphasise that every individual has an ethnicity and that the ethnic majority should not be labelled "white".' The term has been adapted here as 'ethnic UK', in order to include women from Wales, Scotland and Ireland who would most often be classified 'white'.

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Inaugural Lecture

HARALD MOTZKI

Methods of Dating Muslim Traditions

There are hardly any sources available for the historically most important period of Islam, its first 150 years of existence. We only have at our disposal traditions that can be found in later written collections. The historical reliability of these traditions is doubtful because religious and political developments possibly – sometimes even demonstrably – have distorted, embellished or even created such traditions.

Four main types of dating methods are applied by Western scholars of early Islam to ascertain the historical reliability of traditions, namely: those based on the texts *mutūn* of a tradition; texts based on the collections in which the traditions can be found; those that use the chains of transmitters *asānīd*; and those that take stock of texts as well as the chains of transmitters.

Dating based on the texts of traditions have dominated *Ḥadīth* research ever since Ignaz Goldziher's *Muhammedanische Studien*. Several criteria are applied, such as complexity of the text, level of development, internal coherence of the textual elements, style and vocabulary. The result tends to be a relative, sometimes absolute chronology of the texts. However, research into the plausibility of the premises and the conclusions that are applied make it clear that results are often unconvincing and that there is no real footing in the texts for the purposes of absolute dating. This is a general problem with the methods that try to date traditions solely on the basis of the texts. The method seems to be useful only when combined with other dating criteria.

Dating based on the collections of traditions received a significant impulse by Joseph Schacht, who applied this method in his book *The Origins of Muhammadan Jurisprudence*. The *e silentio* conclusion plays an important role in this method – a dangerous one given that it provides little certainty because of the few available sources on early Islam.

Dating based on chains of transmitters is applied mainly by Gautier H.A. Juynboll, who developed the *isnād* analysis to a high level. Of crucial importance for this method is the phenomenon of common links, i.e. the same names of persons who come up at a comparable level in the various chains of transmitters of the same *Hadīth*. In general, it is assumed that the oldest common link or an immediately preceding common link is the author of the tradition in question. This interpretation of the common link is actually based on premises that can hardly withstand criticism.

Dating on the basis of chains of transmitters as well as texts seems to be the most successful method. In the *isnād*-cum-*matn* analysis, interdependencies between the chains of transmitters and their corresponding texts that can be determined in many traditions play an important role. These interdependencies are seen as indications that we are dealing here with a real process of transmission and not with mere fiction. Thanks to the combination of *isnād* and text analysis, it is possible to make more positive pronouncements on the common links and thus on the dating of a tradition, on the development of the text, and on mistakes and forgeries the variants may contain.

Only after plenty of traditions are dated can scholars of Islam venture to make pronouncements on the authenticity and historicity of what has been transmitted in the sources. Until now, however, things have not developed to that extent. ◆

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Continued from front page 1: Muslim Women in Italy / *by Ruba Salih*

self-fulfilment through an alternative (Islamic) morality. However, Islam also represents for them a way of overcoming what they label as backward and traditional features of their cultures. In certain cases, the endorsement of a Muslim agenda and the process of studying and learning become a terrain whereby women negotiate their aspirations for autonomy and self-realization in a sort of public sphere without challenging their husbands' traditional supremacy in the private sphere. Women who actively engage themselves in Islam in Italy constantly confront other Muslim women who, according to them, remain in the realm of ignorance or tradition, or whom they see as losing their identity by compromising with Western values and behaviour. These narratives, however, are highly contested by other Muslim women who invoke a notion of modernity that embraces secular ideas and behaviour and who claim a diverse notion of authenticity.

Whereas Islamist women in the mosque are persuaded that different ways of being Muslim cannot exist because the Qur'an clearly states what being a good Muslim implies, many Moroccan women consider themselves Muslims and adhere to the general principles of the Islamic religion but show flexibility in practising them and admit different behaviour. However, Muslim women who display more secular behaviour are not necessarily less embedded within traditional practices. More importantly, women who renegotiate Islam construct their own versions of authenticity by reformulating and accommodating diverse cultural and religious practices.

The secular demeanour displayed by these women does not represent a capitulation to a Western hegemony to which they become assimilated. Migration is certainly part and parcel of women's compulsion for change, since it constitutes a major turning point in their lives, where the confrontation with a different model of living and interpreting religion amplifies their reflections about themselves, their culture and their roots. However, women's renegotiation of Islam also reflects the historical processes of adaptation, negotiation and reformulation of cultural and religious identities that have occurred in postcolonial societies. Indeed, processes of renegotiation of cultural and religious practices are more historically rooted than the more recent Islamist call for a return to the religious texts as sources of authenticity.

Muslim women's striving to affirm their own subjective positions discloses a power struggle to interpret and define cultural aspects and performances, and highlights contestation of dominant perceptions of cultural authenticity.

Several women shared with me their anxieties and reflections regarding two models and dominant discourses, articulated as the 'Western' and the 'Islamist', both of which they feel are ultimately alien to their identities. Indeed, several amongst the Muslim women I have worked with define themselves as Muslims but refuse Islamism as the only political and cultural frame leading to self-determination without assimilation. For them, authenticity is not a mere and strict respect for some religious norms, but is rather about positioning themselves through genuinely recognizing negotiations as inescapable outcomes of living in a different society. ◆

Note

* Muslims in Italy are estimated at around 600,000 (Muslim organizations provide higher figures: 1,000,000).

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Book Presentation

ABE W. ATA

Intermarriage in Palestine

Mixed Christian and Muslim marriages have an impact which reaches beyond the lives of the spouses, their children, and their parents. These marriages affect the wider community in ways which can be understood by identifying the enrichment and complications of family dynamics in West Bank households and by exploring the attitudes and reactions of spouses, which have shaped their inter-relationships even at the level of the community at large. Their aspirations and fears about their children's futures, when placed within the context of social, political and religious developments, offers insight into the changing boundaries of the Christian and Muslim communities in the West Bank.

Emerging as a unique phenomenon, cross-religious marriages within the Palestinian community may be seen as having escaped the traditions of religious and cultural exclusiveness. But this by no means signifies a smooth transition for those who decide to take the step, nor does it mean a smooth integration of the differences or an easy accommodation of religious and cultural complexities between the Muslim and Christian communities within the one household. In order to explore these phenomena, a sample group of 120 people was chosen to form the basis of analysis. They were selected from East Jerusalem, Bethlehem and Ramallah according to their concentration in these three townships. Though perhaps small for a comprehensive study, the sample group covers the majority of known cases of Muslim-Christian intermarriages in the West Bank.

Religious intermixing brings with it a certain degree of stress, despite a welcome societal change which allows a choice of partner and associated lifestyle options. The analysis allows us to monitor the extent to which cross-religious intermixing is gradually emerging between Muslims and Christians, a trend which may signify the gradual dissolution of the boundaries between the two communities. Whether it will continue at the same pace or gather momentum depends largely on demographic, migratory and socio-political developments. For example, the level of education of this sample was much higher than those shown in a previous study (Ata, l986). In this study, those having obtained tertiary education amounted to 72.3%; whereas in the previous study it was 10.5%. One thing, however, remains certain: the best answer lies in monitoring the marriage patterns of second and third generations.

One must be careful when assessing developments in the field, if only for the overwhelming religio-gender imbalance. In the majority of cases, male spouses are Muslim and females are Christian. Only in 4% of the cases was the reverse found to be true. As the latter type of marriage is not sanctioned in a predominately Muslim society such as the contemporary West Bank, the data will not allow a symmetric comparison between the two communities.

Pleasant and unpleasant features

Emotional strains and behavioural problems due to cultural and religious differences emerged as a cause of tension between the spouses. Most of these were mentioned by at least one partner, particularly as the person being interviewed perceived the differences. A few of these were serious and unresolved. They related to the community's negative reactions, and much less so to incompatibility in personality, polarization of roles or absence of love at the beginning of marriage. The ratio of those who cited negative reactions by the community to those who cited incompatibility of backgrounds was five to one; precisely 48.7 % and 12.95% respectively. The reactions were perceived to come from relatives, friends, the community at large and one's own religious group. They were also highlighted as the most unpleasant features about the marriages. Depending on one's liberal leanings, responses towards Christian-Muslim marriages have been encouraging. The decision that cross-religious marriages are better than mono-religious ones drew almost the same percentage (16.1%) as those who believed in the contrary (15.2%). The highest reaction (47.3%) was drawn from those who indicated that it was the same. Their reaction was a variation on a theme; one interviewee summed it up with the following: 'it all depends on how much one invests in it.'

Pleasant features were equally varied. The highest proportion of responses (27.4%) comprised reactions relating to cultural exposure and tolerance between the two communities. This was followed by 22.1% who indicated love, understanding, and a liberal life at home. A small percentage (7.4%) held that pleasant features were absent.

Attitudes towards children

Concerns about children and the future ranked as the second highest among elements that affect the relationships. Others included lack of communal and professional support from social and health groups, and the absence of social and psychology-based agencies to deal with feelings of marginality, disorientation and exclusion. The following words of an interviewee encapsulate the depth of this concern:

> *He [my son] doesn't know what he really is. He feels he belongs to both religions. There is no support from anyone around for their well-being and at school, it is like a different place altogether. […] Our kids already have mental insecurity. What kinds of problems will they face when they grow up? Right now they have been to church, next time to the mosque. And no one asks questions about them going only to this place or that.*

The depth of such disappointment must be scrutinized side by side with the permission of mixed households to grant their children the choice of their own religion. The reactions provided by Muslim and Christian spouses differ significantly. The percentage of Christian spouses giving such permission is twice (58.0%) that of Muslim spouses (33.9%); a larger percentage of Muslim spouses (40.9%) do not grant this permission, compared with 16.0% Christians. The remainder of the group did not answer or simply did not know.

The combined responses of male and female spouses who allow such a choice comprised 45.5%. Only one-fifth (20.5%) indicated strongly that they wanted them to be non-religious – something that is considered unthinkable anywhere in the Middle East.

Of particular interest are parental expectations of the children's life in the future, which ranged from 5.4% indicating 'worse' to 52.7% indicating 'better'. Those having been married from one to ten years expressed a slightly higher expectation for a 'better' life (at 56.9%) than those who have been married more than ten years (at 46.8%). One explanation for these slight differences has to do with psychological and workable precedence that has been set by couples in 'older' mixed marriages. Children who have already transcended the brutal realities of cultural differences are success stories.

Escaping from an unbearable situation of spinsterhood may have affected a few (Christian) wives, although that was not the rule. Most of the wives had tertiary education, as did their husbands. This may have prompted them take a proactive role in the choice of their partners.

Gender Roles and Responsibilities

One measure of family style was the role of the breadwinner. Almost two-thirds of the spouses (62.5%) indicated that income was shared equally between the two spouses. This finding is considered a marked improvement on the realities of the 1980s where 12.5% out of total of 899 'non-mixed' families share this responsibility. A relatively modest access of the East Jerusalem families to the Israeli labour market could have also contributed to this result. This need not overshadow the pressing economic hardships becoming instrumental in softening the patriarchal resistance to gender participation.

The trend noted above is reversed with regards to house cleaning and other domestic duties. The shared responsibility on this item is reduced to 19.6%; whilst 79.5% of the responses indicated that these chores were reserved for the 'wife mainly'.

Apirations for the future

Aspirations with respect to the future of Palestine were diverse. This measure was used primarily to distinguish ideas on religious or social changes, and the possible impact on the dynamics of mixed marriages. Preference for a 'democratic' society drew the largest response (at 40.2%). The three second largest groups comprised 16.1% preferring an Islamic society; 16.1% a 'multi-religious' society; and 15.2% a 'non-religious' one.

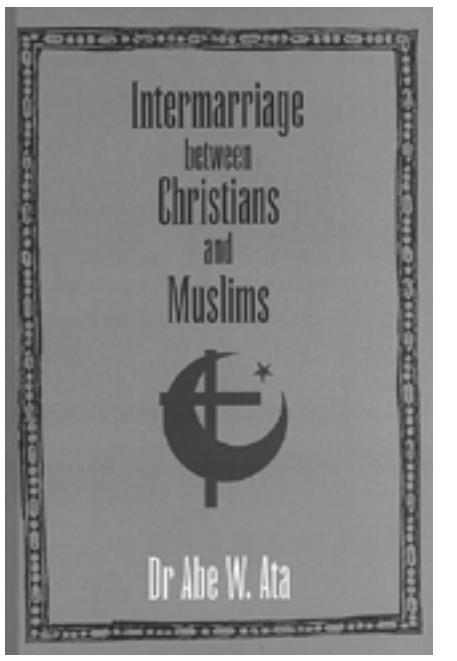
The two Christian and Muslim sub-samples differed strongly in that the latter group ranked three times higher in preferring an 'Islamic' society; and also twice the proportion of other Muslims who preferred a 'non-religious' society.

When asked to choose between three descriptors, namely 'Arab', 'Palestinian' and 'Muslim/Christian' as the most important basis for their identity, the direction of both the gender and religious responses were the same and proportional. The combined responses of Muslim husbands and wives show that 50% chose 'Palestinian', 28% 'Arab', and 23% 'Muslim' as their main identity. The Christian male and female responses combined tend to display an identical pattern.

Despite the relative diversity of reactions, a larger proportion of Muslim spouses still cherish taking part in mixed marriage as long as it is in a larger Islamic atmosphere. The ratio of Muslim spouses (40.9%) to Christians (16.0%) that opposed children having the freedom to choose their religion was three times as high.

These results may be viewed as the seeds of change from the way previous generations used to identify themselves. It may be that this group signals a departure from accepting that nationality and religious affiliation are one and the same. The two ingredients may be viewed as synonymous only in as far as couples of mixed marriages view their sense of destiny as identical.

As the children attain their relative independence against a centuries-old kinship structure, they will have to learn how to adjust and combine cognitive maturity and operating within the established community. Mixed marriages on the West Bank have brought with them a mixed outcome. At one level, couples of this kind of marriage are far from being fully integrated into mainstream society. There is little indication as to whether their children will make headway as times roll by and changes seep deeper into the layers of society. Clearly, unless the community at large effectuates major adjustments to this newly emerging paradigm of partnership, Christian-Muslim marriages are doomed to fail. ◄►



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Book Presentation

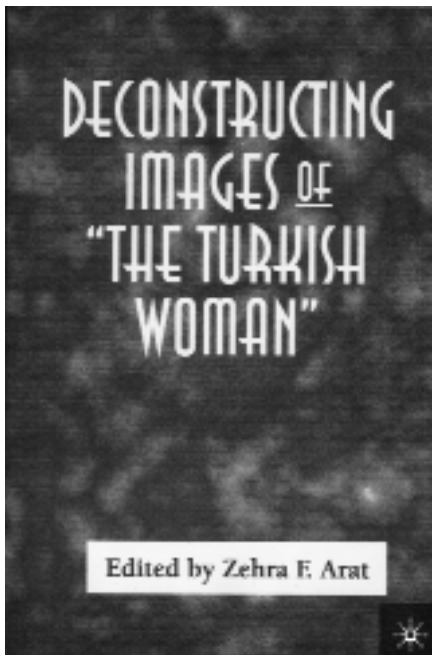
ZEHRA F. ARAT

Representations of Turkish Women

The women of Turkey are often characterized either as a secluded and inert mass oppressed by harsh patriarchal rules of Islam or as liberated citizens enjoying equal rights with men – thanks to Mustafa Kemal Atatürk's modernization reforms. The latter characterization has been promoted by the state and several privileged women, including the former Prime Minister Tansu Çiller, and reinforced by the cross-national data that ranked Turkey higher on many gender development indicators than other Muslim populated countries.

Deconstructing Images of 'The Turkish Woman' is an effort to counter such oversimplifications. It problematizes the collapsing of multiples of people into a prototypical singular as a practice of domination (repeated throughout the history) by focusing on the negation of the diversity and individuality of the women of Turkey. Locating various images of uniformity, employed to define the 'ideal' Turkish woman or to describe her 'pitiful' condition, *Deconstructing Images* scrutinizes the cultural construct of 'the Turkish woman' and the imperialistic, nationalistic, religious and other currents behind it. It also shows how opposing groups have built upon and reinforced similar images and inquires into the role of women in these processes.

In an effort to illustrate the revival and reproduction of the representations of women, the volume attempts to contextualize discourses chronologically by organizing the essays into three politically distinct periods. The first section explores the late Ottoman era and begins with a chapter by Palmira Brummett, who examines the cartoon images of women in the revolutionary press of the Empire between 1908 and 1911. Depictions, though numerous and diverse, all collapse into an image of women as weak and vulnerable and therefore needing to be protected and controlled. For example, the cartoons that depict the country as a woman flirting with European men may be a warning about European imperialism but also point to the perils of women's independence or Westernization. Examining women's journals from the same era, Aynur Demirdirek shows that some urban Ottoman women were indeed demanding certain rights. Despite their relatively small number, these women had been influential in shaping the debates on the 'woman question', and their demands for education and changes in family law had some resonance in the reforms undertaken first by the Young Turks and later by the Kemalists.



Two essays by İrvin Cemil Schick and Pelin Başcı are concerned with the images created through the Western gaze. In agreement with the earlier critiques of orientalism, Schick argues that erotic literature and its claims to be the representation of reality eroticized the East, facilitated gendering, and forged a powerful colonial discourse. Another crucial function of sexuality, he adds, was allowing Europe to form a distinct identity and define its place in the world. Thus, attributing several conflicting images to Ottoman women (e.g. disgustingly filthy and obsessed with bathing) was not self-contradictory but consistent with the alteritist discourse, because each characterization contributed to Europe's self-definition through 'othering'. Başcı's analysis of the texts by American female missionaries shows strong links between missionaries' perceptions and the orientalist discourse. Commenting on how they related to the 'other' women, she argues that by presenting the 'Ottoman woman' as both the ultimate victim and evidence of the country's backwardness and by assigning themselves the role of her saviour, missionary women were able to justify their own recent emancipation and increasing public role.

The second section focuses on the gender ideology of the early Republican era. K. E. Fleming's study of the Ottoman sociologist Ziya Gökalp's contribution to the nation-building project of the Kemalists explicates his interest in connecting the restoration of gender equality, claimed to be prevalent in pre-Islamic Turkish societies, to the revival of authentic Turkish civilization. Reviewing the roles assigned to the patriotic women of the Republic, Ayşe Durakbaşa argues that while Kemalism encouraged women's participation in the public domain, it also restricted them by imposing moral and behavioural codes that emphasized family honour. Zehra Arat analyses the educational system as a device of socialization and discusses how the gendered curricula enabled the regime to beget educated female citizens who would contribute to the modernization of the country without threatening its gender hierarchy.

The last section explores the lives of women since 1960. Işık Urla Zeytinoğlu points to women's low participation rate in gainful employment and finds the explanation both in popular cultural norms and their reinforcement in discriminatory labour laws. Emine Onaran İncirlioğlu's ethnographic study of the gender division of labour in two villages challenges the stereotypical notions of village women as ignorant, passive, and powerless. The profiles of women who have climbed the corporate ladder also challenge some common assumptions. Hayat Kabasakal reports that the chief women executives demonstrate a strong desire and ability to maintain invisibility and reject any association with feminism. Focusing on another privileged group of women, referred to as 'the elite Islamist women', Aynur İncirlioğlu argues that assuming an 'Islamist identity' and the 'new veiling' allow a group of university-educated urban women to resist Kemalist modernity, intercede Islamic patriarchy, and enter public life; they reinterpret Islam to challenge the traditional norms held by Islamist men and employ Kemalist women's language of 'serving' people to justify their claims.

Carel Bertram's review of short stories by four contemporary women writers invokes the Islamic concept of *fitne-i âlem*. Taking housework as a metaphor for chaos containment, she suggests that the female protagonists who defy their expected roles unleash *fitne* that could change the meaning of the house and threaten the social order. Thus, the house is presented as the domain where women negotiate new roles and relationships. Arzu Öztürkmen studies the contribution of a controversial women's magazine, *Kadınca*, to the development of feminist consciousness and gives it credit for engaging non-politicized women. In her brief historiography of the 'Purple Roof of Women's Shelter', Yeşim Arat examines a new wave of feminism and points to the difficulties of pursuing feminist ideals of sisterhood, solidarity, and participant democracy within an organization that has to operate in a materialist, male-dominated, and essentially undemocratic socio-political system.

Together the essays show that improving women's lot was treated as the focal point of community interests by all competing ideological groups: advocates of Westernization, Western missionaries, defenders of Islam, Ottoman patriots, Turkish nationalists, and socialist reformists and revolutionaries. Moreover, they all manipulated the same images and metaphors within the language of their own ideology. Consequently, women and their images have served as the site of important political struggles for over a century; but what was questioned by all ideological groups was women's backwardness, not male dominance. Nevertheless, speaking of domestic life, family and household politics as public issues marked by gender, they all effectively *politicized the private* and thus contributed to the development of a new paradigm of modernity. While the male-led modernization projects have treated women as targets rather than participants, they have also created some opportunities. Although most women have demanded or embraced these opportunities to 'serve the country', increasingly more women and women's groups, however different (e.g. Islamist, Kemalist, Socialist, or Radical), seek financial independence, demand equality at home, and strive for an independent identity. ◆▶

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CIRHS

BAHEY EL DIN HASSAN

Human Rights, Education and Dissemination
A 21st Century Agenda

The Second International Conference of the Human Rights Movement in the Arab World was held in Cairo from 13-16 October 2000, under the title of 'Human Rights, Education and Dissemination: A 21st Century Agenda'. The conference was held at the invitation of the Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies (CIRHS), in coordination with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Network. It came in response to the conclusions of the First International Conference of the Human Rights Movement in the Arab World, organized by the CIHRS (Casablanca, April 1999), at which was stated that utmost priority should be given to the tasks of human rights education and dissemination. There was a shared belief that citizens' awareness of their rights is the first line of defence of human rights.

Approximately 120 human rights experts and advocates representing 40 human rights organizations from 14 Arab countries, as well as a number of experts from Africa, Asia, Latin America and Europe, participated in the conference, at the end of which 'The Cairo Declaration on Human Rights Education and Dissemination' was adopted. The deliberations showed that during the first five years of the UN Decade for Human Education, only limited success was achieved in bringing about more extensive partnerships between governments and NGOs, on the one hand, and amongst the NGOs on the other. In the Arab world, the implementation programmes of the Decade were faced with a number of challenges: political crises, the discrepancy in economic and social conditions in the Arab countries, and the lack of cooperation between official government institutions established for this purpose and NGOs working in the field. A number of papers and interventions reflected on the obstacles facing the NGOs in this regard. Most significant among these were the practical consequences of the imbalanced historical emergence of the human rights culture and thought, and hence the association of the notion of human rights with Western culture. This is further exacerbated by the declared position of the US, and the West in general, on a number of the most vital issues of Arab collective rights, such as in Palestine and Iraq, which contribute to a real barrier to human rights education in the Arab World.

Discussions demonstrated that the most important problem for human rights dissemination within the dominant culture is 'elusive democracy'. Some regimes circumvent their international human rights commitments by adopting an elusive rights discourse that keeps intact the essence of tyranny and human rights violations and reduces human rights promotion by governments to mere propaganda. In addition, there is the problem of the growth of fundamentalist currents with their conceptual repertoire that is particularly hostile to the freedoms of opinion, expression, and belief, and the rights to equality, bodily integrity and life. These currents also preach a contradiction between cultural specificity and the universality of human rights – the same argument used by the governments to derogate from their international commitments and to make reservations on women's rights in particular.

Discussions further showed that cultural diversity among the peoples of the world is a fact to be acknowledged, tackled and fortified in order for it to become a factor that enriches and supports the universality of human rights. Also noted was the importance of having closer relations with advocates of religious reform.

Furthermore, deliberations also dealt with the effect the Eastern Church has had on human rights culture through the teachings of the Bible, the heritage and works of the founding fathers of the Eastern Church, its educational institutions, and the contributions of Christian Arabs to the Arab renaissance. The Christian Arab presence was affirmed as a supporting factor for human rights culture, and was described as an embodiment of democratic pluralism. It was also affirmed that upsetting such presence in any way would have a negative impact on the image of Islam in the world. Finally, in relation to the role of the arts in the dissemination of human rights culture, five papers were discussed that treated the issue extensively, especially the role of theatre, plastic arts, folk art and poetry. They affirmed that human rights issues constitute rich material for creativity in such domains. The interventions noted the necessity of combining work on human rights and creative works, and called for lifting all forms of tutelage and censorship on the arts, whether based in the law or in the dominant political culture. They also argued for the necessity of giving special attention to folk culture and the arts in human rights education and dissemination, and for developing non-traditional educational materials such as films and plays. It was stressed that a greater and more flourishing role of the arts in shaping the consciousness of the people requires putting an end to the arbitrary marginalization of artists and innovators in their own countries. Discussing ways of developing independent Arab regional human rights media, a number of detailed proposals on issuing an Arabic newspaper and establishing a radio station and a television channel for human rights were reviewed. ◆▶

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RESEARCH

Gender

ZAKIA BELHACHMI

The Science Question
in Arab-Islamic Feminist Knowledge

Women's production of scientific feminist knowledge in Arab-Islamic[1] society is rarely systematically addressed. The available literature reflects preconceptions and misconceptions about women's feminist scientific production of knowledge in the Arab world. In response to this, it is necessary to provide a systemic view of women's scientific production of knowledge in Arab-Islamic education and society.[2] The focus then shifts from the 'woman question' in Arab-Islamic society to the more radical 'science question' in feminism, education and society in general.

Women's production of scientific feminist knowledge in Arab-Islamic society is rarely systematically addressed. The available literature reflects preconceptions and misconceptions about women's feminist scientific production of knowledge in the Arab world. In response to this, it is necessary to provide a systemic view of women's scientific production of knowledge in Arab-Islamic education and society.[1] The focus then shifts from the 'woman question' in Arab-Islamic society to the more radical 'science question' in feminism, education and society.

The question of women's feminist productions of scientific knowledge in contemporary Arab-Islamic society is complex and raises two fundamental and interlapping issues: the historical process of women's involvement in science, and feminism[2] within Arab-Islamic society. To answer these two questions adequately, investigating education is central.

Research conducted by the author is based on the rationale that different world systems of education have culturally specific socio-pedagogical practices that shape both the process of knowledge production within culture and regulate the relations between the individual/society and individuals/groups. It offers an epistemological study of women's scientific productions in Arab-Islamic education and society. Furthermore, it presents a reflexive model that reconciles particularism and universalism in the cross-cultural analysis of feminist knowledge; hence avoiding the traps of cultural relativism and scientism.

The author's thesis examines the process involved in the production and construction of al-Sa'dawi's (Egypt) and Mernissi's (Egypt) scientific feminist knowledge in its systemic relation to Arab-Islamic education and society from 1970-1990. The aim is twofold: to situate al-Sa'dawi's and Mernissi's scientific feminine mode in its systematic relation to the power structure of scientific practice in education and society from 1970-1990; and to examine and evaluate al-Sa'dawi's and Mernissi's feminist research in view of the power-structure that governed scientific practice in education and society from 1970-1990. Theoretical and empirical works of both authors from 1970 to 1990 were selected in order to discover their respective articulations of gender from their perspective as women.

From a pro-active perspective that maintains the systemic link between scientific knowledge and social action in a dialectic relation to culture, the methodology combines a theory-praxis approach for the epistemological analysis of al-Sa'dawi's and Mernissi's feminist research and its related contexts of scientific discovery. For the systemic investigation and evaluation of al-Sa'dawi's and Mernissi's feminist scientific perspective, the study provides a reflexive three-leveled model of analysis, drawing selectively from Bourdieu's reflexive sociology (1992), Dorothy Smith's feminist sociology of knowledge (1990 a,b), and Stanley and Wise's feminist epistemology (1990). In this manner, the study captures the tensions between determinism and agency contained in al-Sa'dawi's and Mernissi's feminist discourses, and delineates how communication and co-optation of information take place in their feminine scientific mode.

The findings indicate that al-Sa'dawi's and Mernissi's feminist scientific perspective is marked by an ambivalent feminist consciousness, and is therefore inadequate to represent the plural socio-political reality of Arab-Muslim women, or the diverse reality of women's scientific practices. Also, on the basis al-Sa'dawi's and Mernissi's appropriations of the disciplines in the social sciences, the thesis describes how the authors' scientific feminist paradigm is anachronistic with respect to the Islamic post-modernist scientific practices in higher education and mainstream culture; hence lacking scientific validity and moral authority in women's studies in the region. Moreover, the thesis discusses why the authors' respective scientific approaches and epistemologies fail to offer sustainable egalitarian societal projects that make realistic progress in the status and rights of Arab-Muslim women, or contribute to the advancement of Arab-Islamic women's studies in the region.

The thesis concludes that these findings show the need for a change of paradigm in favour of a systemic scientific paradigm that combines the particularism of the Arab-Islamic identity with the universalism of feminist egalitarian goals derived from women's concrete social experiences. Finally, the study illustrates with the example of Morocco how local feminist post-modernist projects, affiliated with the Islamic tradition of political governance, and scientific practice have yielded to both the scientific development of women's studies and to the advancement of women's status and rights in Arab-Islamic society since the 1980s. ◆▶

Notes

1. The author's PhD thesis, Al-Sa'dawi's and Mernissi's Feminist Knowledge With/in the History, Education and Science of the Arab-Islamic Culture (1999), deals specifically with this issue.
2. Feminism is defined as 'an international socio-political movement with plural origins, multiple cultural historical manifestations, and diverse epistemologies that shape the discursive feminist practices in the world community'.

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CERAW
STEFAN ZIMMERMANN

International Conference on **Cinema and the Middle East**

Media in general, and especially feature films, have the power to create places. Mass media and the cinema supply major parts of society with information on current affairs and ideas about foreign places. It is within this context that the interdisciplinary network on 'Cinema and the Middle East' met from 11-12 October 2000 at the Institute of Geography at the University of Mainz. The conference was jointly organized by Prof. Dr Anton Escher and Prof. Dr Günter Meyer, both of the Centre for Research on the Arab World (CERAW).

Attended by many scholars and experts, the conference provided an excellent opportunity for professionals from research, industry, academia and related government sectors to discuss the latest developments in Middle Eastern cinema. The conference participants tried to focus on a very broad variety of topics related to the many aspects of film production in countries of Northern Africa and the Middle East. The questions ranged from those concerning production conditions and the cinematic depiction of everyday life, to the analysis of economic structures and socio-economic interconnections of the film industry in parts of the Middle East, Northern Africa and Asia.

Several panels concentrated on 'National Cinemas' of the following countries: Syria, Palestine, Lebanon, Egypt, Iran and India. Within these panels, several papers were presented. Randolph Galla (Amman) spoke about 'The Mua<assasa al-<âmma li-s-sīnamā fī Dimašqi: Working Conditions for Cinema Directors'. He highlighted the fact that Syrian authorities regard cinema today as a visiting card to the world. Viola Shafik (Cairo) presented a paper on 'Prostitute for a Good Reason: Stars and Morality in Egypt', giving a brief introduction of the history of the Egyptian film industry, its current star system and the general evaluation of stars on the artistic as well as on the moral levels. The Iranian filmmaker Abbas Kiarostami and his film *Close-Up* was the subject of Azadeh Saljooghi's (Salt Lake City) presentation in which she demonstrated how Kiarostami suggests new meanings of cinema, audience, and human imagination.

Using Ziad Doueiri's film *West Beirut* as an example, Ala Al-Harmaneh (Mainz) demonstrated the use of historical elements in the context of an autobiographical movie. Sven Andressen (Frankfurt) introduced 'The Legend of Anârkalî' and Indian historical film. Claudia Preckel (Bochum) focused on some ideas of the Indian film industry, usually referred to as 'Bollywood'.

Several panels specifically dealt with the construction of the so-called Orient, while using different angles on the topic. The 'historical Orient' was the central focus of one of these panels. Diana Wenzel (Mainz) offered a paper on 'The Construction of Cleopatra in Film: A Queen of Egypt as a Symbol of Oriental Culture'. Regina Heilmann (Mainz) tried to approach the cinematic Orient from an archaeological point of view, analysing 'The Ancient Near East in Film and Babylon's Reception as a Paradigm for the Other'. Wolfgang Zwickel, in his paper on 'The Arc of the Covenant – Cinematic Representation of a Biblical Object', dealt with the problematic use of biblical texts, giving two examples of movies dealing with the Ark of the Covenant: Steven Spielberg's *Indiana Jones* and Bruce Beresford's *King David*.

A different approach was introduced by Christopher L. Lukinbeal (New Haven). In his presentation, he tried to show how landscapes function in popular American cinema. The construction of cinematic landscapes and movie-generated geographies were also presented by Stefan Zimmermann (Mainz). He offered an inside glance of 'Cinema's view of Marrakech' by analysing European and American film productions using Marrakech as their location.

The use of stereotypes in the depiction of Arabs in popular European and American cinema was demonstrated by Martin Noweck (Munich), who showed that the use of offensive stereotypes is usually based on specific political intentions. Annelies Moors (Amsterdam) looked into a different mass media phenomenon. She chose (the clothing company) Benetton's advertising campaign which features photos of Jews and Palestinians posing in friendship, to reflect upon what sort of 'imagined community' was being produced.

Films were not only discussed, but also shown. The first day ended with the presentation of Parine Jaddo's *Aisha,* an intricately woven experimental film on Arab identity and gender. The next day, the exceptionally innovative feature documentary *The English Sheikh and the Yemeni Gentleman* was screened in the presence of its director, Bader Ben Hirsi. The film traces the search of the London-born director for his cultural heritage in Yemen. The panelists were highly fascinated by the extraordinary photography.

The interdisciplinary network counts more than 100 members from 21 different countries. The conference greatly benefited from the diversity of its participants, coming from various fields of studies and industry. This blend led to intriguing and fruitful discussions within the different panels. The discussions and the personal engagement of several researchers and filmmakers reconfirmed the importance of this field of research.

The forthcoming meeting will be held again at the Institute of Geography at the University of Mainz, scheduled for 4-5 September 2001, and will concentrate exclusively on film and mass media of the Maghreb. ◆

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CIE
HERMAN DE LEY

Islam and Racism in Europe

The Centre for Islam in Europe (CIE) held its inaugural conference on 25 October 2000 in Ghent. The conference, held at Ghent University, was organized by the CIE in close collaboration with the Flemish Muslim association, VOEM (Association for the Education and Emancipation of Muslims). At the occasion, two new courses were jointly inaugurated: 'Islam in Europe's Secular States' and 'Racism and Representation'. They will be taught by two leading members of the CIE: Prof. Herman de Ley and Prof. Jan Blommaert, respectively.

The conference was chaired by Mrs Meryem Kanmaz, researcher at the CIE, and opened with a welcome address by Prof. Johnny Devreker, Dean of the Faculty of Arts. He stressed the innovation and uniqueness of both courses in Flanders. They confirm, in an exemplary fashion, the distinct social profile of Ghent University as a pluralistic institution that 'welcomes all students whatever their philosophical, political, cultural, and social background' (Charter of GU, Paragraph 1). Prof. Blommaert, in his inaugural lecture, spoke of 'racism as a perspective: on the ideological character of racism'. Racism must not be reduced to an individual attitude: the structuring and spreading of racist ideas are closely interwoven with existing social structures. As a consequence, racism is related to power systems. At the same time, it is not just a matter of ideas: there is a close link with behaviour as well. Besides being an ideology, though, racism should also be viewed as a kind of *episteme*: it is a structured way of producing 'facts' and 'knowledge' on social phenomena.

Prof. Blommaert was joined by Dr Thijl Sunier (head researcher at Erasmus University, Rotterdam), who had been invited as a guest speaker. The subject of his lecture was 'Muslims as a policy category and an object of research: The role of Islam in policies of integration in the Netherlands'. The lecture gave a critical review of the consecutive policies and debates in the Netherlands since the 1960s. The intervention by publicist Scheffers at the start of this year confirmed the definitive transition from the former tolerant policy of multiculturalism towards that of an enforced civic integration (*inburgering*) of minorities.

The second course was inaugurated by Prof. De Ley with a lecture entitled 'Muslims in the Belgian secular state: what secular state?' He introduced his lecture with a particular case, viz. the practical problems an inhabitant of Ghent had recently been confronted with in order to provide an Islamic burial for an Iraqi refugee killed in a traffic accident. Prof. De Ley stated that for too long Muslims living in Europe have been subjected to a debate on Islam and secularism as a kind of precondition to be granted the basic rights guaranteed by the European constitutions. When Muslims are refused a dignified burial in the name of 'secularism', European secularism itself has to be critically examined and updated. Many Muslim intellectuals, philosophers, and sociologists inside and outside the Western world offer interesting contributions to this debate that is vital to our democratic future.

The international guest speaker for this second course was Prof. Tariq Ramadan (Collège de Genève and Université de Fribourg), one of today's leading European intellectuals. In his lecture, entitled 'To be a European Muslim', he forcefully pleaded for the right of Europe's Muslims to be recognized as fully qualified citizens, while preserving their Muslim identities. 'Not one political constitution in Europe requires Muslims to be less Muslim in order to be accepted as a citizen', he stated. Muslims, for their part, have to learn to differentiate between their religion and the cultural traditions that they brought to Europe as immigrants; at the same time, they have to appropriate Europe's cultural traditions. That way they will be able to construct a 'European Islam' while respecting the universal fundamentals of their faith.

The last speaker was Mr Youssef Souissi, president of the VOEM. In a short speech, he stressed the importance for Muslim citizens in European countries to be not only 'recognized' and 'known', but also to be 'seen'. This public visibility does not only apply to some dress codes (such as the headscarf), but also to religious practices such as the *adhân,* and architectural contributions to the urban environment – i.e. the building of real mosques instead of the presently-used old garages, supermarkets or factories.

The inaugural session was concluded with a festive gathering including a Moroccan tea ceremony, accompanied by a recital of oriental music and an exhibition of calligraphy by master Kakayi (living and working in Ghent).

The afternoon session was attended by several hundred people, not only students and academics, but also many Muslim and non-Muslim field workers and activists from all over Flanders, and from Brussels and the Netherlands. There was a conspicuous presence of a large number of young Muslims. Thanks to the dedication of everyone involved, this inaugural conference earned outstanding academic, social and intercultural merit. ◆

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Congress Report

WELMOET BOENDER

Religious Freedom and the Neutrality of the State
The Position of Islam in the European Union

The title of the international congress held in Leiden from 14 to 16 December 2000, 'Religious Freedom and the Neutrality of the State: The Position of Islam in the European Union', can be said to indicate a challenge. Although all member states of the European Union state the principles of religious freedom and non-discrimination in their constitutions, neutrality appears to be a paradoxical concept. A group of 35 scholars from 11 countries of the European Union discussed the recent developments regarding the position of Islam within the current national legislations, political structures and public discourses in the European Union.

Organized by Prof. Dr P.S. van Koningsveld and Prof. Dr W.A. Shadid, this congress was held under the auspices of the Leiden Institute for the Study of Religions (LISOR), the Leiden Centre for Asian, African and Amerindian Studies (CNWS), and the Forward Studies Unit of the European Commission in Brussels, which made the conference financially possible.

In their presentations, participants pointed to a bias which often exists in the attitudes of states towards Islam. This is strongly influenced by historical traditions between state and religion, which differ from one country to another, as exposed by Moreras (Spain), Soares Loja (Portugal), Musseli (Italy), Ferrari (Italy, on the EU), Jonker (Germany) and Akgönül (France, on Greece). One the one hand, a general striving towards equality, non-discrimination and unbiased attitudes is clearly visible in the EU countries. A gradual adjustment of the 'new' Islamic religion into the legislation of predominantly Christian states can be observed and an increase in religious liberty for foreign and other minority groups has been apparent. Case studies as presented by Maréchal (Belgium, on the EU) and Heine (Austria) on the integration of Islam and Islamic education in public schools served as examples of recent developments in this field. The contributions of Wiegers (The Netherlands) and Dessing (The Netherlands) analysed how life rituals such as circumcision and Muslim standpoints on organ donation are developing in a secular Dutch context. Jensen (Denmark) endeavoured to measure the attitudes of Muslim high school students towards their religion.

On the other hand, this process has not been without disturbances and setbacks, as Alwall pointed out for Sweden and Foblets and Overbeeke for Belgium. Perceptions of Islam play an important role in public and political discourses, as was shown in different ways by Von Kemnitz (Portugal), Shadid (The Netherlands), Zemni (Belgium) and Beck (The Netherlands). Deep sentiments of fear for Islam hinder an unbiased and impartial attitude of the state. Moreover, in discussions on a separation of church and state, secularism is often taken as neutral, while Muslims are considered to be in opposition to it, as De Ley (Belgium) pointed out. Baeck Simonsen (Denmark) critically expressed the urgent need for new legislation in Denmark in order to empower the Muslim minority to take advantage of the constitutionally defined right to religious freedom in Denmark. Processes of emancipation among Muslims in the European Union were analysed in a considerable part of the contributions. Lewis (United Kingdom), Schmidt di Friedberg (Italy) and Kroissenbrunner (Austria) looked at the role and influence of Muslim leadership. Van Koningsveld (The Netherlands) and Mohsen-Finan (France) elaborated on the discourses of Muslim intellectuals. Sander and Larsson (Sweden) discussed new technologies such as the internet and Allievi (Italy) elaborated on the process of building transnational Muslim communities through Islamic networks and the use of (mass) media.

Dassetto (Belgium, on EU) and Nielsen (United Kingdom, on EU) presented a report to the European Commission on Islam in Europe, entitled 'La situation des musulmans en Europe – rapport de recherches realisé pour la Cellule de Prospective de la Commission Européenne'. This report consisted of quantitative and qualitative data on infrastructural provisions and Muslim daily life in various countries of the EU. The study included a list of 1200 recent publications on Muslims in the EU.

The atmosphere of this congress was one of critical concern. Many questions raised in a specific national context appeared to be similar in other countries, although debates may focus on different institutions or institutional figures, as exemplified by Boender and Kanmaz (The Netherlands and Belgium, respectively) who compared *imams* in the Netherlands and Islamic teachers in Flanders. The aim of this congress, the third of its kind in a series of international congresses on Islam in Europe organized by the University of Leiden (1991, 1995), was to bring together specialists for the exchange of knowledge and expertise concerning the latest developments in legislation, jurisprudence, administrative regulations and attitudes of officials and politicians with respect to Islam and the Muslim communities residing in these countries (Van Koningsveld and Shadid). Obviously scholars on Islam in Europe cannot act as neutral observers. However, the participants succeeded in their task of closely observing these developments and attitudes and alerting policy makers, both at the national and European levels. ◆

The conference papers, edited by W.A. Shadid and P.S. van Koningsveld, are to be published in the summer of 2001.

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Seminar Report

JOHANNES DEN HEIJER

Ignaz Goldziher (1850-1921)
and his Significance for the 21st Century

The Netherlands-Flemish Institute in Cairo (NVIC) held a seminar entitled 'A Pioneer of Islamic Studies in Hungary: Ignaz Goldziher (1850-1921) and his Significance for the 21st Century' on 4 October 2000, in co-operation with the Hungarian Embassy in Cairo. The work of Ignaz Goldziher can still be regarded as seminal for numerous fields within Arabic and Islamic Studies.

PHOTO: COURTESY BY PROF. S. FODOR, BUDAPEST UNIVERSITY

Ignaz Goldziher in1880.

Goldziher's life and working methods were highlighted particularly in a presentation by Tamás Iványi (Budapest) entitled 'Positivism with a Personal Approach – Goldziher at Work', based on Goldziher's diaries and annotated copies of Arabic manuscripts.

Three speakers sought to assess the value of Goldziher's studies for current and future research. Sándor Fodor (Budapest) stated that whereas Goldziher's work on Islamic history, including Qur'anic exegesis and dogmatics, philosophy, and legal thinking, has retained much of its value, his studies on 'popular' religion now raise serious methodological questions. According to Fodor, Goldziher's admiration for 'high' Islamic culture – he regarded Islam as the only religion able to satisfy inquisitive philosophical minds – was counterbalanced by an outright contempt of magical practices in Islam (as well as in Judaism and Christianity), which he often dismissed as 'religious swindle'. And even when he wrote in more objective terms about such topics, he was too heavily determined by the evolutionist theories of his time to escape from explaining the regional variety of 'popular' beliefs in terms of local substrates dating from pre-Islamic times.

In the same vein, Catherine Mayeur (Paris) discussed Goldziher's interpretation of the famous *mawlid* of as-Sayyid Ahmad al-Badawi in Tanta as a linear continuation of the ancient Egyptian solar cult at Bubastis. Modern anthropological work has shown that this cult of a Muslim saint can be explained fully within an Islamic framework. One important historical point made by Mayeur is that, through the works of such European scholars as Vollers and Littmann, Goldziher's interpretation came to confirm Muslim reformists in their rejection of such practices as belonging to polytheism (*shirk*).

Turning to political history, Ferida Jawad (Groningen/Cairo) drew attention to the lack of progress made since Goldziher endeavoured to explain the *shuʿubiyya* movement in the Abbasid period as a mainly pro-Persian nationalist political party. In Jawad's view, 20th-century scholars have failed to offer satisfactory alternatives, especially due to their use of terms they never properly defined, such as 'social cultural movement' and 'cultural identity' (Gibb), the 'position' of the respective peoples in Islam (R. Mottahedeh), Persian vs. Arab 'race' (D. Agius), and Arab 'nationhood' (B. Lewis).

Rachida Chih (Paris/Cairo), introduced her paper on the 'Nouvelles perspectives de recherche sur le rôle des saints et soufis dans la société égyptienne contemporaine' with a reference to Goldziher's work on Muslim saints. However, she stressed the need to pay more attention to living saints and to emphasize their considerable impact on Egyptian society. Chih illustrated this with an outline of her own research on Sufis of the Khalwatiyya brotherhood, particularly in an Upper Egyptian rural setting, combining textual analysis and historical anthropological fieldwork.

The presentation by Hassan Hanafi (Cairo) was mostly consecrated to an Arabic annotated translation of Goldziher's *Richtungen der islamischen Koranauslegung* by ʿAbd al-Halim al-Naggar, published in 1955. This translation influenced various other Egyptian scholars, such as sheikh al-Dhahabi (assassinated in 1976) and Hassan Hanafi himself. Rather than simply rendering Goldziher's text in Arabic, the translator produced numerous marginal corrections on and additions to such issues as the Judaeo-Christian background of the Qur'an, its codification and punctuation, the alleged incompatibility between legalist Islam and mysticism, and contradictions in al-Ghazali's works.

Two speakers discussed topics more loosely connected to Goldziher's work, which were nonetheless of much relevance to the general theme of the workshop. Iffat Al-Sharqawi (Cairo), in 'Reason and Revelation in the Thought of Fakhr ad-Din al-Razi', analysed al-Razi's ideas on a very central issue in Islamic dogmatics and philosophy, and added comments on their importance for present-day Muslim intellectual challenges. Gino Schallenbergh (Leuven/Cairo) discussed the 'Diseases of the Heart' (*Amrad al-Qalb*) in the works of Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya, who sought to refute what he considered to be excesses in certain Sufi practices and beliefs.

The seminar had the character of a workshop in that ample time was reserved for discussion and exchange of information. More particularly, in a panel discussion chaired by Mustafa Kamel el-Sayyed (Cairo), the participants were asked to reflect upon the progress and prospects of Islamic Studies since Goldziher's days. Some of the issues debated were: the increased application of tools taken from sociology, economics and political science to assess questions about the compatibility of Islam and development or democracy; the concept of 'Islamization of Knowledge', which might be understood as a reaction to what is conceived as the myth of the objectivity of the social sciences; and the problem of interaction between Muslim societies and the scholars who study them. ◆

A slightly more elaborate report on this seminar will be published in the NVIC Newsletter 4 (2000); see also www.leidenuniv.nl/interuniv/nvic

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Art & Culture Agenda

THE NETHERLANDS

Exhibitions

World Art Delft
Rotterdamseweg 205
2629 HD Delft
Tel: + 31 15 285 0114

Recent
- *Arabesk: Contemporary art from Iran, Iraq and 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 1111/ 365 8985

25 November 2000 – 11 March 2001
- *Glass from the Orient Islamic glassware.*

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

Wereldmuseum Rotterdam previously: Rotterdam Museum of Ethnology)
Willemskade 25,
3016 DM Rotterdam
Tel: +31 10 270 71 72
Fax: +31 10 270 71 82
E-mail: mediatheek@wereldmuseum.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 AD. 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 long-standing historical connection.*

Continuing
- *Islamic art from its own collection.*

Galerie A
Oldenzaalsestraat 256
7523 AG Enschede
Tel/Fax: +31 53 341 3788

Continuing
- *Intercultural Art*

Music

RasaNetwerk Non-Western music
Pauwstraat 13a
3512 TG Utrecht
Tel: + 31 30 233 0123
Fax: + 31 30 233 0122
E-mail: rasa@rasa.nl
URL: www.rasa.nl

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

BAHRAIN

Exhibition

Bahrain National Museum
P.O. Box 2199
Manama, Bahrain
Fax: +973 297 871
E-mail: musbah@batelco.com.htm
URL: www.bnmuseum.com/english.htm

8 January 2001 – 10 March 2001
- *Islamic Art and Patronage: Treasures from Kuwait. This travelling exhibition became widely renowned during its inauguration in 1990, the year of the Iraqi aggression toward Kuwait. The DAI's collection left for Saint Petersburg one week before the Iraqi aggression toward Kuwait, and thus these masterpieces serendipitously were exiled in safety during the occupation.*

CANADA

Exhibition

Glenbow Museum
130 - 9th Avenue S.E.
Calgary, Alberta
Canada, T2G 0P3
Tel: +1 403 268 4100
Fax: +1 403 265 9769

2 December 2000 – 11 March 2001
- *Women of the Nile. Explores the essential role of women and their variety of responsibilities in the four primary aspects of Egyptian life: in the home, the temple, the palace and the afterlife.*

FRANCE

Exhibition

Institut du Monde Arabe
1, Rue des Fosses St-Bernard
75236 Paris
Tel: +33 1 4051 3960/3310

28 November 2000 – 15 April 2001
- *Les Andalousies de Damas à Cordoue: This exposition shows Andalusia at its height, Andalusia after the period of the Ottoman emirs who discovered the Iberian Peninsula. It shows the different influences of the Orient on art and society and tries to enlarge the outlook of the visitor who knows Andalusia only from a visit to the Alhambra.*

GERMANY

Exhibitions

Vorderasiatisches Museum Entrée Pergamonmuseum
Museuminsel
Am Kupfergraben, Berlin-Mitte
Tel: +49 30 2090 5401

Expected: 15 May – 30 September 2001
- *Agatha Christie and the Orient. Criminology and Archaeology trace those two strands in the life of the 'Queen of Crime', displaying diaries, 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 2090 5401

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

Museum fur Islamische Fliesen und Keramik
Westerhof-Klinik
Olaf-Gulbranson strasse 19
83684 Tegernsee
Tel: + 49 8022 1810

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

Ifa-Galerie Stuttgart
Charlottenplatz 17
70173 Stuttgart
Tel: +49 711 222 5173
Fax: +49 711 222 5194
URL: www.ifa.de

2 February – 31 March 2001
- *'Mes Arabies'. The photographer Samer Mohdad, born in Lebanon in 1964, has travelled the Middle East searching for traces of past civilisations in the world of today, which has seen the clash of religions, of cultures, demolition and rebuilding for a new future, conservation and adaptation. The exhibition will be at the IFA-Galerie in Bonn from 18 April – 31 May and at the IFA-Galerie Berlin from 15 June – 5 August 2001.*

Exhibitions and contemporary art from the Middle East

IRAN

Islamic Period Museum Tehran

Continuing
- *Continuing exhibition of e.g. Koranic manuscripts, ceramics, metalwork and textiles.*

KUWAIT

Dar al-Athar al-Islamiyyah
Mahboula
Tel: +965 565 3006

Continuing
- *Al-Sabah Collection of Islamic art.*

The Tareq Rajab Museum
Hawelli 32036
Tel: +965 531 7358
Fax: +965 533 9063

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

MALAYSIA

Islamic Art Museum
Pusat Islam Malaysia
Jalan Perdana
50480 Kuala Lumpur
Tel: +60 3 2274 2020

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

RUSSIA

The State Hermitage Museum
St Petersburg
Tel: +812 110 9079/9625
Fax: +812 312 1550
URL: www.hermitage.ru

Continuing
- *Art of the Near East is represented in the Museum by an excellent collection covering the 7th-19th centuries and includes several exquisite masterpieces.*

SINGAPORE

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 writing. In this exhibition the various scripts that developed over the centuries and also calligraphy as a decorative motif on various media like ceramics and metalwork are displayed.*

SWITZERLAND

Antikenmuseum Basel und Sammlung Ludwig
St Albangraben 5
4010 Basel
Tel: +41 61 271 2202
Fax: +41 61 272 1861

29 October 2000 – 1 April 2001
- *Agatha Christie and the East*

TURKEY

The Museum of Turkish and Islamic Art Istanbul

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

UNITED KINGDOM

British Museum and Museum of Mankind
Great Russelstreet
London WCIB 3DG
Tel: +44 17 412 7111
Fax: +44 17 1323 8614/8480

4 May – 2 September 2001
- *The Jewelled Arts from India in the Age of the Mughals. The exhibition will display some 300 pieces of Indian jewellery. The famous Ruby Dagger will be shown.*

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 8500
URL: www.vam.ac.uk

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

Egee Art Gallery
9 Chelsea manor studios
Flood Street
London SW3 5SR
Tel: +44 171 351 6818
Fax: +44 171 376 8510
URL: www.egeeart.com

Continuing
- *Arabic Calligraphy 2000 - The Saudi Show. Presents a breathtakingly beautiful and diverse collection of calligraphy.*

Contemporary and antique Middle Eastern art

UNITED STATES

Metropolitan Museum of Art
1000 Fifth Avenue at 82nd Street
New York 10028
Tel: +1 212 535 7710

19 January – 22 April 2001
- *Sultan 'Ali of Mashhad, Master of Nasta'liq: This exhibition will examine the elegant calligraphy of the acknowledged master of nasta'liq—the writing style likened to flying geese that was favoured in 15th and 16th-century Iran for poetical texts—and two of his famous pupils. Some twenty examples of manuscripts and specimen pages, many enlivened with brilliant illumination, will be drawn from the Museum's holdings, supplemented by a few works from outside collections.*

Harvard University Art Museums
Arthur M. Sackler Gallery
Cambridge, Massachusetts
Tel. + 1 617 495 9400
Url: www.artmuseums.harvard.edu

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 master Mir Sayyid-'Ali's Night-time 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.*

Kelsey Museum of Archaeology
University of Michigan
434 South State Street
Ann Arbor, MI 48109
Tel: +1 734 764 9304
Fax: +1 734 763 8976

Continuing
- *Early Islamic Inscribed Textiles. In a variety of materials, weaves, embroideries and ornamental schemes, these textiles from the early Islamic world were most frequently used for clothing. They also displayed a wealth of information, keenly sought after and widely imitated.*

Kirkpatrick Library
Central Missouri State University
Warrensburg

18 October 2000 – 15 December 2001
- *Saudi Costume and Jewelry from the Nance Collection: displays more than 100 items of traditional clothing and mostly Bedouin jewellery.*

The Arthur M. Sackler Gallery and Freer Gallery of Art
Smithsonian Institution
Washington, D.C. 20560.
Tel: +1 202 357 4880

29 October 2000 – 22 April 2001
- *Asian Traditions in Clay: the Hauge Gifts presents 81 vessels from three important ceramic traditions. On display are examples of ancient Iranian painted or burnished earthenware, low-temperature-glazed earthenware works from Islamic Iran and Iraq and Khmer stoneware vessels.*

3 December 2000 – 25 March 2001
- *India through the Lens: Photography 1840-1911 emphasizes the aesthetic qualities, as well as the social and historical importance of 135 photographs taken in the Indian subcontinent. The exhibition shows the appeal of the panoramic photograph, the British passion for documenting architecture and ethnography as well as the aftermath of the Indian Mutiny of 1857. 'Picturesque' views of the Indian landscape lead into sections devoted to the maharajas of princely India and the ceremonial durbars of British imperial India.*

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

3 May 1998 (ongoing)
- *Arts of the Islamic World. Some 60 works – Koran pages, metalwork, ceramics, glass, paintings, and calligraphy– from the 9th-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
- *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 A.D. 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.*

UNITED NATIONS

Magazines

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

PHOTO: JOHAN DENTERS

The director of the Dutch settlement of the VOC arrives in Surat.

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 and Art,
P.O. Box 361,
3000 AJ Rotterdam,
TheNetherlands
Fax: +31 10 270 7182
E-mail: sikc@wereldmuseum.rotterdam.nl

Academic Meetings

Recent Conferences and Public Lectures

The Monetary and Financial System of an Islamic Economy
Date: 6 October 2000
Venue: UCLA, Center for Near Eastern Studies
10286 Bunche Hall
P.O. Box 951480
Los Angeles, CA 90095-1480
USA
Tel: +1 310 825 1181
Fax: +1 310 206 2406

The Ethnography of Education in the Arab World
Date: 19 October 2000
Venue: Center for Contemporary Arab Studies
Georgetown University
Washington
USA
Contact: Anne-Marie Chaaraoui
Tel: +1 202 687 6215
Fax: +1 202 687 7001
E-mail: chaaraoa@georgetown.edu

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, the International Institute of Islamic Thought
Contact: Muzaffar Iqbal
Tel: +1 780 922 0927
Fax: +1 780 922 0926
E-mail: muzaffar@cis-ca.org

Locating Feminism: The Collapse of Secular and Islamic Discourse
Date: 13 November 2000
Venue: Villanova University
Philadelphia
USA
Guest speaker: Margot Badran (Georgetown University)
Sponsored by: The Core Humanities Program, the Center for Arab and Islamic Studies, the Center for Peace and Justice, the History Department, the Women's Studies Program, the Islamic Law Forum

34th Middle East Studies Association Meeting (MESA): Representations of the Middle East
Date: 16-19 November 2000
Venue: Orlando
Information: Middle East Studies Association of North America
University of Arizona
1643 East Helen Street
Tucson, Arizona 85721
USA
Tel: +1 520 621 5850
Fax: +1 520 626 9095
E-mail: mesana@u.arizona.edu
URL: www.mesa.arizona.edu

A Critique of the Mosque Institution in Malaysia
Date: 20 November 2000
Venue: Massachusetts Institute of Technology
USA
Sponsored by: The Aga Khan Programme for Architecture
Tel: +1 617 253 1400
E-mail: akpiarch@mit.edu

The Merriam Symposium: Can The World Cope? The Challenge of Ethnopolitical Conflict
Date: 29 November 2000
Venue: Penn, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia
USA
Contact: Carrie Savarkos
Tel: +1 215 898 5262
E-mail: cstavrak@sas.upenn.edu

The United States and the Middle East: A Cultural Encounter
Date: 8-9 December 2000
Venue: New Haven, Connecticut, USA
Sponsored by: Yale Center for International and Area Studies, Hofstra University
Contact: Magnus Bernhardsson
Tel: +1 516 463 5607
E-mail: Hismzb@Hofstra.edu

The Mediterranean Idea
Date: 27-31 January 2001
Venue: Tel Aviv
Contact: Dan Laor Dean of the Faculty of Humanities
Tel Aviv University, Ramat Aviv
Tel Aviv 69978, Israel
Tel: +972 364 0811
Fax: +972 364 07174
E-mail: mediter@post.tau.ac.il

Islamic Studies After Orientalism
Date: 5 February 2001
Venue: UCLA, Center for Near Eastern Studies
10383 Bunche Hall
P.O. Box 951480, Los Angeles, CA 90095-1480, USA
Guest speaker: Vincent Cornell (University of Arkansas)
Tel: +1 310 825 1181
Fax: +1 310 206 2406

Domestic Service and Mobility: Labour, Livelihoods and Lifestyles
Date: 5-7 February 2001
Venue: International Institute of Social History
Cruquisweg 31
1019 AT Amsterdam
The Netherlands
Contact: Annelies Moors
E-mail: moors@pscw.uva.nl

The Texas Association of Middle East Scholars (TAMES): 2001 Annual Meeting
Date: 23-24 February 2001
Venue: University of Texas
Information: Christopher Rose
TAMES General Secretary
Center for Middle Eastern Studies
University of Texas at Austin
Austin, TX 78712-1193, USA
Tel: +1 512 471 3881
Fax: +1 512 471 7834

Interactions: Regional Studies, Global Processes, and Historical Analysis
Date: 1-3 March 2001
Venue: Washington DC
Organized by: American Historical Association, the World History Association, the Middle East Studies Association, the African Studies Association, the Latin American Studies Association, the Conference on Latin American History, the Association for Asian Studies, the Community College Humanities Association, the Library of Congress
Contact: Debbie Doyle
American Historical Association
400 A Street, SE Washington DC 20003-3889, USA
Tel: +1 202 544 88307, +1 202 544 88132
Fax: +1 202 544 8307
E-mail: ddoyle@theaha.org

Rediscovering Religious Identities: Christianity and Islam in Modern Eurasia
Date: 9-10 March 2001
Venue: Phoenix
Sponsored by: Arizona State University Graduate College, The Historical Society, Arizona State University Departments of History and Religious Studies, the Russian and East European Studies Consortium
Contact: Carol Withers
Russian and East European Studies Consortium
Arizona State University, SS 206, P.O. Box 872601
Tempe AZ 85287-2601, USA
Tel: +1 480 965 4188
Fax: +1 480 965 0310
E-mail: carol.withers@asu.edu

Upcoming Conferences, Lecture Series and Public Events

Considering Consumption, Production and the Market in the Constitution of Meaning in the Middle East and Beyond
Date: March-June 2001
Venue: Ben-Gurion University, Beer-Sheva
Contact: Relli Shechter
Department of Middle East Studies
Ben-Gurion University
Beer-Sheva, 84105, Israel
Tel: +972 7 647 7763
Fax: +972 7 647 2952
E-mail: rellish@bgumail.bgu.ac.il

25th Annual Symposium: Arab Legal Systems in Transition
Date: 5-6 April 2001
Venue: Washington DC
Sponsored by: The Center for Contemporary Arab Studies at Georgetown University
Contact: Anne-Marie Chaaraoui
Symposium Manager
Georgetown University
Center for Contemporary Arab Studies, ICC 241
Washington DC 20057-1020
USA
Tel: +1 202 687 5793
Fax: +1 202 687 7001
E-mail: ccasinfo@gunet. georgetown.edu
URL: www.ccasonline.org

Orientalism Reconsidered: Emerging Perspectives in Contemporary Arab & Islamic Studies
Date: 18-19 April 2001
Venue: Institute of Arab and Islamic Studies, University of Exeter
Information: Nadje Al-Ali
Institue of Arab and Islamic Studies,
University of Exeter
Old Library, Prince Wales Road
Exeter EX4 4JZ, UK
Tel: +44 13 92 264 026
Fax: +44 13 92 264 025
E-mail: N.S.Al-Ali@exeter.ac.uk

Islam in Africa: A Global, Cultural and Historical Perspective
Date: 19-22 April 2001
Venue: Binghamton
Contact: Michael Toler or Tracia Leacock
The Institute of Global Cultural Studies
Binghamton University
P.O. Box 6000, LNG-100
Binghamton NY 13905, USA
Tel: +1 607 777 4494
Fax: +1 607 777 2642
E-mail: igcs@binghamton.edu

Religion and the State in the Arab World: Conflict or Accomodation?
Date: 28-30 April 2001
Venue: Cairo
Sponsored by: The Egyptian Historical Society and the Higher Council for Culture in Cairo
Information: Egyptian Historical Society
2 Sekket Nasir al-Din
Sh. Bustan, Cairo, Egypt, or
Assem Desouki and Raouf Abbas
E-mail: lollafarida@yahoo.com, raouf@collegemail.com

Bringing the Middle East Back In...To the Study of Political and Economic Reform
Date: 4-5 May 2001
Venue: Watson Institute for International Studies
Brown University
Providence, Rhode Island
USA
Contact: Jean Lawlor
Tel: +1 401 863 1035
E-mail: Jean_Lawlor@brown.edu

Evolving Identities Turks, Kurds, Arabs and Armenians
Date: 5 May 2001
Venue: Breasted Hall, Oriental Hall
Information: Center for Middle Eastern Studies
The University of Chicago
Albert Pick Hall for International Studies 201
5828 S. University Avenue
Chicago 60637, USA
Tel: +1 773 702 8297
Fax: +1 773 702 2587
E-mail: cmes@uchicago.edu
URL: http://www.cmes.uchicago.edu

The Economics of Health, Environment, and Welfare in the Middle East and North Africa
Date: 17-19 May 2001
Venue: Byblos, Lebanon
Information: Salpie Djoundourian
Conference Chair
Lebanese American University
School of Business
475 Riverside Drive
Room 1845
New York NY 100115, USA
E-mail: confhew@lau.edu.lb
URL: www.lau.edu.lb

Islamic Space and Travel in the Era of Transnationalism: Reflections on Sainthood and Sacred Centres
Date: 18 May 2001
Venue: Research School CNWS, Leiden
Contact: E. van Hoven
Research School CNWS
P.O. Box 9515, 2300 RA Leiden
The Netherlands
E-mail: E.van.Hoven@let. leidenuniv.nl

Muslim Missionaries and States in West Africa and its Diaspora
Date: 1 June 2001
Venue: Research School CNWS, Leiden
Guest speaker: Ousmane Kane (Yale University, New Haven)
Contact: E. van Hoven
Research School CNWS
P.O. Box 9515, 2300 RA Leiden
The Netherlands
E-mail: E.van.Hoven@let. leidenuniv.nl

Primary Solidarities and Middle East Elite Groups
Date: 11-13 June 2001
Venue: University of Haifa
Sponsored by: The Jewish Arab Center and the Gustav Heinemann Institute of Middle Eastern Studies
Contact: Amatzia Baram
Head of the Jewish Aran Center
Haifa University, Israel
E-mail: fjar401@uvm.haifa.ac.il

1st International Conference on Heritage of Islamic Thought and Sciences
Date: 1-4 July 2001
Sponsored by: Islamic Heritage Foundation, Ameer Khusro Society of America (AKSA)
Information: Abdollah Kashani
1949 Governors Lane
Hoffman Estates, Illinois 60195
USA
Tel: +1 874 885 4851

Association Française pour l'étude du Monde Arabe et Musulman (AFEMAM): 15e congrès 2001
Date: 5-7 July 2001
Venue: Strasbourg
Information: AFEMAM
c/o URBAMA
BP 7521, 23, rue de la Loire
F-37075 Tours Cedex 02
France
Tel: +33 2 473 684 61
Fax: +33 2 473 684 71
E-mail: gallet@droit.univ-tours.fr

Third Annual Mediterranean Programme Summer School: 'Building Interdisciplinarity in the Study of the Middle East'
Date: 9-19 July 2001
Venue: European University Institute, Florence
Contact: Ann-Charlotte Svantesson
Mediterranean Programme/Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies
European University Institute
Via dei Roccettini 9
50016 San Domenico di Fiesole (FI), Italy
Tel.: +39 55 468 5785
Fax: +39 55 468 5770
E-mail: med.summer.school@iue.it
URL: www.iue.it/RSC/MED/ Med-summer2001.htm

Annual Conference of the British Society for Middle Eastern Studies (BRISMES)
Date: 15-18 July 2001
Venue: University of Edinburgh
Information: BRISMES 2000
Centre for Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies
University of Cambridge
Faculty of Oriental Studies
Sidgwick Avenue
Cambridge CB3 9DA, UK
Tel: +44 12 23 335 103
E-mail: oriental-mes-admin@lists.cam.ac.uk

Conceptualizing Political Succession in the Middle East
Date: 27 August – 3 September 2001
Venue: San Francisco
Hosted by: The annual American Political Science Association Conference, the Conference Group on the Middle East (CGME)
Fax: +1 410 455 1021
E-mail: cantori@umbc.edu

DAVO 2001: Eighth Congress for Contemporary research on the Middle East
Date: 6-8 September 2001
Venue: Göttingen
Information: DAVO Congress 2001
Prof. Martin Tamcke
Universität Göttingen, Theologium
Platz der Göttinger Sieber 3
D-37039 Göttingen, Germany
Tel: +49 551 339 588
Fax: +49 551 397 488
E-mail: mtamcke@gwdg.de
URL: www.geo.uni-mainz.de/ davo

Fifth Nordic Congress of Middle Eastern Studies: The Middle East: Interpreting the Past
Date: 25-28 October 2001
Venue: Lund
Information: Nordic Society for Middle Eastern Studies
Centre for Middle Eastern Studies, University of Bergen
N-5020 Bergen, Norway
Fax: +47 555 898 91
E-mail: knut.vikor@smi.uib.no
URL: www.hf.uib.no/smi/nsm/ nordconf.html
www.hist.lu.se/hist/middleeast/ middle_east.htm

Conservation and Regeneration of Traditional Urban Centers in the Middle East 'Learning from Regional Experiences & Building Partnerships'
Date: 24-30 November 2001
Venue: Amman
Sponsored by: Jordan University of Science and Technology (JUST), The Council for British Research in the Levant (CBRL), Darat al Funun of The Abdul Hamid Shoman Foundation
Information: Rami Farouk Daher,P.O. Box 402
Amman 11118, Jordan
E-mail: radaher5@just.edu.jo; turath@joinnet.com.jo

Anthropology in the Middle East: Gendered Perspectives
Date: 30 November – 2 December 2001
Venue: Berlin
Contact: Anja Peleikis
Centre for Modern Oriental Studies, Kirchweg 33
14129 Berlin, Germany
Tel: +49 30 803 070, +49 30 803 072 31
Fax: +49 30 803 072 10
E-mail: anja.peleikis@rz.hu-berlin.de

First World Congress for Middle Eastern Studies
Date: 11-14 September 2002
Venue: Centre for Research on the Arab World (CERAW)
Information: Prof. Guenter Meyer
Centre for Research on the Arab World (CERAW)
Institute of Geography
University of Mainz
55099 Mainz, Germany
Tel: +49 61 31 392 2701
Fax: +49 61 31 392 4736
E-mail: davo@geo.uni-mainz.de
URL: http://www.geo.uni-mainz.de/davo

Traditions of Learning and Networks of Knowledge The Indian Ocean: Transregional creation of societies and cultures
Date: 29-30 September 2001
Venue: Oxford
Information: Gina Burrows
Institute of Social and Cultural Anthropology (ISCA)
University of Oxford, UK
Tel: +44 1865 274 687
Fax: +44 1865 274 630
E-mail: gina.burrows@anthro. ox.ac.uk

Third Mediterranean Social and Political Research Meeting
Date: 24-25 March 2002
Venue: Florence
Italy
Fax: +39 055 468 5770
E-mail: medmeet@iue.it
URL: www.iue.it/RSC/MED/ meeting2002-callWS.htm

In order for the ISIM Info Pages to prosper, we kindly ask for your participation by filling out the forms for Vacancy Announcements and Special Events. These forms can be found online on the ISIM website: http://isim.leidenuniv.nl
If you wish to have a formula sent by e-mail, fax, or post, please contact the ISIM Secretariat:
Tel: +31 71 5277905
Fax: +31 71 5277906
E-mail: ISIM@rullet.leidenuniv.nl

Contents

international institute
ISIM
for the study of islam in the modern world

The International Institute for the Study of Islam in the Modern World (ISIM) promotes and conducts interdisciplinary research on contemporary social and intellectual trends and movements in Muslim societies and communities. The ISIM's research approaches are expressly interdisciplinary and comparative, covering a large geographic range which includes North Africa and the Middle East, Sub-Saharan Africa, Central Asia, South and Southeast Asia, and (Muslim communities in) the West. Broad in its scope, the ISIM brings together all areas of expertise.

ISIM Events

ISIM Visiting Fellow: Rehana Ghadially
Date: March – June 2001

ISIM Post-Doctoral Fellow: Karin van Nieuwkerk
Date: May 2001 – March 2003

ISIM Post-Doctoral Fellow: Matthijs van den Bos
Date: March 2001 – March 2003

ISIM PhD Students: Joseph Alagha, Egbert Harmsen and Mareike Winkelmann
Date: March 2001 – March 2005

Workshop on 'Family, State and Civil Society in Islamic Communities: and Sociological Perspectives'
Date: 21-25 March 2001
Organized by: ISIM and AKMI (Arbeitskreis Moderne und Islam in Berlin)
Venue: Florence, Italy

Guest Lecture by Ishtiyaq Ahmad Zilli (Aligarh Muslim University, India)
Date: 26 March 2001

Guest Lecture by Maribel Fierro (Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas (CSIC), Spain)
Date: 3 April 2001
Venue: Leiden

Workshop Africa and Islam
Date: 18 -21 April 2001
Venue: Leiden

ISIM Visiting Fellow: Farish Noor
Date: 1 June – 15 August 2001

For more information on these and other ISIM Events:
ISIM Secretariat
Tel: +31 71 527 79 05
Fax: +31 71 527 79 06
E-mail: isim@rullet.leidenuniv.nl
URL: www.isim.nl