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ISIM Review 21, Spring 2008

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Citation

ISIM,. (2008). ISIM Review 21, Spring 2008. Retrieved from <https://hdl.handle.net/1887/13326>

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ISIM REVIEW

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Foreign labourers
in Dubai, 2004

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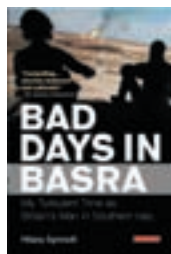
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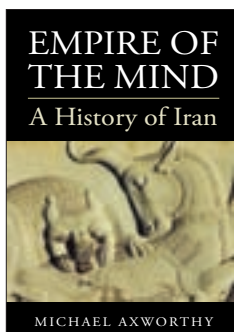
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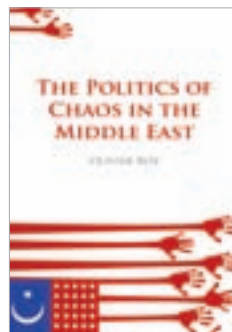
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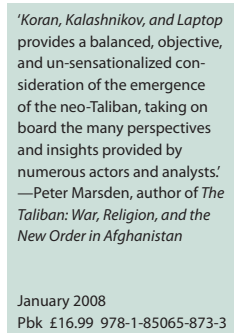
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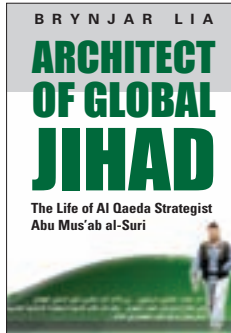
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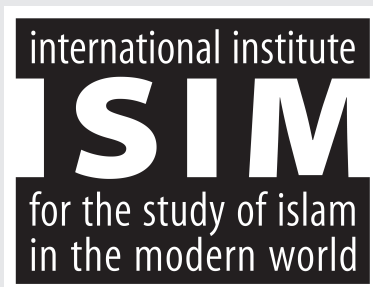
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Spring 2008
60 Pages
ISSN 1 871-4374

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De Kreeft, Amsterdam

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Dijkman Offset, Diemen

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ISIM Review 22
Deadline for Articles
1 July 2008
Publication Date
Autumn 2008

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

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

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ISIM

ANNEMARIKE STREMMELAAR

Day by day Moroccan men and women cross the border to Ceuta, a city on Spanish territory, from which they bring back merchandise to sell at home (see back cover). Such images of border crossing reflect only one small instance of a ceaseless process, a massive movement of people traversing borders for the sake of trade, employment, education, or marriage. Notwithstanding governments' increasing restriction on migration, the fact remains that such migrants have been the foundation of much economic gain, from the United Arab Emirates to Europe.

Whereas the presence of foreigners is creating anxieties in many parts of the world, in Europe the focus is mainly on their Muslim populations. Here, the "problem" is not migration per se, but is especially Islam which is believed to prevent Muslims from integrating fully into European societies. Images of Islam as a religion aspiring to world domination reflect the fear of Western citizens who are increasingly concerned about the presence of Muslim migrants in their midst. Thus, Muslim communities may, for example, experience great difficulties in finding spaces for worship (Kuppinger, p. 48).

Muslim migrants and minorities in Europe are expected to adjust themselves to the majority culture and prove that they are worthy citizens. Imams are to instill in them liberal and democratic values and promote their integration into the host society (Boender, p. 22), while mosque designs are to demonstrate their willingness to adapt to the surrounding communities (Roose, p. 50). Behind these concerns lies the implicit fear that Muslims may adhere to beliefs and views that subvert their integration into society or that may even undermine its core values.

The anxiety over a Muslim threat stands in sharp contrast with the reality of the life most Muslim immigrants experience in Europe. Like other migrant groups, they are struggling to survive and strive to turn their adopted environs into places where they feel at home. In trying to cope with the unknown, different people develop different strategies which have often been shaped both by their personal histories and the societies they inhabit. Thus, Sudanese migrants trying to avoid the "stigma" of being seen as 'black' emphasize different aspects of their identity according to their place of habitat, whether Egypt

or the UK (Fabos, p. 24). Such changes in self-definition are not predictable, as the Moussaoui family illustrates—despite a shared history, one family member turned to Salafism while the others made different choices (Donahue, p.18). Dominant views of migrants and Muslims also have an impact on how they adapt. Salafi beliefs hold an attraction for young Muslims living in Europe as they offer ways of overcoming feelings of exclusion. After all, a major Salafi ideologue, Al-Albani, was himself a migrant in Saudi Arabia, which might well have contributed to his popularity among Salafi youth who feel equally marginalized (Lacroix, p. 6).

Not everyone stays on. Some migrants may eventually undertake a journey back home, where the demands of integration seem less daunting. Indeed, some Arab families living in Germany, who find their way of life at odds with their environment and the authorities, opt for remigration, settling not necessarily in their country of origin, but in those which offer better economic prospects and more suitable cultural setting (e.g. the United Arab Emirates (Al-Hamarneh, p. 26)). Some Salafi youth in France also think of adopting a new home to suit their convictions (Adraoui, p. 12). Yet people opting for remigration represent a very small, though possibly growing, number. The overwhelming majority wish nothing less than to be part of their adopted societies.

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The International Institute for the Study of Islam in the Modern World (ISIM) develops, supervises, and engages in innovative, high quality research on social, political, cultural, and intellectual trends and movements in contemporary Muslim communities and societies. Its research and research network comprise ISIM's societal capital: ISIM provides insights gained in its research programmes to the benefit of society at large.

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Feeling at Home on the Margin

In the current debate on migration to Europe, a central concern has emerged over the “marginality” of Muslim communities, in other words, their seeming failure to “integrate” into the mainstream life world. Migrants congregating in mosques or Muslim community centres, attending Islamic schools, wearing headscarves and exotic “traditional” clothes, and turning to non-European television programmes are seen as an anomaly in the social body of European societies. Underlying this anxiety is the implicit assumption that Muslim peoples have an exceptionally primordial attachment to “tradition”—some immutable “Islamic ways of life”—that is incompatible with modern European values and which stands in the way of their integration.

ASEF BAYAT

If by “integration” is implied the expectation that minorities should become just like the majority, that they should assimilate, this can neither be realistic nor just. But if “integration” means, as I take it to mean, a two-way process of give and take between different cultural collectives, then any real integration would involve movement from both minority and mainstream communities. The minorities are expected to interact with the mainstream, and engage in the economy, civil society, and the state institutions while the mainstream is expected to facilitate such exchange and engagement, recognizing “minorities” as a part of the national citizenry.

Given this perception, how much can the claims of “Muslim non-integration” be justified? I like to suggest that “integration” is not simply a voluntary “matter of will” process where individuals “choose” or “refuse” to integrate; nor are “cultural groups” uniform collectives whose members supposedly hold the same aspirations, orientations, and capacities. Rather “minority groups,” whether Muslim or non-Muslim, each possess differential capacities for mixing and exchanging with the mainstream; they hold varied resources to cope with the exigencies of integration. While segments of the European Muslims have indeed succeeded in this path, others are in the throes of a protracted struggle.

Recent studies confirm that the Muslim minority in Europe represents a mixed entity differentiated by ethnicity, class, educational background, and religious inclinations. In terms of integration, at least three patterns can be roughly observed.¹ First, “secular Muslims” who seem to be fully integrated as they try to reach out to the majority culture, economy, and social interaction, even though they are occasionally frustrated by incidents where many natives refuse to recognize them as “Europeans.” Indeed there are some 2,000-3,000 influential Muslims leaders who are active in politics, media, business, religious and civil society organizations, and who represent the core of an expanding Muslim professional class whose participation in the political process, as a new interest group, may affect the European politics. These Muslims embrace liberal democracy, resent religious radicals, respect human rights as a God-given gift, and wish to build a “European Islam.” Possessing the necessary resources—higher education, respectable jobs, information, and relevant knowledge—the group is enabled to handle and live a European life. They enjoy and take advantage of what their adopted societies offer and know how to manoeuvre within them.

The second strain within the Muslim minority consists of very small numbers of young radicalized groups, about which we know very little for certain. Roughly, they tend to be mainly second or third generation Muslims, well versed in the local

vernaculars, and linked to transnational networks. Yet detached from the governing values of ancestry, but engulfed by the multiplicity of lifestyles and flow of information, the truth of which they can seldom ascertain, these youngsters tend to resort to an imagined “authentic” reference—a trans-local, global, and abstract Islam stripped of cultural influences, one that can serve as vehicle for resentment and dissent.

And then there is a significant third group of Muslims which includes largely the first generation immigrants who while struggling to speak the European languages, striving to hold regular jobs, and establishing the props of a normal life are still oriented to practicing many aspects of their home culture—food, fashion, rituals, or private religious practices. Most of them struggle to survive and to live in peace and with dignity, invest in their children to get by in the societal settings they often find too complex to operate. So they tend to restore and revert to their immediate circles, the language and religious groups, informal economic networks, and communities of friends and status groups built in the neighbourhoods or prayer halls. They feel at home on the margin of the mainstream.

As such, this “feeling at home on the margin” is hardly a thing of Islam, nor a sign of resentment against the mainstream, or a primordial desire for “tradition.” Rather, it represents a familiar trend—a typical coping strategy that lower-class immigrants often pursue when they encounter complex foreign life-worlds. It reflects the paradoxical reality of peripheral communalism that enables the members to get around the costs, to endure the hardship, and to negotiate with the mainstream in an attempt to be part of it. Because to immerse fully in the mainstream requires certain material, cultural, and knowledge capabilities that most plebeian migrants, Muslim or non-Muslim, do not possess, which in turn compels them to seek alternative venues. Thus, being part of an organized economy demands regular payment of various dues and taxes; if you cannot afford them, then you go informal. When a migrant cannot afford to pay for the cost of fixing his kitchen through regular firms, then he or she will look for, or generate, a network of friends, relatives, and locals to mobilize support. If he cannot afford to shop in the mainstream modern supermarkets, or to borrow money from regular banks (because he does not have the credit and credentials), then he resorts to ethnic street bazaars to get his/her affordable supplies, and to informal credit associations to secure loans. When he lacks the necessary information and skill to function within the modern bureaucratic organizations—which do not accommodate flexibility, negotiation, and interpersonal relations—he relies on the locals with whom he establishes flexible transactions based upon mutual trust and reciprocity. If people cannot operate within the cultural settings that are perceived to be inhospitable, too formal and strict, then they are likely to get involved with the ones that allow them to fit.²

An unintended consequence of these economic and cultural processes is the likely revitalization of “negative integration,” in parallel and peripheral communities, where ethnic networks or religious rituals are revived and reinforced to serve as structures of support and survival. It is no surprise that “ghettoization” is especially more pronounced among lower-class British Muslims where unemployment remains three times higher than among other minority groups. This process of “feeling at home on the margin” represents a way of coping with the imperatives of modernity embodied in the bureaucratic arrangement, the discipline of time, space, fixed and formal contract, and the like. As such this process is not specific to Muslims, but includes all comparable migrant communities. Nor is it limited to international migration. Rural migrants in Cairo, Tehran, Istanbul, or Casablanca undergo more or less similar experiences (and receive similar levels of hostility from their national elites) as many residents with Turkish or Moroccan origin in Germany or in the Netherlands. However, the hostile sentiments of the mainstream political and intellectual circles in Europe serve as an additional factor to push such Muslim minorities to seek sanctuary within themselves to build a life-sphere on the margin which they can call home. Otherwise, they yearn for an integrated status of relief and recognition, while they strive to manage and minimize its detriments. “Feeling at home on the margin” is not necessarily the antipode of integration, but can instead serve as an antidote.

Notes

1. Jocelyne Cesari, *When Islam and Democracy Meet: Muslims in Europe and the United States* (New York: Palgrave, 2006); Jytte Klausen, *When The Islamic Challenge: Politics and Religion in Western Europe* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005).
2. A. Bayat, “When Muslims and Modernity Meet”, *Contemporary Sociology*, vol. 36, no. 6 (November 2007): 507-511.

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

Al-Albani's Revolutionary Approach to Hadith

STÉPHANE LACROIX

Portrait of Al-Albani from Ibrahim Muhammad al-'Ali, Muhammad Nasir al-Din al-Albani, Damascus: Dar al-qa', 2001.

When on the first of October 1999, Shaykh Muhammad Nasir al-Din al-Albani passed away at the age of 85, he was mourned by virtually everyone in the world of Salafi Islam. To many, he represented its third main contemporary reference, after 'Abd al-'Aziz bin Baz (who himself had died a few months before) and Muhammad bin 'Uthaymin (who would pass away in January 2001), both leading figures of the Saudi religious establishment. Salafi newspapers, journals, and websites celebrated this Syrian son of an Albanian clock-maker—whose family left Albania in 1923, when he was nine years old, and re-established itself in Da-

In spite of his undistinguished social background al-Albani became known as the greatest hadith scholar of his generation. His reliance on hadith as the central pillar of law at the expense of the schools of jurisprudence caused him to take up controversial positions. This brought him into conflict with the Saudi religious establishment but also made him popular in Salafi circles.

mascus—who had become known as the *muhaddith al-'asr* (traditionist of the era), that is, the greatest hadith scholar of his generation.

How did al-Albani, with his undistinguished social and ethnic origins, come to occupy such a prestigious position in a field long monopolized by a religious elite from the Saudi region of Najd? The answer, as we shall

see through the example of al-Albani himself and some of his disciples, lies in his revolutionary approach to hadith.

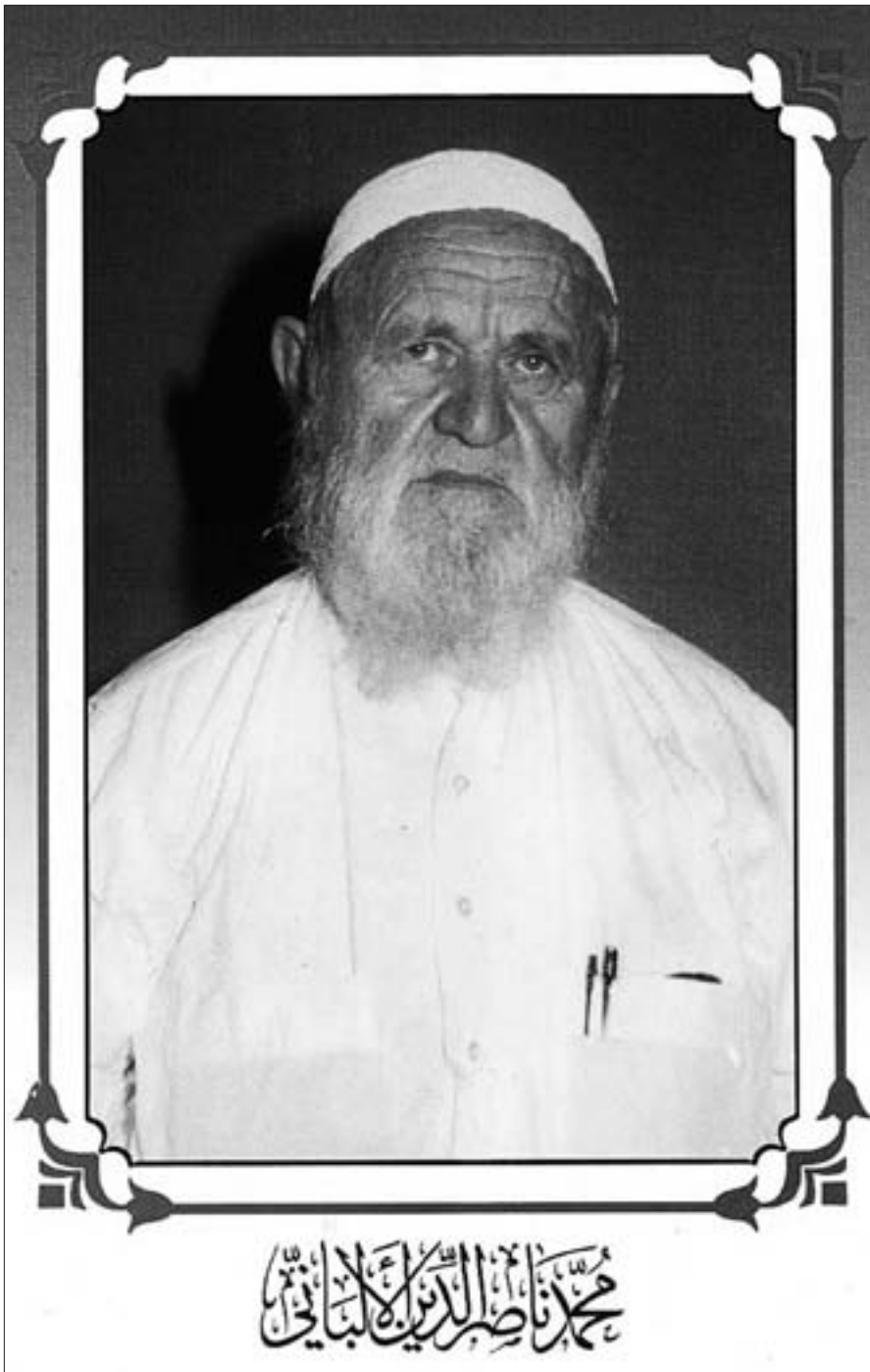
The Wahhabi paradox

Common knowledge considers Shaykh Nasir al-Din al-Albani to be a staunch proponent of Wahhabism, the discourse produced and upheld by the official Saudi religious establishment.¹ This is undoubtedly true in terms of *'aqidah* (creed), yet al-Albani strongly disagrees with the Wahhabis—and especially with their chief representatives, the ulama of the Saudi religious establishment—when it comes to *fiqh* (law). There, al-Albani points to a fundamental contradiction within the Wahhabi tradition: the latter's proponents have advocated exclusive reliance on the Quran, the Sunna, and the consensus of *al-salaf al-salih* (the pious ancestors), yet they have almost exclusively relied on Hanbali jurisprudence for their fatwas—acting therefore as proponents of a particular school of jurisprudence, namely Hanbalism. According to al-Albani, this also applies to Muhammad bin 'Abd al-Wahhab whom he describes as “salafi in creed, but not in *fiqh*.”

For al-Albani, moreover, being a proper “salafi in *fiqh*” implies making hadith the central pillar of the juridical process, for hadith alone may provide answers to matters not found in the Quran without relying on the school of jurisprudence. The mother of all religious sciences therefore becomes the “science of hadith,” which aims at re-evaluating the authenticity of known hadiths. According to al-Albani, however, independent reasoning must be excluded from the process: the critique of the *matn* (the content of the hadith) should be exclusively formal, i.e. grammatical or linguistic; only the *sanad* (the hadith's chain of transmitters) may be properly put into question. As a consequence, the central focus of the science of hadith becomes *'ilm al-rijal* (the science of men), also known as *'ilm al-jarh wa-l-ta'dil* (the science of critique and fair evaluation), which evaluates the morality—deemed equivalent to the reliability—of the transmitters. At the same time—and contrary to earlier practices—al-Albani insists that the scope of this re-evaluation must encompass all existing hadiths, even those included in the canonical collections of Bukhari and Muslim, some of which al-Albani went so far as to declare weak.²

Revolutionary interpretations

As a consequence of the peculiarity of his method, al-Albani ended up pronouncing fatwas that ran counter to the wider Islamic consensus, and more specifically to Hanbali/Wahhabi jurisprudence. For instance, he wrote a book in which he redefined the proper gestures and formulae that constitute the Muslim prayer ritual “according to the Prophet's practice”—and contrary to the prescriptions of all established schools of jurisprudence. Also, he stated that *mihirabs*—the niche found in a mosque indicating the direction of Mecca—were *bid'a* (an innovation) and declared licit to pray in a mosque with one's shoes. Another controversial position was his call for Palestinians to leave the occupied territories since, he claimed, they were unable to practice their faith there as they should—something which is much more important than a piece of land. Finally, al-Albani took a strong stance against indulging in politics, repeating that “the good policy is to abandon politics”—a



phrase implicitly aimed at the Muslim Brotherhood, whose political views he consistently denounced.

The presence of al-Albani in Saudi Arabia—where he was invited in 1961 by his good friend Shaykh 'Abd al-'Aziz bin Baz to teach at the Islamic University of Medina—prompted embarrassed reactions from the core of the Wahhabi establishment, who disagreed with him but could hardly attack him because of his impeccable Wahhabi credentials in terms of creed. The controversy sparked by his book *The Veil of the Muslim Woman*, in which he argued that Muslim women should not cover their face—a position unacceptable by Saudi standards—, finally gave the Wahhabi establishment the justification needed to get him out of the Kingdom in 1963. He then re-established himself in his country of birth, Syria, before leaving for Jordan in 1979.³

However, the opposition al-Albani encountered from the Wahhabi religious establishment was not merely intellectual. By putting into question the methodological foundations upon which the Wahhabis had built their legitimacy, he was also challenging their position in the Saudi religious field.

From its inception, Wahhabism had established itself as a religious tradition—at the core of which laid a number of key books, both in creed and law. This tradition had been monopolized by a small religious aristocracy from Najd, first centred around Muhammad bin 'Abd al-Wahhab and his descendants (known as the Al al-Shaykh) before opening up to a small number of other families. In the Saudi system as it took shape, the members of this aristocracy would become the only legitimate transmitters of the Wahhabi tradition; in this context, independent scholars were excluded because they had not received “proper ‘ilm” from “qualified” ulama.

Traditional Wahhabi ‘ilm, therefore, was the fruit of a process of transmission and depended on the number of *ijazas*—a certificate by which a scholar acknowledges the transmission of his knowledge (or part of it) to one of his pupils, and authorizes him to transmit it further—given by respected Wahhabi scholars. This is the very logic al-Albani—who, himself, owned very few of these certificates—would challenge by promoting his critical approach. As a matter of fact, according to al-Albani, transmission has no importance whatsoever, because, every hadith being suspect, the fact that it was narrated by a respected scholar cannot guarantee its authenticity. On the contrary, the important process is accumulation—a good scholar of hadith being someone who has memorized a large sum of hadith and, more importantly, the biographies of a large number of transmitters. Thus, the science of hadith can be measured according to objective criteria unrelated to family, tribe, or regional descent, allowing for a previously absent measure of meritocracy. More importantly, al-Albani's claim of being more faithful to the spirit of Wahhabism than 'Abd al-Wahhab himself made the former's ideas very popular among Salafi youth.

Religious entrepreneurs

For all these reasons, al-Albani's ideas would rapidly become a means for Salafi religious entrepreneurs from outside the Wahhabi aristocracy to challenge the existing hierarchy. Al-Albani himself quickly gathered a large following, in Saudi Arabia and beyond. He would soon have to be recognized, despite the initial hostility of the Wahhabi religious establishment, as one of the leading figures in Salafism.

In the mid-1960s, a number of al-Albani's disciples in Medina founded al-Jamaa al-Salafiyya al-Muhtasiba (The Salafi Group which Commands Good and Forbids Evil), a radical faction of which, led by Juhayman al-'Utaybi, would storm the grand mosque of Mecca in November 1979. Many of the group's members—and especially its scholars—were either of Bedouin descent or non-Saudi residents, and were thus marginalized in the religious field. Their activism came, in part at least, as a response to their marginalization.⁴ One of the main religious figures of this group—who was “lucky” enough to have been thrown out of the Kingdom in 1978 and therefore did not take part in the 1979 events—was Muqbil al-Wadi'i, who subsequently re-established himself in his native Yemen and became the country's most prominent Salafi scholar.

In the late 1980s, some of al-Albani's pupils, led by a Medinan shaykh called Rabi' al-Madkhali, formed an informal religious network generally referred to as al-Jamiyya (“the Jamis”, named after one of their key members, Muhammad Aman al-Jami). Beyond their focus on hadith, the Jamis became known for emphasizing al-Albani's calls not to indulge in politics and for denouncing those who did. Again, many of the Jamis were of peripheral origin (al-Madkhali was from Jazan, on the Yemeni border, while al-Jami was from Ethiopia) and had therefore been excluded from all leading positions in the religious field. They would finally gain prominence in the early 1990s, when the Saudi government supported them financially and institutionally, in the hope of creating an apolitical ideological counterweight to the Islamist opposition led by the al-Sahwa al-Islamiyya (the Islamic Awakening), an informal religio-political movement which appeared in Saudi Arabia

in the 1960s as a result of a hybridization between Wahhabism, on religious issues, and the ideas of the Muslim Brotherhood, on political issues.⁵

In the 1990s, a few students of al-Albani would go so far as to challenge both the Wahhabi religious aristocracy and al-Albani himself. Following the teachings of an Indian shaykh called Hamza al-Milibari,⁶ they would promote the centrality of hadith, while criticizing al-Albani for relying, in his critique of hadith, on the methods used by late traditionists—at least so they claimed. On the contrary, they would pride themselves for relying exclusively on the methodology of the early traditionists (that is those anterior to al-Dar Qutni (917-995)) and would therefore name their approach *manhaj al-mutaqaddimin* (the methodology of the early ones). Again, most of these scholars were peripheral figures, such as Sulayman al-'Alwan, a very

young—al-'Alwan was born in 1970 and started to become known as a scholar while he was in his twenties—shaykh of non-tribal descent, and 'Abdallah al-Sa'd, whose family had come from the city of Zubayr in Modern Iraq. The two of them would later become key figures in the Saudi Jihadi trend, challenging the political order after they had challenged the religious order. As a consequence, they would be arrested and jailed after the May 2003 bombings.

Muhammad Nasir al-Din al-Albani's denunciation of the “Wahhabi paradox” and his promotion of a new approach to the critique of hadith as the pillar of religious knowledge have prompted a revolution within Salafism, challenging the very monopoly of the Wahhabi religious aristocracy. As a consequence, al-Albani's ideas have given independent Salafi religious entrepreneurs a weapon with which to fight their way into previously very closed circles. Although none have yet achieved al-Albani's prestige, some have become recognized scholars. Interestingly enough, al-Albani's rise to prominence as a *de facto* part of an establishment he once rejected has encouraged some of disciples, proponents of the “methodology of the early ones,” to call—along al-Albani's earlier line—for an even “purer” approach to the critique of hadith. As this shows, the revolutionary power of his method remains intact.

For Al-Albani . . .
hadith alone may
provide answers to
matters not
found in the
Quran . . .

Notes

1. As opposed to Wahhabism, Salafism refers here to all the hybridations that have taken place since the 1960s between the teachings of Muhammad bin 'Abd al-Wahhab and other Islamic schools of thought. Al-Albani's discourse can therefore be a form of Salafism, while being critical of Wahhabism.
2. Stéphane Lacroix, “Muhammad Nasir al-Din al-Albani's Contribution to Contemporary Salafism,” in *Global Salafism: Islam's New Religious Movement*, ed. Roel Meijer (London/New York: Hurst/Columbia University Press, 2008 (forthcoming)).
3. On the controversies surrounding al-Albani, see *ibid.*
4. See Thomas Hegghammer and Stéphane Lacroix, “Rejectionist Islamism in Saudi Arabia: The Story of Juhayman al-'Utaybi Revisited,” *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 39, no. 1 (2007): 103-122.
5. For more details, see *ibid.*
6. The book is called *Al-muwāzana bayna al-mutaqaddimin wa-l-muta'akhhirin fi tashih al-ahādith wa-ta'līhā* [The balance between the early ones and the late ones regarding the identification of authentic and weak hadiths].

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The Local & the Global in Saudi Salafism

MADAWI AL-RASHEED

Global jihad is a constructed category, perpetuated in the discourse of academics, think tank consultants, politicians, policy makers, terror experts, and journalists on the one hand, and Jihadi ideologues and sympathizers on the other hand. The first group identify a global menace that requires the mobilization of governments, military strategists, civil society activists, and media campaigns across the world to justify the global War on Terror. The second group endeavours to mobilize Muslims across cultures, nations, and geographies in the pursuit of deterritorialized battles that nevertheless take place in specific localities, including world financial centres, train stations, and discos, expatriate residential compounds, tourist resorts, shrines, mosques, and markets.

The contradictions and tensions within the Saudi Jihadi project are the focus of this short exposition.¹ Saudi Jihadis represent post-national non-state actors who draw on the rhetoric of the global jihad, yet remain immersed in the locality of Saudi Arabia.² Rather than selecting famous contemporary Jihadi ideologues, this article draws on the messages of lesser known Saudi authors of Jihadi texts to demonstrate the centrality of the local in the global project: Faris al-Shuwayl writes about the priority of local jihad while Lewis Atiyat Allah³ glorifies the global project. Both seem to exhibit the tension between the local and the global.

Contesting the local state

In both Faris al-Shuwayl and Lewis Atiyat Allah's writings, the first Saudi state (1744-1818) is glorified as *dawlat al-tawhid* (the state of monotheism), a political entity unbounded by defined territorial boundaries, unrecognized by the international community, and uncontaminated by international treaties and legal obligations. The first state is a local political configuration that defied regional and international contexts and promised to make true Islam hegemonic. They regard this state as a revival of the state of prophecy where the community was subject to divine law. Membership was determined not by recognized frontiers but by submission to the rightful Imam, whose authority over

distant territory was recognized by paying zakat, receiving his judges, and performing jihad under his banner. In the first state, unity was expressed in the belief in the one God, applying His commands, and swearing allegiance to His political authority on earth.

Both Faris al-Shuwayl and Lewis Atiyat Allah regard the main agent of this state to be Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab rather than Muhammad ibn Saud; the former was the interpreter of God's words while the latter was the executive force that enforced these words. This state had no name apart from *dawlat al-tawhid*, a deterritorialized polity pursuing the ultimate message of Islam, subjecting the individual to the sovereignty of God. As such, this state cannot be confined to

man-made borders, cultural and historical factors, ethnic and linguistic considerations, or any other attribute common in defining the modern nation state. As such it was the ideal Muslim state that rebelled against blasphemy, religious innovations, and man-made law. The collapse of this state in 1818 at the hands of Ottoman troops temporarily sealed the fate of *dawlat al-tawhid* whose advocates impatiently waited for its revival in the twentieth century.

Jihadi ideologues in Saudi Arabia are advocates of global jihad aiming to establish an Islamic world order. At the same time they remain closely tied to local Saudi identities. Rejecting the national Saudi state and emphasizing tribal affiliation, Saudi Jihadis construct a discourse in which the Arabian peninsula is crucial. Yet when action is concerned, as in the pursuit of jihad, the tension between the local and the global creates contradictions that remain unresolved.

In contrast, the current state of 1932 evokes only negative responses among Saudi Jihadi Salafis. They contest its legitimacy, name, law, borders, and foreign policies. Many of them regard it as an aberration of the first experience. They attribute its creation to an illegitimate relationship with an infidel power (Britain). Its name "Saudi Kingdom" is denounced as a family fiefdom; its nationality is rejected as a modern innovation that is not anchored in Islamic

text or historical practice; its foreign relations, especially its alliance with the West, violate the tenth principle of *iman* (faith) in Wahhabi theology, namely *al-wala wa al-bara* (association with Muslims and dissociation from infidels). Against the global Jihadi message, the local state remains a rejected aberration.

Faris al-Shuwayl (detained in Saudi Arabia since 2004), and also known as Shaykh Abu Jandal al-Azdi (*nom de plume*), replies to queries posted to him on the Internet about differences between the first state and the contemporary one. His reply outlines how a Muslim should proceed in his evaluation of the first state. He glorifies the first state and argues that in each family there are those who are good and those who are bad. One must distinguish between the good and the debauched from among the Al-Saud family. The first state was one that corresponded most to the ideal Islamic polity. He lists its assets: making religion triumphant, fighting blasphemy, applying Sharia, and purifying Islam from Sufis, philosophers, and innovators. Its unity is derived not from the cultural or ethnic characteristics of people, common economic interest, or geographical boundaries, but from belief in one God.

The first state embodied a borderless Salafiyya uncontaminated by practices of the contemporary nation-state. Rather than spreading the flames of jihad, the contemporary state prohibited it under foreign pressure. Furthermore, it opened its territories to foreign troops and allowed military bases to be established in the land of Islam. In addition, it allowed *istitan*, the settlements of foreigners who brought their ways of life to sacred space, which should have remained pure and uncontaminated by the *kafir* ways of Christians, Jews, Hindus, and Buddhists.

Local and global identities

Jihadis who reject the contemporary state accept only two identities, one extremely narrow defined in either regional or tribal affiliation, and one extremely global defined in a deterritorialized utopia, the Muslim ummah. Jihadi ideologue Faris al-Shuwayl clearly articulates this position. In a famous letter entitled "Saudi Nationality Under my Foot," he introduces himself as Faris ibn Ahmad ibn Juman ibn Ali al-Shuwayl al-Hasani al-Zahrani al-Azadi, thus anchoring his identity in Zahrani, one of the Hijazi Qahtani tribes of contemporary Saudi Arabia.

Faris al-Shuwayl asserts that he does not recognize Saudi nationality in stating: "I am a Muslim among Muslims. I read history and did not find something called *jinsiyya* (nationality). Each Muslim must operate in *Dar al-Islam* wherever he wants and without borders restraining him or passports confining him and without a *taghut watan* (despot nation) to worship. My fathers are known, my family is known, my tribe Zahrani belong to the Azdi. Therefore I do not belong to Al-Saud who have no right to make people belong to them."⁴

Faris al-Shuwayl calls upon the tribes of the Arabian Peninsula to remember that the return of their glory will be dependent on their return to Islam and rejection of a state that reveals *kufur bawah* (obvious blasphemy), governs by rules other than those of God, opens the land for Jews and Crusaders, and kills pious Muslims, arrests people of knowledge, and steals public wealth. He calls upon the "lions of the

"I do not belong to Al-Saud who have no right to make people belong to them."

Peninsula," the grandsons of *muhajirun*, early Muslim converts who migrated with the Prophet to Medina, and *ansar*, the Medinians who supported them, to dissociate themselves from the contemporary state.

Tribal affiliation becomes the first important marker of a narrow identity that defines the individual and anchors him in an old hierarchy of noble tribes, whose prestige and standing stem from their early historic support for the message of the Prophet. While this identity is constructed on the basis of kinship and blood ties, the tribe acquires local significance in the war on blasphemy and the purification of the land from polytheism. It is incumbent on this narrow tribal construction to make Islam dominant and hegemonic. The narrow local identification should be put at the service of the global message.

From the narrow confines of local tribal identity, Faris al-Shuwayl moves to the global Muslim ideal, where brotherhood is established as a result of *tawhid*, in its spiritual rather than geographical meaning. In this typology of identities that move from the very local to the global, there is no space for modern constructions such as *jinsiyya* (nationality) and *wataniyya* (citizenship). Faris al-Shuwayl invites Muslims to reject these modern constructions, considered as instruments of division between Muslims, whose unity cannot be established on common economic interest or any other interest except belief in one God.

Nationality and citizenship cannot mediate between the very local and the very global, as had become the norm and practice in the world. There is only one path that can mediate between the local and the global. This is the space of *jazirat al-Arab* or *bilad al-haramayn*, an identity that derives its legitimacy from Arab heritage and sacred space, the two holy mosques. The Arabian Peninsula becomes the regional mediator between the tribe on the one hand and the ummah on the other hand. This model is the only possible and legitimate one. Arab identity, where it first emerged in the Arabian Peninsula, becomes a source of pride.

Between the local and the global

Lewis Atiyat Allah, who has a prominent presence on Jihadi websites, advocates global jihad. His vision encompasses an Islamic world order that opposes and defies the current international world order labouring under US hegemony.⁵ His jihad is very much dependent on the notion of an Islamic ummah, encompassing different races, nationalities, and cultural groups. The unity of this ummah is derived from faith rather than race. However, Lewis Atiyat Allah turns his attention to his homeland, the most sacred territory and the core of the Muslim world, the "Land of the Two Holy Mosques." His homeland is central in the establishment of the Islamic world order, but unfortunately, according to Lewis Atiyat Allah, it has become, under the current Saudi leadership, a vehicle for Western hegemony. Lewis Atiyat Allah seems to blur the boundaries between the so-called national and the transnational Islamists, a dichotomy that has become fashionable in several academic studies of the Islamist movement after 9/11.

When Lewis Atiyat Allah "returns" to *bilad al-haramayn*, he is transformed into a nationalist who invokes notions of sacred territory, historical responsibility, and the glorious past. For Lewis Atiyat Allah *bilad al-haramayn* is not only Mecca and Medina, theoretically closed to non-Muslims, but the whole Arabian Peninsula. As such, the land of Islam needs to be freed from acts of defilement, manifested in the actual physical presence of non-Muslims. This foreign presence encompasses not only US soldiers and military bases, but also non-Muslim workers, especially Western expatriates. According to Lewis Atiyat Allah, foreigners, obviously regarded as profane, violate the purity



PHOTO BY HASSAN AMMAR / © AFP, 2008

of this geographical entity. Here the boundaries of *bilad al-haramayn* are seen as having become porous, allowing in the process a greater defilement and molestation to take place not only on the periphery but also in the core of this sacred territory.

He calls upon the "grandsons of the companions of the Prophet to expel the infidels from *jazirat al-arab*," following the prophetic tradition. *Jazirat al-arab* is a central term for Lewis Atiyat Allah. Syntactically, it invokes "Arab" possession of a territory, which the descriptive nomenclature *al-jazira al-arabiyya* fails to capture. Furthermore, *jazirat al-arab* conveys a different meaning from that implied by *bilad al-haramayn*. The first implies the centrality of the Arab dimension of the jihad option and the historical responsibility of the inhabitants of the Arabian Peninsula to take the lead in the struggle. When Lewis Atiyat Allah invokes *jazirat al-arab*, there is no doubt that he is an Arab nationalist, thus exposing the tension between the universal Muslim community, the ummah, and the particular, his own homeland. He tries to resolve this tension by ascribing a central role to his own native land, fusing the local—his homeland—in the global project, the envisaged Islamic world order.

Road to Mecca, Riyadh

The centrality of the local in the global Jihadi project manifests itself in the desire to cleanse the Arabian Peninsula and Arabs from the sin of not only having actively contributed to the destruction of the Islamic Caliphate in the First World War but also of having been the vanguards of this destruction. While the Ottoman Caliphate is not held to be the desired Islamic Caliphate especially in its later years, Jihadis lament its downfall and the Arab contribution to its demise. Accordingly, the participation of Saudis in Jihadi projects on the periphery of the Muslim ummah (for example in Afghanistan and Iraq) is an act of both purification and reclamation of a lost glory.

Saudi Jihadi discourse and practices create unresolved contradictions. In Saudi Arabia, dissident Jihadis recognize only two identities, one originating in tribal affiliation and one in a global Muslim construction with the Arabian Peninsula mediating between these two distant poles. Other mediating constructions such as nationality are rejected as forms of innovation and blasphemy whose main purpose is to divide and undermine Muslim unity. However, when action is concerned, for example pursuing jihad, there is an on-going debate that may not be resolved in the near future. Some Saudi Jihadis will remain at home to correct the aberration and topple the contemporary Saudi state while others will choose to pursue jihad abroad as an act of purification of Arab sins. From afar, they will aspire to make Islam once again dominant and hegemonic. In pursuing this project, Saudis are called upon to play a leading role. Their local identity is paramount in the global project, yet the local remains problematic, or at least in need of justification.

Notes

1. This article draws on Madawi Al-Rasheed, *Contesting the Saudi State: Islamic Voices from a New Generation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).
2. Although Saudi involvement in Jihadi projects abroad was initially state sponsored, for example in Afghanistan, it later escaped the control of its sponsors.
3. I can only speculate on why this Jihadi chose this unusual *nom de plume*. He explains it as resulting from a conversation he had with a US immigration officer. When Lewis said that his name was Lewis, the immigration officer remarked that this name was not the one written in the passport, Lewis then replied that he was "gonna change it to Lewis." See Al-Rasheed, *Contesting the Saudi State*, 175-176.
4. Faris Al-Shuwayl, www.islah.tv.
5. For a full biography, see Al-Rasheed, *Contesting the Saudi State*.

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The Development of British Salafism

SADEK HAMID

British Muslim communities comprise a diverse range of traditions, in which four major tendencies are identifiable: the largest numbers of followers come from the Barelwi tradition, followed by Deobandi, then Jamaat-i Islam inspired institutions, and finally the Ahl-i-Hadith network. All of these are theological and ideological trends imported into the UK with the arrival of the early South Asian settler communities in the 1960s and 1970s. The remainder of British Muslims tend to be organized around ethnicity. Only a handful of mosques openly identify themselves as Salafi; key among them are institutions like the Green Lane Mosque in Birmingham, Salafi Institute, Birmingham, Masjid Ibn Taymiyyah in Brixton, and the Islamic Centre of Luton. Pinpointing the precise entry of Salafi ideas into the UK is speculative at best, but it is thought to have occurred towards the late 1980s.¹

The Emergence of British Salafism

The instrumental organization for the spread of Salafism in the UK was the Jamiyyat Ihya Minhaj as Sunnah, "The Society for the Revival of the Prophetic Way" (JIMAS).² Its leader Manwar Ali, also known as "Abu Mun-

The popularity of Salafism in the UK is attributable to the convergence of the globalization of Salafi discourse, the search for religious identity among second generation British Muslims seeking "pure" religion, and the competition for recruits between rival Islamic currents. British Salafism has become diversified to such an extent that it is no longer recognizable as a single movement, with the development taking unexpected turns that belie popular monolithic representations.

tasir" is credited by many as being the father of "Salafi dawah"(proselytizing) in the UK. He is largely responsible for the spread of Salafism among young people through his delivery of countless "study circles" at mosques, community centres, and universities across the country. Furthermore, replicating global patterns, the spread of Salafi interpretations of Islam in the UK was underwritten by the financial investment into religious institutions and distribution of literature from Saudi Arabia and the return of religious studies graduates from Saudi Arabia's two main universities.

Methodologically, Salafism relies upon scriptural literalism and revolves around a set of binary opposites: *tawhid* (oneness of God) and opposition *shirk* (all forms of divine association-ism), loyalty to the *sunnah* (prophetic example) in matters of belief and religious ritual as opposed to *bid'a* (innovation), an emblematic respect for the pious first three generations of Muslims, and general loss of confidence and interest in subsequent phases of Muslim intellectual history, and rejection of *taqlid* (adherence/loyalty to one school of Islamic law) in favour of literalist approaches to Islamic jurisprudence.

The early 1990s was the defining era for second-generation Islamic activism; indeed this decade was perhaps the most intense for its identity politics. Adherents to Salafi perspectives were drawn mainly from second generation male and female South Asian Muslims with a significant number of black and white converts. The average age of followers was between eighteen and thirty years; they were geographically located most often near the mosque communities already mentioned. Membership to religious organizations provided opportunities for the creation of communities of shared meaning and strong friendship networks important to younger people wanting to feel part of something bigger than themselves. Muslims tired of what they saw as "cultural Islam" found in the Salafi perspective an approach to religious commitment which seemed to be intellectually rigorous, evidence-based, and stripped of the perceived corruptions of the folkloric religion of the Barelwis, or the "wishy washy" alternatives offered by rival Islamic tendencies such as Young Muslims UK or Hizb ut-Tahrir. Adopting a Salafi identity was in effect a process of exchanging and re-routing religious language and symbols. For subscribers to Salafism, the messages of other groups were not seen as convincing due to their lack of scholarly reference points and perception of compromise with *kafir* (heathen) culture. British Salafis could also frequently cite the senior scholars of Saudi Arabia, Ibn Baz (d. 1999), Ibn al-Uthaymin (d. 2001), and the hadith specialist al-Albani (d. 1999), to buttress arguments from authority and silence those with an inferior command of scholastic frames of reference.

Towards the middle 1990s, Salafism as an alternate religious paradigm became well established through mosques, networks, publications, media, and a large body of literature available on the Internet. Joining the Salafi dawah meant acquiring membership into a multi-ethnic, supranational identity which offered a revival of "pure" Islamic practices that were seen as lacking in other Islamic trends. These communities of meaning provided an intellectual as well as physical refuge from readings and practices of Islam that were judged to be inauthentic, inferior, or deviant. In comparison to other Muslim groups, the Salafi trend seemed to offer a cohesive iden-

Still from JIMAS website

The screenshot shows the JIMAS website interface. At the top, it reads "In the Name of Allah the Most Gracious the Most Merciful" and "Jami'at Ihyaa' Minhaj al-Sunnah (The Association to Revive the Way of the Messenger) Registered Charity No. 1000276". Navigation links include "ABOUT US", "HISTORY", "ACTIVITIES", "HELP US", and "CONTACT". A central banner says "ALWAYS DONATE YOUR ZAKAT CORRECTLY AND WISELY" with a quote: "Do not let a single penny go to waste through overzealous piety, promotions and unnecessary payment of officials." Below this, there are several content blocks: "U DON'T WANT" with a quote about purifying oneself, "ONE COMMUNITY IN CONVERSATION" event details for February 27th, "Morning Dew" Islamic magazine information, and "Public Diary" by M. Manwar Ali. A sidebar on the left lists categories like "ZAKAT IN THE UK", "ISLAM", "OUR PUBLICATIONS", "AUDIO CDs", "CURRENT EVENT", "PAST EVENTS", "CHARITY", "CONFERENCE 2012", "CONFERENCES", and "EMAIL LIST".

WWW.JIMAS.ORG

tity option that young people could purchase which might explain its relatively greater attraction for converts seeking “a ‘rationalized Islam’, one already stripped of the niceties and ambiguities of juristic reasoning, the complexities of theology, and the subtleties of Sufism.”³

Rise of the “Super Salafis”

The development of British Salafism reached a critical juncture in 1995 when tensions that had been simmering for a year or so between factions inside JIMAS eventually caused the organization to rupture and leave an ideological split that remains to this day. Ever since the first Gulf War in 1991, Salafi scholars have been divided over the presence of US troops in the heart of the Muslim world. The origins of this division started within the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia when a faction of younger scholars began questioning why its rulers had invited the Americans to fight another Muslim country, and worse still, establish military bases. Ideologically they were led by Salman al-Audah and Safar al-Hawali who gained prominence for their rebellious stances against the government.

Quintan Wiktorowicz provides a helpful typology in differentiating three main global trends that were identifiable as a result of this emerging intra-Salafi factionalism; purists, politicos, and Jihadis.⁴ The “purists” remain loyal to the principles of Salafi *‘aqida* (creed), and the Saudi state and therefore resisted any attempt to challenge the authority of the rulers. Their priority was peaceful preaching—reform and correction of Muslim belief and ritual practice. The “politicos” agreeing to the importance of the Salafi creed nevertheless argued that the reform *manhaj* (methodology) had to include a consideration of the complex and changing social-political realities taking place in the world, which need to be addressed in addition to the concerns of the Salafi dawah. The Jihadis, on the other hand were impatient of the status quo, had participated in theatres of conflict like Afghanistan and wanted to take direct action, using violence to affect social change. All three tendencies share the Salafi positions in matters of theology but differ in their analysis of problems in the Muslims world and on how they should be solved.

These shifting currents had direct consequences on the UK Salafi scene as JIMAS and individuals associated with them made direct links with Salafi figures in Saudi Arabia. The split similarly started appearing in Britain with the pro-Saudi government position member, Abdul Wahid, also known as Abu Khadeejah, leading the polarization of positions within the group. He challenged Abu Muntasir and those who were sympathetic to the anti-Saudi government stance, causing a process of fragmentation over a period of one year. Despite attempts by senior figures within the UK Salafi community, the rift became irreconcilable with the Abu Khadeejah faction eventually breaking away and taking a significant number of people with them to form OASIS (Organization of Ahl al Sunnah Islamic Societies), the precursor to Salafi Publications, and associated websites.⁵

This faction then established the Salafi Institute and became known for their intolerant and polemical attitude to former colleagues and other Muslim groups. A form of theological Inquisition was initiated where people were condemned for not being Salafi enough. The details of these differences between various protagonists are a labyrinth of theological argument, counter claims, accusations and rebuttals, a flavour of which can be sampled by visiting their main websites. This mindset eventually led Abu Khadeejah and his followers to be derogatorily labelled by moderates as the “Super Salafis,” because of their ruthless witch-hunt tactics of non-conformist Salafis who refused to capitulate to their version of correct Salafi belief and methodology. People were accused of being “Hizbiyyah,” “Qutbiyyah,” “Sorouri,” pejorative terms referring to ideas and figures deemed beyond the pale, which resulted in a form of religious McCarthyism. The term Hizbiyyah would imply that someone was influenced by movements like the Muslim Brotherhood, while Qutbiyyah refers to the Muslim Brotherhood’s ideologue Sayyid Qutb; Sorour was a prominent Salafi figure based in the UK for two decades until the late 1990s. Black lists, boycotts, and character assassinations continue to divide British Salafis to this day. This dark period had other impacts on the relationships between people and their families, with some people becoming socially estranged, couples divorcing, and individuals suffering what became known as the “Salafi Burnout,” when individuals suffered a dramatic loss of faith and religious practice.

The counter attack of “traditional Islam”

Another major factor in the evolution of Salafism in the UK has been the increasing appeal of “traditional Islam,” an activist and scholarly form of Sufism, which was initially popularized by charismatic American convert scholar Hamza Yusuf.⁶ He seemed to mesmerize audiences with the depth of his knowledge of Islam and apparent polymathic command of subjects as diverse as music, literature, and science. Prominent moderate Salafis at the time, though privately in awe of his learning, publicly dismissed him as Sufi. The traditional Islam trend in effect appropriated some of the authority from the Salafi scholars, resulting in a reduction of some of the aura of knowledgeability from British Salafis and offering a broader, richer understanding of Islam that emphasized the spiritual dimensions of religion. The impact of Hamza Yusuf’s message was reinforced and echoed by two other prominent convert scholars, the English Abdal Hakim Murad (b. 1960), a Cambridge professor of Islamic Studies, and the American Shaykh Nuh Keller (b.1954) who is based in Jordan. The three figures spearheaded a strategy of discrediting the politicized readings of Islam found in the literature of the reformist Islamists and deconstructing the claims to textual orthodoxy of the Salafi groupings. Especially Abdal Hakim Murad has been prolific in this regard; his writings constitute one of the most popular resources for “traditional Islam.”⁷

The influence of Salafi trends on British Muslim communities has been larger than its numerical presence among communities; their influence is disproportional as a result of the effectiveness of their literature distribution and web presence. Today, people that subscribe to Salafi perspectives can broadly be described as either those that gravitate to the outlook of the “Super Salafis,” or feel more comfortable with the JIMAS approach; those whose religious praxis is what could be described as a “methodological Salafism”—a literalist reading of scripture but which is not aligned with any particular group or institution; or those who might be described as “post-Salafi.” Leading British Salafis such as Abu Aliyah, Abu Muntasir, and Usama Hasan are not obsessed with defining themselves as Salafi. More complex hybridized identities are emerging where, for example, Usama Hasan goes as far as to refer to himself as a Wahhabbi–Sufi! In an interview with the author, he argued that some of the categories used by analysts miss the complex, evolving nature of contemporary British Salafi trends. Leading Salafi activists are now trying to bridge the sectarian divides once thought impossible. In the aftermath of the Iraq invasion and resulting intra-Muslim violence, there have been high profile attempts to reconcile opposing theological trends, through initiatives such as the Amman Message⁸ and the Sunni Pledge,⁹ a pledge of mutual respect and cooperation between Sunni Muslim scholars and organizations. These developments challenge the nuance-lacking representations of Salafism in recent times as well as indicate the dynamic and organic nature of religious identity formation.

Joining the
Salafi dawah
meant acquiring
membership into
a multi-ethnic,
supranational
identity ...

Notes

1. The entrance of Salafi ideas is mapped by Jonathan Birt, “Wahhabism in the United Kingdom: manifestations and reactions,” in *Transnational Connections and the Arab Gulf*, ed. M. Al-Rasheed (London, 2005).
2. See <http://www.jimas.org>.
3. Hamid Algar, *Wahhabism: A Critical Essay* (New York: Islamic Publications International, 2002), 52.
4. Quintan Wiktorowicz, “Anatomy of the Salafi Movement,” *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* 29 (2006): 207–239.
5. See <http://www.salafipublications.com/sps>; <http://www.salafitalk.net/st>; <http://www.salafimanhaj.com>.
6. See <http://www.zaytuna.org>.
7. See <http://www.masud.co.uk/ISLAM/ahm/default.htm>.
8. See <http://www.ammanmessage.com/index.php?lang=en>.
9. See <http://www.yahyabirt.com/?p=99>.

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Purist Salafism in France

MOHAMED-ALI ADRAOUI

Salafis are usually qualified as revolutionary or reformist Muslims mainly interested in gaining primacy around the world and overthrowing perfidious regimes which have betrayed the cause of Islam. However, this image covers only one aspect of Salafism, that of the Jihadi Salafis, who present themselves as partisans of using political violence and combating corrupt Muslim leaders. External to Jihadi Salafism is a quietist Salafism, that of the so-called purists. Whereas both types of Salafis reject

Western society, purist Salafis, unlike Jihadi Salafis, do not strive to destroy it. Neither do purist Salafis in Muslim countries put up resistance against the government, even if they find it insufficiently Islamic.

Whereas the purist view is built around non-political opinions, revolutionary Salafis think that Muslims have a political obligation to establish a strict Islamic society rid of apostate leaders and to Islamize the

state and its institutions. Therefore Jihadis target Muslim leaders, charged with trampling Islamic laws underfoot because of their cooperation with the United States and their negligence of “their brothers” in Palestine, Afghanistan or Iraq. But according to the purist Salafis, human beings are created for a strict religious purpose: obeying Allah and following His moral and judicial commands. Purists promote a strict religious view focusing on the duty to worship Allah who prescribes them obedience to political chiefs so as to prevent Muslim communities from *fitna* (chaos and anarchy).¹

Purist Islam

For a decade and a half in France, in some suburban areas close to Paris,² Lille-Roubaix,³ and Lyon,⁴ purist Salafism has become a significant social reality within Muslim communities. With about 5,000 people said to be purist Salafis in France according to Intelligence Services, this current is growing in areas traditionally known to shelter many Muslim families coming mainly from migratory flows after the 1950s-1960s. Generally,

they are young people and many of them come from Algerian families. However, converted people are overrepresented within Salafi groups. Within French Muslim communities, converts do not constitute more than three or four percent whereas they stand for almost twenty to twenty-five percent of the Salafis that I have met through my work. They mainly attribute their decision to take up the *Minhaj Salafi* (Path of the Virtuous Ancestors) to the influence of friends who had entered Salafi groups.

Cultivating a way of life based on the search for purity, Salafis usually opt for a strict break with what they think of as causing their perdition. Practising moral codes which they identify as coming straight from the *salaf* (the ancestors of early Islam)—thus the best and purest Muslims ever—they claim for themselves legitimacy and superiority. Salafis claim to be the only Muslims who know the true sense of *tawhid* (oneness of God) as opposed to other currents such as the Muslim Brothers whom they accuse of being too far from a true knowledge of the sources.

Moreover, Salafis think they are closer to Islamic authenticity and truth because their methodology is based on the primacy of orthodox scholars. They appeal to Salafi scholars—teaching mainly in Saudi

Although Islam in France is composed of currents found in Muslim societies around the world, France is currently primarily affected by the assertion of purist Salafis, whose main concern is to bring Muslim believers back to the path of Islamic orthodoxy. Purist Salafi Muslims strictly differentiate themselves from non-Muslims and Muslims alike. They emphasize a break with society in order to return to Islam practiced in its “original” form, but their purist Salafism nonetheless retains some trappings of the modernity it shuns.

Arabia—for religious rulings because they have mastered Islamic learning and answer any question supporting it with proof. Put differently, Salafi Islam presents itself as rational compared to “passionate Islam.” Such was the claim made by a young Salafi to distinguish “his” Islam from *l’Islam de France* represented by famous figures such as Tariq Ramadan. Legitimacy based on the expertise of judicial norms seems to be the key to understanding the feeling of Islamic superiority associated with

Salafi Islam. In France, where Islam is a much stigmatized religion, it can be easily understood why some people overturn this stigmata by insisting on their exceptional predestination. The *Minhaj Salafi* as it is understood in France grants answers to young people facing anomie and trying to position themselves within the French context.

Breaking with society

When we observe “the Salafi way of life” from the period of its emergence we see that from their clothing to their cultural habits everything is related to the desire to break with the surrounding society. For instance, whereas many young Muslims (many young people living in the suburbs, actually) prefer wearing suits because of their professional life or others wear sporting caps, Salafis wear the *qamis*, a long tunic over loose pants, their heads are covered by a *taqiyya*, and they wear *izhar* (shorter pants that end before the ankles). Their dress aims at stating at an immediate glance that they do not belong to modern times.

Before conversion many Salafis lived an un-Islamic life including the consumption of alcohol and sexual promiscuity, after which they started looking for an ideal provided by Islamic purity. Maybe for this reason they act as if they do not want to stay connected with their former environment. This can also be an explanation for their refusal to participate in politics within French society. For example, almost all the purist Salafis I met claimed they do not vote on religious grounds. However, it turned out that most of them have never voted for their whole life, even before becoming Salafis. Consequently, this can explain Salafis’ weak involvement in political issues.

Moreover, since purist Salafis do not identify with French social customs, and more generally with Western moral codes, they tend to leave France to join Muslim countries where they believe they will be able to practise true Islam and experience real religious freedom. They call this a *hijra* (salutary migration), or a “return to the lands of origins” (from where their parents should never have left). However, though until a few years ago, main destinations were the countries of their parents, currently, through a process of “globalization of *hijra*” new geographical targets such as Dubai or Abu Dhabi can be mentioned.

Whereas France stops being their country and they get a new identity based strictly on a religious feeling of belongingness, it must be stressed that the *hijra* made by French Salafis obeys a Western logic. For example, they are attracted by modern and dynamic trading cities which enable them to set up businesses and become wealthy. Instead of reaffirming their parental culture by returning to Algeria or Morocco for instance, they are more akin to the globalized youth involved in computer or electronic goods businesses who travel frequently between Europe and the Gulf so as to advance their personal situations. By learning foreign languages (mostly English) and connecting to new ways of lives, they improve their cultural skills and their knowledge of the world.

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Intra-religious competition

Salafi imams play hardly any role in the turn to Salafism in France. Most of the time, when we study the Salafis' trajectories, we are led to traces of the Tablighi Jamaat, or more rarely, instances of attending conferences of the Muslim Brotherhood. They come to the *da'wa salafiyya* (Salafi mission) through their disappointment with these forms of Islam which they later see as "false." Salafis justify their negative view of the Muslim "other" by referring to the magical elements they find in Tablighi Islam or the Muslim Brotherhood's taste for accommodation and politics. For example, they call the Islam of Muslim Brotherhood "Islam light" and claim that the *ikhwan muslimin* (Muslim Brothers) are, in fact, *ikhwan muflessin* (Corrupt Brothers) who have given too much value to politics. Purists level similar criticism at Jihadis, adding political violence to the list.

Purist Salafi groups in main suburban areas in France consider themselves the cream of Islam. They feel they do not belong to oppressed social classes because they have joined a kind of sacred caste that is the elite of society. Allah chose them to be the *taifa al-mansura* (victorious branch) and the *farqat al-najiya* (saved group), in reference to the famous and much debated hadith that Muslims will divide into seventy three factions all of which will end in hell except for the one Allah saves because it had stayed faithful in the face of temptations. Many Salafis think they form that only group destined for eternal salvation, because they have resisted the allure of "new" gods such as money, democracy, or secularism. Having been saved, they have to be grateful toward Allah and obey His Laws. This exclusive feeling is very different from Muslim currents such as the Muslim Brotherhood which insists on the need to unify Muslims and to come to an agreement with all of them so that Islam and Muslims restore their glory.

On a cultural and social level, purist Salafism can be defined as an attempt to rationalize time and space. Life, work, and education are fields for religious investment. However, there is a real contradiction in French Salafis' way of life and their desire to be recognized as the possessors of Islamic truth. While Salafis intend to live apart from the rest of the society on religious grounds they are also involved in a competition with other Muslims. The Islamic field in France can thus be described as a market within which each "firm"; each Muslim current, emphasizes comparative advantages to win "religious market shares."

Salafis emphasize authenticity as opposed to, for instance, Muslim Brotherhood's Islam as seen in the Union des Organisations Islamiques de France (UIOF), which prioritizes the need for a contextualized Islam that will allow one to be fully Muslim and fully citizen at the same time. Understandably, purist Salafism is overwhelmingly popular for a majority of young Muslims who do not succeed at school and are above all mistrustful of the surrounding society. Muslim youth who are attracted by the message of UIOF for example are seeking social enhancement which leads them to look for a religious discourse that legitimizes their choices. In other words, contextualizing Islam does not lead to integration but integration leads to reformulating religious imperatives.

Negotiated identities

Escaping professional careers that might corrupt them, Salafis are often led to establish their own businesses such as fast-food restaurants, phone shops, Internet cafes, and bookshops. Ironically, many Salafi entrepreneurs reach social positions thanks to their successful businesses. Attributing their social ascension to the correctness of their religious orientation they take their worldly success as a further sign of their religious superiority. Briefly, many Salafis change from a "down and outs" state to a "chosen ones" state and they see Islam as the cause of their progress: true Islam has empowered them.

Furthermore, instead of keeping Salafis separate from the rest of the non-Muslim community, this counterculture contributes to a kind of integration between Salafis and others. This integration is based on purist Salafi wishes to hold on to many attractive features of Western



Family attending a rally against laïcité, Paris

PHOTO BY JOEL ROBINE / © AFP, 2004

modernity such as its business spirit or consumer culture. Thus purist Salafism engenders a "negotiated identity" which allows its adherents to appear as more honourable believers while retaining the undeniable advantages that French nationality provides. They do not consider themselves as citizens but as people whose bond with the state is not allegiance but utility. Though they abstain from political participation in a non-Islamic state, Salafis have no scruples in taking welfare from that very state. No Salafi has ever admitted that accepting welfare is prohibited and none of the several Salafi websites I have seen discuss the prohibition of receiving social help from the non-Muslim state.

French purist Salafism appears to be a manifestation of post-Islamism since it can be defined as the plan to foster Islamic militancy without using real political means as creating parties or involvement in elections and political campaigns. Its main characteristic is the will to "re-Islamize" Muslims by reinvesting in the "core business" of Islam, namely *tawhid*, worship, and spirituality. In their view, Islamists have not been of real service to the ummah since their actions have only created *fitna*. Contrary to Islamists who generally want to get political power either violently or legally, purist Salafi thinking insists on using non-political methods.

The purists focus on purely religious elements such as faith and adoration. Society has to be "re-Islamized" by means of preaching and providing "a good model." The institutions however have to be Islamized through inspired scholars who are able to reform the state thanks to their religious knowledge. "Ordinary" believers have to stay away from these struggles and focus on preaching, worshipping, and deepening their knowledge of religion, because they can easily lose their self-control.

No longer down and outs, purist Salafis set up some kind of new "bourgeoisie" whose goal is to maintain a "top culture" which will reach any Muslim or even any person on earth. Purist Salafis believe they form the *avant garde* and will become moral models for anyone. They are to be the followed ones and not the followers. Thus, it seems justified to speak of purist Salafism in France as a religious answer to social, symbolic, and cultural feelings of domination that are widespread among Muslim populations. This discourse of true Islam can be used to reformulate power relations to the advantage of the dominated.

Notes

1. During French elections, Salafis reprimanded Muslims planning to vote. Quarrels erupted in mosques between elderly Muslims who urged the young to vote, and Salafis, who declared that it was illicit to take part in non-Islamic institutions. I witnessed an old man quoting Shaykh Yusuf al-Qaradawi as allowing political participation, after which a Salafi retorted that Salafis did not heed deviant scholars.
2. In Les Mureaux, Stains, Argenteuil, Nanterre, and Épinay-sur-Seine.
3. In Roubaix and Tourcoing.
4. In Vénissieux.

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Mujahidin in Bosnia From Ally to Challenger

ONDER CETIN

The existence of the remaining mujahidin, foreign Muslim warriors, in Bosnia following the Dayton agreement in 1995 has occasionally been portrayed by Croat and Serb religious and political leaders alike as a threat towards their existence and coexistence in Bosnia. This article disputes this view and argues instead that mujahidin have become a challenger to the Islamic leadership, namely the Islamska Zajednica (Islamic Community), and the Hanafi interpretation of Islam practiced by Bosnian Muslims. The Islamic Community of Bosnia and Herzegovina, founded in 1878, is the sole religious authority of Muslims in Bosnia and Herzegovina and authorized to appoint imams to approximately 1,700 mosques and to provide religious education from secondary to post-graduate level.

Mujahidin entered Bosnia in 1992 through Croatia, mainly as humanitarian aid workers. Although initially welcomed during an arms embargo in the fight against Serbian aggressors, they have gradually become a problem. Beside several confrontations with UN Peacekeeping forces, their operations against Croat armed forces and civilians aggravated relations between Bosnian Muslims and Croats. Their emphasis on the religious character of the war did not only create conflict between the two allies (Bosnian Muslims and Croats), but also created tensions within local Muslim populations.

In the early 1990s, the Bosnian Muslims were at a serious disadvantage vis-à-vis the Serb army which seized the ammunition of the Yugoslav army. In this context, the appearance of the mujahidin received much support, not least from Izetbegović, who was president at the time. However, the political anxieties triggered by 9/11 brought an end to this welcome. In 2002, six Bosnian citizens of Algerian origin were deported to Guantanamo and the accounts of ten humanitarian or-

Rather than forming an actual terrorist threat, Muslim warriors in Bosnia have become prominent challengers to Bosnian Islamic leadership. By propagating Salafi teachings which target the forms of Islam practised by the Bosnian Muslims, this former ally came to be seen as a threat—not only because their presence fuelled stigmatization of Bosnia as a potential terrorist hotbed, but also because their Salafi ideas go against the very essence of Bosnian Muslim identity.

ganizations were frozen. Since March 2007, the government has stripped 661 individuals of their Bosnian citizenship, arguing that it had been granted illegally. Such incidents show that after a decade of cooperation the mujahidin have now become a nuisance to Bosnian Muslims, not just because they negatively influence the image of Bosnian Muslims in the eyes of non-Muslim Bosnians and the international community, but also because they

challenge the very core of Bosnian religious identity and its everyday representations.

Between “brothers” and “neighbours”

Following the end of the 1992–1995 war, resulting in around 200,000 dead, two million refugees and over 3,000 destroyed or damaged monuments, the Islamska Zajednica faced the difficult task of facilitating understanding and confidence among the previously warring parties. In this context, the representatives of Croat and Serb religious and political leaders in Bosnia occasionally referred to the “increasing Islamization” which they saw as a threat to their existence and to the possibility of coexistence. Although these statements have reflected a vague and ambiguous framework on subjects ranging from the increasing number of mosques to constitutional arrangements for a centralized state or the political statements made by Reis ul-Ulama Dr. Mustafa ef. Cerić, they have centred on the presence of mujahidin.

In the post 9/11 era Bosnia has been under scrutiny as a potential hotbed of Al-Qaida terrorism. It has been this alleged potentiality that has fed into anxieties and suspicions. The aforementioned statements started to be pronounced publicly in Bosnia in 2000. Until now three attacks have been committed by Salafi-oriented groups¹ towards

non-Muslim Bosnians. These were the murder of three members of Andelic family on 24 December 2002, a fight in Maoca on 13 March 2003, and an attack on Mihajlo Kisic from Brcko on 15 July 2006. Furthermore, “verbal provocations” were reported by Serb returnees in the Jablanica and Gornja Maoca near Brčko where the settled mujahidin reside since they moved from Bocinja in central Bosnia in late 2000 and early 2001.

Certainly, the accusations are not just rhetoric: mujahidin have indeed used Bosnia as a battle front to fight “infidels” and as a training field for future campaigns. However, a comparison of the extent of the incidents and the discourses on this “threat” reveals that although the relatively limited direct threats to Croats and Serbs can inevitably give rise to anxiety, the statements of a so-called Wahhabi threat in Bosnia towards coexistence is primarily incited by the memories of the war and the aforementioned “potentiality,” which is also politically manipulated. For example, the Serb terrorism expert Darko Trifunović urged preservation of

Cars damaged during post-war communal tensions in Bocinja, Bosnia



PHOTO BY HRVOJE POLAN / © AFP, 2004

the institutions of the Serbian Republic despite the current dysfunctional state structure of Bosnia “to keep a track on Muslim spies,” the number of which was exaggerated to 400,000 by Mihajlo Mitrović, another Serb terrorism expert.² Furthermore, Serb politicians such as Milorad Dodik employ discourses similar to those used prior to the 1992-95 war, such as “to prevent the creation of a Muslim state in the heart of Europe.”³ However, facts on the ground reveal that it has been particularly the Bosnian Muslims who have been challenged by their former allies.

Importing “true Islam”

Following a war into which Bosnian Muslims drifted partially due to their religious identity, the remaining mujahidin have attempted to transform the dominant socio-cultural framing by further solidifying and channelling the increased interest in religion in particular ways. The remaining humanitarian relief organizations have not only reconstructed destroyed mosques, but also started educational and publishing projects. Translated Salafi-oriented literature (such as the “Family Library” financed by High Saudi Committee), new magazines (such as SAFF published by the pro-Salafi youth organization Active Islamic Youth), and websites (such as www.islambosna.ba and www.bih.org) have been the main instruments for the transmission of Salafi thought among Bosnian Muslims. They especially brought new cultural framings and related discussions into the agenda of Bosnian Muslims. Besides denouncing the local practices as *bid'a* (religious innovations), such as mawlid celebrations, *tawhids* (commemoration rites), or relatively fast performance of prayers, they also introduced visual symbols in public life such as *niqab* and long beards. Since 1992, these interpretations have often caused tensions between Bosnian Muslims performing the customary, Hanafi way of rituals and those adopting a Salafi interpretation.

These conflicts moved to the next stage when differences in appearance and performance of rituals started to disrupt the established order in Bosnian mosques and evolved into physical conflicts between the two groups. In February 2007, the doors of the Careva Mosque were locked, probably for the first time in its history, to avoid clashes between the congregation and the followers of Jusuf Barčić (the deceased Salafi imam from Barčići) who intended to give religious lectures. Several cases have reported “Wahhabi young men” being beaten up by Bosnian mosque-goers. For example, during the past Ramadan, such young men were beaten and thrown out of the mosque when they intended to do *i'tikaf* (spend time in devotion to God) in a mosque. Similar cases occurred in Barčići in March and in Sarajevo in April 2007.⁴ Not only did these intra-Muslim conflicts create impatience with the Salafi-oriented groups, but due to such instances, the Islamska Zajednica and Reis-ul Ulema Cerić have now been harshly criticized for not looking after the Bosnian Muslims’ centuries-old trust.

The authority of the Islamska Zajednica

While these events targeted the Bosnian interpretation of Islam and the authority of the Islamska Zajednica as the sole legal and traditional representative of the Bosnian interpretation of Islam since 1878, the alleged passivity of the Islamska Zajednica has also been severely criticized. The critics were mainly learned Bosnian Muslims such as several professors at the Faculty of Islamic Studies and Gazi Husrev Beg Madrasa of the Islamska Zajednica in Sarajevo as well as “former Wahhabis” such as Jasmin Merdan.

The Islamska Zajednica, which has been criticized for not having taken timely measures, had indeed attempted to take the initiative in the midst of the war with an almost now forgotten fatwa dated 13 November 1993, concerning “the obligation of honouring the principles of the Hanafi madhab.”⁵ Despite current requests to adopt a coercive approach by implementing legal measures, the Islamska Zajednica typically tries to sustain its hegemony by legitimizing its discourse and reconfiguring alliances horizontally and vertically to gain the consent of the members of the traditional congregation, as well as followers of the Salafi-oriented movements. The only exception was its later request from legal authorities (resulting in a law enacted in 2006) not to register any organization or institution with the attribute “Islamic” in its name, which can be regarded as an implicit coercive instrument. However, the developments on the ground, revealing that this fatwa in 1993 had been ignored by some segments of the society, opened the way to new initiatives.

Rijaset, the leadership of the Islamska Zajednica, issued two subsequent resolutions in March and November 2006.⁶ By these resolutions, the Islamska Zajednica underlined its determinacy “to protect the uniqueness of the centuries-long tradition of Bosnian Muslims” and support “an institutional interpretation of Islam in this region, based on Quran and Sunna and the traditions of the Bosnian Muslims,” while calling “those who want to make interpretations outside the institutional set-up, perhaps some humanitarian organizations or others [to] harmonize their programmes with the Council of Elders of the Islamic Community.” Here, it was also stated that mosques are open to everyone, while approval of the imam is required to do “anything in an organized fashion.”

Although the Islamska Zajednica aimed to strengthen its leadership, it has abstained to exclude the dissident individuals and groups and conduct a kind of witch-hunt. The Islamska Zajednica has even refused to name and stigmatize these dissidents, not to “repeat the mistake made in 1949” when the religious leadership declared some ulema and members of the Young Muslim association as “traitors and terrorist.” Cerić preferred to blame “those who have not understood the ‘Islamic tradition of the Bosniaks.’”⁷

Beside these attempts to form a horizontal alliance at the domestic level, the Islamska Zajednica has also initiated a vertical alliance in synonymy with the debate on so-called Euro-Islam with the initiatives of the Reis-ul Ulema Dr. Mustafa ef. Cerić. Following his “Declaration of European Muslims” in August 2005, Cerić has portrayed the Bosnian experience as a genuine form of the European experience of Islam. This has also reminded Bosnian Muslims that preservation of their moderate stand could promote their image. Now, the mujahidin have not only been figures who “sowed discord” within mosques and on the streets, but are also an obstacle in attempts of Bosnians to regain their positive image and to be part of the house of Europe. The dissidents had already damaged these goals by prompting connotations of terrorism.

However, the resolution of November 2006 was found “inadequate and euphemistic” by several Bosnian Muslims, such as Prof. Esad Duraković, professor at the Institute for Eastern Studies in Sarajevo, who stated that “it has not even named the threat that is looming over Bosnia-Herzegovina,” while “it is necessary to act more adequately and with more urgency.”⁸ Such a call for action has already been pronounced by Prof. Adnan Silajdžić, who even proposed that Wahhabi activities in Bosnia-Herzegovina must be penalized.⁹ Furthermore, the strongest accusations came from another professor from the Faculty of Islamic Sciences, Rešid Hafizović, who accused the Islamska Zajednica of being indulgent, by delineating the situation as follows: “Bosnian Muslims have been infected by a new lethal virus, as a recurrence of the recent aggression [1992–1995 war]” which “manifests itself in the form of an arrogant, rigid, aggressive, and anachronistic phenomenon called Wahhabism.”

From 1992 to 2007, mujahidin have changed from an ally to a threat in the eyes of many Bosnian Muslims. For over a decade the traditional interpretation of Islam by the Bosnian Muslims and their religious leadership have been the main targets of the Salafi ideologies of the remaining mujahidin in Bosnia. They have not only fuelled the discourses to depict Bosnia as a hotbed for international terrorism, but also challenged the very core of Bosnian religious identity and its main representative, the Islamska Zajednica. It is now the representatives of the traditional Bosnian interpretation of Islam who undertake the struggle to regain self-confidence and trust before their fellow Bosnians and Europeans.

[A]fter a decade of cooperation the mujahidin have now become a nuisance to Bosnian Muslims.

Notes

1. “Salafism” is a more comprehensive and neutral notion used in Bosnia, while the term “Wahhabism” is mostly used by critics against these groups, which themselves reject the term.
2. SRNA news agency (Bijeljina), 17 October 2003.
3. *Dnevni List* (Mostar), 24 November 2007.
4. See <http://archive.newsmax.com/archives/articles/2007/5/24/134645.shtml?s=sr>.
5. *Glasnik* 1–2 (1994): 198.
6. See www.rijaset.ba.
7. *Nezavisne Novine* (Banja Luka), 17 February 2007.
8. *Oslobođenje* (Sarajevo), 18 November 2006.
9. *Oslobođenje* (Sarajevo), 11 November 2006.

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From Local Insurgency to Al-Qaida Franchise

SAMI ZEMNI

On 11 December 2007 two car bombings targeting UN buildings and the Constitutional Council in different neighbourhoods of the Algerian capital caused at least sixty two casualties while injuring more than a hundred others. The bombings moved the international community and disgruntled the Algerian public as “Al-Qaida in the land of the Islamic Maghreb” (AQIM) claimed responsibility for the attacks

calling the UN “the international den of infidels.” The bombings signalled the transformation of a localized Islamist insurgency, the Groupe Salafiste pour la Prédication et le Combat (Salafi Group for Predication and Combat, GSPC) into a member of the Global Jihad movement. While AQIM, just like the GSPC, still acts first and foremost to destabilize the Algerian state, the movement has adopted an international discourse in which it fulminates against the West in general and against the US and France in particular. Far from being a sign of strength, it is the weakness of the movement and the unintended consequences of the War on Terror that have radicalized the movement.

During the 1990s Algeria was enmeshed in a civil war that caused more than 150,000 casualties but from which emerged a period of relative calm and stability. While there remained several armed Islamist groups at large, it was the GSPC that had been the most active one in fighting the Algerian regime. The group emerged from the Armed Islamic Group (GIA) after it broke down into several splinter groups in the second half of the 1990’s, as a result of the extremist attitude of its leadership under the emirs Djamel Zitouni (1994-1996) and after him Antar Zouabri (1996-2002).¹ It was in late 2006 that the local franchise of Al-Qaida became active with repeated bombings and attacks and the first suicide attacks the country witnessed on 11 April 2007. The AQIM group is now seen as a potential threat by the international community. This became even clearer in the beginning of 2008 when the Paris-Dakar rally—passing through Mauretania and Mali—was cancelled after a statement, presumably issued by

AQIM, that branded the race neo-colonialist and accused Mauritania of collaborating with “crusaders, apostates, and infidels.”²

The War on Terror

Throughout 2005 and 2006 most observers in and outside Algeria agreed that the GSPC found itself politically isolated, under pressure of the security forces, and lacking basic infrastructure and means (money, weapons, logistics, popular support). The combined action of the government with its efficient security policy and its reconciliation programme seemed to bear its fruits. However, the “framing” of the fight against the GSPC into the logic of the global War on Terror has prompted the United States to grant military, logistic, and intelligence support to the Algerian regime. The active cooperation between the US and Algiers led to a growing number of youngsters in Northern Algeria wanting to fight in Iraq and a mounting displeasure in the Sahel-region, a hitherto peaceful region turned into a securitized area “seemingly full with terrorists.” Since 2003 the Sahel region has become a second front against terror. US and Algerian troops have militarized and securitized a vast Saharan region stretching over parts of Mali, Mauretania, Niger, and Chad. Today, it becomes clear that the Algerian government tried to link the GSPC to the “Saharan” corridor as a means to “attract” US military help.³

One of the unintended consequences of the global War on Terror in the Maghreb is the transformation of the local Islamist insurgency into an Al-Qaida franchise. The Salafi Group for Predication and Combat, which in the past targeted the Algerian government, has now become part of the global jihad against the enemies of Islam. With the transformation new tactics such as suicide-attacks and assaults on foreigners have emerged.

Marginalized, the GSPC’s “Afghan” core, the militants who fought in Afghanistan against the Russians and who came back to Algeria in the 1990s, made some appeal to Al-Qaida for help in order to win the franchise of the movement. After contacts with the leader of Al-Qaida in Iraq, al-Zarqawi, the GSPC officially shifted in September 2006 from a local group which was active within Algeria into an organiza-

tion with—at least in discourse—regional ambitions...thus becoming in a way something that the Algerian and US security communities were saying already existed.

The shift became complete with the adoption of the new name and the espousal of new strategies of violent action, including suicide attacks. While the group carries out symbolic attacks in the heart of Northern Algeria (capital and central cities), it also uses the tribal areas of the East and the mountainous regions of the West as its strongholds. The choice is based on the consideration that the militants can better adapt to this area on the borders of several countries than in the suburbs of the heavily policed cities of the North.

The new name does not really change the movement’s organization but offers the possibility for the movement to access more easily the channels and funds of recruitment networks of people around the globe who are sympathetic to the fight against the US army in Iraq. This shift does not entail a shift in authority over the movement as no international or foreign player (Bin Laden or otherwise) can dictate the movement’s strategy. Some observers even suggest that the adoption of an Al-Qaida affiliation has been a conscious effort of the movement to: “keep Algerian fighters from leaving their home country and to attract them to the fight against the Algerian government.”⁴

New tactics

While AQIM still tries to destabilize the Algerian regime—just like the GSPC before—it has nevertheless introduced new tactics that aim to rekindle the insurgency and increase the number of recruits. First of all, there was since the end of 2006 a growing number of smaller attacks in the tribal areas of the East of the country and in provinces far from Algiers that seem unavoidably linked to the movement’s search for funds and the control over parts of the trade routes through the desert. AQIM seems to be in part reliant on the proceeds of trading in stolen vehicles, smuggling cigarettes and drugs, and people-trafficking as well as “tax-levies” on smugglers looking for safe passage through the Algerian desert. Algerian newspapers have regularly reported on the link the jihad groups and criminal activities. These allegations should be taken with precaution but it is nevertheless likely and logical that AQIM is in search of funding.⁵

Secondly, the group clearly started targeting foreigners working in the oil and gas industry as well as in the development sector. For example, according to the al-Jazeera website, the AQIM stated on 21 September that: “This morning, the morning of the blessed Friday, 9 Ramadan 1425 AH at 0715, the martyr hero Othman Abou Djaafar drove a vehicle—brand Mazda—loaded with more than 250 kg of explosives to target the French crusaders who are building the biggest dam in El Hammam Maala village near Lakhhdaria.” Algerian security services admitted that nine people were wounded, including two French nationals and an Italian.

Defying “foreign” nationals and their presumed interests has always been a tactic that aims to show the strength of the group as well as putting the foreign support of the Algerian regime under pressure. New for the AQIM—in comparison with the GSPC—is that these operations bolster its media presence by taping the operations and posting the videos online, particularly the attacks that target foreign workers. The usage

The new tactics and the merger with Al-Qaida have led to generalized internal dissent . . .

Not available online

PHOTO BY LOUAFI LARBI / © REUTERS, 2007

of multimedia technology (especially the Internet) is a new component in the ideological battle for the movement, which signals the fact that AQIM has stepped up its global propaganda. Posting its attacks on Al-Qaida affiliated websites has given the movement the opportunity to recruit new militants from several other countries in the Maghreb.

Thirdly, the group also introduced the use of suicide attacks against official buildings such as army barracks, security services buildings, police stations, or other governmental agencies. These attacks are carried out by a new generation of younger militants, foremost interested in fighting the Americans in Iraq and mainly recruited in Algerian mosques that are not controlled by the state. However, after their training, they are more and more asked to carry out attacks in the country itself. The enlistment of young teenagers who have been excluded from the educational system and who come out of impoverished backgrounds of the capital city's suburbs (where the GSPC has numerous contacts) as well as the recruitment of foreigners (mainly Libyans, Malians, Mauritians, and Tunisians but only few, if any, European Muslims until today) is presumably a sign of the movement's loss of members which for months has been emptying the terrorist organization of its resources.

Internal dissent

The new tactics and the merger with Al-Qaida have led to generalized internal dissent, massive defections, and a general disarray over what course to follow. The rather unilateral decision of the emir of the GSPC, Abu Mus'ab Abd al-Wudud, aka Abd al-Malek Droukdel to join the Al-Qaida movement directly led to divisions and disagreements. The emir was—until his removal during last summer—facing harsh criticisms and strong opposition to his methodology of carrying out attacks using explosives in public areas and robbing the money of Muslims and terrorizing them. Hassan Hattab, the founder of the GSPC, denounced on several occasions the new methods used by the group and has accused Abd al-Malek Droukdel of turning Algeria into a second Iraq. He also tried to convince the terrorists still active to lay down their weapons and give themselves over to the authorities. He finally rendered himself to the authorities in September.

Another prominent leader, Salim al-Afghani from the Humat Al-Da'wah Al-Salafiya (Protectors of the Salafi Da'wa) declared that he was against joining Al-Qaida for many reasons, including the fact that AQIM treats innocent civilians as crusaders or blasphemers plus its abandoning of the doctrines of Sharia and focusing on recruitment of young men whom are used to carry out suicide attacks. The issue of suicide attacks has indeed divided the Islamist armed groups. Newly "imported" into Algeria in 2006, most of the armed groups have rejected the strategy. This became all the more clear when, after the first suicide attack of 2008 on 29 January in Thénia, AQIM stated in a press release its disgust

at the radio programmes on Quranic teachings and the scholars that proved that suicide attacks were illegitimate in Islam.⁶

The continuous bomb attacks have shown however that the numerous defections of both leaders and militants from the movement, the internal conflicts, and the government's reconciliation policy are incapable of completely bringing an end to the violence. While there are inherent deficiencies in the national reconciliation policy (lack of resources, no ideological or psychological help) it is clear that the programme has also had success. Around 6,000 militants have renounced terrorism since 1999 (as part of the civil harmony law), and another 2,000 repented over the past two years as part of the Charter for Peace and National Reconciliation.⁷

With the 11 December attacks and a string of lesser publicized ambushes and bombings during the fall of 2007, AQIM seems to be increasing the level of violence again. It looks like Algeria will be facing terrorist attacks under Islamist banners in the coming years. However, it is also obvious that these groups cannot really count on large popular support. Only a growing feeling of insecurity and destabilization of the Algerian state could bring into turmoil a population that is largely against terrorism. Dissatisfaction with the government (that is already struggling to keep up its legitimacy in the face of growing socio-economic problems) can make it easier for AQIM to recruit the disappointed youth. While the access to the collection of funds from protection rackets and smuggling, and an increasingly sophisticated Internet-based exposure will keep the material basis of the insurgents stable, it is the growing dissatisfaction with the war in Iraq and the global War on Terror that will remain the underlying political basis of the movement's perpetuation and its global Jihadi agenda. The "duty" to fight the "enemies" of Islam will remain a potent slogan in the coming years as the War on Terror keeps generating unintended and unwanted consequences. One thing is sure: it has not made the world any safer.

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Notes

1. On the history of the armed groups, see Luis Martinez, *La guerre civile en Algérie* (Paris: Karthala, 1998).
2. See <http://africa.reuters.com/top/news/usnBAN648110.html>.
3. For a thorough critique of this policy see Jeremy Keenan, *The Dark Sahara: America's War on Terror in Africa* (forthcoming 2008); idem, "The banana theory of terrorism: alternative truths and the collapse of the 'second' (Saharan) front in the War on Terror," *Journal of Contemporary Africa Studies* 25, no. 1 (2007): 31-58.
4. Guido Steinberg and Isabelle Werenfels, "Between the 'Near' and the 'Far' enemy: al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb," *Mediterranean Politics* 12, no. 3 (2007): 411.
5. See, for example, *Al-Khabar*, 29 December 2007 and *Liberté*, 24 April 2007.
6. The Algerian daily *Al-Khabar* was sent a communiqué from the movement (see its issue of 31 January 2008).
7. See <http://www.asharq-e.com/news.asp?section=3&id=10220>.

The Religious Trajectories of the Moussaoui Family

KATHERINE DONAHUE

Zacarias Moussaoui's mother can look out of her kitchen windows past her terrace to the Golfe du Lion of the Mediterranean. She can also look into her own heart to find the source of her Islam. In an interview at her house in Narbonne in February 2007, she told me that she carries Islam in her heart, and that she does not have to wear it on her sleeve or in outward manifestations of religiosity. She wrote in a letter to her son Zacarias when he was in detention in New York, before his indictment for six charges of conspiracy in December, 2001, that: "The jihad we are asked to do on earth is to fight the evil within ourselves in order to be able to live in harmony with others, whatever their religion or their ideas."¹ The jihad she had in mind bridges borders between people and cultures. But long before she wrote that letter, Zacarias had chosen a different jihad.

The story of the Moussaoui family, all of whose members lived together in the same household for a while, therefore sharing the same

social milieu, brings into focus the importance of understanding individual action and choice. Each family member was embedded in the same socio-cultural conditions and situations, and yet each made different choices. It is the problematic role of the anthropologist to balance an understanding of those individual choices with the necessity of placing such individual action into a context that acknowledges the role of sociocultural conditions in framing those choices.

The parents of Zacarias Moussaoui are Moroccan by birth, as are two of their four children. Moussaoui's mother, Aïcha el-Wafi, was married at 14, against her will, she said. The couple's two sons, Abd Samad and Zacarias, were born in France. The Moussaouis were not observant Muslims, and Aïcha on occasion celebrated Christmas with her children. Zacarias was, according to his brother Abd Samad, first introduced to Islam when visit-

ing relatives in Morocco on summer vacations. Zacarias was by all accounts a normal French teenager, who loved Bruce Springsteen and Bob Marley and dance competitions with his blonde-haired girlfriend who lived just down the street. He was, according to his sister Jamila, "the sweetheart of the family."²

Leaving home

But there were problems. Zacarias was of Moroccan descent, and the target of French racism. He and his brother were called "dirty Arabs." The nightclub at the bottom of the hill in his middle-class neighbourhood was the site of fights between French youths and those of North African descent. His girlfriend's parents did not approve of Zacarias. He dreamed of going to university, but he and his brother were both diverted to a technical high school from the *lycée* attended by their neighbours and friends. As Zacarias was finishing school in the early 1990s, Bosnian Muslims were being killed, Algerian elections were derailed over Islam, and the United States was involved in Kuwait and Iraq.

Zacarias moved to London in February of 1992. He told his family he wanted to learn English, and he did so. He applied to South Bank University's international business master's programme, was accepted, and received a degree. While a student there he attended Friday

A glimpse into the family of Zacarias Moussaoui, the only person to be tried in a US court for conspiracy in the attacks of 9/11, brings into focus the importance of understanding individual action and choice in religious behaviour. Though rooted in the same social and cultural background, the members of this family have embarked on radically different religious trajectories: Moussaoui and his brother are adherents of very different forms of organized Islam, while his mother looks inward for her faith, and his sister identifies with Judaism.

prayers at several moderate mosques, including one in Brixton. While finishing his degree the imam of the Brixton mosque, himself a Jamaican convert to Islam, noticed that Moussaoui increasingly dressed in Arab *thobes* and was becoming more militant. Moussaoui demanded that the imam tell him where the next jihad would be. When Moussaoui appeared in the mosque wearing military fatigues and carrying a backpack, the imam asked him to leave. Moussaoui had already been proselytized by groups such as al-Mu-

hajiroun ("the Emigrants"), who leafleted people emerging from the moderate mosques such as in Brixton. Moussaoui was of interest to these groups because of his education and knowledge of the West, and he was drawn to a militant Islam as well, apparently because of his experiences with French racism and his inability, despite his graduate degree, to follow his dreams of finding a good job in international business.³

By the time Moussaoui left the Brixton mosque he was cutting off ties to his family, except for one return visit in the summer of 1997. His mother did not see him again until she arrived in Alexandria, Virginia, in 2002 for hearings concerning his pending trial for six counts of conspiracy to commit terrorist acts, four of which could carry the death penalty. Testimony later admitted into court, and available on the court's website, indicates that the French police knew about Moussaoui's conversion and had followed his movements to Chechnya and Afghanistan in the 1990s. He himself admitted to his travels in court, and he actually pleaded guilty to the conspiracy charges against him in April 2005. He insisted, however, that he was not part of the 9/11 plot. He was sentenced to life in prison, escaping the death penalty because one juror held out for life.

War of words

Meanwhile, his brother Abd Samad had married a Moroccan cousin. Abd Samad joined a mosque run by the Ahabash, or Habache, group, the Association des Projets de Bienfaisance Islamiques en France (APBIF). Al-Ahabash in Arabic translates as "the Ethiopian" or more properly, "the Abyssinian." In Arabic, the group is Jamiyyat al-Mashari al-Khayriyya al-Islamiyya, in the US and other English-speaking countries, the Association of Islamic Charitable Projects (AICP). The movement has now spread beyond Lebanon to France, where it has 17 mosques or prayer halls, Sweden, Denmark, Switzerland, North America, and elsewhere. Abd Samad's wife Fouzia, according to Moussaoui's mother, is excessively religious, wearing long clothing covering her arms and head. She too is a member of the APBIF. Aïcha and the couple do not speak. Aïcha is unhappy that her son Abd Samad wrote a book, *Zacarias, mon frère*, in which he exposed events in the Moussaoui family's life that made her seem a less than loving mother, and there has been discussion in the French press about why he would do so.

Part of the reason lies with the poor relations between the two Muslim groups the Moussaoui brothers joined. There is little love lost between the Ahabash and the Wahhabis, or Salafis. Ali Laïdi reported that Abd Samad Moussaoui was present at a meeting in Montpellier in December, 1999, on the subject of "Islam in the Republic." Abd Samad is reported to have told a Muslim speaker that he was "worse than the Jews and the crusaders." A fight broke out, chairs were thrown, and the police were called in.⁴

Aïcha el-Wafi says that her son Abd Samad, a high school teacher in France, is a fundamentalist much as is her son Zacarias. In an interview with a *Time* magazine reporter, she said of Abd Samad: "...he is also an

"The jihad we are asked to do on earth is to fight the evil within ourselves"



Courtroom drawing of Moussaoui's trial, Virginia, May 2006

PHOTO BY ART LIEN / © AFP, 2006

Islamist radical: a Habashite, who hates the Wahabists like Zacarias, and consider them traitors and rivals.”⁵

The connection to the Ahabash would explain Abd Samad's own desire to distance himself from the actions of his brother even though they had been close before Zacarias left for London. A Rand Corporation report calls the Ahabash a Sufi group which is “militantly moderate,” emphasizing moderation and tolerance and opposing political activism and violence. Anti-habashite groups say that this stance is merely a comforting face put on for western consumption, and point to the fact that members of the Ahabash have been implicated in the assassination of Rafik Hariri, former prime minister of Lebanon. Tariq Ramadan has written that the Ahabash “carry on a permanent double discourse” by saying they support laicism and the emancipation of women and oppose fundamentalism on the one hand, yet at the same time accusing many Muslim religious scholars of being impious unbelievers.⁶

The Ahabash and the Wahhabis vehemently disagree about such points as God's omnipotence and personification; whether the Word of the Quran is from the angel Gabriel (Ahabash) or from God (Wahhabi); whether one can reach God through veneration of saints (Ahabash), or not (Wahhabi); and whether one can live as a Muslim inside states which include Christians and Jews (Ahabash) or not (Wahhabi). In France, this struggle moved beyond doctrinal views to accusations of brother against brother and friend against friend. An FBI communication presented as evidence in the Moussaoui trial said that in September 2000 French security interviewed an un-named source concerning the death in Chechnya of a friend of the Moussaoui brothers. The source was a “hibachi,” and in favour of religious moderation, which, the source said, Zacarias Moussaoui rejected. Moussaoui was said to be cold and cynical and a danger should he return to France. The source of this information was not to be revealed, but the information reflects knowledge that Abd Samad would have had of his own brother's movements.⁷

Moussaoui demanded that the imam tell him where the next jihad would be.

Different paths

Abd Samad and Zacarias Moussaoui's older sisters, Nadia and Jamila, are not observant Muslims. Jamila receives psychiatric care, as does Omar Moussaoui, Aïcha's ex-husband and the children's father. Nadia has said that in her own heart, she is Jewish, that she listens to Jewish radio stations such as Radio Shalom, and reads extensively about Judaism.⁸ Her fascination with Judaism may stem from a connection with discrimination and oppression. In an interview videotaped in France for her brother's trial, she said that she and Zacarias often talked together about racial relations. Zacarias was opposed to violence, she said, and tolerant of racial difference. One of Zacarias's best childhood friends had a Jewish parent. Both Zacarias and Nadia were impressed with the work of Martin Luther King Jr., for social justice and the cause of black Americans, with whom they both identified because of their feelings of difference and exclusion in France.⁹ This difference and exclusion has taken each one of the Moussaouis on a different path in life. Aïcha el-Wafi would prefer that some of these paths had taken different turns.

Notes

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2. Jamila Moussaoui, videotaped testimony, US v. Moussaoui, 7 December 2005, Defense Exhibit 010.V2.
3. Plant, videotaped testimony, US v. Moussaoui, 15 November 2005, Defense Exhibit 012.V2.
4. Ali Laïdi, “Le défi islamiste,” *Le Nouvel Observateur*, no. 1991, 2 January 2003.
5. Bruce Crumley, “Moussaoui's Mother: ‘This is a Show Trial!’” *Time*, 20 April 2006.
6. Tariq Ramadan, *Western Muslims and the Future of Islam* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 29–30.
7. U.S. v. Moussaoui, FBI Legat memo, 30 August 2001, Defense Exhibit 59B.
8. Susan Dominus, “Everybody has a Mother,” *New York Times Magazine*, 9 February 2003, Section 6: 37–41, 56, 85–87.
9. Nadia Moussaoui, videotaped testimony, US v. Moussaoui, 17 December 2005, Defense Exhibit 011.V2.

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Islamic Schools in South Africa

INGA NIEHAUS

Islamic education is one of the key areas identified by the South African Muslim community in their effort to cope with the challenges of a changing society and their wish to preserve a distinct cultural and religious identity. In this context a number of Islamic independent schools have emerged in the last twenty years. Today, South Africa has about seventy five Islamic schools concentrated in the urban areas of three provinces namely the Western Cape, Kwa Zulu/Natal, and Gauteng.¹ They are accredited by the South African Department of Education and they follow the national curriculum. While Islamic studies and Arabic are additional subjects, only Arabic is an official examination subject. Like all other independent schools, Islamic schools get minimal financial support from the government relying on school fees and sponsors. Because their fees are high, a number of Islamic schools are regarded as elite institutions that guarantee high academic standards and above average pass rates. Access to these schools is limited to those who come from wealthy families and a few underprivileged children who are able to secure bursaries.

Interviews with principals, teachers, and pupils show that the discourses taking place within these institutions focus on structural aspects like financial limitations, management, and teachers' qualifications. Nevertheless, educational aims are under revision regarding curriculum development and the Islamic values and norms which shape the religious ethos of the school.²

Since the schools are independent they often struggle to meet financial demands and find sponsors. Furthermore, many schools face problems with regard to management: there are conflicts over leadership between the "Board of Trustees" or "Board of Governors" which consists of the founders and the sponsors of the school who have a specific vision for the institution and the principal who has to manage the day-to-day affairs. Tensions often arise over curriculum and teaching practice between the religious teachers and the teachers who have a secular education. While the former are often representing a particular conservative religious school of thought, such as Deoband, the latter are more open to modern

teaching methods and liberal worldviews.

Islamic schools are popular among Muslim parents because they offer an academic education which provides the learners with the skills to cope with the demands of a globalized world, but within a distinct Islamic environment. In these schools Muslim children are able to observe the praying times and fulfil other religious obligations; the school uniform requires girls to wear a headscarf and gender separation is observed by either teaching girls and boys in different buildings or segregating them in the classroom.

By combining secular and Islamic education these institutions differ from the traditional madrasa education and the Darul Uloom where only religious training is pursued. The majority of Muslim children are educated in public schools and attend the madrasa in the afternoons. Madrasa education takes place either at private homes or at local mosques and mainly comprises of learning how to recite the Quran, the basics of the Arabic language, and Islamic history and rituals. To further their religious education, youngsters join one of the numer-

Over the last twenty years independent Islamic schools have emerged in many countries where Muslims are a minority, among them South Africa. Although these schools differ in religious and pedagogical orientation, they all aim to offer an excellent education and a space where the Islamic identity of Muslim children can develop. While the curricula of some of these schools hardly differ from those of public schools, other schools are Islamizing their teaching materials and methods.

ous Darul Uloom, where they train to become Islamic teachers or shaykhs. The attempt to merge secular with religious education seems to be symptomatic of Muslim minority discourses, and illustrates their need to fit into a society which is shaped by Western and Christian values while preserving their distinct Islamic identity.

The preliminary results of an empirical study of selected Islamic schools in South Africa which was carried out in

2006 and 2007 help offer a critical assessment of the question whether Islamic schools promote processes of identity formation within a democratic society or whether they rather lead to disengagement from the wider society. Theoretically, the project is embedded in the discourses on the role of democratic citizenship education for the integration of Muslim children and the discourses within Muslim communities regarding the concept of the "Islamization of knowledge." Methodologically the project is divided into two phases. In phase one interviews with principal, teachers, and learners, as well as experts were carried out. In the second phase qualitative questionnaires were distributed to pupils aged fifteen to seventeen, asking about their religious beliefs and practices as well as their attitude towards people of other faiths and their views on the society they are living in.

The emergence of Islamic education

The pattern of Islamic education in South Africa has to be analyzed within the colonial and post-colonial political and social order. The requirements of an increasingly industrializing society at the beginning of the twentieth century led to the establishment of a modern Islamic educational system. The Muslim community established so-called Muslim Mission Schools in the Cape Province from 1913 onwards. These schools were modelled after the Christian Mission Schools which educated the majority of children at the time. While the Muslim community had to provide the building of the school and work out a curriculum for religious education, the government paid for the maintenance of schools and salaries of the teachers. These Muslim Mission schools were the first institutions to combine secular and Islamic education, and teach Islamic Studies and Arabic. With the advent of the apartheid government in 1948 these schools were either closed down due to the introduction of segregated residential areas or they were absorbed by the apartheid education system and became public schools. After two decades the demand for Islamic schools resurfaced in the 1980s. The revival of Islamic education emerged at a time when the general education system was experiencing a deep crisis. The national school boycotts of the 1980s had led to a situation where hardly any formal education was taking place at public schools as the majority of pupils and teachers had become politicized and engaged in resistance movements against the apartheid system.

Muslim educators and parents were concerned about the influence of secular ideologies on their children but also the educational standard of public schools which saw an increasing number of black children moving into formally "Coloured" and "Indian" schools due to the relaxation of segregation and influx laws. High numbers of pupils per class and the disadvantaged education background of black children resulted in a decrease of the academic results of these schools. Furthermore, Muslim children were exposed to a dual educational system where they would attend a public secular school in the morning and a madrasa in the afternoon to learn about their religion. Muslim educators and academics feared that this parallel system would present contradictory values and norms to children and lead to polarizations

The attempt to
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where pupils would be compelled to choose which knowledge system would be of relevance to them. They desired an integrated education which would combine Islamic studies with the so-called secular subjects.

Islamization of knowledge

The concept of Islamization of knowledge, which emerged in the context of the First World Conference of Islamic Education in 1977 in Saudi Arabia, influenced the founders of Islamic schools around the world, among them also South Africa. Muslim intellectuals saw Islamic education in a deep crisis as schools and universities in Muslim countries were, in their view, influenced by Western ideologies and secularized to an extent where religion hardly played any role in these institutions. Leading academics like Ismail Al-Faruqi developed the concept of "Islamization of knowledge" which would bring Islam into the secular subjects. Textbooks and the curriculum at schools and universities had to be revised and re-written to make them compatible with Islamic values and norms. Nevertheless, the project stayed an ambitious ideal and did not, in the case of Islamic schools in South Africa, materialize down to the classroom.

Islamic schools are obliged to teach democratic citizenship education as part of the national curriculum within the subject Life Orientation which deals with, among others, diversity, religious beliefs, human rights, rights and responsibilities of citizens, and personal issues. Islamic schools teach these topics from an Islamic point of view and take out issues such as HIV-Aids education and sexual relationships between teenagers. In some schools "Life Orientation" was combined with Islamic Studies to ensure that the subject is taught from an Islamic perspective. Islamia College is one of those schools which combined the subjects, but according to one Islamic Studies teacher most of the teachers found it difficult to teach both subjects together.³

Islamia College

One well established Islamic school in Cape Town is Islamia College. Founded in 1984 it expanded steadily over the next twenty years. Today the school has over 1000 pupils and 80 teachers and is regarded to be among the best schools in the city. It has a Primary School and two High Schools (one for boys and one for girls) and its own mosque. It offers the national curriculum and, additionally, Islamic Studies and Arabic. Islamia College follows a holistic approach of Islamic education: Islam is more than the performance of religious rituals, it is perceived to be a "way of life" which encompasses every aspect of the mind, body, and behaviour of the learner. The college states in its mission that among its objectives is to instil in pupils "a consciousness of Allah as the source of intellectual, emotional, spiritual, and physical growth." The founders of the school, who are predominantly of Indian origin, represent the conservative Deobandi school of thought.

Like most Islamic schools in South Africa, Islamia College pursues the ideal of "Islamization of knowledge." However, according to the founder and director of the school, Maulana Ali Adam, it has not yet achieved its goal to introduce Islam into secular subjects since so far no textbooks and materials for teaching have been produced which could be used by teachers.⁴ However, it remains a top priority to the newly appointed principal, Shaheem Galant; he envisages an ideal situation where Arabic and Islamic studies have the same status as the secular subjects and Islam informs the syllabi of all subjects.⁵ To improve the quality of teaching through teacher-training programmes and to realise its goal to "Islamize" the secular curriculum, Islamia College has joined an international research organization called International Board of Educational Research and Resources (IBERR). The London based organization is supporting Islamic schools mainly in England, South Africa, and USA with school management, staff development, and curriculum research. Since Maulana Ali Adam is one of the trustees of IBERR, a large part of the research and the publication of material are taking place in South Africa. Although the organization has not yet published its own text books it has produced guidelines on how to teach the main secular subject from an Islamic perspective.⁶

The internal focus of educators on the project of "Islamization of knowledge" raises the question, in which ways is the identity of learners shaped by it. According to the preliminary analysis, learners seem



PHOTO BY INGA NIEHAUS, 2007

to flourish well in the sheltered environment of the school in terms of their spiritual and emotional development, the majority stating that Islam is very important for their personal lives. They appreciate the fact that they can practice their religion at school and that they learn more about Islam in the lessons becoming confident and secure about their role within the Muslim community.

On the other hand, learners' experience with non-Muslim sectors of the society appears to be limited. In spite of the inclusion of citizenship education in the schools' curricula, which is supposed to teach tolerance and understanding between different religious, cultural, and social groups, learners have little knowledge about or contact with people of other faiths. The questionnaires confirmed the distance: hardly any pupil had non-Muslim friends and only a few could recall positive experiences with people of other faith while the majority reproduced negative stereotypes of other faith groups. Nevertheless, most of the learners stated that they would like to learn more about other religions and engage in inter-religious exchange programmes.

Islamic schools in South Africa are sites where concepts of Islamic education are transformed to address the challenges of a multi-cultural democratic society and where curricula requirements of a modern education system are modified to suit Islamic educational goals as defined by the school. In the case of Islamia College, one sees an internal pre-occupation with merging Islamic and secular education to reproduce an orthodox Islamic worldview. Democratic citizenship education and the teaching about inter-religious relations take place within the parameters of a conservative Islamic knowledge system and are viewed critically in terms of which aspects are compatible with Islamic values and norms and which are not. Learners would like to know more about other religions, but within the confines of the school they are not able to engage in a meaningful dialogue with people of other beliefs which is regarded to be a prerequisite of democratic citizenship education within a pluralist society. The question remains, whether the learners are able to become active citizens in a multicultural society, without the experiences of how to negotiate differences and resolve conflicts as part of inter-cultural dialogue.

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Students at Islamia College, Cape Town

Notes

1. According to statistical data from the Census 2001, 585.000 of the 654.000 South African Muslims live in these three provinces, see www.statssa.gov.za.
2. The author conducted research in four secondary schools: Islamia College and Darul Islam in Cape Town and Al-Falaah College and the South Coast Madressa in Durban.
3. Interview with Fadlin Ebrahim, 8 October 2007, Cape Town.
4. Interview with Maulana Ali Adam, 28 November 2006, Cape Town.
5. Interview with Shaheem Galant, 9 October 2007, Cape Town.
6. See the IBERR website: www.iberr.org.

Imams in the Netherlands Expectations & Realities

WELMOET BOENDER

In numerous public discussions about the development of a "Dutch Islam," the question emerges of whether an imam can be instrumental in Dutch integration policies by acting as a renewer of the Islamic tradition in a Western liberal secular context. Certainly the Dutch government expects that, within the local migrant mosques, the imams establish a connection between Dutch society and Islam and publicly show loyalty to civic values perceived to be at the core of Dutch identity. In contrast to this optimistic image of an "ideal imam," a worrisome picture is concomitantly drawn of the "existing imam" who is either conservative and isolated, or radical and segregated, and therefore not prepared for the task of integration. When imams appear in the media who seem incapable of fulfilling the government's expectations the moral commotion is intense.

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Dutch integration policies? From qualitative descriptive-exploratory research in two mosques and an Islamic student association,¹ carried out between 2000 and 2004, it appears that the imam can indeed play an authoritative role in influencing the moral views and societal options of the believers through moral admonition (for example in his sermons), religious education, and social advice. But it is also important to note that the imam appears as neither the "villain," nor the "integration wizard" he is stereotypically presented as in government documents and media coverage.

Imams

The imams of my research base their message on the Quran, Sunna, and fiqh, and encourage believers to participate in society, to demonstrate a strong work ethic, to encourage one's children to receive education at the highest level possible, and not to be too materialistic. They also preach sexual morality and stress the importance of mar-

Imams serving in the Netherlands are confronted with diverse expectations. While practising Muslims first of all turn to imams for advice in religious matters, the government expects imams to show believers how to be a good Dutch citizen. But although many Muslims hold their imams in great esteem, the influence of the imam should not be overestimated. Young people in particular are looking in other directions for religious guidance.

riage.² These expressions about private lifestyle and social participation do not seem to oppose civic participation.

Imams thus do speak out about civic society, but they consider the maintenance and reinforcement of the *religious* ties between believers (within their individual and community life styles) as their primary mission. Indeed, imams realise their own limitations beyond this: "as imam, we can indicate

the right position a believer can take and show some alternative options, but it's up to the people themselves to make their choice" (Turkish imam). Moreover, the possibilities of an imam to publicly conjure up reforming interpretations of orthodox dogmas seem limited. In interviews, several imams emphasized that the role of the imam is primarily an exponent of the religious tradition which they present as more or less fixed. "We focus on the religious aspects and have to follow Islamic law," the imams repeatedly explained.

An important reason for the limited powers of the imam within the Dutch context is that, in the lay tradition of Sunni Islam, matters eventually depend on the believer him or herself as to whether or not the advice of the imam dictates his or her opinions and actions: "The imam passes on his knowledge about the religious message of the Quran and Sunnah and leads the prayer. That's it. That's his job. The decision that you eventually take, is made by yourself. You should fear Allah. All the others are humans, who make mistakes" (male student). Unlike circulating role-expectations in public debate, in Islamic tradition, the imam is not in the same position as—for instance—a Catholic priest, who is supposed to mediate between God and men.

Believers

Particularly for first generation immigrant Muslims, the maintenance of their ties with their original home-land culture and religion of earlier days is important. Community formation around familiar structures and institutions, such as the mosque, has been relevant to them. Within such structures and institutions, the authority of the imam, temporarily, is reinforced. Hence, the expectations of an imam, by first generation male mosque-goers have always been strong: the imam should not only lead prayers, but also support and advise his congregation in social matters.

In the eyes of second and third generation mosque-goers, as well, it is the duty of the imam to pass on a normative message through which the differences between good and evil practices, according to the sources of Islam, become apparent. Accordingly believers expect him to guide and educate them in ritual practice. They have many "technical questions" regarding those things which are *halal* (legally permitted) and those which are *haram* (forbidden). Yet, increasingly, and in contrast to the first generation, young Muslims demand that the imam explains, on the one hand, the rationality behind the ritual rules and regulations and, on the other hand, inspires them to experience the spiritual meaning of the moral codes of conduct.

Thus, for second and third generation young Muslims, the imam must not only be authoritative in his traditional institutional position as leader of the congregation in prayer and preaching. Rather, he must also be convincing in his message and comprehensibly sketch the connection between Islamic prescriptions and the context of modern

Dutch society. As one of the respondents, a twenty-year old student explained: "For example, jihad has many meanings. Holy war really is the final meaning in a row: when you have only your body left to fight with and no money, no pen to write petitions, or press releases. Our imam teaches us that it is also jihad to study. It offers you the same forgiveness. He teaches us that you can win with your pen." An imam should possess a certain personal charisma and show empathy regarding the daily situations in which the young and pious find themselves. In practice, each imam does this differently. Moreover, according to the students interviewed, existing imams are not always able to answer their personal requests. "Some special imams have real authority, but many ordinary imams do not" (male student).

Also among young Muslims the imam continues to be respected as a core institution of Islam. But he is not consulted as the community's sole authority and may not even represent the first stage of inquiry. Young Dutch Muslims do not accept his advice indiscriminately, nor do they deem this advice obligatory to follow. Thus, the scope and force of the preachings of an average Moroccan or Turkish imam in the Netherlands should not be overestimated.

Furthermore, diverging levels of Dutch language proficiency often make communication between imam and believer difficult. Likewise, the imam does not always show empathy and sympathy with the daily circumstances of the young. Put these factors together and one soon

Possibilities to consult other religious authorities—who operate on local, national, and transnational levels—have become increasingly accessible. In an eclectic manner, young pious believers are influenced by "television shaykhs" like the Egyptian 'Amr Khaled, and "cyber-imams" in discussion forums on the Internet, by various authors of (translated) books, by female leaders in the mosques, and by their peers and relatives. Whereas first generation Muslims appointed the imam to transmit religious norms and values to their children, these children (who now have children of their own) have grown up to be less satisfied with the local mosque imam as their (sole) teacher. Influenced by modern communication techniques, through which transnational networks operate, they have been introduced to a different religious discourse than that proclaimed within the established migrant mosque in the Netherlands.

Another reason for the imam's decreased role and authority is related to the above observations. Young practising Muslims may associate imams in mosques that are directed by first generation men with a "cultural Islam," which they criticize for reflecting an archaic homeland culture. This has been strengthened by the emergence of groups of new religious leaders—often Salafi—who work outside the established, ethnically based mosque. Such groups have developed a religious discourse which sets them (and their followers) apart from that of many local imams.

New institutions

Among Muslims in the Netherlands a continuous process of interpretation of religious sources and traditions takes place, influenced by the Dutch context as well as by various transnational movements. Practising Muslims in the European diaspora are searching for religious authorities who can help and guide them in processes of interpreting the religious tradition. The imam can be one of them. But in trying to understand, influence or modify these currents, as the Dutch government and broader society has sought to do, it is unwise to focus too heavily on the imams in the local mosques.

As elsewhere in Europe, Islamic religious leadership in the Netherlands occurs through a variety of roles and religio-social positions. New institutions like Islamic universities, where men and women study together, have

Two boys study in a Rotterdam mosque during Ramadan.



PHOTO BY ROBIN UTRECHT / © ANP, 2006

understands why Dutch imams are not always successful with young believers. One student explains: "I think an imam should know what happens within Dutch society. So he must know Dutch. But he doesn't. That's why I am open to his advice on religious matters, but I do not feel strongly about his advice on civic matters." Although young highly educated practising Muslims often state that the imam can be consulted on various questions about life in the Netherlands, only a small proportion of the interviewees in this category visit the imam with personal questions.

Competing religious authorities

If this is the case, then why would an imam training in the Netherlands, as suggested by the Dutch government in the past two decades, not be the obvious solution? Although, because of his institutional position as leader of the congregation and his knowledge of Islamic sources, the imam maintains a certain level of authority, this does not necessarily mean that his audience adhere indiscriminately to his moral admonition. His young educated audience, in particular, check his views and compare these with the ideas of their peers, relatives, Internet preachers, and Dutch speaking lecturers. Besides these sources, female religious teachers should not be overlooked. Though often not visible within the realm of public debate, their influence is considerable. Women generally prefer to put their questions directly to female religious leaders, while eschewing direct contact with imams. Communication thus occurs through written notes with questions, mediation of male relatives, or listening to the Friday sermon.

been established. Certain previously unheard of professions, such as Islamic pastoral caretaking in prisons and hospitals, now exist. Muslim male and female writers, publicists, and other intellectuals have cautiously entered into public debates with their interpretations of religious sources. Those evolutions and its accompanying new discourses are indeed relevant in the development of Islam in the Netherlands or Dutch Islam. At present still "avant-garde," they will become increasingly visible in future interpretations of the religious texts. Imams will remain important. But in their integration policies, the Dutch government should not place all its eggs in one basket.

Notes

1. Based on anthropological observation, forty-eight interviews, and analysis of eleven Friday sermons in a Turkish and a Moroccan mosque community and a Muslim Student Association.
2. See the dissertation of Boender for translated sermons and teachings of a number of imams working in the Netherlands.

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Resisting “Blackness” Muslim Arab Sudanese in the Diaspora

ANITA FABOS

“*Ya wahsha, ya suuda*” (You ugly, black girl!), Aliya playfully remarked to Nur, her brown-skinned maternal cousin. Aliya, a young Cairo teenager whose mother was a Muslim Arab Sudanese immigrant but who identified herself culturally and racially after her Egyptian father, then turned to me and said in English, “I call her ugly because she is from Sudan.” This explicit banter between the cousins of this family, with its (black) Sudanese and (white) Egyptian members, reflects a broader racial hierarchy stemming from centuries of asymmetrical power relations along the Nile Valley. In combination with historical migration and recent forced migration from Sudan, the increased mobility of Muslim Arab Sudanese into Western cultural spaces such as London, Toronto, Houston, and Sydney brings them into contact with new and less familiar racial frameworks. Sudanese, in their increasingly transnational circumstances, must now negotiate racial categories in different countries, most of which regard them as “black.”

The term “Muslim Arab Sudanese” here refers to Sudanese nationals from the dominant ethnic group in northern Sudan, representatives of which have been in power since Sudan’s independence. Following the Islamist military coup in 1989 and ensuing political and economic turmoil, many Muslim Arab Sudanese left or fled Sudan, joining millions of southern and western Sudanese forcibly displaced by decades of civil war. In countries like Egypt and the UK with large communities of minority Sudanese, Muslim Arab Sudanese resist being designated as “black,” a category that in Sudan is pejorative and generally not employed by the Muslim Arab ruling class to refer to themselves. Muslim Arab Sudanese identity in the UK and Egypt is increasingly shaped by negative experiences of “blackness” in both of these two receiving societies. Different historical, cultural, and socio-legal contexts in each country, however, give rise to two distinct approaches to building a familiar and recognizable communal identity in the diaspora.

Race and whiteness

The new field of “whiteness studies” is helpful in thinking about how, in many societies where people of European origins are the majority, being “white” is often considered natural—the norm—while being a minority implies having a racial identity. The comparative study of race has demonstrated that racial categories are quite different from one society to the next, and that these categories are learned and acted out in ways that help to maintain the privileges of the dominant group. “Whiteness,” like “blackness,” can be similarly thought of as a learned cultural category even though it characterizes the racial

Muslim Arab Sudanese consider light-coloured skin attractive and upper class, but in Egypt and the UK Sudanese refugees and migrants are considered “black”; in each country Sudanese Arab Muslims have developed different strategies to cope with this situation. While Egyptian racial categories demand association with the dominant, light skinned majority, in the UK the Sudanese aspire to neither the white majority nor black identity.

majority. While I would argue that the particular racial hierarchy in Sudan predates the “black and white” European colonial categories, it is useful to think of Muslim Arab Sudanese as the standard norm in Sudan against which other minority “black” Sudanese are measured.

Sudanese recognize a wide spectrum of skin colours, describing *abyad* (white), *ahmar* (red), *asfar* (yellow), *akhdar* (green), *azraq* (blue), and *iswid* (black). These designations resonate historically with the classification scheme used by slave traders in the markets in Cairo, where slaves classified as *asfar* and *abyad* were sold for larger sums of money than those who were labelled *azraq* or *iswid*.¹ Despite the fact that physical characteristics in Sudan are by no means clear-cut markers of ethnic identity, the social stigma towards “blackness” as an indication of African or slave origins contrasts white skin with attractiveness, wealth, and leisure. One of the ways that wealthy and powerful classes of Muslim Arab Sudanese have maintained and perpetuated their dominance over time is through promoting their own (lighter) skin colour as a sign of class and beauty. Various traditions of body decoration have developed that draw attention to lighter skin. Lip-darkening previously done through tattooing but replaced by make-up in contemporary times is thought to heighten the contrast between lips and skin, thus enhancing the appearance of light skin. Henna patterns are also thought to contrast with—and thus enhance—lighter skin.

More recently, “whiteness” has become a public issue for Sudanese in Sudan and in the diaspora, where the trend of using cosmetic skin whiteners that contain bleach is noted and discussed in the Sudanese media and in online sites. Beauty salons, pharmacies, billboards, and television advertisements promote cosmetic products which purport to lighten women’s complexions. Beswick summarizes the current Sudanese preoccupation with race and visual appearance thus: “Looking like an ‘African’ is bad; looking lighter is good, and the visual markers of skin colour and hair texture define who is an ‘Arab’ (good) and who is not (bad).”²

The attention that skin-bleaching in Sudan has recently received is noteworthy. A beautician interviewed in Khartoum is quoted as saying, “One hundred percent of women who come here have it done,” she said. “People think it’s prettier to look white.”³ A young woman quoted in a recent ethnography of middle class women in Khartoum states, “*Alhamdulillah*, my hair is okay and I have got all the right features from my mother, but I am dark, thanks be to my father [sarcastically]. Who would want to marry one with such a colour? Every man wants *‘safra*. I myself use all these creams to find a man with a light skin colour. If I stayed dark do you think a light man would want his children to be ‘dirtied?’”⁴ Light skin also symbolizes wealth, as illustrated by a woman quoted in a newspaper article posted on SudaneseOnline: “People judge you here by your colour...If they see me and someone else with lighter skin wearing the same clothes, they would say she is living a comfortable life and I’m a poor woman.”⁵

The same article excited the following comment from a Sudanese man: “Thanks for this interesting issue. It’s so important to discuss such realities of Sudanese life. Such phenomenon can be interpreted in terms of the influence of Arabic culture in the country. In school



curriculum, white colour, and particularly a white woman, is associated with perfection in all aspects of life. A woman is praised if she's white, sometimes regardless of whether or not she's beautiful. Even in Holy Quran white color is always positive with black color being negative. Sudanese people were, and still, brought up with the understanding that they are arabs, and part of this identity is to acquire an aran [Arab] feature: color.⁶



Racial hierarchies along the Nile

Like Sudan, Egypt has played a historical role in slave-trading and slavery along the Nile Valley. Egyptians whose ancestors were slaves—from present-day Sudan, Ethiopia, Albania, and elsewhere—are today part of Egypt's ethnic mix. While subordinate groups in Egypt are not necessarily distinguished by skin colour, mainstream Egyptians use the term *qamhi*—wheat-coloured—to designate the "typical" Egyptian skin tone. As in Sudan, people who look "African" receive negative attention, and Africans who have become refugees in Egypt are maltreated and regularly harassed by Egyptian security. In Cairo, this differential treatment translates into the reluctance of Muslim Arab Sudanese migrants and exiles to consider themselves "African-looking" in comparison to Egyptians. Unlike private, cultural attributes such as food and music, physical characteristics like skin colour are publicly recognizable, if culturally constructed, markers of difference. Muslim Arab Sudanese in Egypt, however, do not tend to emphasize their comparatively darker skin tone.

Muslim Arab Sudanese resist being classified by Egyptians into socially disadvantaged categories like "African," and they actively pursue practices and stress their belonging to a (white) "Arab" ethnicity and the Muslim religion. One of the ways this is accomplished is through espousing a morality discourse that ties Sudanese firmly to Arab and Muslim concepts of proper behaviour, which I have described elsewhere as *adab*—propriety.⁷ Egyptians were largely portrayed as being less proper, and in comparison Sudanese felt that their own behaviour was more "Arab" and "Muslim" than their Egyptian hosts. Through this strategy, Sudanese were also resisting blackness by distancing themselves from their African compatriots while outperforming their "white" hosts through proper behaviour. In this way, Muslim Arab Sudanese in Egypt were able to avoid taking on a racial minority status yet maintain a separate community identity.

Black and Muslim in Britain

In the British context, Muslim Arab Sudanese women and men similarly seek to position themselves at an advantage in the national discourse on race. In contrast to a lack of rights in Egypt under Egyptian immigration policy, in Britain Sudanese are able to claim British citizenship. However, Britain's legacy of racial discrimination and the heightened social and political anxiety with immigration, especially of Muslims, places Sudanese—who, in the British paradigm, are both black and Muslim—in a vulnerable position. In comparison to the Egyptian context, Muslim Arab Sudanese are not able to reconstitute their identity as part of mainstream British culture, and feel somewhat alienated by "immoral practices" (such as premarital sexual relations) that are seen to be part of British society. At the same time, Sudanese seem unwilling to define themselves as part of Britain's black minority.

Nagel points out that, in Britain, Arabs and Arab migration have been "excluded from 'race relations' debates and discourses. They seldom are treated as a separate, identifiable cultural entity or as a 'problem' minority group" in mainstream discourse except in reference to terrorism, Middle East politics, and oil wealth.⁸ Nagel describes the strategy of her Arab research participants in the UK whereby Arabness is disassociated from recognized minority identities and from racialized groups like "Pakistanis" who use the term "black" to underline commonality with other visible minorities.

This disassociation from blackness debates in Britain is difficult for Sudanese Arabs to maintain. Anwara is a Muslim Arab Sudanese refugee interviewed by Nagel who has rejected colour-based identities, despite feeling that she is considered "black" in British society. In the context of her Sudanese middle class background, embedded in Sudanese racial hierarchies Anwara "is disturbed by the thought that she is now black." Rather than searching for commonality with other black groups, she has chosen instead to avoid association with them. Revealing her sense of black as a stigmatized category, she states, "We look at the underclasses here and we say, look at those people, how they behave, how loud they are. They are in a low position."⁹

For Sudanese women and men in the diaspora, the particularities of negotiating a Sudanese Arab Muslim belonging in Egypt and the UK are not only shaped by their social and legal status as immigrants and refugees, but also by negative experiences signified by blackness. As familiar aliens in Egypt and foreign citizens in Britain, Sudanese may hold on to their Muslim Arab identity in both places but it is given different social meaning in these contrasting contexts. The position of Sudanese in an Egyptian racial hierarchy wherein blackness is associated with slavery requires

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them—with their own legacy of enslaving Africans and participating in the development of racial categories in Sudan—to distance themselves from other darker skinned people and maximize their association with the dominant—and lighter skinned—Egyptian majority. In the UK, however, Sudanese, as Muslims, do not seek a position for themselves among the white Christian-identified majority yet neither do they aspire to a black identity, which would embroil them in the charged debate about racism in British society. "Whiteness" is as much of an aspiration for Sudanese in the UK but with the goal of inclusion into an Arab Muslim identity that sidesteps British racial categories.

Cosmetic skin lighteners emphasize whiteness as a beauty ideal.

Notes

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6. Posted by Al-Sadig Yahya Abdalla, 1 May 2006, www.sudaneseonline.com. Spelling as in original.
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8. Caroline R. Nagel, "Constructing Difference and Sameness: The Politics of Assimilation in London's Arab Communities," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 25, no. 2 (2002): 268.
9. *Ibid.*, 275.

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Arab-German Remigration

ALA AL-HAMARNEH

The post 9/11 discourses of public discussion and academic research on Arab migration and integration in the European countries have been dominated, on the one hand, by processes of "Islamization" of the migrants' communities. On the other hand, security, terrorism and crime issues and socio-spatial segregation patterns are pushing for further alienation and isolation of larger segments of Arab migrants. The theoretical framing of these discourses has been delivered by various post-modern approaches of different shapes and colours; transnational, networking, multicultural, post-conflict, diaspora, gender, as well as other approaches. The major focus of these approaches is again the dynamics of the migrants' communities in the host countries. Few innovative works have discussed the issues of remigration and the political aspects of emigration for the Arab countries.¹

The number of people of Arab origin living in Germany is hard to estimate. Numbers between 280,000 and 400,000 have been mentioned on various occasions and in various resources. The numbers include holders of nationalities of Arab countries, naturalized Arabs, holders of dual citizenships, and stateless Arabs. The majority is of Moroccan, Tunisian, Lebanese, Syrian, Palestinian, and Iraqi origins. The different histories of migration of various Arab communities are reflections of the socio-economic and political histories of their original homelands; the Moroccans and Tunisians are descendants of the labour migrants (*Gastarbeiter*) that came to Germany on the basis of bilateral governmental agreements; the Palestinians, the Iraqis, and the Lebanese came for the most part as political refugees; considerable number of Syrian and Palestinian Arabs came to Germany for study and never left.

Histories of collective and individual immigrations find their expressions in various patterns of integration and daily-life practices. Integration is mainly a local phenomenon. Integration processes take place in the living quarter, at work, in school, in public spaces, and venues, etc. People integrate primarily on the micro level before achieving a national (macro) level of integration.²

Types of remigration

A variety of parameters can be used to identify specific categories of returned migrants. In the case of Arab returning migrants from Germany a mixture of the motivations to leave Germany and the expectations in the in-bound Arab countries delivers a comprehensive tool to analyze the dynamics of return and the aspects of interaction between societies, economies, and cultures. There are five major types of returned migrants: Elderly remigration, career remigration, forced remigration, political remigration, and social conservative remigration. Beyond these groups, other types of motivations and expectations have been identified (lifestyle motivations, medical needs, familial reasons, etc.) though due to their individual characters and small numbers could not be clustered in groups.

To the type of elderly remigration belong elderly people that are on pensions and/or not of a working age anymore. These are mainly former *Gastarbeiter* from Tunisia and Morocco that are expecting better standards of life in their original homelands and have rather weak family ties in Germany. There are no exact numbers of these returnees, because they often are still nominally registered in Germany within the households of their children. By doing this they keep a postal address in Germany through which they deal with the authorities responsible for pension payments and health insurance.

This article discusses the remigration of Arab families formerly living in Germany, as well as the possible causes and effects of remigration. For several families, especially those with daughters, social and cultural reasons turn out to be the most important motivation for leaving Germany. Concerned that they will be unable to protect the family honour within a German setting, these families decided to move back to an Arab country where they hope to find a social environment that shares their moral concerns.

Career remigration is taking place among highly qualified young people who are taking advantage of their bi-lingual, bi-national, and bi-cultural backgrounds. They belong mainly to the second and the third generations of migrants as well as naturalized former students (first generation) that see better career chances in the Arab countries than in Germany. They consider their career chances in Germany limited in general, due to their migratory background. The policies of economic

liberalization and globalization going on in many Arab countries, but especially in the rich Gulf Arab countries, give them a chance to realize themselves as mediators and brokers between German-speaking countries and companies from one side, and Arab businesses and markets on the other side. According to different estimations by the German Business Chambers and the German-Arab Trade Chambers their number in 2007 reached 2000-2500 people.

Then there is forced remigration of people that lose their residential permits for one reason or another (students, criminals with no German citizenship, rejected asylum seekers). There are exact numbers available by various German official authorities, but it is practically very difficult to have access to them because they are gathered on state by-state base and not on the federal level. According to the numbers available by the Auslaenderamt in the city of Wiesbaden (State of Hess), around 350 persons of Arab origin lost their residential permits in Hess in the year 2007 down from 400 persons in 2006.

Political remigration relates to Arab political refugees who voluntarily return to their homelands. Iraqis (Kurds and Arabs) make the main group of this type. In the last five years many Arab political refugees from Mauritania, Algeria, and Bahrain returned to their home countries due to improvements in the political situations. Numbers of the returnees are very roughly estimated and cannot be used for further research. Social conservative remigration, finally, concerns the remigration of families with children that decide to live in an Arab country due to socio-cultural conflicts in Germany. These are mainly conservative and better-off families with young children that can easily find good-paying jobs in an Arab country.

Lack of integration

A case study of twenty returned families of Jordanian, Palestinian, and Syrian origin pointed out that the most two important motivations of return, according to the returnees themselves, are the lack of social integration in the living neighbourhood and the wish to raise their daughters in a traditional Arab social environment. The process of measurement of the levels of integration was left to the personal perception of the heads of the households (mother and father) involved in the case study, who themselves described their situation as "less-integrated" or "non-integrated." The traditional Arab social environment is outlined by the heads of the families as a society where "Arab family and religious values and traditions prevail, where solidarity and honour still have a meaning, and where individual freedoms do not clash with the norms of the family, the society, and the religion."

The returned families belong to the educated upper-middle class. All of the male heads of the families (the fathers) hold university degrees (physicians, engineers, IT specialists, brokers, solicitors, etc.). Thirteen families are Arab-German bi-national families and seventeen fathers have a German citizenship while the other three have a permanent residency. All of them used to live in well-off neighbourhoods dominated by native German population. All the families have at least one pre-

teenage daughter. It is indeed noteworthy that all the families that mentioned the socio-cultural conflicts in Germany as the major reason for return have at least one daughter (eighteen of the families have two or more daughters). Families with only male children did not mention in a single case the socio-cultural conflicts as a major or as an important reason for return. Thus only families with daughters indicated that socio-cultural conflicts are the motivation for leaving Germany.

The conflicts of daily life as a conservative Arab in a German liberal neighbourhood, especially for the female members of the family, were always mentioned by the fathers and the mothers as "the problem"; Islamic dress code (headscarf) was openly not accepted by the majority neither at school nor on the streets; the daughters' avoiding of the gender-mixed physical and out-door school activities was not accepted by the school administration. The integration processes on the local level obviously failed. These families did not want to move into the so called foreigners' quarters dominated by disadvantaged segments of population and where the traditional conservative Arab way of life is present in public spaces and generally accepted (partially dominated). The heads of the families were well aware that they do not belong economically, socially, and intellectually to the disadvantaged quarters with their multiple problems. They were looking for good and safe quarters.

Looking for belonging

The decision to live in an Arab country is not the classical return to the original homelands. Of sixty percent of the families in the study four chose to live in Qatar and eight in the UAE. It is interesting to notice that only one family chose the fashionable Dubai as a place of living, while the others chose the more conservative Abu Dhabi, Sharjah, and Ras Al-Khaima. Three families of Palestinian origin decided to go to Jordan and not to the original homeland of Palestine/occupied West Bank.³ It is remarkable that two of the returned families are re-born Christians who keep a very conservative and religious way of life (no alcohol, no smoking, no gender-mixed activities, and for children, partially no TV watching and no Internet).

The high expectations to find a social conservative space to raise the children, especially the girls, have been mentioned by fathers and mothers as well. The parents accept the traditional interpretation of family honour as honour defined through female bodies and sexual behaviour. In this context, the sexual behaviour and the individual freedom of the female members of the families have to be controlled to protect and save the family honour (the male honour as well). The issue of male homosexuality has been tackled by seven of the families who mentioned the problem of raising boys in liberal societies, where gayness is accepted and publicly addressed, as encouraging gay activities. All the families see the Arab-Islamic societies as conservative traditional social societies where children can be better raised and controlled than in the liberal German society.

The influence of these returned migrants in the local communities in Jordan, Syria, Qatar, and the UAE is crucial. Under local communities is included extended families, colleagues, friends, and neighbours. In addition to their educational and economical status, their bi-national character as well allows these returned migrant families to enjoy a high social respect and gain even a solid "reference" rank on European matters and Western cultural issues. During my field research, they were pointed out by their friends and colleagues as pioneers and experts in the context of lifestyles, ideas, and behaviour. By exemplifying the experiences of integration and return of these families various anti-liberal personalities and groups in the local communities construct an amoral and xenophobic image of the German (read Western and European)



PHOTO BY ALA AL-HAMARNEH, 2008

society and use this return as an argumentation in the discussions with the liberal members of the very same community.

The heads of the returned families have never been engaged directly in political activities in Germany and were rather apolitical personalities according to their own expressions. Especially their attitudes towards the Arab diasporic communities and the Arab states have always been politically ambivalent; they were not active in host countries' Arab political organizations and activities. Their leitmotifs for social actions and articulations are embedded in their conservative cultural and religious lifestyles.

Despite their tranquil socio-political activities in Germany,⁴ they are today seen as some kind of icon for the anti-liberal local Arab activists. However, the impact of the constructed "occidental" images of the Western societies is still rather locally limited since the number of such returnees from Germany is small. Taking into account the possible return of numerous social conservative migrants from other European and American countries, their social influence and political role could rapidly grow and may reach beyond the local circle of friends, families, and colleagues. The globalization and internationalization of higher education and health sectors as well as the development of new economies in many Arab countries may, on the one hand, open many career chances for Arab experts-migrants and, on the other hand, deepen the conflicts inside each Arab society between liberal and anti-liberal social movements on issues of individual freedoms, especially female and sexual freedoms, as well as values, traditions, and liberal styles of raising children.

Returned migrants picnic in Dubai.

Notes

1. See Jean-Pierre Cassarino, *Theorising Return Migration: a revisited conceptual approach to return migrants*, EUI Working Papers, RSCAS, no. 2 (2004); Laurie Brand, *Citizens Abroad. State and Emigration in the Middle East and North Africa* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006).
2. See Nadia Al-Ali and Khalid Koser, *New Approaches to Migration? Transnational Communities and the Transformation of Home* (London: Routledge, 2002).
3. Of course the political situation in Palestine contributed strongly to the decision to go to Jordan.
4. For more information on the life of Muslims and Arabs in Germany, see Ala Al-Hamarneh and Jörn Thielmann, *Islam and Muslims in Germany* (Leiden: Brill, 2008).

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Muslim Modernities & Civic Pluralism

AMYN B. SAJOO

As the locus of lived Muslim modernity, neither the everyday nor the public space in which it occurs fits the paradigm of mainstream secular liberalism. The civil and ethical particulars that give shape to Muslim lifeworlds are distinct from and yet overlap with Western (and other) modernities. This article argues that reimagining those particulars—in contexts that range from cinema and epic-tales to architecture and urban design—yields a cosmopolitanism that avoids lapsing into relativism, and is true to the pluralist ethos of Islam itself.

Modernity has many guises. In Jafar Panahi's acclaimed 2003 film, *Crimson Gold* (*Talaye sorkh*), Hossein is a stolid, blue-collar veteran of the Iran-Iraq war who delivers pizzas in Tehran. This exposes our protagonist to the full spectrum of urban sprawl, from clogged traffic to privileged suburbs, the denizens of which might as well be living in Las Vegas. In a poignant encounter at the end of the film, Hossein finds himself trying to deliver pizzas in the lavish quarters of the Other. Here, in stark contrast to his usual clients, people are lean, loquacious, wealthy, and worldly. Yet, Hossein's delivery is impeded by the police, who are busy arresting the decadent young guests of a late-night party. Though generous enough to dole out slices of pizza to the policemen thwarting his delivery, such encounters eventually drive Hossein to breaking point.

Modernity on a motorcycle

Crimson Gold interrogates more than the 1979 Iranian Revolution's cry of *mustaz'afin*, "solidarity with the oppressed." Certainly, there is plenty of blame to go around. If the theocratic State stifles the personal freedoms of many young Iranians, there are other rich youths who, as one policeman observes, are left only to "sleep during the day." While the wealthy enjoy every new technology, Hossein is compelled to climb four flights of stairs because the lift is broken. The traffic chokes; yet Hossein, on a fair sized motorcycle, contributes to this. Avarice is everywhere: "If you want to arrest a thief, you'll have to arrest the world," comments one cynical felon. It is the human condition that *Crimson Gold* engages with plaintively in the spirit of contemporary Iranian cinema, spearheaded by Panahi's mentor, Abbas Kiarostami, as well as by Samira Makhmalbaf and others. We are invited not merely to observe the sins and blessings of onscreen characters, but to reflect on the culture, ethics and political reality in which individuals and communities live—and on the outcomes of choices made by a widening circle that finally encompasses history itself.

Cinema as a medium lends itself well to such an exploration. This success has much to do with its politically transgressive power—a power which continues to keep censors busy the world over. *Crimson Gold* was banned in Iran; while Jafar Panahi and several fellow directors have been denied permission to enter the United States. Of course, this transgressive power concerns not only *what* the images say, but also *how* they say them. In a domain that is mundane or even profane, cinema captures the visual flattening of time. Its images, meanwhile, like the fire of Prometheus, are stolen from the realm of the sacred.

Muslim life worlds both differ from and overlap with Western modernities. Everyday expressions of Muslim identity and citizenship can give a more reliable picture of existing multiple modernities than doctrines or ideologies do. Drawing on examples from cinema, literature, and architecture, this article argues that social visions in the Muslim world are part of modernity.

It is in this sense that Charles Baudelaire's essay, "The Painter of Modern Life" (1860) draws attention to the narrative power of images. To this work is ascribed the first use of the term "modernity." Like Panahi's roving camera, Baudelaire seeks to extract meaning from the everyday with its crowds and masks. Finding much to embrace and disdain in the everyday, he persists in his quest for an

elusive present. In hindsight, Baudelaire's approach was derived from an appreciation and measure of time that, in more recent years, has come to be regarded as the quintessence of modernity.

Time, technology, the cherishing of subjectivity amid class difference, civil society, and a heightened consciousness of the presence of the State, all these lend substance to the varying guises of modernity. The ways in which they do so may, like the relentless traffic in which Hossein delivers pizzas, appear inevitable. Yet, the outcomes of myriad choices are certainly not inevitable; nor do they bear the same significance, emerging out of histories both shared and distinct. Baudelaire's obsession with the here and now was integral to the secular as a new phenomenon, and to secularism as a European socio-political doctrine. Panahi's obsession with urban time may gesture to the secular; but it is located in a public space that is clearly different from that occupied by Euro-secularism. It is thus that we find expressions of the civil which make for plural modernities.

Anyone for authenticity?

Social imaginaries in the Muslim world, for all their differences, partake of the Modern. True, strident Western narratives have spurred an industry in counter-assertions of identity, of difference as essential. The talk of authenticity figures much in the postmodern critique, in reply to the overdetermination of identity by hegemony, real or perceived. In Muslim contexts, it finds expression in the insistence of a "return," usually to a pristine original—text, historical period, practice—cast as authentic. This is mirrored by Western commentators for whom the distinctiveness of Islam is expedient. In both cases, this othering serves political ends, if it is not exoticization for its own sake.

Aziz al-Azmeh pits historicity against the rhetoric of authenticity to avoid exceptionalising Islam, though he does not directly link this to the nature or making of plural modernities.¹ Mohammed Arkoun, in contrast, explicitly links the historical role of the *imaginaire* in managing "symbolic capital" to claims of authenticity.² However, it is the religious imaginary of Islam and the Judeo-Christian traditions that concern Arkoun, rather than the broader social imaginary that occupies us here.

Historicism of a special sort—sacralization—feeds the talk of authenticity in Salafi revivalist trends. Tradition is placed in binary opposition to Modernity, as is often done in Western accounts. Yet it is on a continuum between old and new, past and present, that individuals and communities locate themselves in practice. Needless to say, the everyday expressions of Muslim identity and citizenship, piety and protest, music and modes of dress more reliably yield a picture of the secular than do its ideological markers.

Let us recall how diverse even "core" religious traditions are among Muslims, down to their interpretations of the Quran and Sharia. The more evident this becomes in a globalized world, the more fiercely it is denounced by defenders of a univocal Tradition—outside of which all is profane, whether professed by Muslims or non-Muslims. Yet sacred and secular motifs happily accompany each other in the epics, folk-tales, music, and architecture of Islam. Such components are of formative importance in the identity and ethos of individuals, com-

The narrowing of tolerance has more to do with modern secular nationalism and colonial legacies than with a jealous religiosity.

munities, nations, and civilizations. At times penetrating more deeply than any formal doctrine or ideologies, *The Thousand and One Nights*, the songs of Umm Kalthoum, and the Alhambra do not merely captivate, they also shape how Muslims and non-Muslims see the world and themselves. In the richly illustrated *Hamzanama* (Adventures of Hamza), a collection of heroic narratives about the Prophet Muhammad's uncle, imaginative courage serves virtue: nature is celebrated, political power is mocked, females are empowered, and saints are playful. Such themes educate, socialize, and refresh devotion as they are indigenized and Islamized in the reinvention of tradition.

Cosmopolitanism

The narratives and markers that have plied the circuits of the Silk Road, the Mediterranean, the Sahel, and beyond remind us of the vintage—and vantage—of a pluralist ethos. Yes, it was fed by what sociologists call “the economy of desire”—the driving consumerism of material culture—but there is more to it. For Ibn al-‘Arabi (1165-1240), coming out of Andalusia’s melting pot, overlapping faith traditions across cultures spoke to an underlying unity; and they did so without a relativism according to which anything goes.³ For the Fatimids in Egypt (969-1171), the Mughals under Akbar (r.1556-1605), and often under the Ottomans, the cultivation of a *modus vivendi* among diverse subjects gave rise to a pluralist ethic that was enshrined in law. The narrowing of tolerance has more to do with modern secular nationalism and colonial legacies than with a jealous religiosity.

In our post-9/11 world, the conceits of secularist hegemony come at a high cost. A serious engagement with religion occurs mainly when it meets security objectives. Otherwise, notes Kevin McDonald, liberalism prefers to flaunt a style of cosmopolitanism (complete with an abstract view of agency) grounded in the ideal of autonomy—which thrives on its opposite, fundamentalism.⁴ The liberal cosmopolitan is everywhere at home, welcoming the unknown; the fundamentalist is confined by tradition. The former is curious and open to change; the latter fears and opposes it through tribal anti-modernism.

What this posture fails to grasp are religious grammars outside the secularized personal Christianity of Europe, though such grammars were vital in the West as “sources of the self” that ushered in new public cultures.⁵ Today, older movements (like the Muslim Brotherhood) must contend with globalized forms of religiosity linked to mobility and diaspora. Some religious movements are violent, others are peaceful; but there is more to either than identity politics or resistance to globalism. Post-secular understandings of agency, ethics, and responsibility are needed to deal with new questions confronting the civil. The Habermasian secular public sphere of mainstream liberalism no longer cuts the kebab, if it ever did.

Reimagining the civil

In 2005 Cairo became host to Al-Azhar Park, a seventy four-acre green space that has come to embody historic, ecological and social renewal amid urban overcrowding and decay.⁶ It was the culmination of over twenty years of consultative planning, excavation, rehabilitation, home upgrading, and urban design. A site whose harshly saline soil served as a repository for debris and fill was refreshed and endowed with water reservoirs and tens of thousands of trees—in the midst of Egypt’s 1,000 year old capital packed with seventeen million people. Residents of the Darb al-Ahmar neighbourhood with its appalling housing conditions and massive unemployment were engaged in a renewal of housing, health, work, and credit resources. They were also integral to an archaeological initiative to recover key historic landmarks.

Led by the Aga Khan Trust for Culture in conjunction with domestic and international partners, the Al-Azhar Park project aspires to provide an alternative to the usual approaches to development in declining



PHOTO BY GARY OTTE / © AKTC, 2006

Central Promenade of Cairo's Al-Azhar Park

historic locales.⁷ These have tended to privilege monuments at the expense of neighbourhoods where residents are commonly displaced, often by force; commercial development follows along laissez-faire lines. The critique of neoliberal modernization ideology has much to do with such schemes, where corporate and technocratic priorities hold sway. In the Al-Azhar Park project attempts have been made at making Darb Al-Ahmar’s residents active stakeholders from the planning stage on.

The Park site is integrated with the adjacent Urban Plaza that comprises the new Museum of Historic Cairo. The project aimed to mould a wider cultural memory and sense of civic belonging, of continuity rather than rupture.⁸ It also invokes the particular place of public gardens in Muslim settings from Cordoba, Marrakesh, and Damascus to Isfahan, Lahore, and Delhi. As such, the Park sits congruently with the civic visions of two of the most influential designers of modern public space, Frederick Law Olmsted (1822-1923) and Hassan Fathy (1900-1989).⁹ For Olmsted, landscapes that framed park spaces were key to urban civility; his work included New York’s Central Park. Fathy insisted on socially responsible buildings alive to the needs of less privileged rural and urban citizens; his “architecture for the poor” across Egypt won global acclaim. The Olmsted-Fathy conjunction also subverts the Orientalist “segregated Islamic city” of Tradition that is contrasted with Modernity’s integrated city. In embodying the ideals of Fathy and Olmsted, Al-Azhar Park flags a modernity that is also Muslim. It reimagines the civil in ways that may set fresh standards for vernaculars, Western and otherwise—rather like the innovative Iranian cinema of Panahi, Kiarostami, and Makhmalbaf.

Notes

1. Aziz al-Azmeh, *Islams and Modernities* (London: Verso, 1993), 22-24.
2. Mohammad Arkoun, *Rethinking Islam: Common Questions, Uncommon Answers*, trans R. D. Lee (Boulder, CO: Westview, 1994), 6-14, 86-105.
3. William C. Chittick, *Imaginal Worlds: Ibn al-‘Arabi and the Problem of Religious Diversity* (New York: SUNY, 1994).
4. Kevin McDonald, *Global Movements: Action and Culture* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2006).
5. Charles Taylor, *A Secular Age* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap/Harvard, 2007); Armando Salvatore, *The Public Sphere: Liberal Modernity, Catholicism, Islam* (New York: Palgrave, 2007).
6. Stefano Bianca and Philip Jodidio, eds., *Cairo: Revitalising a Historic Metropolis* (Turin: AKTC, 2004).
7. See http://www.akdn.org/agency/aktc_hcsp_cairo.html#contact.
8. See Kenneth Frampton, ed., *Modernity and Community: Architecture in the Islamic World* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2001).
9. Witold Rybczynski, *A Clearing in the Distance: Frederick Law Olmsted and North America in the Nineteenth Century* (New York: Prentice Hall, 1999); Malcolm Miles, “Utopias of Mud? Hassan Fathy and Alternative Modernisms,” *Space and Culture* 9 (2006): 115-139.

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Islamic Feminism & Gender Equality

QUSIA MIRZA

The ethical project of Islamic feminism shares the central ideals and values of Islam itself—of justice, egalitarianism, equity, compassion, and tolerance. By opening up the question of who has the authority to interpret scripture, and by challenging the power of traditional interpretive communities and the producers of religious knowledge, Islamic feminists are at the forefront of the contemporary reformist movement. Writers such as Amina Wadud and Asma Barlas are conferring upon themselves the authority to challenge the monopoly of traditional interpreters of the Quran, whilst scholars such as Fatima Mernissi are engaged in contesting received notions of Hadith literature. All such scholars are engaged in revisiting Islamic sources and actively furthering what has been succinctly termed the “democratization of *ijtihad*.”¹ Working within Islamic jurisprudence, this entails the use of an interpretive methodology, *ijtihad* (to strive for) to dynamically re-interpret foundational Quranic principles in order to bring about equal rights for women.

Feminists look to the time of Islam’s origin and assert that women, who had played a significant role as the creators of oral texts, became invisible after the inception of Islam, both as originators and interpreters of such texts. Scriptural literature was then produced by men who

incorporated their own restrictive assumptions and understanding of gender relations. Legal texts were also created in this way and a masculine bent was inscribed into the legal literature of that time, resulting in the atrophy of the egalitarian ethos of Islam.² Thus, the feminist project is based squarely upon an Islamic framework within which an ethically correct gender paradigm and resulting legal rights for women may be configured.

The reform of Islamic law is seen as one of the principal means by which the discrimination women have suffered under certain interpretations of Islam can be addressed. In pursuance of this, feminists are advancing new interpretations of the sources of Islamic law, and theorizing a “liberatory praxis” with a “Quranic hermeneutics of liberation” at the vanguard of this endeavour. This means that writers such as Wadud and Barlas are utilizing the notion of *ijtihad* to establish interpretations of the Quran which bring to light the gender egalitarian impulse

of the Quran. These new interpretations then form the basis for an emancipatory agenda for the establishment of equality. Therefore, this project encapsulates the vision of a post-patriarchal Islam which guarantees women legal and social rights, equal with men. This will only be possible, feminists argue, by liberating Islamic orthodox scripture from the stranglehold of male-centred interpretations that have become entrenched in the Islamic canon. Thus, by challenging traditional notions of authority, and deconstructing gendered Islamic discourses, Islamic feminists are producing interpretations of scripture that can be utilized for the radical re-configuration of gendered legal rights.

However, despite this uniformity of aim, Islamic feminism is also characterized by great diversity of opinion. Therefore, it may be more appropriate to talk of Islamic *feminisms* which can be differentiated by

Islamic feminists are reinterpreting Islamic sources in order to achieve equal rights for women within an Islamic framework. They have challenged traditional interpretations of scripture and received notions of interpretive authority, both in Muslim majority societies as well as in the diasporic Islamic world. With their new interpretations they have contributed to the transformation of the legal, political and social rights of Muslim women. There are, however, also limitations to the feminist interpretations of scripture and their potential to deliver gender equality.

cultural and regional, as well as significant doctrinal differences, which have led to divergent schools of thought. A number of writers have offered typologies of contemporary feminist thought and, broadly speaking, they can be divided into two main groups: first, those who see the “inequality” of the sexes in Islam as divinely ordained; and second, those who have engaged in progressive readings of the Quran and the Hadith to unearth the authentic configuration of women’s rights in Islam.

Diversity of opinion

For Safia Iqbal, who belongs to the former group, the literal interpretation of the Quran sanctions a differentiation between the sexes. This is based upon a delineation between the public and the private in which men and women inhabit different domains under the “separate but equal” rubric. Women and men have different roles, and occupy different spheres of life, and it is this definition of equality which challenges conservative representations of women as spiritually inferior to men. The second approach includes writers such as Wadud, Barlas, and Riffat Hassan, who are developing readings of scripture that often depart radically from classical interpretations.

The heterogeneity of this second feminist approach ranges from the creation of new interpretive methodologies in scriptural exegesis, to more critical analyses of the viability of locating gender equality within Islam. Someone who is highly critical of the Islamic feminist project is Haideh Moghissi, who asserts that Islam and feminism are fundamentally incompatible because Islamic scripture contains a highly developed gender hierarchy. Consequently, Moghissi doubts the possibility of developing a programme of social and legal rights for women within Islamic parameters—as these, for her, are inherently antithetical to the notion of gender equality.³

Nevertheless, what is abundantly clear is that most feminists are striving for a renewal of gender equality within the parameters of a discursive framework which is deemed to be faithful to an ethically correct Islamic impulse. This approach is predicated upon the view that such gender equality was an integral part of Islam at its very inception, and that feminists are reviving what has been lost or marginalized throughout the centuries of Islamic history. As a result, the feminist movement embodies both a trenchant critique of conservative Islamic thought as well as opening a new phase in the politics of gender, and of reformist theorization in Islamic thought.

Consequently, there is much to approve of in the advances being made by Islamic feminism and it is a force that is clearly gathering momentum. In the recent past, one can see the changes made to family laws in Iran, and the revisions made to the Moroccan Family Code, the *Mudawwana*, in 2004, as the result of feminist revisionist thinking. However, at this juncture of its development, it is worth raising a number of concerns about the theoretical advances in this intellectual movement and to be more realistic about its potential to transform gender relations in the Muslim world.

A critique of employing authenticity

One of the most striking consequences of the contemporary rise of political Islam (Islamism) is that it has provided a space in which Muslim women have begun to question established versions of their faith in their struggle for gender equality. The Islamist agenda of instituting ultra-conservative interpretations of Islam under the banner of “a return to the past and an original Sharia” has galvanized

The Islamist
agenda ...
galvanized women
to challenge
discriminatory
interpretations of
their rights

women to challenge discriminatory interpretations of their rights. What has been less remarked upon is the remarkable convergence, in methodological terms, between this Islamist discourse of authenticity and the deployment of authenticity by contemporary Islamic feminists.

This is demonstrated by Islamism and feminism possessing a number of common characteristics: both are anchored in the central texts of the Quran and the Hadith literature; both represent their own interpretation as the expression of authentic or “true” Islam; and both discourses have appropriated the notion of the ideal past of Islam as the foundation of law. Of course, the difference between the two discourses lies in how they each conceptualize that ideal(ized) past and, in turn, how that past is used to implement a contemporary legal, political and social order. Thus, the idea of a cultural revival, an authenticity and a “purity of origin” which can be re-created through the mechanism of law is pivotal in both discourses.⁴ Allied to this is the important question of temporality for feminists carving out a new scriptural hermeneutics: what is the relationship between the past and the present in Islam? A central tension that needs to be addressed is that the Quran is a historical response to a historical problem; simultaneously, it is also a transcendental text which is normative and atemporal. How do we reconcile these two ways of reading the Quran, and is it strategic for feminists to deploy a discourse of authenticity?

A critique of methodology

There is also the need to realize the limitations of effecting lasting change purely through the medium of new scriptural interpretations. This is based upon an emerging critique of reformist methodologies, particularly those interpretive techniques which make distinctions between Quranic verses by imbuing some with a normative quality and others with specific, limited application. Criticisms are made of the artificial manner in which a distinction is made between Quranic verses revealed in the earlier Meccan period, which point to gender equality, and are thus viewed as normative, and the later Medinan verses which appear to discriminate against women. This latter type of verse is categorized by feminist theorists as having limited and restricted application.

The critique centres first around the fact that it is not always possible to differentiate clearly between verses revealed in Mecca and those revealed in Medina. Second, many Medinan verses encapsulate principles that are at the very core of the Islamic approach to justice (which incorporates the notion of gender equality) and should, therefore, be viewed as of normative, rather than of limited application. A further critique is that a great deal of emphasis is placed upon a few Quranic verses pointing to a specific type of equality and, from this, feminists conclude that the Quran advocates egalitarianism as a norm. This is counter to evidence to the contrary: that the Quran is a clearly patriarchal text, because this is the historical condition in which it was revealed.⁵

Critics contend that it is incorrect for feminists to avow that Islam is the *only* model within which to frame reformist agendas for women’s rights. In emphasizing scriptural interpretation, feminists fail to take into account the social, political, economic, and cultural factors which may have an equal or even greater power in determining women’s unequal status and legal rights in Islamic societies and communities. In the Egyptian context, Abu-Odeh argues correctly that the feminist sacrifice of secular space for reforms that are couched purely in religious terms, may be problematic—even though those reforms are liberal in nature—as they may prove hard to critique after a while.⁶



PHOTO BY SERGEI CHIRIKOV / © AFP, 2001

A critique of “equality”

We must also be clearer about the concept of equality that is deployed in Islamic feminism. Two important points need to be made about the idea that gender equality can be achieved within an explicitly Islamic framework. First, the concept of equality is one that is assumed, with little or no theoretical discussion of the implications of basing it on the concept of sexual difference, or sameness, with men. The feminist rejoinder to conservative interpretations of the Quran has been to emphasize how sexual difference has been deployed to justify the establishment of lesser rights for women. However, feminist writers have not addressed the question of when, and to what extent, the idea of sexual difference is acceptable within scripture. Second, by basing demands for gender equality in purely scriptural terms, feminists are limited to the depiction of women in scripture itself, of wives and mothers, thus failing to recognize the heterogeneity of

Girls read the Quran together, Afghanistan.

Muslim women and further marginalizing those who fall outside the traditional paradigms of women depicted within scriptural texts.

The need to put forward a systematic feminist position located within an Islamic framework may be necessary from a strategic perspective, particularly as it is the more conservative of feminist thinkers who have had the most political success in their work being translated into legal and political gains. The more radical proposals offered by Islamic feminists remain outside the mainstream of legal thought and peripheral to the centres of power. The question for scholars and activists is how are we to influence those in power—the ulama, mosque leaders, politicians, and the whole gamut of religious and political authority—so that theoretical improvements are implemented into legal and political rights that effect real change in the material reality of women’s lives. Additionally, feminists may also feel that it is necessary to advance a more uniform idea of the “Muslim woman”—which denies difference amongst women—in order to exercise political power which effects real change.

The radical nature of many of the conceptual advances made by contemporary feminist interpreters of scripture is undeniable, and a development that is gaining more supporters. The potential for utilizing these new interpretations to transform the legal, political, and social rights of Muslim women is enormous. In broader reformist terms, the feminist challenge to the traditional notion of interpretive authority, both in Muslim majority societies as well as in the diasporic Islamic world, is also a significant and worthy phenomenon. However, there are both substantive and methodological limitations to feminist interpretations of scripture, and thus to its potential to deliver equality for *all* women. By recognizing both the restrictions as well as the possibilities of such theorizing, feminists can offer a more nuanced and responsive understanding of Muslim women’s calls for equality.

Notes

1. A term coined by Yvonne Haddad and Barbara Stowasser in “Introduction,” in *Islamic Law and the Challenges of Modernity*, ed. Yvonne Haddad and Barbara Stowasser (Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press, 2004), 7.
2. See Leila Ahmed, *Women and Gender in Islam* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992).
3. Haideh Moghissi, *Feminism and Islamic Fundamentalism: The Limits of Postmodern Analysis* (London, New York: Zed Books, 1999).
4. See Qudsia Mirza, “Islamic Feminism and the Exemplary Past,” in *Feminist Perspectives on Law and Theory*, ed. Janice Richardson and Ralph Sandland (London: Cavendish, 2000).
5. “Reply,” in *The Place of Tolerance in Islam*, ed. Khalid Abou El Fadl et al (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 2002), 109–110; Ebrahim Moosa, “The Debts and Burdens of Critical Islam,” in *Progressive Muslims: On Justice, Gender and Pluralism*, ed. Omid Safi (Oxford: Oneworld, 2003).
6. Lama Abu-Odeh, “Egyptian Feminism: Trapped in the Identity Debate,” in Haddad and Stowasser, 202.

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Queer-Friendly Islamic Hermeneutics

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Many contemporary Muslims believe that a queer-friendly Islamic hermeneutics is impossible—or at least that this queer-friendly interpretation is false. And in many ways, it can be seen that queer-friendly Islamic hermeneutics is really a very desperate attempt to reconcile the irreconcilable. Scott Kugle, however, contests this assumption arguing that the words gay and Muslim “belong together because they form the basic identity of actual people in Muslim communities throughout the world.”¹

In addition, analyzing how Islam and homosexuality can be reconciled ideologically is a matter that has not been seriously explored in recent times. Even when it is explored, this is not usually done by academics but by lesbian/gay/queer/trans/bi and intersex Muslim activists themselves, to whom this is personally very important. As such, there is little knowledge in the academy about what a queer-friendly Islam looks like or whether it is even possible in the first place.

The status of homosexuality in the Quran is actually more ambiguous and flexible than Sharia-abiding Islamic states, and the majority of their populace, tend to believe. In fact, the Sharia-endorsed punishment for homosexuality that is carried out in places like Saudi Arabia, Iran, or Nigeria, owes itself to a hadith related about Ali Ibn Abi Talib, the Prophet’s cousin and Aisha’s adversary in the Battle of the Camel, which followed shortly after the Prophet’s death. After the Prophet’s death, two men caught in a homosexual act were brought to Ali Ibn Abi Talib. It soon became apparent that none of the Prophet’s companions were able to produce or remember a hadith in which the Prophet had set punishment for homosexual activity. A young gay, Muslim man interviewed for a documentary relates this very story and thus demonstrates that there is an awareness among gay Muslims that the punishment for homosexuality within Islamic countries can be questioned. Ibn Abi

Throughout the world, Muslims explore ways to be gay and still be part of the Muslim community. Although prohibitive Islamic attitudes towards homosexuality may seem to make this difficult, these are not shared by all Muslims. There is also a counter-culture of Muslim queerness that demonstrates that not all religious scholars were necessarily against homosexuality. This article discusses understandings of Islam that accommodate homosexual relationships.

Talib, however, ordered the two men to be thrown from a rooftop and to be followed by a hailstorm of rocks.²

This event marked the first official stance that a Muslim leader took against homosexual relations and as such this incident appears to be the roots of modern Islamic attitudes toward homosexual relationships. The incident also alerted the early fiqh scholars to the fact that not enough had been said about banning or pun-

ishing homosexuality either in the Quran or the authentic hadiths as collected and extracted by al-Bukhari. In addition, these early fiqh scholars ensured that an active and negative discourse would emerge. They cited questionable hadiths, that is hadiths without a proper supporting chain of transmission that can be traced back to the Prophet and his companions, relating that the Prophet saw male and female homosexual activities as sinful and equivalent to *zina*,³ and that severe punishment befalls the active and the passive partner.

Modern mainstream Muslim attitudes to homosexuality, as represented by the widely known Shayk Yusuf al-Qaradawi,⁴ for example, have inherited a way of interpreting the religious texts that lead to the same negative and damning conclusions about homosexuality. These ways of interpretation can be found within the writings of fiqh scholars such as al-Zuhri, al-Thahabi, al-Suyuti, al-Mashtolee, or al-Hindi,⁵ who frequently relied on ahadith *maqtu’a* (ahadith whose chain of transmission could not be traced back to a reliable source) to substantiate arguments regarding the prohibition of homosexuality.

The story of Lut

These prohibitive attitudes towards homosexuality, however, are not shared by all Muslims. In fact there is also a counter-culture of Muslim queerness that demonstrates that not all Islamic societies or fiqh

scholars were necessarily against homosexuality. There were a number of fiqh scholars, such as Ibn Hazm, Hasan al-Basri, and Yahya Bin Aktham who did not see that homosexuality was equivocal to fornication or that it as punishable under Islamic law. In his book, *Al-Muhalla*, Ibn Hazm explicitly rejects the hadith that claims that lesbianism is “women fornicating with each other” as an inauthentic hadith, or a hadith without *isnad*.⁶ Al-Hasan al-Basri and Ibn al-Hazm were both exposed to homosexual persons and often referred to them quite ordinarily in their writings.

Yahya Bin Aktham, *Qadi al-Muslimin* in Baghdad at the time of al-Caliph al-Ma’mun, was known for his authorization of and involvement in homosexual relations; while Ibn Hazm states clearly that some Muslim communities of his time banned and punished homosexuality while others accepted and authorized it.⁷ Ibn Hazm also alerts us to the fact that the story of Lut’s people, as related in the Quran, was not always considered to be a story warning specifically and exclusively against homo-

Gay Muslim support group marches in the San Francisco Pride Parade.

Not available online

sexuality. Ibn Hazm argues that the story serves as a warning to those who would reject a true prophet, such as Lut in this story. Ibn Hazm stresses that it was Lut's people's insubordination and unwillingness to accept him as a true prophet that led to their destruction and not simply the fact that they engaged in homosexual acts.⁸

Furthermore, in Surat al-A'raaf: 80-84, Lut reproaches his people for abandoning women and engaging in seemingly exclusive homosexual behaviour, but, Ibn Hazm argues, this is certainly not the pinnacle cause of their demise since Lut is additionally disgraced by their attempts to rape his visitor (who also happens to be an angel sent by God to guide Lut out of Sodom, see Surat Hud: 78-81). If Lut's people are, after all, homosexuals, the story stresses this as one of their questionable attributes, but their destruction does indeed seem to be caused by their rejection of Lut and their attempts to rape his visitor, rather than being caused strictly by their sexual behaviours with each other. Contemporary fiqh scholars tend to generalize the story of Lut's people and see it as a story including and characterizing all homosexuals and for all time, rather than choosing to interpret this story as a specific "historical" incident or a story relating to specific individuals. But for the purposes of a queer-friendly Islamic hermeneutics, the question that becomes immediately apparent is: what are Muslims to do with homosexuals who do not resemble Lut's people in that they are not rapists or even non-believers? And this is precisely the question implicitly raised by Ibn Hazm in the eleventh century.

Outlawing *fahsha*

Finally, the Quranic verse in Surat al-Nisa': 20-21, has often been seen by contemporary Muslim scholars to be outlawing homosexuality. The verse tells the believers that if a woman is caught committing *fahsha* (this will be explained in a moment) she should be placed under house-arrest indefinitely or until God works out a way for her. The same verse tells the believers that the two men involved in the *fahsha* should be punished and if they repent they should be released. If by the word "*fahsha*" "homosexuality" was intended, as the contemporary religious figures often claim, then the punishment proscribed here certainly undermines the punitive decision undertaken by Ali Ibn Abi Talib (that is, to throw homosexuals to their death). Nevertheless, even though many modern scholars read "*fahsha*" here as "homosexuality," the word does not specifically mean homosexuality and in fact it could mean any unspecified variety of non-marital sexual activity. *Fahsha* is a word that means obscene sexual behaviour and could refer to bestiality, debauchery, orgy-like behaviours, or possibly, but certainly not exclusively, homosexual activity. It is actually very difficult to substantiate the claim that this verse is related to homosexual activity at all, since the verse seems to be referring to sexual activity between one "theoretical" woman and two "theoretical" men, where the woman is placed under house arrest and the men are punished and released if they repent.

A queer-friendly Islamic hermeneutics

A queer-friendly Islamic hermeneutics begins by, firstly, rejecting the unauthenticated (or severed) hadiths which discuss homosexuality that early, and also later, fiqh scholars relied on. Secondly, the queer-friendly hermeneutics moves to de-programme the belief that the story of Lut in the Quran is a story about homosexuals or worse yet, a story about all homosexuals that ever were or were ever to be. Of the authentic hadiths that remain, however, two are significant, which are authenticated in *Sahih al-Bukhari*. The one to be mentioned here relates a story about a "*mukhanath*." In this historical period, the word "*mukhanath*" can mean a castrato, or an effeminate (usually homosexual) man or a person of indeterminate gender (usually an intersex person). In this hadith, the *mukhanath* was at Um Salma's house (the Prophet's wife) and he was banned by the Prophet from being alone with the women (as he was previously authorized to do) after he provided a sexual description of a woman to one of the Prophet's soldiers.⁹ If by "*mukhanath*" an effeminate, homosexual man was intended (as some modern translators of the hadith see it), we would need to take into account that he was in the presence of the Prophet and that he was banned from entering the women's quarters because he was able to describe them as sexual objects, that is, for his heterosexuality, whereas his presumed homosexu-

ality had allowed him access to the women's quarters and the company of the Prophet in a previously uncontested way. If the Prophet did not object to the presence of a "*mukhanath*" then we can easily see why there were no authentic ahadith relating him banning or punishing homosexuality.

Thus, from a Zahir perspective, Islam and homosexuality can be reconciled. This interpretational style was followed by Ibn Hazm and others and reduces the number of religious texts which can be relied on to the holy Quran and the authenticated hadith collections of al-Bukhari or al-Muslim. The fact that homosexuality was not punished in the formative years of Islam, during the Prophet's lifetime; that the ahadith condemning homosexuality do not have a proper *isnad*, and that the Quranic story of Lut is unnecessarily seen

[H]omosexuality was not punished in the formative years of Islam . . .

as a story about all homosexuals rather than a story about a specific group of people at a specific point in time, all these matters demonstrate that a queer-friendly Islamic hermeneutics is at least theoretically possible.

In-born or not?

Many Muslim scholars who are against homosexuality also argue that it cannot be in-born or *fitra*, despite the fact that many homosexual Muslims state the contrary. This rejection of innateness is due to the premise that God does not make mistakes and creates humans in perfection. It is believed that homosexuals choose to sin by acting on their desires and that homosexual desires in themselves are not sinful, but the activity itself is.¹⁰ These conservative parameters suggest a way for homosexual couplings. Since the desire is not sinful but the act is, Muslim homosexuals can enter into romantic relationships without feeling guilty as long as they avoid certain sexual acts. Or, a more radical way of thinking that is currently being adopted by homosexual Muslims, suggests that homosexuality, in many cases, is indeed *fitra* and in-born and that it is precisely part of the Creator's intention.¹¹

The latter line of argumentation would of course be supported by the indisputable *fitra* of an intersexed person. It cannot be argued that intersexed individuals choose to be intersexed since they are literally born this way, and yet they are not represented in the ahadith or the holy Quran. Therefore, God does create individuals who are neither women nor men even though these individuals are not accounted for Islamically.¹² Therefore, the argument continues, just as God creates individuals who are neither women nor men, he also creates individuals who cannot fit into the exclusive heteronormative gender binary that is promoted by many Islamic communities. This view reflects a rationalist approach to Islamic interpretation which is not at odds with scientific methodology and evidence-based theory, but it goes without saying that this rationalist Islamic mode is not the most popular or currently the most dominant. Nevertheless, the fact that these arguments are being brought forward shows that queer-friendly interpretations of Islam are not only possible in theory, but offer ways to devout homosexual Muslims to reconcile themselves to their faith.

Notes

1. Scott Kugle, "Queer Jihad: A View from South Africa," *ISIM Review*, no. 16 (2005): 14-15.
2. See *Exist*, dir. Peter Barbosa, Arab Film Distributors (2003). Also see http://www.religioustolerance.org/hom_isla.htm. Last accessed January 28, 2008.
3. A hadith cited in several early Islamic texts including Ahmad Bin Mohamad Bin 'Ali al-Yemeni (850 A.D.), *Rashd al-Labeeb Ila Mu'asharat al-Habib* (n.p.: Thala Lil-Tiba'ah Wa'l-Nashr, 2002), 123.
4. See "Islamic Stance on Homosexuality," ed. Nadia El-Awady, Islam Online: <http://www.islamonline.net/english/Contemporary/2003/02/article01-1.shtml>.
5. See Samar Habib, "The History and Representation of Female Homosexuality in the Middle Ages," in *Female Homosexuality in the Middle East: Histories and Representations* (New York and London: Routledge, 2007), 55-62.
6. See Ibn Hazm, *al-Muhalla* (c.1060 A.D.) accessible at www.alwaraq.net, 2232-2233.
7. See Habib, *Female Homosexuality*, 59-60.
8. See Ibn Hazm, *al-Muhalla*, 2228-2229.
9. Bukhari, "al-Nikah," 4834, *Hadith Encyclopedia* Ver. 2.1, Harf (Cairo and Riyadh).
10. Jim Wafer "Muhammad and Male Homosexuality" in *Islamic Homosexualities*, ed. Stephen O. Murray and Will Roscoe (New York: New York University Press, 1997), 87-96.
11. See the documentary, *A Jihad for Love*, dir. Parvez Sharma, Channel Four Films, 2007, and <http://www.ajihadforlove.com/home.html>.
12. See Paula Sander, "Gendering the Ungendered Body: Hermaphrodites in Medieval Islamic Law," in *Women in Middle Eastern History*, ed. Nikki R. Keddie and Beth Baron (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991), 75-95.

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Religious Reform & Polarization in Java

MERLE C. RICKLEFS

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Javanese society—once evidently united in its religious identity—came to be polarized along lines of religious identity. These contesting identities became politicized, which in the end led to major social violence. We may usefully ask whether anything similar is at risk of occurring in today's Indonesia.

In 2006 and 2007, I published the first two of a series of three books on the history of the Islamization of Javanese society from the earliest stages (fourteenth century) to the present. The first book argues that—after various vicissitudes and challenges—by the later eighteenth century Islam was the dominant religious aspect of Javanese identity.¹ It took a form which I describe as the Javanese “mystic synthesis,” a form of Sufism with three distinctive characteristics: (1) a strong sense of Islamic identity, evidently found across Javanese society, (2) widespread observation of the five pillars of Islamic ritual life—the confession of faith, five daily prayers, fasting in Ramadan, giving of alms, and pilgrimage for those who could afford it—but also (3) recognition of indigenous spiritual forces as real, including such major supernatural figures as the Goddess of the Southern Ocean and Sunan Lawu. In the course of the nineteenth century, each of these elements faced challenges until, eventually, Javanese society came to be polarized by contending religious identities, as I have argued in a second volume of the series.²

Reform movements

The initiative for change came, in large measure, from Islamic revival and reform movements which began in Java around the middle of the nineteenth century, and which criticized many local traditional beliefs and practices. By then, a Javanese middle class was emerging. The government monopolies inherent in the colonial *Cultuurstelsel* (cultivation system) still left spaces for local entrepreneurs to exploit. These entrepreneurs—in transport, fishing, ship-building, entertainment, smithing, bricklaying, and such-

Children study the Quran in Java, circa 1910.



PHOTO 2469 COLLECTION OF THE KITLV, LEIDEN, THE NETHERLANDS

Pressures for religious reform—in any society or religious tradition—may lead to greater orthodoxy and orthopraxy, but can also invite opposition, social polarization, conflict, and violence. In this context the history of the Islamization of the Javanese is particularly interesting and significant. That history reveals periods of conflict and periods of reconciliation, so it may tell us something about what circumstances make religion a source for social harmony and what circumstances make it a cause of conflict.

like—often had connections with Arab traders in Java's cities and, most importantly, had become wealthy enough to afford the hajj to Mecca. In both ways, connections with the heartlands of Islam were strengthened and the dynamism of the nineteenth-century Middle East was more readily transmitted to Java.

Figures for the hajj traffic from Java are dramatic. Colonial statistics from the nineteenth century are hardly reliable in detail and some Javanese

undertook the hajj through places in Sumatra, such as Aceh (not yet controlled by the Dutch) or through Singapore, thereby escaping Dutch statistics. It is nevertheless clear that there was a dramatic explosion in the numbers travelling from Javanese-speaking areas to Mecca. In 1850, the colonial regime recorded forty-eight such departures and in 1851 only twenty-three. By 1858, however, the figure was 2,283. Similar numbers were found throughout the later nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, with particularly high figures in some years: 5,322 were reported in 1898, 4,530 in 1908, 7,614 in 1911 and 15,036 in 1921 (in the last case including pilgrims from Madura).

The mystic synthesis carried on. Indeed, some of its most classic expressions are to be found in nineteenth-century Javanese literature, in mystical poems called *suluk*s and in such works as Prince Mangkunagara IV's *Wedhatama*. The latter includes passages such as the following:

*Many are the young people who boast of their theological knowledge.
Though not yet qualified,
they are in a hurry to show off.
The way they interpret Arabic texts
is like a Sayyid from Egypt.
Every time they belittle the abilities of others.
Such persons can be reckoned as frauds:
where is their common sense?
Oddly enough they deny their Javanese-ness
and at all costs bend their steps to Mecca in search of knowledge ...³*

But out of the vast increase in numbers of Javanese hajjis was born a reform movement that rejected this mystic synthesis. The reformers had their own superstitions, of course, but they did not include non-Islamic supernatural figures, such as the Goddess of the Southern Ocean or Sunan Lawu.

Crucially, religious schools increased dramatically in the nineteenth century. Again, colonial statistics are not to be relied upon in detail, but the trend is clear. In 1863 the statistics recorded nearly 94,000 students at Islamic *pesantrens* in Java; in 1872 the figure was over 162,000. In 1893 the figure for Java and Madura was reported as over 272,000.⁴ Many of these schools taught little more than reading the Quran by rote, while others promoted the Javanese mystic synthesis. But many, particularly on the north coast, were vehicles for the reform movement.

Reactions

Not everyone welcomed reformist ideas. Most Javanese villagers evidently found Islam in a more demanding style, with burdensome demands for piety and orthopraxy, unappealing. So for the first time—as far as can be known from the surviving evidence—a group emerged in Javanese society who began to distance themselves from their Islam-

ic identity and adherence to the five pillars. These were the *abangan* (literally, the brown ones). This was a derisory term invented by pious Muslims (who called themselves *putihan*, the white ones) for their less observant neighbours. These *abangan* undoubtedly formed the majority of Javanese. Carel Poensen, a missionary who spent thirty years in Kediri, converted very few Javanese but wrote valuable—and tediously voluminous—reports back to the Netherlands, observed in the 1880s that many villagers found this reformed Islam “too burdensome, too bookish, and that in a foreign language!” He observed that, “Basically, people are beginning to become less religious and pious.”⁵

The emergence of the *abangan* was not the only negative reaction. More remarkable was the growth of Javanese Christian communities for the first time. In the early nineteenth century, European Protestant missionaries began to be allowed to proselytize among Javanese, but they won few converts. The missionaries found it difficult to bridge the cultural and linguistic gap between themselves and Javanese. More successful were pious Christians of mixed European-Javanese ancestry and a few charismatic Javanese. The most remarkable exemplar of the former was C.L. Coolen, born to a Javanese mother and a Russian father c. 1773. He had a European wife and family in Surabaya, but moved to the interior of East Java where he had at least one Javanese wife and more children. At Ngara he created the first Javanese Christian community, beginning in the 1830s. He presented Christianity in a profoundly Javanese garb, including a dubiously orthodox version of the Christian creed, sung like a Sufi *dhikr*: *I believe in Allah the one / There is no God but God / Jesus Christ is the Spirit of God / who excels in his power.*⁶

Among the Javanese charismatic preachers, Kyai Sadrach was the most successful. He, too, presented Christianity in a Javanese style, while Islamic reformers were—in Mangkunagara IV's words—denying their Javanese-ness. He challenged Islamic *kyais* to debate and, thereby, converted them and their followers. Between 1870 and 1873 he is said to have converted almost 2500 Javanese. His relations with the European missionaries, however, were chequered. They regarded people like Sadrach and Coolen as near-heretics, if not actually heretical. Neither of them was quite as remarkable as Kyai Ibrahim Tunggal Wulung, who was tall with long hair and wispy beard, spoke in riddles, said he had been converted to Christianity by magical means and claimed his own magical powers. The converts of people such as Sadrach and Tunggal Wulung were locally called *Kristen Jawa* (Javanese Christians), as opposed to the smaller numbers converted by European missionaries, who were called *Kristen Londo* (Dutch Christians). By 1900, there were probably around 20,000 Javanese Christians. This was a tiny proportion of the 20 million or so Javanese, but it denied the equivalence between being Javanese and being Muslim.

Yet even this was not the most extreme reaction to the reformed Islam. In the Kediri area—and perhaps elsewhere, though we have no surviving evidence—an anti-Islamic intellectual movement emerged. This is encapsulated in three remarkable books that depict the conversion of the Javanese to Islam as a civilizational mistake, brought about by perfidious conduct on the part of the original bringers of Islam to Java (the *walis*) and the first Sultan of Demak. *Babad Kedhiri*, *Suluk Gatholoco* and *Serat Dermagandhul* were written in the 1870s, within a couple of decades of the first signs of the Islamic revival in Java. The denunciation of Islam and its leading figures—from the Prophet himself to local divines—was comical, crude, and sometimes obscene. The writers of these books regarded the true Javanese religion as the *agama buda*—the pre-Islamic “Buddhist” religion—to which the Javanese should return. In *Dermagandhul*, but not in the other two, it is said that this restoration of the true Javanese faith would be achieved by conversion to Christianity. When these books were brought out in print in the earlier years of the twentieth century, they produced considerable political uproar.

Meanwhile, the *priyayi* (the elite of Javanese society), upon whom Dutch rule depended for its day-to-day administration, were enthusiastically embracing the modernity brought by the European presence, the other major new force in Java. The Javanese newspaper *Bramartani* began to be published in Surakarta in 1855. Its pages contain articles, advertisements, and correspondence showing how *priyayi*, along with Chinese and European readers of the paper, were adopting lifestyles and ideas far removed from those of either Islamic reformers or *abangan* villagers. The faith of the former found almost no place in the paper and the superstitions of the latter were ridiculed. News from across Java and the Indonesian archipelago and further afield—elsewhere in Asia,

the Americas, and Europe—filled its pages. The technological advances of the nineteenth century were admired. The contribution of the Dutch regime to educational modernization won much praise. *Priyayi* emulated Europeans in setting up reading clubs, attending European-style social occasions, wearing European clothing, and decorating their houses in Dutch style, and wrote to *Bramartani* about it.

Polarization

Thus, by the late nineteenth century, Javanese society was polarized along religious and social lines in ways which do not appear to have existed before. Islamic (both Sufi and more Sharia-oriented) reformers who sought reconstruction of Javanese religious and social life, adherents of the old mystic synthesis, the majority *abangan* villagers, the first few Christians, writers who thought that conversion to Islam in the first place had been a mistake, and *priyayi* elites who thought the modernity of Europe preferable to Islamic reform (many of them still adherents of the mystic synthesis), represented contending forms of Javanese identity. Until the late nineteenth century, there is little evidence of real conflict, barring the burning of some early churches by Muslim neighbours. But conflict was soon to develop.

In the opening decades of the twentieth century, these contending Javanese identities became institutionalized in modern and particularly political organizations. Thereafter they became more rigid and conflictual. Thus was born the so-called *aliran* (streams) political system of Indonesia, where political, religious, social, and cultural identities were defined by vertical *aliran*, more than by social class. The earliest organization was Budi Utomo, led by *priyayi* who were unconvinced that Islam had been a good idea for the Javanese. For the *abangan* there were the Communist (PKI) and Nationalist (PNI) parties, the latter being particularly a *priyayi* party. For devout Muslims there were both religious organizations (Muhammadiyah for Modernists, Nahdlatul Ulama/NU for Orthodox followers of the Shafi'i school) and political parties (Sarekat Islam, Masyumi, etc.).

By the time of the Revolution and throughout the first twenty years of Indonesian independence, political competition increasingly pitted more devout Muslim adherents of NU and Masyumi against *abangan* followers of PKI and PNI. Propaganda from each ridiculed and demonized the other. From 1963, direct land reform action by PKI followers in Central and East Java produced violent responses particularly from their bitter enemies in NU circles: political and class interests between the landless and landowners were thus intensified by conflicts over religious identity. In the horrific killings of 1965-6, *aliran* differences largely determined allegiances that cost the lives of hundreds of thousands in Central and East Java.

Ongoing research in Java, which I am conducting in collaboration with colleagues there, raises the question of whether a similar process of polarization is now at work. It is too early to judge; but there are similarities with (as well as differences from) what happened in the period 1830-1930. In particular, active—at times aggressive—proselytizing by devout Muslims who aim to change their society has produced opposition. In some places, there is a dialectical relationship between assertive Islamic “hard line” movements and conversion to Christianity.

Attempts by political parties to build *aliran*-defined political constituencies, however, have failed. Indeed, *aliran* seems to play little role in Javanese socio-political-religious life today, as the society becomes generally more devoutly Islamic. Today, it is important also that the vast majority of Javanese are literate and thus able to access and judge information for themselves in ways that were not available to their illiterate predecessors. So the dynamism of Javanese society carries on, and with it the inherent interest of the history of Islam in Java.

Notes

1. Merle C. Ricklefs, *Mystic Synthesis in Java: A History of Islamization from the Fourteenth to the Early Nineteenth Centuries* (White Plains, NY: EastBridge, 2006).
2. Merle C. Ricklefs, *Polarizing Javanese Society: Islamic and Other Visions c. 1830-1930* (Singapore: NUS Press; Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press; Leiden: KITL Press, 2007).
3. Taken from Stuart Robson, ed. and transl., *The Wedhatama: An English translation*, KITLV working papers 4 (Leiden: KITLV Press, 1990), with minor departures.
4. This does not mean that literacy was high in Java. The 272,000 students reported in *pesantrens* represented barely one per cent of the total population.
5. C. Poensen, “lets over den Javaans menschen,” *Kediri*, July 1884, in Archief Raad voor de Zending 261, held in the Utrecht city archives (het Utrechts Archief).
6. Sutarmanto Soediman Partonadi, *Sadrach's Community and its Contextual Roots: A Nineteenth Century Javanese Expression of Christianity* (Amsterdam and Atlanta: Rodopi, 1990), 135. My translation differs slightly from Sutarmanto's.

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Nigerian Echoes of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

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I never thought I would travel to Tel Aviv by motorcycle, but somehow I found myself on the back of a bike on my way to an interview there—not in Israel, but in Nigeria. I was in Kaduna, once the capital of the Northern region. Famously known as the “liberal city” and one of the few cities in the North where Muslims and Christians could live side by side, after the 2000 and 2002 riots Kaduna became increasingly ethnically and religiously segregated. More surprising than the spatial expression of these tensions are the imported terms, maps, and metaphors deployed to articulate them.¹

One mostly Christian neighbourhood, previously called “Television” now sometimes bears the nickname “Tel Aviv,” and Kaduna South, (also mostly Christian) “New Jerusalem.” Correspondingly, the Muslim neighbourhood of Rigasa is now sometimes called “Palestine.” But these parallel terms for neighbourhoods do not just represent the well-known Nigerian flair for humorous renaming. While the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is not a significant factor in internal Nigerian politics, Christian and Muslim activists do sometimes articulate local politics in the borrowed lexicon of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Regional foreign orientations

Yet, religious divisions in Nigeria—and their linkages to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict—have a long history dating to the early days of independence in the 1960’s when the country was divided into three autonomous regions: North, East, and West. These regions roughly corresponded to the three main ethnic groups of the country: the largely Muslim Hausa/Fulani in the North, the mostly Catholic Ibo in the East, and mixed Muslim and Christian Yoruba in the West. From independence in 1960 until the creation of states in 1967, each region had a large degree of autonomy including international affairs.

A particular bone of contention was Nigeria’s relationship with the Muslim World and Israel. During the First Republic, Ahmadu Bello, Premier of the Northern Region had a close personal friendship with King Faisal, and became the Vice President of the World Muslim League in 1963. As an outgrowth of this role, Premier Bello also opposed economic agreements between Nigeria and Israel in 1961-1962. Yet, by 1964, this stance

softened, with the Premier meeting the Israeli Ambassador. In contrast, the predominately Ibo region of the East had consistently extremely strong economic ties with Israel, with many companies operating in both manufacturing and agriculture.

The strong Ibo-Israeli ties have also been explained by referring to the locally popular idea that the Ibo are descended from the Israelites.² Given Israeli investment in the East and theories of the Judean origin of the Ibos, there have long been rumours of official Israeli support to the secessionist movement of Biafra, particularly during the civil war (1967-1970). Although General Ojukwu, Biafra’s leader, flatly dismissed reports of Israeli governmental support, he explained that a small number of Israeli individuals with business interests in the Eastern region acted as intermediaries for arms acquisition and humanitarian aid.³

Unsurprisingly, Ojukwu placed this in a context of a “natural affinity.” Ojukwu also maintained that the Ibo were likewise an “oppressed people that suffered genocide.” Many of the tropes deployed in the Biafran

Although resonances of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict are unexpected in Nigeria, in various ways political actors in Nigeria borrow tropes from the remote conflict to articulate local politics. Relatively autonomous foreign policies of the regions in the early independence period set the stage for contending orientations toward the Middle East, but imported concepts have more recently been deployed in Muslim and Christian politics.

propaganda war echoed those deployed by Israel’s international campaign during the 1967 war, including the David and Goliath metaphor coupled with heavy use of references to “jihad.” Ojukwu explained his deliberate and repeated use of the term “pogrom” in Biafran propaganda stating “one thing that will wake up Europeans is to see the type of massacre that happened to the Jews.”

This balancing act between contending foreign policy orientations remained even after the regions were abolished. In October 1973, Nigeria cut diplomatic relations with Israel in response to OAU (Organization of African Unity) positions on the issue and the October 1973 war. A decade later, Gen. Babangida made Nigeria a member in the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) in 1985. This surprise move caused tremendous controversy and is often cited as a cause of a rise in Muslim-Christian tensions in the late 1980’s. In what is commonly portrayed as a compromise between the two communities in advance of the 1993 elections, Babangida reinitiated diplomatic relations with Israel in 1992. Although the actual motives behind these decisions taken under military rule may never be clear, what is well-understood is that both communities view recognition of Israel as a Christian counterpoint to OIC membership. But why would Israel be seen as a Christian country? When I asked this question to Christians, I was told repeatedly that Israel is a Christian country. Samuel Salifu, Secretary General of the Christian Association of Nigeria, explained it this way, “The average Christian does not understand the details. Israel is the country from which Christ sprang...The way Christians feel about Israel is the way Muslims feel about Mecca.”

Politics of pilgrimage

And this statement is not surprising. The Nigerian government provides a degree of public support for individual pilgrimages—not only to Mecca, but also to Jerusalem. Even though there is no Christian religious duty of pilgrimage to Jerusalem, it has become an established state-sponsored Christian activity in Nigeria as a response to state support for the Hajj. The practice has become so institutionalized that Christians who have gone on pilgrimage are given actual “JP certificates” which gives them the ability to claim the honorific title “Jerusalem Pilgrim” as do Muslims “Hajji.”

Christian Pilgrims’ Welfare Boards in all states administer governmental sponsorship of pilgrims to Christian Holy Lands. In doing so, they coordinate their activities with the Israeli government and hire Israeli tour companies, who then map the ideological and physical boundaries of the “Holy Land” for Nigerian pilgrims. The packages include overnight stays on kibbutzes and “Bible quizzes” in which Israeli-Nigerian flagpins are the prize. While pilgrims visit the Western Wall in order to write their prayers and insert them so that they will be answered, al-Aqsa and the Dome of the Rock are not included.

Not only do these itineraries draw lines inclusively with Israeli culture and exclusively of Muslim heritage, but the Green Line itself is often distorted on pilgrimages as well. One itinerary boasts of boat trips from the Sea of Galilee to Kibbutzes in the Golan Heights, portrayed as if located in Israel. The next day, from the Golan the group “drive(s) southwards through the Jordan Valley to Jericho, the most ancient city in the world” after which pilgrims also take in some shopping at the AHAVA plant on the shores of the Dead Sea on their way back to Eilat.⁴ Mention of border crossings comes only during the Mt. Sinai portion of the excursion, when pilgrims “commit ourselves into the hands of our Lord before setting out for the Egyptian border at Taba.” After this overnight

Jerusalem comes to
... Nigeria through
the form of al-Quds
day ...

sojourn in Arab lands, "we set off again and drive back to the 'Promised Land'"

One critic of Christian support for Israel, Joseph Hayap, Secretary of the Christian Association of Nigeria, Kaduna State, challenges this perspective and attributes his alternative view to increased exposure to areas outside of Israeli control. Of Palestinians, he states: "They have even more Christians in Bethlehem than Muslims. A good number of churches are there and they actually worship. I have been there many times, five or six times." And this has shaped his view: "We have lost so many churches...so many pastors have been killed just because Israel starts bombing...I say no. The problem with Israel is not a religious problem... The issue between Israel and Palestine is purely a political issue." When asked why Christians from various communities in Nigeria view it as a religious issue, he replied: "They think that way because they know that Muslims think that way too. Any day Israel strikes Palestine, assume it's a Christian war against Islam."⁵



PHOTO BY MUSA AL-SHAER / © AFP, 2004

Al-Quds in Kano

As for the Christians, Jerusalem is also a focal point for Muslim mobilization on the conflict. Christian Nigerians go to Jerusalem, but Jerusalem comes to Muslims in Nigeria through the form of al-Quds day (the Arabic name for Jerusalem). Although Muslim (and non-Muslim)⁶ solidarity with the plight of the Palestinian people is neither uncommon nor particularly noteworthy in and of itself, the observance of al-Quds day is a unique practice, most prevalent in Shia areas such as Iran and Lebanon. Because Nigeria's Muslim population is largely Sunni, the observance of al-Quds day in Kano and other cities of the north is quite unexpected. One of the Nigerian Muslim activists most popularly associated with this phenomenon is Ibraheem Zakzaky.

Then a student at Ahmadu Bello University in Zaria and Vice President (International) of the Muslim Students Society of Nigeria (MSSN), Zakzaky travelled to Iran on the one-year anniversary celebration of the Iranian Revolution. Like the rest of the Muslim population of Nigeria, Zakzaky was Sunni but deeply impressed with the political and social transformation in Shia Iran. Upon his return he delivered a series of lectures. During one key lecture Zakzaky spoke about the revolution, recounting his meeting with Imam Khomeini. Students poured into the streets and demonstrated in Zaria painting graffiti saying "Islam only." As Zakzaky's support grew, he left the MSSN and began a movement, called the Ikhwan, inspired by the success of Iranian students.

Because of its association with Iran, the movement has been called "Shia" a designation to be understood in the context of tensions between sects in Northern Nigeria. Zakzaky himself offers the name "Ikhwan" and hesitates to use the term Shia at all despite observing Ashura and other Shia rituals, saying "Here people give Shia different meanings, so we try to avoid it...since we all understand that we are Muslims." Although this statement is clearly tied to Nigerian politics which have seen extensive intra-Muslim divisions, it can also be read as a caution against growing Sunni-Shia sectarian strife in the Muslim World, about which Zakzaky has written and spoken extensively.

Although small in number and based primarily in Zaria with a scattered presence elsewhere in the North, the observances of the Ikhwan are a good example of transplanted practices. Since the early 1980's, Zakzaky as well as many of his followers have studied in Qom and he himself has travelled several times to Lebanon for conferences. Through Zakzaky, the route from al-Quds to Kano thus goes through Qom. The mission statement of al-Quds day on the Ikhwan website states: "Today being 25th of Ramadan is the last Friday of the holy month, and as designated by Imam Khomeini of blessed [sic] memory, is the International Quds Day in which we come out en masse commemorating the flight of Muslims in Palestine and the oppressed globally...It is a day set aside

for reminding the world the significance of the holy Al-Aqsa mosque in Jerusalem and its desecration perpetrated by the Zionists usurpers for decades, by staging peaceful marches, making speeches and distributing releases."

Keenly aware of the sometimes less than benign interest in global activist networks, Zakzaky is quick to place the role of travel and education in perspective. In doing so, he quotes the Hausa expression "*tafiyya mabudin ilimi*" or "travel is the key to knowledge." And it is clear that while exposure to the perspectives of Shia Muslims shaped the expression and particular practice of solidarity, solidarity itself does not emerge from it. Zakzaky states: "Times without number, our ideas did not change because of travels...We thought these things in the late 1970's...we are just as you knew us in the late 1970's, even before the Iranian Revolution."

In Nigeria, the metaphors have been transported and transformed from the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Ibo activists who believe they are a lost tribe of Israel invoked the language of "pogrom" to garner international support. Aspiring "Jerusalem Pilgrims" travel to the "Holy Land" whose physical and ideational boundaries are carefully mapped by Israeli travel agents. Likewise, while solidarity with the Palestinian cause is not uncommon among movements around the world, the Shia inspired Ikhwan movement has introduced a unique form of practice in pro-Palestinian solidarity. Yet, these transnational transactions are neither provisions of material support nor tentacles through which Israel and Iran influence Nigerian politics through Christian-Muslim competition. However, these metaphorical borrowings by Nigerian Christian and Muslim actors have shaped some of the discursive terrain of intra-group relations and group identity in Nigeria.

Nigerian Christians engage in government funded pilgrimage to Israel.

Notes

1. The author would like to thank Dr John Paden and Dr Brian Larkin for their comments on previous drafts.
2. N. T. Ogbukagu, *The Ibo and the Riddles of their Jewish Origin* (Enugu: Okike Printing, 2001); Chief Eric C. N. Okam, *The Ibo as Descendants of Jacob* (Enugu: Snaap, 2004); and Uchechukwu Ikanyibe, *Biblical Evidences: Confirming the Hebrew Origin of the Igbo People* (Benin: Peculiar Heritage, 1999).
3. Interview, General C. Odemgwo Ojukwu, 29 September 2006, Enugu.
4. "Day-by-day itinerary" 05-15 March 2006, obtained from the office of one of the Christian Pilgrim's Welfare Board in a state in northern Nigeria.
5. Interview, Joseph Hayap, 17 July 2006, Kaduna.
6. During a trip to Belfast during Summer 2002, it was difficult not to notice that Catholic-Protestant competition had taken on a new dimension: Republican areas were plastered with Palestinian flags; likewise, Unionist neighbourhoods were sporting Israeli flags.

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Kubilay

Icon of Secularism

UMUT AZAK

Early in the morning of 23 December 2007, four municipality buses were lined in front of the town hall of Izmir to take the members of the Kemalist Thought Society to Menemen, an inland district of Izmir. However, only one bus turned out to be sufficient for the whole group composed of Kemalist activists of all ages. The Society had organized the trip in order to participate in a ceremony, which has been held every winter for the past 76 years.

The ceremony commemorates Mustafa Fehmi Kubilay, a schoolteacher and reserve officer killed in the so-called Menemen Incident, a local rebellion against the secular regime on 23 December 1930.¹ The young officer was beheaded by a self-proclaimed Mahdi and his companions who wanted to restore the Islamic law and the Caliphate. The state's reaction was a violent restoration of its authority by announcing martial law; arresting 2,200 persons; trying 600 of them; and sentencing 37 suspects to capital punishment on the charges of high treason. Among those sentenced to death were Shaykh Esad (1848-1931), a famous Naqshbandi shaykh, and his son, as well as several other shaykhs, villagers, and townspeople who had allegedly collaborated with the rebels.

The rebellion has been depicted by the state as a conspiracy of the Naqshbandi order, which had been outlawed in 1925, and *irticai hareket* (a major reactionary movement) against the secular republic. Moreover, Kubilay acquired a central position in the iconography of the Republic as "the martyr of Revolution." Since 1997, the icon of Kubilay has been revived by Kemalist associations, the army, and the mainstream media as a way to express and restore citizens' dedication to the secularist regime. The people travelling to Menemen in December 2007 had the same intent.

Memorializing Atatürk and Kubilay at the Menemen monument, Izmir

Located on a hilltop in Menemen, Izmir, the monument to Turkey's "first martyr of secularism," Kubilay, has recently become a major site for the defenders of secularism against the AKP government. Isolated from the town below and surrounded by competing sacred sites, this monument reflects the gap between national history and alternative local histories.

In front of the train station in Menemen the municipality band was dissonantly playing old nationalist marches while the people behind waived Turkish flags of all sizes. The march began when the mayor arrived and led the crowd to the ceremony area on the top of the nearby hill, which is protected by the army as a military zone. This isolation of the monument from the town is

a spatial reflection of the gap between the national history imposed from above and local memories which are often unheard or unwritten. Hence, this monument deserves a special focus as a "realm of memory,"² a space where memory is contested. The history of the monument and the commemorations show first of all how the icon of Kubilay has been used in the secularist discourse as a symbol of struggle against religious fanaticism. Secondly, the local reception of this monument reveals that the memory of Kubilay has been highly contested both on a national and a local scale.

Official memory

After the Menemen Incident, the Kemalist elite were determined to keep the memory of Kubilay alive. In 1931, the daily newspaper *Cumhuriyet* initiated a campaign for the building of a Kubilay Monument in Menemen. According to the originator of this idea, Nadir Nadi, the son of the owner of *Cumhuriyet*, such a campaign would strengthen people's emotional attachment to the Revolution; and thanks to the monument Kubilay would be remembered as a legendary figure in the national history.³

The monument dedicated to the memory of Kubilay and the two village guards who were martyred during the incident was erected on a hill outside Menemen in 1934 making them the only people, besides

Atatürk himself, in whose name a monumental statue was erected. The monument depicts a castle—symbol of the Republic—protected by a figure holding a spear. Engraved on it is: "They believed, fought, and died; we are the guardians of the trust they left behind." During the official opening of the monument, emotional ceremonies were held while 20,000 people gathered in Menemen and listened to the speech made by the General Secretary of the CHP (Republican People's Party, the single-party ruling the country between 1923 and 1950).⁴

Between oblivion and remembering

However, Kubilay has not always been remembered during the course of the Republican period. A clear pattern can be observed by tracing the coverage of the "Kubilay, the Martyr Day" from the 1930s onwards, in the daily newspaper, *Cumhuriyet*, which had played a crucial role in the institutionalization of the commemorations.

In the late 1930s and 1940s, Kubilay was almost forgotten, since the press did not report about the commemorations held annually in Menemen. The revival of Kubilay, the martyr, coincided with the transformation of the secularist discourse in the 1950s when the CHP lost power and the government was no longer identified with Kemalist secularism. In the new context of multi-party politics, Islam became a useful tool of populist politics, while secularism, the founding ideology of the Republic, was transformed into a weapon of the opposition. Thus, Kubilay became an ideal icon for this secularism in opposition which has gradually developed a victim psychology.



PHOTO BY AHMET ÇİÇEK / COURTESY OF WWW.MENEMEN.NET, 2006

The first time Kubilay appeared on the front page of the newspaper was in 1952 after the so-called Malatya Incident, an assassination attempt against Ahmet Emin Yalman (1888-1972), a famous liberal journalist. Yalman had been portrayed by conservative nationalist intellectuals as an enemy of Islam because of his alleged membership to the Freemason Society, his role in organizing beauty contests, and his defence of secularism vis-à-vis the increasing public visibility of Islamic religiosity. Invoking the memory of the Menemen Incident, *Cumhuriyet* editors warned the public and the Democratic Party government, which had replaced the CHP in the general elections of 1950, against the anti-secular reactionary forces which could "abuse democracy" by propagating anti-secularist ideas and even use brutal violence to reach their aims.

In the mid-1960s, the socialist movement appropriated Kubilay as the symbol of their struggle against conservative nationalists, seen as new reactionaries. Reaction, in the left-wing secularist discourse, gained the wider meaning of economic and cultural regression, while the Kemalist revolution was reinterpreted as the beginning of the anti-imperialist struggle and an uncompleted enlightenment movement. In the following decades, Kubilay was remembered as a martyr, especially during social and ideological tensions which resulted in violent social clashes, such as those in 1969 and 1978.

On the event of Bloody Sunday on 16 January 1969, left-wing students demonstrating against American imperialism in Taksim, Istanbul, were attacked (and two murdered) by right-wing groups who accused them of communism and infidelity. In the following days, *Cumhuriyet* columnists referred to Kubilay as the revolutionary forerunner of the murdered leftist students and as a symbol of anti-imperialism and revolution.

In 1978, however, the victim of right-wing ultra-nationalist conservative movement was the Alevis, the non-Sunni population, of the city of Kahramanmaraş. Historically, the Alevis have been demeaned by the Sunni centre as a heretic and irreligious group and recently were associated with the leftist movement. In December 1978, the quarters inhabited by Alevis in Kahramanmaraş were ruined by right-wing Sunni gangs, and 111 persons were killed while hundreds were injured. The attackers used the slogan "Muslim Turkey" and targeted also the buildings of the RPP and all left-wing institutions and organizations. The violence of the event again invoked the memory of Kubilay. Those who massacred the Alevis were depicted by *Cumhuriyet* writers as the successors of the reactionaries of the 1930s who had beheaded Kubilay.

In short, the victims of all these events have been seen as new Kubilays martyred by a timeless, abstract enemy referred to as "dark forces" or "reaction." The theme of martyrdom was stressed especially in the 1980s and 1990s following the assassinations of the secularist professors and journalists Muammer Aksoy, Bahriye Üçok, Uğur Mumcu, and Ahmet Taner Kışlalı, who were all seen as "martyrs of secularism" like Kubilay.

The last discovery of Kubilay as a symbol of secularism, however, occurred in the 1990s when the army designated Islamism the major threat to national security. From 1997 onwards, after the Islamist political party began receiving wider popular support, the army invoked the memory of Kubilay, with the motive of protecting the secularist regime even at the expense of democracy. Since the AKP government took power in November 2002, commemoration ceremonies in Menemen became platforms for the army as well as the opposition parties and Kemalist associations to protest the government's allegedly hidden Islamist agenda. The 2007 commemorations were the last of these.

Official memory contested

Although the crowd which gathered this year was much smaller and less agitated than in 2006, the programme of the commemoration was the same as before. Besides members of the Kemalist Thought Society, the ceremony was also attended by the city governor of Izmir, local state officials, high commanders of the army, local politicians, and students. Routine state rituals were performed in front the monument. These were followed by poems and formulaic speeches of students and soldiers chosen by their teachers or commanders for their talent in emotive oratory. The ceremony was interrupted by applause of the audience and their shouting of the slogan "Turkey is secular and will remain secular!" All speakers paid their respect to Kubilay's memory and promised to follow his path if necessary for protecting the secular republic.

Except for a few teachers, students, local politicians, and local Kemalist activists, hardly anybody from Menemen attended the commemoration ceremony. It was understandable: Since 1930, the Menemen population has found itself in an awkward situation as their town has become notorious as the embodiment of religious reaction. The official memory about the Menemen Incident has resulted in the stigmatization of the townspeople as religious fanatics. Every male person in Menemen recalls the moment during his military service when his commander shouted at him and accused him of being "the murderer of Kubilay." Townspeople have been extremely disturbed by this stigmatization and as a backlash, they have boycotted commemoration ceremonies at the monument site. Many express their sorrow for being blemished by such commemorations; some even express the need to demolish the monument in order to erase this unjust association of the town with religious fanaticism.

To resist such associations, townspeople feel also obliged to assert themselves as true secularists. They blame a neighbour town (Manisa) for the incident, because the group of rebels had in fact come to Menemen from there. The monument and the annual ceremonies, according to locals, reinforce a shameful episode of history of which they were not responsible and which they want to forget. They all sadly know about Atatürk's unrealized wish to depopulate the town as a punishment for their alleged collaboration with the rebels. Similarly, they remember not only Kubilay's martyrdom, but also the horrifying scenes of 28 persons who were hanged at gallows set in the streets of Menemen in February 1931. In other words, if the local people's memory does not consciously challenge the national memory embodied by the monument, it certainly resists it by attempting to insert their own realities.

This is also shown by the existence of different but more popular holy *ziyaret* (visit) centres at the foot of the hill. One of them is a mosque, which hides in its basement the tombs of Shaykh Esad and his son, the alleged leaders of the rebellion of 1930. This mosque is today a pilgrimage place for the Naqshbandi successors of Shaykh Esad. Here, instead of Kubilay, this Shaykh is accepted as the real victim of the Menemen Incident, while the latter is seen as a fake event staged by the Kemalist state.⁵ Further up between this mosque and the monument is another tomb which is said to be hosting *Hızır*, a pre-Islamic cult of spring and new life. This tomb is the favourite sacred site for those desiring special boons such as getting married or giving birth to a child, etc. Thousands of people visit here every year in spring, pray and then wait for their wish to be realized. In other words, the sacred space of secularism is circumscribed by other and more popular sacred sites.

The Monument of Kubilay in Menemen was erected by the political elite of the 1930s on top of a hill dominating the town. However, to be placed at a high location does not mean that its presence affects the everyday life of the people below. People resist the domination of the national memory in several ways: nationally, Naqshbandis defy the official history by stressing the martyrdom of their Shaykh instead of Kubilay, while the locals want to forget the event, ignore the commemorations and attempt to revise the official account by playing down their involvement in the rebellion by naming it as "Kubilay Incident" instead of "Menemen Incident." In short, the national memory represented by the monument is far away from being hegemonic. Like the monument on the hill, it keeps its dominance, but not without the challenge of alternative and local memories.

Notes

1. For this incident, see Hamit Bozarslan, "Le Mahdisme en Turquie: L'Incident de Menemen en 1930," *Revue des Mondes Musulmans et de la Méditerranée*, 91-94 (2000): 297-320; Umut Azak, "A Reaction to Authoritarian Modernization in Turkey: The Menemen Incident and the Creation and Contestation of a Myth, 1930-31," in *The State and the Subaltern: Modernization, Society and the State in Turkey and Iran*, ed. Touraj Atabaki (London: I.B. Tauris, 2007), 143-158.
2. See Nora's pioneering study of French realms of memory (*lieux de mémoires*), Pierre Nora, ed., *Les Lieux de Mémoire*, Vol I, II, III (Paris: Gallimard, 1984, 1986, 1992).
3. *Cumhuriyet*, 25 December 1931; Kemal Üstün, *Devrim Şehidi Öğretmen Kubilay: 60.yıl (1930-1990)*, 4th ed. (Istanbul: Çağdaş, 1990), 116-117.
4. *Cumhuriyet*, 26-27 December 1934.
5. This conspiracy theory was first raised by Rıza Nur (1879-1942), a former member of the National Assembly and an anti-Kemalist exile in Paris, who claimed the government incited the rebellion in order to create terror and eliminate the opposition. Rıza Nur, *Hayat ve Hatıratım, Rıza Nur Atatürk Kavgası* (Istanbul: İşaret, 1992), 479-482. The first portrayal of Shaykh Esad as the real victim of the Menemen Incident was made by Necip Fazıl Kısakürek in his *Son Devrin Din Mazlumları*, 18th ed. (Istanbul: Büyük Doğu, 1997, 1st ed. 1969).

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Between Islamists and Kemalists

BERNA TURAM

Islamist forces have moderated widely throughout the Middle East, but this has not been accompanied by parallel democratization. Turkey appears as an exception to this, as the transformation of Islamic actors and the secular Turkish state have been concurrent processes. As I have argued elsewhere, decades of unproductive confrontation within the confines of a democracy have taught both Islamic actors and the state the value and skills of “engagement,” a skill that most other social actors such as the secular left have failed to acquire in Turkey. Engagement is an umbrella term referring to a long continuum of non-confrontational interaction with the state ranging from contestation and negotiation to cooperation and alliance between Islamic actors and various branches of state. Most importantly, engagements have contributed to democratization by transforming both Islamic actors and the authoritatively secular state.¹

By Islamic actors, I refer to AKP (Justice and Development Party) in government as well as the large and internationally active Gülen movement. They share a non-defiant positioning towards the authoritatively secular state. Unlike their forefathers Refah (Welfare) and the Nur movement, AKP and Gülen have successfully negotiated the boundaries between religion and politics to make more space for faith-based lives under secular conditions. Importantly, these multi-dimensional negotiations led these Islamic actors to separate religion from other spheres of life, such as education and political authority. Put differently, Islamic actors in Turkey are no longer contesting over either Islamic or secular state, but mainly over ways of life that are religiously conservative or liberal.

Although a large variety of actors negotiate the terms of democracy in Turkey, this has been obscured mainly by two misconceptions. First, Islamic actors have been mistakenly praised as “liberal democrats” as they have come to the forefront of political reform. Second, the symbiotic association of the Kemalist elite, the secularist followers of Atatürk, with the Turkish state must be revisited as the Turkish state is being transformed against the Kemalists’ will.

State transformation

Since AKP first came to power in 2002, it has developed constructive relations with several branches of the state, including even the military, the staunchest safeguard of laicism, the constitutional principle amounting to state control of religion. The reform packages included the reduction of military control over politics through institutional changes in the National Council of Security (MGK). During the first years of its rule, AKP conducted both economic and political reforms, including the amendment of the penal code, the expansion of rights of ethnic minorities and women, as well as decreasing inflation and increasing economic growth. Although the momentum of reforms has slowed down, the government is currently working on amending the constitution.

In addition to political reforms, AKP’s pro-free-market attitudes have precipitated the rise of an Islamic bourgeoisie. A considerable amount of wealth is accumulated in the hands of Islamic actors, who mostly own small and medium size businesses. Subsequently, the Islamic actors who were previously associated with lower socio-economic status became competitive with Turkey’s traditionally secular economic elite. The integration of Turkish Islamic actors into the domestic and global markets further empowered them vis-à-vis the state by facilitating their engagement with it without losing their autonomy.

The transition is not finalized. In April 2007 the Turkish military gave a “warning” to AKP upon its nomination of Abdullah Gül, the former Min-

In the political developments in Turkey over the last months all attention has gone to the Islamists and Kemalists. The struggle between those two seems to have overshadowed the concerns of many ordinary Turkish citizens. Nevertheless, people who sympathized with neither of the two sides were instrumental in putting up an opposition movement against the AKP government. It remains a question whether they can bring about further democratization in Turkey.

ister of Foreign Affairs, for presidency. Terrified by the idea of the first devout president on the secular Turkish Republic, the collusion between the military and the constitutional court postponed the presidential elections. A secularist outburst followed expressing doubts about the limits and even the “necessity” of democracy. These worries are rather unsubstantiated because these contestations between Islamic actors and secular state are strong indicators

of the transition from authoritarian rule. As Sheri Berman reminds us, democratization has never been a smooth sail, but simply a bloody business.² The most praised Western democracies emerged out of a long-term struggle among and between various social forces and authoritarian regimes.

Despite the collusion between the military and the constitutional court, AKP won the parliamentary elections for the second time in July 2007 by forty seven percent vote—up from thirty three percent in 2002. The results of the election were particularly unwelcome for the military and the Kemalist elite and the secularist opposition party, Republican People’s Party (CHP). In the past, democrats from the secular left had found refuge under CHP’s roof. However, as the secularist politics of CHP have become increasingly anti-democratic and pro-military, and alienated the democratic left, it has become a home for hardcore Kemalists only.

The Kemalist-led backlash

The controversy surrounding the presidential nomination of Abdullah Gül incited a vocal secularist backlash. Kemalists, mostly women, who played pioneer roles in Kemalist civil society organizations, led this backlash in the three largest cities, Istanbul, Izmir, and Ankara.³ Although exceptions apply, the Kemalist elite typically comes mostly from privileged family and socio-economic background, holds leadership positions in state or society, and is above the age of sixty. Under the Kemalist leadership, hundreds of thousands of people (1.5 million estimated in Izmir only) poured to the streets opposing a wide variety of issues including the rapid rise of AKP’s popularity and power.

In my interviews, Kemalist leaders made radical statements expressing alienation from the idea of democracy, such as: “We do not want democracy anymore, as it is used and abused by the Islamists.” Today’s Kemalists, unlike their hero Atatürk, are more and more estranged from the West, as the EU largely supports AKP’s reform packages. One of the leaders of the protests stated: “The West and the EU do not understand the sacred meaning of the military for the Turkish society. In our country, there is no difference between an NGO and the military, each of which come to rescue us from political or natural disasters such as Sharia or earthquake.” A considerable majority of Kemalists supports the military’s domination in politics. Despite the vocal secularist backlash, not only did Gül become the president in a few months, but also the backlash faded immediately after the parliamentary elections.

Why did the backlash lose its remarkable momentum? Typical of social outbursts, the secularist backlash exploded as an abrupt and emotionally charged response to events. This emotional energy is not enough to constitute a durable social movement that can engage with the state. More importantly, the symbiotic relationship between the Kemalist elite and the secular state has prevented the former from growing as a social group with agendas that are separate from the Republic. Differently put, the Kemalists’ claim of a monopoly of the Republic has undermined their own autonomy as independent social actors. Ironically, although Kemalists claimed to be the guardians

of secular democracy, they lack the basic experience of citizenry to negotiate with the state and to push for their own agendas by using democratic channels. Whether they are state officials or members of civil society, Kemalists of the new millennium need to come to terms with the separate and autonomous sphere of the state and society. This is the first step toward the politics of engagement that the Islamic actors in Turkey have mastered.

Ordinary citizens

If the Kemalists do not adjust themselves to the requirements of participating in a more liberal democracy, they are likely to become an impediment to shifting relations between the state and ordinary secular citizens. The majority of Turkish citizens do not associate with either Kemalists or Islamic actors. Hence, they do not mobilize or organize collectively with any of these groups. Their refusal to base their lives on faith and religious conservatism separates them from Islamic actors. Although they are discontent with political Islam, they also do not ally with Kemalists and their authoritarian laicism. Both of these polarized groups fall short of satisfying different needs of secular Turkish citizens for individual freedoms.

The worst impact of the inefficient outbursts of the Kemalists is the fact that they overshadow the voice and presence of a diverse and popular secular resistance to political Islam. Unlike the Kemalists and spokespeople, secular crowds in the 2007 protests crosscut the lines of class, social status, gender, age, occupation, and even political orientation. The rich, the middle class, and the poor walked together to protest AKP. Unlike the old-school Kemalists, the participating secular people were from every age group, including the youth. Most importantly, this was the first public demonstration in which a large spectrum of the secular and the faithful—including some Muslims with headscarf—joined forces against political Islam. Considering the close ties between the pious president Gül and the AKP government, the secular masses expressed fear of losing the separation of powers between government, presidency, and parliament. Briefly, the protestors exercised “democracy in everyday life,” while the Kemalists explicitly denounced democratic reforms under an Islamic party’s leadership.

Democratic outcomes require fair and genuine competition, but there seems to be none for AKP at the moment. In an informal dinner party in Istanbul, I had the chance to meet and chat with Abdullah Gül. I was very surprised to see how calm and confident he remained in the middle of the turbulence, which was mainly about his presidency. He told me: “The reform process has started. We will not be stopped.” Gül’s serenity was largely due to the inefficient opposition politics by Kemalists and CHP.

AKP and liberal democrats

The successive victories of AKP have come with increasing religious conservatism in everyday life as a package deal. As many restaurants stopped serving alcohol, secular Turks from every walk of life stood up for their rights to consume alcohol wherever they wish. Not just the Kemalists but secular groups at large express discomfort by the rise of religious conservatism in daily life. Especially at the neighbourhood level, the tensions between religious conservatism and the needs of the secular citizens increase rapidly. In certain neighbourhoods and cities, women who are dressed revealingly complain increasingly about judgmental looks. More and more people express discomfort about being refused to be served food during Ramadan and being judged by the pious when they eat in public. Pious leaders, such as Gül, do serve alcohol both in private and official events to display their cooperation and compromise. However, democratic ends cannot be trusted to the goodwill of political leaders.

The fact that Islamic actors in Turkey undertake political reform does not render them “liberal democrats.” The term must be strictly reserved for social actors who unconditionally defend the rights and freedom of others and not just themselves. Probably aware of this distinction, AKP recruited a considerable number of genuine democrats who were previously active in the secular left. It is also significant that the Socialist International has approached AKP, but not CHP, for membership. The reason that democrats temporarily cooperate with AKP is that it is the only party that undertakes political reform in Turkey. But it would be a clear oddity to assign the role of a liberal democrat to Islamic actors, who tried to criminalize adultery, and who do not even claim to be liberal outside the economic realm.

In contrast to the liberal democrats, AKP yearns for democratization mainly because a more democratic state will emancipate and empower Islamic actors by tolerating their own faith-based life. Similar to the founding fathers’ reforms as part of their broader state-building project, AKP’s reforms are supplementary parts of their broader scheme of political reform. For example, AKP passes bills of reform for women and ethnic and religious minorities. But its attitudes in general contradict with these bills, as the party has undermined the Islamic feminism that had flourished under the previous Islamic party, Refah. Instead, AKP recruited conservative women into the party, who do not account to the women’s movement but to the Prime Minister Erdoğan. This paradox has also been evident in AKP’s ambiguous relations with religious minorities, such as the alienated Alevites or AKP’s absence in the mourning of Hrant Dink, the Armenian democrat assassinated due to his liberal politics.

While liberal democrats support AKP for respect of individual and religious freedoms, Islamic actors have conservative takes on ways of life, sex, homosexuality, and gender relations. A strong opposition to

Not available online

PHOTO BY FATIHA SARIBAS / © REUTERS, 2007

the highly skilled AKP mobilization has to be assertive about individual freedoms. The lift of the headscarf ban from the universities in 2008 can serve as the first step for a liberal democracy only if the freedoms of others, such as religious minorities are institutionally protected. Rather than attacking the pious and their faith-based life, an efficient secular opposition needs to recognize, respect, and contest with Islamic actors over individual freedoms by using democratic channels. However, unlike Islamic actors, ordinary secular citizens have not yet articulated their future agendas, discontents, needs and interests. The lack of a political language of ordinary citizens explains why some vote for AKP, and others borrow selectively from Kemalists’ laicism. Yet, this is simply an act of laziness on their part. One thing is clear. Neither CHP nor the Kemalists can lead or shelter a lasting and proactive (as opposed to reactionary) secular resistance movement. The secular crowds need to come up with new recipes if they wish to surpass the old-style Kemalists’ menu that is losing its appeal along with democratization in Turkey.

Protest against presidential candidate Abdullah Gül, Istanbul

Notes

1. Berna Turam, *Between Islam and the State: The Politics of Engagement* (Stanford University Press, 2007).
2. Sheri Berman, “How Democracies Emerge: Lessons from Europe,” *Journal of Democracy* 18, no.1 (2007).
3. Berna Turam, “Turkish Women Divided by Politics: Secularist Activism versus Islamic Non-resistance,” *International Feminist Journal of Politics* (Fall 2008, forthcoming).

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The Fracturing of Pakistan

KAMRAN ASDAR ALI &
HUMEIRA IQTIDAR

Benazir Bhutto's tragic death in late December, 2007 reopened long festering fissures in Pakistani society. Over the last several years, Pakistan has been represented as a place where increasingly belligerent Islamist radicals are pitched against an entrenched military ruler who seeks to make the country into a moderate Muslim state. Yet the rioting and looting in places like Karachi, the commercial heart of the country, and the adjoining Sindh province demonstrate other deep fractures in Pakistani social life. The city and the province were littered with burnt-out cars, trucks, and trailers. Private universities, schools, factories, government buildings, banks, petrol pumps, and "posh" food outlets, were all attacked.

The targets were clearly symbols of institutions "where the poor cannot afford to study; businesses where they cannot get jobs; government offices where they have to pay bribes and where they are insulted and abused."¹ The extent of damage to private and public property clearly shows that, in addition to an outpouring of anger and grief, this reaction was also indicative of frustration at rising poverty levels. This is not surprising; the percentage of Pakistan's population falling at or below the poverty line increased from 17% in 1991 to close to 38% in 2002.² Since then, unemployment levels have also increased and there is an increasingly widespread sense of deprivation that has set in among the populace after eight years of military rule.

In recent years, public and political questioning of its military rule has raised important questions about the Pakistani state's legitimacy. One key point is the state's identification with certain ethnic groups, most notably the Punjabis. Sixty years after independence, and more than thirty years after the creation of Bangladesh, the state has not successfully integrated its many cultures and diverse linguistic groups. The spate of suicide bombings in the last two years, the (alleged) influence of the Taliban and other radical groups in areas bordering Afghanistan, and the ongoing insurgency in Baluchistan continue to remind us of other cracks in Pakistan's social fabric. Under General Musharaf, the military attempted to portray itself as a stable political institution protecting Pakistan from radical Islamists and inept civilian representatives. Yet, although the General always spoke of providing "security" to the country, his tenure was marked by numerous "army operations," as these were euphemistically termed, in Baluchistan and Sarhad (North West Frontier Province).

While there may be little doubt about the ideological orientation of the Islamist radicals in the region, there are also elements of Pashtun (the dominant ethnic group in Sarhad) nationalism and self-assertion intermingled with the religious idiom. How Pakistan's North West Frontier Province, the area bordering Afghanistan with a majority Pashtun population, went from being a hub of nationalist and leftist politics to being identified with radical Islamic movements remains an unwritten part of Pakistani history. When it is written, the narrative of this transformation must, of course, include a major section on the roles played by Pakistan's security services and state structures in addition to those of the US and other international players during and after the war in Afghanistan in the 1980s.

In addition, the state has also pushed against Baluch and Sindhi political aspirations targeting ethnic nationalists and various groups who resist the building of army cantonments and high tech ports on their lands, or have stood against the export of natural resources without compensation to local communities. During such engagements, the military strategies have included aerial carpet bombing, the use of heavy artillery or incursions with tanks; needless to say, such tactics do not distinguish between terrorists and innocent civilians. The inappropriateness of such manoeuvres has never been lost on the local people who have increasingly resented and resisted the army's presence in their midst. This was quite evident in the public support for the recently dismissed Chief Justice of Pakistan, Iftikhar Muhammad Chaudry.

Pakistan's democratic and civilian groups face various problems: Issues of national integrity, reduction of violence, the creation of a governing consensus among different provinces and ethnic groups; all of these will have to be tackled by the new parliament. But just as important as the restoration of democracy and the end of military involvement in politics are problems of poverty and economic deprivation.

The judiciary

The Chief Justice, previously hand-picked by the General, was summarily dismissed by General Musharaf in March 2007 for agreeing to accept habeas corpus petitions from families of disappeared persons who many suspect have been handed over to foreign intelligence agencies as part of General Musharaf's "services" in the "War on Terror." As the Chief Justice publicly

resisted his dismissal, the public support he received went, perhaps, beyond his own expectations. In one case, due to the crowds gathered alongside the road, his convoy took 28 hours to travel from Islamabad to Lahore for a journey that normally lasts four to five hours. The lawyers' movement built around the Chief Justice was clearly a resistance to the wider implications of General Musharaf's regime.

Chaudry's case seemingly united many factions within Pakistani society. However, over time the movement became increasingly the domain of middle class activists. Whereas protest had previously tended to focus on unemployment and poverty, after Chaudry's dismissal, the perimeters of effective protest have shifted to include visible markers of democracy, such as the freedom of the judiciary and the media. It is clear that the two sets of concerns are not mutually exclusive. Yet for many perhaps it was the Chief Justice's defiance to the military rule that provided inspiration, and not a general call for upholding the rights of the judiciary. Indeed, the judiciary in Pakistan, in its abstract form, has historically—linked as court cases are to high lawyer fees, bribery to various officers of the courts, and intimidation by more powerful parties—seldom provided free and fair justice to the common person.

Through his government's handling of the Chaudry matter, General Musharaf faced severe pressure regarding the legitimacy of his rule. The most sophisticated political group in Pakistan, the military, eventually managed the crisis and temporarily pacified matters by reinstating the Chief Justice in July 2007. At the same time, under intense pressure from the US to demonstrate its anti-Islamist credentials (and perhaps also to divert attention from rising anti-Musharaf sentiment), the state also used excessive force against the radicals in the Red Mosque (Lal Masjid) in Islamabad. As students and teachers barricaded themselves in the Lal Masjid complex, the army laid siege and eventually raided the compound. In the process, scores of men, women, and children were killed or wounded.

The political parties

During this period, there can be little doubt that mainstream political parties did not provide effective support for the lawyers' movement. Indeed, at the peak of the movement's popularity, Benazir Bhutto entered into a deal with Musharaf that allowed her to return to Pakistan without the threat of pending corruption cases against her. Musharaf delivered on this promise by passing the infamous NRO (National Reconciliation Ordinance), effectively wiping out all corruption charges against politicians made prior to 1999. With its mass base, Benazir Bhutto's Pakistan People's Party could have bridged the gap between the lawyers' movement and the larger public. Yet, by entering into this deal, Bhutto effectively betrayed the lawyer's movement by leaving no viable political route for its demands of judicial freedom and civil liberties to be met. With one of the key opposition parties now thus hamstrung, the lawyer's movement could hope to make no further significant changes at the political level.

When in October Bhutto finally returned to Pakistan after eight years in exile, her welcome procession in Karachi was rocked by a bomb explosion that killed close to 150 people and injured many others. Soon after this, the government escalated its military operations in the Swat valley, a part of the Sarhad Province that was hitherto peaceful. In this case, the government's operations were directed towards a group of supporters of proselytizing leader Maulvi Fazlulallah (previously in league with the state's own security agencies). However, yet

again these operations involved the aerial bombing of villages and road blockades—an approach which led to food and medical shortages. There is ongoing speculation that the incidences at Lal Masjid and in Swat valley were conveniently timed by the regime. For, not only were they useful in diverting public attention from various pressing economic and social crises, such instances also allowed Musharaf to present himself as the voice of secularism and religious freedom to a Western audience.³

Military rule

Fearing a high court ruling that his presidency was now unconstitutional, on 3 November 2007 Musharaf imposed emergency rule. To tackle what he perceived as the worsening security situation, Musharaf dismissed the superior judiciary and held the constitution in abeyance. The state enforced new regulatory rules on the media and imprisoned thousands of people. Hand picked Supreme Court judges ruled in favor of the General and he was elected president for the next five years by the Election Commission of Pakistan.

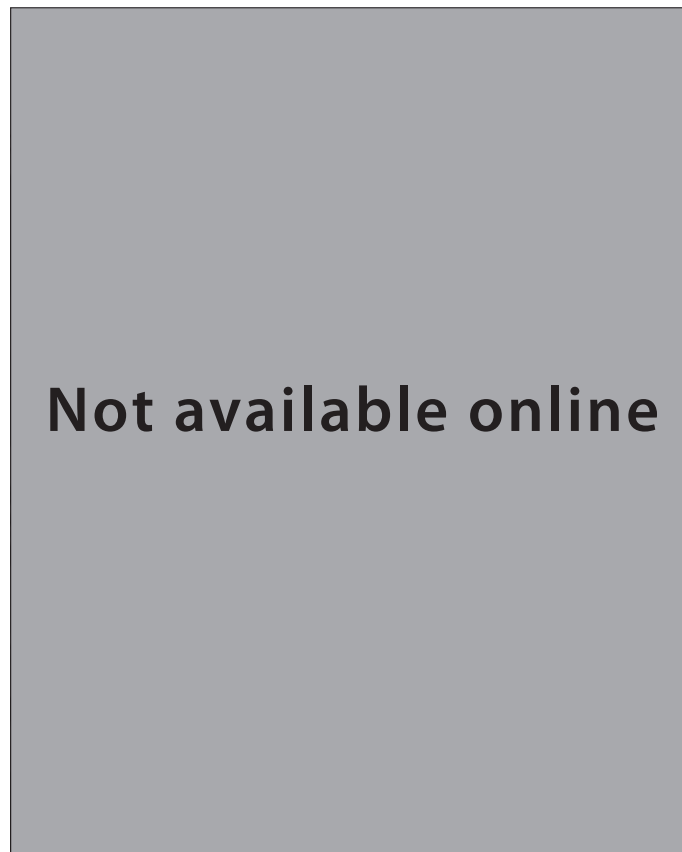
Continued local and international disenchantment led Musharaf to renounce his army role and become a “civilian” president.⁴ Moreover, a date for elections in January (postponed to 18 February following Bhutto’s death) was announced. Riding on the platform of a burgeoning pro-democracy movement of lawyers, students, and civil society actors, a coalition of political parties, including the Islamist party Jama’at-e-Islami, announced that they would boycott the elections unless the judiciary was restored and emergency rule lifted by 28 November 2007. Participation in the polls by political parties was seen as an acceptance of the political process as laid out under the Provisional Constitutional Order (PCO) promulgated by Musharraf. It would implicitly endorse all the constitutionally illegal acts committed by the regime and, thus, would be contrary to the demands of civil society groups demonstrating daily in Pakistan. Indeed, a boycott by major parties of the electoral process would theoretically have delegitimized the entire arrangement.

Yet, the two major parties, the People’s Party of Benazir Bhutto and the Pakistan Muslim League of Nawaz Sharif, agreed to participate in the process and, thus, damaged the protest movement that had been counting on their support. Both leaders may have felt that, had they not participated in the elections, the already present corruption cases could be re-instituted against them. The military was aware of these weaknesses and also understood the traditional rivalry between the two leaders. By allowing Sharif back into the country, it created a further challenge to Bhutto’s electoral ambitions.

It was while she was campaigning for elections in Rawalpindi, the base for the army’s high command, that Bhutto was killed. Whether the killers were Islamists, as the government claims, remains to be seen. One thing, however, is certain: there is now widespread suspicion regarding the government’s complicity in this event. Moreover, the assassination has also worsened ethnic tensions in a country that has never been free of such worries. Many in her home province of Sind felt that, once again, a Sindhi politician of national stature has been deprived of a share in the country’s power structures. For many of her supporters, Bhutto’s death was reminiscent of that of her father, the ex-Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, who was hung by another military dictator who was seen as representing Punjabi interests, as does the present regime.

Despite its obvious ethnic dimension, Benazir Bhutto’s assassination had the strange quality of being expected and yet, until it happened, quite unimaginable. It has, however, further exposed both the illegitimate nature of Musharaf’s regime, and the fundamental disenchantment of the Pakistani people with the state. The failure of this state to provide a modicum of hope for social mobility and economic stability to the majority of its citizens, along with the vanishing sense of personal security in rural and urban areas, has shattered the aura of invincibility once held by Musharaf. The fracturing of the state is not only recognizable by the insurgency in Baluchistan or by the Islamist radicals in Sarhad and Swat, but also by the potential of some of these groups to set up civic and judicial services outside the formal state structures. The illiberal character of some of these systems notwithstanding, there is no doubting their popular appeal when contrasted with the increasingly violent state.

In the final analysis it is not about personalities like Musharaf, rather it is the institutional entrenchment of the Pakistani military that is



at stake. As a political entity the military has been the key conduit of US interests in Pakistan. Currently, there is a growing awareness, within the military and its US supporters, of the military’s current lack of credibility among the Pakistani people. Musharaf’s decision to renounce his uniform—to become a civilian president—may be understood, therefore, as an attempt by the military to untangle itself from the everyday processes of governance, though it continues to control the levers of power in Pakistan. Worryingly, the Pakistani military has only given up power to leave the country in turmoil: in 1971, Pakistan was divided into two parts after a brutal civil war; and in 1988, after the sudden death of Zia-ul-Haq, it suffered the after effects of the Afghan war—namely, increased Islamic militancy, ethnic strife, and the proliferation of drugs and arms. The social and political costs of the last eight years of military rule are manifest in the very violence that led up to the elections on 18 February.

The challenges faced by Pakistan’s democratic and civilian groups are now multi-fold. As the election results show, when given a chance, the Pakistani people chose to vote against the regime’s supporters. The issue of national integrity, the reduction of violence, and the creation of a governing consensus among different provinces and ethnic groups may be foremost in the minds of the new parliament. Yet, in Pakistan, the mere restoration of democratic forms of governance is not enough. Rather, a much deeper sensitivity to the problems of poverty and economic deprivation is needed for democratic interventions to be meaningful. Democratic struggle in the twenty first century should not only be against tyranny, but against misery and injustice for it to provide a future of hope.⁵

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PHOTO BY MIAN KURSHEED / © REUTERS, 2007

**Election
billboard,
Rawalpindi**

Notes

1. See Arif Hasan, *Dawn* (Karachi), 3 January 2008.
2. World Bank, *Poverty in Pakistan: Vulnerabilities, Social Gaps and Rural Dynamics*, October 2002.
3. This Western audience is pivotal for a domestically beleaguered Musharaf. In a recent interview Musharaf seems increasingly paranoid: “The media have let me down...The NGOs are against me. I don’t know why. I think I have been the strongest proponent of human rights...” According to Musharaf, the only people who are not against him are the Western leaders which he describes as “absolutely supportive” and as expressing “total solidarity.” Jemima Khan, “An Extraordinary Encounter with Musharaf,” *Independent*, 2 February 2008.
4. His replacement, General Kiyani, has been thoroughly vetted and primed by the USA to continue the kind of access General Musharaf had promised.
5. See Arjun Appadurai, “Hope and Democracy,” *Public Culture* 19, no. 1 (Winter 2007): 29-34.

Peasants, Crime, and Tea in Interwar Egypt

OMNIA EL SHAKRY

Egypt's Law 96 of 1992—which reversed the ability of agricultural tenants to secure fixed rents and inherit tenancies in perpetuity—arguably represents one of the most significant reversals of Nasserist land reform, or what Ray Bush refers to as “counter-revolution in Egypt’s countryside.”¹ Social scientists have demonstrated the ways in which the 1992 tenancy law was propagated by the press, political parties, and parliament who backed the power of landlords against tenant farmers.² Perhaps unsurprisingly, representations of the peasantry continue to focus on stereotypes of wayward peasants, killing time in cafes and enjoying the profits derived from their low rents. The political debate surrounding the implementation of Law 96, which focused almost entirely on the perspectives of landowners and their rights, demonstrates a remarkably durable facet of the relationship between Egypt’s political authorities and its rural population.

The debate returns us to the social scientific discourses of the interwar period. These discourses depicted the Egyptian peasant both as culturally authentic, and as profoundly backward. Egypt’s peasants were to be reformed in order to become modern subjects of the nation-state. Such attitudes resulted in the idea of a unique peasant cultural *mentalité*, a stereotype including a propensity for revenge killings and the excessive drinking of black tea. Conveniently obscuring the social and political processes at work, this *mentalité* provided a catchall explanation for Egypt’s rural poverty.³

Authorities

marvelled at the proportion of income spent on tea by the average household.

The “peasant question”

In 1932 two men from the village of Badari in Asyut province in Upper Egypt, Ahmad Ja’idi and Hasan Abu Ashur, were charged with the murder of a rural superintendent. The convicted men levied impassioned accusations of torture, which included multiple humiliations, privations, and brutalities that ranged from being bound, beaten, and dragged, to sodomy. As a legal case, the incident highlighted the cruel oppression of the peasantry by provincial notables. Yet, it also underscored the peasants’ propensity for “revenge”; and the vulnerability of the state apparatus and *kibar al-mullak* (landed elite) to the consequences of this. Indeed, the outbreak of World War II in

1939 was cause for such alarm that the state ordered all firearms removed from peasant households.⁴

The incident at Badari highlights the larger social context for the emergence of the “peasant question” as a discourse of social welfare and the reproduction of power relations in twentieth century Egypt. Beginning in the middle of the 1930s, a core group of Egyptian reformers began to formulate agendas that took the peasantry as their principal object of study and reform. The question of the educability of the peasantry emerged as the call for *al-nahda al-qurawiyya*, *al-nahda al-rifiyya* (a rural renaissance) and reached its apex in the middle to late 1930s. Egyptian public intellectuals often evoked graphic images of rural decay and criminality in order to suggest the immediate need for social reform projects. Such projects were intended to guide the peasantry towards the adoption of “reformed” norms of behavior and social and cultural practices deemed more in line with the modern world. Representations of uncivilized peasants served to rationalize the expertise of social scientists and reformers and to underscore the

Contemporary discussions of the Egyptian peasantry, for example relating to the recent tenancy law, centre on stereotypes of backward peasants. Such discourses, which paint peasants as apolitical creatures and bearers of a backward mentality, can be traced at least as far back as the interwar era. But by using the peasant “mentality” as an all-explanatory device for understanding rural poverty, these discourses ignore the social and political processes that produced rural poverty in the first place.

civility of the urban *effendiyya* (Egypt’s emergent middle class).

In Egypt, the social uplift of the peasantry was understood to depend on a complex of social and cultural values to be inculcated. Among these values, *al-tarbiya wa l-ta’lim* (education), *tamadun* (civility and refinement), *umran* (culture), *raqa* (progress), and *adab* would lead, it was thought, to the elimination of vice, wretchedness, and moral decline. One of the key elements in this transformation was the modification of

what had become known as the “peasant character.” The peasantry had long been associated with pernicious habits—see, for instance Muhammad ‘Umar’s turn-of-the-century work, *The Present State of the Egyptians or the Secret of their Retrogression* (*Hadir al-misriyyin aw sirr ta’kharuhim*), for the author’s portrayal of the peasant as drug addict and thief. Yet, the 1930s and 1940s marked the beginnings of a discourse prioritizing the production of statistical and substantive knowledge about peasant crime. In this context, the Central Narcotics Intelligence Bureau began to collect data on the use of addictive substances, such as hashish, opium, and black tea among peasants, and to link this use to criminality and other social ills. The collection of statistics on rural crime, and violent crime in particular, helped cultivate a discourse on peasant character that emphasized the fellah’s lack of cultural and moral sense.

Criminology

In the late 1930s Egyptian social scientists began to compile statistical and descriptive studies on the rate, prevalence, and types of crimes being committed. Two key texts published during World War II were Muhammad Mustafa Al-Qolali’s *Essai sur les causes de la criminalité en Egypte* and Muhammad al-Babli’s exhaustive study *al-Ijram fi misr* (*Crime in Egypt*).⁵ Al-Qolali was a noted criminal lawyer who received his doctorate from the Sorbonne and taught criminal law at Cairo University. Muhammad al-Babli’s study was the canonical work on criminology at the time. In addition to analyzing the various theories about the factors predisposing to criminality, the author reviewed the methodological approaches to the study of crime. Al-Babli focused in particular on the use of statistical data. At the time of writing, al-Babli was the director of the School of Police, though he had been trained as a lawyer originally. Al-Babli and al-Qolali were good friends and were to cooperate extensively.

A hallmark of criminological studies in Egypt was the classification of criminality as either urban or rural. Each of these types, in turn, was held to possess a different etiology and morphology. On the whole, writers argued that urban crime was materially motivated; while rural crime was of a violent and affective nature—a nature most transparent in crimes of revenge and passion. Social reformers, such as al-Babli, argued that a peasant *mentalité* of ignorance was a predisposing factor in rural crime. The peasant’s naturally patient and submissive yet labile character could, because of his attachment to customs such as the *vendetta*, suddenly, become vengeful. It was noted that, in comparison to the West, crimes of passion (and not cupidity) were more common in Egypt. This tendency was more marked still in the countryside, where “revenge” crimes (blood murder, assault, arson, destruction, or poisoning of crops or livestock) were far more common than crimes for material gain. In a 1940 article on rural crime, Mustafa Al-Qolali characterized urban crimes as materially motivated, as accounting for the majority of convictions in Cairo, Alexandria, and Suez, and as propagated solely by the urban criminal. Rural crime on the other hand, was characterized by *al-qaswa* (cruelty).

What, then, were the motives behind rural crime? "Revenge is the blood wound in the social life of the countryside," al-Qolali noted. Most rural crime, even against property, was shown to be motivated by revenge or for the preservation of honor. As such, the custom of *tha'r* (vendetta), the retribution required for a breach of familial or personal honour, was frequently discussed. For al-Qolali, *tha'r* was especially pernicious as it generalized individual feuds to a familial level. Factionalism, itself, was another aspect of rural life that exacerbated criminality allowing individual disputes to escalate out into society. Other authors emphasized the triviality of the motives behind rural crime. Peasant crimes, they noted, were often caused by petty disputes, or minor thefts, usually concerning land, water, crops, or livestock.

Black tea

Peasant habits, too, were implicated in rural crime. In particular, the culture of the coffee house, with its attendant social evils, was thought to play a major role in the moral decadence of the peasantry. The peasantry was thought to have a strong propensity toward addiction to narcotics such as hashish, opium, and black tea. Coffee houses were places for peasants to "kill time," and gamble and where they were exposed to various narcotics and criminal elements. Yet, the presence of most narcotics—hashish, opium, alcohol, morphine, heroin, and cocaine—was thought to be limited to certain small pockets of the rural community. The more prevalent and destructive rural addiction, served in vast quantities in coffee houses, was black tea. This was a potent brew, usually unregulated, adulterated, and equally likely to be drunk by children and adults. Black tea was the term used to refer to the product obtained from boiling tea in a kettle, adding water and re-boiling the mixture: "During the next twenty-four hours the kettle is never cleaned out but more tea leaves and more water are added with the result that all the so-called tea leaves are boiled six or seven times over producing a black, bitter liquid to which large quantities of sugar must be added."⁶

The concern over boiled tea, as well as its commercial adulteration, was so serious that, in 1938, the Ministry of Public Health commissioned a scientific study on tea bought, prepared, and consumed by the fellahin. The study concluded that, although the amount of caffeine and tannin were proportional to the amount of tea used and not dependent on the length of boiling, the sheer daily quantities of caffeine consumed by the Egyptian peasant were bound to be, given the local physical environment and influences such as the presence of endemic diseases, the lack of nutrition, and excessive labour, deleterious to his health.

Tea itself came to be viewed as a narcotic substance, its effects mimicking those of any other addictive substance. These effects included nervous and physical stimulation (not dissimilar to those associated with cocaine use, i.e. the shivering of hands, insomnia, and even heart failure); psychological and physical dependence; decreased productivity; and, tellingly, a propensity to criminal activity. Seen as a lower class phenomenon, authorities marvelled at the proportion of income spent on tea by the average household—income, they reasoned, that could have been spent on foodstuffs. According to one estimate, the efficiency of the worker was reduced by twenty-five percent, "based on the time lost and the fact that the tea-drinker is not as able a workman as the non-drinker."⁷

Criminality and peasant "character"

Both al-Babli and Al-Qolali resorted continuously to discussions of the peasant *mentalité* to explain rural crime. Social and economic factors rarely feature in their analysis despite the statistical correlation which al-Babli noted between crimes committed and agricultural seasons. Namely, he showed that there was an increase in crimes during harvesting and storage season, or, as Tawfiq al-Hakim phrased it in *Yawmiyyat Na'ib fil Aryaf*: "every crop has its crime." Nor did reformers view the peasants' unwillingness to cooperate with the authorities in prosecuting criminals as a political act. According to Al-Qolali there was a fifty percent or greater chance for criminals to escape justice altogether. Likewise, though disturbed by it, social researchers did not link the peasants' use of *al-ashqiya'* (brigands or bandits) to social or



Drawing from Hekmat Abu Zayd, *Al-takayyuf al-ijtima'i fil rif al-misri al-jadid*. Maktabat al-Anglo al-Misriyya: n.d.

economic struggles. Rather than viewing the peasants' refusal to cooperate with the authorities (an attitude in keeping with older conceptions of crime and justice) as a deliberate strategy, these reformers attributed it to ignorance; and rather than treating crimes against the persons and properties of landowners or their agents (especially the so-called "agrarian crimes" of arson, destruction, or poisoning of crops or livestock) as masking social struggles, they treated them as the remnants of an archaic tradition of revenge. In fact, al-Babli went so far as to dismiss the potential effects of revolutionary Soviet communist propaganda, since, in his opinion Egyptians were not naturally amenable to it.

Contemporary views of the Egyptian peasant tend to attribute the causes of rural poverty to a uniform "peasant culture" that purportedly privileges child bearing over small households, extremism over secularism, and irrational folk traditions over national culture. Such views hark directly back to the theories of the interwar social reformers mentioned here. In sum, these reformers posited peasant ignorance as the cause of peasant poverty; and moral and social education as the solution to the problem.⁸ Accordingly, the debates on Law 96 repeat, almost verbatim, interwar allegations of lazy tenants squandering their income. They thus represent the displacement of political and economic explanations onto the domain of culture.

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Notes

1. On the implications of Law 96 of 1992 implemented in 1997, see Ray Bush, *Counter-Revolution in Egypt's Countryside* (London: Zed Books, 2002).
2. Reem Saad, "Egyptian Politics and the Tenancy Law," in Bush, *Counter-Revolution in Egypt's Countryside*.
3. Excerpts from *The Great Social Laboratory: Subjects of Knowledge in Colonial and Postcolonial Egypt* by Omnia El Shakry, © 2007 by the Board of Trustees of the Leland Stanford Jr. University, all rights reserved. By permission of the publisher, www.sup.org.
4. Sayyid Ashmawi, *Al-Fellahun wal Sulta* (Cairo: Mirit, 2001).
5. The following account is based on: Muhammad Al-Babli, *Al-Ijram fi Misr* (Cairo: Dar al-Kutub al-Misriyya, 1941); Muhammad Al-Qolali, "Al-Ijram fi al-rif," *Shu'un Ijtima'iyya* 1 (July 1940): 20-29; Mahmud Bey Mahir, "Jara'im al-Qura," *Al-Majalla al-Tibiyya al-Misriyya* 20 (March 1937): 163-169; and Nathan Brown, *Peasant Politics in Modern Egypt: The Struggle Against the State* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1990).
6. Egyptian Government, CNIB, "Adulterated Tea," *Annual Report for the Year 1938*, 92-94, quotation p. 92. See also Egyptian Government, CNIB, "Boiled tea," *Annual Report for the Year 1939*, 104-105.
7. Dr. L. Askren, "New Method of Taking Opium," in Egyptian Government, Central Narcotics Intelligence Bureau, *Annual Report for the Year 1938*, 98.
8. For contemporary examples see Lila Abu-Lughod, *Dramas of Nationhood: The Politics of Television in Egypt* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2005) and Timothy Mitchell, *Rule of Experts: Egypt, Technopolitics, Modernity* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2002).

Ramadan in Djibouti

Daily Life & Popular Religion

LIDWIEN KAPTEIJNS

One of the joys of spending some time in a city not one's own is to pick up some of its rhythms and to share the daily routines of the people one comes to know. I spent Ramadan 2007 in Djibouti, the capital of the small Republic of the same name on the flat and torrid coast of the Red Sea. Climate is a dominant factor of life in Djibouti and only the small minority with money can temper its debilitating impact. Even in September, when the worst heat and humidity of the summer months is over, the heat is overwhelming. No wonder that, in the summer season, those who have an opportunity and resources to leave the city do so at this time, so much so that *xagaa-bax*¹ or "leaving for the summer" is a respectable institution with a long history.

As it happened, I came to share work- and living space in the city centre or *guudka* (uptown), the heart of the old colonial town. The ten or so city blocks that make up this quarter include picturesque squares (still known to locals by their old colonial names such as Place Menelik and Place LaGarde), graced by trees and surrounded by the multi-storey stone buildings with the large windows, arches, and porticos of the French colonial style. Uptown is separated on the landside by the central market place, still called Place Rimbaud in popular speech, and Suuq Duqsileh (the "Market with the Flies"), now a crowded warren of small shops, from the residential areas of the common people, the *quartiers*. During the colonial period, uptown was largely out of bounds for the local people. Now it is largely a business district, which forms a buffer between the rich and the poor: the *quartiers* on the one side and the really fancy neighbourhoods nestled in the peninsula on the other. Here the sea is never far away, either on the side of the port in the west or on the side of the beachfront hotels and residences to the north and east.

During the morning hours the city centre is very busy, as many people have business at the banks, stores, and offices that are located here, but from about 1:00 to 4:30 PM, the sun-baked streets empty out. The radios that blast from the three or so tourist stores that open onto the sidewalks and never seem to close their doors

Qaat vendors in Djibouti



PHOTO BY ALEXANDER JOE / © AFP, 1997

All over the world Muslims observe and celebrate Ramadan, but how they do so varies greatly. This article describes everyday life in Djibouti during the recent month of Ramadan and brings into focus the differences between rich and poor, men and women, local Muslims and foreign soldiers, as well as the government's support for Sufi Islam to counter the influence of fundamentalist Islam.

are almost invariably tuned to the local RTD (Radio and Television Djibouti) and so determine the mood of this part of town during these siesta hours: the serious mood of *tafsir* and Quran recitation, the light airs of love songs, the staccato of the news programmes in Arabic, Somali, Afar, and French, and so forth.

Popular devotion

Ramadan in Djibouti is a total experience, a month-long special event, or better, special timetable that rules practically everything and everyone. Many government offices and big business establishments open later than usual and close early (shortly after noon), often not to open up again. From about mid-day until just before *affur* (the breaking of the fast) the streets are empty, while in kitchens everywhere women are preparing the labour intensive traditional fried dough and sambusis. And, at least when the electricity does not fail, everybody everywhere, it seems, is listening to the *nabi ammaan*—praise songs for the Prophet—on the radio. These joyful, often didactic, songs—many specially adapted from older versions for this year's Ramadan by Djibouti's artists—mark the time before and after the breaking of the fast. They remind the believers of the reward or punishment they will receive on the Day of Reckoning, congratulate them with successfully accomplishing their religious duty that day and encourage them to now thank God and indulge: *Affuraay, affuraay, affuraay, ummadda Muslimaay affuraay!* (Eat now, Muslim people, and break the fast!).

Sufi devotional practices have always been popular in Djibouti's *quartiers*, but in 1989, when I had attended *sittaat* sessions at which older Somali women sang praise songs to the women who had been central to the life of the Prophet, younger people had looked upon this kind of Sufi religious devotion as something of the past and the more fundamentalist-inclined had actively discouraged me from attending what they regarded as superfluous and perhaps even superstitious practices. Now the government, through the national radio and television and by supporting the artists who produced modernized versions of such Sufi poems and songs, actively encouraged this form of religious devotion in the mother tongue.

"A nation that does not protect its mother tongue cannot make progress," is one of the slogans of Djibouti's president, Ismail Omar Geelle. However, there is another reason for the government's support, for the inclusive and ecstatic Sufi Islam of the *nabi ammaan* also competes with the more sober and narrower approaches of the fundamentalists, who, through small madrasas run with the help of powerful patrons in richer neighbouring countries, also reach out to the poor.

Sunset in Djibouti is always a magical moment, but in Ramadan this moment is even more special and marked by a hushed flurry of activities. One is supposed to break the fast exactly when the muezzin calls for the sunset prayer, first with dates, then with water, juice, and other *affur* food. If you are the woman in charge, you cannot fry the *sambusis* too early as they may get cold or soggy; you should not be late with the charcoal for the incense to be burned, at least in our house, exactly at the moment of *affur*. You must get the "breakfast" for the doorkeepers and the poor gathering at the mosque ready to be picked up. All preparations must come to their fruitful end exactly at sunset. As every household tries to share its Ramadan breakfast food with those who are worse off, the movement of food on plates during Ramadan makes the gap between rich and poor even more visible, even as it temporarily tempers it.

Those who do not have families with whom to break the fast, seat themselves well in advance on the plastic chairs of the small, street-side diners, expecting to be served exactly on time! And of course, because this is Djibouti, the big question that is on everyone's mind at *affur* time is whether the *qaat*² has yet "come in" and, if not, when it will. Ramadan does rule the time when *qaat* becomes available in the city streets—around *affur* time, not lunch time as is usual—but *qaat* will be chewed in Djibouti, whether it is Ramadan or not. Not everybody chews, of course, but chewing *qaat* is a dominant feature of life in Djibouti. In my uptown neighbourhood, you can see people chew at street corners, next to their taxis or the wares they sell, on the thresholds of, or inside stores, and so forth. In the *quartiers*, people chew both in their houses, especially in the relatively cool of a court yard or verandah, and in public *qaat*-cafés or *mabrazes*, where one finds pillows on the ground and everything that goes with chewing *qaat*: the water, the soft drinks, and weak, sugary tea that compensate for the bitterness of the *qaat*, cigarettes, perhaps perfume, cologne, and incense, and always a radio to listen to the BBC Somali service, which broadcasts three times a day.

The same scene plays itself out in the lavishly appointed *diwans* or reception rooms of ministers and other well-off citizens, except that here the *qaat* stalks are longer, their leaves more tender, the pillows thicker and of better quality, and the sound systems more elaborate, while generators kick in to keep the air-conditioning going when the electricity fails. For those who can afford to sleep during the day or decide to drastically cut down on their sleep, Ramadan only means chewing more *qaat* for longer hours than at other times of the year. After hurrying through *affur*, the sunset prayer, and dinner without a pause, the most inveterate chewers sit down to chew until just before the muezzin calls for the morning prayer. After a quick *suxuur*—the special Ramadan meal people eat before sunrise—they go to work at best for a few hours and then sleep until late in the afternoon when *affur* time is near and fresh *qaat* becomes available. Thus, while *qaat*, on the one hand, appears to be Djibouti's great equalizer, how, where and when it is chewed becomes, at the same time, also an emphatic marker of class.

Foreign soldiers

During Ramadan, Djibouti hardly goes to sleep. In the early evening, Djiboutians of all ages and both sexes fill the many mosques of the city for the *taraawiix* or extra Ramadan prayers, which last from about 7:30 to 9:30 PM. During the last ten days of Ramadan, many people also return to the mosque for the *salaat al-layl* (night prayer) from about 11:30 PM to 1:30 AM. This is common practice almost everywhere where there are Muslim communities. What is exceptional in Djibouti is that, during Ramadan, the mosque goers walk the evening streets together with those who frequent the many discos and night clubs, especially the French and American soldiers stationed in Djibouti's outskirts.

If you mostly visit the city centre during the day, you will hardly recognize it during the evening, when loud and cheery neon signs mark the locations of the many night clubs and night "restaurants"—a euphemism in this context—that were invisible during the day. The Shams Restaurant, the Scotch Club, the Oasis—there are dozens of night clubs like these, frequented by French and American soldiers. If the American soldiers—out of uniform—are recognizable mostly because they move in groups, the French soldiers of the Foreign Legion, who are not allowed to shed their super-short shorts and colonial képis, stick out like sore fingers. They come to drink and "close-dance" with available women and, even though religious objections have been (and are) continuously made, the Djibouti government is dependent on French and American military and economic support, while the local middle class needs the soldiers' hard currency. The fate of Djibouti's nightclubs is a good barometer for Western influence over its government. Whether they will survive the increasing economic presence and financial influence of Dubai will be interesting to watch.

Normally, after ten in the evening, the nightclub goers really own the uptown streets, which are now specially patrolled by the motorized, French military police. However, during Ramadan, the disco- and mosque-goers cross paths and the sound of people praying mingles with the relentless and all-penetrating base of French and American rap and disco. This cacophony barely dies down, when the call for the morning prayer and Djibouti's noisy and omnipresent crows mark the beginning of a new day.

Ciid

Everywhere in the Islamic world, it is always a guess when Ramadan will end, as the new moon must be sighted by the relevant religious authorities. On Thursday evening, October 11, all ears were tuned in to radio or TV to find out whether it would be *Ciid* the next day or the day after. When the announcement came that the fast had ended, both via radio and TV and from cars with loudspeakers, the city exploded into frantic activity, not unlike the last evening before Christmas at American malls. Housewives rushed to the market to get the missing ingredients for special foods and sweets; fathers and mothers who had not yet bought new clothes for their children or still needed to get a new and fancy *macaawiis* (a man's sarong) for the communal *Ciid* prayer next day poured into Suuq Duqsileh. Those who had not yet paid the zakaat tax to the poor—a duty that must be performed before the formal prayer, now made last-minute arrangements. And everywhere women cooked and cleaned and prepared for the holiday. It seemed as if no one slept that night.

On the first day of the Feast of Fast breaking, Djiboutians pray the *Ciid* prayer in three large open spaces in different parts of the city. The ritual of endlessly repeated *Allahu akbars* (God is Great), which precede this special *Ciid* prayer, cannot be heard in uptown but many people spoke of this special ritual with awe. Apart from the formal *Ciid* prayer and the President's public "state of the nation" speech, this holiday is a family occasion, with relatives and friends sharing time and food in each other's houses. Children get sweets, toys, and new clothes and go from house to house to receive *Ciid* gifts from relatives and family friends. Radio and TV broadcast special Ramadan programs, with live reports on the *Ciid* celebrations in Mecca and Medina and rebroadcasts of famous Somali singers in concert. Moreover, on the evenings of the first and second days of this particular *Ciid*, there was a life performance as well: a concert by Djibouti's most famous diva, Nimco Jaamac, in the open-air theater called Les Salines, just out of the city center.

The second day of the *Ciid* is a very special day, for it is one of the very few days of the year that its many domestic servants have off. These girls are mostly young and unmarried, often work twelve or fourteen-hour days (or even sleep over), and do most of the cooking and cleaning in all quarters of the town. Aware that they are stuck in dead-end jobs, many of them attempt, sooner or later, by legal or illegal means, to obtain work in the Gulf States, where wages are higher, or refugee status in Europe and the USA, to their minds beacons of endless possibility. Or, like the friend of the domestic who worked in my host family, they take even bigger risks by opting for *tahrib* or being smuggled to Yemen in open boats, as the many news stories of Somali bodies washing up on Yemen shores testify. However, this holiday was their moment of glory: their day to dress up, to visit friends and relatives, and, as I found out when I showed up in Les Salines, to attend a concert. The open-air theatre, with stadium-like seating, is one of the most affordable venues for such events and, although there were some young men present as well, that evening, they filled it to the brim. They knew by heart and moved their lips along with every song sung that evening. Whether dressed in the typical colourful and often gold and silver-spangled Djiboutian *diric*³ and *garbasaar* (shoulder wrap), or in a combination of modest but fashionable head scarf and provocatively tight jeans and shirts, they were here to celebrate and to be seen. They took turns in flocking onto the small stage to kiss the singers, empty bags of colorfully wrapped sweets out over their heads, and dance around them for a while. There was nothing plain or understated about them that evening! *Ciid* in Djibouti could not have ended more festively.

Notes

1. Note that in the Somali orthography long vowels are doubled, the "x" stands for the aspirated "h" and the "c" for the Arabic letter 'ayn. For example, 'ld (as in feast or holiday) in Somali orthography becomes Ciid.
2. The leaf stimulant called *Catha edulis*.
3. The *diric* is a loose, straight-cut, extra long dress of fine, transparent cotton voile.

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All preparations
must come to their
fruitful end exactly
at sunset.

Mosques in Stuttgart

Struggling for Space

PETRA KUPPINGER

The easiest way to reach the Al-Nour Mosque¹ from the local train station and avoid the extra walk around an entire city block is to take a short cut through a small dead-end street and an adjacent parking lot. For months I had used this route to reach the mosque which is one of the sites in my research about Islam in Stuttgart. In September 2007 I received an email from Andrea, one of the mem-

bers of the women's Quran study group that I regularly attended at the Al-Nour Mosque which read "I just want to briefly inform you that the entrance of the mosque by way of the parking lot is no longer open. The neighbours had a gate installed. We are already in touch with a lawyer." That evening I took the long way around to attend the study group. Since then there has been ongoing controversy about the gate. The new owners of the neighbouring building want to prevent traffic from the passage which is legally theirs, but has for a long time been shared, onto the shared parking lot. The mosque and its visitors clearly account for the largest share in this traffic and are the targets of the gate affair. However, with a few exceptions the new gate remained open throughout the fall.

The gate incident at the Al-Nour Mosque could be done away with as an ordinary right of access controversy between neighbours. But because the conflict involves a mosque, it is about more than mere rights of use and access. Instead the seemingly insignificant conflict illustrates elements of a much larger encounter between Islam and dominant society. Concrete mosque facilities and locations of mosques in the cityscape illustrate the current multi-layered social, political, and cultural position and struggles of Muslim communities in Stuttgart and beyond. Moreover, they illustrate the relative invisibility of Islam and Muslims in Stuttgart

and indeed their absence from the city's dominant self-image. As the city struggles hard to situate itself on the map of global cities, the dominant self-image of the high-tech, economic and cultural metropolis allows little room for migrants, mosques, and ethnic enclaves.

Stuttgart is the capital of the state of Baden-Württemberg. Home to the global giants Mercedes, Porsche, and Bosch, this region has over the past half century attracted hundreds of thousands of migrants and students from all over the world. Today almost forty percent of the city's residents have "backgrounds of migration" (*Migrationshintergrund*) which means that at least one of their parents was/is not of German descent. This is the highest such figure in Germany. Approximately 40,000 to 50,000 Stuttgarters are Muslims (about eight percent of the total population). Over the past few decades, Muslim Stuttgarters of different ethnic backgrounds have founded religious associations and mosques. Some combine religious and social or cultural elements, others only have a room for prayer. Regardless of these differences, there is a core of about twenty five associations that are relatively permanent, have premises (rented or owned), and offer space for prayer and other activities. Among these associations there is a core of about a dozen very well established communities with larger premises and an array of services, activities, and programmes for members and non-members.

Dynamic marginal spaces

Most large Stuttgart mosques are vibrant and dynamic spaces. They bustle with activities and visitors, in particular, for the Friday prayer, and on weekends when most offer religious instruction for children. Many communities are located in less than perfect premises. Some increase

Examining mosques, their spatial contexts, and the struggles to create, negotiate and improve their spaces in Stuttgart reveals the complex and controversial nature of spatial articulation for Muslim communities in this German city. These processes symbolize the broader struggles of Muslims and Muslim communities for recognition and participation in German cities and society at large.

their space piecemeal if possible, others renovate or improve their locations, yet others are in search for better spaces. Yet these processes are frequently marked by considerable obstacles. Some mosques have to move because of problems with landlords and neighbours. An official from the Al-Medina Mosque related how his association occupied five different locations between

the 1970s and the early 1990s. Finding appropriate spaces for mosque associations is difficult. There is the almost instantaneous opposition of neighbours when the news spread that a building will be turned into a mosque. In early December 2007, the Al-Medina Mosque which operates under the umbrella of Milli Görüs,² was denied access to an empty factory that it wanted to buy. The city decided to rewrite the zoning of the area in a larger planning effort that officials stated was unrelated to the mosque project. Mosque officials, however, were not surprised to see such re-zoning, indeed they noted that this was a well-established game in the city.³ The association's current facilities which the community has long outgrown are located in an industrial zone between two urban quarters. Adjacent to a power plant, produce wholesale market, a small gambling place, and a huge car show room, the mosque is part of a larger industrial and commercial complex. This mosque is one of the few remaining larger communities that do not own their premises. For years they have been searching for better premises. "We have looked at every single available facility in the larger Stuttgart area, but nobody sells to us in the end," an official told me.⁴

Most mosques are default spaces and represent spatial compromises in a situation where only a few options are available and mosques are seen as bad neighbours at best and serious trouble at worst. Looking at only a few mosques, it becomes apparent how every single one occupies inconvenient, inhospitable, and certainly not very aesthetic or representative spaces. The Al-Nour Mosque, for instance, occupies three separate suites in a non-descript, if not to say ugly, 1970s office building. For community events and high holidays this means that the staircase turns into a human highway where, especially, children move between the first floor men's and fourth floor women's quarters. On the third floor the community occupies yet another smaller suite that serves for "in between" communal activities and more public events. This spatiality is highly inconvenient. But at least this community has a fairly central location within its urban quarter, something few mosques have.

Similarly out of the way is Stuttgart's largest mosque complex, the DITIB Mosque in Feuerbach which is located in the heart of a large industrial area.⁵ Once a metal factory, this sizeable complex includes a series of connected buildings and oddly shaped extensions. It accommodates a large men's and a women's prayer space, community facilities, and commercial spaces. A very lively and dynamic space, this mosque complex attracts Muslims and some non-Muslim shoppers in particular on the weekends. "Up to 4000 people come to pray here for the high holidays," one of the members of the board of directors proudly noted. The complex remains largely hidden from dominant urban society. Even the most liberal and culturally interested of non-Muslim Stuttgarters do not know where this place is, let alone have ever set foot there.

The Stuttgart crescent

Stuttgart does not have any larger or representative mosques, like other German or European cities. None of the local mosques were built as such or have any of the appearance of a mosque (e.g. minarets). There is no central mosque that brings together Muslims of different ethnic or national origins and serves as a symbol of the community in the city. Instead there is a diverse and dynamic landscape of mosques. Marking the twen-

[M]osques are seen
as bad neighbours
at best and serious
trouble at worst.

ty five established mosques on the map,⁶ I found the not very surprising pattern that these spaces, with only one exception, are all located on the vague crescent of older industrial, now turned lower class and migrant quarters. Bad Cannstatt constitutes the centre of Muslim Stuttgart with eight mosques. Only the Afghan mosque, situated in a more upscale section of Stuttgart-West, defeats the crescent pattern. A look at Stuttgart's social and economic statistics shows that mosques are almost exclusively situated in poorer and migrant quarters. While poverty in Stuttgart is not (yet) dramatic, social differences are real and visible. Of the six quarters with the highest purchasing power, five do not have mosques. Of the eight quarters with the lowest purchasing power, six have mosques.⁷ Seven of the eight quarters with the highest rates of unemployment have mosques; the eight quarters with the lowest rates of unemployment do not have mosques.

This list could be continued, but clearly the quarters with mosques are socially and economically more disadvantaged. To be sure, it is not the mosques that produce this social disadvantage. Instead, their presence in these quarters illustrates the status of mosques as lower class spaces and very clearly also as unwanted spaces. The Stuttgart mosque crescent curves around downtown with its upscale shopping, commercial, entertainment, and political spaces. The wealthier residential quarters lie inside the crescent or to its south. Many mosques serve specific ethnic communities, which are not tied to one district. Instead of an expression of the community's residential context, mosques tend to be spatial compromises that illustrate an intersection between a community's financial means and, more importantly, the willingness of a district and its population to tolerate and accommodate a mosque. The struggle of the Al-Medina mosque mentioned above demonstrates this. A few years ago another association bought an old factory and subsequently had to fight a long political, administrative, and legal battle over this site. In the end the city bought the site from them and the mosque project had to be folded. It appears that if a proposed mosque does not fit the images for the particular spatiality, as held by dominant actors, those in charge are prone to find reasons and administrative tools to undermine the project. This decreases the possible locations for mosques considerably. What remains are lower class/migrant neighbourhoods with less political influence or locations in industrial or commercial zones. Thus the emergence of the Stuttgart mosque crescent is the result of powerful urban images, economic necessities, and the less influential position of lower class/migrant districts.

Mosques are relegated to leftover or marginal locations. They often recycle otherwise unwanted spaces, in particular, defunct industrial sites. First tucked away in small backyards locations, many mosques eventually upgraded to smaller or larger industrial facilities. In search of adequate and more respectable facilities, communities often moved several times until they finally bought premises. Pushed into marginal and unwanted locations, it is not surprising that mosques share facilities or are neighbours to other "unwanted" groups and activities. In one case, a Hindu Temple is located in the same building as a mosque. One community is located in the vicinity of Stuttgart's red light district.

Struggling for space and recognition

From the perspective of dominant society, there are the occasional loud disputes over sites for mosques. Issues of noise, lack of parking spaces, and the supposed oppression of women in Islam, in general, and mosques, in particular, dominate these controversies. In Stuttgart, they seem few and far between. When seen, however, from the perspective of Muslim communities, this scenery looks very different. In particular until the mid-1990s when many larger associations started buying premises, mosque associations were frequently on the move. This game of moving around escaped the view of much of dominant society. I repeatedly heard stories that ended with something like "and then there were problems with the neighbours and we had to move." These ongoing problems necessitated, and for some continue to necessitate, a tedious constant search for facilities. The willingness to sell and political interference into sales, such as re-zoning play an important role. Located in out of the way spaces many facilities are the discarded spaces of Stuttgart's economic transformations of the last decades, the city's rust-belt. Spaces that have lost their previous function and cannot otherwise be re-inserted into Stuttgart's glittery twenty first century cityscape then become available for mosques. Many mosques occupy the lowest end of the Stuttgart real estate universe.

The spatiality of Stuttgart's mosques is a reflection of the political, cultural, and social position of Muslim communities in the city indicating

Not available online

Protests in
Cologne reveal
that hostility
towards
mosques is
not limited to
Stuttgart.

PHOTO BY INA FASSBENDER / © REUTERS, 2007

just-how marginal they are with regard to urban politics and power. Hidden away from public view, Stuttgart's mosques are easily glossed over as urban actors and participants. It is not surprising then, that, for instance, a recently published book⁸ about Bad-Cannstatt (46.1% of its population have backgrounds of migration) dedicated a mere one and a half pages (of 242 pages) to "foreign fellow residents." Remembering that Bad-Cannstatt with its eight mosques forms the heart of the Stuttgart crescent, it is even more amazing that the book refers in precisely two sentences to Muslim communities. This void is not conscious exclusion, but much more the result of the forced invisibility of mosques and the chosen blindness with regard to Muslim affairs in the city's dominant self-image. This marginalization stands in stark contrast to the very dynamic and vibrant inner lives of these communities, as they build and rebuild their spatialities and their religious, social, cultural, and political position, and increasingly also grassroots participation in the city. Stuttgart's mosques still have to overcome many obstacles to escape their spatial and political marginality.

By mid-December 2007, just before the Eid, the gate at the back entrance of the Al-Nour Mosque was locked again on several occasions.

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Notes

1. Names of mosques are pseudonyms.
2. Milli Görüs is generally thought to be the European arm of the larger Erbakan movement in Turkey.
3. N. Höfle and J. Brand, "Stadt verhindert Moschee in Wangen," *Stuttgarter Zeitung*, 6 December 2007. The title of the article "City prevents mosque in Wangen" speaks for itself.
4. This case is not unusual. The fact that Milli Görüs is under observation by state security may play a role here, but associations that are not on the watch list make very similar experiences.
5. DITIB is the German association of the Turkish-Islamic Union for Religious Affairs. Associated with the Turkish Presidency of Religious Affairs, it represents official Turkish Islam.
6. There is no comprehensive list of Stuttgart mosques. I assembled my list from my various research sites and Internet sources e.g. www.islam.de, www.orientbasar.de, and www.meinestadt.de.
7. All Stuttgart statistics are from: Landeshauptstadt Stuttgart, *Datenkompas Stadtbezirke Stuttgart* (Stuttgart: Statistisches Amt, 2006).
8. J. Hagel, *Cannstatt und seine Geschichte* (Tübingen: Silberburg Verlag, 2002).

Mosque Design in the Netherlands

ERIC ROOSE

Concurrent with intense public discussion regarding the ideal manner of social integration of Muslims into Dutch society is a heated architectural debate about mosque design. Muslims in the Netherlands are recognized as members of individual ethnic or culture groups, with Surinamese, Moluccan, Turkish, and Moroccan Muslims represented by their own architectural style while sharing a basic Islamic belief system and liturgy.

When municipalities are confronted with mosque plans, some see the conspicuous use of building elements from the Muslim countries of origin as an unwanted and unnecessary intrusion on Dutch culture by nostalgic commissioners suffering from too much homesickness. Instead, Dutch Muslims are supposed to come up with designs that on the outside will appear as Dutch community centres and not as Arabian Nights palaces. On the other hand, other municipalities find that although mosques are indeed thought of as mere practical places of Islamic liturgy, the introduction of building elements from the Muslim countries of origin will be a way for Dutch Muslim immigrants to feel at home in Dutch society by remaining proud of their cultural heritage, enriching Dutch culture along the way. Whatever the commissioner's architectural choices, the measure and content of his preferred layer of "cultural" building elements that go beyond the basic religious necessities has come to be seen by the Dutch public as an expression of his opinion on the ideal manner of social inclusion of Muslims in a non-Muslim environment.

Religious oppositions

However, contrary to the general assumption, an in-depth study of Dutch mosque design processes shows that religion plays a far greater role in the architectural preferences of Muslim commissioners than merely prescribing "a place to prostrate oneself before God in the direction of Mecca." Especially the three most recent and controversial Dutch mosque projects, the Amsterdam Taibah Mosque and Westermosque and the Rotterdam Essalaam Mosque, show some unexpected twists. The architects generally looked towards the designs as expressions of progress within a grander scheme of Islamic architectural evolution from the "traditional" to the "modern." The commissioners, however,

With the growth of the Muslim population in the Netherlands more and more mosques are being designed by Dutch architects. But while architects approach mosque design as a display of either traditional or modern values, for commissioners religion plays a crucial, if unspoken, role in the design. Through the design of their mosque commissioners aim to express their own vision of Islam and distinguish it from other visions.

looked towards their future mosque as an opportunity to represent their vision of Islam in opposition to other visions. Whether they insisted that certain "cultural" building elements be used or not did not depend on their mother countries' Hindustani, Turkish, or Moroccan style characteristics at all. This preference had to do with the ways that certain building elements had been used by other Muslim com-

missioners who, in their minds, held false Islamic beliefs. By selecting specific building elements from the world's Islamic architectural history that in their contemporary associations carried a certain meaning to them, the commissioners literally aimed to "construct" the ultimate Islam. Notably, they saw opposing commissioners and beliefs mainly within their own culture group. As a result of this, the mosque designs within one ethnic group show some surprising stylistic inconsistencies. Indeed, it appears that it is not in how they are alike but in how they differ from each other that we can find their meaning to the commissioners themselves.

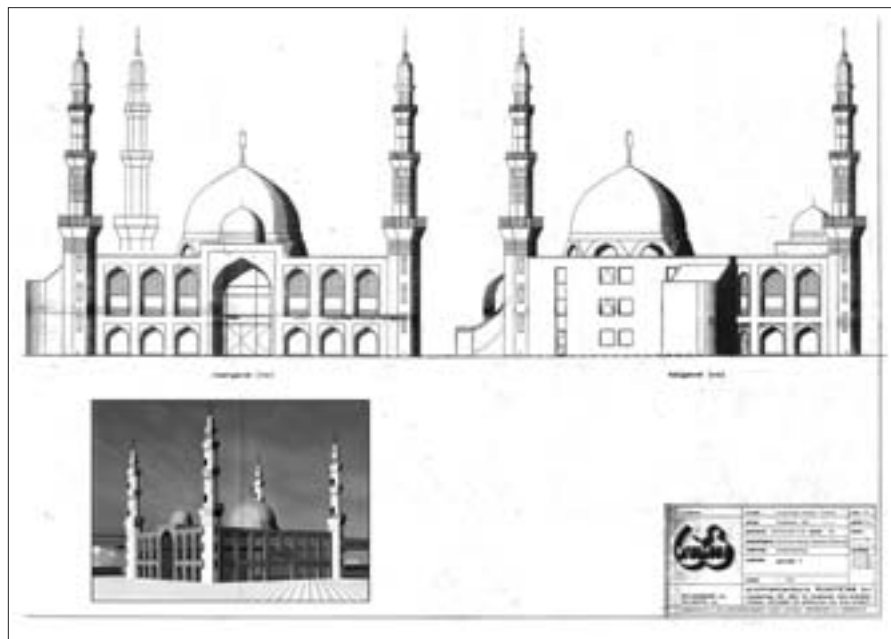
Saintly brilliance

In the case of the Taibah Mosque, the Surinamese commissioner, Mohammed Junus Gaffar, effectively searched for a representation of his beloved Brelwi Islam. The latter had been created in 19th-century northern British-India in opposition to the Deobandi (consistently called "Wahhabi" by Gaffar) and Ahmadiyya versions embraced by other Hindustani Muslims in the region. Whereas the Deobandi school attempted to reform Islam by denying the role of the locally much-revered Sufi holy men—and their tombs—as successors to Muhammad and intermediaries between believers and God, the Ahmadiyya even had their own prophet. The Brelwi school, essentially meant as a counter-reformation, reinforced Sufi holy men, their tombs and Muhammad as the ultimate saint and Seal of Prophets. His light, or Nur of Muhammad, was seen as ever-existing and all-pervading, imagined as radiating from the Prophet's mausoleum and from his Sufi successors' tombs in Hindustan. Consequently, Gaffar combined a Hindustani-Sufi shrine, consisting of a central dome, an arched substructure, and four corner turrets as he identified them in the Taj Mahal mausoleum, with Muhammad's tomb, in his eyes consisting of the oldest minaret and dome within the Medina complex. He explicitly shunned the Saudi—since "Wahhabi"—extension around the latter. He then added his own creations of interior lighting, consisting of omnipresent lamps in the prayer hall and dozens of lights on the inside of the dome. He also aimed for exterior transparency by bringing in conspicuously large glass windows and doors in the form of the Prophet's dome. All were meant as representations of the central notion in the Brelwi conviction, the Holy Prophet's light as it was, and still is, passed on by later saints. At the time of writing, the Taibah Mosque was already in use but still remained to be officially opened.

Sacrality in the public sphere

The Turkish commissioner of the Westermosque in Amsterdam, Üzeyir Kabaktepe, effectively searched for a representation of the Islam as embraced by the Dutch Milli Görüş movement that he led. The movement had originated in Turkey in the Milli Selamet Partisi (MSP), the political party that strove for a larger role for religion in Turkish politics in the 1970s. It aimed to counter-act the Ministry of Religious Affairs or Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı in Ankara, founded in 1924 by Atatürk to prevent mosque organizations from becoming too politically active, threatening his secular-republican ideal. In Kabaktepe's account, mosque communities of the Dutch branch of Diyanet had stylized and modernized

Taibah Mosque



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the Ottoman architectural legacy in such despicable ways that the sacral values he (and many other religious leaders in Turkey) associated with it had been corrupted beyond recognition. Consequently, requiring the recognizably authentic Ottoman building elements that to him would represent a much greater role of Islam in the public sphere, he first steered his architect towards incorporating elements from the Blue Mosque. However, after having taken his designer to Istanbul to visit Ottoman architecture and to meet with a contemporary builder of classic-looking Ottoman mosques, he requested his architect to use the much-admired Selimiye Mosque in Edirne, by the hand of the great Sinan, as an even more sublime example of Ottoman grandeur. He even had the mentioned Turkish builder come over to assist in designing a whole new, "genuinely" Ottoman mosque instead of the one that he had already submitted to the municipality and the public, a turn that his architect eventually managed to prevent. Due to a breach of trust between the project developer and the municipality on the one side and the Milli Görüş movement on the other, the construction of the Westermosque is now in jeopardy.

Pan-Islamic splendour

In the case of the Rotterdam Essalaam Mosque, the Moroccan commissioner, Ahmed Ajdid, effectively searched for a representation of an encompassing Islam, one that would surpass all national versions. In this, he particularly disliked the official Moroccan vision, revolving around the king as the successor to Muhammad and aiming to ban any opposing convictions. Neither was he much attracted to the Salafist alternative as upheld among some other anti-royalist Moroccan community leaders in the Netherlands. The purist and inconspicuously Islamic building elements that they had chosen would not, in his account, do justice to the dignity and splendour of a truly global Islam. Going for the translation of pan-Islamic values into a design within the parameters set by the municipality, he initially rejected anything Moroccan as "old-fashioned." At the same time he discarded anything Dutch as "too modern" and avalanched his designer with an—also truly global—multitude of mosque references. The public assumes that he copied a mosque from the home region of his Dubai sponsor since "who pays the piper calls the tune." Ajdid however gradually worked his way towards incorporating the major building elements from the extension around the Prophet's mosque in Medina. In his eyes, the latter formed a global culmination of all Muslim architectures at once, with all Muslim nationalities presumably having worked on it and all Muslim cultural styles presumably having been included in it. At the time of writing, the Essalaam Mosque had not yet been completed.

The ultimate Islam

Meanwhile, whereas the municipalities and architects were reasonably straightforward in their particular ideas on the translation into design of social integration and architectural progress, the commissioners were much less direct about the religious content of their own design preferences. None of them started out by saying, "I am a Muslim who follows the such-and-such path of Islam and I need to recognize it in my mosque design." Instead commissioners began with a list of practicalities and a statement like, "we are Muslims and therefore our design should be Islamic" and with some seemingly general and vague images. Only in the course of a relatively long design process they proved to have some very specific

design requirements indeed. When publicly asked, however, they justified their insistence on certain building elements by using the publicly much-valued notions of social integration and architectural progress.

Gaffar, for instance, at one time called his glass arches and windows a sign of social transparency, having "nothing to hide," even though he had admittedly meant them to represent the Prophet's light. At his turn, Kabaktepe successfully claimed his design to have purposefully made use of the "Amsterdam School style," even though the architect as well as the design process easily shows that it did not. And finally, Ajdid stated his mosque to be a functional design, using European forms that, without dome and minaret, would look "a little bit like the Rotterdam city hall," even though in every single reaction to his architect's proposals he admittedly had had the Medina Mosque's extension in mind. Upholding the claim to represent the ultimate Islam and not a mere contested version, their ultimate Islamic buildings could only be publicly explained as diverging from others for non-religious reasons.

Towards a Dutch mosque?

Architectural critiques in newspapers, magazines, exhibitions, and televised documentaries in the Netherlands have tended to compare only the most superficial and judgemental interpretations of these mosques with a growing number of "progressive" design alternatives created by a range of engaged architectural students. Besides having led to municipal expectations and ever so many municipal disappointments, these critiques have resulted in public accusations of social segregation whenever commissioners did not wish to use such publicly acclaimed alternatives. However, notions of social integration and architectural progress appear to form much less of a factual issue to Muslim commissioners during the actual design process than does a specific vision of Islam. As a consequence, to automatically assume that the building elements they require represent notions of integration or



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segregation and then forcibly try to convince them to embrace a pre-established modern-Dutch prayer hall might not be the best way to reach the terminus of a Dutch-Islamic style. Instead, municipalities as well as architects would first have to realize the existence of the multitude of Islamic varieties within the Netherlands as much as within any Muslim home country. Then, they would have to find out the specific vision of Islam as upheld by the commissioner they have before them. Finally, they would have to reach a basic understanding of the particular architectural representation that the commissioner has in mind, even if he may not wish to disclose his religious considerations. Only once the basic motivation behind the "collage" of building elements, insisted on by the commissioner in his aim at creating the ultimate Islamic prayer hall, is understood and accepted, a more efficient discussion on how it could be materialized by other means could be started. Although the Prophet's tomb, the Selimiye Mosque and the Medina complex can hardly be made to look otherwise, the religious notions underlying their introduction into the Netherlands just might.

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Essalaam Mosque

Westermosque

Contemporary Mosque Architecture

HASAN-UDDIN KHAN

Architecture can be regarded as an expression of culture, giving clues as to who we are and embodying our concerns. For example, religious buildings may be seen as reflections of spiritual and social concerns and skyscrapers as symbols of corporate power. The mosque is Islam's most emblematic building. My focus here is on the architecture of the mosque expressing identity.¹

How identity is expressed in mosques in the different areas of the world depends not only on cultural factors but also on regional building mores and tradition of designs, architecture, and construction. A few examples illustrate this well.

A tendency in contemporary mosque design is historicism, that is refer-

Hassan II Mosque, Casablanca



PHOTO BY HOLLY HAYES / © SACRED-DESTINATIONS.COM, 2007



PHOTO BY AKEL ISMAIL KAHERA, 2002

Islamic Center, Washington DC

ring back to historically important models. An interesting example is the Washington, D.C. Islamic Center. It was commissioned in the 1950s with donations from different Islamic countries on the instigation of twelve Muslim ambassadors in the city who felt that Muslims did not have a place to pray collectively or perform the rituals for the dead. The question it raised then as it raises now was this: what should be the image for the building? It seems to come down to who funds and who designs it. In

The mosque is Islam's most emblematic building, as well as an expression of collective identity. By exploring the built form of mosques around the world and prevalent architectural trends in mosque building, this article considers what makes mosques identifiable to Muslims and non-Muslims, as well as the ways architecture represents the identity of a community and also shifts in accordance with changing social and cultural contexts.

this case, it was the architect Mario Rossi, an Italian who worked for the Ministry of Awqaf in Egypt, who used the precedent of Mameluk architecture with which he was familiar. An interesting aspect of the history of this mosque is that it became contested space in the 1980s when it turned into a centre for strife between the Shia and Sunni Muslims in Washington. Part of it was burned (and later restored) because Muslims themselves

disagreed as to who should control the mosque, how it was going to be used, and who was to be the imam. This took about two years to resolve. This history reveals that social politics play a part in the use of mosques.

Another major historicist mosque is the imposing Hassan II Mosque of 1993, in Casablanca. It uses the traditional vocabulary of twelfth century Moroccan architecture, thus visually tying the current regime back into the legitimacy of the past.

Symbolic shapes

Mosque design spans time, crosses boundaries, and expresses cultures. The Afro-Brazilian mosques in Western Africa illustrate this. They are known as such because of the slaves that were taken to Brazil and became the builders of churches there. In the late nineteenth century they became political troublemakers and were shipped back to Africa, where they produced buildings that one would not think are very mosque-like. Still, the locals regard them as very much part of their tradition of Islamic building.

Perhaps what is recognized as a mosque, and what is not, depends on who one is and where one has been—that is to say that it is a cultural manifestation as much as one based on a regional building tradition or a certain interpretation of religion.

The need to express such physical signs of religion is not new. Remember, for example, the insertion in the fifteenth century of a Catholic church into the Great Mosque of Cordoba in Spain, expressing the domination of Christianity in a country which had been ruled peacefully for four centuries by Muslims. Physical forms seem to transmit symbolic messages.

The most recognizable of such forms are the minaret and the dome. The Ottoman influence of the tall pencil-thin minaret has been widely adopted because it actually fits well into modern construction technology and it is a pure modern geometric form, as can be seen in the Islamic Centre in Zagreb, which is one of the largest in Europe. The minaret relates to the past (because that part of the world was Ottoman at one point) and there was a desire to associate oneself with Islam within what was then socialist Yugoslavia. The central dome has a modernist image and reflects the aspirations of the inhabitants portraying themselves as "modern Muslims."

In much of the Islamic world, there was a break with the visual and symbolic past between the late 1940s and 1960s, when most countries in Asia and Africa gained independence. There appeared to be the need to establish a new state and a new look forward. Newly independent Muslim majority countries needed representative buildings that symbolized their states. For example parliament buildings expressed notions of democracy, and state mosques proclaimed the importance placed on religion, as in Islamabad, Pakistan, where the main mosque was conceived as the national mosque. It is now named the Shah Faisal Masjid or King Faisal Mosque, in recognition of Saudi Arabian funding. The Turkish architect Vedat Dalokay designed it in 1970, so it is not surprising that it uses the Ottoman model with its grand open central space and the tall thin minarets. The mosque breaks with the past in expressing a modernity and an identity that proclaims it to belong to the late twentieth century.

Fifty years after Turkey became a secular republic with a majority Muslim population, a mosque was built in Ankara, in 1989, within the Parlia-

ment buildings complex. The mosque fits unobtrusively into this landscape. It declares that there is a place for prayer within government, but does not proclaim Islam as the country's *raison d'être*.

The use of the mosque complex, especially in the West and in non-majority Islamic societies, is changing, which may in turn affect the design of mosques. The situation of women in relation to mosques is becoming of greater concern in some societies. Women in many countries go to the mosque to pray, and also for educational and social functions. In Europe and the United States women and children are increasingly frequenting mosques. Since 2003 some Muslim women in the United States have been vocal in their demand for equal treatment in the mosque. One may recall incidents in the past few years when women demanded to pray in the main hall rather than in a different space, and when in March 2005 a woman led mixed male-female Friday prayers in New York. This led to protests by community members, but also received support. Also, for the first time in the USA, women have risen to positions of prominence in Muslim organizations; for instance the President of the Islamic Society of North America is Ingrid Mattson.

One of the interesting issues and design features in contemporary mosques is the space of prayer for women. Typically around 15 percent of the prayer space is given over to women who are usually housed in a balcony above or to the sides, separated from the men. I know of only one contemporary mosque that places women in a central location: it is in Kingston, Ontario Canada. Perhaps this is due to the fact that women were on the mosque building committee—itsself a rare occurrence—and that it serves a mainly university, that is liberal, population. Before its construction, the physical position for women in a mosque was debated with some hundred letters written to imams all over the world to solicit their opinion. There was no consensus and the community had to make its own decision.

Familiar forms

This brings us back to the question of identity, and its pluralistic expressions. As noted, mosques are a reflection of who we are and how we represent ourselves, not only to ourselves but to society at large. The Islamic Society of North America (ISNA) Center in Plainfield, Indiana, by the Canadian-Pakistani architect Gulzar Haider speaks of a contemporary Islamic architecture without obvious and explicit traditional ele-



Domed mosque, Shanghai



Community mosque, Aborney, Benin

ments. Is it apparent as a mosque? For some it is not. Some fifteen years after its completion the architect met with the clients and users of the project who said that they wished the mosque had had a minaret and dome so that it could be “perceived” to be a mosque.

Here is an architectural question: Can one recognize a building as a mosque without domes or without minarets? The easy use of the familiar—the domes and the minarets—is more usual, as it is in many mosques the world over, from Indonesia to North America. This notion also applies as to how one recognizes other religious buildings, be they churches, synagogues, or temples.

Indeed the dome of a mosque built in the year 2000 in Shanghai, China, is used as a sign of the presence of Islam. It has no relationship whatsoever to the buildings’ interior spaces or structure—it merely sits atop the flat roof. The community was conscious that it needed to proclaim the presence of Islam in a recently more tolerant atmosphere.

In Indonesia, ready-made tin domes sold along the sides of roads are now replacing the indigenous pyramidal roof. Because there is a normative aspect in Islam, that everyone belongs to the ummah, and that everyone is equal in the eyes of Allah, one attitude is that all Muslims should come back to some expression of unity. And it is the dome and the minaret, which in this case do not belong to the culture and which have little to do with the building traditions of the place or the climate, that have become the desirable symbols for the mosque.

Largely due to the current influence of the Arab Middle East, especially of Saudi Arabia and of Iran, such elements become the “legitimate” expression of an Islam that tries to be universal. It can also be interpreted that those whose architecture expressed their own regional identities and their beliefs are not quite sure as to their place in the new globalized world.

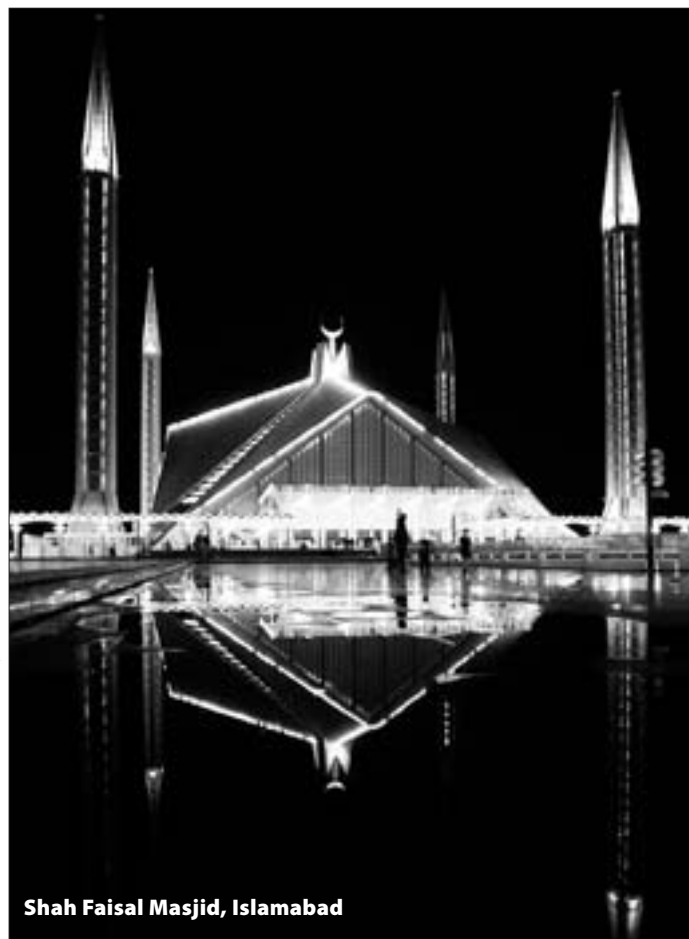
In conclusion, I would stress that the importance of the architecture of the mosque lies not only in the forms or architectural language but also in the collective meanings it transmits to us over time—from its humble beginnings as the house of the Prophet to the pluralistic manifestations we find the world over. It is its symbolism that conveys what the mosque is about, and it expresses who we are to ourselves and to the community at large.

To understand the mosque is to understand the architecture of the region and place, and even more significantly, the sociology and the culture to which it belongs. For in the end, architecture is not about buildings, it is about people.

Note

1. Suggested reading: Renata Holod and Hasan-Uddin Khan, *The Mosque and the Modern World* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1997).

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Shah Faisal Masjid, Islamabad

PHOTO BY FAROOQ NAEEM / © AFP, 2006

PHOTO BY HASAN- UDDIN KHAN

PHOTO BY CARLA DI BENEDETTI / © MIMAR

Europe's Muslim Communities

VALÉRIE AMIRAUX

Questions about the impact of 9/11 on Muslim communities in the European Union in terms of social interaction and conceptualizations of Muslim identity led to the comparative project "Europe's Muslim communities: Security and Integration post 9/11" from 2003 to 2007. The project was initiated by Ethnobarometer, the International Research Network on Interethnic Politics and Migration, and directed by Alessandro Silj. It involved national research teams in six EU countries (Italy, France, the United Kingdom, Germany, Belgium, and the Netherlands).¹ ISIM was the Dutch partner of the project.

The initial frame of the project highlighted the causal tie between terrorist attacks against the USA and the growing feeling of hostility towards Muslim populations and focused on public discourses and policies. By the time of our first meeting, in 2003, it was obvious, however, that public opinion had already been furnished with plenty of empirical and statistical evidence of these dynamics.² In order to better grasp the dynamic of inter-ethnic relations, we therefore reoriented our project towards a new methodological setting.

As matters were dictated by nationality, we wished to nuance our approach by mapping the differences among EU member states trying to come to terms with Muslim populations after 9/11. This meant assessing the level of anti-discriminatory provisions; the legacy of colonial experiences; the strength of extreme right movements and political parties in the national elections; and the kinds of integration policies existing. All such elements influence national political cultures and both public discourses on, and social treatments of, Muslim populations.

The most innovative aspect of our approach was to implement a protocol different from the classical qualitative approach of the religiosity of Muslims through semi-directive interviews. This involved the reproduction, within laboratory settings, of conditions for conflict to occur. This ethnographic innovation grew from a desire to deal with situations and interactions, rather than discourses and institutions. Thus our method aimed at providing us with a way to observe the multiple meanings of "being Muslim" in the course of interaction between individuals, some Muslims, some non-Muslims.

The seven countries involved have all entertained passionate public discussions in relation to resident Muslims. Further, the idea that relationships between Muslims and non-Muslims automatically conflict in secular contexts appeared to be the common denominator. Method should incorporate the conflict dimension as an avenue of analysis. We aspired to a method that would artificially recreate situations involving "ordinary citizens" that had been in touch with arenas where real conflicts have taken place. This would provide a purer ethnographic approach to religious belonging, based on a sociology of culture perspective rather than a neo-Islamic studies or sociology of religion reading. We thus worked with group discussions, implementing situations of debate for invited Muslim and non-Muslim participants. About twenty groups met over a period of two years, each group meeting at least two times.

The settings created space and opportunities for people to express themselves with their own words. Each group focused on a pre-defined

non-consensual topic. Such a method keeps people centered on a topic that, in the course of the discussion, creates linkages and forms of intimacy between them. Trust and mistrust appear as central concepts in distinguishing between successful (and socially cohesive) and unsuccessful situations. The group discussions were opportunities to observe where dialogue stops, what is non-negotiable, at what point people feel too injured by a person's position to continue talking with them. In order not to reduce all conflicts to matters of ethnicity or religion, "focus groups" were formed to represent various ethnic groups, age groups, and

different degrees of religious attachment. Though balanced in terms of age, gender, and ethnicity, these group discussions consisted of people of diverse and contrasting positions.

The precise format of the focus group discussions differed by country. Topics were chosen either on the basis of their local/national visibility in the public space, or on their ability to bind all participants together. In Italy, the impact of immigrants' arrival on Italian society was central in discussing the perception of respective otherness between Italian citizens and immigrant citizens after 9/11 (Rome), the links between security and identity (Padova), or the cultural transformation of Italian society in a migratory context (Milan). In France, the groups were organized on the basis of a community of experience shared by the participants. Cities were selected and associated with one arena for conflict including religious signs in public schools (Creil-Bobigny), the place of religion in French universities (Bordeaux), the access of youngsters with a migration background to political participation (Melun), the daily experience of religious pluralism in public day-care during school holidays (Argenteuil). The German case was entirely based in Berlin and delved into school and media. The British case included Birmingham (the role of religion in the local socialization of youngsters) and London. The Dutch team chose Gouda as their city in which to host five focus groups, all dealing with the victimization of Muslims, the tension within the media, trust and distrust in politics, the impact of the public presence of Islam on non-Muslim's perception of the faith, and Muslim access to Dutch schools.

Despite their variety and scope, our results may be summarized in two observations: there is, on the one hand, a demand for greater recognition between individuals in European communities in which Muslims live, and, on the other, a need for more trust between all parties. Indeed, in plural social contexts where security and Islam have become closely associated in the public domain, the importance of mutual recognition was expressed by Muslims and non-Muslims alike. This topic emerged both in the discourses of individual participants, and in the course of interactions during group discussions. Participants complained about the "rupture of trust" and growing tensions between Muslims and wider society and expressed the idea of trust as the only avenue through which social cohesion may emerge. From a public policy perspective education is clearly of great general importance. Tensions between Muslim and non-Muslim students in schools have long been underestimated, both in their daily impact on the relationships between pupils, and between pupils, teachers, and parents.

The material accumulated is quantitatively impressive and ethnographically rich. The main challenge of interpretation has been relating these data to a comparative framework. Instead of solely looking at theoretical/methodological questions, comparative approaches are increasingly problem oriented. This makes such approaches more receptive to interdisciplinary analysis. It also makes matters more difficult when it comes to the epistemological roots of our results. Beside the national reports, the final result of the project will be an edited volume available in English next summer. Lastly, it should be emphasized that although the organization of the group discussions required a lot of time and energy, for both researchers and participants the project has been a success, suggesting the need for future work along collaborative and comparative lines.

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Notes

1. The names of all coordinators and research assistants can be found on the ISIM website under Projects.
2. For example, see the various reports on Anti-Islamic reactions within the European Union after 9/11 by the EUMC in 2001 (<http://eumc.europa.eu/fra/index.php>), the EUMAP initiatives (<http://www.eumap.org/topics/minority/reports/eumuslims>), the reports by the International Helsinki Federation, not to mention academic publications.

ISIM EVENTS

17 April 2008
Lecture by Mahmood Mamdani
Political Violence in Darfur and the War on Terror
 Organizers: ISIM and Prince Claus Fund for Culture and Development
 Venue: De Glazen Zaal, The Hague

17 April 2008
Ph.D. Defense by Martijn de Koning
Searching for a "Pure" Islam. Religious Beliefs and Identity Construction among Moroccan-Dutch Youth
 Venue: VU University, Amsterdam

26 May – 27 May 2008
Workshop
City Debates 2008: "Spaces of Faith & Fun"
 Organizers: American University of Beirut and ISIM
 Venue: American University of Beirut

9 June – 10 June 2008
Conference
Gestures- Religion qua Performance
 Organizers: NWO and ISIM, on behalf of the NWO programme "The Future of the Religious Past"
 Convenors: Martin van Bruinessen (Utrecht University / ISIM) and Anne Marie Korte (University of Tilburg / Utrecht University)
 Venue: Utrecht University

20 June – 23 June 2008
Transnational Relations and Muslim Diasporas
 Panel at the conference on "Muslim Diasporas: Religious and National

Identity, Gender, Cultural Resistance," initiated by York University (Canada) and VU University
 Organizer: ISIM
 Venue: VU University, Amsterdam

7 July – 8 July 2008
Workshop
Studying Islam in Southeast Asia: State of the Art and New Approaches
 Organizers: Australia-Netherlands Research Collaboration (ANRC) in co-operation with ISIM
 Convenors: Greg Fealy (ANU) and Martin van Bruinessen (ISIM / Utrecht University)
 Venue: Leiden

26 August – 30 August 2008
Workshop
What Makes Popular Piety Popular?
 Organizers: European Association of Anthropologists (EASA) and ISIM
 Convenors: Samuli Schielke (University of Joensuu / ISIM) and Liza Debevec (ZRC-SAZU)
 Venue: 10th EASA Biennial Conference 2008, Ljubljana

29 August – 30 August 2008
Conference
Colonial and Post-Colonial Governance of Islam. Continuities and Ruptures
 Organizers: ISIM and IMISCOE/ University of Amsterdam
 Venue: Leiden

18 September – 19 September 2008
Conference
The Post-Islamist Turn. Shifting

Character of Islamism
 Organizer: ISIM
 Convenor: Asef Bayat
 Venue: Leiden

21 September – 28 September 2008
Summer Academy for Doctoral and Postdoctoral Researchers
Living Together: Plurality and Cosmopolitanism in the Ottoman Empire and Beyond
 Organizers: The Aga Khan University, Boğaziçi University, Berlin-Brandenburg Academy of Sciences and Humanities, the Fritz Thyssen Foundation, Wissenschaftskolleg zu Berlin, German Orient-Institute Istanbul, Centre for Modern Oriental Studies Berlin and ISIM
 Venue: Ottoman Bank Museum, Istanbul

26 September – 27 September 2008
Workshop
Understanding Immanent Critique: Cultural Politics and Islamic Activism
 Organizer: ISIM
 Convenor: Irfan Ahmad (ISIM)
 Venue: Leiden

June – December 2008
Lecture and Debate Series
Muslims in Europe: Representations, Women, Knowledge and Art
 Organizers: De Nieuwe Horizon and ISIM
 Venue: Rotterdam

ISIM P.H.D. AND STAFF SEMINARS

Venue: Leiden University

–22 April 2008
Dress to Differ: Changing Meanings of Tesettür among Turkish Women in the Netherlands
 Lecture by Arzu Unal

–6 May 2008
Between Orientalism and Occidentalism
 Lecture by Robbert Woltering

–20 May 2008
Forms and Elements of Religiosity among Muslim Women in the Netherlands
 Lecture by Nathal Dessing

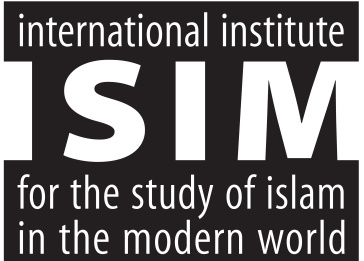
–3 June 2007
Migration, War, and the Making of a Transnational Lebanese Shi'a Community in Senegal
 Lecture by Mara Leichtman

–17 June 2008
The Institutionalization of Islamic Reformism in South Thailand: Yala Islamic University
 Lecture by Ernesto Braam

For more information on these and other events please consult the ISIM website or contact the secretariat at info@isim.nl.

NEW FELLOWS

- **Edip Asaf Bekaroglu** (Visiting Fellow)
Questioning Liberal Democracy: Multiculturalism and Muslims in the UK and the Netherlands
 1 February 2008 – 31 July 2008
- **Hilman Latief** (Ph.D. Fellow at ISIM, funded by Ministry of Foreign Affairs)
Muslim-Christian Charity Activisms and Their Contribution to the Growth of Social Institutions in Indonesia
 1 February 2008 – 31 December 2011
- **Mara Leichtman** (Visiting Fellow)
Transnational and Local Trajectories of Shi'ite Islam in Africa: Lebanese Migrants and Senegalese Converts
 1 February 2008 – 31 July 2008
- **Julie McBrien** (NWO Rubicon Postdoctoral Fellow)
Dreams and Disillusions of Young Muslim Women in Post-Soviet Central Asia
 From 1 July 2008 onwards
- **Fatemeh Sadeghi Givi** (Visiting Fellow, funded by Sephis)
Gender Identity and Politics in Contemporary Iran: A Comparative Study of the Nationalist and Islamist Periods
 1 February 2008 – 31 July 2008
- **Samuli Schielke** (Visiting Fellow, funded by the Academy of Finland)
Contradictions and Margins of the Islamic Revival in Egypt
 1 January 2008 – 31 December 2008
- **Virtudes Téllez Delgado** (Visiting Fellow)
Young Muslims in Madrid: Re-negotiating Identities after 11 March 2004
 25 February 2008 – 25 July 2008
- **Din Wahid** (Ph.D. Fellow at ISIM, funded by Ministry of Foreign Affairs)
Nurturing Wahhabi Ideology: A Study of Salafi Pesantrens in Contemporary Indonesia
 1 February 2008 – 31 December 2011



ISIM Evaluated as "Excellent"

ISIM's work in the period 2002–2007 has been evaluated by an international peer review committee. The committee, working according to the Dutch Standard Evaluation Protocol, found that ISIM's research results and international reputation are excellent. For the complete evaluation report please consult the ISIM website.

New Project on Islam, Fashion, and Music

The NWO programme on Cultural Dynamics has granted almost 550.000 euro to the ISIM/ASSR research programme on "Islamic Cultural Practices and Performances: The Emergence of New Youth Cultures in Europe". In the course of the last decades, the Muslim world has witnessed the emergence of forms of artistic and popular entertainment and consumption that find their inspiration in Islam. The programme sets out to answer the question whether a similar turn towards Islamic entertainment is taking place amongst Muslim youth in Europe. It focuses on developments in the fields of Islamic artistic performances, popular music entertainment, and Islamic fashions. Central questions are: How and to what extent has such a trend emerged? Who are its main protagonists and what are their main sources of inspiration? Which ranges of practices and performances are considered as Islamic—by those involved—and on what grounds are they legitimated? Who are able to claim a position of authority and on which grounds do they succeed? The programme also investigates whether the emergence of Islamic cultural practices and performances contributes to the development of a transnational Muslim public in Europe, while paying attention to how this public may be fractured by nationality, ethnicity, class, gender, generation, and religiosity. The programme will be directed by Annelies Moors, ISIM Chair at the University of Amsterdam, and will run from mid-2008 through 2011.

“Muslim Women” in Asia

ANNELIES MOORS

ISIM organized a workshop on “Transnational Circuits: ‘Muslim Women’ in Asia” as part of the conference on Inter-Asian Connections convened by the Social Science Research Council together with the Dubai School of Government in Dubai from 21-23 February. The conference aimed to launch new, transregional, and comparative research initiatives that go beyond more narrowly defined area-studies approaches and focus on the connections between different parts of Asia. The workshop addressed how women’s subjectivities were transformed in new transnational circuits of labour and consumption. It focused on the involvement of Muslim women in Asia in these circuits, be it as mobile people or as producers, propagators, and consumers of things, ideas, and images on the move. We used the notion “Muslim women” as a heuristic device to move beyond an area studies approach. This focus on Islam and gender turned out to be fruitful in analyzing three major Inter-Asian circuits: migrant domestic labour, transnational marriages, and fashionable styles of Muslim dress.

Studies about migrant domestic labour have often focused on the nationality of domestic workers. However, when focusing on how migrant domestic workers connect to their employers or their natal families, and on the sense of belonging they develop, religion is a highly relevant category, both for Muslim-born migrant domestic workers and for those who became Muslim during their migration trajectory. Bindulakshmi Pattadath did research with poor Muslim women from Kerala who work as domestics in the United Arab Emirates. This connection needs to be seen within the context of long-standing trade links between the Gulf and coastal Kerala, resulting in a sense of familiarity between Emiratis and Muslims from Kerala (including some knowledge of Arabic). Living for years in the Gulf did not mean that these domestics brought “Gulf Islam” back home. Many of them went to work in the Emirates to be able to better adhere to Keralese notions of propriety. For instance, they used their savings to provide their daughters with a substantial dowry, a practice common in South Asia, but not in the Gulf.

Academic writing dealing with migrant domestics from the Philippines has rarely acknowledged the presence of Muslims amongst them. Alicia Pingol focused on Muslim Filipinas migrants to Saudi Arabia working in the field of care, and on how their work experiences alongside other Muslims sustain or transform their religious beliefs, practices, and identities. Attiya Ahmad discussed the process of conversion of migrant domestic workers to Islam in Kuwait not as a sudden transformation but as a process of “becoming Muslim.” The domestic workers did not discuss their conversions in terms of inner motivations and identities, but of how it impacted on their relation with the families for whom they worked, other migrants in Kuwait, and their natal families.

The papers on migrant domestic workers illustrated the link between labour migration and transnational marriages as they included examples of the numerous Inter-Asian marriages between men from the Middle East and women from South and Southeast Asia. Such transnational marriages are closely intertwined with long-distance movements for the sake of trade, pilgrimage, education, and employment, but have gained a new meaning with the emergence of nation-states, laws on nationality and residency, and discourses about national identity. Frances Hasso connected this to “transnational invasions,” a term expressing the cultural anxiety among citizens of the United Arab Emirates and Egypt about increased flows of people, ideas, and products. As she argued, social and political tensions regarding gender relations, sexuality, and marriage were often inaccurately attributed solely to “external” influences, such as migration and the new media. Whereas different opinions about marriage and sexuality have always co-existed in lay practices and among Islamic jurists and scholars, this has been affected by the more stringent laws of modern states.

Long-distance migration has also led to transformations in family relations in Kerala. Caroline Osella pointed out how in Kozhikode families

are shifting from matrilineal large extended households into small individual household units with patrilineal emphasis, often in new neighbourhoods. Other families choose to remain in the old Muslim area, building large properties and trying to re-constitute matrilineages, enabled by remittances from the Gulf. In these settings transnational migration, family relations and notions of the self constitute each other interchangeably. Rehana Sultana and K.C. Bindu zoned in on the phenomenon of senior Arab citizens visiting Hyderabad to marry young local women. As they pointed out, marriages between an Indian woman and an Arab man in itself need not pose a problem and are part of a long history of connections with the Arab world. Yet, reported cases of husbands abandoning wives immediately after a few days of married life point to the sexual exploitation these girls. However, analyzing the 1991 Ameena case—an under-aged girl from Hyderabad rescued from a marriage with an elderly Saudi man—they argued that newspapers used this case to blame the Muslim community, a minority already under threat, while the story of the young woman herself, who subsequently married a much older local man, was lost.

With the turn of the Islamic revival movement towards a more cultural orientation and, especially since the 1990s, fashionable styles of Islamic dress have become a growth sector with materials, designs, and items of dress part of transnational circuits of consumption. Vivienne Angeles zoned in on fashionable styles of dress among Filipina and Malaysian Muslim women. Affected by the Islamic resurgence of the mid-1970s, Muslims in both countries have been increasingly manifesting their Muslim identity through the use of Islamic forms of dress. In the Philippines the ethnic clothing worn by tribal communities in the south has been affected by the growing labour migration to Saudi Arabia, with migrants taking on the *abaya* and in some cases the face-veil. For the Malays, the Islamic revival has contributed to the growing popularity of a style of Islamic dress that is not imported from the Middle East but reflects the evolution of Malay dress to conform to new local interpretations of modesty. Also in Indonesia Islamic fashion emerged along with the Islamic revival movement. Eva Amrullah pointed out how the desire to wear fashionable styles of veiling was first linked to countries such as Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and Yemen, while more recently Indonesian designers have developed their own styles of fashionable Muslim dress that have become an export item and gained a presence in cyberspace.

The discussions highlighted the importance of various forms of mediation through magazines, television, or the Internet. Shalina Mehta discussed the impact of the media on bodily appearances of Muslim women in a Delhi slum. She pointed to the development of cable television networks targeting a “home bound women audience.” Muslim girls who were not allowed to go to college were influenced by a media-created cosmopolitan popular culture with respect to dress styles, jewelry, and accessories.

The papers show not only the mobility of Muslim women, but also how different circuits of people, products and ideas are interconnected. Whereas previously men from the Gulf involved in trade married South and South-East Asian women, after the oil-boom women from these regions started to work in the Gulf States as domestics, sometimes marrying local men. The same domestic workers brought new fashions back home which contributed to the development of fashionable styles of Muslim dress building on local traditions. Various media provided information about jobs available and propagated new fashions, but also produced a discourse of foreign invasions, moral panics, and families in crisis. Clearly, the discussions on mobile domestic labour, transnational marriages, and Muslim fashions point to the need to link global trends in the political economy with the micropolitics of family life and gendered subjectivities, for these fields are at once transnational and personal. Moreover, they exemplify how money and love, economics and emotions, and national politics and sexuality constitute each other in people’s everyday lives.

Annelies Moors holds the ISIM Chair at Amsterdam University.

European Islam Between Religious Traditions and Secular Formations

ALEXANDRE CAEIRO & JEANETTE JOUILLI

The workshop "European Islam between Religious Traditions and Secular Formations" was held in Slubice (Poland) from 7-10 February. It was jointly organized by ISIM, Casa Arabe and its International Institute of Arab and Muslim World Studies, Kompetenzzentrum Orient-Okzident Marinz, and Europa-Universität Viadrina Frankfurt/Oder. The workshop was a collaborative achievement between thirty participating scholars (see the full list at www.isim.nl under Events).

The convenors—Alexandre Caeiro (ISIM), Jeanette S. Jouili (ISIM), Frank Peter (Frankfurt-Oder) and Armando Salvatore (L'Orientale, Naples)—took Talal Asad's work on tradition and secularity as the starting point for a reflection on the structures of European secular formations in their double relation to Christianity and the Enlightenment.

The workshop opened with a lecture by Armando Salvatore entitled "What Went Wrong with Tradition in Europe? Post-Christian Secular Order and the Challenge of Reformed Tradition," where he proposed a re-thinking of secularity on the basis of a re-reading of Habermas' work on communicative action.

The workshop then took the form of a reading seminar divided into three thematic sessions. Participants critically discussed key texts from

the disciplines of philosophy, political theory, sociology, and anthropology, in a deliberate attempt to connect the study of European Islam more closely to important debates in the social sciences.

The first session, "The European State and Historical Time: The Dialectics of Assimilation and Marginalization," attempted to question the assumptions upon which the binary opposition of continuity versus change—common in studies of European Muslims—rests. It began with a lecture by Ruth Mas (University of Colorado at Boulder) focusing on how calls for the reform of Islam relate understandings of time and history to specific sentiments and affects.

The following session, "A Living Tradition? Subject Formation, Disciplines and Bodily Practices," was introduced by a lecture by Mohamed Tabishat (UAE University/WIKO Berlin) on "The Body, the Secular, and the Islamic: An Exploration." Drawing closely on Asad's anthropology of the body, Tabishat questioned the body-mind dichotomy still dominant in European conceptualizations of religion, as reflected in understandings of rituals in terms of symbolic practices.

The last session on "The Structures of Dialogue: Disciplining, Antagonism, and Resentment" started with a lecture by Maleiha Malik of King's College London where she explored how European liberal democracies might design a political "dialogue" with Muslims whose political views seem to be incommensurable with liberal principles, notably by implementing what Malik, following William Connolly, calls "agonistic respect."

The workshop closed with an open discussion in which participants reflected upon the ways the theoretical texts of the previous days could or should be incorporated into the study of Islam/Muslims in Europe. The exercise and format of the workshop were stimulating for all participants, and a follow-up is already being considered.

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- June 2007
- ISBN 978 90 04 15017 1
- Paperback (x, 198 pp.)
- List price EUR 109.- / US\$ 153.-
- Price for subscribers to the series EUR 99.- / US\$ 139.-

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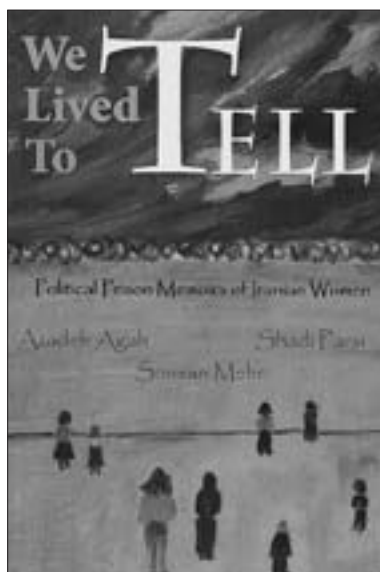
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We Lived To Tell: Political Prison Memoirs of Iranian Women

By **Azadeh Agah, Sousan Mehr & Shadi Parsi**

Toronto: McGilligan, 2007

This book is perhaps the first English-language collection of memoirs written by women who were political prisoners in Iran. It contains the accounts of three Iranian women who were detained for four-five years in the 1980s and now live in Canada. In first person narratives the authors document daily life among the women and children with whom they lived while in prison.

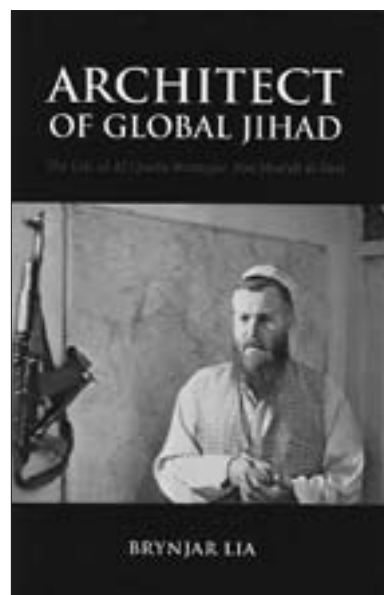
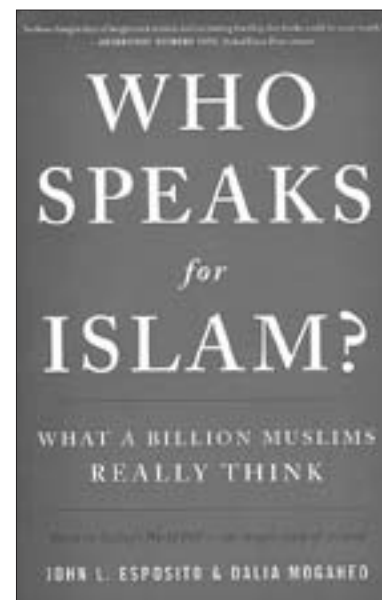


Who Speaks for Islam? What a Billion Muslims Really Think

By **John L. Esposito & Dalia Mogahed**

New York: Gallup Press, 2008

Based on a massive multi-year Gallup study in 35 countries, this book offers valuable data on the views of Muslims from various walks of life on such topics as religion, democracy, women's rights, extremism, and the West. The insights, drawn on interview information from tens of thousands of informants both in the Muslim world and in the West, challenge the prevailing imaginations about Muslim peoples and their relationship to the modern world.



Architect of Global Jihad: The Life of Al Qaeda Strategist Abu Mus'ab al-Suri

By **Brynjar Lia**

New York: Columbia University Press, 2008

A biography of a foremost theoretician of the global Jihadi movement, allegedly captured in Pakistan in 2005. Abu Mus'ab al-Suri was originally from Syria where he participated in the Islamist insurgency in the 1980s. With his extensive knowledge of Jihadi guerilla warfare, he trained a generation of young Jihadis at Al-Qaida's Afghan camps and helped to establish its European networks. The book also contains an English translation of two chapters of Al-Suri's influential book *The Global Islamic Resistance Call*, in which he outlined a strategy for Al-Qaida.



The Public Sphere: Liberal Modernity, Catholicism, Islam and Religion

By **Armando Salvatore**

New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007

This book explores the notion of the public sphere within Western and Islamic traditions, particularly Catholicism and Sunni Islam. It offers a critique of the classical Habermasian public sphere in the light of the author's understanding of social and political processes in the Muslim world. Discarding conventional views of the public sphere as an exclusive legacy of Western political cultures it traces the genealogy of the modern public sphere across conventional borders between the Western and the Islamic world.

The Politics of the Veil

By **Joan Wallach Scott**

Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007

This book analyses the debate in France about the ban on the wearing of "conspicuous signs" of religious affiliation in public schools which was aimed at Muslim girls wearing headscarves. It situates the history and politics of the veil controversy in the context of French notions of racism, individualism, secularism, and sexuality. The author examines the dominant French view of French Muslims, particularly the discourse of the advocates of the ban. She shows the long history of racism behind the law and the conflicting approaches to sexuality that lie at the heart of the debate.

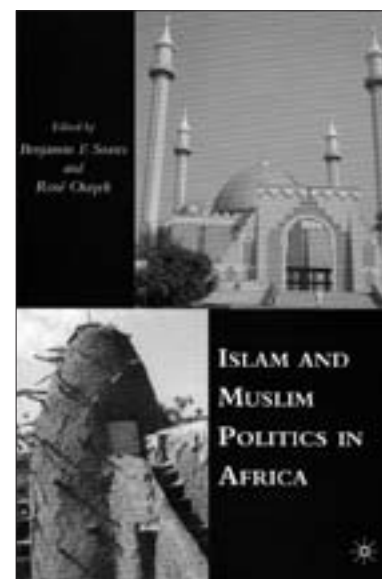


Islam and Muslim Politics in Africa

Edited by **Benjamin F. Soares & René Otayek**

New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007

This collection of essays explores how Muslim politics and the practice of Islam have been changing in sub-Saharan Africa due to processes of political and economic liberalization and globalization. While the volume focuses on transnational networks, the question of the state, and new ways of being Muslim, it includes case studies of Muslim youths, activists, preachers, and ordinary Muslims, Islamic NGOs, secularism, Islamic law, minority rights, and the political process in thirteen countries.





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What we saw upon awakening

Artist Lida Abdul reflects on the character of home and place in a series of film installations created in Afghanistan, including *What we saw upon awakening* and *War games*. Returning to her native country and finding it destroyed by invasion, war and catastrophe, Abdul involves the built landscape

in an exploration of belonging, migration, power, and identity. Her work has been featured at the Venice Biennale, among others, and she received a Prince Claus Award in 2006. The first monograph of her work was published in 2007 by the Prince Claus Fund Library and hopefulmonster editore, Italy.

Lida Abdul

For more information on the publication see the Prince Claus Fund website at www.princeclausfund.org or email info@princeclausfund.nl.

War games (what I saw)

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