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postal address
P.O. Box 11089
2301 EB Leiden
The Netherlands

telephone
+31(0)71 527 79 05
fax
+31(0)71 527 79 06

e-mail
info@isim.nl
homepage
http://www.isim.nl

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Muslim Responses to Globalization

One of the consequences of the post-11 September war on terrorism has been the appearance of numerous attempts, both in academia and in the press, to explain 'Muslim rage', 'why they hate us', and 'what we can do about it'. Much of the reporting has correctly focused on Western culture as a source of antagonism in the Muslim world. However, few analyses have focused on the role of globalization – and the new matrices of cultural, economic and political interaction it has produced – in perpetuating and even exacerbating the hostility between segments of Muslim and Western societies.

MARK LEVINE

In contrast to the general absence of such discussions in the West, the Muslim majority world has witnessed intense debates over the meaning and consequences of (particularly cultural) globalization for the relationship between 'Islam' and the 'West', even as its economic markers such as rapid growth in trade, the use of information technologies to reorganize production, and the integration of financial markets, have had limited impact. There exists a multitude of Arabic, Turkish, Persian, French, German and Italian language literature on the subject. Examined together, they reveal great ambivalence towards possibilities and dangers that globalization implies: that is, a general fear that globalization has brought an 'invasion' of American culture to Muslim societies that will 'hollow us out from the inside and domesticate our […] identity'; yet at the same time an awareness that globalization is a 'natural' process – 'neither Hell nor Heaven' – from which the Arab/Muslim world cannot opt out.

***Al-ʿAwlama* (Globalization), by Galal Amin. Cover image by Manal Badran.**

DAR AL-MAAREF, CAIRO.

Muslim experiences of globalization can be interpreted as a 'post-modern culturalism', one that is intimately connected to what is arguably the culturalization of politics and economies as a defining moment of contemporary globalization. In this discourse, many Arab and Muslim writers demand 'the right to be different' as the basis for the democracy necessary to negotiate past the Scylla and Charybdis of assimilation into or exile from the emerging global order. This focus on the right to cultural difference is crucial, because globalization is understood to be premised on the development of a forced difference that leads to the deepening of poverty and inequalities both inside and between countries.

The consensus seems to be that globalization marks a continuation of the basic dynamic of Western domination and hegemony dating back hundreds of years, in which today America is utilizing globalization to overthrow existing political, economic, and cultural norms. In this context, globalization's cultural/ideological foundations provide it with the 'fine power' to realize its imperialist aims without causing classic revolutionary reactions to it, as did Western imperialism before it.

Building on two centuries of Muslim critiques of capitalism and materialism (from Al-Jabarti to Sayyid Qutb and Ali Shariati) contemporary writers see globalization as sabotaging the 'Islamic Personality' and 'infect[ing] the people', causing a 'planned exchange' with true Muslims through the introduction of materialist culture. As the cover of a recent popular book on the issue depicts it (in the fashion of an old dime-store novel), the American cowboy is lassoing the world. Culture is considered central to the power of contemporary globalization because globalized culture leads people to withdraw loyalty from their 'cultural national identity', leaving only equally powerful discourses such as Islamism able to stand against it.

Moreover, equally important to the perceived threat to democracy and autonomous development posed by American-sponsored globalization is the fear that the consumer/materialist culture at its heart will tear down the borders erected and maintained by the nation-state. Yet at the same time the fear for the future of the nation-state raises the question of how central the nation-state, and the 'human nationalism' counterposed by one writer to an 'inhuman globalism', serves its purpose in the 'global' era, and in a situation where tens of millions of Muslims now live in the heart of the West, where the *dar al-harb* (i.e. non-Muslim countries) is gradually becoming *dar al-Islam*.

Muslims in Europe

Indeed, these ambivalent sentiments toward globalization are shared not just by Middle Eastern Muslims, but by Muslims living in Europe as well, although the latter generally have a more sanguine perspective. Over the course of four decades of Muslim (im)migration to Europe a diverse community, some 10 million strong, has become 'implanted' on European soil. The emerging European Islam is situated in a triangular relation with the wider European host societies and Muslim majority countries of origin. Together these vectors produce two opposing tendencies: a Euro-Islam that sees itself as a permanent presence in the space of Europe, and a 'ghetto' Islam that mirrors the continued rejection of Islam by the white/Christian majority cultures.

The latter tendency is fuelled by the same processes of economic marginalization suffered by most developing countries that have undergone structural adjustment. This dislocation has fuelled the 'Islamization of identity' of many younger European Muslims in the same manner that globalization has 'ideologized' Islam across the Muslim world. Thus may Muslim leaders in Europe remain hostile to 'Western'/European culture; indeed, if anti-IMF violence in Egypt and Algeria heralded the arrival of globalization in the MENA region in the late 1980s, in 1990 an 'intifada of the cities' in France broke out, waged largely by poor Muslim immigrants; while in 1993 the Union of French Islamic Organizations issued a manifesto which, in a language that resonates with the critiques hailing from the Muslim majority world, preached the need of 'freeing [people] from the yoke of ungodly capitalism […] fac[ing] the colonialist unbeliever, the eternal enemy'.

Yet on the other hand, many Muslim leaders in Europe, such as Rachid al-Ghannouchi or Tariq Ramadan, see countries such as France assuming the status of *dar al-Islam*, that is, a 'Muslim' country. Islam *in* France is becoming an Islam *of* France, a transformation that was crucial to the way in which Muslims in Europe and around the world perceive and relate to Europe. Indeed, the question that is raised vis-à-vis these more extreme Islamist imaginations of European Islam is how France can be 'expelled […] from the minds of the colonized' when the (former) colonized are now living *in* France. This is the European problematic generated by the radical political reassertion of Islam in Algeria, and in the southern Mediterranean more generally.

It is clear, then, that Islamism in Western Europe is nurtured by the same systematic processes which are found at the global level. In a more positive sense, this situation reveals the power of Islam as a transnational identity which allows, for example, networks to be formed by small businesses and associations in Germany and Turkey that allow Turkish immigrants to benefit from being political and social actors in both countries. One could argue that the success of these networks is an important reason why, in contrast to the generally negative (or at least suspicious) appraisal of globalization in the Arab world, the Turkish debate is more evenly divided between those who support and those who criticize the dominant neo-liberal, consumerist model of globalization.

At the same time, it reveals the importance of class/economic position in determining religious expression of European Muslims, in fostering and supporting a Muslim élite capable of acquiring legitimacy in both Europe and their country of origin, and more broadly, in shaping the space of Europe and the Euro-Med region into a 'terre de mediation' between Europe and the Muslim world. More specifically, there is a large and growing Muslim middle class, supported through communities such as Fetulleh Gulen that have developed a 'neo-liberal Islamism' that challenges the hegemonic Saudi (Wahhabi) Islam that has sought to establish the kind of religious and cultural homogenization in the Muslim world that many critics decry as a damaging element of the globalization discourses emanating from the West/America.

Whatever their motivations, it is clear that many Arabs and Muslims are developing their own cultural responses to globalization through the introduction of a politicized Islam into the modern arenas of social life. Such cultural politics is generating 'new

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Editorial Office
Visiting Address
Rapenburg 71, Leiden
Postal Address
ISIM, P.O. Box 11089
2301 EB Leiden, The Netherlands
Telephone
+31(0)71 527 79 05
Telefax
+31(0)71 527 79 06
E-mail
isimnews@isim.nl
Homepage
www.isim.nl

Editor
Dick Douwes
Copy and language editor
Gabrielle Constant
Desk editor
Noël Lambert
Design
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Editorial

DICK DOUWES | *Editor*

Dutch drama: 6 May 2002 and an animal rights' activist shoots to death the Dutch populist politician Pim Fortuyn, thus committing the first political murder in the Netherlands since World War II (see Karacaer, p.11). There was no single incidence of public support for the murder, but oddly enough many felt relief that the suspect was not a Muslim. Why?

In a fascinating one-man performance Fortuyn had shaken the foundations of the Dutch political establishment. Bald-headed, proudly gay, with a limousine as means of transportation, and often accompanied by two Yorkshire terriers, he used television as his main medium, disseminating his views with dramatic gestures and – at times funny – one-liners. For those who did not back his ideas it seemed a relief that he was sort of a court jester, too vain and witty to survive dreary Dutch political culture. However, his horrid death may well lead him to 'survive' longer than many anticipated. Nine days after his death his party, established three months earlier and simply called List Pim Fortuyn, became second to the Christian Democratic Party that profited greatly from the moral crisis that had hit the country. The dominant Labour Party lost nearly 50% of its seats, signalling the current spectacular decrease of support for social democracy in Western Europe. Not unsurprisingly, issues of immigration and (public) security, often interlinked, dominated the campaigns in the Netherlands, as in neighbouring countries.

The Dutch example demonstrates that globalization is not only the predicament of the Muslim world or Muslims migrants in the West (Levine, p.1), but also of European societies in general. Relentless in his critique on political correctness and bureaucratic imperative, Fortuyn mobilized public support by questioning the ability of Muslim migrants to integrate and by ridiculing Islam and its representatives. Fortuyn broadcasted mixed messages; he was not xenophobic, but he clearly abhorred Islam and everything associated with it. Islam has received very bad press in the Netherlands – also because of series of incidents concerning imams and would-be imams expressing views which, to put it mildly, with some regularity transgress the local contexts of both believers and unbelievers. However few in number, these extra-local (and in the eyes of many, virtually extra-terrestrial) imams attract public attention and strengthen the belief of many that Dutch culture has nothing to gain from Islam. Moreover, the 11 September attacks have reinforced the idea that Islam is strongly associated with the outright rejection of Western lifestyles. Well before his calling to electoral politics, Fortuyn published his views in columns and books, one of which was entitled *Against the Islamization of the Netherlands*. During the campaigns he defined Islam as a 'backward culture', claiming that conditions are terrible everywhere Islam rules. He held Islam responsible for the isolation of many migrants in the Netherlands. Moreover, he expressed fear that the increased presence of Muslims poses a danger to the emancipation of women and of homosexuals because of their 'hypocritical and male chauvinistic' culture, notwithstanding his own sexist remarks made to female journalists. Nevertheless, he brought two formerly left-wing issues into a basically conservative populist discourse.

Fortuyn's uncompromising views, his camp if not eccentric behaviour, and his veritable martyr's death explain his posthumous popularity. His main ideas, the disciplining of immigrants into the national culture and the refutation of cultural relativism, have been voiced in many places before. Some argue that thanks to people like Fortuyn a number of taboos that frustrated a more pragmatic approach to the issues of immigration and integration, in particular in the field of gender relations, including marriage patterns, have been lifted. That may be true, yet, for the time being, his violent death precludes a more open exploration of the issue of migration and culture based upon the assumption that cultures are in flux and open to change, whether we like it or not.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Dear Editor,

Your *ISIM Newsletter* issue no. 9 is as stimulating as ever, but I wonder whether it fully rises to the occasion. Granted, you strike a fine and imaginative editorial balance, including on the one hand, critiques of Euro-American hegemony, and on the other, attempts to introduce innovative ideas from the Arab-Islamic world to an Anglophone readership. Amr Hamwazy's article on the prospects for the 'intellectual isolation of radical Islamism' and Mohamad Tavakoli-Targhi's piece on 'hate mysticism' are especially striking.

But do you not skirt around an urgent issue, which is whether or not – as recently argued in a lecture in England by the Dutch sociologist Emmanuel de Kadt – the undoubted tendency within all religions (and other dogmatic ideologies) towards violent extremism is particularly pronounced in contemporary Islam? The case he advances is not unfamiliar – that Islam has not yet undergone a Reformation and an Enlightenment, and that its modernizing voices have not yet consolidated into coherent intellectual movements comparable to Reform Judaism. I listened to De Kadt's lecture – which also addressed the much wider question of fundamentalism in general – with deep resistance, fortified by my reading of many anthropological warnings against denying 'coevality' to non-Western societies; by the knowledge that a huge majority of Muslims have no inclination whatsoever towards extremism, let alone violence; and by a recognition that Islam as a religion cannot bear responsibility for the repressive character of so many political regimes in the Islamic world.

However, some facts do seem to support De Kadt's case. It is true that at the centre of Oxford University is a memorial to Christian bishops who were burnt at the stake as recently as four and a half centuries ago. But it does seem odd today that the editor of *The Quest for the Historical Muhammad* (New York: Prometheus Books, 2000) should have had to publish his book under a pseudonym, Ibn Warraq, presumably for fear of retribution. Yes, he may be biased and polemical, but is not the free exchange of ideas a prerequisite for fruitful co-adaptation with the modern world? He has cleverly echoed the title of Albert Schweitzer's pioneering *The Quest of the Historical Jesus*, published in 1906. Surely an anthology of academic texts by such venerable authors as Renan (d. 1892), Lammens (d. 1937) and Schacht (d. 1969) deserves to be publishable in the ordinary way.

Secondly, the extent of mind control exercised by some of the armed Islamist groups in Algeria over their recruits during the civil war has probably been underestimated. I found *Moi, Nadia, femme d'un émirdu GIA* [Groupe Islamiste Armé], by Baya Gacemi (Algiers: Editions L'Epoque, 1998) such a shocking book to read that I hoped it would turn out to be an insidious forgery. 'Nadia' is a pseudonym; the story, told to a journalist, is that of a girl who fell in love with a young hooligan who was indoctrinated into becoming a ruthless killer and petty tyrant in the GIA hierarchy. Her village, initially sympathetic to the Islamists, changed to opposing them, so that eventually her husband was killed by the police and she was abandoned by all her family and friends. During a visit to Algiers in 2000, I was assured by university sociologists whose opinion I trust that it is an authentic account. Similar techniques of indoctrination are commonly used by cults and similar organizations in the West, but the extent of their use in Algeria in the 1990s under the auspices of Islamism testifies to a serious crisis in religious authority. This must be a central problem today in a country whose population is nearly 100% Muslim by birth.

If the question posed by De Kadt is indeed the serious issue that I believe it to be, it is one for Islamic theology, not merely for social and political science – for only a minority of the world's Muslims seem likely to suddenly give up their religious beliefs and become liberal humanists after the English or Dutch model. Special attention should be given to such movements as Islamic feminism, as in your conference report by Martin van Bruinessen; but also to the work of modernizing sheikhs such as Zaki Badawi in London and Soheib Bencheikh in Marseilles, whose intellectual commitments, now criticized by some commentators as élitist, may well have an immense long-term influence. And surely De Kadt's argument should be faced straight on, so that we can assess the evidence for and against.

JONATHAN BENTHALL

Jonathan Benthall is honorary research fellow at the Department of Anthropology, University College London. E-mail: jonathanbenthall@hotmail.com

NEWS

Four Freedoms Medal

On Saturday, 8 June 2002, Prof. Dr Nasr Abu Zaid received the Franklin D. Roosevelt Freedom of Worship Medal. In 1941. US President Roosevelt proclaimed that four freedoms are essential for democracy to flourish: freedom of speech and expression, freedom of worship, freedom from want, and freedom from fear. In order to encourage leadership in fulfilling this vision, the Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt Institute honours individuals who have demonstrated a lifelong commitment to these ideals. Nelson Mandela was among the other recipients. The trustees of the award stated that Abu Zaid's career and work exemplify the importance of continued commitment to freedom of religion and conscience. In his acceptance speech Abu Zaid expressed his great concern about the ongoing repression and violence associated with religion.

'As a Muslim and a scholar of Islamic Studies, the first Muslim to receive such an honourable award, I feel obliged to explicate what I think is the double message implied in awarding me the medal of freedom of worship. The message is to address both the Western world and the Muslim world as such. Islam is not static, non-dynamic, or a fixed set of rules. It is not a violent terrorist religion by nature. Any religion can be misused, politicized and manipulated to serve a certain ideology. The Qur'an, the holy book of Muslims, is silent; it does not speak by itself, but people speak it out. As the Word of God to man, its understanding and interpretation reflect the human dimension of religion. It is then unacceptable to ascribe to Islam whatever problems Muslims might have in their socio-historical existence.'

Among his many other activities, Prof. Nasr Abu Zaid participates in the ISIM 'Rights at Home' project.

Appointment

ISIM Chair at the University of Nijmegen

Abdulkader Tayob, from the University of Cape, joins the ISIM as the ISIM Chair at the University of Nijmegen. His arrival brings with it his wealth of experience in the study of Islam from the perspective of religious studies and South African politics. Tayob is particularly interested in the trends and developments in African Islam since the end of colonial rule. How have Muslims and Islamic institutions developed since the 1960s? Which interpretations of Islam, and which social and political forms, have dominated the public debate among Muslims? In spite of diversity, can one speak of an African experience of Islam? If so, what can this experience tell us about global Muslim experiences? These are the kinds of questions that Tayob will bring to the ISIM in the coming years.

Abdulkader Tayob

PHOTO: DEVELOPMENT AND PEACE FOUNDATION, 2001

Tayob's attention to public life in Africa has deep roots in his personal life and academic career. As an undergraduate student in a racially segregated university, he was attracted to Islamist politics against conservative religious scholars and apartheid. Until 1984, he played an active role in the Muslim Students Association and Muslim Youth Movement. He has maintained a commitment to the development and transformation of the latter as a columnist for its newspaper, occasional advisor, and honorary historian. Published in 1995, *Islamic Resurgence in South Africa* (Cape Town: UCT Press) situates the organization in the history of South African Islam, and the history of Islamic revival in general.

Even whilst reading for a degree in Arabic and Islamic Studies, he was really interested in a career as a mathematics teacher. After completing an honours degree in mathematics, Tayob taught the subject at the high school level for two years. However, a short stint in Saudi Arabia to improve his Arabic competency lured him further into the study of Islam. He then obtained a scholarship to complete an M.A. and Ph.D. at Temple University within the framework of the Islamization of Knowledge under the supervision of Prof. Ismail al-Faruqi. His dissertation on the 9th/10th-century Muslim historian, Al-Tabari, was supposed to be preparatory groundwork for the Islamization of history as a discipline. But, the appeal of history and historians led him to explore the cultural and religious biases that made the writing of history possible. Using the work of Gadamer, Tayob has tried to point out the prejudices of early Muslim historians as both debilitating and empowering factors in the writing of history. Using their religious views on the companions of the Prophet, Tayob showed how the form and production of history (*ta'rikh*) suited the interests of the early historians.

Back in South Africa in 1989, Tayob used his knowledge of the study of religion to evaluate Muslim institutions and responses to colonialism, apartheid and the struggle against apartheid. In addition to personal experience and academic tools, his exposure to the study of religion prepared him well for the task. In the next few years, he published a number of articles and eventually two books on Islam in South Africa. In addition to the one already mentioned, *Islam in South Africa: Mosques, Imams and Sermon* (Florida, 1999) focused on the emergence of Islamic institutions in the context of apartheid, and analysed Islamic sermons in these institutions during South Africa's transition to apartheid. This work marked a transition from a focus on youth and political developments, to a broader concern about the institutional framework and social-religious patterns of Islamic practice. He explored, for example, the relation between imams and traders, Asian and African Muslims, and men and women. Furthermore, he showed how the sermon during the period of transition became the locus of new interpretations on the basis of the old.

His interest in classical Islamic thought has continued, and still focuses on Al-Tabari and other individuals and aspects of classical Islam. Tayob taught courses on the Qur'an, Hadith, Philosophy and Sufism. These were all taught as interrelated disciplines from a critical perspective. Using his knowledge of the development of *ta'rikh*, he tried to frame other Islamic disciplines and their development as products of particular interests. In each case, Tayob was keen to show how the values and symbols of Islam were created and articulated in different historical and cultural contexts. *Islam: A Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oneworld, 1999) was the materialization of this intellectual trajectory. In addition, he is also working as an associate editor for a new two-volume encyclopaedia on Islam at Macmillan.

In the meantime, South Africa was rapidly changing with the dawning of democracy. Tayob's interests in South Africa expanded to draw comparisons with religious societies and communities in other African countries. The focus on African experiences has developed in collaboration with colleagues in Cape Town and abroad. In the first instance, the meaning of religion and public life in a democratic society has been prompted by serious political questions in South Africa itself. A departmental course on Religion and Public Life, taught with colleagues working on comparative religions (Christianity and African Traditional Religions) has stimulated interesting questions. Good partnerships based on similar concerns have been nurtured with colleagues in, particularly, Germany and the Netherlands. So far, one co-edited book on religion and politics has seen the light of day, edited by Tayob and Weisse: *Religion and Politics in South Africa* (Muenchen: Waxmann, 1999). On an equally productive level, Tayob has participated in and established a series of colloquia for sharing and disseminating research findings with Muslim communities.

Report

MAREIKE WINKELMANN

Madrasa Workshop

As a joint effort of the ISIM, the Felix Meritis foundation in Amsterdam, and the International Institute for Asian Studies (IIAS), a workshop on madrasas, or Islamic religious seminaries, was held on 16 May 2002 in Amsterdam. Following the attacks in the United States and the ensuing war in Afghanistan, the perception of the madrasa as a training camp for jihad regained strength and was linked to the debate on the position of Islamic education in the West. The workshop presented a bird's-eye view of the history and role of madrasas in Pakistan, Indonesia and Europe, and addressed a number of related current issues.

In his opening speech, Khalid Masud (academic director, ISIM) gave an overview of the history of the madrasa institution in the Muslim world, reviewing a large portion of the scholarly work that has been done on the topic. Moreover, the opening address established the link with the 11 September attacks on the World Trade Center in New York and the Pentagon, which marked the advent of the New War on Terrorism and gave rise to a new interest in the madrasas in many parts of the world. After the 11 September events, madrasas were mentioned frequently in the media, often in the form of allegations stating that the madrasas form breeding grounds for such terrorist activities carried out in the name of Islam.

This workshop on madrasas provided an opportunity for the four speakers to present their ongoing work from a regional perspective. During the first session, Jamal Malik (see Malik, p. 20–21) introduced the participants to the Pakistani context, concluding that the New War discourse on the 'axis of evil', a heading under which these days the madrasas are also often mentioned, ignores the far more complex reality of this Islamic institution of learning. According to Malik, religious schools provide a space for education and cultural-religious survival for the deprived in Pakistan, who suffer from social poverty, conflict, and oppression. Hence, the basis of the madrasa is not terrorism, in Malik's opinion, though he admitted that the institution potentially lends itself to promoting terrorism and violence. Nevertheless, an outright criminalization of the madrasas is not an option in the Pakistani context either. Martin van Bruinessen reflected on the history of the Indonesian *pesantren*, stating that, even though they are conservative in outlook, the religious schools stand opposite to fundamentalist Islam. Furthermore, Van Bruinessen put forward the idea that teaching students how to think contextually forms part of the madrasa education, which gives rise to a rather pluralist attitude among the students. The conclusion was that also the Indonesian *pesantren* are facing a crisis regarding their regeneration, even though they are well integrated in the larger societal context.

Philip Lewis shifted the focus to Europe, presenting his findings with regard to Muslims in Britain, and addressing the question of whether through madrasas in the UK a religious leadership can be established that is able to interact with the wider social context. Lewis described three ways in which the madrasas relate to their social context, namely through isolation, engagement, or resistance. Moreover, Lewis mentioned new professional trajectories for madrasa graduates, such as rendering service as chaplains in hospitals and prisons, and the new career trajectory of the 'freelance imam'. However, despite the innovative spirit, it turned out that the (Deobandi) resistance model has become paradigmatic in the British context. Thijl Sunier spoke about madrasas in the Netherlands, against the background of the ongoing national debate on whether or not such institutions hamper the integration of migrants into Dutch society. Interestingly enough, in the Dutch context the concern for integration seems to prevail over the fear of violence stemming from Qur'anic mosque schools and vocational training facilities for imams, as they are to be found in the Netherlands. What is perceived as problematic about the presence of such institutions is that first of all funding confessional schools is detrimental to Dutch secularism, and moreover a complex of questions regarding civic incorporation and citizenship arises. In the end, the question of whether Islamic education should be public or private in the Netherlands is a highly subjective one.

To round off the programme, Peter van der Veer (co-director, ISIM) moderated the general discussion, summarizing the main points that were addressed in the respective presentations. Future trajectories and employment difficulties of madrasa graduates, the issue of women and madrasa education, and the question of whether and where violence comes into play against the background of the allegations made, crystallized as the main issues for further scrutiny at the end of the workshop.

Mareike Winkelmann is a Ph.D. candidate at the ISIM.
E-mail: mjwinkelmann@hotmail.com

Rights at Home Project

LAILA AL-ZWAINI

Sounding Board Meetings in Yemen

The ISIM programme 'Rights at Home: An Approach to the Internalization of Human Rights in Family Relations in Islamic Communities' recently held its first series of sounding board meetings in Yemen: from 4–6 May 2002 the venue was in Sanᶜa, 9 May in Aden, and 11 May in Taᶜizz. The meetings were jointly organized by the ISIM and the Forum for Civil Society (FCS), a non-governmental organization concerned with the development of democracy, human rights, and civil society, based in Sanᶜa.

The project team from the ISIM consisted of Abdullahi An-Naᶜim (primary consultant) and Laila al-Zwaini (coordinator). The FCS was represented by its director, Jamal Adimi, and assistant, Mohammad Asham. The team was further accompanied by two members of the Rights at Home Advisory Board, Ebrahim Moosa (Duke University, USA) and Salma Maoulidi (Sahiba Sisters Foundation, Tanzania).

The objectives of the meetings were to discuss issues and strategies regarding social and cultural rights in local constituencies in Yemen, especially regarding the autonomy of women and the socialization of children. Invited were representatives from various sectors of Yemeni society: activists, lawyers, scholars, writers, teachers and poets, as well as imams, female religious guides, judges and shaykhs. With a view to the variety of local dresses of the participants and the diversity of their contributions, it could be established that there was a well-balanced representation of various regions and backgrounds.

The overall outcomes were nevertheless quite consistent: all participants agreed that in Yemen there exists a divergence between the *shariᶜa*-based laws and the Islamic *shariᶜa*, on the one hand, and normative behaviour which is mainly based on local and tribal customs, on the other. Such customs were said to often deprive women of their Islamic rights, for instance in matters of inheritance, marital and divorce rights, and social freedoms. This leads to the understanding that women's rights – especially in the countryside, the home of about 80% of the population – are governed by customary norms of honour and shame (*ᶜayb*) rather than by Islamic norms of *halal* (permissible) and *haram* (forbidden). Another practice that has an immediate impact on family life and the socialization of children is the nationwide Yemeni custom of chewing *qat* during the afternoon and evening hours, which puts a heavy strain on the already low household income and often deprives children of parental care and attention.

In such a context, norms derived from international human rights standards could be invoked to protect the rights of Yemenis' own culture and religion, and at the same time inspire a private and public debate on how these customary and religious norms could be redefined to play an accommodating and promoting role for all members of this developing society.

Activating such a debate is not an easy task, since it requires a strong political will and the application of the agreed-upon norms by well-functioning institutions, as well as a change of mentality and practice among the population as a whole. Changing only one family or community would namely not be effective or even desirous, if the rest of society is on another track and will treat the transformed individuals as outcasts.

The sounding board meetings were therefore also intended to identify so-called 'advocates of social change', local actors who enjoy authority in their respective communities and have the potential and will to effectuate – by themselves or by inspiring others – widespread cultural transformation in support of human rights. There were various candidates who easily matched these criteria: for instance, a group of *waᶜizat*, female religious guides who have access to the secluded privacy of family homes; but also a female novelist specialized in folkoristic stories and songs in local dialects, which in reality have more impact on the way of thinking and behaviour of illiterate people than a religious incantation in standard Arabic.

There was also a member of parliament from the Islamists' party who is at the same time a practising lawyer, a human rights activist and a shaykh, a tribal leader. Shaykhs in Yemen are the 'gatekeepers' of the numerous family homes located in tribal areas: without their cooperation or consent, no outsider – meaning virtually anyone from outside the tribe – can gain access to this sector of society. Although urbanized Yemenis, and many others alike, look upon tribes and tribal norms as an obstacle to progress and modernization, tribal structures have already been changing under the influence of state formation. Is it therefore illusory to imagine their positive participation in the context of civil society? Rights at Home would not shun the idea of investigating this possibility.

The enthusiastic young staff of the FCS contributed a great deal to the success of the meetings, and also gave the project members an opportunity to experience some 'grassroots-level' activities, in the form of sit-on-the-floor lunches in local restaurants and in *qat*-chewing gatherings, the latter being the inevitable décor of the afternoon sessions.

The next Rights at Home sounding board meetings and subsequent fieldwork will be held in Dar es Salaam and Zanzibar (Tanzania) from 17 June until 2 July 2002.

Workshop Report

MATTHIJS VAN DEN BOS
& FARZIN VAHDAT

Authority in Contemporary Shiᶜism

The ISIM hosted a one-day workshop on 'Authority in Contemporary Shiᶜism' in Leiden on 1 March 2002, convened by Matthijs van den Bos. Several observations on the current state of (Iranian) Shiᶜite studies underlay its design. Most importantly, studies of religious discourse in contemporary Iran – particularly that comprising reformist thought – often neglect the disciplinary background of religious discourse. Therefore, scientific scrutiny was due to the decisive shifts that have taken place in the relative importance of *feqh*, *kalam*, *falsafa*, *hekmat*, *erfan*, and *tasavvof* as argumentative styles in debates over religious authority in contemporary Shiᶜism.

'Contemporary' was chosen roughly to indicate the past century and also to locate the workshop within the tradition set by Said Amir Arjomand's *Authority and Political Culture in Shiᶜism* (1988). Whereas politicized juristic debate caught the attention when the latter book appeared, it is nowadays a 'hermeneutics' of religion that once again brings non-juristic Shiᶜite disciplines to the fore. This particularly applies to Abdolkarim Soroush's 'new theology', detailed by Forough Jahanbakhsh, and his theorizing on the 'expansion of prophetic experience'. In the words of Farzin Vahdat, who has been so kind as to share his thoughts on 'this timely conference': 'Forough Jahanbakhsh discussed the newest phase in the thought of the prominent Islamic thinker in Iran, Abdolkarim Soroush, which transcends the "expansion of religious knowledge" and incorporates the idea of the expansion of religion itself, what Soroush calls, the "Expansion of Prophetic Experience".'

Mahmoud Alinejad's paper 'looked at […] two contemporary Shiᶜitethinkers in Iran, Mohammad Mojtahed Shabestari and Mohsen Kadivar, whose thoughts are having a major impact in the creation of a public sphere in post-revolutionary Iran' (Vahdat). Alinejad stated that Mohammad Mojtahed-Shabestari and Mohsen Kadivar were part of 'a new generation of clergy and lay intellectuals [who] reclaimed the political potentials of the faith to legitimize the expression of political and religious pluralism' in – similarly – 'reviving those aspects of the Shiᶜi tradition that had been neglected or pushed to the margins by dominant juridical thought.'

But the women's seminaries addressed by Azadeh Kian-Thiébaut constitute an exception to this trend – *feqh* remaining the dominant discourse, and their target for reform. Vahdat adds: 'Azadeh Kian-Thiébaut addressed the shifting of Shiᶜite thought on women as a result of the participation of a large number of women in seminary education and new interpretations of women's position in an Islamic society. She also discussed the new attitude of some of the reformist clerics on the position of women in Islam in light of their new interpretations of the Qur'an and Islamic law.'

Another paradox, Sajjad Rizvi pointed out that some innovative philosophers in Qom combine a 'thoroughgoing radical approach to traditional philosophy associated with the school of Molla Sadra (d.1641) […] with a most conservative defence of *velayat-e faqih*.' Vahdat: 'Sajjad Rizvi, in his analysis of the two prominent and influential conservative Shiᶜite thinkers in Iran, Ayatollah Mesbah Yazdi and Javadi Amoli, amplified the importance of these traditionalist Shiᶜite thinkers who in fact resort to new interpretations of Islamic *hekmat* and *erfan* to oppose reformist thought and the political movement attached to it.'

The opposite may be said of Mehdi Haeri Yazdi (1923–1999) – addressed by Farzin Vahdat – who was an ardent critic of the 'guardianship of the jurist' while also holding a high social position among the clerical establishment. Vahdat's paper discussed the ideas of Ayatollah Mehdi Haeri Yazdi, a scholar of Islamic and Western philosophy whose thought penetrates deeply into modern Western discourses, especially that of Immanuel Kant, as well as into Islamic philosophy and *erfan*. It pointed to the significant contributions of Haeri Yazdi to the process of creating reconciliation between Islamic thought and modern philosophy and its significance for the establishment of modern political and social institutions in an Islamic context.

Said Arjomand's overview paper examined the reform movement during the last decade and 'its sharp break with the intellectual outlook of the generation of the Islamic revolution.' It argued that the 'nativistic refuge in ideology constitutes the immediate background of the current discussions of modernity and advocacy of reform and pluralism. As the Islamic ideology eroded in the 1990s, a reform movement gathered momentum, proposing pluralism as against totalitarianism and a hermeneutic as against an ideological reading of Islam. This reform movement has revived the debate on tradition and modernity with the intention of radically modernizing the Islamic tradition, and thereby, (re-)infusing modernity with normative value. As Vahdat comments: '[Arjomand] shed light on one major trend in contemporary Shiᶜite intellectual discourse in Iran which is marked by an emphasis on pluralistic and hermeneutic approaches to social and political issues and opened a new and crucial chapter on the decades-old debates on tradition and modernity in Iranian social and political thought.'

Papers given at the workshop:

- Said Amir Arjomand (State University of New York): 'Modernity, Tradition and the Shiᶜite Reformation in Contemporary Iran'
- Farzin Vahdat (Tufts University): 'Mehdi Haeri Yazdi (1923–1999) and His Place in the Current Debates on Modernity and Tradition in Iran'
- Mahmoud Alinejad (IIAS): 'Scholasticism, Revolutionalism and Reformism: New Intellectual Trends in Shiᶜi Scholasticism and the Emergence of a Public Religion in Iran'
- Azadeh Kian-Thiébaut (Université de Paris VIII): 'Women's Seminaries and Strands of ShiᶜiteDiscourse'
- Sajjad Rizvi (Institute of Ismaili Studies): 'Liberal Metaphysics versus Conservative Politics: The Paradoxical Cases of Ayatollahs Abdollah Javadi Amoli and Mohammad Taghi Mesbah-i Yazdi'
- Forough Jahanbakhsh (Queens University): 'Expansion of Prophetic Experience: Reflection on Abdolkarim Soroush's Views'

Comedy

SHAZIA MIRZA

Laughter and the 11 September Disaster

Stand-up comedy and Muslim woman. The two subjects don't really go do they? They are not often mentioned together. Not till I became a stand-up comedian and the media rapidly descended upon me, labelling me as 'the first Muslim woman in the history of stand-up comedy'. I am a stand-up comedian who writes all my own material, most of it from personal experience, and most of it based on truth, because after all the truth is funny, we don't need to make it up.

PHOTO: CLARE KENDALL, 2001

Shazia Mirza

As I was growing up, my parents did everything to prevent me from being on stage. Whenever I suggested that I wanted to go to drama school, or dance lessons, my parents would say, 'You're Muslim, Muslim girls aren't allowed to do that' and I could never understand it. My whole life has been about breaking down barriers and fighting to try and get there. Yes, I am Muslim, that is my religion and my relationship with God, it has nothing to do with my time on stage. I can separate the two, being Muslim and being a comedian. I don't look at David Beckham when he is playing football and think, 'he's a quarter Jewish he is!' His football and religion are totally unrelated.

I don't suddenly stop being Muslim when I am on the stage. It comes naturally to me to be a performer.

I started doing stand-up in September 2000. I was a science teacher in London before then, and the school where I taught was so rough, the only time the students listened to me was when I was funny. When I made them laugh they would listen to me, and although they weren't interested in chemistry and biology, at least they had a good lesson. Then I took that comedy to the stage. I see no difference between making the kids laugh in class and making people laugh in a comedy club. I did a comedy writing course, and my teacher suggested that my material was so funny and original that I should go out and perform it. So I started doing the London Comedy Circuit.

In Afghanistan Taliban means Student, and they have a lot in common with students: They don't shave, they both get stoned and talk rubbish, and their mothers walk in and say: 'It looks like a bomb, has gone off in here!'

The circuit is a series of clubs in London that range from clubs in the basements of pubs, to big purpose-built comedy clubs.

The first time I did stand-up, I stood in the basement of a dingy bar in Brixton, London with no stage, no microphone, and the bar was filled with people on a night out, so it was very noisy. I stood there and spoke and people laughed. In fact they laughed so much I got an encore. Over the period from September 2000 to June 2002, I have done over 500 gigs, including the London Palladium, Edinburgh Playhouse, and Royal Albert Hall. I won the London Comedy Festival in June 2001 and this year in May 2002 I won comedian of the year.

I did stand-up for a year without my *hijab*. I would go to working men's clubs and do my act and they would love it, it would interest people, and people would laugh. There are very few women in stand-up comedy anyway. Even when I go abroad to do gigs, for example, I never meet Asian women in comedy nor have I ever met another Muslim woman. I do not wear the *hijab* normally in everyday life, so I thought 'why should I wear it on stage?' Then I slowly started doing Asian gigs. In March 2001 I did a gig in Brick Lane, East London. It is a heavily populated Muslim Bengali area. I did the gig for charity, where I was the only woman on the bill. There were four other men, one of whom was Muslim. The audience loved him even though he dressed up as the Asian version of the porn star Pamela Anderson. I went on stage, and with the first two lines of my act I was attacked by three Muslim men, who said I was a disgrace to my religion and my culture. They grabbed me by the neck and pushed me against the wall. I didn't do any gigs for three weeks after that, then I thought 'why should I stop doing what I am doing? I'm telling the truth and I'm only talking about myself.'

11 September

Before 11 September I was doing very well. People were enjoying my comedy and were fascinated about how a 'Muslim woman could do stand-up comedy'. Weren't Muslim women meant to be oppressed, depressed, repressed? Wasn't I meant to be covered from head to toe and locked in the house? These are just a few of the stereotypes that the white laddy, working class men, who visited comedy clubs, had in their minds. Most of these men had never known a Muslim woman in their life, they never had an opportunity to meet one, all they know is what they have seen on TV, and their perceptions of Muslims were based on that. Most of that included Salman Rushdie, oppressed women, wars, bombing and extremism. I feel that these perceptions were reinforced after 11 September. I started wearing the *hijab*, because I wanted people in comedy clubs to see the image that they are familiar with of 'the Muslim woman' and a lot of my jokes were funnier, because the audience could visualize it, like when I say, 'the women in my family all use the same bus pass'.

When 11 September happened I remember watching the TV and being so deeply shocked and distressed. A few hours later I thought to myself, 'that's the end of my act'. I will never be able to do my act again, no one will want to listen to me now, not to mention laugh. I did no gigs for weeks because I thought that people were upset about what had happened and it would not be right for me to tell jokes at that point. I was also scared. There was already Islamophobia before 11 September; afterwards there was even more. In London, a Muslim girl wearing a *hijab* was beaten on the head with a baseball bat as she walked down the street.

Three weeks later I heard white non-Muslim comedians in comedy clubs doing jokes about 11 September. Most of them were not funny. It was then that I thought, 'if anyone should address this situation it should be me'. Another two weeks passed and I thought I'd try and see how people react. So I got on stage and did exactly the same act that I had done before 11 September. The reaction was very poor and people were scared to laugh. Fear was the main thing. Then I thought it was about time I address the issue.

In Afghanistan the women are not allowed to wear high heels because the click of the heels is meant to attract men… All goats have now been locked up.

I had a gig at a comedy club in Central London and I started off with some of my material that I had already done before 11 September then in the middle I did some of my new material: I said, 'Hello my name is Shazia Mirza, at least that's what it says on my Pilot's License.' The whole room erupted. The audience which was made up of 60 white English men roared with laughter. The tension in the room had been broken, stereotypes had been broken. Just by standing on that stage, a Muslim woman in comedy, laughing at myself and allowing others to laugh with me, I had broken barriers although I didn't know it at the time. I was just doing what I love. The British public who come to watch me, thank me for giving them permission to laugh at things they normally wouldn't be able to laugh at.

Islam has seriousness surrounding it, and people think that all Muslims are extreme and dangerous. Nobody associates Islam with humour. When I do my comedy, people laugh at the things they recognize. I believe educating people through comedy is a great way of uniting people. When people laugh they remember why they laughed and the white lads of Britain that go getting drunk then go to comedy clubs to have a laugh, are more likely to listen to a comedian than to a politician. I don't know why Islam cannot be associated with humour. Prophet Mohammed (peace be upon Him) laughed many times in his life, and made many jokes, as did Usama Bin Laden. Muslims have a sense of humour too. If your faith is that strong you should be able to laugh at it. Now people of other faiths who come to watch me, ask me questions at the end of my act; they are interested in the life of a Muslim woman and their minds and perceptions of Muslims after 11 September are slowly changing, but only because they've met and seen me perform. If these people had carried on watching TV and only TV their perceptions would be different. Europe is multicultural, we live with different coloured people and faiths, yet know nothing about them. Most people are affected by the media, and driven by fear. There is also too much segregation. I went where no Muslim has been before and I hope generations after me will benefit. I hope that I have inspired some Muslim women to have courage too. As a comedian I believe laughter is the strongest tool for communicating with people who shut the door in my face, because I am Muslim. One day I hope we can all laugh together.

Upcoming gigs:

- *31 August 2002 – Mep Festival, The Hague, TheNetherlands*
- *28 September 2002 – Brussels*

Shazia Mirza is a stand-up comedian and writes for the Birmingham Evening Mail *newspaper, UK.*
E-mail: VSVSM@AOL.COM

Debate

LAMIN SANNEH

Sacred and Secular in Islam

A simmering issue in the Islamic world's relations with the West concerning the tension between the sacred and the secular took a particularly violent turn on 11 September 2001 when Usama Bin Laden and his Al-Qaᶜida network launched a coordinated assault on the US in the name of sacred duty. The West reacted with stunned surprise. But given the long history of Islamic fundamentalist grievances, is not the West's surprise itself surprising?

It is, for example, clear that Bin Laden is motivated by sacred rage against an infidel secular West, and yet the West has sought to dismiss Bin Laden's self-proclaimed struggle as bogus. President Bush has, notwithstanding, sought to portray his military campaign as a sacred contest with an 'axis of evil'. Bush believes that snapping the terrorist networks by driving their members into the sharp prongs of military reprisal, and combining that with closing their financial operations at home and abroad, will be enough for righteous vindication and for disposing of the fundamentalist scourge. That view, however, is sadly mistaken. The fundamentalist challenge, rooted in religious justifications, is unlikely to go away that easily.

In spite of that, the West seems reluctant to take the fundamentalists at their own word. The fundamentalists continue to put up a spirited defence of Islam against an ancient foe now ensconced in the United States. We should inquire into what they mean by Islam and why for them the United States has come to be a citadel of infidels. In a videotaped statement on 7 October, Bin Laden spoke of the moral injury stemming from the disgrace and humiliation Islam has suffered for almost eighty years, a reference to the end of the caliphate in Turkey in 1924 following the First World War. Turkey became a secular state, and the sultan ceased to be the political head of the worldwide community of Muslims. With the end of the caliphate went a potent symbol of Islam's global spiritual identity. Through historical ups and downs, and sometimes only in name, the caliphate lingered on as bearer of Islam's imperial impulse until 1924 when it unravelled. Memories of that demise continued still to rankle with Bin Laden, though most Westerners, being sanguinely pragmatic and unbeholden to tradition in their daily lives, know nothing of that. It is tempting from Bin Laden's viewpoint to dig into history for the roots of his fundamentalist agenda of restoring Islam's glorious past, but for Americans that would be time wasting.

Divergent notions of religion

The West is impatient with history but also with religion, which it reduces to individual piety and subjective dispositions. It gives the sacred little or no public merit. The Enlightenment and the inter-religious wars of Europe decided people to establish the state on a non-religious basis. Religion survived as personal habit and subjective preference, framed by emotions, feelings, and states of mind appropriate to the phenomenon, as Rudolf Otto describes in his classic work, *The Idea of the Holy*. This point of view expresses well the spirit of individualism.

From the fundamentalists' point of view, however, this notion of religion is offensive because religion is the revealed will of God for the public order, and for the individual as a member of the community. This view of religion, however, conflicts with modernity, though, in that case, it sheds light on the nature of the fundamentalist grievance.

The fundamentalists assert that the believer and unbeliever alike are a subject of state jurisdiction, because the Prophet founded a state and a religion to go with it. That makes the 'sacred' and 'secular' one and the same thing, and what distinguishes them is a matter of public will and religious interest. *Haram* means 'sacred' when used of the two holy sites of Mecca and Medina (*haramayn*), but carries a secular meaning as harem, the 'exclusive' women's quarter in the household, and when used of prohibited things or conduct. *Halal*, on the other hand, means lawful or permitted, such as concerns dietary rules or business practice. *Haram* carries the force of 'taboo' while *halal* speaks of the mundane, the unrestricted. 'Sacred' and 'secular', accordingly, touch on both religion (*din*) and the world (*dunya*). Bin Laden is on firm ground here.

Pursuing Al-Qaᶜida and Taliban forces in the caves and tunnels of Spin Baldak and the Tora Bora mountains, the West has responded to this religious challenge by targeting the terrorists as a bunch of fanatics without any standing in Islam, a noble faith and a religion of peace, in the words of President Bush. Others assert that terrorism is not jihad; is not *sunna* after the example of Muhammad; is, in fact, not religion (*din*). True religion, the West believes, does not recruit or conscript, does not fight or thrive in caves and tunnels, does not compete or commit deeds as an international actor, does not own banks, and does not make political claims or laws, as the terrorists are doing. Only governments may act that way. It is difficult, though, to know what counts here as religion, except to say that whatever it is, religion has no public standing. The West had hoped to avoid assuming a religious role in the conflict, and has, accordingly, sought comfort in the convenient thought that it is only a renegade breakaway group of Muslim fundamentalists who have struck out in violence.

Most Muslims do not share that view, and, instead of supporting the West's anti-terrorism strategy, have directed their prickly moral indignation at the threatened rights of Taliban and Al-Qaᶜida captives under US control in Cuba. Condemnation of Bin Laden is muted by growing Muslim calls for his presumed innocence until convicted in a court of law, calls that resulted, for example, in Nelson Mandela retracting his support for Bush. Only generous economic inducement, backed by the amenable voices of exiled Muslims, has prevented this moral indignation from sparking large-scale anti-Western protests.

Americans and Europeans have a hard time understanding Islam, and the fundamentalists are not helping. Islam, for the radicals, calls for absolute surrender to the rule of God. The unbeliever for them has the rights only of a dependent client rather than those of a conscientious dissenter. For them, *kufr*, unbelief, is not just a theological matter of disavowing God; it calls for a policy of containment of those who refuse to submit. Without Islam, unbelievers, like nations, carry a 'secular', pejorative stigma. Fundamentalists seek the political kingdom first, and everything else is added to that.

The sense of divine efficacy in history, that God reveals but also commands, what the first Muslims called *jihad fi-sabil li-llah*, 'holy war in the way of God', (Qur'an 4:76, 91f, 94f; 9:5, 29, 36, 41, 122; 47:4) is demonstrated by the successful establishment of the early Muslim community in Medina, and that vision has inspired the fundamentalists.

Fundamentalists dislike the secular state for opposing the *shariᶜa* and for splintering God's *umma* into petty secular jurisdictions. They want instead to institute a divine social order. They have appealed to fellow Muslims to assume a state of *hijra* toward the secular state, to become what the Qur'an calls *hijra*-bound in God's cause, *al-muhajirun fi-sabil li-llah* (24:22). One such movement declared: 'All the Muslim people of Turkestan have lost their patience and have chosen the holy road to emigration for preparing for jihad-in-the-way-of-God' (*New York Times*, 'Qaeda Grocery Lists', 17 March 2002, p. 18). Ironically, the American perspective on separation of church and state may offer a compromise by ceding the religious ground without stripping it of public interest entirely.

That would be congruent, too, with a strand in Muslim thought that does not want to elide religion with politics, the sacred with the secular, even though worldly interests may serve the ethical purposes of religion. As Ibn Khaldun (d. 1405/06) put it in a fit of theological illumination, believers should resist the facile view that religion and politics belong together lest we 'patch our worldly affairs by tearing our religion to pieces. Thus neither our religion lasts nor [the worldly affairs] we have been patching.'*

The sacred challenge

The sovereign secular state, however, will not countenance a challenge to the sacred/secular distinction. Yet the events of 11 September showed that modernity is not impervious to challenge. For their part, Muslim reformers have supported a compromise solution where religion is adjusted, even reconstructed, as a matter of conscience and personal decision, with the state precluded from a statutory role in the free exercise of religion. Such a compromise would bring Muslims closer to the West, but would not deny a role for religion in public life on the grounds that religion is too pervasive to restrict it to a few designated areas of life. Religion is too important for the state to ignore, and equally too important for the state to co-opt. That implies the modification of separation to fundamentalist ideology, with religion qualifying the limits of state power without the state defining the scope of religious commitment. Under that arrangement the state would desist from interference with religion without being immune to religious scrutiny. It would prompt religious people to join political leaders to denounce Bin Laden's excesses as political terrorism and as religious transgression at the same time, making him deserving of the appropriate military response and of *takfir*, religious repudiation. (The argument by some that Bin Laden is engaged, not in a 'holy war' (*jihad*), but in an unjustified warfare (*hiraba*) against innocent people ignores the sacred/secular correspondence for him and other Muslims.)

The events of 11 September have breached the walls of secular invincibility, and also the logic of secular claims as neutral and normative. The modern religious resurgence has revealed the dogma of secular primacy to be vulnerable to rude surprises, making it imperative that we recognize the role of religion in people's lives for what it is. Religious fanaticism will not disappear with military reprisal but only with religious self-criticism, if at all. The military instrument cannot settle the issue, and governments, especially corrupt ones, are really implicated in their own version of political fundamentalism in the use and means of power, and so they have ceased to be religiously credible; they have too long promoted secularism as a religious alibi to be trusted. As it is, most Muslims find few benefits in secularism enough to win their confidence. They are ready to turn to religious fervour instead. For the flourishing of human life, we need to transcend the sacred/secular cleavage and rise to the challenge of relating our worldly interests to our spiritual values without prejudice to either. In any case, we have less excuse to be surprised any more.

Note

* Ibn Khaldun, *Al-Muqaddimah, An Introduction to History,* vol. I, tr. Franz Rosenthal (Princeton, 1967), 427.

Lamin Sanneh is D. Willis James Professor of World Christianity and of History, Yale University, USA.
E-mail: lamin.sanneh@yale.edu

Middle East

MOUIN RABBANI

Siege Warfare
Israel in the West Bank and Gaza Strip

Media coverage of the current Israeli-Palestinian confrontation has tended to emphasize its most violent and spectacular aspects. While these are hardly to be discounted and have devastated numerous lives, it is noteworthy that during almost two years of conflict the cumulative death toll on both sides stands at approximately 2,000, a figure which compares rather favourably with the horrific statistics produced in Beirut or more recently the Balkans.

This apparent discrepancy is in large measure accounted for by the nature of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The media's concentration on its most visible and visual aspects, and natural predilection for the more belligerent and bellicose statements produced by the various parties involved, has tended to obscure the reality that this is not a war between Israel and Palestine.

Formally, in fact, Palestine does not even exist, but is rather an occupied territory. Most of it – some 40% of the Gaza Strip and more than 80% of the much larger West Bank – remained under full or partial Israeli rule on the eve of the current confrontation in September 2000. The remaining areas, consisting of disjointed enclaves, each of which is fully encircled by territory controlled by Israel, are administered by the Palestinian Authority (PA), which is neither a state nor a government and which exercises limited jurisdiction rather than sovereignty. Pursuant to the bilateral Israeli-Palestinian agreements which established the PA, the latter does not control its own internal or external borders, airspace, or subterranean resources, and does not even possess the right of safe passage between the fragmented territories it administers – whether between the West Bank and Gaza Strip or between Ramallah and Nablus within the West Bank.

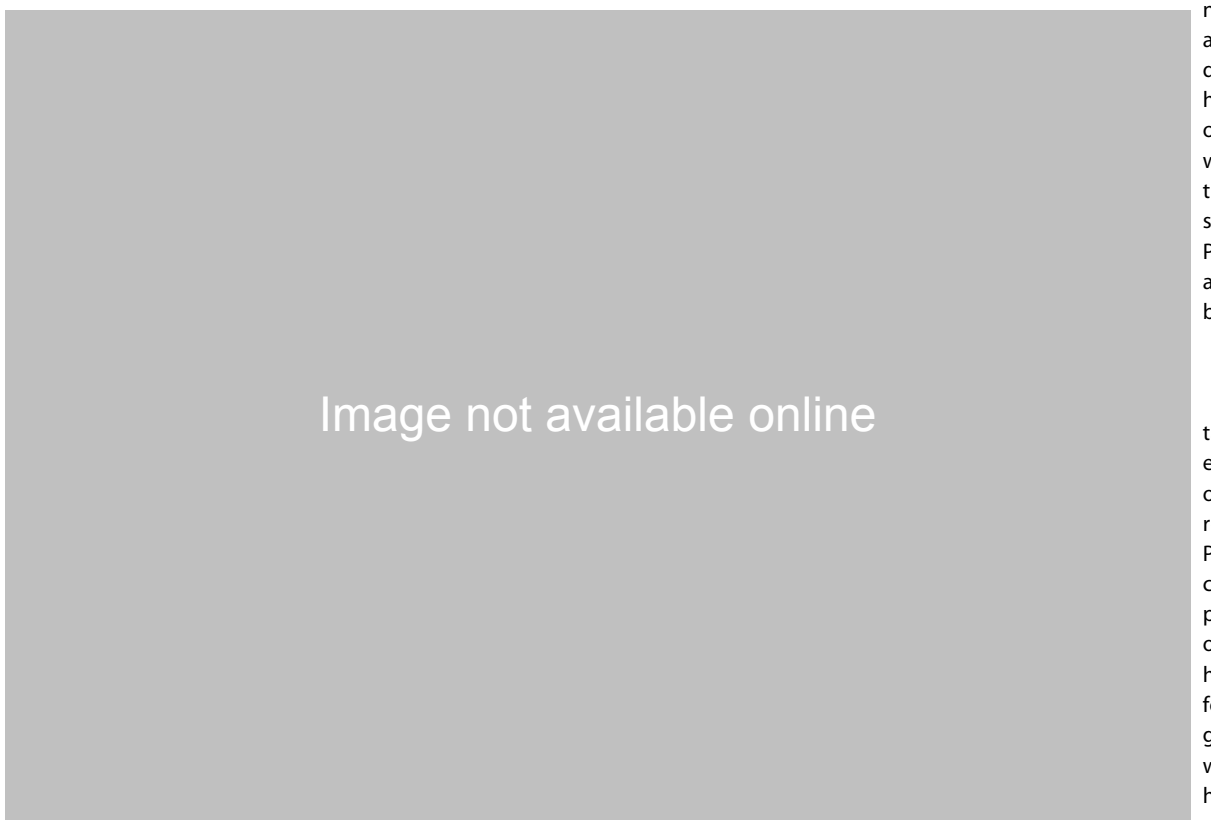
The only army in the putative Palestinian state is in fact that of Israel. The Oslo agreements sanctioned its continued presence within the West Bank and Gaza Strip, in part to protect the numerous Jewish colonies, which have continued to expand at a furious pace since 1993 and in so doing have served to further fragment Palestinian territorial-demographic continuity. For its part the PA was explicitly prevented from establishing a standing army, and possesses only a lightly-armed if oversized police force.

If the above helps explain the origins of the current Palestinian uprising, it similarly helps us understand why armed force is only one of the instruments deployed by Israel in its attempt to crush it, and perhaps not even the most important one. Largely hidden from the television cameras and reporters' notebooks, Israel has by virtue of its continued rule over most of the occupied territories and overwhelming military advantage imposed a prolonged and increasingly strict siege upon West Bank and Gaza Strip population centres, which has devastated Palestinian society, destroyed the economy, and paralysed normal life.

A central characteristic of the Israeli siege (commonly known as 'closure') is its comprehensive nature. Rather than subjecting specific individuals, categories of persons, or particular localities to the various restrictions involved, these are applied wholesale to all Palestinians, their goods and vehicles included. Exemptions may be granted on an individual and selective basis, but this is an increasingly rare phenomenon.

The scope and effects of the siege can most clearly be observed in the Gaza Strip. Some 45 kilometres long and between 5 and 8 kilometres wide, this miniscule territory which is among the most densely populated on earth (pop. 1,000,000) is surrounded by Israel on three sides with the sea accounting for the fourth. Effectively hemmed in by multiple layers of razor wire and with its flat-surfaced perimeters constantly patrolled, it is impossible to exit without first obtaining a plethora of permits and passes from the Israeli authorities and subsequently undergoing an array of humiliating security procedures in facilities which look like they have been designed to process cattle. Within the Gaza Strip, Israel controls a number of 'choking points' – i.e. key intersections – which gives it the power to regulate or prevent altogether passage from one region of the Gaza Strip to the other. On several occasions, thousands of Palestinians have been left with no alternative but to walk (and in some cases swim) several kilometres along the beach in their daily effort to get from one town to the other. On others, Israeli forces have used the power of armed persuasion to close even this route, killing several people in the process.

Palestinian workers wait to go to their jobs inIsrael.



Permanent siege

In a region which suffered from planned neglect during the decades after 1967 and became highly dependent upon the Israeli labour market for economic survival as a matter of design, the most obvious effect has been the visible disintegration of the local economy. Consistent Israeli prevention of the export of goods from the Gaza Strip to Israel, the West Bank, and regional and international markets (but not of the import of Israeli goods) have only heightened the crisis, to the point where the World Bank reports that more than half of Gaza Strip families are now surviving – or not – on less than two dollars a day.

The workings of 'internal closure' are by contrast more easily observed in the West Bank. In recent months, Israel has resorted to a permanent siege upon each individual Palestinian population centre, and on the towns and cities which function as regional hubs in particular. Travel between Ramallah and Nablus, which during heavy traffic could take approximately an hour, currently consumes the better part of a day. With the West Bank fragmented into dozens of sealed military districts maintained through the agency of many more permanent and temporary military checkpoints, such a trip would involve a passenger's repeated transfer from one taxi to another, crossing – or rather walking around – each checkpoint by foot. At times soldiers take satisfaction in observing Palestinians being forced to trudge along broken paths for several kilometres at a time, other times they shoot to intimidate, or injure, or kill.

Such practices – which have also on repeated occasions included the closure of the land crossings between the West Bank and Jordan and the Gaza Strip and Egypt – have, needless to say, had a severe impact not only on economic life, but also social and family relations. With commuting rendered all but impossible, some Palestinians have lost or left their jobs, while others have opted to move to the cities in which they work, away from their families and despite the raging conflict. Civil administration and services – and not less the ability of the Palestinian security forces to impose their authority in more isolated areas – have also been negatively affected.

Sequestering basic services

It is particularly noteworthy that humanitarian and other services which are normally exempt from collective punishment in times of conflict are largely subject to the same regulations and restrictions as the rest of Palestinian society. Villagers, who are typically dependent upon regional hubs for proper medical care, legal matters, and other such services, have been particularly hard hit. In a number of documented cases, for example, village women were forced to give birth at checkpoints because soldiers would not let them pass to reach maternity hospitals located in nearby towns. In several cases, the woman and/or newborn infant died as a result.

During its recent full-scale invasions of Palestinian cities beginning in February 2002, the Israeli military went so far as to systematically prevent local and foreign medical services from evacuating the wounded and ill to hospital. While no precise statistics are available, it is beyond doubt that not a few Palestinians died from otherwise treatable wounds and medical conditions as a result.

Academic life has also been a casualty of the Israeli siege. Throughout the occupied territories, pupils and students, teachers, lecturers and staff, have been unable to travel to places of learning. University life has been particularly hard hit, because such a high proportion of students and staff do not live on or within the vicinity of the campus. Research – whether conducted in libraries or in the field, and also that which depends on exchange with colleagues within or outside the region – has in many respects and instances been paralysed as well.

Until recently the siege operated at various levels; with the boundaries between the occupied territories and Israel permanently sealed off long before the first suicide attack, the 'internal closure' was at times more strict than at others, or concentrated in specific regions while relaxed elsewhere. In May 2002, Israel announced that it would introduce a new permit system whereby the internal closure would become permanent and institutionalized as well; travel between West Bank enclaves (i.e. from Hebron to Bethlehem) would henceforth require a special permit, valid for only a specified period of time. The severity of this measure suggests that Israel announced it – as opposed to quietly proceeding to implementation – primarily in order to observe how the world would react to the news and to calibrate its position accordingly. The results so far are in this respect hardly encouraging. Coupled with the increasingly violent and systematic onslaught against Palestinian institutions, this additional strangulation of Palestinians' ability to lead normal lives is likely to precipitate yet another escalation in the conflict.

Mouin Rabbani is director of the Palestinian American Research Center in the West Bank town of Ramallah, Palestine.
E-mail: mrabbani@compuserve.com

Debate

HENRY MUNSON

Between Pipes and Esposito

Shortly after the attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon on 11 September 2001, the Washington Institute for Near East Policy published a short book (137 pages) by Martin Kramer entitled *Ivory Towers on Sand: The Failure of Middle Eastern Studies in America*. Kramer is the editor of the *Middle East Quarterly*, a journal founded by Daniel Pipes and others who feel that the discipline of Middle Eastern Studies, as practised in the United States, has become too pro-Arab and too 'dovish'. Kramer, a former director of the Moshe Dayan Center for Middle Eastern and African Studies at Tel Aviv University, shares Pipes's views, though he has generally been less strident in expressing them. *Ivory Towers on Sand* is primarily a critique of scholars dealing with issues related to American foreign policy in the Middle East. Kramer is not especially troubled by current trends in the study of Sufi poetry.

Both Kramer and Pipes, like their intellectual mentor Bernard Lewis, view the Muslim world as inherently irrational, violent, and above all, anti-Semitic. The Arabs in particular only understand force. They will behave only if they are beaten mercilessly. The American government should not waste time trying to address their alleged grievances, or those of Muslims in general, because these all boil down to primitive hatred of the infidel and resentment that the infidel now dominates the believer instead of the other way around (Lewis 1990).This view of the Islamic world underlies the policies of the Sharon government in Israel and the policies favoured by at least some members of the American administration. So the issues at stake are by no means strictly academic.

Changes in policy

It is of course natural that Kramer and Pipes disapprove of most American scholarship on contemporary Middle Eastern politics in recent decades. American scholars, like most of their European and Israeli colleagues, generally reject the notion that brutal repression is invariably the best response to Islamic militancy, Palestinian nationalism, and the terrorism often associated with both. Most Middle East specialists in the United States would argue that to win the 'war on terrorism', it is necessary to dilute the rage that fuels it. This would entail significant changes in American and Israeli foreign policy. (There are many Middle East specialists who would take issue with the very notion of a 'war on terrorism'.)

Kramer contends that the 'paradigms' of American Middle East experts 'have been swept away by events' (Kramer 2001: 2). One could say the same of the Pipes-Kramer paradigm. Ariel Sharon invaded Lebanon to eliminate Palestinian terrorism by force in 1982. He is still using the same methods for the same purpose twenty years and thousands of deaths later. Yossi Sarid, the head of Israel's Meretz party, has noted that Israel's war in southern Lebanon 'killed more than 1,000 Israeli soldiers' and 'created Hizbollah' (Sarid 2001). Rather than eliminate anti-Israeli terrorism, Israel's occupation of southern Lebanon created an entirely new form of it among the Lebanese Shi'ites, who initially welcomed the Israelis in 1982. Former heads of Israel's General Security Service, Shin Bet Ami Ayalon and Carmi Gillon, have repeatedly stressed that Palestinian terrorism is the product of despair (Gillon 1999; Eldar 2001). Yet Kramer and Pipes advocate policies that would increase that despair.

Nevertheless, no matter how mistaken Kramer and Pipes may be in terms of the policies they advocate, some of their criticisms of Middle Eastern Studies in the United States are valid. Many American specialists on the Middle East are so determined to rebut popular stereotypes about Islam that they idealize all things Islamic, especially the militant movements commonly referred to as 'fundamentalist' or 'Islamist'. Scholars like John Esposito do ignore or downplay the anti-Semitic conspiracy theories that pervade the Islamist literature (Munson 1996). They do ignore or downplay the threat that such movements pose to human rights as well as to the possibility of resolving the conflict between Israel and the Palestinians. Moreover, while Kramer exaggerates the impact of Edward Said's Orientalism on political science (Gause 2002), it is true that any scholar who dares to discuss discrimination against the Baha'is in Iran, slavery in the Sudan, or the Islamists' persecution of intellectuals in Egypt runs the risk of being called an 'Orientalist', a 'Zionist', or an agent of American imperialism. Conversely, of course, anyone who dares to criticize the policies of Ariel Sharon runs the risk of being called an anti-Semite or a self-hating Jew.

The field of Middle Eastern Studies has become politicized and polarized between two forms of moral myopia represented by Daniel Pipes on the one hand and John Esposito on the other. Reading Pipes, one could easily believe that Muslim hostility toward Israel is simply a matter of anti-Semitism. Reading Esposito, one would never know that anti-Semitism is indeed a serious problem in the Islamic world. Pipes demonizes Islamic militancy without analysing the various social, nationalistic, and religious grievances that fuel it (see Pipes 1996). Esposito idealizes Islamic militancy while downplaying the bigotry, fanaticism, and violence associated with it (see Esposito 1999). Students of Islamic militancy need to avoid both Pipes's demonization and Esposito's idealization.

The rage that fuels

If we take, for example, the Palestinian Islamist group Hamas, we find that its charter borrows many of the classical shibboleths of European anti-Semitism. It contends that 'the enemies' have 'taken control of the world media' and were 'behind the French revolution, the communist revolution, and most of the revolutions we have heard about' (presumably, Iran's Islamic revolution was an exception to the rule). The charter goes on to say that Zionists 'created secret organizations like the Masons, Rotary Clubs, Lions Clubs, and the Bnai Brith throughout the world to destroy societies and promote Zionist interests'. These claims are followed by the usual assertions – usual in the Islamist literature at any rate – about how Jews caused World Wars I and II to profit from arms-dealing and 'ordered the creation of the United Nations and the Security Council to replace the League of Nations to rule the world through them' (Harub 1996: 298–99). To write about Hamas without mentioning such rhetoric would be to present a thoroughly sanitized and distorted picture of the movement.

At the same time, however, Hamas's hostility toward Israel is not simply the result of anti-Semitism. Hamas is, among other things, a nationalistic movement seeking liberation from what it sees as colonial rule. Hamas's charter says its supporters are Muslims who 'raised the banner of jihad in the face of the oppressors to free the country and the worshippers of God [*al-ʿibad*] from their pollution, filth, and evil' (Ibid.: 289). In the minds of Hamas's supporters, the traditional dichotomy of Muslim versus Jew has now meshed with the dichotomy of 'oppressed' versus 'oppressor'.

Hamas grew out of the frustration engendered by the PLO's and then the Palestinian Authority's failures, both on the political and social fronts. The despair and rage that fuel Islamic militancy in the Gaza Strip have been graphically described by Amira Hass, who writes that 'support for the Islamic movement is closely tied to a sense of Palestinian impotence' (Hass 1999: 111). Ahmad Qurai', best-known as Abu ʿAla', was one of the principal Palestinian negotiators of the Oslo accords. When Israeli soldiers prevented him from travelling from Gaza to his home on the West Bank, he reportedly declared: 'Soon, I too will join Hamas' (Kapeliouk 1996: 201). Abu ʿAla' did not really mean this. He was simply expressing the popular view of Hamas as the voice of Palestinians fed up with life in the West Bank and Gaza. (Palestinian Christians obviously have to find other voices.)

In addition to expressing the rage and despair of Palestinians unable to leave their towns without enduring humiliating interrogations at Israeli checkpoints, Hamas has also provided social services not adequately provided by the Palestinian Authority (Hass 1999; Roy 2000). The documentary film *Nahnu Jund Allah* (We are God's Soldiers) shows a Hamas social worker giving an unemployed man food to feed his family for weeks while also trying to help him find work. This too is part of the Hamas story.

In short, Hamas is indeed a fanatical, anti-Semitic terrorist organization. But it is also a response to a specific historical context. To understand it, one must see it in this context. The available evidence suggests that to reduce support for militant Islamic movements like Hamas, one has to dilute the despair and the rage that fuel them. This is not to say that brutal repression never succeeds or that radical educational reform is not needed to eradicate anti-Semitic conspiracy theories. But as a general rule, making people's lives unliveable is not an especially effective way to convince them to embrace life over death and moderation over militancy.

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Henry Munson is professor of anthropology at the University of Maine, USA.
E-mail: henry_munson@umit.maine.edu

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Middle East

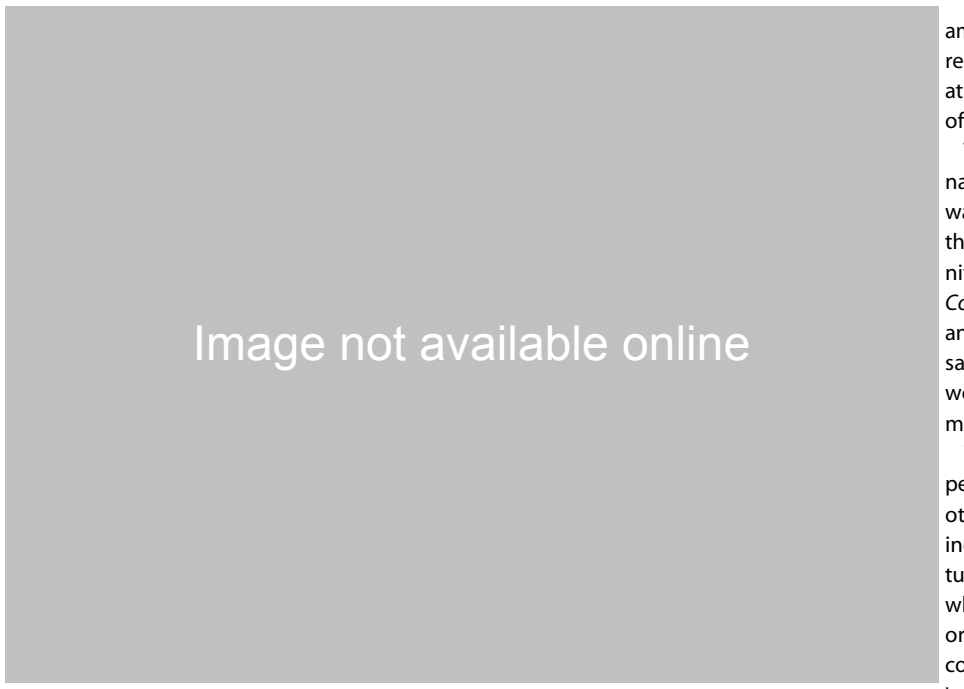
HAZEM SAGHIEH

On Suicide, Martyrdom and the Quest of Individuality

In 1972 three members of the Japanese Red Army carried out a notorious suicide attack on people gathered in one of the halls of Tel Aviv airport; they killed twenty people and wounded eighty. A few days after 11 September, a Swiss man killed several members of the regional parliament of Zug and then killed himself. These two examples are given in response to those narrow explanations of the phenomena of violence, death, martyrdom and suicide that see them in the light of the 'clash of civilizations', bearing in mind that only a very short space of time separates us from the American Unabomber, the Japanese Aum sect and Timothy McVeigh, all of whom were driven, respectively, by their anti-technology delusions, their rush to reach the millennium and their hatred of the federal government, to shorten the distance that separates life from death.

Since 11 September 2001 many analysts and commentators have begun to ask questions about what lies behind Muslims willingness to die. The answer was soon to be 'confirmed' by Palestinian suicide attacks. Naturally there are those who try to find the answer in 'civilization' and others who look for it in religion. No doubt there are many who say to themselves that there is a Muslim type who is predisposed to die and longs to encounter the houris in Paradise. But the question that has only rarely been posed is: what hatred and misunderstanding of our planet is it that creates this love of Heaven?

When your planet is pervaded by intolerable injustice and circumstances impossible either to accept or to adapt to, you end up gratifying the commands of a faith that belongs to the realm of total absolutes. A planet such as this, particularly if reinforced by those sorts of convictions, may drive people to seek a Heaven even without houris. All religions, not only Islam, have raised the banner of martyrdom to which believers have rallied, combining dissatisfaction with the present with a total denial of their individuality (while individualism in its modern sense naturally could not have existed in those times).



Palestinian boys carry a friend dressed as a martyr in Rafah.

It was Christianity that developed the distinctive idea of the theology of martyrdom. Countless legends have come down to us about the confrontations between representatives of the Roman Empire and courageous believers who bore the agonies of their torture with laughter. In medieval southern and western Europe the rituals of the penitents became a widespread phenomenon; until recently, self-flagellation was still a well-known practice of devout Catholics, just as Filipinos to this day practise live re-enactments of the crucifixion. The word martyr itself is derived from the Greek expression *martys*, meaning a witness to a thing or event, which originally referred to Christ's disciples, as witnesses of himself and of his life. It subsequently came to mean those killed, like St Peter and St Paul, under the Roman persecution.

Before the Christian era the early Jewish martyrs included some of the prominent figures of the Old Testament, such as Isaac, as well as the Jews killed at the hands of the Romans. The Midrash mentions ten martyrs: Akiba ben Joseph and the other rabbis tortured under Hadrian as a punishment for establishing law schools. The Buddhists in turn believed that Gautama Buddha had been a martyr in previous lives. Some of them, like the Mahayana Buddhists, canonized Bodhisattvas (or saints) due to their status as martyrs filled with particular zeal and passion. In the course of their many lives it was not enough for these people to sacrifice life itself in their search for truth: they also postponed their own bliss in order to help the wretched and sufferers of this world.

The exclusive connection between Islam, martyrdom and suicide (the latter forbidden by Islamic law) is subject to an infinite oversimplification. The suicide attackers of Al-Qa^{c}ida and Palestine are Sunni Muslims, while self-sacrifice for the sake of a certain goal has traditionally been associated with Shi^{c}ite Islam. However, in our own era, the Shi^{c}ite Islamic Revolution in Iran in 1979 did not resort to suicide attacks, even if it has frequently threatened its enemies with shrouds as a form of ritual folklore and revolutionary nihilism. It is true that it used minefields during the war with Iraq in the 1980s, crossed by human waves, most of which were made up of children, but this criminal tendency was the result of the authorities use of ideology and what is without doubt a modern tactic (remember Hitler's conscription of children in his last year or the use of infants in the Eritrean revolution). If radical Shi^{c}ites in Hezbollah were involved in suicide attacks against the Israelis in southern Lebanon, 'secular' groups such as the Syrian Nationalist Party and 'atheists' such as the communists also took part.

Generally speaking, both religious and temporal cultures all show this link between death, on the one hand, and on the other a protest against life and/or the annihilation of the individual in a greater identity, semi-real and semi-imaginary. This is what we see among some of the Sri Lankan Tamils, and especially in the practice of the Japanese Kamikaze ('Divine Wind'), the first requirement for membership of which was a willingness to die for the Emperor.

Individualism

The relationship between protesting against life and the weakness of individualism is unmistakable. Where individualism is strong, the reaction to a bad and abominable life will not take the form of suicide or slaughter. By the same token, a weak individualism may be incapable of benefiting from a life that ostensibly has nothing wrong with it. Either it will destroy it with an act of conspiracy and sectarianism, or through a collective struggle imbued with demagogy from which leaders and those equipped to ride the waves may be able to gain; or it will set itself apart from life and remain in the periphery, with the possibility that creative states of individualism may appear and find refuge in poetry or music and art. These symptoms flourish in a context of dead ends and crisis of modernity: either for political reasons, such as the inability to achieve independence and establish a nation-state, as is the case in Palestine today and was previously the case in Algeria, or for numerous social and cultural reasons linked to the various phases of transition. In all cases, this relationship translates to a conspicuous degree into violence against the self or against others.

A lack of individualism combined with the effects of modernization and urbanization can produce a disintegrated individual, i.e. a person with a distorted individualism lacking a social dimension. Anomie, as Durkheim demonstrated, is the principal cause of rising suicide rates. The connection between suicide, urbanization and isolation is now one of the givens of post-Durkheimian sociology, even if many of the French sociologist's other conclusions have been forgotten. Just as anomie runs contrary to a person's individualism, so people's old age is a declaration that their individualism is invalid and that they have entered a stage difficult to reconcile with the course of life. At this point we see suicide reappear in wealthy, post-industrial societies, as though it were a social responsibility or even a duty performed by those who are no longer considered active individuals. But naturally what is most important is still the fear of how one is seen by society in the long transition to individualism. It has been observed, for example, that most suicides in modern Japan result from individuals' feelings of 'shame' at their failure to reach the level demanded of them by society.

The famous ritual suicide of the Japanese nationalist writer Yukio Mishima in 1970 was a statement of the dramatic tension that accompanies the transition to a modernity based on individualism. The author of *Confessions of a Mask*, who preferred to die an exhibitionist death, by the sword, as he saluted the Emperor, left us in this act a world of evidence rich in symbols and meanings.

Year after year the world has produced people that are angry for one reason or another but who also suffer from a repressed individualism, who are given golden opportunities by the media revolution to turn the whole world into spectators of their death, or their causing the death of others. In these contexts 'individualism' is achieved and 'truth' is reached in death in a way that was impossible in life. If there is a great difference, according to our moral judgement, between martyrdom as mere masochistic suicide and violence and terrorism directed sadistically at others, the difference is minor as far as the original motives are concerned. These motives, in relation to the Arab world under such scrutiny at present, are the crushing of individualism by countless factors. Israeli occupation and humiliation of Palestine is countered by neighbouring regimes that do not respect individual rights, and economic systems that spread abject poverty preventing the creation of a middle class, not to mention the failures of modernization proven by the crises of youth and demographics in their various forms. In a stagnant world of blocked horizons such as this, progress yawns while those collectivist ideologies revive that call for the individual to merge in a greater entity, such as the nation or religion or social class, as well as inherited blood and family ties, which often renew themselves in one or other of those collectivist ideologies. All these elements together help one another not only to obstruct the advancement of modernity, but also to make each Arab see his or her life as something meagre and not worth preserving. Whoever sees their own life in this way will never see any more value in the lives of others. In all cases, death may be round the corner.

Hazem Saghieh writes for Al-Hayat *newspaper based in London. He has written many books in Arabic. His latest publication – in English – is* The Predicament of the Individual in the Middle East *(Saqi Books).*
E-mail: hazem@alhayat.com

Middle East

ROHAM ALVANDI

Iranian-American Relations after 11 September

Following the tragic events of 11 September 2001, Samuel Huntington's theory of a 'clash of civilizations' has been garnering greater currency. Whereas it was roundly condemned in 1993 as a new manifestation of Orientalism, in today's post-11 September world it is hailed as having 'lasting importance'.[1] Such dangerous thinking is now beginning to pervade presentations of Iranian-American relations, distorting the reality that conflict between Iran and the United States is a result of conflicting interests, not cultures.

To test the credibility of Professor Huntington's theory based solely on one case study – Iranian-American relations – would be unwise. Moreover, to view Iranian-American relations through the lens of Huntington's theory simply because Iran and the US are predominantly Muslim and Christian nations, respectively, is equally ill-advised. A more accurate understanding of Iranian-American relations after 11 September emerges from an examination of Washington and Tehran's concurring and conflicting interests in West Asia.

Today, Iran and the US enjoy two significant mutual interests in West Asia. The first is containing Saddam Hussein's regime in Iraq. Iran has long competed with its western neighbour for hegemony in the region. In an effort to strike a fatal blow at a weakened post-revolutionary Iran, Iraq led the two states into a bloody eight-year war in the 1980s. Mutual suspicion lingers between Tehran and Baghdad as both governments continue to harbour each other's opposition groups and develop weapons of mass destruction (WMD).

Iran's second mutual interest with the US is in supporting an independent Afghanistan, free from Pakistani and Saudi-backed 'Muslim Fascists'[2] like Al-Qaʿida and the Taliban. Iran's highly porous 936-kilometre border with Afghanistan is a source of insecurity for Tehran because of a constant flow of Afghan refugees (now nearly two million) and drugs into Iran from its eastern neighbour. The drug trade across this border has transformed Iran's eastern provinces into a lawless region where, in the year 2000 alone, 1,500 fire-fights broke out between Iranian security forces and drug traffickers. In the last twenty years 3,000 Iranian troops have died on the border with Afghanistan.[3] Consequently, Iran seeks a friendly government in Kabul willing to cooperate in ensuring the security of this border. Viewing the Taliban as the long arm of its regional rivals – Pakistan and Saudi Arabia – Iran sought to push back Taliban forces from its strategically important border with Afghanistan.

As competing regional players, the US and Iran suffer from three conflicting interests in West Asia: control over Afghanistan, the proliferation of WMD, and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Afghanistan is today at the centre of a competition between Iran and the US for strategic dominance in Central Asia. The view from Tehran is increasingly one of a fortressed Iran, facing hostile American forces to the west, south and east. In all, 50,000 American military personnel surround Iran in an arc sweeping from Incerlik in southern Turkey to Bishkek in eastern Kyrgyzstan.[4] For Washington, a presence in Afghanistan is not desirable but necessary in order to deny Afghan hospitality to Al-Qaʿida and to ensure the stability of the Interim Government in Kabul. CIA Director George Tenet highlighted this clash of interests when he warned the US Congress in February 2002 that Iran is 'countering the US presence' in Afghanistan because of 'deep-seated suspicions among Tehran's clerics that the United States is committed to encircling and overthrowing them.'[5]

Today there are four nuclear actors – Israel, Pakistan, the Russian Federation and the US – and one near-nuclear actor – Iraq – in Iran's region. Iranian security planners would be remiss to ignore a future where one or more of these powers could threaten Iran with WMD. Consequently, Iran is developing its WMD capabilities to a point at which if faced with a WMD-armed aggressor it could brandish its own deterrent. For the US a nuclear Iran would inhibit American freedom of action in West Asia and limit Washington's leverage over Tehran.

The final conflicting interest between Iran and the US is over the Israel-Palestine conflict. Just as the US has long enjoyed a 'special relationship' with Zionism, so the Islamic Republic has consistently supported the Palestinian liberation movement. These two relationships may have more to do with domestic politics in both the US and Iran than with external factors. Nonetheless, Iran continues to support anti-Zionist liberation movements in Palestine and Lebanon and the US continues to provide Israel with diplomatic, economic and military assistance.

Resisting pressures

The concurring and conflicting interests outlined above have driven Iranian-American relations since 11 September. Although Iran did not publicly support Washington's 'War on Terror', it closed its border with Afghanistan, denied fleeing Al-Qaʿida and Taliban safe haven in Iran, promised to rescue any American soldiers in distress in its territory, and allowed American humanitarian relief to be transported across its territory to Afghanistan. This tacit agreement between Tehran and Washington was a result of negotiations between the two capitals on 24 and 25 September, through two intermediaries: the British Foreign Secretary, then visiting Tehran, and the Swiss Ambassador to Iran, then visiting Washington. This cooperation culminated in the handshake between US Secretary of State Colin Powell and Iranian Foreign Minister Kamal Kharrazi at a UN discussion on Afghanistan on 12 November.[6]

Predictably, this agreement collapsed at the beginning of 2002. As US civilian and military personnel began to establish an American footprint in Afghanistan, concerns were raised regarding Iranian interference with Washington's plans for post-Taliban Afghanistan. Although Iran had cooperated with the Bonn Conference that established Hamed Karzai's Interim Afghan Government, President Bush demanded on 11 January that Iran refrain from interfering in Afghanistan.[7]

This was followed by Bush's 29 January State of the Union (SOTU) address in which he identified Iran as part of an 'axis of evil'. Despite this swipe at Iran, Iranian leaders have persisted in trying to engage Washington without much success. On 5 February Tehran requested American assistance in securing its eastern border.[8] Two days later, in an attempt to demonstrate their good will, Iranian authorities arrested non-Afghan Taliban crossing the Iranian border.[9] Again on 10 February Iran closed the offices in Iran of Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, an Afghan warlord and opponent of the Karzai Government.[10]

President Bush has tried to use the political capital gained by Washington from the 11 September tragedy to build an international consensus against Iranian WMD proliferation. Washington's public reasoning is that Iran 'could provide these arms to terrorists, giving them the means to match their hatred.'[11] Washington's demands ignore Iran's need to defend itself against American, Israeli, Pakistani, Russian and, potentially, Iraqi WMD threats.

On the issue of the Israel-Palestine conflict both Iran and the US have room to manoeuvre. The Bush administration and the congressional leadership face formidable pressure from the pro-Israeli lobby in Washington and the right wing of the Republican Party to contain and punish Iran. Similarly Iran's elected government faces strong pressure from the Iranian theocracy to oppose Israel's occupation of Palestine. It remains to be seen whether either government has the will or the power to resist such pressure.

Future prospects

There is, however, some hope of renewed Iranian-American cooperation because of a concurring interest in deposing Saddam Hussein's regime in Iraq. As the US moves to build support for a move against Hussein, it will undoubtedly ask for Iranian cooperation, as it did during the 1991 Persian Gulf War. Iran will more than likely cooperate in such an operation, as it did in 1991, but conflict may again arise over competing interests in a post-Hussein Iraq, as it has in Afghanistan.

Iran, the most populous nation in West Asia, sitting astride the Persian Gulf and the Caspian Sea, will play a central role in assuring security in the region. Tehran cannot abandon a role in Afghanistan as Washington requests, for to do so would be to relinquish control over its eastern border. Nor can Iran ignore the proliferation of WMD in West Asia and the threat that such weapons pose to its national security. Progress requires the American foreign policy community to recognize these Iranian interests as legitimate. It will also require the elected leadership in Tehran and Washington to overcome pressure from their domestic opponents on the issue of the Israel-Palestine conflict. Only when the two states perceive their interests, not cultures, to be aligned can any progress be made in Iranian-American relations.

Notes

1. Robert D. Kaplan, 'Looking the World in the Eye', *The Atlantic Monthly* 288, n. 5 (December 2001): 82.
2. This is paraphrased from the term 'Fascism with an Islamic Face' coined by Christopher Hitchins in his 'Against Rationalization', *The Nation*, 8 October 2001.
3. 'Iran Arms 1,000 Basijis to Fight Afghan Bandits', *Tehran Times*, 10 January 2001, 3.
4. Vernon Loeb, 'Footprints in Steppes of Central Asia', *The Washington Post*, 9 February 2002, A01.
5. George J. Tenet, Director of Central Intelligence, 'Worldwide Threat – Converging Dangers in a Post 9/11 World' (testimony before the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence) Washington D.C., 6 February 2002. For full text see http://www.cia.gov/cia/public_affairs/speeches/dci_speech_02062002.html
6. Amy Waldman, 'In Louder Voices, Iranians Talk of Dialogue with U.S.', *The New York Times*, 10 December 2002, 12.
7. Karen DeYoung and Bradley Graham, 'President Warns Iran on Afghanistan Efforts', *The Washington Post*, 11 January 2002, A12.
8. Neil MacFarquahar, 'Tehran Says U.S. Should Offer Assistance, Not Accusations', *The New York Times*, 6 January 2002.
9. The Associated Press, 'Iran Holding Taliban Supporters', *The New York Times*, 7 February 2002.
10. Neil MacFarquahar, 'Tehran Shuts Offices of Afghan Hard-Liner as Calls to Expel Him Increase', *The New York Times*, 11 February 2002.
11. President George W. Bush, 'State of the Union Address', 29 January 2002, Washington, D.C. For the text of his remarks see http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2002/01/20020129-11.html

For more details please refer to Roham Alvandi's forthcoming work, 'Iranian-American Relations after September 11: Clash of Civilisations or Clash of Interests', Journal of Contemporary Analysis, *vol. 74, no. 2.*

Roham Alvandi is an honorary research associate at the Research Institute for Asia and the Pacific, University of Sydney, Australia.
E-mail: r.alvandi@riap.usyd.edu.au

The Netherlands
HACI KARACAER

Murder Victim Wins the Dutch Elections

The first political murder in its democratic history shocked the Netherlands to the core. One week before the parliamentary elections, planned for 15 May 2002, the publicist and politician Pim Fortuyn, branded by the American and British press as the maverick of Dutch politics, was shot dead as he was leaving a radio station in Hilversum. A dramatic end for a politician who relied on the theatrical and strong statements on migrants, in particular Muslims.

'The 54-year-old courted controversy with his robust style, being blunt, outspoken and flamboyant, an approach formerly unseen in Dutch politics. The former Marxist, sociology lecturer and newspaper columnist stood out with his shaven head and bright, colourful ties, and was also conspicuous, travelling around in a car with a driver and blacked-out windows. Proudly homosexual, he spoke out against immigration and high taxation and accused the Dutch government of poor performance', as CNN reported on 9 May. Fortuyn was not too tightly bound by the facts. Unemployment in the Netherlands is at its lowest in decades, the economy is in reasonably good shape, and the government was boring but nonetheless sound. Nevertheless, by way of an electoral agenda, he published a book entitled *The Shambles of Eight Years of Purple*. Purple stands for the government of the former Prime Minister Wim Kok, from the colours of the social democrats (red), left-wing liberals (green) and right-wing liberals (blue). Fortuyn's agenda is inconsistent, sometimes even self-contradictory, financially unsubstantiated, and unattainable in several respects. And yet more than 100,000 Dutch people bought the book (an unprecedented occurrence for an electoral agenda in the Netherlands, where they are normally distributed for free).

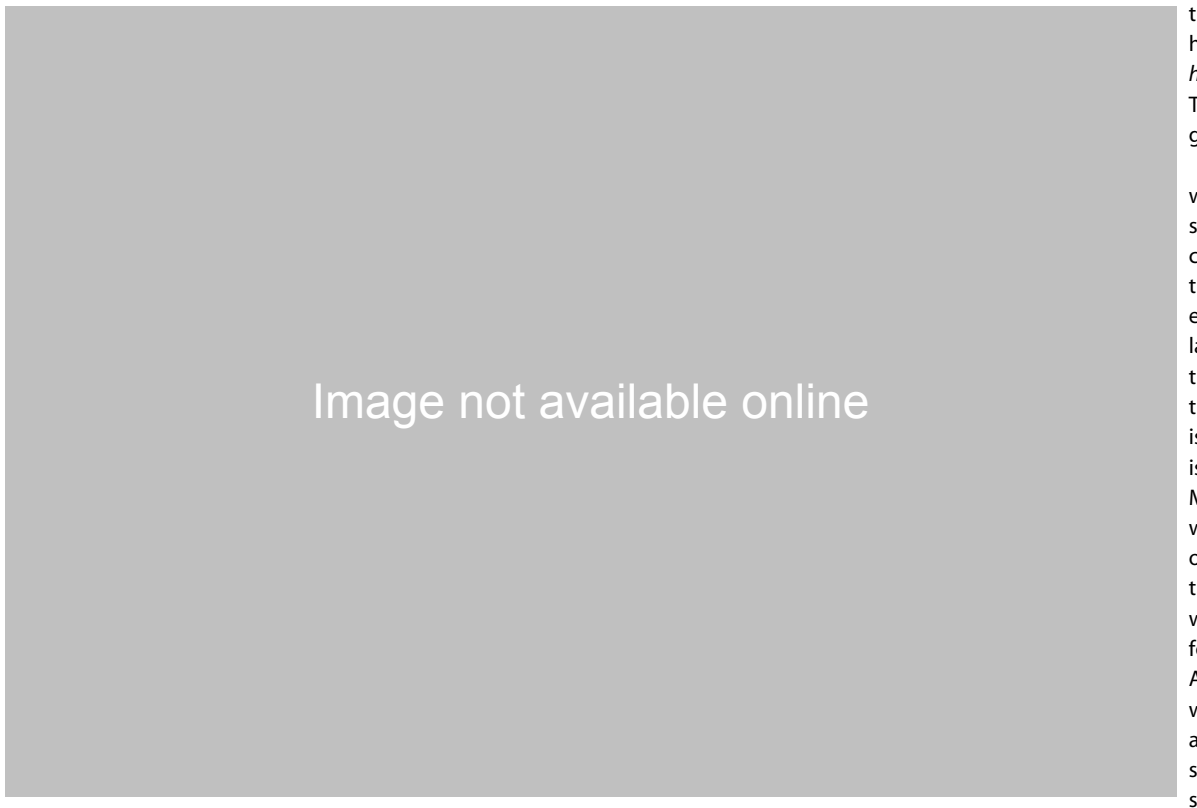


Photo in commemoration of Pim Fortuyn, Rotterdam town hall, 6 May 2002.

And the contradictions of Fortuyn went further still. A Moroccan imam had declared that homosexuals were worse than pigs. He had every right to say so, commented Fortuyn, since freedom of speech is a great good. And then in his second sentence came the punch line: 'but then, I know what I'm talking about, because I go to bed with Moroccan boys, and the imam probably doesn't.'

In November 2001 Fortuyn was elected leader of the new populist party Leefbaar Nederland (Liveable Netherlands). In February 2002 he was expelled after calling for the abolition of article 1 of the Dutch Constitution – which bans discrimination – in a leading Dutch newspaper. On the same occasion he characterized Islam as a backward culture. Only weeks before the elections he created a new party, called the List Pim Fortuyn (LPF). Fortuyn denied being another exponent of the extreme-right populist trend in Europe, insisting, and hating to be compared with the French Jean-Marie Le Pen or the Austrian Jörg Haider. 'My politics are multi-ethnic and certainly not racist', he once said, 'and I want to stop the influx of new immigrants. This way, we can give those who are already here the opportunity to fully integrate into our society.' However, he continued to question the ability of (Muslim) immigrants to assimilate into a liberal and sexually tolerant culture. In his view, immigration had to be curbed in order for the Netherlands' liberal values to survive.

Headless party

After his death, the List Pim Fortuyn made it into the new parliament with 26 seats (out of 150). At first the party, which for its governmental position relied entirely on the one man who headed its list, had difficulty coming to terms with its political success. The confusion was immediately noticeable in the first days of the cabinet discussions, when three LPF spokesmen gave completely contradictory accounts about a possible general pardon for resident illegal asylum-seekers. Apparently the future cabinet members had not quite mastered the distinctions between immigrants, asylum-seekers and refugees. After that a news blackout was declared to ensure that these beginners' blunders were not given too much media attention. The party is based on 'Pim's' philosophy, but in light of the contradictory conclusions which the different members draw from Fortuyn's publications and speeches, it is not entirely clear of what precisely his heritage consists. 'Pim would have wanted it that way' has already become proverbial.

But what is up with the Netherlands? People abroad have reacted with bewilderment to the country's political earthquake. With amazement, *The Economist* of 4 May confirmed that the Dutch welfare state is still perfectly intact. The Netherlands is completely 'liveable'. It is true that there are waiting lists, but health care is of a high standard; education could be better, but compares excellently on an international scale; there are traffic jams, but it is notoriously difficult to control mobility. And yet, notwithstanding the fact that the Netherlands is pretty well placed in the welfare premier league, a large number of Dutch people have chosen to vote for a party with no agenda and no experience. Prime Minister Wim Kok, the most popular politician the Netherlands has ever known, and his Labour Party, which dominated politics over the last decade, were razed to the ground in a matter of a few months.

It seems that voting for populism is an expression of people's fear of losing their own roots, more than an expression of xenophobia. European integration and the introduction of the Euro have forced the voter out of his *vaterland* – a political term, bordering on *heimat*, one's own familiar environment. The coloured man next door is the most tangible and visible proof of globalization.

And this brings us to the question of whether the Netherlands is a multicultural society; or whether multiculturalism has become an alibi for not calling problems by their true name. If you take the mere presence of cultural minorities in the Netherlands, then the country is certainly multicultural, but there is no question of 'multicultural equality'. A multicultural society which is more of a 'salad bowl' than a 'melting pot' is little more than a multi-ethnic society. Multiculturalism demands a social cohesion which goes further than the individual's own group, and for which diverse groups take responsibility. It means a society in which newcomers are clearly called upon for their values, behaviour and organization. A society which asks them to contribute, but which also takes them seriously. The latter aspect means that their cultural capital should no longer be viewed as a candy store, where the others can pick and mix as they wish ('they have such delicious food'), but rather as a coherent, pluralist identity, which can contribute both individually and in a group context to the consolidation and resilience of the society. But it does mean that demands must be made on the newcomers. A dominant culture reinforces its fundamental values by absorbing new groups. It is weakened, however, by mechanisms of exclusion, and also because some newcomers are themselves only too glad to grasp at these mechanisms, precisely so as *not* to be called upon as citizens. In this way they can continue to remain in the comfort of victimization. A society which dares to change, dares to face its problems straight on. Who is going to tell the Netherlands – and Europe – that we cannot manage without immigrants? Economically, socially and culturally, we need these people to renew ourselves.

Soul-searching

We should stop trying to explain multicultural problems merely in terms of disfavoured positions. It is not acceptable that young Moroccans and Antilleans steal from old ladies because they apparently have such a rough life. Nor is it acceptable that Turks get into drug-dealing because they no longer have any prospects for the future. For as long as the Turkish, Moroccan, Antillean, Surinamese, and others do not have the courage to raise their voices against the ills in their own communities, things look grim for their integration. The new Dutch citizens must not only deal with their external issues, but also the internal ones. The 'self-cleansing' potential of immigrant communities must increase, and that is primarily their own responsibility. Turks and Moroccans were all too ready to call on two particular policy-makers to justify their statements the moment they laid a finger on the sensitive spot of immigrant criminality. But in the meantime they have neglected to delve into the facts behind the statements issued by the two men.

The progressive members of Dutch society will have to think again about the issue of multiculturalism, and they should take to heart the words of William Pfaff (*International Herald Tribune*, 16 May 2002): 'In terms of the political system that a given community has adopted for itself, and the human values to which it is committed, it has every right to set terms on which it is prepared to welcome and harbor immigrants. Whatever the merits of other cultures, a nation has the right to give priority to its own historical culture and to its established values and practices. One can even argue that it has a duty to do this, since if it does not it may experience the violently obscurantist reaction against immigrants mobilized by the far right in France and other democracies, and it risks undermining its own values.'

An active re-evaluation of their own identity can also help immigrants in their own integration. For after all, identities can experience further development and renewal in their encounters with other strong identities. Muslims must also rise to the challenge of this confrontation. Moreover, along with individual Muslims, we must also naturalize Islam. Muslims must re-read the Qur'an in the light of their new country (the Netherlands). Dare to call yourself a 'Dutch Muslim'. For as long as we Muslims do not view ourselves as part of Dutch society, others will not do so either. To bring about this change in attitude Muslims need the help of society as a whole. Society must stop branding Islam as a heresy. Help Muslims to develop a Dutch version of their faith. This means that as well as a far-reaching social debate, multiculturalism (and please view culture as one of the mainsprings of society) requires, above all, a great, great deal of practical work.

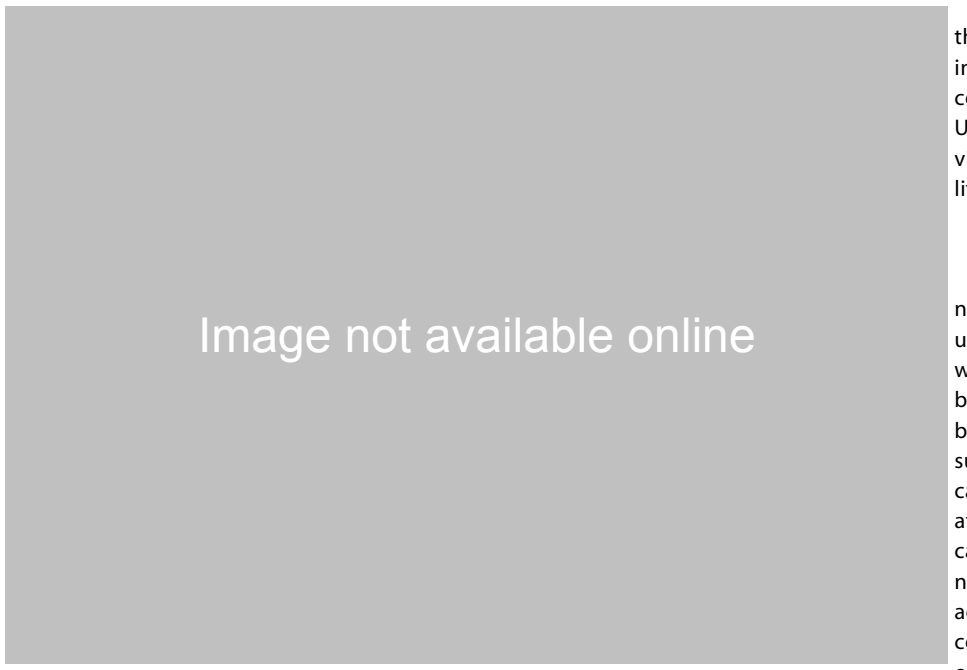
Haci Karacaer is director of Milli Görüş, theNetherlands.

India

JAN-PETER HARTUNG

The Ayodhya Conflict and Muslim Leadership

When on 27 February 2002 the Sabarmati Express at the train station of Godhra in the Indian state of Gujarat was assaulted and set on fire, and when, as a result, the whole state of Gujarat turned into the most severe riots in India since about 10 years, an issue was brought back to the awareness of the world community, that had long been forgotten outside India: the so-called 'Babri Masjid-Ramjanmabhumi', or Ayodhya conflict.



Craftsman working for a new Hindu temple, Ayodhya.

The Ayodhya conflict is a dispute over sacred space between the two largest religious communities in South Asia: Hindus and Muslims. It is, moreover, tightly bound to colonial thinking and colonial politics in 19th-century British India, and thus nowadays an inseparable part of what has been named the 'post-colonial predicament'. Taking both together, the Ayodhya conflict is the paradigmatic embodiment of a phenomenon known as 'communalism': an ideology that perceives society entirely as divided into distinct religious communities which have nothing in common. In India, this ideology found its most pithy expression in the so-called 'Two Nations Theory' by Muhammad Iqbal in 1930.

After the tragic events that accompanied the partition of India in 1947, and the creation of Pakistan as the state of Indian Muslims, the vision of the first prime minister of the Indian Union and leader of the National Congress Party, Jawaharlal Nehru, that India shall become a secular democracy, seems from the very beginning to have fallen prey to communalist tendencies within Indian society. Hindu communalism became a major tendency in post-independence India, taking up this assumption and arguing that the Indian Union was to politically safeguard the interests of the Hindu religious majority. Thus the idea of a unified, strong and self-confident Hindu 'nation' came into being, and turned communalism into Hindu 'nationalism'.

The bundling of the various Hindu nationalist forces was achieved by the Sangh Parivar, an umbrella organization, under which outfits like the Rashtriya Svayamsevak Sangh (RSS), the Vishva Hindu Parishad (VHP) or the Shiv Sena, could coordinate their activities and work out strategies to reach different layers of society. Out of one such strategy today's ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) emerged in 1980. The rhetoric of this new political association included, besides a national political economy and the topos of 'justice versus corruption', more and more religious symbols as core strategies of political mobilization within the process of communalization of the political sphere.[1] Major symbols are sacred law and sacred space; the first became manifest in the debate on Uniform Civil Code versus Muslim Personal Law which reached its peak so far in the so-called Shah Bano case in 1985,[2] the second, sparked off by the mosque-temple dispute, found its climax with the destruction of the Babri Masjid in Ayodhya on 6 December 1992 by militant Hindu nationalist outfits.

Background to the conflict

Much has been written about the issue since the culmination of the conflict in the early 1990s, which centres around the question of whether the mosque in Ayodhya, erected in 1528 by order of the first Mughal emperor Babur, replaced a Rama temple which had been destroyed only for this purpose.[3] Nineteenth-century colonial constructions of the Orient historicized religious myths and, introducing different topoi, helped create distinct religious communities competing for political and social superiority. Growing self-confidence among Hindus in this process became evident in the utilization of sacred space in Ayodhya when a part of the Babri Masjid was occupied by a renowned Hindu priest that year, setting up a raised platform for worship in its courtyard, claiming the place to be the historical birthplace of Rama (*ramjanmabhumi*). This incident, 145 years ago, marked the beginning of the actual Babri Masjid-Ramjanmabhumi dispute.

Communal polarization

What followed, up to today, might be described as flux and reflux of juridical and activist conflict. For about one hundred years the issue was left to the court, while the sources prove that the British colonial administration was more concerned with maintaining a status quo than with taking sides with one of the conflicting parties. But when, on the morning of 23 December 1949, idols of Rama and his wife Sita were found under the middle dome of the mosque, the Indian government took occasion of the riots following, declared the mosque a disputed area and closed it down for both conflicting communities. Another three decades of juridical struggle followed, during which Hindu nationalist thought entered almost every strata of the Indian society. As its clear expression, the VHP in 1961 openly called for the demolition of the mosque. In 1984, a 'Committee to Sacrifice for the Liberation of Rama's Birthplace' was founded and, finally in 1986, by decision of the district court of Faydabad, the mosque reopened for Hindus only. From here it took only a short step to a secret agreement between VHP and the Union Home Minister in 1989 to erect a temple in place of the mosque and to the demolition of the mosque in 1992.

The Indian Muslim intelligentsia was aware of the danger of communal polarization of Indian society at quite an early stage. Attempting to jointly face these developments, a number of non-governmental bodies were set up, comprising otherwise even hostile fractions within the Muslim community. As early as 1964 the All-India Muslim Majlis-i Mushawwarat (AIMMM) was founded, followed by the All-India Muslim Personal Law Board (AIMPLB) in 1972. Even though the latter refers primarily to another issue within the communalist dispute, it cannot be seen as separate from a joint effort of the Muslim communities in India to unite in view of the menace to their cultural identity which was equally perceived as an attempt by Hindu nationalist forces to violate the secular basis of the Indian Constitution, granting equality and freedom of religion. Indira Gandhi's second legislative period as prime minister made, for example, Sayyid Abu l-Hasan ʿAli Nadwi (d. 1999) – president of the AIMPLB and internationally renowned head of the Nadwat al-ʿUlama – understand that even the Congress Party was on its way to discharge the main values that have made up the foundations of Indian national identity. This latent communalism made it possible for Hindu nationalist movements to 'work out strategies for a cultural and political genocide on Muslims, in the result of which Muslims would no longer persist as a culturally distinct community within this society.'[4] One of these strategies, as Muslim leaders were quite aware of, was the conversion of historic mosques – symbols of Muslim cultural identity – into temples, which was tolerated, if not even encouraged, by the central and local governments. Exemplary for this was Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi's assurance to Muslim leaders during talks in February 1986 that he would strongly vote for the Muslims in the Babri Masjid dispute, which almost coincided with the re-opening of the mosque for Hindus only.[5]

To face this particular threat, at least two bodies were set up in 1986: the Babri Masjid Movement Coordination Committee (BMMCC) was founded under the auspices of the AIMMM on the initiative of the then member of parliament Sayyid Shahab al-Din; and the advocate Zafar Yab Jilani from Lucknow called in a Babri Masjid Action Committee (BMAC) which in the meantime has become a national platform too. Nevertheless, they were not able to prevent political instability, following the assassination of Rajiv Gandhi in 1990, from opening the floor to the triumph of communalist politics. The BJP increasingly used communalist symbols in its electoral propaganda. From 1989 onwards the Babri Masjid issue became crucial herein, and was thus transferred from a regional controversy to a national issue; BJP rule in Uttar Pradesh during 1991–1992 finally provided the political framework for the demolition of the mosque.

Continuing dispute

The controversy over the site, officially named 'disputed site', nevertheless continues; it has now become a court case again which, as Zafar Yab Gilani is convinced, will be decided this year. But although efforts of bodies like the AIMPLB, BMMCC and BMAC succeeded in launching effective public campaigns, and became a major factor for at least maintaining a legal status quo, it cannot be denied that the Muslim community lacks a charismatic leader who could be accepted by all different factions, and who could keep together a strong alliance in order to build a front against the Hindu nationalist threat. Another aspect is reflected by the fact that the current carnage in Gujarat, following the Godhra assault, did not cause extraordinary alert among the Muslim élites. Recently conducted interviews with different leading Muslim personalities revealed that they are quite aware of the cyclical character of communalist tension concerning the Ayodhya issue, and that the sparking off of violence in Gujarat is perceived as just another peak of activism. This, together with the lack of charismatic leadership, is the reason for the undermining of all attempts of the mentioned bodies by opposing groups within the Muslim community, and even today when joint action is at highest demand, there are enough indications for the fact that the Ayodhya issue is used by different Muslim factions only to serve their own interests, and to consolidate their own position within the Muslim community, as the example of the recent hearing of Maulana Kalb-i Jawwad, noted Shiʿa cleric from Lucknow, proves: he claimed the land where the mosque once stood to be sacred; this rather exceptional concept is very much reminiscent of the VHP rhetoric. Not the least because of such internal discord, a solution for the Babri Masjid-Ramjanmabhumi dispute seems still to be far away.

Notes

1. Cf. Thomas Blom Hansen, *The Saffron Wave. Democracy and Hindu Nationalism in Modern India* (New Delhi, 1999), 148–50.
2. For an overview cf.: Ali Asghar Engineer (ed.), *The Shah Bano Controversy* (Hyderabad, 1987).
3. For an overview, see: Sarvepalli Gopal (ed.), *Anatomy of a Confrontation. The Babri Masjid – Ramjanmabhumi Issue* (New Delhi, 1991).
4. Abu l-Hasan ʿAli Nadwi, *Karwan-i zindagi*, vol. 3 (Lakhna'u, 1997), 81.
5. Cf. Ibid., 138f.

Jan-Peter Hartung is a Ph.D. candidate at the Max Weber Centre of Erfurt University, Germany. His research is on contemporary Muslim scholarship in India.
E-mail: janpeter.hartung@uni-erfurt.de

Europe
SAPHINAZ-AMAL NAGUIB

Aesthetics of Islamic Spaces in Norway

Take a stroll in the 'exotic' district of Grønland in 'east-end' Oslo, and read the signs at the entrances of anonymous apartment buildings or old warehouses. You are bound to discover that within their premises several of these places accommodate mosques. What makes these places mosques is not their actual shape, but their interior design and decoration.[1]

At present, there are sixty registered mosques in Norway; thirty-six of them are in the capital, Oslo. The number of mosques reflects the diversity of the Muslim population of the country, the majority of which came originally from Asia and Africa. The most common types of mosques are those situated in flats, lofts and basements, and sometimes in detached houses with gardens. Others are to be found in converted schools, warehouses and old factories, or as prayer rooms (*musalla*) in larger architectural units. So far, there is only one newly purpose-built mosque in Norway, that of the World Islamic Mission in Oslo.

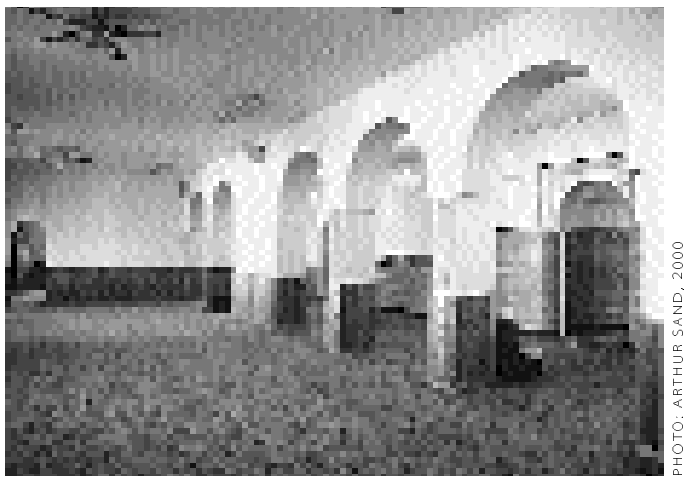


PHOTO: ARTHUR SAND, 2000

Masjid Attaouba, a converted school.

The continuity of use of buildings in a city and the discontinuity of their original function is well illustrated by the mosques of Norway. Here, the various Muslim congregations draw upon their cultural and religious knowledge in order to create the kind of place, which, according to their mental maps, constitutes a sacred space. They transform domestic spaces like flats, houses, factories, or schools into mosques. To do this they select patterns and designs based on templates from their original home countries or other known sites and monuments of the Islamic world.

PHOTO: ARTHUR SAND, 2001

Central Jamaᶜat-i Ahl-i Sunnat, detail of the *qibla*.

The central room of all mosques is the prayer hall, and great care is put into its arrangement and in correctly marking the *qibla*. In some instances one has had to reorient the room in such a way that the *qibla*, which is indicated by a prayer rug on the floor and a picture of the Kaᶜba on the wall, is situated in a corner. Consequently, the prayer lines are oblique with respect to the walls of the room. The walls in most prayer halls are either painted in white or in light green and are decorated with different religious artefacts. The floors are either covered with plain wall-to-wall carpets on which one places the individual prayer rugs or with multi-niched prayer rugs that are placed in rows. In addition, most mosques have kitchens and bathrooms with washing facilities for their members. Several have a library and offer religious instruction as well as mother-tongue and Arabic classes to the children of their communities. A number of mosques have a women's gallery situated either at the back, on a mezzanine of the main praying area, or in a separate side hall. Barriers, like curtains or screens, dividing the main prayer hall, may designate the allocated space for women. From the architectural and decorative point of view, one of the most striking features of spaces in mosques allotted to women is their austerity and the nakedness of the rooms. In most women's spaces the *qibla* is either marked by a prayer rug on the floor, a *kursi* holding a Qur'an, or a photograph of the Kaᶜba and other holy sites. Often, a TV-set permitting the female believers to follow the prayers through video monitors indicates the *qibla*.

Photographs and Islamic kitsch

Like other religious visual arts, Islamic visual arts are used as mediators of religious ideologies. As agents of non-verbal communication upon which societies rely to transmit religious knowledge, they contribute to making religion apparent. Religious art provides the artists and craftsmen with an established catalogue of forms, a sort of common fund of symbols from which they can pick and choose in order to illustrate a given subject. Conformity, however, does allow a certain flexibility and innovation in the organization of details. New technologies, new materials and even new designs and motifs are introduced while remaining in keeping with what is considered an accepted Islamic stamp. To convey the spirit of a coherent Islamic space, Muslim artists and craftsmen in Norway have to find the balance between the reproduction of different regional, traditional models and their incorporation into a novel, transcultural Islamic design. What makes a building Islamic is not so much its form as its intention and function which is expressed by the use of non-architectural means, namely ornamentation. Visualizing religion entails the use of visual topoi and codifying images in such ways that they acquire symbolic and allegorical attributes. The widespread use of photographs and posters in the decorative schemes of Norwegian mosques epitomizes these properties. Representations of the Kaᶜba, the Prophet's mosque in Medina, the Dome of the Rock, the mausoleum of Husayn in Kerbala, and other well-known sites worldwide adorn the walls of prayer halls. The pictures are mass produced at low cost, which makes their dissemination and acquisition quite inexpensive. Photographs and posters of holy Islamic sites may be considered timeless visual glosses where the religious message is condensed into one picture. The use of photographs and posters in mosques appears as a contradiction to the traditional avoidance of figurative art in Islamic visual arts. But today, the omnipresence and banalization of pictures in the Islamic world are well exemplified by the portraits of chiefs of states that are found in all public institutions including on the outer walls of mosques, in shops, as gigantic posters in the streets and, sometimes, even in private homes. Photographs and posters of sacred places indicate the religious importance of their subjects and contribute more to the transmission of religious memory than the unique chef-d'oeuvre, which is historically and culturally bound. The familiarity and monotony of photographic reproductions and of posters give them the faculty of inscribing and incorporating their message deeper and deeper, mechanically and in successive, regular waves. The framed pictures of Islam's holy sites hanging on the walls of a mosque aid in the creation of an Islamic sacred space. The photographic image or the poster encloses and freezes the object. Time seems to stand still, and space tends to disappear. Further, the picture's atmosphere provokes an emotional response in the beholder for whom the depicted monument appears to be within reach. The significance of pictures reproducing Islamic sacred places is often given by calligraphy captions especially on posters whose layout regularly combines photographs, drawings and writing. Moreover, these photographs or posters are usually subject to many forms of manipulation in order to influence the beholder's interpretation and feelings. They are retouched, embellished and glossed. The monuments shown are rendered in an illusive pristine state. Signs of age, rubble and dirt are conspicuously absent from the scene. People represented there are not recognizable persons but crowds, and crowds negate the individual. In the context of mosques in non-Islamic environments they bring forth in the Muslim viewer a sense of belonging to the larger *umma*.

Pan-Islamic artefacts

The decoration of most mosques in Norway consists largely of portable objects. In fact, except in the one purpose-built mosque and a converted school, there are very few fixed features in Norwegian mosques. The use of movable objects in the decoration schemes of these mosques expresses better than anything the flexibility and – so far – the transient character of Islamic sacred spaces in Norway. In addition to photographs and posters there are plates in etched or embossed brass, copper or other metals, wood or ceramics engraved or painted with the names of Allah (normally placed between the *mihrab*, indicating the *qibla*, and the *minbar*, the pulpit), Muhammad (to the left of the *mihrab*), calligrams bearing the mirrored form of *huwa* (He) or a fuller Qur'anic quotation, and one of the four caliphs or sometimes with those of Husayn and Hasan as well. We see costly printed Qur'anic verses and pious invocations set in elaborate, normally gilded frames, richly decorated Muslim calendars, fancy clocks showing the different local hours of prayer and relating them to those in Mecca, prayer rugs and carpets in shiny, silky materials with representations of the Kaᶜba to hang on walls, and miniature gilded mosques. One often finds a Qur'an on a *kursi* beside the *mihrab*. Bunches of rosaries, hanging from pegs on the walls or on pillars, and Qur'ans placed on open shelves are made available to those who need them. *Mihrab*s are often constructed in light, movable material. *Minbar*s are either made of wood and put on wheels, or may simply consist of lecterns or easy chairs. Most of these objects are machine-made consumption goods that can be bought in any shop or street stall catering to such commodities around the world.[2] They are transnational; in fact many are labelled with 'Made in Pakistan', 'Made in China' or 'Made in Korea'. Although they imitate renowned objects and monuments belonging to a common fund of Islamic 'fine arts', these artefacts are neither exact copies nor forgeries. Actually, whether it be a gilded reconstruction of the Dome of the Rock, a heavily retouched representation of the Sultan Ahmad Mosque in Istanbul on a calendar, or a glossy Kaᶜba woven in a silky prayer rug, all show inventiveness and innovation, especially in the treatment of details. These qualities are not always matched with talent and accomplished craftsmanship. The repetitive and conventional character of these artefacts generates a sense of familiarity and nostalgia that remind us of kitsch. Like kitsch, they give a feeling of embeddedness that is tied to the upkeep of traditions and to authenticity. At the same time, like kitsch, they also have a pretence to universality – in this case, one of definite pan-Islamic quality.

Notes

1. Saphinaz-Amal Naguib, *Mosques in Norway. The Creation and Iconography of Sacred Space* (Oslo: Novus forlag, 2001); 'The Northern Way. Muslim Communities in Norway', in Yvonne Yazbeck Haddad and Jane I. Smith (eds), *Muslim Minorities in the West. Visible and Invisible* (Oxford: Altamira Press, 2002), 161–174.
2. Gregory Starrett, 'The Political Economy of Religious Commodities in Cairo', *American Anthropologist* 97/1 (1995): 51–68.

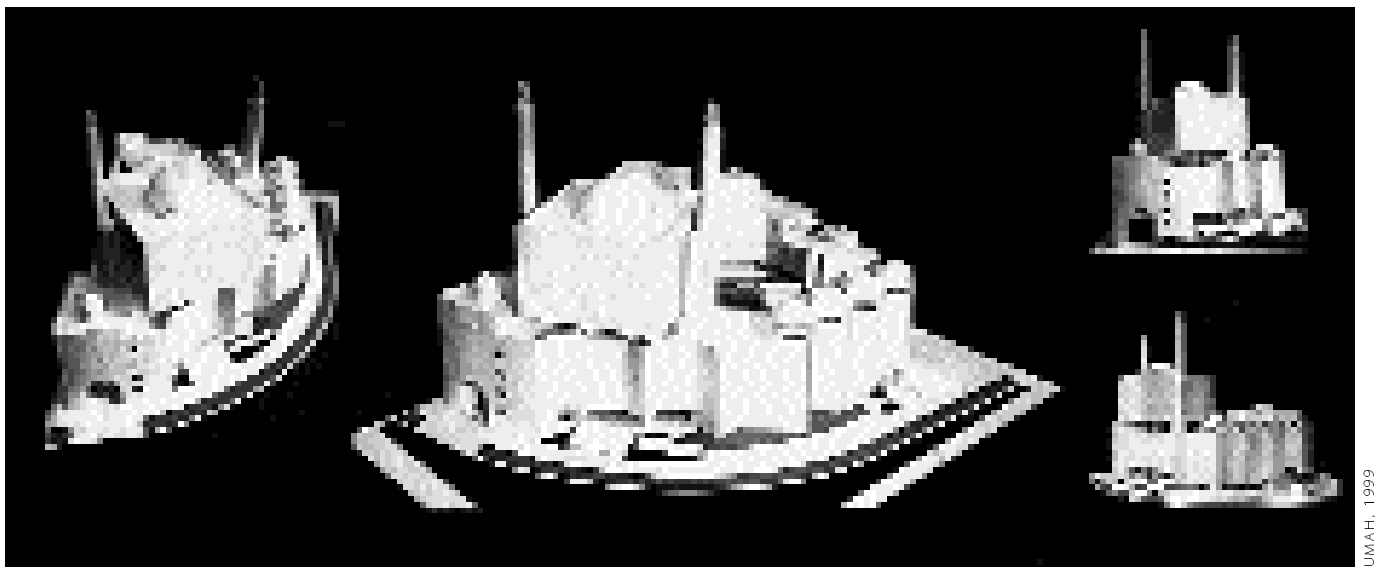
Saphinaz-Amal Naguib is a faculty professor of cultural history/cultural analysis at the University of Oslo, Norway.
E-mail: s.a.naguib@iks.uio.no

East Asia

HO WAI-YIP

Contested Mosques in Hong Kong

Global attention was given to the macro-political changes of Hong Kong in 1997, namely the transition of sovereignty from British colonial rule to the rule of the socialist regime of the People's Republic of China (PRC). But the micro-history of ethnic minorities has been often neglected, if not suppressed. The history of the Muslim ethnic minorities in Hong Kong under British colonial rule and the Chinese-dominated government can be revealed vividly through the design and the spatial distribution of mosques throughout Hong Kong's history. The history of ethnic Muslims is intertwined with that of the mosques in which they gathered. Mosques were – and still are – perceived as sites of cultural and political contestation.



A proposed mosque and Islamic centre of the United Muslim Association of HongKong.

UMAH, 1999

The history of ethnic Muslims in the colonial era is inseparable from the British colonial policies. According to a recent government report in 2002, there are some 80,000 Muslims in Hong Kong. Approximately half of the Muslims in Hong Kong today are of Chinese origin; the others belong to various smaller ethnic groups, including local born non-Chinese believers from Pakistan, India, Bangladesh, Malaysia, Indonesia, the Middle East and various African countries. The recent increase in the Muslim population may be attributed to mobile populations such as the influx of Indonesian domestic helpers. The first Muslims to settle in Hong Kong were of Indian origin. From the mid-19th century onward, Muslim soldiers and businessmen from the Indian sub-continent arrived in Hong Kong. As Muslims increased in number, the colonial government allocated land to them to build community facilities such as mosques and cemeteries.

The politics of space

The Jamiathe Masjid was the first mosque in Hong Kong, built in 1890. After this mosque was demolished, the building was reconstructed as the Shelly Street Mosque, dating from 1915. In terms of religious and cultural rights, the British government's recognition of the needs of Muslims, which resulted in aid being given to them so that they could build a community distinctive from local Chinese culture, was an important step. Nowadays, the Shelly Street Mosque is listed as part of the historical heritage of the city and has been recently renovated. As urban reconstruction programmes and estate developers target the site for potential redevelopment, the mosque escapes extinction under the government policy. The present status of the mosque is no longer strategic when compared to the past. Indeed, it signifies the identity crisis of ethnic Muslims in the post-colonial era. Many non-Chinese Muslims are no longer well off or privileged under the new regime in the post-colonial era as compared to the past. They are forced to scatter in the New Territories driven by the government's urban renewal policy.

Other mosques are in threat of destruction. The Stanley Mosque and the Cape Collinson Mosque (in Chai Wan) are situated in two remote places on Hong Kong Island and are interestingly both built in isolated prison areas (Stanley Prison and Cape Collinson Correctional Institution). Originally built in the early 20th century to serve for prayer and congregation purposes for the Indian Muslim prison staff, the later tremendous drop of Muslim staff in these two prisons and the low access following its isolated location from the residential area have led to the preservation of the two mosques being questioned. Although the prison and the correctional institution are still in service, there has been a significant decrease in the number of Indian Muslim staff members at both. In a recent initiative the government proposed to demolish or convert the Stanley Mosque into a club for government officials.

Mosque design in divide

Another mosque on Hong Kong Island exhibits the cultural divergence between ethnic and local culture: the Masjid Amar and Osman Ramju Sadick Islamic Centre (Wan Chai Mosque), opened in 1967. This mosque, designed by Ramju Sadick, a Chinese Muslim, demonstrates a distinctive Chinese cultural tradition. The Wan Chai Mosque particularly attracts Chinese Muslims, as compared with, for example, the Kowloon Mosque and Islamic Centre, which attracts Muslims from various ethnic backgrounds. The internal design of both mosques embodies various ethnic traditions. The Wan Chai Mosque fits more smoothly in the general organizational structure of Hong Kong, serving multi-faceted purposes. The eight-floor complex is composed of a prayer hall, a Chinese restaurant, a *halal* bakery, medical services, a library and seminar rooms. The Islamic Union of Hong Kong and Hong Kong Islamic Youth Association are based in the Wan Chai Mosque Centre.

The Kowloon Mosque, constructed in 1896, remained a place of worship for over 80 years until extensive damage was caused by the urban Mass Transit Railway project. The mosque was reconstructed and reopened in 1984 in the Tsim Shau Tsui area as a place for prayer and learning. It is primarily frequented by Muslims who have their roots in the Indian Subcontinent, many of them living in the nearby Chung Ching Mansion, where ethnic minorities have settled. This also explains why the Kowloon Mosque also plays a role as a cultural site for non-Chinese Muslims, who assemble there for their social life and support, exchange of information, and leisure. Non-Chinese and Chinese Muslims live in different segments of society, with different cultural orientations and lifestyles, though they adhere to the universal *umma*.

The Wan Chai Mosque has a multi-purpose design and clearly caters to the local Chinese mentality. Its multi-purpose design differs from that of the Kowloon Mosque, where the space is mainly devoted to the three prayer halls with luxurious white marble finishing. Moreover, the leaders of the respective Muslim communities in these two mosques also distinctively differ in terms of their ethnic backgrounds: a Chinese imam from China proper leads the Muslim community at the Wan Chai Mosque, whereas a non-Chinese imam leads the Kowloon Mosque. Chinese Muslims gather in the Chinese restaurant of the Wan Chai Mosque, where they can comfortably enjoy social time and have a Chinese *halal* meal. Different cultural practices and the institutional design of the mosques, on one hand, reflect the availability of a variety of spaces to accommodate ethnic differences; but, on the other hand, there has yet to be developed a stronger solidarity, one which goes beyond ethnic difference, amongst all Hong Kong Muslims.

Spatial distribution and design

The social and cultural status of non-Chinese Muslims in post-colonial Hong Kong can also be examined through the ongoing project of the sixth mosque in Hong Kong, the Sheung Shui Mosque and Islamic Centre. The construction of this mosque is path-breaking as it is the first mosque to be built in the post-colonial New Territories. Urban reconstruction forces many Muslims to move from Hong Kong Island to the new satellite cities in the New Territories. Many of these Muslims are economically less well off and have no alternative but to comply with government policies. In view of the absence of facilities in the New Territories, Muslim leaders campaigned for mosques and community facilities. Limited land supply as well as the government's policy to promote social welfare influenced the negotiations; the latest revision of the design aims at the development of a welfare-oriented mosque, which will not only include a prayer hall but also an English-medium secondary school and facilities for the elderly. Permission to build the Sheung Shui Mosque and Islamic Centre has been granted and Muslim countries including the United Arab Emirates and Qatar have pledged to give full financial support, but resistance continues. Local Chinese residents express their discontent with the plans for the mosque, arguing that it may upset social order. The non-Chinese Muslim leader interprets the opposition of Chinese residents to the mosque project as being the result of ignorance with respect to Islam and discrimination towards non-Chinese Muslims. A dialogue has been initiated between ethnic (non-Chinese) Muslim leaders and local Hong Kong Chinese representatives. The yearning for public acceptance of the new mosque in the New Territories indeed symbolizes the road ahead of social recognition among non-Chinese Muslims.

One *umma*, two fates

Non-Chinese Muslims are a deprived population in the post-colonial era, and their leaders lament the situation they deem unjust as compared with that of the colonial era. Resistance of Chinese residents against the mosque in the New Territories expresses just the tip of the iceberg of the marginality of non-Chinese Muslims. In general, the non-Chinese Muslim minority suffers from the isolation and implicit racism in searching for employment and in education. Many children from South Asian countries have difficulties being admitted to schools. They drop out from school due to problems with learning the native Chinese (Cantonese) language, adapting to the curriculum and the Chinese culture of their peers. The increase in mobile groups such as Indonesian domestic helpers find themselves in an unfavourable environment, especially after the Asian economic crisis following the handover of Hong Kong in 1997. Indonesian domestic workers were the first to experience frozen wages and layoffs. After 11 September, non-Chinese Muslims have become conspicuous targets of discrimination due to the label of 'Islam' and their skin colour. In contrast, in the eyes of the non-Chinese Muslim, Chinese Muslims are a silent minority that seems to be invisible in society. Their Muslim identity is hardly noticeable in public life. At home with the local Chinese culture and language, Chinese Muslims generally have no difficulty functioning in society. Few of them outwardly express their Muslim identity in everyday life. A non-Chinese Muslim leader observed that many Chinese Muslims 'forget' Islam or integrate too comfortably in the 'westernized' lifestyle. As Hong Kong has transitioned from the colonial to post-colonial era, mosques have reflected changes, especially in terms of the social and political status of Muslims. Only time will tell what will become of the current clear divide between Chinese and non-Chinese Muslims in Hong Kong, and how they will come to terms with the notion of the *umma*.

Ho Wai-Yip is a Ph.D. candidate at the Division of Social Sciences, Hong Kong University of Science and Technology, Hong Kong (SAR), China. He is currently the Rotary Academic Year Ambassadorial Scholar at the Institute of Arab and Islamic Studies, University of Exeter, UK.
E-mail: sohwy@ust.hk

Jordan
ALA HAMARNEH

Transformation of Al-Wihdat Refugee Camp

Al-Wihdat is a legendary camp in the history of the Palestinian struggle for liberation, self-determination and national identity. It was established in 1955 for 5,000 refugees, three kilometres to the south of Amman's city centre and inhabited by refugees from the villages between Jaffa and Jerusalem. Shelters and tents dominated the camp scene until the early 1970s. Al-Wihdat was a main centre of activity of Palestinian nationalists in the late 1960s and early 1970s.

After 'Black September' the Jordanian government and the UNRWA initiated numerous projects to improve living conditions. With the conclusion of the agreements of Oslo and Wadi ʿAraba, the Palestinians of Jordan, now excluded from the so-called peace process, have opted increasingly for Jordanian strategies.

Today Al-Wihdat constitutes an important urban area, with more than 2,000 officially registered shops and enterprises that offer an impressive variety of goods and services. Administratively, Al-Wihdat is a part of Al-ʿAwda quarter of Al-Yarmouk district. The current estimate of 48,000 inhabitants includes about 8,000 local gypsies, Egyptian labour migrants, Iraqi refugees and other low-income non-Jordanian groups. In Arabic Al-ʿAwda means 'The Return'. It seems ironic that the most integrated refugee camp in Jordan carries this name. Nevertheless, it is a way to keep the hope of return and a separate identity alive. The paradigms of refugee versus citizen and Palestinian identity versus integration have dominated the socio-political discourse of Jordan in the last 30 years. Although the absolute majority of the Palestinian refugees in Jordan have Jordanian citizenship, they accepted and understood it, until the late 1980s, to be a 'transit' solution on the way back to Palestine. The Oslo and Wadi ʿAraba treaties caused a change in public opinion, and at present a large majority in the refugee communities has come to terms with the fact that Jordan is their permanent place of residence. But it was not without disappointment and scepticism that they recognized that the question of the refugees was excluded from the Oslo and Wadi ʿAraba agreements.

Al-Wihdat was one of the main centres of the formation of the Palestinian liberation movement in Jordan. In the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s Al-Wihdat was synonymous with 'Palestinian' in public life; protest actions, demonstrations, petitions and even Al-Wihdat soccer club's matches were all indicators of an all-Palestinian public stance and national self-identification. The takeover of Al-Wihdat in 1970 by the Jordanian armed forces marked the conclusion of the September clashes in the country. The crackdown on the in-camp demonstrations in the 1970s put a further restraint on Palestinian political activities. The later elections for the executive committees in the camp's NGOs reflected the passive political mood inside the Palestinian community after the repression. In the first democratic elections in Jordan in 1989, the inhabitants of Al-Wihdat were reluctant to participate, demonstrating the degree of political self-identification of the refugees. However, in the 1990s, assimilation strategies became the dominant trend among the Palestinian refugees.

Political 'Jordanization'

In the wake of Arab-Israeli peace talks and treaties, Islamic movements gained a huge popularity with their fierce criticism, in particular concerning the negotiation tactics of Arafat and the Jordan-Israeli peace treaty. The Islamic Action Front – the political branch of the Muslim Brothers in Jordan – and numerous welfare organizations filled the political and social gaps that existed in the camp in the early 1990s following Arafat's failure to continue financing his local allies and the social networks in the camp. The PLO now focused on the foundation of the Autonomy Authority in the West Bank and Gaza. Moreover, the PLO lost many of its former sponsors due to Arafat's stance during the Second Gulf War. In contrast, the Islamists gained a lot from their legal status and their strong welfare network. In short, an officially registered Jordanian political party became the representative body for Al-Wihdat. The fact that it concerns an oppositional party with a clearly Palestinian agenda does not alter its national character, orientation and loyalty. Each Jordanian political organization puts the Palestine issue high on its agenda, because it is the practical way to address the 'patriotic emotions' of the Jordanians of Palestinian origin, who make up at least 50% of the potential voters.

The HAMAS crises in 1999 and the local actions of solidarity with the Intifada al-Aqsa in 2000–2001 show the efficacy of this 'Jordanian' domination of political life in Al-Wihdat. While in winter 2000 a few hundred extreme radical leftists and Islamists were involved in street fights with the police in the streets of Al-Wihdat, the authorized Islamic actions and events were peaceful and indeed very moderate in their expressions. The meetings and demonstrations organized by the Islamic Movement followed the official regulations. Even the protests against the last Israeli military aggressions in March–April 2002 were most disciplined; the populous protests took place outside of Al-Wihdat and were mainly under an effective command of the Islamic Action Front. In contrast, in Al-Baqʿa, the largest refugee camp in Jordan, various protest manifestations occurred beyond the control of the Front.

Another aspect of notice is the participation of Al-Wihdat refugees in the various national and local elections. In 1989 about 40% of the potential voters went to the polls. In 1993 the number of voters increased to 61%, but in 1997, following a call by the Islamists to boycott the elections, only 22% cast their votes. The votes drifted from pro-Arafat traditional personalities, who had good connections with the Jordanian establishment (in 1989) to contra-Arafat radical candidates with critical attitudes towards the Jordanian national establishment (in 1993) and new agitated rhetoric (in 1997) about 'the candidate of the Jordanians of Palestinian origin'. The integration of the camp in Jordanian politics put an end to its role as a 'factory of return illusions', as it was sometimes called, and strengthened the influence of the refugee-citizens in the domestic political life. The forthcoming national elections may demonstrate whether this political integration is stable and functional, especially in the context of the last Israeli invasion in the Palestinian Authority areas.

Urban integration

Compared to other former refugee camps, the changes in Al-Wihdat following the liberalization of the political life in Jordan since 1989 are impressive. The boom in the construction and commerce sectors following the arrival of Palestinian-Jordanian returnees from the Gulf States after the Second Gulf War has accelerated the transformation. Today Al-Wihdat is the commercial and service centre south of Amman. More than 2,000 enterprises are located in the camp. While the eastern quarters of Al-Wihdat have been developing as low-middle class housing areas with three- and four-storied buildings, the southern quarters have degraded to slum-like areas.

The practical inclusion of Al-Wihdat in the spatial planning of the metropolis of Amman started in 1970, with the crushing of the Palestinian national movement there. The first streets were built across the camp's territory mainly for security purposes. Later, electricity, telephone and – in the 1980s – waste-water lines were installed. The housing reconstruction boom began in the early 1980s with the new regulations for permanent-cement roofs (until that time the housing units could only have tin-plate or zinc-plate roofs) and limited second floor permissions.

The situation changed radically after the Second Gulf War. About 300,000–350,000 Jordanians of Palestinian origin were forced to leave the Gulf region, mainly Kuwait. The returnees caused a boom in the commerce and construction sectors. The geographic location and cheap real estate prices in and around Al-Wihdat as well as the intensive urbanization to the south of Amman attracted numerous small businesses. Between 1990 and 1993 the number of shops and enterprises in the camp more than doubled: from 450 to 980, and by 1997 they numbered 1,700. However, it is not only the number of enterprises that is impressive but the type and variety as well. At the beginning of the 1990s, these enterprises were mainly small, simple, family-owned businesses with a low level of technical expertise. Today they include banks, jewellers, pharmacies, travel agencies, appliance and electronic shops, and a huge number of grocers, clothing stores, vegetable shops and fast food outlets.

The development of commerce and services fuelled the construction boom and the real estate market in the camp. Despite the fact that the selling, buying and renting of units in the camp is officially prohibited by the UNRWA, it has become a common phenomenon, which is indirectly supported by the Jordanian authorities. Returnees and ex-camp inhabitants are the main residents in the extensions to the south and east. However, unlike the camp itself, these expansions are formal areas, outside of UNWRA jurisdiction. Al-Wihdat continues to be the centre of social, commercial and political life for these new quarters as well. The UNRWA schools, clinics and social networks strengthen its dominant local position.

Palestinians have been citizens of Jordan since 1951. Their economic and demographic weight in the country, as well as the increased state of integration, is only partly reflected in the Jordanian political fabric. The majority of the refugees distinguish between the right to return and the prospect of return. The dilemma of integration versus assimilation will remain on their agenda for the years to come. Essential for further modernization and democratization of Jordanian society – and for that matter for a more stable and peaceful situation in the region – is the formulation of a new (Jordanian) national identity, that accommodates the needs and aspirations of the Palestinians in Jordan. A more balanced representation of the urban areas, where the refugees live, in the electoral laws would be a first requirement.

PHOTO: ALA HAMARNEH, 2001

A commercial street in Al-Wihdat.

Ala Hamarneh holds a Ph.D. in geography and is currently a researcher at the Centre for Research on the Arab World, Institute for Geography, University of Mainz, Germany.
E-mail: alhamarneh@excite.com

Jordan
RENATE DIETERICH

Orientalizing the Orient
Renovating Downtown Amman

In September 2001, the Greater Amman Municipality started an extensive project for the renovation of downtown Amman, supported by a Japanese loan of $58.8 million. One of the main goals of the project is to bolster tourism in the kingdom which has been negatively affected by Al-Aqsa Intifada and the 11 September attacks. Furthermore, Amman is the Cultural Capital of the Arab World 2002 and will thus become an important destination for Arab tourists. The Jordanian economy, always looking for cash money, desperately needs the revenues of a blossoming tourism industry. It is therefore only logical that Jordan tries to meet the expectations of Western and Arab visitors as a means to improve the national balance sheet.

PHOTO: PATRICK BEN LUKE SYDER / LPI

The Roman Amphitheatre and Hashimiyya Square.

The concerned area around the Roman Amphitheatre and the Citadel including the old Circassian Al-Muhajirin quarter will undergo a far-reaching programme of restructuring. This area, usually simply called 'downtown' by the Ammanites, lies in a *wadi* where once the Sail Amman (desert torrent) used to flow. It was the nucleus of the modern town of Amman which emerged after the foundation of the Emirate of Transjordan in the early 1920s. The development of the city in those days was hampered by the topography which is difficult in several respects and which complicated the extension of the built area. The narrow *wadi* is surrounded by hills which had to be made accessible by long staircases, one of them leading from the street opposite the Roman Amphitheatre to the Citadel, thus connecting the two main places of touristic interest.

According to the deputy mayor of Amman, the municipality now intends to erect 'oriental fountains […], kiosks and a traditional market place' and wants 'to redecorate the entrances of some shops in a traditional Arabesque motif'.[1] Accordingly, the flow of tourists will be channelled through three passageways lined with souvenir shops, guiding the visitors from the Citadel to the Amphitheatre or vice versa. But the refurbishing of downtown Amman does not only aim at an 'orientalization' of the old city centre by means of architecture; it contains another major project: the new national museum, which will focus on the various aspects of (Trans-)Jordanian history and culture. While the exhibition will include an archaeological section, the main focus will be on the recent Hashemite history.[2]

Early development of Amman

Though Amman has a long tradition, there was no settlement continuity and the historical caesuras had important consequences for the development of the city. Signs of human settlement in what is now modern Amman date back at least 6,000 years. Later on, the Roman and Greek emperors made use of the city and in the 7th century, the whole region was incorporated into the newly established Islamic dominion. But after the disastrous Mongolian conquest in the 13th century, Amman increasingly lost its importance and was completely abandoned from the 14th century. It was only in 1878 that Circassian refugees were settled in the ruins of ancient Amman by the Ottoman administration. Remains of the Roman and Greek rule today form the most important tourist sites in Amman.

Typical features of a traditional Arab and Islamic city emerged during the formative years from 1876 to the end of the 1930s: Al-Husseini Mosque in the centre of the city, the surrounding markets, a cemetery some way up from the city centre in Ras Al-ᶜAin, and the palace of the ruler which was built from 1924 onwards in Raghdan. Unlike other cities in the Middle East, Amman never knew a clear residential separation of Muslims and Christians, but ethnic clusters did emerge with regards to the Circassian immigrants according to the date of their arrival in the city. Al-Muhajirin quarter, which is now part of the renovation project, is an example of this. According to the needs of the state and its desire for public representation, streets in downtown Amman were widened from the late 1920s onwards and older houses were torn down to give way to places of public gathering, official parades and the easy passing of automobiles. Photographs of Amman from the mandate period show a very modest architecture with simple one- or two-storied houses and hardly any representative buildings.

The influx of the Palestinian refugees in 1948 again led to a dramatic change of the city. Many buildings from the formative years of the Emirate have been demolished since then. The emergence of a politically influential economic class during World War II initiated also the division into East and West Amman. From that time on, the better-off people were found in the western part of the town while the lower income population settled in the eastern parts. The old city centre has since then developed into a cheap shopping area for the poorer inhabitants of Amman. This division has become constantly and increasingly accentuated with each decade.

Use of public space

Apart from its function as a market place for low income earners and as a tourism spot, the old city centre represents one of the rare public spaces in Amman where social interaction takes place. Furthermore, the city centre regularly serves as a place for demonstrations and manifestations of public discontent. People have flocked to the streets after Friday prayers at Al-Husseini Mosque on several occasions during the last decade: to protest against the peace agreement with Israel in 1994, the sanctions against Iraq in 1998 and against the current Israeli aggression in the course of the second Intifada in Palestine.

Downtown Amman also contains one of the city's biggest and most frequented parks: the Hashimiyya Square opposite the Roman Amphitheatre. The place, which adjoins Raghdan bus terminal, was originally planned as a major tourist area with shopping arcades, souvenir booths, restaurants and cafés. Nevertheless, it developed less into a place of consumption and more into a place of recreation and relaxation. The large open space, bordered by trees and designed as a public garden, today attracts *shabab* (groups of young men), families and couples alike. While shop owners complain about the missing profits, the Ammanites have different ideas about their use of the square. They enjoy themselves strolling, gossiping and watching people. Hashimiyya Square thus returns to its traditional use from the Emirate days when it often witnessed small fairs and festivities during the Ramadan and national celebrations.

Tradition or innovation?

Downtown Amman is mainly a product of the 20th century and never resembled the 'traditional Arab city' as constructed by Western scholarship. The projected 'Arabesque motifs' to decorate buildings from the 1940s and 1950s, the 'oriental fountains' and the market place all reflect the municipality's visions of how Amman could have been – but not as it used to be. The attempts by the municipality to restructure the heart of the city therefore express the common imaginings of the 'Arab-Islamic city' guided by the typical clichés without any historical authenticity. Besides, the national culture and local heritage during such a process become commodified, i.e. they serve as goods 'for commercial consumption and excessive capital accumulation'[3] and are detached from their original meaning. In fact, the planned renovation has nothing to do with the traditional structure of downtown Amman, the history of which comprises no more than 120 years.

Anyway, the official interest in the relics of the early Emirate days is rather new. For a long time, they had been completely neglected: one of the main examples of early Transjordanian architecture, the Philadelphia Hotel, was demolished in 1984 when the Hashimiyya Square was remodeled,[4] thus destroying one of the most important places of political, cultural and social activities during the years of the Emirate and the early years of independence.[5] Another example is a large villa on Jabal al-Luweibdeh where Frederick Peake used to live. It was abandoned during the 1970s and saved only by a private initiative in 1993. Today it is the most inspiring art centre in the whole of Jordan, called *darat al-funun*.[6]

Current attempts to rescue the remnants of the past coincide with a new sense of the recent Jordanian history. Since the early 1990s, a steadily growing sense of proper historical background has emerged, as manifested in numerous books and articles, seminars and conferences on local history. This demonstrates a hitherto unknown interest in an authentic 20th-century Transjordanian history. Moreover, the sudden increase in research must also be seen within the context of the ongoing discussion in Jordan about the question of national identity. While all Arab states have their national founding myths, different explanations for their nationhood and varying exclusions and inclusions of certain societal groups, the Jordanian case is even more sensitive. In the face of the Palestine conflict, the question of national identity has yet to be sufficiently answered. The new national museum is therefore likely to become a centre point for the reinterpretation and redefinition of the Jordanian nationhood.

The 'face-lift' of old Amman and the projected museum can thus be read in three different ways: as a means to satisfy tourist expectations and to strengthen the economy; as an attempt to create tradition embodied in material culture; and as a contribution to the age-old discussion about national identity in Jordan.

Notes

1. 'Downtown Undergoing Renovations to Attract Tourists', *Jordan Times*, 29 October 2001.
2. See 'Amman's Old City to Get Face Lift', *Jordan Times*, 31 August 2001.
3. Rami Daher, 'Heritage Conservation in Jordan: The Myth of Equitable and Sustainable Development' (22f.), *Document du CERMOC*, no. 10 (2000): 17–42.
4. See Omar M. Amireh, 'Amman Experiencing Plazas and Parks: Adaption of Users to Space or Space to User', in Jean Hannoyer and Seteney Shami, *Amman. Ville et societé* (Amman: Centre d'Etudes et de Recherches sur le Moyen Orient Contemporaine (CERMOC), 1996), 149–170.
5. See 'A Face-lift Old Amman', *The Star*, 15 September 2001.
6. See *Old Houses of Jordan, 1920–1950* (Amman: TURATH, 1997), 84, 92.

Renate Dieterich is a post-doctoral researcher at the Institute for Oriental Studies, University of Bonn, Germany
E-mail: r007d@aol.com

Israel/Palestine
TAMIR SOREK

Memory and Identity
The Land Day Monument

The establishment of monuments for commemorating the victims of violent confrontations constitutes a major element in the construction of modern national consciousness.[1] The Arab-Palestinian citizens of Israel, approximately 19% of all Israeli citizens, have experienced in the last five years an accelerated process of 'monumentalization' of their identity as a national minority – many monuments that commemorate their victims in the Zionist-Palestinian conflict have been established in Arab villages and towns inside Israel.

One event and one monument were crucial in triggering this process: on 30 March 1976, Israeli police shot to death six Arab citizens during violent demonstrations against the government's confiscation of Palestinian land. This day, known as Land Day, and the monument built to commemorate the tragic event signify the stage in which Palestinian memory began to be carved in the public space of the Arab minority in Israel.

Rabinowitz[2] describes the discursive ways in which the state of Israel denied the Palestinian national identity of its Arab citizens, and how it tried to create a new, local Arab identity, loyal to the state of Israel. The main element in denying the Palestinian identity was denying the past, notably everything that happened before 1948. The Palestinians were expected to ignore their common destiny as victims of the war in 1948 and the memories of their existence as a community before 1948. The exile of the Palestinian leadership, as well as many years of worry about possible repressive action and the disapproving stance of the Jewish majority, forced demonstrations of Palestinian national identity into the private sphere.

Private memories of the 1948 war and longings for exiled family members were transmitted orally within families. Poets and authors like Emil Habibi, Tawfiq Zayad and Hana Ibrahim wrote about the Nakba (the destruction of Palestine in 1948) in their poems and novels, bringing this to the public sphere. However, public rallies and demonstrations where highly restricted and not a single Palestinian national monument was founded.

The year 1976 constitutes a turning point in the ways the Palestinians in Israel remember their past. In February of that year, the Israeli government declared its intention to confiscate land from its owners in the villages of Sakhnin, Arabeh and Deir-Hana in central Galilee. The wide protest demonstration planned for 30 March developed into a violent confrontation between the demonstrators and the Border Police troops, who entered the villages and the houses. The Israeli police killed six people and injured 70.

It was not the first time that the Arab citizens of Israel suffered fatal casualties from the shooting of Israeli security forces. Twenty years earlier, on 29 October 1956, a group of peasants from Kufr-Qassem returned to their village from the fields, not aware that their village was under curfew. Forty-seven of them were murdered by Israeli troops. The event is commemorated annually and two monuments were built in the village.[3] However, it is difficult to consider those early memorial practices as national commemoration since they were not articulated by any Palestinian symbols and did not invoke, explicitly or implicitly, a common Palestinian past. However, the collective self-image of the Palestinians in Israel produced by this commemoration of Kufr-Qassem is one of a passive victim and not of an active political agent fighting heroically for rights.

In contrast, Land Day was a clear political issue. What was at stake was the core of the struggle between Zionism and the Palestinian people: land. The Palestinian national narrative could be summarized in one sentence – 'the Palestinian peasants' land was robbed by the Zionists'. 'Land' occupies a central role in Palestinian experience and mythology. After the end of military rule in 1966, the Arab citizens had reason to believe that Israel was going through a process of democratization, progressing toward civil equality. The confiscation of lands in 1976 and the victims of the police shattered this illusion. But in contrast to the massacre in Kufr-Qassem, the absence of military rule enabled the protest to gain presence in the public space and to be linked to a shared Palestinian memory. Thus, the events of Land Day signify a historical turning point where Palestinian identity began to spill from the private walls into the public space – in building monuments and in the annual political rallies of protest and memory.[4]

The Land Day monument

Following the Land Day events of 1976, committees were established in the victims' villages. These committees sought ways to commemorate their names. The Committee for Protecting the Arab Land[5] decided to build a central monument to commemorate all six victims in a cemetery in Sakhnin, residence of three of the victims. The committee contacted Abed Abedi, a young artist from Haifa who returned from his art studies in East Germany in 1972, and worked for the communist newspaper *Al-Ittihad*. Abedi was concerned that his work might turn the state's authority against him. This was one of the reasons that he asked the Jewish sculptor, Gershon Knispel, to join him in co-creating the monument.

The Arabs in Israel had indeed gained more freedom by then but were still closely surveilled by the authorities who restricted their freedom of expression. When the foundations for the monuments were built, the police arrested Sakhnin's head of local authority, Jamal Tarbieh, accusing him of 'illegal construction'. There was no legal basis for this accusation and he was released after hours. This pattern of intimidation likely reflected the authorities' awareness of the far-reaching significance of Land Day commemoration for Palestinian identity in Israel.

Abedi and Knispel created two separate monuments. The smaller monument is a sculpture of a plough, with no accompanying text. Beside it, the main monument deals explicitly with the relations between the people and the land. It is made in the form of a sarcophagus with four bulkheads decorated with human figures touching the soil in various ways – a man bending over to lift a rock, a woman taking a handful of soil. In all the cases, this is a determined bending, not a submissive one. The eastern bulkhead presents figures lying still, most likely dead. These figures were developed form a drawing of Abedi following the Arab-Israeli war in 1973 in which he intended to express his identification with the sufferers and victims of both sides.

The monument is located in the middle of a Muslim cemetery, but it is characterized by an explicit secularism. No religious expressions are used, except perhaps the word *shuhada* (martyrs), but this term has long been employed in secular Arab and Palestinian nationalism. The names of the six victims are written on the forefront of the monument, titled by the words: 'They sacrificed themselves [*istashhadu*] for us to live… thus, they are alive – The martyrs of the day of defending the land, 30 March 1976'. This is a self-aware nationalized secularized paraphrase of a Qur'anic verse – 'And reckoned not those who are killed for Allah's way as dead; nay, they are alive…'. The victims' immortality is ensured not because they were killed for religious purposes but for 'us' – the collective.

On the back of the monument there is a sentence in three languages (Hebrew, Arabic and English) reading: 'Created by A. Abedi and G. Knispel for deepening the understanding between the two peoples.' Whether this reflects a tactic to appease the authorities or stems from the consistent ideology of the then-dominant communist party, this sentence has never appeared again on any Palestinian monument.

The central monument established in Sakhnin reflects a transitional phase, a historical juncture with several dimensions. First, it signals the beginning of a long process of 'stitching the rupture' of Palestinian memory. It is the first attempt to carve in public space a symbol of national heroism and sacrifice, linking it to the major Palestinian theme: the land. Second, it is early enough to include a statement in Hebrew calling for a co-existence on a Palestinian national monument – an unimaginable scenario in later days in Israel. In this sense it is still connected to the 'decade of hope' that followed the end of military rule in 1966. Finally, it expresses an extroverted defiant secularism, a moment before it became impossible with the rise of political Islam.

A quarter of a century after the creation of the Land Day monument, dozens of other monuments have been established all over Arab villages and towns in Israel. These monuments commemorate the martyrs of the rebellion against the British in 1936–1939, the Nakba in 1948, and recently, the 13 victims who were shot and killed by the Israeli police during the violent demonstrations of October 2000. Where possible, there is an effort to a draw a direct line between all the victims, emphasizing their common destiny. From a contemporary perspective, looking back on 54 years of the existence of the state of Israel, the crucial place of the Land Day events and Land Day monument is evident. It was the watershed of identity and memory, the moment when the Palestinian identity of the Arabs in Israel started to gain presence in the public space.

Sakhnin statue

PHOTO: TAMIR SOREK, 2001

Notes

1. G.L. Mosse, *Fallen Soldiers – Reshaping the Memory of the World Wars 1990* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990).
2. D. Rabinowitz, 'Oriental Nostalgia – How Did the Palestinians Become "The Arabs of Israel"?' (in Hebrew), *Teoria Uvicoret*, 4 (1993): 141–151.
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4. O. Yiftachel, 'Minority Protest and the Emergence of Ethnic Regionalism: Palestinian-Arabs in the Israeli "Ethnocracy"', in S. Ben-Ami, Y. Peled, and A. Spectorowski (eds), *Ethnic Challenges to the Modern Nation-State* (Macmillan and St. Martin's Press: London and New York, 2000), 145–180.

Tamir Sorek is a post-doctoral fellow at the Centre d'Etudes et de Recherches International (CERI), Paris, France.
E-mail: sorek@sociologist.com

Bangladesh
JEFF KEMP

Healers as Informal Religious Leaders

It is largely agreed that formal Islamic leadership centres on the *ʿalim* who function as experts of the *sharīʿa*. It is similarly accepted that informal expressions of Islamic faith are extremely common – but there is less agreement regarding the functional roles performed by those who lead these informal expressions of faith. It is suggested that there are three such (distinct but overlapping) roles, one of which is examined here. The three roles are, broadly speaking, the provision of healing, the oversight of major festivals, and the storage of core religious knowledge. Leaders of these groups collectively provide leadership that is intrinsically religious in nature. As leadership is ceded to them, they in return help those around them re-create a sense of faith-centred corporate identity. The following briefly looks at how healers operate as informal leaders who help to shape Islamic faith in rural Bangladesh.

Leadership has various facets. Local political leaders in the village of 'R'[1] were respected less for their supposed religious expertise than for their facility in brokering agreements all could live with, such as those reached in semi-formal localized meetings called *bichars*. Conversely, piety was assumed from those who oversaw religious festivals, artistically re-created core religious knowledge, and healed various ailments. In each case the practitioner was assumed to be a mediator between God and his (occasionally her) neighbour. Such mediation is primarily for daily needs since ultimate questions like salvation are left to God alone to decide – although many believe that one can become acceptable to God by being accepted by a local *pir* (since this *pir* is acceptable to his now-deceased *pir* who is linked back through time along a chain of intercession culminating in the Prophet).

Healing is the most urgent and widespread daily need. There are several types of healers in rural Bangladesh, including the *kabiraj*, *oja*, *pirshab* (or *pir*) and fakir (the last two categories, in particular, often overlapping in usage). The *kabiraj* is relatively well known and written about, and is often thought to be more reliant on learned knowledge (of plants and herbs) than an ability to appropriate God's blessing and thereby God's healing.

*Oja*s and 'snakes' breath'

Much less has been written about those healers known as *oja*s. They treat snakebites and 'snakes' breath' (*sapir batas*) since it is thought that snakes can exhale poison which the wind can carry long distances (or which is spilt onto the ground, evaporates, and becomes wind-borne) and then randomly afflicts people far away. Symptoms of *saper batas* include nausea, dizziness, and (occasionally) death. *Oja*s are thus seen primarily as healers of physical complaints rather than as overtly religious figures, but their reliance on secret mantras, their (perceived) power over spirits, and their tendency to use methods similar to those used by fakirs add a supernatural and religious aspect to their perceived role.

'A' described himself as an *oja* although he also occasionally heals by giving amulets (*tabiz*) and blowing air over an afflicted area (a practice called *phu deoýa* in Bengali). Giving or selling amulets and *phu deoýa* are usually associated with fakirs, since the curative effect of breath is widely held to be one of the Prophet's powers.[2]

The *oja*'s performance given when diagnosing and treating *sarper batas* appears ritualized with certain recurrent actions, but the core of the *oja*'s healing process centres on the use of a secret mantra.[3] The mantra, silently repeated, is interspersed with four or five breaths onto the afflicted part of the body and involves verses from the Qur'an in addition to lists of Hindu deities. Although mantras are also used when curing by *phu deoýa* the wording is said to be different, consistent with the fact that routines when curing *sarper batas* and delivering *phu deoýa* are distinct despite superficial similarities. In diagnosing whether *sarper batas* is the cause of an ailment, for example, 'A' squats by the patient's feet, recites his mantra and slides one hand along the ground towards the patient's feet in a motion so fluid that it resembles a snake. If the complaint is caused by *sarper batas* the hand is drawn towards the patient; if not, the hand will be repelled.

Women healers

One of the features of informal healers in 'R' was the inclusion of women. 'S' is a middle-aged grandmother unremarkable in appearance as long as she keeps her head covered with her sari. Her uncovered head reveals hair that is very matted, in order (she explained) to house the various types of spirits that attend on her (she identified four specific groups). 'S' is primarily known as a practitioner of *gasonto*, a term which refers to the practice of hurting someone by burying an item of their clothing along with plant fragments, as well as uncovering these fragments and preparing prophylactic amulets to counter any such buried threat.

It could be argued that having women accepted as healers of this type is indicative of their occupation of a societal niche that is relatively unthreatening to the formal religious hierarchy. It could, however, equally indicate the 'village realities' whereby women are free to exercise a great deal of closely localized leadership. Rural Bangladesh is organized around the *bari*, which is a collection of homes all facing a central courtyard, with the 'village' being a collection of dispersed *bari*s. One woman in 'R' told me: 'I do not need to wear my *burqa* (head covering) in and around my own *bari*' which is suggestive of the way women are able to express themselves and exercise their individual gifts – including healing – at a localized level.

Fakirs

Healing is also performed by fakirs, whose spiritual role is generally recognized and often relies on their association with a local *pirshab* (fakirs are often very active in organizing and attending feasts and festivals such as *urus*). 'H' is a locally recognized fakir who usually diagnoses by tying a piece of thread around a finger. This binds any of the several types of in-dwelling spirits to answer his questions and then obey his commands (although there seems at times to be an element of bargaining in this). 'H' also heals by finger-tying or by giving amulets (using a small stock of Arabic formulae), by *phu deoýa* or by *pani pora* (administering water that has been made sacred by having a Qur'anic verse breathed over it).

Discussion

There are, of course, other healers in and around 'R' – there is even a government hospital in nearby Tangail, and the prevalence of illness means that healers assume a position of some leadership. The doctors in Tangail are, however, perceived totally as trained experts and there is no assumption that their ability to heal is linked to a closeness (albeit perhaps via a chain of transmitted piety) to God. Similarly, there are other religious leaders in the village, which has two mosques. But the leaders associated with these institutions are more likely to be consulted for set occasions such as funerals, or the leading of Eid prayers, than for the needs of everyday life.

All of the people reviewed in this article are perceived (to varying degrees) as healers who rely on religiously derived authority. This is firstly because they all are thought to operate within the spiritual realm and therefore need spiritual as well as practical abilities. 'S' was adamant about the fact that the spirits who attended on her were powerful (even dangerous) and she had to be able to control them. Similarly, 'H' said that his expertise was primarily in secret (*gapane*) matters, the foremost of which was the use of dreams. 'A' was perhaps the most informative about his skills and training as an *oja* – but significantly the 'office' of *oja* is perceived as the least spiritual of the healing practices.

Not only did the healers operate in a spiritual realm, it was also the realm of faith – the faith others have in their abilities and their own faith in God. While physical materials might be used in the healing process, it was the assumption that the practitioner was in a rightful position before God which was of paramount importance. All the healers, in other words, were seen as pious people with the tacit assumption that an impious healer would be unable to channel God's healing or even survive in the 'hidden realm'. The assumption of piety was not impacted by the fact that few of the healers (encountered in the context of this research) were regular in keeping all the required rituals of faith.

This leads to the third, and perhaps the pivotal, reason for the healer's leadership. The *oja*s, fakirs, *pirshab*s et al in the village all lived lives similar to those they attended and had similar terms of reference. Whereas those vying for temporal leadership and those religious leaders more closely associated with the mosque both tend to look beyond the village for their power and credibility, informal religious leaders retain very localized contacts, reference points, and power bases. Their leadership was therefore overtly from amongst; they understood precisely the pressures all were under while empathizing with the desire to live up to ideals of faith many felt unable to attain. This closeness, understanding, and acceptance are pivotal in the healers' leadership. They are seen as concurrently able to access God's power, channel God's compassion, and accept the weakness of their neighbours – which encourages their neighbours to confer authority onto them.

Notes

1. This study was in the village ('R') near Tangail, but draws on several years' residence in Bangladesh.
2. See, for example, M. Abdullah, *The Ascent of the Prophet Mohammed* (Delhi, 1989), 21.
3. See Eaton in N. Levtzion and J. Voll (eds), *Eighteenth-Century Renewal and Reform in Islam* (New York), 176.

Jeff Kemp holds a Ph.D. from the Department of Islamic and Middle Eastern Studies in Edinburgh, UK. He is project coordinator at the Edinburgh Racial Incidents Monitoring Project (www.erimp.org).
E-mail: gorbley@hotmail.com

WORKSHOP ANNOUNCEMENT

Dissemination of Religious Authority in Indonesia

Within the framework of the current project on the 'Dissemination of Religious Authority in 20th-Century Indonesia', Michael Laffan and Nico Kaptein will convene a workshop on the role of fatwas in Indonesian society. In this workshop, to be held at Leiden University on 31 October 2002, project members will present their research to date on aspects of fatwa production and transmission.

Participants have been invited to consider the means, authority, audience and impact of fatwas in Indonesia. More broadly they will address how fatwas are disseminated, what response they engender, and how a relationship is established between the fatwa requestor and the mufti. In so doing, they will inquire into the sources of authority for the respective fatwas – textual and/or personal.

The question of audience will of course be crucial, and the effect of a fatwa in a given society is naturally related to the social context, whether local, national or international. The presentations will also address such issues, by looking at the competing fatwas of Muhammadiyah and Nahdlatul Ulama, for example, or the recent moves to harmonize the fatwas of Indonesia's Council of Ulama and those of Egypt's Al-Azhar.

Presentations will be given by Kees van Dijk (Leiden University), Nico Kaptein (Leiden University), Jajat Burhanuddin (IIAS), and Michael Laffan (IIAS), among others. Two leading scholars will also present papers with the aim of providing an overview of the situation in Indonesia – Atho Mudzhar (IAIN Jakarta) – and comparative comment – Muhammad Khalid Masud (ISIM).

Both the presence of and comments from scholars working on fields outside Indonesia are very welcome. Those wishing to attend the workshop are invited to contact Michael Laffan at the IIAS in the first instance.
E-mail: m.laffan@let.leidenuniv.nl

Middle East

FARIAN SABAHI

The Literacy Corps in Pahlavi Iran, 1963–1979

The Literacy Corps (*sepah-e danesh*) was implemented in Iran in the framework of the White Revolution (1963–1979) during the reign of Muhammad Reza Pahlavi (1941–1979). Suggested by the Kennedy administration as an alternative to red revolutions and as a condition to US aid, the White Revolution aimed at propelling Iran onto the level of the most modernized countries. However, since about 40% of the labour force was illiterate and, thus, could not foster productivity, the government realized that action had to be taken in the field of education.

According to two government decrees issued on 26 October and 3 December 1962, and approved by the Majles on 26 January 1963, young men holding a secondary education diploma – mainly urban middle-class youth – were given the option of serving in the Literacy Corps instead of serving in the army. Dispatched to rural areas, 166,949 corpsmen and 33,642 corpswomen (since 1969) taught over 2.2 million children between the ages of six and twelve who had not yet attended school up to the second grade, plus a million adults. The Literacy Corps absorbed high school graduates who could not be drafted in the army and had no labour skills; used military facilities and the army's experience in literacy training; saved funds, especially as compared to the previous teachers training programme; and – according to an American observer – the programme was peculiarly suited to the Persian temperament because nothing could 'get Iranians to help their fellow man or participate in any sort of Peace Corps activity except force or the threat of force.'[1]

With the Literacy Corps 'the state combined the stick of conscription with the carrot of monetary advantage and opportunity for service'.[2] Corpsmen were paid $16 per month during the training period[3] and then 300–400 tomans ($50) per month, according to their military rank. Women received 450 tomans per month (perhaps because women were not obliged to serve in the army and a decent salary could help in finding volunteers). The cost of educating a student in a school run by the Literacy Corps was considered minimal (100 tomans, equivalent to $13.33), that is, one-third of the costs for a student at a conventional school. Furthermore, the villagers paid for the construction of facilities.[4]

With the Literacy Corps, education to some extent escaped the control of the ulema, who used to shape the younger generation along traditional lines. This programme actually aimed at helping the regime in establishing a modern nation-state on a basis other than religion. Persian as a common language was the major tool used to inculcate the spirit of national unity: 'I viewed central control of public education as one means of ensuring national unity. Teaching the Persian language throughout our country fostered a common bond among all', wrote the Shah whilst in exile.[5]

Teaching the history of the Persian Empire was a means to make people feel part of Iran. In the textbook for the third year of high school, for instance, the interference of the Zoroastrian clergy in politics caused the defeat of the Sasanian Empire by the Muslim armies. Therefore, religious interference in political affairs was extremely dangerous.

PHOTO: GHOLAMREZA SADRAI

Two members of the Literacy Corps.

Involvement in politics

In 1966 some corpsmen were involved in political activity within the Islamic Nations Party. Arrested in the autumn of 1965, fifty-five members of this organization were sentenced in March 1966. Three of them were literacy corpsmen and their leader had just ended a tour with the corps a few months before his arrest. In addition, 'there are also indications that the Government, concerned over reports that corpsmen wittingly and unwittingly have spread anti-regime propaganda in the villages (often as a result of communist radio broadcasts), is moving to counter this situation. In an operation as large as the Literacy Corps and in a country like Iran, some activity of this sort is to be expected.'[6]

Two decades of White Revolution improved standards of living. At the same time, however, 'deprivations deepened, differences widened, and disparities became even more transparent'. The combination of these factors can answer 'the apparent paradox of sustained accumulation and growing absolute prosperity with outbursts of mass agitation and discontent'.[7]

Some of the consequences were unleashed by the gap in living conditions between rural and urban areas and the large amount of money the regime was spending, for instance, on celebrations. Despite attempts to keep up the corpsmen's morale, the Literacy Corps led to some extent to the further radicalization of already discontented men. Corpsmen were reported as taking part in 'dissident political activity' though, 'in view of the size of the Corps, the incidence did not seem overly significant'.[8]

The historian Mohamad Tavakoli told the story of his brother who was drafted into the Literacy Corps in the early 1970s: '[h]is understanding of the problems of village life politicised his consciousness and spurred the formation of a new revolutionary identity in him and many others. His subsequent involvement with leftist groups was the direct and unintended consequence of the state's programs of development.'[9] In contrast, some corpsmen declared that their experience in the country-side had strengthened their support for the regime.[10]

Oppositional activities

In addition, many of the corpsmen's parents were influenced by their 'children's new-found radicalism' and the political impact of the Literacy Crusade was thus larger than generally thought. According to a survey, 82.3% of literacy corpsmen declared that this experience had made them more aware of the actual situation in rural Iran and they had realized that no prompt solution was available. Eight per cent declared they had become 'more aware of the inefficiency and inertia of the government bureaucracy'.[11]

According to Ali Rezavi, in the 1960s the widespread opinion among leftist corpsmen was that the White Revolution had been implemented because the Shah had been instructed to do so by imperialist countries wishing to have cheap labour and to rule over people. With the White Revolution imperialist countries supposedly wanted the villagers to migrate to towns, increase the unemployment rate and thus decrease wages to the benefit of the imperialists themselves. At the end of the day, the only real change brought by the White Revolution was that 'the landlord's power had been weakened and he and his sons could not enjoy the *jus primae noctis* any longer'. This advantage for the villagers was pointed out to my interviewee by Darvish Mahmud, who spent his time travelling, reciting poetry and collecting money: 'Sarkar, up to four years ago any bride in the village would have had to spend her first night with the landlord or his sons. Therefore, 50% of the children of our village are illegitimate. Everything changed when the White Revolution was launched and the villagers dared to set the landlord's car on fire. Can't you see the difference between now and the past?'[12]

It is, however, difficult to distinguish between the political implications motivated by the experience in the Literacy Corps and those generated by the turbulent atmosphere of those years. My interviewee, Ismail Bayani, stated that after having watched the television programme on Golsorkhi's trial, his perception of the regime was so negative that he decided to join the street protest and throw stones at the windows of the university. Some of his anger was surely motivated by Golsorkhi's death sentence, but it was also the result of his personal experience. In fact, at the beginning of the 1970s Bayani was directly involved in the Feda'in-e Khalq, which he joined after a period spent attending lectures by the influential reformer Ali Shariati at the Hoseyniyyeh-ye Ershad college and leading a group of pro-Islamist students. Before entering university, Bayani had served as a literacy corpsman in a village in Mazandaran and this experience helped to shape his political thought. As a corpsman he had tried his best in order to implement the White Revolution, had written to many ministries complaining about the lack of resources, but was disappointed by the fact that in reply he only received threats for being too active. Though it is not possible to give an exact dimension to one experience compared to another, Bayani declared that serving in the Literacy Corps surely had an impact on his political activism.[13]

Notes

1. 'The Literacy Corps', NARA, US National Archives, 8 December 1962, n. A-356.
2. J.W. Ryan, Educational Resources and Scholastic Outcome: A Study of Rural Primary Schooling in Iran (Ph.D. diss. Stanford, 1973), 131.
3. Airgram, 'Initial Implementation of Literacy Corps Proposal in Azerbaijan', NARA, 13 January 1963, n. A-46, 888.43/1–1363.
4. R. Sanghvi, C. German, and D. Missen, 'The Literacy Corps', in *The Revolution of the Shah and the People*, vol. 7 (London, 1967), 23.
5. M.R. Pahlavi, *Answer to History* (New York, 1980), 128.
6. 'The Literacy Corps – Growing Maturity', NARA SOC 6–5 Iran, 10 May 1966, n. A-749.
7. H. Hakimian, 'Industrialization and the Standard of Living of the Working Class in Iran, 1960–1979', *Development and Change*, vol. 19 (1988): 30.
8. Idem note 6.
9. Z.T. Sullivan, 'Eluding the Feminist, Overthrowing the Modern? Transformations in Twentieth-Century Iran', in L. Abu-Lughod (ed.), *Remaking Women. Feminism and Modernity in the Middle East* (Princeton, 1998), 227.
10. Johanes Farhadian, London, 13 May 1999.
11. H. Faris, Conscription of Urban Youths for Rural Education and Development in Developing Countries: Iran as a Case Study (Ph.D. diss. The American Univ., Washington, 1975), 313, 316–317.
12. Interview, London, 10 April 1999.
13. Interview, Venice, 21 September 1998.

Farian Sabahi teaches at Bocconi Business School in Milan and at the University of Geneva. He is author of The Literacy Corps in Pahlavi Iran (1963–1979): Political, Social and Literary Implications *(Lugano: Ed. Sapiens, 2002).*
E-mail: sabahi@hei.unige.ch

South Asia

JAMAL MALIK

Traditional Islamic and Reform

Considerable criticism has been directed towards traditional Islamic educational institutions, the madrasas, as breeding grounds of militant Islam and training camps for jihad. The powerful perception of the supposedly unilateral inter-relatedness between these religious schools and jihad, between mullahs and violence, produced and perpetuated fear in the public mind in the West. As a result, the relationship between state power and civil rights has been subjected to very severe restrictions in countries like Pakistan – and without major reactions from the public. This has enabled governments to push through restrictive policies in an unprecedented way.

Efforts in Pakistan and other Muslim countries to streamline madrasas into the national educational systems are not new, but they are now seen as a part of the global war on terrorism. Also in secular India, the approximately 100,000 madrasas have become subject to scrutiny and suspicion. It is evident that the majority of Muslims do not regard the madrasa as a terrorist institution. They believe it fulfils the needs of religious education. It is therefore unsatisfactory and indeed too simplistic to equate madrasas with terrorism, as becomes evident in General Musharraf's historic speech of 12 January 2002 in which he indulges in a rather sweeping 'othering' of the ulama, reminiscent of the 19th-century topos of the mad mullah. Even if the General appreciates religious schools as excellent welfare and educational organizations, better even than services offered by NGOs, he clearly revealed that he is influenced by the notion that religious scholars are narrow-minded and propagate hatred. The country's future, he postulated, was to be not a theocratic state but an Islamic welfare state, not marginalization but modernization, not traditionalism but reform.

In the 19th century – in the wake of colonial penetration – with the introduction of new systems of education, the madrasa lost its function as a general training institute and turned into an institution exclusively for religious learning. While some groups made use of Islamic symbolism to mobilize against colonial power, other Indian Muslims tried to change, reform or conserve it, as a means to counter colonialism. Various Sunnite schools of thought emerged, such as the Deobandis, the Barelwis, and the Ahle Hadith. They appealed to specific social groups and were tied to particular regions, and thereby added to the religious and societal complexity of South Asia. Yet another movement, the modernist Aligarh school, tried to Anglicize the Muslim educational system, but this was contested by the Council of Religious Scholars (Nadwa al-Ulama), which aimed at an integration of religious and secular education.

These various reforms, however different they may have been, were thought to be achievable only through 'modernization'. It was in this context, that modernity came to be regarded as the opposite of tradition and thus determined the fate of Muslim education. Religious institutions that did not subscribe to this development were marginalized politically and culturally but continued to provide knowledge to the majority of Muslims. This led to a dramatic societal split. It was only the recent wave of Islamization that has given the madrasa new life. While after 1947, in India, these schools were left more or less untouched by the secular state, in Pakistan, as in many other Muslim countries, the situation was quite different: political leaders have always been interested in bringing the madrasas into the mainstream national system of education in order to try to curb autonomy.

State encroachments in Pakistan became prominent fairly early, with Ayyub Khan's nationalization of religious endowments and schools during the 1960s. A first survey of religious schools was undertaken, discussing their histories, affiliations and locations and the numbers of religious students and teachers in what was then West Pakistan. Their institutional affiliation to state machinery was to be paralleled by curricular reforms which, however, aroused opposition among the representatives of religion. They therefore established umbrella organizations for religious schools – just prior to the proclamation of the 'West Pakistan Waqf Property Ordinance 1961'. The main tasks of these umbrella organizations were to reform and to standardize their educational system, and of course, to counter state power collectively.

During Z.A. Bhutto's time Islamic scholars were able to negotiate some concessions, but it was with the advent of so-called Islamization in the late 1970s, that state activities touching on traditional institutions in general and centres of Islamic learning in particular took increasing effect, although most of them had been pushed to the margins of the political process before the advent of Zia al-Haqq's Islamization policy, when they regained significance partly as an alternative educational system.

The Islamization policy in Pakistan has resulted in a new dimension of curricular reform and has ushered in a new phase of institutionalization. For the first time the degrees of religious schools were put on a par with those of the formal education system and recognized by the University Grants Commission. This recognition was based on certain conditions: the students were now supposed to be taught a modernized syllabus lasting sixteen years, which meant that the religious scholars would have to follow the suggestions of the National Committee on Religious Schools established in 1979.[1] The report of the Committee suggested making

> *concrete and feasible measures for improving and developing Deeni-Madrassahs along sound lines, in terms of physical facilities, curricula and syllabi, staff and equipment […] so as to bring education and training at such Madrashahs* in consonance with the requirements of modern age and the basic tenets of Islam *[…] to expand higher education and employment opportunities for the students of the Madrassahs […] integrating them with the overall educational system in the country.* (my emphasis)

The idea of this reformed Islam stood in contrast to the concepts of most of the ulama, however. These suggestions provoked considerable reaction, but with the insistent pressure of the government and its support – i.a. through zakat money, as we shall see – and with the equating of their degrees with those of national universities in 1981/82, the ulama became more and more convinced of the potentially positive consequences of this policy for them. They did adapt the curriculum by merely adding subjects from the formal primary education system to their own syllabus, and Arabic instead of English was used on the certificates. The ulama showed their ability to gain official recognition by effecting minor changes, and they were gradually able to exercise more influence on the government. Theoretically, these degrees, once recognized, were to open up economic mobility and possibilities of promotion for the graduates. However, there was no consideration of how and where the now officially examined armies of mullahs would be integrated into the job market. This short-sighted planning soon resulted in considerable problems.

Stemming the tide

Parallel to these administrative and curricular reform measures, the economic situation of religious schools was changed and, indeed, improved by means of money disbursed through the central and provincial zakat funds set up by the government in 1980: ten per cent of the alms collected from current accounts through zakat-deducting agencies go to religious education if curricular reform and political loyalty are observed. These additional financial resources enhanced the budgets of religious schools considerably, comprising up to one-third of their annual income, and were exclusively at the disposal of the rectors of the schools, e.g. the ulama. This certainly created new expectations and new patterns of consumption.

As a result of these changes, a new dimension of mobility of these scholars and their centres of learning can be discerned. One is tempted to speak of an expanding indigenous infrastructure which in the early 1990s already had far-reaching consequences: firstly, the prospect of zakat grants resulted in a mushrooming of madrasas, mostly in rural areas. In response, the government has introduced various measures to try to stem the tide, but this has only resulted in new problems. Secondly, the number of the graduates of higher religious schools – not to speak of students in religious schools in general – is constantly on the rise, as these institutions now also offer formal primary education with officially recognized degrees. Thirdly, the Islamization policy brought in a new phase of institutionalization among umbrella organizations, so that the number of affiliated schools has increased tremendously. Fourthly, the data available on religious schools also shed light on their spatial distribution and the social and regional background of their students: Deobandis in the North Western Frontier Province and Baluchistan, where tribal society prevails, as well as parts of Punjab and Sindh; Barelwis in rural areas of Sindh and Punjab, where the cult of holy men is most popular; Shiʿites in Northern Areas and in some districts of the Punjab dominated by folk religion; Ahl-e Hadith in commercial centres and important internal markets; and Jamaʿat-e Islami primarily in urban and politically sensitive areas that seemed to have attracted a number of radical groups from various regions outside Pakistan. Thus, each school of thought has its own reserved area, be it tribal, rural, urban, trade oriented or even strategic.

In the wake of the formalization and reform of religious schools, an increasing trans-provincial north-south migration from rural to urban areas can be observed, a sign of the degree of spatial mobility of the young religious scholars. Students from specific regions then look for schools and teachers that comply with their cultural perceptions and ethnic affiliations and the search for corresponding institutions that create identity-giving sub-structures in an urban environment which may otherwise be perceived as alien and even hostile. The migrant scholars-to-be gather in the metropolis and potentially contribute to conflicts that are often religiously and ethnically motivated. The fact that the number of religious schools and their students has grown spectacularly in urban, and even more in rural areas also suggests that not only cities have become locations of increasing conflict: the hinterland has also been increasingly drawn into the sphere of religiously legitimized battles. Thus, the Islamization policy has promoted the institutionalization of different groups, but has fostered their politicization and even radicalization. And since contemporary regimes are not able or willing to integrate ulama in a productive way, their increasing marginalization is the result.

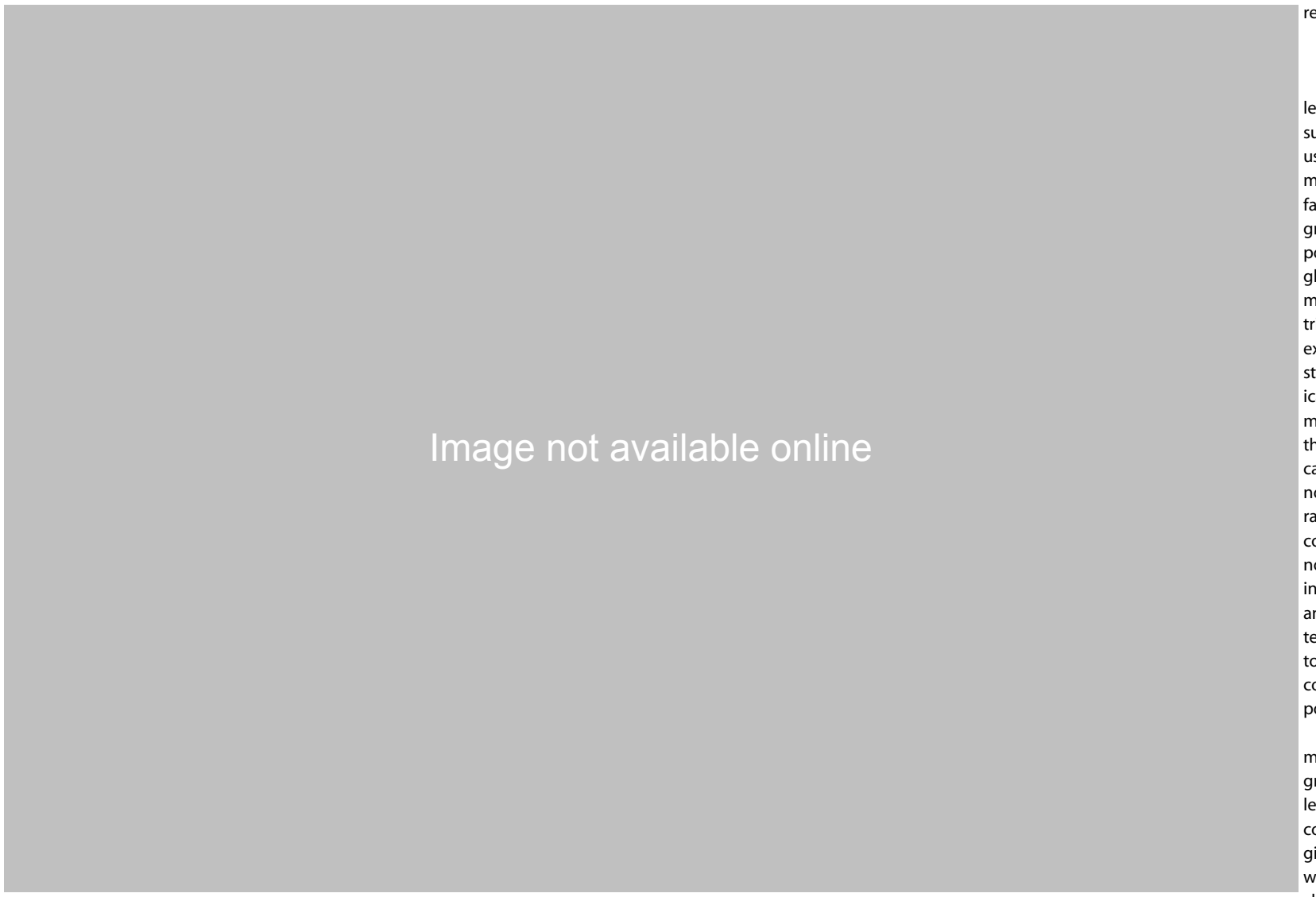
The increasing number of young theologians, with degrees equivalent to an M.A. in Arabic/Islam Studies, are faced with government reform measures that lack plans for dealing with the labour market. The promised Islamization and improved literacy of the country has not translated into jobs for the ulama; on the contrary, the lack of proper measures comprises a potential source of conflict. The American advisor on religious education made the following criticism: 'Reservations were voiced by various officials of the provincial Departments of Education about recruiting "Maulanas" for the schools on the suspicion that they would divide the students on the basis of their own preferences for a particular "Maktab-i-Fikr".' He hastened to add that 'these suspicions, however, were proved in the field to be ill-founded. Such suspicions should never be allowed to affect the making of educational policy at any level.'[2]

It is only as teachers of Arabic, having been promoted since 1979, that some young scholars have found jobs. These courses, however, targeted Pakistanis going to work in the Middle East, and so were motivated primarily by pragmatic financial considerations. On a different front, the military, against the background of the cold war, has been encouraging the recruitment of religious scholars since 1983 – with foreign aid. In the medium term, this has led to new values and structures in the army, especially at junior levels of command.

Danger of expectations

With the official support of religious scholars in the 1980s and even in the 1990s, the political strength of representatives of this section of Islamic traditionalism has increased unmistakably. Thus, the Islamization policy – or better the politics of de-traditionalization – has ultimately forced the politically dominant sector to rethink its own position. The centre may be pushed onto the political defensive, a position from which it could extricate itself only by violence, and with increasing alienation from the rest of the society. This danger exists

Learning in Pakistan



Pakistani students study English at a Peshawar madrasa.

especially when indigenous social and educational structures, such as endowments, alms and religious schools, still existent and mostly functioning, cannot be adequately replaced and thousands of unemployed mullahs who have access to the masses are not successfully integrated.

The raised expectations have pushed many graduates of religious schools into the hands of different players: their role in the cold war in Afghanistan, when they were exploited by certain groups and governments; their role in post cold-war Afghanistan, when once again, they were caught up in power politics supported by different secret services; and now in the post-Taliban era, when some of them have taken sides with terrorist groups.

The rhetoric of Islamic symbolism and jihad has shown that it can be effectively used as a means of self-defence against foreign encroachments, and there has been constantly increasing pressure on the state by religious elements. The Council of Islamic Ideology set up in the 1960s, and the Pakistani Federal Ministry of Religious Affairs, should not therefore be blamed for issuing outrageous Islamic proposals. Similarly, the failure to reform either the Blasphemy Law in 1994 and 2001, or the madrasas in 1995 is simply a reflection of the aggressive mood of the clergy and Islamists, based on what has been called 'paranoid Islam'. In May 2000, Islamic parties were powerful enough to demand several Islamic provisions, some of them met instantly by the government. But in order to increase control over the clergy, the current regime came up with yet another madrasa reform proposal in August 2001.

General Musharraf called for a peaceful 'Sunnatization' of life-worlds, referring to Islamic mysticism and prohibiting madrasa students from going for divine force. The reconstruction of tradition ought to serve to raise the madrasa and bring it to a level with the mainstream. The major task seems to be to open up the job market for the graduates. Similarily, mosques should be reformed in order to guarantee a secular and modernized society, otherwise Pakistan will be marginalized – and radicalized. This policy clearly aims at controlling some 20,000 madrasas with approximately 3 million students, and more than 50,000 mosques – a solid power-structure.

The control of the clergy seems to be even more important since there has traditionally been a movement across the borders of Pakistan with Afghanistan, India and Kashmir. This is especially true of ethnic groups such as Pashtuns in Pakistan, who outnumber their fellow Pashtuns in Afghanistan, and are linked by family networks, commercial connections, and religio-political solidarity. Hence, despite the Pakistan government's recent strict policy against foreign students, Afghan students of religious schools have vowed to continue their education in Pakistan.

Effects of the reforms

The reforms envisaged by the state have produced an imbalance that has resulted in a variety of problems, some of which were temporarily alleviated through jihad in Afghanistan. In the wake of these developments, several different branches of Islamic learning and madrasas have emerged. We need to distinguish: firstly, students of religious schools in general; secondly, mujahidin or freedom fighters; thirdly, Taliban; and fourthly, *jihadi* groups.

As far as the first category is concerned, they have been subjected to several reforms from within and from without, but have played a quietist role. Because of traditional ties with Afghanistan and other neighbouring countries and as a result of the use of jihad rhetoric, some of them were used as foot-soldiers in the cold war. This is the second group – the mujahidin. In order to keep this group under control and to maintain a grip on the region for economic and political purposes, another version was established by interested parties: these were the Taliban. Both the mujahidin and the Taliban are known for their forced recruitment of young children in madrasas and refugee camps. As for the fourth category, the *jihadi*s, some of them can be traced back to groups returning to Pakistan from other battlefields such as Kashmir and Afghanistan, their leaders being middle-class and secular educated men, rather than madrasa students, though madrasa students also joined the militant and radical groups. There is little doubt that some of these organizations run private armies, collect compulsory donations, and indulge in militant and terrorist activities. Some of them, such as Lashkar-e Tayyiba and Jaish-e Muhammad, have made a regional conflict, the Kashmir cause, their raison d'être. But what is the reason behind their radicalization? Mere hatred, violence and the obsession for jihad?

It is true that the struggle for victory over a super-power and their alleged connections to some international network enhances their feeling of Islamicity, no matter how blurred and intangible that may be. But it is the objective material conditions plus the symbolic power of regional conflicts, such as Palestine and Kashmir, that make up for the explosive mixture because these conflicts represent the suppression of whole nations. However international these organizations may be, they have arisen primarily as a result of an internal problem caused by political mismanagement, and they have subsequently been exploited by external powers. The dramatic flaunting and celebration of military power on national occasions such as Pakistan Day and the propagation of jihad in textbooks even in formal schools[3] and daily on television for the cause of Kashmir are cases in point.

This state-promoted violence and hatred from childhood onwards might be part of the painful nation-building process and search for ideology, but it certainly fails to instil tolerance and acceptance of plurality in the students. The alarming increase in kidnapping for ransom in the cities as well as in rural areas, the killing of whole families by senior family members because of lack of material resources are causes of major concern.

Concluding remarks

In this scenario religious schools provide at least space for some kind of education and survival, and what is more important, they use the variety of religious repertories to make sense of the predicaments people are facing in a highly fragmented society. The growing presence and visibility of religious power in the public sphere shows this struggle between neo-colonial élites – mostly the military that has been ruling in Muslim countries – and religious scholars who have been exploited in different quarters but have constantly been denied their share, very dramatically. In the face of these developments the making of an epitomizing prophet is easy: the 'ladinist' saviour, who would lead the campaign against suppression. It should be noted that the basis of this Islamically tuned radicalism still has a very secular basis: social conflict, poverty, suppression. The basis is not the Qur'an, but social reality, which is put into an Islamic symbolism. Formerly, violence and terror were legitimized in nationalistic terms; today use is made of the Islamic repertory, not because this violence is or has become Islamic or religious, but because the political discourse has shifted.

The latest crack-down policy can hardly diminish the significance and power of these groups, because they reflect systemic problems. Unless these problems (e.g. material conditions of the common people and regional conflicts) are tackled, these groups will start operating under different names, change their modus operandi or move their operations elsewhere, making use of trans-Islamic networks. As a popular diviner has opined, a reaction was brewing: 'This government is paving the way for Islamic revolution by creating hurdles for the Islamic parties.' He hastened to add that '[t]here may not be instant reaction but they will respond once the dust is settled […]. We are just watching the situation but the silence will not last for long. […] The timing of this announcement by the president [e.g. crack-down, J.M.] has raised suspicion in the minds of religious people. It is being done under U.S. pressure.' And he asked: 'If they were terrorist groups, then why were they allowed to operate for such a long time?'[4]

The criminalization of the ulama therefore seems not to be an option. In a country that is heavily under their socio-cultural and religious influence, a dialogue of bullets is a dead end. Instead, it is more important to integrate these sections of society properly in order to prevent a cold war before it gets too hot and becomes a war that no one can handle.

Notes

1. See Government of Pakistan, Ministry of Religious Affairs, *Riport qaumi kamiti bara-ye dini madaris Pakistan* (Islamabad, 1979).
2. Yusuf Talal Ali, draft chapter on 'Islamic Education for Inclusion in the Report of the President's Task Force on Education' (Islamabad, 1982, mimeo), 6.
3. 'Textbooks and the Jihadi Mindset', *DAWN*, 12 February 2002.
4. *The News*, 15 January 2002, 11.

Jamal Malik is chair of Religious Studies–Islamic Studies at the University of Erfurt, Germany.
E-mail: Jamal.Malik@uni-erfurt.de

Iran
ASHK DAHLÉN

Towards an Islamic Discourse of **Uncertainty and Doubt**

Contemporary Islam is witnessing the advent of new critical discourses from within its own modes of articulation. It confronts a new epistemic and interpretative situation, which is generally felt as something of an emergency. This emergency in epistemology and hermeneutics is largely the result of a radical shift of the categories of modern philosophy, science, culture and geography. Given the fact that the exploratory elaboration of law for centuries has been the dominant mode of self-expression in Islam, one of the key themes of contemporary Shiʿi thought is the search for a legal identity. The current debate on the *sharīʿa* (divine law) in Iran underscores the continued significance of this exploration. In the debate, the radical post-modernist ʿAbd al-Karim Surush contests the epistemic certainty of eternal knowledge, so common among modernists.

In the study of the dissemination of modern thought in Iran, one experiences special difficulties due to the fact that the existing constellations on the intellectual scene are characterized by institutional discontinuities, transmutation in the use of language and complex notions of loyalty in society and politics. This entanglement has produced a multiplicity in the various intellectual patterns, where components of one stance are even employed by other discourses in their experience of modernity. Among the pivotal figures who are considered in this respect are primarily ʿAbdullah Jawadi-Amuli, Muhammad Mujtahid-Shabistari and ʿAbd al-Karim Surush, but other individuals who belong to the Islamic intellectual élite of Iran are also included. In the main, the discourse of Surush is highlighted, since his post-1988 writings on the nature of Islamic law, legal epistemology and hermeneutics accommodate Islam to modernity to an extent unsurpassed in the Iranian context.

Since the 1979 revolution, the problem of the reform and renewal of the traditional Islamic law has acquired great urgency, as the new theocratic order confronts a political reality that is not addressed by definite formulations in the traditional *fiqh* corpus. Since there do not exist any clear unambiguous norms under the *sharīʿa* in many areas of law, such as substantive laws, the Shiʿi *fuqaha* (jurists) are divided among themselves as to the best legal solutions to many problems facing contemporary society. This situation and the ensuing controversy have forced traditional as well as modern educated scholars into different intellectual camps. As some observers have noticed, the intellectual debates and paradoxes that are taking place in contemporary Iran defy any monolithic characterization of Shiʿi Islam. Partly due to the attempts to apply traditional Islamic jurisprudence in the political sphere of the modern state, Islam, being an a priori source of religious normativity, is increasingly 'crystallized' into a contested myriad or body of competing intellectual discourses, where the access to interpretation of the revealed legal texts has become more plural. At the present, a number of lay Islamic intellectuals participate in developing various discourses on religious epistemology and hermeneutics side by side with the ulama, and the key figures in the criticism against traditional jurisprudence are lay intellectuals.

Suggesting that the present overall situation in Islam is characterized by the dual phenomenon of tradition vis-à-vis modernity, which has generated the possibility of competing paradigms struggling for mastery, makes contemporary Islamic thought a paradigmatic phenomenon. From this perspective, Islamic intellectual production comprises a paradigmatic field, which epitomizes a discursive dialogue between revelation and reason, unity and diversity, idealism and realism and tradition and modernity. The exchange of European ideas has incited the development of a complex set of competing normative discourses to the extent that the use of terms like polycentrism seems appropriate to characterize modern Islam. A significant factor in the formation of a multiple paradigm phenomenon is the very existence of a paradigmatic field, in which different paradigms coexist and knowledge of different paradigms becomes possible and accessible to others. By highlighting the variety of stances found in the debate, it establishes a taxonomy that provides a scheme for the characterization of Islamic thought in terms of three distinct categories, namely traditionalism ('pre-critical'), modernism ('critical') and post-modernism ('post-critical').

Transitional paradigms

The traditionalist position (represented by Jawadi-Amuli) in general terms adheres to the paradigm of pre-modern Islamic tradition by identifying legal epistemology (woven into methodology) with Aristotelian syllogism. In philosophical terms, it is pre-critical and considers cognitive matters in the light of a basic sacred cosmology. In contrast, the genuine effort of Islamic modernism (represented by Mujtahid-Shabistari), in the sense of representing the appearance of an autonomous critical consciousness, is to break with the entrenched pre-modern paradigm in the realm of epistemology. It signifies a genuine effort to accommodate religion to the scientific (albeit not always ethical) structures of modernity, emancipated from the traditional theological and legal philosophy. While the result of the reflection of the critical consciousness is the secularization of the world, the recent hermeneutical turn of certain modernists' discourses does not accept the full implications of a retreat before critical thinking and instead rework interpretative methods in the light of the methods of modern science. Islamic post-modernism (represented by Surush) constitutes a further paradigm shift in Shiʿi speculation on revealed law, in the sense that it contests the modernists' belief in epistemic certainty by considering all human knowledge, religious as well as 'secular', as hypothetical and conjectural at best. In contrast to the typical modernists' submission for rational criticism in the name of truth, post-modernism accepts no unshakable foundations on which to adjudicate claims of justified true knowledge and hence also of meaning. Representing the most innovative 'avant-garde' thought in contemporary Shiʿi Islam, it argues that the temporality of understanding that merges with its contextuality points out both the finitude and reflexivity of human understanding.

Modernity

Due to the relationship between global modernity and the religion of Islam, the question of *sharīʿa* has indisputably come to occupy a wider perspective than its traditional formulations and this raises the question as to whether modernity is categorically conceptualized as an external phenomenon among Iranian religious intellectuals, or if there is instead an effort on their part to develop indigenous forms and expressions of modernity. While the dilemma of modernity is more momentous considering the fact that the universal reason of European Enlightenment denies the equality of all cultural traditions, it is important to take into account the existence of different and plural varieties of modernity, where the term modernity itself refers to those features that allow us to speak of a modern age in the first place. In philosophical terms, modernity has as central to its reality the category of experience itself and might justifiably be thought of as the sovereignty of experience. In so far as there is no higher authority for the modern world than experience, the universality of reason and the autonomy of the subject (notions rooted in the Enlightenment thought) equally serve as constitutive components of the philosophical but also social vision of modernity. In the realm of epistemology, the growth of epistemological 'subjectivism' is considered to be the underlying ontological foundation of modernity, which gives paramountcy to a moment of self-awareness in the adjunction of knowledge. The turning away from things, the object of thinking, to the subject, having thoughts, is considered to be the mark of modern Western philosophy.

Islamic post-modernism

As far as the primary cognitive and interpretative questions for many contemporary Islamic intellectuals are essentially similar to those of contemporary Western philosophy, their understanding of Islamic epistemology, hermeneutics and conflicting interpretations is engendered by the cognitive structures of modernity. By considering Islamic tradition not as a closed entity but as a paradigmatic epistemic field, and by focusing on processes of reception and communication between cultures, it is possible to speak of internal Shiʿi expressions of modernity. One of the unique results of the in-depth encounter between Islam and modernity is the ability of Iranian Islamic intellectuals to examine the very foundations of modernity and thereby give internal synthetic answers within their own religious and cultural context. Surush's affinities with post-modern thought are, for instance, closest in the sphere of hermeneutics, where he initiates a systematic critique of meaning. By turning to the hermeneutics of suspicion, Surush considers religious knowledge as, overall, tentative and conjectural: it is ultimately bold guesswork. Since human understanding, in his view, always is blocked and empowered by the concrete and changing context of a specific hermeneutical situation, the scientific endeavour constantly preys on other interpretations in an endless process. A moment of philosophical doubt clings to all human knowledge claims.

It is tempting to think of Surush as a constructive or revisionary post-modernist who seeks to overcome the modern worldview by means of constructing a new worldview through a revision of modern premises and traditional concepts. Unlike deconstructionism, which overcomes modernism through an anti-worldview, he has not abandoned modern philosophy's goal of formulating rationality and universality, and he does not altogether reject or eliminate the ingredients necessary for a worldview (God, self, purpose, meaning, real world, truth as correspondence, etc.). By considering the contribution of post-modernism to pluralism, tolerance and its criticism of the superiority of reason as beneficial, he is essentially involved with the question of what to do next, given that in central ways modern philosophy has reached a state of exhaustion. By adopting deconstruction at the level of methodology in his lectures on *ijtihad*, it is evident that his ideas comprise a revision of the epistemic premises of Enlightenment modernism. Surush's thought constitutes the flowering of the deepest impulse in the modern project and represents in many respects a loss of faith in Enlightenment modernism, a spirit of subjectivism, a pluralism, a scepticism and a relativist rejection of final answers. His religious discourse is hence situated in opposition to the 'settled hegemony' and 'objective certitude' of the meta-narrative of Islamic tradition.

Ashk Dahlén, Department of Asian and African Languages, Uppsala University, Sweden, is author of Deciphering the Meaning of Revealed Law. The Surushian Paradigm in Shiʿi Epistemology, *Acta Universitatis Upsaliensis. Studia Iranica Upsaliensia 5. 384 pp. Uppsala, 2001, ISBN 91-554-5189-6.*
E-mail: ashk.dahlen@afro.uu.se

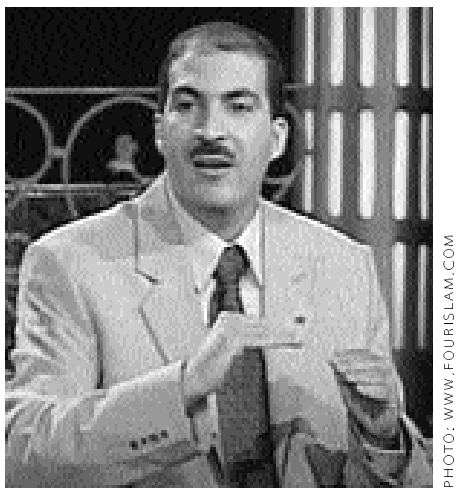
Egypt
ASEF BAYAT

Piety, Privilege and Egyptian Youth

Understandably, the 11 September terrorist attacks in the USA have reinforced more than ever Western anxieties over the 'threat' of 'Islamic fundamentalism'. The perpetrators' Islamic identity and the subsequent mass street protests in the Muslim world during the US bombings of Afghanistan left little doubt that political Islam in the Middle East is here to stay. However, the picture conceals some significant changes that Islamism in the Middle East has been undergoing in recent years. There is a clear shift from the earlier emphasis on Islamist polity to one on personal piety and ethics; from constituencies centred around impoverished middle classes to more fragmented adherents including the privileged groups.

Specificity of individual Muslim countries notwithstanding, there seems to be a change from Islamism as a political project with a contentious agenda into an active piety concerned with personal salvation and culture. The causes of the change are complex, but broadly include the crisis of Islamic rule wherever it was put into practice (as in Iran and Sudan), the failure of violent strategies (e.g. in Egypt and Algeria), more hostile Israeli policies which overshadow domestic conflicts in Muslim countries, and thus the emergence of new visions about the Islamic project.

The following concentrates on one aspect of change in Egyptian religious activism – the popularity of a new genre of lay Muslim preachers. In particular, the focus is on what is currently described in Egypt as the 'Amr Khalid phenomenon'. As the most popular preacher since Sheikh Shaʿrawi, Amr Khalid exemplifies a transformation of Islamism into a post-Islamist piety – an active piety which is thick in rituals and scriptures and thin in politics. It is marked and framed by the taste and style of the rich, in particular, affluent youth and women; and sociologically underlies a Simmelian 'fashion'. Thus, the convergence of youth sub-culture, élitism, and a pietistic Islam together produce this new genre of *daʿwa* and its appeal. It has grown against a backdrop of a crisis of political Islam, and a profound stagnation in Egypt's intellectual and political landscape.



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Amr Khalid

Since 1999, Amr Khalid, an accountant-turned-preacher, has become a household name in wealthy Cairo. Khalid followed the leads of fellow lay preachers ʿUmarAbdel-Kafi and Khalid el-Guindy, but surpassed them in popularity amongst the well-to-do youth and women. A gifted orator – televangelist style – he began by lecturing in private homes and exclusive social clubs, but soon rose to stardom at the pulpit of El-Hossari Mosque in the trendy Muhandesin, before he was forced by the authorities to move to 6th October City, a new posh community in the outskirts of Cairo. His weekly lessons have become a spiritual staple for thousands of young people who flock from throughout the city's affluent districts to hear him. Crowds arrive hours in advance of the sermons to get a spot, filling the lecture halls, the surrounding streets and sidewalks, often causing heavy traffic congestion. In 1999, Amr Khalid delivered up to 21 lessons a week in socially prominent households, peaking at 99 during the Ramadan. The tapes of Amr Khalid's sermons were the unparalleled best sellers in Cairo's massive Book Fair in 2002, and have travelled as far as the back-street markets of East Jerusalem, Beirut and the Persian Gulf cities.

Faith and fun

The new preachers deliberately target youth and women of the élite classes, 'the people with influence', because 'they have the power to change things', according to Khalid el-Guindy. Since the élite families generally kept away from the traditional mosques located in the lower class areas, the young preachers brought their message to their doorsteps, to the comfort of their private homes, social clubs and the stylish mosques of their posh neighbourhoods. More importantly, in addition to face-to-face sermons, Amr Khalid utilizes a full range of media to disseminate his message, including satellite television channels such as Dream T.V., Iqra'a and Orbit, the internet with his state of the art website, and audio and videotapes – media which particularly reach the middle and more affluent classes. For some time a popular state-sponsored magazine, *Al-Ahram al-Arabi*, distributed his tapes as gifts to readers. Khalid el-Guindy established a paid 'Islamic Hotline' (*hatif al-Islami*) to be used by the public to seek advice from the sheikh. Within the period of one year daily calls increased from 250 to 1,000. For his part, Amr Khalid travelled with his message to the stylish Agami and other upper middle class north coast resorts, and has more recently gone on speaking tours to Arab Gulf states where his fame had already spread. The colourful décor and a talk-show-like aura of his lecture halls, in contrast to the austere Azherite pulpits, reflect the taste of his main audience – males and females from 15 to 35 years of age, never before exposed to religious ideas in such an appealing and direct manner.

Amr Khalid's style resembles that of his young, affluent audience; he appears cleanly shaven in blue jeans and polo shirts or in suit and necktie. Khalid simultaneously embodies the hip-ness (*rewish*) of Amr Diab (Egypt's most revered pop-star), the persuasion power of evangelist Billy Graham, and unsubtle therapy of Dr Phil, American popular talk-show host. For the young, Khalid, in the words of a female fan, is 'the only preacher that embraces and tackles *our* spiritual needs', someone who 'makes us psychologically comfortable', 'who treats us like adults, not children'. Unlike more orthodox preachers known for their joyless moralizing and austere methods, Khalid articulates a marriage of faith and fun. Speaking in a sympathetic tone, compassionate manner, and in colloquial Arabic, Khalid and his colleagues convey simple ethical messages about the moralities of everyday life, discussing issues that range from relationships, appearance, and adultery, to posh restaurants, drunk driving, the *hijab*, and the sins of summer vacations in Marina. In a sense, the new preachers function as 'public therapists' in a troubled society which shows little appreciation for professional psychotherapy. Emotional intensity, peace, and release (crying) often symbolize Khalid's sermons.

From the likes of Khalid, the young hear the message that they can be religious and still live a normal life – work, study, have fun and look like anyone else in society. More importantly his words assure the audience that they can be pious while maintaining their power and prestige. Khalid's message operates within the consumer culture of Egypt's nouveau riche where piety and privilege are made to cohabit as enduring partners. Analogous to the Methodist church of the well-to-do in the American Bible belt where faith and fortune are happily conjoined, Khalid's style makes the Egyptian rich feel good about their fortunes.

Of course, adherence to religious ethics and the search for spirituality are not new among Egyptian Muslims, including the wealthy youth. But theirs was a *passive* religious attachment. That is, as believers, they unquestioningly carried out their religious obligations. However, what seems to be novel (since the late 1990s) is that affluent families, the youth and women in particular, have begun to exhibit an *active* search for religious devotion, exhibiting an extraordinary quest for religious ideas and identity. Not only do they practise their faith, they also preach it, wanting others to believe and behave like them.

Scriptural cosmopolitanism

Khalid is not a scholar or interpreter of the Qur'an, and does not issue fatwas. Rather he is devoted to correcting individuals' ethical values and everyday behaviour, fostering such values as humility, generosity, trust, loyalty, and repentance. However, he is not a liberal Muslim thinker. Some of his ideas remain highly conservative, and his methods manipulative. Khalid advances a religious discourse which contains passion, clarity, relevance, and humour, but lacks novelty, nuance and vigour. While his style is highly imaginative, his theology remains deeply scriptural, with little perspective to historicize, to bring critical reason into interpretations. On the *hijab*, for instance, Khalid begins by basing the 'integrity of society […] on the integrity of women' and the latter on 'her *hijab*', because 'one women can easily entice one hundred men, but one hundred men cannot entice a single woman'. Since, according to this logic, unveiled women are promoters of sin, a 'complete, head-to-toe *hijab* is an obligation in Islam'. The unconvinced Muslim women are not really Muslim, he claims, because Islam, in the literal terms, means simply 'submission' to the words of God.

In fact, Khalid's doctrinal views hardly differ from those of orthodox Azharite sheikhs who dismiss him despite, and perhaps because of, his popularity. Rather, in the current juncture in Egypt where religious thought in general possesses little sign of innovation (and this is testified by Islamic thinkers from Yusef al-Qaradawi to Salim el-Awa, to the activist Essam el-Erian), Khalid appears as an innovator, if only in style. The mass appeal of the likes of Khalid is a by-product of Egypt's mass education, one that valorizes memorization, fragmenting knowledge, revering printed words, and nurturing authoritarian mentors. Compared to the patronizing manner of a typical Azhari sheikh, the amiable and compassionate Khalid appears as a true democrat. For those who have learnt to take shortcuts in seeking knowledge, or are trained to be docile learners, Khalid emerges as a superior source of wisdom. 'He is easy to understand' echoes what the young admirers of Khalid invariably express.

Yet this new genre of *daʿwa* is as much the initiative of the sermonizers as a response to the appeal of the increasingly globalizing youth. In a sense, Egyptian cosmopolitan youth fostered a new religious sub-culture – one which is expressed in a distinctly novel style, taste, language and message. It is resonant of their aversion to patronizing pedagogy and moral authority. This globalizing youth display many seemingly contradictory orientations. They are religious believers, but distrust political Islam if they know anything about it; they swing back and forth from Amr Diab to Amr Khalid, from partying to prayers, and yet they feel the burden of the strong social control of their elders, teachers, and neighbours. As the Egyptian youth are socialized in a cultural condition and educational tradition which often restrain individuality and novelty, they are compelled to assert them in a 'social way', through 'fashion'.

Thus, from the prism of youth, this religious sub-culture (ideas, emotions, and identities) galvanized around the 'Amr Khalid phenomenon' is partly an expression of 'fashion' in the Simmelian sense, in the sense of an outlet that facilitates a simultaneous fulfilment of contradictory human tendencies: change and adaptation, difference and similarity, individuality and social norms. Adherence to active piety permits the Egyptian youth to assert their individuality, undertake change, and yet remain committed to collective norms and social equalization. In the social juncture in Egypt characterized by the decline of organized Islamism, intellectual stagnation and political closure, Khalid ingeniously took his *daʿwa* literally to the sitting rooms of his audience. By doing so, Khalid and his colleagues became catalysts for a gradual shift in Egyptian religious politics.

Asef Bayat is professor of sociology and Middle East studies at the American University in Cairo, Egypt.
E-mail: abayat@aucegypt.edu

Syria

HEIKE ROGGENTHIN

'Women's World' in Damascus

In Damascus there are a number of different places where women are active, when they jointly occupy part of their normal day, where they communicate intensely with one another, and where they attempt to cope together with their problems. Temporary exclusive women's domains exist within the women's public domain and form one element of women's culture in Syria. Access to these social areas is permitted exclusively to women. Only female staff are employed in such establishments.

PHOTO: HEIKE ROGGENTHIN, 1998

***Gamaiya niswan* meeting.**

The construction of a female public space and male public space serves as a basic model to understand the necessity of women's domains. The strict spatial separation of female and male spheres and spaces characterizes the segregated and segmentary social order of the Middle East. Western academics, both female and male, associate the living domain of Muslims today directly with privacy and isolation. This description has proved to be Eurocentrist and obstructs the view of the differences in social and cultural reality.

The construction of social reality, as undertaken by women in Damascus, indicates two publics: a female one and a male one. Inside the female public sphere women's spaces arise as an integral part of society. This definition differs from Western culture, and deviates from the common definition of the public domain as being accessible to everybody on an unrestricted basis.

The so-called public domains in Damascus cannot be chosen freely or exchanged by both genders. They co-exist. I am therefore turning away from the previous concept that private sphere = women's domain and public sphere = men's domain, since it puts the men's domain at the forefront and highlights women's domains only under the aspect of exclusiveness. Clear instructions on roles and tasks exist for both public domains. Male claims to power and space, which are displayed in the repressive mechanisms against women from the male public domain, allow the emergence of a likewise isolated female public domain.

In the women's world, the opportunity exists for women to free themselves for a limited period of time from imposed social obligations, and to rid themselves from patriarchical mechanisms. A common positive feeling of self-confidence can be developed here. Women act according to their own ideas and express their needs without any hindrances. Differences can be made between domestic informal women's domains, formal out-of-house women's domains and formal out-of-house charitable organization forms.

Domestic domains

Domestic informal women's domains exist temporarily in the apartments and houses of those involved. The groups which are close to the family are formed out of the necessity at certain times to do something only for oneself. According to their life cycle, women of similar ages come together to talk to one another, to support each other, to give themselves strength and to improve their own economic situation. The mobile interior of Arabian apartments can be adapted for various purposes without any problems: a living room becomes a meeting room, a reception room becomes a dance floor.

The *sabhiya*, the daily morning meeting, indicates the regular coming together of female inhabitants of a traditional house, or of a block of houses, or of women from the immediate neighbourhood. The drinking of coffee at about 10 o'clock is essentially a part of the every day routine. The content of the conversations covers the normal day of the women – basically just gossip! *Istiqbal*, women's receptions in the afternoon, are a kind of small party with friends and acquaintances, organized by female family members. Larger women's receptions are only held by prosperous women. The parties are held at alternating locations, generally at larger homes or at restaurants, which are agreed upon beforehand. The hostesses and the guests are always the same women. Good food and relaxed celebrating are main aspects of such gatherings. The entire afternoon and evening is taken up by heated discussions, jokes, dancing, games and singing. The *gamaiya niswan*, the women's savings and credit association, also takes place in the afternoon. The basic idea behind the informal associations is the coming together of several individuals, in order to tie up a rare factor of production, e.g. capital, and with a rotation process to always make available one member of the group. All members should profit within a fixed time frame. The money is used to create accruals to secure the family in the case of financial crisis. The sum of money saved is also partially used as up-front financing for small companies and in particular to realize the wishes of the consumers: for buying items such as a television set, new furniture, etc.

Health, beauty and fitness

Formal out-of-house women's domains are formed in areas which are conceived for specific purposes, such as hairdressing, bathing, fitness training, etc. Architecturally, the buildings are designed in line with the women's needs and activities. The hammam, a public bath, was – together with holy graves and the cemeteries – once the only permitted place for women outside of their homes. Due to the fact that today almost every home has its own bath, this establishment is increasingly diminishing and almost completely losing its importance for the cities' inhabitants. Out of a total of 12 hammams, today only seven have opening hours for women. The women's hairdressing salon is an important establishment, where women can keep up with the demands on their looks because they (usually) are appreciated less for their intellectual capabilities than for their beauty and capacities as housewives. As well as beauty care, they use the visit to the hairdresser as a social event and look for contact with female staff and customers. The women's open-air swimming pools are a relatively new phenomenon within the city of Damascus. The first opened at the beginning of the 1970s. The current ten existing women's swimming pools are social places for women of all social/economic backgrounds, religions and ages. The level of admission fees, the type of building and the accessibility using public transport are the decisive factors as regards the customers in the pools. *Nadi riyada*, fitness clubs for women, of which 26 exist today, have formed part of the infrastructure in many parts of the city since the 1990s. Going to aerobics classes is currently very popular amongst women between the ages of 18 and 40, and amongst all social classes. The main motivation of the participants attending aerobics classes is mainly weight reduction. They want to lose as much weight as possible in a short period of time, while overcoming their dislike for sports. Contact with other women is also important.

Charity organizations

Through the honorary work in state-owned, private or church charity organization forms, formal out-of-house women's domains have appeared in which women find the place and time for social togetherness and communication, in addition of course to their activities which express their social commitment. During group activities there is sufficient time for social conversation. Group excursions, journeys and celebrations are also extremely popular. At such events there is a strengthening of the community spirit and motivation to carry out charitable work.

Concluding remarks

The use of and participation in informal and formal women's domains creates set points in the daily, weekly and yearly schedule of the women. In domestic informal women's domains the women are welfare workers, therapeutics, advisers and aid workers to each other. Handed down patterns are reproduced and opportunities are created to make a contribution towards helping the family to survive. Women's domains provide social security. The communicative and personal aspect of gatherings in informal women's domains creates a power potential which could regulate or guide the social togetherness. Formal out-of-house women's domains help women, on one hand, to keep up with social norms and demands on their looks and, on the other hand, to establish their presence in more extensive communication systems. Women create this female public to correspond to their demands for modern-ness or conservatism.

The dynamic expansion of formal women's domains in the centre of Damascus at the end of the 1990s allows one to focus on four aspects regarding the women's motives: obtaining better health and greater attractiveness, social care, keeping tradition in the sense of 'back to the roots', and adapting American/European norms in their use of leisure time.

Observing and maintaining emotional satisfaction of all concerned is the main objective of coming together. In this way, informal and formal women's domains contribute to gender separation and help to stabilize the existing social order. As the patriarchal supremacy is not being questioned, and the women's increased overall satisfaction has a positive effect on men; most household leaders approve of the expansion of different women's domains. For this reason as well, the number of institutionalized women's domains is currently on the rise.

The description of the living situation of women in Damascus society which is portrayed as un-free and repressed from a European point of view, often neglects the positive qualities of women's domains. A lived out women's community offers security and certainty to its members. If the lack of orientation or the loneliness of the individual is being denounced in Western European society, the female public space of the Damascus women offers assistance and support in coping with everyday life.

Heike Roggenthin is assistant professor at the Institute of Geography, Johannes Gutenberg-University of Mainz, Germany, and author of
"Frauenwelt in Damaskus"
Institutionalisierte Frauenräume in der geschlechtergetrennten Gesellschaft Syriens
(Hamburg, London: LIT-Verlag, 2002).
E-mail: H.Roggenthin@Geo.Uni-Mainz.de

East Africa
SALMA MAOULIDI

The Predicament of Muslim Women in Tanzania

Muslims take considerable pride in Islam's eloquence on the rights and obligations of women. Scholars and laypersons do not hesitate to point out how Islam emancipated women over 1400 years ago – something the global community only began working towards in the last three decades. But despite religious and legal assurances, very few Muslim women can claim personal autonomy; guarantees in marital, personal or political matters; or recognition of their reproductive role. In view of this gap many Muslim women are becoming disillusioned with the popular rhetoric on rights few of them enjoy.

Faced with numerous challenges – oppressive social, political, economic and philosophical systems, a hostile political climate and world economic imbalance – Muslim women are exploring diverse means and forms of exerting themselves. In Tanzania the struggle is about governance, at an individual and institutional level, a struggle touching the heart of fundamental rights and freedoms. Unfortunately religious and political undercurrents blur the real issues at stake. Where does this leave the Muslim women's movement in Tanzania?

As is the case elsewhere, the development of Muslim women has largely been a concern not of Muslim women, but of other people: of Muslim men who claim divine authority over their womenfolk; of Western feminists who (patronizingly) see themselves as trailblazers of gender equality; of the Western media which thrives on ridiculing the image of the cloaked and suppressed non-attractive woman. Even so, Muslim women are responding to these challenges while appreciating that they are both internal and external.

Globalization is bringing new perspectives and challenges to the population. Amidst a dominant global culture, individual identity is now more pronounced with increased symbolism around the image of the Muslim woman. By and large her image signifies Muslims' aspirations to build an Islamic model of governance. Inevitably, the discussion revolves around placing greater restrictions on women.

Muslim women's movements and Muslim activists paint an image of Muslim women far divorced from local realities. While earnestly trying to distance what is Arab from what is Islam, in effect they engage in the Arabization of local customs. In Tanzania some Muslim factions promote the black chador or *ʿabaya*, common in parts of the Middle East, over the local *khanga* and *kitenge*, a multi-purpose cotton print. Gender activists on the other hand advocate ideals of women's liberation using models that are alien to the local situation. Failing to appreciate that the basis for human interactions and relations should inform the content and context of their paradigms, the two groups remain at loggerheads, confusing the less enlightened populace.

In defiance of external assault, the local situation rigidifies its system to preserve its essence singling out those who fail to conform. Communities miss the opportunity to reflect on lessons and instead are left reacting to external factors/challenges. In such a scenario, how do we not only recognize but also value the individual state of being?

The struggle for Muslim women in Tanzania is at two main fronts: internal and external. Internally, Muslim women try to exert themselves against unresponsive structures and systems. Women have little access to major Islamic institutions, hardly any of which have women in decision-making bodies. Where space is provided to women, it is symbolic and leaves them with little autonomy to organize or make decisions. Externally, they struggle against a global system that increasingly is intolerant of non-Western philosophies or ideologies. The spillover of these dynamics can be appreciated in the treatment Muslim women have attracted in Tanzania, a reality that reflects the gap which civil society organizations are yet to bridge in promoting good governance, equality and justice.

The issue of religion

From 1992–1993 Tanzania witnessed its first openly religious conflict over pork butchers. Enraged by an incident where a 'faithful' had purposefully sold pork, Muslims set about destroying pork butchers in Dar es Salaam. In justifying their actions they asserted that the operations of pork butchers violated city regulations. The incident was trigged by perceived oppression of Muslims by the state. In particular they interpreted the opening of pork butcheries in residential areas as a deliberate affront to Islamic values and freedoms. Muslim women suffered most from the ensuing communal tension. As female Muslim students at the University of Dar es Salaam (the Hill) at this time, we became easy targets for those who wanted to put Muslims in their right place. We were threatened verbally and physically. A few had their headscarves ripped off from their heads. The famous 'Hill' grapevine[1] purported that should the situation get out of hand Muslim women would be raped to assert secular/Christian authority over the Muslim population.

During this period, the Hill was just recovering from the Levina[2] scandal that for the first time exposed the issue of sexual harassment of female students. In response, university authorities formed a gender task force to investigate cases of harassment and to support the harassed. While the media was instrumental in exposing Levina's fate, the harassment of female Muslim students went unnoticed by the media and the gender task force. Male students escorted us from classes to our dormitories and vice versa.

Again in 1998 Dar es Salaam witnessed the Mwembechai uprising instigated by a leadership dispute at the local mosque.[3] This was the first time police openly fired live bullets at protestors. Caught in the mêlée and some in their homes, Muslim women were arrested, strip-searched and penetrated with objects in the vaginal and anal areas. Perhaps because it concerned a group detached from social and gender movements, few human rights or gender organizations spoke up against these atrocities. Some felt Muslims deserved this treatment, as they were *wakorofi*, or troublemakers.

During the 2000 elections the military and police violated Muslim women. In Muslim majority areas like Pemba, media reports surfaced of rampant raping of women by the military to quell fierce political opposition. This time, key human rights organizations spoke about the human rights violations on principle. Most comments were, however, directed at the suppression of political rights and not at the violation of women's bodily integrity.

So is there room to apply human rights norms/principles to Muslim women?

The human rights perspective

The Tanzanian Constitution is founded upon democratic principles and social justice and guarantees various rights and freedoms. Article 29 provides for equal treatment before the law. State organs are the constitutional custodians, guided by international human rights conventions and principles of non-discrimination on the basis of sex, colour, ethnicity, religion or personal status.

Yet, judging from the experiences of Muslim women this has not always been the case. The state and activists single-handedly blame religion and customs for women's predicament. Such assertions trivialize the real issues at hand and thus fail to offer sustainable options in realizing gender equality/equity. As a class Muslim women are denied the right to free association, to participation, to an education, freedom of expression and exercise of their religion, enjoyment of personal security and proprietary rights. The *hijab*, for instance, has systematically been used to deny Muslim women education and work opportunities. Following intense activism, a ministerial circular was issued in August 1995 to allow female students to wear the *hijab*. However, this protection is revocable and does not extend to women in employment.

Excessive state interference in Muslim organizations also impacts women's ability to advance. The Tanzania Muslim Council (BAKWATA) is heavily regulated by the state. Muslim women's efforts to organize are officially not recognized if not sanctioned by this body. Likewise it dictates their attempts to exert their autonomy and directs their fate in personal matters. For instance, under the Law of Marriage Act, before dissolving a marriage, the matter has to go before a marriage conciliation board. In the case of Muslims, such matters are directed to BAKWATA, which has a proven record of inaction and insensitivity to women's concerns and interests. Yet, the government refuses to see beyond the political and resists entertaining any challenges to BAKWATA's existence and powers.

Inheritance is another sore issue with women in Tanzania. However, there are two fundamental departures in approaching the issue of property with others in the women's movement. The first rests with the reality that Muslim women are guaranteed property rights as mothers, wives daughters or sisters. Secondly it concerns the concept of inheritance in Islamic jurisprudence as opposed to Western views, a contrast between distributive justice and self-interest. This in no way undermines the real hurdle Muslim women like other women face in asserting their property rights in inheritance matters. However, the solution is not just about giving women those rights but guaranteeing them access and enjoyment of those rights by putting appropriate and responsive mechanisms in place to that effect.

Inspiration from within

Usman Bugaje notes, 'the prevailing intellectual decadence of the Muslim community has over several decades forged a timid mind, which conformed and feared creativity […] lost its analytical capacity and became mechanical in its thinking […] [I]t is easier to evade questions/issues rather than face them, particularly when they relate to women or the private sphere.'[4] This assertion is a true description of the predicament in which we find ourselves. This struggle is about reclaiming what is ours and defining our development.

Sound activism demands a people-centred approach compatible with prevailing concepts of social justice. We can revisit what is empowering in our traditions. For instance, while gender activists clamour for the recognition of women's reproductive role, Islam bestowed this unique status to women. Alternatively, we can draw parallels from indigenous people's movements to assert their rights to land, representation, survival and dignity. Invoking the powers within becomes a means of facilitating transformation supported, not dictated, by the state.

It is evident that if not empowered and not allowed to assert their voice, assume their position, exert their authority and obligations in the family and society, the development of Muslim women in Tanzania will remain a hypothetical, desired state of being rather than a genuine sense of being. In essence, our struggle has been about the dignity of womanhood. For us in the Sahiba *Sisters Foundation, this is a struggle at the heart of our very being.

Notes

1. Known as Punch, initially set up as a form of social commentary by students but later became notorious for ridiculing women and politicians.
2. Levina was a 1st-year student who rejected the advances of some male students. They in turn harassed her. She sought help but the authorities were unresponsive, resulting in her committing suicide.
3. See Hamza Njozi, *The Mwembechai Uprising*, available at www.islamorg.tz.
4. Usman Bugaje, 'Do Muslim Women Need Empowerment' (paper presented at a conference on 'Islam and Contemporary Issues' organized by the Movement for Islamic Culture and Awareness, 26 October 1997).

*Salma Maoulidi, M.A. in Law from Georgetown University, is executive director of the Sahiba *Sisters Foundation. She is also a development consultant, child rights activist, and is on the advisory board of the ISIM 'Rights at Home' project (see page 4).*
E-mail: smlidi@yahoo.com

Iran

RUDI MATTHEE

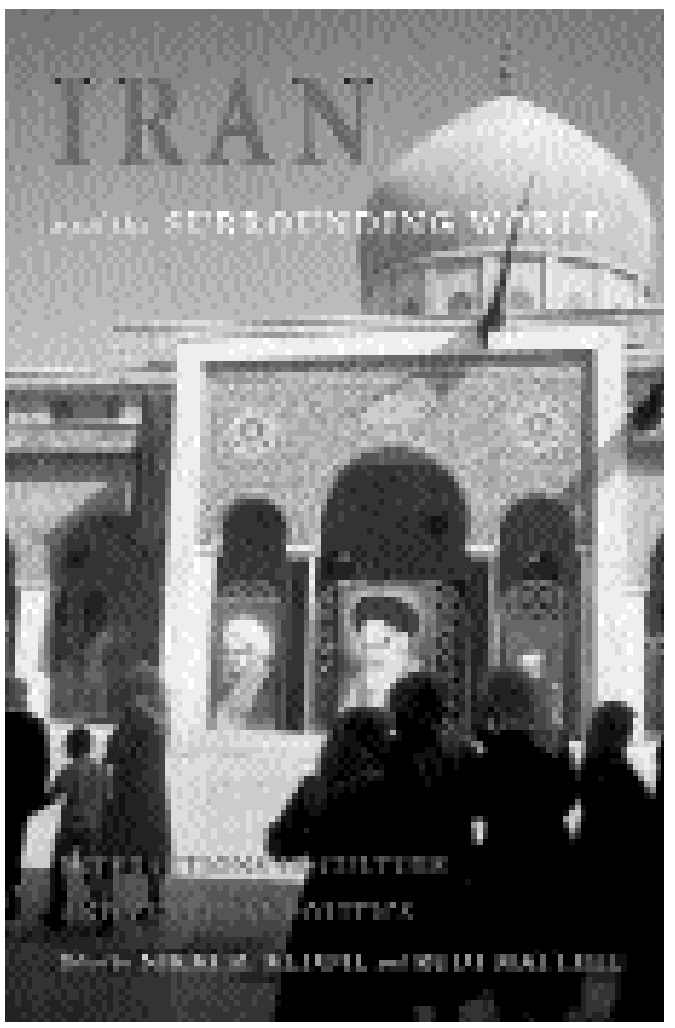
Iran and the Surrounding World

The immense importance of the complex interaction between Iran and the outside world has long been recognized, but scholars traditionally have been selective in the attention they have paid to its manifestations and individual aspects. From the wars against classical Greece to the Iranian Revolution, their focus has typically been Iran's relations with Europe, and later the United States, revolving around commercial traffic, imperialism and the reaction to it, particularly reform attempts. Especially with regard to the period since 1500, this emphasis has come at the expense of studying relations with countries adjacent to Iran – a situation that is no doubt reinforced by a tendency among Iranians themselves to overlook and ignore the region around them in their eagerness to adopt – or resist – things Western. A different approach, one that looks also at neighbours and at culture and cultural politics, should offer us much new information.

Iran has been a crossroads of civilizations since time immemorial. Its location and physical geography have always made it a favoured and often inevitable corridor for land-based military expeditions and commercial traffic between West and South Asia, between China, inner Asia and the Mediterranean basin. Alexander the Great travelled through Iran on his way to Central Asia. Islam arrived in India through Iran. The Mongols used Iran as their springboard to invade the Middle East. Napoleon planned to use Iran as a passageway for his assault on India, while the British regarded the country as a vital buffer against Russian encroachment on the shores of the Indian Ocean.

The fluidity and mobility of an environment with a large tribal, nomadic population not just energized movement, but also facilitated borrowing and adaptation.

The fruits of this synergy lasted well beyond 1500, the time when three kindred empires, that of the Ottomans, the Safavids and the Mughals, coalesced into political units that, given the remarkable way in which they each reconstituted a common legacy of combined Perso-Islamic and Turko-Mongolian religious and political elements, must be seen as an interactive continuum. Long fascinated by the maritime discoveries and the ensuing new level of intensity reached in the interaction between Europe and Southwest and South Asia, scholars only recently have begun to direct their attention to specific aspects of historical ties between Iran with the world directly surrounding it in the period after 1500. The immensely important relationship between Iran and India is a case in point. In the area of economic relations it is only now being recognized that India in early modern times was by far Iran's most important trading partner. Something similar is true for cultural relations. A steady migration of Iranians to the subcontinent, driven by instability at home and beckoning economic and political opportunities in India, created a large and very influential class of Persian-speaking scribes and literati at its various Muslim courts – to the point where in the Mughal period many more speakers of Persian lived in India than in Iran. The same migratory movement influenced the formation and development of Shi'i-ruled principalities and kingdoms, in the Deccan and, following the fall of the Mughals in the 18th century, in the north as well. Most importantly, the influx of Iranians elevated the Persian language and its literature to the pre-eminent status that it would maintain well into the 19th century.



Iran's place in the world

Relations between Iran and its neighbour to the west present a comparable situation. The rich and richly documented military, diplomatic, and cultural relations between various Iranian dynasties and the Ottomans await thorough investigation. Until the 19th century, the two fought many wars but also engaged in the frequent exchange of gift-carrying embassies, and the status of Persian in the Eastern Muslim world ensured steady cultural borrowing. Mutual perceptions were coloured by the variant forms of Islam professed by the two states – the Ottomans were staunchly Sunni while Iran has been the only officially Shi'i country in the world since 1501 – as much as by their shared cultural affinity. In the 19th century, finally, the Ottoman Empire (and later Turkey) provided Iranian rulers and élites with models of political and administrative modernization.

Iran's relationship with its northern neighbour is another field in need of further exploration. Good studies exist on the military and political aspects of contacts between Iran and Russia, the country that posed a threat to its northern borders as of the late Safavid period and that as of the reign of Peter the Great loomed large as its expansionist neighbour but also as a model to be emulated, but the overall state of our knowledge of these contacts remains rudimentary as well.

In modern times, Iran's relations with the West have all but overshadowed its interaction with countries around it. Since the focus in this relationship has been the process of modernization, the tendency has been to see the West as the agent and Iran as the recipient or reactive force. The large shadow the Iranian Revolution has cast over the country's history has only exacerbated the lack of a balanced assessment of Iran's place in the world. Ever since the formation of the Islamic Republic, most of the Western public has associated Iran with reactionary Islam, state-sponsored terrorism and oppressed women.

To be sure, counter trends to both tendencies do exist. In the 1990s, discriminating movie fans in the West discovered Iran's rich modern cinema. Kiarostami, Makhmalbaf, Panahi, and an entire generation of younger talented filmmakers, some of them women, have become household names on the roster of quality films, their reputation bolstered by the many international prizes they received. Iranian cinema is hailed in the West as an outstanding example of humanistic art – a most striking counterpoint to the grim appearance of the Islamic Republic – and the subtle and inventive ways in which directors manage to show women's lives, problems, and even expressions of affection between the sexes have drawn wide praise.

The most important of these trends is of course Iran's experimentation with openness and accountability since the election of President Khatami in 1997. The glacial progress of this process and the fierce resistance it has encountered from the hardliners in the government have demoralized Iranians and outside observers alike to the point where one is tempted to conclude that the experiment has run its course and failed. Nor has the so-called Dialogue of Civilizations, launched by Khatami, found much resonance outside the halls of the United Nations (which proclaimed 2001 the year of the Dialogue of Civilizations).

Yet it would be a mistake to write Iran off. The new openness of the Islamic Republic arguably has little inspiration for the Westerners, who may see discussions about civil society held in the face of continuing (or worsening) political oppression as futile, and most of whom know nothing of positive changes in the lives of many young people and women. In the region immediately surrounding Iran, however, developments are followed with great attentiveness, and Iran is seen as a dynamic country and even a model in its continuing endeavour to create a society that combines modernity with a lasting adherence to Islam and tradition. Present-day Afghanistan is a good example. To Afghans coming out of Taliban rule, the Iranian way of integrating Islam into political and social life must look positively enlightened. The many cultural ties with especially the Tajik parts of the country make Iran's educational system, the role it accords women in public life, and, last but not least, the ways in which the Iranian state manages to keep the country's myriad ethnic and linguistic groups unified under the umbrella of a common identity.

Egypt is another example of a country where the new Iran exerts some influence, albeit of a different nature. Ever since the outbreak of the Iran-Iraq War in 1980, even those Egyptians who had initially welcomed Khomeini's Revolution as divine intervention, were forced to choose between Islamic and Arab solidarity in their assessment of the Islamic Republic. First vilified by Egypt's regime, then ignored, Iran gradually faded in the public consciousness – until the advent of the Tehran spring following Khatami's election. Overlooking the many negative stereotypes about Iran that exist in their country, many Egyptians have come to see in Iran an inspiration as a vibrant society engaged in Islamic reformation built on notions of pluralism and free elections – a stark contrast, in short, to the perceived military staleness of much of the Arab world.

The women's movement

Even Iranian women are proving to their Muslim sisters that Islamic strictures can coexist with experimentation and development. In Iran, many more women work and operate in public life than in many other Muslim countries. Iranian women, who now form the majority of university students, have been at the forefront of resisting interpretations of Islamic law that are inimical to females. More specifically, the country's women's movement has been actively engaged in finding ways to encourage emancipation without giving up Iran's indigenous culture, including Islam. Due in part to its heavy emphasis on the chador, the regime's efforts to propagate its message on women have made little headway in countries with a recent history of secularism, such as the former Soviet republics. More recently, Iranian NGO groups speaking on behalf of women have followed a more pragmatic approach in their attempt to forge contacts and connections with women's groups in other Islamic countries. Such attempts and the partial successes of Iran's post-Islamist women's movement do not receive much coverage in the press, but they do add yet another dimension to the picture of modern Iran as a centre of culture and cultural politics that has influenced and been influenced by both nearby and distant countries and cultures. Iran's cultural relations with the world as a subject can contribute much to current interest in global and world history.

Rudi Matthee is associate professor at the Department of History, Munroe Hall, University of Delaware, USA. He is co-editor, together with Nikki R. Keddie, of Iran and the Surrounding World: Interactions in Culture and Cultural Politics *(Seattle,2002).*
E-mail: matthee@juno.com

Palestine

AWAD EDDIE HALABI

The Nabi Musa Festival under British-Ruled Palestine

Palestinian national identity arose during the period of British rule (1917–1948). The Nabi Musa (Prophet Moses) festival – *mawsim al-Nabi Musa* – provides us with an example of how a religious ritual celebrated within a colonial context shaped nationalist ideas. Rituals, such as festivals and pilgrimages serve as arenas for the interaction of various social groups, each of which possesses its own agendas and discourses on questions of order in society. In British-ruled Palestine, powerful social groups such as the Palestinian political leaders and the British colonial authorities used the Nabi Musa festival to promote a conservative version of Palestinian nationalism, one which remained anti-Zionist but which avoided expressing popular discontent regarding British occupation.

PHOTO: SARAH GRAHAM-BROWN, *PALESTINIANS AND THEIR SOCIETY 1880–1946* (LONDON: QUARTET BOOKS, 1980)

Muslim, Arab, and British dignitaries watching the Nabi Musa procession in 1933.

During the period of Ottoman rule, the Nabi Musa festival emerged as the largest Islamic festival in the region, consisting of a one-week celebration and pilgrimage to Moses' tomb located seven kilometres southwest of Jericho, culminating in a gathering at the shrine on the Friday preceding the Greek Orthodox Easter weekend.

The festival evolved into an active and productive element in the formation of Arab élite and British colonial versions of Palestinian nationalism. This was due to the synchronic relationship which members of Palestine's Arab élite families forged with the British rulers. The high-ranking posts these Arab élites acquired in the colonial administration, or the status the British granted them as officially recognized political leaders, ensured that this close familial relationship would strengthen colonial rule. British participation in the festival evolved beyond the formal, official role as state observers of a civilian, religious ceremony and acquired an obliquely religious character, as rightful participants in the ceremonies.

At the 1918 festival, the first to be celebrated under British rule, on the first Friday of the festival, known as the Friday of the Banners (*jumᶜat al-aᶜlam*), the British governor of Jerusalem greeted the shaykhs of the villages surrounding Jerusalem at the Government House (the main British administrative building). The shaykhs presented him with the banners of the Prophet, two banners of Nabi Da'ud (Prophet David), and two of Al-Haram al-Sharif. In this segment of the Moses ceremonies, the new, British governor of the city, by officially receiving the banners, assumed the duties of his former Ottoman counterpart. Even though this ceremony involved a religious component, in the form of the shaykh leading this delegation reciting a prayer over the banners, the British governor was nevertheless eager to participate, by saluting the banners after the prayers.[1]

The festival took on greater political importance after Muslim pilgrims rioted during the celebrations in April 1920. Four Muslims and five Jews were killed; 251 Arabs and Jews were wounded. These riots confirmed the British notion of 'Islamic extremism', in which Islamic rhetoric, themes, and rituals could be used to mobilize an anti-colonial resistance, a fear prevalent throughout Britain's colonial rule over Muslim populations. The British authorities stressed that Arab political leaders had to prevent any further violence from erupting at the festival. That is most likely why in 1921 the British appointed Al-Hajj Amin al-Husayni as mufti of Jerusalem, bestowing upon him the new and esteemed title of *mufti al-akbar* (Grand Mufti). In 1922 they secured his election as the president of the Supreme Muslim Council (*al-Majlis al-Islami al-Aᶜla*), the most important Islamic body in Palestine. So eager were the British to appoint a member of a leading Arab family to the post of mufti, the first British High Commissioner to Palestine, Herbert Samuel (1921–1925), even pardoned Al-Hajj Amin for his involvement in the riots. Al-Hajj Amin promised to cooperate faithfully with British officials, explicitly assuring them that the violence of the 1920 Nabi Musa festivities would not be repeated.[2] As the leading religious figure in Palestine, Al-Hajj Amin was responsible for organizing the festival and leading the ceremonies, becoming an important player in attempting to erase conflict between the Arab Muslim community and the British colonial rulers. A report on the political situation in Palestine for April 1922 expounds on the importance of his role:

> *[The] advice given prior to the Nebi Musa celebration by the president [Al-Hajj Amin] of the [Supreme Muslim] council contributed not a little to preventing disturbances; and the obviously sincere spirit in which the president lent his cooperation is in itself a sign that the establishment of the council has been a means of improving the relationship between the government and representative Moslem opinion.*[3]

Promoting British rule

A further example of how the Arab élite employed the festival to promote British policy manifested in an invitation which the mayor of Jerusalem, Raghib Bek al-Nashashibi, extended to the British governor of Jerusalem, to other Arab notables, and to leaders of all religious denominations, calling for their attendance at a pavilion erected just outside the Old City, which pilgrims customarily passed as they marched to the shrine. The newspaper *Filastin* reported that these invitations were printed in all three official languages: Arabic, English, and Hebrew.[4] Even though the Arabs of Palestine were troubled by the British adopting Hebrew as an official language, regarding it as an encroachment on their identity, a prominent and politically influential member of a notable Arab family was able to use the Nabi Musa festival to defuse this language issue in particular, and the question of British support for Zionism in general, by recognizing the official status of Hebrew at this popular Islamic celebration.

But the inclusion of a British military band (with pipes and brass instruments) became one of the most visible examples of British participation in the festival. An argument for the necessity of a British band at Nabi Musa festivities was earnestly put forward by Herbert Samuel in May 1921, arguing that a British-sponsored band in the festival could raise Britain's prestige:

> *The according of a Band for the occasion constitutes no precedent for there is no other religious festival in Palestine comparable with it. […] The Moslem population expects that the British government whose respect for the Religious Customs and Ceremonies of their Moslem subjects in other parts of the British Empire is so well known, shall adopt a not less favourable attitude towards the Moslems of Palestine than the latter enjoyed under the late Turkish regime.*

He concluded by pleading that '[t]he matter is of greater importance than may at first sight appear.'[5] From Samuel's words, the Nabi Musa festival allowed the British rulers to present themselves as guardians of Islamic identity in Palestine, by invoking the former Ottoman Muslim rulers as models to be replicated. The British employed this image to undermine criticism of their contentious support for Zionism.

Palestine's Arab political and religious leadership was willing to collude with the British aspirations to be involved with the Nabi Musa ceremonies. One British official alluded to the importance of this alliance at the festival as follows:

> *[I]t is usual at this season, when feasts important to all three communities take place [i.e., Passover, Easter, Nabi Musa] that there should be in the minds of many a feeling of nervousness. Rumours of impending trouble are discussed, and, among the general public of Jerusalem, there is a good deal of anxiety. Among the Arab notables, however, there is both a hope that no outbreak may occur and a desire to prevent it.*[6]

An important element in how the Arab élite incorporated British participation in the festival was by evoking the festival's Islamic nature, which, in effect, artfully sanctified Britain's role in Palestine's Islamic, religious culture. This approach appears in an appeal by Musa Kazim al-Husayni, a relative of Al-Hajj Amin and president of the Palestine Arab Congress, issued a year after the 1920 riots and printed on the front pages of many Arabic newspapers. In this message, entitled 'A Message to the People of Noble Palestine', Al-Husayni wished Palestinians a joyous celebration in the upcoming holidays (i.e. Nabi Musa and Easter), but urged that these be conducted peacefully, claiming that, 'the government of Great Britain […] will not fail the trust of the people because what the people want is what God wants.'[7] Incorporating the British into Islamic religious discourse became a powerful method to deflect widespread, public resentment against British rule.

Popular responses

Nevertheless, less-powerful groups, such as the Muslim pilgrims, at times rejected and at other times reinterpreted these messages, transforming the festival into an arena of alternate discourses on the question of Palestinian nationalism and British colonialism. Folk songs sung at the festival became the most vocal and unequivocal expressions of this group's own ideas and social agendas. During the 1920 riots, authorities noted that pilgrims modified the music of a British-regiment band accompanying the procession by inserting their own lyrics of 'Long Live King Faysal' and 'Down with Every Nation which Helps the Jews'.[8] Similarly, the worshippers from Nablus replaced their traditional, religious songs celebrating the Prophet Moses and their pilgrimage to his shrine with boasts of their steadfastness against British colonialism: 'We are the children of Jabal al-Nar (Nablus)/ We are a thorn in the throat of the occupation.'[9] These messages contradicted the conciliatory tone of the discourses presented by Arab élites and British authorities at the festival.

Notes

1. FO 371/339/92045, 'The Nebi Musa Pilgrimage', from Chief Political Officer, Egyptian Expeditionary Force, to Foreign Office, 2 May 1918, 2.
2. Philip Mattar, *The Mufti of Jerusalem: Al-Hajj Amin al-Husayni and the Palestinian National Movement* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988), 26.
3. CO/733/20/24595, 'Report on the Political Situation in Palestine during the Month of April 1922', 10 May 1922, 2.
4. *Filastin*, 26 April 1921, 2.
5. CO 733/2/24586, Letter from High Commissioner for Palestine, Herbert Samuel, to Winston Churchill, Secretary of State for the Colonies, 30 April 1921, 3.
6. CO 733/20/19426, 'Political Report for March 1922', from High Commissioner for Palestine, Herbert Samuel, 10 April 1922, 1.
7. *Bait al-Maqdas*, 18 April 1921, 1.
8. FO 371/5118/E3928, Letter from Col. Meinetrzhagen, General Head Quarters, Egyptian Expeditionary Force to Colonial Office, 14 April 1920, 2.
9. Kamil Jamil al-ᶜAsali, *Mawsim al-Nabi Musa fi Filastin: Ta'rikh al-Mawsim wa'l-Maqam* (Amman: University of Jordan, 1990), 192.

Awad Eddie Halabi is a Ph.D. candidate at the University of Toronto, Canada.
E-mail: ehalabi@chass.utoronto.ca

Morocco
STACY HOLDEN

Meat and Society in Colonial Fez

In 1937, Haj Alla al-Qadmiri intoned 'Bismallah' (In the name of God) up to one hundred times in the course of a night's work.[1] Qadmiri was an imam of the municipal slaughterhouse of Fez. Placing each animal on its side, he slit its throat from ear to ear while uttering this blessing. After the ritual sacrifice, butchers, also Moroccan Muslims, prepared the animal for sale by removing its skin and dressing its meat. Qadmiri's job seemed an age-old tradition, but it was an innovation dating to 1912, when the French established the Protectorate of Morocco.

Colonial officials collected taxes on each animal slaughtered at the municipal slaughterhouse. Qadmiri's sacrifice ensured that meat offered for public sale was licit for consumption by the city's 121,000 Muslim residents. In this way, the French profited from concessions made to the religious practices of the residents. When Qadmiri acted as imam, the taxes paid by butchers accounted for 10% of the city's income.[2]

French policies had repercussions far beyond their administrative and fiscal intentions. Administering public facilities and collecting taxes were seemingly trivial accoutrements of bureaucratic modernity. Nonetheless, the colonial regulation of the meat industry transformed the way that the social classes of Fez conducted daily life.

Meat consumption in pre-colonial Fez

Before the French Protectorate, meat played a different role in the lives of the residents of Fez. The élite privately sacrificed animals. The Sultan, his entourage and wealthy notables paid butchers to visit them at home, where they dressed the meat and prepared it as a meal. Working households rarely ate meat, while the poor depended on charitable acts by the wealthy.

When executed for *al-ᶜid al-kabir* (Great Sacrifice) the butcher's workaday practices represented faith, power and prosperity. For the holiday, residents purchased livestock and dissected it, as did a butcher. They also mastered the rites of sacrifice, which served symbolic purposes. In rendering meat *halal*, or permitted for Muslim consumption, a patriarch stressed his religious authority. In Fez, the pre-colonial capital, sacrifice also became linked to the exercise of temporal power, for residents sacrificed only after the Sultan's public sacrifice. A household then distributed as much as two-thirds of the meat to the poor, creating relations of dependence while publicizing its benevolent prosperity.

Such traditions influenced the butcher's trade because the élite displayed their privileged status by sacrificing at home throughout the year. A private sacrifice demonstrated respect for a guest while calling attention to a household's wealth. Thus, when dining in private homes, foreign diplomats invariably ate *mechoui*, ram roasted on a spit. Residents also sacrificed bulls or camels at home to make *khelia*, dried meat stored in fat and spices. Descendants of families long established in Fez draw attention to this delicacy's social meaning. The sight of meat drying on a terrace, insists Abdelali al-Ouazzani, 'gave authority to the house'.[3] Wealthy households paid butchers like Gilalli Rabani for his services in readying the *mechoui* or *khelia*, not for the sale of meat.[4]

Most residents could not purchase livestock, but a butcher did not profit from the sale of meat. A local proverb identifies meat as a consumable luxury: 'If you pass the night without meat, you wake up without debt.'[5] Certainly, the possession of meat aroused popular envy. In 1878, protesting tanners pillaged a tax collector's house, taking his stock of *khelia*.[6] An average family ate meat twice a week, unless a crisis raised the cost of living. Thus, in 1880, after three years of drought, tax receipts collected from commercial butchers decreased by a third.[7] In a like manner, butcher shops closed in 1906 when regional conflict doubled the price of livestock.[8] The butcher Moulay al-Haj Alaoui endured the uncertainty of his trade. Eleven years before the Protectorate, he moved from Fez because he did not earn enough to feed his children.[9]

Colonial modernization

In developing meat as a commodity, the French transformed the butcher's trade. They respected Islam by naming people like Qadmiri to the post of imam at the municipal slaughterhouse. Colonial policies, however, altered the role of meat in Moroccan society.

Colonial administrators increased the number of sacrifices offered by the poor for *al-ᶜid al-kabir*. This policy advertised French respect for Islam and the Sultan, a descendant of the prophet. Three weeks before the holiday, the French temporarily lifted prohibitions on the slaughter of young animals to 'permit poor families to buy sheep intended for sacrifice'.[10] Colonial authorities also exempted holders of an official declaration of poverty from paying the taxes collected at the purchase of a sacrificial ram.[11] By facilitating the active participation of poor Moroccans in religious celebrations, colonial officials jeopardized patron-client relationships while undoubtedly raising popular expectations in regard to meat consumption on a daily basis.

If French officials honoured the Great Sacrifice, they demonstrated equal enthusiasm in preventing the élite from sacrificing at home for ordinary meals. In 1912, administrators fined butchers working outside the slaughterhouse. Two years later, the Commandant of the Region prosecuted a merchant who privately sacrificed three cows. Administrators then decided to imprison butchers who assisted private slaughter. Notables might apply for permission to slaughter at home, but they paid a tax aimed at the 'well off part of the population […] who sacrifice choice animals for making dried meat'.[12] Municipal administrators associated *khelia* with 'clandestine slaughter', thereby denying a request by the Indigenous Chamber of Commerce to eliminate taxes on livestock from private farms. In 1922, administrators even pursued Driss Zemrani, the Sultan's Assistant Chief of Protocol, who sacrificed two bulls at home.[13]

The establishment of the municipal slaughterhouse demonstrates the care taken by colonial authorities to make commercially butchered meat acceptable to those who had previously sacrificed at home. Construction of the municipal slaughterhouse began in 1914 at Bein el Mdoun, the centre of the walled Moroccan quarters. The municipality included European Christians and Moroccan Jews, but the French designated this facility exclusively for 'Muslim use'.[14] Wooden lintels with arabesque in the slaughtering chamber, where the imam performed his sacrifice, as well as beamed ceilings duplicated features of the élite's courtyard houses. As construction began, administrators built a butcher shop with tiled walls and a marble butcher's block to act as a model to others in Rsif, a nearby market with an exclusively Moroccan clientele.

Ultimately, the French desire to increase colonial revenue underpinned the development of meat as a commodity. In France, taxes on meat served only to maintain a city's slaughterhouse.[15] In Fez, the French used this tax to generate income for wider purposes. Colonial administrators raised existing taxes on meat only five months after the Protectorate's establishment. In 1917, after the municipal slaughterhouse had operated for a year, the Chief of Municipal Services identified taxes collected at the facility as 'one of the most important budgetary funds'.[16] That same year, taxes contributed to assisting Moroccan workers, such as six craftsmen producing traditional embroidery in a municipal workshop, which, in turn, permitted them to buy meat.[17]

After 25 years of colonial rule, the French intended to authorize only 21 men to sacrifice according to Islamic law.[18] Colonial officials respected the Muslim identity of the urban majority in Fez, but their regulation of the butcher's trade transformed meat's social significance. As the French fostered demand for commercially butchered meat amongst the rich and the poor, they did more than better the butcher's lot. Prohibiting routine slaughter at home, colonial officials suppressed a time-honoured prerogative of the élite. At the same time, but for the sacrifice of *ᶜid*, they facilitated the independent access to an influential luxury amongst the poor. In addition, the financing of employment programmes with revenue generated from the municipal slaughterhouse permitted wage earners to consume more meat. Thus, the colonial development of the meat industry in Fez decreased the prestige of notables, while increasing that of the destitute and working households.

Notes

1. Haj Mohamed Sharqi as-Sabiyya, interview with author, 19 July 2001.
2. Bibliothèque Générale et Archives (BGA), A80, Budget Primitif de l'Exercice de 1937.
3. Abdelali al-Ouazzani, 'al-lahm al-qadid', in *jnan al-sabil*, vol. 2 of *ayam fas al-jamila* (Fez: Maktab Shᶜabiyya, 2000), 210.
4. Driss Rabani, interview with author, 2 June 2001.
5. Mohammed Ben Chebeb, *Proverbes populaires du Maghreb*, vol. 1 (n.d.; reprint, Paris: Alif Editions, 1989), 52.
6. Abderrahman Ibn Zaydan, *Itahaf ᶜalam al-nas bi-jamal akhbar hadirat maknas*, vol. 2 (1931; reprint, Casablanca: Imprimerie Idéale, 1990), 137.
7. Direction des Archives Royales (DAR), Mohamed ben al-ᶜArabi to Abdallah ben Ahmed, 29 Joumada I 1297 (9 May 1880).
8. BGA, H128, Mohammed al-Hajoui, *qanash bi-hi taqaiyyid ᶜalmiyyawa-tarikhiyya*, 51.
9. Bibliothèque Royale, Dossier 570, Moulay al-Haj Alaoui to Mefedel Gharit, 14 Rejab 1319 (27 October 1901).
10. ADN, Direction des Affaires Chérifiennes (DACH), 150, Note pour le Secrétariat Général du Protectorat, 10 August 1921.
11. BGA, A753, Arrêtés Municipaux, Fez, 1913–1924. Unless otherwise noted, this dossier supplied information on the colonial regulation of meat consumption.
12. BGA, A1104, Chef des Services Municipaux to Résident Général, 20 May 1918.
13. ADN, DACH, 137, Chef des Services Municipaux, Rabat, to Conseiller du Gouvernement Chérifien, 22 September 1922.
14. BGA, A1465, Rapport Mensuel, August 1914.
15. J. de Loverdo, *Construction et agencement des abattoirs*, vol. 1 of *Les abattoirs publics* (Paris: Dunod et Pinat, 1906), 885.
16. BGA, A1764, Chef des Services Municipaux to Résident Général, 10 February 1917.
17. BGA, A1767, Subventions pour le relèvement des industries indigènes, 1917.
18. BGA, A1074, Concours, 1 March 1936.

Stacy Holden is a Ph.D. candidate at the Department of History at Boston University, USA. A Fulbright Student Award and a grant from the American Institute for Maghrib Studies funded research for her dissertation. A Carter Manny Award of the Graham Foundation for Advanced Studies in the Fine Arts is now funding the writing of her dissertation on millers and butchers in colonial Fez.
E-mail: sholden@bu.edu

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Dr Daniella Talmon-Heller
Department of Middle Eastern Studies
Ben-Gurion University of the Negev
E-mail: talmond@bgumail.bgu.ac.it

Western Europe
MONIKA SALZBRUNN

Transnational Senegalese Politics in France

Muslim brotherhoods (*turuq*), most notably the Mourides, have been considered a dominant factor of political influence at the local and national levels in Senegal. The recent election campaigns, however, seem to indicate a changing influence of religious authorities on a local level. Most of the opposition parties formed a coalition which intended to break up the dominance of the Socialist Party, an intention which was successfully realized. International political – not necessarily homogeneous religious – networks and new means of communication were decisive for the victory of the new president, Abdoulaye Wade, in 2001.

From the colonization period up to the 1990s, a large number of national and local religious authorities considerably supported the ruling government in Senegal by guaranteeing the French governor's control over rural areas or by expressing clear recommendations to the voters after the Independence. Nevertheless, the mutual loyalty of the secular and the religious powers has not always functioned without resistance. In the middle of the 19th century, the French governor Faidherbe, who counted on the purchased loyalty of local marabouts in order to control rural areas, was fought by El Haj Oumar. Senegal's first president after the Independence, Léopold Sédar Senghor (who was Catholic), continued to cooperate with the authorities of the leading Sufi brotherhood. The exchange of material and immaterial goods could be proceeded with by the purchase of votes against land rights or tax advantages for the marabouts. Senghor's successor, Abdou Diouf, whose family belongs to the *tariqa* Tijaniyya, dealt also with the Mouride and the Tijaniyy marabouts, particularly with the general caliph of the Tijaniyya, Abdoul Aziz Sy (1905–1997). These links were visible on a symbolic level, when representatives of the Senegalese government assisted at national or regional pilgrimages (the Tijaniyy Gamou in Tivavouane or the Mouride Magal in Touba), or when the drainage system was renewed and maintained by important public funding because of the event.[1] The ruling Mouride general caliph Serigne Saliou Mbacké presented himself until the end of the 1990s as a discrete religious authority not wanting to get involved in political affairs. Hence at that time, the leading candidate of the opposition party, Abdoulaye Wade, visiting the Mouride capital Touba very frequently, openly showed his need for the protection and counsel of his personal Mouride marabout.

The opposition party's victory was celebrated bySenegalese residents of France. This poster is an announcement of the party.

Re-privatization of religion

During the presidential election campaign in 2000, the behaviour of most of the local and national religious authorities changed significantly. Marabouts tended to avoid expressing themselves in favour of either the ruling socialist party or for the opposition parties. There was only the general caliph of the Tijaniyya, Mansour Sy, who appealed to believers to vote for Diouf. However, Diouf was defeated even in Sy's own electoral circumscription in the holy city of the Tijaniyya, Tivavouane. The large coalition of the opposition parties, named 'Alternance 2000', won the presidential elections, resulting in the victory of the Mouride Abdoulaye Wade as the first non-socialist president after 40 years. Although Wade belongs to the liberal PDS (Parti Démocratique Sénégalais), former Marxist parties like And Jëf/PADS and socialist dissidents like Ibrahima Niasse joined the coalition in order to break the 20-year domination of Abdou Diouf.

The first act of the new president just after his victory was a personal pilgrimage to his marabout in Touba, in order to thank him for support and prayer. Serigne Saliou Mbacké had refused to openly express himself for Wade, but the fact that Wade presented himself always as a Mouride *talibé* no doubt had a positive effect on his election. But the links between religious and political authorities at the micro and the macro levels are far more complex, and we need to enlarge the general context of these elections in order to understand Wade's success.

Transnational networks

Studies on Senegalese migration have heavily focused on Mouride trade networks.[2] The increasing migration of Senegalese peasants to the urban areas and the international migration to Europe (France, Italy, Spain and Germany) and, currently, to the United States (especially New York), have reinforced the creation of transnational social spaces. The latter are not necessarily exclusively based on religious practices or on membership in a *dahira*. Communities have cross-cutting ties and individuals belong to several networks and (interest) groups at once. It is sure that the Mouride economic networks are some of the best organized groups with an undoubtable financial influence. Nevertheless, we have observed that individual and collective migrants' activities in migration, particularly in and around Paris, considerably focus on the will for political change. The large political coalition that aimed at breaking the domination of President Abdou Diouf was united above religious or ideological orientations. During the electoral meetings in Paris, for example, financial affairs were controlled by three women: one Mouride and one Catholic woman who belong to the main opposition party PDS, and one Tijaniyy woman who is a member of the former Marxist party And Jëf/PADS. This example reflects the attitude of most of the activists as well of most of the voters. Religious issues were not openly discussed during the meetings in and around Paris – on the contrary, the laic character of the constitution was underlined several times by speakers. Nevertheless, most of the practising Mourides were conscious of the fact that in the person of Abdoulaye Wade, a Mouride *talibé* was leading the main opposition party. In the past, several marabouts got into trouble for having supported the government – a government which has been increasingly contested. The dissatisfaction with the ruling government and the difficult economic situation of the population since the devaluation of the Franc CFA in 1994 have increased the will for political change, particularly among the youth, whose participation rate in elections was very low until 2000. Hence, it became a growing risk for marabouts to openly support the ruling government by the expression of *ndigal*s (which means a general order, in this case a clear recommendation for a vote). A member of the Senate, the second chamber in Senegal, proudly said during a meeting (in France) of the opposition: 'I have convinced my marabout not to give any *ndigal*, although he usually supported the Socialist Party.' This statement was met with applause, reflecting a belief in the real chance of political change. We can assume that historical structures of religious authority were largely contested on an individual level. People's will to take autonomous political decisions, independently from the advice of marabouts, was obvious. This evolution was the fruitful ground for Abdoulaye Wade's strategy to count on transnational networks. Wade himself organized his political campaign from his residence in Versailles near Paris. Political claims of the migrants constituted the central part of his political programme: a favourite customs policy, governmental aid for investments in Senegal, bilateral social insurance agreements, human living conditions for migrants in France, etc. Wade systematically addressed the migrants during electoral meetings that were organized in the collective workers' homes in and around Paris. He presented himself as the only candidate who is close to the migrants and who best knows their problems.

Migrants as vote multiplicators

The central reason for this election campaign outside of Senegal was the importance of the migrants as new intermediaries between the political leaders and the voters in Senegal, especially in rural areas, where religious authorities have played the role of counsellors in electoral affairs for a long time. In Paris, at the end of the official campaign on Friday night before the elections, several speakers urged the activists present to influence their relatives and friends in Senegal: 'The campaign is officially closed, but it is not forbidden to phone home.' This strategy worked also in Senegal, where people from Dakar came to visit their family before the day of elections in order to convince them to choose Wade. Abdou Diouf, who was conscious of the importance of the opposition parties in urban areas, scheduled the elections during the Aïd feast, hoping that people from Dakar or other cities would celebrate the Aïd in their home villages instead of voting in the city. This plan failed, as residents of the big cities organized themselves very well in order to be back in town in time. Ultimately their presence in rural areas was favourable for the opposition. Wade's strategy of multiplying votes from migrants back to Senegal and from the cities back to the village was very successful. Another important aspect was the growing speed of communication thanks to new media and to mobile phones. The private press company Sudonline published the main opposition journal *Sud Quotidien* online, so that Senegalese abroad were very well informed about the political and economic situation at home – particularly about the corruption scandals in which members of the socialist government were implicated. In Paris, the printed version of the online journal circulated amongst migrants who, in majority, have no access to Internet. Another important factor for Wade's victory in 2000 was the efficient survey of the elections by journalists who assisted at the counting of the votes, and communicated the results via mobile phones to the private radio station of the 'Sud' group. The mirror effect continued via satellite radios which spread the results in Paris. Senegalese migrants celebrated Wade's victory in the suburbs of the French capital as well as in Dakar even before the government had time to officially count the votes.

Notes

1. Leonardo A. Villalón, *Islamic Society and State Power in Senegal* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995).
2. See the recent articles by Sophie Bava, 'The Mouride Dahira between Marseille and Touba', *ISIM Newsletter* 8 (2001), and by Serigne Mansour Tall, 'Mouride Migration and Financing', *ISIM Newsletter* 9 (2002).

Monika Salzbrunn recently defended her Ph.D. in sociology and social anthropology at the EHESS, Paris, and the University of Bielefeld. Her research focuses on 'Transnational Politics of West African Muslim Migrants in France and Germany'.
E-mail: Monika.Salzbrunn@worldonline.fr
Monika.Salzbrunn@ehess.fr

Middle East

JOHANNA PINK

Deriding Revealed Religions? Baha'is in Egypt

When on 10 May 1925, the appellate *shariᶜa* court of Biba annulled the marriages of three Upper Egyptian Baha'is to their Muslim wives, declaring that the Baha'i faith was not part of Islam and therefore Muslims embracing it were to be considered apostates, this verdict was, paradoxically, hailed by the international Baha'i community as 'the first Charter of the emancipation of the Cause of Baha'u'llah from the fetters of Islamic orthodoxy'.[1] The National Spiritual Assembly (NSA) of the Baha'is of Egypt and the Sudan, one of the first NSAs to be founded worldwide, felt inspired by the verdict that finally made the Egyptian public aware of the existence of an active Baha'i community in their country. It was clear to everyone now that the Baha'i faith could no longer be regarded as an Islamic reform movement, as had been the case before World War I, when Abd'ul'baha's visits to Alexandria had caused a first wave of interest in the new religion.

The Baha'i community of Egypt began to flourish in the 1920s. Their publishing house, Matbaᶜat as-Saᶜada, distributed Baha'i religious writings throughout the Arab world. In the 1930s, Egyptian Baha'is presented their faith in various independent liberal secular newspapers and managed to have their NSA registered at the mixed court[2] of Cairo, though their attempts to obtain any form of official recognition by national political or juridical institutions were in vain. In 1939, two Baha'i cemeteries were opened in Cairo and Ismailiyya. In the 1940s, the NSA inaugurated their own building, financed by donations, in Abbassiyya, a quarter of Cairo. More and more new members joined the faith, sometimes after having gotten hold of one of the Baha'i publications which were disseminated in great numbers through bookshops and libraries, sometimes after having read about the new religion in the liberal press, sometimes after having attended a public lecture on the faith. The converts came from all the major religions present in Egypt. Their educational background was generally rather elevated, many of them being academics. All these developments made Shoghi Effendi, great-grandson of Baha'u'llah, express, in 1944, his firm belief that 'the establishment of […] [the Baha'i] faith on a basis of absolute equality with its sister religions' in Egypt was only a question of time.[3] Between the 1950s and the present day, however, Shoghi Effendi's optimistic forecast has not been fulfilled.

Arrestation for vice and debauchery

In January 2001, Egyptian newspapers reported the arrest of 16 Baha'is from the area of Suhag in Upper Egypt. The accused had allegedly indulged in promiscuous sexual activities, which were, the press claimed, in accordance with Baha'i religious rites. Caricatures depicted the Baha'is as obsessed with women and sexuality. In June 2001, eight of the accused were still in prison without having been officially charged. The accusations do not seem to have been lifted since then.

The high expectations the Egyptian Baha'is had held for the future of their faith in their home country have indeed been crushed. After years of failed attempts to achieve legal recognition, they had initiated, in the late 1940s and early 1950s, several lawsuits through which they hoped to reach, at least partially, their goal. Their main concern was the validity of Baha'i marriages. The problem was twofold: not only were marriage contracts that followed Baha'i personal status law not accepted by the Egyptian state, but Baha'is with a Muslim background also ran the risk of having their marriages annulled on grounds of apostasy. In 1952, the State Council, the highest administrative court, issued a judgment against a Baha'i government employee whose employer had refused to pay him the marriage and family allowances to which he was entitled. The court held that the plaintiff was an apostate and that therefore his marriage was null and void. It considered the question of freedom of belief, which was guaranteed in the Egyptian Constitution, but came to the conclusion that the legislator had not meant the principle of freedom of belief to protect apostates or members of any faith other than the revealed religions accepted by Islam. The court furthermore declared the supremacy of the *shariᶜa* over secular laws.

Things definitely took a turn for the worse for the Egyptian Baha'is shortly afterwards. The first reason for this was the foundation of the state of Israel in 1947 and the fact that the international centre of the Baha'i community was situated in Haifa. From the beginning of the 1950s onward, accusations were raised by journalists as well as Muslim theologians that the Baha'i faith was in reality not a religion, but a disguised instrument of Zionism in order to corrupt and weaken the Arab and Muslim world by perverting God's revelation and by promoting pacifism and internationalism. This conspiracy theory spread rapidly and by the 1960s reached general acceptance in Egyptian public opinion, with extremely few exceptions.

Nasserism

The second reason for the increasingly problematic situation of the Baha'i community in Egypt was Nasser's repressive policy in the religious sector. His aim in dealing with religious communities of all kinds was to either submit them to government control or eliminate them. The second option was usually chosen for groups that were suspected of having ties to Israel; not only the Baha'is, but also Jehovah's Witnesses suffered from this. In 1960, a presidential decree (Law No. 263/1960) was issued by which the Baha'i centres were dissolved and their properties – including their building in Abbassiyya and a valuable piece of land in Maadi, south of Cairo – were confiscated. The law also made any attempt to continue the Baha'i centres' activities liable to punishment.

In several cases, Egyptian Baha'is were charged with violating this law. In 1972, the Baha'i community of the delta city of Tanta was at the centre of the attacks. This case gained a certain amount of publicity. The judgment, however, was delayed, one of the reasons lying in the fact that a number of Baha'is had shortly before turned to the newly founded Supreme Court, contesting the constitutionality of Law No. 263/1960, which was the basis of the charges against the Baha'is of Tanta. The court decided to postpone its verdict until the Supreme Court had issued its judgment. Interestingly, all the defendants who publicly declared to be Muslims or renounced the Baha'i faith were immediately released, which shows that the charges were not really based on any concrete action that violated the law in question, but rather on the defendants' adherence to the Baha'i faith. In the case of Tanta, many of the accused finally chose to profess Islam; most of them still being pupils or students, they feared that repeated postponements of the final verdict would make them miss important exams.

The Supreme Court passed its decision in 1975. It declared Law No. 263/1960 constitutional. The court held that the law in question did not trespass on the right of freedom of belief as it did not prevent anyone from being a Baha'i, i.e. internally believing in the principles of the Baha'i faith. As for the right to confess and practise one's religion, the court maintained that the legislator had granted this right only to the three revealed religions recognized by Islam. The court also declared that Law No. 263/1960 was not a case of religious discrimination, as the state was only obliged to treat equally those citizens having a comparable status, e.g. Christians should be treated equal to other Christians, etc. This is an extremely restrictive interpretation of the Constitution which basically strips the relevant articles of any meaning.

Increasing publicity

The Supreme Court's verdict opened the way for more arrests. The next one followed in 1985. About 50 Baha'is were arrested and charged with violating Law No. 263/1960. The case received extreme amounts of publicity, virtually every Egyptian newspaper and magazine covering the topic, often several times as the proceedings continued. The only voice that spoke in favour of the Baha'is was that of Mustafa Amin, eminent writer and journalist, who reminded the readers of his daily column in *Al-Akhbar* that freedom of religion was a basic human right. Most of the press chose to ignore this comment. However, newspapers with an Islamist tendency, like *An-Nur* or *Ash-Shaᶜb*, violently attacked Amin for his opinion.

The defendants were released on bail shortly after their arrest. In 1987, a court of first instance sentenced each of them, with the exception of two who had chosen to renounce their faith, to a three-year prison term, which was the highest possible sentence. As the judgment contained blatant legal errors, the most prominent one being the fact that the court had made no effort to prove the individual guilt of the accused, the ruling was, without much public attention, reversed by the appellate court in 1988.

After that, the Egyptian Baha'is tried to remain as inconspicuous as possible. As their faith dictates them to follow the laws of the land, they have always accepted the ban on their organization; the charges raised against them could never prove any activities exceeding occasional private meetings. Still, as mentioned above, last year the Baha'is of Suhag were arrested. The accusations in this case do not seem to be based on Law No. 263/1960, but on Art. 98 of the penal code which rather vaguely bans 'the distribution or support of extremist ideas with the intention of invoking strife, deriding or mocking one of the revealed religions […] or harming national unity or social peace'. Art. 98 allows prison sentences of up to five years, which exceeds the limits set by Law No. 263/1960.

Since Farag Fuda was shot in 1992, nobody in Egypt – including the local human rights organizations – has taken to publicly defending the Egyptian Baha'is' right to freely practise their religion. With Law No. 263/1960 still in force, added to a penal code allowing arbitrary arrests of persons adhering to a heterodox faith, it is not likely that the Egyptian Baha'is will, in the coming years, experience a change for the better.

Notes

1. Shoghi Effendi, *God Passes By* (Wilmette: Baha'i Publishing Trust, [1944] 1970), 366.
2. The mixed courts had been founded in order to handle cases which concerned two or more states; the staff was international.
3. Shoghi Effendi ([1944] 1970), 367.

Johanna Pink is a researcher in Islamic studies. She recently finished her Ph.D. thesis on new religious communities in Egypt at the University of Bonn, Germany.
E-mail: mail@johanna-pink.de

The Netherlands
NATHAL M. DESSING

An Islamic Wedding in a Dutch Living Room

A few weeks ago, I attended a religious wedding in the Netherlands. A Moroccan imam concluded a marriage between a Muslim man and a non-Muslim Dutch woman – a widow with two grown-up sons. Ten people attended the ceremony: the intending couple, the imam and two members of a local mosque, the woman's two sons, and three female friends. The event epitomized in many ways what it means to live in a migrational situation where many religious facilities that can be taken for granted in Muslim majority countries must be reconstructed.

According to Islamic law, marriage consists of the exchange of consent by the intending husband and wife or their guardians in the presence of two witnesses. The exchange of consent, that is, offer and acceptance, must take place during a single meeting of the two parties arranged specifically to this end (*ijab wa qabul fi majlis wahid*). The meeting opens when an offer is made and comes to an end when the parties separate.

If the groom is of adult age and sound mind, his personal and warranted consent is an essential condition for the validity of the marriage under Islamic law. According to the Shafiʿites, Malikites, and Hanbalites, however, the bride's consent, whether in person or by warrant, has no legal validity, even if she has reached adulthood or has been married several times before. In order for the contract to be valid, she must be represented by a guardian (*wali*) for the giving of consent. The Hanafites hold that it is recommended for a bride of adult age to make use of a guardian, but she is not obliged to do so.

Further requirements in Islamic law are the stipulation of a bridal gift that the husband must pay to his future wife and the presence of two qualified witnesses. Islamic law requires neither the presence of a registrar or a religious authority, nor the drawing up of a written document on this occasion. Nevertheless, these institutions and forms of registration have gained significance in the present-day marriage legislations of Muslim countries. In Morocco, for example, the Minister of Justice appoints qualified, professional witnesses. These officials put in writing what they have seen and heard, and register marriages concluded before them in the marriage register of the competent court.

Most Moroccan couples in the Netherlands undergo a consulate marriage. Consulate marriages are concluded according to the Mudawwana, the Moroccan codification of Islamic family law and law of inheritance, and consequently to a large extent also in accordance with Malikite prescriptions. There is no distinction, therefore, between a religious and a civil wedding, as there is for example in the Netherlands and Turkey.*

The ceremony

Our couple's motivation in concluding an Islamic marriage was a wish, particularly on the part of the groom, to legitimize their cohabitation before God. In their case, a consulate marriage was not an option. They therefore approached a Moroccan imam to conduct a wedding ceremony.

The couple had an initial meeting with the imam at the mosque. They discussed the woman's knowledge of and attitude towards Islam and the marriage proceedings. The imam asked if the two wished to marry and if the father of the bride consented to the marriage. He also asked about the intended bridal gift. The bride said that she would be happy with a bouquet of flowers. This provoked laughter, as a Moroccan bride normally receives a substantial sum in cash as a bridal gift. The imam asked her to suggest an alternative gift. The couple decided that the groom would give the bride a ring belonging to his family. At this meeting, the imam also said that the couple, who had been living together for some time, should abstain from sexual relations until the marriage ceremony.

The wedding ceremony took place at the bride's home two weeks later. The imam invited the bride, her sons, and the female guests to take seats in the room where he was sitting with the groom and the two mosque members. The company sat in a circle. The ceremony started with the conventional light conversation. The imam spoke Arabic, and the mosque members translated his and our words.

The imam checked if all requirements for a legally valid marriage were met. He explained that the two members of the mosque acted as witnesses to the marriage. He then asked the intending bride if her father, who was not present, consented to the marriage. In order to establish his consent, the woman was asked to telephone him. She had not expected this, and she therefore inquired if the imam really wanted her to do so. She then rang her father. She explained the situation to him, and asked him to talk with one of the mosque members. He asked the father if he consented to his daughter's marriage, which he did.

The imam then asked about the bridal gift. The bride confirmed that this would consist of the ring, which was currently being repaired by a jeweller and which the groom would present to her in due course. The ceremony ended with the recitation of the opening chapter of the Qur'an. The official part had lasted approximately thirty minutes. From then on, the gathering took on an informal character, with conversation and people eating cake and drinking lemonade. The meeting ended when the imam, the mosque members, and the groom left by taxi. The bride and the other women then took off their scarves and talked about the ceremony.

Ritual knowledge and competence

How should we interpret this course of events? Our example shows that the transplantation of a ritual from one context to another that does not support it to the same degree results in a loss of knowledge and competence of the ritual actors, and consequently in a considerable degree of improvisation. An imam normally plays no role either in a wedding ceremony in Morocco or at a consulate marriage in the Netherlands. The fact that an imam conducted this wedding ceremony was therefore itself a departure from Moroccan marriage practice. No one, however, expressed surprise at the imam's role on this occasion. On the contrary, the couple felt that his presence was essential to render the ceremony valid.

The imam's understanding of Islamic marriage practice determined the course of events. He said that he had conducted a number of marriages before. From one point of view, however, the formalities of Islamic marriage were not followed strictly. As far as I could see, the groom was not explicitly asked whether he consented to the marriage. The meeting therefore did not include an exchange of offer and acceptance between the groom and the guardian of the bride – a basic feature of an Islamic wedding. When I checked my recollection with the couple later, they denied this. They said that the groom was indeed asked to give his consent, but that I must have missed this exchange.

Furthermore, the imam was unclear about the role of the father of the bride in the ceremony. Was he considered her guardian, and if so, did his consent over the telephone comply with the Islamic prescriptions, or should he have been present at the ceremony? And what would have occurred if the father had been unreachable or unwilling to give his consent to the marriage?

Creativity and improvisation

Through lack of knowledge on the part of the ritual actors, there was much uncertainty about the proceedings. Creativity and improvisation were important features in this situation. When the imam, the witnesses, and the groom arrived, the sons of the bride and the female guests did not know whether they were permitted to sit in the room with them. They decided to sit in the adjoining room, viewing the ceremony through the open doorway. However, the imam invited them to sit in the room where the ceremony would be held. He thus clarified the situation for the ritual actors.

There were several other examples of improvisation and perhaps also of arbitrariness. In the days before the ceremony, the husband-to-be had said that the bride should wear a headscarf during the ceremony, completely covering her hair. The bride asked the female guests to put on a scarf too. I had brought a headscarf for this eventuality, but the other two women had to pick from the bride's collection. What was the reason for the bride and her guests to wear a headscarf in the imam's presence? Was it to show respect to the imam, because Islamic law requires it, or for some other reason?

The course of events raises questions about the stability and reproducibility of such ceremonies. If an individual imam conducts marriage ceremonies infrequently and these ceremonies are attended by only a few members of the Muslim community, it is likely that no standard form of marriage ceremony will become entrenched in practice. Each marriage ceremony will remain a one-off event, never to be repeated in the same form. On the one hand, this suggests that some ritual elements of the Muslim marriage ceremony will be lost. On the other hand, the lack of consistency will enable new ritual elements to be developed and adopted, perhaps leading to inventive adaptation of the Muslim marriage ceremony to the social and environmental circumstances of the migrational context.

In circumstances where ritual knowledge and competence are difficult to preserve and transmit, ritual actors attempt to give structure and significance to a ritual as best they can, combining partly understood and remembered elements with ad hoc innovations. The outcome is a less stable and sometimes subjectively dissatisfying ritual practice in which attrition is mixed with the opportunity for creative evolution. Our couple, however, expressed complete satisfaction with the wedding ceremony that they had undergone.

Note

* For a detailed account of the marriage formalities and practice among Muslims in the Netherlands, see Nathal M. Dessing, *Rituals of Birth, Circumcision, Marriage, and Death among Muslims in the Netherlands* (Leuven: Peeters, 2001).

Dr Nathal M. Dessing conducts research on Islam in Europe and is ISIM Educational Coordinator.
E-mail: n.dessing@isim.nl

BOOK PRESENTATION

Islam in the Era of Globalization

Islam in the Era of Globalization. Muslim Attitudes towards Modernity and Identity presents an in-depth discussion of some of the most important questions at present faced by Muslim society. The book is arranged around three core themes, namely globalization, modernity, and identity. The collection combines more general and theoretical elaborations with relevant case studies. Among the topics treated are the global and local dimensions of religious and intellectual discourse and dress codes, the complicated – but not necessarily problematic – relationship between Islam and modernity, the role of religious education in the construction of identity, the interaction of state and 'civil society' in religious education and justice, and the relationship between religious and other factors in processes of social transformation. The case studies cover an area stretching from China and Southeast Asia to the Caribbean.

This publication is of particular interest as it represents a step towards a new synthesis in Islamic studies, namely the cooperation of scholars representing diverse disciplinary traditions and various geographical origins and specializations, including Muslims and non-Muslims. The book will draw the attention of specialists and students of Islamic studies, social sciences, and the humanities as well as the general educated public interested in subjects as diverse as development, modernization, globalization, intercultural contacts, intellectual discourse, gender, religious education, and religious authority.

Johan Hendrik Meuleman (ed.), Islam in the Era of Globalization. Muslim Attitudes towards Modernity and Identity *(RoutledgeCurzon: London and New York, 2002).*

Europe

ISHTIAQ AHMED

Communal Autonomy and the Application of Islamic Law

Islamic organizations, claiming to represent the interests of the 8 to 9 million-strong Muslim immigrant communities in Western Europe, have been asserting a human rights claim to communal autonomy to apply Islamic law, the *shariᶜa*, to their family or personal matters. Always included among the latter are marriage, divorce and inheritance.

PHOTO: FERRAN PAREDES, ©REUTERS 2001

Elderly Muslim woman walking past police officers as she attends the Friday Prayers at London Central Mosque.

In 1975, Sheikh Syed Darsh, the head cleric of the Regent's Park Mosque in London, said:

> *When a Muslim is prevented from obeying this law he feels that he is failing to fulfil a religious duty. He will not feel at peace with the conscience or the environment in which he lives and this will lead to disenchantment. […] They [that is Muslims] believe that the British society, with its rich experience of different cultures and ways of life, especially the Islamic way of life which they used to see in India, Malaysia, Nigeria and so many other nations of Islamic orientation, together with their respect for personal and communal freedom, will enable the Muslim migrants to realize their entity within the freedom of British society. When we request the host society to recognize our point of view we are appealing to a tradition of justice and equity well established in this country. The scope of the family law is not wide and does not contradict, in essence, the law here in this country. Both aim at the fulfilment of justice and happiness of the members of the family. Still, there are certain Islamic points which, with understanding and the spirit of accommodation, would not go so far as to create difficulties in the judiciary system. After all, we are asking for their application among themselves, the Muslim community, as our Christian brothers in Islamic countries are following in the family traditions and the Christian point of view. The Qur'an itself has given them this right.* (Quoted in Nielsen 1993: 1–2)

Contrary to the assertion of the learned cleric, it will be argued below that such autonomy would create serious legal, philosophical-theoretical and political problems related to current Western notions of justice and equity.

Family matters

The recognized schools of Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh*) regard marriage as a central institution of Muslim society. In legal terms marriage is not a sacred bond but a civil contract between two free individuals. However, the consent of the guardian to a marriage is considered necessary by some jurists, while others do not consider it obligatory for an adult female. A girl may not be coerced into marrying someone of whom she does not approve, but since traditional law does not prescribe an age limit, even very young individuals can be married. In such a case, it devolves upon the guardian (normally the parents) to decide the terms of the contract.

A Muslim male may have simultaneously up to four wives. Such a right is not subject to any limitations. A man can dissolve marriage by pronouncing his intention to do so three times. There are different ways of doing it, but in principle a man can secure divorce at will even when he is advised to seek reconciliation (Amin 1989: 77). Women can apply for divorce under exceptional circumstances. Allegations of cruelty, insanity and impotence are strong cases for demanding divorce. However, it does not mean that a woman can secure divorce at will. Normally she has to be ready to pay an agreed sum of money to the husband who must agree to her proposal (Doi 1984: 192–7). The *shariᶜa* does not allow Muslims to marry polytheists or atheists. However, a Muslim male may marry a woman from among the people of the book, that is, Jews, Christians and a now extinct sect, the Sabians. Twelver Shiᶜism allows marriage to a Zoroastrian female. On the other hand, a Muslim woman cannot marry a non-Muslim.

As regards inheritance, both male and female dependents and close relatives are given a share in the property of the deceased. Besides the shares of different wives, the distribution among the children of a deceased father follows the principle that the female children inherit one-half of the share of male children. Further, while Muslim wives are entitled to a share, non-Muslim wives are not. However, through a will or testament the husband can gift some property to his non-Muslim wife. Property of a Muslim may not be inherited by non-Muslim children or parents. The property of an apostate cannot be inherited nor can the property of a Muslim be passed on to an apostate (Ibid.: 289–91). As regards children born out of wedlock, according to the Hanafi School (the biggest and considered the most liberal) the illicit child cannot inherit from the father but may inherit from the mother's side. Moreover, children of a deceased son are excluded from inheriting the property from the grandfather. Instead the share is distributed among the siblings of the deceased son. Finally, although Muslims are encouraged to take care of orphans, there is no right to adopt a child. Thus an adopted child cannot inherit property of the adoptive parents (Amin 1989: 81–82). On the other hand, a part of the property can be left to such a child through a testament.

It is quite clear that the *shariᶜa* laws pertaining to family matters differ radically from the European systems. For example, only the monogamous form of marriage is legally recognized in Europe. Any restrictions on marriage between a Muslim and a non-Muslim cannot be condoned by a European legal system because the Western states have ratified the International Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (1979) which envisages equality between the sexes on all matters. Article 16 unequivocally places women on a par with men in matters of marriage and allows them freely to chose a spouse. Similarly divorce, the rights of the child (born within or outside of wedlock), inheritance and adoption are matters on which traditional discriminatory practices have been eliminated.

Moreover, serious procedural questions arise with regard to the practical application of the *shariᶜa*. Who would be competent to interpret and enforce Muslim family law? Can non-Muslim judges be competent enough to consider cases involving Islamic law or should the state set up separate courts with Muslim judges to try cases involving disputes over family matters? Even more intractable would be problems stemming from mixed marriages. Additionally, there is a distinct possibility that some Muslims may prefer to seek redress from the mainstream legal system or, worse still, the conflicting parties may appeal to the two different legal systems. Who should decide which court is appropriate for a Muslim?

Communal authority

In a theoretical and philosophical sense, the demand for communal autonomy poses serious challenges to current understandings of multiculturalism and pluralism. *Shariᶜa* rulings on family matters are underpinned by ontological and epistemological values which identify community and revelation as superior to the individual and reason. In sharp contrast, Western European legal systems have been reformed in the light of the Enlightenment values of rationality and secular humanism. The human rights of individuals are a centrepiece of such reformed law. How these diametrically opposite approaches can be reconciled into a coherent system of law is a matter on which more serious work needs to be done. In political terms, it is quite clear that any concession to Muslim separatism under the garb of communal autonomy will provoke a reaction deriving from xenophobia, in general, and Islamophobia, in particular.

It is worth noting that even among Muslim states there is no agreement on how to apply the *shariᶜa*, including its rulings on family matters. Saudi Arabia and Iran apply the *shariᶜa* in a complete sense. Mauritania, Libya and Egypt in principle but not consistently in practice base their legal praxis on the *shariᶜa*. The United Arab Emirates, Oman and Pakistan recognize the *shariᶜa* as the supreme law of the land, but deviate from it in practice. Twenty countries retain *shariᶜa* courts for personal law, while fourteen make reference to it in personal law codifications. Nine countries have abolished all reference to the *shariᶜa*. These include Eritrea, Senegal, Turkey, and the former Soviet republics having a Muslim majority, including Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan and Azerbaijan.

It must be remembered that current human rights were won by deprived and disenfranchised people through long-drawn mass struggles. The French Revolution converted obligation-bound subjects of the monarchy into rights-bearing citizens of a republic. Initially it was propertied men from the majority communities who could enjoy the rights of citizenship. Poor men, religious and ethnic minorities and women were extended such rights much later: universal citizenship is a post-World War II phenomenon. It would be ironic and tragic if in the name of communal autonomy claimed by conservative Islamic organizations, Muslim men and women were deprived rights that other citizens or permanent residents of Western societies enjoy. The Western European states have shown understanding of and sympathy towards demands for permission to build mosques and maintain special graveyards. Such matters are truly of a personal nature. However, marriage, divorce and inheritance are matters which require justice and equity for everyone on a universal basis. Islam established impressive standards of justice and rights in the 7th century but Muslims need to catch up with developments on the world stage. It is high time to debunk dubious claims to cultural authenticity as a legitimate basis for human rights, and instead engage Muslims in a dialogue for partnership in a world order based on equal and universal rights.

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Ishtiaq Ahmed is associate professor at the Department of Political Science, University of Stockholm, Sweden.
E-mail: Ishtiaq.Ahmed@statsvet.su.se

East Africa

ERIN STILES

Buying a Divorce in Zanzibar

In Zanzibar, all family law matters are handled in Islamic courts. Most of these concern marital disputes. Field research on disputes and court cases shows that it is difficult to understand judicial decision-making without considering the cultural context of the cases; court documents often do not tell the whole story. One area of particular interest is under what circumstances a judge, called a *kadhi* in Kiswahili, will uphold social norms or cultural practices that he actually considers religiously unlawful. A recent example from a rural court shows how a *kadhi* uses the principle of fairness and the attribution of fault to allow such a practice.

Zanzibar is a semi-autonomous island-state of Tanzania with its own president, parliament and legal system. *Kadhi*s have been arbitrating disputes for at least two centuries, and the Islamic courts were most recently established at the primary and appellate levels by the Kadhi Act of 1985. The courts have jurisdiction over all family and personal status matters for Zanzibar's Muslims, who make up over 95% of the approximately one million inhabitants. Decisions of the primary courts may be appealed to the Chief Kadhi, whose office is in the High Court in Zanzibar town. Family law is not codified, and most Zanzibaris, *kadhi*s included, are Shafiʿi.

There are nine primary Islamic courts on the islands – three on the northernmost island of Pemba and six on the southern island of Unguja. Primary *kadhi*s are selected by the Chief Kadhi based on their reputation as religious scholars. As there is no mandatory training or educational prerequisites for acquiring the post, the *kadhi*s have a variety of educational backgrounds.

The jurisdiction of the Islamic courts is limited to family and personal status matters and the vast majority of cases opened concern marital disputes. Of these, maintenance disputes, divorce suits, and husbands' pleas for the return of absent wives are common. Men in Zanzibar have the unattenuated right to divorce their wives unilaterally through repudiation, and women may file for divorce in the courts. The latter are granted a divorce on a variety of grounds, the most common being desertion and lack of maintenance. About 65% of all cases in the courts are opened by women.

PHOTO: ERIN STILES, 1999

Courthouse at Mkokotoni

Opening a case follows a fairly regular procedure. One interesting precondition is a mandatory reference letter from a local community leader, or *sheha*. *Shehas* preside over groups of villages in the rural areas and over urban neighbourhoods in towns, and their role is an interesting one in the recent history of Zanzibar. In the past they were selected from within their communities by elders, but today are appointed by the government and are thus most often acknowledged supporters of the ruling political party. Although they have no formal training in either religious or secular law, *shehas* are in principle responsible for all types of community dispute resolution; people with marital disputes bring their issues to the *sheha* before opening a case in the *kadhi* court.

Although only the *kadhi* may decide cases and issue judgments, or *hukumu*, clerks have an important role in court procedure. Once a claimant has a referral letter from his or her *sheha*, the dispute is presented to the clerk, who determines whether or not the issue is suitable for the *kadhi* court. If a case is opened, the clerks aid in the preparation of the plaintiff's official claim, the *madai*, and the defendant's counterclaim, the *majibu ya madai*. They also schedule court dates, manage case files, write summons, and explain procedure to litigants, their families, and witnesses. Clerks are not required to have any special religious or legal training, but most have finished secondary school.

Case study

Shaykh Khamisi* comes to court by boat every Monday through Thursday. He arrives early in the morning and hears cases until the early afternoon. On average, he hears about three cases each week. It is not unusual for a case to remain open for many months, and disputants often come to court several times.

One interesting case was opened in October 1999 by a woman in her fifties named Mosa. She explained that her husband, Juma, did not provide adequate maintenance for her and her children, some of whom were from a previous marriage. When describing her problems, she emphasized that Juma refused to support the children from her first marriage. She said that she had not asked him for a divorce, but that Juma had previously asked her for money to divorce her; although this is a fairly common practice in Zanzibar, it is considered unlawful by religious experts.

While preparing her *madai*, the court clerk asked if she and her husband got along, and gave examples of the kind of strife they might have – foul language, arguing, or rudeness. Although Mosa agreed that they did not get along well, she stressed that her main problem was lack of a house, inadequate food, and the fact that Juma did not support all of her children. In the *madai*, however, the clerk highlighted their inability to get along and Juma's bad language. The document referred to maintenance problems only in a general way.

When Juma was summoned, he argued that he had done nothing wrong and that their marital problems stemmed from Mosa leaving him for no reason. His counterclaim stated that he had not verbally abused Mosa, and that she blamed him for negligence to hide the fact that she had left him. It also stated that he wanted her back.

They came to court together a week later, and Mosa argued that she did not receive any clothing and the food that Juma provided was not sufficient to feed all of her children. Juma countered that he was blameless and that they began having problems when Mosa left him. He also claimed that he had problems with her children, because they were disrespectful and foul mouthed. When the *kadhi* asked him about his demand for money for a divorce, Juma replied that he had indeed asked because she was away for such a long time, but that now he no longer wanted a divorce.

Shaykh Khamisi heard witnesses and decided the case the following week. He told Mosa that both she and Juma had made mistakes, and ruled that they must try living together again. His written judgment was in the form of *masharti*, or terms that each person must follow. This is typical in cases where the *kadhi* thinks the couple capable of reconciliation. Although it was not written that Mosa return to Juma, Shaykh Khamisi explained that she would be expected to do so. Although Juma was ordered to improve his behaviour and support her, he was not ordered to support the children who were not his own because he had no legal responsibility for them.

Three months later, Juma came to court claiming that Mosa was not fulfilling her terms. He brought a letter from the *sheha* stating that Mosa was not upholding her end of the terms of the judgment. Mosa showed up two days later, claiming that Juma still did not maintain her properly. The *kadhi* listened, but strongly reminded her that she must first go to the *sheha* if she has marital problems, as it was set out in the ruling.

When they came to court together the following week, Shaykh Khamisi told them that they had 'two laws' to fulfil: maintaining the terms set by the court and going to the *sheha* if they have problems – failure to do so was a violation of court orders. He decided that they must try to live together one more time and that if Mosa could not bring herself to live with Juma, she must buy her divorce in a court-ordered *khul* – when a wife compensates her husband for a divorce, usually by returning the marriage gift, or *mahari*.

The *kadhi*'s final words

Mosa did not return to Juma, and two weeks later Shaykh Khamisi ordered her to buy her divorce. She agreed, but much debate ensued about how much she would pay. Juma asked for 70,000 shillings, but the *kadhi* told him he was breaking the law by asking for more than he paid as *mahari*. However, he did permit them to negotiate the amount, and eventually the sum was set at 25,000 shillings – still greater than the original *mahari*.

Shaykh Khamisi explained that he allowed the negotiation because they had *both* caused problems in the marriage. Since Mosa no longer wanted to be married to Juma, but he wanted her, she must buy the divorce with a *khul*. Since she was not without blame in their marital strife and had broken court orders, fairness dictated that she pay more than her *mahari*.

This case shows Shaykh Khamisi's justification of a local norm that he considers religiously unlawful. He allowed Juma to receive more financial compensation than his original *mahari* payment because he deemed Mosa to have broken procedural regularities and to be at fault in the marriage by leaving him and allowing her children to misbehave. He allowed this type of negotiation in a number of other cases as well, and justified it in the same way – as a wife at significant fault in a failing marriage. It is interesting to note that other *kadhi*s and scholars have different ways of handling this type of situation. Some insist that they would not allow such negotiation at all while others justified it religiously. Shaykh Khamisi, however, had often mentioned that a Zanzibari *kadhi* was not able to apply *sheria za dini* (Islamic law) in full, and that although many scholars rejected the position when it was offered to them because of this, he himself had accepted the position mindful of that aspect of the job.

Note

* I worked for more than a year with Shaykh Khamisi Hamza, the *kadhi* of the primary court at the village of Mkokotoni. Shaykh Khamisi was trained in Zanzibar and in Tanga, a coastal city on the Tanzanian mainland.

Erin Stiles is a Ph.D. candidate at Washington University in St. Louis, Missouri, USA.
E-mail: eestiles@artsci.wustl.edu

Eastern Europe

GALINA YEMELIANOVA

Islam and Power in Post-Communist Islamic Russia

Although Russia is widely associated with Orthodox Christianity, it accommodates almost 15 million Muslims in its federally organized state. The major Islamic enclaves of the Russian Federation are situated in the Volga-Urals and the North Caucasus. Following the fall of Communism Russia's Islamic regions have experienced a revival of Islam, enhanced by ideological voids, centrifugal political processes and the shifting sands of civil society. The autonomous republics of Tatarstan in the Volga-Urals and Dagestan in the North Caucasus exemplify two distinctive models of a relationship between Islam and power in the post-Communist *umma*. The following draws on the findings of a three-year research project funded by the Economic and Social Research Council (UK) entitled 'Islam, Ethnicity and Nationalism in Post-Soviet Tatarstan and Dagestan'.

In post-Soviet Tatarstan Islam has become an organic part of the Tatar national revival. Historically the ancestors of the modern Tatars were Sunni Muslims of the Hanafi rite. The Tatars' four-and-a-half centuries of existence within the Russian Orthodox political and cultural environment has rendered 'Tatar' and 'Islam' practically synonymous. The Islamic renaissance among Tatars has been hampered by high levels of urbanization and secularization, and the bi-national nature of Tatarstan's society. These circumstances are responsible for the idea, among dissident Tatar nationalists, of re-integrating Islam into the fabric of Tatar society, represented by the Vsetatarskii Obshestvenni Tsentr (VTOTS, All-Tatar Public Centre), the party of Ittifaq (Union), Milli Mejlis (National Assembly) and Azatlyk (Freedom). After the abortive anti-Gorbachev *coup d'état* in August 1991, the Tatar nationalists received *carte blanche* from Tatarstan President Shaimiev, who manipulated them in order to avoid inevitable repercussions from Moscow due to his backing of the anti-Yeltsin camp.

During the period of amicable relations between the official Tatar establishment and the Tatar nationalists, lasting from 1989 till 1994, the government in Kazan (capital of Tatarstan) responded favourably to the nationalists' main Islam-related aspirations. In particular, it encouraged the emergence of a separate Islamic administration – Dukhovnoe Upravlenie Musul'man Respubliki Tatarstan (DUMRT, Islamic Spiritual Board of the Republic of Tatarstan), which declared its independence from the all-Russian federal Islamic administration, the Dukhovnoe Upravlenie Musul'man Evropeiskoi Rossii i Sibiri (DUMES, Islamic Spiritual Board of the European Part of Russia and Siberia), based in Ufa.

The 1994 power-sharing treaty between Moscow and Kazan, which secured wider autonomy for the Tatarstan leadership, put an end to the alliance between the establishment and the Tatar nationalists. Shaimiev's team opted for the formation of a democratically camouflaged, moderate ethnocratic regime which necessitated the neutralization of the Tatar national opposition. This included the co-optation of the nationalists' most intelligent representatives, the formation of the official duplicate national organizations and the incorporation of some nationalist ideas into the official ideology. For example, in opposition to the Milli Mejlis the Shaimiev government sponsored the formation of a tame Vsetatarskii Mezhdunarodnii Congress (All-Tatar World Congress) under the leadership of Indus Tagirov. It also appropriated nationalist policies in areas such as language, education, and especially religion (e.g. restoration and building of mosques, opening an Islamic University, Islamic colleges and madrasas).

In spite of the official separation between the state and religion, as declared by the 1992 Constitution, the Shaimiev government supported de facto an increasing role for Islam in Tatar politics. It perceived the DUMRT as an indispensable attribute of Tatarstan's sovereignty and national distinctiveness. In February 1998 Tatarstan officials orchestrated the unifying congress of Tatarstan Muslims and promoted Gusman Iskhakov as the mufti of Tatarstan. Since then the government has discreetly supported Mufti Iskhakov's policy aimed at making Kazan the Islamic capital of Eurasia and centralizing Tatarstan's Islamic communities under the DUMRT's auspices in opposition to the Ufa Mufti Talgat Tadjuddinov. In July 1999 the authorities adopted a new law on 'The Freedom of Consciousness and Religious Formations', recognizing the DUMRT as the only legitimate Islamic administration in the republic. The formal display of loyalty has allowed Mufti Iskhakov to enhance his personal power and to place his relatives and associates in the major local Islamic administrations of Tatarstan. He also introduced new registration rules for Islamic communities which rendered the status of Mufti Talgat Tadjuddinov's followers illegal.

In addition to forging special relations with the *muftiyat*, Tatarstan authorities have promoted Islamic themes in official symbols, architecture, monuments and design. The strengthening of the symbolic function of Islam has been accompanied by some attempts to revive its ideological function. To this end the leading Tatar official ideologist, R. Khakimov, has advocated the restoration of Tatar reformist Islam or Jadidism as a viable basis for the Tatar national ideas. He introduced the concept of EuroIslam, described as a neo-Jadidism, which would arguably permit the resolution of the apparently inevitable conflict between formally Muslim Tatarstan and allegedly Islamophobic Europe.

On the whole, however, the impact of Islam on Tatarstan's official politics has been more symbolic than genuine. Islam has been regarded as a vital component of Tatarness while Tatarstan society has remained overwhelmingly secular. As for the religious Islamic revival, it has been weak and has had only a marginal impact on political and public life.

Dagestan

In Dagestan the influence of Islam in the policy-making process has been much more prominent than in Tatarstan, due in part to the substantially higher level of religiosity of the population. Another reason is the much deeper economic crisis, aggravated by Dagestan's close proximity to war-stricken and intensively Islamicized Chechnya. Dagestani society has relatively strong communal, ethno-clan and religious ties which supersede individual rights and values. Most Dagestanis are Sunnis of the Shafii rite, although the Nogays of northern Dagestan adhere to the Hanafi rite. It is also significant that the majority of Dagestani Muslims profess mystical Islam – Sufism of Naqshbandi, Shadhili, Dzhazuli, Kadiri, and Yasawi orders. Local Sufism absorbed various pre-Islamic beliefs and practices and became deeply integrated into the traditional community system. As a result, there emerged a particular regional form of Sufism, known as Tariqatism.

Compared to Tatarstan, in Dagestan Islam has remained a pivotal social and cultural regulator. Its survival, although mainly in its popular Sufi form, is due to Dagestan's significantly lower scale of industrialization, urbanization and resulting secularization, and the overwhelming numerical superiority of Muslims over non-Muslims. During the Soviet period the traditional community and clan-based Dagestani society absorbed Soviet collectivism and Party centralism and approximated the Islamic Communist model advocated by Sultan-Galiev and other Islamic Communists of the 1920s. Consequently, the bulk of Dagestanis were devastated by the break-up of the USSR and subsequent de-Sovietization of Dagestan. Nonetheless, the Soviet political system persisted in Dagestan until 1995 and the Communists maintained their popularity until the late 1990s, much longer than anywhere else in Russia.

The breakdown of the Soviet economic and industrial complex and the drop in federal subsidies brought about extreme hardships to Dagestanis, aggravated by the war in neighbouring Chechnya. Among its worst consequences have been the mass impoverishment and desolation, the spread of military and terrorist activity on Dagestani territory and the proliferation of a culture of violence and lawlessness. These factors have created a fertile breeding ground for extremism, both religious and political. Like Chechnya, Dagestan has been overwhelmed by a wave of terrorism, including political assassinations and kidnappings in return for ransoms.

The failure of ethno-nationalists to generate a viable opposition to the corrupt and ineffective Dagestani government encouraged popular Islamic protest. This was channelled largely into the Islamic fundamentalist movement, known as Salafism, or Wahhabism. By 1999 about 7 to 9% of Dagestani Muslims had succumbed to the increasingly popular Wahhabism. On several occasions during the 1990s Wahhabi leaders demonstrated their ability to mobilize their followers for the struggle against the injustice and lawlessness associated with the ruling regime. In response, the Dagestani authorities opted for ruthless political and administrative suppression of Wahhabism altogether.

The common anti-Wahhabi stance had brought together the Dagestani government and the Dukhovnoe Upravlenie Musul'man Dagestana (DUMD, Spiritual Board of Muslims of Dagestan), controlled by the Avar ethnic party, and in particular, by the Naqshbandi *wird* (*tariqa* branch) of Shaykh Sayid-Efendi Aytseev (Chirkeevskii). In 1997, as a result of pressure from the latter, the authorities institutionalized Tariqatism as the only legitimate and traditional form of Islam in Dagestan, banning Wahhabism. Many Wahhabi leaders were arrested, their offices demolished and periodicals closed. The Dagestan pro-government mass media has launched an anti-Wahhabi propaganda campaign, presenting Wahhabis exclusively as foreign, mainly Saudi and British mercenaries, despite the fact that many are indigenous Dagestanis. Furthermore, the term Wahhabi has been applied to any representative of the opposition, irrespective of his or her religious orientation.

This resolute anti-Wahhabi position of the official authorities of Dagestan has also been enhanced by the Chechen and Moscow factors. The Dagestani authorities feared that the proliferation of Wahhabism in Dagestan would facilitate the Chechen radicals' plan to unite Chechnya and Dagestan into a single Islamic state, ruled by Wahhabi Chechens. On the other hand, under the conditions of protracted military conflict between Moscow and Chechnya, Dagestan's official denunciation of Wahhabism has provided important leverage for the continuing inflow of federal subsidies to Makhachkala. For example, as a reward for their unambiguous support for Moscow during the abortive Chechen-Wahhabi invasion of Dagestan in August and September 1999, federal financial support for the republic has increased by 270%. Since then the leaders of Dagestan have carefully attuned their rhetoric and actions to the policies of President Putin, who tends to equate Wahhabism with Islamic extremism and international terrorism.

The ongoing official physical and ideological warfare against Wahhabism has secured for Sufism the position of official traditional Islam. However, given the deep interweaving of Sufism with primordial social networks based on clan solidarity, it is unlikely that it could provide a plausible ideological framework for the future modernization and democratization of Dagestani society. Moreover, the prolongation of the current economic and social disorder, on the one hand, and the association of Sufism with a semi-criminal and inefficient regime, on the other, might continue to generate increasing receptiveness to Salafi Islam, which could come to be regarded as the last resort for socially and economically alienated members of the ex-Soviet Dagestani *umma*.

Galina Yemelianova is a research fellow at the Centre for Russian and East European Studies and the Theology Department at the University of Birmingham, UK.
E-mail: g.yemelianova@bham.ac.uk

North America
NEGUIN YAVARI

Muslim Communities in New York City

The lives of Muslims in America changed on 11 September 2001. The initial reactions of panic, guilt, defiance, and confusion, were accompanied in subsequent days with physical threats and hostile acts against Muslims. An opinion piece in the *New York Times* arguing that Muslims hate us not for what we do but for what we are was widely quoted in the media. Veiled women did not appear in public, several students on our campus left theirs at home. A great number of scholars of the Middle East and the Islamic world shouted themselves hoarse insisting that there existed a direct correlation between US foreign policy and the events of 11 September, and others reiterated their anti-liberal stance by pointing an accusing finger at what they regarded as their fellow academics' failure to warn the public about inevitable threats from the outside. Vigilance became the prescriptive word aimed at both New York landlords and college professors.

From the mundane to the existential, and almost nine months after 11 September, Muslims in New York are grappling with fundamental dilemmas. Muslim communities turned inward, and what followed was a resurfacing of the same isolationist trend that was visible in the wake of the 1993 World Trade Center bombings. In response to the concomitant hostile rhetoric and the increased hostility, what are Muslim communities doing to alleviate the immediate threats in the short run, and to promote toleration and respect for their traditions in the future?

Several Muslim associations in and around New York produced a statement[1] condemning the attacks, and expressed solidarity with the families of victims, their 'fellow Americans' as they called them. Apart from university campuses, the most visible and successful support for Muslim communities in this city is generated by religious organizations, justified along religious lines, and expressed in religious discourse. Healing is promoted in church gatherings, and anti-violence messages are conveyed from pulpits in churches, synagogues, and mosques. The essential political message is universalized along religious lines: all religions are susceptible to hijacking by fanatical fringe groups; all religions are prone to misrepresentation; the majority of the adherents of all major religions shun violence and extremism; and Islam, as opposed to the essentially un-Islamic dogma of Usama bin Laden and his supporters, is no exception.

This inherently religious response to the events of 11 September is indicative of several trends. First among them is the steady chiselling at the separation of church and state, evidenced throughout the American political landscape since the 1980s. From the pro-life movement to the appointment of staunchly religious officials to various governmental positions, the religious right in the Untied States is on the ascendancy. In the meantime Muslim communities in America have capitalized on existing patterns of religious participation in civic life to foster the development of religious networks and organizations to channel the articulation of Muslim identity. In her study on the transformation of Muslim life in the United States in its multivalent encounter with the American legal system, Kathleen Moore has focused on the evolution of Muslim identity in the US as communities settle into a visible and self-conscious religious minority, depending on the American state for protection. 'By virtue of the legislation of federal hate crimes statutes, the interests and rights of Muslims, including the security of religious property, have become a protected category. Presumably, the state is empowered to safeguard mosques and Muslim practices from the inherent risks raised by their increased visibility, in becoming targets of animus directed toward the Islamic world, and Muslims who report the incidence of such crimes acquiesce in the recognition of the capability of the state to do so. Similarly, increased contact with neighborhood groups and municipal politics has been part of the Muslim experience in establishing mosques, and has brought out the human factor in the social processes of determining important spatial relationships. Such legal practices, deciding how things get done, serve as a mediating and transformative link.'[2]

Filling gaps in research

Scholarly interest in American Muslim communities intensified in the 1990s, and the consensus of the field tilted in the direction of increased integration and participation in civic life. But this surge of interest, with its prescriptive implications, found itself at once lacking in essential demographic data and in-depth field studies based on close contact with the concentrations of Muslim communities in various states.

The 'Muslims in New York City Project'[3] – a collaborative research project conducted by the Middle East Institute and the Center for Urban Research and Policy at Columbia University – to which the rest of this article is dedicated, was a major response to this need. It set out to identify and map Muslim communities in New York City and collect data on the attitudes of Muslim New Yorkers toward the social, civic and political life of the city, and their participation in New York public space. Between 1998 and 1999, a research team of graduate students canvassed nearly every neighbourhood in the city's five boroughs to record the location of mosques, Muslim-owned stores, professional offices, and service and cultural centres. With this information, researchers forged networks to recruit community members for interviews. They observed the patterns by which immigrant Muslims have joined a small but well-established and active community of African American Muslims whose presence in the city dates back at least 70 years. Twenty years ago there were fewer than 20 mosques in New York. Today, there are at least 80 mosques in Brooklyn and Queens alone, a world-renowned Islamic centre in Manhattan, and a major philanthropic organization headquartered in Jamaica, Queens.[4]

In the summer of 2000, the project convened 27 focus groups with over 200 Muslim New Yorkers to ascertain their attitudes toward community and civic engagement, and to probe the processes by which minority identities are formed. Muslim New Yorkers are grappling with problems of assimilation to the mainstream secular American culture while attempting to ensure continuity of tradition through the creation of philanthropic and educational institutions to transmit culture and tradition to younger generations. At the same time, they are learning to 'manage' in New York through interfaith dialogue, political coalition-building and cooperation with their neighbours of all faiths and backgrounds in order to improve the quality of life in the city. The initial findings of the focus groups were presented in a panel at the annual meeting of the Middle East Studies Association of North America in San Francisco in November 2001. In March 2002, the Muslim Communities of New York Project co-sponsored a conference organized by The Muslim Women's Institute for Research Development on 'Contextualizing Islam in the United States: A Charge for Muslim Women Scholar-Activists', identifying their target audience as 'Muslim women willing to engage in the discipline of Islamic scholarship that motivates to action'.

The challenges confronting the project organizers since its inception were a microcosm of the dilemmas facing the Muslim communities of New York. As mentioned at the outset, in conceptualizing the project, the conveners decided to map Muslim communities, and not simply ethnic minorities whose worldviews are informed, in radically diverging ways, within the cultural confines of multiple permutations of Islam. In so doing, however, the project has had to grapple with the underlying tensions between spiritually religious Muslims and culturally religious ones, assuming that the latter also wish to be represented within the rubric of Islam. Participants in this project are acutely aware of the misleading lopsidedness such an appellation might produce. Another important consideration is that of segregated focus groups, which brings us to the question of American, or perhaps democratic political discourse. An overwhelming majority of the participants in these focus groups did not choose to articulate political demands in local terms. Loyal to the language of politics in their homelands, their concern if at all political, was with overarching, macro-level issues, foreign policy, prejudice, and bigotry.

Silent women: further research questions

On taxes, social security benefits, pension plans, mortgage and interest rates, fiscal policy, educational initiatives, budgetary concerns, on all those wide ranges of issues that define local politics and safeguard democracy in America, our Muslim women fall silent. Are they silent women, are they silent Muslims, are they Muslims and therefore silent, or are they highly politicized Muslim citizens who reveal in their responses more the organizational shortcomings of the focus group than an organic Muslim self? Are women who are willing to identify themselves as harbouring Muslim proclivities, by definition therefore etching their autobiographical horizons along norms and metaphors that in their own minds echo those of their Islam? In narrating their selves, pasts, and ambitions, are they emulating an imagined Muslim ideal?

These and related questions form the crux of my area of research in this project, still in its preliminary stages. I am focusing on the religious and spiritual organization and activities of Iranian Muslim women in New York City. The majority of Iranian women in this city who were born outside the United States left Iran in the aftermath of the 1979 Islamic Revolution, and most of them did not choose to cooperate with the focus groups organized by this project. Their personal and professional lives disrupted by a religious revolution, these women nonetheless express affinity with myriad religious and spiritual organizations in the city; this in spite of their reluctance to regard Islam as a defining component of their identity. How do these women participate in such activities, and how do they articulate their religious affiliation? Even at this preliminary stage I have found conflicting voices and contradictory descriptions of how women define their identity and how they relate their everyday conduct to the principles espoused by organizations and communities to which they belong or towards which they feel a sense of affinity and loyalty. By focusing on a small community in some detail, bearing in mind the artificial and at times ad hoc taxonomies and dividing lines imposed from the outside, I hope my report will reflect the changing attitudes and outlook of these women, many of whom lived through almost two years of revolutionary turmoil in their country of origin and, just over two decades later, a calamitous day in their adopted city.

Notes

1. The full text of this declaration is found on the website of the Islamic Circle of North America, www.icna.org.
2. Kathleen Moore, *Al-Mughtaribun: American Law and the Transformation of Muslim Life in the United States* (Albany: State University of Albany Press, 1995), 139.
3. The presentation of the aims of this project is taken from the Newsletter of the Middle East Institute of Columbia University (June 2001); see http://sipa.columbia.edu/REGIONAL/mei/
4. See e.g., Abdelhamid Lotfi, 'Creating Muslim Space in the USA: Masajid and Islamic Centers', *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations* 12/2 (2001): 236–54; and Jerrilynn D. Dodds & Edward Grazda, *New York Masjid: The Mosques of New York City* (New York: Powerhouse Books, 2002).

Neguin Yavari is assistant professor of Islam at Columbia University's Religion Department.
E-mail: ny71@columbia.edu

South Asia

MUHAMMAD KHALID MASUD

The State of Social Sciences in Pakistan

In 1947, when Pakistan came into being, there were only two university departments of social sciences: one in history and one in economics. More departments were established in the 1960s when research in sociology and social work expanded. Although the growth of social sciences was still slow – until 1983 there were only 34 social science departments in all the Pakistani universities – the range of social sciences expanded to include (apart from economics and history) departments of political science, psychology, international relations, social work, and anthropology. The state began employing social scientists in its activities of planning and finance. The government also established research institutions in the fields of economics, foreign affairs, administration, and development economics.

In 1983, there were approximately 16,000 graduates in the social sciences in the country, mostly (97%) employed in the public sector.[1] Very few foreign social scientists were working in Pakistan, and the indigenization of the social sciences was not yet an issue for most Pakistani social scientists in this period.

Development of social sciences departments accelerated between 1983 and 2001. The number of departments in this period rose from 34 to 110 and the number of teachers from 191 to 851. In this growth, economics still figured prominently.

Underdevelopment

Most Pakistani social scientists are dissatisfied with the development of social sciences in the country. In their view, the underdevelopment of this field has to do with the historical setting in which the Pakistani state and society came to be defined in ideological terms. Since the first decade of the existence of the Pakistani state, finance, defence and the constitution comprised the list of priorities. Continual migration of the Muslim population from India to Pakistan, the constant state of war with India, and formidable economic challenges did not allow education and research the attention they deserved. Military regimes, which have dominated the political scene in Pakistan since 1958, and the civil governments, during the intermittent periods, which were supported by authoritarian bureaucracy, reinforced a general sense of insecurity and the need for an ideological identity for the state and society as the only basis of national solidarity.

As an ideological state, regardless of whether it was defined in secular or Islamist terms, Pakistani authorities developed a general fear that freedom of expression and inquiry might lead to disunity and anarchy. They distrusted independent and critical thinking. The solidarity of the state, thus, required submission to an official version of history, society and religion, which came to be known as Nazriyyai Pakistan (the ideology of Pakistan). It was considered the duty of the state, particularly of the Pakistani military and bureaucracy, to defend not only the geographical but also the ideological frontiers of the state.

The politically powerful conservative groups within the state structure of Pakistan also pose themselves as the sole guardians of the Pakistani tradition and its values. They dogmatize culture and religion in their conservative traditional values. Consequently, they support and influence state institutions to discourage scientific outlook, critical thinking, reasoning, questioning of the status quo, challenging traditions and authority. These groups determine the direction of scientific activity and allocation of resources to various disciplines and sub-disciplines in the social sciences.

Consequently, throughout Pakistan's more than 54 years of existence, education and manpower development never received the priority they have been given in other newly independent countries. It is only since the 1990s that literacy, health, nutrition, and social equality, including gender equality, have been included in the Human Development Index. Defence-related sciences, however, are still on the priority list in the budget allocation. Analysing this state of affairs, Hassan Nawaz Gardezi, a Pakistani social scientist, remarked that '[t]he power structure, which assigns extremely low priority to social indicators and high priority to building atomic bombs and missiles, is seriously flawed. Should not human development be the primary value to guide scientific activity in Pakistan?'

The state of social sciences

In 1988, social scientists at the Quaid-i-Azam University (Islamabad), the Centre for the Study of Central Asian Civilization (Islamabad), and the University Grants Commission, organized a joint conference in Islamabad to discuss the state of social sciences and the causational factors of their underdevelopment in Pakistan. The conference recommended the establishment of the Pakistan Social Science Research Council to promote research in the social sciences. The conference was very critical of the state of social sciences in Pakistan. The following lines reflect the general tenor of this criticism.[2]

Pakistani social sciences have not made any significant contribution to the cumulative growth of social scientific knowledge. Generally, the social sciences in Pakistan lack theoretical orientation and a theoretical framework. The latter, when indeed used, is not subjected to a critical assessment. A superficial, speculative journalistic style of analysis of political events (political science, foreign policy, international relations), chronology divorced from social science and history, and the rationalization of events on the basis of charisma and individual attributes of political personalities, remain standard traits of Pakistan's social scientists. While some of the speculative, historical and legal-formal analysis has come to the Pakistani social sciences from the indigenous intellectual tradition, abstracted empiricism or hyper-factualism has come from a superficial understanding of Western sciences, both natural and social, through training of social scientists in the West.

The import of abstracted empiricism has been accompanied by the import of research techniques developed in the social sciences in the West, which are not often appropriate for gathering facts in an illiterate society.

Social sciences in Pakistan largely suffer from the twin ills of xenophilia and ethnocentrism: the former emerging from Pakistani society's quest for modelling education on Anglo Saxon intellectual and cultural traditions, and the latter from its indigenous intellectual culture and special circumstances of its emergence as a separate country from India. The latter is particularly manifest in the teaching and research in the fields of Islamic history and Pakistani studies.

Some Pakistani social scientists have called for an Islamization of the social sciences, which in some sense could be seen as an attempt to indigenize the social sciences, but in another sense they also reflect a particular Pakistani ethnocentrism. Islamic social scientists argue that the modern social sciences and their fundamental epistemology are Western innovations and alien to Islamic culture. Pakistan has adopted modern social sciences as structured and classified in the West. However, the value context in which they operate limits their full acceptance and flourishing in the Pakistani environment. Nevertheless, among the Islamized social sciences, only Islamic economics has achieved some advancement, while other fields like Islamic anthropology and Islamic sociology have not progressed further than a change of labels. The proposed approaches have raised serious methodological questions, because they are developed in normative and prescriptive terms. They do not aim to explain social realities, ignore the question of apparent incompatibility between scientific and religious knowledge, and subordinate the social sciences to religious beliefs.

Furthermore, it is also difficult to speak of social sciences in Pakistan in a collective sense. Each discipline within the social sciences in Pakistan is developing in isolation both in terms of teaching and research. This segmented development has made the scientific knowledge of Pakistani society unbalanced. Development in Pakistan has generally come to be viewed merely as economic development, a narrow and unbalanced view of development of a society.

The participants in the conference found two main causes for the underdevelopment of social sciences in Pakistan. First, bureaucratic, authoritarian, insecure, modernizing and dependent states like Pakistan produce technocratic, apolitical, tame, hyper-factual and empiricist social sciences. Second, the cultural outlook of the religious authorities, though an indirect and subtle factor, generates fears of committing apostasy and heresy, or being condemned for doing so by religious authorities. Researchers tend to avoid public controversy and disapproval. Consequently, the Pakistani social scientists have not played a significant role and have been marginal with respect to the planning process in Pakistan.

Among other things, the conference recommended the establishment of the Pakistan Social Science Research Council to promote research in this field.

The Council of Social Sciences

The Council of Social Sciences (COSS) formally came into existence in June 2000 with a charter that defines it as a service-oriented and autonomous organization of social scientists. It aims to contribute to the building and strengthening of an autonomous community of social scientists and to the enhancement of their knowledge and skills. The Council promotes a scientific way of analysing problems among the citizens of Pakistan. It aims to advance a pluralistic approach in the social sciences while remaining committed to objectivity, rationality and creativity. More than one hundred social scientists in Pakistan and abroad have registered themselves as members of the Council. The Council offers the following publications:

The State of Social Sciences in Pakistan, *edited by S.H. Hashmi (Islamabad: Council of Social Sciences, Pakistan, 2001). It is in fact a reprint edition of the proceedings of the above-mentioned 1988 conference on the state of social sciences. In addition to general essays on the state of social sciences, the book also contains assessments of the development of specific subjects, such as psychology, history, political science, sociology, economics, public administration, international relations, education, Pakistan studies, American studies, and African studies, in the Pakistani universities. The book covers the period between 1947 and 1983. The COSS continuously updates this survey in its* Bulletin *(see below) and plans to update the book.*

Bulletin of the Council of Social Sciences, Pakistan, *edited by Dr Inayatullah, Dr Zarina Salamat and Zafarullah Khan. This quarterly bulletin contains reports on the activities of the COSS and of the social sciences in Pakistan. More significantly it reports on the developments in social sciences in Pakistan, listing research programmes, published books and periodical literature. The bulletin is also available on the COSS website.*

Notes

1. Statistical data in this essay is from the *Bulletin of the Council of Social Sciences, Pakistan*, no. 2 (2001).
2. See for instance, Dr Inayatullah, 'Social Sciences in Pakistan: An Evaluation', in S. H. Hashmi (ed.), *The State of Social Sciences in Pakistan* (Islamabad: Council of Social Sciences, Pakistan, 2001), 1–68.

For more information contact:
COSS
P.O. Box 2802
Islamabad, Pakistan
E-mail: cosspakistan@yahoo.com
Fax: +92(0)51 227 58 03
www.coss.sdnpk.org

Prof. Muhammad Khalid Masud is ISIM Academic Director and ISIM Chair at Leiden University.

Institution

CYNTHIA NELSON &
MARTINA RIEKER

Gender Studies in the Global South

Established in 1999 at the American University in Cairo, the Institute for Gender and Women's Studies (IGWS) is a multipurpose and interdisciplinary research centre that serves scholars, activists and policy-makers interested in gender and women's studies in the Arabic-speaking world, Turkey, the Caucasus, Iran, Central Asia, Western Asia and Africa. The primary function of the institute is to serve as a resource nexus within and through which research projects, conferences, workshops, seminars, policy debates and educational programmes on gender and women's issues are engaged.

Modernities and concomitant liberal articulations of social space and place – delineated by political and cultural visions of the post-colonial world order and its boundaries – have critically informed women's and gender studies over the past few decades. The challenges to modernist and post-colonial geographies and political imaginaries posed in the historical present are increasingly demanding a reconsideration of the frameworks within which gender scholarship has taken place. Envisioning gender studies in the global South demands not only a critical engagement with the grammar of the modern (subaltern/gendered) subject but also its critical repositioning within a new global geography. Recognizing the Middle East as an unsatisfactory and problematic category, the goal of IGWS is to facilitate these demands through a focus on transnational dialogue, cross-regional networking and interdisciplinarity. Although focused on the MENA region as its main target, the institute is committed to fostering scholarly dialogue pertaining to (a) the flows of bodies, ideas and goods between discrete Islamic cultural spaces such as West Asia and the MENA region, (b) the northern and southern Mediterranean and (c) the Arabic-speaking and sub-Saharan parts of Africa.

To further these objectives IGWS has developed a number of programmatic components to create scholarly networks to explore the demands of the political present for gender studies in the global South.

At present its focus is on planning and organizing workshops, seminars, and conferences to facilitate continuous and substantial dialogue between academics and social researchers across these new philosophical and spatial geographies. Components include:

Conferences: At the first World Congress of Middle East Studies (Mainz, September 2002) IGWS will sponsor a symposium entitled 'Women or Something Like That: Revisiting Gender Studies in the Middle East Field'. The purpose of such symposia in one of the yearly area studies conferences is to bring together a critical mass of scholars to examine (a) areas in which gender studies have animated the Middle East field and the political and academic areas that continue to isolate such approaches and (b) map out productive strategies for gender studies in a region marked by conflict.

Networks: IGWS is an active member of a consortium currently being established between the American University in Cairo and other universities in the MENA region and beyond. The purpose of this consortium is to develop databases on faculty conducting research on gender issues; organize workshops and conferences on Middle East Gender Studies as a field; and explore interdisciplinary and comparative research foci that would engage graduate students and faculty across the consortium.

Workshops: Together with the Center for Gender and Sexuality Studies at New York University, IGWS is developing a series of three workshops, publications and educational materials on gender and transnational politics. The first two workshops are being planned on the following themes: 'Gendered Bodies, Transnational Politics: Crisis of Liberalism in Middle East Studies' (Cairo, 2003) and 'Sexualized Bodies, Transnational Politics: Emotionality and Desire in Islamic Studies' (New York, 2004).

Research Projects: Together with the Centre for Studies and Research on Women (CSAROW) affiliated with the Faculty of Letters, University of Fez, Morocco, IGWS is developing a comparative research project on 'Gender and Modernist Literacies'.

Journal: Beginning with its first issue in the summer of 2002 the institute will publish a bi-annual academic journal on gender studies in the region.

Much of the energies in gender education, research and practice in the global South are absorbed by and develop in dialogue with non-academic actors and agencies. Thus, in addition to its scholarly and academic mission, IGWS is committed to substantial dialogue between social researchers, practitioners, and policy-makers to create more gender-aware and gender-sensitive action research and policy formulation. In this context IGWS is launching a long-term project entitled 'Reassessing Gender Training in Egypt' in conjunction with the Social Research Center (AUC).

The Institute for Gender and Women's Studies invites interested scholars to participate in developing scholarly dialogues around gender studies across new philosophical and geographical boundaries.

For more information on specific IGWS events, workshops, conferences, the fellows' and scholars' programme, visit the IGWS website: www.aucegypt.edu/igws or write to igws@aucegypt.edu.

To join H-GENDER-MIDEAST, please send a message from the account where you wish to receive mail, to: listserv@h-net.msu.edu (with no signatures or styled text, word wrap off for long lines) and this text: sub h-GENDER-MIDEAST firstname lastname, institution.

Cynthia Nelson, professor of anthropology, is the founder and director of IGWS.

Martina Rieker, assistant professor of modern history, is a member of the IGWS executive committee.

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ISLAMIC THEOLOGY
International Contributions to the Debate in Hamburg

In Germany, Islam, as the third largest religious community in the country with more than 3 million Muslims, has no academically recognized higher education programme that focuses on Islamic theology. A conference organized by the Free Hanseatic City of Hamburg's Commissioner for Foreigners in cooperation with the University of Hamburg and the Körber Foundation, addressed the question of establishing a chair for Islamic theology at German universities. Islamic theologians and experts of Islamic studies from Great Britain, the Netherlands, Turkey, South Africa and Indonesia contributed their positions and experience to the debate. The publication, which resulted from this conference, presents examples of the profile of such a chair for Islamic theology, as well as scientific analysis and critical views from the political and religious community of the City of Hamburg. It offers impulses for a profound discussion of 'Islamic Theology' in Germany.

ISLAMISCHE THEOLOGIE
Herausgegeben von
Ursula Neumann
Internationale Beiträge zur
Hamburger Debatte

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Iran

RICHARD TAPPER

The 'New Iranian Cinema' New Cinema? New Iranians?

In June and July 1999 the National Film Theatre in London screened over 50 Iranian films, made before and after the 1978–79 Revolution. The proceedings of the accompanying SOAS conference have now been published. Contributors review the development of Iranian cinema before the Revolution, efforts to create an Islamic cinema afterwards, and the growing international success of the 'New Iranian Cinema'. Typical features of this cinema are examined: the blurring of boundaries between documentary and fiction, the focus on children, the constrained portrayal of women, and the way the success of Iranian cinema has provided both a focus and a forum for Iranians to reconsider their national and cultural identity.

During the 1990s, films from Iran were increasingly acclaimed at international festivals. The 'New Iranian Cinema' became recognized not merely as a distinctive 'national cinema' but as one of the most innovative and exciting in the world. International media interest was doubtless aroused by two paradoxes: films of poetic and simple beauty coming from a country reputed, since the 1978–79 Revolution, for religious fanaticism; and a successful national cinema emerging in conditions of political and cultural repression. These paradoxes are more apparent than real. Contemporary Iranian cinema has firm and deep roots, both before the revolution, and in richer and more profound Iranian cultural traditions of drama, poetry and the visual arts that have survived many centuries of political and social change.

An Islamic cinema?

Before the Revolution, the ulema either rejected cinema or ignored it: their only method was to apply juristic (*feqh*) rules in relation to the depiction of images. Generally, the religious classes disapproved. For some pious families, going to the cinema was tantamount to committing a sin: it was *haram*. When the state became Islamic and subject to the rulings of the jurists, they could no longer ignore the issue of cinema. They had two options: either to do away with it (as the Taleban decided in Afghanistan 15 years later) or to Islamicize it. Realizing its usefulness and power, they decided to bring it under proper control, and use it for proper political purposes.

The Islamic revolutionaries sought to undo and to rectify 'non-Islamic' elements in Iranian society and culture; to establish an Islamic political and economic base and popular legitimacy through a new Constitution; and to reinvent culture, society, intellectual life, education and learning, 'Islamized' and cleansed of the pollution of Western and Pahlavi elements. The new cultural policy imposed new regulations: all forms of media and arts were forced into the ideological straightjacket of *feqh* rules of *halal* and *haram*. The most powerful media, television and radio, were brought firmly under state control. The arts (including cinema), press and publishing, were made subject to the new Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance.

How much did the Revolution mark a break from pre-revolutionary cinema? While some scholars focus on differences, others stress continuities, pointing to many accomplished directors who made films both before and after, to the abiding connection of cinema with politics, and to the continuation of censorship in various forms. The main break was the public's reduced exposure to Hollywood films. By the mid 1980s, however, the failure to establish an Islamic ideological cinema was evident. Iranian cinema, like Iranian society, gradually stretched the limits imposed by the jurists, and further redefined and reinvented Iranian culture. In the arts, some Muslim militants and radicals who had won the earlier battle with the secularists now became moderates and liberals themselves. Among key players in this group who formulated cultural policies in the 1980s, was Mohammad Khatami, Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance, who, with a team of Muslim intellectuals, laid the foundation for an independent press and a new, national cinema.

Back to the festivals

Pre-revolutionary directors such as Daryush Mehrju'i, Bahram Beyza'i, Mas'udKimia'i and Abbas Kiarostami were allowed to resume their interrupted careers. Prominent newcomers included women directors. A period of recovery and qualitative growth started, and films like Mehrju'i's *The Tenants* (1986) and Beyza'i's *Bashu, the Little Stranger* (1988) attracted international attention once more. Important foreign critics and filmmakers were invited to the seventh Fajr Film Festival in 1989. The next year came a breakthrough, with the success of Kiarostami's *Where is the Friend's House* at Locarno.

Meanwhile inside Iran, after the end of the Iran-Iraq war in 1988 and Khomeini's death in 1989, cinema became a focus for ideological and political dispute. Official attitudes and conditions changed. Morality codes were relaxed. Strict censorship continued, but a process of cultural negotiation and accommodation resulted in a lively cinema and cinema culture.

Political skirmishes reached a peak at the Fajr Festival of 1991 and led to Khatami's resignation and a new period of uncertainty. Rafsanjani's rightist government banned many high quality films, and accused internal opponents of supporting 'Western cultural invasion'. But the change of policy was too late, and backfired. It politicized the filmmakers and forced them to take positions. In the 1997 presidential elections, when Khatami was a surprise candidate, the artistic community, including prominent filmmakers, took an active role in politics for the first time. Those producing art and progressive cinema openly supported Khatami. With the latter's election, a new phase in Iranian cinema began. Many long-suppressed films were screened, and new films like Rakhshan Bani-Etemad's *The May Lady* (1998) and Tahmineh Milani's *Two Women* (1999) addressed issues that had been taboo.

With the phenomenal success – and Festival exposure – in the late 1990s of new films by established masters like Kiarostami, Mehrju'i, and Mohsen Makhmalbaf, as well as newcomers such as Majid Majidi, Abolfazl Jalili, Samira Makhmalbaf, Jafar Panahi and Bahman Ghobadi, the international progress of Iranian cinema seemed unstoppable. No respectable festival could be without at least one film from Iran. Seasons of Iranian movies multiplied. In summer 1999, the National Film Theatre staged the largest season so far (and the third in London that year), screening some 60 Iranian films, both pre- and post-revolutionary, over two months. The same year, Chicago had its tenth annual festival, and there were seasons devoted to Iranian films, or particular directors, elsewhere in the USA, France, Canada and other countries.

Renegotiating Iranian cultural identity

The new success of Iranian cinema has provided both a focus and a forum for Iranians to reconsider their national and cultural identity. The main elements of Iranian national identity (*iraniyat*) and the dialectic between them have been much discussed recently: Iran as homeland and Persian as dominant language and culture; modernity, Western or otherwise; and Shi^{c}a Islam. The question is complicated currently by the existence of a varied and articulate Iranian diaspora, interacting with many different host cultures and different versions of modernity, and now into second and third generations, with hybrid/hyphenated identities, and differing ancestral linguistic and religious roots in Iran. Extreme versions of all three original elements (Iranian nationalism/Persian chauvinism; Western top-down modernization; Islamic fundamentalism) have been tried in the 20th century, and failed. There is now a widely perceived imperative to negotiate an acceptable balance for the new millennium; and a strong movement, with mass support among women and youth in Iran, to reject the traditional politics of monopolization of power, control, secrecy and violence, in favour of democracy, transparency and political, religious and ethnic pluralism.

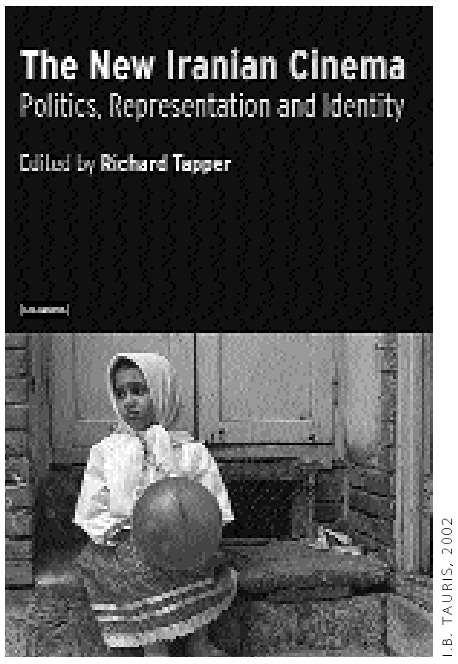
Cinema has become a major focus and arena for these discussions and debates. The distinctive forms and achievements of Iranian cinema, owing little to Hollywood or Western models, have shown that, culturally at least, a fear of 'Western invasion' is a chimera. Cultures always borrow from each other, then appropriate what is borrowed and transform it into their own style. Iranian cinema has much to teach the world about poetry, children, emotion, class. But what do audiences see – and want to see?

Audiences and critics have predictable (if contradictory) expectations of 'international cinema': an appealing aesthetic, professional filming and editing; a focus on universal human themes such as family relationships, loss/search, survival; 'documentary' portrayal of a little-visited country; images that contradict media stereotypes of a given people (Iranians, for example, as anti-Western, irrational, terrorist); and alternatively, a lively, country-specific social and political critique, confirming stereotypes created in Hollywood productions such as *Not without My Daughter* (Brian Gilbert 1991).

In terms of style and content, Iranian movies have drawn international attention by neo-realism and reflexivity, a focus on children, and difficulties with portrayal of women. In the age of ever-escalating Hollywood blockbusters, part of their attraction (like much 'third-world' cinema), comes from shoe-string budgets and use of amateur actors. Many successful films have had strikingly simple, local, small-scale themes, which have been variously read as totally apolitical, or as highly ambiguous and open to interpretation as politically and socially critical.

Given such contradictory expectations and interpretations, manifested in any number of film reviews in both popular and intellectual presses, it is not surprising if Iranians abroad themselves show confused reactions and understandings of foreign audience responses to images of 'their' country in the films. The mixed – and often heated – responses of Iranians abroad to the new Iranian cinema (and other aspects of Iranian culture and politics as viewed in the West) reflect not merely their different politics, but different assumptions about what foreign viewers look for, and see, in these films.

Not least of the achievements of Iranian cinema has been that it provides both a social critique and a forum for discussion between Iranians inside and outside the country. The international success of Iranian cinema has been for many in the diaspora a source of renewed pride in their culture and heritage, as well as a channel for reconciliation between Iranians of different persuasions inside Iran and in the diaspora. It has become an important medium – through viewing and debate – for renegotiating Iranian cultural identity.



Richard Tapper is professor of anthropology at SOAS, where he teaches an M.A. course on Iranian Cinema and convenes the new Ph.D. programme in Asian and African media.
E-mail: rt3@soas.ac.uk

UK
MAI GHOUSSOUB &
SHAHEEN MERALI

Claiming Multiple Identities

Genuine culture can never claim a unique origin. Its validity and its richness are drawn from a long interaction within human society. The centres of cultures, historicized as centres of civilization, have been constantly travelling and traversing at the same pace as human curiosity, and curiosity is as old as being.

In the 'Dressing – Readdressing' project, we are seeking to position specific symbols drawn from our own communities and marry them to our lives as the new Europeans. The changes witnessed recently by the fashion world speak of a desire to transcend national boundaries. The message conveyed by the clothing and dressing is that of borrowed and exchanged identities. Aminata Dramane TraorJ, Mali's minister of culture and tourism, spoke of the meanings filtered through this message: 'Affluent, technological standardised societies tend to forget the meaning of this twofold relationship between ourselves and our clothing and between the clothed body and other people. […] Clothing is the bearer of our, and society's, images of ourselves, of our desires and impulses. […] The changes wrought by fashion in recent years have blurred national boundaries. The clothing traditions of the various ethnic groups and cultures are now shifting and interacting to create a new African aesthetic which includes a universal element.'[1]

By dressing some of the facades of conservation buildings with symbols linked in popular memory to 'the other', we hope to bring to the fore the question of the role of art, the inter-relations between the monumental façade and the ambiguities of cultural identity. Here the visual arrangement acts as a fantasy that can be enjoyed by the eye as well as stirring the mind with the unexpected.

Similarly, books bought by the artists from second-hand traders, fragrant with age, are deviated by pasting onto the covers either a *tarbousch*, *fez*, or a traditional veil. This variance, this state of discord, like some translated text that imports the local vernacular, addresses the shifting geographies and the tension between the global and the local. Unlike the dressing of the façade, which is like some ritualized event and has an outwardly symbolic measure, the books are intimate objects and re-a-dressing their cover illustration invites the 'reader' to a more intricate and personalized reading.

In remembering these conditions of lost origins and merged authenticities, of ruined essentialisms and immigrant progression, we have tried to work alongside our 'rememberings' as two disturbed observers participating in what can only be described within a legacy of a century of contested history. As displaced native informants, looking at European culture while being in European culture, we claim an off-centred view, a multiangular gaze at visual memories.

According to Steyn, '[t]he ways in which identity can be thematised is multifold: it is made and un-made in many sites and crosses many paths. Rethinking identity entails a demand: to split the traditional link between self and identity.'[2]

The two collages of dressing the building and the books in 'Dressing – Readdressing', make and un-make, temporarily, the message of the original architects and publishers.

The intention of the artists was to find out whether this temporary change would have an effect on the understanding of the passer-by that goes beyond a temporary visual experience. The characters created by a simple costume collage became 'self sufficient cameos, nourished within and externalized in self-created visual idioms'.[3] In this self-sufficiency, the enquiry by the artists remains open and questioning: how far can the imagination of an individual or, in this case, a pair of individuals effect the realization of the complexities of a disputed history, of a conflicted claim for the word 'civilized'?

The first site

The first site is Al-Saqi Bookshop, 26 Westbourne Grove, West London. The façade of the building needed to express its (Middle) Eastern identity to the passer-by – as 26 Westbourne Grove has been the hub of activities around issues raised by the presence of the Near and Middle Eastern communities. The artists intended their work, 'Dressing – Readdressing', to be a proclamation, a shortening of distance between its users and its locality in the same manner a street loves to put ornaments when it celebrates a happy event or when men put on a tie and women wear a suit to attend an official ceremony.

Specific symbolism

Since both the artists' grandfathers wore the Turkish *fez*, they wanted the theatre personalities sculpted on 26 Westbourne Grove to try the *fez* on for a few weeks. Near and Middle Eastern women wore the veil traditionally. Most of them covered their faces at the time when the figures sculpted on the façade of the building were active in the theatre. The veil was hastily raised as a negative symbol in the West and by Middle Eastern modernists in a way that was totally oblivious to customs and traditions. By redressing 26 Westbourne Grove in 19th-century Near and Middle Eastern symbols we hoped – in this case by a simple method of juxtaposition – to make a shift in peoples' visual concepts and readdress the myths.

PHOTOS: MAI GHOUSSOUB & SHAHEEN MERALI, 2001

Notes

1. Aminata Dramane TraorJ, in E. van der Plas and M. Willemsen (eds.), *The Art of African Fashion* (Prince Claus Fund and Africa World Press, 1998).
2. Julia Steyn, *Other than Identity* (Manchester University Press, 1997).
3. Jaya Appasamy, *The Critical Vision* (New Delhi: Lalit Kala Academy, 1985).

Mai Ghoussoub, sculptor and writer born in Beirut, is a co-founder of Saqi Books. Her latest publications include Leaving Beirut *and* Imagined Masculinities *(edited with Emma Sinclair Webb). Her theatrical performance* Divas*, first shown in Beirut, is now touring in Europe.*
E-mail: MaiHazim@compuserve.com

Shaheen Merali, artist and curator, is currently a researcher at the University of Westminster and a lecturer at Central Saint Martins School of Art and Design, UK.
E-mail: Shaheen@btinternet.com

Continued from front page: Muslim Responses to Globalization / *by Mark LeVine*

Muslim lifestyles and subjectivities' in the global era – the most deleterious of which are on display nightly on the TV news, the more positive of which are harder to spot in the media. Indeed, Muslim thinkers are not shying from the issue of 'why the hatred of America', as a recent *Al-Hayat* opinion piece described it. For many, such 'repugnance' and 'antipathy' towards the US are comparable to the feelings of George Washington toward the British; or at least an understandable response to 30% unemployment, increasing poverty, and myriad other problems which most critics of globalization see as the inevitable outcome of neo-liberal economic globalization.

Strong opposition to American power and 'tyranny' is seen as a sentiment in common with many European citizens, whose increasing opposition to US policies is noted by many authors. This reaching out to Europeans demonstrates the potential to bring Muslims and Arabs into the grassroots worldwide conversation on globalization as an important avenue to address many of the problems that stifle its growth. Such a move would expand the focus to include issues of culture and identity that are the foundation for shaping any alternative worldwide conversation by enlarging the conversation beyond its secular, left-wing base to include both 'religious' and 'Other' perspectives.

Cultures of resistance

In the context of the post-11 September war on terrorism, the current heightened violence between Palestinians and Israel has exacerbated Muslim sentiments against the United States and opened new space for communication with European opponents of American-sponsored globalization. In fact, Israel has long been singled out, based on the vision of leaders such as Shimon Peres, as the 'engine' of globalization, and thus a threat to Muslims regardless of the status of the peace process with Palestinians and its Arab neighbours.

The daily displays of unchallenged US and Israeli power are strengthening the belief that in the global era there can be no alternative for the Arab world except unity and loyalty to its original culture. But how to remain loyal? A 'cultural revival' that can unify, rather than divide, humanity is called for, one built on a 'firmly rooted infrastructure' – that is, Islam. Indeed, scholars and activists around the world consider such 'revival' and 'protection' to be the foundation for successful 'cultures of resistance' against the negative effects of globalization. Yet more broadly, a new 'universalism' is advocated, one which would 'open up to the world', enriching rather than diluting or even erasing local identities. In this vein, Islamist thinkers and activists are developing specifically Muslim models for a multicultural society which need to be situated vis-à-vis the construction of alternative modernities in other cultures in the global era.

Thus Tariq Ramadan seeks to decentre globalization from the West and deploy the 'effervescence of thinking and mobilizations in the Muslim world' to make possible a 'South-North synergy'[1]; but to build on such forward thinking the Muslim world must 'realize that there exist cleavages and resistances that traverse national and cultural frontiers and even the larger symbolic frontiers between civilizations'. But to achieve this, as Hassan Hanafi observes, a 'reconstruction of the mass culture' in the Muslim world is necessary, one that can reduce the power of the main stream in favour of heretofore marginalized voices that favour human initiative and freedom.

To quote Muhammed Arkoun: 'The circulation of various Islamist discourses will have much to do with how this turns out',[2] that is, with the success of the growing attempts by Muslim and Western intellectuals and culture producers alike to establish a successful dialogue between their respective civilizations. Much research remains to be done before we can assess the prospects for this important enterprise.

Notes

1. Tariq Ramadan, *Muslim in France: The Way towards Coexistence* (Leicester: The Islamic Foundation, 1999).
2. Mohamed Arkoun, 'Islam et laïcité: un dialogue-conflit en évolution?', in Robert Bistolfi and François Zabbal, *Islams D'Europe: Intégrationou insertion communautaire* (Paris: Editions de l'Aube, 1995), 72–76.

Mark LeVine is assistant professor of Middle Eastern History and Islamic Studies at the University of California, Irvine, USA.
E-mail: mlevine@uci.edu

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ISIM Events

Workshop: 'Scholarship and Activism in Islamic Family Law'
Conveners: Lynn Welchman, Anna Wuerth
Jointly organized with the Working Group Modernity and Islam (AKMI) and the Centre of Islamic and Middle Eastern Law (CIMEL/ SOAS)
Date: 5–7 July 2002
Venue: Freie Universität Berlin, Germany

Panel at First World Congress for Middle Eastern Studies (WOCMES): '(Migrant) Domestic Workers to/in/from the Middle East'
Conveners: Annelies Moors, Blandine Destremeau
In cooperation with the University of Amsterdam
Date: 8–13 September 2002
Venue: Mainz, Germany

Panel at the First World Congress for Middle Eastern Studies (WOCMES): 'Taking Islamist Debates and Discourses Seriously: New Avenues in Research and Collection'
Conveners: Amr Hamzawy, Roel Meijer, DickDouwes
Date: 8–13 September 2002
Venue: Mainz, Germany

Joint Conference: 'The Role of Converts in European Islam'
Convener: Thijl Sunier
In cooperation with the Netherlands Association for the Study of the Middle East and Islam (MOI)
Date: 21 September 2002
Venue: Utrecht, The Netherlands

Workshop at the 4th Mediterranean Social and Political Research Meeting (MSPR): 'The Production of Islamic Knowledge in Western Europe'
Conveners: Martin van Bruinessen and Stefano Allievi
Date: 19–23 March 2003
Venue: European University Institute, Florence, Italy

For more information on these and other ISIM Events please check the ISIM website or contact the ISIM Secretariat:
Tel: +31(0)71 527 7905
Fax: +31(0)71 527 7906
E-mail: info@isim.nl
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The International Institute for the Study of Islam in the Modern World (ISIM) promotes and conducts interdisciplinary research on contemporary social and intellectual trends and movements in Muslim societies and communities.

ISIM Fellowships

The ISIM welcomes the following new fellows:
- Dr Vazira Zamindar: 'Idols of the Past: The Construction of World Heritage and Islamic Intolerance'
- Dr Ali Yaman: 'From Holy Lineages to Cultural Organizations: Modernity and Changing Institutional Structures among Alevis in Modern Turkey'
- Syuan-Yuan Chiou, M.A.: 'Islandization and Islamization: Conversion, Ethnicity, and Identity among Chinese-Indonesian Muslims'
- Caco Verhees, M.A.: 'Islam, Gender and the State in Senegalese Women's Groups in Paris and Dakar'

The ISIM invites applications and research proposals for various programmes. Applications from candidates in the social sciences, humanities, and religious studies will be considered. Applicants should be competent in academic English. The ISIM fellowships and their respective application deadlines are as follows:
- *Junior fellowships* (1 September 2002 and 1 March 2003)
- *Ph.D. fellowships* (1 September 2002 and 1 March 2003)
- *Post-doctoral fellowships* (1 September 2002 and 1 March 2003)
- *Visiting fellowships* (1 March 2003)
- *Sabbatical fellowships* (1 September 2002 and 1 March 2003)

For more information on the various fellowships, please consult the ISIM website (www.isim.nl/isim/fellowships/). Application forms may be downloaded from the website or obtained upon request from the ISIM secretariat (info@isim.nl).

ISIM Publications

The ISIM has recently produced its fourth publication in the ISIM Papers series as well as a special ISIM Publication:
- *'Traditionalist' Islamic Activism: Deoband, Tablighis, and Talibs* (ISIM Paper 4) by Barbara Metcalf
- *New Voices of Islam* by Farish Noor

The following publication is forthcoming:
- *Muslims, Minorities and Modernity: The Restructuring of Heterodoxy in the Middle East and Southeast Asia* (ISIM Chair Inaugural Lecture) by Martin van Bruinessen

Earlier ISIM publications include:
- *Islam, Islamists and the Electoral Principle in the Middle East* (ISIM Paper 1) by James Piscatori
- *Thinking about Secularism and Law in Egypt* (ISIM Paper 2) by Talal Asad
- *Muslim Jurists' Quest for the Normative Basis of Shariʿa* (ISIM Inaugural Lecture) by Muhammad Khalid Masud
- *Shariʿa, State and Social Norms in France and Indonesia* (ISIM Paper 3) by John Bowen

These publications are available at the ISIM and can be ordered through the ISIM secretariat.