POLITICAL ISLAM

Conceptualising power between 'Islamic states' and Muslim social movements



Edited by Na'eem Jeenah

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Foreword

Mohammed Dangor

The chapters in this book confer, debate, and share experiences and analyses of issues that challenge the global community, whether states, faith communities or civil society organisations. Indeed, in some parts of the world the very foundation of the nation state is being challenged. Postcolonial nation states in Africa consciously decided to maintain the boundaries established by colonial powers. The objective was and remains to manage the possible fault lines through the establishment of regional harmonisation blocs, promote inter-African trade and development programmes such as NEPAD, the African Parliament, the African Peer Group Mechanism, and African development and investment banks and customs unions.

However, the splitting of Sudan could begin a process whereby countries that suffer from the resource curse will see separatist movements emerging and sparking bloody wars. Neocolonialist powers have not relinquished their interests in the resource-rich African continent, and we may ask why this is the case. The civil strife that we see in Africa and other parts of the world forces us to confront the question about the causes of these conflicts, and to examine whether they are ideological, as a result of unresolved religious differences, tribal, or for some other reason. In my view, domestic elites and external forces – sometimes in competition and sometimes in collaboration

with each other – exploit whatever fault lines exist in order to control resources.

I have had the privilege (or misfortune) of representing South Africa in two regions presently experiencing turmoil, two countries that are at war with themselves – first as ambassador to Syria and Lebanon, and recently as ambassador to Libya. With the benefit of hindsight I will briefly share some observations regarding the uprising in Libya.

I deliberately use the term 'uprising' and not 'revolution', as the objective of revolution should be to fundamentally improve the conditions of people's lives. Although the Libyan state during the era of Muammar Gaddafi provided its citizens with goods and services, it was a nanny state that robbed citizens of their dignity; it was not a developmental state. Recent attempts by the divided ruling elites and their international backers to address the situation have failed because of a deficient understanding and deficient responses to the challenges.

Lazily labelling one group 'Islamist' and another 'liberal' or 'modernist' is simplistic and inadequate. The country's problems involve many different elements and actors at play within Libyan society, including tribal interests, militias, elected politicians, and religious and business elites. Each of these motive forces must be assessed separately as well as in terms of their relationships to one another. The interests of external forces need to be factored in both regionally and globally. They are often part of the problem and may contribute to the solution.

Libya, an oil-rich economy, enabled the building of political relations internally as well as with regional organisations and western countries. Gaddafi ruled rather than governed, and has been the effective ruler of Libya since coming to power in a coup in 1969. He was ambitious in his desire to become the first leader of a 'United States of Africa'.

In 1974 the visionary South African leader Ruth First wrote a book titled *Libya: The Elusive Revolution,* in which she discussed, among other issues, 'oil politics'. She posed the question there of how much long-term advantage Libya might seize from its oil wells. Her poignant warning was: 'Libya may well miss her chance to re-make herself,

and to take advantage of the power which her assertive policies in the sphere of oil have helped to achieve.' In retrospect we can say it was indeed a very poignant warning. Libya, or, more specifically, Gaddafi, missed this opportunity.

Libya has the resources but requires the political will and a collective vision to address two of the reasons for the uprising: 1) unemployment and under-employment, and 2) the youth bulge. The so-called nationalist or moderate Libyan formations have exploited the perception that the Muslim Brotherhood's commitment to the ummah (the global Muslim community), which extends beyond the borders of Libya, will result in Libyan resources being shared to fund activities in other countries and regions to promote the objectives of a pan-Islamic state, as Gaddafi is perceived to have done in Africa.

Sadly, the consequences of the Libyan saga continue to impact upon the African continent. The arms looted in Libya fuelled crises in Mali, Niger, Chad, and Nigeria, among others; Boko Haram was armed partially with looted Libyan AK-47s, SAM-7s and mortars. Boko Haram continues to destabilise West Africa, claiming it acts in the name of Islam. But the reports of kidnappings, rapes, murders, and child brides are against the principles of Islam and are more reflective of the action of criminals taking advantage of existing fault lines in Nigeria. The country's north-south divide, and the history of Biafra again are used to create the perception of a conflict between Muslims and others, thus destabilising West Africa.

Although different in its roots and stated objectives, al-Shabab and its activities again created conditions of uncertainly in East Africa. This also has an impact on Muslim minority communities in the rest of Africa. It could lead to other countries and regions treating Muslims with suspicion, which brings me to the sad plight of the people of Syria, a country where there is now hunger and poverty in a land that had, before the uprising, one hundred per cent food security, and was a food-exporting country with a manufacturing base.

My period in Syria was for me a very enriching experience. This was a historically and culturally rich country, with a relatively self-suf-

ficient economy. At present, various faith communities, such as Christians who had resisted foreign occupation alongside their Muslim, Yazidi and Druze neighbours, are now experiencing yet another largely foreign-supported army, leaving behind the destruction of ancient historical sites, and creating enmity and suspicion among the people inhabiting the Levant. A region where resources were once abundant now has internally displaced people, refugees, starving children and orphans in camps. The actions by extremists should not be encouraged but condemned.

We find, on the one hand, Palestinians continuing to suffer as a result of the Zionist project that seems unstoppable in its ambitions, and, on the other hand, Muslim residents and citizens of the West are profiled through Islamophobia. Our aim should be to maintain wisdom and the prophetic capacity to endure and to maintain Muslim dignity in the face of hurt and anger. It is not enough for Muslim communities to distance ourselves from extremists. The extremists distort the values of Islam, its teachings and our very identity. It is also important to disarm the counterparts of the Muslim extremists, that is, the extremists *against* Muslims. They are the mirror images of the Muslim extremists that they purport to combat, and they create a fertile terrain for recruitment in Muslim communities and nations. We need to inculcate values based upon Islamic history, knowledge and ambition, and nurture a culture of freedom and human rights. Our silence should not be interpreted as a mandate to murder, kidnap schoolgirls, raze Sufi mosques or encourage sectarian attacks, whether they be against Shi'a or against Sunni, against Christians, other Peoples of the Book or Druze and Yazidi sects.

The South African experience is important here. In this country we crafted a constitution that granted rights and responsibilities to all citizens. We devoted a considerable amount of resources, both human and financial, to ensure that communities lived in harmony. We did not encourage provocation against any faith or cultural background. The South African constitution has a limitation clause that can be used to curb excesses on the right to freedom of speech if such action is intended to foster racial, tribal or sectarian strife.

Foreword

Usamah Hamdan

The term 'Political Islam' is tricky, defined by people who do not understand our community, our beliefs and our Islam as we do. Maybe their use of the term is influenced by European history and culture in the middle ages. What does it mean, this term 'Political Islam'? There is no clear definition for it, and I prefer to use the notion of a movement based on Islam. From that starting point we can talk about a wide range of different movements: those who seek to reform their own communities on the basis of Islam; political movements; resistance movements; so-called jihadist movements; and even others.

The Islamic community has always possessed a special political history. 'Political Islam' began with the first constitution in al-Madinah Munawarah, where Prophet Muhammad (peace be on him) established a state. It was not called an Islamic state, and the constitution at that time defined citizenship not only for Muslims but for all people who were living in Madinah, including the Jews. He considered all citizens as having the same rights and responsibilities as the Muslims; they all constituted one nation, including the Muslims.

That was the first political indicator for the religion of Islam. The formation of the first 'political party' was forty years later, with the emergence of al-Khawarij, who refused to join either Ali or Mu'awiyah, at the time the two major leaders in the Muslim community who were in conflict with each other. The Khawarij changed the nature of

politics with their use of the tactic of assassination. They planned to assassinate Ali, Mu'awiyah and 'Amr ibn al-'As. While they failed in their attempts to murder the latter two, they did succeed in the case of Ali. The Khawarij represented the first political party within the Islamic community. In fact, most people refer to the fight between Ali and Mu'awiyah, but not many realise that the battle was mostly between Ali and al-Khawarij, because he did not consider them real Muslims who acted according to Islam.

Two decades after Ali's assassination, after his son Hussein was killed in the Karbala massacre, the second political party was formed. It was formed by some of the people of Kufa, in Iraq, and other supporters of the sons and grandsons of Ali and their cousins, the sons of al-Abbas. This political party, the Tawwabin, worked secretly against the Umayyad government. After its defeat, it was succeeded by the Mukhtar uprising, which represented the beginning of the downfall of the Umayyad state half a century later, and the establishment of the Abbasid state. During the Umayyad period the majority of the population dealt with the caliphate as a system of governance, leading the country for the benefit of Islam. Although the caliph and most of those working with him were not considered the best examples for Muslims on an individual level, everyone accepted them because it was a sign of the unity of Muslims: one caliphate, one governing system.

Alongside this system of governance a new system, known as the civil community system, developed. After a period it developed into what is known as al-nasiha, advice for the people in power.

This Abbasids took power in the year 750 and established their state with its capital first in Baghdad. The Umayyads were out of power, but not defeated, and they became the opposition to Abbasid rule. However, it was a civil rather than a violent opposition. During the rule of the seventh Abbasid caliph, al-Ma'mun, a new political formation emerged. We saw the use of a new term, 'Ahlus-Sunnah'. It was related to religion, but it was also a political movement led by Ahmad ibn Hanbal, which added a new political dimension to the Islamic community.

Thus, we had the Shi'a, and then we had the Ahlus-Sunnah. In this period there was a clear separation between the community and the government. Civil society grew and became very effective. Some signs of that development were in the opposition of people like Ahmad bin Hanbal to the Abbasid government, whose protests – in various forms – sometimes forced reforms from the caliphate.

A big question that remains is: What about the Khawarij who started the first political party? In every century there has been some form of Khawarij. For example, in the Abbasid period they were known as al-Qaramita who attacked Makkah during the hajj, killing more than 30 000 Muslims, and resulting in the hajj being suspended for eight years.

Some groups and organisations claim they are based on Islam, but they act even against the very simple foundational principles of Islam. It is unacceptable to consider them as part of Political Islam just because they claim 'we are connected to Islam'. Some politicians using the term Political Islam are against the whole idea of having Islamists in politics, and working for the benefit of their countries and people or maybe the government of their countries.

As Muslims we have a long history in political work, social work and reform inside our communities. This practice is clear throughout history. I want to turn to the future after looking at this long history. At the beginning of the twentieth century, Islamists, or Muslims generally, faced a very important challenge, the dissolution of the Caliphate, which had united Muslims all over the world. The dissolution of the Uthmanian Caliphate and the creation of nation states was an important and massive challenge for Muslims, a challenge that was not easily accepted. Allow me to give one example. In Malaysia, four years after the demise of the Uthmanian Caliphate, during the resistance against British occupation, the resistance used the flag of the Ottoman Caliphate as their flag. Muslims faced a dilemma in how to deal with the end of the caliphate, and they often dealt with it in strange but useful ways. They did focus their attention on politics, but began to concentrate on

protecting individuals, on the people. So they acted first as reformists to protect the community, with the slogan: 'If we lose the people, we lose the future'.

Based on that understanding they have worked as social movements, as reformists, and, for a long time, did not do political work. Whenever they did political work they did it as part of the work of the nation, as in the revolutions in Syria and North Africa. They were not considered, and they did not consider themselves, separate from their communities. In fact, in Algeria everyone participated in one united resistance movement. They considered themselves Muslims, and they all had to stand against French occupation.

In Palestine it was the same. In 1982 the Islamic Movement considered the resistance that had been mounted by the PLO as the Palestinian resistance. The PLO's defeat convinced the Islamic Movement inside the Occupied Palestinian Territory to initiate a resistance from inside, especially considering that our fighters had been thrown outside our borders and far from Palestine. Those in the Islamic Movement concentrated on the people, and they worked to reform their communities to resist the occupation. On the first level, they focused on Muslim identity, beliefs, ethics, and so forth, and worked to keep the community united to confront the challenges. On the second level, they were part of the huge resistance of their communities. They worked under the rule of secular regimes, and saw no problem with that. In fact, they did not oppose those regimes, but adopted the way of slow reforms in their communities.

What we see happening in the region now, within the uprisings, or what some call 'revolutions', are not struggles between Islamists and others. Rather, they are reflections of political, social, economic and even ethnic or tribal problems. These same reasons are prevalent elsewhere, and are normal developments in this kind of context.

The major cause of these upheavals is injustice faced by our communities, and dictatorships, which we have suffered from across the region. Islamic movements are part of what is now happening in their

communities. They have had to take action and make choices about whether they will participate in these revolutions or whether they will continue working as reformists. In some countries, such as in Egypt, they participated in the revolutions, but they insisted that the revolutions must be peaceful. Thereafter they participated in elections. The situation might be different in other places, such as in Libya. But when we consider Libya, we note that the Islamic factor was not the only factor involved; there were other factors, too.

I believe Islamic movements are moving forward. They are making choices and changes in their ways and ideas. We have a dual stream of Islamic movements: those who are moderate, and the others who I have already mentioned – Khawarij, those groups that give themselves the right to kill people because simply because these groups regard them as non-Muslims, even if they are Muslims. These are the Khawarij of this century, and I cannot consider them as part of Islamic ideas and beliefs.

There are challenges facing Islamic movements. The first challenge is to understand the concept of the ummah in the face of the nation-state concept. Will Muslims continue working within the framework of the nation state, or do they seek to have their ummah united again? What about justice in their communities after the revolutions? How must they participate to build new systems of justice for those communities that had risen up because of injustices they faced? How should the revolutions be protected and turned into new societies that subscribe to justice and equality? How should we build the required safety nets to protect the communities domestically, regionally, and globally? These are the urgent questions that the Islamic movement must answer.

Within Hamas we worked as a social movement until 1982. After the Israeli attack on Lebanon we initiated resistance from the inside. From 1987 until the present moment, Hamas has been a resistance movement, because until now there has been no liberation of Palestinian lands. In 2006, we agreed to participate in Palestinian Authority elections, and, in fact, we won those parliamentary elections. Consequently, and for several reasons – chiefly the occupation – there followed the Palestinian division.

That represented a massive challenge for Hamas. Hamas fervently believes that the Palestinian community must be united. We worked towards a unity agreement in 2009 to rebuild our political system as Palestinians, to accept all organisations – with our differences – within this system: the PLO, the Palestinian Authority, the Palestinian National Council, the Palestinian Legislative Council, etc.

The unfortunate reality is that it is not working as we believe it should, or as we hope. Nevertheless, we are going forward, we are building something new, and I believe this is the important challenge: not to keep the old with all its problems, not to destroy everything because there are problems, but to improve your situation, solve the problems, and create something new to benefit your people and your society. This is a lesson not just for Palestinians, but for all Muslims, for all in the Middle East region, and for all of us human beings wherever we live in the world.

Preface

Na'eem Jeenah

Since the beginning of the 2011 uprisings in the Middle East and North Africa, a large part of that region has been in almost continuous turmoil, presenting and confronting us with events and experiences that will undoubtedly leave an indelible mark on the pages of the history of the MENA region, of the Muslim world, and of the world more generally. We have seen uprisings; the removal of the presidents for life in certain countries; change of governments; at least one fully blown revolution; a brutal military coup; huge reversals – in some countries – of the gains of the uprisings; hundreds of thousands of people being killed in civil wars; intense counter-revolutionary activity that seems to currently be winning the day, with massive amounts of resources being spent to prop up dictatorships and return at least parts of the region to the way they were in 2010; and the dramatic and rapid rise (and subsequent almost-as-dramatic fall) of a new group that threatened – or, at least, hoped – to upset the entire Sykes-Picot apple cart (which, in itself, is not really a bad thing). These developments, individually and collectively, have certainly had profound impacts on the countries where uprisings took place; they have also affected a number of countries and communities within and without the region which did not experience the uprisings directly, such as Lebanon, the Palestinian people, and various countries in Africa, Europe and North America.

All of this has meant that many people in the region have been engaged in a profound conceptual rethinking, including a re-evaluation of notions of global ethics, citizenship, democracy, capitalism and economic development, imperialism, and liberation. Playing a central role in this process of rethinking – whether by engaging in it or attempting to prevent it from happening – have been various organised forms of Political Islam. These came to the fore over the past few years in different ways, and exerted their influence to shape the region in terms of very specific visions that were developed on the basis of geopolitical, strategic, theological and sectarian interests. Despite setbacks for certain forms of Political Islam, such as the 2013 coup in Egypt against a president who was a Muslim Brotherhood leader, in many cases Islamism has not been discarded, but, rather, it would be more correct to say that one form of Political Islam has been replaced or overthrown by another. This might sound astonishing if we regard Political Islam as simply various forms of Islamist social movements and political opposition groups such as the Muslim Brotherhood and Hizbullah; it is not very surprising, however, if we understand Political Islam as including not only such movements, but also certain states such as Saudi Arabia or proto-regimes such as the Islamic State group.

It was with these developments as a background that the Afro-Middle East Centre (AMEC) organised a conference in 2015 with the theme 'Political Islam: Between Islamic states and Muslim social movements'. The theme suggests that there is more to Political Islam than participatory Islamists – those who participated or engaged (or attempted to) in the democratic process, contested elections, were active in civil society and so forth. It suggested that, in fact, that included under the broad term 'Political Islam' (or 'Islamism') were other actors as well – actors who might not participate in, and, in fact, might eschew, democratic processes. Political Islam, AMEC believed, needed to be understood in a much broader sense, and discussions about it should include actors that might not be interested in democracy and democratic processes, and might actually oppose these in theory and prac-

tice. The 2015 conference, thus, attempted to tease out these various strands that might be regarded as falling within the purview of Political Islam. It sought to include in is consideration participatory Islamists, as well as Islamist governments (of various shades), and even the Islamic State group (IS), and, through such consideration, to include all of these within the ambit of 'Political Islam'.

The conference brought together scholars and roleplayers who would be able to appreciate, present on, discuss and debate these various forms of Islamism – and even argue about which groups should be covered by the Political Islam umbrella. The conference was, consequently, characterised by vigorous debates. This book is, in the main, an edited collection of most of the papers presented at the conference, with additional chapters commissioned for the sake of completeness.

Completeness in this matter is, however, not an easily attainable objective. Many aspects of Political Islam that we would have liked to cover in this book have been omitted for a number of practical reasons. Furthermore, the political and social terrain in the Middle East and North Africa region is constantly changing, and, with it, the fortunes of Political Islam too have been unstable, ebbing in some areas, flowing in others; certain expressions replacing others in some places, and undermining or even halting them in yet others. This does not mean that the chapters in the book are outdated, however. The book has been edited to allow its chapters to continue to be relevant and of use for a long time yet.

Some of the expressions of Political Islam discussed in this book have undergone significant, and sometimes dramatic, transformations over the past few years. The MENA uprisings and their aftermath have certainly affected the development of Political Islam and Islamist organisations in a profound manner. In many respects, the real impact on the development of Political Islam in the region of the uprisings and the attempts to undermine them will only be realised in years and decades to come. This volume and the essays it contains will continue to be useful as a timeless reference to the various movements, civil society

groups, armed formations and political parties that make up the mosaic of Political Islam, while, at the same time, continuing to address a particularly significant moment in history.

Na'eem Jeenah, Ebrahim Deen, Nazlie Jada, Mahlatse Mpya
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Frequently used acronyms and abbreviations

ADF	Allied Democratic Forces, Uganda and Democratic Republic of Congo
AKP	Justice and Development Party, Turkey
AMISOM	African Union Mission in Somalia
AQAP	Al-Qa'ida in the Arab Peninsula
FJP	Freedom and Justice Party, Egypt
FSA	Free Syrian Army
GCC	Gulf Cooperation Council
GNC	General National Council, Libya
GWOT	global war on terror
ICC	International Criminal Court
IDF	Israeli Defense Forces
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IS	Islamic State group
LIFG	Libyan Islamic Fighting Group
MB	Muslim Brotherhood
MENA	Middle East and North Africa
MYM	Muslim Youth Movement, South Africa
NATO	North Atlantic Trade Organization
NCP	National Congress Party, Sudan
NDF	National Defence Force, Sudan

NIF	National Islamic Front, Sudan
PCP	Popular Congress Party, Sudan
SAPs	structural adjustment programmes
SCAF	Supreme Council of Armed Forces, Egypt
SLA	South Lebanon Army
SPLA	Sudan People's Liberation Army
TFG	Transitional Federal Government, Somalia
TJ	Tablighi Jamaat
UN	United Nations
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
US/USA	United States
USD	United States dollar(s)

Introduction

Na'eem Jeenah and Shir'a Jeenah

The attack on New York City's World Trade Centre in September 2001 was a landmark in global politics. It led to the invasion and virtual destruction of two countries (Iraq and Afghanistan), the emergence of an entirely new political and security discourse (the 'war on terror'), the burgeoning of new scholarship (and the remoulding of existing thought) on Islam, and particularly 'Islam as politics'. Discourses on Islam and political Islam have since been reshaped as scholars have provided or contested orientalist and Islamophobic readings of the faith.

About a decade later, another series of events occurred that forced many to navigate the discourses on political Islam anew. The protests that began in Tunisia in December 2010 shook the Middle East and North African (MENA) region, as well as the rest of the world; they are still having a major impact on scholarship. Since 2011, countless books and articles have been published on Islam and political Islam (or Islamism). Many of these were spurred on by the MENA uprisings, which had resulted in certain groups of Islamists taking on increasingly political roles (including state governance) in some countries. These Islamists, and the ideologies they subscribed to and propagated, have become important subjects of study – to be understood, analysed, judged, and predicted.

The uprisings also led a number of intellectuals, ideologues and political figures to profoundly re-evaluate concepts such as: global ethics; citizenship and democracy; capitalism and economic development; imperialism and liberation. Similarly, various organised forms and

manifestations of political Islam have played central roles in engaging with, or attempting to prevent, these re-evaluations. Thus, in the first few years after the uprisings broke out, articulations of political Islam came to the fore in different ways, each attempting to influence the MENA region in ways that promote their own geopolitical, strategic, theological and sectarian interests.

After an initial sense of optimism, certain forms of political Islam suffered real setbacks – the 2013 military coup in Egypt being a massive (and perhaps the most significant) one. In some cases, the setbacks did not necessarily involve a complete rejection of political Islam, but rather the replacement of one form of political Islam by another. This might seem confusing if we regard political Islam as encompassing only the various Islamist social movements and opposition groups, such as the Muslim Brotherhood or Hizbullah. It becomes clearer, however, if we understand political Islam as also including certain states and proto-regimes – such as Iran or Saudi Arabia and the Islamic State group (IS) – as well as militant organisations (such as al-Shabab in Somalia and Boko Haram in Nigeria).

Interestingly, one of the questions scholars have raised repeatedly since the end of 2010 is whether the leaders and adherents of political Islam were actually equipped to rule at that time, and how they would have fared had they been able to take power. This question, agonised over in books, articles and lectures, misses an important point. Islamists *have* already won elections and/or *been* in power, and Islam has previously been instrumentalised in numerous ways for political purposes and for the sake of governance. While the individuals, groups and ideologies involved in those cases might not have been identical to those that emerged from exile and prisons after 2011, many had occupied positions of power prior to 2011. Perhaps the fact that most of these were once allies of the United States and other western powers helped to protect them from negative media and commentary, and, indeed, from being labelled Islamist, which many in the West regard as a derogatory term. Included in such Islamist ruling parties (and families) are:

- Strong Western allies, such as the Saudi royal family and the Justice and Development Party (AKP) which has been in power in Turkey since 2002.
- Powerful governments not allied to the West, such as Iran.
- Parties that have won elections but have been prevented from taking office, such as the Algerian Islamic Salvation Front (which won elections in 1990) and Hamas (which won national elections in the Occupied Palestinian Territory in 2006).

In this book, a wide spectrum of those who might be called 'Islamist' are examined and discussed. Some have been part of states that regarded themselves as 'Islamic' – or that have been ruled by Islamists (through groups such as the Muslim Brotherhood) – and that came to power by participating in electoral and civil processes in their countries. Others (such as IS) have rejected democratic processes and sought to create new forms of governance that they regard as Islamic. Also examined are forms of Islamism that have no interest in winning state power, and instead focus their political activities on confronting the state through armed resistance and/or social movements. Such groups include the transnational al-Qa'ida, and the Muslim Youth Movement as well as the Call of Islam in South Africa.

The chapters in this volume do not cover all the manifestations in all the possible categories of political Islam. Instead the contributors examine particular forms of Islamism or political Islam within several categories, and discuss the ideological imperatives and inclinations of each one. All the contributors regard Islamism as an engagement in politics that draws on the teachings of Islam as a theoretical and practical reference. Accordingly, any movement, political party, militia group or state agency that identifies Islam as its raison d'être, and uses Islamic language, symbols and rhetoric as mobilising tools, can be defined as Islamist. By this definition, different manifestations of Islamism can have radically different notions of what 'making Islam a reference point' actually entails. What is relevant, however, is that they all subscribe to the notion of Is-

lam as reference. Thus, none of the contributors are suggesting that any particular manifestation of Islamism – whether this is the government of Iran, the Muslim Brotherhood, Hizbullah or any of the groups related to them – can be seen as epitomising Islamism. Instead, these and other examples are considered as the kinds of phenomena that can emerge when Islam is instrumentalised for political objectives.

In addition, the contributors do not examine states or socio-political actors that seek to control or define Islam without using Islam as a basis for their actions. Thus, for example, the military state in Egypt, which controls Islamic expression, and even Islamic thought through its control over Al-Azhar University and the Grand Mufti of Egypt, is not considered. Nor is the case of Tunisia's secular fundamentalist president, Zine al-Abidine Ben Ali, who hunted down young Muslims and decreed that he was the only legitimate interpreter of the Qur'an until he was forced to flee the country in January 2011.

Political Islam, Islamism

The terms 'political Islam' and Islamism are often used interchangeably, and are generally regarded as meaning the same thing. While both terms have been adopted and appropriated by those they seek to describe, neither term derives from the thinking of these roleplayers or even from within Muslim discourse. The terminology was developed by western scholars, and was initially used mostly in ways intended to malign.

The French term 'Islamisme' (Islamism) began to be used from the eighteenth century as a substitute for 'Islam' because, it seems, moving from the derogatory 'Mahométisme' (Mohammedanism) to the correct term – 'Islam' – was too big a leap even for liberal French intellectuals. In the 1970s, the contemporary meaning of the term 'Islamism' (as a political approach to Islam) started to be used (again in France initially) as a more neutral way to refer to 'Islamic fundamentalism'.[1] Despite its recasting, the term still conveyed a sense of derision for politically engaged Muslims (and Muslim groups) that viewed politics through the prism of Islam.

Nevertheless, many individuals and groups later appropriated the terms, and began to refer to themselves as Islamist. Most Arab Islamists, for example, now have no problem calling themselves, or being called, 'Islamiyoun'; and many Turks call themselves 'İslamcılar' with no misgivings about the origins of the term. The Persian equivalent, 'Islamgarayan', had currency during and after the Islamic Revolution in 1979, but has since fallen out of usage due to Iran's complex domestic politics. A final noteworthy point is that (with exceptions in certain parts of the world) many of those who are now comfortable about identifying themselves as Islamists tend to support the Muslim Brotherhood and/or the Islamic Republic of Iran. Apart from Iran, none of the other states that have instrumentalised Islam for their political projects have referred to themselves as Islamist.

Similarly, the term 'political Islam' was also initially developed by western critics, but this, too, has been appropriated by politically engaged Muslims. Interestingly, the generally positive appropriation of these terms is in stark contrast to Muslims' rejection of the derogatory connotations inherent in the term 'Islamic fundamentalism'.

In this book, the terms 'Islamism' and 'political Islam' are mostly used interchangeably. Although some scholars have suggested that the two terms have slightly different meanings, the contributors to this volume agreed that these variances have more to do with nuance than substance. For example, the argument that 'political Islam' refers to all Muslim political activity going back fourteen centuries, while 'Islamism' refers to Muslim political activity from the beginning in the twentieth century, is unjustifiable because both terms are recent inventions. The argument, therefore, represents a post-hoc imposition on all political activity before the twentieth century,[2] when forms of political structures and activity were very different, as indeed was the understanding of the role Islam (or religion in general) should play in political life.

There is, however, one important (if subtle) distinction between the two terms. That is, the term 'political Islam' can be construed as confined to the political realm (ideologies, practices, methodologies, ro-

leplayers), while the term 'Islamism' seems to encompass more than purely political concerns. This is relevant when considering the many Islamist groups whose activities are not limited to politics (and, for some of which, politics, while important, is not the major part of their activity), and do include providing social and economic services. In essence, the term 'Islamism' allows for a slightly wider understanding than the notion 'political Islam' in that it includes socio-political and economic activity, and can thus be understood as being more comprehensive than the confines of the political realm are generally perceived to be.

And post-Islamism?

The term 'post-Islamism' was coined by Asef Bayat in his 1996 essay, 'The Coming of a Post-Islamist Society'.[3] It has since been employed by a number of scholars,[4] but has so far, gained little traction among the roleplayers themselves – most of those who refer to themselves as Islamists would baulk at being described as 'post-Islamists'. The reason for this is easy to fathom: Islamists do not see their activities as occurring 'post' or 'after' Islamism; nor do they envisage a new form of Islamism or anything that supersedes existing practice. In general, the evolutionary shifts that they envisage, and try to achieve, include new ways of doing Islamism or different ways of being Islamist. This suggests that their understandings of Islamism are more essentialist – in the sense that shifts in thought and practice can be seen as being derived from the same essence – than Bayat is willing to acknowledge. In other words, contemporary Islamists often see new ideas and approaches as not new at all, but rather as adaptive and contextual responses to different circumstances.

Bayat defined post-Islamism as 'a tendency to resecularise religion'.[5] As he later pointed out, this suggests that post-Islamism 'represents both a *condition* and a *project*'.[6] He argued that Islamism is compelled to change and 'reinvent' itself due to 'internal contradictions' and 'societal pressure'. Importantly, he furthered the argument by suggesting that this change is 'expressed in acknowledging secular exigencies…

in breaking down the monopoly of religious truth'.[7] This implies that Islamism does not yet encompass such 'secular exigencies' as individual freedom of choice, democracy or modernity. Thus, the notion of post-Islamism is based on a particular understanding of Islamism.

Most scholars who theorise about post-Islamism argue for the validity of the concept on the basis that the practice of Islamism necessarily involves aspiring towards an Islamic state. As Bayat put it, 'I take Islamism to refer to those ideologies and movements that strive to establish some kind of an "Islamic order" – a religious state, shari'a law, and moral codes in Muslim societies and communities.'[8] By making this assumption, such scholars claim the right to define what Islamism is and what Islamists do, rather than allowing Islamists to do this for themselves. This line of thinking is problematic in several ways.

First, some Islamists and Islamist groupings readily accept, as part of their own *Islamism* (in theory and practice), the characteristics that Bayat and others list as defining features of *post-Islamism*. In fact, for some, these features sit comfortably within their Islamist discourse alongside their aspirations for an Islamic state. Second, for others, the elements that Bayat refers to as defining post-Islamism are integral to their Islamism, but aspiring towards an Islamic state is not. For these adherents, the desire to bring about an Islamic state does not necessarily define their Islamism. Third, the idea of post-Islamism falls into the trap of viewing Islamism (and Islamists) as static and rigid, as well as ontologically and paradigmatically incapable of changing or adapting to varying conditions and circumstances. Thus, as noted above, rather than representing any kind of failure of Islamism, the adaptation and refashioning that Bayat identified are better understood if they are seen as responses to differing or changing material realities.

As illustrated by the chapters in this book, the breadth of the Islamist universe means that attempts at categorising or classifying Islamists and Islamism always risk being flawed. This is why Graham Fuller's definition of Islamism makes more sense than any that include the aspiration towards an Islamic state as a key feature. Fuller suggests that

> an Islamist is one who believes that Islam as a body of faith has something important to say about how politics and society should be ordered in the contemporary Muslim world and who seeks to implement this idea in some fashion.[9]

It is unfortunate that Fuller narrows the definition by referring to 'the contemporary Muslim world' as political Islam also exists in places that might not ordinarily be regarded as 'the Muslim world'. We will refrain from debating what the 'Muslim world' might or might not be, and simply point out that manifestations of political Islam exist in numerous states where Muslims live as minority communities. Political Islam in South Africa is one case in point, but there are numerous other examples. The Jamaat-e-Islami in India is, perhaps, among the largest and best known; others exist in Sri Lanka, China, Russia and elsewhere.

A broad spectrum

Using a definition of political Islam similar to Fuller's, this book's contributors accept that political Islam encompasses all of those who claim to exercise their politics on the basis of Islam or who use Islam as a political reference point. We depart from the usual tendency to conceptualise 'political Islam' as a phenomenon limited to groups that can perhaps be better characterised as social movements or as opposition to the status quo. Instead, we see political Islam as a descriptor for various ideologies, organisations and individuals that seek to legitimate their political actions or state power by referring to Islamic principles, symbolisms and texts. Thus, we discuss not only the paradigmatic Muslim political actors (such as the Muslim Brotherhood and those who are organisationally or ideologically linked to them) but also ruling regimes in Saudi Arabia, Iran, Pakistan and other states, as well as proto-regimes such as IS, which invoke Islam as the basis for their political views and actions. We examine how various Muslim political actors understand their relationship with political power, revealing that some happily wear the Islamist label while others vehemently reject it.

All the actors described, discussed and analysed in this volume (sincerely or expediently) cite Islam as the basis of their ideology, their practices, and even their strategies and tactics. It is no great surprise, then, that, in general, these actors use a common language and symbology. This leads casual (or malicious) observers to conclude that these actors share the same ideology, vision, goals and objectives, and must therefore be linked to one another in some way. Nothing could be further from the truth. In reality, the differences between them – in all the respects just listed – can be vast. It is no wonder, then, that tensions arise between the different groups – and some are even at war with one another. Mohammed Ayoob explains:

> The various Islamist movements take recourse to similar vocabulary because they draw their inspiration from the same sources and also because this vocabulary is familiar to their audiences. However, once one begins to scrutinise the political objectives and actions of discrete Islamist formations…it becomes clear that they are engaged primarily in promoting distinct national agendas, not a single universal agenda.[10]

This important point is also borne out in Chapter 15, in which the similarities in the vocabularies used by different groups are examined. The groups range from extremist and violent (such as IS) to those that believe in pluralism and gender equality and do not include the seizure of political power and the establishment of an 'Islamic state' among their aims. As Ayoob put it:

> It is true that there is an Islamic vocabulary that transcends political boundaries. However, such vocabulary is normally employed to serve objectives specific to discrete settings… while the Islamic idiom may continue to appear similar to the uninitiated observer, its actual content undergoes substantial transformation.[11]

The shared vocabulary that Ayoob refers to should not, therefore, be taken to include identical or even common tactics, strategies, agendas, objectives, ideology or principles. In examining the various manifestations of political Islam that are described in this volume, it is clear that, in some cases, what they share begins *and ends* with vocabulary, and that sharing terminology does not extend to a common understanding of even basic elements of ideology. Vocabulary, as a set of signifiers, is often appropriated and reappropriated in varying contexts, and across time and space, as people formulate and articulate their actions. Thus, although Islam is the reference point that seems to 'unify' varying projects under the banner of political Islam, it does not necessarily follow – and, indeed this would be difficult to imagine – that they share all, or even most, of their thinking.

Political Islam as conceptualised and discussed in this book manifests variously as military rule, monarchy, democratic (or pseudo-democratic) republicanism, pseudo-states, armed non-state militancy, political parties or candidates participating in electoral politics, and social movements. In the MENA region and beyond, it manifests both as nationalism (in different nation states) and transnationalism (in the case, for example, of al-Qa'ida or IS). The contributors to this volume do not seek to cover every expression of political Islam's complex and rich mosaic. Instead, we set out to explore the broad experience of several, often through a single case study.

Islamist framings

In their landmark 1998 essay, David Snow and Robert Benford discuss how social movements 'frame' the 'signifying work' that they do in their efforts to: produce meaning for themselves, their antagonists and observers; to transmit their beliefs and ideas; and to mobilise support. Social movements, they assert,

> frame, or assign meaning to and interpret relevant events and considerations in ways that are intended to mobilize potential

> adherents and constituents, to garner bystander support, and to demobilize antagonists.[12]

While Snow and Benford focused on social movements in their work, their perspective applies not only to the different Islamist formations, it also helps to explain the competition (even violent rivalry) between these entities as they vie for what Quinton Wiktorowicz called 'framing hegemony'.[13] The notion of 'framing' thus offers a useful prism through which readers can locate different manifestations of political Islam in the chapters of this book.

All the manifestations of Islamism discussed – whether of individuals, groups or states – use framing to mobilise support *for* their respective projects and *against* their political 'enemies', including other groups that frame Islamism differently. Consequently, these manifestations often get involved in contestation and confrontation. In the 1970s, John Wilson argued that 'ideological structures consist of three parts, each of which is closely related to the others: a diagnosis of present problems; a solution to these problems and a vision of a better world; and a rationale for the movement.'[14] Snow and Benford appropriated the idea of 'structural elements' to develop the notion of 'core framing tasks'. They defined these as follows:

- Diagnostic framing – 'a diagnosis of some event or aspect of social life as problematic and in need to alteration.'
- Prognostic framing – 'a proposed solution to the diagnosed problem that specifies what needs to be done' as well as the 'identification of strategies, tactics and targets.'
- Motivational framing – 'a call to arms or rationale for engaging in ameliorative or corrective action.'[15]

On closer examination of each of these 'framing tasks', the authors of the various chapters uncover some of the differences between Islamists, thereby demonstrating that political Islam covers a much broader spectrum of beliefs and formations than is generally acknowledged. For example, the framings of Islamic activism by, say, anti-apartheid Islam-

ists in South Africa and IS in Syria and Iraq differ hugely in terms of ideology, objectives, principles, strategies and tactics. Differences in framing even occur between Islamist groups that are often thought to be similar ideologically and/or organisationally aligned. For example, Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood might frame its ideological understanding of Islam similarly to that of the Palestinian Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas), but the two movements frame their strategies and tactics in significantly different ways. The former insists that using violence in political struggle is illegitimate, while the latter has made armed resistance to Israel a cornerstone of its political project. (In fact, this was one of the reasons why the Muslim Brotherhood of Palestine broke away and formed Hamas.)[16]

Between state and society

As noted earlier, definitions of Islamism often focus on the pursuit of state power. Echoing Bayat's definition as discussed earlier, Kamran Bokhari and Farid Senzai state that, 'a principal Islamist goal is the founding of an "Islamic" state – one that will implement the shari'a.'[17] These definitions were published in 2013, in the midst of the uprisings and civil wars that had erupted in the MENA region. In this context, a number of scholars became convinced that the goal of Islamism and Islamists is fundamentally about seizing power and/or asserting control over the levers of state.

By contrast, Greg Barton, who wrote about Islamism in Indonesia almost a decade earlier, proposed that,

> Islamism covers a broad spectrum of convictions. At one extreme are those who would merely like to see Islam accorded proper recognition in national life in terms of national symbols. At the other extreme are those who want to see the radical transformation of society and politics, by whatever means, into an absolute theocracy.[18]

While Barton might be stretching the definition at the two extremes, he does not regard the creation of an 'Islamic state' as the main goal of

all Islamists. In our view, his description should be read together with debates about the notion of an 'Islamic state' and the role of this idea in Islam. Many of the scholars quoted in this volume (and others who are not) assume that state control is of primary significance in any Islamic political position, others argue that this is not the case. Some even argue that Islam and the modern notion of the state are incompatible. For example, in his book *The Impossible State*, Wael Hallaq asserts that the 'modern state is a bad fit for Muslims'.[19] Such theses suggest that Islam, in its ontology, is diametrically opposed to the very idea of the modern state, and conversely that the conceptions of modern European state sovereignty are fundamentally opposed to the theological underpinnings of an 'Islamic state'. Of course, this critique is still located within a framing that understands modern Islamism as a project that aims to capture state power and create an 'Islamic state' – despite the logic of Hallaq's assertion that this is an impossibility.

Interestingly, Hallaq's background is Christian, yet, similar claims have also been made by scholars educated within the Islamic tradition. Many Muslims eschew politics and claim that Islam has nothing to do with the state; large movements, such as the Tablighi Jamaat and many Salafis, hold on to a theology that is politically quietist. In addition, clerics such as Ramadan al-Bouti and Hamza Yusuf have argued an alternative traditionalist perspective that Islam requires that Muslims acquiesce to their rulers or governments, and that opposition to the status quo leads to fitnah (civil strife), which is worse than oppression. According to this view, all governments – even tyrannical ones – should be considered 'a blessing'.[20]

Accordingly, Islamists who emerged as strong political actors after 2010, with a vision of transforming or capturing state power, have faced several challenges. For some Muslims, the argument that Islam and the modern state are incompatible has some traction. They question the validity of vying for state power and advocate working in civil society, thus avoiding the socio-political 'trap' of liberal statehood. Such questions are rooted in an ontological critique of the modern nation

state, which doubts that the nation state can ever be a successful platform for achieving the social justice that Islamists claim to be pursuing. One reading of this stance locates Islamism as a form of collective political subjectivity rather than an entity of faith. It critiques liberal Western political forms and advocates for the transformation of the political and socio-economic status quo through the adoption of a 'revolutionary' consciousness. It also challenges Islamists who are attempting state capture to constitute socio-political (even revolutionary) movements rather than political parties if they wish to drive real socio-economic change.

The contributors to this book collectively attempt to move away from all the narrower definitions, and try to expand our imagination of the parameters of what can be labelled 'Islamism' or 'political Islam'. What we want to encourage is an understanding of the varied methods, means and nuances that political Islam and Islamist movements have adopted as they have navigated time and space. The Muslim Brotherhood is a prime example of this. For a long time, the movement was confined to the socio-religious sphere in Egyptian society; then suddenly they were given an opportunity to assume state power. Our assertion is that Islamism includes all of the various political manifestations of what certain politically active Muslims interpret Islam to be – be it in the state or society or both.

Islamism and modernity

Islamism is a very modern phenomenon. As explained, contemporary Islamist movements all have their roots in modernity and, importantly also, in a context in which western hegemony has discursively sculpted Muslims and Islamic thought into a global Other. It is unsurprising, therefore, that the relationship between most of these groups and modernity is complicated and tenuous.

The ways in which modernity has shaped the imagination of various Islamisms is evident in the activities of a number of Islamist movements, particularly in the MENA region – from Ennahda in Tunisia to the

Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt and Hizbullah in Lebanon – as they and their constituencies navigate their Islamic beliefs and practices, as well as their political aspirations and strategies, through modern forms of living. Although these groups and individuals generally succeed in reconciling Islam and modernity, the process is fraught with tensions that, for some, result in an existential conundrum. In most cases, however, the conundrum is often more rhetorical than actual because, in their very manner of thinking and operating, they are essentially modern.

Various discussions of Islamism, particularly post-9/11, both inside and outside the Islamist (and Muslim) tradition insist on setting Islam up against 'the West' or western modernity. Within the Islamist tradition, this idea certainly has a strong pedigree. The South Asian Islamist leader, Abul 'Ala Maududi (1903–1979), referred to secular modernity as the 'new jahiliyyah' (age of ignorance).[21] Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood leader Sayyid Qutb (executed by Egypt in 1966) also used the term 'jahiliyyah' in his immensely influential manifesto, *Milestones*,[22] which he wrote while in prison and which was first published in 1964. Qutb expanded the scope of the term,[23] using it to refer to both western ideologies and those Muslim rulers who he regarded as oppressors. For Qutb, jahiliyyah was about the domination of some human beings by others, as opposed to what he saw as the ideal; namely, the subservience of all humans to God. Touting the same idea, but using different terminology, the Iranian Islamist ideologue Ali Shari'ati borrowed the term 'westoxication' ('gharbzadegi' in Persian) – coined by Samad Behrangi and Jalal Al-e Ahmad – to describe the ways in which western ideals seek to poison Iranian society in particular, and Muslim society in general.[24]

As Salman Sayyid has observed, political Islam is 'considered to be the vehicle by which many of the victims of the western enterprise seek revenge and redress'.[25] Islamists often position themselves as political actors against western modernity, and, particularly, colonialism and imperialism. The hegemonic power of the West that they rail against is not an abstract notion but the consequence of centuries of colonial domina-

tion. Importantly, responses to colonialism and modernity are couched in language that represents territorial as well as social, political, economic and cultural battles. Sayyid suggests that such movements take 'revenge' for the atrocities of colonialism, and for the foreign policies of states that continue to uphold western domination.

The chapters in this book highlight various manifestations of this battle, not only against the colonialism of the past, but also the ongoing destabilisation and domination of other nations by the West as it pursues its own economic and political interests. What the chapters also highlight, however, are the nuances of the relationship between Islamism and modernity. Thus, while this tense quest for 'revenge' dominates the thought, rhetoric and practice of Islamist groups, they also comfortably use the tools of modernity – its language, technology, forms of organisation and so forth – to engage in the battle. Indeed, the modernisation of contemporary Islamist movements – including extreme examples such as al-Qa'ida and IS – is even more profound. It includes their conceptualisation of nation states and the organisational forms that these can take; as well as, for some, their engagement with capitalism and its attendant valuing of individualism, urbanisation, technological solutions and so forth. It can even be argued that were such groups not willing to be part of the project of modernity, they would not exist.

What this book deals with

As noted, this is not an attempt to review all of the contexts in which political Islam is active, nor to catalogue all its expressions. Rather, we seek to reveal and examine forms and strategies of political activity that are common among Islamist groups. Drawing on a few case studies, we aim to explain the different forms that political Islam has taken, from monarchy to military dictatorship or social movement, and so on. Furthermore, the various authors examine the range of theoretical frameworks and underpinnings from those that are wholly congruent to those that overlap a little and others that are utterly irreconcilable. The point

is to showcase a spectrum of ideas and cases that ought to be considered when thinking through issues related to Islamism.

In Part One, the focus is on the relationship between Islamists and modernity. In Chapter One, Jocelyne Cesari discusses modernity, secularism (and secularity) and explores how closely Islam's becoming a 'modern religion' has been related to the making of the modern state. Highlighting the religion–state dichotomy, she argues that the persistent role of religion in the public realm in these states means that the western definition of secularism (in which state and religion are separated) does not apply – even in Muslim-majority states that are regarded as secular. Cesari rejects the notion that the study of Islam has to accept a dichotomy between state and religion, and opts instead for what she calls an 'institutional approach'. Through this, she attempts to achieve a better understanding of Islam and, particularly, of Islam in relation to the state and society in Muslim-majority contexts.

Mohammad Fadel, in Chapter Two, examines the thought of three modern Islamic political theorists: Khayr al-Din Tunisi, Rifa'a Rafi' Tahtawi, and Muhammad Rashid Rida. Fadel suggests that understanding the work of these three scholars is necessary for those wishing to understand the spectrum of modern Islamic political thought. Bringing their ideas about Islam and politics to light, Fadel considers the relationship between modern Islamic political thought and liberalism, and concludes that republicanism can express the 'convergence between Islamic modernists and liberalism'.

Tahir Zaman, in Chapter Three, and Salman Sayyid, in Chapter Four, diverge from the framework that Cesari and Fadel sketch and accept. Zaman and Sayyid see an intrinsic link between modernity and the rise of Islamism, and they propose a more decolonial approach to understanding Islamism. Zaman proposes a Fanonian framework, in terms of which Islamist political projects ought to 'find something different' and choose paths other than those designated by the logic of Western modernity. He suggests that a new ethos in terms of ideas about politics and the nation state should be imagined, and should include what he terms

a 'politics of propinquity'. Sayyid describes Islamism as a 'decolonial political grammar of Islam'. He argues that Islamism should be viewed as a modern phenomenon, yet one that should be viewed as being in opposition to western modernity. As he puts it, 'becoming modern meant un-becoming Muslim'. Sayyid extends his argument by elaborating on the distinctions between Islamism and IS.

In Part Two, the focus shifts to the ways in which Al-Saud in Saudi Arabia, the Islamic/Islamist government in Iran, and Islamists in Sudan have sought to establish their political legitimacy, through the use of Islamic vocabulary, theology and actors. In Chapter Five, David Commins signals the relationship between the Saud dynasty and Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab as an important factor in the rise of the Saud family, and in making it the dominant power in Arabia. The Wahhabi doctrine, as Commins points out, served as a major legitimising feature of the Saud monarchy, with the family's claim that it upholds and protects (Sunni) Islam becoming a means to continued political domination. Nura Hossainzadeh, in Chapter Six, examines the writings of Iranian theorist Ayatollah Abdollah Javadi-Amoli. To guide us through the theoretical underpinnings of Iran's Islamist government, Hossainzadeh sketches the similarities and differences between Amoli's political thought and that of Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini. In a scathing critique, Abdullahi Gallab examines the military rule of the 'Islamic government' in Sudan, in Chapter Seven. Outlining the government's history and rise to power, he highlights the relationship between militarism and Islam. The chapters in Part Two demonstrate how, in very different ways and with very different outcomes, Islam has been used to legitimise state governance and military rule.

Two militant Islamist movements, that would vehemently disagree with each other on principles, strategies and tactics take centre stage in Part Three. In Chapter Eight, Joseph Alagha examines Hizbullah, the Shi'a Islamic movement in Lebanon, and interrogates various strategies that the movement employed after the 2006 'July War' with Israel. Having had intimate and extensive access to Hizb spokesper-

sons and archives, Alagha considers the effects that the war had on the movement, and carefully traces the strategies it implemented to rebuild and maintain its strength and support after it and the people of southern Lebanon suffered major material losses during the war. He illustrates how Hizbullah adjusted its regional and domestic ambitions, as well as its religious rhetoric, and the practical projects it undertook, to sustain its relevance in Lebanon and the region. Although the movement's regional standing has since deteriorated, due to its role in the Syrian civil war, Alagha shows how even a militant Islamist movement can engage local communities politically, socially and spiritually. Stig Jarle Hansen shines the light on Somalia's al-Shabab in Chapter Nine, focusing on the group's rise to prominence as well as its claim to, and control of, territory. Hansen describes how the militant group 'governs' areas under its control and how, after some substantial losses, it shifted its strategy away from controlling territorial entities. Hansen argues that the case of al-Shabab offers useful insights into how Sunni jihadist movements can transform in the face of military defeat, and, also into the implications of such changes.

Considering the impact of the 2011 MENA uprisings on how scholars have since approached the topic of Islamism, the contributors to Part Four explore various aspects of the uprisings and their aftermath. In Chapter Ten, Larbi Sadiki looks at the shift in the politics of Tunisia's Ennahda Party after its tenth congress in 2016. This was when the movement attempted to separate politics and religion so as to allow it to function as a political party, while leaving religious activities to other organisations. Sadiki also evaluates aspects of the broader Tunisian context that might have prompted Ennahda's policy shifts.

Staying in North Africa, Abdullah al-Arian looks at the role that Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood played in the 2011 uprisings in Chapter Eleven. He focuses on the 'critical decisions' that might have played a role in the group losing power, being proscribed, suppressed and suffering two massacres at the hands of Egypt's deep state. In examining these decisions, al-Arian attempt to extract lessons from the

Brotherhood's experience. Also focusing on Egypt, Chapter Twelve by Stéphane Lacroix examines how the Egyptian Salafi party, Al-Nour, came to be the only Islamist party left in Egypt, after others, such as the Muslim Brotherhood, had been crushed. Lacroix traces the party's role in the uprisings and its subsequent support for the coup against the Brotherhood's Freedom and Justice Party. He explains how this led to the continued presence of the Salafis in Egyptian politics and explores the internal conflict it created for Al-Nour.

In Chapter Thirteen, Omar Ashour turns to another North African country, Libya to consider the roles played by different Islamist groups during and after the 2011 uprising. Then, in the last contribution to Part Four, Chapter Fourteen, Ebrahim Shabbir Deen discusses counter-revolutions and, in particular, those engineered by Iran and certain Gulf states after 2011. Deen discusses how these counter-revolutions were planned and executed, and suggests why they have been successful so far.

The contributors to Part Five attempt to develop an in-depth case study on political Islam in the Muslim minority context of South Africa. In Chapter Fifteen, we survey political Islam during the anti-apartheid struggle. Starting with the beginnings of Islam in South Africa, we profile Muslim leaders who were prominent in the liberation struggle along with various social movements that drew inspiration from Islam to engage in the struggle. Furthermore, we look at what manifestations of political Islam in South Africa have in common with similar phenomena in other parts of the world. Abdulkader Tayob, in the fascinating final chapter, argues that political Islam in South Africa (and other contexts) can best be understood as a journeying – that is, the sum of numerous individual journeys. He thus considers how a number of individuals have navigated political Islam within the politically charged space that is South Africa, including how they have interacted with one another and with others.

Endnotes

1 Kramer (2003).
2 For an example of this kind of argument that distinguishes between Islamism and political Islam, see Bokhari and Senzai (2013).
3 Bayat (1996).
4 See also Badamchi (2017); Kepel (2002); Roy (1999); Schulze (1998); numerous others have also used the term, asserting its validity in different ways.
5 Bayat (1996: 44).
6 Bayat (2013: 8; emphasis in original).
7 Bayat (2007: 19).
8 Bayat (2013: 4)
9 Fuller (2003: xi).
10 Ayoob (2008: 16).
11 Ayoob (2008: 15).
12 Snow and Benford (1988: 198).
13 Wiktorowicz (2004: 17).
14 Wilson (1973: 95).
15 Snow and Benford (1988: 199).
16 See Tamimi (2011).
17 Bokhari and Senzai (2013: 18).
18 Barton (2005: 28).
19 Hallaq (2012: 272).
20 Yusuf (2019).
21 Maududi (1960).
22 Qutb (2012).
23 Qutb (2012: 12).
24 Cited in Hanson (1983).
25 Sayyid (2003: 4).

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PART ONE:
POLITICAL ISLAM: CONCEPTUALISING AND POSITIONING THE DISCOURSE

1

How Islam became a modern religion[1]

Jocelyne Cesari

Drawing on the historical experience of western countries, an academic consensus has emerged that modernisation, democratisation and secularisation are inextricably linked in any process of political development. However, recent sociological data shows that democratisation is not dependent on the separation of church and state – and that, in fact, government involvement in religion often increases as democracy grows, especially in Christian nations.[2]

In the same vein, scholars like Kaplan have argued that democratisation and secularisation, even in the West, were not actually as smooth and linear as the narrative wants us to believe, and setbacks were inevitable.[3] For example, the European experience of democratisation was part of a reaction to the religiously induced Thirty Years' War and the rise of Enlightenment principles, which resulted in various forms of church and state separation. In other words, the differentiation of church and state experienced throughout Europe was the solution to end several decades of bloody religious wars during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Ultimately, the matrix of long-term ideas, such as the necessity of separating religion and politics, the perception of religion as a disturbance in public spaces and the idea that intertwining politics and religion creates absolute power, shapes the political imaginary and cultures. European political actors continuously utilised this

imaginary to build ideological arguments that secularisation goes hand in hand with a decline of religion in the public space.

In the American republic, on the other hand, the separation of church and state was addressed very early on due to the experience of religious persecution of the initial settlers from Europe. As a result, since its inception, American secularisation was influenced by toleration, which at the time was defined as equality for all religious groups without a public and political hierarchy between various religious beliefs. Such recognition of toleration, however, was very far from the modern conception that focuses on the individual freedom of belief or non-belief, which is now considered one of the golden standards of democracy although it came only during nineteenth-century American democracy.

When it comes to modernisation outside the West, analyses of the historical role of religion are very rare.[4] Instead, priority is given to unhistorical democracy models. At the same time, these theories are forged on the basis of the western experience and therefore operate on the premise of a uniform causality for secularisation that does not capture the specificities of non-western countries. Even the current attempts to re-evaluate secularisation[5] by emphasising that it does not automatically mean privatisation of religion rarely take into account historical experiences outside the West.

It is not surprising then that most non-western experiences of secularisation have been measured and evaluated in comparison to *secularism*, which in this chapter is defined as the western model of *secularity*. In other words, I consider secularism as the western political culture that coats the two major defining principles of secularity: protection by law of all religions and equidistance of the state vis-à-vis all religions. These principles can be implemented in multiple contexts. Therefore, they are interpreted within specific political cultures that ultimately frame social expectations about the status of religion in public space. In the case of the West, these expectations are the separation of church and state, and the privatisation of religion, leading to its social decline. This

western experience is at the foundation of most secularisation theories that are applied to non-western countries.

As a case in point: Turkey, Tunisia under former president Zine El Abidine Ben Ali and Iraq under former president Saddam Hussein have been defined as secular countries, as opposed to Saudi Arabia or the Islamic Republic of Iran, with the implicit assumption that they are or were aligning themselves to the western experience briefly described above. These 'secular' states have certainly attempted to diminish the role of religion in the public sphere. However, an irreversible decline of the social and political presence of Islam did not occur in any of these countries. Moreover, none of these states properly implemented a separation of Islam and state, nor the recognition or protection of religious diversity, which more than separation is a critical factor of a secularisation process. As described by Alfred Stepan, secularisation entails a dual process of differentiation in which 'the minimal boundaries of freedom of action must somehow be crafted for political institutions vis-à-vis religious authorities, and for religious individuals and groups vis-à-vis political institutions'.[6] In other words, states would not use religion for political purposes and would grant equality to all religions, while religious groups would refrain from capturing state institutions and politics for specific religious purposes. While such equilibrium is never completely achieved even in western nations,[7] it can serve as a criterion to evaluate processes of secularisation. In these conditions, almost all Muslim countries, even the ones dubbed as secular, fail on both counts: that is, state equidistance vis-à-vis all religions and no encroachment of religion upon politics. We are therefore in dire need of reconsidering or at least broadening the existing approaches to regimes of secularity in order to make sense of their particular political experience.

In this regard, an important aspect to consider is the role of the state. Ahmet T Kuru's book *Secularism and State Policies toward Religion*[8] aims in this direction, as he points out the challenges and critiques of the secularisation and modernisation theories that relegate religion as a '"traditional" phenomenon, which will eventually be marginalised by the

modernisation process'.[9] Kuru specifically focuses on the ideological influence of state policies on religion. He differentiates them as 'assertive secularism' (where the state plays an active role to exclude religion from the public sphere and relegate it to the private domain) or 'passive secularism' (where religion is allowed to play a public role). He also presents two characteristics for the criteria of a secular state: '(1) their legislative and judicial processes are secular in the sense of being out of institutional religious control, and (2) they constitutionally declare neutrality toward religions; they establish neither an official religion nor atheism'.[10] In contrast, 'other states have established religious laws and courts as the basis of their legislative and judicial systems ("religious states"), [and/or] recognised an official religion ("states with an established religion")'.[11]

In this sense, the way he defines secularism refers to the dominant and taken-for-granted approach from the western experience that we criticise above, which is a separation of state and religion, and non-religious references in the legal system. This is in opposition to an established religion or religion with ties to the state. In such a classification, Turkey is defined as secular, but the status of citizens, the family life and the definition of the nation involve a dominant religious element imposed on all members of the political community. In other words, the private/public divide, as the staple of secularity, is not applicable to Muslim majority countries. Furthermore, it can be argued that in countries like Tunisia and Turkey, Islam was indeed confined into private spaces, but this is not a sufficient condition to define them as secular because state actions did not translate into the neutrality and equidistance of the state vis-à-vis all religions, which has been until now the norm of secularity.

In this regard, it is true that France and the USA differ as demonstrated by Kuru, because the United States seems to have a much friendlier approach to religion by allowing for its public visibility in religious symbols worn at public schools and by recognising 'God' in the Pledge of Allegiance. In this way, the USA implements 'passive secularism'. However, unlike his approach, France and the USA still have more in common than France and Turkey, where the building of a secular nation

did not lead to an equality of all citizens because of ethnic or religious differences. This is mainly due to their different stances with regard to religious education. In both France and Turkey, the secular approach to public education is manifested through the banning of religious symbols, the banning of organised prayer and the lack of reference to 'God' in reciting pledges.[12] On the one hand, the French state allows funding of religious private schools so long as the state can maintain certain control over the school's curriculum, but the state does not allow for religious instruction in public schools. On the other hand, Turkey not only allows but also makes it compulsory for Muslim students to participate in Islamic education in public schools. Such a difference is key because the Turkish state's policy of compulsory religious education reveals a case of state-favoured religion. Moreover, this policy imposes a religious tradition on sectarian minorities, such as the Alevi. As a result, although the Turkish state tries to play the role of 'assertive secularism', ultimately because of compulsory religious education (among other state homogenisation policies discriminating against religious and ethnic minorities) Turkey cannot be considered as secular.

Thus, the use of western terms or western techniques or cultural styles should not trump us into thinking that some of these countries went through a differentiation between Islam and politics, as was experienced in western democracies. Actually, quite the opposite occurred. The use of western secular techniques in law and the constitutions created a strong connection between Islam and politics and contributed to redefining Islam *as a political norm* in ways unknown under the Muslim empires.[13] My position then is that the making of Islam as a modern religion, whereby norms, organisations and actors have been defined as Islamic, has been closely related to the making of the modern state.

My recent work shows that modern religion in Muslim countries is positioned on the platform of the state. The institutionalisation of religion occurs through the reconfiguration of relationships between people, property and organisations that were 'religious' but formerly outside the political control of the state apparatus.[14] Modernity is

thus not constituted by a one-sided, state-driven project to discipline people's thoughts, but 'multiple projects or rather a series of interlinked projects'[15] whereby states and religions reshape each other, and, in the process, redefine themselves. While this recalibration of religion by the modern state happened everywhere, in the West its outcome was autonomy of religious institutions from the state, whereas in most Muslim countries, the trajectory has been in the opposite direction. This counter-trajectory is a challenge for the dominant western theories of secularisation and democratisation.

The difference between the western experience and that of Muslim countries lies in the institutional arrangement of state-religion relations. In the West, secularism has translated into a legal order that preserves both the right to believe and not to believe, in essence defending their practical equality, even as the balance between competitive sets of beliefs is challenging to maintain, as illustrated by the claims of Christian fundamentalists or the European tensions around Islamic dress codes in public spaces. As a consequence, the 'secular age' came to be embodied in a ubiquitous hegemonic version of Islam, even in countries like Turkey.

Defining hegemonic Islam

In both domestic and international politics, Islam is often depicted as a tool of political opposition. At the national level, Islam is presented as an alternative ideological repertoire to the failed, secular state. For example, the state-centred approach to the politicisation of Islam, arising from the comparative politics discourse, demonstrates the influence of authoritarianism on the instrumentalisation of Islam as a resource for political opposition.[16] Cultural duality theory and state culture theory also envision a parallel power structure of state and religion and expand upon this model by proposing that a dualist power structure occurs when an Islamist movement is formed in reaction to state ideology and policies.[17] These theories posit the existence of a rigid, stark opposition between the state and religious groups (as in Iran) or religious

values (as in Egypt). Similarly, at the international level, most studies frame Islam as a resurgent ideology used almost exclusively as a tool for supranational political opposition. Post-Islamism is another version of this binary approach promoted by Olivier Roy[18] and Asef Bayat[19]. The term aims to qualify political movements based on Islam that do not make an Islamic state their ultimate political goal.[20] While these approaches explain *how* Islam is efficiently constructed as an ideological tool for political opposition, they rarely explain *why*.

In other words, it is crucial to explore the unexamined dimension of the politicisation of Islam – that is, state actions and policies vis-à-vis religion in general and Islam in particular. It adopts an institutional approach to Islam in order to introduce state actions and policies into the analysis of political influence of cultural and religious changes at both the domestic *and* international levels. Institutionalisation refers to the way new sociopolitical situations are translated into the creation or adaptation of formal institutions like constitutions, laws, and administrative bodies and agencies. The adoption of the nation-state model by Muslim-majority countries after the Ottoman Empire's collapse has been the decisive changing political situation that led to the reshaping of values and institutions. These changes are salient over two matters: hegemonic status granted to one religion and state regulation of religions.

First, it is important to note the difference between a dominant religion, an established religion and a hegemonic religion. A religion is dominant when it is the religion of the majority of a given country. In such cases, the dominant religion continues to impart historical and cultural references that are considered to be 'natural' and 'legitimate'. Religious symbols and rituals become embedded in the public culture and the country. Examples of such dominant religions include Protestantism in the United States or Catholicism in France and Poland. An established religion is a church recognised by law as the religion of the country or the state and sometimes financially supported by the state like in Denmark. Usually, the existence of an established church is not incompatible with the recognition of religious minorities. A religion

becomes hegemonic, however, when the state grants a certain religious group exclusive legal or political rights that are denied to other religions. In other words, religious hegemony refers to legal and political privileges granted to a specific religious group, which in most but not all cases is the dominant religion.

Second, state regulation of religion may assume several forms, with legal neutrality on one end of the spectrum, legal privilege on the other end and many nuances in between. Legal neutrality, as understood and codified in most secular democracies, entails recognition and legal protection of all religions. Separation of religion and state is not a necessary prerequisite for legal neutrality, which can be implemented even when there is state accommodation of religions (for example, most European democracies) or interference of the state in religion. Additionally, legal neutrality does not mean that practice of law is always neutral. Frequently, the dominant religious group serves as an implicit standard for the legal work concerning other religious groups.[21]

Legal privilege occurs not only when one religion is implicitly or explicitly defined as the religion of the state or the nation but also when it is granted financial resources and/or legal rights that are denied to all other religious groups. Pre-existing research has measured state involvement in religion,[22] using the following criteria:

- The country's constitution officially recognises one religion.
- Religious foundations, learning institutions and clerics are nationalised.
- The legal system includes some provisions of religious law.
- State schools teach the recognised religious doctrine.
- The most determinant features of a religion's hegemonic status are: the nationalisation of religious institutions and the inscription of the religious doctrine in the public education curriculum, as will be explained below.

The unexpected and often unseen consequences of legal privilege are state restrictions and controls over the activities of the official religion.

This usually involves:

- A Ministry of Religious Affairs and Administration to manage the official religion;
- Government regulation of the use of religious symbols or activities;
- State laws and policies limiting religious freedoms;
- Penalties for the defamation of the official religion;
- Government interference with worship.

The other side of state regulation is the tacit or explicit discrimination against religious groups that are not recognised as the official religion.

For example:

- Minority groups do not receive government funds or resources for education, religious programmes or maintenance of property or organisations.
- Domestic or foreign religious groups are forbidden to proselytise.
- Conversion from the official religious group to another, if not fully forbidden, is severely restricted.
- The government is hostile towards religious minorities or may adhere to a policy of non-intervention in the case of these groups' harassment or persecution.[23]

Legal privileges characterise the majority of Muslim countries, where legal and political rights have generally been granted to the dominant orientation of Islam, but not to other religious groups, Islamic or otherwise. More infrequently, privilege is accorded to a religious minority, such as the Sunni in Bahrain or in pre-2003 Iraq, while Indonesia, Senegal and Lebanon are the only exceptions in the Muslim world of its attempts to create a regime of legal neutrality. The presence of a hegemonic religion is not specific to Muslim countries, however, and can be found today for Buddhism in Sri Lanka[24] and, to a certain extent, for the Orthodox Church in Greece.

Institutionalisation of Islam and its correlation to politicisation

An institutional approach to religion shows a correlation between state regulations and the pre-eminence of Political Islam over other forms of politics. Politicisation in this context is broader than Islamism and means: nationalisation of Islamic institutions and personnel; usage of Islamic references in political competition by state actors and opponents (Islamism); religiously motivated social unrest or violence; and internationalisation of Islam-orientated political movements or conflicts. The often-unseen consequence of this politicisation is the redefinition by the state of Islamic doctrines through the creation of state religious administration and personnel, along with control of religious discourse.

Using the state regulation approach to explain Islam's politicisation allows us to overcome the current dilemma of most approaches to religion in politics, which primarily frame religion as the independent or dependent variable.

The Clash of Civilisations has been the most discussed theory in which cultures in general and Islam in particular are apprehended as the independent variable. Samuel Huntington states that social conflicts are the result of clashes across civilisations and religions.[25] However, as abundantly proven by the social sciences,[26] civilisations are not homogenous, monolithic players in world politics with an inclination to 'clash' but rather consist of pluralistic, divergent and convergent actors and practices that are constantly evolving.[27] Thus, the clash of civilisations theory fails to address not only conflict between civilisations, but also conflict and differences within civilisations. In particular, evidence does not exist to substantiate Huntington's prediction that countries with similar cultures are coming together, while countries with different cultures are coming apart. In fact, as the data presented in this chapter demonstrates, religious homogeneity increases conflict and the probability for religion's politicisation. In the same vein, according to the Pew Research Center, thirty-three per cent of countries dominated by one re-

ligion have a high level of religious-based violence, compared to twenty per cent of countries where no religion dominates.[28]

The institutionalised approach to religion also differs from explanations of social or political behaviours based on religious traditions. Security studies that assume the origin of political violence lies in some decontextualised cultural or religious specificities fall into the same trap. More specifically, a large body of literature exists on jihad, al-Qa'ida and terrorism, which, with a few exceptions,[29] considers religion as one, if not the primary, cause of terrorist activities worldwide. The same essentialist approach characterises research that focuses on the ideological content of Political Islamic movements without systematically linking them to specific social and political contexts. This is a tendency noted throughout the whole approach to religion, particularly Islam, in the discipline of international relations.[30] To a certain extent, the same critique can be made for some constructivist work when it is limited to a discursive approach, which views cultures as rhetorical practices and narratives.[31] That is why my approach will broaden some of fundamental tenets of constructivism by including institutions and legal practices.

An institutional approach to Islam further differs from the dominant body of research that analyses Political Islam as a dependent variable. This literature is dominated by social movement theory, which rightly points out that ideology is only one aspect of political mobilisation.[32] More distinctly, the politicisation of Islam is attributed to the combination of a strong ideology[33] with several 'opportunity structures'. The most significant structures are the political failure of secular national projects,[34] deepening economic crises and demographic bulges[35]. As noted above, this literature is relevant to understanding the multiple mechanisms of politicisation, but it does not explain why Islamism prevails over other forms of political mobilisation.

Most of these approaches operate on the implicit dichotomy of a secular state versus political groups that use Islam as an oppositional tool at both the national and international levels. An institutional approach shifts the perspective from a polarised state-religion focus to complex

Islam's role in Muslim-majority countries[39]

	CONSTITUTION	NATIONALISATION	LAW	EDUCATION	POLITICAL DISCOURSE
SCORE OF 5 **Afghanistan** **Algeria** **Bahrain** **Bangladesh** **Brunei** **Comoros** **Egypt** **Iran** **Jordan** **Kuwait** **Libya (under Gaddafi)** **Malaysia** **Mauritania** **Morocco** **Pakistan** **Qatar** **Saudi Arabia** **Somalia** **Sudan** **UAE** **Yemen**	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔

SCORE OF 4 **Iraq** **Oman** **Syria** **Tunisia**	✓	✓	–	✓	✓
SCORE OF 3 **Turkey** **Uzbekistan**	–	✓	–	✓	✓
SCORE OF 2 **Tajikistan**	–	–	–	✓	✓
SCORE OF 1 **Chad** **Kyrgyzstan** **Mali** **Niger** **Nigeria** **Turkmenistan**	–	–	–	✓	–
SCORE OF 0 **Albania** **Azerbaijan** **Burkina Faso** **Guinea** **Kazakhstan** **Kosovo** **Sierra Leone**	–	–	–	–	–

sets of interactions between the two entities, such as adaptation, cooperation and competition. It considers state-Islam relations, particularly the construction of Islam as the hegemonic religion, as a condition for politicisation of Islam. In other words, Islam is not anti-democratic per se, but certain forms of state-religion interaction are, such as regulating, restricting or privileging religious activities.

Pre-existing research shows that state restrictions on religion increase social and political violence.[36] The Pew results illustrate that government and social restrictions on religion lead to higher levels of religious persecution and violence across *all* countries independent of the religious tradition. It also confirms that the highest degree of persecution happens in countries with sociopolitical monopoly of religion or monopolistic social pressures,[37] or what this chapter calls the hegemonic status of Islam. The monopoly or quasi-monopoly situation covers ninety per cent of Muslim-majority countries and further converges with the data produced by Jonathan Fox and Shmuel Sandler[38] on government involvement in religion, where Muslim-majority countries score the highest.

The hegemonic status of Islam is not a feature of the 'Islamic' states, such as Saudi Arabia and Iran, but is shared by most of the Muslim-majority countries, therefore challenging the traditional understanding of secularism. For this reason, this chapter focuses on countries that have been defined as secular according to 'western' standards, meaning countries generally perceived to have a secular ruling elite, educated, or otherwise openly influenced, by the West, such as Egypt, Iraq under Saddam Hussein, Turkey and Tunisia.

For each country, data was methodically collected on Islam's role in: (a) nation-building and the constitution; (b) the legal system; (c) the education system; and (d) political movements. The data covers the period from the creation of each nation state to present and introduces in detail the data on the state's constitution, as well as its legal and educational systems. According to this systemic review, out of the forty-one Muslim-majority countries, twenty-seven scored between a three and five on a five-point scale measuring the institutionalisation of Islam using the five rubrics stated above.

The five conditions are not individually sufficient to secure Islam's hegemonic status, and not all of these conditions hold the same weight, especially with regard to Islam's inscription in the constitution or the use of Islamic references in political discourse that in some countries can be merely symbolic. However, the conjunction of the nationalisation, legal system and education conditions are probably necessary to secure a hegemonic status. In other words, if Islamic institutions are state institutions, Islamic law is part of the legal system and Islam is engrained in the public school curriculum, Islam has a hegemonic status. In this regard, our research confirms findings that correlate religious instruction with the role of Political Islam in most Muslim-majority countries.[40]

In these conditions, Islam's hegemonic status is at the core of nation-building, and Islam's politicisation is not only the consequence of failed secular national projects, but also a component of nationalisation projects themselves.

Notes

1 This chapter is an excerpt from Cesari (2014).
2 Fox (2006).
3 Kaplan (2007).
4 Ashiwa and Wank (2009).
5 Casanova (2003, 2004); Davie, Heelas and Woodhead (eds) (2003).
6 Stepan (2000: 37).
7 For instance, see the current debates on the status of Islam in Europe or the ongoing debate on the First Amendment in the USA.
8 Kuru (2009).
9 Kuru (2009: 1).
10 Kuru (2009: 7).
11 Kuru (2009: 7).
12 Kuru (2009: 9).
13 Specifically in the Turkish case, Hakan Yavuz (2003: 52) explains, 'As a result of nation-building and militant secularisation, society came to be divided along the now familiar cleavages of Turkish versus Kurdish and state versus society. In contrast, the caliphate, abolished in 1924, had rep-

resented an Islamically sanctioned union of multi-ethnic groups and had recognised ethnic diversity without assigning it any political role. In other words, the caliphate was the symbol of a multi-ethnic polity and authority; it symbolised the unity of Muslims as a faith-based community and allowed space for diverse loyalties and local autonomy for the periphery.'

14 Ashiwa and Wank (2009: 45).
15 Ashiwa and Wank (2009: 45).
16 Nasr (2001: 3).
17 Moaddel (2002).
18 Roy (2011).
19 Bayat (1996).
20 Roy (2004: 5); Bayat (2007: 10).
21 Beaman (2003).
22 Chaves, Schraeder and Sprindys (1994); Fox and Sandler (2004); Grim and Finke (2006).
23 Grim (2011: 208–209).
24 Tambiah (1992).
25 Huntington (1996).
26 Grim (2011).
27 Katzenstein (2010).
28 Grim and Finke (2011: 67).
29 Pape (2005).
30 Volpi (2010).
31 Katzenstein (2010).
32 McAdam and Snow (2010); Tarrow (1998).
33 Jamal (2007); Shapiro, Smith and Masoud (eds) (2004); Wiktorowicz (2006).
34 Hafez (2003); Kepel (2002).
35 Kepel (2002); Lawrence (1989); Zubaida (2009).
36 Grim and Finke (2011).
37 Grim (2011).
38 Fox (2005); Fox and Sandler (2004).
39 Source: the author. Lebanon provides an example of confessionalism, which proportionally allocates political power and represents the demographic distribution of the recognised religions. Indonesia, Gambia and Senegal recognise all religions and legally provide education and resources

for all religious institutions. As a result, these countries do not fit into the brackets provided here. A caveat is in order: This table groups countries in a very unusual way (Saudi Arabia/Egypt, for example) because it scores only institutional arrangements as they stand today. Therefore it does not reflect nor contextualise the political and social forces at work in each country that are obviously very diverse.

40 Beck (2009).

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2

Islamic modernist political thought, republicanism and liberal democracy

Mohammad Fadel

Introduction

One of the hallmarks of post-Second World War liberalism has been its avowed commitment to a politics that is morally neutral between what would otherwise be contradictory and conflictual ways of life. The theory of the liberal state's moral neutrality underpins, for example, John Rawls' argument that the liberal order must necessarily be 'free-standing', that is, capable of being endorsed by the various reasonable, but otherwise incompatible, comprehensive doctrines that will inevitably flourish under the conditions of freedom that prevail in a well-ordered society.[1] One justification, indeed perhaps the central justification, for a neutral state is that it is impossible to know, in advance, which way of life is most consistent with human flourishing for all individuals. Given this uncertainty, along with the assumption of the equality of all citizens, the most defensible political response is to adopt a constitutional order that provides a maximum set of equal liberties; that is, liberties consistent with the rights of others to exercise those same liberties, such that all individuals can pursue their own conception of the good life in a manner compatible with others pursuing their own, different conceptions. The inevitable reality of pluralism in ways of life, each having its

own justification in reason, thus requires the establishment of a neutral state if the goal is to respect the equality of all citizens and to insure the state's long-term stability. Elsewhere, I have argued why Muslims living in a pluralist democracy might have good reasons within the Islamic tradition to endorse a metaphysically neutral, politically liberal state of the sort described by Rawls in *Political Liberalism*.[2]

In that same argument, however, I reserved for a later time consideration of the appropriateness of political liberalism – understood as a free-standing, metaphysically neutral political conception – for Muslim-majority states. This chapter is an attempt to begin to consider that question, especially in light of the 2011 MENA uprisings, the roles played by prominent Islamist groups in Egypt and Tunisia in their respective attempts at democratic transition, and what role democracy, liberalism or both could possibly play in their thinking, or the thinking more broadly of any Muslim (or theist, for that matter) committed to a regime that in one form or another vindicates divine law.[3] More specifically, the dilemma is this: what is the need for democracy as a mode of decision-making if revealed law provides adequate answers for all important political questions; and if liberalism, particularly post-Second World War liberalism, is understood as a response to the reality of pluralism as the enduring political fact facing post-Second World War democracies, what could an adherent of divine law find attractive in liberalism, in light of the fact that adherents of divine law believe that they *know* what is the best way of life for all people (at least in the case of a universal theistic religion such as Christianity or Islam)? In short, to the extent an Islamist adheres to the notion that divine law, that is, the shari'ah, provides the answers to the questions for which secular democratic politics struggles to find answers, democracy seems superfluous, and to the extent that liberalism is a solution to the problem of pluralism under conditions of equality, a society governed by a true conception of divine law lacks any need for liberalism because grounds for pluralism do not exist.

Likewise, from a liberal perspective, on what basis could one engage in meaningful political cooperation on a common political project

with an adherent of divine law who believes that revelation already provides the correct answers to all or the most important questions regarding the good life? This chapter will argue that republican political thought creates a practical bridge between Islamic modernist political thought and modern liberalism through the common concern of each tradition with the concept of civic or political virtue. Part two of the chapter will briefly describe liberalism and the place of freedom in liberal thought. Part three will then examine republicanism as a distinct strand of democratic western political thought, which places a higher value on politics and political participation than negative freedom as such, and to that extent, is in tension with liberalism. Part four will critically engage other scholarly framings of the relationship of Islam to liberalism, in particular, the work of Charles Kurzman. Part five will identify the republican strains of various Islamic modernists. Part six will conclude by arguing that republican thought represents a point of convergence between Islamic modernists and liberalism.

Liberalism as the priority of freedom

Before one can meaningfully understand the relationship of modernist Islamic political thought to liberalism, it is necessary to have a clear understanding of both phenomena. Casual observers might assume that only modernist Islamic political thought needs to be interrogated because liberalism is already well understood. Alan Ryan, in his book *The Making of Modern Liberalism*, however, points out that liberalism is a contested term and suffers from its own indeterminacies.[4] Ryan refers to the division between classical liberalism – represented by thinkers such as John Locke, Adam Smith, Alexis de Tocqueville and Fredrick von Hayek – and modern liberalism – represented by thinkers such as John Stuart Mill. Classical liberalism, according to Ryan, can be viewed as modest, contenting itself with doctrines such as limited government, maintenance of the rule of law, avoidance of arbitrary and discretionary power, sanctity of contract and private property, and the

responsibility of individuals for their own fate. Classical liberalism was neither necessarily democratic nor progressive, and unlike modern liberals, it certainly did not advocate for the redistribution of income or believe in the perfectibility of man in contrast to the views of a modern liberal like Mill.[5]

Despite divisions within liberalism as to its own doctrines, which Ryan attributes to the history of various struggles confronted by different liberal thinkers, Ryan believes that the various conceptions of liberalism share the common feature of being a 'defensive doctrine', one whose principal concern over the last 300 years has been 'to protect individual liberty against a succession of threats'.[6] Famously, these include religious freedom, security of the person and property, and in the post-industrial world, more controversially, the right of labour to organise for purposes of collective bargaining with the owners of capital.[7] Consistent with the defensive character of liberalism, Ryan further notes that the best working definition of liberalism is 'the belief that the freedom of the individual is the highest political value and that institutions and practices are to be judged by their success in promoting it'.[8]

As Ryan himself points out, this definition, although an extremely plausible working definition of liberalism, is not without difficulty. First, what kind of freedom do liberals value, negative freedom or positive freedom? Second, what is the relationship of the freedom of the individual to the freedom of the political community? And third, which individuals constitute the political community; that is, who are the citizens?[9] In trying to understand Islamic modernism and its relationship to liberalism, we would do well to consider how Islamic modernist thinkers answer these questions, or more accurately, we might interrogate the writings of Islamic modernists in an attempt to determine what their answers to these questions might be.

Republicans, negative liberty and positive liberty

Insofar as Ryan is correct to identify liberalism as a 'defensive doctrine' that views individual freedom or liberty as the highest political

value, it follows that the freedom liberalism values is largely, if not entirely, negative liberty or freedom, that is, the liberty or freedom to do what one wishes without interference from someone else. Negative freedom, however, is not the only conception of freedom that concerns political philosophers. Positive freedom is also a valuable element of personal freedom. If negative liberty is a condition in which a person is free of third-party interference in his life choices, positive liberty is the condition in which a person or a group is effectively able to exercise self-control or self-mastery, commonly understood as the ability to act on second-order desires. A desire is a first-order desire if its object is an ordinary (non-cognitive) thing, for example, to drink water. A desire is a second-order desire if it is a desire *about* one's ordinary desires.[10]

Frank Lovett, in his entry on republicanism in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, illustrates the distinction between negative liberty and positive liberty with the example of a gambler. Insofar as a person desires to gamble, he has a first-order desire to gamble, and to the extent he is neither coerced into gambling, or coercively precluded from gambling, he is free to act on that desire, and therefore, to that extent, he possesses negative liberty. But suppose that he believes that it is bad for him to gamble, and he desires that he not act upon his first-order desire to gamble. In this situation, even though he is acting freely from the perspective of negative freedom, he can nevertheless be described as *unfree* in the positive sense because he is unable to make effective his second-order desire, namely, to refrain from his first-order desire to gamble.[11]

Lovett further argues that reducing freedom to negative freedom generates certain paradoxes. A slave may have a beneficent master who, in fact, permits the slave to do what he wishes, especially in contrast to slaves who are not lucky enough to have an equally beneficent master. Would it be proper, however, to say that the former slave is *freeer* than the slaves owned by the latter? At the level of political life, too, Lovett points out that negative liberty fails to capture ordinary intuitions regarding the content of freedom. Consider a people under the rule of

an empire that adopts a 'hands-off' policy toward the colony's people, and therefore does not interfere in their customs, laws or institutions. At a later date, they gain their independence, and the new government adopts a series of statutes intended to transform the society by, for example, modernising social relations and the economy. Would it be reasonable to say that the community's people became less free after they obtained independence?

Republicanism tries to solve this problem by focusing on a conception of liberty or freedom that is the product of a structural relationship between persons or groups, and therefore not dependent on contingent events, such as the benevolent exercise of discretion. Lovett therefore states that the 'republican conception of political liberty…defines freedom as a sort of structural independence – as the condition of not being subject to the arbitrary or uncontrolled power of a master'. The goal of politics is not to make the master a better master, that is, by inculcating in the ruler the proper moral values; rather, the goal of politics is to achieve 'the secure enjoyment of non-domination' by eliminating relationships of domination when possible, and reducing them whenever it is not.[12]

According to Lovett, classical republicanism, which includes well-known European writers such as Machiavelli, Montesquieu and Blackstone, and prominent American founders such as Thomas Jefferson and James Madison, focused its attention on 'the importance of civic virtue and political participation, the dangers of corruption, the benefits of a mixed-constitution and the rule of law'.[13] Contemporary republicanism is characterised by two different strands that are often confused. The first is commonly referred to as *civic republicanism* and the second as *civic humanism*. These two strands of republicanism are differentiated from one another by their respective stances toward the place of the political in defining the good life. For civic republicans, the political is an *instrumental* good desired to bring about the condition of 'the secure enjoyment of non-domination' so that individuals are then free to pursue their various ends without arbitrary interference. By contrast, civic

humanism views active citizenship and healthy civic virtue as intrinsic components of the good life that requires actively resisting those vices that would undermine or corrupt the possibility of creating active citizens with a healthy sense of civic virtue.[14]

While civic humanism, as defined here, represents a perfectionist political philosophy – which would be in deep tension with political liberalism, particularly with regard to the place of negative liberty in its ideal conception of politics – civic republicanism, understood in the limited sense as 'the secure enjoyment of non-domination', places greater value on negative liberty, and, therefore, is much closer to the ideals of political liberalism. Rawls, too, affirms the basic compatibility of what Lovett calls civic republicanism with his conception of political liberalism, insofar as both fundamentally agree that '[t]he safety of democratic liberties requires the active participation of citizens who possess the political virtues needed to maintain a constitutional regime.'[15] Rawls does, however, reject civic humanism as incompatible with his ideal of a well-ordered society governed by the norms of political liberalism insofar as civic humanism is an essentially Aristotelian project of political perfection, which takes political participation not as one good among others, but as the central feature of the good life.[16]

Lovett nevertheless insists that civic republicanism cannot simply be collapsed into another kind of liberalism, largely because of the primacy that liberals give to negative freedom. From a liberal perspective, any governmental interference in the life of a person is necessarily an interference in that person's liberty. Lovett suggests that the primacy of negative liberty in liberal thought means that liberals are too suspicious of governmental action. Civic republicans, however, because of their commitment to liberty as the secure enjoyment of non-domination, are more likely to view governmental actions as creating the grounds for freedom rather than restricting it. Lovett writes:

> On the republican view of political liberty, by contrast, public laws or policy interventions need not necessarily count as re-

> ductions in freedom. Provided that the law or policy is adopted and implemented in an appropriately non-arbitrary manner, the citizens' freedom remains untouched. Indeed, if the law or policy ameliorates dependency, or curtails the arbitrary powers some exercise over others in the community, the freedom of citizens may be enhanced. In the classical tradition, this idea was often expressed as the idea that, as Blackstone for example puts it, 'laws, when prudently framed, are by no means subversive but rather introductive of liberty' and thus 'where there is no law, there is no freedom'.[17]

The different attitudes that republicanism and liberalism display toward negative freedom in part stem from their different conceptions of freedom in the state of nature. Where a classical liberal like Locke views human beings as having perfect liberty in the state of nature, and that in entering civil society they give up that natural liberty on the understanding that it is the role of civil society to protect as much of that natural liberty as is possible,[18] the republican view of the state of nature is one in which the interrelations of persons is 'governed simply by force – which is to say, the arbitrary whim of the momentarily stronger party. In order to enjoy some degree of republican freedom, therefore, it is absolutely essential to introduce a domestic legal system so as to govern the citizens' mutual relations.'[19]

Islamic modernist political thought

It is impossible, of course, to survey the views of all modernist Muslim political thinkers in an essay such as this, but we can direct our focus to the writings of some writers who can plausibly be taken as representative of Islamic modernism's approach to politics. I will focus primarily on the works of Rifa'a Rafi' al-Tahtawi,[20] Khayr al-Din al-Tunisi[21] and Rashid Rida[22] as exemplars of Islamic modernist political thought, although I will make occasional reference to the views of some post-Second World War Islamic modernists as well.

These authors are well-known to English-speakers insofar as their doctrines have been the focus of numerous studies by prominent scholars such as Albert Hourani in his classic *Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age,*[23] and extracts of their writings have been translated in popular readers, such as Charles Kurzman's *Modernist Islam*.[24] Kurzman also provides a helpful discussion of reformist Muslim thought over the last 150 years and its relationship to liberalism in his other reader, *Liberal Islam*.[25]

Kurzman rightly refrains from arguing that the Muslim thinkers whose works he has excerpted would qualify fully as liberals from the perspective of western liberalism; nevertheless, he thinks that these Muslim thinkers take up certain themes that overlap in crucial ways with the concerns of western liberalism. Some of these themes include a kind of anti-theocracy in the form of rejecting inherited doctrines and valorising independent thought in religion; an embrace of scientific rationality in place of theology as the highest form of knowledge; a belief in progress, both moral and material, and a commitment to reforming Islamic law in light of human progress; a commitment to improving the status of women and non-Muslims in Muslim-majority societies; a rejection of absolutist politics; and an embrace of some kind of participatory politics.

Kurzman did not attempt to synthesise the views of those whom he called Muslim liberals, but instead identified three strands of thought among Muslim liberals' approach to divine law. He called these approaches the *liberal shari'ah*, the *silent shari'ah* and the *interpreted shari'ah*. The first approach claims that revelation, properly read, endorses liberal values. The second approach suggests that revelation is limited in scope, and where it is silent, Muslims can adopt liberal interpretations of divine law. The third is that divine law stands in need of interpretation, and accordingly, Muslims should interpret revelation in a manner to further liberal values.

Each approach has its own advantages and disadvantages: if a liberal norm can be plausibly found in an express text of revelation, then that

is certainly a valuable resource in affirming that particular value in a Muslim-majority society; for example, the virtue of mutual deliberation on issues of common concern, the principle of individual responsibility or the obligation of instituting a limited redistribution scheme from the wealthy to the needy, each of which is a core value of at least certain cognisable strands of liberalism. On the other hand, advocates of this approach often find themselves in a quandary when faced with a text of revelation that plainly is in tension or conflicts with liberal norms; for example, texts permitting the keeping of slaves or husbands to discipline their wives. In these cases, advocates of liberal shari'ah may find themselves accused of putting forth implausible readings of revelation in order to justify their claim that revelation is itself liberal.

The second approach is helpful insofar as many of the historical norms of Islamic law that are decidedly illiberal are not, in fact, based on explicit texts in revelation; indeed, in many cases, they aren't based on any texts at all, but simply reflect the reasoning, often clearly biased, of prior generations of Muslim jurists. On the other hand, this approach is disabled by those rules that are expressly found in revelation and are illiberal, which, as already noted, are not hard to find. Moreover, this second theory has no account for why Muslims, when faced with silence in revelation, should adopt a liberal understanding of divine law rather than, for example, an authoritarian or even chauvinistic conception of divine law.

The third approach has the advantage of recognising that revelation, while it has texts that in general support a liberal outlook on numerous issues, also contains texts that conflict with liberal values, and these conflicts can only be resolved through some sort of human interpretive agency. Although Kurzman suggests that this approach is the closest to liberal sensibilities, it suffers from the problem of indeterminacy: whose interpretation should be deemed authoritative, and why?[26]

One common feature of these three approaches, however, is an implicit commitment to the idea that the domain of divine law is solely a problem of epistemology, meaning that the primary problem facing the

Muslim world is the proper understanding of divine law. If Muslims could gain a proper understanding of divine law, their political problems would essentially be solved. Politics, in all three of the modalities Kurzman identifies, appears as an afterthought to the theological problem of determining the proper content of divine law. At best, politics, particularly the state, is simply a means for the implementation of divine law, rather than being an autonomous domain of self government through human deliberation. Viewed from such a perspective, politics is, at best, a secondary concern to law, if not completely subsumed into law.

Modernist Islamic political thought, at least as I will use the term, challenges this notion, and instead posits that politics is a kind of collective governance through deliberation, which, even though it exists within divine law, is not itself to be understood or practised through the tools of interpretation that jurists use to understand revelation. Modernist Islamic political thought in turn is distinctive insofar as it pursues a certain kind of Muslim political subjectivity that aims toward active and effective self-government, collectively and individually, in accordance with the norms of divine law. Accordingly, its principal concern is how to make divine law effective for the secular purpose of effective and rational Muslim self-government, not to discover a 'true' conception of divine law for purposes of achieving salvation in the next life, to ensure the spiritual success in the next life of citizens by enabling them to live Islamically good lives or to spread true religious doctrine to the four corners of the earth in this life. By taking for granted the notion that Islamic law is intended to secure the secular good of effective and rational self-governance, however, modernist Islamic political thought demands that substantive Islamic law be reformulated to render it a practical tool for the achievement of the public good, and therefore tests the rationality of particular rules of Islamic law, not by the extent to which they are narrowly faithful to the hermeneutical principles that govern the linguistic interpretation of revelation, but by the extent to which historical rules of Islamic law are consistent with the achievement of the public good.

This recasting of Islamic law as a tool for effective secular governance also meant that modernist Islamic political thinkers became interested in the kinds of values that modern Muslim subjects needed to adopt in order for Islamic law to fulfil its role in promoting a well-governed state. The positive role assigned to the individual in creating a Muslim society that was effectively governed in accordance with Islamic law – properly understood as a legal system having as its highest *secular* aim the public good – in turn meant that there could be no escape from considering both the rights and duties of individual Muslims within the polity. Individual rights, therefore, play an important role in the discourse of prominent modernist Islamic political thinkers, particularly Tahtawi and Tunisi, but crucially, their conception of individual rights (and duties) was instrumental insofar as their arguments in favour of securing individual rights were, in the first instance, teleologically related to securing the public good, rather than the particular good of the rights holder. This does not mean, however, that they were indifferent to the question of individual well-being or happiness, but rather that their focus on the public good was a reflection of the fact that the immediate crisis to which they were responding was not a problem of defining what constituted a good life for an individual – for it was generally known and taken for granted that normative Islamic teachings provided sufficient outlines of what a good life was – but rather how to defend the well-being of the community in the face of its relative decline vis-à-vis Europe. Indeed, after the First World War, with the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, and the consequent imposition of the mandate system on the Arab provinces of the former Ottoman Empire, ensuring the simple survival of the Muslim community as a political entity became the principal focus of a thinker like Rashid Rida.

From the perspective of political philosophy, therefore, it is difficult to describe these thinkers as liberal Muslims, or their tradition of thought as liberal, because they are only secondarily concerned with the place of freedom in the lives of individuals; rather, they are better described as Muslim republicans insofar as their primary interest in the

individual is how to cultivate the civic virtues necessary to promote good and healthy governance so that the political community can flourish. That does not mean, of course, that they were indifferent or hostile to individual flourishing, but only that this was not the primary concern that motivated their writings. In the next section, I will take a systematic look at the writings of Tahtawi, Tunisi and Rida in an attempt to make the case that their understanding of politics and how rights should function within a polity are closer to a republican conception of politics than a liberal one.

The republicanism of Islamic modernist political thought

Islamic modernist political thought began with the realisation of the immense gap in power and material prosperity that had emerged in the nineteenth century between western Europe and the Ottoman Empire. This first manifested itself in the ease with which Napoleon's French forces were able to invade and conquer Egypt, but Arab Muslims quickly discovered that the French success was not narrowly a matter of superior military organisation or tactics, but of broader advances in technology and knowledge. In response, the post-Napoleonic Ottoman governor of Egypt, Mehmet Ali (Muhammad Ali), sent a delegation of Egyptian students to study the modern sciences in Paris. Tahtawi accompanied them as their religious advisor. While there, he busied himself learning French and acquiring as much knowledge of modern European sciences as he could master, and upon his return to Cairo he published a memoir of his trip, *'Takhlis al-Ibriz fi Talkhis Bariz' (The Quintessence of Paris),* which, among other things, described his life in Paris and the social, cultural, political and economic life of nineteenth-century France. This work included a chapter discussing the French legal system, including its constitution, thereby evidencing his interest in the new political ideas emerging in Europe, a topic he would return to in much greater detail later in his life when he wrote his lengthy treatise on education, *al-Murshid al-Amin li-l-Banat wa-l-Banin* (*The Reliable Guide for Girls and Boys*).

In addition to his career as a public intellectual, Tahtawi had a distinguished career in the Egyptian government, serving in a variety of administrative positions in the new Egyptian bureaucracy, including: director of the newly established medical school; translator for the artillery school; director of the school of foreign languages, which translated thousands of works in various fields into Arabic; director of the military school; editor of the official newspaper; and editor of an educational journal. He also participated in numerous educational reform commissions and personally translated two dozen French works.

Although only a small part of his Parisian memoir was dedicated to the French constitution and the political theory that inspired it, the prosperity and good order of France clearly impressed him. In commenting on the French constitutional order, he noted that its most important features were its monarch's limited powers; equality of all citizens before the law; its rational, rather than revealed, character; and the freedom (hurriya) it provides French citizens.[27]

Significantly, his conception of freedom in this work bears strong resemblance to the civic republican ideal of secure enjoyment of non-interference. Accordingly, he understands freedom not as an absence of restraint, but rather a condition where justice (ʻadl) and fairness (insaf) govern relations among citizens, and between the ruler and the ruled. Freedom, therefore, is a feature of the political order, not its nature. Accordingly, ʻa [political] system of freedom means establishing equality with respect to legal judgements and substantive laws so that the ruler does not act arbitrarily against any person; rather, it is only the laws which govern and are relevant.'[28] He concludes by noting that a country is free only to the extent that its people enjoy effective equality under its laws.

It is also clear, however, that Tahtawi understood the rights guaranteed in the French constitution primarily from the perspective of the goods that they achieve for the public, and only incidentally from the perspective of the goods that they secure for individual French citizens themselves. Accordingly, equality under the law means that French

citizens can pursue their various talents without arbitrary interference from the state, a condition that is conducive to the spread of prosperity and civilisation. Likewise, freedom of expression, particularly freedom of the press, which Tahtawi also singled out as a notable feature of the French constitution, is also valuable for the political goods it furthers, holding the government accountable to the law and preventing arbitrary rule.[29]

His later work, *The Reliable Guide*, however, allows us to see even more clearly the implicit republicanism in Tahtawi's political thought. There, he develops a political theory that centres on the idea of the homeland (al-watan) and the duties of those living in a common homeland to strive toward its continual improvement (islah) through the spread of civilisation (tamaddun).[30] Tahtawi, in turn, defines tamaddun as:

> the realisation of what is required for the people of a material civilisation (ahl al-'umran) in respect of the means (al-adawat) necessary to improve their conditions, materially and morally, which consist in the excellence of their character, customs, moral education and encouraging them to love praiseworthy qualities and the comprehensive acquisition of civic virtues (istijma' al-kamaliyyat al-madaniyya).[31]

One of 'means' necessary to achieve the homeland's perfection is politics; hence the need for one king and one law that bind the people together. Just as an individual's duty to improve the homeland is akin to the duty of a child to its parents, so too the homeland has a reciprocal duty of protecting its citizens, its 'children', so to speak.[32]

The ruler's job in his role as legislator is to adopt a legal framework that is conducive to the obligation of perfecting the homeland.[33] In so doing, the ruler is bound by the norms of revealed law, substantively and methodologically.[34] Revealed law limits the ruler's lawmaking capacity in a substantive sense by prohibiting the adoption of rules that revelation deems sinful (haram). This is because, according to Tahtawi, acts that are prohibited, such as the unrestricted mixing of men and wo-

men (ikhtilat), are not constitutive of true civilisation. Procedurally, too, the ruler is not free to interpret the norms of revealed law for himself, but is limited to the historical doctrines of Islamic law as articulated by the Sunni schools of law. The ruler is free, however, to use rational law (siyasa or qanun) to pursue the public good, for example, by prohibiting the people from performing some acts that are licit under revealed law. Rational law, in effect, functions to complete revealed law by allowing the ruler to make certain kinds of acts obligatory, either in an affirmative or negative sense, even though such actions were not obliged by revealed law, so long as revealed law does not condemn such acts as immoral in themselves.[35] Because revealed law is the foundation of rational law, the two for the most part do not conflict, but when they do, as in the case of unrestricted mixing of the sexes, revealed law must be given priority.[36] As for instructing the public in the principles of political morality, however, religious methods must be used, not rational ones.[37]

Freedom also plays an important role in achieving the people's happiness, and when freedom is grounded in just laws, it helps in the perfection of the homeland through the spread of tamaddun. As we saw earlier, however, freedom is largely the *product* of law, not a residual category of conduct unregulated by the law. Freedom, as a general matter, is the permission (rukhsa) to perform any act that is, all things being equal, permissible (mubah) under the law. A person is free when they are able to exercise these rights without any interference outside of the law, whether revealed or rational. To be free also means that one is immune from punishment except in accordance with legitimate criminal law. In both civil and criminal law, then, freedom is understood by Tahtawi to consist of the secure enjoyment of non-interference by a third party in one's rights, but crucially, those rights are constituted by law. While Tahtawi recognises several different kinds of freedom, the most significant are civic freedom (al-hurriya al-madaniyya) and political freedom (al-hurriya al-siyasiya). The former consists in the rights that flow from the implicit agreement among all the members of the

community to guarantee to one another their mutual rights and obligations under the law, while the latter consists in the secure guarantee that the state will not interfere in the people's exercise of their legal rights.[38]

Civic freedom, because it depends on the readiness of individual members of the community to abide by the law *and* ensure that others also abide by the law, turns implicitly on the civic virtues of individual citizens. Accordingly, improvement of the homeland through the spread of civilisation is not just a material project; rather, it also consists in the moral project of producing upright, just ('adl) citizens. The integrity of the just citizen is simply that he habitually performs his obligations and habitually demands his rights, something that causes a just citizen to be fair to himself or herself and to others. Integrity is the foundation of all other moral virtues and reaches its perfection when the Prophetic saying, 'None of you believe until he wishes for his brother what he wishes for himself' becomes manifest in the mores of the people.[39] In Tahtawi's thought, therefore, a mutually reinforcing, virtuous cycle existed between law, morality and politics, with each supporting the other in service of the common goal of perfecting the homeland. Civic and political freedom are part of the necessary means by which the homeland is perfected, and are desirable for that reason, not for their value in promoting the private happiness of individual citizens. Rather, the citizen's happiness is indelibly tied with the common project of improving the homeland, and accordingly, rights are to be measured in light of their effectiveness in achieving the common goal of perfecting the homeland, not the private ends of the individuals constituting the political community.[40]

The same kind of conceptualisation of rights to the health of the political community is found in Khayr al-Din al-Tunisi's *Aqwam al-Masalik*. While Tunisi contends that freedom is the key to social and political progress, it is clear that his conception of freedom is generally consistent with the republican idea of freedom as the secure enjoyment of non-interference rather than non-interference as such. Accordingly, personal freedom for Tunisi is the liberty of a person to act with respect

to one's body and earnings, with security of person, honour and property, enjoying in those respects full equality with all others in the community under the law, such that one is not afraid of any transgressions against one's person or other rights; that one is secure from criminal punishment except pursuant to laws promulgated by public assemblies; and that the laws apply to the rulers and the ruled alike.[41]

Political freedom is the right of individual citizens to participate in determining what is best for the state.[42] Tunisi's book is almost exclusively concerned with how to establish and maintain the community's political freedom, rather than investigate the kinds of rights that are appropriate for free citizens outside those necessary to establish and maintain just public institutions. The most important threat to the community's political freedom is arbitrary and despotic rule, which, in the case of the nineteenth-century Ottoman Empire, had led to the state's enfeeblement and vulnerabality to aggression at the hand of foreign powers. Much of what Tunisi argues, particularly with regard to the importance of individual freedom to achieving the state's prosperity and the relationship of revealed law to rational law, is consistent with Tahtawi's arguments. What distinguishes Tunisi from Tahtawi, however, is the former's concern with the institutional structure that characterises a well-governed polity, and the need for there to be a sufficient number of citizens who possess sufficient motives (wazi') to maintain the polity's good health.

According to Tunisi the central political problem facing the Muslim world was entrenched despotism. Progress can only be achieved when despotism is eliminated from the state and replaced with the law. Muslim polities historically had been prosperous when they were ruled through a combination of revealed law (shari'ah) and rational law (qanun), and they declined when arbitrary and despotic rule displaced the rule of law. The Ottomans, in their heyday, restored the rule of the shari'ah and qanun, and the state prospered, but they too, when despotism set in, lost their way. The nineteenth-century reforms known as the Tanzimat were an attempt to restore the place of law in the Ottoman Empire so that the scourge of despotism would be eliminated and law, not the arbitrary

decisions of public officials, would determine public affairs. Determining the law's proper content is largely a technical problem and one that can be solved without great difficulty. While Tunisi recognised that Islamic law must be modernised before it can function as an effective tool for the pursuit of the public good, he is optimistic that this goal can be achieved without much difficulty once religious scholars recognise the need for legal reform.

The more difficult problem is how to make the law, whether the shari'ah, qanun or both, an effective tool to combat arbitrary rule. As Tunisi points out, knowing the content of just laws is only one aspect of the political problem facing Muslim societies. The more serious problem is that law is not self-executing; it requires properly motivated citizens to stand behind it who are determined to protect it in the event that public officials act unlawfully. For Tunisi, Islam provides the motivation (wazi') necessary to ensure that the government respects the law. Islam, unlike Christianity, in Tunisi's view, promotes various political virtues that are crucial to the maintenance of a healthy polity, including: inculcating in people the virtue of self-restraint so they are free from the control of arbitrary passion; respecting the rights of others, regardless of religion; taking account of the public interest in light of changing circumstances; prioritising the removal of harms rather than obtaining new advantages; and the principle of prudence, such as choosing the lesser of harms when all alternatives are bad.[43] Most importantly, however, the shari'ah explicitly rejects autocracy and despotism and mandates instead that public affairs be conducted on the basis of mutual consultation (shura). So important is this political value in Islam that the Qur'an obliged the Prophet Muhammad to consult with his companions in all matters of public concern despite his status as an infallible messenger of God.[44] The Islamic requirement of commanding the good and prohibiting the evil (al-amr bi al-ma'ruf wa al-nahy 'an al-munkar) also provides a specific mechanism for ensuring the state's accountability to the law, a duty that must be undertaken specifically by state leaders, both religious and non-religious.[45]

The requirement of consultation in public affairs, and the duty of state leaders to protect the integrity of the law, is not simply a function of fidelity to the express texts of the shari'ah; it is also implicit in the basic norm of the shari'ah with regard to the legitimacy of a ruler's actions. Namely, that they are only legitimate to the extent that the ruler's decisions are consistent with the public good. Determination of the public good, however, is too complex a matter to be left to the decisions of one person, even if that person has the highest standards of personal integrity. Involvement of state leaders in political decision-making, far from constituting an impermissible interference in the ruler's lawful discretion, is a condition to ensure that those decisions are in fact consistent with the public good. Islamic law, therefore, provides its own solution to the problem of despotism through the principles of consultation and commanding the good and prohibiting the evil. These political values drawn from Islamic law then support the specific political rights of freedom of the media and assemblies of state leaders because they are indispensable to ensuring that the government acts in conformity with law.[46]

Rashid Rida most explicitly expresses the republican concern with non-domination in his work *Al-Khilafa* (*The Caliphate*), which he penned shortly after the Ottoman Empire's collapse at the end of the First World War.[47] Rida's argument about the nature of government in Islam is essentially based on his understanding that the supreme political virtue is dignity ('izza) and the supreme political vice is servility (dhull). Rida also expressly claims that the form of government in Islam is in fact, republican (darb min al-jumhuriyya).[48] Muslims became vulnerable to the depredations of colonialism because they became servile as a result of their acquiescence to political and religious despotism.[49] The solution to the problem of political despotism is popular sovereignty through the establishment of representative government.[50] The solution to religious despotism is the renewal of independent thinking in matters of religion (ijtihad), and abandoning the obligation of blind deference to historical authorities in law and theology (taqlid). With the restoration of popular government and independent thought in religion,

Muslims can establish a lawful caliphate based on consent and then embark on the wide-scale reforms necessary to secure their independence and progress.

Rida's commitment to promoting the community's political health as the supreme Islamic political virtue is so great that he argues for virtually a complete break with traditional methods of law finding. Historical Islamic law was a jurists' law, developed by jurists through the careful interpretation of revealed texts and other jurisprudential principles and applied on a case-by-case basis, often using casuistry. It also generated diversity and disagreement (ikhtilaf) regarding the content of the law insofar as the interpretive effort underlying the law's discovery led the jurists to recognise both the fallibility of their interpretations and the impossibility of resolving their differences on purely epistemological grounds. This conception of divine law in turn produced a system of normative pluralism, which potentially allowed for numerous solutions to exist simultaneously to the same legal problem. Rida, of course, singled out certain historical doctrines of law, for example, the rules of commercial law, including the historical rules prohibiting interest, as inconsistent with the Muslim community's public good and therefore in need of radical revision;[51] however, he had no *theological* objection to the law's traditional conception insofar as it applied to individuals and their individual concerns, for example, details of ritual law, but he argued that this conception of law, because it depended on the subjective assent of the believer for an interpretation to become binding, was incapable of generating binding general law (ahkam 'amma) of the sort needed to reform Muslim society to restore to political health.[52] Instead, he proposed a deliberative system of lawmaking whose primary concern would be to identify the public good. The public good would then be used to interpret revelation, such that even if revelation was said to be silent as to something, for example, the permissibility of positive law (something which Rida denied), it would become permissible by virtue of its being a necessary tool to achieve the public good and therefore vouchsafe the Muslim community's dignity.[53]

We also see Rida's concern for the politically deleterious consequences of taqlid in connection with the desire by certain groups of Muslims to imitate what are otherwise harmless European customs, such as building statues to honour the memory of famous public figures. Unlike a traditionalist or fundamentalist who might oppose statues on the theological ground that it resembles idolatry, Rida objected to the emerging practice on the grounds that it lacked any discernible connection with promoting the community good, but was instead intended merely to *imitate* European civilisation.[54] In effect, the blind imitation of European customs, even when those customs were in themselves harmless, was akin to what Jean Jacques Rousseau identified as the vice of amour-propre – the desire to gain the recognition and approval of others – rather than the virtue of amour de soi – the love of one's self as reflected in the drive to self-preservation.[55] Just as political and religious despotism in the Muslim world led to domination and abasement, so too would unreflective adoption of European customs, unmediated by an independent assessment of the public good, also produce domination and abasement for the Muslim world.

Conclusion: Islamic republicanism, civic republicanism and political liberalism

I have tried to show that it is very difficult to classify thinkers such as Tahtawi, Tunisi and Rida as liberals of any stripe, insofar as their primary concern is not maximising individuals' negative liberty; indeed, for each of these three thinkers the primary concern was the political community's well-being, and in their thinking, citizens' rights are to be determined by reference to the public good. There is no doubt that each of them believed that the individual wellbeing of the persons making up a political community is connected to the wellbeing of the political community. In other words, they all shared a belief, even if only implicit, that a healthy body politic produces happy citizens, and an unhealthy body politic produces unhappy citizens.[56] Nevertheless,

their primary focus was on the political community's health, and, accordingly, their political thought began with the state and considered the rights (and duties) of citizens from an instrumental perspective of what was good for the state, not the other way around.

Given the pressing threat posed by European powers to the Ottoman Empire's integrity in the latter half of the nineteenth century, and then the imposition of direct European rule over the Arab provinces of the former Ottoman Empire in the wake of the Ottoman collapse at the end of the First World War, it is unsurprising that thinkers of that generation were concerned primarily with the steps necessary to restore health to the body politic rather than individual rights. It is perhaps for this reason that Islamic modernist political thought has developed more along republican lines than liberal ones. Indeed, in the case of at least one modernist thinker, one might even make the case that political participation plays a role in his conception of the Islamic good life that is comparable to the role the public life plays in civic humanism. Abd al-Halim Abu Shaqqa, for example, developed a theory of moral excellence in his work *Tahrir al-Mar'a fi 'Asr al-Risala* (*The Liberation of Women During the Age of the Messenger*). He argues that, based on the indispensability of public participation in perfecting Islamic virtues, Muslim societies were obligated to restructure their societies radically in order to give Muslim women a fair opportunity to participate in public life, and thus perfect their Islamic virtues.[57]

Nonetheless, most Islamic modernist political thought is closer to civic republicanism than civic humanism, insofar as their principal aim is to restrain the state's despotic power through law, and religion is largely a means to produce subjects with sufficient virtue to ensure that the state adheres to legal norms. The normative limitations on personal freedom, understood in the liberal sense as negative freedom, are determined not politically, but rather by the substantive prohibitions of Islamic law: as Tahtawi put it in *The Reliable Guide*, if a matter is prohibited by revelation (haram) it is not constitutive of a proper conception of civilisation (tamaddun), and is properly excluded from the domain

of freedom in Muslim societies.[58] Nevertheless, within the substantive limits of Islamic law, there is no doubt that Islamic modernists value negative freedom, but what distinguishes them from other contemporary Muslim groups is their insistence that the civic virtues are part and parcel of Islamic teachings; indeed, they go further and suggest that these political virtues are part of the *core* of Islamic teachings.

Consider, for example, that Yusuf al-Qaradawi compares the act of voting to the role of a witness, whose responsibility is to select the candidate who, in the voter's opinion, is best qualified for office. Accordingly, a prerequisite of voting is moral probity ('adl) (although this is to be presumed in the absence of conviction of a serious crime). A citizen who votes for an unqualified candidate commits the equivalent of perjury (shahadat al-zur). Alternatively, a citizen who votes for a candidate solely on the arbitrary grounds of family relations or friendship, or that they come from the same town, or on the expectation that he will provide him some kind of private benefit, has violated his obligation as set out in the Qur'an to testify solely for the sake of God (wa aqimu al-shahada lillah). Similarly, those citizens who fail to exercise their right to vote violate God's prohibition against suppressing relevant evidence (katm al-shahada).[59]

Qaradawi's emphasis on the ethics of voting as a prerequisite for its moral legitimacy as a tool of good governance is not that different in sentiment from what we see Rawls express about the ethics of voting and the morality of democratic proceduralism as a legitimate basis for exercising coercion.

> When may citizens by their vote properly exercise their coercive political power over one another when fundamental questions are at stake? Or in the light of what principles and ideals must we exercise that power if our doing so is to be justifiable to others as free and equal? To this question political liberalism replies: our exercise of political power is proper and hence justifiable only when it is exercised in accordance

> with a constitution the essentials of which all citizens may reasonably be expected to endorse in light of the principles and ideals acceptable to them as reasonable and rational…[T]he ideal of citizenship imposes a moral…duty…to be able to explain to one another on those fundamental questions how the principles and policies they advocate and vote for can be supported by the values of public reason.[60]

The emphasis on civic virtues, I think, offers a more realistic basis for recognising commonalities among republicanism, liberalism and modernist Islamic political thought. Moreover, it is conceivable that the kind of limited and grudging toleration Islamic modernism offers to non-Islamic behaviour, for example wine drinking, borne more of exasperation rather than recognition of a legitimate right to drink wine, could become more robust in the future if the Muslim world can successfully consolidate non-authoritarian regimes. Until the principal problem facing Muslim societies, particularly in the Arab world, moves beyond authoritarianism and foreign domination, however, it is unlikely that Islamic political thought will move beyond concern for the kinds of virtues required to produce a regime that respects the rule of law and pursues the public good.

Nevertheless, liberals too have a stake in the promotion of the positive liberty required for the acquisition and practice of the civic virtues so valued by civic republicans as the necessary precondition for securing any kind of negative liberty. For populations in post-authoritarian regimes in the Arab world, there is no easy solution to the deep conflicts on the proper scope of negative liberties. On the other hand, with the increasing likelihood of state collapse as the result of several generations of poor governance, Islamic modernists and secular modernists, whether of a republican or liberal variety, all share, or should share, a common concern in establishing effective states that are law-abiding and can pursue rational development polices. They should also agree that some degree of civic virtue in their citizenry is a prerequisite for the

establishment of a minimally accountable and rational regime. While there does not seem much objective basis for hope now, one function of political theorising is to imagine how a better world can be achieved, and, as this chapter suggests, there are sufficient grounds in the terrain of their mutually overlapping concerns with civic virtue for Islamic modernists and liberals to produce a political order that is superior to the one currently prevailing in the Arab world. Given the rational basis for this hope, it is simply a matter of marshalling the will to achieve it.

Notes

1 Rawls (1996).
2 Fadel (2008: 5).
3 I have written a short essay on the relationship of modernist Islamic political thought to the Tunisian and Egyptian revolutions. See Fadel (2011).
4 Ryan (2013).
5 Ryan (2013: 24).
6 Ryan (2013: 9–10).
7 Ryan (2013: 9–10).
8 Ryan (2013: 23).
9 Ryan (2013: 23).
10 Schroeder (2014).
11 Lovett (2014).
12 See Section 1.2 in Lovett (2014).
13 See the Introduction in Lovett (2014).
14 See Section 3.1 in Lovett (2014).
15 See Lecture V, Section 7.5 in Rawls (1996: 205).
16 See Lecture V, Section 7.5 in Rawls (1996: 206).
17 See Section 3.3 in Lovett (2014).
18 Ryan (2013: 23) attributes to Locke the view that men are born 'in a state of perfect freedom, to order their actions and dispose of their possessions, and persons as they see fit'.
19 See Section 4.1 in Lovett (2014).
20 Tahtawi (1993, 2002).
21 Tunisi (1972).

22 Rida (1988).
23 Hourani (1983).
24 Kurzman (2002).
25 Kurzman (1998).
26 Kurzman (1998: 13–18).
27 Tahtawi (1993: 169–170, 180–181).
28 Tahtawi (1993: 181). There is clearly a misprint in the printed edition. My translation is based on what I believe the author meant.
29 Tahtawi (1993: 182–184).
30 Tahtawi (2002: 93).
31 Tahtawi (2002: 93).
32 Tahtawi (2002: 94).
33 Tahtawi (2002: 123–124).
34 Tahtawi (2002: 123).
35 Tahtawi (2002: 123–124).
36 Tahtawi (2002: 123).
37 Tahtawi (2002: 62).
38 Tahtawi (2002: 127–128).
39 Tahtawi (2002: 131).
40 Tahtawi (2002: 128).
41 Tunisi (1972: 206–207).
42 Tunisi (1972: 207).
43 Tunisi (1972: 99–100).
44 Tunisi (1972: 100).
45 Tunisi (1972: 101–102).
46 Tunisi (1972: 208).
47 Rida (1988).
48 Rida (1988: 9).
49 Rida (1988: 55).
50 Rida (1988: 9).
51 Rida (1988: 108–109).
52 Rida (1988: 87, 98).
53 Rida (1988: 104–105).
54 Rida (1988: 94–95).
55 See Section 2 in Bertram (2012).

56 See, for example, Tahtawi (2002: 128).
57 Fadel (2012).
58 Tahtawi (2002: 123).
59 Al-Qaradawi (1997: 138–139).
60 See Lecture VI, Section 2.1 in Rawls (1996: 217).

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3

Escaping modernity: Towards an Islamic politics of movement

Tahir Zaman

> Let us not pay tribute to Europe by creating states, institutions and societies which draw their inspiration from her. Humanity is waiting for something other from us than such an imitation, which would be almost an obscene caricature.
>
> – *The Wretched of the Earth,* Frantz Fanon[1]

Introduction

Drawing on Fanon's perceptive insights on the condition of colonised people in the mid-twentieth century, this chapter argues that colonial structural injustices and inequalities of yesteryear continue to haunt the poor peoples of the so-called Muslim world in the guise of neoliberalism. The first part of this chapter makes the case that in recent decades neoliberalism has successfully appropriated religious discourses and practices to stave off any meaningful response from political readings of Islam. I argue that Muslim intellectuals have constructed such readings following a dialectic encounter with European modernity – in particular the colonial project – creating the 'obscene caricature' Fanon warned against – violent political Islam movements.

The second half of this chapter directs our attention to the emergence of what I call a nascent Islamic politics of movement. Here, political struggle is less concerned with the direct capture of state or society,

as has hitherto been the focus of political Islam movements, but rather seeks to recalibrate the social world from first principles. The key protagonist around whom this politics is being articulated and formulated is the figure of the refugee. In what follows, I make the case that at a time of unprecedented global mass displacement the most-affected populations are from Muslim majority countries. Drawing on the case of the conflict in Syria, this chapter shows how the challenge of mass displacement calls for Muslims to engage with the contradictions of an exclusionary state with an Islamic ethos that celebrates hospitality and neighbourliness. In so doing, political subjectivities are produced which bring into question the purpose and form of state, society, and economy.

The bitter fruits of neoliberal Islam

Over the past thirty-five years, political understandings of Islam have been dominated by either authoritarian/autocratic states, or movements aligned to the right of the political spectrum. In many cases they have offered very little resistance to neoliberal readings of economy, and have often been complicit in furthering the neoliberal political agenda – namely: 'a worldwide strategy of accumulation and social discipline that doubles up as an imperialist project, spearheaded by the alliance between the US ruling class and locally dominant capitalist coalitions'.[2]

Arguably, the Islamic response to the challenge of neoliberalism[3] to date has been characterised by simply inserting Islam within a capitalist framework through a selective reading of Islamic jurisprudence. This is particularly true in states such as Turkey, Indonesia, Egypt, Iran and Pakistan, to name but a few, where the interests of conservative Islam have been married to powerful business interests. In the energy-propelled autocratic Gulf states, an increasingly consumer-driven culture casts a pernicious shadow over social relations wherein a hierarchy of humanity fixes migrant labour drawn from populous nations in South and East Asia firmly on the lowest rung.[4] It is easy to forget that polit-

ical readings of Islam have not always sought to galvanise religious traditions from a perspective serving the interests of capital. Indeed, during the late nineteenth century and for the best part of the twentieth century when the struggles against European colonialism and for independence were at its height, a proliferation of Muslim intellectuals, political activists and movements were assiduously engaged with the burgeoning idea of socialism. From the Tartar-led Waisi movement in Russia in the first decades of the twentieth century to the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) formed by Zulfikar Ali Bhutto in 1967 – political articulations of Islam acknowledged the significance of class struggle in the lives of ordinary Muslims.

The poetry of Faiz Ahmed Faiz – a recipient of the Lenin Peace Prize – demonstrates clearly how far from uncommon it was by the late 1970s to find a religious vernacular employed to convey revolutionary socialist ideals. It is also a reminder that Muslim intellectuals from the left openly contested ways in which a religious idiom was being put to use by right-leaning autocratic regimes:

> [Hum dekhenge] We shall see
> When from the Ka'bah on God's Earth
> All the idols will be removed
> We the truthful ones but out of favour
> Will be raised to the stage
> All the crowns will be thrown away
> All the thrones will be turned over
> Then only God's name will remain

And yet, we continue to wait in anticipation of the day when 'we shall see'. Today, such stridently vociferous iterations against the deprivations of unrestrained capitalism seem largely to come from organisations that stood at the altar of violence rather than from Muslim intellectuals. That resistance to neoliberalism is articulated through the likes of al-Qa'ida, Boko Haram, the Islamic State group and the Taliban is indicative of imperial aspirations of neoliberal elites and the usurping

of political and economic articulations of Islam by local capitalists. This is the reason that the fury of militant groups is directed at the house of Saud as much as it is against US hegemony. Militant groups draw on a religious lexicon to contest the monopoly of violence enjoyed by the postcolonial nation state – calling it to account for its failed promise to deliver social justice and preserve what has been described as the moral economy of Islam.[5]

Despite their professed beliefs, the violent actions of these groups are indicative of a nihilism directed at believers who fail to meet their exacting standards and at neighbours who belong to different denominations and faiths. What sense can be made of this deliberate targeting of children, the elderly and – for the most part – the poor? Such murderous acts of violence, Fanon tells us, are misdirected and avoid tackling the real cause of distress and the dissonance of their daily lives, which gnaws away at those who perpetrate such acts.

> Tribal feuds only serve to perpetuate old grudges deep buried in the memory. By throwing himself with all his force into the vendetta, the native tries to persuade himself that colonialism does not exist, that everything is going on as before, that history continues...It is as if plunging into a fraternal bloodbath allowed them to ignore the obstacle, and to put off till later the choice, nevertheless inevitable, which opens up the question of armed resistance to colonialism.[6]

In the mid-twentieth century, at the time of Fanon's writing, the adversary was a clear and open enemy – the colonial settler. Resistance to the colonial project and indeed the struggle to overthrow colonial regimes had no other recourse than through the logic of violence reciprocated. 'Colonialism is not a thinking machine, nor a body endowed with reasoning faculties. It is violence in its natural state, and it will only yield when confronted with greater violence,' Fanon reminds us.[7] Here, in place of colonialism we can read neoliberalism, and then the descent into the abyss of sectarian violence in recent decades becomes

clearer. The USA-led invasion and occupation of Iraq in 2003 was a reminder that proponents of neoliberalism were far from reticent in employing a 'shock doctrine' to Iraqi society and economy in order to satiate their desire for resources and markets.[8]

Just as colonialist projects of yesteryear were put into motion to subject the productive capacities of colonised lands to the rapacious needs of the capitalist economies of Europe, we find today the same formerly colonised lands being transformed through neoliberal interventions – becoming marketplaces for the productive capacities of corporate powers that have saturated their own markets. As the quote usually attributed to American novelist Mark Twain goes: 'History doesn't repeat itself but it does rhyme.'

To convince the people of this sleight of hand, the neoliberal enterprise arrives impeccably clothed in cultural authenticity and sanctioned by those who have taken it upon themselves to govern the country. Arguably, it has done a fine job of presenting itself as compatible with the teachings of Islam – playing heavily on the mercantile character of the Hejaz region at the time of the Prophet Muhammad. However, on closer inspection, the fine garb of supposed cultural authenticity is a lot more frayed around the edges than supporters of the neoliberal paradigm would have us believe. Whereas trade in the early Muslim era was encouraged and understood as a social enterprise protecting the rights of the worker,[9] neoliberalism is concerned solely with the isomorphic reduction of social relations to that of the market alone. Fanon recognised that the struggle for liberation is not always complete, that the colonised 'wily intellectual' schooled by the colonialist bourgeoisie to accept 'the idea of a society of individuals where each person shuts himself up in his own subjectivity'[10] remains the heir of the colonialist project. These 'spoilt children of yesterday's colonialism and of today's national governments, [who] organise the loot of whatever national resources exist'[11] can be found in today's globalised world serving their apprenticeships in transnational corporations, the World Bank, IMF and sundry international development agencies. Arguably, these 'spoilt

children' are merely the tip of a much greater iceberg and act in concert with a wider array of actors, including the clerical class, to perpetuate a discourse and set of practices around what it means to be both Muslim and politically engaged. The extent to which the philosophical framework underpinning industrial capitalism, and its more recent and potent strain – neoliberalism, is deeply anchored in how today's Muslim intellectuals and activists experience and perceive the world around them cannot be understated.

As noted above, socialist readings of Islam in many Muslim majority countries have been unable to withstand the onslaught of neoliberalism and the globalised context in which it operates. Cronus-like, neoliberalism devours other competing worldviews it comes up against through the commodification of cultural difference – and in so doing, turns a tidy profit. Indeed, neoliberalism has appropriated Islamic ideals of beneficial trade and individual accountability and woven it within its overarching narrative of entrepreneurialism. In the case of Pakistan, the Islamic socialism of the PPP very quickly degenerated into a vehicle for well-to-do businesspersons and landholders. The ready acceptance of governments to take their recommended dose of neoliberal reforms has paved the way for western powers to reassert their hegemony – this time in the guise of a liberal imperial regime. This impotence has in turn created considerable socioeconomic disparities in traditionally Muslim countries – a state of affairs that fails to chime with the call for social justice to be found in the sacred texts of Islam with its insistence on mutual aid at the heart of economic relations.

Meanwhile, the postcolonial state – already floundering for legitimacy – has sought to prop up its claim to authority through mobilising religious traditions, networks and institutions in an attempt to maintain the status quo. In so doing, it has created an acquiescent and pliant clerical class.[12] Where state institutions have become emptied, hollowed-out vehicles for furthering the economic interests of governing elites functioning as nodal points for international capital, religious and clan affiliation have become increasingly significant identity markers.

This sets the basis for a competition of access to state resources along lines of identity and is characterised by violence.[13] Reducing identity to primordial notions of religious belonging produces a distinctive set of processes and practices that seek to subjugate, dominate and exclude the Other while occluding social, cultural and economic factors at play, which cut across those very same communal cleavages.[14] Tellingly, the sectarian narrative of recent conflicts in the Middle East has been near hegemonic. Think tanks, policymakers, journalists and academics have all been guilty of demonstrating an unhealthy obsession bordering on perversion with geopolitical readings that over-emphasise the clout of sectarian armed groups while glossing over the agency of millions of Iraqis and Syrians. Although framed in the language of religious symbolism, this discourse has very little to do with everyday lived understandings of religion – at the heart of which is virtue ethics.

The caution sounded by Fanon has not been heeded. In the desire to be modern in the way of Europe, predominantly Muslim countries have rushed headlong into structuring state, society and economic relations in faithful imitation of Europe. Here, we would do well to pay attention to Fanon, who reminded us: 'Two centuries ago, a former European colony decided to catch up with Europe. It succeeded so well that the United States of America became a monster, in which the taints, the sickness and inhumanity of Europe have grown to appalling dimensions.'[15]

Getting lost in translation

Much of what has been labelled 'Islamic socialism' from the twentieth century remained unquestioningly within the rubric of the nation-state system. Struggling to free themselves of the shackles of colonial rule, nascent socialist projects in Muslim majority countries were conjoined at birth with pro-independence and nationalist movements. The glaring contradiction of a universalising religion bound within a nation state, which by definition exists through othering those who fall outside of the state-citizen-territory trinity, has clung stubbornly to the fibre of

political and economic iterations of Islam since. With postcolonial states networked into global supply and commodity chains, Islam as a vernacular for understanding social relations has been subordinated to the market. Polanyi's observation that '[i]nstead of economy being embedded in social relations, social relations are embedded in the economic system'[16] rings true for many, if not all, Muslim majority countries today.

Ontological borrowings by Muslim intellectuals in relation to the nation state are also evident in how there has been a laboured attempt to fit the square peg of ummah into the round hole of society. Here we find ummah – the community of believers – has been translated and re-envisioned as Islamic society. Alternatively, the more secular term 'mujtamma'a' has also been used to describe both society and community. Confusion abounds, and with it the implicit acceptance of that dichotomy wherein one represents personal and affective social interactions (Gemeinschaft), while the other is characterised by impersonal relations, rationalism and void of any binding norms (Gesellschaft).

Here, it is useful to look not to a European construction of knowledge of the social world to find an understanding of ummah but to the proximate cultures bordering the Arab heartlands. The migration of loanwords from Arabic to neighbouring languages fixes in time certain premodern readings of how foundational terms such as ummah were understood. Excavating language in this way allows us to move beyond the encounter that the Muslim world had with modernity – particularly the colonial project, and retrieve a hitherto forgotten vocabulary, and, with it, a possible future Muslim imaginary.

In Urdu the word ma'ashara is used in everyday parlance to mean society. Ma'asharet kardan in Farsi means to socialise, unite or mix well (with people), and in Turkish muaseret is used to convey civility and reciprocal social relations. The word itself has an Arabic root 'ashr which means to associate closely. Mu'ashar is a rarely used noun in contemporary Arabic to mean comrade, companion or friend. More common in both colloquial and modern standard Arabic is a related

word in reference to kin networks or clan – 'ashira. This root meaning conceptualises society as a space in which people – including strangers – come together and associate not solely in competition with one another, but also in a convivial manner. It is a space not only for rational economic exchange but a site for people to connect with one another as human beings. The binary of community and society dissolves.

This also has radical implications for our understanding of what an economy is and does – moving away from one centred on profit-driven competition and towards mutual aid as the objective. It challenges a core precept of neoliberal thinking; namely, that the mechanism of the market alone is sufficient in guiding human action and structuring relations. It directs us away from both the centralised gaze of the state and the supposed rationality of the market. Instead, it posits that neighbourhoods and communities, which are bound not only by a cold rational economic calculus but are also anchored in affective sociocultural ties, are sufficiently equipped to manage and arrange the distribution of common resources at their disposal.

It is worth remembering here that the marshalling of capitalist modes of production for the purposes of industrialisation and modernisation in what was formerly the Ottoman Empire was instigated by the state rather than something that grew organically from within communities. To be clear, I am not arguing that capitalist relations did not exist in traditionally Muslim countries before the encounter with modernity and colonialism. Trade in crafted goods and agricultural commodities, as well as the use of elaborate ruses to overcome the interdiction on usury, were widespread in the premodern era.[17] The point is that production was far from being on an industrial scale. Where large-scale enterprises were undertaken they were commonly framed as perpetual endowments – awqaf. While such endowments were certainly used to protect the wealth of elites, they also often served an important social function. Moreover, the fact that creative legal loopholes were required to circumvent the spirit of Islamic injunctions is a reminder that, socially, such practices were held in disdain.

The encounter with European colonialism left many Muslim intellectuals bewildered, disoriented, and, it is fair to say, dazzled. Thus we find that Muslim reformers at the turn of the twentieth century were not wholly opposed to capitalism per se, but their discontent could rather be located in the control of capital by foreign actors. It was believed that an Islamic underpinning would harness capital to serve the interests of emerging Muslim states. What we begin to see here are the first indications that what passes as an 'Islamic economics' is in fact embedded in global capitalist relations, which paradoxically invites the wolf of colonial capitalism to the door rather than keeping it at bay.

Notable exceptions among reform projects were those of 'Ali Shari'ati and Sayyid Qutb – both of whom grappled with capitalist hegemony. Their respective attempts to formulate a grammar of interaction anchored in an Islamic vernacular ultimately failed to escape European ontological categories that had by the latter half of the twentieth century become deeply ingrained in how Muslims were both structuring the world around them and being guided by those very same structures. The subordination of Islam to a European modernity is made manifest and captured succinctly in the private real estate projects that have sprung up around the Haram al-Sharif in Makkah.[18] Where once pilgrims would have measured the passing of the day according to the call of the mu'adhin, they are now confronted with the sight of the Ka'bah being dwarfed by the very symbol of modernity – a clock tower.[19] Aside from the ostentatious – some would say vulgar – display of international capitalism, the new constructions accentuate the privileging of visualised space, a characteristic of post-enlightenment European culture, trumping the emphasis Islam puts on the auricular.



Aerial view of Abraj al-Bait under construction[20]

Islamic practice as a framework of virtue ethics

In drawing attention to our understanding of society, I am treading a well-worn path of interpreting Islam through the lens of virtue ethics. Muslim ethicists, theologians and philosophers such as al-Ghazali and Miskawayh have long recognised that sociability is the defining characteristic of humanity.[21] Indeed, the Arabic word for 'human' – 'insan' – is derived from 'uns' – 'fellowship'. The four principal virtues of wisdom, courage, temperance and justice are deemed usul al-din or the true foundation of religion by al-Ghazali. For Miskawayh, the virtues are fully realised or 'manifested' when 'one participates and lives with other people, and has dealings and various kinds of association with them'.[22]

The key distinction between earlier Greek philosophers, notably Aristotle, and later Muslim ethicists is the insistence of the latter that virtues are not an end in and of themselves, but a means to attain the love of God. Furthermore, these virtues could be inculcated not only through habituation and learning but also through an appeal to the divine. In so doing, Muslim ethicists reconciled an Aristotelian framework of virtue ethics with Islamic tradition. For it is in the character of the Prophet

Muhammad that virtues are embodied as per the prophetic tradition: 'I was sent to perfect [complete] good character'.[23] These noble qualities or virtues[24] were considered to consolidate and further the good practices prevalent among the Arabs during the time of Prophet Muhammad's call to Islam – most notably hospitality and good neighbourliness.[25] In what is widely acknowledged as al-Ghazali's magnum opus, *Revival of the Religious Sciences*, he extends the virtues further.[26] For the purpose of this discussion I will focus on a virtue that features both in al-Ghazali's list and in the ten stipulated in the tradition of 'A'ishah reported in *Makarim al-Akhlaq*: 'behaving honourably towards your neighbour'. It is worth noting here that al-Ghazali also adds 'whether he be a Muslim or a disbeliever'. Here then is an explicit recognition and acceptance of difference. The question of neighbourliness is central to understanding one of the most pressing political issues of our time – forced displacement. In what follows, I consider how the conflict in Syria and its ensuing mass displacement crisis can be understood as the erosion of customary rights to neighbourhood, and the search to recapture those rights in exile.

Towards an Islamic politics of movement

Traditions as ongoing 'arguments extended through time'[27] allow us to move beyond the metanarrative of the nation state and find much-needed space to begin thinking differently. For displaced people standing at the threshold of the sedentarist world created by the nation state, religious traditions provide a powerful vernacular and idiom that allows them 'to "create a past" for themselves which will legitimate them in a way which just being themselves in the present will not allow them to do'.[28]

For Talal Asad,[29] a reading of what constitutes Islamic tradition and practice must be understood on its own terms. It cannot be disentangled or disembodied from the living practices of historically and socially located communities and their institutions – it is a discursive tradition wherein 'each successive generation [of Muslims] confronts its partic-

ular problems via an engagement with a set of ongoing arguments'.[30] A brief survey of refugee populations across the world today reveals that mass displacement crises are perhaps this generation's immediate 'particular problem'. More than half (53 per cent) of the 14.4 million refugees registered with the UNHCR are from three countries: Syria, Afghanistan and Somalia.[31] This number excludes the 5.1 million Palestinians who are displaced and receive assistance from UNRWA. Similarly, Muslim majority countries account for four of the top five countries that are hosting refugees.[32] It is in this encounter between settled resident populations and the arrival of the newly displaced, who are often co-religionists, that a 'sedentarist metaphysics'[33] positing the nation state as the moral container for people, culture and politics is called into question. Here, the dissonance of contemporary Islamist approaches to the Muslim Other is laid bare for all to see. In the case of the Turkish response to the Syrian displacement crisis, the Justice and Development Party (AKP) cleaves to the exclusionary logic of the nation state. On the one hand, Islamic rhetoric is mobilised to express solidarity with the displaced. On the other, displaced Syrians are readily configured as an available pool of exploitable labour – displaced Syrians are not afforded the rights enjoyed by Turkish citizens.

The figure below illustrates this clearly. Here, we see a Syrian refugee child examining the soles of his bare feet in a textiles workshop – quite possibly producing cheaply priced clothing destined for the European market. Behind him hangs a framed picture of the Ka'bah, on either side of which are verses from the Qur'an. Beneath the image reads a supplication in Turkish asking God for good health and prosperity. Evidently, the health and prosperity of the Syrian refugee child is secondary to that of the owner of the workshop and far from the concerns of the consumer in a distant European high street. This is a reading of Islam that considers the mobilisation of religious symbols and traditions only insofar as it upholds the primacy of capital. As we noted earlier following Fanon, to do so can only lead to violence. An alternative reading of religion is demanded.



Syrian refugee child in Turkish textiles workshop[34]

The right to neighbourhood

Conflict-induced violence and forced migration are key contributors to social transformation; communities are left fragmented; economic resources usurped or destroyed; and traditional ways of life are re-examined and interpreted anew. The loss and attempt to retrieve, recreate or perhaps even re-shape the vital cultural resources which constitute relational understandings of home lie at the heart of the decision making, religious practices and beliefs of displaced people in the Middle East.

As the social anthropologist David Turton reminds us: 'The experience of displacement is not only about the *loss* of place, and the pain and bereavement this entails. It is also, inevitably, about the struggle to *make* a place in the world.'[35] And so, with every fragmentation comes a re-imagining and re-configuring of community and neighbourhood; with the destruction of economic resources come changes in livelihood strategies; and with the re-examination of traditional social structures are born new perceptions of identity and belonging.

The inroads neoliberalism has made into countries with predominantly Muslim populations have led to the erosion of what I shall call

here popular understandings of 'the right to neighbourhood'. But first, what do I mean by a right to neighbourhood? The rights discourse is built on an understanding of individual rights. While this has undoubtedly advanced debates on liberty and social justice, a dogmatic adherence to the notion of the individual fails to see the wood for the trees. Individuals are located relationally both within and outside larger units in social space: family, neighbourhood and workplace.

Echoing the growing literature in critical urban geography on the 'right to the city',[36] the right to neighbourhood puts forward the case for enfranchising inhabitants of cities rather than simply national citizens, a right of neighbourliness serves to protect the well-being, dignity and integrity of all those resident (temporarily or otherwise) in a neighbourhood, including those who arrive as strangers. It protects the neighbourhood against the caprice of a neoliberal state that serves to defend the interests of those close to its centre. The right to neighbourhood upholds not only social, cultural and political rights but economic rights also. Lefebvre provocatively labelled the right to the city 'a cry and a demand',[37] and it has been a clarion call for the left since. Peter Marcuse writes, 'The demand is of those who are excluded, the cry is of those who are alienated, the demand is for the material necessities of life, the aspiration is for a broader right to what is necessary beyond the material to lead a satisfying life.' At a time where there is an increased enclosure of public space in the city, there is heightened anxiety around the growing trend for those who are excluded, alienated and dispossessed to be corralled into 'abject spaces...where their existence is rendered invisible and inaudible'.[38]

The politics of propinquity[39] I am advocating here is far from being parochial. It does not serve to exclude those on the margins. Rather, social distance between self and Other are compressed, and boundaries are recognised as spaces to cross rather than bound. It understands an individual, a neighbourhood or a city to be part of a greater whole. Relationships are configured radially. It is useful here to think of a concentric circle spiralling outwards, or of a matryoshka doll – the spaces

in between are not void but thick with meaningful relationships producing 'multiple geographies of affiliation, linkage and flow'.[40]

The cultural geographer Thomas Tweed asserts that those who subscribe to a religious worldview are guided by 'autocentric' and 'allocentric' frames of reference.[41] The former can be equated with a concern for the care of the self, whereas the latter refers to concern with that which is external of oneself. These reference frames enable those who subscribe to religious beliefs and practices to orient themselves temporally and spatially by placing their bodies within homes, homelands and the cosmos. For those cultivating a virtue ethic modelled on Prophet Muhammad, geographies of affiliation flow outwards beyond any circumscribed boundaries of the nation state. In encountering the stranger as a neighbour, virtues as learned, habituated dispositions take on transcendent meanings that brings the believer closer to the love of God, as the Muslim ethicists would have it, thus simultaneously providing both an autocentric and allocentric reference frame.

Eroding the right to neighbourhood

The conflict in Syria can be read retrospectively as a case where a centralised regime has eroded the right to neighbourhood. Alongside the insidious politics of entrenched sectarianism pursued by the Asad regime, tensions between different factions of Syrian society on the eve of the conflict were exacerbated by the caprice of a state serving to defend the interests of those close to its centre.

Whereas the regime of Hafez al-Asad had maintained and consolidated political control through the provision of key economic and social subsidies funded largely by extracting natural resources,[42] this option was becoming less sustainable with depleting oil production and a rapidly growing population.[43] Syria's total population had grown from just under 12.5 million in 1990 to over 21 million on the eve of the uprisings in 2011.[44] During the same time frame, youth unemployment was on an upward trajectory.[45] The percentage of the overall workforce recognised as unemployed young Syrians stood at 18.6 per cent in 1991. Two dec-

ades later, unemployed Syrian youth represented just over one third of the overall labour force available for work in the country.[46] By 2006, Syria had become a net oil importer.[47] As Syrian political economist Shamel Azmeh puts it: 'Syria was rapidly becoming an oil-based economy and an oil-based political system but without oil.'[48] Confronted with this reality, a step change was required. Under Bashar al-Asad, the Syrian regime embarked on what has been described as both a 'modernising' and 'upgrading' of authoritarianism.[49] This allowed for what the regime considered acceptable limits of social transformation albeit with a greater emphasis on the restructuring of economic rather than political arrangements. The opening up of the Syrian economy to neoliberal practices meant that the compact agreed upon under Hafez al-Asad, wherein the state provided key economic and social subsidies, was to be restructured such that private welfare providers were to step into the space left by the retreating state. A key facet of this policy was to 'appropriate and contain civil societies'.[50] The success of this policy had been questionable before the 2011 uprising,[51] and has arguably laid the ground for developing the social bases from which armed groups operate today.

Economic reforms were focused on the routinisation of neoliberal policies: a reduction in public spending; an increase in indirect taxes; postponement of public sector reforms; removal of subsidies on key commodities; and moves towards the decoupling of the energy market from the state. The costs of the restructuring of economic arrangements in line with global shifts towards neoliberal practices under the regime of Bashar al-Asad have been borne predominantly by poorer sections of the Syrian population – notably rural communities and communities in working class areas surrounding the larger cities of Damascus, Aleppo and Homs. In reducing energy subsidies and opening up the local economy to favour Turkish export companies, locally manufactured textiles, garments and furniture were made uncompetitive as they lost the benefit of the protection tariffs previously afforded by the state.[52]

Hikes in energy prices and the loss of subsidies on fertilisers had a disproportionate effect on agricultural communities. The timing of

these policies could not have been worse coinciding with a four-year drought that devastated many agricultural communities – particularly in the northeast of the country where the Islamic State group later ensconced itself. Francesca de Chatel made the case that it was the long-term mismanagement of water and land resources under the watch of the Asad regime rather than the drought itself which 'fed a long-simmering discontent' against the regime in the region.[53] The ensuing humanitarian crisis saw farming communities in the northeast losing as much as 85 per cent of their livestock, making over one million Syrians food insecure.[54] In search of creating alternative livelihoods, as many as 50 000 rural families migrated to peripheral urban locations surrounding the urban centres of Homs, Damascus and Dara'a.[55] Here they found themselves in competition in the informal labour economy with Iraqi refugees who themselves were in a protracted displacement crisis, and had by this stage of their exile depleted the limited financial capital they had arrived with. An additional consequence of the mismanagement of the drought was the reduction in local food production. This exacerbated an already inflationary situation, which had seen a hike in international prices for basic food items, mounting pressures on Syrian households. The shift away from consolidating support in provincial areas through the presence of the state as a key service provider and subsidiser of basic food items – as had been the case under Hafez al-Asad – towards restructuring economic relations in favour of a select group of businesspersons focusing on banking, construction, media and tourism had created an environment within which crony capitalism could thrive.[56] Property development, for the most part, had not focused on the needs of a growing population, but was concentrated on luxury housing, retail and tourism projects for a new elite class, which saw its interest being rapidly integrated into the regional and global centres of capital,[57] and which had grown 'accustomed to dealing with malfunctioning, kleptomaniac power structures'.[58]

In rushing headfirst into the single-minded development of new opportunities afforded by the structural change in economic relations

in Syria under the Asad regime, traditional mainstays of the Syrian economy such as agriculture and manufacturing industries were neglected and even exposed to a competitive disadvantage when the market opened up to foreign companies.[59] Nasser et al. make the point that 'institutional bottlenecks' arising from arrangements favouring crony capitalism ultimately 'led to the marginalisation of large segments of society, and relatively deprived them from effectively contributing to political, economic and social development...[while simultaneously failing] to respond to the aspirations, interests and expectations of society.'[60] Douma, a suburb of Damascus at the heart of the uprising against the Asad regime, provides an example where the economic rights of the neighbourhood had been sacrificed to make way for a liberalisation of the Syrian economy that privileged the centre. Small to medium-sized enterprises that comprised the mainstay of the Douma economy were squeezed out by cheaper Turkish goods as the detente between Syria and Turkey reached a peak in 2010. Here, the underbelly of globalisation was laid bare for all to see – unemployment, the immiseration of an urban working class and the erosion of community resilience. The call for bread, freedom and social justice in Douma was born out of recognition of the manifold ways in which the economic rights of the neighbourhood were being forsaken by the Asad regime. In towns such as Douma, the new economic arrangements not only dismantled the local economy but also did little to alleviate the chronic housing deficiencies. As Robert Goulden observed in his writing on housing, inequality and economic change in Syria: 'It is notable that demonstrations were first seen in Damascus in the suburb of Douma, an area where over 70 per cent of residents live in informal housing.'[61]

The fact that the uprisings against the regime across the country were driven by local grievances and the protests were multivocal meant that the opposition would not be cohesive but fractured. Iterations of discontent and disenchantment with policies not grounded in local lived realities – be they the policies of the 'international community', Syrian National Council, Asad, the Islamic State group or Jabhat Fatah al-Sham – should

be understood as a clarion call for localised solutions that demand the right to neighbourhood. Arguably, in areas liberated from the Asad regime and Islamic State group, strides towards a right to neighbourhood have been made. Alternative, rhizomatic structures of governance have emerged wherein prominent roles are played by civilian-led efforts such as Local Administrative Councils (LACs) and Revolutionary Councils.[62] In 2014, it was estimated that in excess of 750 LACs were operating with varying degrees of success in so-called liberated areas of Syria.[63] The autonomy of local areas grounded in solidarity has been the popular expression of will rather than a reliance on party-based political projects.

In search of a right to neighbourhood

Many of the displaced people I have spoken to over the past eight years identify communal home-like spaces (mosques, churches, places of learning, community centres) as being significant in helping orient themselves following displacement. Community centres, particularly those organised around networks of self-reliance, are often described as a refuge from the cramped conditions in which displaced people ordinarily live. Aside from being used as places of learning, such centres are used to celebrate festivities including weddings and annual religious festivals, to organise sporting and cultural events, to introduce neighbours to one another, to pray. In short, such spaces are deeply anchored in the lives of displaced people. In using communal spaces as much as possible, including as a place to meet friends, to eat, drink and be hospitable, displaced people affirm the centrality of relational understandings of home[64] in religious practice and imagination.

The theme of neighbourliness is integral to their understandings of homemaking and religion – transforming the stranger into a neighbour. In the process, hospitality breaks free from the rigid shackles of humanitarian discourse allowing the displaced to reciprocate.[65] It is in the understanding of reciprocal rights and duties pertaining to neighbourhood and neighbourliness that the ummah is realised as lived practice – the ummah is found first and foremost in localised contexts. A Syrian

refugee I met in Urfa echoed the experiences of Iraqi refugees I had met earlier in Damascus in 2010. He signalled the importance of neighbourly visits as a barometer of meaningful relationships.

> I like it when they (Turks) treat us equally and not as 'poor' refugees. When they visit and invite us to their homes - I feel normal and equal to them. I'm not made to feel like a refugee. It's great when people call on you like this. Visiting people's homes like this means we have proper relations.

The rights of neighbourliness are upheld – often in opposition to statist agendas – on a daily basis across countries of first refuge: Jordan, Turkey, Lebanon and indeed Syria. As the delivery of humanitarian aid to non-regime controlled areas becomes ever more challenging and less frequent, more and more Syrians are forced to migrate to areas where humanitarian aid is more accessible and the threat of aerial bombardment by the Asad regime and Russian forces negligible. By November 2013, the Asad regime was reporting that around 3 per cent of the 6.5 million IDPs were housed in public shelters – mosques, schools and other public buildings. More than 85 per cent of those displaced inside Syria's borders have found refuge in the homes of relatives and extended family, according to government statistics.[66] A recent needs assessment carried out by humanitarian agencies found 38 per cent of IDPs, surveyed across the seven provinces in Syria where the war has been at its most brutal, were hosted by local families. The relationship between host communities and displaced people can be characterised as largely supportive, with as many as 53 per cent of respondents in the aforementioned survey stating they were willing to assist the displaced for a limited time, while 34 per cent reported that support was not contingent on the duration of stay.[67] In areas to the north and east where the level of conflict had been less intense during the first two years of the conflict, an overwhelming picture of hospitality and welcoming the displaced emerges – with as many as 56 per cent of displaced people surveyed found to be living in the homes of other families.[68]

There is no doubt that the strain under which local communities are placed is great: the lack of resources, even fewer employment opportunities, upward spiralling prices of daily necessities and chronic shortage of space to meet the demand of new arrivals all contribute to possible flashpoints of tension. Yet the crisis of mass displacement also brings with it an opportunity to nurture neighbourly relations and move beyond demonstrations of hospitality – of knowing how to treat the stranger in our midst in an ethical manner and building towards a politics of propinquity. It is here that religious traditions have much to offer in building a framework of a right to neighbourliness that is compatible with secular readings of a civil society. A religious idiom provides adherents with a learned grammar of interaction with the Other.

Conclusion: The challenge ahead

It is in this context that it becomes imperative to interrogate both the 'taken-for-granted' fact of the nation state and the narrative that a neoliberal economic agenda is somehow in harmony with an Islamic ethos. Thirty-five years without response to this insidious and often violent restructuring of social and economic relations has been far too long.

There do seem to be glimmers of resistance in isolated pockets where the devastation wrought by neoliberal encroachment has been at its most intense – notably during the Gezi protests in the summer of 2013 with Ihsan Eliacik's anti-capitalist Muslim youth movement. Elsewhere, others have failed to muster much support from the masses for their re-interpretation of Islam along liberal and socialist lines; Hassan Hanafi's 'Islamic left' project serves as a case in point. Their detractors have accused both Eliacik and Hanafi of promoting heretical interpretations of Islam. While it is to be expected that those who currently enjoy a near monopoly on the production of religious knowledge will seek to besmirch the reputation of those who challenge the status quo, the question remains why such alternative readings of Islam have failed to gain traction in the popular Muslim imagination.

An Islamic politics of movement begins with the lived realities of Muslims today and the need to mount a challenge to a corrosive neoliberal agenda. It harks back not to an imagined authenticity, but to first principles (al-Ghazali's Usul-al-Din) grounded in a virtue ethics. It demands an understanding of how the discourse and practices of states – with a predominantly Muslim population – have constructed the common sense of the free market while simultaneously presenting themselves as 'defenders of the faith'. From here, understandings of nation state, society and economy can be reconstituted so that they are read through an Islamic lens rather than that of modernity – be it Marxist or neoliberal. This requires imagination.

While this may ultimately bring us to a politics of the commons characterised by cooperative modes of production and consumption, open borders, sustainability and localism – the ontological reasoning behind it must surely derive from the tenets of Islam if neoliberal readings of Islam and the violent progeny it has brought into this world are to be challenged. It is this capitulation to neoliberalism that has sown the seeds of much discontent, disenchantment and disillusionment throughout the Middle East and the wider Muslim world.

The task an Islamic politics of movement is faced with is to wrest away the monopoly on political readings of Islam from those aligned with the interests of capital and authoritarianism. To do so, we have to move beyond proximate translations of concepts such as nation state, society, and economy, and re-imagine them so that they speak to the very real socio-economic, cultural and political distress Muslims find themselves in today.

We must rise to the encouragement of Fanon,[69] who exhorts us to 'find something different' and is unwavering in his belief that 'we today can do everything, so long as we do not imitate Europe, so long as we are not obsessed by the desire to catch up with Europe'. In short, what we need more than ever before is a re-awakening of the ideals that underpin social relations in Islam – chief among them are neighbourliness and solidarity, which have long been a feature of everyday practices of Islam.

Notes

1 Fanon (1967: 254).
2 Saad-Filho and Johnston (2005: 2).
3 The key characteristics of neoliberalism are the globalisation of 'a new discipline of labour and management to the benefit of lenders and shareholders; the diminished intervention of the state concerning development and welfare; the dramatic growth of financial institutions; the implementation of new relationships between the financial and non-financial sectors, to the benefit of the former; a new legal stand in favour of mergers and acquisitions; the strengthening of central banks and the targeting of their activity toward price stability, and the new determination to drain the resources of the periphery toward the centre'. See Dumenil and Levy (2005: 10).
4 Hanieh (2016).
5 Tripp (2006).
6 Fanon (1967: 42).
7 Fanon (1967: 48).
8 Klein (2007); Marfleet (2011).
9 Kamali (2011). A well-attested tradition narrates that the Prophet Muhammad stated: 'Allah says, "I will be against three persons on the Day of Resurrection: One who makes a covenant in My Name, but he proves treacherous; one who sells a free person (as a slave) and eats the price; and one who employs a labourer and gets the full work done by him but does not pay him his wages."' See https://sunnah.com/bukhari/34/174.
10 Fanon (1967: 36).
11 Fanon (1967: 37).
12 Ismail (2006).
13 Kaldor (2012).
14 Haddad (2011); Zaman (2016a).
15 Fanon (1967: 252).
16 Polyani (2001: 60).
17 Rodinson (1977).
18 The Noble Sanctuary is the title given to the environs of the Ka'bah.
19 Incidentally, this is home to the Canadian and US-owned Fairmont hotels and resorts group.

20 Flickr/Fadi el-Benni. Some rights reserved. See https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/2.0/legalcode.
21 Sherif (1975).
22 Miskawayh (1968/2002: 26).
23 This was confirmed also in the Qur'an (68:4) where God reminds humankind of the importance of emulating the Prophet: 'And you [stand] on an exalted standard of character.'
24 The virtues were enumerated as ten by the Prophet's wife, 'A'ishah, in a widely accepted tradition listed in Ibn Abi al-Dunya's (823–894 CE) *Makarim al-Akhlaq [Book of Noble Virtues]*. She tells us: 'There are ten noble qualities of character: speaking the truth, firm courage in obeying God, giving to him who asks, repaying good deeds, strengthening family ties, keeping faith, behaving honourably towards neighbours, behaving honourably towards friends, hospitality to guests, and modesty which is chief of them all.' See Bellamy (1963: 111).
25 Shoukri (2011).
26 al-Ghazali (2008).
27 MacIntyre (1988).
28 Shils (1971: 133).
29 Asad (1986: 14).
30 Haj (2009: 6).
31 UNHCR Statistical Yearbook (2014: 9).
32 UNHCR Statistical Yearbook (2014: 9). The numbers should be taken as a conservative estimate as they do not include refugees who have spontaneously self-settled in urban locations and have not availed themselves of the protection and assistance available under the aegis of the UNHCR.
33 Malkki (1992: 31).
34 AP Photo/Lefteris Pitarakis.
35 Turton (2005: 278).
36 Lefebvre (1967); Purcell (2003); Harvey (2003); Marcuse (2010).
37 Lefebvre (1967: 158).
38 Isin and Rygiel (2007: 184).
39 Amin (2004: 38).
40 Amin (2004: 38).
41 Tweed (2006: 97).

42 By the early 2000s, oil revenue contributed around 20 per cent of GDP, two thirds of total exports and half of government revenue. See: IMF (2005).
43 Not to mention a highly repressive security apparatus. See Wedeen (1999).
44 http://databank.worldbank.org/data/reports.aspx?source=2&country=SYR&series=&period=.
45 Huitfeldt and Kabbani (2005).
46 http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SL.UEM.1524.ZS?order=wbapi_data_value_2010 wbapi_data_value wbapi_data_value-first&sort=asc.
47 Nasser, Mehchy and Abu Ismail (2013: 20).
48 Azmeh (2014: 10).
49 Perthes (2004); Heydemann (2007).
50 Heydemann (2007: 5).
51 Pierret and Selvik (2009).
52 Azmeh (2014).
53 de Chatel (2014).
54 Erian, Katlan and Babab (2011).
55 Worth (2010).
56 Haddad (2012); Nasser, Mehchy and Abu Ismail (2013); Azmeh (2014).
57 Qatari institutions were heavy investors in Syria establishing a five-billion-USD joint holding company that had a heavy property portfolio. See Khalaf and Fielding-Smith (2013).
58 Harling and Birke (2015).
59 Azmeh (2014: 21).
60 Nasser, Mehchy and Abu Ismail (2013: 9).
61 Goulden (2011: 201).
62 Ali (2015); Khalaf, Ramadan and Stoleis (2014); Elhamoui and al-Hawat (2015).
63 Elhamoui and al-Hawat (2015: 31).
64 Taylor (2015).
65 Zaman (2016b).
66 See *2014 Syrian Arab Republic Humanitarian action Response Plan.* Relief Web. http://reliefweb.int/report/syrian-arab-republic/2014-syrian-arab-republic-humanitarian-assistance-response-plan-sharp.
67 See *Joint Rapid Assessment of Northern Syria II: Final report.* Relief

Web. http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/JRANS II - Final Report_0.pdf.

68 *Joint Rapid Assessment,* 28.

69 Fanon (1967: 251–252).

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4

Reflections on Political Islam after the Islamic State group

S Sayyid

The articulation of Islam with politics within the contemporary world remains dominated by a fixation that contrasts political Islam with another kind of proper politics based on Enlightenment values and bequeathed by European imperialism. The analysis of political expression inflected through Muslimness remains under-theorised. An illustration of this occurred on 3 October 2011. Slavoj Zizek predicted with 'ninety per cent certainty' that the Egyptian army and the Muslim Brotherhood would form a pact. Mona Eltahawy, an Egyptian journalist and blogger, chimed in saying that it was already happening, and Zizek went on to say that the US government would support this arrangement. On 3 June 2013, the Egyptian military under the leadership of Field Marshal Abdel Fattah el-Sisi removed the duly elected president of Egypt, and member of the Muslim Brotherhood, Mohamed Morsi. Morsi was imprisoned, the Muslim Brotherhood was banned, and thousands of its supporters were killed in some of the most violent acts of sustained state repression seen in Egypt since the days of the British occupation.

In this chapter, I do two things: first, I provide an account of Islamism, and, second, I examine the extent to which we can distinguish the Islamic State group (IS) from Islamism. In the process of addressing these two points I put forward an analysis in which questions of Islamism are part of the wider question of Eurocentrism. The thread running

through these reflections is provided by what I have described as Critical Muslim Studies.[1] My method is to expand the horizon of illustrations that bring Critical Muslim Studies into view. I begin this series of reflections by returning to Zizek.

The mysteries of political Islam

To put Zizek's prediction in its proper context, it should be pointed out that his comment was made in Australia, where both Zizek and Eltahawy were part of a panel for the ABC flagship current affairs programme *Q and A*.[2] This prediction is mentioned not to point out how, like many predictions, it came to nought, or the perils of confusing philosophy with astrology, but rather to examine the epistemological underpinnings of such a prediction. For, once all the necessary caveats are made (for example, the context of a live-televised meeting – where the risk of misspeaking is high, and one is not always at one's most considered), we still have a situation in which the likelihood of a pact between the Egyptian military and the Muslim Brotherhood is considered not only possible but also very probable. Nor is it the case that this is just another idiosyncratic intervention by Zizek; after all, Eltahawy supported this prediction.

The basis of the prediction was a theoretical model that saw the Egyptian military and the Muslim Brotherhood as in essence right-wing organisations and, therefore, natural allies. The reason why neither Zizek nor Eltahawy seemed to find the notion of a convergence between the Egyptian military and the Muslim Brotherhood a strain on their imagination (despite all evidence to the contrary) was that they understood them as 'reactionary' forces at heart, and therefore natural allies.

The idea that social actors have intrinsic interests that they pursue purposefully and predictably is a staple of essentialist social sciences. Zizek is not typically considered an essentialist, but the articulation between the political and the Islamicate has the effect of turning him into one. This is because analysis of political Islam remains dominated

by a framework that refuses to take the 'political' part of 'political Islam' seriously. As a consequence, political Islam in general remains under-theorised.[3] This lack of theorisation of political Islam stems in part from a belief that sees the development of politics and the political as uniquely western.[4] Conflict between France and Britain or Germany and France is rarely authoritatively described as the outcome of ancient ethnic hatreds. Conflict outside the West is most often described in terms of essential differences, which are not amenable to historical transformations, or do not reflect anything other than tribal hostilities. For example, Saddam Hussein's invasion of Iran in 1980 was described as part of an ongoing battle between Arabs and Persians that had been ongoing for a millennium. Specifically, it is through Zizek's embrace of Eurocentrism that essentialism enters his analysis. Zizek's plea for Eurocentrism is most often deployed in his opposition to the form of 'New Age' multiculturalism that he finds dominating US campuses. There is more to it, however, than just a disdain for the 'decaffeinated' nature of liberal prosperous North America. As has been pointed out, Zizek often takes a Eurocentric position in relation to questions of Islam, Christianity and the Global South.[5]

Eurocentrism in the sense I use it here is not an ethnic, cultural or geographical category, but is rather an epistemological category. This epistemic Eurocentrism is most clearly visible on borderlands between what is demarcated as non-European and what is described as European. This is why the formulation of European and non-European in terms of people with history and people without history is so crucial. Eurocentrism can only conceive of the political as its own patrimony, the guarantee of its ability to make history. All attempts at history making are claimed and appropriated by the West. History making is considered a western monopoly, and those who are deemed not western cannot make history but merely import it from the West. Such reasoning is the staple of orientalism, and figures like Lawrence of Arabia are its representatives.[6]

Orientalism can be seen at work in the dominant narrative describing the so-called Arab Spring.[7] This orientalist narrative saw in the re-

moval of Zine El Abidine Ben Ali and Hosni Mubarak the continuing long march of democracy. According to this view, the 2011 MENA uprisings came about as a result of westernised youth wired up via social media and fired up with visions of democratic life found in the West. This narrative appeals to western audiences as well as the 'westoxicated' in the rest of the world. The western romance of the 2011 MENA uprisings displayed three key assumptions that rest upon the logic of Eurocentrism. It is assumed that democracy has only one source and can only be fulfilled by imitating that source. 'Democracy' is a metaphor for a pro-western government with a free market and a society in which social conventions are approximations of western society's image of itself.

The second assumption is that technology can determine social processes that are external to it. In other words, while technology is an autonomous force able to bring about social transformations, it is not a part of society. At the same time technology is considered a hallmark of western civilisation. Thus technological determinism, when applied to what are considered non-western societies, is another way of connoting the significance of the West as the engine of modern social transformations.

The third assumption is that the 2011 MENA uprisings mean the end of Islamism, and its failure.[8] The representation of the uprisings – and their cognates like the Gezi park demonstrations in Turkey and the so-called Green Movement in Iran – was in terms of their auto-correction of history: They seemed to confirm that popular appeal and Islamism are ultimately incompatible, and this incompatibility dooms Islamism to eventual failure. As has been pointed out frequently, there is a tendency to continuously write the obituaries of political Islam, since every obituary validates the Enlightenment vision of politics and confirms the necessity of Eurocentrism for the future of the world. At stake in any discussion of political Islam is not merely the problem of governance or conflict in specific parts of the world, but rather the making of the world itself. This is because a successful theorisation of political Islam cannot pro-

ceed without a conceptualisation of politics and the political. The political is not about specific arrangements and distributions of authoritative decision-making; it's not about particular parts of the social system, nor is it confined to particular offices and precincts (parliaments, ministries, bureaucracies). Rather, it is about the institution of social systems.

In the next section I present a different account of Islamism and political Islam. I follow this with a few remarks on current developments of Islamism, and, in particular, the emergence of the Islamic State group. In the process I provide a number of examples and illustrations that show the ontological nature of the political. This chapter reveals the manner in which the challenge of political Islam is epistemological rather than just analytical. To understand Islamism means acknowledging the way in which orientalism and Eurocentrism frame the parameters of 'normal science', and it is precisely this paradigm that gets in the way of understanding political Islam.

Manifestations of 'Political Islam'

There are three key features that characterise Islamism's appearance. Firstly, Islamism is postcolonial, both in the historical sense that it aligns with the wave of decolonisation, which reduced the formal European colonial empires to isolated outposts, and as a theoretical comportment that is able to recognise the continuity of colonial ramifications in the constitution of the contemporary world order. Islamism is possible in the context of the decentring of the West. Secondly, Islamism is possible in a horizon opened by the de facto abolition of the caliphate – an opening that the proclamation of Abu Bakr alBaghdadi as caliph is unable to close, thus demonstrating the abject failure of the late-Ba'athist, neo-Kharijite project. The caliphate's abolition transcends its legal and institutional framings, and points to a world in which Muslims are not only fragmented and subaltern, but lack a mechanism for representing their concerns and demands in sustained manner on a global scale. Thirdly, Islamism emerges in a post-Westphalian context in which a

convergence of developments has led to a fundamental weakening of the nation state. Globalisation has eroded the capacity of nation states to regulate their economies, and neoliberalism has done much to undermine the idea of the state having a role in socioeconomic matters. The war on terror – with its drone attacks, colonial-style invasions and occupations, renditions, and claims of extraterritoriality for US citizens – has subverted national sovereign spaces. Developments in cyberspace have increased the ability of communications to circumvent the capacity of most nation states to act as the main point of reference for flows of information. Consequently, the post-Westphalian order is fraying, and it is in its tears that a transnational sense of Muslimness has emerged. Islamism describes attempts to translate and transform this transnational Muslimness into a collective political subjectivity.

Manifestations of 'political Islam' range from political parties, such as the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt and Syria, the Justice and Development Party (AKP) in Turkey, Jamaat-e-Islami in Pakistan, Hamas in Palestine and Hizbullah in Lebanon; to Islamic republics such as Pakistan (designated as such in 1956), Mauritania (1958), Iran (1979) and Afghanistan (1992). It may include countries such as Saudi Arabia and Malaysia, and insurgent groups such as IS, alQa'ida, Boko Haram and alShabab. These various manifestations all deploy Islam as the means of legitimating their authority. It is the deployment of Islam that is considered decisive in the formation of political Islam. The problem with emphasising the deployment of Islam remains that it is too often ahistorical. Since the beginning of the Madinah state, a powerful case could be made that Islam was the means by which the legitimacy of power was most frequently and intensely organised throughout Muslimistan. The institution of rule by Muslims developed a panoply of elements inscribed with Islam – from having the khutbah (Friday sermon) read in the ruler's name to the building of mosques with the patronage of rulers, from titles of rule taken to the regalia of rule. In this case, political Islam should be expanded to include Muslim states from the Madinah state onwards.[9]

Commonly, however, political Islam has a much narrower range of use. In fact, it is possible to argue that the present concern with political Islam, while having older antecedents, is at most only fifty years old.[10] Most often, accounts for the beginning of this phenomenon date it from 1967 and the reaction to the Six Day War, or OPEC's quadrupling of oil prices in 1974, or the Islamic Revolution in 1979, or the Afghanistan jihad beginning with the Soviet invasion in 1978. These events, however, evade the historical context that makes the emergence of Islamism possible and that distinguishes it from the lexicon of legitimacy used previously by Muslim entities. Political analysis without a theorisation of the context by which Islam is disclosed can only produce taxonomies or bland ethnographies but not explanations. The study of political Islam was and continues to be heavily influenced by journalistic analyses. This journalism is very often attuned to the needs and concerns of wider western foreign policy establishments, and reproduces (with some notable exceptions) the conceptual framework of western foreign policy. In this area the visibility of 'instant experts' is marked. One consequence of such a narration is that political Islam remains poorly understood because it is so poorly conceptualised.

The Kemalist order

To understand what is involved in turning Muslimness into a collective political subjectivity, we require an analysis that goes beyond the empirical plane, which groups together the manifestation of the intersection between Islam and politics based on descriptions that take their cue from an Enlightenment understanding of the proper relationship between religion and politics. To bring to the fore a degree of reflexivity on the scholarship and research on the relationship between politics and religion, I want to introduce the concepts of 'normal science' and revolutionary science as derived from the work of Thomas Kuhn. In *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, Kuhn describes normal science as the conduct of 'research firmly based on one or more past scientific achievements,

achievements that a particular scientific community acknowledges for a time as supplying the foundation for its further practice'.[11] The activity of normal science occurs within a specific paradigm, which establishes what counts as proper research and scholarly practice, what problems need to be resolved and the legitimate mechanisms for their resolution. Kuhn describes revolutionary science as occurring when a paradigm begins to lose its cohesion and legitimacy as anomalies in normal science accumulate, and when established accounts of a field's research and scholarship seem inadequate to the task. If the paradigm that governed the normal science of understanding and accounting for societies that were considered non-European (in however contested form) can be described as orientalism, there is little doubt that this paradigm is in crisis. At the core of this crisis is the question of the extent that the history of the West can be used as a model for understanding the rest of the world. The question of religion and politics is crucial to this project, since the western imagination defines both religion and politics in such a way that the essential relationship corresponds to its own understanding of its own history, rather than saying such concepts may be used in varying historical and cultural contexts. While Kuhn's work focused on the history of science, it is useful in understanding the development of other disciplines and processes of knowledge formation.

The paradigm of social sciences – bequeathed to the world from a Europe certain of itself and of its place in the future – has been in crisis for a hundred years, a crisis that many thinkers have observed and commented upon. Missing from most accounts of the crisis of European sciences is a sustained awareness of the geopolitics of knowledge. It has been by and large left to postcolonial and more self-consciously decolonial investigators to draw attention to the unravelling of confidence in metanarratives, and raise suspicions of European grand narratives. This epistemic crisis has a cultural location, a point to which I will return towards the end of the chapter.

Islamism does not have substantive properties, but emerges in systems of differences organised in relational contrasts. To understand the

regularity of distribution by which discursive elements constitute Islamism requires not the forensic enumeration of these elements, but rather to see how they are distributed in terms of the articulation of a frontier – an exteriority that provides their interior with cohesion and shape. The key to Islamism is its antagonism towards what I have described as Kemalism. By Kemalism I mean not only the series of transformations undertaken by Mustafa Kemal following his military victory in 1922, but also this assemblage of reforms that became hegemonic throughout Muslimistan. The legitimacy that political Islam seeks is not in reference to a trans-historical Islam with the same connotations as it had in 632, as in 1258, or 1517 or 1924.

Following a victory over Greek forces in 1922, Mustafa Kemal and his supporters secured control of the remaining Ottoman domains. The people of these lands had suffered a decade of almost continuous war from the Italian invasion of Libya (1911–1912), to the devastating First Balkan War (1912–1913), to the First World War and the Turkish War of Independence (1919–1923). The Ottomans experienced a demographic loss of epidemic proportions, and the population decreased by twenty per cent as a direct result of the attendant devastations and ethnic cleansing during these wars.[12] Against the background of an organic crisis caused by the dislocatory effects of such widespread devastation, the Kemalist radical programme of transformation was put into practice. Effectively, de-Islamisation on such a scale had rarely been attempted outside the Iberian Peninsula, European colonial plantation economies of the western hemisphere and Communist regimes. In all these cases, the main instigators of de-Islamisation programmes were clearly non-Muslims. What is novel and disquieting about Kemalism is that it was a process carried out by those who, at least previously, had described themselves as Muslims. This is why Yasin Aktay's description of autocolonialism implicates all political forms organised by the logic of colonialism, not just those that were unleashed by Mustafa Kemal and his supporters. Kemalism opened up a horizon that other rulers of Muslim countries were able to exploit. An overlapping series of policy innovations took hold throughout the

Muslim Ummah, which were similar to those introduced by Mustafa Kemal. Arguably, none of these policy changes were as intense, radical or systematic as those carried out in Turkey.

There are three major factors that partly explain the intensity and radicality of the transformation carried out by the Kemalists in Turkey. Firstly, very few Muslim societies faced the kind of devastation the Ottoman state experienced during its last decades.[13] This devastation did much to weaken the old Ottoman order by undermining its sources of power, and helped to create the conditions in which the Kemalist project of radical transformation could be contemplated and implemented.

Secondly, the Ottoman state's ability to maintain a relatively high degree of sovereignty in relation to the predatory European powers provided a degree of insulation, which then allowed Ottoman intellectuals to exercise independent thought and discuss the possibility of adopting social reforms that would help accommodate the Ottoman state within an increasingly Eurocentric world system.[14] Many of these social reforms were patterned on imitating what were considered to be causes of European power, that is, the reasons for its global ascendency. In the Ottoman case a social base of some standing had been incubating for some time, in which ideas of westernisation had already began to circulate among small but influential groups. Thus, when Mustafa Kemal came to power he was able to harness these ideas into policy blueprints to be implemented.

The third major factor accounting for the Kemalist rupture's intensity was a series of contingent decisions taken by those who could have sustained anti-Kemalist opposition, but failed to do so. These ranged from the privileging of dynastic considerations by Ottoman monarchs, to Enver Pasha's strategic blunders during the First World War, to the failure of nineteenth-century Ottoman governments to institute self-strengthening reforms in a sustained and systematic manner. There was nothing inevitable about Kemalism in either its scope or intensity.

The story of the Kemalist transformation can be told through a series of headlines ranged around a decade-long legislative programme begin-

ning with the ending of the sultanate (1 November 1922), the proclamation of the Turkish republic (29 October 1923), the de facto abolition of the caliphate (3 March 1924), the outlawing of the fez (25 November 1925), and the declaration of the state as secular (10 April 1928). In 1933 the call to prayer was required to be in Turkish rather than Arabic, as it had been since the beginning of Islam. In 1934 the Law of Surnames was adopted, and government officials went around giving people European-style surnames. In 1935 Friday was replaced by Sunday as the legal weekly holiday, again to bring it in line with European (and, of course, Christian) practice, and to diminish the significance of Friday and congregational prayers.

These acts aimed to reorient the former Ottoman order to the West. Kemalists imagined Islam through orientalism.[15] The measures first introduced into Turkey by the Kemalists were not merely attempts at modernisation but also westernisation. They could not articulate an alternative form of modernisation, and being modern was synonymous with being western (otherwise how does one explain legislation banning the fez or the promotion of opera rather than Turkish folk music?). Given the extent to which western identity was based on the exclusion of the Islamicate, if modernisation was understood as uncritical westernisation, becoming modern meant un-becoming Muslim.[16]

Kemalism as an analytical category has a wider currency than the policies and stratagems of Mustafa Kemal in Turkey. I use Kemalism to describe the series of transformations in which governments run by those who call themselves Muslims carry out reforms that undermine the possibility of Muslim political agency. Thus the Saudi clan, the former rulers of Iran – the Pahlavis, the Asads in Syria, and the Algerian junta are different examples within the family of Kemalism. There is no causal relationship between Mustafa Kemal's reforms and the policies instituted by the Pahlavis, Asads, Hashemites, Saudis, etc. In fact, some would vehemently argue that Riyadh's rulers are the antithesis of Kemalists. I would put it another way: I would suggest, if it comforts those who like to focus on the surface, that at most they may be the black

sheep of the Kemalist family. My reason for saying this is that what is crucial to Kemalism is a series of overlapping commonalities that are sufficient to formulate the broad contours of the modern territorial sovereign state within Muslimistan. Just as there is no causal relationship between chess, football, badminton, cricket or solitaire; yet, they are described and understood as being games. Kemalism denotes a set of both linguistic and non-linguistic elements; it is performative and institutional. In other words, Kemalism is a discourse. This does not mean that Kemalism is homogeneous; within this discourse there are a number of iterations and configurations.

The mukhabarat state is one such iteration. This form of state emerged following formal decolonisation in the context of a bipolar world order in which, because interstate war was disciplined by the two superpowers, the main threat to most states was not external but internal. Mukhabarat states focus on internal threats and rely on external alliances to protect themselves from foreign threats. They use extensive intelligence services and systematic torture to prevent popular mobilisation. Such states are able to discard popular legitimacy because they rely upon support from superpowers in order to maintain power. Since 2001, the 'war on terror' has shifted the axis of threat from internal opposition to regimes to external intervention by powerful states, as US military predominance erodes national sovereignty and the lack of a counterweight to US hegemony lowers the threshold for US intervention. States can only exercise their sovereignty by ensuring that they enjoy popular legitimacy and support. Regimes that rule by torture and intimidation are unlikely to be able to count on the support of their people when they become caught in the crosshairs of the war on terror. The Kemalism of the mukhabarat state can easily be gleaned from its understanding of modernisation as westernisation, its attitude to questions of Muslim autonomy and its continuation of the colonial divide between rulers and the ruled.

Kemalism was hegemonic throughout the Islamosphere from 1924 onwards, with two moments of interruption: the formation of Pakistan in 1947, and the Islamic Revolution in Iran in 1978–79. In the case of

Pakistan, the politicisation of a Muslim identity was the very condition of possibility for Pakistan. The demand that Muslims of the British Raj had to have a distinct homeland meant that being Muslim could not simply be dismissed as something that could be confined to the private sphere. The mass mobilizations that sustained the demands for a Muslim homeland were only possible with the articulation of a Muslim political subjectivity and the enunciation of an 'Islamic ideological state'.[17]

Pakistan was possible not due to the machinations of a handful of men (Jinnah, Nehru, Gandhi and Mountbatten) and the deals that they made or failed to make. It was, rather, the culmination of a process of cultural changes by which the movement for Pakistan caught the imagination of Muslim South Asians as an attempt to build Madinah.[18] In the case of Iran, the 'unthinkable revolution' demonstrated that Islamism could overthrow Kemalist regimes and institute an Islamic republic that was resilient enough to survive subversion, invasion and US-instigated, UN-imposed sanctions.[19] The Islamic Revolution decisively demonstrated that the presumed lack of Muslim political agency was not internal to Islam or Muslims but rather contingent on a set of decisions and approaches characteristic of Kemalism. It is not Islam that makes Muslim autonomy impossible but Kemalism. The impossibility is a function of epistemology as much as of the techniques of modern governmentality. Kemalism is in many ways a continuation of the European colonial enterprise, even when it has come to power in opposition to colonial rule, as, for example, in Algeria.[20]

By colonialism I do not mean something that is of universal application. I am being very specific by using colonialism as synonymous with the European colonial enterprise; that is, the process of world-making that took place from the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries. European colonialism did not only have the familiar dimensions of economic exploitation and racial rule but was also, as decolonial scholars have pointed out, a project of epistemological violence.[21] Nor was colonialism, with its attendant horrors, an aberration from the modernising civilisation that was the hallmark of the European project. Rather, throughout

much of the planet the experience of modernity was expressed in the form of colonialism. Colonialism and modernity were synonymous. Decolonisation in the sense that I use it here cannot be limited to removing the institutions of colonial rule, but must rather be an exercise in an alternative world-making. The caliphate can then be seen as an engine of alternative world-making, and this is how I argue that the widespread 'Muslim longing for the lost caliphate' can best be understood.[22]

Political Islam and the caliphate

The Islamic State group's declaration of the caliphate on 29 June 2014 is one response to this longing, but, as we shall see, it is also the ultimate deferral of its satisfaction. If Islamism was driven by a desire to fill the caliphate-shaped hole in the ummah, than does the advent of Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi as caliph signal the consummation of the Islamist project? Is 29 June 2014 another date in the various and numerous attempts to write-off Islamism? Do the horrors committed by IS thugs show once again the perils of mixing politics and religion, and betraying universal values to appease particularities? To explore these questions further I examine the decision by various armed groups in Iraq, following the overthrow of Saddam Hussein's Ba'athist regime, to reconfigure themselves and proclaim the caliphate.

The rationale behind the decision to declare the caliphate has been, oddly, under-analysed. This is partly a reflection of the difficulty of getting information around the rather opaque workings of IS, and partly because the neocons had spent the previous decade warning that the caliphate was coming; its appearance thus seems to fulfil a prophesy, and could be presented as something rescued from the ruins of the neocon crusade associated with the Bush presidency. The trouble with such overreaching accounts is that they take the unit of analysis for granted; they assume that collective identities are hard-wired into human souls, which obscures from analysis one of the key features of any political process: the formation of collective identities.

It is important to ask why IS proclaimed the caliphate eighty-odd years after Mustafa Kemal ended it. I suggest four main reasons. The first reason stems from the dispute between IS and alQa'ida. Osama Bin Laden's killing, and the US campaign to 'decapitate' alQa'ida's leadership greatly diminished the group's ability to exercise paramountcy among various 'jihadi' tendencies. With this background, the simmering dispute between alQa'ida and IS precursors about tactics, and the desirability of gaining popular support while tempering attacks along sectarian lines, spilled over into a direct challenge to alQa'ida's authority and legitimacy. Thus the IS declaration of a caliphate sought to trump alQa'ida, whose leadership had confined itself to the establishment of sub-caliphal polities such as emirates, as precursors to the establishment of a caliphate. For alQa'ida, the geopolitical conditions were not right for the declaration of a caliphate.

The second main factor is the Islamic State group's attempt to reconstruct its marginal position on the periphery of Iraq and Syria into a new centre. By claiming to be the caliphate, IS hopes to overcome the stain of warlordism, which is attached to so many armed groups that have emerged in the interstices of failed states, such as the Lord's Resistance Army in Uganda.[23] The third factor, closely linked to the second, is that IS has only been able to secure a base astride two national borders, and no regional appellation gives coherence to their territory. Therefore, the dictates of the ebbs and flows of their military presence have pushed them into a situation in which they have not taken over an existing state or uncovered a subnational entity, but have, rather, been forced to stake a transnational geopolitical position that reflects their geography of domination. There is something Ruritanian about IS, and the attempt to claim the caliphate is an effort to escape the sense of Ruritanian reality in IS territory. By declaring itself to be the caliphate, IS articulates itself as destroyer of the regional system established by the Sykes-Picot pact one hundred years ago.

Fourthly, it is perhaps not accidental that the caliphate appears on the borderlands of two countries that have been brutalised by forty

years of Ba'athist rule. The declaration of the caliphate can be seen as a reformulation of the idea of Arab unity espoused by the two Ba'athist parties.[24] While IS would claim that its members are not Arab nationalists, their articulation of Islam is clearly influenced by an Arab nationalist narrative about the true essence of Islam. It can be seen in how they present doctrinal disputes, for example, with the Ja'fari Madhab,[25] as reflecting ethnic and national differences rather than theological disagreements. The influence can be seen in the deployment of former members of Saddam's regime to significant positions. It can be also be seen in an organisational culture that uses violence and torture as routine mechanisms for structuring social relations. The purpose of this is generic rather than specific in creating awareness in the wider society of the risk of non-compliance. Thus the caliphate's declaration can also be seen as a development in late Ba'athism in which pan-Arabism is transmuted into an Islamicate register.

The rationale for declaring a caliphate was overdetermined by a number of contingent strategic factors. The decision, however, raises questions about the relationship between IS and Islamism's trajectory. Is the Islamic State group not the culmination of a process ignited by Mustafa Kemal's decision to do away with the caliphate? More worryingly, is the Islamic state not a final demonstration that the project of Islamism has reached an intellectual, cultural and moral dead end? If under the banner of Islamism such cruel atrocities can be committed, then what is the point of Islamism? Is the final irony not that political Islam is the betrayal of Islam? Does true Islam not exist outside the temptations and corruptions of political power? This series of questions arises from the inadequacy of Islamist accounts in their response to the caliphate's declaration. By inadequate I do not mean that they have not condemned IS, because most organisations associated with Islamism, for example Hamas, Hizbullah and the Muslim Brotherhood, have been vocal in their rejection of IS.

The problem is that the most common response of various Islamist organisations has focused on rejecting IS on mainly theological

grounds, by arguing that IS does not represent true Islam. This appeal to true Islam works for both Muslims and non-Muslims. One of the most common responses to various formulations of political Islam that one does not favour is to argue that such and such does not represent 'true Islam'.[26] While such declarations of what is improper or proper Islam are very satisfying to those found on the right side of that divide, they are not particularly useful, either analytically or rhetorically. The assumption seems to be not only that if it could be demonstrated that IS does not represent true Islam, then its legitimacy would collapse, but also that such a collapse in legitimacy could come about by showing, through detailed citations, that IS is not Islamic. It is unclear whether for IS recruits, the strategies they follow and their aims are based on careful consideration and refutation of the view of the majority of Muslim scholars about what constitutes 'true Islam' and what is the caliphate.[27] It is a mistake to assume that what sustains IS and its adherents is a theologically-sanctioned version of Islam. The evocation of the caliphate by Ba'athists and neo-Kharijites around al-Baghdadi is not the result of applying carefully-considered doctrines to the circumstances. The declaration of the caliphate was a rhetorical act. It cannot be undone by specific references to a disciplinary matrix of fiqh. Such an approach assumes that political actions are grounded, rather than seeing politics as the means of grounding: In other words, the constitutive element of politics establishes rules, and thus cannot be determined by following rules.

If appeals to 'true Islam' cannot help differentiate between IS and Islamism, is it possible to work out the degree of difference by examining the policy contents of IS and various Islamist ideologues? This approach would identify common features and make judgement in terms of the content of the IS programme and Islamist policies. Similarities in programmatic content are one of the most common ways of determining a political ideology's identity. Despite the regularity with which this approach is undertaken, it is not a sufficiently robust position as it depends on a degree of essentialism. Such an approach assumes that

certain types of programmes and policies have a specific belonging that is intrinsic to them; in other words, policies have an essential kernel, and the job of the analyst is simply to match this essence to the correct assemblage. When applied to a comparison of IS and Islamism, this approach confronts two problems.

Firstly, as there is no essence to any political formation or trope, it is difficult to assign with durable fixity the necessary linkages between policies and parties. For example, Otto von Bismarck (1815–1898), an opponent of the Socialist Party in Germany, was also responsible for establishing what was arguably the first modern welfare system in the world. The meaning of specific policies arises from their articulation, and not from their essential quality. Political analysis would, in many ways, be far less complicated if there were such an essence, in the same way as ethical life would be far easier if all the villains wore black hats and all the heroes wore white ones. As the wearing of hats is no indication of good or evil, so too is there no right way to read the identity of political organisations and orientations in specific policies and programmes.[28]

Secondly, difficulties with this approach arise because it is unclear what the broad contours of an Islamist programme are. Islamism does not have an overarching author or text that could disclose a series of common polices. Here a contrast with 'communism' is instructive. Communist parties in Russia and China shared not only an analytical framework but also a repertoire of policy responses; for example, public ownership of the means of production. The Islamist policy programme has not achieved this level of granularity. It is, consequently, difficult to work out a characteristic or coherent policy mix to compare with IS.[29]

To answer the questions about the relationship between IS and Islamism requires an altogether different approach. This approach conceives of Islamism not as a set of specific organisations or manifestos, but rather as a grammar. As Aktay points out, the range of Islamist articulations have gone beyond the mirror image of utopias produced by revolutions to include not only the Islamic Revolution in Iran, but also

resistance movements against occupations (Kashmir, Palestine, Afghanistan, Chechnya, Iraq) and tyrannies (Egypt, Syria, Algeria, Tunisia). It has come to identify electorally successful political parties (AKP, Hizbullah, Hamas, the Muslim Brotherhood, Ennahda, etc.). It is this range of articulations that leads Aktay to conclude that 'Islamism is the political grammar of Islam'.[30] He reaches this conclusion in response to claims in Turkey that Islamism has come to end. These, of course, echo Olivier Roy's outrageous conclusion that political Islam has ended; Aktay is keen to demonstrate that it is simply not possible to see Islamism as an oppositional movement only.

The point of a political project is to achieve social transformation; it cannot restrict itself to critique without construction. Aktay clearly sees Islamism as a postcolonial phenomenon and not as a permanent feature of the Islamicate. In other words, it is the experience of European colonial world making that sets the background for Islamism. To clarify this point, I would qualify Aktay's statement in the following way: Islamism is a decolonial political grammar of Islam. By adding the qualification 'decolonial' I want to foreground that Islamism is historical (not a perennial feature of Islam), and is an attempt to undo significant aspects of European colonial world making.[31] A political grammar describes the conventions and embedded ways that govern our understanding of the concepts that furnish authoritative decision making. Islamism, then, is the series of concepts, tropes, institutions and stratagems by which the ethical impulse in Islam is translated into conventions for sustainable groupings. In other words, I want to emphasise Islamism's political nature by focusing on its capacity to constitute collective subjects able to act with purpose in the world. Part of this purpose is decolonial.

The limits of political projects are derived from how a project articulates itself. IS has an antagonistic relationship with all major iterations of Islamism. From the Islamic Revolution to the Muslim Brotherhood, IS is hostile to all forms of political Islam. Its exclusionary logic does not allow it to be placed in any family of related ideological movements or tendencies. Contrast this with the manner in which Nazis were able

to narrate themselves as sharing outlooks and orientations with other European fascist groups and Japanese militarism. IS is antagonistic to the Taliban, alQa'ida, Riyadh Tehran, and all other forms of Islamism. Its support emerges from franchising warlordism in various parts of Muslimistan. Its mix of takfirism and Ba'athism undermines any serious and sustainable claim that it is a continuation of Islamism.

What Baghdadi has done, however, is to recognise that the idea of the caliphate has not disappeared, that it is a powerful symbol – not so much for what it can do currently, but for the potential that it holds. With the coup against Morsi in Egypt, securing an 'Islamic' state in the landscape of existing nation states and boundaries appears to be a difficult project to achieve. Yet there is a clear demand among Muslims throughout the world for governance structures that are just, responsive and competent. There is also a growing recognition that, given the predatory nature of the current world order vis-a-vis Muslims, there is a need for forms of governance that protect Muslims and strengthen their ability to make decisions about their lives. Such forms of governance cannot be confined to the current divisions of the world. There is a need for a global voice for the world's Muslims. The proclamation of the caliphate is a recognition of Muslim dissatisfaction with the current situation. The idea of the caliphate is, at best, a symbol that expresses a transnational, post-Madhhabi possibility.[32] The inability of IS to understand Islam and the Islamicate except through highly improvised literalist readings means that while they may be aware of the caliphate's appeal, which transcends national (and sectarian) boundaries, they lack the imaginative resources to understand its metaphorical appeal. The caliphate is about a decolonial future, not about orientalist nostalgia.

Conclusion

In the summer of 1976, New York City was the site of a killing spree. When apprehended almost thirteen months later, the serial killer explained that he had been driven to kill because his neighbour's dog

was possessed by a demon, and the dog-demon had ordered him to kill. Of course, the explanation was rejected in its entirety. Presumably, in an English court in the fourteenth century, an explanation that someone was motivated kill repeatedly because they were following the orders of a demonic dog would have greater credence, whereas in the late twentieth century an explanation that such motivation stemmed from feelings of rage engendered as a result of emotional and physical abuse by one's parents would receive greater merit. This illustrates that in order to account for a given social behaviour one must be able to call upon the stock phrases, explanations and descriptions used for such purposes. In other words, social behaviour is accounted for by resorting to the kind of language game available for that purpose. This language does not have to be the language of the subject or analyst, but reference to the language as evidence does little more than lead us into a system of circular validation.

Islamism's disclosure occurs at a moment in which there is no single language game that can be relied upon to provide the means by which we can describe such behaviour. This is why any discussion of political Islam has to confront Eurocentrism. This is why the confidence that writers such as Olivier Roy, and others who follow this train of thought, have in the adequacy of their data and facts to understand Islamism is not only misplaced but also structurally delusional.[33] To understand Islamism means not only having the right data and facts, but also being clear about what the limits of facts and data are, and being attentive to the ontological rather than just the ontic. The overarching theme of these deliberations is the necessity of abandoning Eurocentrism not as a normative but as an analytical compulsion. Eurocentrism is neither necessary nor inevitable. Instead, it blocks our ability to make sense of the world emerging around us.

Notes

1 Sayyid (2014a); Sayyid et al. (2015).

2 See www.abc.net.au/tv/qanda/txt/s336264.htm.

3 Sayyid (2004: 7-27); Sayyid (2014a).

4 Zizek (1998) claims that politics is specifically European. Contrast this claim with John Keane's (2009: 128) ecumenical vision of the adventure of democracy as passing through not only Athens and Rome, but also Babylon and Makkah.

5 Eltahawy's ethnic identity no more insulates her from Eurocentrism than does Zizek's ethnicity prompt him towards Eurocentrism.

6 Edward Said (1985: 246) makes this point specifically in relation to TE Lawrence.

7 Contrast this view with that of Hamid Dabashi (2009: 9–11), in whose euphoric account the 2011 MENA uprisings mark a break with orientalism and the overcoming of coloniality and the postcolonial through the inauguration of a new non-violent cosmopolitism.

8 There is, of course, another narrative that sees in the 'Arab Spring' not a flourishing of people power but another chapter in a US-inspired colour-coded revolution. According to this view, part of the US strategy has been to use apparently popular mobilisations to try and weaken regimes that the USA considers hostile. Those holding this view focus on popular mobilisations in the former Soviet Union, Georgia's Rose Revolution and Ukraine's Orange Revolution, which weakened the Russian hold over the region, as well as Lebanon's abortive Cedar Revolution and the Iranian Green Movement. They point to the level of material support the USA had given to those involved in these mobilisations as an indication of a US conspiracy. They also point to the way in which the Ba'athist regime in Syria is being threatened with regime change, and also to US silence that has allowed Saudi arms to put down an uprising in Bahrain while supporting those in Syria and Libya.

9 Of course, there are many Muslims and non-Muslims who maintain the continuity of a link between politics and Islam, citing the Madinah state of the Prophet Muhammad as the first and exemplary iteration of that relationship.

10 Cemil Aydin (2007, 2016) suggests that the correspondence between Abdul Hamid I and Tipu Sultan in Mysore to build an alliance against British colonialism can be seen as the inauguration of a pan-Islamism.

11 Kuhn (1970: 10).

12 Ulrichsen (2014: 3).

13 See Justin McCarthy (1996) for details of the demographic loss incurred by Ottoman Muslims. McCarthy's work has been attacked, and he and his family have been threatened, for his views regarding the fate of the Armenians in 1995. McCarthy regards the deaths of one million Armenians as the product of a civil war rather than as a systematic programme by the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP) government to commit genocide. His arguments compare the death of a million Armenians to the millions who died in the 1947 partition of India rather than considering it part of a deliberate policy of extermination as mounted by the Nazis or their colonial predecessors. Whether one agrees with this characterisation or with what actually constitutes genocide and the culpability (or otherwise) of the CUP specifically, and of Ottoman society in general, McCarthy's demographic analysis of Muslims in the Balkans appears robust enough to survive his critics' best efforts.

14 See Cemil Aydin's (2007, 2016) description of the relatively slow discovery of Eurocentrism by Ottoman and Japanese intellectuals from an initial phase when they tended to accept the Enlightenment claims of universal to the recognition that this universalism excluded what was considered non-European in essence. The development of pan-Islamism and pan-Asianism as distinctly anti-western discourses can be seen as being prompted by and countering Eurocentrism.

15 Talal Asad's (2015) extremely insightful essay on the role of tradition and religion in Egypt in the wake of the el-Sisi coup shows how many of the so-called liberals and moderns supported the overthrow of Morsi because they continue to see modernity and modernisation as westernisation.

16 See, for example, Judith Herrin (1987) for the role of Islam helping to forge a distinct western European collective identity.

17 Sayyid (2014b: 283–284).

18 Dhulipala (2015: 499–501).

19 See Kurzman (2004).

20 This continuity of the colonial condition following the end of formal independence from colonial rule can be seen as one of the hallmarks of the postcolonial condition.

21 Mignolo (2009).

22 See Mona Hassan's (2017) study of cultural effects of the loss of the caliphate in 1258 and in 1924 on Muslim sensibilities.

23 The IS phenomenon can most rewardingly be studied as a form of warlordism sustained by revenue from precious resources and external funds. See Christopher Cramer (2006) for a discussion of civil wars sustained by such extractive economies. It is very likely that Caliph Ibrahim is more likely to be the first of a series of warlords rather than the harbinger of the Caliphate.

24 Unity was central to the Ba'athists. It included long-term plans and short-term actualities of a union between the various Arab countries. Ba'athism, like other forms of Arab nationalism, saw Islam as specifically (and authentically) an Arab phenomenon. It can be argued that for IS the caliphate becomes de facto a means of expressing Ba'athist ideals in an Islamicate register.

25 Islamic jurisprudence was organised in a number of 'schools of thoughts' (Madhahib). Currently there are five major Madhahib in terms of adherents and influence: Hanafi (mainly found in a belt from the Balkans to Bangladesh), Shafi'i (concentrated in the Malay Archipelago), Maliki (North and West Africa) Ja'fari (largely found in Iran, Pakistan, Iraq, Turkey and Yemen) and Hanbali (confined, for the most part, to the Arabian peninsula).

26 A recent example of this can be seen in an open letter by a number of prominent and well-meaning theological scholars (including Hamza Yusuf) who have listed aspects that are considered to be unIslamic. The trouble, of course, is that such lists of what constitutes true Islam have been part of the rhetorical strategies of different Islamicate entities. As a consequence, they do not have the straightforward credibility that give their pronouncements sufficient authority to undermine IS claims; after all, such rhetorical devices have been used by the rulers of Riyadh, Cairo, and other major Muslim capitals.

27 As the notorious example of a book entitled *Islam for Dummies* found in the luggage of one Muslim on his way to joining IS demonstrated, most of those who joined IS do not do so on the basis of theological reasoning.

28 The career of the Chinese Communist Party is the sharpest example of the absence of an essence that determines the identity of programme and political organisation.

29 This is why, as Francois Burgat (2003: 77) points out, it is uncommon to confuse the Ku Klux Klan with the US Republican Party, even when they seem to share common ideological tropes. It is not the presence of tropes but the articulation of limits that gives identity to distinct political outlooks, projects and positions.

30 Aktay (2013: 119).

31 The idea of grammar and its use outside the field of linguistics owes much to Ludwig Wittgenstein's (1958) elusive remarks on the topic. Grammar for Wittgenstein determines the use of concepts and their deployment in specific language games.

32 By post-Madhhabi I mean the recognition of Madhahib as schools of thought rather than as distinct sects.

33 See Fredric Volpi's (2010: 1–21) criticism of this position.

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PART TWO:
MUSLIM STATES CLAIMING 'ISLAMIC' LEGITIMACY

5

Monarchy as an expression of Political Islam in Saudi Arabia

David Commins

At first glance, nothing could be more obvious than the Saudi monarchy's invocation of Islam to legitimise its actions and policies. After all, al-Saud's transformation from being emirs of an oasis settlement into becoming Arabia's dominant power took place only after they became patrons of Shaykh Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab's mission. The alliance benefited al-Saud by providing a broader foundation for political power than that offered by affiliation with a chiefly lineage possessing local prestige. In return, al-Saud's support for Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab enabled him to establish hegemony over religious life by silencing and expelling clerics who rejected his teachings. From the beginning, the purpose of the Saudi-Wahhabi alliance was to establish domination. Al-Saud's claim to uphold religion is a means of maintaining political domination; the religious estate's support for al-Saud is a means of maintaining religious domination.

Wahhabi doctrine is well suited to play the role of legitimising monarchy. It strongly favours order and obedience, in accord with principles commonly found in classical Sunni treatises. According to those treatises, Muslims must have a ruler in order to preserve unity and carry out religious duties, such as enforcing Islamic law and waging jihad. As long as the ruler performs those roles and does not command believers

to violate shari'ah, subjects owe him obedience. In order to fulfil his obligation to implement shari'ah, the ruler depends on the expertise and advice of the 'ulama. Accordingly, Saudi rulers and Wahhabi 'ulama observe a division of labour whereby al-Saud ensures the population's security and welfare and uphold a moral public order defined by Islamic principles, while the 'ulama counsel the rulers on the details of Islamic principles. If they see the rulers deviating from or violating those principles, they offer private advice; they are not to denounce rulers in public, for to do so might cause disorder.[1]

The Saudi monarchy demonstrates its commitment to upholding Islam in numerous ways that tell upright believers, 'This is what we do for you.' The government mobilises workers and financial resources to facilitate, orchestrate and televise the annual pilgrimage; government ministries collect zakah and distribute proceeds to charitable causes; qadis preside over religious law courts to implement shari'ah; schools hand down Islamic teachings to Muslim boys and girls, separately, by allocating abundant time to religious subjects; the Commission for the Promotion of Virtue and Prevention of Vice enforces conformity with religious norms of public morality; the Ministry of Information oversees publications and broadcasts to censor objectionable material. And so on.

Another way of reading al-Saud's commitment to upholding Islam is to see it as the exercise of political and religious domination, telling their subjects, 'This is what we do *to* you.' It has obvious forms, such as closing shops and offices to ensure that all men attend group prayer, willingly observed by many and performed by others mindful of religious police patrols. Domination is visible in blacked out figures in commercial advertisements. Domination is audible through amplified sermons by Wahhabi preachers. Domination is embedded in an education system that inculcates Wahhabi doctrine while condemning other Muslim traditions. Domination is asserted in the privacy of homes, where family members come under pressure to uphold family reputation by conforming to public norms. In myriad ways and locations,

political and religious domination are intertwined to foster habits of obedience, conformity and support in the Saudi public.[2]

Attaining a perfect state of permanent domination, however, is impossible because the religious and political fields are broad and mutable. To summarise the shifting terrain of contestation surrounding al-Saud's invocation of Islam to legitimise their rule, this chapter examines three causes of such shifts. First, al-Saud's calculations of what they must do to maintain political domination at different historical moments have led them to sacrifice fidelity to Wahhabi doctrine. At such moments, clerics have compromised religious principles because of their own political calculation that supporting al-Saud was essential to maintaining domination of the religious field.[3] Second, al-Saud's decision to open the country to the outside world had the indirect effect of undermining Wahhabi religious domination by allowing other Sunni tendencies to gain a foothold.[4] Third, not all Saudis adhere to Wahhabism. Historical communities include Shi'as and Sunnis belonging to other theological traditions that have survived under Saudi rule in spite of the wishes of Wahhabi clerics to eradicate them.

Expediency versus purity

In Saudi historical memory, the first emirate represents an era of harmony between political and religious purposes: al-Saud's military conquests served the religious imperative to expand the realm of monotheism. In the early 1800s, however, outside powers gained footholds on the fringes of Arabia, placing obstacles in the way of further expansion. The British Empire began to establish domination over the Gulf, and the governor of Egypt, Mehmet Ali, expelled the Saudis from the holy cities. The arrival of superior imperial powers putting hard limits on expansion rubbed against the Wahhabi vision of outsiders as infidels who must be brought into the fold of Islam. As a result, the second Saudi emirate (1824–1891) dealt with neighbouring powers from a position of weakness. Efforts to conquer Bahrain and Oman collided

with Britain's policy of pacifying the Gulf region through treaties that promised protection to its allies. As a result, Emir Faisal had to engage in diplomacy with the infidel power and send envoys to negotiate with British agents. From the other shore of Arabia, Mehmet Ali's forces invaded and occupied Najd in the late 1830s, forcing the Saudis to put off ambitions to reconquer the holy cities. At particular times, Faisal paid tribute to Istanbul to ward off Ottoman intervention. The Saudi chronicles do not tell us what Wahhabi clerics thought of these concessions to necessity, but there is no record of their objecting to them. Two Ottoman-Egyptian invasions in living memory were apparently enough to teach them that waging jihad against a more powerful enemy could backfire and destroy the political ground of their religious mission.[5]

The first open clash between political calculations and religious principles broke out in the 1870s when civil war erupted between Saudi emirs. Faisal's designated successor, Emir Abdullah, requested support from the Ottoman Empire in his struggle against his brothers. Wahhabi clerics condemned Abdullah for violating the shari'ah rule that prohibits seeking assistance from infidels, which is how Wahhabis viewed the Ottomans. Backing Abdullah's rivals, however, would have meant violating another shari'ah principle because he was the legitimate heir, and his rivals were therefore disobeying the rightful succession. Given the fault on both sides according to shari'ah, the clerics split, in a sense mirroring the divisions in al-Saud.[6] The lesson that they seemed to draw from the episode was the importance of maintaining unity because the strife critically weakened Saudi power and resulted in their subjugation to the northern Arabian Rashidi emirs of Ha'il.

The lesson was tested in the course of Abdulaziz ibn Saud's campaign to recover his ancestors' Arabian empire. The Saudi revival hinged in part on the incorporation of Bedouin tribesmen into agricultural settlements where they underwent religious indoctrination at the hands of Wahhabi clerics. In the past, Bedouin support for al-Saud depended on calculations of momentary advantage in deciding whether to support a particular Saudi military campaign, making them fair-weather friends.

The settled tribesmen, known as the Ikhwan, proved dedicated to the Wahhabi mission of waging jihad to expand the realm of belief and full enforcement of shari'ah.

In the 1920s, tension mounted between the Ikhwan and Ibn Saud over a number of issues. For instance, Ibn Saud wanted to introduce the telegraph to his realm, but when the Ikhwan objected to it as an infidel innovation, he agreed to hold off. The Ikhwan also objected to lenient treatment of Shi'as in Eastern Province, and Ibn Saud again placated them by requiring Shi'as to take religious instruction from Wahhabi clerics. On the other hand, Ibn Saud condemned Ikhwan attacks on Bedouin tribesmen whom they regarded as unreconstructed polytheists.

The final straw for Ibn Saud was the Ikhwan's insistence that raids into Transjordan and Iraq were consistent with the religious duty to wipe out polytheism through conquest. Ibn Saud's problem was that the former Ottoman territories were under British protection, and the British insisted that he stop the incursions. His efforts to dissuade the Ikhwan failed. Ibn Saud's political calculation was simple: If his subjects did not stop violating the borders, the British would, and that in turn would jeopardise his grip on power. To rein in the Ikhwan, he needed support from the Wahhabi clerics. Caught between rebellious Ikhwan citing Wahhabi doctrine and the prospect of prolonged strife that threatened to erode the doctrine's political pillar, leading Wahhabi 'ulama supported Ibn Saud. He defeated the Ikhwan at a decisive battle in 1929 that underscored the primacy of political calculations.[7]

The opening

The suppression of the Ikhwan was part of a long-term process in which al-Saud integrated their realm into the international economic and political order. The country's opening to the outside world had different aspects. First, al-Saud found it expedient to adopt modern communications technologies such as radio and television, and, eventually, to countenance the internet and satellite television in spite of initial resistance from Wah-

habi ‘ulama. Second, al-Saud ended their isolation from the rest of the Muslim world, taking the lead in founding international Muslim organisations, and sponsoring political causes such as the anti-communist jihad in Afghanistan. Third, the government embraced an ambitious development programme that created demand for a massive workforce of expatriate Muslims and non-Muslims, who came to comprise one-third of the country’s population. Fourth, exposure to western societies through travel and media spurred western habits of leisure. Fifth, the country’s oil wealth whetted consumer appetites and fostered materialism.

The opening had contradictory effects on Wahhabi religious domination. On one hand, the accumulation of material resources made it possible for al-Saud to build up government institutions, which included agencies charged with the mission of reinforcing Wahhabi authority. On the other hand, by admitting foreign Muslims, the rulers made it possible for other Sunni tendencies to gain a foothold, thereby setting the stage for challenges to Wahhabism. Finally, by raising living standards, the opening augmented the dynasty’s symbolic resources to include the idea that it was responsible for national development. As a result, al-Saud reduced their reliance on clerical legitimation because they could garner support with reminders of the benefits of their rule.

The Makkan Uprising of 1979, mounted by the Salafi Group, had roots in two aspects of the opening.[8] First, the Salafi Group was outraged by the spread of materialist consumerism and western habits. Second, the group emerged in a milieu where Wahhabism mingled with Sunni revivalist tendencies that arose outside Saudi Arabia – the Tablighi Jamaat, Ahle Hadith and Jamaat Ansar al-Sunnah, and with independent Salafi shaykhs such as Nasiruddin al-Albani. He was invited to teach at a new institution, the Islamic University of Madinah, which was established in 1961 to impart Wahhabi doctrine to foreign Muslim students. Albani represented the arrival of cosmopolitan religious authority that did not acknowledge the superior standing of Wahhabi clerics. After he left Saudi Arabia, some of his former students, who included Saudis and non-Saudis, founded the Salafi Group.

At first, members of the group had the backing of the prominent Wahhabi cleric Abdulaziz ibn Baz. Their relationship to religious authority, however, frayed because of the increasingly strident criticism of al-Saud voiced by the group's leader, Juhayman al-Otaybi. He condemned Abdulaziz ibn Saud for sacrificing Wahhabi doctrine to political expediency when he suppressed the Ikhwan in the 1920s, and blamed modern Saudi rulers for allowing banks to charge interest, another departure from Wahhabi doctrine, due to the country's opening to the global capitalist economy. Rupture became unavoidable when Juhayman took a stand against government schools and jobs. He expressed stark rejection of official domination in the name of doctrinal purity.

When Juhayman's group took over the Grand Mosque in Makkah, al-Saud obtained a fatwa from senior 'ulama that authorised them to use force to regain control if the rebels did not surrender. The official fatwa also condemned them as 'Kharijites' who were guilty of sowing discord.[9] In a separate fatwa, ibn Baz rejected the messianic claims of Juhayman's group. Behind the fatwas there was the logic of power: To sustain al-Saud and Wahhabi domination of politics and religion, it was necessary to crush the uprising.

A more broadly-based and persistent challenge to Wahhabi religious domination built up during the 1980s and burst forth in the Kuwait crisis of 1990–91. The Sahwa, or Awakening, too was an outgrowth of Saudi Arabia's opening. Developing national infrastructure, education and health systems required the admission of thousands of foreign Muslims because of the small number of Saudis with technical qualifications. Many foreign Muslim workers were members of or sympathisers with the Muslim Brotherhood. They spread their conception of religion and politics to young Saudis who in turn naturalised the Brotherhood's ideology. During the 1980s, the Brotherhood's influence was evident in a cultural struggle waged in newspaper and magazine columns against liberal tendencies that were condemned as posing a danger to religion. As long as the rising Sahwa generation was preoccupied with combating western influences, it was not a challenge to the Wahhabi clerics.

Al-Saud's response to the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, however, activated the Sahwa's potential to contest the clerics' domination.[10]

In August 1990, King Fahd sought a fatwa from the Council of Senior Ulama that would allow the United States and other western (non-Muslim) powers to dispatch thousands of troops to deter Iraqi forces from invading the kingdom. Members of the Council initially baulked at giving their stamp of approval because, they said, of the shari'ah principle prohibiting a ruler from seeking the assistance of infidels. At a moment when the monarchy considered its survival at stake, the Council came under intense pressure to provide religious justification for western intervention. It delivered a fatwa that skirted the issue by omitting any reference to infidel forces. Instead, the fatwa stated that the rulers could obtain assistance from 'qualified forces with equipment that bring fear and terror to those who wish to commit aggression against this country'.[11]

Days after the fatwa's pronouncement, a leading figure in the Sahwa, Shaykh Safar al-Hawali, denounced it and declared that it represented a failure to understand the true purpose of US intervention: Washington was not interested in defending Saudi Arabia but in controlling its oil fields. Months later, Hawali and other Sahwa shaykhs issued the Letter of Demands, which called on al-Saud to reaffirm their commitment to Islamic principles through measures such as vetting the piety of all government employees.[12] The royals took umbrage at the suggestion that they fell short in meeting their duty to govern according to Islam. In order to shore up their religious legitimacy, they urged Wahhabi clerics to denounce the Sahwa shaykhs as misguided upstarts. A few clerics supported the Sahwa shaykhs, and for doing so they were removed from their positions in government agencies. Most senior clerics stood by al-Saud and condemned the signatories to the Letter of Demands, not necessarily for what they demanded, but how: They violated the Wahhabi tenet of offering rulers private counsel rather than voicing public criticism.[13]

In addition to triggering the Sahwa protest movement, the Kuwait crisis spurred Saudi Arabia's small but articulate liberal trend to speak out

as well; they submitted a petition to King Fahd that called for representative government and curbs on religious domination over the public sphere. The small liberal camp was another outgrowth of the kingdom's opening. It drew on Saudis who studied in western countries and who worked in technical fields, modern professions and international business. Educated women seeking to loosen restrictions based on gender, such as the ban on women driving, contributed to the liberal trend as well.[14]

Since their emergence in the late 1950s, Saudi liberals have confronted two fundamental problems. The first one stems from their challenge to al-Saud's political domination. Liberal institutions such as a constitution or elected assemblies would curtail al-Saud's ability to rule without formal constraints. The clash between royal power and liberal principles was clear in the early 1960s, when a group of princes led by Prince Talal came out in favour of turning the kingdom into a constitutional monarchy. Senior members of the royal family quashed Talal's challenge. After a brief exile, he abandoned the cause, and the liberals learned their lesson. They are careful to proclaim their loyalty to al-Saud and profess that they share al-Saud's dedication to Saudi public interests. The second fundamental problem that liberals face is the association of their discourse with western secularism. That association allows Wahhabi and Sahwa critics to brand them as westernising secularists. Liberals counter by drawing on the tradition of Islamic modernism to argue that their vision of politics and society represents an authentic expression of religious principles found in the Qur'an and the Sunnah.

The liberal cause picked up momentum after al-Qa'ida's September 2001 attacks on the USA. Because fifteen of the nineteen hijackers were Saudi nationals, the attacks spurred discussion of the country's religious culture. In particular, some Saudis wondered whether Wahhabi doctrine instilled intolerance and hatred that found expression in terrorism. In the new climate of open discussion of sensitive issues, liberals sent a letter to Crown Prince Abdullah that called for sweeping reforms: a constitution, separation of powers, an elected legislature, freedom of speech and assembly, and protection of religious minorities (Shi'as and

non-Wahhabi Sunnis). The liberals asserted that such changes were not only consistent with Islam but were the most effective means to ensure the Islamic principle of justice, and to secure Muslim rights based on the Qur'an and the Sunnah.[15]

While Abdullah did not support the liberal programme, he did foster a more open social climate through 'national dialogue', a series of meetings where Saudis from different religious traditions discussed ways to promote tolerance. Critics branded the national dialogue sessions as cosmetic; being arranged from the top with agenda controlled by the royals, these sessions were not intended to serve as a platform for tampering with al-Saud's political domination. They did, however, indicate a softening of royal support for Wahhabi religious domination. National dialogue sessions were occasions for Wahhabi clerics to mix with Shi'as and Sufis, and official recognition was thus extended to subordinate religious traditions.[16] But without a legal foundation, al-Saud could pull back from mildly liberal steps when political calculations shifted. That occurred during the 2011 MENA uprisings, when the government tightened the reins on liberal voices in order to prevent the wave of protests from spilling into the kingdom.

A more radical challenge to al-Saud and Wahhabi domination comes from militants inspired by al-Qa'ida's call for global jihad. Like the Sahwa and liberal trends, the roots of the militant tendency in Saudi Arabia go back to its opening. Starting in the 1960s, King Faisal embraced pan-Islamic causes in order to bolster the monarchy's position in regional rivalries with Arab nationalist leaders such as Egypt's President Gamal Abdel Nasser. New ideological threats to the monarchy's religious legitimacy burst forth in 1979 with the Makkan Uprising and the Iranian Revolution. The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan at the end of that year presented al-Saud with an opportunity to reclaim religious leadership by supporting Afghans fighting the communist regime in Kabul. The dynasty sponsored fundraising drives and funnelled arms to Afghan fighters, while Wahhabi clerics urged young men to wage jihad alongside volunteers from other Muslim countries.

The Afghan war inspired the formulation of a new interpretation of jihad authored by Abdullah Azzam, a Palestinian Muslim Brother. From Azzam's perspective, one aim of jihad was to liberate Muslims from non-Muslim rule, an idea that had a long pedigree in Muslim anti-colonial movements. The original part of his doctrine was his insistence that when Muslims were unable to throw off non-Muslim rule, the duty to wage jihad fell upon all Muslims everywhere, not only those living under infidel control.[17]

Osama bin Laden took Azzam's doctrine in a new direction with his 1996 fatwa proclaiming jihad against the USA. As long as Washington backed the oppressors of Muslims, he reasoned, it was fruitless to fight what he called the near enemy – US collaborators in the Muslim world. He called for waging jihad against the far enemy, the United States, to force it to withdraw from the Muslim world, causing oppressive regimes to become so weak that they would collapse without Washington's support. In one respect, Bin Laden's outlook overlapped with that of al-Saud and the Wahhabi religious establishment in that it expressed solidarity with Muslims suffering oppression in different parts of the world. It also resonated with widespread Saudi public sentiment. In another respect, however, the group's targeting of the West in general and the USA in particular constituted an attack on al-Saud's strategic alliance with Washington, which was an important prop of its political domination.

The monarchy reacted to al-Qa'ida's challenge by shoring up religious legitimacy in broader terms than ever before. After the 11 September attacks on the United States, Wahhabi clerics condemned terrorism as a violation of shari'ah. At the same time, Crown Prince Abdullah encouraged religious toleration through the national dialogue sessions. When Al-Qa'ida in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) initiated a terrorist campaign inside Saudi Arabia in 2003, the monarchy responded with a combination of sheer force, a public campaign against extremism and re-education programmes for AQAP members and sympathisers. The strategy worked. Security forces uprooted AQAP cells and the shed-

ding of Muslim blood so alienated the Saudi public that the insurgents were unable to attract new recruits. The militant trend was suppressed.[18]

Historical Shi'a and Sunni communities

Throughout the centuries of al-Saud domination, enclaves of Shi'as and Sunnis belonging to other theological traditions have endured. The dynasty's interest in consolidating power over conquered regions meant diluting the imposition of religious domination. While Wahhabi doctrine prevailed in public, the other Muslim communities adhered to their historical religious practices and beliefs in private.

The Sunni population in Hejaz was diverse. As the major port in the Red Sea, Jeddah had a cosmopolitan stamp with a commercial flavour, and the holy cities of Makkah and Madinah drew believers from the breadth of the Muslim world. Because of these various influences, the region's religious tendencies included Sufi orders and several Sunni theological and legal traditions. The first Saudi emirate's rule over Hejaz in the early 1800s was too brief to have lasting impact. When Ibn Saud conquered the region in the 1920s, the Ikhwan pressed him to impose Wahhabi doctrine by force, but his desire for international legitimacy caused him to tread lightly. Public observance of religious holidays such as the Prophet's birthday was banned, but clandestine ceremonies went on with the knowledge of Saudi authorities. As long as the Sunnis of Hejaz kept their heads down, they could ward off Wahhabi aspirations to impose their doctrine.[19]

Shi'as, on the other hand, have suffered persecution and discrimination under Saudi rule. In the 1920s, the Ikhwan pressed Ibn Saud to impose Wahhabi religious authority over Shi'as in Eastern Province. In response, many prominent Shi'a clerics abandoned their homes and relocated to Iraq.[20] While Ibn Saud adopted a more lenient approach to the Shi'as after he suppressed the Ikhwan, they continued to undergo collective harassment in numerous ways. Wahhabi clerics continue to denounce them as infidels in sermons and fatwas; Saudi law courts

do not admit their testimony; Shi'a prayer books are banned because Wahhabi clerics consider their supplications to the Shi'a imams to be polytheistic; the Saudi authorities forbid Shi'as to build husayniyyahs – assembly halls consecrated for holding their major religious ceremony for 'Ashura;[21] and Shi'as may not set up their own schools, forcing children to attend public schools where Wahhabi instructors teach them that they belong to a heretical sect.[22]

The Iranian Revolution of 1979 inspired young Shi'a radicals to form the Organisation for Islamic Revolution as a platform to rebel against Saudi and Wahhabi domination. Their grievances were not solely about religious persecution, and included the discrimination Shi'as faced in obtaining jobs in the public sector, which had expanded rapidly in the previous twenty years because of growing oil revenues. Moreover, even though Saudi Arabia's oil fields are concentrated in Eastern Province, the region's Shi'a towns and villages did not receive funds to develop infrastructure. Consequently, the Shi'as' inferior religious standing resulted in their being excluded from the rewards of the oil boom.[23]

Security forces were able to quell the uprising that erupted in November 1979 and to force the Organisation for Islamic Revolution into exile shortly thereafter. In the early 1990s, the organisation's leaders turned away from revolution and adopted a moderate, gradualist programme for improving the conditions of Shi'as. The government acknowledged the change and allowed exiles to return home. Their new organisation, dubbed the Reform Movement, called for religious toleration and ending of discrimination.[24] In the early 2000s, the political climate improved for Shi'as. The national dialogue sessions marked the first time Shi'as and non-Wahhabi Muslims attained official recognition. Some Wahhabi clerics exhibited flexibility in tempering their view of Shi'as as infidels, but others upheld the doctrine's customary position. Overall, conditions for Shi'as improved little, largely because any gains depended on the momentary disposition of the rulers rather than a constitutional or legal framework.

Saudi Shi'as also stir unease in ruling circles because of their ties to their co-religionists in nearby Bahrain, Iran and Iraq. Even though Yemen's Zaidi community belongs to a different branch of Shi'ism, the sectarian polarisation afflicting the region heightens al-Saud's anxieties about Shi'ism in general. When popular protests swept the Arab world in early 2011, Shi'as in Eastern Province held demonstrations calling for equality; at the same time, Shi'as across the King Fahd Causeway in Bahrain rallied for political rights. From Riyadh's perspective, the prospect of empowered Shi'as on their soil and in Bahrain meant gains for Iran. Indeed, Saudi ruling circles believed that Shi'a unrest did not stem from genuine grievances but from Iranian manipulation. Hence, the Saudi government did not hesitate to use force against Shi'a demonstrations in Eastern Province, and to dispatch military forces to crush the protest movement in Bahrain. By the summer of 2011, the trend to improve conditions for the kingdom's Shi'as had stalled.

Conclusion

Presently, Saudi royals, Wahhabi clerics, Shi'as, Sahwa shaykhs, militants and liberals all invoke principles and concepts derived from religion to serve their diverse political purposes. In official discourse, al-Saud provides the power essential to uphold Islam, and the Wahhabi establishment possesses the authoritative religious learning essential to determine correct doctrine and law. The enforcement of Wahhabi doctrine, however, means repression of Shi'as and the country's other historical Sunni traditions, and therefore spurs resistance. Meanwhile, Muslim revivalist movements possess their own conceptions of what it means to uphold Islam, and they criticise the monarchy's strategic alliance with the United States. Supporters of global jihad consider the monarchy illegitimate. They assert that it pays lip service to Islam but is, in fact, guilty of undermining Islam, and they view Wahhabi clerics as hypocrites willing to betray religion for the sake of wealth and position. The liberal trend refers to religion to justify the call for relaxing public norms and for steps to increase political participation. In brief,

Saudi Arabia has disparate tendencies that support or oppose the monarchy's actions and accept or deny the monarchy itself as legitimate according to one or another reading of Islam.

The presence of several religious tendencies is a sign of the failure of the Wahhabi mission to create a realm of perfect and complete compliance with its doctrine. At the same time, there is no alternative on the Saudi political horizon that does not refer to Islam. Is that a facet of Wahhabi domination? Or are there other reasons why religious referents possess such potent value as symbolic resources in Saudi Arabian politics?

One explanation for the salience of religion in the politics of Muslim countries in general is that religious referents constitute a ground for resisting western political, economic and cultural domination.[25] In that scenario, religious referents are a badge of fidelity to one's culture. That would be consistent with the notion that the large expatriate population enhances the valuation of religious referents as a means of bolstering national identity and solidarity. Thinking of religious referents in such terms is also consistent with the idea that their valuation is related to strong attachment to patriarchy, which is under siege by economic forces driving families to seek additional incomes to maintain consumption, which in turn sustains social status, but which is undermined by having women work outside the home. The virtue of these propositions is that they do not take today's primacy of religion in political discourses as an essential trait but as a starting point for examining how historical shifts continuously reshape the effects of al-Saud's invocation of Islam.

Or, the explanation for Islam's centrality in Saudi politics may boil down to sheer coercion. The flogging of liberal blogger Raif Badawi for the crime of blasphemy in January 2015 was a brutal and very public reminder of the raw power accompanying political and religious domination, and the painful punishment in store for the disobedient.

Notes

1 For a superb treatment of the dynamics of political and religious domination, see al-Rasheed (2006: 22–58, 254–262).
2 For a fictional portrayal of the way some Saudis experience religious domination as oppression, see al-Mohaimeed (2014).
3 The best discussion of the compromises made by Wahhabi clerics is in al-Fahad (2004).
4 For a study on the impact of Islamic revivalism on the Saudi religious landscape, see Lacroix (2011).
5 Crawford (2014: 111–118).
6 Crawford (2014: 119–120).
7 For a summary of the confrontation between the Ikhwan and Ibn Saud, see Mouline (2014: 98–106).
8 For details on the background to the Makkan Uprising, see Hegghammer and Lacroix (2011).
9 Mouline (2014: 237–238).
10 Lacroix (2011: 37–81, 133–141).
11 Al-Fahad (2004: 518–519).
12 Lacroix (2011: 179–181).
13 Commins (2006: 179–180).
14 Dekmejian (2003); Lacroix (2004).
15 Dekmajian (2003: 404–407).
16 Thompson (2014).
17 Wiktorowicz (2005). For Azzam's ideas, see 84–85.
18 See the excellent study by Hegghammer (2010).
19 Commins (2006: 76–79).
20 Commins (2006: 75–76).
21 Ibrahim (2007: 17–44).
22 Prokop (2003).
23 Jones (2010: 138–147).
24 Ibrahim (2007: 153–177).
25 Sayyid (2015).

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6

Political thought in contemporary Iran: Ayatollah Javadi Amoli's theory of guardianship

Nura Hossainzadeh

Though the idea of an 'Islamic state', and the way it compares to or can accommodate features of the liberal democratic state, has often been a preoccupation of scholars in western academia, very few studies have focused on how scholars who are native to societies that are governed by Islamic constitutions have conceptualised and debated the nature and form of the Islamic state. This is true of the Iranian case; in part because of language boundaries and travel restrictions, there has been an unfortunate lack of academic exchange between Iranian and western scholars. This chapter is a study of a prominent Iranian political theorist and academic, Ayatollah Abdollah Javadi Amoli, who is often characterised as a conservative scholar and a defender of the institutions of the Islamic government in Iran. I examine his thought with a focus on how it diverges and overlaps with the political thought of the founding father of Islamic government in Iran, Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, the most prominent leader of the 1979 Islamic Revolution in Iran, and theoretician of the political role of the jurisprudent in an Islamic government. While in his book, *The Guardianship of the Jurisprudent: The Guardianship of Jurisprudence and Justice*, Javadi Amoli draws directly from

and reiterates key tenets of Khomeini's political theory, he differs from Khomeini in one crucial way: he holds that the Islamic government's Council of Experts, a popularly-elected body charged with selecting, overseeing and dismissing the guardian, as well as the guardian himself, does not represent the opinions, beliefs and desires of the people, but instead functions and acts independently of the people in order to implement the divine will.

This chapter focuses on Javadi Amoli's argument for how both the Council of Experts and the guardian serve neither their own aims nor the aims of the public, but the will of God. Khomeini, on the other hand, holds that the members of the Council of Experts act as representatives of the country's citizens; he does not go so far as to claim that either the Council of Experts or the guardian implements the divine will, emphasising instead the conventionality of the particular form of Islamic government – and therefore the conventional origins of the powers granted to institutions and officeholders in this government – established after the Islamic Revolution in 1979. Still, both scholars believe that citizens may criticise the guardian – although Javadi Amoli prefers that experts, more than ordinary citizens, criticise him, and both believe that the public must have consented, at the founding moment of an Islamic government, to be governed by an Islamic constitution and by a form of government that includes the guardian.

Khomeini's theory of guardianship

Contrary to much of the literature produced in English on Khomeini's political thought,[1] I have argued[2] that Khomeini seeks to provide support for a theory of limited, and not absolute, guardianship. In his speeches, statements and correspondence from after the 1979 Islamic Revolution, Khomeini argues that the guardian's decisions may be criticised or condemned, that the very possibility of his guardianship is contingent upon public consent, and that the laws that define and circumscribe his power are nothing more than conventional. In addition,

in his most widely-read work, *Islamic Government*, a transcription of a series of lectures he delivered to seminary students in Najaf in 1970, he recognises the fallibility of the guardian, and, therefore, his capacity to act tyrannically, as well as the desirability of public consent to an Islamic government. Because the guardian is a fallible human being, his actions cannot always be presumed to be correct, though he occupies a powerful and religiously significant position as the successor to the last of the twelve imams. (The imams, in turn, according to Shi'a belief, succeeded the Prophet Muhammad in their religious and political leadership.) In a speech after the revolution, Khomeini said that because the guardian is fallible, he is subject to the criticisms of ordinary citizens and experts alike. Moreover, Khomeini holds that citizens granted the guardian his political position; more explicitly than in *Islamic Government*, in his speeches and statements after the revolution Khomeini said that it is necessary that citizens consent to an Islamic government. Finally, after the revolution Khomeini was emphatic that the Council of Experts produced a constitution by means of debate and reflection, where Council members, elected by the public, represented their constituents, and where ordinary citizens could participate in the drafting process by voicing their opinions as the constitutional debates progressed. Khomeini made no claim that the Council of Experts should become an instrument of the divine will, either as it drafted the constitution or as it functions as part of the Islamic government.

In *Islamic Government*, his 1970 work, Khomeini reminds readers that the jurisprudent, once in office, may make mistakes, implying that his guardianship cannot be absolute and immune from criticism. Unlike the imams whom he succeeds, and despite his powerful position as successor to the imam, Khomeini says that the ruling jurisprudent does not have the spiritual status of the imams. Though the jurisprudent has the same scope of political authority as the imams and the Prophet – he is charged with the same tasks and responsibilities, he warns us not to 'imagine that the status of the faqih [jurisprudent] is identical to that of the imams and Prophet…[The responsibilities of the governing juris-

prudent] constitute a serious, difficult duty but do not earn anyone extraordinary status or raise him above the level of common humanity.'[3] Because the jurisprudent has the ability to err or even to sin, he may 'usurp or abandon'[4] his position.

Khomeini's theory of guardianship is qualified by a second factor in *Islamic Government*: he says that the guardian must have attained the public's consent before assuming his position. Khomeini reserves disapproving words for any government – and, it is implied, Islamic governments included – that imposes its rule without public consent. He is critical of governments in which popularly elected legislative bodies 'approve anything they wish as law and impose it on the entire population'.[5] Islamic governments, on the other hand, implement Islamic law, a law that is welcomed by citizens in Muslim countries; such political regimes, which implement a law that the people wish to see implemented, act more fairly. Consent to being governed by Islamic law in Muslim countries, he says, 'facilitates the task of government and makes it truly belong to the people'.[6] While Khomeini stops short of saying that consent is a necessary, indispensable prerequisite to legitimate government, his language does indicate that it would be highly desirable to attain this consent and highly objectionable to govern without it. In addition, Khomeini presumes that citizens of Muslim countries want to be governed by Islamic law. He says nothing of the possibility that citizens of a Muslim country may not want to be governed by Islamic law; he neither recognises nor denies this possibility.

In Khomeini's speeches, statements and correspondence from 1979 to 1989, he continued to maintain, as he did in *Islamic Government*, that the jurisprudent is fallible, and he stated that ordinary citizens, and not only experts, must observe him closely to be sure that as long as he is in office, he commits no sin. While in *Islamic Government* he had said that the ruling jurisprudent held no extraordinary spiritual status, after the revolution he became hopeful that the jurisprudent may go for a significant period of time without sinning. By insisting that the guardian must not sin while he is in office, he raises the expectation

that the nation is to have of the guardian. If and when the guardian does sin – sinning remains, therefore, a possibility – he must be deposed from office.[7]

Not only should citizens participate widely in elections for the Council of Experts to ensure that elected individuals effectively oversee the guardian (and would dismiss him and choose a new guardian, if need be), but Khomeini also said that citizens themselves can and should directly judge the ruling jurisprudent's character throughout his period of office. His ethics, his belief in religion, his knowledge and his actions must all be of an acceptable quality to them,[8] he says, though the constitution does not give them the institutional means to vote to dismiss him. (Instead, they may vote in and out of office the members of the Council of Experts who do have this power.) In an interview with several reporters on 3 December 1979, he said that when the guardian 'commits even a minor sin, he is deposed from guardianship'.[9]

In Khomeini's speeches, statements and correspondence from during the drafting of Iran's first constitution by the Council of Experts immediately after the revolution, he stated that the constitution is a human convention, not indisputably Islamic or divine, and that it is a product of the debate that occurred between members of the Council of Experts, who acted not just as experts but as representatives of those who voted them onto the Council. Experts on the Council, he emphasised, are representatives of citizens, designing a constitution that they believe would meet the approval of those citizens.[10] Citizens can also participate directly in the constitutional drafting, he said in one public speech, so that the outcome is representative of public opinion.[11] The deliberations of the Council of Experts, in the end, can and should do nothing more than design a human convention that aspires to operate within the limits of, and serve, the divine law.[12]

Finally, unlike in *Islamic Government*, Khomeini is clear in his post-revolutionary speeches, statements and correspondence that an Islamic government must have secured public consent if it is to govern legitimately; the guardian holds no unconditional right to rule. He

argued that Islamic law can be implemented in Iran only because the vast majority of citizens had voted in the nationwide referendum of 30 and 31 March 1979, prior to the drafting of the constitution, that they would like to replace the monarchy with an 'Islamic Republic'.[13] After the Council of Experts had finished drafting the constitution, the public had approved it in another nationwide referendum, and Khomeini had encouraged all citizens to vote, even if they wished to reject the constitution, since he believed that for the constitution to be adopted legitimately, the people must have approved of it.[14]

Javadi Amoli's theory of Guardianship

In his *Guardianship of the Jurisprudent*, Javadi Amoli prescribes a stronger form of guardianship than Khomeini does in either *Islamic Government* or in his post-revolutionary communications. His central argument is an insistence that the guardian cannot be considered a representative of citizens; one must be sure, he says, to maintain the distinction between guardianship and representation, and not allow the concept of guardianship to be blended with features of representation. The guardian has not been put in his position by citizens, according to Javadi Amoli; instead, God, who works through the Council of Experts, appointed him, and he is the vehicle through which God exercises his Guardianship over humankind.[15] Khomeini, on the other hand, during the drafting of the constitution by the Council of Experts, had emphasised that the Council does not enact the divine will, but instead represents the citizens who elected its members to produce a conventional set of laws. Unlike Javadi Amoli, Khomeini did not believe that God acts through the Council of Experts, or even through the guardian himself.

Khomeini, in the years after the revolution, had encouraged citizens to vote in all public elections, including elections for the Council of Experts, which, just after the revolution, would draft the constitution, and, after the drafting, would oversee, and occasionally select and perhaps dismiss, the guardian. Javadi Amoli, however, adds a significance

to this democratic act that Khomeini had not explicitly given it, by arguing that through and by means of the people and the Council of Experts, God implements his plan; it is God who acts through the elections of the Council of Experts and deliberations of the Council to put the guardian in his rightful position. There exists at least one jurisprudent, says Javadi Amoli, who 'has a right to Guardianship, [given to him] by God, even before the people appoint him…'[16] A guardian's right to his position, therefore, exists independently of any desire on the part of the people to make him their guardian, while on the other hand, for a representative, this right is contingent upon the votes of the people.[17] Because the guardian always had a right to hold this position, and he does not acquire this right after having been chosen by the Council of Experts, he cannot be a representative; in fact, according to Javadi Amoli, he is a representative not of the people, but of the last Imam, and in turn, the Prophet and God himself.[18]

Javadi Amoli is very careful about the language he uses to describe the Council's selection of the guardian; only when there are two or more jurisprudents who are equally qualified for office, and the Council must choose between them, does the Council exercise any form of choice; otherwise, they 'identify'[19] the most qualified jurisprudent out of all the contenders. Drawing on their expert knowledge of Islam – its ethics, its law, its theology, for example – members of the Council of Experts 'can identify the jurisprudent who is most qualified for leadership'.[20] He refers to this method of choosing the guardian as 'entesab',[21] or appointment. Whatever decision the Council ultimately arrives at, Javadi Amoli argues, has attained 'the signature of the sacred Lawgiver'.[22]

In fact, he says, though the constitution uses the word 'choice' when describing the process by which the guardian is selected, this must be understood not in the literal way – the way the word would normally be understood in Farsi – but instead as 'acceptance'.[23] This is because the nation does not choose its guardian; instead, God is working through the Council of Experts and through the people as they elect members of the Council of Experts. A jurisprudent can be 'chosen' to be a rep-

resentative, but a guardian cannot be chosen since the word 'choice' implies that a selection is made on the basis of opinions that may nor may not be true, or desires that may or may not be legitimate. Opinions or desires, however, cannot create a religiously legitimate government. Instead of choosing the guardian, the Council must determine, in its judgement, which jurisprudent has a divinely mandated right to rule. If, on the other hand, we understand the word 'choice' to imply an acceptance, rather than an active choice based on our own considerations and desires, then the term may be used. The Council accepts, but does not choose, the guardian.[24]

While the Arabic word for choice or election, 'intikhab',[25] would be appropriate to use to describe the appointment by the Council of Experts of the guardian, the Farsi word, also 'entekhab', but which has different connotations, is not. The Arabic word can be used to accurately describe the process by which a jurisprudent is selected to be guardian – one may 'choose' a guardian, in Arabic terms, without implying that by doing so one causes, by one's self, the guardian to deserve his position, regardless of whether God wishes for him to be guardian. In Farsi, it is more accurate to use the term 'entesab', or 'appointment', instead of 'choice', because this implies that the guardian's right to rule existed before the Council made the decision to appoint him as guardian.[26]

Similarly, when the Council decides that it must dismiss the guardian, it does not 'choose' to dismiss him; instead, it simply 'announces that the governing jurisprudent has abdicated, on account of his inability to fulfil his duties, or because he has lost one of the essential qualities for leadership, or because [the Council] discovers that he always had this deficiency…the fundamental task of the Council of Experts is to determine whether the guardian-jurisprudent is appointed or abdicated, not to appoint or dismiss him'.[27] The moment that the guardian acts against God's law, he is no longer guardian, for it would be impossible to be both a guardian, in the true, Godly sense, and to act against God's law. When this happens, the Council of Experts should dismiss him from office. Javadi Amoli emphasises that it is not the Council of Experts who

has made him no longer a guardian; no human decision can change a metaphysical truth. As long as he deserves to be guardian, he is guardian, and when he loses the required characteristics, he is no longer so, on a metaphysical level. The Council may be said to deprive him of his institutional position, but it never deprives him of his metaphysical status.[28]

On a rare occasion, he says, the people may directly select the guardian in nationwide elections instead off of the Council of Experts doing so; however, this is only possible when 'a people recognises their leader'[29] in an outstanding individual like Imam Khomeini. History rarely produces these outstanding figures, however; normally, it is not clear who is most qualified to lead, and it becomes the task of experts, not the public at large, to appoint the leader. Again, Javadi Amoli's language is very specific when he describes the scenario in which the leader is granted office by means of nationwide elections. The people do not 'choose' a leader but instead 'recognise' him; he was their leader even before they went to the ballot box because he was uniquely qualified for, and divinely appointed to, this position.[30] This option – for the people to directly elect the guardian – was taken out of the constitution in the 1988 revision because it is rare that an individual stands so apart in his morality and knowledge from others that common citizens can recognise him, Javadi Amoli says.[31]

If the people do not choose the guardian, and the guardian had been chosen long before the people went to the ballot boxes to vote for representatives to serve on the Council of Experts, or, on the rare occasion, vote directly for the guardian themselves, why, then, does Javadi Amoli maintain that voting should be done at all? Why could not the experts who appoint the guardian have been selected by some other, non-democratic means? Javadi Amoli does not seek to erase the role of the people in the political process; in fact, he continues to assume that they will be involved. Like Khomeini, he recommends their political involvement both during and after elections. The democratic process that leads to the guardian's selection is a perfectly suitable means of seeing that the jurisprudent with the divinely granted right to guardianship is awarded

his position. Javadi Amoli does not bemoan the people's participation in this process, nor does he argue that it is vital to the selection of the deserving guardian; he seems content to remain faithful to the process stipulated in the constitution, and he does not mention whether a different, non-democratic process would be better or even equivalent.

He says, however, that after elections the people should be involved in overseeing the guardian and may become aware that the guardian is not acting as he should. Although citizens must wait until the next election to unseat their representatives from the Council of Experts, they retain the right to 'oversee and criticise' the guardian, but not to exert pressure upon or dismiss him by legal means. Though this right is held by all citizens, it is 'especially preserved for political, legal and fiqhi[32] experts'.[33] It is worth noting, however, that Khomeini, unlike Javadi Amoli, did not make this distinction between experts and laypeople; instead, Khomeini said that all citizens, including non-experts, have the right to criticise the guardian.

Since it is possible that the guardian may be criticised by his subjects and dismissed by the Council of Experts, it is evident that Javadi Amoli, like Khomeini, does not believe that the jurisprudent is infallible and incapable of sin. However, he does believe that the ruling jurisprudent may hold his position for a certain period of time – long enough, it is presumed, to have the opportunity to exercise effective leadership – without sinning. The jurisprudent must fulfil three conditions, according to Javadi Amoli, to qualify for guardianship: first, he must be capable of ijtihad – he must flawlessly be able to deductively derive legal injunctions from the divine law; second, he must be perfectly just – he must unfailingly act upon the principles of the divine law that he understands so well; and finally, he must have sufficient administrative abilities and leadership skills. The second quality, 'idalat-i mutlaq', or perfect justice, means that the guardian will never sin as long as he is guardian; as soon as he does, he loses his status as guardian.[34] This conception of the guardian's spiritual capacity, however, stands in tension with Khomeini's statement in *Islamic Government* that assuming the

post of guardian does not give the jurisprudent 'extraordinary status',[35] though it is reminiscent of Khomeini's post-revolutionary position, when he said that the guardian is deposed from guardianship even if he commits a 'minor sin'.[36]

Though the guardian may be criticised by citizens, he may not be said to be in office to represent either their wishes or their interests. When Javadi Amoli speaks of government more broadly, and not just the Council of Experts, he says that while the objective of a democratic government is to fulfil the wishes of the majority, the objective of an Islamic government is 'to discover the truth'.[37] Insofar as the majority rule is the standard for decisions in Islamic governments, it is with the aim of discerning the truth and not establishing it. In particular, majority rule decides who will sit on the Council of Experts, and who is elected to parliament, a body that implements the shari'ah and formulates law that a Guardian Council (composed of six experts in Islamic law and six experts in secular legal science) deems is compatible with or furthers the aims of the shari'ah and the constitution. Institutions composed of experts operate by majority rule; majority rule is the standard by which the Guardian Council and the Council of Experts come to decisions. Even among experts, however, majority rule does not establish what truth is but only discovers what God has made the truth to be.[38]

It is significant that Javadi Amoli seeks to retain the sacred in the political process. While Khomeini said simply that a guardian is chosen as a result of a political process designed by and participated in by ordinary citizens,[39] Javadi Amoli does not wish to lose politics to the mundane. A guardian cannot be considered a representative of the people, in office to serve their wishes and susceptible to their criticisms and decision to dismiss him from office. When a guardian acts justly and in accordance with God's law – a state of affairs that ordinary citizens, but more likely, experts, can discern – he is none other than God's representative on earth. He is not merely a creation of human convention, or a good approximation of just rule – he, in fact, governs in a divine manner. Javadi Amoli thus imbues the guardian's actions

and decisions with divine sanctity while holding that the political realm is one in which humans do not have sovereignty. While Khomeini stops short of depicting government in a world without an infallible imam as divine, Javadi Amoli is willing – and, indeed, finds it necessary – to take this bold step.

Still, at one point in the text, Javadi Amoli says that Islamic government was established by contract, the national constitution, and it is this contract that gives it legitimacy.[40] At first glance, this idea does not seem to comport with his contention that only the divine will, and not a human contract, can legitimate government, and seems to bring Javadi Amoli's view of government closer to Khomeini's. When he describes the article of the constitution that created the Council of Experts, for example, he says that members of the nation made 'a covenant with one another that [stipulated that] the right to govern over them…would only be granted through the Council of Experts; experts that they had chosen, who would, after recognising the jurisprudent with all the requisite qualities, appoint [him to his position].'[41]

However, Javadi Amoli's constitution is set apart from Khomeini's insofar as, in his view, the contract, once made, seems to lose its human quality. While for Khomeini, however, the contract that forms the basis of Islamic government, embodied in a constitution, is a creation of public representatives, approved of by the public in a national referendum, to Javadi Amoli, it is an instrument of the divine. Once the Council is convened, it engages in activity that the citizens themselves – the same citizens who created the Council and elected its members – cannot fully understand, a deliberation that leads them, in effect, to discover a divine truth. These citizens discover who holds the divine right to guardianship. It is here that Javadi Amoli moves above and beyond what Khomeini said about how the leader is chosen.

However, Javadi Amoli also holds that the public must have consented to an Islamic government, which they did when they voted in the referendum on the constitution.[42] In arguing that Islamic government cannot be forced on the people, Javadi Amoli follows Khomeini's

unambiguous post-revolutionary position that public consent is a necessary prerequisite for legitimate government, and adopts a stronger position than Khomeini's ambiguous position in *Islamic Government* (where Khomeini had argued that public consent was a desirable prerequisite for government, but stopped short of saying that it was necessary). 'Islamic government,' Javadi Amoli says, 'is not a government of tyranny and imposition; if it was tyranny and force, it would become [like] the illegitimate government[s] of the Umayyads and Marwanids,[43] which after a while, passed from existence.'[44]

What is it about political tyranny that elicits Javadi Amoli's condemnation? His concern is not simply that governments that have not gained public approval are unstable and soon to 'pass from existence'. Instead, his concern is a moral and religious one. It is not in the nature of things for religion to be imposed on individuals; God did not will for it to be this way, he seems to be arguing. While there eternally exists a religious truth, this truth should not be forced on human beings. There certainly exists a metaphysical truth, and with it, an individual who deserves to be the political leader of a given society; this truth, this nature of things, is eternal and can never be compromised. However, for this truth to be manifested materially and to have an effect on human society, human beings must embrace it. This is how God has willed it to be; a truth cannot simply pass into the human realm without the presence of an active human will for it to be manifested.[45] 'If the country needs to be governed,' says Javadi Amoli, 'as long as the people do not want it and are not present [as advocates for it in the political sphere], neither prophethood, nor imamate, nor the specific deputyship [of those named by the last Imam to be his representatives during the Lesser Occultation], nor general deputyship [of jurisprudents during the Greater Occultation][46] – none of these will be manifested externally.'[47] The uniquely-qualified jurisprudent has to assume, in practice, his role which already exists 'in potential', but for this potential to be fulfilled, and for the jurisprudent to actually assume his deserved role, a necessary condition is the acceptance of the guardian by the people.[48]

Javadi Amoli does not condemn government without consent by using the language of rights. For him, political tyranny is reprehensible not because the tyrant deprives individuals, and a nation, of the right to determine their political futures and have a voice in the way in which they are governed. Instead, he uses the language of Islamic philosophy; God, he argues, never imposes His wishes on human society, and therefore neither should small numbers of human beings. Islamic government, as a metaphysical 'good', cannot be imposed on an unwilling society; instead, there must a democratic act prior to its establishment, establishing a broad expression of acceptance of this government, and the values that it would exist to promote and that have shaped its design. Whether people come to this acceptance does not affect whether Islamic government is legitimate on a deeper, metaphysical level; whether or not it is legitimate in the opinions of humans does not affect whether it is legitimate in God's eyes. Javadi Amoli holds, in fact, that because a popular vote does not make a particular government more legitimate, in any true, divine sense, than it was before the people consented to it, and because a lack of popular support does not deprive a government that is good on a metaphysical plane of a true, divine legitimacy, then we must refrain from saying that popular consent makes a government legitimate; instead, popular consent gives it 'power; because without the people, there would be no power for the guardian, and his ability to engage in any kind of action [in the political realm] is taken from him; though at the level of metaphysical reality, he has divine legitimacy'.[49] This 'power', to Javadi Amoli, is not a form of raw, physical power, but instead a capacity that the guardian gains because of the world's metaphysical nature, a power that God wills him to have, and therefore that he will acquire, when the people have come to accept his rule. This power is dependent not upon tanks, guns and all the physical force of the state, but it emerges, instead, from an act of belief on the part of the people.

Conclusion

While Javadi Amoli writes in support of a theory of guardianship, he does not fully accept Khomeini's theory, which, I have argued, can be more accurately characterised as a theory of limited guardianship. Both in Khomeini's *Islamic Government*, and in his speeches, statements and correspondence after the 1979 Islamic Revolution until his death in 1989, Khomeini is clear that Islamic government is ultimately human government. The guardian may sin, he suggests – though after the revolution he became more optimistic about the guardian's ability to remain free of sin while in office. Furthermore, Islamic government itself has been designed by a council of popularly elected representatives. The Council of Experts, and the guardian himself, should be viewed as nothing more than human beings who strive to act in a way that is godly, and, in the case of the Council of Experts, representative of those who elected them into office. In addition, he clarifies after the revolution, an Islamic government is one that has been consented to freely by the public.

Javadi Amoli's theory of guardianship, in many ways, overlaps with Khomeini's. He too accepts that the guardian is fallible, though he says that experts, more than ordinary citizens, have the capacity to recognise when the guardian errs or to discover a flaw in his character. Like Khomeini, he argues that an Islamic government cannot be imposed on citizens; consent is a necessary condition for political legitimacy, even if it is the Prophet himself who wishes to govern.

However, Javadi Amoli modifies, and does not simply inherit, Khomeini's theory of guardianship. He does so, in broad terms, by arguing that the guardian should not be considered, in any way, a representative of citizens. To be a guardian of, as distinguished from a representative of, the people, he cannot have been selected by the people themselves. Instead, God works through the Council of Experts, the popularly elected body that chooses and oversees the guardian, to appoint him. Khomeini never makes a similar argument; he depicted the

Council of Experts as a body of knowledgeable, though fallible, experts who make very human decisions. Likewise, if and when the Council decides to dismiss the guardian, this, again, is a divine act, according to Javad Amoli, and not simply a potentially-mistaken choice made by members of the Council.

Though citizens may criticise the guardian, as long as the Council of Experts has not dismissed him, he must be considered a representative of God, not of the people. He is not in office to implement either his own wishes or the wishes of citizens, only the divine will. Though Islamic government was initially established by a contract, as Javadi Amoli acknowledges, and this contract – the constitution – was approved of by the vast majority of citizens in a national referendum, key institutions and individuals in government – namely, the Council of Experts, the guardian and even the Guardian Council – become instruments of the divine will. The popular will allows Islamic government to come into being, but these institutions of government must function independently of the popular will.

Still, Javadi Amoli insists, even divine government cannot be imposed on a people; popular consent is a necessary prerequisite for political legitimacy. This is not because individuals have a right to choose how they are governed, but because in the particular world of causes and effects that God has designed, people must desire to be governed justly in order for just government to be established. While Khomeini maintains that even an Islamic government must be recognised for what it is – human in both its origins and in its day-to-day function – Javadi Amoli finds it important to have a different perspective; Islamic government cannot simply be considered a human government whose decisions and actions, therefore, are always circumspect, but instead a government that – often, but perhaps not always – may perfectly emulate the divine.

Notes

1 Some scholars argue that Khomeini envisioned the ruling religious cleric to have both jurisprudential and philosophical knowledge, and to have all-comprehensive and unquestionable authority. See, for example, Hamid Dabashi (1993: 41), who argues that Khomeini's political leader was the 'philosopher king in the platonic understanding of the term… Khomeini maintained that people do not know what is good for them'. Also, Vanessa Martin (1996: 18) suggests that, in Khomeini's thought, 'ideally it is the philosopher-jurist who understands both the shari'ah and its hidden meanings and is thus most qualified to rule'. She, elsewhere (2000: 162), argues that Khomeini's theory was a 'juxtaposed and interactive merging of rule by Islamic law and rule by a guardian'. Other scholars do not claim that Khomeini required the ruling religious cleric to have philosophical knowledge, but they claim that Khomeini envisioned the jurisprudent, on account of his knowledge of the law, to have absolute political power. For example, Said Amir Arjomand (1988: 149) says that '[T]here is reason to believe that Khomeini considered the Islamic republic to be the appropriate form of government only for the period of transition to the truly Islamic government,' a government in which a hierarchy of religious clerics rule single-handedly 'on behalf of God'. Gregory Rose (1983: 187) says 'The jurisprudent is positioned to guarantee institutional conformity to the agenda for restructuring consciousness.'
2 See Hossainzadeh (2014).
3 Khomeini (1981: 62).
4 Khomeini (1981: 65).
5 Khomeini (1981: 56).
6 Khomeini (1981: 56).
7 Khomeini (1999, vol. 10: 482). All translations of excerpts from *Sahifa-yi Imam* are the author's own.
8 Khomeini (1999, vol. 10: 482).
9 Khomeini (1999, ref. 7, vol. 11: 306).
10 Khomeini (1999, vol. 14: 377).
11 Khomeini (1999, vol. 9: 173).
12 Khomeini (1999, vol. 10: 322).
13 Bakhash (1984: 73).

14 Khomeini (1999, vol. 11: 23).
15 Javadi Amoli (2000–2001: 208).
16 Javadi Amoli (2000–2001: 210).
17 Javadi Amoli (2000–2001: 210).
18 Javadi Amoli (2000–2001: 209).
19 Javadi Amoli (2000–2001: 448).
20 Javadi Amoli (2000–2001: 448).
21 Javadi Amoli (2000–2001: 230–232).
22 Javadi Amoli (2000–2001: 445).
23 Javadi Amoli (2000–2001: 404).
24 Javadi Amoli (2000–2001: 403).
25 Javadi Amoli (2000–2001: 403).
26 Javadi Amoli (2000–2001: 403–404).
27 Javadi Amoli (2000–2001: 231).
28 Javadi Amoli (2000–2001: 211).
29 Javadi Amoli (2000–2001: 448).
30 Javadi Amoli (2000–2001: 448).
31 Javadi Amoli (2000–2001: 449).
32 That is, experts in fiqh, or Islamic jurisprudence. When Javadi Amoli uses the term 'legal', he refers to the secular legal science, a science centred on the study of law that is not derived from authoritative Islamic sources.
33 Java Javadi Amoli (2000–2001: 446).
34 Javadi Amoli (2000–2001: 136–137).
35 Khomeini (1981: 62).
36 Khomeini (1999, vol. 11: 306).
37 Javadi Amoli (2000–2001: 90–91).
38 Javadi Amoli (2000–2001: 80).
39 Khomeini (1999, vol. 14: 377).
40 Javadi Amoli (2000–2001: 447).
41 Javadi Amoli (2000–2001: 445).
42 Javadi Amoli (2000–2001: 445).
43 Here, Javadi Amoli refers to the Marwanid branch of the Umayyad dynasty, which prevailed over the Sufyanid branch – the descendants of Abu Sufyan – in 684, reigning until 750, when the Umayyad dynasty, destabilised by internal dissension and suffering setbacks in its wars of

expansion, was overthrown, and later, in 756, would establish a caliphate in Cordoba, Spain. See 'Umayyad dynasty' in *Encyclopedia Britannica* (2015). It was under the Marwanid Umayyads, between 736 and 740, that the Shi'a began to mobilise against the caliphate, claiming, as they had since the founding of the Umayyad dynasty in 661, that the descendants of Ali were the rightful rulers of the Muslim community because of their knowledge of religion and their spirituality. In 740, Zayd ibn Ali, the grandson of the third imam, Hussayn, led a rebellion against the dynasty but was soon defeated. See Lapidus (2002: 47–54).

44 Javadi Amoli (2000–2001: 402).

45 Javadi Amoli (2000–2001: 402).

46 According to Shi'a belief, the Lesser Occultation began when the eleventh imam died in 874 CE, whereupon the twelfth Imam immediately went into concealment, and communicated with the Muslim community through four intermediaries. The Lesser Occultation ended when, in 941 CE, the imam ceased all communication with the Muslim community. Thus began the Greater Occultation, which continues until today. See Arjomand (2012). According to Shi'a doctrine, the twelfth imam is absent from the physical plane during the Greater Occultation, and is anticipated to return to earth as a messianic figure just before the end of time. See Algar (2009).

47 Algar (2009).

48 Javadi Amoli (2000–2001: 390).

49 Javadi Amoli (2000–2001: 405).

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7

Justifying military rule as 'Islamic government'

Abdullahi A Gallab

My main focus with military rule as a form of government is in the context of Sudan. For me, understanding the Islamist regime – which I have written about since 1989, the year it came to power – goes beyond academic research and political necessity. It poses itself every day as the question and essential element of Islamism and its future in the way it has imposed itself on Sudanese everyday life, producing different forms of violence, conflict and human suffering.[1] This goes beyond political and academic concerns, discussions and discourses. This chapter examines the intersectionality between militarism, Islam and the Sudanese Islamist state by analysing the difficulty of situating the regime within any of these categories.

On 30 June 1989, a military coup apparently led by a then-unknown brigadier named Omar Hassan Ahmad al-Bashir succeeded in toppling Sadiq al-Mahdi's democratically-elected government. On the night of the coup several hundred politicians – including political party leaders and state ministers, trade unionists, lawyers, journalists and businesspeople were detained, and all non-religious civil society organisations were dissolved. Newspapers were shut down, and only the state radio and television station and the army's weekly newspaper *Al-Quwwat al-Mussallah* were allowed to operate. Hassan al-Turabi, the secretary general of the National Islamic Front (NIF) and two of his

party members – Ibrahim al-Sanusi and Ahmed Abdel Rahman – were detained in Sudan's notorious Kober prison, together with other politicians. Unbeknown to the general Sudanese population, the Islamists were the architects, planners and main executors of the coup.

For many Sudanese, the nature of the coup was not initially obvious. Some thought it was a traditional coup led by 'nationalist' army officers. Governments in neighbouring countries, particularly Egypt, welcomed the coup. It took the politicians and trade unionists in Kober prison some time to realise that the NIF had initiated the coup, even though three of its key leaders were detained with them. The late Muhammad Ibrahim Nugud, secretary general of the Sudanese Communist party, who was well known for his wit and sense of humour, told al-Turabi, 'Barakah Allah fi man zarah wa khafa' ('God blesses the visitor who visits briefly and is not a burden'), implying that al-Turabi should go home and rejoin the conspirators. But the coup plotters – al-Turabi's disciples – had a different plan. They kept him in prison for six months instead of one month as previously agreed, and another six months under house arrest.[2] Ten years later, al-Turabi admitted that he had ordered al-Bashir to go to the presidential palace 'raisan' (as president), while he went to prison 'habisan' (as detainee).

The Islamic ethical principle 'Inna al-raida la yakzib ahlihu' (the one leading his people does not lie to them) should not be overlooked, as there is a fundamental connection between this principle and the establishment of a good society, a state, and the maintenance of human dignity and the truth. Thus the coup, through its end result and its means of implementation, provided a practical endorsement and license for the Sudanese state to turn violent action into political rule, and to wreak havoc on human beings. The Sudanese Islamists that night traded their slogan 'al-Islam huwa al-hal' ('Islam is the solution') for 'violence huwa al-hal'; they traded it all for power.

To reconsider the nature of the Sudanese Islamist state, one needs to abandon visions and ideas about the religiopolitical dimensions of Islam, or what appears to have been advocated for, but has been abandoned a

long time ago: 'al-Islam huwa al-hal'. One also needs to recognise the state's blind belief in violence or the 'darkness of its holiness rather than its light'.[3] Only then can we realise that constant violence, not Islam or militarism, forms the basis on which Sudan's regime is founded. That is to say, every aspect of the state is secular, and religion itself has turned against the Islamists, their regime and their leader, al-Turabi.[4]

The coup and the regime that emerged from it, which I refer to as the first and second Islamist Republics,[5] proved to be a particular political phenomenon. The 1989 coup was unique compared to other successful or attempted coups in Sudanese political history. In Sudan, the military's role expanded to handle internal issues when an insurgency started in the southern part of the country immediately after the country's independence from Britain in 1956. Later, by 1958, the military's assumption of power and its scope in Sudanese life had become unrestricted. The officers and regime that obtained power in the coup became highly involved in politics. El Ferik Ibrahim Abboud[6] became, in addition to his position as commander-in-chief of the Sudanese army, head of state and head of the ruling high supreme council, while high-ranking officers became ministers and military rulers for the provinces. Abboud, his senior officers, and a few civilian collaborators ruled the country with an iron fist until 1964 when they were removed from power by a popular uprising. Overt and covert opposition to the regime – represented by armed insurgency in the south and intransigent political parties, intellectuals and trade unions in the north, respectively – were dealt with as security issues and met with violent responses by the government. Violence and torture became the mode of governance. Different ways to inflict physical and psychological injury to political dissidents began to creep across the country from the south to the north. A nascent security community 'involved in the planning and execution of repression, intelligence gathering, interrogation and torture'[7] became part of the state apparatus.

The 1969 coup of Gaafar Nimeiry[8] and its state (1969–1985) expanded the military's role further. The Gamal Abdel Nasser regime of

Egypt spawned the clandestine 'free officers' movement in the Sudanese army. The development of the security apparatus and a controlled one-party system dominated the army and Sudanese political life.

What happened in 1989 was, to a significant extent, a particular political event and a peculiar military phenomenon compared to previous coups in Sudan. These factors are important in relation to the most distinct, planned for and discrete developments that followed. In a sense, the 1989 coup shaped some of the regime's later characteristics. What was unique about the Islamists' coup and the emergent regime was affirmed by the nature, the individuals and the group or community to which each element belonged. First, the Islamists, and not the army, planned, organised and executed every aspect of the coup.[9] That is to say, the Islamist movement transformed itself into a military entity while preparing for the coup, and, in particular, on the night of the coup's execution. Therefore, Omar al-Bashir was chosen by the Islamists rather than by the military. In fact, he was neither the first nor the second candidate of the Islamists for 'leading' the coup. The first candidate, Brigadier Kamal Ali Mukhtar, died when Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) forces shot down his plane in 1988. The second candidate, Brigadier Osman Ahmed al-Hasan, the leader of an underground Islamist group in the Sudanese army, insisted that the army should have full control over political power after the coup. The Islamists replaced him with al-Bashir a few days before the coup. Another peculiar aspect of the coup was that it might have been the first of its kind in which civilians (Malakiyat Nafie)[10] dressed in army uniforms[11] took a major role in the coup's execution.

Later, the regime organised and officially recognised the paramilitary National Defence Force (NDF). Al-Turabi described the NDF as 'an alternative to the National Army to carry out the mission of jihad and to protect the regime from armed opposition in the north and rebellion in the south'.[12] The society's militarisation took different forms that included the dababeen (paramilitary tank forces), janjaweed[13] (rural militia) and siihoun in urban areas. Each one of these elements reveals

different aspects of how the first and only Islamist republic in the Sunni Muslim world developed. In the same way, torture, secret detention[14] and janjaweed violence and atrocities, as initially happened in the south, crept across the country – but this time it spread from Darfur and in a larger and more violent way, especially in Kurdufan and Khartoum.

The Islamist objective has been to establish a regime and state that could simultaneously carry out self defence and offence by utilising state institutions to supply the regime with a means of waging war against the opposition. Hence, violence developed within state institutions, transforming them and giving them the exclusive ability to coerce, repress and torture. This situation gave birth to a new model of the separation of religion and state in which the state is bound up with the production and unequal distribution of violence. The state privileges more violent forms of wilding, which become inherent to the system, such as kasb – a system of extraction to benefit others – and tamkeen – an unequal system of privilege. My argument attempts to delve into issues lingering beneath the surface, in order to describe such a system's reality. It is based on an examination of how the Islamists in power acted in a specific way to colonise religion and ordinary Sudanese society and how they used their power and the state's violent capacity to inflict a system of kasb and tamkeen. Responses to this system provoked the state to exercise open-ended violence to promote, protect and maintain what Sudanese citizens describe as 'fasad', or corruption.

The state created a system of inequality based on and imposed by violence, and perpetuated in the people's minds as a 'halal' exploitation. Eltigani Abdelgadir Hamid[15] describes this as the 'Uhud mentality', referring to the seventh century Battle of Uhud; the Muslim forces were close to victory when some individuals violated the Prophet's orders and rushed to collect the Makkan spoils. Abdelgadir wrote about those who exemplified 'our gubsh (barefoot) brothers who used to eat with us fava beans and lentils (the food of the poor) and reside with us in Um Dirawa wa al-Droushab (poor neighbourhoods), those wretched of the earth became ministers and governors. We felt at first that was a good

omen…as we felt that we found a rock that would close the gate for corruption, and block the road to brokers and mafias, and turn toward the poor and disadvantaged'. But the temptation was too great as some of them turned to look only at what was around them and built only their tall buildings and spent only on their own entourage and clan.[16]

Even before the coup, when the Islamist movement was bloated with money, it transformed itself into a corporation.[17] Abdelgadir described this development by recalling 'the market mentality and the capitalist groups that started to become active and expanded until they were about to "swallow" what was remaining of our Islamic organisation, which we did not join in the first place except to run away from wild capitalism'.[18] Another viewpoint is even more critical of this 'market mentality'. Sudanese satirists reinvented the meaning of an old famous Sufi verse that referred to those who rushed towards piety and gained their rewards from Allah, to mean the opposite – describing the Islamists as they scrambled for the state's spoils. Al-Turabi fell short of capturing the phenomenon's depth when he described it as 'fitnah al-mal' (wealth and its temptation/corruption). In this context, the Islamists strove to convince their followers that 'they are engaged not merely in mundane struggle for territory or political power or financial gain but in a cosmic war, a battle for [the] soul and future of humanity. In such a context, violence is not only permissible; it is obligatory'.[19]

In their first regime the Islamists tried to show the world that the theory and practice of their political programme could be advanced through their slogans: 'Sa nahzim al-Amrikan wa Husni al-jaban wa nagim al-Azan fi al-Vatican' (We will defeat the Americans and the coward Hosni [Mubarak], and we will make the call for prayer in the Vatican), and 'Amrika gad dana uzabuha' (America's torture has come). Al-Bashir's favourite verse, with which he has closed every single public appearance for the last twenty-five years, describes a similar sentiment: 'Fal ya'ud lil adn majdahu aw tasil kul al-dimaa' (Either Islam's glory is restored, or all blood will flow).

However, it would be insufficient to interpret Sudanese Islamist rhetoric at face value. Analysing their rhetoric and judging their deeds according to culture and practice reveals the irony of how the two mutually falsify one another. The manner in which the regime grew within Sudanese society, as a dominant presence within society, made it difficult for it to maintain itself without violence. Ultimately, this led to al-Bashir becoming the first sitting head of state to be indicted by the International Criminal Court (ICC),[20] which issued a warrant for his arrest.

Ali Osman and his new class of Islamists, who came together as a ruling elite to control the Islamist republic, ended up as individualists, with a high degree of mistrust and even hatred towards each other. They outbid each other not in terms of faithfulness to Islam, the movement or the Sudanese people, but in terms of personal ambitions. Sudanese satirists describe the late Majzoub al-Khalifa's ambition as 'wazir bi makant ra'is jumhuria' (minister with a president's engine). The inexorable fighting between Ali Osman, Ali al-Haj, Nafie Ali Nafie and Ghazi Salah al-Din al-Atabani and their supporters and protégés made al-Bashir's presence in the top position a functional necessity – not because of his effectiveness but due to the opposite. Al-Turabi continued his sojourn from one prison to another at the hands of those he once considered to be his own disciples. Mysterious circumstances ended the lives of potential rivals without serious investigation into their causes of death.

Furthermore, the Islamist experience has subjected the entire country to a series of humanitarian crises. This development occurred during a very important period in the history of the country and Islamism, as the possibility of the country's fragmentation into more than two mini-states became a looming threat after South Sudan's secession in 2011.

Of course, Omar al-Bashir and those who ruled the country for the last quarter century are ordinary human beings. Ghazi Salah al-Din described al-Bashir as a 'nice person', and Ahmed Raissouni, former chairperson of the Moroccan Tawheed and Islah movement, and current deputy of the International Union of Muslim Scholars, quoted Sadiq al-Mahdi saying, in reference to al-Bashir, 'we have a dictator-

ship without a dictator'. Nevertheless, al-Bashir and his ruling Islamist group continue to see themselves as the be-all and end-all in the Sudan, while other Islamists worldwide, unfortunately, see them as the whole of Sudan. This conception emerges from a failure to think critically and engage in conversation within one's self. Such thinking leads to ethical behaviour that defies the 'banality of evil'. The violent discourse and actions in Sudan have emerged from the Islamists' 'inherent reinvention of difference', which developed into a self-satisfied group living out a fantasy of exceptionalism, separating the Islamists' ascribed authenticity and their self-made identity from the other. This condition set in motion a problematic political, cultural and religious process that may be difficult to evaluate. With such a conception and condition, we can understand another aspect of separation between the Islamists and one of the most positive aspects of Islamic ideals, especially if we consider that each mujtahid (innovative thinker) who arrived at the truth after extensive open space for "amal al-fikr', the 'business of thinking',[21] within the domain of probability that gave rise to the famous tenet that 'kul mujtahid musib' (every mujtahid is correct), 'a maxim that proved operative and became sanctified'.[22]

At the same time, in the current Sudanese Islamist case, religion is separate from all spheres, as the Islamists themselves have taken 'shape as an enclave, a community apart from the larger society concerned with maintaining boundaries to prevent its members from deserting'.[23] At the same time, all types of reward (social, political and economic) have become exclusive to the enclave in an attempt to create a differentiation of sorts that designates religion and religious groups separate and marginalised in both status and sphere.

After the coup, the Islamists dissolved the NIF as a political party replaced it with the Council of the Forty, which grew into the National Congress Party (NCP). This party experienced at least two splits: under al-Turabi's leadership, a splinter group established the Popular National Congress Party; in 2013, another group lead by Ghazi Salah al-Din and thirty Islamists broke off to establish the Reform Party. In 2006, Ghazi

Salah al-Din told me that 'the Islamist movement was the coup's first casualty'. He explained that the Islamist movement had shrunk in popularity, and its credibility and moral standing had been severely damaged since the early days of the coup. It was Rashid al-Ghannoushi, the founder and leader of the Tunisian Islamist Ennahda movement, who warned later that 'the most dangerous thing [is] for the Islamists to be loved by people before they get to power and then hated afterwards'.[24]

The most serious development, however, was that the NCP ended up as neither a party in the real or traditional sense, nor a movement. At the same time, the military's expansion to control security and military affairs has reversed to the extent that one could say that the coup's second casualty was the army itself.

When I say that military rule justified itself as Islamic government in Sudan, I mean that since 1989, major components of both militarism and Islamism have been used to legitimise one another. There are four important aspects here. First, the concept of legitimacy brings to mind an important insight of Quentin Skinner: 'What is possible to do in politics is generally limited by what is possible to legitimise. What you can hope to legitimise, however, depends on what courses of action you can plausibly arrange under existing normative principles.'[25] This may allow us to position the Sudanese experience of the Islamist state and its unveiled violence through forms of state brutality, degradation, terror and oppression as emerging from its first days, when the Islamists traded in the concept 'Islam huwa al-hal' (Islam is the solution) for violence huwa al-hal.

At the same time, this insight may help us to understand why, as failure has shown itself at all levels, the Sudanese folk 'fiqh' (jurisprudence) of satire has been very accurate in describing the different stages of the regime's course of action. This kind of satire, which invariably constitutes the daily subject matter of alternative traditional communication and now social media communication circulating among Sudanese at home and abroad, reveals an aspect worth considering. In particular, the way that satire has framed – through concealment and in-

version – what is described as the essence of Islamism, and the regime's ideological regression towards degradation and oblivion, exposes the implications of a non-movement, or an encroachment of the regime, on Sudanese daily life.

One of earliest jokes was about the five pillars of al-Inqaz[26] (salvation, a reference to the National Islamic Front and its regime). It describes these five pillars as: state of emergency, guarding bridges, forced sleep, walking barefoot and commercialised petrol for those who could afford it.[27] Later, as the violence of the regime escalated, another version of these pillars circulated: 'You do not find enough food to eat, you wear rags, you go to the south of the country to die, you have to pay [taxes] whether you have money or not, and you will suffer if you open your mouth.'[28] Another joke described an encounter between al-Bashir and a person high on drugs. Al-Bashir asked the person, 'Who is better, me or Abboud?' The man said, 'You Mr President.' The president asked, 'Why?' The man said, 'Because Abboud fears the British.' 'What about between me and [Gaafar] Nimeiry?' The man replied, 'You Mr President.' The president asked, 'Why?' The man responded that Nimeiry feared the Americans. 'Then what about me and Omar ibn al-Khattab [the second successor after the Prophet Muhammad]?' The man said, 'You Mr President.' The president asked, 'Why?' The man replied, 'Because Omar ibn al-Khattab fears God.'

The second aspect relates to the absurd conviction of the Islamists that the whole society should share one belief system, or be coerced to do so. This is how the Sudanese Islamists found common ground with various shades of 'takfiri'[29] groups, including Osama bin Laden, Ayman al-Zawahiri and their jihadists, whom the Sudanese regime hosted, and who exported terror on the regime's behalf to neighbouring countries; Sudanese pro-Saudi Salafis inside the country. Later, and especially after the 'mufasala',[30] the ruling Islamists found it useful to encourage a counter-insurgency by unleashing neo-Salafi takfiri groups against some of the regime's enemies, particularly al-Turabi, al-Mahdi and Sufi leaders. This also sheds some light on why the Islamists – before and after

the mufasala, and throughout the lifetime of their republic – played the global jihad card to secure their position by intimidating neighbouring states and distant enemies in an attempt to force them to submissively collaborate by kneeling before the Islamists in power. In both ways, nothing in the political realm – including human beings, belief and the natural world – has moral value; but these things can be manipulated, exploited and taken advantage of until they crumble or subside.

Third, it is true that the regime is part of the complex Sudanese human experience; nevertheless, the state is neither a military state nor an Islamic one. In a letter to the Islamist leaders who attended the Sudanese Islamic movement's eighth general conference held in Khartoum in November 2012, al-Turabi, the founder of Sudanese Islamism, described the conference as a charade planned by hypocritical politicians who sought to monopolise Islamism for their personal gain. He added, referring to himself and others, that genuine Islamists 'are excluded and languishing in prisons as political detainees'.[31] Moreover, he added that he and his party disassociated themselves from those who 'tarnished the image of Islam'.[32] Whether Turabi disassociated himself from them or not, in his first meeting with Ali Osman during the Naivasha negotiations between the SPLM and the ruling Congress Party in 2003, the late John Garang, known for his biting humour, is said to have joked, 'We have heard of the revolution that eats its children and the cat that eats its kittens, but we have never heard of the kittens that eat their father.'

What Garang said might have been amusing, but he missed the point. In the Sudanese Islamist experience, some of al-Turabi's party members who were first 'disciples' later became 'intimate enemies' after learning to play the political game by living properly within al-Turabi's Islamism, even though they wanted him gone. Later, and to resolve this dilemma, they became 'bitter enemies' when they advanced themselves as a class inside a group that tried to rule over the population after assuming power through a military coup and establishing a totalitarian system, which later became an authoritarian one, within the Islamist republic.

After the coup, those who were bound together under a flimsy canopy of ideology transformed. They later re-emerged, separated by a desperate state of 'egoliterianism' and governed by an underlying spirit of wilding that bred selfish individualism and corroded not only their own togetherness but also their ethics, morality, trust and all aspects of the common good. Hence, the disruption of what could be described as a Sudanese Islamist community or state reached an unprecedented and dreadful moment. Until then, there had been no another Islamist group worldwide that had assumed power in a way comparable with the Sudanese experience.

Nevertheless, many would say that al-Turabi has remained an albatross around the Islamist movement's neck; but, conversely, the Islamist movement remained an albatross around his neck too. His tragedy, regardless of his self-denial, is that for the last quarter century he has been forced to reside in either an actual prison, a virtual prison or under house arrest.

Fourth, Ghazi Salah al-Din al-Atabani, one of Ali Osman's main competitors, discussed at the 2008 general conference what he described as the merger of 'the three H's': al-harakah (the movement), al-hizb (the party) and al-hukuma (the government). Al-Atabani should have added an S – security. In 2006, al-Atabani said that he felt ashamed to say that 'the Islamists did not rule', which was more an irony than a reality.[33] And after half a century of advocating and telling the Sudanese people and the world that 'Islam is the solution', Ali Osman called for the slogan to be reconsidered because, he claimed, 'it did not achieve or create a programme of justice'. Unfortunately, he said this to an international audience of Islamists attending the first conference of Islamist movements in Malaysia. In October 2014, Raissouni advised al-Bashir to step down, saying he had been for many years convinced that 'al-Bashir and his party should leave the government and, especially, the presidency'.[34]

In conclusion, these accounts of the Sudanese Islamist regime may sound strange to some, especially for those who would deny or justify this type of violence to excuse it, such as regime founders and sympathisers. I would like to return to the fall of Islamism and with it to my

assumption that the Sudanese regime's emergence reveals a new model of the Islamist state embedded in the three elements. In this way, I have described these elements as constituting the newness of the Sudanese Islamist model, though its newness does not make it a good thing by any means. However, this model is being repackaged in 'its malignant cells that spell doom for the legitimacy, omnipresence and even existence of the state itself, and even entail other disruptions'[35] at local, regional and international levels. My account of the Sudanese experience in constituting an Islamist state in three elements is meant to draw attention to the nature of the Sudanese Islamist state and its model of separation of religion and the state, which I have described as savage.

Notes

1 The Islamists have demonstrated throughout their twenty-five-year rule different forms of state-sponsored violence ranging from, but not limited to, 'ghost houses', attacks against their own citizens and the actions of the janjaweed militia, including rape and killing.
2 See al-Mahboob (2009).
3 Roy (2010: xi).
4 Al-Turabi has been perceived as simply secular by his Salafi, Muslim Brothers and other Islamist enemies. See Gallab (2014).
5 Gallab (2008, 2014).
6 Ibrahim Abboud (1900–1983) became the Sudanese Armed Forces' commander-in-chief after the country's independence in 1956. In November 1958, he led a coup against Abdallah Khalil's democratically-elected government. The so-called October Revolution, a civil disobedience movement, toppled Abboud's regime in 1964.
7 Stepan (1988: 30).
8 Gaafar Nimeiry (or Ja'afar Mohamed el-Nimeiry) (1930—2009) was a Sudanese military officer who came to power after a military coup in May 1969. The so-called April Intifada, a civil disobedience movement, ousted him in 1985.
9 Al-Tayib Zain al-Abidin, a Sudanese political scientist and former leader of the Islamist Shura Council, was the only council member to object to

the idea of the coup. In an interview with the author, Yasin Omar al-Imam accused Zain al-Abidin of 'chickening out'. However, Zain al-Abidin remained one of the loud voices of dissent.

10 Nafie Ali al-Nafie (1948–), the former Sudanese presidential assistant and deputy chairman of the ruling National Congress, is a university professor who earned his PhD in genetics from the University of California in 1980. Al-Nafie acquired his political promotion as one of Ali Osman's emerging class of civilian Islamists and as a protégé of Hassan al-Turabi. He undertook a career turn after a period at the Islamists Information Bureau (the NIF intelligence bureau). Many claim that he took security and intelligence training in Tehran in 1981 under the cover of conducting further studies in the field of agriculture. There are claims also that he travelled to Muslim and Arab countries making contacts with various militant organisations in Afghanistan and Lebanon's Bekaa Valley. He was one of the main founders of the Islamist regime's security apparatus and its notorious Biyuot al-Ashbah, which made him a hated figure among the Sudanese public. He was dismissed from his post for involvement in the 1995 assassination attempt in Ethiopia on Hosni Mubarak. Nafie broke decisively with al-Turabi in 1998 when he, alongside a number of senior Islamists, signed the Memorandum of the Ten, which signalled widespread discontent within the Islamist movement towards al-Turabi's policies in the 1990s. In the aftermath of al-Bashir's split with al-Turabi in 1999, Nafie grew close to al-Bashir and was appointed to a number of senior posts, acting as a presidential advisor during the peace talks with South Sudan, and as federal affairs minister. His rising influence has infuriated his rivals in the NCP, especially Ali Osman and Salah Gosh. Their rivalry reached a peak during a series of confrontations heavily publicised by the media, as Gosh attacked Nafie for his hawkish stance and opposition to reconciliation. Reportedly, in recent NCP meetings Nafie accused Osman, who helped negotiate the 2005 Peace Agreement, of being behind South Sudan's secession. Some analysts oversimplify these events by stating that these rivalries reflect ethnic disputes.

11 In an email with the author, Ali al-Haj, deputy secretary general of the Popular Congress Party, who held a similar position in the Islamist NIF during the planning for the coup, confirmed that eighty per cent of the

1 000 individuals who carried out the 1989 coup were civilians dressed in military uniforms. In an article sent to the London based Arab newspaper *Al-Hayat*, and published in the Arab press, Brigadier Faisal Abu Salah, former member of the defunct military command council, claimed that Nafie had asked him if he had any relationship with Abidin Awad, the military tailor. He added that Nafie confided to him that they had uniforms ready, but had required military badges.

12 Lowrie (ed.) (1993: 73).

13 The term 'janjaweed', defined as a ragged militia, is thought to be derived from the Arabic words 'jinn' (devil) and 'jawad' (horse). British writer Alex de Waal referred to the militia as 'counterinsurgency on the cheap'.

14 Following the 1989 coup, the Islamist regime used the National Security Act to restrict daily life and political activity in an effort to maintain control. Secret detention centres, or 'ghost houses', became notorious for torture and ill treatment of political dissidents by individuals selected and trained by the regime. The Sudanese refer to the regime's oppressive rules as the 'red line'; anyone who breaks these rules and crosses this line, especially members of political parties, trade unions and journalists, may experience severe torture in the ghost houses.

15 Eltigani Abdelgadir Hamid is a professor of Islamic thought, and one of the younger Islamists who distanced themselves from the regime, and continued criticising the regime and its leaders.

16 Hamid (2006).

17 For an elaboration on the Islamist movement's transformation into a corporation see Gallab (2008: 78).

18 Hamid (2006).

19 Appleby (2011: 233).

20 Hasan al-Turabi called on Omar al-Bashir to surrender to the ICC for the sake of the country.

21 The Qur'an praised 'those who reflect' (Ar-Rum 30: 8). The Qur'an describes such good deeds as 'tijaratin tunjikum min 'adhabin alim' (a transaction that will save you from grievous suffering) (As-Saff 61: 10).

22 Hallaq (2013: 59).

23 Hallaq (2013: 59).

24 Fuller (2008: 47).

25 Skinner (1998: 105).
26 The Hadith says that Islam has five primary obligations, or pillars of faith, that each Muslim must fulfil. The Sudanese satire claims that the regime has five obligations forced upon people, that is, the fundamentals of the regime.
27 In Arabic, it is described as: 'bunia al-Inqaz ala Khams, halat tawari, hirasat kabari, noum ijbari, mashi kadari, and benzene tijari li mn istata aliyhi sabelin.'
28 'Takul ma tashbaa, talbas maragga, tamshi al-Janoob ma tarjaa, indak ma indak tadfaa, taftah khashmak einak tatlaa.'
29 The term 'takfir' accuses a fellow Muslim of being a disbeliever; takfiri groups are those who issue statements to that effect.
30 Islamists use the term 'mufasala' to describe a split that occurred in their ranks in December 1999, which contributed to what is perceived as al-Turabi's downfall.
31 *Sudan Tribune* (2012a).
32 *Sudan Tribune* (2012b).
33 Interview with the author in 2006.
34 Article published in the Moroccan paper *Hsebres,* 24 October 2014.
35 Bayart (2007: 31).

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PART THREE

SOCIAL MOVEMENTS, ARMED RESISTANCE, VIOLENCE AND TERRITORIAL CONTROL

8

Hizbullah and reconstruction efforts after the 2006 Lebanon war[1]

Joseph Alagha

The Second Lebanon War (12 July–14 August 2006) between Israel and Hizbullah was the most devastating war in Lebanon. The so-called July war took place after Israel's almost complete withdrawal from the country in May 2000, following its twenty-two-year occupation of southern Lebanon. In Hizbullah's southern Beirut stronghold, which houses more than one million adherents of Shi'a Islam, 326 residential buildings sustained partial or complete damage; of these, 269 were in the district where Hizbullah's central headquarters located. Overall, 130 000 housing units sustained partial or complete damage. To deal with the colossal devastation, Hizbullah established the Wa'd (Promise) project with the motto: 'We'll rebuild it more beautiful than what it was'. The Wa'd project was completed on 11 May 2012, nearly five years after its launch. Despite severe losses of material and human resources, Hizbullah not only managed to rise like a phoenix from the ashes, but also obtained hegemony over the Lebanese political system. Today, in the wake of the 2011 MENA uprisings, Hizbullah has tried to balance its regional ambitions with domestic priorities, and aims to achieve its objectives through piecemeal sociopolitical engineering and identity reconstruction. This approach allows Hizbullah to read and interpret domestic, regional and international events, and to react to

dynamic changes in line with the complexity, flexibility and pragmatism of Muslim jurisprudence, thus legitimising its behaviour through religion.

The Second Lebanon War[2] (12 July–14 August 2006)

With the objective of liberating Lebanese prisoners and hostages, and the bodies of fallen fighters in Israel, Hizbullah entered Israeli-controlled territory and successfully captured two Israeli soldiers on 12 July 2006, killing three soldiers in the operation. After the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) responded by crossing the border into Lebanon, Hizbullah killed five more Israeli soldiers. Israel used these events as a pretext to launch a long-prepared aggression against Hizbullah and Lebanon, igniting the 2006 war. With the required arsenal to face the invading IDF, Hizbullah was able to inflict heavy casualties, killing more than 100 Israeli soldiers.[3] Hizbullah's strategic mistake may have been that it did not anticipate that such an action would spark a large-scale conflict, which would ultimately destroy nearly all of Lebanon's achievements since the civil war that ended in 1990. Although some Lebanese people questioned the wisdom of Hizbullah's actions, which Israel used as a pretext to inflict a great deal of damage on Lebanon, Hizbullah emerged from this crisis enjoying greater popularity than before, at least within its main constituency.[4]

The media war: Psychological warfare

During the Second Lebanon War (or July War) in 2006, Hizbullah's media displayed a remarkable will of survival. Although these media primarily aimed to mobilise its constituency and raise morale, the Lebanese satellite television channel Al-Manar also demonstrated its regional and international outreach to the Muslim ummah and its members worldwide through its motto, 'the channel of Arabs and Muslims'. Even after Israel completely levelled the Al-Manar building, and inflicted substantial damage on the Al-Nour radio headquarters, Hizbullah's

media outlets were not forced off air for a single minute because the group had prepared contingency measures and alternative broadcast sites. Both the television and radion channels continued to broadcast from undisclosed locations.[5] Likewise, the newspaper *Al-Intiqad* was published on schedule every Friday, even appearing twice in the war's second week[6] in order to report on Hizbullah's feats on the battlefield.

Destruction of cultural capital

In and around Hizbullah's 'security square', fifty-one publishing houses, most of which dealt with religious and/or political issues, were totally destroyed. Unfortunately, many of these did not maintain records in any form that was protected. Hizbullah's think tank, the Consultative Center for Studies and Documentation (CCSD), was, similarly, destroyed. In addition, many Hizbullah-affiliated schools, universities and higher education institutions were obliterated.

The Lebanese cabinet's pragmatism

In an attempt to stop the war, the Lebanese cabinet unanimously endorsed then Prime Minister Fouad Siniora's seven-point truce plan on 5 August 2006: (1) the release of Lebanese and Israeli prisoners and detainees; (2) the withdrawal of the IDF behind the Blue Line; (3) placing Shebaa Farms, in the south of Lebanon, under UN jurisdiction, and Israel surrendering all remaining landmine maps for that area to the UN; (4) the Lebanese Army should control all Lebanese territory and prevent any other group from bearing arms; (5) deploying a robust UNIFIL force to guarantee stability and security in the south; (6) putting the 1949 Armistice Agreement between Lebanon and Israel into effect; and (7) the international community providing support to Lebanon on all levels.[7] Six days later, on 11 August, the UN Security Council (UNSC) passed Resolution 1701, which called for, inter alia, the cessation of hostilities and Hizbullah's disarmament - the same call as contained in UNSC Resolution 1559 of 2 September 2004. After initially

rejecting the UNSC draft resolution, which fell short of demanding Israeli withdrawal, the Lebanese cabinet approved it, with the support of Hizbullah's cabinet members. In an attempt to influence the new resolution's wording to Lebanon's advantage, the Lebanese cabinet, in an unprecedented move, unanimously approved the deployment 15 000 Lebanese soldiers from the Litani River to the border with Israel. This move conformed to Siniora's fourth point, which implied that the Lebanese state had absolute monopoly over the use of force in its territory. The move was counterproductive to Hizbullah's interest, and seemed to constitute a genuine policy shift rather than a rhetorical move, since Hizbullah's earlier discourse had vetoed sending the army to the south 'to protect Israel from the attacks of the Lebanese resistance', as Nasrallah repeatedly stated in his earlier speeches.[8]

Hizbullah is fully cognisant that the public sphere 'opens the possibility that actors may redefine their interests in the course of public communication and shifting understanding of both collective good and individual and collective identity'.[9] Employing this precept, and keeping in mind that as a survival strategy Hizbullah adjusts as circumstances change, Hizbullah secretary general Hassan Nasrallah asserted that accepting the army's deployment to the south - which had been a repeated Israeli demand to the Lebanese government - and agreeing to the terms of UNSC Resolution 1701 would 'serve the national interest since the strength of Lebanon is in its resistance and national unity'. Although this policy seemed to be aimed at increased integration and infitah (opening-up), the real goal was to exercise Hizbullah's hegemony.

Hizbullah's 'Divine Victory' rally

On 22 September 2006, Nasrallah delivered a victory speech that was attended by Lebanese cabinet ministers, members of parliament, other politicians, clergy, Arab dignitaries and others. The audience of 800 000 people guaranteed a perfect human shield, which prevented Israel from executing its threat to kill Nasrallah when given the opportunity.[10] Call-

ing his supporters 'the most dignified people', Nasrallah stressed that Hizbullah would surrender its arms when Israel relinquished Shebaa Farms, released Lebanese prisoners of war and submitted its landmine maps, saying, 'We will not keep our weapons forever'. Nasrallah affirmed that Hizbullah's rockets had increased from 20 000 before the war to 33 000.[11] Many cadres of the March 14 coalition criticised Nasrallah, arguing that the phrase 'divine victory' was not in the military dictionary.[12] The Israeli media mocked Hizbullah's 'divine, historic and strategic victory', arguing that Hizbullah was only showing off, that Nasrallah had been in hiding since 12 July, and would return to his bunker after finishing his speech. According to Israel, Nasrallah had conceded three weeks earlier that if he had known the magnitude of Israel's devastating response, he would not have captured the two soldiers. Israel also accused Hizbullah of being an agent of Syria and Iran.

The war's devastation

Lebanon paid a heavy price for the war. Israel imposed an air, land and sea blockade that almost completely severed the country from the outside world for approximately eight weeks, from 13 July to 8 September. The war destroyed Lebanon's infrastructure and economy, curtailed its industries and exports, and stopped foreign investment in the country. Israel systemically destroyed Lebanon's infrastructure, including its roads, bridges, airports, harbours, telecommunication facilities, fuel supplies and reservoirs, electricity facilities and factories. The country lost approximately 4.5 billion US dollars (USD) that it would have received in tourism revenue during the summer season. According to a UN report, Lebanon lost 15 billion USD in damages and revenues, including 50 million USD per day on tariffs. An assessment by the European Union revealed that in the south the IDF destroyed or damaged 1 489 buildings; 21 out of 29 bridges over the Litani River; 535 sections of road and 545 cultivated fields. In Dahieh, in southern Beirut, where Hibullah is based, 326 residential buildings sustained partial or

complete damage; of these, 269 were located in the Harit Hurayk district, which housed Hizbullah's central headquarters. Overall, 130 000 housing units sustained partial or complete damage. In addition, the war damaged all the runways of Beirut's Rafic Hariri International Airport, as well as six strategic highway sections. Out of one million persons displaced by the war, almost half returned to their villages and cities to find them destroyed and littered with unexploded ordinances and cluster bombs, most notably in the south.[13]

Reconstruction

While the late prime minister, Rafic Hariri, has been regarded as the champion of reconstruction, that title passed to Hizbullah after the 2006 war, as the magnitude of the crisis and level of destruction was too heavy for the Lebanese state and its institutions to cope with. As soon as the ceasefire came into effect, Hizbullah dispatched special assessment commissions that toured devastated areas; its civil society institutions spearheaded relief efforts and began rebuilding partially destroyed homes.

While the Lebanese state and its institutions suffer from chronic corruption coupled with nepotism and favouritism, Hizbullah is renowned for its probity, integrity and transparency in conducting public services and affairs. While the country as a whole faced severe shortages in foreign currency, Hizbullah handed out cash donations ranging from 4 000 USD to 12 000 USD to people whose houses or apartments were partially or completely destroyed. Impressively, Hizbullah delivered on its promise to fully compensate the owners of 15 000 destroyed houses by providing every household with enough money to rent and furnish an apartment until their original houses were rebuilt. If Hizbullah had failed to fulfil this promise, it would have lost a big part of its constituency. People, after all, cannot survive on ideology alone; they need a roof over their heads and a decent living. Despite being classified as a 'terrorist organisation' by the USA, Hizbullah's main reconstruction

body, Jihad Al-Bina, accomplished a feat in urban planning through its Wa'd reconstruction project, which addressed the gigantic burden of rebuilding Dahieh after the war. Overall, Hizbullah allocated around four billion USD to reconstruction,[14] and since 2007 had spent around 400 million USD in reconstruction funds.[15] The four billion USD were allocated not only for reconstruction but also for buying land north of the Litani River, mainly from Christians and Druze, even at ten times its original price in some cases, in order to link the party's constituencies in the south and the Bekaa Valley. In some instances, Hizbullah succeeded in buying entire villages and turning them into restricted military areas. Although the ambitious Wa'd project faced many challenges, generous funding from Iran, which had assisted the project to materialise in the first place, enabled Wa'd to realise its motto.

On 14 January 2010, Wa'd chief executive officer, Hasan Jishi, held a press conference where he announced that the project was rebuilding 244 of the 281 living complexes destroyed in the 2006 war.[16] Six months later, on 2 June 2010, the Wa'd project for reconstructing Dahieh handed over thirty renovated houses to their owners. On 11 May 2012, Jishi announced the project's completion, nearly five years after its launch on 24 May 2007. At an estimated cost of 400 million USD, Wa'd had removed one million cubic meters of rubble and debris, and returned 4 300 apartments, 269 buildings and 1 200 department stores to their rightful owners in state-of-the-art conditions. The newly-constructed buildings had been equipped against earthquakes with double walls and double-glazing in order to preserve their temperature and prevent leakages. Hizbullah had lived up to its promise of modernising Beirut's southern suburb by giving it a facelift – rebuilding it 'more beautiful that it was before'.

On the same day, Nasrallah delivered a speech boasting about his party's achievements in reconstruction. In addition, he called for the implementation of a proportional representation law for the 2013 parliamentary elections. Nasrallah argued that such a system would more accurately serve the Lebanese population than the 1960 law that had

been used in the June 2009 election. In anticipation of a future war with Israel, Nasrallah laid down a new 'balance of terror' formula, whereby for every building destroyed by Israel in the Dahieh, Hizbullah would destroy two buildings in Tel Aviv.[17] Interestingly, his lecture coincided with an earthquake of 5.5 magnitude on the Richter scale. This prompted observers to joke that when Nasrallah speaks, the earth shakes in response. Others stated that God was testing the newly reconstructed buildings' anti-earthquake foundations. Lebanese politician Saad al-Hariri responded to Nasrallah's speech by saying that in the 2013 parliamentary election, the ballot box would determine who would gain the upper hand in the country.

Meanwhile, on the southern front, Hizbullah revised its military strategy with Israel, thus attempting to set new rules of engagement in any future conflict.

New rules of the game: Changes in Hizbullah's military strategy

Hizbullah's military strategy is characterised by asymmetrical warfare. In such a situation, the two belligerents are so mismatched in military capabilities or accustomed methods of engagement that the disadvantaged actor (Hizbullah) must use its unique advantages or effectively exploit its enemy's (Israel) particular weaknesses if it is to have any hope of prevailing. This situation existed before the Israeli withdrawal in May 2000, and continued to be the case from May 2000 to July 2006, and from July 2006 onward. The following section describes the changes in Hizbullah's military strategy over time, from 1982 to 2000, then from 2000 to 2006, and lastly from 2006 to the present.

Hizbullah's military strategy during the Israeli occupation (1982–2000)

Hizbullah's intelligence is highly efficient; its military structure is characterised by extreme discipline and sophistication. Its clandestine tactics render it very difficult to identify members of its military wing, al-Muqawama al-Islamiyah (The Islamic Resistance). This is especially so

since some fighters wear civilian clothes, while others wear the same uniform as the IDF and even speak Hebrew. Islamic Resistance employs guerrilla warfare, and hit-and-run and blitz tactics, which do not immediately aim at occupying land; rather, they endeavour to drive out the enemy by continuously launching a war of attrition in order to inflict the highest number of casualties. Their tactics resemble those of the Vietcong, which effectively defeated the Americans in the Vietnam War.

Hizbullah's military strategy after the 2000 Israeli withdrawal

The 2006 war put Hizbullah's deterrent military strategy, employed from 2000 to 2006, to the test. Hizbullah leaned heavily on its stock of 20 000 rockets, with the intention of preventing Israel from attacking Lebanon again. During the six years after the Israeli withdrawal, Hizbullah had transformed southern Lebanon into a high-tech bunker containing sophisticated anti-tank, as well as short, medium and long-range rockets. Hizbullah built elaborate fortifications and saturated them with armaments. However, the 2006 war proved that Hizbullah dwelled too much on its presumed balance of power with Israel; the group refers to it as the 'balance of terror', based on its reading of the Qur'anic verse: 'It may be that your Lord will have mercy on you, and if you return (to disobedience), We too will return (to punishment), and We will make Hell a prison for those who reject faith'.[18] Thus, Hizbullah overestimated its deterrent strategy, since it had no contingency measures to fend off a massive Israeli attack, aside from heavy reliance on its missile cache.

Miscalculation on both sides

The 2006 war was the most destructive war launched by Israel against Lebanon. Israel heavily and systematically bombarded Hizbullah's constituencies in the south of Lebanon, the Bekaa Valley and the Dahieh suburb, in an attempt to sow discord among residents and diminish Hizbullah's following. Although Hizbullah's 4 000 rockets had limited destructive capacity, the rockets 'terrorised' the Israeli population on a psychological level, and forced more than two million Israelis

to live underground in bunkers or leave potential target areas for safer places. A BBC documentary claimed that Israel sustained its heaviest aerial bombardment during the 2006 war since its creation in 1948.[19] Though Israel initially aimed to eliminate Hizbullah and free its two captured soldiers, it gradually watered down its expectations to destroying Hizbullah's infrastructure and curtailing its ability to fire rockets into Israel. The latter objective did not materialise. On the other hand, Hizbullah's strategic mistake as its miscalculation of the Israeli reaction to the abduction of its soldiers – massive destruction and disproportionate use of force. Nasrallah acknowledged, on 27 August 2006, that Hizbullah would not have captured the two soldiers if it had known the devastating outcome. 'We simply would not have done it,' he said.[20]

Thus, it seems that the 2006 war was a zero-sum game, with both Israel and Hizbullah claiming victory. Nasrallah dubbed it 'the fiercest battle in Lebanese history', hailing it as a 'strategic, historical and divine victory for Lebanon and the ummah'. Ehud Olmert, then prime minister of Israel, stressed that in addition to its military victory, Israel won a great diplomatic victory with UNSC Resolution 1701. He implied that Israel had changed the rules of the game that were contained in the 1996 Israeli-Lebanese Ceasefire Understanding. Although Hizbullah continued firing rockets into Israel until the last day of the war, even into areas occupied by the IDF, the war proved that the defence strategies of both parties needed serious revision.

Although Hizbullah had not been prepared for it, the 2006 war did not pose an existential threat to the party. One year after the war, through the concession made by the Israeli defence minister, Ehud Barak, Hizbullah had not only rebuilt its arsenal, but had also improved its capabilities and power. It constructed elaborate fortifications above the Litani River for its newly-acquired long-range missiles in order to avoid conflict with the international community for breaching Resolution 1701. The party successfully linked its key constituencies in the south of Lebanon and in the Bekaa Valley by buying land and turning it into a restricted military area. However, from the Litani River to the

Israeli border, Hizbullah's fighters remained invisible and kept their weapons out of sight (but not out of reach). Nasrallah warned Israel that if it attacked Lebanon again, Hizbullah would not hesitate to use unconventional weapons to target any location. Resolution 1773 of 24 August 2007, which extended the UN mission in Lebanon until 31 August 2008, reiterated the achievements of Resolution 1701: a 'cessation of hostilities' rather than a ceasefire. Likewise, on 27 August 2009, to Israel's dismay and Hizbullah's relief, the UNSC renewed Resolution 1701 for one year under the same rules of engagement. However, the cessation of hostilities was not coupled with a comprehensive political solution or settlement of the conflict, rendering the situation immensely fragile.

Hizbullah's military strategy after the 2006 war

In a major change after the 2006 war, Hizbullah shifted from a defensive to an offensive military strategy, whose aim is to occupy the northern Israeli settlements, thus moving the war to Israeli soil in the event that Israel decided to attack Lebanon again. In November 2007, Hizbullah put the new strategy to the test when Israel conducted war games involving 50 000 military personnel across its northern border with Lebanon. Hizbullah immediately responded with a three-day military drill of its own, mobilising 120 000 elite fighters, dressed in civilian clothes, south of the Litani River, where around 12 500 UN troops and 15 000 Lebanese Army soldiers were stationed. This unprecedented move aimed to send a strong message to three audiences. First, to Israel in case it considered attacking Lebanon again; second, to the international community, by allowing Syria and Iran to use the Hizbullah card as a stick and a bargaining chip; and third, to Lebanese politicians, to nudge them towards accepting Hizbullah's demands.

In a fiery speech on 11 November 2007, Nasrallah affirmed Hizbullah's message and defiantly challenged UNSC Resolution 1559, insisting that all the armies in the world could not disarm Hizbullah. In 2008 and 2009, Nasrallah reiterated that all of Israel was within the reach of Hizbullah's missiles. Commemorating the third anniversary of Hizbul-

lah's victory in the 2006 war on 14 September 2009, he boasted that the party's military capabilities were three times what they had previously been. He repeated his 'balance of terror' formula aimed at deterrence, reiterating that if Israel were to bomb Beirut or Dahieh, Hizbullah would reciprocate by striking Tel Aviv. Notably, Hizbullah obtained the incredibly accurate Russian-made 9K338 Igla-S ground-to-air missile system in 2010, which works on a feedback control system. This implies that any future Israeli incursion into Lebanon would be costly.[21]

On 15 January 2015, in a three-hour interview with Al-Mayadeen satellite television,[22] Nasrallah affirmed that during the 2006 war his party had possessed the Iranian-made Fateh-110 missile, which has a range of 200 kilometres and can carry a denotation warhead of 500 kilograms. He also revealed that Hizbullah possessed of a new model of the Fateh missile, which had a range of 350 kilometres, was much faster, more difficult to intercept and could carry a devastating warhead. Nasrallah boasted about Hizbullah's new deterrent capabilities, claiming that his party possessed weapons and missile that were more sophisticated and destructive than the Fateh-110. In any future war with Israel, he added, Hizbullah's military wing would storm the northern Israeli settlements and drag the fight onto Israeli soil.[23]

Prisoner exchange

Nasrallah's promise to liberate all Lebanese prisoners in Israeli prisons materialised in July 2008. As part of a prisoner exchange, Israel returned the bodies of 199 Lebanese, Palestinians and others who died in action confronting the Israeli army in previous decades, including the bodies of eight Hizbullah fighters. Further, the exchange culminated in the release of the notorious Samir Kuntar, the dean of Arab prisoners, who was captured on 22 April 1979, with four other PLO members.[24] The prisoner swap also included four Hizbullah fighters who Israel had captured during the 2006 war. Each side's media reflected a contrasting interpretation of the event. Israeli media depicted the event as a concession

and defeat.[25] Lebanon celebrated the exchange as a triumph. Hizbullah's media portrayed the scene as a 'very sombre and sad day for Israel', echoing the following slogan: 'Lebanon has a date with the achievement of freedom'.[26] According to Hizbullah, Israel succumbed to Lebanese demands, and, in the process, violated three of its own principles: releasing a convicted felon with Israeli blood on his hands, exchanging dead Israeli soldiers for living Arab prisoners-of-war, and undergoing an exchange operation prior to resolving the fate of Ron Arad.[27]

Hizbullah's regional ambitions: Syria, Iraq and Yemen

Hizbullah supported the 2011 Middle East and North Africa uprisings – except for the uprising in Syria, where it adamantly stood by the Syrian regime, its indispensable strategic ally. The movement lent its co-religionists in Bahrain unwavering support in the face of the ruling elite. This stance led some political analysts to criticise the party's 'double standards'. Nasrallah has tried to defend, justify, and legitimise Hizbullah's policies. Hizbullah has repeatedly stated that it would not interfere in any military attack targeting Syria and Iran, expect if there were an existential threat facing the two regimes; in such a case, Hizbullah would join the fight to tilt the balance in favour of the aggressed-upon party.

Hizbullah has fought alongside the Syrian army and lent logistical support to Iraqi and Yemeni Shi'a armed militias. The group seems to move within the parameters of pan-Islamism and pan-Arabism, while maintaining its Lebanese national identity at the centre. Further, it moves between militancy and integration. The former has been represented by its hawkish policy during the MENA uprisings, while the latter is illustrated by its dovish domestic face as an integral part of the Lebanese state from which it derives its legitimacy. This shift has fuelled Sunni-Shi'a discord (fitna) and threatens a serious spillover of the Syrian civil war into Lebanon. Such a spillover became all the more likely in August 2014, when the Islamic State group and al-Nusra Front battled Hizbullah and the Lebanese Army on Lebanese soil.

Hizbullah's involvement in Syria

On 25 May 2013, Nasrallah announced that Hizbullah had begun fighting in Syria on the side of President Bashar al-Asad's regime, deeming the decision an existential necessity. Invoking the legacy of the 2006 Lebanon War, he emphatically promised his constituency another victory, which materialised on 12 June 2013, when the party 'liberated' the city of al-Qusayr from Syrian opposition fighters.[28] Employing anti-takfiri discourse, Hizbullah interfered in the Syrian conflict in order to defend the Syrian regime, and fend off the militant Sunni fundamentalist threat represented by the Islamic State group, al-Nusra Front and others. Unsurprisingly, Hizbullah's strategic ally, the Syrian regime, welcomed its involvement, which it considered a boost in its fight against its opposition, which it labels 'armed gangs' in the case of the Free Syrian Army (FSA), 'international terrorists' or 'jihadis affiliated with al-Qa'ida'. Hizbullah accused the FSA of treason and of collaborating with the 'enemy', just as the defunct South Lebanon Army (SLA) did during the IDF occupation of southern Lebanon. Hizbullah also accused the FSA of furthering the Israeli-US agenda in the region.

Domestically, Hizbullah has traded accusations with the western-backed March 14 coalition, which compared Hizbullah's military intervention in Syria to the IDF occupation of Lebanon. According to March 14, in order to protect its strategic interests, Hizbullah behaved like the IDF by invading and encroaching on Syria's 'sovereignty and territorial integrity'. Furthermore, March 14 argued that Hizbullah's involvement in the Syrian civil war had diminished its availability on the Lebanese-Israeli border, and reduced its vigilance in dealing with the imminent Israeli threat.

From Hizbullah's perspective, however, involvement in the Syrian quagmire was due to its strategic interests and fear of losing its vital space, including an easy supply route for arms. It sent fighters to Syria to support the regime, despite the heavy price and fear of depleting its human and material resources. Nasrallah conceded Hizbullah's lim-

ited capabilities, and argued that his party could not change the Syrian war's outcome, but could offer logistical and material help to the Syrian Army, particularly by training it in guerrilla warfare. He defended Hizbullah's actions, stating: 'We went to Syria to defend Lebanon… we did it as our own decision, rather than heeding an Iranian order.'[29] He accused Saudi Arabia of waging proxy wars in Iran, Iraq, Lebanon and, most importantly, Syria through its material and military support of radical Islamist groups fighting the Asad regime. These actions led to more radicalisation among the Sunni community in Lebanon and Syria, he argued, which gave way to militancy and violence, including suicide operations.

In addition to many radical Lebanese Sunni Islamists who have volunteered to fight against the Syrian regime, jihadi Salafis – such as the Shaykh Ahmad Al-Assir of Sidon and Shaykh Salem al-Rafi'i of Tripoli – also sent a large number of fighters. With both Hizbullah fighters and these Sunni fighters in Syria on opposite sides, Sunni-Shi'a discord in Lebanon appeared to be unavoidable. On 23 June 2013, violent military clashes erupted between Hizbullah and Al-Assir supporters in Sidon. Following many deaths, the Lebanese Army intervened and ended the fight but at a high price. The army destroyed Al-Assir's headquarters and arrested many of his supporters. Al-Assir fled. After almost two years, Lebanese security forces arrested him on 15 August 2015 when he attempted to flee the country via the Beirut Airport using a fake Palestinian passport. At the time of writing, he is in detention awaiting trial.[30]

On 19 November 2013, two Al-Assir supporters conducted a twin-suicide operation against the Iranian Embassy in Dahieh, killing twenty-three people. Previously, Sunni Islamists targeted Dahieh with rockets and two massive explosions: the first on 7 July 2013 led to a few deaths, while that of 15 August 2013 killed thirty-one people, after which Hizbullah agreed to the deployment of the Lebanese Army and security forces. On 16 January 2014, a suicide bomber detonated a car in Hermel, Hizbullah's Bekaa Valley stronghold, killing two and

wounding forty-six people. For the next two days, Syrian Islamists targeted Hermel with sporadic rockets. On 21 January 2014, a suicide bomber detonated a car in Dahieh killing three and wounding thirty-five people. The carnage continued. On 13 November 2015, two Islamic State group-affiliated suicide bombers detonated themselves in a crowded market in Dahieh, killing forty-three people and injuring more than 200.

In Baalbek on the outskirts of the eastern Bekaa Valley, violent confrontations erupted between militant Sunnis and Hizbullah fighters on 28 September 2013. As in Dahieh, the clashes eventually led to the deployment of the Lebanese Army and security forces in the city, thus returning sovereignty to the state after the apparent failure of private security measures for a second time. On 23 August 2013, two car bombs targeted two Sunni mosques in Tripoli in northern Lebanon, the second largest city after Beirut, and considered the traditional home of conservative Sunni Muslims. Regular skirmishes erupted between the Sunnis in Tripoli, who support March 14, and the Alawi religious group, who support the Syrian regime. In short, what Hizbullah had warned against two years earlier – the spread of the Syrian civil war to Lebanon with drastic and detrimental consequences, the most salient of which is Sunni-Shi'a discord – had become a painful reality.

In August 2014, the Syrian civil war's most serious spillover occurred. Takfiri jihadis from the Islamic State group and al-Nusra Front raided and occupied the Lebanese border town of Arsal. The Lebanese Army intervened. After a few days, the defeated takfiris returned to Syria but only after kidnapping thirty Lebanese soldiers and security force personnel. They executed four Lebanese soldiers, threatening more executions if the Lebanese government did not comply with their demand to release a number of Sunni militants.

On 6 October 2014, al-Nusra Front stormed a Hizbullah post near the Lebanese border village of Brital, killing eleven Hizbullah fighters. The party reinforced its positions and took back its post after a fierce battle that led to the death of sixteen al-Nusra fighters. On 2 December 2014,

the takfiris ambushed seven Lebanese soldiers near the arid border area of Ras Baalbek, killing six and wounding one. These events illustrate a rising trend of targeting the Lebanese Army and security forces.

On 16 January 2015, the Lebanese Army defused a car carrying 120 kilograms of explosives near Arsal; the car was likely heading to Dahieh. On 10 January 2015, two Lebanese suicide bombers from al-Nusra Front targeted the Alawi area of Jabal Mohsen in Tripoli, killing seven and wounding more than thirty people. In an attempt to defuse the takfiri threat and grant itself more legitimacy, Hizbullah engaged in dialogue with the Future Movement, a faction of March 14, and the largest and most moderate Sunni political party in Lebanon. In a fiery speech on 27 March 2015, criticising the Saudi-led military operation in Yemen and lending support to the Yemeni Houthis, Nasrallah reiterated that his party was dialoguing with the Future Movement for the sake of Lebanon's national interest, stressing that the two parties' different tactics on regional issues should not negatively affect domestic politics. Although the parties have conflicting interests – the Future Movement's leader, Saad al-Hariri, supports the Saudis, Hariri emphasised that his party recognised the need for dialogue in order to protect Lebanon's national interests above all other considerations.[31] Therefore, Nasrallah and Hariri agree that dialogue is of paramount national interest.[32]

Conclusion: Hanoi or Hong Kong?

Nearly two decades ago, veteran Lebanese politician Walid Jumblatt asked: 'How could Lebanon balance between Hanoi (Hizbullah's military resistance) and Hong Kong (reconstruction, economic development and recovery)? Could Lebanon enjoy economic recovery while continuing military resistance?' Jumblatt answered that Lebanon had chosen Hanoi to Hong Kong.[33] Lebanon is trying to pull itself through the MENA uprisings with minimal damage. As the Prophet Muhammad admonished, 'Fitna is lurking in the dark. God damn those who wake it up.' In keeping with the prophetic tradition, Sunni-Shi'a discord (fitna) should be war-

ded off, at all costs, since its consequences would be catastrophic for the Islamic community (ummah). Instead, such situations require dialogue, negotiation, bargaining, compromise and mutual understanding.

Notes

1 Parts of this chapter were published in an earlier format in Alagha (2011). These sections have been revised and updated for this publication.

2 Before the war began, I sensed something drastic was about to happen. I arrived in Beirut on 6 July. My presence in the field allowed me to observe, witness and document the thirty-four-day war first hand.

3 On the Lebanese side, the war killed around 1 200 people (one-third were children under the age of twelve), wounded 4 000 people and displaced more than one million. It cost Lebanon around fifteen billion USD in damages and lost revenue. See (2006). 'Lebanon Under Siege', Presidency of the Council of Ministers, Higher Relief Council. <http://www.lebanonundersiege.gov.lb>. On the Israeli side, the war killed 119 soldiers and thirty-nine civilians, wounded 5 000 people, destroyed 12 000 houses, and crashed five aircraft. Israel incurred a financial loss of around six billion USD. See Ynet (2006).

4 Alagha (2006, 2008); Balqaziz (2006); Sharara (2006).

5 These locations were reached through a dungeon-like tunnel lit with a long line of small lights until one arrived at the broadcasting room, where everything was manually operated with very limited equipment and resources.

6 These issues were released on Monday, 17 July (Issue 1171) right after Haifa was bombed and on Friday, 21 July (Issue 1172).

7 See Higher Relief Council (2006).

8 *Moqawama* (2005).

9 Calhoun (2003: 244).

10 Although Hizbullah had taken precautions and dug elaborate bunkers, if Israeli planes had caused a sonic boom, it may have resulted in a stampede and chaos. Fearing the worst, the party cancelled its annual show of force on 'Quds [Jerusalem] Day', the last Friday of Ramadan.

11 See (2007). *Mawsu'at Nasrallah (Nasrallah's Encyclopedia)*. Beirut: Manshurat al-Fajir, 151–177.

12 The pun is that his name means 'Victory of God'.

13 Many areas in the south remain uninhabitable, which resulted in an estimated 200 000 internally displaced persons. See http://www.lebanon-undersiege.gov.lb for official Lebanese government figures and statistics.
14 Author's estimates are based on fieldwork and on Hizbullah's primary documents.
15 *Al-Intiqad* (2007).
16 Al-Manar, 7:30pm news, 14 January 2010.
17 See *Al-Safir* (2012: 1, 15); *Al-Akhbar* (2012: 2–3).
18 Qur'an, Surah 17, Verse 8.
19 Norman (2007).
20 *Moqawama* (2006).
21 *Al-Safir* (2015: 3).
22 Hizbullah's second affiliated satellite television station, Al-Mayadeen, is a joint venture between former Al-Manar director Nayef Krayyem and former Al Jazeera icon Ghassan Bin Jiddo. The channel was founded in Beirut on 11 June 2012. Al-Mayadeen's motto is 'Reality as it is'. See http://www.almayadeen.net/.
23 Al-Mayadeen (2015).
24 The Israelis convicted Kuntar of killing two civilians and a policeman. He was sentenced to five life sentences, and served twenty-nine years in prison. Remarkably, Kuntar is neither a Hizbullah member nor an adherent of Shi'a Islam; he is a Lebanese Druze and a leftist revolutionary. In an effort to free him, Hizbullah captured two Israeli soldiers, Eldad Regev and Ehud Goldwasser, on 12 July 2006.
25 *Ha'aretz* (2008); *The Jerusalem Post* (2008).
26 Al-Nour Radio (2008); see also *Al-Safir* (2008).
27 Note: In October 1986, Lebanese militia fighters downed an Israeli jet fighter. Although the assistant pilot, Ron Arad, was initially captured and imprisoned, his fate remains unknown.
28 *Moqawama* (2013).
29 OTV Lebanon (2013).
30 *Daily Star* (2015).
31 *Moqawama* (2015); see also *Al-Safir* (2015: 3) and *Al-Akhbar* (2015: 2).
32 *Al-Akhbar* (2015: 2).
33 Alagha (2001: 53).

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9

From territoriality to semi-territoriality: Al-Shabab in transformation

Stig Jarle Hansen

The growth of organisations such as the Islamic State group (IS), Boko Haram and Al-Qa'ida in the Arab Peninsula (AQAP) has challenged the notion that Sunni jihadist organisations only exist as networks. As these entities have built up control of larger territories, they have gained territorial control, and some of them have built up proto-state institutions. Harakat al-Shabab gained territorial control and built up such structures more than six years ago. This chapter argues that Al-Shabab is now transitioning away from such territoriality. Al-Shabab provides an opportunity to study possible scenarios in which Sunni jihadists, when losing on the battlefield, change organisational mode, and the advantages and disadvantages of such a change, perhaps indicating possible challenges for other jihadist groups facing the same changes.

Steven Hutchinson and Pat O'Malley claim that modern terrorist organisations are network based.[1] Several other scholars have fallen into the trap of viewing terrorist organisations as networks and social movements, while neglecting the state-like qualities that some had the potential to obtain.[2] Indeed, as an organisational mode, clandestine networks provide many advantages for jihadi organisations. With a clandestine organisation, the wider population in the operational area might not know the group's ideology, information distribution may become a se-

curity risk and such a network may be seen as morally superior if operating within a corrupt state's territory. A clandestine organisation may more easily survive government prosecution and police action in the context of an efficient police force.

However, this is far from the only organisational mode for a Sunni Islamist-inspired organisation employing terror as a strategy. Further, as the rise of the Islamic State group (IS) has drawn the attention of the research community, it seems seriously misplaced today in terms of how it is classified. In the general literature, the possibility of such organisations taking territorial control and simultaneously employing terror is neglected. While the Taliban clearly had achieved state-like qualities, the academic literature did not often portray it as a terrorist organisation, at least not until it launched an attack in New York and its factions launched attacks in Pakistan.[3] These organisations differ from clandestine networks. For example, Faysal Itani suggested that IS should be treated as a state in order to defeat it.[4] He argues that IS employs different strategies than a clandestine network such as Al-Qa'ida. However, it becomes analytically erroneous to conflate the organisation with a state, even though it has established institutions and maintains extraction capacities in a territory that it has held for years. Few states will accept its 'statehood'. Its borders are not protected de jure and lack the stability such recognition can grant; it could easily lose its territorial holdings. Indeed, perhaps using the term 'territorial control' is better than referencing a 'state' or 'proto-state'. Many of these entities do not strive for statehood but for a resurrected political union of the ummah, where borders are not based on those of a state but rather on religion.

There has been some seminal work on jihadi groups holding territories. Brynjar Lia excellently highlights some of the common traits, arguing that they tend to be ideological projects that aim to implement a 'proper' type of Islam, thereby curtailing 'sin'. Lia also argues that 'proto-states' tend to have an internationalist dimension, attracting foreign fighters, foreign shaykhs and indeed foreign support.[5] He also argues that, while they are highly aggressive against neighbouring states, they

also attempt actively to implement forms of governance. In this sense Lia's article adds an important nuance to an older more network-focused view of jihadist groups. However, his approach also has its shortcomings. It fails to touch upon the income-generating possibilities, and possibilities for recruitment, that territoriality gives, such as the ability to tax locally and, in some cases, export through clandestine networks.[6] He also fails to highlight how territoriality provides an opportunity for de-ideologisation, through attracting tribal allies, as Al-Shabab, IS and AQAP have done in the past, but also through attracting opportunists tempted by the new possibilities for income generated by the possibility of taxing. Territoriality influences income structures; groups are able to publicly tax individuals and businesses and openly extract natural resources. Often groups are required to provide governance systems, as permanent control of territories forces them to consider macro stability; it is not enough to plunder – long-term actors have to extract in a way that makes it possible to extract tomorrow.[7] At the same time groups can use territorial control to showcase their ideology, and they can organize training facilities for foreign fighters and logistical bases for foreign terrorist operations on a scale that a clandestine organisation cannot.

However, a pure dichotomy, even an ideal type division, between a territorial entity and a clandestine network is also misleading. Firstly, although often forgotten, a militant jihadi network can be perfectly legal. States, such as Omar al-Bashir's Sudan or, even, Olusegun Obasanjo's Nigeria, have not been strangers to using non-state groups for instrumental purposes. David Shinn noted, between 1991 and 1996, Al-Qa'ida's involvement in aiding and supporting the Bashir regime's struggle against its enemies through its support for Eritrean Islamic Jihad, Al-Ittihad Al-Islamiya and one of the forerunners of Uganda's Allied Democratic Forces (ADF).[8] In Nigeria, Boko Haram also enjoyed legal status from 2002 to 2009, during which time local politicians used them as political storm troopers.[9] A jihadi organisation can thus also be a sect – a legal entity, often isolated from the rest of society by their

own choice, used by non-religious elites and/or conflict entrepreneurs to further their political cause.

Jihadi organisations might also control peripheral areas as long as the current territorial controllers are not present in those areas or do not control the territory permanently. This is perhaps best illustrated by the period of US counter-insurgency in Iraq, where self-protection concerns forced US forces to stay in their camps except when required to fight larger battles or conduct patrols, leaving villages at the mercy of jihadists in their day-to-day life.[10] Al-Qa'ida in Iraq thus wielded a kind of semi-territorial control. The USA and its allies had a superior army that could not be defeated in open combat, yet was too small to ensure permanent protection for the local villages. This can be the case if a state lacks resources. However, this may also be determined by geography. Even strong states like Algeria are unable to maintain a permanent presence in large parts of their Saharan territories.[11]

Semi-territoriality is widely seen in Africa, and partly results from a specific weakness of counter-insurgency tactics, namely the lack of will and/or resources to provide security to villages away from state centres. David Kilcullen refers to this as a lack of 'people-centric strategies'.[12] If entities opposing the organisation in question fail to permanently secure the countryside, the rural population may be exposed to a semi-permanent security threat where jihadist organisations can pressure the local population into supplying recruits, food and sex, and threaten locals who cooperate with the government with reprisal. Often semi-territorial control is seen in the peripheral areas of a state; for example, the operations of the ADF in the border zone between Uganda and Congo. It can provide large advantages, such as control of smuggling hubs for long periods.[13]

The above typology can be helpful in order to understand transitions – how a group can lose territory and still survive – and can also aid in understanding countermeasures, as the weaknesses and strengths of each organisational mode may vary. As Clint Watts argues, al-Shabab's transformations might serve as a model for IS in future.[14]

Such a typology can help us to understand the challenges faced by al-Shabab when it loses territory. Territorial losses may not mean the end of an organisation, possibly just a transformation of the organisation itself. This feeds directly into a discussion of al-Shabab's future. Some authors have argued that al-Shabab is in decline and is seriously weakened.[15] This chapter will argue, following Williams and Anderson, that al-Shabab, although in a slight decline, is, in reality, transforming.[16] Williams and Anderson do, however, miss an important point. Anderson maintains correctly that al-Shabab is turning into a regional network. However, existing literature fails to see the strong possibility of al-Shabab maintaining its position even inside Somalia, not as a network, but as a semi-territorial entity.[17]

Al-Shabab's past transformations

Harakat al-Shabab's history reveals its flexibility, but also shows the causes and implications of the organisation's many transformations. Al-Shabab emerged from a small clandestine network whose members held strong radical views, as indicated by the large number of Afghanistan veterans among them.[18] The group had considerable advantages, as it was better placed to transcend clan lines than other Somali organisations. During this early phase, it operated as a clandestine network, partly because it was targeted by the USA and its local allies (or 'wannabe allies' – local actors seeking foreign support for their own agenda), and partly because of its closeness to al-Qa'ida.[19] The network occupied an important role in at least two shari'ah courts, Circolo and the powerful Ifka Halane court, which gave them a crucial position in the quickly expanding Islamic Courts Union (ICU), an umbrella group of local shari'ah courts.[20]

The old al-Shabab network held an important position among the militia commanders who ensured the courts' successes in spring 2006. When it developed into a more formal organisation in autumn 2006, al-Shabab chose to reform itself and include outsiders, such as Somali

politician Adan Madobe, in the organisation. Al-Shabab became a powerful organisation within the ICU, a structure that expanded dramatically during the last half of 2006. In one sense, al-Shabab functioned as one within the court structure; in another sense, it was so powerful in the courts that it could enjoy the fruits of territorial control while receiving access to the courts' tax funds. However, it also had to moderate itself in order to fit into the court system, for example, by hiding foreign fighters from the rest of the courts.

In December 2006, Ethiopia and its Somali allies inflicted a major defeat on al-Shabab and the ICU, creating perhaps the biggest rupture in al-Shabab's history. Ethiopian and transitional government forces took control of central Somalia; al-Shabab activists were forced to disappear and hide their identities, turning the organisation into a clandestine network.[21] In the same year, al-Shabab reorganised itself into a more radical clandestine organisation. In 2007, it reformed, withdrew from combat and attempted to use terror to gain attention. This was a part of a wider transformation, in which Mogadishu's shari'ah courts transformed themselves from institutions with territorial control into numerous clandestine networks, of which al-Shabab was one. Al-Shabab was initially defeated on the battlefield, and had to restructure itself based around loose cells with a hidden command network.

Over time, the group built up its forces, establishing battle groups in the countryside where Ethiopian forces were not present. It played on clan politics and on the weakness and corruption of the Transitional Federal Government (TFG), the new western-supported government. Al-Shabab could shine in the glory of the shari'ah courts, which, in fact, did establish justice. Meanwhile, al-Shabab's harsh interpretation of shari'ah was virtually unknown to a wider audience, as the group failed to control territories on a more permanent basis. Yet the group established a semi-territorial presence in areas where Ethiopian forces were not present. It could easily intimidate the rural population into submission, as the government and Ethiopian forces had increasingly centralised their bases.[22] The Ethiopian forces were superior in open

combat and did not lose a single large-scale battle. However, they failed to pay attention to civilian protection, including inside Mogadishu, where sneak assassinations of government officials were the order of the day. The new Somali police and army were not paid, and were outright predatory, which enabled al-Shabab to build up a regime of fear. Somali anger against the Ethiopian intervention definitively drove al-Shabab recruitment, but many observers failed to grasp that the group had also established a regime of fear and a reputation for justice, which enabled them to sustain an organisation superior to the western-backed TFG. The Ethiopian withdrawal in 2009 thus made it possible for al-Shabab to again transform, this time into a state of full territoriality.

Al-Shabab successfully transformed from an organisation that held a form of territorial control into a clandestine network, then into a state of semi-territoriality, and, finally, into a state of full territoriality; one might say that it had rebounded. Its first transformation into a clandestine network came as a result of its unfamiliar ideology for many central Somalis, who viewed it more as a nationalist organisation able to bring order to anarchy. In this sense Al-Shabab managed to align their ideology with the grievances of a wide segment of the population. It was also definitively a product of ideologically determined hard-working al-Shabab leaders, who were willing to abstain from committing forces too early. Issue alignment, weaknesses of the Somali army and police, and limitations to the Ethiopian and Somali counter-insurgency strategy were crucial in enabling Al-Shabab to successfully transform from a clandestine network into a state of semi-territoriality due to a few factors. First, al-Shabab managed to play on clan grievances, enabling it to recruit allies from many clans. Second, the corrupt and often unpaid Somali army and police forces failed to bring security to the countryside. In general, their units disappeared in combat and acted in a predatory manner, alienating the local population. Moreover, the Somali forces were clan based, partly because of lack of trust between actors in Somalia. Third, Ethiopian forces focused on their own security, centralising their bases and abandoning the countryside to its own devices

and to al-Shabab. At times the Ethiopians used collective punishment, including the use of heavy artillery for area bombardment. In one sense, Ethiopian strategies were similar to US strategies in Iraq from 2003 to 2007, and the result was relatively similar: a semi-territorial enemy that wielded semi-permanent control of large parts of the countryside.

Al-Shabab's last transformation occurred as the result of Ethiopia's full withdrawal from Somalia in 2009, allowing the TFG to stand on its own feet – save for the protection it received from African Union (AMISOM) forces in Mogadishu. The conventional balance of forces turned decisively against the forces opposing al-Shabab, and the latter expanded drastically, developing proto-state institutions. The transformation paved the way for al-Shabab's golden age from 2009 to 2010, where it again, and this time as a single group, managed to transform into an organisation with territorial holdings.

Al-Shabab's current transformation

The mechanisms that ensured the transformations described above should be remembered today, partly because they persist. Al-Shabab's current misery is first and foremost a result of an invigorated African Union contingent and the re-intervention of Ethiopian forces, as well as the intervention of Kenyan forces, all under the African Union umbrella. These forces evicted al-Shabab from Mogadishu (2011), Baidoa (2012), Kismayo (2012) and the smaller cities of Brawa (2014) and Merca (2012). In all of these cases, AMISOM forces forced the withdrawal of al-Shabab. At the time of writing, Al-Shabab still held territories inside Somalia, but these were shrinking. A reinvigorated Somali government, with a new president since 2012, a new army, and relatively functional regional states in southern Somalia are also differences in the present time, compared with the situation between 2006 and 2009. Similarly, al-Shabab's ideological agenda is now well known among Somalis. Few believe it is just another nationalist organisation, and US drone attacks have been relatively successful in

killing many of its leaders. The internal conflicts within al-Shabab starting in 2013 are known. In summary, Al-Shabab cannot hope to win open battles against AMISOM; it faces more sound local allies of AMISOM, and its weaknesses and ideology are more familiar to the general public.

Yet, some factors that allowed al-Shabab to transform between 2006 and 2009 remain. AMISOM and its Somali allies, except the regional states, show little interest in protecting civilians in the countryside, focusing instead on the larger cities. They garrison the larger cities and sporadically raid al-Shabab holdings in the countryside, effectively allowing al-Shabab safe spaces in these areas, as long as they temporarily withdraw in the face of AMISOM and Somali National Army raiding parties. An example of this trend is the campaign for Awdheegle and Mubarak villages, approximately thirty-five kilometres and forty-four kilometres southwest of Afgooye town, respectively, which at the time of writing in 2015 had changed hands from AMISOM to al-Shabab, returned to AMISOM's control and then came under al-Shabab's control again. The same story goes for Burweyn in Hiran, which AMISOM conquered and then abandoned. As in 2007, al-Shabab controls the countryside in lower Shebelle, Hiran and Bakool Bay. This has enabled al-Shabab to hit supply lines for the garrisons of AMISOM and the Somali National Army. It has also enabled al-Shabab to build up a semi-territorial presence.

Secondly, the issue of AMISOM's allies is still pressing. In 2007, despite massive western support, the Somali army and police were, in reality, just empty shells. Desertion rates were sky high, perhaps due to a lack of salaries; soldiers in the Somali army had been paid irregularly, which hurt morale. The army had been developed around two clans, the Hawiye and Rahanweyn; there are, however, attempts to change this. In some areas, the Somali army functions as an occupation army, since its units hail from the same clans that occupied those areas in the 1990s, such as in the lower Shebelle.[23] There are reports of police corruption and that al-Shabab was able to 'buy' the custodial corps and take full

control of several Mogadishu prisons.[24] One of the differences today is that the regional militias of the two southern regions, Jubaland and South West State, clearly attempt to pacify and secure the countryside independent of the Somali army, but these entities also have problems with some clan groups.

In this case, AMISOM's Somali allies are barely better than Ethiopia's allies; it is unlikely that they can protect rural Somalis. It is important to remember that al-Shabab has not suffered crucial battlefield retreats. It has, in general, withdrawn in an orderly fashion and kept its forces intact. Although it has lost control of lucrative income sources, such as Kismayo port and the Bakara market in Mogadishu, al-Shabab still collects income from other lucrative sources, including corruption within the government. Its ability to block roads and threaten business executives who want to hedge against the group's attacks also ensures income.[25] In the main, it manages to survive on local income generated by a semi-peripheral presence.

Third, part of al-Shabab has already transformed into a different entity. The group has regionalised and established new offshoots – this time as clandestine networks. Inside Kenya, there are strong indications of an al-Shabab presence where the exact borders between local allies and al-Shabab become blurred.[26] In a paper for the Institute for Security Studies, despite unclear methodological considerations, researcher Anneli Botha noted that al-Shabab's Kenyan members came from a variety of backgrounds, including Arab-Kenyan, Bajun, Barawa, Boran, Gabra, Garre, Giriama, Jomvu, Kamba, Kauma, Kikuyo, Kenyan-Somali, Luhya, Luo, Mgunya, Mijikenda, Mohonyi, Nubi, Orma, Pokomo and Swahimis, with a dominance of Bayunis (twenty per cent).[27] There are also indications that al-Shabab has the ability to tax people in certain areas inside Kenya.[28] In Tanzania, there are signs that al-Shabab has local contacts and inspires local groups. Within Somalia, there are clandestine networks inside Puntland and Somaliland, although the latter has possibly weakened, and there have been no terrorist attacks in that region since 2008.[29] The fact that al-Shabab already exists as a

clandestine network in different regions may help it to transform into something else in the regions it controls.

Al-Shabab still has a potential for issue linkages, and we may have seen examples of these already. For example, in the 1970s, Kikuyo settlers forced locals, predominantly from the Bajuni ethnic group, out of the Mpeketoni area. Thus, it is understandable that al-Shabab's propaganda targeting Christians can move Bajunis. The relatively new Kikuyos, who had been supported by the current president's father, are largely Christian, while Bajunis are generally Muslim. In one sense, al-Shabab's attacks against Mpeketoni in mid-2014 were in retribution. The same goes for the situation pertaining to the lower Shebelle.

Significance of these transformations

Al-Shabab's various transformations throughout its history and currently provide important lessons in looking at situations outside the Horn of Africa. Al-Shabab was able to transform itself through its enemies' mismanagement and erroneous military strategies, because of local support, and sometimes because of issue alignment, where old grievances were reinterpreted in a new way, using Islamist lenses, but remaining relatively close to local grievances.

For the most part, insurgency strategies against Sunni militant organisations have failed to be population-centric. In Iraq, as in Nigeria, the local population's security seemed to be of little importance to the conventional armies fighting there, and possibilities for issue alignment were overlooked, as in Somalia.[30]

Al-Shabab can continue to transform, although it faces more difficulties than before due to an improved Somali army and the intervention of regional states. It has partially transformed already in Kenya, Tanzania, Puntland and Somaliland. Interest in protecting Somalis in the rural areas in central Somalia is still low; there are no security solutions for these populations. These conditions are similar to conditions in Nigeria, Iraq and Syria. In the end, they might lead to a somewhat

weakened al-Shabab, able to wield semi-territorial control in its core areas, and to exist as a network in other areas. This is how al-Shabab survived from 2007 to 2009. As in 2009, a new window of opportunity might emerge that enables the group again to be able to wield territorial control. This is just one scenario. If a window of opportunity does not come along, al-Shabab may continue to exist as a semi-territorial network, while clandestine network connections outside Somalia are able to implement terror for years to come. Rumours of al-Shabab's demise may be premature.

Notes

1 Terrorism is here defined as a strategy where a non-state actor attacks civilians and non-military targets outside a war zone in order to force an actor to change policies. See Hutchinson and O'malley (2007).
2 Some works do not explore territorial expansion, while others are correct in analysing their focus of study as clandestine networks; yet, this illustrates a gap in the literature. See: Bergen (2002); Dishman (2001); Gerges (2011); Greenberg (2005); Hegghammer (2010a, 2010b); Moghadam (2008); Morselli et al. (2007); Reidel (2008); Sageman (2004, 2008).
3 BBC (2014); Clark and Walsh (2010).
4 Itani (2014).
5 Lia (2015).
6 See, for example, Hayden (2015).
7 For an elaboration of this point, see Tilly (1985).
8 Shinn (2007).
9 Hansen (Forthcoming, May 2018: 70).
10 Kilcullen (2009: 19).
11 Chivvis and Liepman (2013).
12 Kilcullen (2009: 19).
13 McGregor (2014).
14 Watts (2015).
15 Bergen and Schuster (2015); Menkhaus (2014).
16 Reno (2013: 16); Williams (2014).
17 Williams (2014).

18. An International Crisis Group (2014) report contests this. The report's conclusion refers to a single interview only, while Hansen's (2013) conclusion is based on the background of the early leaders, interviews and Al-Shabab's own necrologies (lists of deaths).
19 Hansen (2013).
20 Hansen (2013: 60).
21 Hansen (2013: 60).
22 Hansen (2006, 2007a, 2007b).
23 See Garowe Online (2014).
24 Ahmed (2014).
25 See the United Nations Arms Monitoring Group on Somalia and Eritrea (2014).
26 Hansen (2015).
27 Botha (2015).
28 Abdi (2015).
29 It has been used as a staging ground for attacks in Ethiopia and Djibouti.
30 See Stansfield (2015) and Comolli (2015).

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PART FOUR:
THE 2011 MENA UPRISINGS AND THE TRAVAILS OF POLITICAL ISLAM

10

Tunisian Ennahda's 'second founding'

Larbi Sadiki

Ennahda's Tenth Congress in May 2016 was a leap of faith into re-endorsing the movement's historical leadership as well as learning to 'Tunisify' its specific brand of Islamism – or whatever is left of it. The stakes are high, and so are the challenges lurking ahead. At a historical juncture of intra-Islamist divisions from Morocco to Egypt over matters of substance and organisation, and parallel divisions among secularists, Tunisia's Islamists seem to favour the contest of power over the contest of ideology: policy is now primary; ideology is secondary.

Have they 'killed' Muslim Brotherhood ideologues Hassan al-Banna, Sayyid Qutb, and Hassan al-Turabi, and prominent Shi'a religious leaders such as Ayatullah Rohullah Khomeini and Ayatullah Mohammad Hussein Fadlallah – all iconic ideologues whose writings stamped Islamist dogma with the dictum that Islam is 'din wa dawlah' (religion and politics)? Tunisian Islamists, like their Moroccan and Turkish counterparts earlier, seem to have rethought their ideas, which had postulated the inseparability of Islam and politics for almost a century.

Ennahda's resolve to finally put to bed the conundrum of religion and politics, by declaring their separation at its congress, may be a turning point in the movement's thirty-six-year history that amounts to a 'second founding'. But the move is not necessarily motivated by tactical manoeuvring; 'civic habituation' is a moderating force too.

Neo-political Islam and the primacy of practical knowledge

Three key observations are in order here.

First, the tendency today by Islamists in places such as Morocco and Tunisia to 'separate' religion and politics – or, more aptly, to de-emphasise religion in their brand of politics – speaks to the failure within political Islam to translate theoretical ideals, agendas and knowledge into a convincing and satisfactory practice in terms of political behaviour and civic engagement in many Arabo-Islamic settings. There are qualified exceptions; Turkey and Malaysia may be imperfect examples but both function well.

Second, separation of religion and politics by Islamists subverts the original paradigm: instead of moving from theory to practice, the new trend that focuses on the *experience* of political Islam has the potential to inform theory-building. Perhaps the practice of political Islam at the level of the state will eventually enable deeper appreciation of the theoretical potentialities of Islam as a religion. This will help incorporate practical knowledge into the organisation of politics by Islamists who are informed by theories that have thus far eluded application. Reconciling this 'contradiction' is a huge challenge for Arab politics in general. It is easy to pontificate about an ideal – such as social justice or its ethical foundations – as do many Islamist theoreticians, postulating it as an indispensable virtue of Islamic democracy or governance. It is a greater challenge to apply it as integrally part of lived Islam.

Third, the tendency today to separate religion and politics may bode well for levelling the playing field. The interpretation of religion ceases to be the exclusive bastion of righteous voices whose missionary zeal in some settings may have turned them into self-appointed speakers on behalf of 'Islamic correctness'. No one reserves the right to claim the moral high ground and dictate what religion in the public sphere should and should not mean.

The Tunisian context

Islamism is not going away. Scholars from John Esposito and John Voll[1] to Khaled Abou El Fadl[2] have confirmed this axiom. It is, however, the dogma that underpins the various Islamisms vying for attention in the Muslim world that should be under close scrutiny, or should be subject to tactical shifts or rethinking. Dale Eickelman and James Piscatori view 'Muslim politics' as involving 'the competition and contest over both the interpretation of religious symbols and the control of the institutions that produce and sustain them'.[3] Consequently 'Muslim Politics' is a sophisticated analysis of the ever-changing correlation between the sacred and the profane in the Muslim world.

Eickelman and Piscatori advance the idea that the politics of language that embed the expression and organisation of Muslim politics must be 'deconstructed'. The Muslim world has witnessed a process of 'objectification of consciousness', a process sparking fundamental questions in the minds of believers. This objectification has come about as a result of mass education and wider channels of communication within the Muslim world, rendering exegesis widespread.[4] Tunisia, like other countries that experienced uprisings in 2010 and 2011, is today awash in contestation over meaning in politics, religion and culture. It is a facet of maturing pluralism, civic engagement and freedom.

Political Islam or Islamism is simply refashioning itself according to the exigencies of time and space. Old conundrums are being tackled head on, and Tunisian Islamists are not exempt from this process. In his recent book *Young Islam*, Avi Spiegel, referring to Morocco, makes relevant points for those pondering the state of play within Islamism.[5] Taking a leaf from Eickelman and Piscatori about how 'Muslim politics' is lived, Spiegel considers political Islam in practice, in the way it is operationalised, especially by the younger generation of activists, dealing with a huge lacuna in research on Islamism.

Spiegel makes two important points when accounting for transformative processes within Islamism.

First, that Islamist-Islamist relations inform behaviour and thinking more than external factors. This is more relevant to Morocco than Tunisia because Morocco's Islamism is more dispersed and plural, with competing versions, including establishment Islamism, competing for influence in the monarchy's 'public sphere'. Tunisia's Ennahda has been shaped by its relationship to the state (which Spiegel says is not the case in Morocco). A brand of secular nationalism led by Tunisia's first post-independence leader, Habib Bourguiba, provoked Islamists into opposing the suppression of Tunisia's Islamic identity and heritage in nation- and state-building. Ennahda today argues that the question of identity no longer divides Tunisians. It is doubtful whether Ansar al-Shari'ah,[6] the violent extremist group designated as a terrorist organisation by Tunisia, and much weaker now than four years ago, has forced policy rethinking within Ennahda.

Second, that the separation of al-siyasi (civic activism or politics) and da'awi (religious or proselytisation activities) has been in the offing within Morocco's Justice and Development Party (PJD). Using the example of Abdelali Hamiddine, amongst others, Spiegel shows how there is a separation between the religious movement (harakah) and the political party.[7] This is the direction Ennahda has just taken.

Ennahda's emerging brand of rethought Islamism provides a more open engagement in the sociopolitical sphere after the democratic reforms that routinised the Islamist party as a major stakeholder in Tunisia's fledgling 'public sphere'. This brand of civic Islamism that slots the political and the religious into two different compartments works in tandem with increasing civic engagement, contest of power, a power-sharing record since 2011 and massive investment in the professionalisation of the party.

Concomitant with its new status as a power broker in Tunisian politics, Ennahda engages with deeply entrenched leftist and secular forces through both dialogic (including an alliance with secularists in government in 2011 and currently) and concessionary means. Ennahda has adopted a declaratory policy of deference to the state when it comes to

the management of mosques – leaving them as venues of worship. It has also supported current plans to re-educate imams and professionalise their functions. This may also be a defence mechanism at a time when the state is eager to counter terrorism and overall religious radicalisation, especially amongst youth.[8] Religiously inspired actors in the Muslim world are trying to define themselves in opposition to the likes of the Islamic State group (IS); Ennahda is no exception in this narrative pitting 'moderates' against 'radicals'.

Distinguishing between the fixed (al-thabit) and the mutable (al-mutaghayyir) may explain Ennahda's attitude towards the state. Politics, the party argues, belongs to the sphere of the changing. I propose that there is a public utility or 'maqasidi' framework at play here, and that exigencies and necessities of the Tunisian context have influenced this move.

In the Tunisian national milieu, Ennahda is also probably responding to the misgivings of its detractors that it conceals a secret theocratic agenda; that once in power it will impose dictatorship. The shift is intended also to pre-empt criticisms from liberals and secularists that it does not respect Tunisia's political identity. Ennahda can now claim it is transcending politics of identity.

The plan to refashion Ennahda as per the movement's Tenth Congress can be summed up in the following areas:

- It commits to a civic state (dawlah madaniyyah), which rethinks earlier Islamist positions to make shari'ah (Islamic legal system) the law of the land.
- It moves away from the revivalist brand of Islamism by locating itself as a national actor sharing political space with other power claimants and contestants. The old claim by Muslim Brotherhood movements that 'Islam is the solution' is no more (even though Ennahda never really used this motto).
- It redefines Islamism as approximating 'political ethics' rather than ideology that informs political ends in the contest for power. In this sense, Ennahda attempts to become post-ideological in a quasi-'end of ideology' moment.

- It embraces the market unambiguously. This position breaks with earlier Islamist reservations about capitalism. (Sayyid Qutb is a leading voice in this regard, with Islam's social justice being a key tenet of his political thought.) Ennahda's discourse after the uprisings also embraced social justice.
- It renounces moralisation in the social realm in a society that is 99 per cent Sunni Muslim. This aims to end the pursuit of da'wah or religious propagation by the newly professionalised political party, and to end its monopoly over interpreting religious dogma – much less endeavouring to implement it.

Where Ennahda is concerned, the fundamentals that defined Muslim Brotherhood-type movements (such as 'the Quran is our constitution'; 'jihad is our method') no longer apply in any evaluative (normative) or practical (political) sense.

Civic habituation

Like Islamist parties in Algeria, Egypt, Lebanon, Morocco and Sudan, Ennahda is undergoing a phase of 'civic habituation'. Islamists today are faced with having real power, reversing past practices when they were excluded.[9] Moderating policy and political behaviour may thus not be just tactical or ephemeral. Ennahda has a fixed constituency and following (sympathisers and members) that secure it political visibility and prominence, though not always as the winning party, as was the case in the 2014 parliamentary elections. It has gained kudos, status and know-how that deepen civic habituation. Before the uprisings, Ennahda was at the receiving end of the dictatorial proverbial 'stick'. Now its political fortunes have improved, and with that come increased legal participation, recognition of the political system, legitimacy and shared power.

As a stakeholder, Ennahda is now concerned with self-reproduction – via the contestation of power, effective political strategies and responsive public policy platforms. Ideology has ceased to be a guid-

ing force, even if in the minds of many members and the wider Islamist transnational community the separation of religion and politics may seem heretical. Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood (MB) showed how contest and acquisition of power can play a moderating role, thus informing incipient civic habituation. Most MB groups conducted a de facto separation following the Arab Spring; the Egyptian MB, for example, founded the Freedom and Justice Party, open to members and non-members, which accepted the civil state and political pluralism, at least in theory.

Adaptation is the name of the game: the challenge to measure up to the demands of pluralism, freedom and democratic transition through constant training in the art of politics. That is, finding a shared space for engaging self and other through clear messages, legal and democratic strategies, shared values and rallying multipartisan objectives. Thus Tunisia's Islamists may contribute in a practical sense to a form of 'Islamic democracy', an oxymoron for many of their detractors.[10] In fact, as so-called Arab liberals continue to fragment or are slow at self-reforming,[11] it is legalised Islamists that seem to be turning the learning curve of democratic government.

Of course, it is moot whether civic habituation through increased participation as a result of the adoption of the separation of religion and politics produces radicalisation or deradicalisation within society. It is undeniable that there is demand for a role for religion in political affairs in Tunisia, as in many other Arab states. Abandoning a powerful tenet of Islamism may be read as a form of retreat, which may have a radicalising effect.[12] Nevertheless, the rule of thumb is that civic engagement spells moderation and de-emphasis of ideology, not radicalisation.

'Neo-Ennahda'?

Is Ennahda renouncing 'Islamism', its doctrinaire sine qua non and the basis of its foundational identity? Since its emergence in the late 1970s as the 'Islamic Tendency Movement', identity politics – promoting the

idea of Islam as an organic frame of reference for imagining polity, society and economy – has defined the movement's declaratory policy, rhetoric, discourse and political engagement.

This template and attendant agency came at a high price: exile, imprisonment and exclusion under both Bourguiba and his successor, the ousted dictator Zine El Abidine Ben Ali. Under Ben Ali, Ennahda sought accommodation and even contested by-elections, showing early indications of electoral support in the late 1980s, which made the then-dictator buckle and shift policy from coexistence to systematic exclusion and coercion. No single political current in Tunisia's history suffered as much at the hands of Ben Ali's police machinery as did Ennahda.

Neo-Ennahda emerged over a three-day historic congress punctuated by fascinating and heated but pluralist debates, part of which I witnessed first hand, as a national political party with an Islamic frame of reference that deploys democracy as a mode of political engagement. To this end, Neo-Ennahda is now committing to separating the religious (al-da'awi) and the political (al-siyasi).

A vision that was upheld for over three decades has ceded to a new brand of civic Islamism. As an analogy, Neo-Ennahda has not only edged closer to the notion of a civil state, but also to Turkey's AKP, and further from Egypt's standard Muslim Brotherhood or 'Ikhwani' model: the former operationalises politics with minimum ideology, the latter has historically harboured ambitions of Islamising polity.

This is why, in one of his interventions during the congress, party president Shaykh Rachid al-Ghannouchi adopted a new discourse angled at stressing the primacy of the market, economic growth, and renouncing the politics of identity (huwiyyah) – elements that had been part of the fundamentals of his thought for over thirty years.

There are three interconnected motivations for the change.

First, normalisation of Ennahda with the 'deep state', which has preserved the imprints of Bourguiba's political modelling of it à la Francophile: secular in nature. Tunisia's society is similarly shaped, manifest-

ing a deeply hybrid national persona that reveres Islam but with a bent for civic engagement of all aspects of the horizontal side of life, including politics. Ennahda is finally being intelligently and deftly adaptive, seeking a brand of 'Tunisification' of its identity as a major political force with a fixed thirty-five to forty per cent political following.

Second, professionalisation, and this is common to all major parties anywhere as they mature politically. So by defending a new identity that separates the religious and the political, Ennahda has turned an important learning curve on the way to becoming a fully-fledged civic political party. The amendments, all of which passed with absolute majorities of more than 800 votes, prove that several months of internal debates have come to fruition for the party's reformists. This includes further empowerment of the party's Shura Council, of which 100 members are directly elected by conference and another fifty by the Council's elected representatives. Ennahda's partnering in the troika government that delivered the country's democratic constitution in early 2014 provided the party with an invaluable 'reality check', which it used to reflect, revise and adjust.

Third, democratisation via 'factionalisation' – a salient feature of maturing political parties anywhere. One of the most fascinating debates, and the first ever in the history of Ennahda, took place on the morning of 22 May. Three leading leaders representing first and second generations of the party took to the floor to openly contest and defend their respective views of how the party should be internally organised, led and administered. This would have been unthinkable before the 2010 uprisings. Ennahda's practice of internal democracy has produced a kind of factionalisation, which may, over time, serve to reduce the huge concentration of power in the party executive. Islamist parties, like Arab secularist parties, tend to be resistant to democratic transformation in party structures and internal democracy. From this perspective, factionalisation must be seen as having a democratising effect, at least in the long term.

Al-Banna's Islamism no more?

Surveying the state of political Islam in the aftermath of the uprisings, what is most conspicuous is the presence of a spectre of stagnation, crisis and fragmentation. From Egypt to Tunisia, there are signs that there is confusion in the 'Islamic project' adopted since the days of Hassan Al-Banna (assassinated in 1949), the founder of the Muslim Brotherhood ideal and model of socio-politico-moral organisation.

Morally, the flame of the ideal has not dimmed; it still lights up millions of subaltern lives. Al-Banna – and after him other like-minded iconic figures ranging from Sayyid Qutb (MB ideologue and scholar hanged by Gamal Abdel Nasser in 1966) to Maulana Abul A'la Maududi (leading scholar of Indian–Pakistani origin, d 1979) – made a strong case for 'Islamic governance'. They found in Islam an organic repertoire for giving the former colonised a voice, and also the means to resist subjugation, westernisation, secularisation, moral decay and dissolution into followers of Euro-American models of organising polity, society, economy and morality.

In a short but brilliant 'Foreword' to Sayyed Abul Hassan al-Nadwi's famous book *Islam and the World*,[13] Qutb seconds the author's ideas of an Islam that sanctions liberation from 'superstitions and banalities', 'slavery and degradation', and from religious and political 'tyranny'. Islam, Qutb argues, blesses life with faith, a font of 'knowledge, fraternity, justice and self-confidence'. These are in turn life-giving values that through hard work maximise human potential for realising the quest for a 'just, healthy and balanced system'.[14] The genius of Islam resides in the telos of a 'just' and 'balanced system'. A balanced system defuses the tension between dualisms such as God/man, this world/the hereafter, Muslim/non-Muslim (or peoples of the Book), community/individual and theory/practice.

Qutb does not mince his words when it comes to articulating the primacy of Islam as 'din wa dawlah' (religion and state), and in terms of visibility and leadership in world (and worldly) affairs. He affirms

that there is 'good' to be had when Islam assumes a leading role 'to fashion life according to its own special genius'.[15] There is no doubt in his mind that justice and a balanced society or polity derive from Muslims leading, not following. He regards leadership as intrinsic to Islam. Moreover, he affirms that 'proving' and 'testing' Islam's mettle obtains only when assuming responsibility. Thus, in his view, Islam is predisposed to 'lead the caravan of life. It cannot be a camp follower.'[16] Perhaps this is no longer the case. Muslims, being today plugged into the international economy, integrated in an international order not of their making, and, of late, as they are being converted to the notion of separation of religion and politics, cannot but be 'camp followers'.

The issues that shaped Qutb's thinking more than fifty years ago[17] – the ideological standoff with 'the West', colonial penetration, Muslim identity – do not seem to feature large in the thinking of current Islamist ideologues. Qutb found both capitalism and communism to be inferior to Islam,[18] with both steeped in materialism. Even when they valorise justice, as did communism, they expunge it of all spiritual content.

In its continuous transformation, Islamism has, thus, shifted emphasis according to time and space, oscillating between phases of confrontation and reconciliation, rejection and accommodation. Some of these shifting emphases include:

- The deployment of Islam as a moral and educational medium for raising levels of consciousness and resisting colonialism;
- Islam as a medium of resisting secularisation, to the point that sometimes mere political participation in 'secular' politics was considered heretical;
- Resurgence or sahwah islamiyyah that positioned the question of identity at the heart of the quarrel with national-secular elites and states;
- Islamisation of state, society, morality and knowledge, all overlapping agendas that gave rise to transnational rethought Islamisms, recognising authoritarian regimes (what the MB and the PJD did in Egypt in Morocco respectively), and approving of engaging the

secular state by equating the Islamic concept of 'shura' (consultation) with democracy;
- Islamism going hand in hand with revolution, and the emergence of Islamist resistance movements;
- The Wahhabi-Salafi explosion promoting literalist interpretations of Islam that spread to all corners of the Muslim world;
- Intra-Salafi divisions and the rise of intellectual and radical salafisms; and
- Divisions within moderate Islamisms (for example, in Egypt, Jordan, Sudan), and attendant 'rationalisation' of Islamism through adoption of formerly rejected positions such as separation of religion and politics.

End of Political Islam? End of Ideology?

It is too early to confidently state that the shift in Ennahda and other parties marks the end of political Islam, because it depends firstly on how one defines political Islam. A strict ideological definition will lead to the conclusion that it is the end of political Islam, in a certain sense. But if one allows for the elasticity of ideas and practice within political Islam, then it is not but a recognition that Islamists come in all shapes and colours: they are neither fixed nor unitary.

For me, a Tunisian who closely follows the politics of a fledgling democracy, I never cease to remind myself of the enduring legacy of Bourguiba's secularism. It lives on, and today reshapes Tunisia, including its Islamists. Many Tunisians – including Ennahda sympathisers and members – are left with a big question: was Bourguiba right all along? This is a question Ennahda has to ponder. For, after the tragic experiences of torture, martyrs, exile and suffering, a big volte face on this issue cannot be easy. Was the suffering for nothing at all? Has Ennahda abandoned its original vision that Islam and politics belong to an organic sphere in which they are mutually reinforcing as a matter of conviction or necessity? These are questions that will not disappear for some time.

Notes

1 Esposito and Voll (1996).
2 Abou El Fadl et al. (2004).
3 Eickelman and Piscatori (1996).
4 Eickelman and Piscatori (1996).
5 Spiegel (2015: 177–178).
6 Zelin (2013: 178).
7 Spiegel (2015).
8 Khechana (2016).
9 Sivan (1998).
10 Kramer (1993).
11 Alterman (2004).
12 Georgy and Perry (2013).
13 Qutb (2003: vii).
14 Qutb (2003: vii).
15 Qutb (2003).
16 Qutb (2003).
17 Khatab (2006).
18 Qutb (1949). See also Qutb (1975).

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11

Lessons learnt by the Muslim Brotherhood

Abdullah Al-Arian

This paper's title appears to be premised on a number of notions. First, it suggests that the historic period in Egypt, which began with the uprising against the Mubarak regime on 25 January 2011, has ended. One can choose as an end date the mass mobilisation of 30 June 2013, the subsequent military coup of 3 July 2013, or, perhaps, even 14 August 2013 – the day the army demonstrated that it was willing to employ an unprecedented use of force to end any mobilisation by Egyptians, in what came to be known as the Rabaa massacre. According to this line of thinking, these roughly two and a half years signified a distinct era, which came to a definitive halt with the drastic change in fortunes experienced by the Muslim Brotherhood – and indeed, the entire nation – following the end of the revolutionary moment. This leads to the paper's second premise: there are lessons to be learned from these experiences; this suggests that the Muslim Brotherhood bears considerable responsibility for this period's outcomes. And finally, the topic suggests that – however bleak the picture appears to be at the moment – there is a future for the Muslim Brotherhood during which time these lessons could prove vital.

However, these are all highly contested notions in the current state of Egyptian politics. Some observers suggest that it is too soon to set an end date for the post-Mubarak era, and while the political situation

is not what it was in spring 2013, it cannot be described simply as a complete reversal of the revolution's gains and a return to the Mubarak era. Other analysts are highly resistant to the notion that what occurred in Egypt during the summer of 2013 was the Muslim Brotherhood's fault; there is nothing to be learned from the experience, and, if faced with the same choices, it would pursue its agenda in entirely the same manner. Still others believe that the entire discussion is moot because the Muslim Brotherhood cannot possibly survive the current wave of repression and will never return to play a prominent role in Egyptian society.

This chapter traces the critical decisions taken by the organisation since 2011, before delving into possible lessons to be learned from those decisions and their outcomes, and then exploring whether the Muslim Brotherhood's current leadership has indeed internalised any of those lessons. At the outset, it is important to explore the Muslim Brotherhood's historical legacy, especially those elements related to the topic at hand. The group's presence in Egyptian society has been highly contentious in recent years, with devastating consequences for its members and supporters; this fact makes a historical review far more than an academic exercise.

In *Answering the Call: Popular Islamic Activism in Sadat's Egypt* (Oxford University Press, 2014), I reconstruct the developments during the critical period of the 1970s, which witnessed the Muslim Brotherhood's re-emergence following a twenty-year absence from Egyptian society due to the repression of popular political expression under the Nasser regime. During the 1970s era of student activism, the organisation developed a number of features that are still relevant today. It exhibited a decidedly reformist agenda, and explicitly disavowed the path of revolutionary change. It focused its energies on reaching society at large and influencing state institutions, in order to connect with the Egyptian public, from student unions to professional syndicates, and, by the mid-1980s, even running candidates for parliament. As a result, by the late Mubarak era, the Muslim Brotherhood had deeply entrenched

interests invested in state institutions. While it remained the leading and most organised opposition force, its accommodationist strategy yielded benefits for the group, as well as the regime. These were political in nature, such as the ability to win eighty-eight parliamentary seats, its largest share ever, in the 2005 elections, and its tacit support for the continuation of Mubarak's neoliberal economic development programme.

Another feature of this generation's leaders is that they emerged from the new Egyptian middle class – recently urbanised, highly educated professionals and business elites. Despite this change, the Muslim Brotherhood has continued to preach its message of an Egypt built on an Islamic frame of reference, and free from the corruption, exploitation and repression of the authoritarian regime and its allies.

On the eve of 25 January 2011, two constraints hindered the Muslim Brotherhood from joining the popular mobilisation against Mubarak. Firstly, the organisation suffers from an inability to work in tandem with other forces in Egyptian society. Historically, it had never formed successful coalitions, and its leaders refused to be a part of any effort that they could not directly and unilaterally control. The Kefaya movement, which opposed Mubarak's project to pass on the presidency to his son, provides one such example. Secondly, the Muslim Brotherhood had until then avoided any efforts to challenge the regime. While it would occasionally mobilise its followers in opposition to a certain policy, it never directly confronted or explicitly called for the collapse of the regime.

Nonetheless, by the third day of the revolt, the Muslim Brotherhood had reversed its decision not to support the demonstrations due to the participation of a significant number of its youth members, who had defied the order not to go out. Also, as the momentum grew, it was important that the Muslim Brotherhood be seen as having played an important role, lest it emerge as a loser in the event that the regime was successfully removed. From that moment on, the group pursued a strategy of hedging its bets, simultaneously maintaining dialogue with

the regime, while sending its leaders into Tahrir Square and making its presence felt at critical moments such as the Battle of the Camel.

The Muslim Brotherhood emphatically declared its support for the revolution and its objectives: bread, freedom and social justice, which it considered to be consistent with its decades-long mission. Immediately after Mubarak stepped down, the group launched its first political party, the Freedom and Justice Party (FJP). Meanwhile, the remaining political forces in Egypt were unclear on what the next step would be, and whether to continue the revolutionary action even after Mubarak's ouster. It was clear then, as now, that the Muslim Brotherhood stood to gain the most from shifting the country's political centre of gravity from the public squares and revolutionary activity to the Egyptian political sphere and a reform-oriented transition. Although the ruling military council oversaw the transition, this factor appeared only to concern a small and relatively marginal number of youth activists, many of whom had launched the initial mobilisation against the regime, but found themselves increasingly isolated. By cracking down on these activists during the ensuing months, the ruling Supreme Council of Armed Forces (SCAF) sent a message: the only acceptable form of political contestation would be through formal channels, that is, voting in the referendum to approve the transitional road map, organising political parties, running in parliamentary and presidential elections, and supporting the constituent assembly's efforts to write and pass a new constitution. The Muslim Brotherhood's leadership enthusiastically endorsed this path.

Ironically, the Muslim Brotherhood has been critiqued for not being 'revolutionary enough', and for opting for a reformist path, when for nearly its entire history it was condemned for its allegedly revolutionary inclinations that threatened to destabilise Egypt, throw the country into chaos and establish an Islamic regime. Those fears, of course, were unsubstantiated, but they hung over the heads of the Muslim Brotherhood's leaders for decades, during which time they had to repeatedly assure critics of their reformist goals and commitment to

democracy. This perception ultimately served to hamper the group's ability to support an explicitly revolutionary path when the moment for one arose.

So what were the implications of the Muslim Brotherhood's decision to forego a revolutionary path? First and foremost, this meant that the organisation would become bound by the decisions and actions of state institutions, which continued to function in the service of the former regime: the military, security services, bureaucracy and state media. The March 2011 referendum effectively granted SCAF the power to govern the country and dictate the terms of the transition in the absence of a constitution, since the previous one had been suspended. The Muslim Brotherhood helped mobilise fourteen million Egyptians to vote in favour of the referendum, which received a decisive seventy-seven per cent of votes in support. By endorsing a path that relied on the continuation of SCAF rule and the election of a parliament and president ahead of rewriting the constitution, the Muslim Brotherhood seemed to suggest that political legitimacy would emerge from the ballot box and not from a strong constitution that could safeguard against exactly the kinds of abuses to which the organisation had long been subjected.

Of course, one could very easily make the case that this was an extreme miscalculation on the part of the Muslim Brotherhood. It obtained nearly half of the seats in parliament following the 2011–12 elections, but the high court had overturned the results months later on a legal technicality. Aware that the same court had authenticated one of the most fraudulent elections in Egyptian history just two years earlier, the Muslim Brotherhood faced an important decision: it could refuse to acknowledge the validity of the ruling, and assert its own electoral legitimacy and role as the true caretaker of the revolution against a corrupt state institution, or it could disagree strongly with the decision while recognising the court's ability to issue such a ruling in the hope of avoiding a direct confrontation with a powerful instrument of state power, and attempt to find another avenue to assert its strength within the revolutionary transition. Perhaps to its detriment, the Muslim

Brotherhood chose the latter, which may have contributed to the erosion of electoral legitimacy in favour of state power.

Although the decision to run a presidential candidate was announced prior to the court's ruling, there is reason to believe that the Muslim Brotherhood was hedging its bets, knowing that it could very well lose the parliament and seeing the presidency as the alternative path to power. Once again, it proved the most adept force in Egyptian society at mobilising the populace to vote in favour of its candidate, even against the entire might of the state and its preferred choice of Ahmed Shafik. Whatever one thinks of Mohamed Morsi, the fact remains that he was the winner of one of the most hotly contested, and yet practically meaningless, free elections in history. On the eve of his election, SCAF issued a constitutional declaration that stripped the president of nearly all of his executive powers. Further, not only was Morsi quite powerless as Egypt's president, but he was more a prisoner of his position than a meaningful representative of a political programme that could have been implemented.

The Morsi experience demonstrates that one cannot simply go from being an enemy of the state to head of state overnight without a radical transformation to the nature of that state. There are two ways in which the Muslim Brotherhood could have transitioned from public enemy number one to an effective political actor in the Egyptian context. The first option is a decisive revolution, in which the institutions of the state are effectively cleansed of all former regime figures and their employees. This would have entailed a direct confrontation with the military, which the Muslim Brotherhood would have lost, especially if it did not receive popular support, and, in particular, support from Egyptian civil society institutions and leaders. The second approach is a gradual reformist approach in which the Muslim Brotherhood could have been part of some kind of unity government, never directly taking over the reins of the state. This would have required a truth and reconciliation process to integrate the organisation into the various state institutions as part of a gradual inclusion of segments of Egyptian

society that had been disenfranchised throughout the Mubarak era. In time, whether five or ten years, the Muslim Brotherhood could have slowly found its way into positions of executive authority, and possibly even the presidency. The organisation's initial decision against running a presidential candidate and the decision's eventual overturn – against the wishes of a large number of influential members of the Guidance Bureau – indicates that its own leaders recognised the peril of throwing the group's hat into the ring and taking on a state committed to its repression for the past half century.

Although the dangers to the Muslim Brotherhood – and indeed, to the entire revolution – in its decision to pursue Egypt's highest office may only have become apparent on the eve of the coup, the writing was certainly on the wall far earlier than that, given the responses of the Egyptian state, the business elites and their foreign supporters. Much has been said about Morsi's various policies, the political and economic impasse faced by Egyptians during his year in office, the struggle over the constitution and the viability of the revolutionary moment, but those things are of little consequence to my analysis. Although leftist and liberal obstructionist forces state that they opposed Morsi on the basis of his grave policy errors, I argue that forces hostile to the revolution – which could not care less what kind of president he actually was – orchestrated the coup.

Looking ahead, the future will be determined by the Muslim Brotherhood's understanding of the current situation, and particularly its ability to conduct an internal assessment of actions taken during the crucial post-Mubarak revolutionary moment. One possible approach is to minimise the Muslim Brotherhood's mistakes and instead shift the focus to the obstructionists who undermined Morsi during his presidency and supported the coup against him. Proponents of this viewpoint tend to reduce the current conflict in Egypt as one between Islamist and secular forces. Another response, emerging primarily from among the Muslim Brotherhood's youth, many of whom were far more integrated into the broader revolutionary movement, posits that the Muslim Brotherhood needs to acknowledge the critical errors

it had made in the revolution's early days. Only once it comes to terms with these mistakes and corrects its strategy going forward will the movement stand to survive the government's clampdown and recover to the point of being able to overturn the coup.

An internal memorandum circulated among exiled Muslim Brotherhood leadership in late 2013 expressed a similar outlook. In the leaked document, the Muslim Brotherhood's exiled youth contingent puts forward a platform of reform centred on reconfiguring the organisation's approach to political questions. It identifies two competing outlooks on the coup and its aftermath. On the one hand, many of the Muslim Brotherhood's harshest critics characterise the political struggle in Egypt as one between Islamists and the military. In this scenario, the supporters of the coup make the case that the Islamist alternative poses a far more insidious prospect for the future of political freedom in Egypt. Whether or not they have successfully supported their argument with evidence is immaterial. Rather than lend this argument credence by acknowledging its basic premise, the Muslim Brotherhood should respond by supporting an alternative vision: namely, that the struggle is between the Egyptian people, millions of whom supported a revolutionary movement to end exploitation, corruption, and repression at the hands of the former regime, and the military, the leading state institution responsible for upholding the prior political arrangement.

According to the document, the primary determinant in these divergent viewpoints is the deliberate attempt to sow division among the revolutionary ranks by promoting the notion that the Muslim Brotherhood acts according to a narrow agenda, distinct from the broader aims of the revolution. Such a view serves only to further isolate and vilify the Muslim Brotherhood, eventually justifying the violent crackdown against it. From here, the document launches into a process of self-criticism. It argues that the Muslim Brotherhood's leadership is partly responsible for creating such a perception. By virtue of expanding its wider social activist mission into the sphere of partisan politics upon the establishment of the Freedom and Justice Party so

soon after the post-Mubarak transition began in February 2011, the movement ceased to represent the interests of all Egyptians, and instead became a competitive actor in the fraught world of Egyptian electoral politics. Subsequent attempts at cooperation with revolutionary forces proved impossible in light of the obvious conflict of interest brought on by the FJP's political project. In short, the Muslim Brotherhood's internal critics believe the movement made a major strategic error by abandoning the revolutionary path so early in the post-Mubarak transition. As the largest organised social force, its decision had detrimental effects for the rest of Egyptian society.

Indeed, the Muslim Brotherhood did not clarify its position vis-à-vis revolutionary change throughout the entire transition. It endorsed the revolution's aims generally but was reticent to accept a change of the Egyptian state that required tearing down old institutions and replacing them with new ones. At the same time, the group's leaders never offered clear guidelines by which gradual reform of existing institutions would occur. The FJP also sought to avoid confrontation with the judiciary and the military at all costs.

In light of these critiques, the document proposes that the Muslim Brotherhood end its ambiguity with regard to revolutionary action. It calls on the central leadership to halt the pursuit of divisive political competition, and do so by unilaterally dissolving the FJP. Instead, it suggests adopting an explicitly revolutionary track, which would unite the organisation with the other revolutionary factions in opposition to the coup. It also calls on the Muslim Brotherhood to pledge that it will not independently contest any elections without being part of a broad-based and inclusive revolutionary coalition. In the proposed scenario, the Muslim Brotherhood's central leadership would abandon any pretence to controlling major decisions made in the revolutionary movement, allowing individual members and local committees and groups to proceed independently of the central leadership, thereby giving primacy to the revolutionary consensus over the individual interests within the organisation.

In adopting a revolutionary track, the authors of the document argue that the Muslim Brotherhood cannot attempt to centralise control of such a movement, because this would undermine one of the Egyptian revolution's strengths – decentralised grassroots mobilisation. Rather than attempt to direct the movement, the organisation must respond to the wishes of the people, based in large part on the achievement of justice even if it requires a confrontation with state institutions.

Moreover, the document states that, under the right conditions, the Muslim Brotherhood's explicit endorsement of a revolutionary track would cause segments of the Egyptian population that did not previously support the uprising to believe in the merits of the revolution. Such a development would allow for the establishment of a broad consensus on the need for a fundamental restructuring of the Egyptian state, as opposed to the grafting of democratic institutions onto the pre-existing political order. Under this vision, the Muslim Brotherhood could establish itself as a consensus builder that bridges the divisions between secular and Islamic trends, and addresses concerns about sectarian conflicts and the violation of minority rights. A popular consensus must be built with regard to the more critical decisions of the transition. For instance, on the issue of security, structural reform of the interior ministry would require developing popular defence committees to provide security during the interim period.

The internal document concludes by listing these points in a proposed press release. This constitutes the first such document in the Muslim Brotherhood's attempt to rehabilitate itself among the revolutionary forces and broader Egyptian society. In the months since this document was first circulated, the Muslim Brotherhood's exiled leadership has repeatedly rejected its suggestions, but the positions expressed continue to represent the views of a strong contingent of Muslim Brotherhood members and supporters, particularly among the movement's youth.

It is important to place this development within the historic trajectory of the organisation dating back to its re-emergence in the late 1970s. When then Egyptian president, Anwar Sadat, made the determination

to release the movement's leaders from prison, the Muslim Brotherhood had barely a hundred surviving members. Many members simply wanted to reintegrate back into normal life, leaving only a handful to decide on the organisation's future. Following the leaders' release, Sadat was careful not to bestow any legal status on the group, so they were obliged to continue operating outside the bounds of the law. Two opposing trends emerged: one advocated for the Muslim Brotherhood to develop a broad movement without a centralised organisational structure, while the other advocated for a strong hierarchical structure lacking a broader engagement mechanism within society. Under the leadership of the newly selected General Guide, Umar al-Tilmisani, the organisation reached a compromise. However, this divide continued to play out in subsequent years.

There was simultaneously an emphasis within the inner circle of the leadership to maintain control over the rank and file, while retaining a deep distrust of the government, as well as broader Egyptian society. At the other end of the spectrum, there was a strong push for greater engagement with society and less emphasis on doctrinal and organisational uniformity. Ultimately, both trends tended to adopt a reformist approach to activism, meaning they did not want to challenge the regime directly. Some members believed in continued social work and active recruitment of members to broaden their base and shape a new generation of Egyptians to believe in the MB message. Others wanted greater accommodation within the state by reaching an implicit agreement that the organisation would contest a limited number of parliamentary seats in exchange for its endorsement of the political process and therefore its tacit support of the regime. Whatever change it hoped to bring about under this arrangement would be incremental.

For all its rhetoric on issues of social justice, the Muslim Brotherhood benefited in a variety of ways from Mubarak's pursuit of economic liberalisation. On the one hand, its base was largely comprised of middle class Egyptians who benefited greatly from these policies, and enjoyed rapid upward social mobility throughout the 1990s and

beyond. Liberalisation also led to the rise of a particularly wealthy elite represented most prominently by figures such as Khairat el-Shater. However, it should be noted that the wealth of the Muslim Brotherhood's elite pales in comparison with that of the oligarchs closely tied to the Mubarak regime who enjoyed tremendous prosperity due to widespread corruption and nepotism. Secondly, rising income inequality and the state's removal of several critical social services allowed the Muslim Brotherhood to step into the breach created by the widening poverty in Egypt, and expand its social welfare services, thereby obtaining another avenue to reach Egyptians.

The Muslim Brotherhood's leadership refused to acknowledge that it faced an internal crisis of dissent and disillusionment within its ranks. Yet, this may be changing; a recent statement by an FJP spokesman, and reiterated by other figures from the organisation, calls on the group to shift its energies away from political work in favour of a return to emphasising the most basic unit within the Muslim Brotherhood, the 'usar (meaning 'families'), that is, weekly reading groups of five to seven members meeting to discuss the basic Muslim Brotherhood curriculum.

These reports emerged in the wake of the recent suicide of activist and former Muslim Brotherhood supporter Zainab Mahdi, who was reportedly alienated by the organisation and experienced a crisis of faith. Critics have urged a reemphasis on the Muslim Brotherhood's basic curriculum as established by its charismatic founder, Hassan al-Banna. Others have added that the curriculum itself needs to be revised to reflect contemporary challenges facing Egyptian youth.

Indeed, the Muslim Brotherhood's internal structure faces major challenges going forward. From the moment that the organisation shifted the bulk of its energies to political work through the FJP, it neglected to maintain active recruitment into its historic social movement organisation, with the number of new members reaching a complete standstill after 2011. By withdrawing from spaces of traditional strength, the organisation allowed alternative social forces,

from Salafis to liberals and leftists, to exert greater influence on the next generation of Egyptian activists. In addition to offering an ideological and institutional home for Egyptian youth suffering under the coup regime, the re-emphasis on the Muslim Brotherhood 'usar is meant to provide organisational continuity and resilience in the face of efforts by the regime of Abdel Fattah al-Sisi to eradicate its presence from society, something that previous Egyptian presidents have attempted but never successfully accomplished.

The coming years will be very revealing for the Muslim Brotherhood's future, and the future of political Islam more generally. In the past, the fortunes of Islamist parties have turned rather quickly, as embodied by the term 'post-Islamism', an attempt by scholars to capture the political failure of these movements. With the Muslim Brotherhood's resurgence after the 2011 uprisings, followed by its dramatic fall, commentators yet again advanced the belief that Islamism had run its course, that it existed as a salient force as long as it was in opposition to secular authoritarian rulers, but that it failed to offer solutions to political and socioeconomic crises in a post-revolutionary transition. This assessment must be tempered by recent developments within the movement and across Egyptian society. Throughout its existence under authoritarian rulers, political Islam offered itself as an alternative, but did not propose a re-conceptualisation of the state. Movements such as the Muslim Brotherhood, which are reformist in nature, seek to undo the authoritarian tendencies of a government without transforming it in a fundamental way.

Given political Islam's failed experiences in Egypt and elsewhere, the future of Islamism lies in something I term 'cosmopolitan Islamism'. This concept is far more universal in outlook, builds upon unifying principles and views shari'ah as something that informs a legal system through realising the spirit of the law, not the letter of traditional interpretations. This perspective has been represented in liberal and youth wings of various movements and is beholden to the so-called wasatiyya school of thought. Among other areas, it has been observed

in the de-emphasis on the legislation of issues of personal piety and religious practice. Given the current state of repression against the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt, and increasingly around the region, this current is unlikely to be more than a minority voice in the short term. Although not entirely indicative of this trend, the experiences of the Justice and Development Party (AKP) in Turkey and Ennahda Movement in Tunisia indicate that for an Islamist movement to succeed, it is necessary for its political party to adopt a more pluralistic outlook. In the case of Egypt, that approach must be reflected as part of a broad revolutionary effort long before it can ever manifest in a competitive political field.

12

The politics of Salafism in post-revolutionary Egypt

Stéphane Lacroix

On 3 July 2013, General Abdel Fattah el-Sisi announced that Mohamed Morsi was no longer president of Egypt, and that a new 'transitional roadmap' would be put in place. Sitting behind Sisi were a number of leading Egyptian political figures, activists and institutional representatives: the shaykh of Al-Azhar, Ahmed el-Tayeb; the Egyptian Coptic pope, Tawadros II; Muhammad ElBaradei, founder of the liberal Constitution Party (Hizb el-Dostour); Mahmoud Badr, founder of the Tamarod movement, which played a central role in the demonstrations leading to Morsi's fall; and, quite unexpectedly for many, Younes Makhioun, president of the Salafi Al-Nour Party. Al-Nour later continued on the same track: it took part in the drafting of the new constitution, called for a 'Yes' vote during the constitutional referendum of January 2014 and supported Sisi's bid for the presidency.

Given the alleged 'Islamist' nature of the party, many saw Al-Nour's open support for the coup and the new regime as a manifestation of pure opportunism. Yet, this chapter will argue, Al-Nour's support for the coup can be easily explained if one considers the logic followed by the party since its creation in June 2011. However, support for the coup has caused considerable harm to Al-Nour's image and provoked a deep internal crisis among its members. Although Al-Nour remains the only Islamist party able to operate in today's Egypt, it has lost much

of the appeal it had in 2011. This loss of appeal has two consequences: first, many Salafis now see politics as a losing game and have chosen to return to da'wah;[1] second, other, more politically radical, forms of Salafism are on the rise: jihadi Salafism, with Ansar Bayt al-Maqdis and the Soldiers of Egypt (Ajnad Misr) at the forefront, and what some have termed 'revolutionary Salafism', which is more obscure in its meaning, but has greater grassroots appeal.

Al-Nour Party: From success to crisis

Although the Salafi movement only started making headlines in the wake of the revolution, its existence in Egypt is not new. Ansar al-Sunnah al-Muhammadiyyah,[2] the first association explicitly claiming to be 'Salafi', was established in Cairo in 1926, two years before the Muslim Brotherhood (MB). Salafis proudly stress this history in response to the recurrent accusation that they are an imported movement. Although, it should be noted, many of Ansar al-Sunnah's references were taken from Saudi Arabia, where Salafism is the official brand of Islam. Both Ansar al-Sunnah and the MB championed the idea of an Islamic revival, but they did so in very different ways. For the MB, this revival was essentially expressed in political terms – the MB's project was to create an 'Islamic state'. In contrast, for Salafis in Ansar al-Sunnah, what was needed was a religious revival, meaning, on the one hand, a 'purification' of the Muslim creed in order to align it with what the group deems to be original – or 'Salafi' – Islam (rejecting the influences of Sufism and Shi'ism in particular), and, on the other hand, a reform of individual social and religious practices in an ultra-conservative way. Ansar al-Sunnah, however, stopped short of developing any political vision. Another difference with the MB was that, far from being a mass movement, Ansar al-Sunnah merely constituted a network of religious scholars whose main activity was to edit and publish books in the Salafi tradition.[3]

In the 1970s, Egypt experienced a second – and much stronger – wave of Salafism. Those were the years of Anwar Sadat's presidency,

when Islamic movements were allowed to operate relatively freely in the country. At the forefront of these movements were university groups called the Gama'at Islamiyyah, whose ideology reflected a wide range of influences. They borrowed from the MB and had read the books of Sayyid Qutb, but they were also highly influenced by the Salafi literature made available through Ansar al-Sunnah's networks. The regional influence of Saudi Arabia, which now possessed the money to export its brand of Islam through a range of government-funded institutions, added to the spread of Salafism.

The plurality of influences present in the Gama'at Islamiyyah's ideological fabric soon sparked lively debates among its members. This led to a split in around 1977-78. The majority of Gama'at Islamiyyah members, including Essam el-Erian and Abdel Moneim Aboul Fotouh, joined the Muslim Brotherhood, where they were instrumental in reviving the organisation, which had been greatly weakened during the Gamal Abdel Nasser era. Other members advocated a radical and violent approach because of a particular way in which they interpreted the writings of Sayyid Qutb.[4] They founded a group called al-Gama'at al-Islamiyyah (the Islamic Group), which later claimed responsibility for the assassination of Anwar Sadat. It is, however, doubtful that it was involved, since the assassins were members of the Egyptian Islamic Jihad.

Finally, a third group decided to distance itself from the Muslim Brotherhood's ideas altogether and adopt a 'pure' Salafi approach. The leading figures of that group were students at the faculty of medicine at Alexandria University; among them were Muhammad Ismail al-Muqaddim and, later on, Yasser Borhami. They established an organisation first called al-Madrasa al-Salafiyyah (the Salafi school), which they later renamed to al-Da'wah al-Salafiyyah, the Salafi call or the Salafi da'wah. Like Ansar al-Sunnah, the Salafi Da'wah proclaimed that its aim was to purify the Muslim creed along Salafi lines, and to 'correct' what was wrong in the social and religious practices of Egyptian Muslims. Their action was therefore limited to preaching, and had

no explicitly political dimension. For the next three decades, they made sure to avoid the political issue altogether.[5]

The difference with Ansar al-Sunnah, however, was that the Salafi da'wah's founders, despite being apolitical, had been socialised in the context of 1970s Islamic activism, and so they were activists (harakiyyun) in the modern sense. They wanted Salafi Da'wah to be a mass movement with a cohesive and well-organised structure, along lines somewhat similar to the MB. One of the organisation's founders, Abu Idris, was named 'al-qayyim' (the leader) – Salafi Da'wah's equivalent of the Muslim Brotherhood's guide, 'al-murshid'. In addition, Da'wah began sponsoring a range of social activities in the poorer neighbourhoods of Alexandria and other Egyptian cities, although this activism remained more informal than in the MB.

In the wake of Sadat's assassination in 1981, Salafi Da'wah, unlike most other Islamic groups, escaped persecution because of its non-political stance. In subsequent years, Salafi Da'wah even sometimes benefited from the covert support of the Egyptian security apparatus, which saw the Salafis as a useful counterforce to the more politicised religious groups. To be sure, the Salafis were also closely monitored and sometimes repressed by the authorities, but they were generally treated much better than their competitors. In this context, Salafi Da'wah was able to expand its influence beyond Alexandria to most Egyptian governorates.

In the 2000s, the government decided to step up its anti-Brotherhood strategy by allowing Salafis to open satellite television channels, many of them broadcast through Nilesat, an Egyptian telecommunications network. Within a few years, a fair number of Salafi channels were created. Soon, they became extremely popular with Egyptian viewers, turning certain preachers, such as Muhammad Hassan or Muhammad Hussein Yaqub, into nationwide celebrities. In this way, Salafism gained hundreds of thousands of sympathisers and extended its influence far beyond the organised networks of the Salafi Da'wah.

When the revolution began on 25 January 2011, most Salafi shaykhs called on their followers not to join the protests. For a group that ad-

vocated individual religious reform and did not believe that political activism was desirable at all, this was hardly surprising. However, a few days before Mubarak's fall, Salafi leaders revised their position. The protests were no longer described as fitna (chaos) but as thawra (revolution). Most observers at the time saw this as mere opportunism; this would, however, retrospectively mark the beginning of a fundamental evolution inside Egyptian Salafism.

In the revolution's wake, a few figures in the Salafi Da'wah argued that because the context had changed, Da'wah's position towards politics should change as well. For them, this meant that, just as the MB was about to establish its political party, the Freedom and Justice Party (Hizb al-Hurriyya wa al-'Adala), the Da'wah should establish its own party as well. The rationale was that, since the political sphere was now open, Salafis, as an influential social force, needed to be represented in it.

Spearheading those calls was a man whose profile was relatively peculiar within the Salafi Da'wah: Emad Abdel Ghafur, a doctor who had spent the previous few years living and working in Turkey. As Abdel Ghafur explained, it was the Turkish experience of Islamic politics that had changed his mind, and he was waiting for the opportunity to 'make the Salafi Da'wah benefit from this experience'.[6] At the same time, Abdel Ghafur carried a lot of weight within the Da'wah: he had been one of the organisation's founders in the late 1970s, and although he had moved away from it a little, he continued to enjoy great respect within it. After numerous debates, Abdel Ghafur managed to convince the Da'wah's leadership to support his project. The creation of Hizb al-Nour (The Party of Light) was announced, and Abdel Ghafur was appointed its president. Officially, Al-Nour Party was to be the political arm of the Salafi Da'wah. The Da'wah's help was instrumental in setting up the party; within a couple of weeks, it had already claimed to have 100 000 members across Egypt.

It is important here to insist on Abdel Ghafur's agency because what happened was by no means a structural evolution. Had Abdel Ghafur, with his aura in the movement and strong determination, not cham-

pioned the idea of a party, the Salafi Da'wah could very well have decided to remain out of party politics. This is what happened in Tunisia where most Salafis refused to enter the formal political sphere, despite the attempts to create three small Salafi parties, which until now have demonstrated very little influence.[7] I should add that a few other small Salafi parties were created in Egypt in addition to Al-Nour, but most had only very local followings, and none had the infrastructural power of Al-Nour, thus allowing Al-Nour quickly to impose itself as the dominant Salafi party by far.

One of Al-Nour's early goals was to assert its existence as a political entity entirely independent from the MB in its agenda. This was needed because many Egyptians saw the Salafis as nothing more than a 'reservoir of support' for the Brotherhood (a view shared by the MB itself, as expressed by members in interviews in 2011).[8] This explains why Al-Nour chose to compete against the Brotherhood in the legislative elections starting in November 2011. And so, while the Brotherhood established a 'democratic coalition' with small centrist and secular parties, Al-Nour allied itself as part of an 'Islamic coalition' with two small Salafi-leaning parties, the Authenticity Party (Hizb el-Asala), created by students of a Cairo-based shaykh called Muhammad Abdel Maqsoud, and the Building and Development Party (Hizb el-Benaa wa el-Tanmia), the Gama'at Islamiyyah's political arm, which had renounced violence a decade earlier.

The competition was extremely fierce, but the Salafis were able to score a number of points. First, the Salafis more or less explicitly denounced the Brothers as 'candidates of the old system', and blamed them for being apparatchiks and opportunists who had happily participated in the facade democracy of the Mubarak years. In turn, the Salafis strove to turn their quietism during the Mubarak years into an advantage; because they had not been involved in politics, they argued, they had not been compromised. As opposed to the Brothers, they were entirely new political actors, and therefore more capable of representing real change. To reinforce this impression, Al-Nour strategically appoin-

ted spokespersons of a relatively young age, with no history in politics. One of them, the twenty-eight-year-old Nader Bakkar, an elegant young man with a degree in management, attracted tremendous media attention. All the Brothers had to offer in return were spokesmen aged in their fifties, who had been in politics for decades and could hardly represent any form of political renewal. In addition, Al-Nour was quick to denounce the allegedly bourgeois nature of the MB and its leadership, describing it as disconnected from Egyptian society. Al-Nour portrayed itself, in turn, as a true representative of the lowest classes of society. Consequently, the movement's programme adopted leftist overtones: much more than the Brotherhood, Salafis insisted on social justice, and they advocated a redistributive role for the state as opposed to the Brotherhood's charity-based model.[9]

This rhetoric was extremely effective. In addition to the fact that the party was able to rely on the Salafi Da'wah's extensive networks, it largely explains Al-Nour's successful campaign in the legislative elections. Against all odds, Salafis received about twenty-nine per cent of the votes and about twenty-five per cent of the seats in the parliament. They came in second after the MB, which obtained about forty per cent of the vote. Together, the two forces controlled nearly seventy per cent of the first post-revolutionary Egyptian parliament.

The dominant reading of the new situation was that the political scene now comprised not one major Islamist party, but two, the Muslim Brotherhood and Al-Nour. Thus, Al-Nour was widely portrayed as a Salafi version of the MB. Yet, this resulted from a fundamental misunderstanding. What Salafi shaykhs advocated from the start is what I have called an infrapolitical vision: they wanted Al-Nour to be merely a lobby to defend the Salafi Da'wah's interests in the political sphere. Indeed, for them, change could only come from below, through preaching the Salafi creed, which remained the absolute priority. Politics was seen as merely a means to protect the religious movement and its da'wah activities, not a goal in itself. This is not to sugggest that everyone agreed with this view; Al-Nour actually was embroiled in a significant amount of internal

tension in 2012, some of which was closely related to this issue. This led to several splits; the largest was in December 2012 when some leading figures of the party, including its founder Emad Abdel Ghafur, left to establish a rival party called the Hizb al-Watan (Homeland Party). But from early 2013 the view became unchallenged within Al-Nour.

This meant that Al-Nour had developed a very peculiar approach to the political game. On the one hand, they were not interested in governing, and so they didn't even consider presenting a candidate in the presidential election. On the other hand, they concentrated all their efforts on the parliamentary elections, which provided the opportunity to constitute a large interest group inside the parliament that could defend the Da'wah's interests, and, on certain questions of special importance to Salafis, such as shari'ah, push for Islamic policies.

This understanding of politics as merely a means to defend the interests of a religious movement also had an impact on the question of alliances. The logic here, again, was that Al-Nour Salafis were not really interested in seeking partners with whom they could agree on a common political vision; what they wanted was to offer their political support in return for support for the Salafi Da'wah at the grassroots level. When asked to define the party's political identity, one leader of Al-Nour said: 'We are rigid in matters of creed, but we are flexible in matters of politics'.[10]

Following this logic, the MB has remained Al-Nour's main enemy, because the Brothers are not seen just as political competitors, they are also competing for control over the religious sphere – and here the stakes for the Salafis are considered much more existential. The nightmare scenario for Al-Nour Salafis was that the MB, if it managed to come to power, would use its position of political hegemony to try and establish hegemony over the religious sphere, thus diminishing the Salafi Da'wah's influence. This explains why all of Al-Nour's positions and alliances since early 2012 aimed at, first, preventing the MB from winning the presidential election, and, second, opposing (and eventually bringing down) Mohamed Morsi's government.

In April 2012, for instance, Al-Nour offered its backing to presidential candidate Abdel Moneim Aboul Fotouh, a former Muslim Brother who advocated a liberal Islamist approach. Though the Salafis did not share many of his views, they chose to support him mostly in order to undermine the chances of the MB candidate, Mohamed Morsi. After Morsi came to power, Al-Nour began moving closer to the non-Islamist opposition to the Brotherhood. In January 2013, Al-Nour launched a dialogue initiative with the secular opposition, and eventually Al-Nour and the secular opposition came together on a platform of joint demands directed at the MB.[11] Finally, in June 2013, without officially calling for protests against Mohamed Morsi, Al-Nour announced that if the numbers were large enough, it would demand the president's resignation. It is no surprise then that, on 3 July 2013, Al-Nour became a key component of the coalition of parties backing the military coup against Morsi. Since then, Al-Nour has taken a consistently pro-military stand; for example, the party actively campaigned for Sisi during presidential elections in May 2014.

My interpretation of Al-Nour's support for the coup and the subsequent political process is in line with what I explained earlier. By taking this stand, Al-Nour Salafis hoped to: first, get rid of their existential competitor, the Muslim Brotherhood; and second, become an indispensable religious partner for the military, not only preserving their presence in the religious sphere but also expanding it. Today, one can say that this was a clear miscalculation. The Egyptian army was certainly not willing to rely on a non-state religious group for social control. And so, the main religious beneficiary in the wake of the coup was not the Salafis, but al-Azhar, the state's religious arm. Still, Al-Nour Salafis have kept their social presence intact and remain the only religious party able to operate in Egypt today.

Al-Nour's stances since 2012 have provoked virulent debates within the Salafi movement, both domestically and abroad. After the party's decision to back the military coup, it experienced a huge internal crisis. Arguably thousands, if not tens of thousands, of followers relinquished

their support for the party. A few shaykhs, including very senior ones like Said Abdel Azim, broke away from the Salafi Da'wah. Some are now calling for abandoning politics altogether and returning to pure da'wah. Others among the larger Salafi base are being increasingly drawn to alternative forms of Salafism. One such alternative form is jihadi Salafism, with groups such as Ansar Bayt al-Maqdis and the Soldiers of Egypt (Ajnad Misr). Another, less studied alternative, is what I and others have called 'revolutionary Salafism'.

Revolutionary Salafism: An anti-establishment Salafi alternative

Although the term has become fully relevant only since the 25 January revolution, revolutionary Salafism did not develop in a vacuum. Indeed, in the pre-revolutionary period, a number of groups that claimed adherence to Salafism rejected the cautious quietism advocated by the Salafi Da'wah. Ideologically, many of these groups could be described as Salafi-Qutbi, since they combined references to both the Salafi tradition and the political writings of Sayyid Qutb, the ultimate revolutionary of Egyptian Islamism. In terms of intellectual affiliation, some were influenced by a little-known but highly influential figure of Egyptian Islamism in the 1970s, Shaykh Rifa'i Suroor, who died in 2011.[12] Others were students of more contemporary shaykhs, including Mohamed Abdel Maqsoud, Nash'at Ahmad and Fawzi al-Said, all based in Cairo.

During the Mubarak era, these shaykhs had openly accused the regime of impiety (kufr), while also distinguishing themselves from the jihadis by not advocating armed struggle. This had resulted in strong pressure from the police, which led to arrests or house arrests as well as bans on preaching. The different groups were thus scattered and unable to work together. In the aftermath of the 25 January 2011 revolution, revolutionary Salafism gained in visibility due to the spectacular progress of Shaykh Abu Ismail, a charismatic leader who unified the various groups, thus sparking the unprecedented growth of the movement.

Born in 1961, Hazem Abu Ismail is a lawyer by training. The son of Salah Abu Ismail, an Azhari shaykh and MB personality who represented the group in the Egyptian parliament in the 1970s and 1980s, Hazem himself joined the Brotherhood and was an unsuccessful candidate in the general parliamentary elections of 1995 and 2005. He was elected to the Union of Lawyers in 2005, and during the 2000s his discourse drew him closer to the Salafi movement. By then, he was a rising star in the Muslim Brotherhood's Salafi wing, although he eventually left the group (the exact moment of his departure remains unclear; it has been stated that he only formally left after the revolution). When the 2011 revolution began, he was among the first Salafis to demonstrate in Tahrir Square, together with the small groups mentioned earlier. Most revealingly, in the days after Mubarak's fall, he distinguished himself as one of the first Islamist leaders to warn the revolutionaries of the risk that the army would take over. On 24 May 2011, he announced his candidacy for the Egyptian presidential elections, before the election date had even been set.[13]

As a presidential candidate, Hazem Abu Ismail generated considerable publicity for himself and the movement he came to represent. As early as summer 2011, the small Salafi-Qutbi groups that had existed prior to the revolution began to consider him their natural leader, giving added impetus to his campaign. He became the incarnation of revolutionary Salafism, as his discourse focused on the major themes of the movement, although minor ideological and strategic differences still existed among the various groups.

The first of these themes was the requirement for complete and immediate application of shari'ah (kamila ghayr manqusa). This demand was repeated like an incantation, although it did not constitute a well-defined political platform. The idea of shari'ah was presented as the obvious solution for all of Egypt's problems. At most, revolutionary Salafi discourse revealed concern for working classes who were assimilated with the 'oppressed' that both Islam and the revolution are meant to see triumph. Some intellectuals from the revolutionary Salafi movement

took this idea to its logical conclusion in October 2012 by founding a small party called Hizb al-Sha'b (The People's Party). The People's Party targeted 'workers and peasants', using rhetoric that some observers characterised as 'Salafi-leftist'.[14]

The second theme, nationalism, at times Islamic and at other times Egyptian, was brandished in defiance of 'foreign powers', particularly the United States and Israel. Hazem Abu Ismail was the only Islamist presidential candidate who openly opposed the Camp David agreement that has tied Egypt to Israel since 1979.[15] He also paid extensive homage to Osama bin Laden after his death in 2011, praising him as a 'mujahid' in the lineage of 'Abdallah 'Azzam and Ahmed Yassin.

The third theme was a proclaimed identification with the 25 January 2011 uprising, which Abu Ismail considered to be the beginning of a revolutionary process rather than its end. Like the 'revolutionary youth', and unlike most organised political groups, Abu Ismail and his supporters contended that the revolution did not end on 11 February 2011, and that it would need to continue until the nation had completely severed its connections with the former regime.[16] This meant that they would have to confront the new executive power, the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF), which was denounced as a legacy of the Mubarak era. The revolutionary Salafis were a central feature of protests against the SCAF during two significant events: first, the Mohammed Mahmoud Street clashes in November 2011, when the police shot dozens of young people opposing the Supreme Council, and second, the events of Abbasiya Square in April 2012, when approximately ten people were slain in front of SCAF headquarters.

Logically, revolutionary Salafis adopted an ambiguous stance during the year of Morsi's presidency. On the one hand, they saw him as much too liberal and far too ready to compromise with the military. In contrast, their expressed goal was an Islamic revolution. On the other hand, they didn't want to undermine Morsi's rule, as they understood this would mainly benefit the secular opposition and the forces of the old regime. Still, in the wake of the coup, revolutionary Salafis became

a major component of the anti-Sisi protests. It can be argued that in some universities and neighbourhoods (such as Matariyyah in Cairo, a hotbed of protest), it was the revolutionary Salafis (with groups such as Harakat Ahrar) and not the Brothers who were calling the shots.

In mid-2011, however, revolutionary Salafism was still a marginal phenomenon. At that time, most Salafis threw their weight behind al-Nour, which seemed poised to become the leading Salafi political force. The subsequent positions of al-Nour, discussed above, and the lack of 'revolutionary commitment' on the parts of both al-Nour and the MB, boosted the revolutionary Salafis' appeal. By March 2012, Hazem Abu Ismail, who had been little known outside Salafi circles a year before, was ranked first in some of the polls conducted ahead of the presidential elections. If it had not been for his elimination from the presidential race (because the judiciary argued that his mother had been granted US citizenship, a breach of Egyptian electoral laws), he may have won. And today, although he is in jail (having been arrested on 5 July 2013, two days after the military coup), he remains a prominent source of inspiration among Salafi youth.

Conclusion

The encounter between Salafism and politics that took place in the wake of the Egyptian revolution has generated intense debates. This chapter describes the two radically opposed paths taken by the Salafi Da'wah, which founded al-Nour and the revolutionary Salafis led by Hazem Abu Ismail. While the latter embraced revolutionary politics in a maximal fashion, the former has taken a much more sceptical stance, which led it to look at politics in a purely instrumental way – merely as a means to protect and expand the influence of what remains first and foremost a preaching movement. This has led al-Nour to make alliances with different non-Islamist actors, most recently the Egyptian military. Yet, while this decision can be explained through the logic followed by Al-Nour since its inception, it was no doubt extremely unpopular with

the party's base, as well with the broader Salafi movement. Today, al-Nour has arguably lost a significant part of its appeal and membership. In return, al-Nour's seemingly 'opportunistic' stance has reinforced the appeal of both the jihadis and, most importantly if one considers grassroots support, the 'revolutionary Salafis'. Since 2012, revolutionary Salafis have attracted a large following. Today, they remain a key component of the anti-Sisi protest movement.

Notes

1 'Da'wah' refers to the range of charitable, welfare, humanitarian activities of the group, as well as its propagation programme.
2 All references to Ansar al-Sunnah in this chapter refer to the Egyptian group, as opposed to the Iraqi group.
3 On Ansar al-Sunnah al-Muhammadiyyah, see Tahir (2004).
4 *Ma'alim fi al-Tariq [Milestones]* was the most prominent of Qutb's works, which was variously interpreted, and lent itself to the interpretation of a violent approach.
5 Lacroix (2012: 2).
6 Interview with Emad Abdel Ghafur, Cairo, December 2012.
7 On Tunisian Salafis, see, for instance, Merone and Cavatorta (2012).
8 Interviews with Muslim Brotherhood officials, 2011.
9 Lacroix (2012: 4).
10 Interview, Cairo, January 2013.
11 'Mubadarat Hizb al-Nur li al-khuruj min al-azmah' [Al-Nour Party's initiatives to exit the crisis], http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pazAv-T3VAW8.
12 Interviews with Ahmed Mawlana, spokesperson for the Salafi Front, and Yahya Rifa'i Suroor, the son of Sheikh Rifa'i Suroor, Cairo, 2012.
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16 As a result, supporters of Hazem Abu Ismail kept alive a memory of him as one of the first leaders to call on young people to continue to occupy Tahrir Square until the 'objectives of the revolution' were fully achieved.

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13

Between the Islamic State group and a failed state: The saga of Libyan Islamists[1]

Omar Ashour

Islamism, revolution and democratisation in Libya

Islamists and their impacts on the Arab-majority uprisings, democratisation and political violence of various forms have been among the most debated issues of the 'Arab Spring'. Libya was no exception. Libyan Islamists have been a critical part of the armed revolution that, with NATO's assistance, toppled Muammar Gaddafi's regime. Several strands of Islamists in Libya have also been an integral part of the democratisation process, competing in elections, crafting constitutions and participating in civil society activities. Libya's Islamists were also heavily engaged in the aftermath of the collapse of the democratisation process and have become part of the ongoing Libyan civil war. Islamists were not all on one side of the civil war, however; the majority sided with the Tripoli government and a small minority (mainly from the Salafi-Madkhali trend and former jihadi figures) sided with the Tobruk government.

Before delving into this chapter's structure and analysis, a few Libyan peculiarities need to be clarified. First, the Libyan events of 2011 were the only political revolution in the Arab-majority uprisings. As opposed to Tunisia, Egypt, Bahrain, Syria and Yemen, the revolutionary forces not only managed to topple the regime and its head, but

also fundamentally altered the political system. Tunisian, Egyptian, Bahraini, Syrian and Yemeni pro-change forces did not have the capacity to do so; therefore, they ended in different trajectories of transition, stagnation or deterioration. Political compromises between the status quo forces and forces of change were the highlight in Tunisia. A bloody defeat for the pro-January 2011 forces was the main result in Egypt. The pro-change forces in Bahrain faced a similar fate. And an armed, political stalemate among these forces was the main feature in Syria and Yemen.

Between August 2011 and May 2014, Libya's pro-revolution forces had actually succeeded in significantly altering the status quo. The results were not limited to taking down the Gaddafi regime, but also included the establishment of unprecedented basic freedoms and free and fair elections for the first time in Libya's history. Libyan Islamists were at the core of the two processes. They significantly contributed to the fight against Gaddafi's forces. Several Islamist groups, factions and figures also participated in the electoral process, including post-jihadi ones, such as figures and factions from the Libyan Islamic Fighting Group (LIFG) and others. Islamists, with other Libyan conservative tribal forces, have also tried to use the institutional space to implement their understanding of shari'ah laws.

Since May 2014, when General Khalifa Haftar declared his second televised coup, the political game in Libya has significantly changed. Before that date, Islamists and their rivals contested politics on four fronts: a media front, an election/political/institutional front, a judicial front, and a controlled hard-power front. The last front was represented by a 'balance of terror' system rather than a fully-fledged armed confrontation. Each political party or coalition attempted to extend its influence over, and strengthen its alliances with, armed brigades of various affiliations. The May 2014 attempted coup turned that multidimensional conflict into primarily an armed one. The majority of Islamist forces, whether from the Libyan Muslim Brotherhood, LIFG or others, sided with the Tripoli government, and a minority of Islamists,

mainly from the Salafi-Madkhali trend and former jihadi figures, sided with the Tobruk government and Haftar's forces. The transformation of the conflict had major implications on Islamist behaviour, especially with the developments in nearby Egypt.

It is worth mentioning that the Libyan branch of the Muslim Brotherhood (MB) is a significantly different organisation from the Egyptian MB, the main target of the 2013 coup in Egypt. I will highlight two critical differences. First, the Libyan MB had a limited presence in the decade prior to the 2011 revolution. Since the late 1990s and early 2000s, the Libyan MB had almost no student activism, provided no social services, and had control over or access to virtually no mosques or public spaces to preach its messages. Therefore, after the revolution, it had limited popular bases compared to the Egyptian MB and even Ennahda in Tunisia. Second, the Libyan revolution was primarily a popular armed one, and the Libyan MB participated in it. So, as opposed to the Egyptian and the Tunisian Islamists, the Libyan MB experience in collective armed action, within a multi-actor coalition, was much more positive. This armed action toppled a brutal dictatorship and helped the Libyan branch to avoid the dismal fate of its mother organisation in Egypt. As outlined below, these two differences will affect the organisation's political behaviour.

This chapter is divided into three sections. The first section identifies the main Islamist forces in Libya, and provides a brief overview of their background and roles in the transition. The second part attempts to understand the salient issues facing Libyan Islamists and how these issues affect their actions in Libya. These issues are: the 2011 armed revolution, the 2012–2013 electoral process, the 2014 attempted coup, and the civil war. The final part concludes with implications for the study of Islamism.

Libyan Islamist actors: An overview

The Libyan Muslim Brotherhood

'The Muslim Brothers established this party. We are a national civil party with an Islamic reference...We have Islamists and nationalists,' said Al-Amin Belhaj, the head of the founding committee of the newly-announced Justice and Construction Party.[2] With the announcement on 3 March 2012, Libya seemed set to follow the electoral path of Islamist success set in Egypt, Tunisia and other Arab countries. After decades of fierce repression of the Muslim Brotherhood by the Gaddafi regime, the formation of a political party in Libya was a heady experience.

The Muslim Brotherhood's presence in Libya goes back to 1949, but its first clear organisational structure was developed in 1968, and quickly frozen in 1969 after the coup of Colonel Muammar Gaddafi.[3] The Brotherhood was never allowed to operate openly and suffered extreme repression. Indeed, when state television did broadcast something about them, it was the bodies of their leaders hung from street lampposts in the mid-1980s. Gaddafi's media called them 'deviant heretics' and 'stray dogs'. Fleeing repression, the Libyan Muslim Brotherhood was reborn in the United States, where members established the 'Islamic Group – Libya' in 1980, and published their magazine *The Muslim*. In 1982, many of the MB figures who had been studying in the United States returned to Libya to re-establish the organisation inside the country, but they ended up in prison or were executed.[4]

The Libyan MB made a comeback in 1999 and entered into a dialogue with the regime. Its rebirth was bolstered in 2005 and 2006 by the initiatives of Gaddafi's son, Saif al-Islam Gaddafi, which aimed to co-opt and neutralise opposition groups, particularly Islamist ones.[5] This led to doubts about their motivations during the 2011 revolution, charges which Brotherhood leaders reject. 'No, we did not plan the revolution, and we weren't playing a double game with the regime,' said Fawzi Abu Kitef, the head of the Revolutionary Brigades Coalition in eastern Libya, and the former deputy defence minister in the National

Transitional Council (NTC), the body that led the revolution politically and then de facto governed Libya for a period of several months (March 2011 to August 2012) before the elections.[6] Abu Kitef was a leading figure in the Brotherhood, and he had spent more than eighteen years in Gaddafi's jails, including in Abu Salim.[7] Indeed, from the outset, the Brotherhood was supportive of the NTC, with some of its icons joining it, such as Dr Abdullah Shamia, who was in charge of the economy portfolio in the NTC.

The Libyan Muslim Brotherhood modelled its new party after Egypt's Freedom and Justice Party (FJP), despite being much smaller than its Egyptian counterpart. In 2009, Soliman Abd al-Qadr, the former General Overseer of the Libyan MB, estimated the number of MB figures in exile to be around 200, and inside Libya to be a few thousand, mainly concentrated in the professional and student sectors.[8] While those cadres would be critical for the movement and its party, they can hardly compare to the hundreds of thousands of the Egyptian Brotherhood.

During its first public conference in Benghazi in November 2011, the Libyan MB restructured the organisation, elected a new leader, increased the size of its Consultative Council from eleven to thirty leaders, and decided to form a political party. In the party elections, Muhammad Swan, the former head of the Libyan MB's Consultative Council, narrowly defeated former MB leader Soliman Abd al-Qadr and two other candidates to become the leader of the new party, the Justice and Construction Party (JCP). 'Participation in the party will be based on individual, not group basis,' said Bashir al-Kubty, the newly-elected General Observer of the Libyan Muslim Brotherhood. He meant that the party would not be a political front of organisations.[9] 'They want it to be like the FJP in Egypt, 80 per cent MB and 20 per cent others...to be able to say that they are inclusive,' said Jum'a al-Gumati, a former non-Islamist representative of the NTC in London.[10]

When Ali al-Sallabi, a leading Islamist activist once affiliated with the MB, proposed a National Rally Coalition to include the MB and

other Islamists, the MB ultimately rejected the proposal. The objective of the MB at that phase of the transition was to have control over its political arm. It ostentatiously shunned alliances with post-jihadists (like those of the Libyan Islamic Fighting Group, which temporarily changed its name to the Libyan Islamic Movement for Change – LIMC – before its members split into two political parties, several armed state bureaucracies such as the army or the security services, and militias) to avoid any international outcry in that period. It also rejected initiatives proposed by ex-affiliates, like al-Sallabi, as this would send the wrong message to the grassroots and the mid-ranks.[11] Domestic and international legitimacy, expansion of audience and control of members seemed to be the determinants of the Libyan MB's behaviour in the transitional period.

The emerging Libyan political scene posed several major challenges to the Libyan MB, especially prior to the 2012 elections. Unlike the MB in Egypt and Ennahda in Tunisia, the Islamists of Libya have little history of interaction with the masses. The MB of Egypt had a third life from the early 1970s, and during the last four decades it worked hard, under hazardous conditions, to build mass support in universities, professional syndicates, unions and the streets. The Ennahda Party in Tunisia is not much different, although the mass support-building efforts were frozen in 1990. The Libyan MB did not have any similar chances to connect with the masses. They also did not have the opportunity to build their organisational structures or institutions within Libya, or to create a parallel network of clinics and social services.

Second, Libyan Islamists had to deal with persistent questions about their commitment to democratic values, women's rights and toleration of others. The attempt to be inclusive was clear in the party's conference from 2 to 3 March 2012. Walid al-Sakran, who was not a member of the MB, was a candidate for the party's leadership, and five women attempted to join the forty-five-member Consultative Council. Three were successful. But even if the leadership was committed to pragmatism, the grassroots and sympathisers expect the ideology to influence

the behaviour. This challenge for the leadership is to legitimate its pragmatic behaviour to its followers, including its coalitions with non-Islamists. The presence of many of these groups in exile in the West earlier, and the experience in ideological transitions did help ease the tension between political pragmatism and ideological commitments. This particularly applies to the MB and the LIMC, but not necessarily to the local Salafis (who are more numerous than the members of both organisations combined, but lack a structure and a leadership).

Third, the constitution-drafting process posed, and will continue to pose, thorny challenges. The reference to the shari'ah as the principal source of legislation in article one of the constitutional declaration of August 2011 raised a few eyebrows in the West and among Libya's liberals. A similar reaction occurred when Mustafa Abdul Jalil, the chairperson of the NTC, talked about the superiority of shari'ah and the legitimacy of polygamy in his liberation speech on 23 October 2011. 'We are an Islamic state,' he said, and he pledged to get rid of regulations that didn't conform to Islamic law.

The MB, the LIMC, as well as Salafi and conservative figures interviewed earlier perceived this as a victory. 'The laws of Libya have to have an Islamic reference and that should be enshrined in the constitution,' asserted Bashir al-Kubty.[12] 'The issue of the shari'ah is settled. It will be the supreme source of legislation...there is no point in making this debatable or raising the Qur'an in Benghazi and Sabha,' said Dr Abd al-Nasser Shamata, the head of the crisis management unit in the NTC. His statement was a response to demonstrations of a few hundred protestors in Benghazi and Sabha demanding the implementation of the shari'ah in 2011 and 2012.[13]

The issue of the shari'ah will remain to be a thorny one in all the transition and civil war phases. Libyan Islamist relative electoral successes occurred in 2012 without a thorough update of their worldviews. This exacerbated political and ideological polarisation that became increasingly evident in the new Libya.

The Libyan Islamic Fighting Group

Established in 1990, the LIFG was modelled along the lines of the Egyptian al-Jihad organisation: secretive, elitist, exclusively paramilitary, and aiming for a decisive action to topple the regime.[14] However, the Libyan authorities discovered the movement; it, therefore, had to declare its existence for the first time on 18 October 1995. A brutal crackdown followed, and the LIFG led a three-year low-level insurgency mainly based in eastern Libya. The group attempted to assassinate Gaddafi on three occasions in 1995 and 1996. By 1998, the Consultative Council of the LIFG decided to impose a three-year ceasefire in Libya and to review that decision in 2001. But the events of 11 September 2001 changed all calculations, as it put the leadership and the whole organisation in survival mode.

According to LIFG leaders and members I interviewed in Tripoli, dialogue with the Libyan regime started in 2005. In 2006, six members from the Consultative Council were involved in talks with the regime. By the end of 2010, the LIFG published a book, *Corrective Studies in Understandings of Jihad, Enforcement of Morality and Judgement of People*, in which it reviews the ideas and fatwas supportive of fighting against rulers as well as of judging individuals as apostates (takfir). In March 2010, Saif al-Islam Gaddafi heralded the release of LIFG commanders and praised their book in a public conference attended by western diplomats, academics and journalists.

Like the MB and its offshoots, the LIFG and the jihadi trend supported the February 2011 revolution and played a significant role in the removal of Gaddafi's regime. The movement brought a wealth of paramilitary experience to Libyan revolutionaries. Members of the movement were heavily involved in multiple armed conflicts, including in Afghanistan, Algeria and Chechnya. But the LIFG first transformed itself into the Libyan Islamic Movement for Change (LIMC), and many of its figures are members of the Tripoli Military Council (TMC). Two of its leading figures established the Watan (Homeland) Party and Ummah Wasat (Central Nation) Party.

The Salafi trend

The existence of the Salafi trend in Libya goes back to the 1960s.[15] Like in other countries, non- jihadi Salafism in Libya is divided into five subtrends: status-quo/authoritarian Salafism, apolitical/scholarly Salafism, political/reformist Salafism and armed Salafism. Despite being associated with Saudi theologians, status-quo Salafism was able to grow under the Gaddafi regime, mainly due to its rhetorical support of the rulers, regardless of their behaviour. Like some Egyptian Salafis, many of the shaykhs of that subtrend were against the revolution,[16] and supported the status quo. Between February and August 2011, some of them were used for pro-Gaddafi propaganda, issuing statements on TV and radio to cast religious legitimacy on the regime, and to de-legitimate the revolutionaries.[17]

After Gaddafi, the Salafi trend in Libya, despite its relatively large number compared to even the MB and the LIFG, suffered from a lack of leadership and organisational structures. Additionally, the ideology does not proscribe a specific political behaviour. As a result, Libyan Salafis engaged in both the post-Gaddafi electoral political process and armed conflict, but on rival sides.[18]

Islamists and the 2012 electoral losses

'We certainly did not expect the results, but regardless...our future is certainly better than our present and our past,' said Sami al-Saadi, former ideologue of the Libyan Islamic Fighting Group and the founder of the al-Ummah al-Wasat Party (Central Nation – CNP), which came in third in Central Tripoli.[19] Al-Saadi, once called 'the Shaykh of the Arabs' by the Taliban's Mullah Omar, and author of the LIFG's anti-democracy manifesto, accepted the initial indicators of Libya's non-Islamist victory.

Indeed, the results raised eyebrows, even for analysts who did not expect an Islamist landslide. In electoral district number one, where Derna lies (commonly referred to as an 'Islamist stronghold'), the 'liberal-leaning', non-Islamist National Forces Coalition (NFC), a coalition of more than sixty parties and hundreds of local civil society

organisations, swept the poll with 59 769 votes, while the JCP of the Muslim Brotherhood got only 8 619. The liberal-leaning Central National Trend (CNT) came in third with 4 962 votes.

In the western district of Abu Salim – where many Islamists are perceived as local heroes due to their sacrifices under brutal repression – the NFC still swept the poll with 60 052 votes, defeating all six Islamist parties, which together received less than 15 000 votes. Overall, liberal-leaning parties won the most votes in eleven out of the thirteen electoral districts, with the NFC winning ten of those and the CNT winning one. Overall, the NFC got thirty-nine seats, the JCP won seventeen seats and came in a distant second, and the CNT secured only two seats.

Those results only affected eighty out of the 200 seats of the 2012 General National Congress (GNC), whose mandate was to appoint a prime minister, a government and a committee to craft the constitution. The rest of the 120 seats are assigned for individual candidates.

In some districts, the Islamists were not too far behind, however. Across Libya, they consistently won the second place in ten out of the thirteen districts, with the JCP winning nine of those and the Salafi-leaning Originality Coalition (OC) wining one. In Misrata (district number nine), the JCP came in second, after the local Union for Homeland Party, but still managed to win almost three times the number of votes as the NFC, which came in fourth.

Islamists spearheading the opposition against Gaddafi were advised by Tunisian and Egyptian Islamists, and they used rhetoric full of religious symbolism in a conservative, Muslim majority country. Unsurprisingly for some, this was not enough. It was noted earlier that a striking difference exists between the MB in Egypt and Ennahda in Tunisia, on the one hand, and the Islamists of Libya, on the other: the history of institutionalism and interaction with the masses. In the four decades of Gaddafi's rule, the Islamists of Libya were unable to build local support networks. They also did not have an opportunity to develop their organisational structures, hierarchies or institutions within Libya, or to create

a parallel network of clinics and social services as their counterparts in Egypt, Morocco and Jordan have done.

As a result of this organisational immaturity, the Libyan Islamists could not unite under one coalition to compete with former Prime Minister Mahmoud Jibril's NFC. Instead, Islamist votes were divided between several parties. For example, the LIFG had to split supporting votes between two large factions: al-Watan Party, led by the LIFG's former commander, Abd al-Hakim Belhaj, and the CNP, led by the LIFG's former ideologue, Sami al-Saadi. Moreover, sometimes the Salafi-leaning OC-affiliated parties competed against each other in the same district, most notably district eleven, where three of their parties came in second, seventh and thirteenth in Tajoura/Souq al-Jum'a area. Additionally, the OC leaders failed to mobilise large sections in the Libyan Salafi community that boycotted the elections, mainly out of theological convictions that elections were religiously illegitimate.

Another reason for non-Islamist support is the 'blood' factor. 'I am not giving my family's votes to the MB. Two of my cousins died because of them,' explained Mohamed Abdul Hakim, a voter from Benghazi.[19] Despite believing that Islam should be the source for legislation, he still voted non-Islamist. His cousins were killed in a confrontation in the 1990s, likely between the Martyrs Movement (a small jihadi group operating in his neighbourhood at that time) and Gaddafi's forces. Nevertheless, many average Libyans, including Mohamed, do not distinguish between different Islamist organisations. For many, all Islamists are 'Ikhwan' (MB). The 'stain' of direct involvement in armed action, coupled with the fears of enforcing Taliban-like laws or an Algeria-like scenario in the country have harmed Islamists of all brands.

Islamist rhetoric during the election campaign also resulted in a poor showing at the polls. 'It is offensive to tell me you have to vote for an Islamic party. What does that make me if I voted otherwise? In Libya we are Muslims...They can't take away my identity and claim it's only theirs,' I was told by Jamila Marzouki, an Islamic studies graduate

who voted NFC, despite wanting Islam to be the ultimate reference for Libyan laws.[21]

Other factors had more to do with the non-Islamist side. The international legitimacy and its domestic impact of Mahmoud Jibril, his tribal affiliation (the Warfalla tribe is about one million of the 6.4 million person Libyan population), and leadership style, coupled with an electoral campaign that focused on incentives and future hopes (while also exaggerating the repercussions of an Islamist takeover and showing off his 'piety') all produced good results for that camp.

Political-military coalitions and regional patrons

But if the non-Islamists were able to obtain victories in elections, Islamists and their allies in the GNC were able to form more effective GNC coalitions, and therefore control the majority of votes. This happened mainly via forming political coalitions within the GNC and keeping these coalitions disciplined during voting. The NFC failed to build effective coalitions, and the subsequent reduction of its GNC-bloc led to further polarisation and attempts to dissolve the GNC, most notably through Haftar's first and second coup attempts in February and May 2014.

Elections were held on 25 June 2014 for the Council of Deputies (parliament), amidst Libya's polarisation and armed politics. While all candidates ran as independents, the elections saw non-Islamist factions win the majority of seats. The election turnout was very low, however, at less than 18 per cent, compared to a 61.58 per cent in the 2012 elections. The low turnout was mainly attributed to an escalation of armed confrontations in the country following Haftar's May 2014 coup, which also rejected both the new elections and the GNC.

Regional dynamics and the IS challenge

The actions of some regional players have not only exacerbated the polarisation in Libya, but also directly spoiled reconciliation efforts at critical junctures. The Sisi regime in Egypt is a prime example. 'This man is an opportunity, sir. He is speaking about the timing...they are

planning something there [in Libya]. Yes, he is speaking about a form of secret cooperation...unannounced to anyone...no one will hear or know about it...he will come to you,' said General Abbas Kamel, Sisi's chief aide, in a recent instalment of a series of leaks.[22] 'The man' was Ahmed Gaddaf al-Dam, Gaddafi's cousin and chief aide, pursued by Libyan authorities after the revolution as well as by Interpol for alleged crimes against humanity. He was also recently interviewed on a local pro-regime Egyptian TV channel to publicly declare his support of the Islamic state group (IS).[23]

The exact date of the leak is unknown. But it was certainly after Sisi's military coup on 3 July 2013, and before Haftar's first 'television coup' on 14 February 2014. The leak revealed no secrets but shed important light on the regional dimension of the Libyan conflict. Sisi's military involvement in Libya became common knowledge in official and expert circles around November 2013. In August 2014, US officials exposed an Egyptian–Emirati secret airstrike in Tripoli, an unprecedented bombing raid by an Arab Gulf state on an Arab North African capital.[24] Further details were exposed recently of actions that clearly violated the arms embargo on Libya and UN Security Council Resolution 1970. 'We should not forget the favour of Egypt. Our ammo came from Egypt. Four hundred containers from there,' said Saqr al-Joroushi, the commander of air forces loyal to Haftar and the Tobruk government, while the cheering crowd chanted 'Allah akbar'.[25]

In February 2014, Egypt's air force struck again; this time in Derna, after IS militants brutally slaughtered twenty-one Egyptian citizens in Sirte. After the strike, Sisi's regime sought United Nations approval for military intervention in Libya, then for a naval blockade of the Tripoli government, while lifting the rebel embargo. All attempts were diplomatic failures.

'Sisi doesn't have credibility with, and he is in fact an opponent of, the moderate Islamists, and they are already looking to use his bombings as a pretence to abandon the talks,' a European diplomat said in March 2015.[26] That may be an oversimplification on several levels.

Whereas they are part of it, the Tripoli government is not exactly run by 'moderate Islamists', but by a multilayered coalition in which pro-revolution regionalists, such as Misratan revolutionary brigades and local councils, are a very influential faction. The Tobruk government is not exactly 'secular' either. It is also composed of a non-homogeneous coalition of military factions, regionalist forces, pro-Gaddafi elements and pro-revolution ones, with the military faction led by Haftar having most clout. Haftar believes in the 'Sisi model' of takeover, including using Salafi figures to issue supportive fatwas for repressing rivals.

The western-backed UN strategy has an alternative route – with less bloody prospects and a potentially higher chance of defeating IS and like-minded organisations, without empowering a ruthless dictator in the process. The immediate objective of the strategy is to build a unity government alongside Libya's security and military forces.

But the situation in Sirte is particularly problematic. Libya Dawn, a military force operating under Libya's Chief of Staff loyal to the Tripoli government, with which members of the MB are in coalition, has deployed the 166th Battalion around Sirte, in an attempt to take over the city centre, the university and other areas from IS loyalists. 'IS forces there are estimated to be somewhere between 100 and 150 armed vehicles [pick-up trucks and four-by-four SUVs]' said Mohammed Abdullah, a General National Congress (Tripoli Parliament) member and the leader of the National Front Party.[27] The ground troops of Libya Dawn are not enough for a quick, decisive victory though. 'The force is composed of around 300 armed vehicles,' said Abdullah.

Regardless of how the confrontation between the Tripoli government and IS plays out, the Sisi regime's preferred strategy can have disastrous consequences on the already-precarious situation in Libya, not to mention the rest of the region. This strategy's objective is not national reconciliation, social cohesion, democratisation, military and security professionalism, or democratic control of armed actors; it is more about eradication of political rivals – mainly from the Muslim Brotherhood and other Islamist factions, empowering like-minded/loyal milit-

ary generals, installing another repressive authoritarian regime on the borders of Egypt, and – where most of the other objectives intersect – defeating IS. But the tactics employed to attain that last objective are more likely to prolong the civil war in Libya, and destroy any potential for reconciliation. With these consequences, a stronger North African version of IS is a more likely outcome.

The rise of IS poses a significant challenge, not only to the MB in Libya but also to Salafi factions, including LIFG and its offshoots. Young Libyan Islamist activists link the MB's failure in Egypt to the rise of IS in Syria and Iraq. The radical narrative and propaganda of the 'caliphate' is also contrasted with the gradualist approach of the MB. This has implications in terms of recruitment, and Derna is a good example of how IS loyalists steadily advanced.

Implications for the study of Islamism

The Egyptian military coup of July 2013 has majorly affected the region in general, and Libya in particular. The message of the coup for Libya, Syria, Yemen and beyond is that of militarising politics: only arms guarantee political rights, not the constitution, not democratic institutions, and certainly not votes. That message will have a few implications for Islamist political behaviour, as well as ideological and organisational consequences. Such consequences will affect the study of Islamism.

The Libyan Muslim Brotherhood has certainly taken a lesson from the coup in Egypt, and the fate of the MB leaders and members there. One lesson is about having allies with 'hard power'. Powerful regional militias, factions within armed institutions and/or arming organisation loyalists are all options that were partially implemented. Several Libyan MB figures understand that the two Islamist organisations that survived major onslaughts are Hamas and Hizbullah, mainly due to their armed wings. This should not be construed as a transformation towards jihadism, but it can engender a sub-category within an armed

Islamist typology, mainly focused on a defensive 'arms-for-survival' understanding. The level of militancy can increase, however, depending on how repressive the political environment is.

The inclusion-moderation hypothesis was also affected by the post-uprising Islamist transformations. In Libya, there are two main relevant issues. The first is how political inclusion affects Islamist stances on constitutional liberalism. As seen in the GNC case, Islamist MPs attempted to use their electoral success to implement laws that contradict constitutional liberalism. The second issue is the question that if inclusion proves to be constantly unsustainable, which trajectory will the Islamists ultimately take in an environment in which moderation does not pay off.

Notes

1 Belhaj Al-Amin, interview by author, 1 March 2012, Tripoli.

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4 Soliman Abd al-Qadir, former General Observer of the Muslim Brotherhood in Libya, interviewed by Sami Kleib, Liqa' Khas, *Al Jazeera Arabic,* 30 May 2009.

5 Fawzi Abu Kitef.

6 Abu Salim is a maximum security prison in Tripoli, Libya. It was notorious during the rule of Muammar Gaddafi for human rights abuses, including a massacre in 1996 in which Human Rights Watch estimated that more than 1 270 prisoners were killed by regime forces in two days.

7 Soliman Abd al-Qadir, 30 May 2009.

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14

Revolution and counter-revolution: A clash of Political Islams

Ebrahim Shabbir Deen

Introduction

> February 11 was the culmination of the Arab revolution. On February 12, the counterrevolution began…Revolutions devour their children. The spoils go to the resolute, the patient, who know what they are pursuing and how to achieve it. Revolutions almost invariably are short-lived affairs, bursts of energy that destroy much on their pathway, including the people and ideas that inspired them. So it is with the Arab uprising.[1]

No sooner had the MENA uprisings begun than attempts were made to halt and reverse them. This is not unique; the history of revolutions is filled with attempts by former regimes and international actors negatively impacted by revolutionary changes to reconstitute and regain some of their losses. Some scholars argue that counter-revolutions are hotwired into the international order, and are not always the result of neorealist calculations.[2] This chapter critically investigates the different material and normative transformations caused by the uprisings, which informed the Gulf and Iranian counter-revolutions. It assesses their methods and successes. Part one seeks to understand what revolutions entail. It briefly elaborates on how different theoretical paradigms view

revolutions and their causes. The section then locates revolutions in an international context.

Part two expounds on attempts by former regimes to reverse the losses suffered as a consequence of their overthrow. It considers the international dimensions of counter-revolutions and the reasons thereof, such as a lack of common goals within revolutionary coalitions, which allow for the emergence of remnants of former regimes. The section then critically analyses the international dimensions of counter-revolutionary manoeuvres, and argues that these are informed by both material and normative factors.[3]

Part three assesses the 2011 MENA uprisings. Although most of these uprisings had domestic causes, they had similar origins across the region. This can partially be explained by the implementation of structural adjustment programmes (SAPs), and the commencement of the 'global war on terror'. These led to the collapse of the autocratic bargain between regimes and their populations, and subsequent calls for political liberalisation, social justice and economic redistribution. This chapter is, however, more focused on the regional situation half a decade after the uprisings began. It elaborates on the reversals in Egypt, Yemen and, to an extent, Syria, concluding that only Tunisia is likely to consolidate some of its gains.

Parts four and five critically analyse the Gulf and Iranian counter-revolutions. The section considers the material and normative changes caused by the uprisings, then critically analyses the regimes' responses of containment and confrontation regionally, and co-optation and repression domestically. Iran's ability to institutionalise this opposition through a change in presidential power is an interesting case in this regard.

The last part investigates the reasons for the relative successes of the counter-revolutions, distinguishing between classical and negotiated revolutions. In the case of the MENA uprisings, it argues, following the removal of former rulers, the lack of overt violence, ideological coherence and state control allowed for the reconstitution of remnants and regional support to these.

Revolutions: Theoretical concepts

Studies of revolutions have formed an integral part of social enquiry, especially in light of the changes they have wrought in different parts of the world.[4] The French revolution produced new systems of nationalism and popular sovereignty, which influenced the many nineteenth-century battles between republicanism and absolutism; the Bolshevik revolution resulted in the institution of a governance system and form of economic development, which, at its peak in the 1950s, inspired over a third of the world's states.[5] Many have attempted to understand the causal factors influencing revolutions and their resultant trajectories. Theda Skocpol defines revolutions as 'rapid, basic transformations of society's state and class structures…accompanied and in part carried through by class-based revolts from below.'[6] In Marxist theory, they are caused by disjunctures in the 'mode of production' between the forces of production (technology, division of labour) and the relations of production (property relations). Political conflict theorists argue that access to resources and political organisation are critical in enabling groups to revolt.[7] Aggregate-psychological theories, on the other hand, understand revolutions as originating from frustrations caused by schisms between expectations and capabilities (relative deprivation).[8]

Islamists have a less defined interpretation of revolutions. Viewing them as causes of huge upheaval (fitna), most Islamists believe that societies transform in a more evolutionary manner; hence most are reformists. This can be seen in the stances of parties such as the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood (MB) and Tunisia's Ennahda, which prefer consensus rather than confrontation.[9]

Absent in many discussions is a focus on the international or systemic causes of these events.[10] These include the unequal nature of capitalism and economic development, the collapse of geopolitical alliances, and the incubation of new ideas.[11] The 1989 negotiated revolutions in Eastern Europe are a case in point. Aside from various domestic

factors (political repression, economic stagnation, citizen alienation, etc.), these were greatly influenced politically by the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan, ideationally by the rise of Mikhail Gorbachev and militarily by the withdrawal of the military guarantee provided to Soviet client states.[12]

Revolutions are more common following wars and drastic shifts in power balances as these provide an opening for revolutionary changes to occur and, more importantly, gain acceptance.[13] Examples include the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution, which commenced during the First World War, and the various successful independent struggles or revolutions following the Second World War.[14] The participation of a country in interstate wars also increases the chances of it undergoing a revolution, especially when these wars become extended or are unsuccessful. France's involvement in numerous wars between 1650 and 1780 forced the regime to increase taxes, which consequently led to schisms within the old regime.[15] Revolutions are triggered by a breakdown in social structures, resulting from various domestic and external factors, which allow oppositional forces to mobilise, acquire resources (especially military hardware) and overthrow the existing regime. States undergoing revolutions are often on the economic and geopolitical periphery and dependent on international powers.[16]

Counter-revolutions: Origins and aims

Following a revolution, backlash from the deposed regime can be expected as it seeks to reverse its losses.[17] This is most apparent during the consolidation process, when the revolutionary power is attempting to entrench its hold and fight off opponents. Revolutions tend to occur via coalitions of different factions, united more around their disagreements with the old system than around a common programme, and are not usually instigated by a single, unified faction.[18] Therefore, a revolution's relative success can usually be measured only a generation later. Furthermore, revolutions are contingent on political and structural change.[19]

Because revolutions are caused by international as well as domestic factors, they also have normative and material consequences for international actors and the international system as a whole.[20] Materially, revolutions alter the balance of power and may disturb complex state alliances.[21] The Iranian revolution, for example, turned the United States' main regional ally in the battle to contain communism into an enemy state. Further, dominant states sometimes act to protect their hegemonic positions. Failure to protect an ally, even though it may be of little significance to the hegemon's interests, may lead others to question the dominant state's motivations and abilities. Revolutions also disturb economic interests, providing fodder for the counter-revolution's international support base.

Normatively, revolutions alter the rules and values of the international order. Henry Kissinger, for example, argues that the international order is governed by two main factors: equilibrium (balance of power) and agreement on a set of norms and values.[22] These norms and values underpin the goals and methods of foreign policy, and ensure that balance-of-power logic is not resorted to on every international issue.[23] In other words, norms and values are used to assess the relative justice of a state's claims and provide a mechanism for adjustments if necessary. Imperative in this regard is the acceptance of these by all states. Revolutionary states question these norms and in most instances oppose them.[24] Likewise, Raymond Aron argues that the international order is characterised by homogeneous and heterogeneous states.[25] Homogeneous states are organised similarly, give legitimacy to certain foreign policy principles and share alike values that guide actions, while heterogeneous states are characterised by adherence to different norms and values.[26] In a heterogeneous system, difficulty in distinguishing between a political adversary and an enemy state may be experienced, leading to conflict.[27] At these systems' core are the values and principles of domestic actors, which have a significant impact on the order as a whole.[28] Homogeneity results in a stable system, while heterogeneity leads to a system characterised by competition and conflict.[29]

Revolutionary states thus pose a threat to the international order by questioning its norms and values.[30] Their activist foreign policies seek to modify it, in line with the conditions they believe led to their exploitation (capitalism in Lenin's view, arrogance according to Khomeini).[31] These threaten the system's viability as institutionalised mechanisms to assess the nature and justice of these claims do not exist. This leads to a system wherein, to paraphrase Kissinger, diplomats speak different languages.[32] In this context, hegemonic states are forced to act to protect the system no matter what the capabilities and interests of the revolutionary state.[33] Moreover, revolutionary states seek to export their ideologies,[34] in light of their belief in their ideology's universalism and emancipatory characteristics.[35] The Bolsheviks employed a two billion-rouble fund to support revolutions around the world, while the Iranians fund militias across the Middle East. Lastly, the norms and values conceptualised once power is consolidated inspire other movements and parties, causing status quo powers to treat the revolutionary state with heightened concern and wariness. This illustrates that some threats posed by revolutionary states are systemic and non-neorealist.[36]

Methods of counter-revolution

Status quo powers use a variety of measures to halt revolutionary states, the most overt of which is a resort to direct action. Examples include the Allied intervention in Russia following the Bolshevik revolution, and the deployment of US forces to Vietnam. Other measures include harassment, such as small border incursions and the spread of propaganda; arming and funding remnants and counter-revolutionary groups, such as the US funding of the Contras; and depriving the state of legitimacy through non-recognition and the use of international institutions, such as the non-recognition of the Soviet Union by the USA despite the two countries' informal bilateral trade and security partnerships.[37] Notably, counter-revolutionary states often use measures deemed contrary to the international order, such as interventions and domestic interference, to

stall and reverse the path of revolutionary states. In other words, they use many of the same actions they deem illegal when practised by the revolutionary state; they challenge the same norms they claim to protect. Regis Debray poetically asserts that 'revolutions revolutionise the counter'.[38] Significantly, these interferences are couched in popular and emancipatory ideologies, which their constituencies genuinely believe in.[39]

The 2011 MENA uprisings: Origins and dimensions

The 2011 MENA uprisings, termed the 'Arab Spring' by many observers, were large, relatively nonviolent protests demanding political liberalisation and wealth redistribution.[40] They commenced in Tunisia – where protests forced its leader of twenty-three years, Zine El-Abidine Ben Ali, to relinquish power in January 2011 – and spread as far as Uganda.[41] Egypt, Libya, Bahrain and Yemen saw widespread protests, which eventually led to the departure from power of Hosni Mubarak, Muammar Gaddafi and Ali Abdullah Saleh. The Syrian and Bahraini regimes might have encountered the same fate, had it not been for the support of other regimes in the region.[42]

Though each had domestic characteristics, the various uprisings had similar causes.[43] Inspiration for the protests included economic stagnation, unemployment, political repression and corruption.[44] In Egypt, for instance, eighteen million people (twenty per cent of the population) lived in absolute poverty in 2009. According to often-understated official figures, unemployment was at eleven per cent. Rampant corruption had allowed former president Mubarak and his allies to accumulate billions of dollars. Meanwhile, inflation stood at twelve per cent (down from eighteen per cent in 2008).[45] Social factors put tremendous pressure on the robust authoritarian states, and eventually the autocratic bargain[46] – a social compact governing state-citizen interaction – collapsed.[47] Further, the revolutions occurred in a context of demographic clustering in the young adult age category.[48] An important consequence

of this demographic trend was an increased need for job creation, especially for young adults entering the job market, failing which restlessness and increased demands for accountability usually result.[49] This was best witnessed in Tunisia, where unemployment was over ten per cent higher (twenty-three per cent) for young graduates when compared with the unemployment among older adults.[50] Certain areas of Tunisia, such as Gafsa and Sidi Bouzid, the uprising's epicentre, had youth unemployment rates of over forty per cent.[51]

However, the contribution of systemic/international norms and powerful state interests should not be overlooked. The IMF and World Bank promoted the infamous SAPs, ostensibly for economic growth, while global actors, including the USA, propped up dictatorships to protect their geopolitical and commercial interests.[52] These 'strategic rents' enabled regimes to outlast their term limits.[53] Funding and technology sharing from these large powers led to increased securitisation, especially in terms of maintaining large, overarching security apparatuses, which were used mainly to suppress dissent.[54] Furthermore, the funds provided were also dispersed in conventional rentier forms to secure the loyalty of preferred businesspersons and industries.

Tunisia is a case in point. The country's implementation of SAPs involved increased privatisation, which benefited individuals linked to the Ben Ali regime and consequently led to a situation where poverty and unemployment increased.[55] Moreover, Ben Ali's assistance and acquiescence in the global war on terror endeared him to the Bush administration, which provided him with military aid and ignored his autocratic behaviour. Ben Ali regularly arrested and tortured political opponents during his twenty-three years in power.[56]

Such actions were not without precedent in the Arab world. Similar scenarios played out in the region during the 1950s and 1960s, with distinct similarities to what confronted the region in 2011, and the subsequent responses of regional powers. The period saw the popularisation of socialism and military nationalism in the region.[57] Moved by institutional inefficacy, subservience to colonial masters, corruption, the concentration

of power and failure to address the plight of the Palestinian people, armed nationalists dethroned monarchs across the region.[58] Gamal Abdel Nasser ascended to power in Egypt in 1952; the Ba'ath Party dethroned the Iraqi monarch in 1958; Yemen's king was deposed in 1962; and Muammar Gaddafi defeated the regime of King Idris in 1969.[59] At the time, the spread of ideas such as economic redistribution, nationalisation and anti-Americanism threatened Gulf monarchs, culminating in Nasser's involvement in Yemen.[60] Jordan and the Gulf responded by banning political parties and enlisting Islamists to ideologically combat nationalism, while Iraq and Sudan violently suppressed the communists. Nasser's defeat in the 1967 Arab-Israeli War accelerated this process, as Egypt lost its military and political might, and was forced to rely on Saudi Arabia.[61] This consequently resulted in the creation and maintenance of regimes, which were nationalist or Marxist only in their rhetoric.[62] They maintained large security apparatuses (mukhabarat), and diverse sectors of society (state bureaucrats, industrialists and military personnel) were enlisted to ensure the regimes' perpetuation; politics became the domain of the powerful.[63] The regional situation in 2011 directly resulted from this legacy.

The events in Tunisia, Egypt and the other countries in the region that experienced uprisings commenced processes of negotiated revolution, and were not full-blown revolutions. Barring Libya, substantial societal change has not resulted in any of the countries that experienced uprisings in 2010–2011. Even when political deviations occurred, such as in Egypt and Tunisia, regime change rather than structural political change took place. In Egypt, the military was easily able to preserve its dominant position in politics, while in Tunisia the interior ministry and judiciary remain intact.[64]

The MENA uprisings: Five years on

Four years after the uprisings, little has changed, and Tunisia is the only country likely to consolidate some gains.[65] Economic stagnation has worsened; regional unemployment has increased; and the demo-

cratic openings in most states have been shut.[66] In Egypt, for example, the gains of the uprisings had been fully reversed by 2013. Poor economic performance and increased polarisation led to the military ouster of then-president Mohamed Morsi a year into his administration.[67] The situation has since deteriorated further, with thousands of Islamist sympathisers killed or arrested, freedom of movement curtailed by a November 2013 protest law, and the Muslim Brotherhood being declared a terrorist organisation and banned, with its assets frozen. Military personnel, the judiciary and Mubarak-era remnants have been conferred constitutional protections, and now hold key state positions, including that of the presidency.[68]

Syrians saw their initial, largely non-violent conflict mutate into a full-blown civil war as regional actors entered the fray. The conflict has caused hundreds of thousands of deaths and displaced millions of people, as the government and opposition factions seek to consolidate control of civilian areas. The subsequent power vacuum led to the rise of the Islamic State group (IS), which declared a caliphate in July 2014. The rise of IS has instigated direct international intervention in the country, strengthening the regime and decreasing chances for a political solution. A tacit rapprochement between the USA and the Asad regime, which would mean a total reversal of the Syrian uprising, is potentially on the table as mutual opposition to IS draws them closer.

In Yemen, one of the poorest Arab countries, Ali Abdullah Saleh's delay in accepting a Gulf-brokered path from power has created significant instability. Further, Al-Qa'ida in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) and the Houthi rebels, backed by supporters loyal to Saleh, have increased and consolidated control over vast swathes of territory. The Houthi rebels' gains have forced multiple cabinet reshuffles, as well as the short-lived resignation[69] of President Abd Rabbuh Mansur Hadi.[70] These culminated in the intervention of Arab Gulf states in the country, commencing in March 2015. These interventions worsened the already dire social and economic situation in the country, and over half of Yemen is now food insecure. Thousands have been killed, and although

negotiations toward ending the conflict will soon commence, the damage is irreparable.

Lastly, calls for reform have been blunted in Bahrain. Opposition to the regime continues to be suppressed through arrests and torture, and the Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry has yet to charge a senior official for committing crimes.[71]

Regional counter-revolutions: Interests and aims

The MENA uprisings have largely complied with the many theories and perspectives predicting counter-revolutionary attempts following regional upheavals. The uprisings had affected the Gulf states and, in particular, regional hegemon Saudi Arabia.[72] The so-called moderate axis, comprising status quo Gulf states and Egypt, had been severed and its backbone, Egypt, detached.[73] This could be observed as early as 18 February 2011, less than a week after Mubarak's ouster, when former Egyptian defence minister, Mohamed Hussein Tantawi, authorised two Iranian warships to pass through the Suez Canal. Further moves included Morsi's visit to Iran in September 2012, and his call for the formation of a contact group – including Iran – to negotiate an end to the Syrian crisis.[74] Significantly, Iran remains Saudi Arabia's regional arch-rival.

During Morsi's short term, Egypt grew tentatively independent. The country played a pre-eminent role in negotiating a ceasefire between Hamas and Israel in November 2012, and a coalition was beginning to form between Egypt, Turkey and Qatar.[75] Prior to this, Egypt had often followed the Saudi lead, especially on issues concerning Palestine and Israel.[76]

Aside from Egypt, regional powers were compelled to act to protect the order they had sought, and to ensure that other, weaker states remained within their orbit. This is best illustrated by Saudi Arabia's intervention in Bahrain to protect the Khalifa regime.[77] Bahrain is not necessarily a very important Saudi interest and does not pose a threat

to Riyadh. However, it intervened to protect Bahrain's rulers, and to ensure the perpetuation of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC).[78] Further, Gulf states maintained investments in post-uprising states that had been acquired at dubious prices as a result of the links between the monarchs and various autocratic regimes.[79] Republics such as Egypt were also a source of cheap labour for the Gulf.[80] This changed after the deposition of the autocrats.[81] These are some of the many material reasons influencing the subsequent Gulf counter-revolution.

From a more normative perspective, the uprisings impacted the region in two main ways. Firstly, the increase in the popularity of Islamists advocating more participatory politics altered the existent norms and values guiding regional interaction.[82] The rise of Islamist parties such as the Muslim Brotherhood and Ennahda, and their espousal of democracy, altered the prevalent discourse, which hitherto had not distinguished between militant Islamists such as al-Qa'ida and democratic parties such as the Brotherhood. This allowed Gulf states to increase their control domestically through the provision of rents and increases in surveillance. Regionally they were consulted, and exercised great influence on foreign activity in the region. The uprisings drastically transformed these relationships. The USA publicly scorned the Bahraini regime in February 2011 over its crackdown on opponents, while Riyadh began losing influence in the determination of regional policies.[83]

The decline of Saudi influence was best observed in the November 2012 Israeli attacks on Hamas. Previously, the international community had refused to engage the group.[84] During the 2012 clashes,[85] Hamas was engaged and its positions canvassed through Morsi's connections with the group, which is fraternally linked with the Brotherhood.[86] These negotiations were so successful that the final ceasefire terms were largely negotiated between the USA, representing Israel, and the Brotherhood, representing Hamas; even the ceasefire announcement was a US-Egyptian joint statement.[87] The US president, Barack Obama, and Morsi developed a close relationship and the partnership was seen as a model to address issues beyond the region.[88]

The shift initiated a process, which, if allowed to flower, would have altered the norms and social compact governing Gulf monarchies.[89] Currently these governments seek to legitimise their autocratic rule by citing Islamic precepts.[90] They cloak their leadership in such precepts, preserve links with the religious establishment through funding and political appointments, and maintain shura councils to give citizens the impression that the religious establishment guides the rulers.[91] The rise of the Brotherhood and that of participatory Islamist parties threatens these states.[92] These movements' belief in democracy, women's rights, and non-hereditary leadership, and their use of Islamic concepts such as shura, if allowed to become new norms, may threaten the very basis of the Gulf monarchies' legitimacy. Moreover, the fact that many opposition parties and regime figures espoused such norms and couched their opposition in Islamic terminology and concepts increased the Gulf monarchs' threat perception.[93] This perception was enhanced by the fact that thousands of Islamists escaping military crackdowns in the 1950s and 1960s had settled in the Gulf.[94]

Lastly, the monarchs still resent the Muslim Brotherhood's refusal to endorse their stance supporting US intervention in Iraq during the 1990–91 Gulf War.[95] The recently-appointed crown prince of Saudi Arabia, Nayef bin Abdulaziz, bemoaned the lack of support provided to the kingdom during the crisis, arguing that Riyadh had provided the group with too much support.[96] Seizing the opportunity, Gulf states – including Saudi Arabia, Bahrain and the UAE – declared the MB a terrorist group in March 2014 and instituted a crackdown on its sympathisers.

Gulf states: Interests, motivations and aims

The above consequences have meant that Gulf states, led by Saudi Arabia, responded to the uprisings speedily with relative success. Domestically, they implemented a two-pronged approach involving co-optation and increased repression.[97] First, the governments used their large reserves to increase social spending, improve public sector salaries and

renew focus on infrastructure projects. Saudi Arabia, for example, spent over 100 billion dollars in 2011 alone for this purpose.[98] Further, certain states instituted elections to consultative bodies in order to provide a veneer of democracy and public participation in governance.[99] Saudi Arabia held its long-postponed municipal elections in 2011, while the UAE held elections for its federal national council in the same year with an increased franchise, and Hamad Bin Khalifa Al-Thani, then emir of Qatar, promised to hold parliamentary elections in 2013.[100]

Second, the Gulf states increased domestic repression in order to suppress dissent.[101] Long seen as less direct in their attempts to influence their societies, a factor that some argue accounts for their survival and longevity, Gulf monarchs implemented large crackdowns on opposition forces.[102] GCC states arrested and jailed hundreds of citizens for 'insulting' leaders. Governments reduced already-constrained press freedoms and instituted increased monitoring of phone and internet services.[103] This was best observed in Bahrain, where the regime has faced the gravest threat to its survival, with proportionally the largest protests in the MENA region to date.[104] In February and March 2011, the Bahraini military, augmented by Gulf forces, violently dispersed protests, killing dozens of protesters and arresting hundreds.[105] Today, many Bahraini human rights activists, such as Abdulhadi al-Khawaja and Nabeel Rajab, remain imprisoned. Bahrain's rulers, like those of Saudi Arabia,[106] shrewdly used the Iranian 'threat' to aid in the execution of these goals, accusing the country's majority Shi'a population of being Iranian agents. This clearly illustrates how the Gulf rulers use religious precepts, such as the protection of Sunnism, to legitimate their rule and halt domestic protests. A similar, yet opposing, sectarian form of religious legitimacy can be observed in Iran.

Still reeling from the US decision to abandon Mubarak, the GCC has relied heavily on member states, instituting a regional policy of containment and confrontation.[107] In March 2011, the council deployed units of its 40 000-strong Peninsula Shield Force to Bahrain, enabling the Bahraini regime to consolidate and avoid negotiations with opposi-

tion parties.[108] The situation today remains similar to that following the GCC intervention.[109]

The council further sought to buttress other struggling regional monarchs,[110] and invited Jordan and Morocco to join the GCC.[111] Through a 'strategic partnership', the GCC provided over five billion dollars to the Jordanian and Moroccan regimes, which at the time were experiencing protests.[112] These funds were critical in enabling Jordan's King Abdullah II to postpone subsidy cuts in order to stave off anti-government protests threatening his survival.[113]

Following the success of the containment policies, the monarchs grew more ambitious and sought to reverse the Islamists' gains in other countries through more hostile actions such as supporting remnants, spreading propaganda and refusing loans to states where uprisings had been successful. Egypt's strategic importance meant that the country experienced these actions most acutely. The UAE and Saudi Arabia were actively involved in Morsi's ouster, diplomatically and financially backing the Egyptian military to the tune of over twenty billion dollars, and urging foreign powers not to interfere in 'domestic' Egyptian politics.[114] This consequently allowed the Sisi regime to disregard western calls for reconciliation and political pluralism; the government no longer requires funding from the IMF to sustain itself.[115]

Elsewhere in the region, GCC states have been actively backing the non-Islamist Nidaa Tounes party in Tunisia, and General Khalifa Haftar's forces in Libya.[116] Seizing the opportunity to constrain Iran's influence, GCC states have been vocal supporters of the Syrian uprising, financially and militarily bankrolling anti-regime factions.[117] This partially backfired in light of the militant Salafi nature of some of these forces, which may turn their weapons on their former benefactors once the conflict is over. Further, this support has contributed to the rise of IS, which not only threatens Saudi security through its fighters stationed near the Saudi-Iraqi border, but which will also undermine Saudi legitimacy through the group's stringent use of Islamic concepts and symbols to justify its institutions and actions.

These dangers and opportunities culminated in the December 2013 establishment of the GCC's joint military command.[118] Stationed in Riyadh, the 100 000-strong force is tasked with protecting the region's security, ensuring its stability, and countering terrorism, that is, nullifying threats to Gulf monarchs posed by democratic forces such as the MB and military forces such as IS.[119] The Gulf is also forming an intra-regional police force and establishing a security training academy.[120] Prince Mohamed Bin Nawwaf bin Abdulaziz summed up the rationale behind these moves, first by denouncing western actions in the region, especially those regarding negotiations with Iran and Syria, as 'gambling', and then by declaring that 'the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has no choice but to become more assertive in international affairs'.[121] In other words, the Gulf monarchs will do anything necessary to protect their interests and the regional order, even if it means going against US interests.

Iran: Interests, motivations and aims

Because the uprisings had occurred in states largely satisfied with the status quo, mostly states aligned to the 'moderate axis', Iran stood to gain the most from upheavals in these countries.[122] The Islamic republic's main regional competitor, Saudi Arabia, had financially, diplomatically and militarily supported most of the states that had experienced popular upheavals.[123] Following the removal of long-term dictators, the environment became more conducive to these states' improving relations with Iran.[124] Thus, the Iranian-led 'axis of resistance', which included Hizbullah and Hamas, was set to expand its support base, especially if Egypt defected.

At the outbreak of the uprisings, the Iranian regime, led by Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, adopted harsh and confrontational stances, and its nuclear programme had led to sanctions being placed on the country.[125] This crippled the Iranian economy, and if it had continued, may have posed a threat to the regime.[126] Thus, in the early days, the Ahmad-

inejad administration rhetorically supported the MENA uprisings.[127] However, this changed when protests began in its regional ally, Syria.[128] Aside from diplomatic and trade relations enjoyed by the two states, the Asad regime had been one of only two regimes that had supported Iran during the Iran-Iraq War (1980–1988). Syria had provided Iran's navy a link to the Mediterranean Sea, and had been an important conduit for arms to Hamas and Hizbullah, two groups supported financially and militarily by the Islamic republic.[129]

Initially, it seemed that Iran stood to benefit from the uprisings. The legitimation of parties with religious underpinnings, such as the Muslim Brotherhood, which had received increased recognition from the USA and EU following Mubarak's ouster, would help break down the binary in terms of which many western states understood the Middle East – either as dictatorships that needed to be propped up or as terrorists (with Iran being in the latter category) – as well as the negative perceptions around political Islam.[130] Moreover, the various Islamic precepts appealed to by the many Islamist parties, such as democracy, woman's rights, and constitutions with shari'ah as a reference point, would have little influence on Iran's Velayat-e-faqih form of governance as it already partially accommodated these ideals.[131]

Iran's response

Domestically, the Iranian regime initially responded in a similar manner as it had following the 2009 protests. It banned gatherings, arrested thousands, including opposition leaders Mir-Hossein Mousavi and Mehdi Karroubi, and vigorously monitored internet sites such as Facebook. However, in Iran's political system, regime protectionist shadow institutions providing religious legitimacy, such as the Guardian Council and the Expediency Council, work alongside formal democratic institutions such as the parliament and presidency.[132] This enables the regime to absorb citizen input and provide a measure of democracy. Electoral candidates hold different strands of thought and are allowed to institute vastly different policies, especially in the economic realm.[133] Ac-

cordingly, in the June 2013 election, the Guardian Council sanctioned a moderate, Hassan Rouhani, to stand for election, and ratified his first round victory.[134] Rouhani has instituted policies to improve the country's civil liberties, which include the release of political prisoners, reversal of internet restrictions, and a reduction in state monitoring. These actions have largely defused internal dissent. However, real power still remains vested with the Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei.

In countries around the region, the Iranian state responded in a similar, disjointed manner. The MENA uprisings were initially praised as being inspired by the 1979 Islamic Revolution, with statements touting them as being against western-backed dictatorships and Israel being pre-eminent.[135] The Iranian regime believed the the uprisings would result in anti-Israel, pro-Islamist regimes that would seek to join, or come closer to, the resistance axis.[136] However, when such a result was slow in emerging, and especially after the Syrian uprising began, Iran's actions and discourse transformed.[137] Tehran issued statements bemoaning foreign interference in the Syrian conflict, and began financially and militarily supporting the Asad regime.[138] Iranian support has enabled Asad to hold onto power, and decreased the chances of a negotiated end to the crisis.[139]

The Iranian regime has also exaggerated and instrumentalised the threat posed by militant Sunni factions such as al-Nusra Front in order to sustain the support of ordinary Iranians, and prepare the ground for a possible partnership with the USA against IS.[140] This dealt a severe blow to the country's aspirations to regional leadership. Arab citizens and Islamist parties are unlikely to overlook Iran's support for Asad.

Gulf and Iranian successes and the problem of negotiated revolutions

The relative success of Gulf states and Iran in halting, and in many instances reversing, threats to their regional influences and interests raises many questions, especially as many theorists argue that counter-revolu-

tions are likely to result in little success.[141] In fact, historically, counter-revolutions usually strengthened the despotic powers of post-revolutionary regimes, especially as this threat was exploited to consolidate the regime's control over the state.[142] Post-revolutionary regimes effectively used the threats of a 'fifth column' to buttress themselves and eliminate domestic opponents, especially factions that may have assisted with the former regime's removal.[143] Following the Bolshevik revolution, the allied forces interfered in Russia, allowing Stalin to use repression to consolidate control. In Iran, institutions such as the Guardian Council and the Assembly of Experts, formed to 'protect' the revolution, would have not been tolerated by ordinary Iranians were it not for US support for Saddam's attempts to reverse the 1979 Islamic Revolution.[144] Even in Vietnam, where the USA directly intervened by deploying more than 500 000 troops to support the south, Ho Chi Minh's Vietcong emerged victorious despite suffering significant losses.

Negotiated vs classical revolutions: Similarities

A new understanding is required to explain Gulf and Iranian successes. In one view, these were mainly enabled and achieved because the various uprisings experienced by MENA states were 'negotiated' as opposed to being classical revolutions.[145] The two revolution types share three broad similarities. First, they occur at a conjuncture when both the entrenched powers and the revolutionaries are not able to 'live' and 'survive' as normal.[146] In other words, it is not sufficient for 'revolutionaries' to express their opposition to the entrenched power; the entrenched power's capacity to extend control needs to be altered and subdued.[147] Hence, long-term and short-term effects, such as economic growth and depression, wars and crises of legitimacy, are as important in negotiated revolutions as they are in classical revolutions.[148]

Second, in large part, the subordinate classes carry out both negotiated and classical revolutions.[149] Elite leadership is required, but support from the masses is essential to compel the entrenched power to

retreat.[150] It was the MB's ability to mobilise large numbers of people when it began backing the protests on 27 January 2011, rather than its political experience, that forced Mubarak to relinquish power.[151]

Last, negotiated revolutions, as is the case with classical revolutions, are influenced and shaped by the international order and in turn leave their imprints on it.[152] The collapse of the Soviet Union and international support for the negotiated revolutions in Eastern Europe were both as important in ensuring their outbreak and path, as were the impacts of the Russian war of 1905 and the 1917 intervention in Russia by European actors and their proxies on the Bolshevik revolution. Moreover, negotiated revolutions, like classical revolutions, influence and shape the international order. From inspiring other revolutions, such as what occurred following Ben Ali's ouster, to espousing a more rhetorically revolutionary foreign policy and assisting other states and parties, such as the Morsi regime's call for Asad's exit and attempts to coordinate and unify opposition forces.[153]

Negotiated revolutions: Distinguishing factors

However, negotiated revolutions differ from classical revolutions in various ways. First, overt violence is contained. While levels of violence differ in each setting, the notion that the old regime will be allowed to continue contributing to the state in some manner inhibits the need to employ violence.[154] Thus, during the Egyptian, Tunisian and, to an extent, Yemeni uprisings, the respective regimes relinquished power following mass protests; both regime and revolutionaries used minimal violence.[155] Further, in most instances, the counter-revolution is initially impeded from using violence as the regime negotiates its way out rather than being forced out.[156] In Tunisia, Egypt and even Bahrain, foreign powers, such as the USA and the UK, used diplomatic measures to secure their interests and ensure system stability, even publicly advocating political negotiations.[157]

Second, the struggle or uprising is not informed by a utopian ideal or ideology, since negotiated revolutions seek a return to 'normalcy'.[158]

Many people were dismayed at the lack of ideological slogans and postures informing the 2011 uprisings.[159] Protests across the region called for political liberalisation and economic redistribution, demands already agitated for in the West, and hence the demonstrations resonated with western citizens and their leaders.

Third, negotiated revolutions weaken the state rather than strengthening it.[160] This results from two main factors. First, elements from the old regime maintain state positions, inhibiting the urge to strengthen the new regime. This is aptly illustrated by Morsi's attempts to weaken Egypt's deep state through personnel transfers, including appointing a new public prosecutor and military head, the proposed retirement of judges, and the privatisation of industries. Second, treaties and agreements accompanying the power transfer result in the reduction of state powers.[161] This includes accession to conventions such as those against torture and chemical weapons, and agreements with financial institutions such as the IMF and World Bank, which require privatisation and fiscal restraint.

In the case of the MENA uprisings, the IMF stipulated conditions for the provision of loans to both Tunisia (1.7 billion USD), which it accepted, and Egypt (4.8 billion USD), which was not accepted because Morsi was overthrown before any response could be proffered. These conditions included deeper economic liberalisation, the removal of subsidies, and deregulation. Such conditions severely curtailed the Egyptian and Tunisian governments' ability to adopt policies targeting the poor; both had strict fiscal policy restrictions and deficit limitations imposed.[162] This resulted in a weakening of the state's infrastructure and repressive powers.[163]

Last, because of these factors, foreign powers, rather than attempting a violent counter-revolution, as was the case in many classical revolutions, initially – at least – supported the revolutions.[164] The main actors, such as the USA and China, rapidly recognised the post-uprising governments, and the G8 immediately instituted a forty-billion-dollar fund to assist these states; only a fraction of which have been disbursed.[165] It is important to note that these four features are ideal-typical, and that they are present to differing extents in negotiated revolutions.

The emergence of remnants

The characteristics of these negotiated revolutions aided the efforts of domestic and regional actors to seek a reversal. First, the lack of a popular party to organise the revolutionaries, of a charismatic leadership to inspire demonstrators, and an ideology to focus their activities led to the demonstrators being co-opted.[166] In Egypt, especially, the opposition did not achieve institutional transformation and Mubarak-era remnants instigated them to compete against each other.[167]

Second, the relative lack of violence used and purges of former regime remnants had two main consequences. On the one hand, it allowed networks that ensured the previous regimes' survival to remain intact.[168] Impediments to their reconstitution were almost non-existent, allowing them to stall the process of change.[169] This could best be observed in the ease through which the media and business elites in Tunisia and Egypt, largely constituted by remnants, were able to stall change and discredit the new regimes.[170] On the other hand, global and regional actors seeking a reversal were able to institute more covert programmes, increasing their appeal. Rather than undertaking direct military action, which is easily detectable and carries much risk, actors employed indirect and less costly measures, such as providing funding and coordination.[171] Thus, Saudi Arabia and the UAE, through links with former officials (General Ahmed Shafiq in Egypt and Ben Ali in Tunisia) resolved to cover shortfalls in funding, if the international community were to institute sanctions following the counter-revolutions.[172] In addition, these regimes used internal networks to coordinate opposition activities. Military unity is critical in this regard, as it ensures that counter-revolutionary forces are able easily and successfully to employ violent means if necessary, as occurred in Egypt, and because training and equipping an obsolete or new armed faction requires time and is easily detectable.

Last, the minimal recourse to purges of post-revolutionary regimes, as well as domestic sunset clauses, allowed remnants the opportunity to reconstitute and halt substantive change from within.[173] In Morsi's

Egypt, the preservation of the deep state allowed it to consolidate and halt reform attempts.[174] The judiciary frequently dissolved elected institutions, and the remnants' control of petrol and gas prevented attempts at subsidy reform.[175] Further, the discontent caused by the failure and inefficacy of these institutions was directed toward the new regime and not the remnants, creating an environment conducive to a reversal. Consequently, in Egypt, instead of directing anger toward the remnant-controlled sectors responsible for electricity and energy shortages, and the interior ministry, whose staff had been on strike for over a year in protest against the new regime, demonstrators focused their anger on the government.[176] Morsi was seen as incompetent and ineffective, even though he had little influence over these issues.

Notably, counter-revolutionary states, like revolutionary movements, couch their actions in ideological terms.[177] Actions undertaken by Gulf states and even domestic forces were thus framed in the language of tolerance, inclusivity and anti-extremism.[178]

Conclusion

This chapter critically analysed the Gulf and Iranian counter-revolutions following the 2011 MENA uprisings. It illustrated how the international order and international institutions such as the IMF and World Bank influenced the uprisings' initial causes, despite their domestic origins. The implementation of SAPs caused sluggish, inequitable growth, while the global war on terror provided an excuse to securitise Arab regimes. This led to calls for political liberalisation, social justice and economic growth, which formed the bedrock of the 2011 uprisings.

Initially successful, these uprisings faced a determined counter-revolution. The vicissitudes caused by the uprisings informed and accounted for the intensity of the backlash. Materially, the balance of power favouring the Gulf was altered and its economic interests were threatened. Normatively, the conflation between different forms of Islamism, which enabled the Gulf states to securitise and influence re-

gional relations, was transformed, and the religious precepts underpinning these states' domestic legitimacy exposed. Iran faced similar challenges. The benefits of these revolutions to Iran were not forthcoming, and the Syrian conflict threatened the country's strategic interests. Domestically, the Green Movement, which had been in decline, used the uprisings to re-emerge. Both the Gulf and Iran implemented similar measures to stall the changes, adopting regional containment and confrontational policies, and co-optation and repression domestically. These efforts were largely successful. Change in Syria, Egypt, Yemen and Bahrain was stalled, and, in most instances, reversed. Meanwhile, the Gulf and Iranian regimes entrenched their domestic control.

These reversals are unique. Previously, counter-revolutions were largely unsuccessful, and in most instances strengthened revolutionary regimes, including in Iran following the 1979 Islamic Revolution. Counter-revolutionary threats were used to buttress the regime and increase its authoritarian powers. The MENA uprisings were different because the revolutions were negotiated revolutions rather than classical ones. Demonstrations were largely co-opted due to lack of organisation (for example, within a popular party), charismatic leadership and a common ideology on which to focus the opposition. Further, the relative lack of violence and minimal removals of former regime remnants allowed them to reconstitute and stall change. This is best illustrated by the deep state's role in the Morsi regime's overthrow. In addition, this allowed an easier path for foreign interference in and support of counter-revolutionary forces. Through contacts with former officials, the Gulf and Iran were able to fund and coordinate counter-revolutionary action without much censure; military unity was important in this regard.

The nature of the MENA uprisings as negotiated revolutions eased and enhanced the efficacy of counter-revolutions. However, the Libyan case provides a useful comparison, and reveals the weaknesses inherent in these modes of change. In Libya, with NATO's assistance,[179] the Gaddafi regime was forcefully removed following an eight-month civil war.[180] During the uprisings' initial stages, Gulf states vehemently sup-

ported NATO and were instrumental in securing Arab League support for the intervention.[181] Gaddafi's removal was seen as the elimination of a hindrance to their regional aspirations.[182] However, barring Qatar, the Gulf states changed their stance after the Justice and Construction Party (Libya's version of the Muslim Brotherhood) gained seventeen seats in the 2012 GNC vote,[183] thus being able to impede Mahmoud Jibril's National Forces Alliance (the more liberal alternative).[184] Jibril was given exile in the UAE, which continues to drastically influence the situation in Libya.[185] The UAE funded and supported an attempted coup by Gaddafi-era General Khalifa Haftar in February 2014. After the coup's failure, the UAE financed Haftar's Operation Dignity against Islamists, to the tune of over 800 million dollars,[186] and launched aerial attacks on Libya Dawn positions around Tripoli airport on 16 and 23 August.[187] The Egyptian regime too has been involved in Libya, supporting Haftar, warning against a 'threat' emanating from Libya, and calling for international action to confront 'terrorism'. It participated in actions against the GNC government, and provided military assistance, including aircraft, to Haftar's forces.[188]

Classical revolutions lead to the weakening, breaking down or collapse of state institutions, while negotiated revolutions ensure their survival. Political conflict theorists argue that in a system of multiple sovereignties (where several groups hold legitimacy), access to resources – specifically coercive power – is imperative for the survival of these groups.[189] A lack of coercive resources impedes attempts to contest and hold power by increasing its costs.[190] This can be observed in Egypt, where the regime was able to reconstitute itself following what Fred Halliday terms the 'grace period', when external powers assess the new regime's power and transformative impact and re-emerge during the 'period of confrontation' in which they attempt to reverse the changes.[191] Libya differed as the presence of multiple factions with military resources impeded attempts to reverse the country's path, mainly because the regime had no monopoly over the use of force, and was, thus, unable to reconstitute itself in its original form.

Notes

1 Agha and Malley (2011).
2 Bisley (2004).
3 Bisley (2004).
4 Skocpol (1979); Lawson (2011).
5 Lawson (2011).
6 Skocpol (1979: 4).
7 Skocpol (1979).
8 Skocpol (1979).
9 Held and Ulrichsen (2014); Gresh (2012); Deen (2012).
10 Skocpol (1979); Lawson (2011).
11 Bisley (2004); Lawson (2011); Skocpol (1979); Agha and Malley (2011).
12 Lawson (2005, 2011).
13 Bisley (2004); Lawson (2011).
14 Lawson (2011); Deen (2014b).
15 Bisley (2004); Lawson (2011).
16 Lawson (2011).
17 Bisley (2004); Skocpol (1979).
18 Lawson (2011); Bisley (2004); Skocpol (1979).
19 Lawson (2011); Skocpol (1979).
20 Bisley (2004); Lawson (2005, 2011).
21 Bisley (2004); Lawson (2011).
22 Henry Kissinger cited in Bisley (2004).
23 Bisley (2004).
24 Bisley (2004).
25 Raymond Aron cited in Bisley (2004).
26 Bisley (2004).
27 Bisley (2004).
28 Bisley (2004).
29 Bisley (2004).
30 Lawson (2005, 2011); Bisley (2004).
31 Lawson (2005, 2011).
32 Bisley (2004).
33 Bisley (2004).
34 Lawson (2005, 2011).

35 Lawson (2011).
36 Lawson (2011).
37 Lawson (2011).
38 Regis Debray cited in Bisley (2004: 57).
39 Bisley (2004).
40 Le Pere (2014); Lawson (2005).
41 Deen (2014b).
42 Gause (2013); Dalacoura (2013).
43 Le Pere (2014).
44 Agha and Malley (2011); Held and Ulrichsen (2014).
45 Deen (2012).
46 The autocratic bargain refers to the norms that previously governed, and in many instances still govern, domestic relations in these countries, which see citizens trading political freedoms for security, low taxation and job provision.
47 Le Pere (2014); African Development Bank (2012).
48 Le Pere (2014).
49 AMEC (2014a); Le Pere (2014); Deen (2014b).
50 Deen (2014b).
51 Deen (2014b); African Development Bank (2012).
52 Le Pere (2014); Gause (2013).
53 Le Pere (2014).
54 Le Pere (2014).
55 African Development Bank (2012); Deen (2014b).
56 Deen (2014b).
57 Agha and Malley (2011); Gause (2013).
58 Agha and Malley (2011); Gause (2013).
59 Gause (2013); Agha and Malley (2011).
60 Mandour (2014); Agha and Malley (2011).
61 Mandour (2014).
62 Agha and Malley (2011).
63 Agha and Malley (2011).
64 Held and Ulrichsen (2014); Deen (2014b).
65 AMEC (2014c).
66 Gause (2013); Dalacoura (2013).

67 Gas and electricity shortages, a drop in investment and a drastic deterioration in personal security coupled with polarisation had led to millions protesting against Morsi.
68 Deen (2014a); Mandour (2014); Held and Ulrichsen (2014).
69 From 22 January to 27 February.
70 Held and Ulrichsen (2014); Dalacoura (2013).
71 Gause (2013).
72 Gause (2013); Dalacoura (2013); Jones (2013).
73 Jones (2013); Dalacoura (2013); Held and Ulrichsen (2014).
74 Gresh (2012).
75 Kirkpatrick and Rudoren (2012); Baker and Kirkpatrick D (2012).
76 Held and Ulrichsen (2014); Gresh (2012).
77 Gause (2013).
78 Jones (2013); Gause (2013).
79 In April 2011, Saudi Prince Waleed Bin Talal announced that he was turning over around seventy-five per cent of a 420-square-kilometre piece of agricultural land acquired from the Mubarak regime.
80 Le Pere (2014); Gresh (2012); Mandour (2014).
81 The Saudi Arabian ambassador to Cairo was recalled following protests over the conviction of an Egyptian lawyer (Ahmed Al-Gizawy), who was charged with crimes including drug possession. Meanwhile an advisor to former president Mohamed Morsi, Essam Al-Aryan, publically enquired about the charges laid at Najla Wafa, a domestic worker sentenced to five years in prison and 500 lashes after a financial dispute with a Saudi prince.
82 Gresh (2012); Dalacoura (2013); Duran and Yilmaz (2013).
83 Gause (2013); Jones (2013); Dalacoura (2013)
84 The international community had previously refused to engage with the party, with the USA refusing to recognise Hamas' victory in the 2006 legislative election and deferring to Fatah and Mubarak, even in 2008/09 when Israel invaded Gaza, killing over 1 400 Palestinians.
85 The 2012 clashes lasted less than two weeks, mainly because of concerted efforts by the Obama and Morsi administrations, respectively, to negotiate a solution.
86 Kirkpatrick and Rudoren (2012); Baker and Kirkpatrick (2012).

87 Kirkpatrick and Rudoren (2012); Baker and Kirkpatrick (2012).
88 Baker and Kirkpatrick (2012).
89 Gresh (2012); Dalacoura (2013); Duran and Yilmaz (2013).
90 Salafi opinions (fatwa) advocating non-participation in politics and obedience to rulers, and forbidding political contestation or removal of leaders, are all used to suppress dissent and ensure regime perpetuation.
91 Gresh (2012); Duran and Yilmaz (2013); Gause (2013).
92 Deen (2012); Gresh (2012); Dalacoura (2013).
93 Gresh (2012); Deen (2014a).
94 Gresh (2012).
95 Gresh (2012).
96 Prince Nayef, writing in the Kuwaiti daily *Al-Siyassah* as cited in Gresh (2012).
97 Agha and Malley (2011); Gause (2013); Jones (2013).
98 Gause (2013).
99 Gause (2013).
100 Gause (2013).
101 Gause (2013); Held and Ulrichsen (2014).
102 Gause (2013); Jones (2013).
103 Gause (2013); Jones (2013).
104 Agha and Malley (2011); Gause (2013).
105 Gause (2013); Jones (2013).
106 Gause (2013); AMEC (2014a); Held and Ulrichsen (2014)
107 Gause (2013); AMEC (2014a); Held and Ulrichsen (2014).
108 Significantly, then Crown Prince Salman bin Abdulaziz circulated a seven-point programme for negotiations with the opposition, which included among others discussions around the establishment of a parliament with full powers and a government representing the will of the people. The GCC intervention occurred a few days subsequent to Salman's conciliatory gesture, ending the chance of ensuring a negotiated solution and allowing the regime to replenish itself.
109 Gause (2013); RT (2013).
110 AMEC (2014a); Gause (2013).
111 AMEC (2014a).
112 AMEC (2014a).

113 AMEC (2014a).
114 They have gone as far as supporting the crackdown on the Egyptian MB, encouraging the Egyptian military to reject the August 2013 US–EU brokered negotiations, which may have led to reconciliation between the regime and the MB. Jones (2013); Held and Ulrichsen (2014); Mandour (2014).
115 Mandour (2014); Held and Ulrichsen (2014).
116 AMEC (2014b).
117 Deen (2014a); Held and Ulrichsen (2014).
118 Mustafa (2013); RT (2013).
119 RT (2013).
120 RT (2013); Mustafa (2013).
121 Abdulaziz cited in RT (2013).
122 Dalacoura (2013); Duran and Yilmaz (2013); Aras and Yorulmazlar (2014).
123 Dalacoura (2013); Duran and Yilmaz (2013).
124 As noted, Iranian naval vessels had even been granted permission to pass through the Suez Canal.
125 AMEC (2013a); Dalacoura (2013).
126 Sanctions caused oil exports to decrease to under a billion barrels per day in January 2013 from 2.5 billion at the start of 2011. The Iranian riyal depreciated by over two-thirds in 2012 alone.
127 Dalacoura (2013).
128 Duran and Yilmaz (2013).
129 Dalacoura (2013).
130 Dalacoura (2013).
131 It should be noted that all the various Islamist parties had distanced themselves from Iran's form of Islamism and governance.
132 Dalacoura (2013).
133 Dalacoura (2013).
134 Rouhani was victorious with 50.7 per cent of the first round vote
135 Dalacoura (2013); Duran and Yilmaz (2013).
136 Dalacoura (2013).
137 Dalacoura (2013); Aras and Yorulmazlar (2014); Duran and Yilmaz (2013).

138 Duran and Yilmaz (2013); Dalacoura (2013).
139 Dalacoura (2013); Aras and Yorulmazlar (2014).
140 Aras and Yorulmazlar (2014).
141 Bisley (2004); Lawson (2011).
142 Bisley (2004); Lawson (2011).
143 Bisley (2004); Lawson (2005).
144 Lawson (2011).
145 Bisley (2004); Lawson (2005).
146 Lawson (2005).
147 Lawson (2011).
148 Lawson (2005).
149 Lawson (2005); Bisley (2004); Adler and Webster (2000).
150 Lawson (2005).
151 Deen (2012).
152 Lawson (2005).
153 Lawson (2005); Jones (2013); Gresh (2012).
154 Lawson (2005).
155 Agha and Malley (2011); Jones (2013); Held and Ulrichsen (2014).
156 Lawson (2005).
157 Held and Ulrichsen (2014); Gause (2013).
158 Lawson (2005); Tucker (2007).
159 Le Pere (2014); Agha and Malley (2011).
160 Lawson (2005).
161 Lawson (2005, 2011).
162 IMF (2013); Mohamadieh (2013).
163 Lawson (2005).
164 Lawson (2005).
165 Deen (2014b); Sleiman (2012).
166 Agha and Malley (2011); Held and Ulrichsen (2014).
167 AMEC (2013b); Momani (2013).
168 Momani (2013); AMEC (2013b); Deen (2014b).
169 AMEC (2013b); Gause (2013); Momani (2013).
170 AMEC (2013b); Momani (2013); Deen (2014b).
171 Gause (2013); Dalacoura (2013).
172 AMEC (2013b); Gause (2013); Held and Ulrichsen (2014); Mandour

(2014).

173 Gause (2013); Jones (2013); Held and Ulrichsen (2014).

174 AMEC (2013b); Held and Ulrichsen (2014).

175 AMEC (2013b); Momani (2013).

176 AMEC (2013b); Momani (2013).

177 Bisley (2004).

178 For example, the deputy foreign minister of the UAE Anwar Gargash (2013) explained the Emirates' support for the military's overthrow of Morsi in terms of promoting inclusiveness, moderation, gender equity and respect.

179 NATO overstepped its mandate in terms of Security Council Resolution 1973, which provides for the protection of civilians.

180 Al Jazeera (2011).

181 Ulrichsen (2011).

182 Ulrichsen (2011).

183 BBC (2012); Al Arabiya (2012).

184 Notable victories included the election of Mustafa Abushagur as Prime Minister over Jibril and the appointment of a close Justice and Construction Party ally, Mohammed Magarief as President of the GNC (though his presidency has since ended).

185 Through Jibril, Aref Ali Nayed, Libya's former ambassador to the UAE, and financial and military relations with the Qaqa and Zintan militia, the UAE has sought to influence occurrences in Libya. See AMEC (2014b); Fox (2014).

186 AMEC (2014b); Fox (2014).

187 Deploying its superior air power in coordination with Egypt, the attacks were concealed under the darkness of nightfall and only revealed following US outrage.

188 AMEC (2014b); Tawil (2014).

189 Skocpol (1979).

190 Skocpol (1979).

191 Bisley (2004); Lawson (2011: 1070).

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PART FIVE:
MUSLIM MINORITIES, POLITICAL ISLAM AND LIBERATION: THE SOUTH AFRICAN CASE

15

Political Islam in South Africa: Islamists, Islamisms and the struggle against apartheid

Na'eem Jeenah and Shir'a Jeenah

It is not usual that Political Islam is spoken of as a phenomenon that occurs in Muslim communities in minority contexts – unless it refers to Muslims in such countries who join, or act on behalf of, Islamist organisations in Muslim majority countries. Other than in such instances, therefore, Muslim minorities do not feature significantly or substantially in discussions of Political Islam. Moreover, when such communities are considered worthy of being discussed in this regard, it is usually 'newer' Muslim minorities in the West, rather than indigenous Muslim minority communities in countries such as India, China or Rwanda, or countries with older (but not necessarily completely indigenous) Muslim minority communities such as in South Africa. Political Islam in Muslim minority contexts is also rarely considered to be driven by domestic agendas that are less important than (or as important as) foreign ones. Often, in such cases, manifestations of Political Islam are viewed as (and frequently are) satellites of foreign groups, and the political activism is in support of organisations in Muslim countries or of liberatory or democratic causes in these countries.

Such an approach, however, results in a huge gap in the discourse on Political Islam because it does not consider forms of Political Islam that are often very different to those in Muslim majority contexts, with various particularities, and different objectives, strategies, tactics, and

unique understandings of how Islamists should play their role vis-à-vis their fellow compatriots and fellow strugglers who are not Muslim. An approach to Political Islam that does not include these phenomena cannot be regarded as comprehensive or exhaustive; if Muslim minority communities are not included in the discussion, or if their inclusion does not discuss political activism in and for the causes of countries they are located in, such a discourse is seriously flawed.

In attempting to fill at least part of that gap, this chapter looks at one such minority community – Muslims in South Africa – in an attempt to understand what Political Islam meant (or means) to and in that community, and in order to explore the unique contours of this phenomenon that distinguish it from other manifestations of Political Islam discussed in this book. This chapter will mostly focus on Political Islam in South Africa during the apartheid era and as part of the of the anti-apartheid struggle between the 1960s and 1990s, and will only briefly refer to the phenomenon as it presented itself after South Africa's first democratic election in 1994.

Various manifestations of Political Islam across the globe – wherever they lie on the spectrum described in this book – share some commonalities: whether in ideology, symbols, approaches, strategies or tactics. This chapter illustrates that, despite such commonalities, there can also be significant and substantial differences and specificities in different contexts. Furthermore, even what might seem to be commonalities may often mean different things in different contexts, and might be understood or experienced in ways that are significantly dissimilar. This chapter explores these similarities and differences, whether in the use of language, the appreciation of symbols, or the meaning of substantive ideological and strategic considerations.

Islam in South Africa

The history of Islam's arrival, survival and growth in South Africa is crucial to an understanding of Political Islam in the country in the twen-

tieth century. Indeed, Muslim opposition to colonialism and apartheid in South Africa began soon after the arrival of the first Muslims in the Cape Colony in the late 1650s, not long after the Dutch East India Company set up its refreshment station in what is now Cape Town.

Various acts of resistance since their arrival have highlighted the Muslim community's opposition to the oppression it faced, and, in the latter part of the twentieth century, to the oppression faced by its members and their Black[1] compatriots. Previously, until the early twentieth century, acts of resistance by Muslims largely focused on demands they made regarding the oppression that they or their community faced, and, in the first half of the twentieth century, Muslim resistance included opposition to the oppression of Black people in general. In the latter case, these early twentieth century actions were done mainly through resistance organisations, community groups or worker unions that were not organised on the basis of Islam. However, from the late 1950s Muslims began playing a role in the struggle against apartheid through Islamic organisations. Interestingly, their role was in excess of what their numbers in the country might suggest.

In the 1950s, while a number of Muslims joined the various national liberation movements, as well as other socialist, nationalist and trade union organisations, a group of Muslims in Cape Town organised themselves within Islamic organisations to engage in the anti-apartheid struggle, and characterised their involvement as the exercise of an Islamic duty. A brief account of South Africa's history will be helpful to place this phenomenon in context.

Resistance to colonialism in South Africa began in 1652 with the establishment of the first refreshment station by the Dutch East India Company in the 'Cape of Good Hope' (now known as Cape Town). From the station's establishment until the beginning of the twentieth century, there was substantial – though not united – armed resistance by indigenous Africans, variously organised, and, often, by imported slaves and exiles. When the Union of South Africa was formed in 1910, as a unification of four British colonies, and still a British dominion,

Black people developed new strategies and forms of struggle, shifting from military confrontation against the foreign colonisers in an attempt to drive them out to efforts at securing more justice and equality within new political and economic structures. Organisations such as the African People's Organisation (APO) and the South African Native Convention (a precursor to the South African Native National Congress, which later became the African National Congress) emerged after the creation of the Union in order to fight for the rights of Black South Africans. Their demands included the right to vote and to be elected to parliament.

The White population's election of the Afrikaner nationalist National Party in 1948 signalled the beginning of the policy of apartheid that formalised and legislated already-existing White privileges and the comprehensive discrimination against Black people on the basis of their 'race', which included discrimination in matters of citizenship. By 1961, when the country broke its ties to the British empire and declared itself a republic, numerous resistance movements were actively opposing apartheid, including the African National Congress (ANC), the Pan Africanist Congress (PAC), the South African Communist Party (SACP), and other political formations, as well as smaller groups organised around workers, religion and sports, among others. In 1960, several of these organisations were banned and forced into exile. In the 1970s, the Black Consciousness Movement (BCM) was formed, and it became the largest liberation movement within the country for about a decade.

The 1980s saw a vigorous increase in anti-apartheid organisation building and protest activity within the country, with the formation of new anti-apartheid organisations or coalitions such as the United Democratic Front (UDF – aligned to the ANC), the National Forum (which united Africanists, Black Consciousness adherents and various leftist organisations), the Federation of South African Trade Unions (FOSATU – founded in 1979), the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU – formed in 1985 as a merger of FOSATU and other unions), and a number of other community, youth, religious, cultural

and sports organisations. The increasing mobilisation of especially (but not only) Black people – leading to a state of ungovernability in parts of the country, various creative forms of resistance, and the international isolation of the apartheid state ultimately led to the unbanning of liberation movements, the release of most political prisoners, as well as the beginning of negotiations between the state and the liberation movements in the early 1990s. This led, ultimately, to South Africa's first democratic election in 1994.

Muslims in the struggle

Although Muslims comprise a small minority of the South African population, around one million out of a total of 56 million people, thereby making them about two per cent of the population, the community and its individuals have played significant roles in South African society for the past three-and-a-half centuries. The first Muslims were taken to the Cape colony from Bengal, Indonesia and Java by the Dutch as slaves and political exiles in the seventeenth century. Their arrival heralded the beginning of Muslim resistance in southern Africa, which took various forms, and included, for example, the smallpox protests of 1840 and the cemetery uprising of 1886.[2] The oppressive practices and injustices with which they were confronted included restrictions on their religion, free movement and the right to own property. It is significant to note that most of this resistance was for parochial Muslim demands and did not usually address broader issues of oppression that affected the rest of the Cape society.

There was a hint of a change in this, however, at the beginning of the twentieth century with the formation, in Cape Town, of the South African Moslems' Association (SAMA), which was a largely coloured[3] organisation that mobilised people in protest against the policy of racial segregation in urban areas, a policy that was taking root following the 1901 bubonic plague in Cape Town. Despite its name, SAMA's membership did not include only Muslims, and one of its more well-

known activists included an African Methodist Episcopal lay preacher, W Collins. Through SAMA emerged the idea of a coloured organisation that would take on a broader agenda, and the African Political Organisation was born in 1902 (later the African People's Organisation, APO), with Collins as its first president.[4] The APO's second president was Dr Abdullah Abdurrahman, a Muslim who typified Muslim involvement in the liberation struggle in the early twentieth century; his political activism was not directly related to his religious beliefs, and remained largely separate from Islam.

Other Muslims, including Muslim merchants in the northern Natal and Transvaal provinces who were involved in the formation of the Natal and Transvaal Indian Congresses (NIC, founded in 1894; and TIC, previously called the Transvaal British Indian Association that was founded in 1903), involved themselves in the struggle for the rights of Black people on the basis of nationalist (and secular) objectives, not necessarily because they regarded such involvement as a religious (Islamic) obligation.

By the middle of the twentieth century, as Black resistance to apartheid intensified, a number of Muslims were to be seen in prominent positions in various resistance or liberation organisations. These included people such as Dr Yusuf Dadoo,[5] who became general secretary of the SACP; ANC activists Ahmad Timol[6] and Babla Saloojee,[7] who were killed in detention; Azanian People's Organisation (Azapo) leader Abu Bakr Asvat; as well as Azapo and Workers' Organisation for Socialist Action (WOSA) leader Haroon Patel (who joined the Muslim Youth Movement in 1993). In the main, these activists engaged in their political activity outside of the Muslim community, and with no (stated or claimed) inspiration for their politics from their religious background.[8] Only a few of these activists suggested that Islam had played a role in developing their political consciousness. Many had been forced by the Muslim community, through intolerance, tinged with some racism in religious and communal discourse, to choose between being part of the community, or being politically involved. In particular, there

was a strong discourse within the Muslim community labelling political involvement, particularly of the anti-apartheid variety and less so of the apartheid-collaborationist one, as 'kufr politics' (the politics of disbelief or of disbelievers).

There were, however, exceptions to this trend; these were individuals who might be regarded as the proto-Islamists in the South African Muslim community. Fatima Meer, for example, was a popular ANC and NIC leader, and remained a devout Muslim until her death. Her husband, Ismail Meer, was a member of the SACP and the NIC, and maintained that his activism in these organisations had been inspired by his understanding of Islam. He even saw no contradiction in being a Communist and a Muslim simultaneously, emphasising, in fact, that his decision to become a Communist was inspired by his being a Muslim. He discussed this decision in his autobiography.

> The only political party which I could belong to as a devout Muslim, deeply immersed in the Quranic teaching, was the Communist Party of South Africa, which had no segregation and which was promoting the interests of all South Africans on a non-racial democratic basis.[9]

Another example was the indomitable clergyman and well-known ANC and TIC figure Maulvi Ismail Mohamed Cachalia.[10] 'Although trained as a traditionalist scholar at a seminary in Deoband, India, and at a time when Deobandi scholars in South Africa were opposing Muslim involvement in politics, Cachalia's efforts can be principally regarded as a contextualization of Koranic political maxims for seeking liberation for disenfranchised South Africans.'[11]

South Africa's Political Islam

In the 1950s, the negative attitude towards those Muslims who were involved in anti-apartheid politics began to change in some sections of the Muslim community, and many Muslim activists no longer saw

the need (or felt the pressure) to distance themselves from or leave Islam in order to oppose apartheid. This decade might be regarded as the beginning of what we now call 'Political Islam' in South Africa. The Muslim Teachers' Association, founded in Cape Town in 1951, protested against apartheid, and in 1952, called on Muslims not to participate in Voortrekker Celebrations held to commemorate Afrikaner expansionism into the north of South Africa. The Claremont Muslim Youth Association and the Cape Muslim Youth Movement, which were both established in the late 1950s, launched an important declaration in 1961 that called on Muslims to unite with other South Africans in order to 'rid our beloved land of the forces of evil and tyranny'.[12] Titled 'Call of Islam', and signed by a number of Muslim organisations and leaders, the document declared:

> For too long a time now we have been together with our fellow sufferers [non-Muslim Black people], subjugated, suffered the humiliation of being regarded as inferior beings, deprived of our basic rights to Earn, to Learn and Worship freely according to the Divine Rule of Allah. We can no longer tolerate further encroachment on these, our basic rights and therefore we stand firm with our brothers in fighting the evil monster that is about to devour us – that is, oppression, tyranny, and *baas skap* [literally 'master-hood', but meaning White domination].[13]

Subsequently, in May 1961, a public meeting was called by the two organisations – Claremont Muslim Youth Association and Cape Muslim Youth Movement, in league with a number of other Muslim groups. They explained that the purpose of the meeting was

> in order to show how completely incompatible every single step the ruling class has taken is with the fundamental principle of Islam and therefore humanity: and secondly, to make our stand the Islamic point of view as based on the Holy Quran, Sunnah, and Hadith of the Holy Prophet Muhammed, clear

> to all in the country in particular and the world at large, as to where we stand in our struggle against oppression and exploitation and in the struggle for the complete freedom for everybody in this country, irrespective of race, colour, or creed.[14]

Decades later., in reference to the 'Call of Islam' declaration, Tamara Sonn correctly noted its importance.

> While Muslims had protested interference with their religious practice in earlier years, this call for Islamic resistance was unique in a number of ways. First, unlike earlier protests, the new resistance was not against specific rulings, but was aimed against an entire system deemed essentially unjust. Second, and more significantly, the injustices being suffered were not those suffered by Muslims alone, but by all victims of oppression, regardless of religious affiliation.[15]

It certainly was a significant development that regarded struggling for the rights of all people – including non-Muslims – as an Islamic duty. One of the main drivers behind the new movement, and the leader of the Claremont Muslim Youth Association, was Imam Abdullah Haron, who was also the imam of Masjid al-Jamia in Stegman Road, Claremont, Cape Town. Although linked to the Pan Africanist Congress, Haron saw his politics and anti-apartheid activities as being founded on, inspired and guided by Islam. He also regarded his Islamic activism as being influenced by and inseparable from his anti-apartheid activism. His association's newsletter, *Islamic Mirror,* carried numerous political articles, including articles by leaders of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood, such as the revolutionary and prolific writer Sayyid Qutb. Haron's murder by security police while he was in detention in 1969 was a milestone in Islamic resistance in South Africa.

Another organisation that was formed in 1963 in Cape Town, and which was to play a role within the Islamist scene in the 1980s, was Al-Jihaad International Islamic Movement, led by Ismail Joubert. The organisation started as a religio-social group, and defined 'jihad' as be-

ing 'for the infinitely noble purpose of defending the weak and helpless men and women'.[16] Similar to the sentiment in the Call of Islam declaration, but extending that sentiment, Al-Jihaad's members argued that jihad was to be used for the liberation of both Muslims and non-Muslims.

Soon after Haron's murder, two Muslim resurgence organisations were established; both were destined to become national organisations that would significantly influence the development of anti-apartheid Islam: the Muslim Students Association (MSA, which was formed in 1969 in Cape Town and launched nationally in 1974) and the Muslim Youth Movement (MYM, established in 1970).

The MSA remained politically inactive for almost the entire first decade of its existence, even through the landmark national student uprisings in 1976, which have had a long-term and profound impact on South African history and the South African liberation struggle. The MYM, initially a religio-social organisation, changed its orientation in 1977 when, inspired by foreign Islamist movements such as Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood and Pakistan's Jamaat-e-Islami, it began calling itself an 'Islamic movement'. Armed with a new ideology, the MYM insisted that Islam was a 'comprehensive way of life', and that politics was an important component of Islamic belief and practice (almost as important as spirituality).

From the late 1970s, the MYM's discourse increasingly included political rhetoric, which began to be seen in its publications as well as at its many events throughout the country. Although the organisation became critical of the apartheid state – even describing it as 'satanic', comparing it to the regime of the Pharaoh during the Jewish exodus from Egypt, and utilising a plethora of Qur'anic verses and prophetic traditions to argue that apartheid was anti-Islamic and should be destroyed, it did not immediately involve itself in practical anti-apartheid activity, and was absent from spaces where mass mobilisation or underground activity took place. Even though its training programmes and study groups (halaqat) that were created in this new phase featured many discussions

on jihad (and they referred to the struggle against apartheid as 'jihad'), the movement found it difficult immediately to apply these concepts to the South African context, and unsure about how to proceed from rhetorical support to anti-apartheid activity. Until the mid-1980s the MYM continued to search for an 'Islamic paradigm' that would guide its response to the apartheid state.[17] The search for the 'paradigm' delayed the MYM's entry into practical anti-apartheid engagement. The paradigm was never developed, but from 1980, when national student uprisings had erupted, and with the influx of politically conscious students into the MSA and the MYM, both organisations were dragged into anti-apartheid political activity by their younger, more radical, members.

Just as the MYM was starting to come to grips with what its new political direction might mean, the Iranian revolution of 1979 broke, provided yet a new source of Islamist inspiration. While admiration for Iran waned for many MSA and MYM members over the next few years, the revolution inspired the formation of another, more radical, Muslim organisation in 1981. Recruiting many of its early members from the MSA, Qibla was founded by Achmad Cassiem, a former schoolteacher who, for PAC-related activities, had spent ten years imprisoned on the notorious Robben Island prison. He had attended an MYM 'Islamic Tarbiyyah Programme' in 1977 and had left disillusioned due to the MYM's unwillingness to entertain the idea of Muslims being engaged in armed struggle against the apartheid state. Taking its lead from the Iranian Revolution, Qibla's main slogan, even into the first half decade of South Africa's democracy that was inaugurated in 1994, was 'One Solution, Islamic Revolution'.

According to Qibla's leaders, South African Muslims had the solution to the apartheid government's injustices. Their understanding of Islam was a normative description of the Muslim community. Qibla thus asserted:

> Islam declares war on racism and racialism. This is more than a mere battle of words. As proof we offer Muslims as the only

> truly consolidated anti-racist force in the country. This has been historically maintained for three hundred years because it is an ideological unit and not a nationality, tribe and race or class.[18]

In their publications and public articulations, the organisation expressed a strong aversion for any alternative other than revolutionary Islam. Yet, it was revolutionary Islam understood in a particular form and with a particular method – the Iranian revolution. It is not very surprising, then, that from 1984 onwards, some of Qibla's strongest vitriol was reserved for the Call of Islam (an organisation formed in 1984, unrelated to the 1961 declaration), because of the latter's affiliation to the internal wing of the ANC, the United Democratic Front (UDF).

Nevertheless, despite its uncompromising position on Islamic revolution, Qibla was closely aligned to the PAC and, to a lesser extent, the Black Consciousness Movement in the form of Azapo. This alignment was illustrated in various ways. For instance, the PAC's Tehran office was staffed in the 1980s by a Qibla exile, and after the PAC's unbanning in 1990, Cassiem often addressed that party's meetings and rallies. Political prisoners who had been incarcerated on Robben Island claimed that Cassiem had been part of the Africanist group on the Island, and in 1999 he ascended to the PAC's provincial leadership. Another prominent Qibla leader, Yusuf Patel, was active in the BCM, and senior Qibla member Hassan Ghila was part of the original group that had split from the ANC to form the PAC. Qibla also sometimes used the PAC salute, used the name 'Azania' to refer to South Africa (as Africanists and Black Consciousness adherents did) and employed Africanist slogans in its public meetings.[19]

Qibla developed and trained a small cadre of Muslim anti-apartheid activists. A number of its members were sent out of South Africa to receive military training (often in PAC camps) and, upon their return, undertook sabotage operations against the state. These armed activities – mostly small bomb blasts – were regarded as part of their activities as Qibla activists.

The 1980s was a period of heightened political activity for the MYM-MSA, Qibla and the Call of Islam (COI or the Call). The Call emerged between 1983 and 1984, when four senior members of the MYM-MSA, led by Farid Esack, left their organisational home to form an organisation called Muslims Against Oppression. Esack was a cleric who had trained in Pakistan, and while studying there had become interested in Political and had joined the MYM. When he returned to South Africa in the early 1980s, he was hailed by MYM leaders as the first in a new generation of MYM 'ulama. The other three splitters had been student leaders in the MSA, and had also been activists in the MYM.

Muslims Against Oppression later changed its name to 'Call of Islam', and aligned itself with the UDF. This was not unexpected, considering that the issue of affiliating to the UDF was the reason for the split in the first place. The MYM and MSA had firmly refused to align to any particular tendency of the liberation movement when pushed by Esack and others, preferring to abide by what it later called 'positive neutrality'. The term was coined in this context by Ebrahim Moosa, and the MYM defined it as a position whereby the organisation would locate itself within the broad anti-apartheid movement, but would maintain equidistance from the different tendencies of the broad movement, while working with any of them as different contexts required.[20] Disagreement with this position by Esack and three other MYM members was the main reason for their leaving the organisation and starting Muslims Against Oppression; they had lobbied for the MYM and MSA to affiliate to the ANC-aligned United Democratic Front.

The Call considered itself 'a South African phenomenon owing little or nothing to the international developments in the Muslim world'.[21] Esack even argued that the only reason the Call had organised or participated in international solidarity efforts, such as its protest against the US bombing of Libya in 1986, was to show that 'American aggression in Southern Africa is as abominable as that in Northern Africa'.[22] Despite this self-proclaimed notion of South Africanness, the Call's senior members had all previously been schooled in the ideology of Islamist (par-

ticularly Muslim Brotherhood) politics during their period in the MYM and MSA; they took that ideology (albeit modified) and those forms of training into the Call, and trained other Call members in the same mould.

The organisation argued that one factor distinguishing it from the MYM was that its understanding of Islam and its engagement in the anti-apartheid struggle mutually influenced each other. Unlike the MYM, the Call was not waiting for a 'paradigm' to be revealed, but allowed its theory to be shaped by its actions and struggles, and vice versa. According to Esack, 'We know that our theology, wherever else it may also be located, is very much rooted in the basic experiences of our people.' The organisation saw itself as a radically new phenomenon on the South African scene. Explaining the group's involvement in the UDF, Ebrahim Rasool explained how the Call viewed its praxis.

> The UDF taught us that it takes a lot of grassroots organization and a regular presence in the community to create, in turn, the conditions whereby Muslims will be able to take their place in the struggle. It does not simply take an appeal for revolution from the Quran to create revolutionaries among Muslims. That creation is the product of social conditions, theological reflection and organization.[23]

Like the MYM and Qibla, the Call also described the anti-apartheid struggle as a 'jihad'. As part of its contribution to this jihad, some of its members joined the ANC's armed wing, Umkhonto we Sizwe (MK – Spear of the Nation) and engaged in sabotage actions against the state.[24]

These four organisations – the MSA and MYM, the Call of Islam and Qibla – were the main and most visible Muslim groups involved in the anti-apartheid struggle in the 1980s that claimed that their political activism was on the basis of and inspired by their understanding of Islam, the Qur'an and the life of Prophet Muhammad. A fifth organisation was the small Western Cape group referred to earlier, Al-Jihaad. Its leader, Joubert, had joined MK in the late 1970s, and had been given the nickname 'Tatamkhulu Afrika' – the Great Father of Africa – in the

MK camps. Al-Jihaad was also affiliated to the UDF, but its low visibility was partly due to its role deliberately being downplayed by the other Muslim UDF affiliate, the Call of Islam, mainly because many Al-Jihaad members had become Shi'a after the Iranian revolution, and the Call was concerned that a Shi'a UDF affiliate might alienate the UDF from the Muslim community.

It must be clear that all these organisations were deeply religious, and even if there were external influences at different points in time, they all regarded Islamic scriptures as providing the guidance for their struggles. Even when they characterised apartheid as 'racial capitalism' – as the MSA regularly did, they would justify their explanation with Islamic scripture.[25] In terms of their ideals, four of the groups, with the exception of the Call (the youngest of the five groups), believed in the ideal of an Islamic state at some point in their histories. Qibla, which is now virtually non-existent, continued to promote the 'Islamic state' ideal for South Africa well into the twenty-first century. The MYM and MSA, on the other hand, began questioning the idea in the mid-1980s and officially abandoned it in December 1989 at the MYM's Islamic Tarbiyyah Programme held at the As-Salaam Educational Institute on the Natal south coast.

Apart from the armed resistance of Qibla and the Call, throughout the 1980s and 1990s all these organisations were involved in mass mobilisation within both Muslim and non-Muslim communities, building political campaigns (often together with other organisations or coalitions such as the UDF, Mass Democratic Movement, Azapo and the PAC), and strengthening mass movements in the country. The MSA, MYM and the Call also worked with the trade union movement, FOSATU and then COSATU; as well as, in the case of the MYM and MSA, the National Confederation of Trade Unions (NACTU) – on various campaigns. They were all at the forefront of campaigns against the racially-based Tricameral Parliament that was formed in 1983 to co-opt sections of the Black community, namely, indians[26] and coloureds, into the apartheid system. Muslim involvement in the struggle reached

its height in the mid-1980s and was especially visible in the Western Cape, where Muslim political funerals mobilised Muslims and non-Muslims alike. This is where the Islamic chant 'Allahu Akbar' became a nationalist slogan shouted by Muslim and even some non-Muslim activists, and where the Palestinian keffiyeh and other paraphernalia of these organisations were banned. A number of Muslim activists from these organisations were detained, while others went underground for periods of time, some being forced to flee into exile.

Commonalities and differences

Despite these unique South African expressions, as mentioned earlier, a number of commonalities exist between Islamist groups around the world, and, by extension, there are also numerous similarities between Political Islam in South Africa (both in the 1980s and today) and manifestations of Political Islam in other parts of the world. One of these similarities is the commitment to Islamic scripture – in particular, a commitment and determination to be adherent to the Qur'an, which Muslims regard as Divine revelation to Muhammad in the exact words of God. Like all other religious scripture (and, indeed, like all texts),[27] the verses of the Qur'an are interpreted in various ways, and the manner in which they are employed depends on the one doing the interpreting.

In the South African context, the Qur'an was interpreted and deployed by Islamists quite creatively, and politically, during the anti-apartheid struggle. Esack identified three ways that the Qur'an 'functioned' for the Call of Islam. 'It genuinely functioned as a source of guidance, and it functioned for its own activists as a source of inspiration, but it also functioned as a weapon in the…struggle against apartheid…that was used against collaborationist Muslims and against the state.'[28] In fact, it was not just the Call that employed the Qur'an in this manner. All the Islamist organisations active in the 1980s took a similar approach, as did earlier Islamists such as Imam Haron.

They, thus, read South Africa and apartheid into the Qur'an, often treating the 1 400-year-old text as though it had been revealed in the apartheid era to South Africans. The suggestion of Muslim Brotherhood ideologue Sayyid Qutb about how the generation of Muhammad responded to the Qur'an perhaps finds resonance here. The person from that generation, Qutb claimed, 'approached [the Qur'an] to act on what he heard immediately, as a soldier on the battlefield reads "Today's Bulletin" so that he may know what is to be done.'[29] Verses about oppression and fighting oppression (even with force of arms) were read by South African Islamists as if they referred directly to the anti-apartheid struggle. The apartheid state too was mentioned in the Qur'an, according to this instrumentalisation and according to the propaganda of these Islamists. Among the Qur'anic verses that were often quoted to refer to the apartheid state were sections of the Qur'an referring to the Pharaoh who ruled Egypt during the life of Moses and the exodus of the 'Children of Israel' (as the Qur'an refers to them) from Egypt. For example, a verse that frequently appeared in MSA publications to describe the apartheid state was from Surah Qasas: 'Indeed, Pharaoh exalted himself in the land; and divided its people into sects/groups. He weakened and oppressed a group from among them, slaughtering their sons and letting their women live.'[30]

For the South African Islamists of the 1980s, apartheid was the ideology of Pharaoh, who was dividing South Africa's people, oppressing Blacks from among them, and killing their men through the migrant labour system and various forms of repression. (It seems that the fact that women were also 'killed' in the same way was conveniently ignored in order to make the verse more directly relevant.) Therefore the response of Muslims, the speeches and publications of these organisations argued, should be guided by the demands of the Qur'an:

> What [is the matter] with you that you do not fight in the way of God, and of those who are oppressed; men, women and children whose cry is: 'Our Lord, rescue us from this town

> [or land] whose people are oppressors, and appoint for us from Yourself one who will protect and one will help [us]'.[31]

Muslims, they argued, had to be among those who 'protect and help', because they had been commanded by God to respond in this manner to the excesses of Pharaoh and the pharaohnic system. And, ultimately, the response of God to such striving and struggle would be as was His response to the companions of Moses. The verse in the Qur'an immediately following the verse about Pharaoh dividing the people of Egypt is a recounting of God's assistance to the Israelites. In South Africa, Islamists read it, instead, as a promise of things to come: 'And we wanted to bestow a favour to those who were oppressed in the land, to make them leaders and to make them inheritors.'[32] As a message of hope, this verse was displayed on banners, posters and even t-shirts.

To anyone studying the ideological underpinnings of the Muslim Brotherhood, al-Qa'ida or the Islamic State group, many of these verses quoted by Islamist anti-apartheid activists in the 1980s will not be unfamiliar, even if the South African interpretations are sometimes somewhat tortured. Herein lies one of the sources of the discursive difference and uniqueness between Islamists around the world and their anti-apartheid counterparts: for the latter, the ideology, language and symbols, including verses of the Qur'an and traditions of Muhammad, had to be contextualised for South Africa, in the particular conjuncture during which they were active. However, the contextualisation went further, and viewed in these verses and traditions the seeds of new (and, often, progressive) ideological and strategic trajectories.

While the notions of inclusivity and exclusivity, which are critical issues in any struggle, are also shared commonalities between South African Islamists and certain Islamist groups in other parts of the world, they too were contextualised to the South African case. The South African Islamists practised what Esack called 'radical inclusivity' and 'radical exclusivity'.[33] In the global context in which we live, certain forms of exclusivity are well known and evoke very strong reactions.

Certainly, the exclusivity promoted by White racists in South Africa (and still promoted by many in the USA and Europe) is universally regarded as odious. In the same way, today the exclusivity promoted by the Islamic State group or al-Qa'ida is seen as unacceptable from within a liberal framework. Indeed, the term 'takfiri', referring to a Muslim who declares another Muslim a non-believer, has become loaded with negative connotations and is part of the general lexicon when discussing IS, Syria or Political Islam.

South African Islamists in the 1980s used their own form of takfir, which targeted those who supported the apartheid establishment. Thus, in reference to the racially based Tricameral Parliament[34] that was set up in order to co-opt those classified as indian and coloured into the apartheid system, Islamists regularly quoted the hadith (tradition) of Muhammad that 'If anyone walks with an oppressor to strengthen him, knowing he is an oppressor, he has gone forth from Islam.'[35] Thus, Muslims who were seen as collaborators with the state, such as those few who were members of the Tricameral Parliament, were painted as having betrayed not only South Africans and the anti-apartheid struggle but Islam itself. Thus Ebrahim Moosa, at an MSA conference a few months before the first Tricameral Parliament election, said of those who participated in the parliament: 'We must not marry them; we must not carry them [when they die]; we must not bury them.'[35] He, on behalf of the MSA, virtually pronounced takfir on those who collaborated with the apartheid regime.

This despite the fact that there is actually no formal excommunication process in Islam, as MYM and the Call members insisted (and continue to do so), and the carrying and burial of corpses is regarded as a communal obligation (fard kifayah) that cannot be rejected. The exclusivity was sometimes also applied within Islamist ranks – though, perhaps, with not quite as much vigour. Qibla, for example, did its utmost to discredit the Call of Islam within the Muslim community, due to the latter's affiliation to the ANC-aligned United Democratic Front.

It is not inappropriate to mention here that all ideological groups practise some form exclusivity. Almost all, of whatever persuasion,

have a tendency to articulate some form of exclusionary politics, in terms of which they decide that others are not left enough, right enough, socialist enough or liberal enough. Put another way, and using Islamic theological terminology, almost all ideological groups are takfiri[36] to some degree. Islamists are no different, and taking into account the context of South Africa and the struggle against apartheid, South African Islamists had their own form of exclusivity/takfir. Certain groups of course, such as IS, take such exclusivity to an extreme degree. In IS's practice of takfir, for example, it often results in the deaths of those from the targeted groups, and the exclusivity is more to impose the superiority of one group over another than, as in the South African case, to struggle *against* such discrimination.

The corollary of Esack's 'radical exclusivity' was the notion of 'radical inclusivity'. While not terribly concerned about the very serious act of questioning the religiosity of Muslim apartheid collaborators, effectively throwing them off the Islam bus, the Islamists of the 1980s seemed even more enthusiastic about inviting onto the bus non-Muslims whom they regarded as part of the struggle. For the Call, this was especially with regard to those in the (ANC-aligned) Congress movement; for Qibla, it was especially those linked to the Pan Africanist Congress and the Black Consciousness Movement. The MYM and MSA attempted to live true to their 'positive neutrality' position by not demonising, at least publicly, any of the liberation groups and their ideologies. Despite these inter-organisational difficulties, however, all the 1980s Islamists located themselves within the broad category of 'the mustad'afin' (the oppressed) and regarded all oppressed people (read: Black people) as allies or potential allies (with the exception of those who openly collaborated with the state).

A hadith that was often quoted and is illustrative of this kind of inclusivity was a narration by Anas ibn Malik, who reported that Muhammad had said: 'Be aware [or conscious] of the supplication of the oppressed, even if he is a rejecter of faith, for there is no barrier (hijab) between him and God.'[37] In a similar hadith that was also quoted

by South African Islamists, Ibn 'Abbas said that Muhammad, on sending his envoy Mu'adh to Yemen, told him: 'Be afraid of the curse of the oppressed, as there is no screen between his invocation and God.'[38]

While there was discomfort, it seems, with being inclusive towards Muslims who were seen as collaborators with an oppressive state, the rule regarding 'the mustad'afin' was inclusivity. This inclusivity/exclusivity also pointed to 'an acceptance of the basic Qur'anic premises of binaries, of haq [truth] and batil [falsehood], ma'ruf [the right, good] and munkar [the wrong, evil],[39] hasanat [good deeds] and sayyiaat [evil deeds], rather than the liberal embrace that there is space for everybody', according to Esack.[40]

Another commonality in the discourse of Islamists around the world (particularly Islamists who do not govern states), and certainly including the South African anti-apartheid Islamists, is an emphasis on the idea of jihad. Even a group like Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood, which during the 1950s had rejected violence as a political tactic, and upholds that position to this day, maintains that jihad is a crucial part of being Muslim, even if they define jihad in pacifist terms. The Muslim Youth Movement of South Africa, in its youth camps and publications, often referred to jihad by claiming 'if there was a sixth pillar of Islam, it would be jihad'.[41] For all the major South African Islamist groups, the struggle against apartheid in South Africa was defined as a jihad.[42] Theological niceties and debates, such as the question of who is qualified to declare jihad, were ignored, and even rejected as irrelevant. The unambiguous position they articulated was that, as long as people were oppressed, the mustad'afin must engage in jihad against the oppressors.

Herein lies another example of 'radical inclusivity'. For these 'progressive Islamists' (as some began to refer to themselves by the 1990s), the efforts of all those engaged in the anti-apartheid struggle constituted acts of jihad. The anti-apartheid jihad was the totality of all struggles against the oppressive political system, whether conducted by Muslims or non-Muslims. All South Africans today, and certainly all Black South Africans, according to these Islamists, have come from a 'jihadi' background.

Jihad was often referred to in various forms. This included the jihad of fighting, the jihad of the pen and the jihad of the tongue (among others). The greatest emphasis, in practical terms, was on the struggle against the apartheid state. The discourse of jihad in South Africa was peppered with the glorification of violence, with Qur'anic verses and traditions of Muhammad being employed quite liberally in the service of this 'jihad'. The verses and ahadith most popularly used will be easily recognisable to those who follow the discourse of groups such as al-Qa'ida or IS. Among the more popular ones that were quoted in speeches, publications and banners were:

> And muster up as much of your power as you are able, including steeds of war, by which you may terrify the enemies of God and your enemies.[43]

> Surely God loves those who fight in His Cause in battle array, as if they were a solid structure.[44]

> God has conferred on those who strive with their wealth and lives a rank above the sedentary.[45]

The MSA also printed the first of the verses above on thousands of t-shirts, which were subsequently banned by the apartheid government – as might be expected.

For the Islamists, then, God elevated jihad (in the form of fighting) above pacifism. Thus, they interpreted the Qur'an as having conferred on them a responsibility and a duty to oppose apartheid, even through the use of armed struggle. Indeed, for many, forceful or violent opposition to oppression was elevated above other forms of opposition, based on a hadith narrated by Abu Said al-Khudri, who said:

> I heard the Messenger of Allah say, 'Whoever of you sees an evil must change it with his hand. If he is not able to do so, then with his tongue. And if he is not able to do so, then with his heart. And that is the weakest [form of] faith.'[46]

As with the references to those who were involved in the 'anti-apartheid jihad', those who were killed in the struggle, whether Muslims or non-Muslims, were regarded as shuhada (martyrs) by South African Islamists,[47] with the publications of these organisations routinely referring to non-Muslims such as Steve Biko,[48] Neil Aggett[49] and Andrew Zondo[50] as martyrs, along with Muslim martyrs such as Imam Haron, Ahmed Timol[51] and Mohsin Jeenah.[52]

Political Islam in South Africa in the 21st century

In many ways, and for various reasons, the era of anti-apartheid Political Islam ended with South Africa's first democratic election on 27 April 1994. Al-Jihaad, Qibla and the Call of Islam are no longer in existence; and the MSA, which had been a national organisation, split into its constituent provincial parts in 1986, has not succeeded in reconstituting its national structure, and its constituent parts developed more parochial religio-social agendas rather than political ones. Although MSA structures exist at many tertiary institutions throughout the country, they vacillate ideologically because of the volatility of their membership. The MYM also still exists, with offices and membership in different parts of the country, and a fortnightly newspaper, but it is a shadow of its former self.

In the post-1994 period, all these groups attempted to find new agendas and give themselves new leases on life. In the process, some continued to use familiar Islamist language from the 1980s, or adopted that language for new – sometimes non-political – programmes. For example, the MYM, in particular, began pursuing a programme it called the 'gender jihad' from the early 1990s, which resulted in the formation of its MYM Gender Desk in 1993, the establishment of which was proposed by former BC (then MYM) leader Haroon Patel, and co-founded by Shamima Shaikh, by then a well-known Muslim feminist.[53] Islamists from various of these organisations also spoke at different times about a 'jihad against racism', and a 'jihad against poverty', among many other – mainly socioeconomic – 'jihads'. Some Islamists from

the 1980s argue that as long as South Africa's socioeconomic disparities, inequality and racial problems persist, the country remains in need of jihad (albeit differently-defined).

Nonetheless, the shape and face of Political Islam in South Africa has changed considerably since 1994. Simultaneous with the waning of Islamist organisations of the 1980s, other groups that had been either apolitical or anti-political during the apartheid era began articulating themselves politically. The notion of 'kufr politics' not being acceptable for Muslims to be involved in has recently been rejected by much of South Africa's Muslim community. The rapid adoption of the idea that politics is part of Islam does not, however, necessarily mirror the progressive Political Islam of the 1980s. Some of the current manifestations of Political Islam are positive, such as Muslim students who have been involved in the 'fallist' #RodesMustFall and #FeesMustFall movements, and who have argued for their involvement on an Islamic basis.[54] In the process, they have also adopted the old positions of the MYM and Call of Islam on issues such as gender and interfaith activism. Others, however, are part of a more diverse expression of Political Islam, and a variety of Muslim groups and individuals whose focus on political action is on matters outside South Africa. This includes individuals who support the activities of movements such as the Islamic State group. Most 'ulama organisations who had refused to be drawn into political discussions and eschewed politics (or eschewed, at least, anti-apartheid politics) until 1994 now freely express political thoughts, both about South Africa and the Muslim world.[55] Indeed, one might argue that most forms of Political Islam that are discussed in this book find some articulation of support in South Africa today.

Notes

1 Apartheid legally classified the South African population into four racial groups: 'White/European', 'Coloured', 'Asian/Indian' and 'African/Native'. In this chapter, in protest against the use of apartheid terminology, 'racial' terms will not be capitalised. The style decision to render

these terms in lowercase aims to express protest against the concept of such 'racial' categories, as well as the injustice, inequalities and associated power dynamics represented by these categories, historically and at present. However, political terms such as 'Black' – encompassing people previously classified as coloured, indian and african/native – and 'White' will be capitalised.

2 See Davids (1985) and Davids (1980: 62–84).

3 The term 'coloured' refers to the apartheid-era category. See Note 1.

4 http://www.sahistory.org.za/organisations/african-peoples-organisation-apo.

5 http://www.sahistory.org.za/people/dr-yusuf-mohamed-dadoo.

6 http://www.ahmedtimol.co.za.

7 http://www.sahistory.org.za/people/suliman-babla-saloojee.

8 See, for example, Pahad (1979); Dadoo (2000); Reddy (1995).

9 Meer (2002: 272).

10 Dadoo (1996: 129–133).

11 Dadoo (1996: 129).

12 Esack (1997: 47).

13 *Muslim News,* 12 May 1961.

14 *Muslim News,* 12 May 1961.

15 Sonn (2002: 27).

16 Afza (nd: 25–26), quoted in Palombo (2014: 34).

17 Tayob (1998: 19).

18 'Revolution Today, Justice Tomorrow', Qibla publication quoted in Esack (1992: 78).

19 Esack (1988: 473–498).

20 'General Assembly Minutes' of the Muslim Youth Movement of South Africa (1989).

21 Esack (1988: 491). The notion that the Call was untouched by foreign or global developments and ideas was, however, false. For a discussion on this, see Jeenah (2005).

22 Esack is now the chairperson of the Palestine solidarity organisation called BDS South Africa.

23 Rasool (1986: 33).

24 Kelly (2008: 129–131).

25 'Racial capitalism' was a term coined by South African Marxist scholar-activist Neville Alexander in a speech he delivered at the launch conference of the National Forum, an alliance of Black Consciousness and leftist groups – including a few trade unions, in Hammanskraal on 11 June 1983 to explain that apartheid was not only about race but that there was a link between race and capitalist accumulation. See Alexander (1985: 41). This chapter is an adaptation of Alexander's Hammanskraal speech. At the Hammanskraal meeting the Forum adopted the 'Azanian Manifesto', a declaration that called for a socialist state in South Africa. Taking the cue from Alexander's speech, the Manifesto also used the term 'racial capitalism' to refer to the South African political economy.

26 The term 'indian' refers to the apartheid-era category. See Note 1.

27 Jeenah (2001: 21).

28 Esack (2015).

29 Qutb (1964/2006: 31).

30 Qur'an Surah 28, Verse 4.

31 Qur'an Surah 4, Verse 75.

32 Qur'an Surah 28, Verse 5.

33 Esack (2015).

34 See South African History Online (2014). 'The Tricameral Parliament'. http://www.sahistory.org.za/article/tricameral-parliament.

35 Narrated by Bayhaqi. See Maqsood (1995).

36 Ebrahim Moosa, speaking at MSA Annual Conference in Laudium, Pretoria, June 1983. Moosa later became national director of the MYM and, thereafter, its deputy president.

37 See 'Takfir' in *The Oxford Dictionary of Islam*. http://www.oxfordislamicstudies.com/article/opr/t125/e2319.

38 Recorded in Musnad Ahmad 12140.
The Arabic reads: عن أنس بن مالك قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ اتَّقُوا دَعْوَةَ الْمَظْلُومِ وَإِنْ كَانَ كَافِرًا فَإِنَّهُ لَيْسَ دُونَهَا حِجَاب

39 The hadith is recorded in Sahih al-Bukhari, Book 46, Hadith 9. The Arabic is:عَنْ، حَدَّثَنَا يَحْيَى بْنُ مُوسَى، حَدَّثَنَا وَكِيعٌ، حَدَّثَنَا زَكَرِيَّاءُ بْنُ إِسْحَاقَ الْمَكِّيُّ، يَحْيَى بْنِ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ صَيْفِيٍّ، عَنْ أَبِي مَعْبَدٍ، مَوْلَى ابْنِ عَبَّاسٍ عَنِ ابْنِ عَبَّاسٍ ـ رضى الله عنهما ـ أَنَّ النَّبِيَّ صلى الله عليه وسلم بَعَثَ مُعَاذًا إِلَى الْيَمَنِ، فَقَالَ «اتَّقِ دَعْوَةَ الْمَظْلُومِ، فَإِنَّهَا لَيْسَ بَيْنَهَا وَبَيْنَ اللَّهِ حِجَابٌ».

40 The phrase 'enjoin what is ma'ruf and forbid what is munkar' appears in a number of verses in the Qur'an, for example: Surah 3, Verse 104; Surah 3, Verse 110; Surah 9, Verse 71; Surah 9, Verse 112 and Surah 31, Verse 17.

41 Esack (2015).

42 Muslim Youth Movement (1982).

43 For a more detailed discussion about how Islamists in South Africa viewed the notion of jihad and of martyrdom, see Jeenah (2015: 201–215).

44 Qur'an Surah 8, Verse 60.

45 Qur'an Surah 61, Verse 4.

46 Qur'an Surah 4, Verse 95.

47 Sahih Muslim, Hadith 49. الأول: عن أبي سعيد الخدري رضي الله عنه قال: سمعت رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم يقول: «من رأى منكم منكرًا فليغيره بيده ، فإن لم يستطع فبلسانه، فإن لم يستطع فبقلبه وذلك أضعف الإيمان» ((رواه مسلم)).

48 For a more detailed discussion about how Islamists in South Africa viewed the notion of jihad and of martyrdom, see Jeenah (2015: 201–215).

49 See South African History Online (2016). 'Stephen Bantu Biko'. http://www.sahistory.org.za/people/stephen-bantu-biko.

50 See South African History Online (2016). 'Dr. Neil Hudson Aggett'. http://www.sahistory.org.za/people/dr-neil-hudson-aggett.

51 See South African History Online (2012). 'Andrew Sibusiso Zondo'. http://www.sahistory.org.za/people/andrew-sibusiso-zondo.

52 See South African History Online (2016). 'Ahmed Timol'. http://www.sahistory.org.za/people/ahmed-timol.

53 Jeenah (2008).

54 'Gender jihad' was a term coined by former MYM president Rashied Omar and popularised by the MYM Gender Desk, which was formed in 1993. See Jeenah (2015: 212).

55 See for example, Minhaj Jeenah, Khutbah at Claremont Main Road Mosque. 'Realign Islam with youth of 1976', *Voice of the Cape*. http://www.vocfm.co.za/realign-islam-with-youth-of-1976.

56 See, for example, the lectures by Ebrahim Bham, Jamiatul Ulama South Africa, 'Lectures'. http://www.jmtsa.co.za/library/audio/?pagenum=3.

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16

The journeying in and of Political Islam[1]

Abdulkader Tayob

An enormous body of literature has been produced on Political Islam,[2] but relatively little has been written on individual journeys of religious activism. I argue in this chapter that Political Islam is the sum of these individual journeys and that Political Islam is best represented as a journey writ large.

The journeys of Political Islam have not been entirely ignored by observers, but they are usually told in an overly simplistic form. Sayyid Qutb's journey to the United States and his return to Egypt and to Islam has become a template for others. The journey from sinfulness represented by the West to the dynamism and beauty of Islam has been repeatedly told. In these stories, a life of debauchery and temptation is left behind for a life of commitment and sometimes martyrdom. Journeys told in such ways create a caricature where good and evil are white and black. There are no grey areas in this binary template, promoted by insiders and uncritically repeated by many observers.

The journeys that make Political Islam, the real journeys, are much more complex. They include intellectual tribulations, but also deeply personal struggles with regard to beliefs, practices and attitudes in relation to parents, teachers, partners, children, friends and associates. Islamists want a better society, a more vibrant Islam, and a greater commitment to Islam from themselves and others. Such aspirations demand commitment, choices, temptations and confrontations.

Political Islam lends itself easily to the metaphor of journeying. It has some distinguishing features that suit the metaphor. Most organisations use the word harakah to denote their dynamism, movement and change. On an individual level, this movement almost always includes a departure from one place to another, from one lifestyle to another. Political Islam means taking a different position from the one given at birth. There are journeys in space and time, from the rural to the urban, from the East to the West and back again, and from the present to the past and back again. The journeys of Political Islam are promoted by unusual influences and paradoxes, and include moments of enlightenment and darkness. The journeys are focused, some may say obsessed, with a significant Other. They pass through a conscious construction and reconstruction of the self in relation to a significant Other. In these and other key ways, Political Islam is best thought of as journeying.

I first thought of the journeys of Political Islam in Europe in 2010, when I met a Libyan activist who shared his story with me. He was part of the da'wah organisation that had opposed Muammar Gaddafi for a long time. At one time, he related, Libyan security officials had kidnapped him and had stuffed him into a box at the embassy. When I met him, he relayed his gratitude that the German security services had rescued him. Otherwise, he would have been sent to Libya, and to a more permanent and everlasting abode. In exile, he became an active member of a mosque and still gives the weekly sermon, and was also drawn to Sufism. He sometimes attended the gatherings of the Burhaniyyah Sufi order in Hamburg, but resisted joining them in their heavy breathing and moving dhikr (remembrance of God). His interesting journey prompted me to look closer at the biographies of Islamic activists. I began in earnest, then, in Egypt in 2011, when I interviewed some Islamists immediately after the advent of the 2011 Middle East and North Africa uprisings. However, I was unable to return to Cairo due to the continuing conflict there and decided to focus on South African activists for a while.

I want to share with you a few journeys of South Africans within the broader frame of journeying in Political Islam. Moving from the local to the global and back again, I will share vignettes exemplifying journeying in Political Islam. I will then conclude with some reflections on how my approach adds to current scholarly interpretations of this important phenomenon.

Mandla[3] was a politically conscious youth in the Eastern Cape, reciting poetry at anti-apartheid meetings at age fifteen. In 1986, a friend from the Black Consciousness Movement lent him a book that argued that Islam was an African religion. Mandla was overwhelmed: '… [the book] captured my imagination immediately; I said no! That this is the faith! I wanted to become a Muslim and this is the religion of my ancestors.' Mandla's enthusiasm was short-lived, as he met Indian Muslims in the Eastern Cape who shattered this vision, but he persisted, and eight years later he joined the Muslim Youth Movement (MYM) as it committed itself to Africanisation in post-apartheid South Africa. Alas, in 2011, he resigned in frustration due to racism in the organisation's ranks. But his journey in Islam continues.

Mandla's journey contrasts with the journey of Faqir,[4] a founding member of the MYM in 1970. Even before the MYM's formation, Faqir had travelled to Europe and met Sayyid Ramadan, the son-in-law of Muslim Brotherhood founder Hassan al-Banna, in Geneva. Faqir was impressed with Ramadan's vision of Islam as a religion of dynamism and modernity, and back home he worked tirelessly to establish an Islamic movement in southern Africa. He played a leading role in connecting Islamists in southern Africa with leading figures in Europe and North America, connected in turn with the Muslim Brothers in Egypt and Jamaat-e-Islami in India and Pakistan. In the 1980s, people like Mandla confronted Faqir with the view that the MYM had ignored the challenges of apartheid oppression, and that its global vision did not resonate with the peoples' struggles. Faqir held passionately to his global vision, but also insisted that Political Islam in South Africa was not opposed to national liberation.

Mandla and Faqir's different journeys capture one of the salient features and dilemmas of journeys of Political Islam in South Africa. Political Islam in South Africa was rooted in ideas of liberation, but moved like a pendulum between a global vision of Islam and local politics. These two poles in Mandla and Faqir's journeys recurred in the journeys of other leaders and followers in the various movements in South Africa.

This particular feature of Political Islam's journeying between poles was initiated and framed by leading intellectuals in the beginning of the twentieth century. The founder of the Muslim Brothers, Hassan al-Banna, presented Islam as a cause (da'wah) in comparison with many other causes (da'awat): 'the different causes (da'awat) that have besieged this period, divided hearts and confused thoughts can be judged by our cause (da'wah).'[5] In another lecture, al-Banna spoke of the Muslim Brothers' Islam, contrasted with the Islam of the Persians, the Mamluks and the Turks.[6] Around the same time, Muhammad Iqbal in India redefined the ummah as a nation, and directed Muslims to compare and contrast the geographical nation in which they lived with the religious nation (ummah) that they shared with people across the globe.[7] Al-Banna and Iqbal created a language for thinking about Islam in comparison with other religions, causes and nations.

When we look at the life trajectories of individuals, these and other choices occupy a central feature of journeying in Political Islam. The Indian-Pakistani ideologue Abul A'la Maududi was faced with a difficult intellectual choice between the Ahle Hadith and the Deobandis.[8] In his political career he was presented with another difficult choice at partition in 1947 when India and Pakistan were founded. According to popular biographies, Osama bin Laden moved from a western lifestyle to Islamic jihad. Countless European Muslims find themselves somewhere on the road between Islam and Europe.

Sometimes, the choices confronted in journeys of Political Islam appear to be clear and straightforward. The real journeys of Political Islam suggest, however, that the choices are often subtle and indeterminable.

Aziz,[9] an architect in Durban, found that the Good took on unexpected shades of grey. Aziz was initiated into Political Islam in Houston, Texas in the USA. In particular, he had been impressed by Iranian activists led by Ebrahim Yazdi. Back in South Africa, Aziz moved between the MYM and the Tablighi Jamaat (TJ), not willing to stake his claim as clearly as his friend Faqir. Faqir, on the other hand, found the TJ 'suffocating…and intolerable'. Then, Aziz was given an opportunity to design a prayer room on the University of Natal's Howard College campus. He did not want to follow the University of Durban-Westville's example, where the mosque stood apart from other religious groups and from the faculty buildings. Aziz wanted a mosque that flowed into the campus – one that was not so clearly demarcated from education and other spheres of life. The mosque was designed and built with this vision, but it has since become very similar to the one that Aziz had rejected. When I met him, Aziz was disappointed with such mosques, the one he designed and those that proliferated in the city. Mosques were a clearly recognisable Good, but their discordant relation to the world unsettled Aziz.

The journey of Musa[10], another activist from Johannesburg, also included multiple and competing Goods. In the early 1980s, he offered to manage the MYM bookshop, primarily to show how it could be made financially viable. But he was also interested in all books, not only the books prescribed by the MYM. Eventually, the MYM leadership confronted and challenged him for stocking 'Murabitun books'. A rival Islamist group from the UK, the Murabitun challenged the MYM's theological credentials. Musa was disappointed with the heavy-handedness of his MYM superiors, but his own journey has followed the books that lined the bookshop: searching for the true Good.

This confrontation and choice – between more than one form of Good – is another key feature of journeying in Political Islam. That a deep sectarianism dominates Political Islam is well known, but little is said about struggles over multiple conceptions of the Good, which appear to be equally right, equally grounded in Islam ,or equally at-

tractive. The great al-Ghazali provides a moving representation of the struggle over multiple manifestations of good and evil.

> It is as if the heart is an object attacked from every side. When influence[d] by one thing, it is immediately matched by its opposite and changes its quality. When the demon descends on it and calls it to respond to impulse, an angel comes and saves it from that. When one demon pulls him towards some evil, another one pulls him in another direction. When an angel directs him to a good, another directs it to something else. Sometimes, (the heart) is torn between two demons, and sometimes between two angels.[11]

The heart not only faces a choice between good and evil, but also between several manifestations of good and evil. A deep and persistent conflict between good and evil, and between varieties of goodness, is humanity's fate, according to Al-Ghazali. This passage provides an excellent insight into this aspect of journeying in Political Islam. Political Islam is confronted and caught between the desires for Islam and democracy, for Islam and modernity, for Islam and revolutionary socialism, for Islam and gender equally and for Islam and outrage. Such manifestations of the Good cannot be compromised. They are not without deep contradictions and contrasts, and come alive in activist journeys.

If the realisation of multiple Goods is too subtle, a more easily recognisable feature of journeying in Political Islam is a confrontation with a significant Other. Haroon[12] came to Durban to study pharmacy and was drawn to Political Islam through Ahmed Deedat's lectures and debates. He followed Deedat everywhere and modelled himself in Deedat's image as a speaker and debater. And yet, when I asked him about a transformative memory in his life, he mentioned a few nights he spent in the Black township of KwaMashu near Durban. Deedat's lectures shaped Haroon's identity against Christianity and Hinduism, but his experience in KwaMashu confronted his identity as an Indian Muslim; it unsettled him to think about Islam beyond race. Sumayya[13]

from Pietermaritzburg related a long and distinguished career as an activist Muslim. She avoided confrontation, but made it clear to herself and to others that she would not join the Tablighi Jamaat and that she was aware that Muslim men in general, and the 'ulama in particular, would not appreciate her commitment. As a woman, however, her horizon and her identity expanded dramatically when civil strife in the midlands of Natal introduced her to a variety of religious and cultural groups. In this new context of social activism, Sumayya's vision of the Other expanded far beyond the inter-Islamic groups that she had grappled with until then.

The Other occupies an important feature of journeys of Political Islam. The Other is the significant partner that shapes and determines a course of action, an attitude and relation. For many activists in South Africa, religious scholars ('ulama) were significant Others. These activists' understanding and practices were shaped in relation to the scholars, who were invariably perceived as too silent on apartheid, too traditional or out of touch with the times. But the Other can take different forms. We know that radical Political Islamists have been driven by their conception of the Other as an arch-enemy. They have framed the West as the Great Satan, but so too have they identified other enemies, closer and within. Brynjar Lia's biography of Abu Musab al-Suri, al-Qa'ida's key strategist, shows how al-Suri rejected the Muslim Brothers in Syria and shaped his political actions in relation to groups in Algeria, Europe and Afghanistan.[14] The overwhelming place of the Other can take different forms. Confronting the Other may lead to a deep and violent sectarianism. But when considering the entire spectrum of journeys, we find the Other sometimes breaking boundaries and, at other times, creating new ones.

If there is a journey, we should ask if there is a destination. This represents another feature of journeying in Political Islam. I only interviewed activists who had been involved in Political Islam for decades. Rather than representing only a snapshot of their lives engaged in ritual, practice, a video message or a book, their journeys shed light on destin-

ations and end points that unfold over decades. Imraan[15] was an office worker attracted to the 'larnies' (middle-class bosses) of the MYM in the 1970s. I interviewed him at his office in the working-class Indian township of Phoenix, from where he counselled numerous people on government grants, HIV and AIDS, and rental arrears. He told me of women who prostrated themselves at his feet for his useful services. He was also embarrassed that they promised to pray for him at the local temple, and he pleaded with them to do so from outside the temple where there were no 'idols'. When I left him, I had no doubt that Imraan had found his destination.

In contrast, Musa and Faqir seemed to me still to be meandering in different ways. Faqir was determined to prove to the world, and mostly to himself, that the MYM was committed to apartheid's eradication from the 1970s. Musa found serial destinations. After withdrawing from an Islamist organisation, he became active in the management of a mosque in Johannesburg, immersed himself in the production of a Muslim world radio programme and then pledged allegiance (bay'ah) to a Sufi shaykh. When I heard that he had become a representative (khalifa) to the latter, I thought that he had reached his goal. In conversation, though, I realised that he was still moving, unsettled by the competing manifestations of the Good that he first experienced in the MYM bookshop.

Journeys of Political Islam remind me of William James's study of the testimonies of evangelical, born-again Christians in *Varieties of Religious Experience*. Analysing these testimonies, James presented a model of the trials and travails that characterised intense religious experiences. After periods of doubt, remorse, confusion and turmoil, mystics and saints arrived at a holistic vision of the world and the self. I sometimes felt a deep sense of resolution and composure when listening to my interviewees. At other times, I heard continuous struggle and confrontation with choices.

I have often wondered if martyrdom attackers regard their supreme acts as final and irrevocable end points, or as deeply frustrated acts of giving up in a struggle against contradictions. Lankford[16] argued that

9/11 suicide attacker Muhammad Atta was neither brave nor fanatical, but a deeply conflicted individual who saw martyrdom as a final escape. We need to know more about the choices made by radical Muslims before judging them in their destinations of glory and destruction.

In general, then, journeying in Political Islam takes shape around life choices, manifestations of the Good, a blinding vision of the Other and resolutions that may or may not be attained. Journeying in Political Islam sheds light on those who have emphasised its political nature. For example, Francois Burgat[17] and S Sayyid[18] have consistently identified Political Islam as an anticolonial movement of authenticity. John Esposito[19] followed a similar line of analysis, regarding the revival of religion in general, and Islam in particular, as alternative paths of modernisation. Political Islam certainly reflects these goals and desires. From a journeying perspective, however, it also includes deep conflict with other Islamic alternatives, and with western approaches and influences that have been indigenised. Burgat, Sayyid and Esposito seem to take an insider's position, without giving full credit to the multiple journeys that constitute Political Islam.

With greater historical insight, Stephen Humphreys saw Political Islam as a new form of religious revival (tajdid) that could be distinguished from premodern forms.[20] This distinctive modern language or discourse gave Muslims from a wide variety of backgrounds a coherent ideology for activism. Roxanne Euben and Qasim Zaman share this sentiment, and write of Political Islam as an 'interpretive' framework that provides a 'lens on the world rather than a mere reflection of material conditions or conduit for socioeconomic grievances'.[21] Armando Salvatore followed a similar line of analysis but stressed the production of Political Islam's discourse in encounters between Europeans and Muslims since colonialism. The discourse was not merely produced in relation to the challenges faced in local contexts but in engagement with western interlocutors.[22] To the metaphor of journeying I would add the important role of travelling in time and space that characterises Political Islam. The discursive approach is useful, as long as one includes a dynamic element in its constitution.

The discourse is not static but dynamic, changing through production and invention in words and deeds, over time.

In conclusion, I see Political Islam as the sum of individual journeys that are more than the sum of their parts. Individual journeys emerged in their individuality and deep subjectivity, but also with others with whom they shared key characteristics. These journeys always include movement between poles, deliberation, debate and confusion over multiple Goods, and framing of the self in relation to the Other. They sometimes conclude in ultimate satisfaction and resolution. They are sometimes forged together to make a deep impact on society and politics. But individual journeys never lose their uniqueness and agency, and unravel from each other as we trace them over time.

Notes

1 This work is based on research supported in part by the National Research Foundation (NRF) of South Africa. The opinions expressed in this work are those of the author, and the NRF accepts no liability whatsoever in this regard.

2 I use the term 'Political Islam' to mean revival (tajdid), Islamism or fundamentalism.

3 All names have been changed. Interview with the author, 26 February 2013.

4 Interview with the author, 4 April 2012.

5 al-Banna (n.d.: 19).

6 al-Banna (n.d.: 118).

7 Majeed (2007).

8 Adams (1976: 25–47).

9 Interview with the author, 23 June 2012.

10 Interview with the author, 8 April 2014.

11 Al-Ghazali (1356: 1419).

12 Interview with the author, 5 April 2012.

13 Interview with the author, 21 June 2012.

14 Lia (2007).

15 Interview with the author, 5 April 2012.

16 Lankford (2014).

17 Burgat (2003).
18 Sayyid (2003).
19 Esposito (2003: 69–100).
20 Humphreys (1979).
21 Euben and Zaman (2009: 1).
22 Salvatore (1997).

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With Political Islam, in its various manifestations, continuing to be in the foreground of global politics and international relations, this collection, which includes chapters by scholars from around the world who have studied the topic for many years, examines critical themes related to this phenomenon.

Divided into five parts, the book debates important questions and seeks to clarify various issues related to Political Islam. It begins by conceptualising and positioning the discourse around Political Islam. It then discusses the Islamism of Muslim states that claim 'Islamic' legitimacy; as well as that of social movements, armed resistance groups and pseudo-state groups. Continuing with the challenges facing political Islam after the 2010-2011 uprisings in the Middle East and North Africa, the book ends with a discussion of political Islam in Muslim minority contexts, with South Africa as a case study.

This fascinating collection brings together existing scholarship about debates on Political Islam, while also providing news insights – especially on how the phenomenon plays out in Muslim minority contexts. While it will definitely appeal to scholars and students, it will also make interesting and accessible reading for anyone keen on understanding Islam, Islamism, politics, international relations, how politics and Islam relate to each other, and how religion is used for political objectives.

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