

Contents

- Neo-Orientalism and Co-optation in American Academia - Tugrul Keskin and Reed Taylor
- Islam and Identity among Uyghurs - Mettursun Beydulla
- Islamism Between the Political Dialectic and the Societal Reality - Abdennour Toumi
- Islam in Politics, not Islamic Politics - Shane Joshua Barter
- Taming The Tigers: Gender Relations and The Cultural Genealogy of Neocolonialism in Afghanistan - Nathaniel A. Davis
- Women, Islam, and Gender Inequality in post-conflict Aceh, Indonesia - Reed Taylor
- A Dissenting Voice on Pakistan's Blasphemy Law - Yoginder Sikand
- A Book Review: The Afghanistan challenge: hard realities and strategic choices - Fatemeh Shayan
- A Book Review: Nader Hashemi's Islam, Secularism & Liberal Democracy - Sheena Sharma
- Study Abroad to Istanbul, Turkey: Politics, Religion and Globalization in Turkish Society
July 4 - 29, 2011 - Portland State University

Neo-Orientalism and Co-optation in American Academia

Tugrul Keskin and Reed Taylor

In the Post September 11 era, we have been witnessing a close and multifaceted relationship between state actors and academia. The fields of Islamic and Middle East Studies - or Central Asian Studies - are the main targets of this co-optation process, which has created its own children that are also embedded in the system of colonialism and benefit directly from the continuation of this trend. Consequently, Islam has become the target and Muslims the subject of this neo-colonialist process. These new groups of "scholars" should be called 'Neo-Orientalists' but they are less knowledgeable than classical Orientalists, and they have a more complicated relationship with state actors. The state needs them as much as they need the state for status and financial benefit. Most of these Neo-Orientalists focus on Women and Islam, or Terrorism and Islam; and in this context, they operate from a feeling that they have the responsibility to 'civilize' others. Their contribution to human civilization however, is nothing more than an abstract of Rudyard Kipling's civilization project. Saving a girl from Afghanistan's oppressive Taliban regime, rescuing the Iranian People from Ahmadinejad and the Mullah Regime; regardless of the actual merits of these forms of leadership; and bringing democracy to the 'savage Muslim societies' is the main purpose of Neo-Orientalists. In this sense, Islam is not seen as part of the social structure of Muslim societies, but has been portrayed as an ideological and uncivilized type of cult. Muslims should be liberated from their 'backwards traditions' and from Islam itself, which should at minimum be reformed in the interests of this new encroaching imperialism. Neo-Orientalist academics play an important role in perpetuating and strengthening this process. In this issue, you will read the articles based on a non-orientalist approach to Islam and Muslim Societies. Salam and Peace to all, Tugrul and Reed

Islam and Identity among Uyghurs

Mettursun Beydulla - bmettursun@gmail.com

Department of East Asian Languages and Civilizations, Harvard University

Uyghurs are indigenous people in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region, PRC (aka East Turkistan). Most of the world's Uyghurs, Turkic-speaking Sunni Muslims who belong to the Hanifi school of Islam, live in Xinjiang. As Islam has a 1000 year long history in Xinjiang, it has become integrated into Uyghur cultural identity. To be a Uyghur is to be Muslim. Most Uyghurs identify themselves as Muslim, but many do not have significant religious knowledge. Most Uyghurs have acquired and transmit Islamic knowledge through the embodied performances of day-to-day living and life-cycle events. In post 1949, the state took control and official hostility towards Islam altered the condition of the "ulama" in Uyghur society. Atheism was proclaimed as public doctrine and the Han Chinese culture as the most advanced of all cultures. Surveillance and suppression of religion by the state have had the paradoxical effect of strengthening the central role of Islam in Uyghur life. (Fuller and Lipman 2004, pp 334-344). The current trend towards assimilation through various educational, religious and economic policies has encountered resistance in the form of riots in Xinjiang and Uyghur diasporas' resistance to the detention of activists.



History of Islam from Introduction to 1949

From earliest times Xinjiang has had a history of interaction with other cultures and places. This has occurred through migration, travel, Silk Road trade and imperial conquest. Xinjiang's connection with China dates back more than 2,000 years, but has remained under the effective control of China for less than five centuries. It was only in 1884 that

Xinjiang was brought within the administrative structure of the Chinese empire and made a full-fledged province (Millward, 2007; Perdue, 2005). Islam entered from Central Asia in 960, and by the end of the tenth century Kashgar and Hoten (the eastern and southern parts of the Tarim basin) had embraced Islam. By the early-fifteenth century, the religion had spread all the way to Qumul (Hami). From this time Sufis, Islamic mystics, spread among the Uyghur in the Tarim Basin. The Naqshbandiyaa Sufi order was even able to seize control of political and military affairs in the Tarim Basin and Turfan. Hidayet

Allah (aka Apaq Khoja or Khoja Apaq), a powerful prince in Kashgar until the 1670s, served as governor of that city. Yaqub Beg, an emir of the Kashgar emirate (1864-1877) claimed himself a "protector" of Islam. In November 1933 the East Turkistan Islamic Republic was established in Kashgar, followed by the East Turkistan Republic (1945-1949) and in 1949, Xinjiang fell under Communist China's control.

Islam under the Peoples Republic of China (1949-1976)

In the early years of the PRC, the government's vision was to create national unity and establish loyalty among all the minority populations by promoting patriotism and socialist ideology. Religious policies followed ideological swings that alternated between periods of tightened central control (underpinned by atheistic principles of Marxism/Leninism) that suppressed Islam and ethnic consciousness, with periods of more lenient policies. The Great Leap Forward (1958-62) and the Cultural Revolution (1966-76) were two periods of the greatest intolerance. Many religious sites including mosques were destroyed or changed into warehouses or pigsties. Any person who exhibited religious behavior or who had played a role in the clergy was labeled 'counter revolutionary', just as intellectuals or secular local nationalists were. Many members of the clergy such as sheikhs and ishans (religious clerics) or believers suspected of disloyalty were persecuted, sent to reeducation camps (laogai), or even executed. Religions of all types were forbidden, not just Islam. According to the official government vision, the pre-1949 situation was dominated by conservative Islamic clergy and oppressive landlords who subjected the population to conditions of serfdom and ignorance. Post 1949 society was modern and progressive, a time during which major economic and social advances were made, including advances in education and literacy.



1978-1989 Era of Reform

The era that started with the end of the Cultural Revolution was the era of reform policies and openness (gaige kaifang) that officially started in 1980. Changes included: expansion of the school system, a drop in illiteracy, an official softening towards religion and the use of minority languages in education. The consequences of some of these changes were positive towards Uyghurs in Xinjiang. There were more opportunities for education and a moderate return of religious practices. Churches, mosques, and temples began to reopen in the years following official reauthorization in December 1978. Atheism no longer figured in the constitution as the Marxist-Leninist vision of religion as the "opium of the people" was completely forgotten. The decade of 1980 to 1990 saw a progressive opening of borders that made

Uyghur youth better able to travel more freely and provided opportunities for spiritual exchange and revival. Until the mid 1990s hundreds of young Uyghurs attended religious schools in Pakistan, Egypt, Turkey, and Saudi Arabia, and a few of them also headed to Yemen, Qatar, and Malaysia for the same reason. The government sent some Uyghur students, after years of training and observation at the China Islamic Institution in Beijing, to study Islam in Arabic counties, especially at Al-Azhar in Egypt. However, Al-Azhar University today requires Uyghurs students to have approval from the local Chinese embassy. Currently hundreds of students study Islam at Al-Azhar University and most of them use their own networks and money or are dependent on small amounts of university scholarship.



1990 to the present and the future of Islam

Policy changes that date from 1989/1990 include changes in religious tolerance which were mirrored in a crackdown on religious education. Attitudes towards Uyghurs involved reforms or reinterpretations of official policies towards religion, education, and cultural expression. To meet these new expectations, a textbook about atheism was promulgated for use by the young in Xinjiang. Communist party members and cadres are by definition Marxist materialists and therefore could not be allowed to believe in and practice religion. Although under Chinese law, citizens have two religious freedoms: the right to believe and the right to not to believe in religion. Party members had to choose the latter.

After 1990, officials began to prosecute illegal religious activities, officially removed suspected clerics, broke up unauthorized medrasas, and stopped construction of mosques. The government instituted a quota for each village and all of the mosques over this quota were demolished. The government began to issue licenses for legal mosques, reviewed appointments of imams and started an 'education in atheism' campaign. The policy of atheistic only party members became even more restricted after September 11, 2001. (Amnesty International 2002) Thus began a Sinicization by educating Uyghurs into the acquisition of Chinese culture. Legally, neither the Koran nor religion could be taught to students younger than eighteen. Chinese schools and television reinforced this Sinicization by teaching 'patriotism' (aiguo zhuyi) at the expense of other cultural expressions.

After 9/11, restrictions also included banning religious practices during Ramadan, increasing control over Islamic clergy, and the detention or arrest of religious leaders who had been labeled 'unpatriotic' or 'subversive' (Human Rights Watch

2005) Restrictions included the annual pilgrimage to Mecca. "In contemporary Xinjiang, the power of the state to regulate religion, including Islam, has brought the forces of law and order into direct conflict with Muslims who are trying to live according to the tenets of their faith" (Fuller and Lipman 2004, p. 323) The practice of religion thus became limited to the private sphere and morality, and Islamic elites who once benefitted from their economic power as religious elites began to depend on state recognition and control in order to receive their salaries.

Education is the key to Sinicization. In order to speed up integration, experimental 'bilingual' language classes for middle and high school for minority students were established. In 1997, these provided a new model for compulsory Chinese language education and the marginalization of the Uyghur language as well as other minority languages in Xinjiang. By using the term bilingual education, the government is implementing a monolingual language education system that undermines the linguistic basis of Uyghur culture. Chinese has become the only official language and is now the language of instruction in all levels of Uyghur schools including kindergarten. (Dwyer, 2005)

As well as bilingual education, changes in the use of the Uyghur language and culture through publications and religious practices have been suppressed as the government has exerted more and more control over every aspect of life in Xinjiang. Now, Uyghurs have become strangers in their own land. (Bovingdon 2010) Since 2002 the government has implemented a labor export program which brings rural Uyghur workers, especially female workers, from south-west Xinjiang to the Han-dominated factories of the Chinese industrial core. During the first half of 2009 alone, the labor export plan had transported 96,000 Uyghur workers.

This labor export program is part of a strategy for assimilating Uyghurs, eroding their sense of national identity, and stamping out their religious beliefs. Many contend that is naïve to say the program is aiding Xinjiang development, but instead it is a program that divides and assimilates in the name of ‘opportunity for all’. At the same time the government is encouraging Han immigration which has increased to 40% from 4% in the last 70 years.



Uyghur advocates both in Xinjiang and in the Diaspora have sought religious and secular education for all members of the Uyghur community so that Xinjiang can develop its own indigenous, ethnically conscious professional classes. The Uyghur language is a depository of Uyghur culture and history and Islam is an element of identity that is intimately bound up with the Uyghur language. For Uyghurs it is unthinkable not to have religion, their own language and literature.

For the foreseeable future, unfortunately we can see a continuation of current policies with regards to religion, education, loss of mother tongue, and immigration of non-Muslim populations from the east into Xinjiang. Uyghurs will have to comply or resist an environment that makes their practice of Islam potentially dangerous. Unrest among the population has led to increased arrests for suspicious behavior or ideas as well as more

aggressive methods of showing national pride such as the Ghulja incident of 1997 (Bovingdon, 2004) and the Urumchi riots of 2009. Uyghur Diasporas have pushed back and have campaigned for the rights of Uyghurs. The Xinjiang situation is similar to the threat to Tibet in that Uyghur culture could come to the brink of extinction. Islam is one of the keys to identity and continuity of Uyghur communities.

References:

- Amnesty International 2002. “Peoples Republic of China’s Anti terrorism Legislation and Repression in the Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region.” Available from:
<http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/asset/ASA17/010/2002/en/f8e02362-d873-11dd-9df8-936c90684588/asa170102002en.pdf>
- Bovingdon, G. (2010). *The Uyghurs, Strangers in their own Homeland*. Columbia University Press
- Bovingdon, G. (2004). *Autonomy in Xinjiang: Han Nationalist Imperatives and Uyghur Discontent*. *Policy Studies* 11. Available from: <http://www.eastwestcenter.org/fileadmin/stored/pdfs//PS011.pdf>
- Dwyer, A. M. (2005). *The Xinjiang Conflict: Uyghur Identity, Language Policy, and Political Discourse*. *Policy Studies*, no 15. Available from: <http://www.eastwestcenter.org/fileadmin/stored/pdfs//PS015.pdf>
- Fuller G. E. and Lipman, J. N. (2004). “Islam in Xinjiang”. In F. Starr (Ed.) *Xinjiang, China Muslim Borderland* (pp320-352). Armonk, NY: M.E Sharpe
- Human Rights Watch 2005. “Religious Repression of Uyghur Muslims.” Available from:
<http://www.hrw.org/en/news/2005/04/10/china-religious-repression-uighur-muslims>
- Millward, J. A. (2007). *Eurasian Crossroads, History of Xinjiang*. Columbia University Press.
- Perdue, P. C. (2005). *China Marches West, The Qing Conquest of Central Eurasia*. The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press.



Islamism Between the Political Dialectic and the Societal Reality

Abdenmour Toumi - nourhty@yahoo.com

In light of all the recent events that have shaken the political systems in Muslim countries, post-cold war era world affairs, and to some extent academic curriculums in political science and sociology, it is useful to explain the historic evolution of political Islam, currently known as Islamism. Islamist parties (legalists), such as the party of the Justice and Development (APK) in Turkey, the MSP in Algeria, Hamas in Ghaza, or Hezb Allah (inspired by the Shea'a doctrine (el-marja'eya) in Lebanon, are adapting well, more or less, with the mechanisms of democracy. There are also small fanatical groups, el-Qae'eda for instance, which proclaim to also be inspired by Islamic political theory; in this is case, it is used as political ideology rather than a political party playing a political role in the democratic process.

According to the definition of Joseph Lapalombara and Myron Weiner, political parties must:

- be a lasting and sustainable organization that makes its existence in space and time.
 - have a will to seize power.
- include a search for popular support through elections or other means (1).

Islamist political parties appeared during a period of social and political transition, challenging the political regimes that have been in power for a long time through either military coups or the emergence of nationalist independence movements. As they have never left power, they have been legitimized and the Islamists have become a horizontal alternative to the status quo.

The exigence of Unity in Islam disallows any idea of division within the nation of el-Oumah el-Islamiya (the Islamic nation) into clans and factions. In the Koran, the term (2) Hezb (party), which in the current Arab-Muslim world serves to

indicate a party in the modern sense of the term, is pejoratively employed (3). However, there are examples where the nation has been divided (4). Moreover, the idea of political parties has varied adaptations in the Arab-Muslim world. From the last quarter of the XIXth century, Ahmed Orabi appears as the leader of a nationalist party, The Egyptian Resistance, emerging above all the factions raging among the Egyptian people; to indicate this party, Ahmed Orabi employs the term Hezb (5). In the 1920's in Syria and Iraq, a secular movement that was the voice of modernity arose with the Arab societies out of the post-Ottoman Empire dislocation, replacing political religious sentiments with secular values. Michel Aflak and Salah Bitar became the founding fathers of an Arab republicanism based on ethnicity and not religiosity. This political movement put the modern structures of the nation-state in Iraq and Syria in place, and paved the road to a political Arab elite, adopting the ideas of democratic values, which led to the creation of el-Ba'aath (the resurrection) of the Arab nation, contrary to the Islamists who were nostalgic and saddened by the death of the Islamic Caliphate under the reign of the Ottoman Empire in 1928. This initiated the dichotomy between Islamists and nationalists' societal objectives. Nationalists look at the Arabic Nation as entity of common language and common destiny, whereas the Islamists look at the Ouma (Nation) as not a nationality but a religion.

Consequently, the Egyptian Islamists founded Jema'eyat el-Ekhoaun (the Association of the Brotherhood) in Egypt. Equally, the Algerian reformists created the Theologians' Association (Jema'eyat el-Oulama el-Mousslimine) in 1931; thus, the Algerian case was rather for identity and political nationalism than nostalgia towards the fall of the Caliphate, because they realized that religious sentiment can be used as a common denominator to unify the Algerian masse and, virtually, the nationalist elite to stand up to the French occupation and its assimilationist policies.



Others religious movements were taking place in Pakistan, for example, the proclamation of the Pakistani State in 1947, where the Islamic Group (el-Jama'aa el-Islamiya) led by Abou el-a'ala el-Maoudoudi played a major role in the autonomy. In 1979 the Islamic revolution led by Imam el-Khoumeini in Iran not only regenerated the Islamist ideology but was considered as the rebirth of the Islamist political project for the Islamist militants across the Muslim world, even though, the mainstream islamist militants did not share el-Khoumeini's doctrine. Dr. Abassi (the leader of the ex-FIS) was asked about the Mullah's model; he responded, explaining his party's difference with Iran, saying not to get confused between sugar and salt--they are the same color but they taste different. Nonetheless, the Islamists supported el-Khoumeini in his war against Sadam's regime because they identified the fight as between secularism and Islamism (6). The year 1979 was a turning point of Islamist ideology and witnessed the emergence of the Jihadist movement and the invasion of Afghanistan by the Red Army. Among the young Islamists on university campuses and in local mosques, the story line became Jihad against the Red Satan.

It is important to point out that inside the Arab-Muslim political systems, there was a certain tendency toward the idea of the unique party, which was described by the regimes as el-wahda or wihdet el-qeyada (unity in directing and guiding the nations' domestic and international affairs). For instance in Egypt, Raïs Gamel Abdenasser used the unity factor as a means of expression to assemble all the constitutional attributions and powers into a personal power. In Tunisia, this idea of the gathering of power becomes the product of an authoritarian drift, as it does in Algeria, where the National Liberation Front (F.L.N) (7) was born through the triumph of the revolution. Indeed, the Algerian uprising was the work of the Revolutionary Committee of Union and Action (C.R.U.A), which was transformed

through the armed operations of the revolution, joined progressively by all other political formations including the Islamist current in the Algerian National Movement, until it became the National Liberation Front. In Algeria, the F.L.N. at once took a dominating position and laid solid structures to achieve the objectives of the revolution and to establish the socialist model in Algeria, according the 1963 Constitution (8), which was amended in the National Charter, which became the spiritual text of the Constitution of 1976.

The Islamists were arguing that to limit and crash any political opposition is foreign to the Islamic political doctrine; in the meantime, they saw and still see themselves as the guardians of the Islamic doctrine. Hence it would be indispensable to bring their contribution to the construction of the political structures in Islamic societies (9). One could also argue that it is true that according to Islamic doctrine any expression of division within the Islamic nation (el-Oumah el-Islamiya) clashes with the definition of democracy and its principals, because this would explicitly imply that the nation (el-Oumah) would divide into clans and small territories instead of being united from Jakarta to Tangier.

To understand this political development in political Islamic theory, it is necessary to go back to the end of the XIIIth century, at the time of the Mamlouks (el-mamaleeks), when Muslims were facing a period of social injustice, oppression and a culture of political corruption and division. Then a major figure, the sheïkh Taqi eddine Ahmed Ibn taymiya, was born in Damascus in a family of lawyers and theologians. Standing up against the Mamlouks' regime, writing about the corruption and the unjust policies of the regime, he was a voice of a strong opposition, but with religious perspective, he did not preach any means of violence.



The Mamlouks' leaders created a sense that they got to legitimize their actions and their power from the Oulemas (religious council) whom were under palace authority. This is practically the same conflict which is currently occurring in the Muslim world between fundamentalists and traditionalists, for instance, the discord between the Brotherhood and el-Azhar institution in Egypt or the Islamists shouyoukh and the High Islamic Council in Algeria. In the XIIIth century, it was a difficult situation between Ibn Taymiya and his teachings on one hand and the reaction from the regime on the other. The Mamlouks' regime was a military dictatorship style of governance. One reason that pushed Ibn taymiya to speak up and denounce the Mamlouks' incompetency was that according to his teachings their regime was illegitimate and one must stand up and fight their acts. He wrote a political book that has become famous among the Islamist political literature titled *The Legal Politics (Essiyassa echare'eya)* (10). He underlines the benefits of the total union of the spiritual and the material. He posits that politics should be compatible with moral standards as long as it does not corrupt and deviate from Allah's recommendations (Shar'aa Allah).

The Islamist idea was relaunched by sheikh Mohammed Ibn Abdelwahab at the end of the XVIIIth. He recommended to return to the basics of puritanical Islam. His doctrine dominated the Arabian peninsula. Later on, Emir Ibn Sa'aoud, the founding father of the Saoud dynasty, made a politico-religious pact which obeyed the Wahabite doctrine, creating a paradoxical model which opted for a sort of a western capitalistic model of governance with an absolute distrust towards any westernized way of life in the Saudi society (11). This doctrine inspired the Talban's regime in Afghanistan between September 1996 and November 2001, as well as other monarchies in the region and the supranational organization of el-Qae'eda (12).

In the second half of the XIXth century, the reformist movement (Harakat el-eslah) made its appearance. Political scientist and French sociologist Louis Gardet noticed that the term "reform" clashes with the term "revolution"; he added that Muslim reformists portrayed themselves as modernists rather than radical revolutionaries. In the case of the Algerian fundamentalists, they reformed while delaying the revolution, reviving the ashes of the Algerian nation and sowing a means of political conscientiousness among the young indigenou, which was seen as a religious awakening in the Muslim world.

The first initiator of the movement is the sheikh Djamel Eddine el-Afghani, who is especially known in France for his debate with Renan. It is necessary to mention his colleague sheikh Mohammed Abdou, and his followers Rachid Redha in Syria, El-kaouakibi in Egypt, and Ibn Badiss in Algeria. According to Gardet, in the origin of any reform there is a tendency towards a will of domestic transformation: "For those facing the Occident, the Muslim people must acquire mastery of the technology but they must not renounce the authentic values of Islam." It is a political argument that the neo-reformists and the neo-Islamists use today, trying to make the Islamist ideology a political inspiration that is valuable and adaptable at any time and in any space. However, on the other side, the Muslim secularists argue that this is outdated and it cannot be adaptable by modern society. The argument of credibility goes beyond the sectarian dispute within the Islamic doctrine, whether She'ea or Sunna.

Both doctrines believe vehemently that Islam is compatible with modernity. The Mullahs in Iran argue that mastering technology is a religious duty. So the Sunnit Islamists are seeing Turkey's Islamist party as a political model. It is a fair example: the AKP (Justice and Development Party)



is leading the most secular institutionalized Muslim country with the party showing how well it is adapted. In some instances it is succeeding in marrying Islamic doctrine with democracy or modern governing practices. A comprehensive analogy would be the model characterized through the Center Christian Democrats in Europe. Remember Sheikh Nahnah, the founder of the Algerian MSP, used the phrase: Choura-cracy. (governing with the consultation principal).

In sum, the Islamists are moving away from their rhetorical opposition of anti-political establishment and anti-secularism, figuring out a new strategy, and looking for political consensus and mutual trust among the political class in Muslim societies. Alas, mistrust sometimes leads to political violence, a social phenomena that disturbs the cycle of societal progress and the possibility to move Arabs and Muslims toward pluralistic societies. Also another hypothesis to demystify the Islamism ideology is to let the Islamists (legalists) put into practice their political project and governing, a plausible scenario in that the moderate Islamists are willing to cohabit with the regimes. An interesting political model that could emerge in Arab societies is a probable National-Islamist coalition, a tactical move by the regimes to eradicate the radical Islamist militants; the Islamist centrists will look credible politically to the masses. In the long run, it is a possibility to introduce the civic spirit to the public which would ultimately lead the Arab and Muslim societies to become democratic--certainly with a social contract that the tri-parties (the military institution, the Islamists, and the elite liberals) find a consensus.

References:

- 1- The political parties: translations by J.et M.Charlot, 1971, p 22.
- 2- Pierre Rondot: The political systems in the Muslim world, La Revue Pouvoirs, 1980, p 17.
- 3- For example the 33rd Surat of the Koran (el-Ahzab) the factions which evoke the coalition of

the polytheists of Mecca, the Jewish tribe in Medina Beni Qouraïdha and diverse peasant tribes of Nejd raised up against the Prophet Mohammed and they fell in the ditch of Medina.

4- By opposition to the faction of the Devil. The Koran evokes one faction will be in heaven and the other will be in hell. (XLII, 5/7)

5- Cf, E.Kedourie, article "Hezb" of The Encyclopedia of Islam, the new edition, volume III, pp. 531-544.

6- Sadam Hussein surprised the Islamists a couple days after his invasion of Kuwait in August 1990, adding the phrase "Allah is great" to the Iraqi flag. This was an affirmation of the death of the Ba'aath's ideals.

7- Algerian National Charter, of 1976, pp. 43-45.

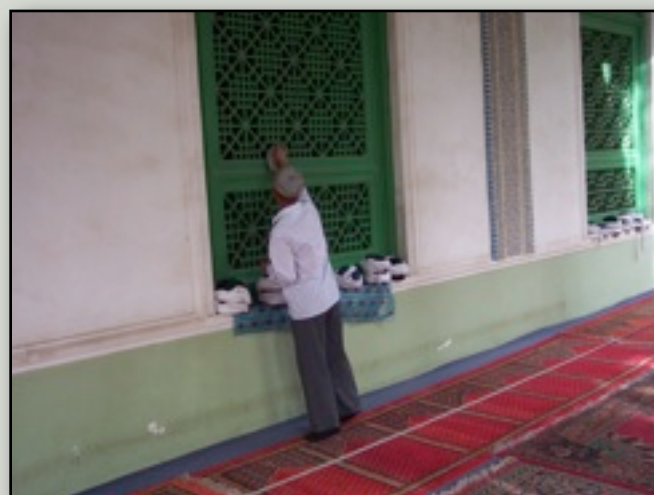
8-Ibid.

9- Francois Burgat and Jean Leca: La Revue Maghreb-Machreq #129, July-Sept, 1990. p.19.

10- The Legal Politics (Essaya Echare'eya) Cheikh Ahmed Ibn Taymiya, ENAG editions, 94.

11- Louis Gardet, Islam's men, Mentality of Approaches, Brussels, edition complexes, 1984, pp.: -332-333.

12- el-Qae'eda is a supranational group without any political program. It could be compared to the far-left radical groups in Europe in 1970o and 1980o: the Red Brigade and Direct Action (Les Brigades Rouges et Action Directe).





Islam in Politics, not Islamic Politics

Shane Joshua Barter - shanejb@interchange.ubc.ca

PhD Candidate, University of British Columbia

"I don't know why we did not win seats. Maybe people do not want religious leaders to be political leaders"

Interview with campaign volunteer a local Islamic Political Party in Aceh, Indonesia (20 April 2009)

Two of the most important global trends in recent decades have been the Islamic resurgence and the third wave of democratization. Indonesia stands out as having experienced both in full force. Indonesia is home to a plurality of the world's Muslims, who represent 210 million, or 88%, of its citizens. Indonesian Muslims have become increasingly pious over the past thirty years. Meanwhile, since 1998, Indonesia has embarked on an impressive journey towards democracy, ranking as the sole liberal democracy in Southeast Asia or the Muslim world (Kunkler and Stepan 2011).

While Indonesia proves that Islamicization and democratization are by no means contradictory forces, the 2009 elections revealed an interesting trend. Islamic political parties suffered a notable decline, leading prominent scholars to view Indonesia as a "secular democracy" (Mujani and Liddle, 2009). What accounts for these seemingly contradictory trends—the Islamicization of society and the apparent secularization of politics? The answer lies in the increasing religiosity of non-Islamic, nationalist parties. In stark contrast to previous eras in Indonesian politics, all political parties have now accepted Islamic elements in their organization, policies, and image (Tanuwidjaja 2010). Support for Islamic parties has declined as voters feel that their religious interests are sufficiently represented by

mainstream parties. This suggests that Indonesians want Islam in politics, but not Islamic Politics.



Islam and Democracy in Indonesia

As Indonesia gained independence, many nationalist leaders agreed with Dutch colonizers that politics should be a secular affair. During the 1955 elections, four major parties emerged, representing nationalists, communist, traditional Muslims, and reformist Muslims. In 1965, Sukarno was overthrown and General Suharto emerged as the country's new President. Suharto mobilized Islamic groups in the massacre of communist forces and sought to institutionalize Islam within his New Order. In the highly constrained elections of 1971, the Nahdlatul Ulama emerged as the opposition, prompting the President to establish a single state-controlled Islamic party, the United Development Party (*Partai Persatuan Pembangunan*, PPP), to contain political Islam. Facing continued Islamic opposition to a range of government policies, Suharto weakened the PPP, demanding that Islamic groups adopt a secular platform. In this environment, many leading Islamic figures withdrew from political life. Leading Islamic scholars even suggested that Islam would best be served by removing religion from the political sphere, enabling reformers to focus on social change (Barton 1997).



This new focus, combined with a global Islamic resurgence, led to a more observant society. In the early 1990s, even President Suharto moved towards Islam, largely to balance an assertive military. Suharto undertook the Pilgrimage, opened new Islamic schools, promoted Islamic officials, and funded an Islamic think-tank. Meanwhile, calls for political change were increasingly heard from what Hefner (2000) refers to as “Civil Islam”, namely organizations such as the traditionalist Nahdlatul Ulama and the modernist Muhammadiyah. Abdurrahman Wahid and Amien Rais, the leaders of these mass organizations, were at the forefront of the democratization movement. With the 1998 Asian Economic Crisis, Suharto was forced to resign, stepping aside in favour of B.J. Habibie, a leading New Order Islamic official, who immediately embarked on reforms and called for free elections.

The 1999 elections in some ways represented a victory for Islamic politics. While the secular nationalist PDI-P and Golkar emerged as the two largest parties, the next five largest parties were all more or less Islamic, and managed to unite in order to form a government. Abdurrahman Wahid became the new President, and other Islamic leaders gained notable postings. Wahid turned out to be a progressive reformer, defending minority rights and negotiating with armed rebels. But he was also erratic, alienating several allies, and was removed from office in 2001, with Megawati Sukarnoputri becoming the new President. While female leadership had angered Islamic leaders in 1999, they now backed Megawati, appeased by PPP leader Hamzah Haz becoming her Vice President.

In retrospect, the 2004 elections marked a turning point. Islamic parties witnessed a decline in electoral support, with the exception of the Prosperous Justice Party (*Partai Keadilan Sejahtera*), an Islamist party based loosely on Egypt’s Muslim Brotherhood. Instead of running

on a clearly Islamist platform, PKS focused on anti-corruption, gaining 7.3% of the popular vote. In the Presidential elections held months later, candidates affiliated with Islamic groups fared poorly. In the end, Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, a liberal former general, proved victorious. Even voters who selected Islamic parties in the legislative elections voted for a Presidential ticket which lacked Islamic credentials.²

The decline of Islamic political parties became more apparent in the 2009 elections. In the legislative race, Muslim parties faced a considerable decline. The only Islamic party which did not lose seats was PKS. PKS abandoned much of its Islamic image during the 2009 campaign, and even spoke out in favour of former President Suharto. PKS made bold predictions that it would win 20% of the vote, but took only 7.9%. The combined vote share of Islamic parties declined from 32% to 24% and their total house seats declined from 208 to 169. Mujani and Liddle (2009, 577) show that 60% of those surveyed favour “secular” parties, while only 24% of people favour “Islamist” parties or parties “based on Islamic social organizations”. These national trends were also evident in sub-national elections. In Aceh, one of Indonesia’s most pious provinces which had recently overcome decades of armed conflict, local parties were allowed to run in provincial and district races. Two of Aceh’s new local parties were Islamic, but they gained only 2% of the vote, and national Islamic parties did not fare much better. Instead, the former rebels and the President’s party dominated Aceh’s elections (Barter 2011).

Explaining the Decline of Islamic Parties

What accounts for this change? One must start with the meteoric rise of President Yudhoyono’s Democrat Party, whose vote share rose from 7.5% to 20.9%. But why would so many voters who previously endorsed Islamic parties now support a candidate lacking Islamic credentials?

Mujani and Liddle explain what they refer to as “secularization” in terms of Indonesian pluralism, Suharto’s state Islam, the growth of Golkar, and moderate voters. But the first two factors cannot explain the decline of Islamic parties from 1999-2009, and the latter two factors are evidence of this change more than explanations for it. Instead, it seems that the decline of political Islam is owed largely to the increasing acceptance of Islam in politics by all parties. As previously secular parties have turned to reject secular positions and incorporate some elements of Islam, voters no longer face a stark choice between religious and political allegiances. In this more relaxed atmosphere, voters have turned away from Islamist parties.

Between 2004 and 2009, all political parties, even those largely described as secular, adopted Islamic elements. Candidates for secular parties increasingly donned Islamic dress, appointed advisors from Islamic organizations, and featured Islamic symbols in their campaign posters [Poster One]. Even PDI-P—traditionally the party of secular Muslims, Christians, and Hindus—ran several religious campaigns and established an Islamic affiliate organization [Poster Two]. Even small Christian parties featured a small number of

outwardly Muslim candidates [Poster Three]. All parties open their meetings and rallies with prayers led by Islamic leaders and work to cultivate an image of piety. Golkar and PDI-P have allied with figures from Nahdlatul Ulama and Muhammadiyah, depriving Islamic parties of support and bringing religious legitimacy to nationalist parties. Far from a secularization of politics, the entire political spectrum has shifted to accept a role for Islam in politics. As they have done so, voters have come to believe that their religious interests can be represented by nationalist parties (Platzdasch 2009).

Tanuwidjaja (2010) has come to a similar finding, noting that instead of the demise of religious politics, the decline of

Islamic parties is owed to the religiosity of mainstream parties. However Tanuwidjaja is led to extremely different conclusions, warning that the decline of secularism led to parties which have “shied away from criticizing controversial religious issues.” While somewhat true, Tanuwidjaja fails to note that the absence of Islamic parties in government has also muted calls for more extreme religious policies. By accepting Islam in politics, nationalist parties have halted the expansion of PKS, Indonesia’s Islamic Brotherhood, which has increasingly moderated its positions. An alternative implication of mainstream parties moving towards Islam, but not towards political Islam, is that elected officials may better reflect the interests and identities of their societies, an important element of liberal democracy.





Indonesian society appears to want Islam in politics, but not Islamic politics. This may well prove to be a way forward for Islamicization and democratization. The presence of staunchly secular parties in other Muslim-majority countries, far from combating radical Islam, may actually enable the presence of Islamic parties.

Tanuwidjaja, Sunny. "Political Islam and Islamic Parties in Indonesia: Critically Assessing the Evidence of Islam's Political Decline." *Contemporary Southeast Asia* 32:1 (2010); pp. 29-49.

References:

Barter, Shane Joshua. "The Free Aceh Elections? The 2009 Legislative Contests in Aceh." *Indonesia* (forthcoming).

Barton, Greg. "Indonesia's Nurcholish Madjid and Abdurrahman Wahid as Intellectual *Ulama*: The Meeting of Islamic Traditionalism and Modernism in Neo-Modernist Thought." *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations* 8:3 (1997); pp. 323-350.

Hefner, Robert W. *Civil Islam: Muslims and Democratization in Indonesia*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000.

Kunkler, Mirjam and Alfred Stepan, editors. *Indonesia, Islam, and Democracy: Comparative Perspectives*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2011.

Mujani, Saiful, and R. William Liddle. "Muslim Indonesia's Secular Democracy." *Asian Survey* 49:4 (2009); pp. 575-590.

Platzdasch, Bernhard. "Down but not out: Islamic Political Parties did not do well, but Islamic Political Parties are Going Mainstream." *Inside Indonesia* 97 (September 2009).



A New Book:
The Clash of Modernities: The Islamist Challenge to Jewish, Turkish, and Arab Nationalism
 Khaldoun Samman

<http://www.paradigmpublishers.com/books/BookDetail.aspx?productID=208915>



Taming The Tigers: Gender Relations and The Cultural Genealogy of Neocolonialism in Afghanistan

Nathaniel A. Davis - nathaniel.davis26@siu.edu

Morris Doctoral Fellow
History Department
Southern Illinois University, Carbondale

“We have got into a conflict with a race of tigers, and it is only by treating them with a rod of iron that they will ever give in.”[1] These were the words of General Sir Charles Metcalfe MacGregor, an officer with the British Army invading Afghanistan in 1878. American neocolonialism in Afghanistan possesses a cultural genealogy that traces back to the British invasions of 1839 and 1878. A brief recapitulation of British attitudes toward Afghan gender relations suggest the probable trajectory of future neocolonialist cooption of women’s rights issues in seeking to dominate Afghanistan without direct military force.

Resistance to this neocolonialism must remain wary of attempts to market the conflict in humanitarian terms. During the nineteenth century, the patronizing views of British ethnographers and historians toward gender relations in Afghanistan infused efforts to control the frontier tribes. Demeaning portrayals of Afghan gender relations strengthened notions that Afghans were an uncivilized people that had to be contained within manageable borders. This culminated in the creation of the Durand Line in 1893, which divided the Pashtun homeland over the objections of Abdur Rahman.[2] Disdain toward Afghan gender relations infused Britain’s imperialist ventures in

Afghanistan.[3] British sketches of Afghan gender relations augmented British cultural power over the peoples of Afghanistan. The specific descriptions varied according to the particular ethnic group, but all created interstitial space which privileged British dominance.

British imperial discourse on Afghanistan in the nineteenth century shifted several times in response to Afghan resistance: depictions of Afghan culture became markedly more favorable as British commentators grudgingly conceded Afghan military prowess.[4] However, portrayals of gender roles in Afghanistan remained constant, structuring the power of British imperialism in South Asia. Part of what the British regarded as the most basic components of native life, Representations of gender relations among Afghan ethnic groups and tribes infused the imperial self-

image, insulating its power from the emasculating effects of battlefield defeat in Afghanistan and domestic regime change.



Several representative types appear in nineteenth century British writing on Afghanistan. These include the Afghan man, Afghan woman, and Afghan children.

Ethnographic studies further delineate particular gender relations among Sunni, Shi’a (usually Pashtun and Hazara tribes), and the “Kafir” (“infidel”) tribes of Afghanistan.[5] In British portrayals, gender roles within these ethnic, tribal, and religious communities overlapped and intermingled with depictions of political identity. In British imperial discourse, this admixture reinforced British cultural self-image and gave power to efforts at dominating Afghanistan from outside the country.



The common themes among depictions of gender roles among the various Afghan communities enabled British essentialization of racial, ethnic, and religious traits, thereby reifying British cultural, sexual, and political superiority. Strategic identification of differences meanwhile facilitated the divide-and-conquer imperial tactics which the British used during the Anglo-Afghan Wars of 1839 and 1878. After invasion failed, these perceptions of Afghan gender relations provided the cultural backbone of British political domination over Afghanistan and the regime of Abdur Rahman. This supremacy endured until the third Anglo-Afghan War of 1919.

The deployment of cultural superiority from the arsenal of imperialism in the region during the nineteenth century is familiar to historians. In their essay, "Baluch Tribalism and British Imperialism (1800-1887): the Conflict of Identity, Authority, and Sovereignty," Muhammad Bhatti and Lubna Kanwal have noted how British observation of Baluchi tribal society infused Britain's political claims and informed its imperial tactics in the region.[6] In *Frontier of Faith: Islam in the Indo-Afghan Borderland*, Sana Haroon has similarly observed how the British mobilized ethnographic understandings of the Pashtun region (spanning the present-day border with Pakistan) in formulating policy and constructing a frontier for British India.[7]

Some scholars have criticized historians' reliance on Western ethnography for cultural information on Afghan peoples. One objection is that such writings provide static snapshots of Afghan society and lack the flexibility to reveal change over time. [8] Such criticism is of course moot when it is the Western perceptions that are of interest, rather than the actual character of Afghan society. In addition, these perceptions exerted tangible influence upon British policies toward Afghanistan in the nineteenth century. They therefore remain

important even if their information is not entirely accurate.

Limited space precludes a comprehensive overview of the variegated representation of gender within British portrayals of Afghan communities, Muslim and non-Muslim. Such depictions were universally derogatory, variously stressing sexual depravity, and exoticism, repulsiveness, and inequality, regardless of the observer's political views on British intervention in Afghanistan. Reaffirming Edward Said's illustrations in *Orientalism and Culture and Imperialism*, all of these accounts emphasize the cultural inferiority of a Muslim country to those of the West.[9] The journal of Dr. John Alfred Gray highlights sexual depravity, as an integral component of Afghan backwardness. Gray was a British medical doctor, who served for five years as a surgeon at the court of Amir Abdur Rahman.[10] During Gray's stay at the Amir's court, a common soldier in Kabul had a (implicitly sexual) liaison with a young boy. Upon discovering that the boy had "associated with another man," the soldier murdered him. The boy's mother brought the case to the Amir, who permitted the woman to take revenge, "according to the Afghan law (an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth) . . ." After cutting the man's throat with a knife, she cupped her hands beneath the spurting blood and lapped it up with relish.[11]

Henry Bellew, a prolific Orientalist writer, Bengal Medical Service doctor and veteran of numerous expeditions in Afghanistan wrote that Pashtun Yusufzai men, "though so jealous of [wives, daughters, and sisters] treat their women with no respect or confidence, but look on them as so much property in which their honor is invested . . ."[12] J. P. Ferrier asserted that the Afghans were less "fanatical" prior to the British invasion of 1839, "but as a set off they are the most covetous on earth, and the result was that the women soon gave themselves up to the English for

money, even with the consent of their husbands.” Josiah Harlan’s memoirs, while more respectful towards Afghan women—especially those of high social rank—resounds with the familiar exoticism that presupposed Western superiority over the Orient.[13]

The link between such attitudes and the nineteenth-century British treatment of Afghanistan bears little repeating: Afghan Muslims were widely held to be among the most uncivilized peoples of the world and their treatment of women provided (ostensibly) ample evidence. It was also an open secret among British officers and staff during the Anglo-Afghan Wars that the cultural intelligence provided by ethnographers and travelers such as Bellew, Ferrier, and Harlan informed British military and political efforts to create a buffer zone for India at Afghan expense.[14] Therefore, the looming danger confronting Western prognoses for Afghan social development is that the relative standing of Afghan women vis-à-vis those of the Occident will continue to be taken as evidence of Afghan political maturity. Ultimately, it is up to the Afghans, in all their religious, ethnic, and linguistic diversity, to decide on the structures of their society and government. David Loyn has emphasized that Afghans will remember foreign attempts to impose rulers on Afghanistan,[15] and the reason for such hostility is the anticipated social, cultural, and religious coercion that political domination necessarily involves. Noting the failure of nation-building in Afghanistan, Ahmed Rashid has called for increased synergy between

the international community and Afghans in rebuilding a better country. Citing the RAND think tank, Rashid also stresses that the funding behind rebuilding efforts has made it “the least-resourced American nation-building effort in our history.”[16]



In view of this, while searching for solutions to the array of economic, social, and political problems confronting Afghanistan, great caution must be exercised so as to prevent manipulation of the issues, in a more humanitarian-sounding yet all the more insidious form of neocolonialism. The link between gender relations and relations of power is subtle and indirect. The same assumption of the cultural inferiority of Afghan gender relations prompted the British to view Abdur Rahman as “our paid servant.”[17] As Loyn has pointed out, similar

assertions have already been made concerning Hamid Karzai.[18] The United States’ occupation appears to be coming to an unsurprisingly controversial close. The pressing question is no longer how long American troops will remain in Afghanistan but the future of gender relations as the rod with which the U.S. and its allies try to tame the tiger when the rod of iron fails. The genealogy of American neocolonialism in Afghanistan suggests that even after the occupation ends, efforts to dominate via more subtle means will continue. The pressing challenge that rebuilding Afghanistan will confront is constructing a program for social change—particularly the improvement of women’s lives—that resists neocolonialist co-optation.



References:

- [1] Charles Metcalfe MacGregor, War in Afghanistan, 1879-80, The Personal Diary of Major General Sir Charles Metcalfe MacGregor, ed. William Trousdale (Detroit, MI: Wayne State University Press, 1985), 77-78.
- [2] Abdur Rahman, The Life of Abdur Rahman, Amir of Afghanistan, Vol. II, trans. Sultan Mohammad Khan (London: John Murray, 1900), 157-158.
- [3] This discussion deals primarily with the first two Anglo-Afghan Wars, 1839-1842, and 1878-1880. For treatment of Third Anglo-Afghan war, see [3] G. N. Molesworth, Afghanistan, 1919: An Account of Operations in the Third Afghan War (New York, NY: Asia Publishing House, 1962), 23 ; Sir George Macmunn, Afghanistan: From Darius to Amanullah (Quetta, Gosha-e-Adab, Reprint 1977, original 1919).
- [4] Nathaniel A. Davis, "From Colonialism to Neo-colonialism: Nationalism, Islam, and the Cultural Framing of Conflicts in Afghanistan," Journal of South Asian and Middle Eastern Studies 33, no. 3 (Spring 2010), 1-21.
- [5] George Scott Robertson, The Kafirs of the Hindu-Kush (London: Lawrence & Bullen, 1896), 173-174.
- [6] Muhammad Shafique Bhatti and Lubna Kanwal, "Baloch Tribalism and British Imperialism (1800-1887): the Conflict of Identity, Authority, and Sovereignty," Journal of South Asian and Middle Eastern Studies xxxii, no. 4 (Summer 2009), 54-55.
- [7] Sana Haroon, Frontier of Faith: Islam in the Indo-Afghan Borderland (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2007), 8-25.
- [8] Ibid., 25-26.
- [9] Edward Said., Orientalism, (New York: Vintage Books, 1994), 7, 24-25, 240; Culture and Imperialism (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1993), xi-xxviii.
- [10] British Medical Journal 2, no. 3595 (30 November, 1929), 1034. www.jstor.org/ (accessed 23 February, 2010). This is Gray's obituary. Gray served as surgeon from approximately 1889 to 1894.
- [11] John Alfred Gray, At the Court of the Amir of Afghanistan (New York, NY: Kegan Paul Ltd, 2002), 129-130. The journal was compiled from letters Gray wrote to his wife-to-be. For a detailed treatment of the sexual relationship between adult and adolescent males, see Afsaneh Najmabadi, Women with Mustaches: Gender and Sexual Anxieties of Iranian Modernity (Berkeley, University of California Press, 2005), 34, 133-135, 146, 235.
- [12] Henry Walter Bellew, A General Report on the Yusufzais (Lahore: Reprint, 1977, orig. 1864), 214.
- [13] J.P. Ferrier, tr. William Jesse, History of the Afghans (London: John Murray, 1858), 335; Josiah Harlan, A Memoir of India and Avghanistaun (Philadelphia: J. Dobson, 1842), 133-139. Josiah Harlan was an American soldier of fortune who served in the court of Dost Muhammad.
- [14] See Charles Metcalfe MacGregor, War in Afghanistan, 1879-80: The Personal Diary of Major General Sir Charles Metcalfe MacGregor, ed. William Trousdale (Detroit, MI: Wayne State University Press, 1985). MacGregor's diary contains numerous indirect references to contemporary Afghan histories and ethnographies. See also Henry Bellew's obituary for an appraisal of the importance of his career. British Medical Journal 2, no. 1650 (13 August, 1892), 391-392.
- [15] David Loyn, In Afghanistan: Two Hundred Years of British, Russian, and American Occupation (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 41, 195.
- [16] Ahmed Rashid, Descent into Chaos: The United States and the Failure of Nation-Building in Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Central Asia (New York: Viking Penguin, 2008), 182.
- [17] Abdur Rahman, The Life of Abdur Rahman, 111.
- [18] Loyn, op. cit., 41.



Women, Islam, and Gender Inequality in post-conflict Aceh, Indonesia

Reed Taylor - rtaylor2@vt.edu

PhD Candidate

Virginia Tech

Arriving in post-tsunami/post-conflict Aceh for the first time, I was enamored with the potential for radical social and political change that was in the air in the run up to provincial elections in 2009. As part of the Memorandum of Understanding (Helsinki MoU) signed in 2005 between the former separatists group the Free Aceh Movement (*Gerakan Aceh Merdeka, GAM*) and the central government of the Republic of Indonesia (RI), Aceh became the first province in the country to have provincially based political parties. While only six parties were able to fulfill all of the requirements in enough time to run, it was a very exciting time to be in Aceh. Having local political parties is a concrete step towards greater self-governance that the Acehnese people had been fighting for since 1976. Adding to the excitement of the latest election, Indonesia's electoral laws had been recently changed to include a provision that a minimum of thirty-percent of each political party's candidates must be women. Although the introduction of the gender quota was not accompanied by a strict penalty for parties who failed to achieve it, the gender quota is of special interest for Aceh because of the province's tradition of matrifocality. Historically, women in Aceh have always played an active role in public life, including during the period of conflict. Given the history of matrifocal traditions that Aceh is known for, it might be safe to assume that women in Aceh could potentially utilize this election through local political parties to gain a foothold in the power vacuum of an emerging 'new Aceh'. Therefore, I found it surprising that none of the six local parties in Aceh

were able to meet the thirty-percent quota, while all of the established national parties had no problems meeting the quota. More importantly than the lack of apparent correlation between the matrifocal tradition and the number of women running as candidates, the low rate of women political participation needs to be scrutinized because it potentially signals the lack of the parties' priority in promoting gender equality.

Each of local party's platforms centered on developing Aceh's economic, social, and political autonomy from Jakarta and I am aware of only two local parties that had explicit policy goals to promoting gender equality. I found troubling the lack of acknowledgment of the importance of gender equality because women played a very critical role in the conflict that immediately preceded the peace agreement. Their role included participating in armed combat (*inong baleé*, widows/combatants) to filling critical roles of providing food and financial support. Additionally, women faced dangers of sexual assault, torture, and rape for their contributions during the conflict and after the end of the conflict, as a group of *inong baleé* described it, 'women in GAM were expected to leave the political and economic spoils of the peace to the men' (interview in Aceh, 2010). All of the women in this group described GAM during the conflict as being basically egalitarian in that the contributions of women were valued similarly to those of men. Despite the women's critical role during the conflict, the political process in Aceh appeared to be dominated by a male agenda.

After meeting with local party officials, candidates, and local activists, it became clear to me that the local parties no longer seemed to be a probable location for women empowerment in Aceh. The Aceh Party (*Parti Aceh*), founded by GAM members, became the first and only local party to win enough votes to meet the minimum electoral

threshold in the 2009 elections. Out of the few women candidates that ran for the Aceh Party, only a fraction of them were elected. What can possibly account for the lack of gender equality in the electoral process in Aceh? Are women being systematically excluded from politics in Aceh? Although I will only begin to address these questions given the limited space of this article, they are worth being investigated in-depth in future works. In order to begin address these questions, I will present a brief overview of the history of Aceh with a particular focus on the role of women in its society.

The province of Aceh is located on the North-Western corner of the Republic of Indonesia on the island of Sumatra and has a historical tradition of both matrifocality and Islam for at least the past five centuries. It is still commonly referred to as 'Mecca's veranda' (*serambi Mekkah*), because many believe that the first indigenous Muslim community in Southeast Asia was established in what is now Aceh (Riddell 2006). While the origins of the growth of Islam across Southeast Asia are difficult to trace, the deep roots of Islamic values and norms have become an important part of an Acehnese identity today (Aspinall 2009, pp. 23-24). The history of Islam in Aceh is filled with cases of women holding leadership positions as exemplified by the four successive Sultanas in the 17th century that marked the pinnacle of women's political power in Aceh's pre-colonial history. Other important roles of women in Aceh's history included judges, a naval commander, and folk heroines who fought the Dutch. The importance of women in Aceh's history had been thoroughly documented by early Dutch historians who noted the custom of women in Aceh as the traditional owners of the family's house as well as women in Aceh leading guerilla attacks against the Dutch during the latter's colonial occupation of Aceh (Reid 1988; Siapno 2002). It is important to recognize, however, that even though the significance of women in Acehnese history is well-

documented, the history in large part has been written from a patriarchal perspective until very recently (Siapno 2002; Tanner 1974). This is due, in part, to the majority of scholars who wrote anthropological accounts of Aceh's history from a male-centered perspective, including Snouck Hurgronje (1906), Anthony Reid (1969, 1988), James Siegel (1969), and Chandra Jayawardena (1977) (Siapno 2002 pp. 60-61). The patriarchal bias in their works can be seen in their tendency to underplay the importance of women in Aceh's history. For example, Siapno (2002) problematized the way Reid (1969, 1988) analyzed the four Acehnese Sultanas (from 1641 to 1699). In his early works, Reid portrayed the Sultanas as having no real political power and consequently contributing to the decline of the power of the Acehnese Sultanate by the end of the 17th century. In contrast to Reid's analysis, Siapno argued following Mernissi (1993) that the Sultanas' reigns were successful. Additionally, Siapno argued that the success of the Sultanas were more notable because they had faced opposition from their political enemies who opposed a women Sultana and went to so far as to request a *fatwa* from Mecca declaring the illegality of a women's rule (Siapno 2002, p. 51). Siapno argues that a closer analysis of early Acehnese literature, including the *Hikayat Aceh*, reveals that many of the translations of the texts superimpose gender onto characters in the story when the text itself is gender neutral (pronouns are not gender specific in old Malay) or at times clearly referring to a female character while being translated as a male (Siapno 2002, pp. 72-82).

The gender bias against positive accounts of women's political role and agency that continue to plague the historiography of Aceh may provide us with a possible explanation of the current manifestation of gender inequality in Acehnese society. The distortion and manipulation of the historical discourse of women may have had an effect on the current discourse that I observed that

women in Aceh somehow are, “lacking capacity” to be viable political candidates. In January 2009 in the run up to the elections, I specifically asked everyone I interviewed in Aceh to explain what they thought was the reason why there were so few women candidates in the local parties. Over and over again, I heard the same phrase ‘lacking capacity’ used to explain why there were so few women candidates. An analysis of the gender bias in the historiography of Aceh provides us with a perspective that considers how a discourse on Aceh that is created by outsiders (in this case the Western educated scholars) can affect the way the people in Aceh perceives their own history and consequently themselves.

Another discourse that needs to be scrutinized in terms of its possible effect on gender inequality in Aceh is the discourse over Islam, Islamic fundamentalism, and specifically on the implementation of *syariah* law. As demonstrated in the aforementioned example of the Sultanas who faced opposition from those who would use Islam to undermine the Sultana’s legitimacy, Acehnese customs and traditions have provided a more egalitarian approach to the role of women in Islam. This unique approach, however, may very well be under attack given the current patriarchal interpretations of *syariah* being implemented in certain regencies in Aceh. The national call for the implementation of *syariah* in Aceh began in 1999 with the announcement from interim president Habibie who proclaimed that the province would be granted *syariah* by the national government. The use of the term *syariah* has led to several misconceptions and inaccuracies by academics, journalists, activists, and politicians (Bowen 2003, p. 14). Although the term *syariah* was declared by the governor of Aceh in 2000 as what the provincial government will “develop, guide, and oversee the application” and in 2002 was signed into law (Bowen 2003, p. 15), *syariah* was also being used as a justification for what Siapno labels *razia jilbab*, or forced veiling, as a form of street

harassment that took place sporadically in 1999 (Siapno 2002, pp. 36-38).



Siapno explains the turn away from a tradition of ‘Islamic liberalism’ as a result of the sexualization and brutalization of women during the conflict and the ulema’s silence on the issue after the *razia jilbab* began in 1999 (pp. 38-39). I argue, in agreement with Siapno, in favor of the tradition of localized Islamic liberalism in Aceh’s as a more appropriate approach to Islam in Aceh. Furthermore, I argue that the key to understanding the apparent lack of gender equality in politics is to understand the current implementation of *syariah* as part of a wider discourse by the central government of ostracizing the tradition of Islamic liberalism in Aceh in an attempt to destabilize an Acehnese national identity.

References:

- Aspinall, E. (2009). Islam and nation: Separatist rebellion in Aceh, Indonesia. Stanford, Calif: Stanford University Press.
- Bowen, J. R. (2003). Islam, law, and equality in Indonesia: An anthropology of public reasoning. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Mernissi, F. (1993). The forgotten queens of Islam. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Reid, A. (1969). The contest for North Sumatra; Atjeh, the Netherlands, and Britain, 1858-1898.



Portland State
UNIVERSITY

SOCIOLOGY OF ISLAM & MUSLIM SOCIETIES

Reid, A. (1988a). Southeast Asia in the age of commerce, 1450-1680 Vol.1. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Reid, A. (1988b). Southeast Asia in the age of commerce, 1450-1680 Vol. 2. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Riddell, P. (2006) 'Aceh in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries: "serambi Mekkah" and identity' In. Reid, A. (ed.) Verandah of violence : the background to the Aceh problem. Singapore.

Seattle: Singapore University Press. In Association with University of Washington Press.

Siapno, J. A. (2002). Gender, Islam, Nationalism, and the Sate in Aceh. New York: RoutledgeCurzon.

Siegel, J. T. (1969). The rope of God. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Tanner, N. (1974). Matrilocality in Indonesia, Africa and among black Americans. In M. Rosaldo, L. Lamphere, N. Chodorow & J. Collier (Eds.), Woman, culture, and society. Stanford University Press.





A Dissenting Voice on Pakistan's Blasphemy Law

Yoginder Sikand - ysikand@gmail.com

In the wake of the dastardly killing of Salman Taseer, governor of Pakistan's Punjab province, for having dared to question Pakistan's draconian anti-blasphemy law, scores of Pakistani 'Islamic' outfits celebrated the crime by showering encomiums on the man's murderer, insisting that his action was perfectly in consonance with (their understanding of) Islam. They feted him as an intrepid Islamic hero, a ghazi or warrior of the faith. Across the border, not a single Indian Muslim religious organization condemned the attack. This might well suggest that they shared the enthusiasm of their Pakistani counterparts, although, for obvious reasons, they were unable to openly express their delight at the deadly event. Probably the only Islamic scholar of note on either side of the border to have condemned the brutal murder in no uncertain terms, and to have insisted that it had no sanction whatsoever in Islam, was the New Delhi-based Maulana Wahiduddin Khan. He immediately responded to the murder in an article published in the Times of India, insisting that the punishment of death for blasphemy, as prescribed in Pakistan's anti-blasphemy law, had no sanction in Islam at all.

Khan's views on the appropriate Islamic punishment for blasphemy, particularly for defaming the Prophet Muhammad, are diametrically opposed to those of the mullahs and doctrinaire Islamists, which is one reason why the latter so passionately detest him. He does not condone blasphemy, even in the name of free speech, of course, but nor does he agree with those Muslims who insist that Islam prescribes the death penalty for those guilty of it. He first articulated his position on the subject in a book titled *Shatim-e Rasul Ka Masla: Quran wa Hadith aur Fiqh wa Tarikh ki Raushni Mai* ('Defaming the Prophet: In

the Light of the Quran, Hadith, Fiqh and History'). The book, consisting of a number of articles penned in the wake of the massive controversy that shook the world over the publication of Salman Rushdie's infamous *Satanic Verses*, was published in 1997. It is a powerful critique, using Islamic arguments, of the strident anti-Rushdie agitation and of the argument that the Islamic punishment for blasphemy is death. Although Khan condemned the *Satanic Verses* as blasphemous, he argued that stirring up Muslim passions and baying for Rushdie's blood was neither the rational nor the properly Islamic way of countering the book and its author. Death for blasphemy, he contended, using references from the Quran and the corpus of Hadith to back his stance, was not prescribed in Islam, in contrast to what Iran's Ayatollah Khomeini, and, echoing him, millions of Muslims worldwide, ardently believed.

Khan was possibly one of the only Islamic scholars to forcefully condemn the death sentence on Rushdie that Khomeini had announced and that vast numbers of Muslims, Shias and Sunnis, imagined was their religious duty to fulfill. Although his book deals specifically with the issue of blaspheming the Prophet in the context of the anti-Rushdie agitation, it is of immediate relevance to the ongoing debate about the anti-blasphemy laws and the violence it engenders in Pakistan today. What is particularly fascinating about the book is that it uses Islamic arguments to counter the widespread belief among Muslims that death is the punishment laid down in Islam for blasphemy as well as for those who, like the late Salman Taseer, oppose such punishment. Addressing the issue from within an Islamic paradigm, with the help of copious quotes from the Quran and Hadith, Khan's case against death for blasphemers would, one supposes, appear more convincing to Muslims than secular human rights arguments against Pakistan's deadly anti-blasphemy law that has unleashed such havoc in that country.

Like most Muslims, Khan believes that Islam is the only true religion. Muslims, he says, are commanded by God to communicate Islam to the rest of humanity. This work of dawah or 'invitation' to the faith is, he says, the hallmark of a true Muslim. Yet, he laments, 'the Muslims of today are totally bereft of dawah consciousness'. This lack, he contends, is at the very root of the manifold conflicts that Muslims are presently embroiled in with others in large parts of the world. This almost total absence of 'dawah consciousness' has made Muslims, so he argues, victims of a peculiar superiority complex (that has no warrant in Islam) that drives them on to engage in endless conflict with others. Muslims, he writes, imagine themselves as 'the soldiers of God, the censors of the morals of the whole of creation, and the deputies of God on earth', which, he contends, is 'absurdly un-Islamic'. He insists that this attitude of presumed superiority and the drive for confronting and dominating others that it instigates have absolutely no sanction in the Quran. He quotes the Quran as referring to the Prophet as simply as a warner and guide, and not as a ruler over the people he addressed, and rues that Muslims behave in a totally contrary manner in their relations with non-Muslims. 'They want to rule over others', Khan laments. And that, he adds, is 'their biggest psychological problem.'

The Quran, Khan says, exhorts Muslims to be bearers of glad tidings to others and to invite them to God's path. The work of dawah is not a simple verbal calling. Rather, for dawah to be effective, he says, Muslims must themselves be righteous, including in their dealings with people of other faiths. They must see themselves as dais or missionaries inviting others to God's path, and regard others as madus or addressees of the divine invitation. Dawah, Khan says, 'must form the basis of the believer's personality and must shape his relations with others.' These relations must be fundamentally shaped by the dawah imperative, which means that Muslims must always seek to

relate kindly and compassionately with others. A true dai, committed to this principal Islamic duty of dawah, must relate to people of other communities with love and concern for their welfare. They should 'keep the needs of dawah above all other considerations,' Khan says. They might face all sorts of loss and damage at the hands of others, but at no cost should they allow the cause of dawah to be hampered. This means, Khan insists, that 'they must not resort to such activities that are opposed to the demands of dawah or that undermine its prospects.' Principally, they must desist from conflicts with people of other faiths, even in the face of grave provocation, for this would certainly further reinforce their prejudices against Islam and Muslims and only sabotage prospects for dawah. Even when confronted with extremely hurtful and provocative situations, such as blasphemy, they must not resort to violent agitation and demand the death of the culprit. There are other, rational and more meaningful, ways to react, Khan says, but to react violently and to call for the death of blasphemers would only further magnify anti-Muslim and anti-Islamic sentiments, harden borders between Muslims and others, and, thereby, place additional barriers in the path of dawah.

Khan is convinced that the Muslims of today have abandoned their divine duty of dawah. This is why, he writes, instead of seeking to relate kindly with people of other faiths, as addressees of the 'invitation' to God's path, they consider the latter as their 'communal enemies' and are constantly engaged in seeking to confront them. Muslims, he contends, wrongly imagine that they are 'God's deputies on earth', completely forgetting that the Quran speaks about true believers as being His witnesses to humanity. Because the drive for dawah no longer enthuses them, he goes on, their relations with people of other faiths are conflict-ridden and they 'engage in such acts as have no sanction at all in Islam'. Their hatred for others,



which promotes constant conflict with them, he says, 'is tantamount to murder of dawah.' Treating others as their 'political foes', instead of as 'potential addressees of God's message', they lose no opportunity to drum up opposition and instigate conflicts and agitations directed against them. Such Muslims, Khan minces no words in saying, 'are murderers of dawah and divine guidance'. They are completely unmindful, he says, that 'by engaging in such activities that sabotage dawah, they are inviting God's wrath on themselves.'

Khan then turns to the issue of blasphemy and the violent agitations unleashed across the globe in the wake of Khomeini's fatwa calling for Rushdie's death. He insists that the fatwa and the agitation that it stirred are tantamount to 'murdering dawah', and bemoans that 'it reflects a total lack of dawah consciousness.' Such reactions, he warns, will only further reinforce deeply-rooted negative feelings among non-Muslims about Islam and Muslims, which would make the task of dawah even more difficult than it already is. He goes so far as to claim that those engaged in this agitation, whether as leaders or foot-soldiers, run the very real risk of 'being treated as criminals in the eyes of God, notwithstanding the fact that they may label their dawah-murdering agitation as an agitation for the glory of Islam.' Hence, he insists, the fatwa and the violent agitation that it spurred are 'absurd and un-Islamic'. Khan blames what he sees as the Muslims' total lack of dawah consciousness for what he perceives as their wild emotionalism in the face of even the smallest provocation. If anyone dares say anything, no matter how minor, against their way of thinking, he contends, they immediately get provoked and resort to agitation and even violence. The most sensitive issue in this regard, Khan notes, is the image of the Prophet Muhammad. If anyone says or writes anything about the Prophet that does not correspond with how they themselves perceive him, Khan notes, Muslims turn 'uncontrollably

emotional' and 'lose all reason.' Khan believes this is not at all the appropriate Islamic attitude, and traces it to what he perceives as the fact that 'Muslims have abandoned dawah'. Because of this, he explains, they now 'see others as their communal enemies' and consider any such criticism as 'an attack on their communal pride', which forces them out on the streets in violent agitation and worse.

Had Muslims maintained their 'dawah consciousness', he remarks, they would have responded to the provocation differently: through patience and avoidance of conflict, as he says the Quran advises them to, so that prospects for dawah would not thereby be damaged. But since they have lost the commitment to dawah, he laments, they have fallen victim to what he terms 'false emotionalism' that drives them to respond violently to any and every provocation. This stance, he says, is completely un-Quranic, and is bound to reinforce anti-Islamic prejudices that underlie phenomenon such as blasphemy, instead of doing anything at all to resolve them.

In the face of provocations, such as negative statements or writings against Islam, Khan advises Muslims not to give in to the temptation to react with violent agitation. Instead, he advises, they should respond 'with patience, wisdom, far-sightedness and clear-mindedness', these being qualities which he identifies with 'success in this world and in the next'.

A New Book:
Sociology and Human Rights
A Bill of Rights for the Twenty-First Century
Edited by Judith Blau and Mark Frezzo
[http://www.pineforge.com/
booksProdDesc.nav?
prodId=Book235439#tabview=toc](http://www.pineforge.com/booksProdDesc.nav?prodId=Book235439#tabview=toc)



A Book Review: The Canadian and German missions in Afghanistan after the debacle of Taliban

®Reviewed Hans-George Ehrhart and Charles C. Pentland, *The Afghanistan challenge: hard realities and strategic choices*, Canada: McGill-Queen's University press, 2009, 264 pp, ISBN: 978-155339241-5.

Fatemeh Shayan, Doctoral student of International Relations, Department of Political Science and International Relations. University of Tampere, Finland, Fatemeh.shayan@uta.fi

If one were to specify the top some issues in the Middle East in the 21st century, brought up in political and academic domains, the Afghanistan issue after the Taliban debacle would be pertinent among them. Afghanistan sheds some crucial light for the conduct of international missions vis-à-vis fragile states since fall of 2001. Among the members of NATO and discussions hovering over the question of objective, tactics and strategies for Afghanistan's mission, Canada and Germany express quite asymmetric viewpoints. This volume of the essays by leading the German and Canadian assessment presents intra-alliance debates over government, economy and security dynamics in Afghanistan and suggests better approaches to the policy questions encountered within NATO. In doing so, Ehrhart's (et al.) edited volume also focuses more narrowly on the German-Canadian dialogue. Conceptually, in addition to the introduction accentuating the Canadian-German narrative, this volume consists of two parts and fifteen chapters. The first section

of the book examines the diverse facets of international missions in Afghanistan ranging from the political and institutional framework at the international level of the security dynamics; the policies of the main neighboring states, and governance and development. In the first Chapter, Citha Maass, Conrad Schetterand & Rainer Glassner and Florian Kühn address in more detail the relationship between the Compact and its predecessor, Bonn Agreement and their features, the limits of the term often used in this context, - warlordism[1] - as a depiction of the structures of violence in Afghanistan and the political economy – the long history of Afghanistan as a rentier state.

The volume then continues with a series of chapters which concentrate more specifically on the role of non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and Iran and Pakistan in Afghanistan. Lara Olson and Andrea Charran study the efforts of NGOs to influence the wider international strategies for security, development and peace in Afghanistan. Christin Wagner offers an analysis on how the Pakistani army's costly battles in the tribal areas and the shift of Pakistani foreign policy towards India affect the bilateral relationship with Kabul. Meanwhile, Janet Kursaw evaluates Tehran's policy to Afghanistan. On the one hand,

Iran is staging friendly relations with Afghanistan and supporting the current Afghan government. On the other hand, Iran remains suspicious of supporting the political opponents of the Afghan government (p. 138). To close out the first section, Ehrhart and Kaestner provide a strategic assessment of the international assessment in Afghanistan in terms of security, governance and development.





The second part of the volume lays out the asymmetric dialogues in Canadian and German approaches as they act in domestic politics, alliance diplomacy and the critical issues of security sector reform to Afghanistan mission. While the writers with Canadian viewpoints such as Kim Richard Nossal, M.D Capstick and David M. Law accentuate the military contribution to the international coalition working to ensure Afghan security and developments, Michael Brzoska with a German outlook supports the ongoing police reform[2] in Afghanistan. Although to what extent that approach could be successful in the very demanding context of Afghanistan remains a matter of debate. Proceeding from the German-Canadian mission in Afghanistan, they emerge officially multi-dimensional and integrated focus on security, governance and development. Collectively, the chapters of the book provide an account of the overall security problems and security reforms in that country. However, the difficulty for the reader is to avoid the conclusion that the German-Canadian dialogue only has extremely limited prospects. Concomitantly, there is a big question underlying the dialogues on to what extent approaches to security reform with respect to government and development recast the practical framework in Afghanistan without taking into account the socio-cultural context. Although the difficulty of editing and constructing a study composed of a series of contributions by different authors is appreciated, this book benefits from coherence and from the use of primary data. As the book must be judged successful in providing basic information about security issues in Afghanistan, however, that import must be beset by some shortcomings.

First, although the pivot of examination has focused on security, a precise theory of international security is not in evidence in the book. Recalling the Copenhagen School theory of security studies, Afghanistan emerges as an insulator state between the sub-complex of the

Persian Gulf and Southeast Asia. After the Taliban debacle, the US and the EU as the superpower and the great power are associated with the problems of Afghanistan in a way never seen before. Concomitantly, Afghanistan's neighboring states affect the internal security dynamic in that country too. In this regard, the Regional Security Complex Theory, to name just one example, could have been adopted as the guiding theory in the volume. Following the lack of powerful government and a local economy with a reliance on drugs trade, the political and economic sectors of security as proposed within the CS theory would fulfill these needs.

Second, since the first section of the volume assesses the causes of security in Afghanistan, for example the process tracing method would serve in that capacity, while the second part which accentuates the German-Canadian dialogue in Afghanistan could benefit from the narrative analysis method due to the key role that language plays in constructing actors' distinct realities.

Although other solutions that the ones now adopted could have been part of the book, in summary, the book shows impressive, thoughtful and academically innovative analysis that articulates well onto the pertinent issues in Afghanistan while casting more light on security reforms should be considered. It might not be all security problems, however, that becomes an important contribution to the discussion on the security studies, and the Middle East that should interest for the Middle East scholars.

[1] Warlordism in the recent literature of Afghanistan signifies "lack of security". (p.39)

[2] The German approach to police reform in Afghanistan – and justification for the focus of the program – emphasizes quality training of civilian police. Quality was to trickle down from the top echelons and the beset trained personnel to the ordinary police officer (p. 284).

A Book Review: Nader Hashemi's Islam, Secularism & Liberal Democracy

Sheena Sharma - sheenapsharma@gmail.com

Reviewed Nader Hashemi, *Islam, Secularism, and Liberal Democracy: Toward a Democratic Theory for Muslim Societies*, Oxford University Press, 2009, 304 pp, ISBN13: 9780195321241

Nader Hashemi's work entitled *Islam, Secularism and Liberal Democracy* examines the intricate relationship between religion and democracy and attempts to demonstrate the possibility for a liberal democratic theory for Muslim societies. Hashemi argues that because religion is such a significant identity marker in the Middle East, secularism is possible if and only if it is inclusive of Islam. In his introduction, Hashemi states that the aim of his work is to contribute to the "development of a liberal-democratic theory for Muslim societies in particular." (1) His work disputes the claim that Islam and secularism are incompatible and he provides three central arguments for furthering this claim:

1. "Liberal democracy requires secularism... First, religious traditions are not born with an inherent democratic and secular conception of politics. These ideas must be socially constructed..."
2. In societies where religion is a marker of identity, the road to liberal democracy, whatever other twists and turns it makes, cannot avoid passing through the gates of religious politics...the development of liberal democracy in the West emerged not

in strict opposition to religious politics but often in concert with it...

3. An intimate and often-ignored relationship exists between religious reformation and political development. The first typically precedes the second, although the processes are deeply interwoven and connected." (2)

Although these three central premises appeared very abstract upon my initial reading of them, I find that Hashemi did an exceptional job at connecting his work as a whole to these main arguments. Hashemi's introduction then commences to discuss Islamic fundamentalism in recent years, and how such movements give the general attitude that Islam is inherently incompatible with modernity. The rise and



popularity of Islamic fundamentalism would appear to be a difficult obstacle for Hashemi to overcome when discussing the possibility for liberal democracy in Muslim societies - however, he immediately turns the reader's attention to examples of Christianity's struggles with the relationship between religion and democracy. This focus on Christianity and the West's struggle with secularism

and modernity becomes a central focus of Hashemi's writing. He argues that while there are clearly numerous noteworthy differences between the two religious traditions, he strongly believes that the West's experience can serve as a useful framework for understanding the recent (and future) developments in Muslim majority societies. Hashemi asserts that this cross-historical and cross-cultural examination is vital for understanding whether and how Muslim societies can form a democratic and secular government that is "compatible with their own historical, cultural and religious traditions." (7)



Central for a lucid understanding of Hashemi's arguments is a clear definition of *liberal democracy*; while his definition in this particular work is influenced by the writings of John Locke, Jean Jacques Rousseau and John Stuart Mill, his key components to liberal democracy include "political authority [which is] rooted in the consent of the governed, the people rule via their elected representatives, and basic human rights." (7) Additionally, as described by Robert Dahl, there must exist certain institutional and constitutional guarantees. Here Hashemi also takes the time to note that modernization does not mean Westernization, as the "West was West long before it was modern." (8) I do appreciate Hashemi keeping this point as simple and succinct as he did – any additional information or reference to other scholars would have been an unnecessary distraction for the reader.

Hashemi's introduction then progresses to discuss the most inherent and obvious 'tensions' which exist between religion and democracy (given that Hashemi seeks to establish a positive relationship between religion and democracy, his critics would be sure to point out any such tensions which exist between the two if Hashemi hadn't done so). The most important point the author makes here is that "unlike religious commandments, the rules of democracy can be changed, adjusted, and amended." (9) He furthers this point by noting that while religion creates a vertical relationship between man and God, democracy creates a horizontal relationship between man and man.

Given that this is his introduction, one shouldn't expect everything that is brought up in this section to be brought up again in later chapters. However, if an author introduces something like the diagram above in their introduction, one might expect the author to reference said diagram in other parts of their work. Given that this figure is the *only* figure utilized in the entire 177 pages, it might be assumed that it is of importance to the author's

main argument. However, this figure was *not* re-introduced nor referenced in any of his four chapters. This diagram doesn't appear to serve any critical purpose, even within the context of the present discussion on the tensions that exist between religion and democracy. It would have been sufficient for Hashemi to progress to his next two comments on religion and democracy.²

Hashemi's introduction then reiterates the three main argument points mentioned in the very beginning of this section. This does seem very redundant and unnecessary, though there are a couple of fresh points that he introduces in this second discussion of his arguments. Firstly, he notes that he believes there is more than one type of secularism, thus it is possible for Muslim societies to create their own version (as Christians did) while respecting their historical, religious and cultural backgrounds. He also reiterates the link between "changing religious ideas" and the "development of liberal democracy" in the West as important for Muslim societies to replicate in order to achieve liberal democracy.

I believe that it would have been sufficient for the author to conclude his introduction after these points, however he goes on to outline the main purposes of each chapter, while also discussing methodology and theoretical assumptions (though I appreciate him not overloading his readers with a lengthy explanation of his methodology and approach).

Toward a Democratic Theory of Muslim Societies: The Historical Background

The first of Hashemi's four chapters immediately begins by attempting to define modernity by looking at a number of different scholars and theories, the most germane being Alfred Stepan whom Hashemi references throughout his work. It is also within this context that Hashemi references Samuel Huntington's important 1984 essay "Will



More Countries Become Democratic,” where Huntington argues that the rise of Islamic fundamentalism essentially precludes any possibility for democracy in the region. Hashemi counters this argument by stating that Huntington’s “view is only valid from a short-term perspective...[and] if one takes a longer view of history, the emergence of Islamic fundamentalism and its contributions to democratization can be interpreted differently.” (30) Essentially what Hashemi argues is that the significant transformations a traditional society undergoes to become modern causes much tension and uncertainty among the people of said society, resulting in the rise of fundamentalist movements which are able to provide some sense of certainty. Turning to the more contemporary obstacles facing Muslim societies today, Hashemi asserts that we must look at the social conditions that have allowed for Islamic Fundamentalism to emerge rather than focusing on the concepts associated with this ideology. Yes, by looking at the message of fundamentalism, one might be quick to assume that Islam and secularism are not compatible and will never truly be so (as Western states have come to be). Yet Hashemi’s progressive thinking allows for the possibility of developing a liberal democratic theory for Muslim societies. He advances this argument by referencing major occurrences in the West that parallel Islamic fundamentalism. He argues that fundamentalist movements will emerge in *any* society undergoing transition to modernity and that this is especially true for societies where religion is an important marker of identity. “Radical religious protest movements, such as Islamism, have a proto-modern character to them. Their impact and relationship to the development of liberal democracy can be better appreciated by focusing on their sociological effects over the long term rather than on their doctrinal content.” (24) Similar to what Oliver Roy discusses in his work *Globalized Islam*, Hashemi observes that fundamentalist groups offer a sense of stability

and certainty in an increasingly uncertain world, however movements of this nature eventually come to an end.

Reference to the European experience is a critical component of this chapter. While Hashemi believes that modernization was a ‘traumatic process’ for Western societies just as it has been in Muslim majority societies, he notes that the “process of social change and evolution was organic to Europe” (27), a point that he develops in later chapters. Hashemi states that radical religious movements and their actors serve as catalysts for modernization, a point that I do not entirely agree with. This is a very large assumption for Hashemi to make, one which he does not appear to justify or explain with much clarity. Can one truly believe that radical movements in parts of the Middle East today are solely responsible for aiding the process and development of modernization in those countries? I think not. Yes, these type of movements may result in more Muslims wishing for some alternative (perhaps some form of secularism?), but I do not agree that fundamentalist groups are “catalysts for modernization.”

Hashemi’s short discussion on ‘what is modernity’ that follows however is sufficient, succinct and interesting. He generally states that unlike the organic rise of modernity in the West, modernization was forced on non-Western societies by colonial forces. Thankfully, Hashemi saves the elaborate discussion pertaining to this topic for his last chapter, which I find to be very fitting and appropriate. His discussion in this first chapter is much simpler, with basic comparisons between traditional and modern societies. For instance, he notes that “traditional societies were thought to be static and unchanging...seen as circular, linear and progressive; creativity and innovation were thought to be nonexistent; and, critically, religion was viewed as a significant barrier to progress.” (29)



It is also in this chapter that Hashemi develops his comparison of Christianity (or, more specifically, Christian societies undergoing social and political transformations) with Islam. He is very upfront about his methodology and that “comparing contemporary Iran and seventeenth-century England is problematic.” (32) For this comparison, he specifically focuses on Islamic fundamentalism and radical Protestantism. To help his approach, he references Fred Dallmayr, who employs a similar “crosscivilizational” methodology in his own work. The main argument of this chapter is that secularism did not come about easily in the West, so one should not expect it to develop smoothly and without any major setbacks in the Middle East. Looking at contemporary Iran, Hashemi states that even their religion has “become politicized, in large part due to the destabilizing effects of rapid modernization on a traditional society and also as a reaction to the authoritarian policies of the state.” (65) While Hashemi believes that political Islam has had modernizing effects on society, I would argue that the reverse is true: the advent of modernization (or, at least, some features of it) have allowed for the emergence of political actors in the public sphere. The phenomenon as described by Hashemi may be indicative of the transformations taking place within society, but I strongly disagree with his belief that the actors are the one’s directly creating the change; rather, I feel that the change has allowed for such actors to emerge.

Dueling Scriptures: The Political Theology of John Locke and the Democratization of Muslims Societies

Perhaps one of the most important points raised in Hashemi’s second chapter is his belief that there is a proper sequence that must be followed for the development of secularism in any society. Referencing Abdou Filali-Ansary, Hashemi states that “the fact that a religious reformation in

Europe preceded and then led to secularization seems to suggest something important about the sequence and process of liberal-democratic development.” (69) Filali-Ansary has observed that there has been a “reversal of the European experience in the Muslim world,” (70) meaning that secularization and modernization policies were forced upon traditional society by colonial powers and post-colonial authoritarian states.

As the subtitle of this chapter suggests, much of the focus turns to the writings and teachings of John Locke. While it is important for any author to carefully introduce a major figure if they spend so much time talking about him or her and their philosophies, I feel that Hashemi’s discussion of John Locke is beyond superfluous; while going through this section, the reader almost feels as if they picked up another book entirely that has nothing to do with the Middle East. Hashemi’s emphasis is not a history of the European experience, but rather a focus on developing a liberal democratic theory for Muslim societies; a more succinct summary of John Locke’s major written contributions and overview of the context in which he was writing would be sufficient for this particular work. Essentially, the main points regarding Locke derived from this chapter is that while Locke’s initial writings reflected strong support for the Church and sovereign, his views begin to change with time leading to a significant shift that was not only seen in his own writings, but also observable in society-at-large. In the later part of his life, Locke, whom Hashemi correctly characterizes as the ‘father of modern liberalism,’ writes of religious toleration (which he commented as the ‘Christian’ thing to do), individual freedom and political authority which sought to “redirect the moral compass of Christianity.” (75) The issues were what reflected most of the significant tensions in present-day society, the most prevalent being the ‘moral basis of authority.’ While Locke argued for a separation



of Church and State and for the freedom of religious conscience, it is important to note that his views were derived from both *reason* and *religion*. Hashemi believes that in his time, Locke might very easily have been labeled a fundamentalist. In order to earn the attention of the people, Locke had to frame his arguments within the context of religion because religion was such an important mark of identity at the time. Hashemi writes:

“This is understood more easily if we remember that the political culture of seventeenth-century England was deeply infused by conservative Christian values and thus any discussion of the moral basis of government had to factor this reality into the political discussion. If anyone sought to change the political culture with respect to ideas of government, they logically had to alter the normative interpretation and understanding of Christianity. A religious reformation, therefore, was a precondition to political secularization and the evolution of ideas that contributed to the development of liberal democracy.” (89)

This is vital for understanding what is and will continue to happen in the Middle East today. With Muslim majority societies today, Islam is clearly a very personal and significant marker of each individual’s identity as Christianity was in the 17th century. In order for change to come about, one cannot simply introduce ideas that are secular and impose them on the people (as history has shown us the inherent failures in such a ‘top-down’ approach). Instead, one must work *within* the religious framework to bring about social change. To demonstrate this in a contemporary Islamic framework, Hashemi turns his focus to modern-day Iran.

The Iranian Example

Presently, reformists and conservatives in Iran are both debating within a religious framework to

defend their political ideals, and they must do so in order to be heard. For example, reformists assert that those who lived under the fourth Sunni Caliph Ali enjoyed freedom of expression without fear of persecution. Thus, the Iranian government today has strayed away from the true tenets of Islam. Hashemi writes that reformists, using Islamic history, claim that toleration of dissenting views as ‘more Islamic’ than oppression. Another interesting example which the author refers to is that of Iranian Cleric Yusuf Saanei. This particular cleric studied under Ayatollah Khomeini, who once said “I raised Ayatollah Saanei like a son,” (92) and held a number of prominent positions within the government, including a seat on the Guardian Council and title of prosecutor-general. “In 1984, however, he withdrew from politics and moved to the city of Qom, a center of Shia Islamic thinking, to teach, study, and gradually develop a new modern interpretation of Islam.” (92) Over the next decade, Saanei issued a number of controversial fatwas (including one on abortion). Hashemi quotes Saanei as stating that his fatwas didn’t “mean that we’re changing God’s laws...it just means we’re reinterpreting laws according to the development of science – and the realities of the times.” (93) While any individual could come to the same conclusions and interpretations of Islam as Saanei has, what is significant about this particular example is that you have a religious scholar and former high-ranking government official who is questioning certain aspects of his religion and political system. I found the following explanation by Hashemi especially useful to his argument about where the social transformation must begin:

“Secular political figures can be more easily dismissed by the regime as no threat to the moral basis of political authority because of their perceived lack of authenticity; theologians and Muslim democratic activists pose a more serious challenge precisely because they accept the basic



religious framework of politics the conservative clerics uphold yet offer a dissenting interpretation of the relationship between Islam and politics.” (101)

The above quote from Hashemi in my mind connects his arguments from his first two chapters: that, in order for significant transformations in politics to occur (in a state where religion is a key marker of identity), arguments about the relationship between religion and politics must be made from a religious standpoint. One cannot simply suggest or force policies of secularization on such a society, the change must be an ‘organic’ process as it was for the Europeans.

A Concise Anatomy of Secularism: Examining its Linkages to Liberal Democracy

In Hashemi’s third chapter on secularism, he references a number of different scholars in an attempt to define this concept while also referring back to the European experience; although this time he focuses on the French Revolution. Perhaps the most prominent (and relevant) scholar that he mentions here is Alfred Stepan and his *Twin Toleration* theory. According to Hashemi, what Stepan is arguing is that the boundaries between religion and state are much more flexible than many assume it to be. He furthermore believes that there is more than one model of secularism that liberal democracy can accommodate. To demonstrate this point, he offers a comparison of Anglo-American secularism with French secularism; while the former is said to be “religion-friendly,” the latter is characterized as “religion-hostile.” The reasons for this are the individual experiences of each country in transitioning from traditional society to modernity are vastly different. Hashemi adopts this view for

himself as he states that “Secularism is not a monolithic entity but varies markedly in accordance with the historical experiences of Church-State relations.” (104) Hashemi further believes that secularism must precede liberal democracy, as certain constitutional and institutional boundaries between religion and state are needed to sustain that democracy. Thus, he invokes Stepan’s *Twin Toleration* theory here by asserting that since these ‘boundaries’ are not as rigid as some imagine it to be, Muslim societies have and will continue to be able to define the relationship between religion and democracy in their own terms. By *Twin Toleration*, Stepan “refers to the ‘minimum boundaries of freedom of action’ that both religious organizations and the state must mutually recognize and respect in order to sustain a liberal democracy.” (129)

While I agree with the notion that these boundaries which Stepan refers to *are* flexible, and thus the relationship between religion and democracy will vary from society to society, I do not believe that it produces ‘different’ versions of secularism. Yes, French society may be characterized as much more secular (or rather, more protective of their secular society) than the U.S. or U.K. might be, but does this really mean that we have different working formulations of secularism? I do not think so. It is the same with the concept of modernity and whether or not multiple modernities exist; yes, different countries may be at different stages of modernity, but this does not necessarily mean that there are different variants of modernity. Thus, while secularism may appear different when comparing across cultures, this does not mean that each country has subscribed to different forms of secularism. Rather, each nation’s cultural heritage and political history has adopted secularism to fit their society. But regardless, what secularism has *done* and *means* for each society is and will be the same.



Another interesting discussion in this chapter is the negativity which Muslim societies associate with secularism. Hashemi states that this is primarily because of two reasons; colonial and imperial involvement (or rather, forceful interference) in the region and post-colonial ‘top-down’ modernization policies that have failed. Thus, Muslims associate secularism with the West and authoritarian regimes. Stepan’s *Twin Toleration* theory offers a practical alternative as it does not use the word “secularism” but is essentially the same concept. Stepan’s theory is also useful for Muslim societies as, according to Hashemi, it allows for religious groups and organizations to still play a constructive role in establishing democracy without necessarily defying the major premise of secularism itself (i.e. separation of religion and state). In conclusion, Hashemi notes that “European societies were not born with a secular proclivity embedded in their political cultures but rather a church-state separation needed to be democratically negotiated and socially constructed around an emerging consensus over a long period of time.” (131) This point supports Hashemi’s claim that Muslim societies *are* capable of adopting a liberal democratic theory, so long as that theory is constructed ‘organically’ and is inclusive of that society’s history, both religious and political.

Secularism and Its Discontents in Muslim Societies: Indigenizing the Separation between Religion and State

Hashemi’s last chapter works to tie the main arguments made in preceding chapters by referring back to the larger question of how it is possible to create a liberal democratic theory for Muslim societies. Hashemi states that the “development of an indigenous theory of Islamic secularism will significantly increase the prospects for liberal democracy in Muslim societies.” (133) He again references Abdou Filali-Ansary’s

observation that there is a necessary order that must be followed in any society undergoing modernization (i.e. religious reformation precedes secularization). Hashemi rejects the Orientalist view and states that the crisis of secularization in the Muslim world today is linked with the failures of modernization processes, policies and programs. “State-led modernization from above has not been matched by a concomitant transformation of Muslim political culture from below, especially in crafting a normative relationship between religion and democracy that is capable of supporting liberal democracy.” (134) Hashemi correctly identifies that liberal democracy requires some degree of secularism to sustain itself, yet Muslims have a very negative view of secularism and thus exists an “irreconcilable paradox” for Muslims. As mentioned above, the negative legacy of secularism in Middle East societies is predominately a result of colonial and imperial encounters over the past two centuries. Interestingly, the author also points out that historically there was no exact translation of the word ‘secularism’ into Arabic, Farsi or Turkish. Thus, most Muslims began to associate secularism with atheism, which has also impacted present-day understanding of this concept.

Another contemporary setback for secularism and democracy in the Middle East was the 2003 US-led invasion and occupation of Iraq. Hashemi points out that this event has deeply impacted many Muslim’s views of democracy and has only reaffirmed fears of Western imperialist ambitions in the region. This, I believe, serves as a very useful example of understanding what is happening in the Middle East today (in terms of political and societal progress). Unfortunately, Hashemi does not develop this point any further and leaves the reader to develop a more detailed conclusion for themselves.



Hashemi also includes a discussion on the rise of political Islam as a reaction to the 'secular' forces in Muslim societies and how much of the rhetoric in recent years has been opposition to the West. Thus, because of its 'association' with the West, there is a strong rejection of secularism by Islamists. Some Muslim scholars argue that Christianity was able to adopt secularism because of the lack of written law, which cannot be said for Islam. (146) However, Hashemi maintains that "modernization [in the region] has *not* been accompanied by a parallel transformation of religious, intellectual and political values on a mass level" (149) thereby suggesting that there is still hope for secularism in Muslim societies. "This chasm between state secularism from above and the nonsecular political culture from below also explains in part why support for religious parties and calls for the establishment of an 'Islamic state' has an appeal today." (151) Thus, because of the lack of organic social transformation, that includes a reinterpretation of religion to reflect current times, there exists a disconnect between the state and its' people; one part has become secularized while the other has not. The author believes that Turkey and Indonesia both demonstrate the 'prospects of liberal democracy' in Muslim majority societies. According to Hashemi, each has constructed an "indigenous theory of Muslim secularism" in which Islamic intellectuals and Muslim political parties have played a significant role by undergoing a doctrinal shift, thereby contributing to the advancement of liberal democracy. In discussing Indonesia, Hashemi quickly makes the point that there is growing support for Shar'ia law at the local level. (164) I believe that this is a very important factor that has and will continue to be problematic for Muslim societies as they attempt to modernize and adopt secularism. It would have be worthwhile for Hashemi to expand or at least address this point at

greater length than casually mentioning it within the context of secularism in Indonesia.

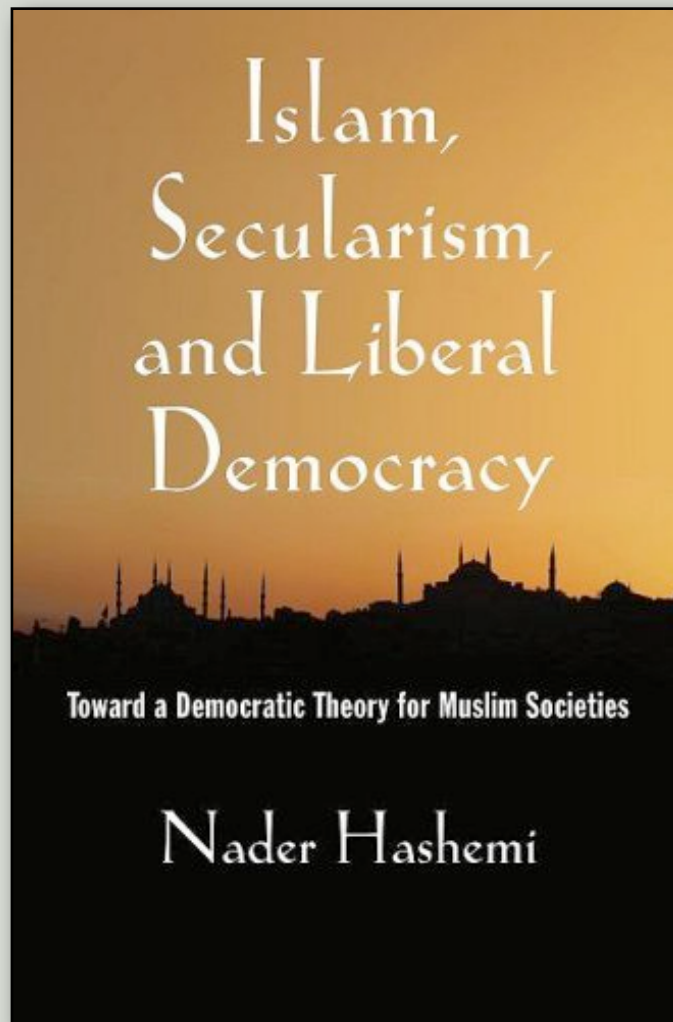
The last section turns back to Catholicism yet again, which feels very much out of place as the main focus of this last chapter is on Muslim societies. Regardless of the awkward placement of this section, Hashemi raises some points that I strongly disagree with and thus feel the need to respond to. Here, Hashemi argues once again that a doctrinal shift within the Church contributed to modernity. He notes that historically, the Church sided with the Sovereign, but this shifted with time as the Church 'voluntarily' disengaged itself from the state while simultaneously adopting discourse on human rights. Hashemi states "a religious reformation leads to a religious accommodation and reconciliation with political secularism and universal human rights, thus lending critical support to democratization efforts on the part of religious groups who have previously bolstered authoritarianism." (169) My skepticism of Hashemi's discussion here on Catholicism might be influenced by my own personal views of religious institutions and the everlasting role they attempt to play in politics, but I do not agree or believe Hashemi when he states that the Catholic Church *voluntarily* stepped down from politics and disengaged itself from the state. I believe that such a move would only have been made as an attempt to salvage themselves and their reputation. With ongoing debates about the 'basis of moral authority' and subsequent violent responses against sovereigns (such as, use of the guillotine during the French Revolution), I believe that it would be more of a *strategic* move for the Church to disengage itself from the state in order to save itself and its place in society. The Church, I'm sure, recognized the changing attitudes of the time and did not separate itself from politics to help further the social transformation but only did so to further its own interests.



Conclusion

Nader Hashemi did an excellent job of building up his arguments and linking all his major premises from beginning to end. While there were sections in each chapter that felt excessive and unnecessary for his major arguments, I very much appreciated the conclusions he provided at the end of each chapter as they help to draw the reader's attention to what the author feels is most important for truly understanding his argument. His novel comparison of present day Muslim societies to Christian societies centuries back is most definitely thought-provoking. While some of his conclusions appeared to lack sufficient support (such as the claim that Islamic fundamentalist groups are directly contributing to modernization), I believe that his main ideas are nonetheless very timely and relevant for present-day discourse on the prospects of democracy in Muslim societies.

Hashemi clearly demonstrates how secularism must be earned and emerge within the context of religion so as to have a strong hold within society. Thus, religious groups can play a significant role in the development of liberal democracy by reinterpreting religion with respect to individual rights and the moral basis of authority. While I disagree with him on the notion that there is more than one type of secularism, I agree that Muslim societies have a long ways to go before we can definitively argue that Islam and secularism are incompatible.



Oxford University Press:
[http://www.oup.com/us/catalog/general/
subject/ReligionTheology/Islam/
view=usa&ci=9780195321241#](http://www.oup.com/us/catalog/general/subject/ReligionTheology/Islam/view=usa&ci=9780195321241#)

A New Book
The Sociology of Islam:
Secularism, Economy and Politics
Edited by Tugrul Keskin

<http://www.ithacapress.co.uk/The-Sociology-of-Islam-Secularism-Economy-and-Politics>



Study Abroad to Turkey

Would you like to study abroad in Istanbul, Turkey for the Summer of 2011? Learn about religion, politics and economic transformation?

[Center for Turkish Studies](#)

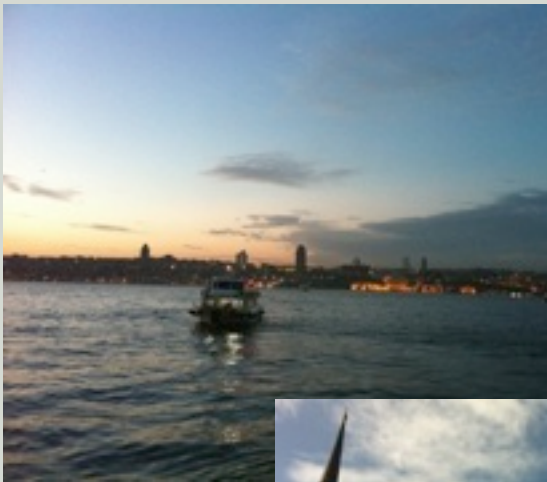
[International Studies](#)

[Office of International Affairs](#)

[Portland State University](#)

is offering a study abroad course in Istanbul.

July 4 - 29, 2011



For more information, please contact the following professors:

Tugrul Keskin tugrulkeskin@pdx.edu Portland State

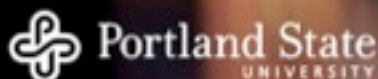
Birol Yesilada yesilada@pdx.edu Portland State

Najm al-Din Yousefi ny@vt.edu Virginia Tech

SOCIOLOGY OF ISLAM & MUSLIM SOCIETIES

Advisory Board

- Ali Akbar Mahdi - Professor of Sociology - Ohio Wesleyan University
- Ayesha Jalal - Mary Richardson Professor of History, Director - Tufts University
- Berna Turam - International Affairs and Sociology - Northeastern University
- Birol Yesilada - Professor of Political Science and International Studies - Portland State University
- Charles Kurzman - Department of Sociology - The University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill
- Daniel Martin Varisco - Professor of Anthropology - Hofstra University
- Kemal Silay - Ottoman and Modern Turkish Studies - Indiana University
- Judith Blau - Department of Sociology - The University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill
- Martin van Bruinessen - Chair of Comparative Study of Contemporary Muslim Societies, Utrecht University
- Mohammed A. Bamyeh - Department of Sociology - The University of Pittsburgh
- Mohammad Omar Farooq - Royal University for Women - Kingdom of Bahrain
- Muqtedar Khan - Political Science and International Relations - University of Delaware
- Nader Hashemi - Josef Korbel School of International Studies - University of Denver
- Sener Akturk - Koc University
- Victoria Clement - Department of National Security Affairs - The Naval Post Graduate School



SOCIOLOGY OF ISLAM & MUSLIM SOCIETIES

PORTLAND STATE UNIVERSITY

INTERNATIONAL STUDIES - 333 EAST HALL, PORTLAND, OR 97207 - 0751 - USA

Publication Information

This newsletter is published from individual contributors, mailing list posts, web and other resources, and as such it represents a diverse set of views.

The views and opinions published here are not necessarily those of the editors or publishers.

Mailing List

The Sociology of Islam mailing list is hosted at PORTLAND STATE UNIVERSITY.

To subscribe to this listserv, send an email to: Sociology_of_islam mailing list

Sociology_of_islam@lists.pdx.edu

https://www.lists.pdx.edu/lists/listinfo/sociology_of_islam

<http://sociologyofislam.blogspot.com/> and

<http://www.sociologyofislam.org/>

Editorial Board:

- Haimaa El Wardy - Al-Azhar, Egypt
- Haroon Moghul - Columbia University
- Husnul Amin, International Islamic University
- Leon Moosavi - Lancaster University, England
- Jeremy Walton - New York University, USA
- Joshua D. Hendrick - University of Oregon, USA
- Jouni Tilli - University of Jyväskylä, Finland
- Mustafa Gurbuz - University of Connecticut, USA
- Najm al-Din Yousefi - Virginia Tech, USA
- Rachel Woodlock - Monash University, Australia
- Reed Taylor - Virginia Tech, USA
- Seyed Javad Miri - IHCS - Tehran, Iran
- Tugrul Keskin - Portland State University, USA
- Yogi Sikand - Journalist, India

© Copyright 2008 by Tugrul Keskin. ISSN 1942-7956