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From "Totalizing Islam" to "Secular Islam" Islamic Civilization under the Dual Pressure of Retraditionalization and Modernization

Samuel P. Huntington's "civilization paradigm" of the early 1990s is considered by many to be a "self-fulfilling prophecy". Under the influence of the events of the past 10-15 years, such voices emphasize the so-called war between the West and Islam. Meanwhile, not only the general public but also some experts interpret the Muslim world as if it were monolithic, a zone in which all processes and events are determined by Islam – or even a totalizing Islam. Also, Islam is viewed in these cases as an autochtonous entity, a closed and coherent system of norms and beliefs that provides explanation for everything taking place in the world of Islam.[1] This essentialist and culturalist, "totalizing" approach to Islam, atemporal in its perspective, is characteristic of traditional Orientalists (Bernard Lewis), "radical experts" of Islam (Daniel Pipes), scholars of the social sciences, as well as politicians, journalists, and men of the street, so much so that it may be called the prevalent interpretation of the past fifteen years.

This approach is supported by the highly visible rise of Islamism[2] all over the Muslim world (as well as outside of it), the popular image of radical and extremist Islam (or, in

[1] 'What we have to do with here is a closed conceptual system, from which it is impossible to isolate certain areas and reform them. On the other hand, as the traditions and methods of Islam are authorized by laws of divine origin, they are *a priori* and in general unreformable from outside. Eternal divine regulations cannot be subordinated to earthly trends and considerations. Every alteration can only be made from inside, supported by a system of arguments accepted in Islam. Individual concepts like law, democracy, Parliament, king, prime minister, social care, family, mother etc. can only be meaningfully interpreted within the system, and this interpretation is typically different from ours. ... This system and its operation can only be understood from inside.' MARÓTH, "Az iszlám" [Islam].

[2] We consider the persons and organizations who represent a kind of 'political Islam', a politicized version of Islam, and who represent Islam as a political ideology, as belonging to the wider sense of Islamism. It is beyond the scope of this paper to provide a detailed discussion of the summary simplification and the schematic judgement of Islamism made by Western experts and media, or of the significant differences in the evaluation of extremely colourful and diverse Islamism even between experts who are trying to assess Islamism in an objective way. Many equate Islamism with Islamic fundamentalism, although besides the radical wing of Islamism described by Gilles Keppel as jihadists, the majority of Islamist personalities and organizations represent a moderate position. There are also experts, however, who differentiate between fundamentalists (*e.g*. the Saudi Wahhabites) and Islamists within the category of 'politicized Islam'. Proponents of this view relate Islamists to the 'liberation theology' within Catholicism, characterizing it as a movement

the lucky case, Islamism), which form part of the re-Islamization trends of the past decades. These images are taken up and diffused by overgeneralizing media, and lent credence by the unfortunate but actual fact that Islam as a broader social phenomenon is currently dominated and thematized by Islamists, who represent a kind of totalizing, radical and dogmatic interpretation. This is due, among others, to the influence of the Islamist network spanning the whole Muslim world, as well as the communities of the Muslim diaspora. Meanwhile, the voices of the moderates and liberals, who interpret Islam very much differently, and who attribute a completely different social role to Islam, are hardly audible. In addition, while radical Islamists announce their objectives clearly and explicitly, the moderates/ liberals/modernists cannot arrive at an agreement as to what exactly they mean by liberal/modernist Islam, and what the role of Islam should be, *i.e*. to what extent it should determine processes and interactions in a modern state and society.

The uncertainties and ambiguities are intimately related to the question of secularization and the relationship between Islam and secularization. In the new millennium, the Middle East policy of the United States aimed at reforming and democratizing the broader region as part of American grand strategy and invoking the logic of the domino principle in the context of democracy. According to this vision, changes were to be initiated from the inside – if with minor assistance from the US. The changes were, though, to go beyond the overthrow of authoritarian systems (see Iraq), extending to a domestically driven reform of Islam itself. For many observers, the latter, closely linked with the secularization of Islam, ranked as a precondition not only for the "naturalization of democracy", but for neutralizing extremist /militant/Islamist/ fundamentalist organizations as well.

The general crisis of modernization, characteristic of most of the Muslim world since the late 1960s, which has been the most important breeding ground of retraditionalization and re-Islamization, also represents an intellectual crisis, in which one of the main, if not the most crucial, questions has been the relationship of the Muslim world (more accurately of the Muslims themselves) to their own past, to the heritage of this past (a contested terrain, to be sure), and, within this, of course, to Islam itself (what is it?; to what extent does it have sway over other aspects of life?; which aspects belong to the competence of Islam?; is it to be understood as "religion in the narrow sense", or more broadly, encompassing non-spiritual activities?). These are, in fact, the usual stakes of the relationship between traditionalism and modernization. It is to be noted that retraditionalization and re-Islamization are taking place in a 21st century environment, in an international system characterized by an accelerated process of globalization, of which the countries of the Muslim world are, like it or not, organic, if subordinated parts in an asymmetric position. As attested by the sporadic and unsuccessful jailbreak attempts, not even fundamentalists, be they the "most Islamist" group, can leave reality, the processes of the international system at their whim. They can, of course, do it in their rhetoric, or even for a short while when in power, but under no circumstances can they afford to do so permanently.

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wishing to reform Islam, adapting it to the ever-changing conditions. (Cf. WRIGHT, "Islam and Liberal Democracy: Two Visions of Reformation".)

Neither the religious, nor the secular Muslim intelligentsia has found the appropriate answer to the problem of the relationship between Islamic authenticity and modernization. From time to time there have been heated debates on different questions related to the above dilemma (secularization, democracy, human rights etc.), but these ended without having achieved consensus.

This failure mirrors the fact that there exists no single, monolithic Islam, just as there exists no all-encompassing interpretation of it. It is well-known that Islam (whether Sunni or Shia) has no authentic centre whose voice would go unchallenged. As to Sunni Islam, al-Azhar in Cairo is of outstanding authority, while for Shia Islam, the *marjaiyyas*[3] in Najaf or Qom (currently first of all great ayatollah Ali al-Sistani) or the most distinguished media-personalities (e.g. Sheikh Yusuf al-Qaradawi) may declare their positions on religious questions, but none of them can be regarded as representative of the single authentic Islamic position. In the Muslim world a permanent re-interpretation of Islam (and the Islamic heritage) is taking place, competing, often contradictory interpretations exist simultaneously and vie with each other, amounting to a perpetual rethinking and transformation of the Islamic tradition. While there are claims to be sole representatives of Islamic authenticity, at best it is *mainstream* trends that can sometimes be discerned.

Islam is in general considered to be an organic religion (or religious system)[4] that, on the one hand, aspires to regulate every aspect of life (*i.e*. every sphere of social existence as an organic whole[5]), and, on the other hand, its inherent attribute is universalism. All this naturally follows from the meaning of the word "Islam", – subordination to God's will – as, since the whole world is moved by God's will, it is justified to say that everything and everybody is Muslim. Thus, Islam is far from being a religion "in the narrow sense" that can be reduced to theology or everyday religious practice. Islam, more exactly the "ideal" or, we might say, Utopian Islam is a complex system comprising every field of life, in which worship occupies only a relatively small part, while the rest includes regulations and guidance for various secular spheres of everyday life.[6]

Muslim religious scholars claim that Islam as a system consists of two parts, one theoretical, and one practical. The theoretical part constitutes the "roots" *(usul)*, while the practical part is the branches that grow out of the roots *(furu')*. The former contains the doctrine itself, the principles and the dogmatics, while the latter is about the guidelines and prescriptions as regards practical concerns. The expression most

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[3] Within Shia Islam, there is a strict hierarchic order of religious scholars, with some great ayatollahs (*ayatullah al-uzma)* on top of the pyramid, who are the 'sources of imitation' *(marja-i taqlid*). The most eminent *marja*s live in the towns of Qom in Iran and Najaf in Iraq, so the *marjaiyya*s there play an outstanding role in Shia Islam.

[4] Cf. TIBI, *Die Krise des modernen Islams. Eine vorindustrielle Kultur im wissenschaftlish-technischen Zeitalter,* p. 184; Idem, "The Renewed Role of Islam in the Political and Social Development of the Middle East".

[5] TIBI, *Der Islam und das Problem der kulturellen Bewältigung sozialen Wandels,* p. 58.

[6] 'Qur'an verses discussing social questions are a lot more numerous than those dealing with the religious duties of the believers.' al-Khomeini, *al-Hukuma al-islamiyya* [Islamic governance], p. 9.

suitable to describe Islam as a practical system is *shari'a*, which contains the various regulations and guidelines of Islam, and in this sense it designates the Muslim legal system regulating different areas of life. It can also be said that the core, the "root" of Islam is the religion itself, and its practical system (the "branches") mainly contains regulations and directions for the secular spheres of everyday life.[7]

Unlike in Christianity, in Islam it is law, not theology that is considered the key element in its system. This is underpinned, on the one hand, by the fact that it is not *kalam* (theology), but *fiqh*[8] (Islamic jurisprudence) that became the disciplinary core of all Islamic sciences, and, on the other hand, that the expression most suitable to express Islam as a practical system, or 'Islam as a function'[9], is *shari'a*, which, in its everyday, common meaning, is equivalent to Islamic law. Even the majority of experts use it to refer to Islamic religious law.[10]

However, the *a priori* totalistic nature of Islam, its claim and desire to influence every sphere of life is not identical with Islamic civilization, the concrete practices followed in the individual Islamic countries. The latter have always been influenced and determined by the historical conditions of the given age to a large extent. Islam, as a closed, coherent system exists only at the level of ideas, while reality and real-life practice show quite another picture. Islam as such has never existed in itself, Islam is always represented and accounted for by someone, be it religious scholars, scholars of religious law, organizations, movements, etc. The "really existing" Islam is always the product of a particular interpretation. "Islam as a monolithic unity exists only in the form of the fictitious »umma«, but that has nothing to do with political realities. Islam does not exist in singular, there are only variations of it….the different worlds of Islam."[11] "One is not dealing with 'Islam', a single and coherent doctrine, but with several ideologies, several Islams."[12] "Islamic doctrine can be interpreted in any number of ways, either to promote peace and tolerance or war and intolerance. The real culprits are the ideologues who would twist religion – any religion – to serve their

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7 The former is dealt with by the science of dogmas, scholastic theology (*'ilm al-kalam*), while the other is the subject of the science of law (*'ilm al-fiqh*).

8 From a semantic point of view, the meaning of *fiqh* is knowledge, but in Islam the *par excellence* knowledge means knowledge of law. 'It is impossible to understand Islam without understanding Islamic law.' SCHACHT, *An Introduction to Islamic Law,* p. 1.

9 RAHMAN, *Islam*, p. 100.

10 Joseph SCHACHT has a similar opinion,: 'From what Islam left to the civilized world, one of the most important is its religious law, the *shari'a*.' SCHACHT: "Islamisches Religiöses Recht, p. 167. Schacht identifies *fiqh* with 'Islamic legal science', op. cit., p. 177. Many use a more sophisticated formulation, due to the complex nature of the question: '*Shari'a*, often translated as 'law' … has the connotation of the total sum of duties, obligations and guidelines for Muslims … It encompasses the relationship of the individual Muslim with God and with other human beings as well as ethics and the ethical life generally'. NANJI, *Dictionary of Islam*, p. 167.

11 SENGHAAS, "Geokultur: Wirklichkeit oder Fiktion? Drei Abhandlungen zur Debatte über den 'Zusammensprall der Zivilisationen'"..

12 RODINSON, *Marxism and the Muslim World*, p. 152.

political agenda."[13] As a result, "the Muslim voice is a cacophony rather than a chorus".[14]

Islam, like other religions, has of course its holy texts, traditions, learned works and interpretations by early religious scholars, legal and other documents. But these are offering an 'à la carte assortment', opportunities of interpretation, and consequently, of action, depending on trends, age, individual and context, rather than concrete options referring to political, social, moral, etc. actions.

The Qur'an has become a bestseller, especially since September 11, 2001, when Islam became the focus of international attention. The question "what does the Qur'an say about this?" can be heard frequently. This creates an appearance as though it were possible to form an unambiguous opinion about anything on the basis of the Qur'an, and as if the content of the Qur'an were not subject to various interpretations. "If there is still a debate about what the Koran really says, it means that nobody really knows, or at least that the people who think they know disagree among themselves.... The key question is not what the Koran actually says, but what Muslims say the Koran says."[15] Thus, "the idea that 'Islam' as such provides an identity, explanation and moral code for all actions undertaken by Muslims is a clear simplification."[16]

Islam has always been characterized by its diversity, the variability and pluralism of its idiom. From time to time in Muslim history, winning the hegemony over the interpretation of Islam, or, using Kepel's phrase, "Islamic domain of shared meaning" became utmost priority.[17] In recent decades, the most obvious example for this has been the effort of Saudi Arabia to make Wahhabi Islam, confessed and represented by the Saudi state and religious leadership, the exclusive interpretation, supported by the prosperity of "petro-Islam".[18] Following the victory of the 1979 Islamic revolution in Iran, however, Saudi Arabia suddenly had to face a serious rival, after the (Shia) interpretation of Khomeini gained considerable ground in the "Islamic domain of shared meaning". This was followed by a desperate struggle between the Iranian and the Saudi interpretations throughout the 1980s and '90s, fuelled by the desire to control the "Islamic domain of shared meaning".

In principle, of course, Islam as a closed conceptual system does exist, but only on a theoretical level, as an "imaginary" Islam.[19] The actual practice of the Muslim world has never, except in the earliest period, complied with this idealized and utopian image. Also, the all-engulfing debates on principles and theories taking place within

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13 GERGES, *Journey of the Jihadist. Inside Muslim Militancy,* p. 11.

14 KLAUSEN, *The Islamic Challenge. Politics and Religion in Western Europe,* p. 81.

15 ROY, *Globalized Islam. The Search for a New Ummah,* p. 10. Goldziher's statement is still valid: 'In the appropriate interpretation of the Islamic religious phenomena the decisive factor is not what the Qur'an says or what the tradition says, rather the way how the community interprets their meanings and messages.' Goldziher *Die Religion des Islams,* p. 804.

16 HALLIDAY, *Islam and the Myth of Confrontation. Religion and Politics in the Middle East,* p. 114.

17 KEPEL, *Jihad,* p.74.

18 *Ibid*., p. 51.

19 ROY, *Secularism Confronts Islam,* p. 42.

the confines of Islam during the past centuries, as well as the diametrically opposed interpretations concerning even fundamental questions, challenge the coherence not only of practice, but also of the abstract foundations.

The differences in the interpretation of Islam, according to Western experts, can be traced back to the difference between Oriental Studies and the social sciences. The "Orientalist discourse" laid the foundations of the essentialist image of Islam, dominant till our day, that has such prominent representatives of great authority as Bernard Lewis. [20] It happened not by chance that Orientalism, which has gone through serious changes during the past decades, but has basically retained its normative underpinnings and interest, has become part of the humanities and not of the social sciences.

From the 1950 and '60s onwards, research into the Muslim world in the social sciences started to flourish. An increasing number of researchers and scholars coming from Islamic countries also took part in this process, joining Western scientists. This process was simultaneous with the rapid development of the educational systems in the countries of the Muslim world, and the increase in the number of local scientists with Western degrees and training. In this period Oriental studies were slightly pushed into the background. The role of the latter became more marred once more only when the concept of culture became the focus of enquiry for several reasons, and the processes related to civilization and culture became more apparent in the international system.

The decisive impulse from the aspect of our subject matter came when Islam occupied the forefront of attention. It is enough to think of the victory of the 1979 Iranian Islamic revolution, of "Islamic fundamentalism" gaining ground, of the nightmare of the "Islamic threat" following the collapse of the Soviet Union, the Eastern alliance and communism, the increasing Muslim presence in Europe and the terrorist acts carried out in the name of Islam. Islamism – the politicized and ideological Islam – has become part of world politics. Simultaneously with this, there has also been a turnaround in social sciences, and modernity came under scrutiny by post-modern deconstruction. "This cultural turn within the sciences made Islam into a battlefield of research."[21]

Both Orientalists and scholars of the social sciences are trying to make their own epistemological and methodological backgrounds appear as the only one suitable to explore "objective reality". The Orientalists' position basically starts out 'from inside', concentrating on the dogmatic and normative dimensions of Islam and relying on them

[20] Since the enormous debate stirred up by Edward SAID's book, *Orientalism*, there have also been negative connotations sticking to Orientalism and Orientalists. Though we agree with numerous statements by Said, we do not share his one-sidedly generalizing position and the *a priori* negative picture of Orientalism he drafted, though neither do we agree with the approach to Islam of Bernard Lewis, mostly criticized by Said. For further information on the question see ROSTOVÁNYI, *Az iszlám világ és a Nyugat* [The World of Islam and the West], pp. 67-73.; Idem: "Bernard Lewis és az iszlám világa" [Bernard Lewis and the World of Islam], pp. 233-246.

[21] ZEMNI, "Islam, European Identity and the Limits of Multiculturalism".

to explain everything. Based on the hypothesis of a kind of 'Islamic continuum', this approach regards Islam as the decisive, central element of Muslim history. On the contrary, according to the approach of social scientists, there is no such thing as Islam *per se*, Islam is represented by concrete persons and organizations, by way of interpretations at times very different from one another. As a result, the subjects of analysis must be Muslims, in their entire diversity. Sami Zemni calls these two approaches "traditional or Orientalist" and "genealogical or pluralist", respectively.[22]

Those who continue to believe in the totalistic/essentialist image of Islam can be divided into some well-definable groups based on their different attitudes toward Islam. Traditionally trained Orientalists usually emphasize the importance of deep familiarity with the subject matter, and most of them have a positive attitude to Islam. Fundamentalists, who, of course, also think positively about Islam, want to implement this idealized approach to Islam in reality. As far as the expert community on Islamism and Islam is concerned, the above, essentializing approach is only followed by those who have a negative view of Islam and conceptualize it as a source of threat or danger. In their case, the same totalizing logic prevails as in the case of some Orientalists, if in the negative.

All of the above groups accept in one way or another that "the traditions and practices of Islam are canonized by laws of divine origin ... the eternal divine regulations cannot be subordinated to earthly trends and considerations".[23] Exactly this thesis has been one of the central questions of the 'intra-Islam' disputes of the past decades: how far does 'divine law' – or Islam in general – extend, what is 'pure' Islam, and what is it that we consider 'cultural apposition', where is the dividing line between the 'sacral' and the 'secular' sphere, and, to what extent does 'divine law' influence the latter.

The group of liberal/modernist/reformist Muslims is also highly structured, yet their common aspiration is quite clear: to adapt Islam to the requirements of the modern world. For this reason their interpretation is based on the traditions and values of the Enlightenment, they accentuate the rationalist traditions of Islam, they hold the values of Western civilization (democracy, pluralism, human rights, etc.) compatible with Islam. Also, though often implicitly, they encourage the secularization of Islam, which, contrary to the totalizing interpretation, emphasizes the religious-spiritual nature of Islam, and approves of the separation of religion and politics.[24]

Bernard Lewis himself established that the Muslim world has become irreversibly Westernized in our age.[25] This fact can hardly be changed by the emergence of

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[22] ZEMNI, "Is there a place for Islam in Europe?"

[23] MARÓTH, *op. cit.*

[24] Some of the distinguished theoreticians of the above trend are Abdolkarim Soroush, Mohammad Mojtahed Sabestari and Mohsen Kadivar from Iran, Abdullahi Ahmed an-Na'im from Sudan, Ashgar Ali Engineer from India, Rashid al-Ghannushi from Tunisia, Ali Mazrui from Kenya, while as to European Islam, Bassam Tibi, who was born in Syria and lived in Germany for decades, and Tariq Ramadan, grandson of Ahmad Hasan al-Banna, founder of the Muslim Brothers.

[25] LEWIS, "The Middle East, Westernized despite Itself".

"dewesternizing" efforts in the Muslim world. The whole globalized world operates based on Western institutions (Parliament, Parties, constitution, etc.), and there is little chance that this situation will change in the future. Lewis has good reason to state that, in every age of human history, modernity (or its contemporary equivalent) was determined by the norms and standards of the dominant and expansive civilization of the given age, and every dominant civilization enforced its own 'modernity' on its environment, and its influence extended far beyond its borders. This was also the case with Islamic civilization, but Western civilization is the first whose effects and influence extend over the whole world. The dominant civilization of our day is Western civilization, consequently its standards define modernity.[26]

These standards and concepts, of course, have different meanings in the Muslim world, as most of them are expressed with a word or expression that formerly had a different meaning in Islam history. In our judgement, however, in the majority of the countries in the Muslim world, the competence of Islam (as a religion) extends neither to the sphere of economy[27] nor to that of politics. While on one side, the original (non-Western) meanings of these concepts play a significant role, and in some of the 'more conservative' countries – especially Saudi Arabia, the Gulf monarchies – Islamist groups are making efforts to make these meanings exclusive, on the other side, liberal-modernist circles are busy working on just the opposite: approximating the Western meanings as closely as possible. Just one example: analyzing the "Islamic discourse of human rights", Fred Halliday distinguishes five attitudes, starting from one stating the perfect harmony of Islam and human rights, finishing with one that considers them totally incompatible.[28] Muhammad Imarah cites three different approaches within Islam to explain the confusion[29] even among Muslim theoreticians concerning the issue. One of the basic questions of the dispute about the subject is exactly whether the concepts and categories are universal concepts of Islam or, considering their meanings, they are the "cultural" notions of a past and long bygone age of history.

The system of Islam: changeable or unchangeable?

One of the key constituents of the system of Islam is *shari'a*. Its precise meaning is 'path leading to water, to the spring', 'pure way', and though, as we have seen, it is usually interpreted as Islamic law, it is much more than that and includes most moral

[26] LEWIS, "The West and the Middle East".

[27] In countries of the Muslim world, there are banks 'operating on the basis of Islam' (which, among others, do not apply interests, which is banned by Islam, though it is also a matter of interpretation what should be meant by the expression *riba*, found in the Qur'an, that the ban refers to). Though the number of such banks is increasing, the economic systems of the countries of the Muslim world do not basically work on the basis of Islam. What is it that makes an economy an 'Islamic economy'? We can but agree with the view that '"Islamic economics" is nothing but neoclassical economic theory in religious guise'. Cf. BOROUJERDI, "Subduing Globalization. The Challenge of the Indigenization Movement", p. 38.

[28] HALLIDAY, *op. cit*., pp. 133-141.

[29] IMARAH, *Islam and Human Rights.*

prescriptions and norms. Some Muslim religious scholars hold that *shari'a* is the external appearance of Islam, while its internal core is *din. Din* (religion, faith) means faith itself, conviction, commitment to a way of life that complies with God's will, while *shari'a* is the detailed expression of the suitable way of life and behaviour, the 'code of conduct'.

Contrary to the widespread view, *shari'a* is not a unified, rigid and unchangeable system, valid in the same form in every part of the Muslim world. *Shari'a* is a product of 'human intellect'[30], which, of course with a view to Islamic principles, integrates local habits and traditions valid in different parts of the Muslim world, local practices, *i.e*. local cultures, different from one another. Famously, in this spirit "the main point is not to dress like the Prophet did, but to dress in line with the principles of how he had picked his clothes."[31]

Perhaps this is the point where it is easiest to grasp the dividing line between "narrow" and "broad", between "totalizing" and "secular" Islam, between the Islam embedded in a cultural context, or "Islam as a conglomerate of religious interpretations" and "pure Islam". The fundamental question is what, in the system of Islam, is of "divine" origin and what "originates from the Prophet", as opposed to what is "human creation", *i.e.* what is it that had been created by the Muslim community over the time, and passed down as part of its own practice, this way making it part of the Islamic system. What is sacred and what is secular – to take the question to extremes or in yet another form: what is unchangeable, and what is not? What is it that belongs to the innermost core of Islam, and what does not, having become integrated into Islam by the unwritten law of culture, which means that it is a mere "deposit", or, even worse, "filth" or "distortion". To what extent can the latter be regarded as part of Islam itself, or, how much is it rather part of the cultural environment surrounding Islam in the given age? This question has been the bone of contention, as the verses of the Qur'an give rise to different interpretations, which is all the more true of all things created by "human intellect": does a certain man-made something comply with Islam at all, and if it does, does it reflect the peculiarities of a given age or can it be considered universal?

In connection with this question the subject of permanent disputes is e.g. the law of Islam, *shari'a.* Some Muslim scholars are of the view that the law of Islam consists of a divine, unchanging and unchangeable element (this is *shari'a* itself, the principles and values rooted in divine sources), and the appendage of human interpretation and application *(fiqh)*.[32] One is the world of divine revelation, the other of earthly application and practice.

However, not only Tariq Ramadan considers *shari'a* "a product of human intellect", but a lot of other reformist/modernist Muslim scholars and intellecttuals do. "Both *shari'a* and *fiqh* are the products of human interpretation of the Qur'an and Sunna of the Prophet in a particular historical context. Whether a given proposition is said to be

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[30] RAMADAN, *Western Muslims and the Future of Islam,* p. 34.

[31] *Ibid*., p. 36.

[32] Cf. ESPOSITO, *The Challenge of Creating Change. The Immanent Frame.* For further information on the question see BALZ, "Shariah versus Secular Law?", pp. 121-126.

based on *shari'a* or *fiqh*, it is subject to the same risk of human error, ideological or political bias, or influence by its proponents' economic interests and social concerns."[33]

Bassam Tibi sets out from the Qur'an, in which *shari'a* is mentioned one single time: "Then we set you on a clear way [that comes] from [Our] affair *('ala shari'atin min al-amri*)."[34] For Tibi it is obvious that "in this case *shari'a* should mean moral guidance and not legal system. *Shari'*a as a legal system only developed a hundred years after the end of the revelation of Islam...The argument that *shari'a* is of divine origin and belongs to Muslim cultural identity is not tenable. Every *shari'a*-expert knows that there is no unified *shari'a, shari'a* is interpretative".[35]

It is well-known that during the development of the system of Islam was the changing social practice of the community which was written down and codified first. These practices undoubtedly enjoyed priority in the thinking of the age, and most of the new phenomena and practices were integrated into the system of Islam by way of being sanctified through a *hadith*, or harmonized with the unchanging norms of the Qur'an in some other way. Initially, priority was given to independent opinions, and only later were the thus established theses traced back to authentic divine sources or the Prophet himself. But with the canonization of the entire system of Islam, the flexibility that had existed formerly was over, the system grew rigid, and by the 9-10th century "the gates of *ijtihad*[36] had been closed."

During the first centuries of Islam, the foundations of the Islamic legal system were often provided by habits in the local traditions, *i.e*. the everyday practice of the community.[37] It was common agreement, consensus, that sanctioned and made some new phenomena part of the Islamic system of values (and of the legal system), thus ensuring the enforcement of the unwritten law professed by the whole society.

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[33] AN-NA'IM, *Islam and the Secular State. Negotiating the Future of the Shari'a,* p. 35. Professor An-Na'im, one of the modernist/reformist Muslim scholars, was called the 'Martin Luther or the Thomas Jefferson of the Islamic faith', when he was being introduced to his public at one of his lectures in 2007.

[34] Qur'an 45:18

[35] TIBI, *Islamische Zuwanderung. Die gescheiterte Integration,* pp. 188-189.

[36] Forming independent opinions, taking independent positions on questions which cannot be underpinned with authentic sources, or at least not without doubt. The formation of the system, until then, took place on the basis of two main principles or methods. One of them was 'learning' *('ilm*), *i.e*. the knowledge of the traditional, existing, unchanged sources (Qur'an, *sunna*, *hadith*), the other was 'understanding' *(fiqh)* based on human intelligence and opinion-forming. The first is objective, the second is subjective. By the 9-10th century the whole system had become an objective entity, and for the new generations it already appeared as an existing, authentic body of knowledge. *Fiqh* also became *'ilm*, too, and from this point on it was no longer allowed to exercise *fiqh*, (*i.e*. to understand something by way of personal logical reasoning), only to study *fiqh.* This marked the end of a process, Islamic orthodoxy had come into being. For more see RAHMAN, *op. cit*., pp. 100-104. In today's Arabic language the meaning of *fiqh* is the science of Muslim religious law, the meaning of *'ilm* is science.

[37] The different trends/schools in religious law *(madhhab*) developed on a territorial basis, and integrated local practices and habits into the law.

Although the interpretation of the *Qur'an*, as the primary source of the system of Islam, has been, to a great extent, determined by prophetical traditions (*sunna*), consensus *(ijma')* supersedes *sunna* as well. In Sunni Islam, the tradition legitimized by the consensus of the community (actually the consensus of religious scholars, hundreds of years ago) has normative value, is compulsory, and supersedes everything.[38] Any deviation from the tradition breaks the continuity between the compulsory consensus of the past and the changes of today's modern world.

One of the major problems is that this consensus, which in the eyes of traditionalist Muslims is the solid pillar on which religion rests, reflects conditions prevalent several hundreds of years ago. The "closure of the gates of *ijtihad*" in Sunni Islam closed and fixed traditions, made them static, and, simultaneously "sacralized" them. The latter was also supported by the fact that religious and legal scholars played a significant role and their consensus on certain issues may have seemed a sign of divine will.

For some it certainly may have seemed as a divine manifestation, but for many it did not, nor does it today, and modernist/reformist Muslims stand up for secularizing tradition. No matter which way we are looking at Islam, the fact is that most of its system is "produced" by humans, which is obviously inseparable from the historical context, from the social and cultural conditions of the given location. Consequently, on the one hand it can be stated that the whole system, combined, is part of transcendental Islam, but, on the other hand, it can also be established that the man-made parts of the system do not belong to it, or at least not in an unchanging and unchangeable form.

The different replies to these fundamental questions result in different interpretations of Islam even within the Muslim world, and in situations when the same grounds of reference often give rise to completely diverging consequences – like *e.g.* on the question of the caliphate (*i.e.* whether its necessity derives from the core of Islam) and often concern the mutual relationship between religion and politics or the state.

The Muslim world and the civilization of Islam need to be and can be analyzed not on the basis of a totalizing, idealized and Utopian (or dystopic), essentialist image of Islam, but based on real-life situation and processes, the discourses and everyday practices of the Muslims.

Islam as a religion and Islam as a civilization

The word Islam is used in two markedly different, still closely related meanings: one is religion, the other is the civilization organized around this religion.[39] Following Tariq

[38] Wearing the *hijab* (kerchief) *e.g.* does not appear in the Qur'an, it is part of the classical Islamic tradition. Various other examples could be cited.

[39] C.f. among others ROSENTHAL, *Islam in the Modern National State,* p. 5, LEWIS, *Az iszlám válsága* [The Crisis of Islam], p. 28, IMARAH, *al-Islam wa-l-'uruba wa-l-'almaniyya* [Islam, Arabism and Secularization], pp. 5-7.

Ramadan, let us add to this the third one, culture (used in the Anglo-Saxon sense, meaning something narrower than civilization), though its Islamic character is questioned by many.[40] Many experts believe there is also a fourth meaning: Islam as a political system.[41] But the latter is only valid provided that by Islamic political system the Islamic state pressed for by the Islamists is meant, as otherwise, since the economy cannot be Islamic or Christian, neither can a political or governance system.[42] So what we should mean by the latter, the fourth, meaning is political/politically active Islam, *i.e.* Islam as a political ideology. This, however, is a special segment of Islam, for which there is a separate expression, and this is Islamism.

The problem is basically caused by the fact that these meanings are very often confused, and are not separated clearly. With Western civilization, or Christianity, the situation is easier as there are separate concepts to denote civilization, the Christian culture (Christendom), or the religion providing its foundation (Christianity).[43] On the contrary, in the case of Islamic religion and civilization, we have the same word to denote both of them, though the two are by no means identical.

It is to be noted that religion is only one, though very important, element of civilization. It is not by chance, however, around what religion the given civilization gets organized, more exactly, what the community interprets its religion to be like. If we believe in the essentialist/ totalizing and timeless interpretation of Islam as the foundation of civilization, the result will be an Islamic civilization with an ahistorical conception of itself, and resisting any kind of modernization.

The situation is further complicated by the fact that Islam emerged as the religion of the Arab people,[44] and in its birthplace in the broader sense, in the Middle East, Arab (and, owing to early Islamization, Persian) traditions are still prevalent. Some experts prefer applying the term Arab civilization instead of Islamic civilization, giving priority to the ethnic or linguistic factor over the religious factor in civilizational/cultural development, while others use Arab Islam civilization or Islamic (Muslim) Arab civilization.[45] Theoreticians of Arab nationalism have been linking up the Arabic and the Muslim components emphasizing the distinguished role of the Arab nation within

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[40] RAMADAN, *op. cit*., pp. 214-215.

[41] 'This means that Islam is partly a religion, partly a political system, at the same time a way of life determining every day', c.f. MARÓTH, "Az iszlám születése" [The Birth of Islam].

[42] 'Water, for example, has a peculiar structure and essence. As such, we do not have religious and non-religious water or religious and non-religious wine. The same is true for justice, government, science, and philosophy ... their Islamization would be rather meaningless. As such we can not have a science of sociology that is essentially religious or a philosophy that is essentially Islamic or Christian, the same way we can not have a system of government that is essentially religious.' Abdolkarim SOROUSH, *Ma'na va-mabna-ye sekularism* [The Meaning and Basis of Secularism] cited by BOROUJERDI, *op. cit*., p. 38.

[43] Bernard Lewis correctly remarked: 'No one could seriously assert that Hitler and the Nazis came out of Christianity; no one can seriously deny that they came out of Christendom', c.f. LEWIS and CHURCHILL, *Islam,* p. 5.

[44] 'Muhammad produced a national religion for the Arabs', RAHMAN op. cit., p. 19.

[45] Cf. GOLDSCHMIDT Jr., *A Közel-Kelet rövid története [A Short History of the Middle-East* (in Hungarian)*],* p. 114. RODINSON, *The Arabs,* pp. 30-35. HASEEB ET AL., *The Future of the Arab Nation. Challenges and Options.* p. 68.

Islamic civilization. Abd al-Rahman al-Kawakibi (1849-1903) held that the Arab nation is distinguished from other nations of Islam by virtue of being "chosen", by its belief in the mission it claims to have, and this lends it a kind of superiority over other peoples.[46] Sati al-Husri (1880-1969), who is regarded by many to have been the actual 'father' of Arab nationalism, gave priority,[47] without any ambiguity, to Arab ethnicity, to Arabism, and set as the final goal of Arabism the achievement of Arab unity – the establishment of the "Arab *umma*".[48]

Though Pan-Arabism (Arabism or Arab nationalism) is an ideology with an ethnic foundation, it represents a "constructed Arab civilization" based on Islam and interwoven with the Arab people.[49] However, it would be a mistake to think that the promoters of this civilization could only be Arabs. On the contrary, a large number of persons belonging to different ethnic communities have contributed, in one way or other, to the development of civilization. Thus it is more suitable to use the much more widespread term Islamic civilization instead of Arab civilization, with the important reservation that the avant-garde of Islamic civilization has always included a large number of non-Muslims, primarily Christians and Jews. We might as well settle for the formula of Islamic civilization with an Arab culture, where the latter is part of the former. In any case, in the wake of the expansion of Islam between the 7th and 9th centuries, a civilization came into being over broad swathes of land, unified by Islam and *shari'a*.

It should be noted, however, that when talking about Islamic civilization or Islamic 'heritage', we are not merely talking about Muslim religion or the Islamic religious heritage, as that would mean depriving the Islamic civilization, in a reductionist manner, of its historical roots. We are also talking of the Islamic social heritage, *i.e*. we are embedding Islam in the historical/social/ cultural context of the given age, and the given region. This is the only way we can arrive at that concrete and complex reality consisting of a number of material and spiritual factors, of which Islam as a religion is a fundamental, but not the only, constituent. The question that is most difficult to answer, of course, is, what the specifically "Islamic component" consists in, and how Islam itself is to be interpreted ('broadly' or 'narrowly')?

The religious and civilizational characters of Islam are, of course, closely interrelated. It is well-known that Samuel Huntington considered religions to be the

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[46] In one of his works, Kawakibi enlists 26 characteristics of the Arabs – susceptibility to Islam, strong community feeling, civilization, etc. – that distinguish Arabs from other peoples of Islam, placing them 'above' those. Cf. AL-KAWAKIBI,"The Qualities of the Arabs" (excerpt from the author's work *Umm al-Qura*), pp. 136-138.

[47] One of al-Husri's works has the title *al-Uruba awwalan* – Arabism before all. Cf. AL-HUSRI, "The Primacy of Arabism".

[48] al-Husri underpins his position with rather practical arguments: accomplishing Arab unity, which would imply the political union of the Arab countries, is a much more realistic objective than Islamic unity, which is a much more comprehensive issue, comprising very different ethnic groups. Cf. AL-HUSRI, "Muslim Unity and Arab Unity".

[49] TIBI, *Krieg der Zivilisationen. Politik und Religion zwischen Vernunft und Fundamentalismus,* p. 101..

most important, central element of civilizations.[50] Distinguishing the two aspects of religion, *i.e*. on the one hand a cult, an intellectual system, while on the other hand the main component of the internal, institutional dynamics of a civilization, Eisenstadt regards the Islamic religion as a special cornerstone and the foundation of Islamic civilization, ensuring the internal dynamics of the social order.[51] Eisenstadt cites the example of the Mongols, but other nomad tribes could be mentioned as well, who ventured into Islamic territories, adapted extremely quickly, and "took service with the religious-political vision", becoming a "very dynamic political force" of Islamic civilization.

Marshall G. S. Hodgson has made a remarkable proposal to eliminate the above problem, *i.e*, the one of mixing up the concepts of religion and civilization, by introducing the expression Islamdom to mark the geographical area covered by Islamic civilization (admittedly by analogy to Christendom), and giving the adjective Islamicate to Islamic civilization (following the model of Italianate).[52] This means that the territory of Islamic civilization is Islamdom, the adjective used for Islam as a religion is Islamic, and as a civilization Islamicate. Islamdom comprises all Muslims, whether they live on the territory of *dar al-Islam* or *dar al-harb*. From this respect it is a bit similar to the category of *umma*, but while the latter has mainly spiritual and emotional connotations, Islamdom is primarily a geographical category.

The difference between Islamic and Islamicate is quite clear. The former refers to Islam as a religion, while the latter refers to the cultural and social environment organically interwoven with the history of Islam and the Muslims. With the help of the adjective Islamicate it is possible to isolate the characteristics related to the everyday life of Muslims, but not directly related to religion. The term Islamic literature refers to religious literature, but Islamicate literature means literature created by Muslims, including non-religious works. Turkish is an Islamicate language linked up with Islamic civilization, but not with Islamic religion, harem is an Islamicate institution widespread in Islamic civilization but not linked in any way with Islamic religion.[53]

On territories far from the Middle East and the Arab-Persian regions, primarily in South-East Asia, Islam encountered yet other local civilizations and cultures. These were often extremely different from Middle-Eastern traditions. The problem lies not in the religious aspect of Islam, as a cult and an intellectual system, but in its "code of conduct", *i.e.* the application of *shari'a* to the local conditions. The encounter between an Islam carrying Middle-Eastern traditions and the local traditions has yielded a special synthesis: it was usually the *shari'a* that adjusted itself to the local conditions, integrating certain local habits, and giving up some Middle-Eastern ones not suitable under the local circumstances. This was a kind of inclusion, the Islamization of the local practice, which had originally nothing to do with Islam. It meant that the local tradition

[50] "Of all the objective elements which define civilizations, however, the most important usually is religion." HUNTINGTON, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order,* p. 42.

[51] Cf. EISENSTADT, "Webers Analyse des Islams und die Gestalt der Islamischen Zivilisation", p. 355.

[52] Cf. HODGSON, *The Venture of Islam,* Vol. 1, pp. 56-60.

[53] Cf. PIPES: *In the Path of God. Islam and Political Power,* p. 91.

was dressed up in Islamic garb and became part of *shari'a*. One textbook example for this can be found in the case of Indian Islam: not only is it different from the Middle-Eastern model, but sometimes local practices expressly contrary to orthodox Islam have become parts of *shari'a* (worship of local saints and tombs, etc.) The local Muslims converted to Islam have mixed the orthodox Islamic ritual with a number of Hindu elements.[54]

It would be quite right to ask, whether there is such a thing as authentic Islamic tradition, what actually does Islamic heritage mean? Instead of unchanged traditions existing in a constant form for centuries, it is rather a set of discourses and interpretations that reflect the needs of the given age.[55] In every age the heritage appears in the way in which the collective memory of the given age reconceptualizes it.

Let us return here, for a moment, to the concept of Islamic culture, since, as it has been pointed out before, Islamic civilization is made up of different local cultures. "Islam is not a culture", says Tariq Ramadan, rather surprisingly at first reading. "Whether we like it or not, the core of Islam is religion", he goes on.[56] He continues to argue that speaking about Islam first of all means speaking about faith, spirituality and ethics. These determine the universal principles of Islam. But as regards the area of social issues, it is totally open to divergent traditions and cultures. Muslims have always lived in different cultural environments, so they can feel at home in any cultural context. The diversity of cultures and traditions does not contradict the unity of Islam, Ramadan says.

And indeed: Islam has been ethnicized right from the very beginning, it became linked up with different ethnic groups (primarily with Arabs, Persians and Turks, who have played the most important part in the history of Islam). It would be close to impossible to determine what in Arab culture is part of Islamic civilization, is specifically Islamic and what is specifically Arab? (The list could be continued with other cultures). Following the emergence and strengthening of nation states, Islam was no longer only linked to ethnic groups, but also to the (quasi) nation of those living in the territory within the state borders. Though it may sound paradoxical, the expansion of Islam strengthened this ethnocultural and ethnonationalist approach. In most Middle-Eastern countries, Islamism has been "nationalized",[57] and the majority of Islamist organizations, though in the guise of Islamist ideology, represent mainly national interests, from Palestinian Hamas and Hezbollah in Lebanon, to the Turkish Refah Partisi and the Algerian FIS. (Parallel with this process, however, there was also another process taking place: the emergence of international Islamism).

At the same time, the process of re-Islamization does involve a process of powerful deculturalization, especially characteristic of Europe and the Muslim communities

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[54] For more see SHARIF, *Islam in India or the Qánún-i-Islám. The Customs of the Musulmans of India,* p. 7. Certain members of some Indian tribes and castes converted to Islam, while others did not, so Muslim and Hindu wings of the same caste existed simultaneously.

[55] HALLIDAY, *op. cit*., p. 147.

[56] RAMADAN, *op. cit*., p. 214.

[57] ROY,*Globalized Islam,:* p. 63.

living in Europe. The core of this is the deconstruction of ethnocultural Islam, the dismantling of the whole cultural context built out around the Islamic "kernel", with the goal of constructing a religious identity without linkages to a given culture. All this, of course, has very far-reaching consequences. Perhaps the most important of all is that this identity looks at Islam as a "pure" religion, independent of any cultural context, *i.e.* it in fact strengthens the process of secularization. At the same time, in harmony with the approach represented, among others, by Tariq Ramadan, it enables Muslims to fully experience their Muslim identity in any political or cultural context. Tariq Ramadan's interpretation of Islam is nothing but the secularization of Islam. Olivier Roy, as a result, looks at him as one of the "modern fundamentalists".[58]

Distinguishing Islam as a religion and Islam as a civilization is also important because it is not only the faithful who are participants of the latter. As early as the beginnings of the Islamic conquests, more and more non-Muslims came under the authority of the ever-expanding global Islamic empire. The category of *dhimmi (ahl al-dhimma)* was applied to non-Muslims living on Islamic territories who enjoyed the defence and support of the Muslims[59] and who had to pay a poll tax *(jizya)* in return. During numerous periods of historical development, among those living on the territories of different Islamic empires and dynasties (*e.g.* in the Ottoman Empire), the majority was composed of non-Muslims. These non-Muslims, no matter whether they were Christians, Jews or followers of other religions, became participants of Islam as a civilization without becoming believers of Islam as a religion.

There have existed smaller and also larger Christian communities living among the Arab majority for hundreds of years (*e.g*. the Copts in Egypt, the Maronites in Lebanon, the Assyrians and Chaldeans in Iraq, etc.), which persisted within the boundaries of Islamic civilization, and, to a certain extent, became parts of it themselves. Their mother tongue is Arabic, but their customs, due to their Christian identity, are different from those of Muslims in many respects. It is hardly possible to define their civilizational belonging. Many of them look at Islam not as a religion, but as culture and civilization, as common historical past and heritage. Michel Aflaq, an outstanding Christian theoretician of Arab nationalism, considered Islam, which he kept in very high esteem, to be culture and also civilization, "a cultural and spiritual melting pot", and, simultaneously, the highest-level manifestation of Arabism.[60] Other Christians in the region, however, have looked at Western civilization as a model.[61]

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[58] ROY, *Secularism Confronts Islam*, p. 42. By the way, Roy is sharply criticizing Ramadan for the 'double language' he uses. See *op. cit*., pp. 6, 25, and 42.

[59] The word *dhimma* means defence, protection.

[60] 'The relationship between Arabism and Islam cannot be compared with the relationship between any other nationalism and religion. When the nationalism of Arab Christians awakens and they regain their original character, they will realize that for them Islam is a nationalist culture in which they have to be embedded, to understand it and love it ... as the highest value of their Arab identity.' AFLAK, *al-Ba'th wa-l-turath,* p. 98, and Idem, *Choice of Texts from the Ba'th Party Founder's Thought,* p. 57.

[61] In the colonization period some Christian communities developed rather close relations with the Western great powers, some of the Western states could definitely act as defenders

From a certain point of view, the situation was similar in the case of Jewish people living on the territory of Islamic civilization, who became an integral part of Islamic (or Judeo-Islamic) civilization, creatively contributing to its development and adjusting to its peculiarities, through a series of mutual interactions. The most evident manifestation of this could be seen on the Iberian Peninsula, during several centuries of Islamic dominance and the peaceful coexistence of three global monotheist religions, Islam, Judaism and Christianity. By the 10-11th centuries this region had become the spiritual-scientific centre of Islamic civilization, where Islamic and Jewish rationalism developed simultaneously, and their courses of development were hardly separable.[62]

Following the emergence of Islam, the establishment of the caliphate united the Hellenized Jews who had lived thus far apart in cultural separation, partly on the territory of the Fertile Crescent and speaking Aramean, and partly in Alexandria and the Eastern provinces of the Roman Empire and speaking the Greek language. The Jews living under Islamic supremacy were later Arabized or Islamized and became an important constituent of a "diverse and pluralistic civilization".[63] Bernard Lewis speaks about the "symbiosis of Jews and Arabs" or of a "Judaeo-Islamic symbiosis",[64] during which there developed a "Judaeo-Islamic culture", and a "Judaeo-Islamic tradition". Its existence did not imply conversion to Islam for all, but "assimilation to Islamic modes of thought and patterns of behaviour".[65]

The question of the Jews living on the territory of Islamic civilization became part of the problems surrounding the Jewish state that was to be established on Palestine territory, from the late 19th century, and it has become totally saturated with political connotations. A large part of the Sephardic or Mizrahi Jews living in the Arab countries or Iran moved to Israel and constructed an exclusively Jewish identity for themselves.[66]

If, on the one hand, it is accepted that not only followers of Islam can be members of Islam civilization, but, among others, Christians or Jews as well, it must also be accepted that followers of Islam can belong to other civilizations, as well. We are of the view that 'indigenous' European Muslims, Bosniaks or Albanians, or for that matter

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and representatives of Middle-Eastern Christian communities (see e.g. the relationship between France and the Maronite Christians of Lebanon).

[62] 'Jewish and Muslim thinkers were using the same vocabulary, pondering about the same problems.' BENBASSA and RODRIGUE, *A szefárd zsidók története [Histoire des juifs sépharades* (in Hungarian), p. 36. It is enough to think of the Muslim Ibn Rushd (Averroes, 1126-1198) and the Jewish Moshe bin Maymon (Maimonides, 1138-1204), who lived nearly at the same time.

[63] LEWIS, *The Jews of Islam,* p. 73.

[64] *Ibid*., pp. 68, 77.

[65] *Ibid*., p. 78.

[66] The religious, national/ethnic or civilizational character of Jews is a similarly complex question as the religious or civilizational character of Islam. Discussing it in detail is beyond the scope of this paper. Deciding whether being a Jew implies a religious or a national belonging (Zionism definitely is in favour of the latter) is obviously subjective, depending on specific individuals. If we accept the former version, the category 'Jewish Arab' (*i.e*. an Arab with Jewish religion) is legitimate, but if we identify with the latter one, it is not.

Hungarian and Polish Muslims, do not belong to the Islamic civilization simply because their religion is Islam. The question is, of course, much more complex, and much more complicated in the case of Turks or some other Muslim minorities living in Europe.

In the above cases civilizational status can hardly be judged unambiguously: it is partly a question of interpretation, and partly of individual self-identification. Already Huntington's civilizational fault lines have raised a problem: "Where does Europe end? Europe ends where Western Christianity ends and Islam and Orthodoxy begin,"[67] says Huntington, who does not classify Albania, or even Greece, as part of Western civilization.[68] He considers Turkey a classic "torn country", which has a "single predominant culture which places it in one civilization but its leaders want to shift it to another civilization."[69] This, of course, means that the place of Turkey should be within Islamic civilization, but its Kemalist leaders want the country to belong to the West. He does not specifically discuss the states of the Balkan having Muslim populations. On the contrary, he does speak about the successor states of ex-Yugoslavia or the Soviet Union, in which clashes between "multi-civilizational groups" have led to more recent divisions, and in which the "civilizational divides" have to be bridged. He makes a distinction between "countries with distinct cultural groupings belonging to the same civilization" (Czechoslovakia, Canada) and the so-called "cleft countries where large groups belong to different civilizations". There can be deep internal conflicts in the former, too, which might even lead to their dissolution, but the real division is characteristic of the latter.[70]

Without going into detail in criticizing Huntington's statements, public opinion considers Turkey rather to belong to Islamic civilization than to Western civilization. But are Albania or Bosnia also parts of Islamic civilization? And what about the Muslims living in Bulgaria or Montenegro? And the Muslim minorities living in the EU member countries, including those born in the EU and having EU citizenship? It is hardly possible to reply to these questions unambiguously, more precisely, the answer will be significantly dependent on our interpretation of Islam (and of civilization).[71] The more we interpret Islam as a complex system, as "totality" (not simply as a religion), the more we can be sure that the answer is "yes". But provided we accept the deculturalized, deethnicized, deterritorialized interpretation of Islam as "mere" religion, the answer is obviously "no".

Westernization vs. retraditionalization

[67] HUNTINGTON, *op. cit.*, p. 158.

[68] 'Greece is not part of Western civilization, but it was the home of Classical civilization which was an important source of Western civilization', *ibid.*, p. 162.

[69] *Ibid.*, p. 138.

[70] *Ibid.*, p. 137.

[71] The question of civilizational affiliation, of course, depends on a number of other factors, not to be discussed here, among others on the decisions of the individuals and communities in question, as well as on what the external environment considers them to be.

The colonization symbolically launched by the victory of Napoleon's expeditionary troops over the Egyptian Mamluks in 1798 not only made European technology, economy, political systems and institutions known to the Muslim world, but it also familiarized it with Western views, ideas and ideologies. Liberalism, nationalism, somewhat later socialism and Marxism, as intellectual systems developed in Europe, were transplanted into the world of Islam, and began to interact with the hitherto exclusive ideology of pre-colonial Muslim societies, Islam.

The dissolution of traditional Muslim societies – and the system of values and norms earlier thought perpetual –, the emergence of new structures, the increasing oppression by the Western powers, and rising Western influence resulted in a lasting and deep identity crisis. Muslim thinkers started to look for opportunities of catching up, of a development that is in harmony with the modern age. Meanwhile, European models were followed in the economy, in society and the political system of institutions, all foreign elements which ever more aggressively challenged traditional structures.

In some Middle Eastern states, governments launched modernization programs consisting of a series of pro-Western reforms. The challenges by Western and pro-Western local governments triggered different types of Muslim responses. The common element of all of these responses was that they all started out with the necessity of reform, the necessity of reforming Islam and/or society.

The two most dominant trends are Islamic modernism, and Islamic fundamentalism. Those representing the former think it necessary to reform Islam, to adjust it to the system of conditions required by the modern world, which also involves the reinterpretation and the rebuilding of the Islamic heritage, so as to enable the Muslim world to provide a successful response to the political, cultural, scientific and other challenges of the modern, Western world, and, thus regaining its independence, break free from any direct or indirect dependence on European imperialism or colonialism. Several followers of this trend have taken a position explicitly in favour of secularization, *i.e.* driving Islam out of the public sphere. Islamic modernism has contributed to the introduction into the Muslim world of several ideological movements and to their becoming prominent, from secular nationalism to pan-Islamism.

Islamic fundamentalism does not seek to change Islam, but targets the world at large. Its representatives see the main problem in the fact that over the time there has been a deviation from Islamic principles, that politics, the economy and society have not operated in compliance with Islamic principles, or if they said they were, those were not the "pure" fundaments of "original" Islam, but of a distorted, "filthy" Islam, complying with the interests of political powers and legitimizing them. It is therefore necessary to return to the original pure Islam (that only prevailed during the period of the prophet Muhammad and the next four "rightly guided" caliphs).[72] This implies

[72] The opinion of Shia fundamentalist theoreticians shows slight differences from that of the Sunni. They (the Shia) only consider Ali, the fourth of the caliphs 'pursuing the right path' to be a legitimate leader, though they are not explicitly criticizing the other three for diverting from religion. Khomeini's statement that Ali's governance was reform governance serving

purifying Islam of the appositions and contaminations, and, relying on the totalizing nature of Islam and its universal regulatory force covering every domain of life. It also foresees building politics and society on the same foundation.

Theoreticians of Islamic fundamentalism have constructed the model of the Islamic state, ardently supported the Islamization of the whole society, and have thus become founders of the ideology of political Islam, or Islamism. A significant difference between Islamic fundamentalism and Islamic modernism is that the former, while there exist considerable divergences in details, as regards the methods to build the 'Islamic state', comes together in a relatively coherent system, the latter does not.

The reform movement emerging in Islam held great influence over political and state-theories as well. Western political theories and views about democracy, power, representation, etc. became known in the Muslim world as well. Moreover, colonialism had naturalized different elements of the Western system of political institutions in regions of the Muslim world. The local response to this was diverse, it moved on a broad scale from the total rejection of Western political institutional systems, categories and views, and working out a special Islamic political theory to replace it, to its complete acceptance and adoption. Even those who opposed them were not able to stay immune to the effect of modern Western political and state theories. A significant part of theoreticians were busy working out theories that are "rooted in Islam", and at the same time meet the requirements of the modern age, complying with the requirements set by modern statehood, and are more or less in harmony with certain general prescriptions of Western political theories. In this way, traditional Islamic categories and concepts took on new meanings, often preserving their original, different significations as well, thus giving rise to several possibilities of interpretation.

Dawla, which had formerly meant "dynasty", in line with the peculiarities of Islamic historical development, has obtained a new meaning, that of "state". "Citizen" *(muwatin)* appeared as a new concepts, and political parties, which in this form were not characteristic of classic Islamic development also gained ground.

A new meaning was also given to *umma,* which had referred to the religious community of Muslims, more precisely, according to the Qur'anic usage, to a people or community following one religion.[73] Muhammad's *umma* only included Arabs at the time, only later, as a consequence of the conquests, did other ethnic groups that had converted to Islam become parts of it. The Islamic *umma,* the religious-spiritual community of Muslims living in the Muslim world is, even today, an important concept for Muslims, lending an overwhelming feeling of belonging together. The word *umma*, however, has also acquired the meaning of nation (in a sense: the people) in the modern age. Toward the end of the 19th century, the word *umma* was becoming increasingly used to mean nation in texts about foreign countries, especially about

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the restoration and the reform *(hukumat islah),* and Ali's rule was the last period in Islamic history when Islamic principles prevailed, is implicit criticism of the first three caliphs. After Ali's time, says Khomeini, the caliphate was replaced by the sultanate and the hereditary monarchy, *i.e*. tyrannical power, which still lasts, AL-KHOMEINI, *op. cit*., pp. 33, 43.

[73] Cf. *Qur'an* 10:19, 35:42, etc.

Europe. Besides, when in contexts relating to European countries or the United States, the national assembly was mentioned, it was translated as *majlis al-umma.* This new meaning spreading in the media and colloquial conversation, and differing from the traditional usage, also made some religious scholars redefine the concept of *umma.* Husayn al-Marsafi, sheikh of al-Azhar in Cairo, announced in 1881 that *umma* as a concept is not only linked to faith but to territory or language. He especially underlined the importance of the latter as the common language expresses some kind of unity.[74]

Since then, the new meaning of *umma* has become accepted in the Muslim world, primarily in referring to the Arab nation *(al-umma al-arabiyya)*. This concept involves awareness of the one-time greatness of the Islamic *umma*, and expresses some kind of longing for and hope of Arab unity, the emergence of a unified Arab nation, as opposed to the current fragmentation. Sometimes, though less often, the concept of the nation within country borders is also expressed by the word, *e.g*. *al-umma al-misriyya* (the Egyptian nation). The name used for Parliament in some Arab countries (*e.g*. in Jordan) is *majlis al-umma*, meaning national assembly, elsewhere (as in Egypt) *majlis al-sha'b i.e*. people's assembly.

Most theoreticians have also advocated the necessity of change, of reforms. Change, revival *(tajdid)* and reform *(islah)* need to be interpreted in a special way in Islamic civilization. Both *tajdid* and *islah* are classic Muslim technical terms, which refer to true faith. The Qur'an calls those who adhere to the Scriptures and attend worship the *muslihun*, meaning those who carry out the *islah.*[75] A tradition holds that the prophet Muhammad spoke about God's delegates who are renewing faith, *i.e.* ensuring that the original spirit of Islam prevails. This way "reform", in its classical Islamic interpretation always has a connotation that has to do with returning to the original spirit, the 'real' meaning of Islam, primarily in a moral sense.

The fact that the modern political system of institutions, or at least most of its elements, was transplanted into Islamic civilization by colonialism has resulted in a contradictory situation not only in practice but also on the level of theories. Many argue, and not without ground, that some political institutions are not suitable for the local conditions, do not organically follow from the particularities of local development. There is a common attempt to find their Islamic equivalents, or replace them by some institution culled from Muslim history. Many people have in this manner equated modern Parliament with *ahl al-shura* or *ahl al-hall wa-l-'aqd* as found in the history of Islam.

The response of the Muslim world to 19th century Western dominance and the dependence on the West was not absolute refusal or opposition. A part of the leaders and the elite adopted Western ideologies, including secularization. The Western-oriented elite cooperated with the British and French colonial administration. One of its main goals, from the second half of the 19th century, was to replace the absolute monarchies with a constitutional form of government. This was also the goal set by the constitutionalists in several countries, who tried to implement a political model based on the constitution and rationalized governmental operations. Strangely enough, this

[74] AYALON, *Language and Change in the Arab Middle East,* p. 27.
[75] *Qur'an* 7:170.

attitude also gained ground among the religious intelligentsia, the *ulama,* who, breaking with the traditional approach to the Islamic legal system, cooperated with liberal-nationalist leaders and spoke up against both absolute monarchies and colonialism/imperialism simultaneously. This is exemplified by the Urabi uprising in Egypt in 1879-82, or the constitutional revolution in Iran in 1905-11, but similar processes were unfolding in Syria and Algeria as well. Thus some of the religious leaders were actively taking part in the movements for independence and to establish modern nation-states, taking sides with the secular nationalist elite.

However, this modernist religious intelligentsia had reservations concerning Western ideologies, institutions, law and traditions, and expected Islam to have a central role in the future. This vision never materialized, and by the early 20th century, the main organizing principle of modern states became liberal, then radical nationalism. The ruling nationalist political/military elite firmly separated state and religion, but did not maintain the ideological neutrality of the state. They undermined and radically rolled back the social functions of traditional religious leaders and institutions, trying to replace religion by an official state ideology, often suggesting that their ideology represented "real" Islam.

A textbook example for this process is provided by Egypt. Following the death of King Fuad in 1936, his son, Faruq, became King only to see his initial popularity fade quickly. Under the influence of the secular political institutional system (including the Parliamentary system) and ideologies imported from Europe, the political elite cast their vote with European/Western values and institutions, trying to force them upon Egypt, regarding the country's cultural reconstitution as a necessary condition of modernization. These steps could, of course, also be viewed as "an attack upon tradition".[76]

A part of the Egyptian intelligentsia made efforts to demonstrate that Egyptian cultural identity can be derived from European liberal traditions. The best-known among them, Taha Husayn, considering Egypt to be an organic part of the Mediterranean, claimed that "there is not any intellectual or cultural difference between people who grew up in the Mediterranean region", and, markedly differentiating between East and West from a cultural point of view, classified Egypt as belonging to the latter. He dwells at length on the achievements that Egypt had borrowed from Europe. True, he added, there exist some Islamic institutions surviving from the old times, but even these have gone through significant changes. "The dominant and undeniable fact of our times is that day by day we are drawing closer to Europe and becoming an integral part of her" – he concluded.[77]

Nasserism is likely the best example for that following World War II, radical nationalism that became a dominant ideology in the countries of the Middle East, was basically a secularized ideology integrating Islam itself, which controlled political life and the state on the basis of secularized principles, leaning on Islam to gain added legitimacy. The victory of the 1952 revolution in Egypt came about with the effective

[76] CLEVELAND, *A History of the Modern Middle East,* p. 195.

[77] HUSAYN, "The Future of Culture in Egypt". An excerpt from the author's book titled *Mustaqbal al–thaqafa fi Misr*, published in 1983.

help of the *ulama* and the Muslim Brotherhood, both enjoying widespread support in society. The free officers, however, rapidly eliminated the organization of the Muslim Brotherhood. The political leadership then tried to make the nationalizations, land reform and other socialist measures appear more acceptable by equating Islam and socialism, explicitly interpreting Islam as the religion of socialism.[78]

Islam and secularism

Max Weber considers secularization – "the disenchantment of the world"[79] – to be a characteristic of Western civilization, with rationalization in the focus of the process. In functionally structured societies religion is gradually forced out of the public sphere (from the economic, political and, to some extent, even from the social sphere), and becomes part of private life.

Daniel Bell sees secularization as a dual process. One is secularization itself, the differentiation of institutional authority spurred by rationalization. In this process, among institutions and social systems, the counter-concepts are sacred and secular. The other process, after Weber, is 'disenchantment', *i.e.* the process taking place in the world of beliefs and cultures. This is what Bell refers to as 'profanization', resting on the conceptual pair of the sacred and the profane.[80] To round out the picture, the changes taking place in culture also have two levels. One of them concerns institutions, the other has to do with morality and symbols.

Secularization, just like Islam, gives rise to various interpretations, each of them emphasizing a different aspect. One is the separation of religion (or, in Western civilization, church) and state, in other words, the separation of religion and politics. The other is the ousting of religion from the public sphere and its consignment to the private sphere. The third aspect is the overall withdrawal of religion into the background and the coming to the fore of the secular, which amounts to the secularization of the society. A fourth – extreme and rather rigid – interpretation identifies secularization with atheism, the lack of religion.

The different layers of interpretations show well, that it is not easy to determine precisely the relationship, firstly, between secularism and Islam, and, secondly, but most importantly, between secularism and the Muslim world. To start with, we can

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78 All this is excellently reflected in Nasser's speeches. 'The state created by Islam that had been ... established by Muhammad was the first socialist state. The Prophet Muhammad was the first to introduce the policy of nationalization at that time. Following the Prophet ... the Islamic state ... moved on the way of socialism ... There are some who say: Islam is a reactionary religion. My answer to this is: No. Never. Islam is a progressive religion, the religion of development and life. Islam represents religion by at the same time representing the world. ...Islam was the first to declare that everybody is equal and free ... Well, this is socialism.' NASSER, *Majmu'at khutab wa-tasrihat wa-bayanat (Collected speeches, declarations and communiqués),* pp. 460-462.

79 'Die Entzauberung der Welt'.

80 BELL, "The Return of the Sacred?", p. 332.

point out that the question whether Islam and secularism can coexist with each other can be answered both positively and negatively, depending on how we interpret religion and secularism. On the basis of a totalizing/conservative interpretation of Islam and a rigid interpretation of secularism the two are incompatible. On the basis, however, of a liberal/modernist interpretation of Islam and secularism, they are compatible.

Advocates of the essentialist interpretation of Islam, no doubt, give a negative answer to the above question, no matter whether they are Islamist theoreticians or Western experts. Sayyid Qutb, considered to be a spiritual father of Islamism, says that the separation of religion from the society characteristic of the Western world is in contradiction with the nature of Islam.[81] As he argued, "the dichotomy between the sacred and the secular" has never existed in the history of Islam.[82] Analyzing the Muslim world, Bernard Lewis declares that "it makes no sense whatsoever to speak about laymen. The mere idea that there can be anything that is separated or merely separable from religious power, something, which in the languages of Christian nations is referred to as lay or secular, is totally alien to Islamic thinking and practices."[83] Joseph Schacht mentions (in connection with the duality of "legal content" and "religious norm") the dualism of "religion and state", stating that "the state is not an alien power, but the political expression of one and the same religion."[84]

Some trace back the incompatibility of Islam and secularism, as well as that of Islam and Western secularization to the differences between Islam and Christianity. One can in this respect agree with Olivier Roy in the view that "there is no such thing as lay religion", as all global monotheist religions claim to be in possession of the truth, they all have something to say concerning human acts and behaviour. [85] Yet, many believe that the difference between Christianity and Islam on this issue goes back to the saying by Jesus, well-known from the Bible, which has no counterpart in the Qur'an: 'Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's'.[86] However, it would be wrong to derive secularization from Christian theology. The fact that the Church relinquished its earlier position in the organization of state and society, accepted secularization and adjusted itself to it[87] was a product of political realities, not of theological considerations.

Analyzing when, and under the influence of what, the concept of secularization appeared and the process of secularization started (has it started at all?) in the Muslim world seems more important than answering the theoretical question about the compatibility of Islam and secularism. Similarly, analyzing the historical development of the Muslim world, it is more important to decide when, and to what extent, criteria we commonly consider to characterize secularization appear, or, more precisely, do

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81 QUTB, *al-'Adala al-ijtima'iyya fi l-islam* [Social Justice in Islam], p. 18.
82 QUTB, *Islam – the Religion of the Future,* p. 7.
83 LEWIS, *Az iszlám válsága* [The Crisis of Islam (in Hungarian)], p. 36.
84 SCHACHT, "Islamisches religiöses Recht", p. 168.
85 ROY, *Secularism …,* p. 38.
86 Matthew 22,21(King James Version).
87 See *e.g*. the participation of Christian parties in politics

autochthonous phenomena in anticipation of secularization make their appearance independent of Western intervention and influence at all?

Genuine secularization in the Muslim world began well after its emergence and dissemination in Europe and within Western civilization. It was, even then, the West that exported secularism, as it did with other concepts, trends and institutions, to the Muslim world. At best, it was the Muslim world that imported it from the West. The Arab expression used for secularism is *'almāniyya*. Christian Arabs having studied in the West and susceptible to Western ideologies had introduced the concept, and, according to Bernard Lewis, the first form it appeared in was *'ālamāniyya*, which was a clear sign that the expression had originated from the word *'ālam* (world). Later it was somewhat modified, first to '*alamāniyya*, later to *'almāniyya* or *'ilmāniyya*.[88] The last form also reflects a significant change of the meaning, though, as its root becomes the word *'ilm* (science). Accepting this, we can easily arrive at the conclusion that science is in contradiction with religion. The Academy of Arabic Language in Cairo has taken the position that the word clearly derives from the word *'ālam* (world), and, according to some, it would be a good idea to use it in the form *'alamaniyya* so as to avoid misunderstanding.[89]

Muslim religious intelligentsia, as well as a large part of modern Muslim thinkers, similarly to Islamists consider secularism as the antithesis of Islam, identifying it with *jahiliyya*[90] and classifying it as a subcase of *kufr* or lack of faith.[91] Fazlur Rahman identifies secularism with atheism, as "the scourge of modernity", and attributes its appearance in the Muslim world to the negative effect of colonialism.[92] The modernist Muslim thinker propagating democracy, Abdel-Karim Soroush, applies a more subtle approach to the question. He distinguishes two kinds of secularism: political and philosophical. The former means the separation of religion and state, while the latter equals atheism. Political secularism, the way Soroush interprets it, does not mean the negation of the existence of God, as politics simply does not deal with God or religion (the state occupies a neutral position with regard to religion). Philosophical secularism, on the contrary, passes a negative judgement on religion.[93] According to Soroush, secularism was initially tolerant, as it was expecting a gradual weakening of religion. But the strengthening of religions observed worldwide made secularism militant. And militant secularism strengthens identity, the second of the two aspects of religion: truth and identity. Elsewhere Soroush claims it is not only a secular society that can be

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88 LEWIS, *What Went Wrong? Western Impact and Middle Eastern Response,* p. 117.

89 Cf. NAJJAR, "The Debate on Islam and Secularism in Egypt".

90 The term used for the age of pre-Islamic 'ignorance'. Islamist theoreticians, primarily Mawdudi and Sayyid Qutb, use it to denote non-Islamic societies and those not operating following Islamic principles. 'The whole of our environment is … jahiliyya. … All the societies existing today are jahili….The position of Islam concerning all of these jahili societies can be formulated in one sentence: it treats all these societies as anti-Islam and illegal' - writes QUTB at various places in his *Ma'alim fi l-tariq*.

91 'The struggle between Islam and secularism is nothing new at all. This is just the centuries-long fight between Islam and the djahiliyya in a new form.' AL-OADAH, *Islam and Secularism.*

92 RAHMAN, *Islam and Modernity: Transformation of the Intellectual Tradition,* p. 15.

93 SOROUSH, *Militant Secularism.* Theses of a lecture held by the author on August 2 2007, at a Paris university.

pluralistic and democratic, but that a religious society is *a priori* pluralistic and compatible with democracy. "Belief is a hundred times more diverse and colorful than disbelief."[94]

It must be noted that the term secularism was not used it in the sense of atheism or unbelief at first. The first name of the Wafd party established in Egypt in 1919 was Hizb 'Almani, meaning Secular Party, with the following slogan:*"al-din li-llah wa-l-watan li-l-jami'"*, which means "religion belongs to God, the homeland belongs to all." The adjective secular in this case highlighted the non-religious character of the party, to the effect that the activity of the party "was based on social, political and national identities, with no reference to religion."[95] According to Najjar, it was Ataturk's anti-religious measures in Turkey that resulted in the worldwide identification of *'almaniyya* with atheism.

So much so that extreme Islamists say secularists deserve death penalty. They also referred to this after two members of the Islamic Jihad murdered Faraj Foda an advocate of the separation of religion and politics in Egypt, on June 8 1992. Sheikh Muhammad al-Ghazali, a well-known Egyptian religious leader, stated that secularists pose a serious danger for society, and thus the government is obliged to sentence them to death. In spite of this, the Supreme Court of Egypt sentenced Abd al-Sharif Ahmad Ibrahim, the number one suspect of the assassination, to death. The court did not accept the argument of the defence that the assassins only did what the government failed to do, and carried out the death sentence meted out on the basis of the *shari'a.* The court added that Egyptian criminal law forbids murder committed for ethical or religious reasons, and that nobody has the right to charge others with lack of faith.[96]

Even in the Muslim world, not everybody equates secularism with atheism. Muhammad Imara, an outstanding Egyptian representative of moderate Islamism, distinguishes two types of secularists: the extremists and the moderates. The former, representing a strong minority in Islam, reject religion itself, while moderates, accounting for the vast majority of secularists, though they are religious themselves, take sides with the separation of religion and politics/the state. They are "believers in God as creator of the universe, but are not believers in God as manager of earthly matters. They are not absolute believers, nor are they absolute unbelievers, they believe in some parts of the Scripture, while they do not believe in others."[97] Fahmi Huwaydi, a columnist for al-Ahram, adds that moderate secularists accept the dogmatic foundations of the religion, although they have strong reservations and they are voicing doubts as to the application of *shari'a*, which they see as a serious source of threat for freedom, equality and democracy.[98]

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94 SOROUSH quoted by SONN, "Islam and Modernity: Are They compatible?", p. 74.

95 Cf. NAJJAR, *op. cit.*

96 *Ibid.*

97 NAJJAR, *op. cit*., quotes an article by Muhammad IMARAH published on January 7 1994 in *al-Sha'b.*

98 HUWAIDI, "Tahrir al-mas'ala al-'almaniyya". Al-Ahram, September 1992. Cited by Fauzi NAJJAR, *op. cit*.

The reforms of the 18-19th centuries and secularization

In the 18-19th centuries reforms were carried out all over the Muslim world (in the Ottoman Empire, Egypt and Persia), initiated by the respective governments of these lands. The reforms coincided with an increase in the activity of nationalist theoreticians – primarily its Arab variant – and laid the foundations for establishing (nation) states in the region. The most marked example for this was perhaps provided by Muhammad Ali, the enlightened tyrant of Egypt. Under his rule, Egypt became a modern, secular nation state, "although the guideline of the country was still the *shari'a*."[99]

One of the consequences of the reforms was the "secularization of Islam", which meant that "traditional institutions of the Islamic states succumbed to a gradual process of secularization", and, as a result, "ideology, law, and institutions of state were no longer Islamically legitimated but were indebted to imported models from the West."[100] A special duality emerged, as the modern, secular institutions were integrated among the traditional, religious institutions. Society also split into two parts: A Western-minded elite made up a strong minority while a traditional, Islam-oriented majority persisted. This type of modernization implemented by the governments is what Esposito called "progressive secularization."[101]

Other authors use the expression "structural secularization"[102] to describe the process that took place gradually, starting with the 18th century, in the Muslim world, simultaneously with the development of modern statehood (first colonial, then independent). In essence, Islam withdrew from the spheres of politics, state and power as well as those of law, economics and education. Robinson described this situation with the term "structural dualism", of which one factor is the modern, secularized state power with greatly increased authority over the areas of social life mentioned above, while Islamic institutions, pushed into the background and stripped of much of their religious influence, make up the other half.

In the field of education new educational institutions emerged that were transmitting the knowledge essential to survive in the modern world and were teaching sciences of disciplines which had been offered exclusively in Western educational institutions before. At the same time the traditional institutions of Islamic education and scholarship also continued to exist.

Colonialism played a direct role in the establishment of modern (nation) states in the Muslim world, just as it did in the spreading and the gradual inveteracy of secularization. These nation states (or "quasi nation states" as they did not fulfil several of the relevant Western criteria, first and foremost as regards the existence of a titular nation), were founded partly as successor states of former empires and

[99] TIBI, *Vom Gottesreich zum Nationalstaat. Islam und panarabischer Nationalismus,* p. 83.
[100] ESPOSITO, *Islam and Politics*, pp. 45, 47.
[101] *Ibid.*, p. 47.
[102] ROBINSON, "Sekularisierung im Islam", pp. 258, 260.

monarchies (the Ottoman Empire, Iran, Tunisia, Morocco, Egypt), and partly as artificially constructed territorial entities (Syria, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, etc.). As products of the struggle against colonialism, however, they all "defined and legitimized themselves in secular terms."[103]

As regards "subjective secularization" meaning "the fading of the religious vision from people's minds", this process also started in Islam as a result of the reform movements of the 18th and 19th centuries.[104] Though the representatives of these movements viewed the world within the boundaries of Islam in the first place, and they either wanted to change the world to adapt it to Islam (fundamentalists), or were trying to adjust Islam to the altered conditions of the world (modernists), they also opened the door to views and practices representing Western-type secularization, urging the radical separation of Islam and politics.

After achieving independence, the power of the state over the society became still more explicit: In most countries power was seized by the military elite, which then transformed the state into a lay institution, making nationalism and socialism the official ideologies. Moaddel claims that secularism, which took the form of liberal nationalism, Arab nationalism and state-socialism or monarchy-centred nationalism,[105] "became the religion of the state."[106] The "secularism of the state", however, proved to be incapable of secularizing the societies. Although organized religion was pushed into the background in several countries, new religious movements emerged or were revived, some of them increasingly engaging in political activism.

In addition, instead of ideological neutrality, the secular state was strongly linked to an ideology, and tried to replace religion with this ideology. All this resulted in both religion and culture becoming deeply politicized.

The process of secularization, both "structural" and "subjective", gained ground and proceeded also in Islamic civilization, following the direct or indirect colonization of the Muslim world. This, however, was the consequence of external interference by the Western great powers and did not develop as a result of internal social and economic development. It may be said that a Western model of secularization was adopted. This model was primarily represented by the Western-oriented elite possessing the power of the newly established state, and used it first to stabilize its position, and then as a means to gain independence.

Though secularization in the Muslim world had gained ground due to external effects, it would be wrong to claim that this secularization process did not have an immanent or internal dimension in the Weberian sense of the word. It is well-known that vigorous rationalist tendencies were present in medieval Islam, and Islamic rationalism had a number of outstanding representatives from Ibn Sina (Avicenna) to Ibn Rushd (Averroës). Islamic rationalism, which transmitted the Hellenistic heritage to

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[103] LAPIDUS, "Islam and Modernity", p. 102.

[104] ROBINSON, *op. cit*., p. 261.

[105] See Atatürk's Turkey, the Pahlavis' Iran, Nasser's Egypt, Iraq and Syria of the Ba'th party, and Arab socialist Algeria, etc.

[106] MOADDEL [2005]: *Islamic Modernism, Nationalism, and Fundamentalism. Episode and Discourse,* p. 340.

Western civilization, and also contributed to it, had an important part in laying the foundations of European Enlightenment and of the Renaissance. Touching upon this issue, Maxime Rodinson proves that medieval Muslim culture exhibited the signs of rationalism at least as much as contemporary Western culture did. Consequently 'post Qur'anic' Muslim ideology was not as different from the ideology of the Christian world that would support Weber's thesis on the development of capitalism and his claim that it was rooted in Protestant ethics as a *sine qua non* condition of its emergence.[107]

In Bernard Lewis's view there were three paths from antiquity to modernity, and only one of them was the path of Western Christianity. The second was that of Greek orthodox Christianity, while the third was that of Islam. Not only did the Muslim world accept the heritage of antiquity, but "utilized it better than anyone else". Besides, ancient civilizations were local, or, in an optimal case, regional. "The Islamic oecumene ... was the first to create a civilization that was multiracial, multicultural, in a sense intercontinental. Islamic civilization extended far beyond the uttermost limits of Roman and Hellenistic culture, and was thus able to borrow, adapt, and incorporate significant elements from the remoter civilizations of Asia".[108]

Religion and politics in the Muslim world

One of the basic criteria of secularism is the separation of religion and politics or the state. Regarding the relationship between Islam as a religion and politics/state, there are two easily distinguishable positions, correlating with the two interpretations of Islam. A large part of theoreticians dealing with Islam, no matter whether they are Muslims or from the West, are of the view that Islam, being an organic religion, includes the sphere of politics as its integral part: *al-din wa-l-dawla* – in compliance with the Islam doctrine -, or *al-din wa-l-siyasa*, *i.e*. the sacred/spiritual includes the dynastic/state/political. However, this loudly-declared unity confirmed also by Islamism/fundamentalism was not only doubted by modernist/liberal Muslim religious intelligentsia and the interpretation of Islam they represent, but it is not in compliance with the political practices of today's Muslim world, just as it had been in different periods of history.

From the very beginnings of Islam, Muslims formed a community not only in the religious, but also in the political sense. This is a major point of difference between early Islam and early Christianity. But does it necessarily mean that the unity of religion and politics, or even some kind of 'theocratic politics' is a special feature of Islam distinguishing it from other religions?

As theoreticians of Islamism like emphasizing, the unity of religion and politics was only daily reality under the rule of the first four caliphs known as those "pursuing the right path". But was the adjective "Islamic" really applicable to politics, to the state at that time? Discussing Muhammad's Medina period and the Medina constitution that

[107] RODINSON, *Islam and Capitalism,* p. 103.
[108] LEWIS, "The West and the Middle East", p. 128.

determined the political conditions for the Muslim community, Montgomery Watt established that there had been nothing new about it, since it was nothing more than "a confederation of tribes or kin- groups in accordance with traditional Arab principles."[109] And this confederation assumed a specifically Islamic character not because it was founded on the Qur'an's rules and regulations, but due to the simple fact that the contracting parties were Muslims. Following Muhammad's death, when Abu Bakr became caliph, his political function was nothing more than that of the head of a tribe or a tribal alliance, allowing for the difference that this tribal alliance was much larger than any other that has ever existed in Arabia.[110]

Not only the representatives of Islamism, but most experts also agree that the political practices of the Muslim world have not complied with the Islamic principles since the rule of the Umayyad dynasty. The rule of the Umayyad dynasty was *mulk*, *i.e*. earthly, monarchic power. "The Umayyads were overthrown ... because of their godlessness and opposition to-religion", Goldziher stated.[111] This situation slightly changed during the rule of the Abbasids, but, all in all, the adjective "semi-secular" is much more suitable for the caliphate of both Umayyads and Abbasids than the adjective "Islamic."[112]

"Islam as a political and civilizational project has been dominated by realistic, political calculations"[113], which had very little to do with Islamic regulations. The political leaders of the Muslim world, right from the very beginning, have been engaged in politics influenced by pragmatic considerations in line with the given historical and political situation, and not on the basis of Islam regulations. More exactly, they make use of the interpretation of Islam most suitable to support their own point of view. "All authorities in Islam were secular in the sense that they were not determined by religious criteria. Except for the period of the Prophet, there was never a theocracy."[114]

Initially, religious and political leadership were united in the caliph's hands, but soon the practice of the Muslim world became completely different. By the middle of the 8th century, the Abbasid caliph had practically lost all his political power. In many places, the actual political power, "secular politics" got in the hands of Kurdish, Turkish, Caucasian and other military leaders, whose policies were determined by power-/political/military considerations, not by *shari'a*.[115] As early as from the 8-9th century, a dual structure came into being in the caliphate, "the secular political regime and the parallel Muslim community and religious organizations were separated from each other," which means that state institutions and religious communities stood

[109] WATT, *Islamic Fundamentalism and Modernity,* p. 89.
[110] *Ibid.*
[111] GOLDZIHER "On the Development of the Hadīth", p. 62.
[112] ENGINEER, "Islam and Secularism", p.138.
[113] HALLIDAY, *Islam and the Myth of Confrontation,* p. 118.
[114] ROY, *Secularism …*, p. 50.
[115] MOADDEL, *op. cit*., p. 33.

apart.[116] It was less and less possible to trace back the sultan's power to the caliph, when, in reality, "the caliph was set up and deposed by the sultan".[117]

However, the religious legitimisation of political power has always been important. A decisive factor has been, ever since the rule of the Abbasid dynasty, the relationship to *shari'a*. Following the separation of political/state and religious institutions, a special alliance developed between the two: the latter (the "more or less domesticated"[118] *'ulama*, the religious sholars) declared the ruler's legitimacy. In return, the former gave them a free hand in the concrete shaping of *shari'a* and in the judiciary. This symbiosis of political and religious institutions was built on the special complicity of the two parties: the '*ulama* did not insist that every step of the political leadership – the ruler - should be based, in every respect, on the *shari'a*. There were several areas where the ruler could decide freely – autocratically – without having to pay attention to the Qur'an or the regulations of Islam.[119] Acknowledgment of the *de facto* unlimited secular power of the ruler by the *'ulama* was equivalent with the legitimisation of the separation of religion and politics.[120]

Paradoxical as it may sound, the *shari'a* also strengthened the autonomy of the political sphere through creating the group of scholars of religion and religious law, who, independently of the political power, meaning the monarch's will, could interpret and create regulations. The role of the *'ulama*, Roy argues, was much closer to civil society than to theocracy.[121]

This "political secularism" is also reflected in the structure of Muslim societies.[122] Traditional Muslim societies were built on the basis of the tribal system and group solidarity *('asabiyya)*, with Islam having little role in the process. Even today many mistakenly confuse tribal customary law with *shari'a* (in Saudi Arabia or in Taliban-ruled Afghanistan), though the two not only differ from each other, but occasionally they can even contradict each other.

The situation is basically similar in the Muslim world today. The steps taken by political leaders are motivated not by considerations based on Islam, but by pragmatic considerations serving their interests. Given the Islamic context, of course, they take Islam into account, too, but the way they make use of it is primarily determined by their own interests. Helping them in doing so is "official" or "institutionalized" Islam,

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[116] LAPIDUS, *op. cit*., p. 90.

[117] HOURANI, *Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age. (1798–1939),* p. 13. Sultan (meaning 'the person possessing power') in Muslim history primarily refers to military leaders exercising actual power over the territory under their authority, though the given territory was part of the caliphate, and so technically was subordinated to the caliph's authority and religious-spiritual power. From the point of view of religion, the sultan's power was first legitimized by the caliph himself, and scholars of religious law, trying to harmonize the sultan's de facto power, i.e. political reality, with religious governance. Later, the sultan's power sometimes strengthened so much that the caliph became exposed to the sultan's whims.

[118] ROY, *Secularism* ... p. 50.

[119] WATT, *op. cit*., pp. 91-92.

[120] MOADDEL, *op. cit*., p. 35.

[121] ROY, *Secularism* ... p. 52.

[122] *Ibid*., p. 51.

the segment of religious scholars supporting political power and cooperating with it. In return, they enjoy the support of political power. Every country of the Muslim world has its great mufti, the number one official religious leader invested by the political power, who interprets Islam in accordance with the interests of the political leadership, among others, by way of issuing *fatwa*s, religious decrees referring to important daily issues.

Theoretical foundation of secularization

The first theoreticians of the separation of religion and state (politics), *i.e*. of secularization, in the Muslim world were mainly Syrian Christians adopting the Western ideology of nationalism. The first outstanding Muslim religious scholar who exerted a decisive influence on the interpretations of Islam in modernity was 'Ali 'Abd al-Raziq. Throughout his famous work that gave rise to heated debates he seeks an answer to the fundamental question: What actually is Islam and what place does it occupy in the life of the people, the society.[123] He considers Islam a universal religion, a religious invitation *(da'wa)* to the whole of mankind. But at the same time Islam is not a political system. 'Abd al-Raziq provides a systemic, theoretically grounded explanation of the fact that Islam is primarily and exclusively a religion.

The Prophet Muhammad's mission, 'Abd al-Raziq believed, was exclusively religious. This is also underpinned by the Qur'an and the *sunna*. "Muhammad ... Allah's envoy and the prophets's seal"[124] is how the Qur'an goes, and from this it is quite clear that he was a prophet, Allah's apostle, and not a king. The prophet's power, in the final balance, is 'spiritual power" *(wilaya ruhiyya),* a religious power, as opposed to non-religious, "material power" *(wilaya maddiyya)*. Religious power, 'Abd al-Raziq continues to argue, ceased to exist with the death of the Prophet, and it was replaced by "non-religious power", *(za'ama la diniyya),* which is simply an earthly or political form of power. No matter what concrete forms it assumed (*mamlaka* – monarchic state; *dawla* – dynastic statehood; or *hukuma* – political governance), it was nothing but a secular, political form of governance (*hukuma madaniyya dunyawiyya*), that had little to do with religion.[125]

Though the reason why 'Abd al-Raziq was urging the separation of religion and politics was not pushing religion into the background and reducing it to the private sphere, on the contrary, he sought to protect religion and preserve its purity and prestige from the polluting effects of politics. Although he intended to give religion an invariably significant part in the life of society, his work served as the theoretical foundation of secularization in the Muslim world.

Muhammad Rashid Rida, who had attributed primarily political significance to Islam, arrived at an apparently opposite conclusion. He emphasized the unity of the religious and secular spheres, but he mostly dealt with the relationship between Islam and

[123] 'ABD AL-RAZIQ, *al-Islam wa-usul al-hukm.* The work was first published in 1925.
[124] Qur'an 33:40
[125] 'ABD AL-RAZIQ, *op. cit*., p. 91.

secular, political power, and thought that to be decisive. He argued that "Muslims think their religion can only prevail if there arises a strong and independent Muslim state that is able to enforce the laws of Islam with no regard to any foreign power".[126] Rida's strongly politicized Islam is almost independent of religion.

Rida emphasizes the necessity of a form of Islamic government which creates harmony between the religious and secular spheres. Rida's caliphate is a duty arising from religious law. The caliph's function is partly religious, partly secular. It is religious inasmuch as the necessity of its existence is declared by one of the major sources of Islamic religious law (*ijma',* consensus), and as the main function of the caliph is enforcing the Islamic legal system, the divine law, while it is also secular in the sense that most of the specific tasks the caliph has to perform have a secular nature. After all, the caliph's position is also religiously legitimized and its purpose is to apply in practice a legal system (the *shari'a*) that has a religious origin but serves mainly to regulate secular questions.

Rida's caliph is, first and foremost, a secular leader, and the caliph's position has a primarily secular, political nature. The caliph's secular power is, in part, of course also religious power, but it is far from being the same as the Pope's religious power in Christianity. Rida goes so far as to claim that a major characteristic of Islam is that it eliminates or terminates expressly religious or spiritual power ("there is nothing in Islam we could call spiritual power"), and "the caliph is a secular ruler in every sense of the word."[127]

Rida did not accept the institution of spiritual caliphate created by the Turkish national assembly. And this argumentation is already quite close to the way theoreticians advocating the separation of religion and politics would argue. In addition, he takes the management of strictly religious questions out of the caliph's immediate authority, assigning them to special religious institutions, emphasizing that religious propaganda must be free of political power or influence.[128]

Rida arrives at the justification of the completely secularized character of political power through emphasizing the duality of *din* and *shari'a*, and of *'ibadat* and *mu'amalat*, of course within the boundaries of Islamic unity.[129] In spite of the fact that these categories are closely interwoven with each other, they are also, to some extent, separated, at least as far as their treatment and legal regulation is concerned. Consequently, all the questions that do not directly refer to religious practices in the narrow sense, and do not touch upon the "roots", only the "branches" of Islam, should be under the authority of man-made laws.[130] Of course, the general principles of Islam (equality, cooperation etc.) also apply to these, but within this framework the

[126] RIDA, *al-Khilafa aw al-imama al-uzma*, p. 114.
[127] *Ibid.*, pp. 5, 127.
[128] *Ibid.,* p. 119.
[129] According to Muslim religious scholars, *din* is the internal essence of Islam, faith itself, the conviction, while *shari'a* is its external form of appearance, a 'code of conduct'. *'Ibadat* means religious duties in the strict sense of the word, the acts directly devoted to God, while *mu'amalat* refers to duties in interpersonal relations and social contexts.
[130] The 'roots' (*usul*) make up the theoretical part, the dogmatics, the doctrine.

community is quite free to regulate these secular questions. What is this, if not the separation of the religious and the secular spheres, of religion and politics? Rida's Islamic state, in spite of the emphasis put on its religious character, is in fact a very secular, political state.

Rida considered the caliph's function to be almost entirely a secular, political question, as the caliph's legislative authority is almost completely free as a result of *ijtihad*. Political power is exercised by the community through the body of representatives or in other ways. As regards the question of the secular nature of exercising power, Rida is quite close to the views of 'Abd al-Raziq, whom he heavily criticized. The main difference between them lies in the evaluation of the origin of power. Here they start out from the same premise and arrive at different conclusions, as the fact that the caliph's function is legitimized by *ijma'* is interpreted by Rida in such a way that, after all, it gains its legitimacy from divine law, meaning that it has a religious origin, while according to 'Abd al-Raziq, its origin is not religious but secular, as *ijma'* is not a primary source. It shows that the same facts, things, categories and statements can have different interpretations and can often give rise to very different conclusions.

Muhammad Imarah, commonly regarded as a moderate Islamist and a theoretician apparently looking for a middle course between secular state and theocracy, starts out from the premise that Christianity is only a spiritual religion, while Islam, on the contrary, does not separate the spiritual sphere from the secular. Secularists claiming that Islam has only a spiritual message are wrong, just as Islamists thinking in terms of an Islamic state are. Islam rejects secularism as well as a state based on religious authority.

According to Imarah, the state is not a natural part of Islam. The Qur'an says nothing about an Islamic state. This, however, does not mean that there is no close relationship between religion and state. Though the Qur'an does not deal with the questions of the Islamic state, it contains a number of prescriptions and duties that could not be complied with without the establishment of an Islamic state. Only an Islamic state is able to carry out the prescriptions of *shari'a*. "These are civil duties arising from religious duties." The Islamic state, which is neither a theocracy nor a secular state, is not derived from the "roots" (*usul*), but from the "branches" (*furu'*). Establishing it is civil duty arising from religion.

Secularization under Atatürk and its theoretical background

The ultimate impulse to the secularization of Islam, both theoretically and in practice, was given by the events taking place in Atatürk's modern Turkey. Turkish nationalists aimed to establish a modern, lay state by way of separating religion and state. The new state, they felt, should be part of Western civilization. As a peak of this process, the Turkish national assembly first separated from each other the functions of the sultan and the caliph, then in 1924 it abolished the institution of the caliphate, and passed a series of laws promoting secularization and driving Islam to the margins. This included

the closing of *sufi* orders and *medrese*s, the abolishment of the office of *seyhülislam*,[131] replacing the *shari'a* by a modified version of the Swiss *code civil*, forbidding Turkish men to wear the fez, etc.)

The document published by the Turkish national assembly and prepared by religious scholars enumerated arguments for the abolishment of the caliphate. It considers the caliphate to be a definitely legal (consequently secular) and not a religious/theological question, denies the existence of any spiritual authority in Islam, and asserts that the legal system of Islam is based on divine law. Under the document, power and authority belong to the people, the Muslim community, and the caliphate is nothing but a form of governance.[132]

In the background of the Kemalist modernization efforts in Turkey, it is easy to recognize the influence of Ziya Gökalp, the outstanding theoretician, who regarded Durkheim to be his master, who had provided the theoretical foundation for the necessity of the separation of religious and secular power. The abolition of the institution of the caliphate and the acceleration of the secularization process, however, already went beyond Gökalp's ideas.

In the focus of Gökalp's studies was the question of civilization. Following Tönnies, he makes a clear distinction between civilization and culture. The difference exists in spite of the fact that both civilization and culture comprise certain spheres of the life of the society: the religious, moral, legal, intellectual, aesthetic, economic, linguistic and technological areas. These eight spheres make up both civilization and culture. The difference between them is that while culture is fundamentally national, civilization is international. Culture links up the aforementioned eight spheres of the nation's social life and makes them into a system, while civilization does the same with different nations having achieved similar levels of development.[133]

The other basic distinction Gökalp makes is between nation and *umma*, the religious community. *Umma* is the group of people belonging to the same religion, the group of Muslims, Christians or Jews. Each religion constitutes an *umma*, on the other hand, the expression of belonging to an *umma*, the common, cohesive force of the *umma* is religion. In a nation – unlike in the *umma* – religion is not the only connective bond, there are also other common ties ensuring the unity of language, morality, law, political institutions, aesthetic quality, economic organization, science, philosophy and technology – all those factors, which, combined, can be referred to as culture. Gökalp's definition of nation goes as follows: "the sum total of men who belong to the same culture".[134] Thus culture is the sum of the nation's institutions, while religion is the sum of the institutions of the *umma*. Civilization from this point of view is the sum of the institutions of societies having different cultures and religions. Even societies

[131] *Seyhülislam* (*shaykh al-islam*) was the official title of the mufti of Istanbul during the Ottoman Empire. The *seyhülislam* was appointed by the Sultan, it was the highest Islamic religious title or 'state position' in the empire.

[132] Haim, "The Abolition of the Caliphate and Its Aftermath".

[133] GÖKALP, *Turkish Nationalism and Western Civilization. Selected Essays,* p. 104.

[134] *Ibid*. p. 224.

which are alien to each other from a cultural or religious point of view can belong to the same civilization.[135]

The third major distinction in Gökalp's theory is the distinction between "primitive" and "organic" societies. In primitive societies there is only one single type of authority, religious, while in "organic" societies, aside from religious authority, there are also political and cultural authorities. In his formulation, the collectivity united by religion and subject to a religious authority is *umma (ümmet)*, the collectivity united by politics and subject to a political authority is the state. Finally, the collectivity united by culture and subject to a cultural authority is a nation. From the above it follows that primitive societies assume the form of *umma*. In these, neither the political, nor the national institutions have developed. On the contrary, in organic societies all three types of institutions have developed, and the *umma* prepares the emergence of the state, while the state prepares the establishment of the nation.[136]

In primitive societies, as the political and cultural institutions have not developed, religious institutions also perform the functions of the other two institutions, "*umma (ümmet)* functions also as state and as nation." In an organic society political and cultural authorities have already developed, and enjoy sovereignty. Thus religious authority can only extend over "spiritual institutions" and "it becomes harmful when it is extended to worldly or secular, and especially to material, institutions because it prevents these institutions from adapting themselves to the expediences of life". Secular institutions belong to the sphere of the political or cultural authority. The real functions of religion, Gökalp believes, can only assert themselves in organic societies, as it is only there that religion appears in its own sphere.[137] One of the major functions of religion in organic societies is to let the other institutions operate freely, in their own spheres.

The duality of religious and political powers, in fact the necessity of their separation, appears in the way Gökalp discusses the legal system of Islam and calls attention to its strictly religious legal part and its distinct secular legal part. He dwells at length on the functions of the *mufti* and the *qadi* (and their decrees, the *ifta* and the *qada*). He underlines that the *mufti* conveys God's commands, for this reason his position is not dependent on appointment by the caliph, while the *qadi* is the caliph's envoy, who performs his function on behalf of the caliph. The *qadi* is bound by the way the caliph ruled concerning the given question, on the basis of *ijtihad*, while the *mufti* is not. A *qada* can supersede another *qada*, but an *ifta* cannot annul another *ifta*. The *mufti*'s responsibility arises from the caliph's function and has a religious nature, while the *qadi* is a political office and arises from the sultan's powers. *Ifta* and *qada* cannot be issued by the same person. Accordingly, the *qadi* deals with secular questions, and the *mufti* deals with religious issues. In concrete cases, the *qadi* can also make

[135] *Ibid.*, p. 269.
[136] *Ibid.,* p. 184.
[137] *Ibid.,* p. 185.

decisions, to cater to society's needs, which would not be permissible from a strictly religious point of view.[138]

Gökalp unambiguously stands by European civilization. He sees the only means of Turkey's rise: "to adapt ourselves to Western civilization completely!"[139] The summary of his theses is as follows: "the foregoing principle of our social policy will be this: to be of the Turkish nation, of the Islamic religion, and of European civilization."[140] However, he cannot provide an answer as to how these three factors can make up an organic unit in practice. He proves the necessity of each one separately, as though they were independent of each other.

The problems of divine and/or popular sovereignty

The question of the relationship between religion and politics is closely related to the problem of sovereignty: at one end stands God's exclusive sovereignty, and at the other popular sovereignty. Obviously, we have to do with the former when religion and politics amalgamate, and with the latter when they are separate. Muslim theoreticians have, however, worked out a wide scale of combinations of the two, and, according to their opinions the two are not only compatible, but can sometimes also amalgamate, while at other times they can contradict each other, or can be totally separate from each other.

The favourite slogan of fundamentalism is *la hukma illa li-llah*, meaning "sovereignty belongs exclusively to God". The theoreticians of modern fundamentalism apply a new expression to this: This is *hakimiyya*, which presumably originates from Mawdudi. The question has stirred up a great debate among Muslim theoreticians, too, of which the details are beyond the scope of this paper. Suffice it to point out that the great variety of interpretations and practical applications makes it possible to arrive to diametrically opposed conclusions.

God's exclusive sovereignty can also be interpreted as political sovereignty, when God is akin to the supreme and also the only legislator. In this context people are no more than executors of divine law, their function is only to interpret and implement divine law. This is why scholars of religious law (the *faqih*s – *fuqaha*) are given a decisive role in Khomeini's *welayat-e faqih* theory, since, as a result of their being educated, only they (the *mujtahid*s) are able to interpret divine law and supervise its implementation.

Hakimiyya, in an extreme case, can be interpreted as theocracy. However, theoreticians can soften up the concept when they try to make divine sovereignty compatible with popular sovereignty. Concerning the *hakimiyya,* Imarah also gives

[138] GÖKALP cites the religious ban on interest as an example, which can be superseded by the *qadi*'s ruling permitting 'this absolutely irreligious act' in the form of 'inevitable interest', *ibid*. p. 204.
[139] *Ibid.,* p. 276
[140] *Ibid.,* p. 279.

voice to his concern that the emphasis on God's exclusive sovereignty by some Islamists is to the advantage of secularists, as many think of it as something that threatens the fundamental principles of the operation of modern society. In Imarah's view, *hakimiyya* (including its legal interpretation by Khomeini) is alien to Islamic political thinking, so it is to be abolished and replaced by modern "rational *ijtihad*."[141]

Another innovation by Mawdudi, criticized by Imarah, is the introduction of the concept of "theo-democracy", which is nothing but "divine, democratic government", the duality of divine authority and popular authority, "a limited popular sovereignty under the suzerainty of God."[142] Though he, like others, renders absolute authority as belonging to God, in his system people, the community, are in the focus of political power. Not at all by chance, as in Islam people are God's representatives on earth (*khalifat Allah*), and the principle of representation, "vicegerency" – *khilafa* – that Mawdudi considers a major characteristic of Islamic political systems means that man, as God's representative, exercises on earth the power bestowed on him by God.[143]

It was however the Iranian 'Ali Shari'ati who went the furthest, presuming perfect harmony between God's exclusive sovereignty and popular sovereignty, as to him God and the people are identical categories. "Wherever in the Qur'an social matters are mentioned, Allah and *al-nas* (the people – Zs. R.) are virtually synonymous. The two words are often interchangeable, and yield the same meaning... Thus when it is said, 'Rule belongs to God', the meaning is that rule belongs to the people."[144] In Shari'ati's view, on the one hand, the laws of Islam expressed by the Qur'an, which are irrevocable and impervious to human intervention, ensure the continuity of the society, while on the other hand, human responsibility and human freedom, which necessarily encourage society to change and develop, consist in recognizing these inalterable laws and inducing change in compliance and harmony with those laws.[145]

For Shari'ati, the totality of Islam is somewhat limited by the principle of popular sovereignty. In fact Imarah arrives at the same conclusion, when he emphasizes that the source of power is the *umma*, and that the state that is grounded on Islamic footing is simultaneously Islamic and civil, and it is not a theocracy, since, though religion has its functions, religion and state can in no way unite. The civilian steps referring to politics and society must follow from the spirit of Islam. This way, Imarah separates from each other religion and the state, at the same time he does not withdraw the civil sphere from the influence, of course an indirect spiritual influence, of Islam. Imarah's position is obviously 'middle-of-the-road', but secularization is only one step away.

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[141] IMARAH, *Nazariyyat al-hakimiyya fi fikr Abi l-A'la al-Mawdudi* (The question of *hakimiyya* in Mawdudi's theory), cited by Najjar, *op. cit*.

[142] MAWDUDI, "Political Theory of Islam".

[143] In the Islamic state "the power to rule over the earth has been promised to *the whole community of believers* …the popular vicegerency .. is the real foundation of democracy in Islam… There is no room in such a society for the dictatorship of any person or group of persons since everyone is a caliph of God herein…Dictatorship is the negation of popular vicegerency." *ibid*. pp. 168-170.

[144] SHARI'ATI, *On the Sociology of Islam,* p. 116.

[145] *Ibid*., pp. 50-51.

Based on the above, there can be at least five interpretations of the relationship between divine and popular sovereignty:

- God's exclusive sovereignty (theocracy);
- Divine authority limited by popular sovereignty (theo-democracy);
- The amalgamation of divine and popular sovereignty;
- Separation of the religious and civil spheres, but the latter is configured by the former;
- Separation of the religious and civil spheres, with the (quasi or total) independence of the latter.

Secularization in the Muslim world today

As concerns the position of secularization in the Muslim world today, the statement Fazlur Rahman made in the late 1960s also applies to today's Muslim world, notably in that "explicit secularism" exists only to a minimal degree, but the "practical secularist" trends[146] in current Muslim political life are rather powerful – we might call this "latent" or "implicit secularism". "Explicit secularism" only appears in some points of view expressed during the discourse about the values of the social and political order, democracy, human rights, civil society, freedom, etc.

Under the influence of the re-Islamization process underway since the late 1960s and reinvigorated by the victory of the 1979 Islamic revolution in Iran, much of the Muslim world, including the political scene, has become Islamized. This manifested itself not only in the headway made by political Islam (Islamism), but also in the general strengthening of the role of Islam in social life, in the spiritual revival that unfolded.[147] The general Islamization, of course, places considerable obstacles in the way of any explicit secularization efforts.

All this, of course, does not mean that the authoritarian political leaderships of the Islamic countries do not operate on a secular basis in practice. The reinforced re-Islamization process does not contradict the fact that the Muslim world has become irreversibly Westernized, or that at the very least Westernization is well underway.[148] Olivier Roy cites convincing data and arguments to underscore that re-Islamization, aside from leading to an increase in religious belief, and effecting certain changes in

[146] RAHMAN, *Islam*, p. 229.

[147] In a poll made by Gallup in 12 countries of the Muslim world in 2005 and 2006, the majority of the respondents said religion played an important part in their everyday lives (Indonesia 99%, Egypt, Saudi Arabia and the Emirates 98%, even in Kuwait and Morocco, showing the lowest rates, 82%, Iran 74%. An interesting point: the US, where 68% of those asked said that religion played an important part in their lives, did not lag far behind.). Cf. *Ordinary Muslims.*

[148] Cf. LEWIS, "The Middle East, Westernized despite Itself", and LEWIS, *From Babel to Dragomans. Interpreting the Middle East,* pp. 273-286.

individual, personal patterns of behaviour (wearing a kerchief, *hijab*, for women, growing a beard for men), did not at all entail a strengthening of traditional social forms (polygamy, increase in children's number etc.). On the contrary, re-Islamization is proceeding parallel with Westernization/modernization.[149] To cite a single example, in spite of the fact that Iran had Islamized the family law (including lowering the age of consent for women for getting married), the average age of women entering marriage increased (by the late 1990s, to 22 years of age) and the age difference between husband and wife decreased from 7 to 2.1 years between 1980 and 2000. At the same time the share of polygamy among all marriages did not increase at all (in the past 40 years it has stagnated around 2%). Between 1976 and 1996, the literacy rate of Iranian women has increased from 28% to 80%.

Even Islamism, despite its agenda to desecuralize society and establish an Islamic state, has borrowed the majority of its political lexicon from Western political sciences, and, when it was necessary, "Islamized" them, or lent classic Islamic concepts modern meanings. (Hezbollah = *hizb Allah* = God's party; *hakimiyya* = divine sovereignty, etc.).

However, secularization in the Muslim world has a peculiar characteristic, which is diametrically opposed to Western secularization. While in the West, secularization was, in a way, a precondition of democratization, in the Muslim world secularization acts against democratization, and is, mainly, associated with dictatorial, authoritarian regimes.[150] Secularists institute state control over religion and typically oppress its traditional or popular manifestations. Hence comes the peculiar, somewhat paradoxical situation that Islamists, who are considered opponents/enemies by the secular, authoritarian political leaderships, are, on the one hand, supporters of the democratization process, on the other hand, they are one of the most decisive factors of the civil society, regarded as a major constituent of secularization in the West.

In the West, the process of secularization was primarily motivated by the rejection of the dominance of religion, and the activity to counter it. In the contemporary Muslim world the situation is completely different. (Of course, the starting point is also fundamentally different, as in Islam there exists no church in the Western sense of the word). The process of re-Islamization does not at all contradict the fact that the autonomy of politics and religion, as independent spheres, is increasing in the Muslim world, and the relationship between the two is increasingly determined by the dominance of the former.

Esposito distinguishes three types of building a modern political nation-state in the Muslim world.[151] One of them is "secular", an example of which is Turkey, where Islam has been separated from the state. Another is 'Islamic', where the Islamic character of the state and the primacy of Islamic law are also formally declared (as in Saudi Arabia). The third group of states is the one Esposito calls "Muslim states", which, though they apply the Western model in the political, legal and social areas, have built into their constitutions certain Islamic elements (Islam is the official religion, the *shari'a* is the source of law – even if this is not always observed –, the head of state can only be a

[149] ROY, *Globalized Islam,* p. 14.
[150] Cf . *Ibid*., p. 3, and HAQUE, "The debate on secularism and democracy".
[151] Esposito, *Islam and Politics,* p. 94.

Muslim, etc.). A large number of countries from Tunisia, through Egypt, to Jordan[152] belong to this group. It is, however, questionable to what extent these Islamic elements built in the constitutions determine the political practices of these Muslim countries.

In most countries of the Muslim world, the constitution makes mention of Islam as a state religion in one form or another, and in ten countries the constitution also mentions the *shari'a* as the primary or the major source of jurisdiction. (There are two countries in the Muslim world, Turkey and Indonesia, in which the constitution does not make an explicit reference to Islam). This, however, does not tie the hands of legislators or law enforcement, and does not mean that in these countries jurisdiction is really based on the *shari'a*. The best example for the above is Egypt.

Article 2 of the Egyptian constitution lays down that Islam is the state religion and that the ultimate source of legislation is Islamic law.[153] The Egyptian constitutional court, interpreting this article in its decree of May 15, 1993, declares that legislators are bound by the principles of the *shari'a* in the sense that the laws must not be in contradiction with the regulations of Islam. But all this refers only to the 'general principles and inalterable sources' of Islamic law. However, there are such 'specific' regulations that are based on interpretations harmonizing with 'changes of time and place' – in other words, are open to *ijtihad*, free argumentation, or "independent reasoning."[154] The point of the matter is that although legislators are bound by the principles of the *shari'a*, the practical application of the principles enjoys considerable leeway, accommodating a variety of interpretations. This is the way how the contradiction between *shari'a* and secular law can be bridged.

As far as the relationship between religion and politics is concerned, it is specifically worth examining the example of Iran, as this country, where the two spheres are apparently interwoven, is regarded by some as the embodiment of theocracy.[155] Not only is Iran not a theocracy, but religion and politics make up two, well distinguishable spheres, with the unambiguous dominance of the latter. Some experts even risk the statement, probably surprising, but not without grounds, that the Islamic Republic, despite its strongly ideological character, is an "amalgam of religion and secularism".[156] Besides, Iran belongs to the few Middle Eastern states in which the political leadership

[152] Watt also finds Turkey and Saudi Arabia to be the two 'extreme' cases, while the other countries are located somewhere on the scale between these two extremities. Cf. WATT, *Islamic Fundamentalism and Modernity,* p. 42. Kepel also considers the "exclusive reliance on Islam as the basis of the regime's legitimacy (Saudi Arabia)" and "a pronounced secular bias (Turkey)" as the two ends of the scale, adding that this did not mean even in the 1960s, that in Turkey power was as neutral concerning religion as it was, *e.g*. in France, or that it was not interested in religious activities. Cf. KEPEL, *op. cit*., p. 46.

[153] For the text of Egyptian constitution see the website of the *Egyptian State Information Service* http://www.sis.gov.eg

[154] Cf. BÄLZ, "Shariah versus Secular Law?", pp. 122-123.

[155] Some speak about 'a theocratic Shia Islamic state established by Khomeini'. See KAZEMI, "Civil Society and Iranian Politics", p. 124.

[156] MOADDEL, *op. cit*., p. 331.

is not autocratic but quasi-democratic, at least as far as the existence of democratic institutions is concerned.

In Iran a people's revolution coming from below swept away the shah's autocratic and secular system. The heterogeneous social layers providing the basis of the revolution represented two demands that had crystallized by then: On the one hand, as opposed to the autocracy they had lived in until that time, they demanded wider political representation (let us call it democracy), and, on the other hand, contrary to earlier secularization, the firm enforcement of Islam, even comprising political power (in short, theocracy). A compromise between the two is eventually reflected by the peculiar political system of institutions of the Islamic Republic.

Though the system is based on the decisive role of the highest (religious) leader, the structure thus established would make the monopolization of power rather difficult. It is because besides the highest leader and the Revolutionary Guard, the President of the Republic and the Parliament represent further centres of power. The sovereignty of the former is based, indeed, on the *shari'a*, while the sovereignty of the latter derives from the voters' decision.

Khomeini's concept of *welayat-e faqih*, *i.e*. the active participation of scholars of religious law is alien to the majority approach of Shia Islam. With the Shia, as we have pointed out before, a powerful hierarchy of religious scholars prevails, topped by the grand ayatollahs (*marja-e taqlid*, "the source of imitation"). But the majority of religious leaders have always adopted a quietist attitude and kept themselves at a distance from politics.

The Islamic revolution of 1979 did not involve in political power the highest level of the religious hierarchy, but the second tier of religious scholars, while it kept grand ayatollahs at a safe distance. The only exception to this rule was Ayatollah Khomeini, "the leader of the revolution". Following Khomeini's death, the political dimension was given even more emphasis. His successor, Khamenei, was a *par excellence* political appointee, and did not belong to the highest echelons of religious leadership. The constitution modified in 1989 even cancelled the regulation still valid in the 1980 constitution that the supreme leaders must come from the rank of grand ayatollahs. As for the conditions referring to the supreme leader's person, there has also been a shift from religious to political ones. The supreme leader's power is significantly limited also by the fact that there can be more highly respected Shia religious scholars preceding him in the religious hierarchy, which limits his authority as a spiritual leader.

It is even more worthy of attention that the laws passed by the political leadership can supersede divine law in case of need. Concerning this question many refer to the letter written on January 6, 1988, by the supreme leader Khomeini to Khamenei, who was at that time performing the functions of the head of state. In the letter he writes that the government can one-sidedly annul certain *shari'a*-conform regulations.[157] So the case is not that the government can decide on questions that are not regulated by the *shari'a*, but, if the interests of the state so require, the government can overwrite

[157] Cf. ROY, *Globalized Islam,,* p. 87.

the *shari'a*. Khomeini quotes the example that the government can even forbid the *hajj* to Mecca, if this serves the interests of Islam.

The steps of the Iranian foreign policy – especially since the death of Khomeini – have been determined by the enforcement of Iranian national interests and not religious/ideological considerations. Just to quote two examples: supporting Christian Armenians against Muslim (and Shia!) Azeris, and cooperation with the United States in toppling the Taliban in Afghanistan.

Another important balancing factor is "the paradox of state-society relationship"[158], *i.e*. the "duality"[159] between the state and civil society. Civil society is especially well-established in Iran, including a wide range of religious foundations, the *bonyad*s, which are capable of counteracting the efforts of the state or religious leaders seen as for instance attempting to monopolize power.

Islam and globalization: the age of 'post-Islamism'

Globalization, the dominant process of the international system in the past decades, has not left the Muslim world unchanged, either. It has strengthened a series of contradictions not only in the Muslim world, but also within Islam itself. The countries of the Muslim world are, most of the time, subordinated parts of the capitalist world economic system dominated by the developed Western countries, and are in an asymmetric relation of dependence with the latter.

By our days it has been definitively proven that the nation states, which had been created mostly by drawing artificial borders, have consolidated themselves in the Muslim world, and the process of nation building must be reckoned with in the long term, even in the age of globalization and internationalization. And Islam plays an important part in this process.

One of the most trivial of the apparent contradictions is the following: While the Muslim world is, (though not very successfully) proceeding towards (somewhat awkward) modernization and Westernization, simultaneously, a great variety of phenomena attest to re-Islamization and religious revival. The latter, however, and this is another paradox, do not contradict the former, the two can even strengthen each other. The process of globalization and Westernization has prepared a favourable soil for re-Islamization, while the ever stronger deterritorialization of Islam has contributed to building up a new, pure, deculturalized, deethnicized and deterritorialized religious identity that could adjust to the conditions of globalization more successfully than earlier ones.

Another apparent paradox is that on the one hand territorial states have grown stronger in the Muslim world, most of the Islamist movements have become strongly determined by the national/nation-state/ethnic character of their respective

[158] KAZEMI, *op. cit*., p. 151.
[159] MOADDEL, *op. cit*., p. 331.

backgrounds,[160] – their activities assume a markedly nationalist character, *i.e.* one witnesses in these cases the "'nationalization' of Islamism"[161] –, on the other hand, the deterritorialization of Islam is also markedly emerging and is becoming more and more accentuated. Roy traces back all of these phenomena to the failure of political Islam (in fact: Islamism), and the emergence and success of the so-called neofundamentalism.

A bone of contention in expert circles has been the situation of Islamism: Is it declining, or, on the contrary, is it on the rise? Gilles Kepel clearly takes sides with the former. "Today, as Muslim societies emerge from the Islamist era" – he argues – "it is through openness to the world and to democracy that they will construct their future. There is no longer any real alternative."[162] Others also believe that the struggle to build the Islamic state had failed by the 1990s, and "the age of Islamism had waned".[163] As a result, today what we are witnessing is actually better referred to as "post-Islamism".[164] Bernard Lewis is less optimistic: "If fundamentalists' calculations work out, and they fight their war successfully, the world will be faced with a murky future. This applies even more to parts of the world inhabited by Muslims."[165] Daniel Pipes is even more anxious, as he considers Islamism as such and all of its shades to be "enemies of civilization" and every Islamist to be a "potential murderer", refusing any distinction between the mainstream and the fringe of Islamism.[166]

The expressions post-Islamism or neo-fundamentalism indicate that experts wishing to show the real situation are trying to go beyond the widespread but completely misleading pattern of mechanical generalizations and stereotypes, and are attempting to present the processes of Islam and the Muslim world in a nuanced way, taking into account the often very significant differences between the trends and within each trend or tendency.

"Post-Islamism" therefore does not at all mean that the process of re-Islamization is over, only that it has entered a new phase. It is to be noted that one of the main characteristics of post-Islamism is the "privatization of re-Islamization"[167], which in the given case can also mean literally giving it in private hands.

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[160] We have to repeatedly emphasize that in the Muslim world we cannot speak about nations in the Western sense, at most about 'quasi-nations', as the process of nation-building is still in progress.

[161] ROY, *Globalized Islam,,* p. 63. According to Roy, by the late 1990s, most of the Islamist movements were rather nationalist than Islamist, *ibid.,* p. 83. Fawaz Gerges believes that mainstream Islamism had already accepted the political rules of the game from the 1970-80s, and 'religious nationalists' became the main wing even of *jihadists*. GERGES, *The Far Enemy. Why Jihad Went Global,* pp. 2, 24-34.

[162] KEPEL, *op. cit*., p. 373.

[163] *Ibid.*

[164] ROY, *Globalized Islam,,* p. 97.

[165] LEWIS, *Az iszlám válsága* [The Crisis of Islam], p. 212.

[166] See different works by Daniel PIPES found on the author's website: http://www.danielpipes.org

[167] ROY, *Globalized Islam,,* p. 97.

Islamism is nothing but politicized Islam, Islam functioning as political ideology, *i.e*. a political movement seeking to achieve political goals. In today's post-Islamist age three tendencies of Islamism are taking shape.

A major part of Islamism, many believe its mainstream, had been pacified, and is involved in the process of becoming a political party. This segment has been integrated into the political system of a given country. The most organized movement of mainstream Islamists encompassing the whole world, the Muslim Brotherhood, has accepted the rules of the political game, many of its leaders have defended such values of modernity as democracy and human rights. Two local leaders of Egyptian Islamic Jihad have categorically dissociated themselves from Ayman al-Zawahiri, alleged leader of the organization, personal aide of Usama bin Laden. After the organization declared a ceasefire, the Egyptian government released hundreds of its imprisoned members at the beginning of the 2000s. Algerian FIS armed insurrection was declared finished in an official announcement in 1997. The list could be continued.

Of course, Islamist organizations have to expect severe hardships in this area. The authoritarian political leaderships of their countries are wary of any trace of pluralism and they look with special concern at the Islamist organizations which, not long before, had been trying to overthrow these leaderships, sometimes using radicalism as a resource. In some countries (Egypt) it is explicitly forbidden for Islamist groupings to organize themselves into parties. If they are successful in the elections, they have to overcome serious obstacles to be able to become viable governmental factors (see Algeria after the 1991 success of FIS in the elections, or the situation following the victory of Hamas in the January 2006 election.

There is significant mistrust toward Islamist organizations not only from the political leaderships of their own countries, but also from the West. As some radical organizations do not shrink back from radical measures, on the basis of this, many insensitively identify the whole of Islamism with extremism, and Islamist organizations with terrorism. There is widespread suspicion among politicians, the public opinion, and even among experts that an Islamist organization would really limit itself to peaceful means and accept democracy and pluralism. Such declarations are often viewed as ruses to weaken vigilance and grasp power, then proceed to islamize the state and society, eliminating all the institutions by which it had come to power. There are more and more people of the opinion that a major principle of Shia Islam, *taqiyya* or pretence, is a general characteristic of Islamists (including the Sunni), who only pretend to have renounced violence and accepted the political rules, and they are preparing to seize power and show their true colours.

This can be seen most clearly in Turkey where AKP (the Justice and Development Party), which is rooted in Islam, but at the same time supports full-fledged EU membership and has passed a series of EU-conform measures to this end, governs the country enjoying the support of the majority of the population. The military and the constitutional court, traditional guardians of Ataturk's secular traditions, have tried repeatedly, sometimes even testing the boundaries of democracy, to overthrow the government, to ban the party and to banish over 70 of its members holding various offices. In this intra-Turkish fight between the Islamist government and the secular opposition, the European Union has repeatedly taken the side of the government. At

the same time, the Turkish economy has been growing at a staggering rate, the Turkish Islamist leadership complies with the conditions, one after the other, of the EU and international financial organizations. True, at the same time they are also planning to put in proposals in front of Parliament that are sparking off protests from secular layers and are welcomed by Islamists. These include lifting the ban on wearing kerchiefs in universities. Steps like the latter only increase the suspicions and doubts of some Western (and Turkish secular) groups, including Turkey experts, towards the Islamist government, speculating that in the guise of intending to join the European Union, AKP are gradually Islamizing Turkey.

What we are faced with here is a question where it cannot be decided who is right. In Algeria, the intervention by the military prevented Islamists from coming to power. On Palestine territories, while Hamas had won the elections, it was not allowed to govern. In these two cases, nobody knows what measures the Islamists would have taken, had they come to power, or had they been governing under peaceful circumstances. In Turkey the government takes EU-conform and pro-Islamist steps as well.

All in all, it can be established that the strategies of Islamist organizations to become integrated into multi-party political systems have been successful in several countries (Turkey, Kuwait, Jordan, Bahrain, Yemen, Tajikistan), or, at least, have yielded certain results (Egypt, Morocco, Malaysia). It is a strange paradox that Islamist organizations, at least in their rhetoric, are more zealous advocates of democratization than secular ones.

Jihadism or *jihadist salafism*, the radical movement pursuing Islamization by force, by means of *jihad*, including violent means, has definitely become marginalized also in the concrete sense of the word, as it is only able to carry out actions with any hope of success in the peripheries. In the 1970s and‘80s *jihadism* split in two parts. The majority wing is that of religious nationalists[168] who wish to carry out the Islamization of society, amounting to an Islamic revolution, in their own countries, while the other is the international, transnational trend (international Islamism or *alqaedism*), who have internationalized *jihad* and were thinking in terms of a worldwide Islamic revolution.

Religious nationalists all over the Muslim world have launched an attack on the political leaderships of their countries, their main goals being to overthrow the secular political and social actors cooperating with the West, followed by the Islamization of politics and society, and the establishment of an Islamic state. Their attempt, however, had ended in complete failure by the second half of the 1990s practically everywhere. This contributed to the fact that within the *jihadist* movement there has been a shift from localism toward globalism, strengthening the activity of international *jihadism* on the one hand, while on the other hand, another significant part of Islamist organizations transformed themselves into neo-fundamentalist movements placing more emphasis on the private sphere than on the public sphere, more on religion than on politics.

[168] GERGES, *The Far Enemy,* pp. 25, 29.

Neo-fundamentalism, in this sense, is "a closed, scripturalist and conservative view of Islam that rejects the national and statist dimension in favour of the *ummah*, the universal community of all Muslims, based on *shari'a*."[169] Neo-fundamentalism is especially widespread among second- or third-generation uprooted immigrant Muslims, living mostly in the West, or in minority. Its spreading took place simultaneously with the de-territorialization of Islam.

The individualization and deculturalization of Islam

Surveys made among European Muslims suggest that most of them think of themselves first of all as Muslims.[170] And for somebody to perceive themselves as belonging to a universal religion, it is necessary to cleanse the religion from specific, cultural and ethnic contexts. In the countries of Islamic civilization, Islam is embodied in a given culture in the first place, and this makes it difficult (often impossible) to tell what is specifically Islamic and what is the product of the characteristics of local culture. In the West, Muslim minorities appear primarily in ethno-cultural settings (Arabs, Persians, Turks, Pakistanis, etc.), these ethno-cultural communities are, however, linked up and brought to a common denominator by their being Muslims.

For the development of a global Islamic identity, it is necessary to disconnect Islam from the given culture, in other words, to deculturalize Islam and to re-define it according to purely religious criteria. This effort is nothing new, there have been attempts like this in the history of Islam. But the external circumstances and the conditions are brand new: globalization and the significant increase in minority Islam.

In this context, "neofundamentalists strive to construct, from a collection of individual born-again Muslims, a true *umma* – that is, a homogeneous community of equals, delinked from their natural milieu and devoted to the sole aim of practising a true Islam."[171]A part of this process is a certain degree of marginalization of the *shari'a*, or, putting it another way, "the secularization of the *shari'a*."[172] The former means, as interpreted by an-Na'im, and with reference to the secular state urged by him, that the state has no right to enforce the religious law even in the case when the majority of the population are believers of the given religion. Keeping the *shari'a* is up to the believers' individual choice, and if the state were to force it, "its principles would lose their religious authority and value."[173]

Concerning European and American Muslim communities, the reconstruction of Islamic norms can be observed in relation to the effort to make Islam adjust to the local legal systems. The effort to establish an Islamic state and introduce *shari'a* in

[169] ROY, *Globalized Islam,* p. 1.
[170] Cf. "Muslims in Europe: Economic Worries Top Concerns about Religious and Cultural Identity".
[171] ROY, *Globalized Islam,* pp. 268-269.
[172] CESARI, *When Islam and Democracy Meet. Muslims in Europe and in the United States,* p. 56.
[173] AN-NA'IM, *op. cit*., cited by ESPOSITO "Islam and the Secular State: The Challenge of Creating Change"

Western environments has remained marginal, it is only discernible with some radical, extremist Muslim organizations. What is quite general, however, is the adaptation of Islam. But this is dominantly a passive adaptation, which means that it is not carried out by Muslim religious scholars or scholars of religious law, but by Western lawyers. This process results in a "slow and »invisible« construction of a new form of Islam, an Islam that has been translated according to Western law." This effects the emergence of such hybrid forms as "*angrezi shari'a*" in the United Kingdom, a British *shari'a*, a peculiar mixture of the British legal system and *shari'a*.[174]

The above process is inseparable from the deterritorialization of Islam. The redefined Muslim community, the *umma*, is connected less and less to a particular territory, and it can increasingly be interpreted as an imaginary or virtual community. Besides, nowhere is there a specific space where Islam as a religion could not only be lived in its purity, but it also pervades the state and society. The *dar al-islam*, the world of Islam, is less and less a concrete territory, and is increasingly understood to refer to a suitable environment. The "new global Islam" even reconceptualizes the meaning of the "world" as such: it is being interpreted less and less as a geographical entity and more and more as a world of ideas, thoughts and practices.[175]

Strangely enough, some Muslim theoreticians and religious leaders claim that this deculturalized Islam is easier to practice in the West, in non-Muslim countries, than in the countries of the Muslim world, as the latter are only nominally Muslim, and represent more hypocrisy than true faith. As the famous and notorious London-based radical Islamist leader, Abu Hamza al-Masri put it in an interview, Muslims should be encouraged to migrate into "Muslim environments", but not into Muslim countries, because "in our countries .. we have Muslims but we do not have Islamic states."[176]

It is a serious misunderstanding to think that when some Muslims consider Europe as part of *dar al-islam*, they mean it only from a geographical/territorial point of view. It is not necessarily true, as *dar al-islam* is increasingly losing its validity in the territorial sense of the word. It is not by chance that Muslim religious scholars have had a heated debate about this issue recently. *Dar al-islam* is not mentioned in the Qur'an or in the *sunna*. This category, along with *dar al-harb* (the world of warfare) referring to non-Muslim territories, or, later, with *dar al-'ahd* (the world of contract) referring to territories in contractual relationship with the Muslims, was created by Muslim religious scholars on the basis of the realities of the contemporary world. Tariq Ramadan was quite right declaring that these categories do not have their origins in the fundamental sources of Islam, but they are results of human efforts to describe the particularities and geopolitical realities of a given situation. This dualist, simplifying and reductionist view of the world is not at all suitable to describe today's complicated and complex conditions. Ramadan recommends discarding them, and introducing, with regard to Muslims living in the West, the term "Western abode."[177]

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[174] CESARI, *op. cit*., p. 57. *Angrezi shari'a* is the Urdu name of British *shari'a* – a *shari'a* redefined in compliance with the British legal system.

[175] STENBERG, "Islam, Knowledge and 'the West': The Making of a Global Islam".

[176] Abu Hamza's interview of October 17, 2000 is cited by ROY, *Globalized Islam?,* p. 158.

[177] Cf. RAMADAN, *op. cit*., pp. 62-73.

The Muslim world in the territorial sense, primarily the region of the Middle East, gradually ceases to be an area attractive as a result of the prevalence of Islam, and the virtual, imaginary *umma* increasingly binds exactly those who had broken away from the Muslim world in the geographical/territorial sense.

Deterritorialization can also be experienced in the activities of international Islamism, the *jihadists*. A large part of the actions they carry out are not linked to the regions of the Muslim world, and if so, they are not connected to the country of origin of those carrying out the actions. The vast majority of *jihadists* have no or hardly any relationship with their original homelands. They can much rather be regarded as "deterritorialized population" than a diaspora.[178]

Islamism has, at the same time, significantly changed the already post-Islamist societies of the Muslim world, more specifically, the relationship between Islam and politics. By way of strongly politicizing, even over-politicizing, religion, Islamists have in fact strengthened the priority of politics over religion exactly in the name of religion. Religion, which has lost its independence and become subordinated to politics, embarked, by necessity, on a quest for autonomy and forms of independent self-expression, giving ground to different manifestations of religious faith. In this sense, neo-fundamentalism is nothing but an expression of religious revival.

While Islamist discourse was about the unity of religion and politics, post-Islamist discourse, on the contrary, considers the two spheres to be autonomous. This does not mean a decrease in the role of religion, but a change in the relationship between religion and politics, religion and state, and even a certain degree of secularization, and accomplishes all this with reference to religion.

Olivier Roy distinguishes between religion and religiosity, saying that the decisive tendency of the past years has been 'the predominance of religiosity over religion'. The former is used in the sense of "the self-expression of a personal faith", while the latter refers to "a coherent corpus of beliefs and dogmas collectively managed by a body of legitimate holders of knowledge".[179]

Jocelyne Cesari states that, mainly in Europe, "we are now witnessing the emergence of an individualized and secular Islam", similarly to how Catholicism and Protestantism have created their personalized and secularized versions.[180] In addition, Cesari distinguishes three types of Muslims: Those who practice a private version of faith, non-practicing Muslims who nonetheless identify with Islam on an ethical or emotional basis, and, finally, fundamentalists embracing a totalizing version of communal Islam.[181]

Akbar Ahmed differentiates three types of Islamic responses to the challenge of globalization: The mystical, the traditionalist and the modernist, proposing three

[178] Cf. ROY, *Globalized Islam,* p. 305.
[179] *Ibid.*, pp. 5-6.
[180] CESARI, *op. cit.*, p. 46.
[181] *Ibid*. Concerning the individualization of religious choice, CESARI distinguishes four types of Muslim identity: communal Islam, ethical Islam, cultural Islam and emotional Islam. See *ibid.*, pp. 45-46.

models that are derived from the three attitudes present in Islam since its emergence ("the acceptor", "the preserver", and "the synthesizer").[182] In a metaphoric sense, the three Indian cities (and the institutions to which they are home), Ajmer, Deoband and Aligarh, express the different outlooks on the world implied in the three models. At the same time, Ahmed does not say anything too novel, as the existence of the above three models in Islam has been accepted by expert circles since the emergence of the reform movement of the 18-19th centuries.

The Ajmer-model refers to Muslims mostly influenced by the mystical traditions of Islam, *sufism*. By the Deoband-model Ahmed understands the Islamist movements based on orthodox Islam, from *wahhabism* to the Muslim Brotherhood and Hamas, represented by theoreticians like Ibn Taymiyya, Sayyid Qutb or Mawlana Mawdudi. The Aligarh-model refers to the modernist Muslim responses given to the challenges of globalism, boasting representatives like Sayyid Ahmad Khan, Muhammad Abduh, Reza Pahlavi or the leaders of Malaysia.[183] These models are obviously to be understood as ideal types diametrically opposed to each other, yet their unity, especially when subject to common threats, is ensured by "the powerful words of the Prophet".[184]

Ahmed is of the view that most of the leaders in Muslim societies have been awed and captured by the Deoband-model, which could fill the space that had emerged in the wake of state failures. This model has been further strengthened by the events that took place in Afghanistan, Iraq and Lebanon. On the other hand, the Muslim governments influenced by the Aligarh-model are uncertain and weak. Ahmed believes that solid support for the Aligarh-model would be an important duty of the West, however, at the same time Muslims also have to rethink their attitudes vis-à-vis the three models, keeping in mind the need to adjust to the requirements of the modern age. "Muslims need to recognize that the most effective 'weapons' for addressing their grievances are knowledge and reason, rather than brute force".[185]

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[182] AHMED, *Journey into Islam. The Crisis of Globalization,* pp. 32-44.

[183] I have no opportunity here to explain how Sayyid Ahmad Khan, Muhammad Abduh and Reza Pahlavi could have got in the same category in Ahmed's work.

[184] AHMED, *op. cit*., p. 39.

[185] *Ibid*., p.264.

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