ARTICLE

Critical Journal of Social Sciences (CJSS)
Volume 1, No. 1 | 2025
pp. 37 – 61

EVOLVING IDENTITY IN THE FACE OF IMPERIALISM AND COLONIALISM: THE EMERGENCE AND DEVELOPMENT OF POLITICAL ISLAM

LA EVOLUCIÓN DE LA IDENTIDAD FRENTE AL IMPERIALISMO Y EL COLONIALISMO: EL SURGIMIENTO Y DESARROLLO DEL ISLAM POLÍTICO

Ana Belén Soage
San Pablo CEU University (Spain)
anasoage@gmail.com

Critical Journal of Social Sciences (CJSS)

Volume 1, No. 1 | 2025
pp. 37 - 61

Abstract

This paper applies the Constructivist approach to analyse the role of identity in Islamism, or political Islam, in order to complement and, in some cases, problematise the theories that have sought to explain that ideology. It focuses on mainstream Islamism in the Sunni Arab world and references the work of prominent scholars and theorists to illustrate their thought. The core of the paper is divided into five sections: The first considers the genesis of Islamism as a response to the ontological threat posed by the West. The second explains how Islamists relate to an idealised past which they also see as a model for the future. The third section argues that the project to create an Islamic state reflects a desire to produce a non-secular modernity. The fourth dwells on the reinvention of tradition by Islamist thinkers to legitimise their interpretation of Islam and their wide-reaching programme of social transformation. The fifth and last section discusses how Islamists "Other" members of the community who are reluctant to embrace their project.

Keywords

Islamism, Ontological security, Deterministic historism, Islamic state, Multiple modernities, Secularisation

1. INTRODUCTION

The term Islamism, or political Islam, designates a broad ideology based on the belief that Islam provides a comprehensive social, political and economic model. Beyond that core belief, Islamists do not agree on a blueprint for that model nor on the means to make it a reality. On the extremist fringe, groups like al-Qaeda and Islamic State conduct violent jihad to install a universal caliphate. For their part, mainstream Islamists like

the Muslim Brotherhood shun violence and work within the boundaries of modern nation-states, combining grassroots activism, welfare provision and electoral politics[1].

Islamists claim that theirs is the correct interpretation of Islam, despite the diversity in the practice of Islam across different periods and geographies and the plurality of projects within the Islamist movement itself. This suggests that Islamism is, in reality, a set of related interpretations of Islam which arose from particular circumstances. Indeed, Islamists identify as forerunners a number of figures who lived in the late XIX and early XX centuries[2].

This paper seeks to understand Islamism by delving into the life and work of those key thinkers in order to explore how Islamist identity emerged and developed. It starts off in the late XIX century, when Jamal al-Din al-Afghani and Muhammad 'Abduh set out to reform Islam to resist European cultural and military encroachment, but also to embrace European scientific and political advancements. Their groundbreaking efforts galvanised subsequent generations of Muslim intellectuals.

Islamism itself appeared in the first decades of the XX century. Much of the Muslim world was then under colonial rule, its territories divided into proto-states that would need to evolve under colonial stewardship to be regarded as worthy members of the Western-dominated international order. It was then that Rashid Rida theorised the Islamic state as a mirror-image of the modern nation-state but with an Islamic twist: he identified religion, not nationality, as the appropriate source of identity and legitimacy.

Rida had a strong influence on Hasan al-Banna, founder of the Muslim Brotherhood who turned Islamism into a transnational mass movement. Two of the organisation's thinkers are among the most famous Muslim intellectuals of the last century: Sayyid Qutb developed the revolutionary potential of Islam and went on to inspire the international Jihadist movement[3]. For his part, Yusuf al-Qaradawi put forward the notion of *wasatiyya* ("moderation", or "leniency"), which aimed at reaching a balance between Islam's eternal principles and the need to adapt to different periods and geographies[4].

For decades Islamism had to compete with the nationalist and leftist ideologies that were popular during the anticolonial struggle and the post-independence period. However, the postcolonial state did not live up to its development promises and was unable to defeat Israel

[1] With some exceptions. In the 1930s and 1940s the Muslim Brotherhood resorted to assassinations and terrorist attacks against individuals and groups it considered legitimate targets, such as British soldiers, Egyptian public figures and the Jewish community in Egypt. More recently, al-Qaradawi repeatedly expressed support for "martyrdom operations" against Israelis, reasoning that Israel is a militarised state in which there are no civilians (al-Qaradawi on Al-Jazeera 2004a, 2004b).

[2] In this paper the term "Muslim world" is used to refer to regions of the globe where the majority of the population identify as followers of Islam.

[3] In spite of this radical reputation, Qutb did not represent a radical substantial departure from al-Banna's, as we have argued elsewhere (Work by the author), and he continues to be praised by Brotherhood figures like al-Qaradawi (see below).

[4] For more on al-Qaradawi's thought beyond the contents of this paper, see Work by the author, Work by the author.

and restore the rights of the Palestinians. Those failures contributed to the revival of Islamism, which has become the dominant narrative to articulate feelings of discontent among Muslims.

Islamism has attracted considerable scholarly attention and different explanations have been put forward to explain for its rise and success. They have mostly focused on historical, political and socioeconomic factors, but over the last three decades the phenomenon has also been approached from a Constructivist perspective. The present paper follows in this trend and seeks to analyse Islamism as an identitarian response to the often-traumatic historical events the Muslim world has lived over the past century and a half.

2. EXPLAINING ISLAMISM

There are various competing or complementary explanations to account for the rise of Islamism. Western such as Samuel Huntington, Bernard Lewis and Daniel Pipes assert that Islam is intrinsically political due to its beginnings: Muhammad was both a prophet and the founder of a state. The Islamists themselves agree; according to the Muslim Brotherhood's foremost contemporary scholar, Yusuf al-Qaradawi: "True Islam – as formulated by God – can only be political" (al-Qaradawi, n.d.1). However, this has been questioned by non-Islamist Muslims and by academics. For instance, Talal Asad argues that it is based on an anachronistic projection of the modern categories of "religion" and "state" by XIX-century Orientalists. He points out that the fact that it has been embraced by contemporary Islamists "does not make it *essential to Islam*" (Asad 1997: 190-91, emphasis in the original).

Other authors emphasise the politico-historical context in which Islamism appeared. Charismatic precursor Jamal al-Din al-Afghani was known for his denunciation of British colonialism. Hasan al-Banna claimed that he had been inspired to establish the Muslim Brotherhood while he was a teacher in Ismailia, site of a large British garrison (al-Banna 2012: 82-83). Leading Muslim Brother Sayyid Qutb was radicalised in the prisons of Gamal Abdel Nasser's secularist regime. Shortly afterwards, the Arab defeat in the Six-Day War was widely interpreted as a divine punishment against the postcolonial secular state[5]. As Fattah and Fierke have contended (2009), widespread feelings of injustice, humiliation and betrayal have furthered the success of Islamism.

Some scholars highlight socioeconomic dynamics. In the 1950s Saudi Arabia started financing Islamist groups to offset the ascendancy of leftist forces. The 1970s oil boom attracted to the Gulf large numbers of foreign workers who were influenced by its ultraconservative ethos. Concurrently, resource-poor countries saw rapidly expanding populations flocking to urban areas and experiencing overcrowding, poor employment prospects and a lack of basic services. Islamist organisations stepped in, setting up dispensaries, schools, food banks, etc. and framing popular discontent in politico-religious terms. Around the same time, Anwar al-Sadat decided on the geopolitical realignment of

[5] Gamal Abdel Nasser himself characterised the defeat as a lesson sent by God (Zeghal 1999: 381).

Egypt and leaned on the Islamists to undermine his Nasserist rivals (Gerges 2018, esp. chapter 11)[6]. This combination of factors led to the proliferation of radical Islamist factions (Kepel 1985) as well as to a conspicuous re-Islamisation of society (Wickham 2002).

Beyond those traditional explanations, some scholars have expanded the Constructivist research agenda to Islamism. Adamson (2005) has traced the patterns of norm diffusion and norm promotion by Western-style and Islamist NGOs in Central Asia after the end of the Cold War. Pfeifer (2018) has looked into the alleged Islamist challenge to the world order, comparing the West's discourse on sovereignty to that of Hezbollah's. Bettiza and Dionigi (2014) have studied how the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation has lobbied the United Nations to try to implement an international normative agenda informed by Islam, with mixed results: It accomplished the institutionalisation of inter-civilisational dialogue but failed to outlaw the defamation of religion.

For the sake of exhaustiveness, and given that a small extremist fringe within Islamism advocates violent jihad, it should be mentioned that since 9/11 there have been several studies looking at "Islamic" terrorism from a Constructivist perspective. They have aimed at problematising the dominant interpretation of jihadi terrorism (Krishnaswamy 2012) or at exploring how the figure of the terrorist has been constructed in Western discourse (for a survey of that research, see Hülsse & Spencer 2008).

This paper aims at contributing to that growing body of scholarship by applying Constructivism to the analysis of Islamism. It focuses on the Sunni Arab world due to space constraints but also to the outsized weight of the region across the Muslim world and beyond. The authors studied here have been widely translated and read in other Muslim-majority countries and there has been regular contact between Islamists across regions and branches of Islam. Therefore, much of what is said of Arab Sunni Islamism can be extended to non-Arab and non-Sunni varieties of political Islam[7].

3. A CONSTRUCTIVIST ANALYSIS OF ISLAMISM

There is always an internal-external dynamic to identity formation. Communal identity is fluid and shaped by the behaviour of significant others, i.e. actors with whom the community in question has some kind of power and/or dependency relationship. In his seminal work *Orientalism*, Edward Said posited that the Christian West defined itself in opposition to the Islamic "Orient", a once threatening entity eventually colonised by Western armies and essentialised by Western scholars as decadent, hedonistic, irrational… (Said 1978). More recently, Zehfuss (2002), Uemura (2013) and Gabilondo (2016) have explored the role of

[6] This coincided with a number of high-profile former socialist intellectuals turning to Islamism, e.g. Hasan Hanafi, Tariq al-Bishri, 'Adil Husayn, Khalid Muhammad Khalid (Hatina 2000: 52). Another example if Muhammad 'Imara, whose works are cited in this paper.

[7] An example would be the ideological influence of the Muslim Brotherhood in the Islamic Revolution in Iran (Work by the author).

significant others in the identities of the Federal Republic of Germany, the People's Republic of China and the Basque region, respectively.

Unsurprisingly, the XIX-century Muslim world also construed the West as its significant other. Faced by the military challenge posed by Western powers, Muslim rulers embarked on comprehensive processes of reform – e.g. the Ottoman *Tanzimat* – to modernise the armed forces, the civil service, the administration of justice, the economic and financial sectors, infrastructures… They borrowed heavily from Western banks and gradually fell under the control of foreign creditors. Their states were integrated into the world economy, mainly as providers of raw materials and captive markets. A prominent example was Egypt: Cotton was introduced in the 1820s and within a century it represented over 90 percent of the country's total value of exports (Toledano 1998).

Western-style public schools were set up to provide the knowledge and skills demanded by the expanding state bureaucracies. Western missions were allowed to establish schools to educate – and evangelise – Eastern Christians and attracted increasing numbers of non-Christian pupils. A social cleavage emerged between a minority with the financial and educational resources to take advantage of the new opportunities and a majority who feared for their economic prospects and social status: landless peasants forced to move to the cities, artisans undercut but cheap foreign goods, ulema deprived of their teaching and judicial positions… The rapid pace of change felt destabilising and led to uncertainty, confusion and anxiety. Many felt threatened in their "ontological security", i.e. the sense of stability in their collective self-understanding and self-esteem (Giddens, 1991)[8].

3.1. *Ontological insecurity and evolving identities*

Those emotions are tangible in some of the articles written by Muhammad 'Abduh during the 'Urabi revolt (1879-82), a popular nationalist movement against both British and French interference and the Ottoman elites that ruled Egypt. A member of the emerging indigenous intelligentsia, 'Abduh was an inquisitive and talented young man who had managed to transcend his peasant origins and the rather limited education he had received at al-Azhar. Over the previous decade he had fallen under the sway of Iranian revolutionary scholar Jamal al-Din al-Afghani, who encouraged his followers to become involved in politics and write in the bourgeoning Egyptian print media. By the time of the 'Urbai revolt al-Afghani had been expelled for his subversive activities, but 'Abduh had managed to be appointed editor of *Al-Waqa'i' al-Misriyya*, Egypt's official gazette.

An advocate of reform, 'Abduh believed that Muslims should learn from the West in the fields of science and technology as well as political organisation and he vocally supported constitutional government for Egypt. Nonetheless, he worried that traditional institutions

[8] For examples of the application of Giddens's concept of "ontological security" in International Relations see Kinnvall (2004), Zarakol (2010), Croft (2012), Mitzen (2018).

were being eroded without being replaced by anything steady and felt that Egyptians did not respect Western-inspired laws (ʻAbduh 1881a, 1881b). He favoured gradualism so that the people could assimilate the changes taking place and, given the importance of religion in Muslim societies, he insisted that those changes should be grounded on Islam:

> For to attempt reform by means of a culture or philosophy that is not religious in character, would require the erection of a new structure, for which neither materials nor workmen are available. If the religion of Muslims can work these ends and has their confidence, why seek for other means? (Cited in Adams 2000: 110)

When the British invaded Egypt with the pretext of restoring order, public figures associated to the ʻUrabi revolt were sent into exile and ʻAbduh moved to Beirut. In 1884 al-Afghani asked him to join him in Paris and together they launched *Al-ʻUrwa al-Wuthqà* (The Firmest Bond), a weekly journal which appealed for Islamic unity in the face of Western colonialism – especially Britain's, due to the two men's personal experience. It also promoted Islamic reform, or rather the idea that Muslims should return to the truth of their religion, which urged them to pursue knowledge. The journal's circulation was hindered by its banning in the territories controlled by the British and it discontinued publication after only 18 issues, but it had considerable impact on the Muslim world in ensuing decades.

Al-Afghani and ʻAbduh were quick to react to Orientalist attacks against Islam. During his stay in France, al-Afghani wrote a "Réponse" to a lecture in which French philosopher Ernest Renan asserted that Islam is an obstacle to progress and that Semitic peoples are incapable of science and philosophy (reproduced in Capdepuy n.d.). The Iranian reasonably retorted that all religions initially inhibit the development of science and rhetorically asked: "How does the Muslim religion differ on this point from other religions?" (ibid., p. 12).[9] As for ʻAbduh, his polemics with critics of Islam included an exchange with French historian Gabriel Hanotaux, who declared "Arian" Christian civilisation superior to "Semitic" Muslim civilisation. In his rejoinder, he reminded Hanotaux that "[t]he first spark that kindled Western spirits and elevated them to the state of civilisation emanated from the ignited torch whose light spread from al-Andalus" (ʻAbduh 1900: 222).

But despite their condemnation of colonialism and their spirited defence of Islam, al-Afghani and ʻAbduh were not hostile to the West. They had European friends and visited Europe often, and they admired its scientific and technological prowess and its more egalitarian political structures. *Al-ʻUrwa al-Wuthqà* repeatedly used the concept of *sunnat Allah* (divine law) to explain the progress of Europeans and the backwardness of Muslims, asserting that God grants success to those who abide by His commandments whatever their

[9] Al-Afghani's "Réponse" fuelled rumours that he was an atheist and his disciples tried to prevent its dissemination in the Arab world. Kedourie reproduces a letter from ʻAbduh reassuring his master that he had managed to avoid, or at least postpone, its translation into Arabic (Kedourie 1966: 44-45).

religion (al-Afghani & ʻAbduh 1884: 139, 156-57, 186, 195-201).[10] On a similar note, ʻAbduh is widely quoted as saying: "I went to the West and found Islam, but I did not find Muslims. I returned to the East and I found Muslims, but I did not find Islam."

ʻAbduh's disciple Rashid Rida had a very different attitude to that hegemonic Other. Born in a village in modern-day Lebanon, he met ʻAbduh in Beirut and upon finishing his studies he moved to Cairo, following in the path of many other Levantine intellectuals who emigrated to Egypt in search of a freer intellectual atmosphere, and persuaded the older man to collaborate with him. He travelled to Europe only once, in 1921, with the Syrian-Palestinian Congress that presented the case for Arab independence before the League of Nations. He subsequently witnessed the imposition of the British and French mandates in the Levant and the consolidation of the Zionist project in Palestine.

Aside from his political grievances, Rida disapproved of the relaxation of mores he perceived around him: the adoption of Western values and practices, the proliferation of bars and cinemas, the growing presence of women in the public sphere… He believed that Western culture was materialistic and immoral due to its having distanced itself from religion (e.g. Rida 2015: 68, 75, 112). In 1933 he published *Al-Wahi al-Muhammadi* as a work of *daʻwa* (invitation to Islam) addressed to "the freethinkers of the materialist civilisation of Europe and Japan" (Rida 2005: 8-9). After expounding his arguments, he urged them:

> Take up the call to this faith and use it to treat the ills of contemporary society, after your vast science and your precise philosophy have proved unable to stop the contagion of depravity, the worship of appetites and the chaos of ideas! (ibid. 259)

Rida spread his thought through *Al-Manar*, the journal he founded in 1898 and he continued editing almost singlehandedly until his death in 1935. One of his readers was the schoolteacher Hasan al-Banna, who established the Muslim Brotherhood in 1928. Al-Banna shared Rida's negative perception of the West, as he wrote in his memoirs about his life in Cairo as a student:

> During the period I spent in Cairo after the last war (1914-1918), the flow of decomposition intensified in souls, opinions and ideas in the name of intellectual emancipation, and in paths, morals and actions in the name of personal freedom. The wave of atheism and debauchery was mighty, overwhelming, unstoppable […] I was in great pain to see my beloved Egyptian nation oscillating in its social life between the dear Islam it had inherited and protected, was familiar with and had cherished for fourteen centuries, and this Western onslaught equipped with the lethal weapons of money and prestige, ostentation and hedonism, power and means of propaganda. (Al-Banna 2012: 54, 56)

[10] They would continue repeating this idea after they parted ways, e.g. al-Afghani cited in al-Makhzumi 2002: 71, 86-7, 121, 241-2; ʻAbduh 1897: 464-5; 1902: 302-4.

The veracity of al-Banna's recollections has been questioned; he might have been projecting onto the past his feelings when he was writing these words in the 1940s[11]. Whatever might be the case, Islamist discourse have become characterised by these essentialising portrayals of Western and Islamist civilisations – the former as atheist, materialistic and immoral; the latter as pious, spiritual and righteous.

3.2. The founding myth and the return to an idealised past

Identities are often connected to a founding myth that explains the birth of the community and what makes it distinct from its neighbours. That myth also provides temporal continuity in spite of the vicissitudes of history and the actions of the community's enemies and adversaries. Constructivist literature abounds in examples of founding myths and their political use, e.g. the battle of Kosovo in Serbian nationalism (Labarre 2007: 40-2), the Long March in CCP symbology (Forsby 2015: 186-91), or the "Basque matter" (*materia vasconica*) that distinguishes Basque people (Gabilondo 2016).

For Islamists, the founding myth is the establishment of the first Islamic community in Yathrib/Medina after prophet Muhammad's Hijra (emigration from Mecca) in 622, which marks the beginning of the Islamic calendar. Since then, the character of the Umma (Islamic community) may have been adulterated by internal forces such as corrupt rulers or inept ulema, or by external forces such as colonialism, but it was never completely lost and therefore it can be restored to its pristine essence.

As mentioned above, al-Afghani and 'Abduh contended that the problems afflicting Muslims were largely due to their deviating from the true teachings of Islam. Armed with this argument, they circumvented the *fiqh* (jurisprudence) developed by Islamic scholars over the centuries and went straight to the sources of Islam, the Qur'an and the Sunna. They demanded "the reopening of the door of *ijtihad*[12]", which according to (disputed[13]) tradition had been closed to protect Islamic orthodoxy. In the words of al-Afghani:

> What does it mean, that the gate of *ijtihad* is closed? By what text was it closed? Which imam said that after him no Muslim should use his personal judgment to delve into religion, guided by the Qur'an and the authentic Sunna, and devote himself to enlarging his understanding by deducing, through *qiyas* [analogy], what is appropriate in the light of contemporary knowledge and needs. (Al-Afghani in al-Makhzumi 2002: 151)

[11] Al-Banna's memoirs are contradicted by other sources, such as his letters to his father and a report written by a group that split from the Muslim Brotherhood in the early 1930s (Lia 2015).

[12] *Ijtihad* is the "effort" of interpretation of the Qur'an and the Sunna by an ulema.

[13] The date traditionally given for that closure was the X century C.E., but according to Hallaq there was no talk of closing the door of *ijtihad* until the XII century, and even after that date *ijtihad* continued without being identified as such (Hallaq 1984).

'Abduh wrote in his autobiography that his main aim in life was to restore the original message of Islam, which in his view was compatible with reason and encouraged the pursuit of science:

> The first issue [I focused on] was on liberating thought from the chains of *taqlid* ["imitation", but also "tradition"] to understand Islam as *salaf al-umma* [the pious ancestors] did before discrepancies emerged. In order to do that it is essential to go back to the original sources and to weigh religion in the balance that God placed in human reason to avoid its excesses and reduce its errors, thus preserving the human order prescribed by divine wisdom. In this light, Islam is a friend of science that impels to explore the secrets of Creation, admonishes to respect the immutable truths, and demands that they be relied on to educate the spirit and amend behaviours. ('Abduh in 'Imara 1993b: 310)

Rida also supported reform but he was more conservative and given to literalism in the interpretation of the texts, which would eventually lead him to embrace the Hanbali school of *fiqh*[14]. He increasingly quoted Hanbali scholars, especially Ibn Taymiyya and his disciple, Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya (1292-1350), and became a vocal champion of 'Abd al-'Aziz ibn Saud, who in his eyes personified the renewal the Islamic world so desperately needed. In an editorial published in *Al-Manar* in 1926 Rida celebrated Ibn Saud's conquest of the Hejaz, declaring that his victory heralded "a new and long-awaited phase for Islam, the time to reinvigorate its guidance and restore its glory" (*Al-Manar* XVII: 11).

Al-Banna also looked to the past to revive the fortunes of the Umma but as the leader of a sociopolitical movement he was mostly concerned with practicalities. He recommended his followers:

> Strive to revive Islamic customs and to eradicate foreign customs in all aspects of life! This includes greetings, language, the calendar, dress, furniture, times of work and rest, food and drink, arriving and departing, expressing sadness and joy, and so on. To this end, inquire into the Pure Sunna. (Al-Banna 1943)

More recently, al-Qaradawi has written about the sources of the so-called *Sahwa Islamiyya* (Islamic Awakening) that began in the 1970s. He rejected conventional explanations such as economic factors, the psychological effects of the 1967 defeat and Sadat's policies (al-Qaradawi 2016a: 110ff), insisting on the inevitability of such an awakening:

> It is the nature of the Umma not to be estranged from its consciousness for long. This is because of the nature of what it believes in, Islam; because it listens to the Qur'an all day long; and because the lives of its Messenger, peace be upon him, and of its

[14] The Hanbali school is one of the four extant *madhahib* (pl. of *mahdab*, school of Islamic jurisprudence) of Sunni jurisprudence. They are eponymously named after the ulema that established them between the beginning of the VIII and the end of the IX century of the Common Era: Abu Hanifa, Malik bin Anas, al-Shafi'i and Ibn Hanbal.

> heroes are never absent from its memory. It is in the nature of Islam to wake [the Umma] from slumber and revive it from lifelessness. (ibid.: 113)

Al-Azmeh uses the term "deterministic historism" to denote the belief that the underlying nature of a culture or people does not change and will eventually reaffirm itself:

> [T]he passage of history amounts to so many conjunctural bumps that leave the underlying essence whole. Neither conjuncture nor future, in this register, are history; they are rather redactions of ethnological destiny. Secularisation and modernisation, not to speak of secularism and modernism, are in effect pronounced illusory because they do not form part of the narrative of destiny. (Al-Azmeh 2020: 13)

For his part, Jung talks of an "inversed version of teleology" to refer to the "[h]istorical narratives of decay and the restoration of an ideal past" that characterise Islamism (Jung 2021: 6). He points out that such narratives were shaped by XIX-century European critiques of liberal modernity, and he specifically mentions Hungarian Orientalist Ignaz Goldziher, who joined al-Afghani's study circle during his stay in Cairo, describing Goldziher's mid-1870s tour of the Middle East as "a perfect example of the factual entanglement of Muslim and European intellectuals in the construction of modern images of Islam" (ibid.).

3.3. Identity as the basis for interests and behaviour

In a much-cited paper published in 2004, Smith drew attention to the value of identity analysis in political science. Reflecting on the link between identities, interests and behaviours, he wrote:

> People's beliefs that they owe primary allegiance to some political memberships, along with the conviction of others that they are likely to hold such beliefs, have major consequences for how people understand their political interests, how they act, and how others act toward them on a range of politically significant matters. (Smith 2004: 304)

Within the broad ideology of Islamism, individuals and groups identify a variety of objectives and use differing strategies to achieve them. Radicals such as al-Qaeda and Daesh strive to establish a global caliphate and deem violence a legitimate tool to bring it about. However, most Islamists wish to create an Islamic state within current state borders. In pursuit of that goal, they work both from below, proselytising and offering services to the needy, and from above, taking part in elections to influence the political agenda and eventually be elected to form a government.

The first efforts to formulate a modern theory of the Islamic state go back to the Ottoman Empire's defeat in World War I. Rashid Rida, who had become disenchanted with the Empire due to the nationalist and secularist policies of the ruling Committee of Union and

Progress, saw this as an opportunity for a sweeping overhaul of the caliphate. In 1922 he published a series of articles in Al-Manar which would subsequently appear separately as *Al-khilafa, aw al-imama al-uzmà* (The caliphate, or great imamate). This work repeatedly cited the authority of medieval jurists such as al-Mawardi and al-Ghazali while placing at the core of the caliphal institution the concept of *shurà*, the process of consultation recommended in the Qur'an and practised by prophet Muhammad and his four immediate successors, the Rightly-Guided Caliphs.

Rida had in the past conceded that in spite all its drawbacks, the European presence had at least helped Muslims rediscover consultative government (Al-Manar X: 282-283). In *Al-khilafa* he went further and argued that the classical theory of the caliphate already contained the main elements of Western democracy, with sovereignty residing in the Muslim community and the caliph's advisors, *ahl al-ḥall wa-l-ʿaqd* ("those who bind and loose"), being the equivalent of a parliament:

> In Islam there is a legislative power, authorised by God and delegated by the Umma, which resides in the people of knowledge, opinion and leadership sitting in *shurà*. Sovereign power actually resides in the Umma […]. The caliph has no right to invalidate or contradict its consensus or to oppose its representatives, *ahl al-hall wa-l-'aqd*. (Rida 2015: 89-90)

The difference between this version of the caliphate and the Western parliamentary system was the rejection of secularism, understood as the confinement of religion to the private sphere. As Rida explains, the representatives of the people, *ahl al-hall wa-l-'aqd*, should be experts in the Qur'an and the Sunna and their decisions would have to abide by the boundaries set by those texts (ibid. 90)[15].

Rida was eager to prove that Islam could provide the comprehensive legal system a modern state demanded. He argued that the ruler of an Islamic state should use the instruments of *fiqh* – notably *ijtihad* and *maslaha*[16] – to extend the rulings of the Qur'an and the Sunna to new domains (Dallal 2000: 357). That way, the modern caliphate would become a *nizam tamm* (complete system, Rida 2015: 77-78). This was a departure from Islamic history, in which there were two types of law: *fiqh* (jurisprudence), which Islamic scholars derived from

[15] Mahmoud Haddad contends that Hamid Enayat is wrong to say that Rida deemed the ulema the most suitable representatives of the people, citing a volume of *Tafsir al-Manar* published years earlier in which Rida wrote that contemporary *ahl al-hall wa-l-ʿaqd* should belong to different professions (Haddad 1997: 274). Nonetheless, in Rida's project for the caliphate religious knowledge is an explicit requirement for those representatives. He even envisioned a special college to form legislators alongside future candidates to the imamate and their advisors, ulema, judges, muftis, preachers, etc. (Rida 2015: 77). Tellingly, Yasushi describes Rida's model of Islamic state as a forerunner to Khomeini's *Wilayat-e faqih* (Yasushi 2006: 27).

[16] *Maslaha* ("common good") denotes permitting or prohibiting something in the light of the circumstances if it is in the interest of the Muslim community.

the sacred sources; and *siyasa* (administration, policy), drafted by the rulers to manage the affairs of the state[17].

Al-Banna picked up Rida's idea and spoke of *shumuliyyat al-Islam* (the 'totality' or 'comprehensiveness' of Islam):

> Islam is a comprehensive system concerned with all aspects of life. It is state and homeland, government and Umma. It is morality and strength, mercy and justice. It is culture and law, science and jurisprudence. It is substance and wealth, profit and prosperity. It is jihad and *da'wa*, army and idea. It is true creed and correct worship, indistinctively. (Al-Banna 1943)

Modern mainstream Islamists have given up on the caliphate, at most paying lip service to its restoration[18]. Meanwhile, the notion of Islam as a comprehensive system has become one of the pillars of Islamist thought, as exemplified by the words of Yusuf al-Qaradawi:

> We believe in the *shumuliyyat al-Islam*. Islam is not just spirituality. Islam is religion and worldly life, da'wa and state, belief and law, truth and strength. Islam is industry and agriculture. Islam is art. Islam is in everything. We don't believe in the fragmentation implied in calling this *da'wa shumuliyya* ['comprehensive' call] to Islam, 'political Islam.' (Al-Qaradawi on Al-Jazeera 2004a).

On the other hand, the process of identifying Islamic precursors to (desirable) modern Western institutions has continued, with the purpose of legitimising the adoption of those institutions while stressing the relevance of the Islamic heritage. For instance, al-Banna's reference to social contract theory:

> When Abu Bakr[19], may God be pleased with him, first took command and ascended the pulpit, he said: 'Oh, people, I used to work for my family and I gained strength from them. Now I work for you, so assign [payment] for me from your treasury.' He thus provided the best explanation for the theory of the social contract. Indeed, he laid its foundation, for it is nothing but a contract between the nation and the ruler to take care of the public interest. If he does well, he is rewarded; if he does wrong, he is punished. (Al-Banna 1947)

Similarly, al-Qaradawi depicted the Constitution of Medina (in Arabic, *Sahifat al-Madina*) – a pact signed by the town's different communities, Muslims, Jews and polytheists, after the

[17] As Quraishi-Landes explains: "Siyasa laws were typically pragmatic, governance-related laws, covering topics like taxes, security, marketplace regulation, and public safety – i.e., things necessary for public order, but about which the scripture says little" (Quraishi-Landes 2015: 557).

[18] The notable exception being Hizb ut-Tahrir, which aims at reestablishing the caliphate through nonviolent means.

[19] Abu Bakr was one of prophet Muhammad's closest Companions and became the first caliph after his death.

Hijra (prophet Muhammad's migration from Mecca) – as a precursor to the modern concept of citizenship:

> The Messenger, may God's prayers and peace be upon him, organised relations in Medina with a constitution that brought together its residents, Muslims and non-Muslims, to assure them that the divine law protected everyone's freedoms and beliefs. The constitution was a guaranteed of the rights of all, tantamount to a citizenship contract between the people of the city (al-Qaradawi 2016b).

This willingness to embrace Western institutions and ideas shows that Islamism is not a rejection of modernity per se, but of a certain version of it: the European variety, according to which modernity dictates secularisation (Pasha 2012: 1965). The imposition of such a model, first by colonial administrations and later by postcolonial authoritarian regimes, provoked a backlash in the form of an attempt to turn Islam into the source of political authority and legitimacy. Concurrently, the depiction of Islam as a comprehensive sociopolitical system was a response to the unprecedented expansion in the power of the modern state, which provided such a framework (Asad 1997, 190-91).

3.4. The reinvention of tradition

As the previous section illustrates, Islamism is similar to other identitarian movements such as nationalisms in that it seeks legitimation in elements of the past and sometimes reinvents them to reinforce its narrative. Referring to the phenomenon of reinventing customs and rituals to legitimise modern political agendas, Hobsbawm has written:

> [W]e should expect [the invention of tradition] to occur more frequently when a rapid transformation of society weakens or destroys the social patterns for which 'old' traditions had been designed, producing new ones to which they were not applicable, or when such old traditions and their institutional carriers and promulgators no longer prove sufficiently adaptable or flexible, or are otherwise eliminated: in short, when there are sufficiently large and rapid changes on the demand or the supply side. (Hobsbawm 1983: 4-5)

The Muslim world was undergoing changes both in the supply and the demand side, to use Hobsbawm expression: On the one hand, the old institutions were no longer suited to a political, economic and cultural environment disturbed by Western expansionism and modern scientific and political ideas. Conversely, many Muslims felt attracted to those ideas. In this context, traditions were rediscovered or even invented aiming to offer supposedly culturally authentic answers and solutions for a changing world.

In the previous section we saw some manifestations of that phenomenon, namely Rida's reinvention of the caliphate as a modern (Islamic) state and al-Banna's and al-Qaradawi's reinterpretation of episodes of Islamic history. However, it arguably reached its peak with

Abu-l-A'la Maududi (1903-79). Maududi established Jamaat-e-Islami in British India in 1941 to oppose Muhammad Ali Jinah's secularist Muslim League. He invented a new usage for the term *Jahiliyya* (the pre-Islamic period of "ignorance" of the one, true God): he applied it to describe contemporary Muslim societies, which he accused of deviating from Islam[20]. Egyptian Muslim Brother Sayyid Qutb adopted the neologism, which he explained as follows:

> A Jahiliyya society is any society other than a Muslim society. If we wanted to define it objectively, we would say that it is every society that does not worship God alone. […] According to this objective definition, all existing societies on Earth are, in reality, Jahiliyya societies! (1979: 88-9)

Maududi worked tirelessly to turn Pakistan into an Islamic state, which he legitimised by coining another neologism which was also popularised by Qutb: *hakimiyya*. Qutb explained its meaning as follows:

> The basis upon which the Islamic system is based is different from the rules upon which all human systems are based. It is based on the premise that *hakimiyya* is God's alone, for He is the only one who legislates. All other systems are based on human *hakimiyya*; humans are the ones who legislate for themselves (Qutb 1995: 76).

Some promoters of the concept – presumably non-speakers of Arabic – cite the Qur'an to justify its validity:

> Islam is fully endowed with sovereignty (*hakimiyyah* in Arabic), which is clearly stated in the Qur'an: 'O Allah, Lord of Sovereignty! Thou givest sovereignty to whom thou pleases, and takest away sovereignty from whom thou pleases. Thou exaltest whom thou pleases, and basest whom thou pleases. In thy hand is all good for thou hast power over all thing.' (Adiong 2019: 47).

Bizarrely, the word in the Qur'anic verse translated as "sovereignty" is not *hakimiyya*, but *mulk* (power, ownership). In fact, *hakimiyya* was a neologism built on the root of the modern word for "government" (*hukm*, which in the Qur'an is only used to allude to divine judgement).

Beyond politics, there have been attempts to extend the idea of Islam as a "complete" system to all facets of life, e.g. the field of science. Initially many Muslims, like many Christians before them, felt uneasy about modern science, which seemed to clash with central dogmas of their faith. They responded by reinterpreting the Qur'an in the light of modern science to counter allegations that it contradicted some tenets of Islam.

[20] For a discussion of perceptions of the Jahiliyya period throughout Islamic history and of how the Islamists' conception constitutes "a figment of their imagination, based rather on their own ignorance of the intellectual history of Islam," see Asfaruddin (2006: 167-69).

Al-Afghani and ʻAbduh were part of that trend. The Iranian stated that if there appeared to be a contradiction between science and a Qur'anic verse, the latter should be understood allegorically (al-Afghani in al-Makhzumi 2002: 138). As an example, he construed the verse "and after that He spread out the Earth" (Qur'an 79:30) as an allusion to the Earth's roundness, because it uses the word *daha*, which means "egg" in the dialect of the Bedouins (ibid. 141).

For his part, ʻAbduh linked the punishment to usurers mentioned in the Qur'an ("the touch of Satan") to epilepsy (cited in Adams 1968: 137)[21] and identified *jinn* (demons) with microbes (ibid.)[22]. He also referred to the laws of natural selection and survival of the fittest in his exegesis of Qur'an 2:251, "Had God not repelled some of the people by means of others, the Earth would have been corrupted" (cited in Kerr 1966: 130).

Over time, the efforts to reconcile scripture and modern science evolved into a discipline to prove the "scientific miracle" (*al-iʻjaz al-ʻilmi*) of the Qur'an, i.e. to demonstrate that the holy book contains scientific knowledge (e.g. on embryology, astronomy, relativity and quantum mechanics) that was not obvious to its original recipients but has been corroborated by modern science. This type of exegesis is promoted and financed by institutions like the Muslim World League, which in 1984 set up the Commission on Scientific Signs in the Quran and Sunnah, and has gained some popularity among Muslims. Others – such as Pakistani nuclear physicist Pervez Hoodbhoy – dismiss it as "obscurantist nonsense" (Hoodbhoy 1987: 153).

In fact, since the 1970s there has been a movement advocating the "Islamisation of knowledge" to bring an end to the "educational dualism (secular-religious) in the Muslim societies that has resulted in its [*sic*] economic backwardness, political regression and intellectual retardation" (Obaidullah 2010). The project was launched by Palestinian-American philosopher Ismail al-Faruqi (1921-1986), who became an Islamist in the US after joining the Muslim Students Association (Siddiqui 1999: 15). Al-Faruqi established the International Institute of Islamic Thought in Herndon, Virginia, in 1981.

Likewise, Islamism has shaped perceptions on human rights. It was behind the Cairo Declaration of Human Rights in Islam (CDHRI) issued by Organisation of Islamic Cooperation in 1990 as a response to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR). The Islamic Republic of Iran, which has denounced the UDHR as "a collection of secularized ideas informed by Judeo-Christian traditions incompatible with Sharia" (cited in Kayaoglu 2020), had a crucial role in the drafting of the CDHRI, which has been criticised for discriminating

[21] ʻAbduh's exegesis of Qur'an 2:275 (Adams misidentifies it as 2:276), in which he explained that Arabs used to believe that epileptics had been touched by Satan (Adams 1968: 138).

[22] For more such interpretations, see Adams 1968: 134-43.

against women and religious and sexual minorities and for failing to protect fundamental rights such as freedom of religion and expression[23].

Maybe the most remarkable example of Islamist success in reinventing tradition has been the so-called *zi islami* (Islamic dress). It began to be adopted by Muslim women in Egypt in the 1970s, starting with those within the orbit of Islamist organisations, to symbolise their commitment to traditional values and the rejection of "secular" norms like gender mixing. Those garments, including the now ubiquitous hijab, were "not styles that the women's mothers or grandmothers had ever donned [...] [It] was unmistakably *modern* dress" (Ahmed 2011: 83; emphasis in the original). Narratives evolve, of course, and the hijab is now worn by many Muslim women as a symbol of identity, especially in the West (ibid. chapters 9 to 11).

Staying on the subject of rights, Islamist feminists assert that Islam granted women equality long before the West did – although "her domestic and social function calls her to duties different from those of a man" –, and that their current subordinate status in Muslim societies is a deviation from Muhammad's example and Qur'anic teachings (Yassine 2003: 377ff). It is unclear how these assertions can be reconciled with Qur'anic injunctions proclaiming that men have authority over women and can take up to four wives, or that women should only receive half as much in inheritance as their male relatives[24] – injunctions explicitly endorsed by male Islamists like al-Qaradawi[25].

3.5. The exclusion of the internal Other

Identities are defined against an external Other, but they can also be deployed against those within the confines of the imagined community. For example, the French Third Republic asserted itself by separating from the Catholic Church and curtailing its power, and henceforth *laicité* became one of the central features of "Frenchness". For its supporters, secularism makes all citizens equal by giving them a common identity based on national belonging, but it has been increasingly criticised in the light of policies like the hijab ban in state schools, which was widely perceived as targeting the Muslim community. Mabilon-Bonfils and Zoia have deconstructed *laicité* by casting doubt over its alleged neutrality and drawing attention to the experience of young people of foreign extraction, for whom the

[23] Kayaoglu (2020) provides a helpful overview of the origins and provisions of the CDHRI and recent developments, including a new draft of the document.

[24] See Qur'an 4:34 and 4:11. Muslim feminists such as Amina Wadud (2008) have engaged in the process of reinterpreting the most controversial verses of the Qur'an. However, their efforts have failed to gain much traction and they have accused of taking too many liberties with the Qur'anic text. For a sympathetic critique, see Hidayatullah 2014.

[25] Al-Qaradawi justifies those injunctions by claiming that men are more rational than women, that they bear more responsibilities, and that there is a natural surplus of women and some would be left without a husband if polygamy did not exist (al-Qaradawi in Al-Jazeera 2005a, 2005b; al-Qaradawi 2000c: 65).

imposition of secularism is "a weapon of denial, even contempt, for [their] daily, distinct experiences of relegation and humiliation" (Mabilon-Bonfils & Zoïa 2014: 16).

In the case of Islamism, the internal Others are Muslims who reject the Islamist project, particularly those who champion the separation of religion and politics. An early example was al-Azhar educated Egyptian *qadi*[26] 'Ali 'Abd al-Raziq, who published *Al-Islam wa-usul al-hukm* (Islam and the foundations of rule) in 1925. Writing shortly after the abolition of the caliphate, 'Abd al-Raziq asserted that this was not to be lamented because in reality Islam does not provide a framework for government, and that the link between religion and politics had damaged both domains and led to stagnation and decadence. His work was well received by intellectuals and reformists but it was harshly criticised by conservatives and by the palace, which was hoping to claim the title of caliph for King Fuad I.

Al-Azhar led a virulent campaign against 'Abd al-Raziq which resulted in him being stripped of his position and of his right to practise law. Rida contributed to the controversy, publishing a scathing review of *Al-Islam wa-usul al-hukm* which started with these words:

> The enemies of Islam continue to endeavour to topple its throne, destroy its dominion, invalidate its laws and enslave the peoples that worship God through its teachings. They resort to fire and the sword, cunning and deceit, ideas and attitudes. They pervert doctrines and morals, attack the essence and character of the Muslim community, sever all the ties that bind together individuals and peoples so that they become easier for the covetous to devour, prey to the beasts of colonialism. (*Al-Manar* XXVI: 100)

The establishment of secular nation-states in the Muslim world after the colonial period was vehemently rejected by the Islamist movement. As we have seen, in Qutb's eyes, the choice was stark and unambiguous:

> There are only two choices. Either responding to God and the Messenger or following [human] whims. Either divine rule or Jahiliyya rule. Either rule by all that was revealed by God or rebellion against what was revealed by God. (ibid. 150)

This quote comes from Qutb's last and most notorious work, *Ma'alim fi-l-tariq* (Milestones), in which he brandished the weapon of *takfir* (excommunication) against contemporary Muslim societies for not abiding by the precepts of Islam. He was embittered by what he saw as the betrayal of the Muslim Brotherhood, which had supported the 1952 Free Officers' Revolution only to be pushed aside, and was radicalised by years of mistreatment in the Nasserist prisons. Shortly afterwards he was put on trial for his participation in a coup plot and was executed. The Brotherhood's leadership publicly distanced itself from Qutb's most radical ideas in the late 1970s but he continues to be well regarded within the organisation

[26] A *qadi* is a judge in a Sharia court.

and in mainstream Islamist circles (e.g. Ikhwan Online 2021, al-Qaradawi n.d.2, 1994: 188-9, 2016c)[27].

Qutb called for violent jihad to realise the Islamic order he advocated, but he argued that the objective of that jihad was not be to impose such an order but to remove the obstacles in its way. Once the people were free to know Islam, they would inevitably choose to submit to it (Qutb 1979, esp. 55-82). Interestingly, al-Qaradawi used similar reasoning to explain the first Islamic conquests:

> Even in the countries where the Islamic armies entered as conquerors, their intention was to remove the material obstacles from the path of Islam so that its call would reach the people and they could choose for themselves. And the people chose this religion willingly. The Umayyad governors in Egypt even imposed the *jizya* [tax paid by non-Muslims] on those who converted to Islam due to the large number of converts, until [caliph] 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Aziz abolished that practice with his famous assertion to his governor: 'God sent Muhammad as a guide, not as a tax collector.' (Al-Qaradawi 2001: 34)

This telling anecdote shows that far from embarking on the conquests to facilitate the spread Islam, the Muslim conquerors were not always keen for the population of the new territories of the Empire to convert. 'Umar ibn 'Abd al-'Aziz, who is remembered for his piety, did oppose discrimination against new converts but he only ruled for two and a half years and his efforts were ultimately ineffective (Yahaya 2015: 836). In reality, Islamisation was a long-drawn process driven by factors like avoidance of the *jizya* (which was often high and accompanied by humiliating rituals), the pursuit of social mobility and the Arabicisation of the bureaucracy (Wood 2016).

More recently, al-Qaradawi penned a work titled *Our slandered history* to respond to the secularists "who are hostile to the Sharia and want us to import our values, ideas, laws and traditions from the West" (al-Qaradawi 2006: 5). He added:

> The enemies of the Umma [Muslim community] want to erase our historical memory so that we become disconnected from our past, forget our glories, lay dust on our heritage and civilization and start from scratch, like a nation with no history. And if they prove unable to erase our memory, they seek to corrupt it, filling it with false, deceptive or forged information about the Umma's message, civilization, history, men and heritage. (ibid. 6)

Al-Qaradawi is here referring to Muslims who do not see a contradiction between their religious identity and a critical perspective on Islamic history, but the Islamist project is also opposed by those who do not wish to live in a state dominated by a group of self-appointed

[27] Al-Qaradawi wrote warmly of Qutb, dubbing him a "martyr", and attributed his abuse of *takfir* to the repression he suffered (al-Qaradawi n.d.2, 2016c).

guardians of the faith, resist the homogenising impulse towards this particular understanding of Islam, and/ or reject compulsory belonging to an ascriptive community determined by religion of birth. They are prime targets of Islamist hostility because they shake the illusion of ontological security provided by the Islamist narrative[28].

4. CONCLUSIONS

This paper has used Constructivism to analyse the genesis and evolution of Islamism. It has traced the phenomenon back to the second half of the XIX century, when much of the Muslim world was occupied or threatened by European armies and Islam came under the intense scrutiny of European Orientalists. These circumstances posed a threat to Muslims' ontological security just as they were developing their own version of modernity. Scholars like Jamal al-Din al-Afghani and Muhammad 'Abduh reacted by calling for Muslim unity and positing that Muslims should rediscover the true teachings of Islam and selectively adopt Western advances in science, technology and politics.

Rashid Rida lived through the imposition of the British and French mandates in his native Levant after World War I and the accelerated spread of Western ideas and mores in the Muslim world. Keen to prove that Muslim countries could become successful members of the Western-dominated international order, he reformulated the classical theory of the caliphate to show that the latter contained all the institutions required by a modern state.

Rida inspired Hasan al-Banna, who rejected Western values and practices, encouraged the revival of Islamic traditions and promoted a "comprehensive" Islam with directives and rulings for every aspect of existence. Such version of Islam, which is at the core of Islamism, is thoroughly modern in that it represents a response to the all-encompassing nature of the modern nation state and it has often involved the (re)invention of traditions.

Islamism entails two essentialisations: that of the West, characterised as materialistic, immoral and decadent; and that of the Islamic Umma, depicted as devout, honourable and righteous. This is, of course, a reflection of and a reaction to the Orientalist essentialisation of Muslim civilisation that came to dominate, and still influences, European discourse on Islam. Moreover, the Islamist narrative portrays history as a process of decay from an idealised past and holds the deterministic conviction that a return to that past is possible, even inevitable.

At this point it should be reiterated that this paper has focused on mainstream Sunni Islamism in the Arab world, especially in Egypt. Its outsize impact should not make us overlook the diversity within political Islam; even among the organisations linked to the Muslim Brotherhood there are substantial differences in attitude, behaviour and rhetoric due to local conditions. For instance, after the Arab Spring the Tunisian Ennahda Movement proved to be substantially more open to cooperation with other political forces than the

[28] Bennoune (2013) has written on the climate of fear in communities threatened by Islamist extremists from Lahore to Algiers to Minneapolis, and on community efforts to resist their impositions.

Egyptian Brotherhood. Therefore, analyses of the construction of Islamist identity in other countries and regions would be needed for a more nuanced picture.

Another line for future enquiry could be comparing Islamism to other identitarian ideologies like Hindutva nationalism, Sinhalese Buddhist nationalism or religious Zionism. Despite their traditionalist rhetoric they are all eminently modern projects, seek a symbiosis of religion and politics, exalt a particular religious community, reject Enlightenment notions of progress, liberalism and universal human rights and aspire to return to a romanticised past. Nonetheless, they all have their own peculiarities derived from their historical, geographical and cultural context, and comparative case studies can throw some light on their similarities and differences.

REFERENCES

'Abduh, Muhammad (1881a) "Khata' al-'uqala' (1)". *Al-Waqa'i' al-misriyya* (4 April), in 'Imara (1993a), 323-326.

----- (1881b) "Kalam fi khata' al-'uqala' (2)". *Al-Waqa'i' al-misriyya* (7 April), in 'Imara (1993a), 327-330.

----- (1897) *Risalat al-Tawhid*, in 'Imara (1993b), 369-490.

----- (1900) *Al-radd 'ala Hanotaux. Al-islam al-muslimun wa-l-isti'mar*, in 'Imara (1993c), 217-256.

----- (1902) *Al-radd 'ala Farah Antun. Al-idhtihad fi al-nasraniyya wa-l-islam*, in 'Imara (1993b), 257-368.

Adams, Charles C. (2000 [1933]) *Islam and Modernism in Egypt*. London & New York: Routledge.

Adamson, Fiona B. (2005) "Global Liberalism Versus Political Islam: Competing Ideological Frameworks in International Politics". *International Studies Review* 7, 547-569.

Al-Afghani, Jamal al-Din & 'Abduh, Muhammad (1884) *Al-'Urwà al-Wuthqà*, in Khosroshahi (2000), 59-486.

Ahmed, Leila (2011) *A Quiet Revolution. The Veil's Resurgence, from the Middle East to America*. New Haven & London: Yale University Press.

Asad, Talal (1997) "Europe Against Islam: Islam in Europe". *The Muslim World* 87, 183-195.

Asfaruddin, Asma (2006) "The 'Islamic State': Genealogy, Facts, and Myths". *Journal of Church and State* 48/1, 153-173.

Al-Azmeh, Aziz (2020) "Secularism and its Enemies". Working Paper Series of the Centre for Advanced Studies in the Humanities and Social Sciences, Leipzig University, in https://doi.org/10.36730/2020.1.msbwbm.15 (accessed 7/4/2025).

Al-Banna, Hasan (1943) "Risalat al-ta'alim". *Ikhwanwiki*, in https://www.ikhwanwiki.com/index.php?title=%D8%B1%D8%B3%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A9_%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AA%D8%B9%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%8A%D9%85 (accessed 7/4/2025).

----- (1947) "Risalat nizam al-hukm". *Ikhwanwiki*, in https://www.ikhwanwiki.com/index.php?title=%D8%B1%D8%B3%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A9_%D9%86%D8%B8%D8%A7%D9%85_%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AD%D9%83%D9%85 (accessed 7/4/2025).

--- (2012 [1947]) *Mudhakkirat al-da'wa wa-l-da'iya*. Kuwait: Matkabat al-Afaq.

Bennoune, Karima (2013) *Your Fatwa Does Not Apply Here: Untold Stories from the Fight Against Muslim Fundamentalism*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company.

Bettiza, Gregorio & Dionigi, Filippo (2014) *Beyond Constructivism's Liberal Bias: Islamic Norm Entrepreneurs in a Post-Secular World Society*, European University Institute. Max Weber Programme.

Capdepuy, Vincent (n.d.) "Renan / Al-Afghani. *Le journal des débats*. 1883". *L'histoire globale par les sources*, in http://blogs.histoireglobale.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/10/Renan-al-Afghani.pdf (accessed 7/4/2025).

Croft, Stuart (2012) "Constructing ontological insecurity: the insecuritization of Britain's Muslims". *Contemporary Security Policy* 33/2, 219-235.

Dallal, Ahmad (2000) "Appropriating the past: Twentieth-Century Reconstruction of Pre-Modern Islamic Thought". *Islamic Law and Society* 7/3, 325-358.

Fattah, Khaled & Fierke, K.M. (2009) "A Clash of Emotions: The Politics of Humiliation and Political Violence in the Middle East". *European Journal of International Relations* 15/1, 67-93.

Forsby, Andreas B. (2015) "The Logic of Social Identity in IR: China's Identity and Grand Strategy in the 21st Century". PhD thesis. University of Copenhagen, Copenhagen. Available at: https://www.diis.dk/files/media/documents/activities/phd_dissertation.pdf (accessed 7/4/2025).

Gabilondo, Joseba (2016) *Before Babel: A History of Basque Literatures*. Barbaroak LLC.

Gerges, Fawaz (2018) *Making the Arab World: Nasser, Qutb, and the Clash That Shaped the Middle East*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Giddens, Anthony (1991) *Modernity and Self-Identity*. New York: Polity Press.

Haddad, Mahmoud (1997) "Arab Religious Nationalism in the Colonial Era: Rereading Rashid Rida's Ideas on the Caliphate". *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 117/2, 253-277.

Hallaq, Wael B. (1984) "Was the Gate of Ijtihad Closed?". *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 16/1, 3-41.

Hatina, Meir (2000) "On the Margins of Consensus: The Call to Separate Religion and State in Modern Egypt". *Middle Eastern Studies* 36/1, 35–67.

Hidayatullah, Aysha (2014) *Feminist Edges of the Qur'an*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Hobsbawm, Eric (1983) "Introduction: Inventing Traditions", in Eric Hobsbawm & Terence Ranger (ed.) *The invention of tradition.* Cambridge University Press.

Hoodbhoy, Pervez (1987) *Islam and Science. Religious Orthodoxy and the Battle for Rationality*. London & New Jersey: Zed Books.

Hülsse, Rainer & Spencer, Alexander (2008) "The Metaphor of Terror: Terrorism Studies and the Constructivist Turn". *Security Dialogue* 39/6, 571-592.

Ikhwan Online (2021) Sayyid Qutb: Shahid al-zalal. In: https://www.ikhwanonline.com/article/248776 (accessed 7/4/2025).

'Imara, Muhammad (1993) *Al-a'mal al-kamila li-l-imam Muḥammad 'Abduh. Tahqiq wa-taqdim al-duktur Muhammad 'Imara.* Beirut & Cairo: Dar al-Shuruq.

----- (1993a) *Al-juz' al-awwal. Al-kitabat al-siyyasiyya*.

----- (1993b) *Al-juz' al-thani. Al-kitabat al-ijtima'iyya*.

----- (1993c) *Al-juz' al-thalith. Al-islah al-fikri wa-l-tarbawi wa-l-ilahiyyat*.

Al-Jazeera (2004a) "Al-muslimun wa-l-'unf al-siyasi 1". *Al-Shari'a wa-l-Hayat* (23 May), in https://www.aljazeera.net/programs/religionandlife/2004/10/3/%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%B3%D9%84%D9%85%D9%88%D9%86-%D9%88%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B9%D9%86%D9%81-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B3%D9%8A%D8%A7%D8%B3%D9%8A-%D8%AC1 (accessed 7/4/2025).

----- (2004b) "Al-muslimun wa-l-'unf al-siyasi 2". *Al-Shari'a wa-l-Hayat* (30 May), in https://www.aljazeera.net/programs/religionandlife/2004/10/3/%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%B3%D9%84%D9%85%D9%88%D9%86-

%D9%88%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B9%D9%86%D9%81-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B3%D9%8A%D8%A7%D8%B3%D9%8A-%D8%AC2 (accessed 7/4/2025).

Jung, Dietrich (2021) "Islamism, Islamic Modernism and the Search for Modern Authenticity in an Imaginary Past". *Religions* 12/11, 1005, in https://www.mdpi.com/2077-1444/12/11/1005 (accessed 7/4/2025).

Kayaoglu, Turan (2020) "The Organization of Islamic Cooperation's declaration on human rights: Promises and pitfalls". Brookings, in https://www.brookings.edu/research/the-organization-of-islamic-cooperations-declaration-on-human-rights-promises-and-pitfalls (accessed 7 March 2024).

Kedourie, Elie (1966) *Afghani and 'Abduh. An Essay on Religious Unbelief and Political Activism in Modern Islam*. London: Frank Cass.

Kepel, Gilles (1985) *The Prophet and Pharaoh: Muslim Extremism in Egypt*. London: Al Saqi.

Kerr, Malcolm H. (1966) *Islamic Reform. The Political and Legal Theories of Muhammad 'Abduh and Rashid Rida*. Berkeley, California: University of California Press.

Khosroshahi, Seyyed Hadi (2000, 2nd ed.) *Al-sayyid Jamal al-Din al-Ḥusayni al-Afghani. Al-shaykh Muhammad 'Abduh. Al-'Urwa al-Wuthqà*. Tehran: Al-Majma' al-Alami li-l-Taqriab Bayna al-Madhahib al-Islamiyya.

Kinnvall, Catarina (2004) "Globalization and Religious Nationalism: Self, Identity, and the Search for Ontological Security". *Political Psychology* 25/4, 741-767.

Krishnaswamy, Janani (2012) "How Does Terrorism Lend Itself to Constructivist Understanding?". *E-International Relations*, in: https://www.e-ir.info/2012/09/18/how-does-terrorism-lend-itself-to-constructivist-understanding/ (accessed 7/4/2025).

Labarre, Frederic (2007) "The Kosovo War in a Constructivist Perspective." *Connections* 6/ 3, 33-61.

Lia, Brynjar (2015) "Autobiography or Fiction? Hasan al-Banna's Memoirs Revisited". *Journal of Arabic and Islamic Studies* 15, 199-226.

Mabilon-Bonfils, Béatrice & Zoïa, Geneviève (2014) *La laïcité au risque de l'Autre*, Éditions de l'Aube.

Al-Makhzumi, Muhammad (2002 [1931]. *Khatirat Jamal al-Din al-Afghani*. Cairo: Maktabat al-Shuruq al-Dawuliyya.

Mitzen, Jennifer (2018) "Feeling at Home in Europe: Migration, Ontological Security, and the Political Psychology of EU Bordering". *Political Psychology* 39/6, 1373-1387.

Obaidullah, Muhammad (2010) "The Role of Universities towards Islamization of Knowledge: The IIUM as a Model". Islamization of Knowledge project, International Islamic University Malaysia.

Pasha, Mustapha Kamal (2012). "Islam and the postsecular". *Review of International Studies* 38(5), 1041–1056.

Pfeifer, Hanna (2018) "Beyond Terrorism and Disorder. Assessing Islamist Constructions of World Order", in Nassef Manabilang Adiong, Raffaele Mauriello & Deina Abdelkader (eds.), *Islam in International Relations. Politics and Paradigms*. London: Routledge, 100-123.

Al-Qaradawi, Yusuf (n.d.1) "Tuhmat al-Islam al-siyasi". *Al-Qaradawi Net*, in https://www.al-qaradawi.net/node/2099 (accessed 7/4/2025).

----- (n.d.2) "Sayyid Qutb. Al-mufakkir al-islami shahid al-da'wa wa-l-tarbiya wa-l-thaqafa wa-l-fikr". *Al-Qaradawi Net*, in https://www.al-qaradawi.net/node/2186 (accessed 7/4/2025).

----- (1994) *Fi fiqh al-awlawiyyat. Dirasa jadida fi dhaw' al-Qur'an wa-l-Sunna*. Doha: Maktabat Wahba.

----- (2001 [1986]) *Al-sahwa al-islamiyya bayna al-juhud wa-l-tatarruf*. Cairo: Dar al-Shuruq.

----- (2006 [2005]) *Tarikhu-na al-muftara 'alay-hi*. Cairo: Dar al-Shuruq.

----- (2016a [2000]) *Ummatu-na bayna qarnayn*. Cairo: Dar al-Shuruq.

----- (2016b) "Bayan bi-khusus al-mawqif min al-tawa'if al-mukhtalifa wa-khatf al-muntamin ilayha". *Al-Qaradawi Net* (22 September), in https://www.al-qaradawi.net/node/4624 (accessed 7/4/2025).

----- (2016c) "'Alama hukima Sayyid Qutb?" [Chapter 88 of al-Qaradawi's autobiography], *Al-Qaradawi Net*, in https://www.al-qaradawi.net/node/4501 (accessed 7/4/2025).

Quraishi-Landes, Asifa (2015) "Islamic Constitutionalism: Not Secular. Not Theocratic. Not Impossible." *Rutgers Journal of Law and Religion* 16, 553-579.

Rida, Rashid (1898-1935) *Al-Manar* (34 vols.). Cairo: Matba'at al-Manar.

----- (2005 [1933]) *Al-wahi al-muhammadi*. Beirut: Dar al-kutub al-'ilmiyya.

----- (2015 [1922]) *Al-khilafa, aw al-imama al-'uzma*. Cairo: Hindawi.

Said, Edward (1978) *Orientalism*. New York: Pantheon.

Siddiqui, Ataullah (1999) "Ismail Raji al-Faruqi: From 'Urubah to Ummatic Concerns". *American Journal of Islam and Society* 16/3, pp. 1-26.

Smith, Rogers M. (2004) "Identities, Interests, and the Future of Political Science". *Perspectives on Politics* 2/2, 301-312.

Toledano, Ehud R. (1998). Social and economic change in the "long nineteenth century". In M. Daly (Ed.), *The Cambridge History of Egypt*, 252-284. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Uemura, Takeshi (2013) "Understanding Sino-Japanese Relations: Proposing a Constructivist Approach in Chinese Studies". *Journal of Contemporary East Asia Studies* 2/1, 95-127.

Wadud, Amina (2008, revised edition [2006]) *Inside the Gender Jihad. Women's Reform in Islam*. Oxford: Oneworld.

Wickham, Carrie Rosefky (2002) *Mobilizing Islam. Religion, Activism and Political Change in Egypt*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Wood, Philip (2016) "Christians in the Middle East, 600–1000: conquest, competition and conversion", in A.C.S. Peacock, Bruno De Nicola & Sara Nur Yildiz (eds.) *Islam and Christianity in Medieval Anatolia*. Oxford & New York: Routledge, pp. 23-50.

Yahaya, Mahayudin Hj. (2015) "The Social and Political Background of the `Abbasid Revolution: The Rise of the 'Abbasid Caliphate". *International Journal of Humanities and Cultural Studies* 2/3, 831-842.

Yassine, Nadia (2003) *Toutes voiles dehors. À la rencontre du message coranique*. Lyon: Alters Éditions

Yasushi, Kosugui (2006) "Al-Manar revisited: The 'lighthouse' or the Islamic revival", in Stephane A. Dudoignon, Komatsu Hisao & Kosugi Yasushi (eds.), *Intellectuals in the Modern Islamic World Transmission, Transformation and Communication*. Oxford/New York: Routledge, 3-39.

Zarakol, Ayşe (2010) "Ontological (in)Security and State Denial of Historical Crimes: Turkey and Japan". *International Relations* 24/1, 3-23.

Zeghal, Malika (1999) "Religion and Politics in Egypt: The Ulema of al-Azhar, Radical Islam, and the State (1952-94)". *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 31/3, 371-399.

Zehfuss, Maja (2002) *Constructivism in International Relations. The politics of reality*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.