Orientalism, postmodernism and globalism

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To Adelaide, Mathilde and Karen

Chapter 6

Politics and culture in Islamic globalism

From the perspective of sociology of religion, there are two separate but related processes in modern Islamic cultures. The first is the emergence of a global Islamic political system and the second is the cultural reaction of Islamic fundamentalism against Westernism and consumerism. These processes are analysed in this chapter in terms of a sociological framework which embraces, somewhat eclectically, a number of theoretical perspectives.

The issue of Islamic modernization may be understood initially within the framework of Max Weber's sociology of the process of rationalization which focused on the paradoxical relationship between the process of rationalization and the problem of meaninglessness. The argument here is that Weber's sociology provides an anticipation of the current contrast between the programme of modernization and the condition of postmodernism. Within this framework, Islamic fundamentalism is seen as a reaction against cultural and social differentiation and fragmentation. More specifically fundamentalism is an attempt at de-differentiation. However, it is important to avoid a sociological orientation which considers Islam in isolation from other world religions, because the major religions are necessarily involved in global processes. The emergence of universalistic standards in cultural and political life is consequently analysed in relation to the world religions (more specifically the Abrahamic faiths).

In order to understand the recent political and cultural history of Islamic societies, two related arguments must be considered. The first argument attempts to recognize the profound problems of having, within a world cultural system, competing world religions which claim exclusive and largely absolutist truths or values. At present, there seems little possibility of global ecumenism on a fundamentalist basis. Previous research into national forms of ecumenism has drawn attention to the profound difficulties of securing agreement between churches of the same religion, claiming separate versions of truth. The problem on a global level, when dealing with exclusive fundamentalist religious movements, is clearly more difficult and the future relations between the Abrahamic

faiths in particular is uncertain. The poignancy of the relationship between the Abrahamic faiths is nowhere better illustrated than in their separate, exclusive, and largely incompatible claims to Jerusalem. The first problem then is how to contain, within a single global environment, absolutist religious positions presented by mutually conflictual religious systems. In the case of Islam, the relationship between the Household of Islam and the sphere of war gives rise to particularly profound political problems.

The second argument is concerned with the problem of relationship between the cultural, aesthetic, and stylistic pluralism of postmodernity and fundamentalist commitment to the coherent and unified world organized around values, styles and beliefs which are held to be incontrovertibly true. The problem of meaningfulness arises from consumer culture on a global scale which makes alternative lifestyles, beliefs, and attitudes appear as a set of commodities for sale on a world cultural market. However, against Weber and his followers, Islam was perfectly compatible with the modernization project involving, as it did, a high degree of secularization of traditional religious cultures, but Islam cannot deal satisfactorily with postmodernity which threatens to deconstruct religious messages into mere fairy tales and to destroy the everyday world by the challenge of cultural diversity. The problem of cultural perspectivism is an effect of the pluralization of life-worlds brought about by the spread of a diversified, global system of consumption.

The debate about contemporary fundamentalism has to see these social movements as attempts to secure political hegemony within the global political structure, while at the same time securing at the local level a degree of control over the life-world by attempting to exclude the pluralism of contemporary patterns of consumption. Modern fundamentalism is a two-pronged movement to secure control within the global system and also to maintain a local regulation of the life-world. Fundamentalism in both Islam and Christianity can therefore be analysed as a value-system which actually promoted modernization, because modernization was an attack on magical beliefs, local culture, traditionalism, and hedonism. Fundamentalism is therefore the cultural defence of modernity against postmodernity.

POLITICAL MODERNIZATION: MAX WEBER'S THEORY OF SOCIAL CHANGE

Weber has often been interpreted very narrowly as being interested in the relationship between religion and capitalist development. More recent interpretations of Weber's sociology have, however, drawn attention to the concept of rationalization as the core theme of Weber's entire sociological concern (Brubaker 1984; Hennis 1988; Roth and Schluchter 1979). Even this theme of rationalization was merely an aspect of Weber's more

general interest in the origins of modernity and modernization. Briefly, modernity is the outcome in cultural, social and political terms of the broad process of rationalization by which the world is controlled and regulated by an ethic of world mastery, involving the subordination of the self, social relations, and nature to a programme of detailed control and regulation. The modernization project is the imposition of rationality (in terms of means–ends schemes) to the total environment. The history of modernization is the history of reason as the instrumental regulation of society and environment as described classically in the *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (Adorno and Horkheimer 1944).

Weber's account of modernity and modernization can be understood initially in terms of his model of social relations outlined abstractly in the introductory section of *Economy and Society* (1968), where he distinguished, first, between social relations which are either open or closed to outsiders. This involves social closure to secure the monopolistic advantages of resources against unqualified intruders. Second, following the comparison (Tönnies 1957) between *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft*, Weber distinguished between communal and associational relationships. Communal relations are based upon traditional or affectual forms of interaction, involving dense reciprocities between people linked together by customs and local practices. By contrast, associational relations are more impersonal, fleeting, and contractual. By combining these two dimensions, we can form an ideal type of social relations as shown in Table 1.

Table 1 Weber's typology of social relations

	Open	*Closed*
Communal	church	village
Associational	market	political party

If we interpret Weber's typology in a dynamic and historical fashion, then we can argue that the process of modernization was from social relations which were predominantly closed and communal to relations which were primarily open and associational. In terms of social stratification, this was a movement from estates, communities, and castes to classes, organized in terms of market principles (Turner 1988a). Rather like Sir Henry Maine in *Ancient Law*, Weber saw the development of modern societies as a process from status to contract. As a jurisprudential theorist (Kronman 1983), Weber saw the progress of modern societies as a transition from status arrangements involving the total personality in a set of magical and traditional bonds to a social system in which impersonal contracts of a legal character linked persons together into open associational relations. He argued that originally contracts were magical acts

binding persons together through a form of fraternization, but contemporary contracts are 'purposive contracts' which are important for the development of modern market places. We may note in passing that Weber's conception of the emergence of modern capitalism in these terms was not unlike that of Marx for whom the cash nexus in modern societies is the primary bond between persons (Turner 1988b).

If we examine Weber's typology within the context of the historical development of modern societies, then it is clear that the classical sociological tradition saw this evolution from village to market, or from *Gemeinschaft* to *Gesellschaft*. In this transition to an 'open society,' Protestant Christianity (specifically Calvinism) provided a crucial cultural level. Of course, there were empirically many alternative historical processes whereby various combinations of social relations were maintained which are in principle incompatible with open-associated relations. The historical continuity of ethnicity and gender as features of social stratification are the primary illustrations. This model of social relations has two major contributions for this analysis of Islamic fundamentalism in a global perspective.

First, while conventional theories of secularization often assume that religion and modernization stand in a contradictory relationship, Weber's study of the Protestant ethic suggests an alternative interpretation. Ascetic fundamentalism, far from being incompatible with modernity, actually pushed societies from closed-communal to open-associational relations. In this respect, Protestant denominations emerged as the religious counterpart of trading associations. However, as the consumer market threatens to break out into a new stage of fragmented postmodernity in late capitalism, fundamentalism now acts as a brake on the historical development of world capitalism. Fundamentalism appears now in a 'reactionary' guise as the defender of the project of modernity against the disjointed pluralism of postmodernity. The second aspect of the argument is that Weber's model provides some clues about the possible range of the images of the globe. For example, the image of the world as a global system may be presented in terms of a global supermarket (open-associational space) or as a super-church (open-communal) or as a global village (closed-communal). As the world-system moves towards modernity and then beyond into the postmodern age, fundamentalism pulls this process back towards a more traditional mode, but in particular towards the trajectory of either the global 'church' or the global 'party'. In terms of the Islamic system, fundamentalism points towards a genuinely global Household of Faith which must place some limits on membership and which must retain some element of conflict with other absolutist systems (such as communism in the post-war period).

This discussion of Islam and modernization is not concerned with the specifically economic or historical features of these developments. The

aim here is to focus on the cultural and religious implication of this transition from a society grounded in traditional and affectual relations to societies based more and more upon economic contracts of an open and impersonal or associational character. While it was the Calvinistic sects which made possible the transition from closed, communal societies to contemporary capitalist or industrial civilization, Weber had argued that because there was no dynamic contradiction between the sacred and the profane, Buddhism, Confucianism, and Hinduism were unable to provide the social and cultural leverage for the emergence of the modern world.

Given this emphasis on Calvinism, Weber was forced to argue that the other Abrahamic faiths (Islam and Judaism) were unable to provide the historical leverage (via ethical prophecy and the critique of society and human relations) for a transition to modernity (Turner 1974b, 1978a, 1987b). In Judaism, the inner-worldly quest for mastery was turned outward into dietary and other exclusively social practices. In Islam, the inner-worldly salvational quest was turned outward and externalized into a quest for land and military dominance. Even within Christianity, the emotional sectarian movements associated with pietism and Methodism translated the salvational problem into personal emotion. It was the stern ascetic discipline and theology of the Calvinistic sects which, through their irrational inner quest for meaning, produced an external world of discipline, vocations, and rational mastery. As we know from Weber's own work in *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, he argued that once the treadmill of modern rationalization had been set in motion, capitalism no longer required the supportive foundations of spirituality, since modern rational systems have a logic of their own.

What were the implications of these religious and cultural changes for political doctrines and social systems? The historic evolution of the market place corresponded in an important fashion with the gradual evolution of an emphasis on the individual and in later historical epochs with an emphasis on individualism as a specific doctrine of social rights (Abercrombie, Hill, and Turner 1984). Indeed, the liberating impact of impersonal, open, associational relations within the exchanges of the market place can be seen in terms of transition from holistic conceptions of reality to individualistic cultures (Dumont 1983, 1986). For Weber, the emergence of modern capitalism (or more generally the emergence of rational market places) created the conditions for the emergence of the autonomous, self-directed personality. This also had its roots in the emergence of the abstract, religious soul, linked to an abstract monotheistic God by a series of connections of rational belief and religious faith. While the God of Christianity was a personal God, the individual in modern society emerges as an abstract and general, public character. This impersonal dimension is specifically important in the political realm or the

public arena, where the particularistic characteristics of individuals (such as age, sex or race) become, from a political point of view, increasingly unimportant, given the legal and political emphasis on abstract egalitarianism.

Following the work of T. H. Marshall, the expansion of social citizenship rights entails an expansion of the definition of the social and the social arena, with the consequence that the individual citizen constantly emerges as a more abstract, universalistic, and free agent within political space (Turner 1978a). The political citizen within a modern democratic culture is no longer defined in terms of property-holding, gender, racial characteristics, or any such particularistic dimension, but rather emerges as the abstract bearer of general rights of social participation and membership. Another way of expressing this argument is that modern social systems are dominated by the principles of egalitarian citizenship and by the quest for political and social equality (Prager 1985). This development of the abstract citizen is the political counterpart to the historical transition from *Gemeinschaft* to *Gesellschaft*; citizenship can be regarded as an index of secularization in which the City of God gives way to the modern polity of abstract strangers linked together by legal entitlement and abstract exchange relationships. The expansion of political citizenship in terms of this abstract framework can also be connected with the notion that the growth of a money market produces the idea of the abstract individual user of financial facilities (Simmel 1978). There is therefore a certain interpenetration of the economic development of abstract individualism and the long-term historical implications of the individualism of the Abrahamic faiths. The idea was also taken up by Talcott Parsons (1963) who noted that the contractual nature of the relationship between man and God, and the individualism of the Christian tradition created the conditions for a radical egalitarianism which liquidated the notion of religious bonds based upon ethnic particularism. The importance of Christianity for the emergence of a political community was that it undermined fundamentally the particularistic relationship of blood in favour of a community based upon a universalistic faith (Weber 1958a). The logical extension of this sociological argument is that the abstract citizen must emerge eventually as a global agent within a world political system, since the individual (within the logic of the process of rationalization) can no longer be contained within the nation-state. The paradox of the emerging, egalitarian individualism of nineteenth-century capitalism, especially in England, was that the growth of the abstract individual also followed historically the emergence of the nation-state as a closed and particularistic entity in which social membership was ultimately located in one particular language or dialect. There is, as both Marx and Weber implicitly recognised, a potential conflict between the abstract, globally located, citizen-individual and the local requirements of the nation-state as the political encasement of the individual.

It is possible to link this argument about individualism and globalism to the world-system theory of Wallerstein (1974, 1980). Wallerstein has argued that globally the world has moved from a system of large-scale empires (based upon local economies) to a world, structured by one global economy but articulated through particular or local political systems. If we transpose this argument into the context of the world religious systems, at least Islam and Christianity conceptualized themselves or thematized themselves as world religions, and therefore they have a particularly problematic relationship to local political systems.

In the pre-modern period, the world religious systems had little opportunity to realize themselves globally, because the systems of communication and transport were wholly underdeveloped or nonexistent. Prior to the emergence of modern communication systems, the world religions operated on a largely localized basis with tenuous linkages to their cultural centers and articulated at a global level by an underdeveloped and fragile system of trading relationships (Mann 1986). In the modern period, the possibility of achieving global religious systems has been facilitated by the emergence of modern forms of transport, communication, and integration. This produces a number of tensions and paradoxes between the abstract individual and the demands of nation-state political commitments, and between the universalism of the religious system in a competitive world cultural environment, where fundamentalist versions of the Abrahamic faiths are forced to conflict with each other over local sites and sources of recruitment, and geo-political influence.

Weber also had a negative, pessimistic, and demonic version of the modernization project which in some respects anticipated modern debates about anti-modernism and post-modernism. Following the work of Nietzsche, Weber recognized that with the death of God, the pluralization of life-worlds, and the secularization of culture, we live in a world which is relativized and which forces social theorists to adopt perspectivism as their primary orientation to cultural facts. For Nietzsche, the therapeutic capacity of art and music had been undermined by the growth of cultural nihilism. In Nietzsche's epistemology, languages are merely metaphorical accounts of reality; he proceeded to de-construct the underlying metaphors of religion and science. While Nietzsche himself rejected nihilism, his philosophical views had a profoundly disturbing effect on subsequent German philosophy. Nietzsche was received as a great nihilist of culture, whereas the primary emphasis in Nietzsche's own solution lay on the re-evaluation of values. In response to the problems of secularization, Weber converted Nietzsche's philosophy into a sociology of social action and personality, which gave a primary emphasis to the ethic of responsibility and a vocation in science (Stauth and Turner 1986, 1988).

Weber's theory of rationalization provides a basis in sociological theory for an analysis of contemporary movements in culture which are either fundamentalist or neo-conservative and which attempt to restore moral coherence as the basis of modern religious and social practices. On the one hand, Weber recognised a profound process of rationalization and modernization in society leading to the differentiation of religious, scientific, and moral realms and a profound secularization of values. On the other hand, Weber recognized, following Nietzsche, that the project of reason always discovers its own unreasonableness by exposing the arbitrary character of all forms of rationalization. While rationality can select appropriate means for action, it cannot provide a rational ground for ends.

Fundamentalism can be interpreted as a response both to modernization and to postmodernity since fundamentalism is a process of de-differentiation (Lechner 1985a, 1985b; Robertson and Chirico 1985). We might also treat these social movements of fundamentalisation as forms of collective nostalgia which seek to restructure the world in terms of more simple entities and communal cultural relations (Turner 1987a). In political terms, fundamentalism attempts to create a set of boundaries which will contain political pluralism and the abstract generalization of the citizen on a global scale, but in terms of some notion of community or household. In the cultural arena, fundamentalism is an attempt to impose certain boundaries on modernization, and more particularly on postmodernism and postmodernity. It attempts to reverse the historical process towards a hyper-secular consumerism and pluralism by providing paradoxically a traditional defence of modernity. We can consider these developments through a brief sketch of the evolution of contemporary Islam.

THE POLITY OF THE HOUSEHOLD OF FAITH

In theological terms, Islam is based on a idealistic construction (or reconstruction) of the *umma* (community) which Islam has never completely institutionalized. The idealistic conception involved an integration of politico-religious authority, a terrain or household in which Islamic practice is uniformly followed, and an outward religious thrust or *Jihad* involving a struggle against unbelief. While Islam normatively considered itself as a universalistic faith, it is important to recognize the Arabism of Islam, since for example the Qur'ān as an Arabic expression of divine revelation has a crucial part to play in the authoritative structure of Islamic cultures. In addition, the Prophet's Arabic lineage has been of enormous significance, and finally Islam is rooted in a holy space (Mecca and Medina) which is obviously profoundly Arabic. This ideal community could never entirely resolve the problem of authority,

especially the problems of political control through either the claims of lineage or those of elected leaders, a tension which contributed in part to the emergence of two distinct forms of Islamic faith, namely Sunni Islam and Shi'ism. More importantly, Islam was unable to impose its authority on minor or subordinate groups within the household of faith, and there developed throughout Islam a millet system which permitted internal pluralism and ethnic diversity to continue. Finally, we should note an important variation within Islam between the ascetic traditions of literary Islam within the urban tradition and mystical Islam which flourished in Sufism, permitting the development of saintship, local cults, and hierarchical forms of practice which conflicted with, or at least stood in contradiction to, the egalitarian principles of the core tradition (Gellner 1969, 1981). The history of Islam in part revolves around these problems of local and global authority, giving rise to the periodic social movements of Islamization in which the ascetic and literary codes were imposed upon localist forms of Sufism. The reform of Islam has normally assumed a recurrent pattern in which strong political leaders attempt to impose political control over the hinterland in the name of a monotheistic conception of Islam against the polytheistic tendencies of the periphery.

However, before the emergence of modern forms of communication and transportation, the imposition of unitarian control around a monotheistic culture had always been limited by certain technical-military problems and by the inability of dynastic power to secure its control through time and space (Mann 1986). While in Weberian terms the Household of Islam was patrimonial, the political structure was in fact decentralized into local, dynastic authorities which competed with the patrimonial core of authority. We can therefore conceptualize pre-modern Islamic politics in terms of a constant tension between patrimonial centres and local sources of political authority (Turner 1981b).

There is some general agreement among historians that Islamic cities in the pre-modern period lacked feudal estates and there was no significant development in Islam of urban centers like the urban communes or municipalities of Europe. Islamic imperial rule depended upon local notables who were either scholars (*Ulama*), or notables (*A'yan*), or commanders of local garrisons who provided political skills at the local level for the imposition of Islamic authority. There was a certain integration or structural symbiosis between the state, merchants, and *Ulama* who provided clerical services for the state bureaucracy. The achievement of local autonomy on the part of towns developed in Islam through two channels, either by the weakening of imperial control (for example, Timbuktu in West Africa), or by local rebellions (for example, Seville in Muslim Spain or Tripoli, or Tyre) (Shoshan 1986).

It is important to understand this pre-modern structure in order to comprehend the character of modern fundamentalism as a political move-

ment. Despite the truism that Islam requires the unity of religion and politics, in pre-modern times, that is before the emergence of European colonialism, Muslim rulers were unable to impose their political authority on religious leaders. Within these empires, the ruling elites were forced to depend on the intermediary role and functions of local notables, who claimed to be descendants of the Prophet, or were the *Ashref*, merchants and local garrison leaders. It is the availability in modern times of effective global communication systems which makes possible for the first time a globalization of Islam which in fact is the Islamization of cultures through the norms and practices of Islamic fundamentalism. While Islam had always claimed a universalistic status, it was, prior to the emergence of contemporary communication systems, actually unable to impose this type of uniformity and universalism. The paradox of modern systems of communication is that it makes Islam simultaneously exposed to Western consumerism and provides the mechanism for the distribution of a global Islamic message.

FROM COLONIZATION TO FUNDAMENTALISM

Between Napoleon's invasion of Egypt and the end of the nineteenth century, three separate but related social and economic processes transformed the Islamic regions. First, the Ottoman Empire was broken up by colonialism into relatively separate nation-states. Second, the economies of the old Islamic world were gradually incorporated into and subordinated by a world capitalist system as highly dependent units and, third, there was a significant cultural response to these changes through various religious reform movements. The development of colonialism called forth, as it were, a new local intelligentsia of clerical workers who were often Western-trained and adopted Western attitudes but never achieved full integration into the Western system. The result was an intense ambiguity as to the relationship between secular Westernization and anti-colonial nationalism (Enayat 1982; Hourani 1962). We can regard these three processes as forms of cultural and structural differentiation of the Islamic world.

One response to Western colonialism was to adopt a deliberate policy of secularization which was legitimized by a return to Islamic sources. Islamic reform involved an attack on traditional and popular forms of Islam (in particular Sufism) which was associated with political decay and social stagnation. By returning to primitive Islam (defined as an ascetic and disciplined form of Islam), it was argued that Islamic societies could be modernized while also becoming more Islamic. One has therefore a somewhat paradoxical relationship between secularization and reformism in the liberal response of Islam to Westernism. These developments were probably most explicit in the Turkish case where Kemalist reforms

involved a direct confrontation with traditional populist Islamic lifestyles (Shaw and Shaw 1977). As a reformist regime, the Kemalist government was deeply influenced by Western ideas about, for example, education and nationalism. Educational reform (under the leadership of Ziya Gokalp) was directed in terms of Durkheim's concept of social solidarity. Secularization involved the creation of new legal systems which typically relegated Islamic holy law (the *Shari'a*) to the personal sphere, leaving public relations under European legal codes; and, second, secularization involved the separation of religious and secular institutions of education. Third, secularization involved changes in dress and custom, such as the introduction of the Turkish Hat Law of 1925. These changes in custom involved the differentiation of Islam culture and social structure on the model of Westernization.

The central theme of modernization was, however, legitimized in terms of a return to classical Islam, that is the Islam of ascetic, literary monotheism. Once Islam was liberated from its folk traditions and from foreign accretions, Islam could emerge as a dynamic and progressive component of the reform of society. The return to the Qur'ān was in practice used to bring about profound changes in Islamic life. We can regard this as the liberal age of Islam and its major spokesmen were Jamal al-Din Al-afghani, Muhammad Abduh, and Rashid Rida (Esposito 1984). The liberal reforms are often referred to collectively as the *Salifiyyah* movement which embraced the classical dogmas of 'primitive' Islam in order to bring about a political program of liberal reform.

Islam also came to play a crucial role in the development of anti-colonial nationalist movements in North Africa, India and Indonesia. Within these ethnically diverse and culturally complex societies, Islamic symbols were important as components of nationalist integration in Morocco, Tunisia, and Indonesia (Esposito 1984; Geertz 1968). It is important to recognize, however, that in this period Islam was seen to be a foundation for Arab nationalism; consequently, there was less emphasis on Islami unity and global Islamdom. Since Islam was one foundation of anti-colonial nationalism, some writers have detected a movement away from Islam in the post-independence period toward more secular and nationalist ideologies which attempted to modernize and legitimate separate nation-states (Smith 1974; Wolf 1971). In the 1950s and 1960s many Muslim countries adopted a program of political nationalism, democratic sovereignty, the creation of parliamentary rights, the adoption of secular legal codes, and most importantly the development of Western-style educational systems (Gellner 1981). As national ideological systems became more and more orientated towards secularism, Islam appeared to be increasingly confined to the area of personal belief and practice. Many of these nationalist movements assumed a distinctively socialist program. In Egypt, Iraq, and Syria, the old liberal regimes were overthrown, and

nationalist and socialist programs were developed under Nasserism in Egypt, and under the Baath Party in Syria and Iraq. For these regimes modernization was to be brought about by Arab socialism under the charismatic influence of Gamal Abdel Nasser (Berque 1972). Under the Baath Party, religion was often mobilized to create a populist set of slogans for social change; but there was little in the nationalist ideology to promote Islam as a global strategy.

Alongside these rationalist/secularist political movements, we can also detect important fundamentalist Islamic reactions to secularization and Westernization, especially in the emergence of the Muslim Brotherhood, founded in 1928 by Hasan al-Bamma (1906–49) (Mitchell 1969). The Muslim Brotherhood sought the unity of the Muslim community, denounced foreign intervention in Egypt, and opposed the establishment of Israel. The relationship between the Brotherhood and the Egyptian nationalist movement has always been characterized by tension and conflict, resulting eventually in the assassination of Anwar Sadat, and in recent years the Muslim Brotherhood has increased its political representation within the Egyptian political system. Despite these examples of Islamic resurgence, the 1960s were largely dominated by more secular nationalist movements in the Middle East and South-east Asia.

The emergence of fundamentalism and militant Islam is a striking feature of the 1970s and 1980s with the Iranian revolution under the influence of Ayatollah Khomeini, the political emergence of the late Zia ul-Haq in Pakistan, the Muslim resistance movement in Afghanistan, the growing importance of Shi'ism in the Middle East and the development of an Islamic resurgence in Malaysia (Nagata 1984). Islamic fundamentalism, while different in its national and local manifestation, shares a common rejection of the modernist secular period on a variety of grounds. These include the perception that modernization has failed because its secular character could not offer coherent values. In addition, modernization failed because too rapid urbanization and inadequate agricultural policies produce gross inequalities of wealth and power, leaving the peasantry often in a precarious economic situation. In addition, there is the notion that liberalism has failed because the policies of the nationalist, Arabic, state systems did not allow genuine political expression and democracy. For example, it is suggested that Egypt, despite radical changes, remained dominated by traditional elites who manipulated the electoral system to maintain political power under the slogan of political participation.

While the Western secular program was seen to be in ruins, traditional Marxism also had little to offer in the way of either ideology or successful economic programs. Marxism remained the ideology of an elite and failed to appeal to the masses through a popular discourse which mobilized traditional Islamic themes. It was also too closely associated with the USSR, atheism, and foreign domination. Fundamentalist ideology also

regards the Islamic absolutism of the Saudi regime as incompatible with the genuine message of pure Islam, since the Saudi government has been corrupted by Western consumerism and adherence to the foreign policy objectives of Western societies. The great appeal of ideological and intellectual leaders like Ali Shari'ati was that he combined traditional Islamic themes with modern political and cultural critiques derived from Marxism and French philosophy (Shari'ati 1979). Shari'ati was able to translate the implicit political philosophy of classical Islam into a modern idiom.

At the ideological level, Islam has been able to fill the gap (or at least the experience of a gap) between the promises of Westernization and/or Marxism and the actual reality of social change at the everyday level. Islam has an egalitarian appeal, an ascetic world-view, a dynamic conception of social change and through its history provides an alternative therefore to the Western model which was imposed by colonization. Islam through its prayer meetings and other religious institutions provided an alternative political and social platform to state institutions, expression of oppositional and critical viewpoints which governments could not silence, because religion had deep popular roots in the broader community. Fundamentalist beliefs of Islamic leaders had a direct appeal to the social experiences of everyday life.

Although there are major differences in the various movements of religious revitalization in contemporary Islam, 'they all share the experience of recent, rapid and sometimes uncontrolled urbanisation and industrialisation, pervasive western influence, and the spread of literacy with the burgeoning of a crucial, educated class without precedent in traditional society' (Nagata 1984: 236). Under the influence of writers like Shariati, Islam was transformed into a modern doctrine of radicalism and opposition to Westernization, promoting Islamic ideals of equality and change against Western liberal democratic views of political and cultural participation. Islamization under the fundamentalist umbrella therefore involved a redefinition and re-allocation of institutions and values within an Islamic state. In particular, it involves a re-organization of educational institutions to ensure that Islamic values, beliefs, and practices are inculcated in children and young adults. This involves changes to both secondary and tertiary education systems, pulling the universities away from their Western orientation. In terms of economic systems, Islamization requires a greater emphasis on the traditional Islamic objectives of an equal redistribution of income and wealth and the creation of certain welfare institutions for orphans, the needy, and the poor. In terms of legal systems, it demands the reinstitution of the *Shari'a* as the only source of legal thinking, thereby deprivatizing Islamic regulations and excluding secular Western forms of legal organization. This would also involve of course the co-option of the *Ulama* and the promotion of

religious scholars into the system. From our perspective, probably a more interesting development is the reintroduction of Islam into the mass media and the regulation of broadcasting and advertising by Islamic institutions and norms. In this area Islamization is distinctively anti-consumerist and therefore anti-postmodernist. The growth of a global system of communication has made possible for the majority of Muslims the ritual necessity of pilgrimage to Mecca, thereby reinforcing the concept of Islam as a global system. At the same time, these institutions of global communication spread the message of pan-Islamic unity:

> Ironically, the technological tools of modernisation have often served to reinforce traditional belief and practice as religious leaders who initially opposed modernisation now use radio, T.V., and print to preach and disseminate, to educate and proselytize. The message of Islam is not simply available from a preacher at a local mosque. Sermons and religious education from leading preachers and writers can be transmitted to every city and village.
>
> (Esposito 1984: 212)

Islam is now able to self-thematize Islamic religion as a self-reflective global system of cultural identity over and against the diversity and pluralism involved in the new consumer culture (Luhmann 1984).

ISLAM AND CONSUMERISM

While sociologists of religion have regularly commented on the problem of meaningfulness in contemporary society, seeing the crisis of meaning as a direct consequence of the secularization of religious values, it is more appropriate to start at the level of the pluralization of life-worlds with the proliferation of consumer lifestyles as the basis for the fragmentation of religious belief and values. Consumerism offers or promises a range of possible lifestyles which compete with, and in many respects, contradict the uniform lifestyle demanded by Islamic fundamentalism. We can see the emergence of consumerism as a consequence of the evolution of capitalism as a world cultural and economic system. Within this perspective, early capitalism involved the rationalization of production systems and the discipline of labour through the imposition of religious asceticism or alternatively the imposition of Taylorism. In the twentieth century a further development of capitalist culture and organization has emerged, namely the rationalization of distribution and consumption. The development of a global distribution system was based upon certain technical developments (such as efficient refrigeration) and as a consequence of the development of global systems of transport and communication, creating a mass market for travel and tourism. In the mid-century, capitalism was further developed with the rationalization of consumerism and consumption through the development of debt financing, credit systems and the improvement of mass banking, hire purchase, and other arrangements for extended consumerism. The lifestyle of the middle classes with its emphasis on leisure, gratification, and hedonism has now become a global normative standard, shaping the aspirations and lifestyles of subordinate classes who, while they may not directly consume, consume at the level of fantasy.

In sum, the development of a global mass culture has now begun to shape and condition the lifestyles of the third world, developing societies and post-Soviet states. These developments in mass culture have also made a major impact on the world of Islam, representing for Islamic religious leaders a new form of indirect colonial penetration, a form of internal cultural invasion. Many of these cultural changes in everyday life, which are the unanticipated consequences of mass media usage, were anticipated in Lerner's *The Passing of Traditional Society* (1958).

These developments of global mass consumerism can be seen as a further extension of westernization and symbolic penetration, providing a problematic mixture of localist cultures and mass universalism (Stauth and Zubaida 1987). In the case of Sadat's open door policy in Egypt, critics of Sadat's regime argued that this economic policy involved not only complete capitulation to Western economics but also involved the further undermining of Egyptian values, or more precisely Islamic values by the spread of consumerism and western lifestyles. The critical evaluation of this situation suggested that at the level of peasant life, American consumerism stood for a further erosion of traditional values.

> As the peasant sits in the evening with his family to watch the TV that his son has purchased from the fruits of his labor in Saudi Arabia the intrigues of J. R. Ewing and Sue Ellen in Dallas strip him of what is left of his legitimacy as a culture bearer in his own culture. Between programmes, he is told in English that he should be drinking Schweppes or in dubbed Arabic that he should use deodorant, and that all his problems are caused by having too many children – a total package of imported ideas.
>
> (El Guindi 1982: 21)

Of course, the symbolic meaning and functions of consumer items are complex and unstable. For example, during the Iranian revolution against the Shah, the wearing of the veil by women signified opposition to the regime, adherence to Islam, and political commitment to Shi'ism. The veil however also had a practical function, since it was difficult to identify women individually on the part of the secret service while they were veiled. In the aftermath of the revolution, on a global scale, the veil has come to signify a general commitment to Islamic fundamentalism. However, in Egypt poor and economically deprived university students often

found veiling to be the most practical solution for avoiding sexual harassment, since the veil signifies purity, but also these students are unable to buy the very expensive Western clothes which the upper classes of the Egyptian society buy to demonstrate their own personal distinction. In recent years there has also developed a more fashionable upper middle-class form of veil and associated dress which has become fashionable in some areas of Cairo. Again on a global perspective, it is possible to refer to these strata as 'an Islamic bourgeoisie' (Abaza 1987). Even within Islamic fundamentalism, the multiplicity of the meanings of symbolic cultures can never be entirely contained.

CONCLUSION

Following Jameson (1984), we can associate the emergence of a postmodernist culture with the development of consumerism and post-industrialism. While Islam responded to modernization through the development of an ascetic ethic of hard work and discipline, contemporary Islam has responded to postmodernity through a fundamentalist politics of global community and through an anti-consumerist ethic of moral purity based upon classical Islamic doctrine. These processes involve an apparent paradox: the emergence of a global system of communication made a global Islam possible, while also exposing the everyday world of Islam to the complication of pluralistic consumption and the pluralization of life-worlds. While the Abrahamic faiths successfully survived modernization, there are profound problems for religious absolutism in the area of postmodernity. In epistemological terms postmodernism threatens to deconstruct all theological accounts of reality into mere fairy tales or mythical grand narratives which disguise the metaphoricality of their commentaries by claims to (a false) authorship. These threats of deconstruction emerge out of the pluralization of lifestyles and life-worlds making perspectivism into a concrete everyday reality. Postmodernization of culture is a significant issue at the level of consumption and everyday lifestyle, and it is for this reason, as I argued in Chapter 1, that Gellner fails to see the real importance of postmodernism in his *Postmodernism, Reason and Religion* (1992).

There are various solutions to postmodernism. In terms of the Weberian model (Table 1) one solution to postmodernism is a nostalgic quest for holism through fundamentalist traditionalism, whereby the village is opposed to the global market place. Another solution is nationalism which involves an associational but closed relationship in which the nation-state is opposed to the egalitarian abstraction of globalist citizenship (Table 2). Within this second model, ecumenicalism is a market place of beliefs which is more compatible with globalism, but which still attempts to

retain some credibility in terms of truth by acknowledging that there may be variations on truth in the theological market place.

Table 2 Religio-social movements

	Open	*Closed*
Communal	Islamization	Traditionalism
Associational	Ecumenicalism Individualism	Nationalism

Islamization is an attempt to create at the global level a new *Gemeinschaft*, a new version of the traditional household which would close off the threat of postmodernity by re-establishing a communal ideology. Islamization is a political movement to combat Westernization using the methods of Western culture, namely a form of Protestantism within Islam itself. Islamization equals political radicalism plus cultural anti-modernism. Within this perspective, Islamic fundamentalism is a defense of modernization against postmodernism. The outlook for global ecumenicalism does not appear to be a realistic option since, for example, the Abrahamic faiths in their fundamentalist mood claim an absolute truth. The problem is that the Islamic Household must view alternative global households as threatening and dangerous and therefore Islam constantly finds itself forced up against 'lands of war'. It is difficult to imagine how one can have several universalistic, global, evangelical, religions within the same world political space. How can one have mutually exclusive households within the same world cultural system? There are in a sense two problems for Islam. First, there are the problems of external relations with other faiths and traditions or households where the traditional millet system will no longer work. Second, there are internal relations with 'deviations' such as the Copts in Egypt, or the Bahai faith in Iran, or there are the complications of the Islamization of women and the conflicting interpretations, for example, of egalitarian relations between men and women.

While in this chapter I have specifically been concerned with the conditions that have promoted fundamentalism in contemporary Islam, it is clear that similar pressures operating on other world religions have produced political movements to redefine secular national boundaries in religious and traditional terms. For example, in Israel the Haredin have called for the reactivation of a pre-1948 law governing changes in religious status which would enable the Rabbinate to determine the precise religious status of converts to Judaism emigrating to Israel. One consequence of such a change of political involvement of the Rabbinate would be to block off the migration of reform or conservative Jews from North America and Europe attempting to enter Israel as Israeli citizens (Friedman 1987). In Islam, the Muslim Brotherhood aims to establish not

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simply an Islamic order, but an Islamic state (by force where necessary) as a political program against, not only secularism and nationalism on the part of Arabic governments, but against Western intrusion and against the state of Israel. In terms of the Brotherhood's political philosophy, only a war against such alien forces will bring about the reunification of the spiritual and political world within Islamic culture. Because the Abrahamic faiths share the same spiritual space, the development of global fundamentalism promises to make the Middle East increasingly unstable in political and economic terms, but on a wider global level it is difficult to see how fundamentalist religious movements could tolerate an ecumenicalism of ideas.

Chapter 7

From orientalism to global sociology

The problem of 'Other Cultures' has been, as I have argued in the previous chapters, a persistent aspect of Western social philosophy since Herodotus pondered on the fact that all forms of socio-cultural difference raised a question over the distinction between the natural and the conventional. Consciousness of difference was an inevitable consequence of the social differences (especially between slaves and free men) which has been brought about by Greek trade and military imperialism (Finley 1980). The theological conflicts between Abrahamic faiths produced the first set of systematic and global theories of 'otherness' as the morally and ontologically corrupt. With the rise of Christianity to political hegemony, the 'Islamic Question' was eventually added to the 'Jewish Question' as a political debate which came to define the contours of human society. 'Difference' is an inevitable and necessary feature of all human societies *qua* human societies as a consequence of the functional importance of the development of a moral core (Durkheim 1951). It follows that all human societies are racist, because they are stratified by the dual process of differentiation and evaluation (Dahrendorf 1968). While these processes of separation and judgement are a necessary feature of collective life as such, the issues of 'otherness', of outsider-culture and of the threat of 'alien belief systems' (Peel 1969) they become prominent and pressing only under special circumstances of national crises and social disruption. In the twentieth century, the problem of otherness has been increasingly associated with the political necessity to understand Islam. The oil crisis, the Iranian revolution, the war in Afghanistan, the Gulf War and the global resurgence of Islamic fundamentalism have transformed not only the map of the world, but the global consciousness of the precarious nature of intersocietal and inter-religious stability. The pressing awareness of cultural globalism has brought with it a necessary consciousness of regional opposition, fundamentalist faith and anti-modernism (Robertson 1987; Robertson and Lechner 1985). It was in the political vortex of this global conflict that the intellectual debate over orientalism originally arose.