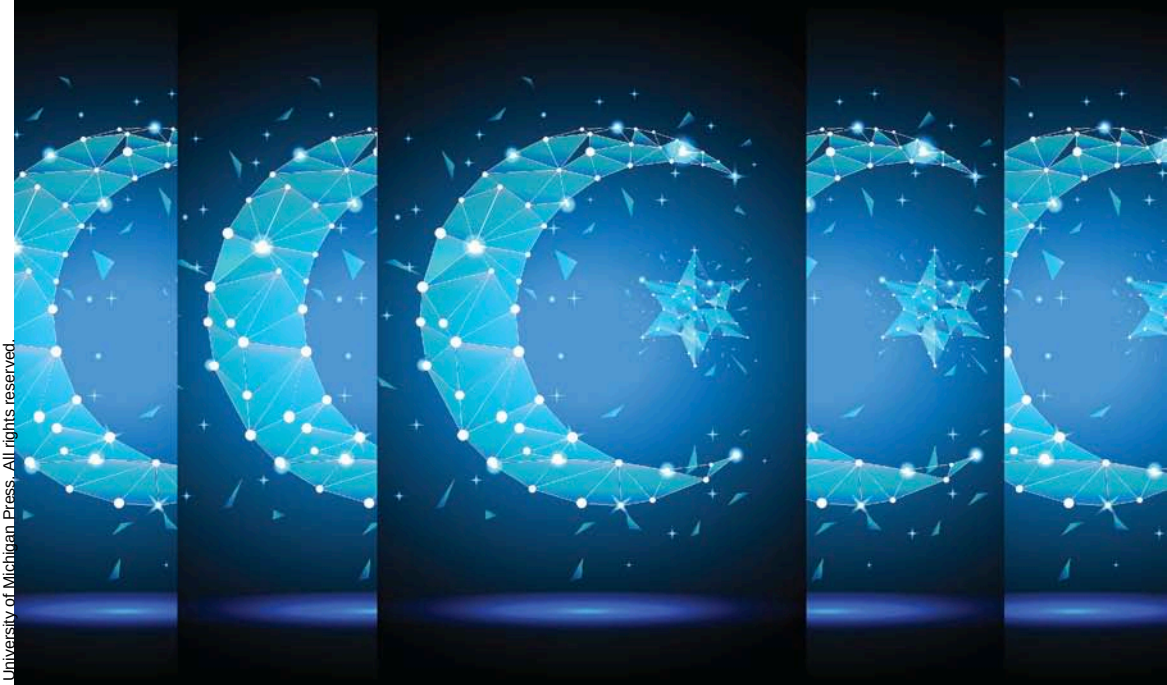
THE MANY FACES OF POLITICAL ISLAM

Religion and Politics in Muslim Societies

SECOND EDITION



Mohammed Ayoob
and Danielle N. Lussier

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— *OF* —
Political Islam

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University of Michigan Press
—Ann Arbor—

Published in the United States of America by the
University of Michigan Press
Manufactured in the United States of America
Printed on acid-free paper
First published January 2020

A CIP catalog record for this book is available from the British Library.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Names: Ayoob, Mohammed, 1942– author.
Title: The many faces of political Islam : religion and politics in Muslim societies / Mohammed Ayoob and Danielle N. Lussier.
Description: Second Edition. | Ann Arbor : University of Michigan Press, 2020. | Includes bibliographical references and index.
Identifiers: LCCN 2019025040 (print) | LCCN 2019025041 (ebook) | ISBN 9780472037650 (paperback) | ISBN 9780472126408 (ebook)
Subjects: LCSH: Islam and politics. | Islam and politics—Islamic countries. | Islamic countries—Politics and government. | Islam—21st century.
Classification: LCC BP173.7 .A875 2020 (print) | LCC BP173.7 (ebook) | DDC 320.55/7—dc23
LC record available at https://lccn.loc.gov/2019025040
LC ebook record available at https://lccn.loc.gov/2019025041

Cover credit: Shutterstock.com / Ann679

For Salma—intellectual companion, best friend

For Marcel and Pamela Lussier—role models of determination

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Digital materials related to this title can be found on the Fulcrum platform via the following citable URL: https://doi.org/10.3998/mpub.11448711

Preface to the Second Edition

Originally published in 2008, *The Many Faces of Political Islam* made an immediate and important contribution to the study of Islam and politics in undergraduate classrooms. Earning high praise from experts in the field and popularity among students that led to several additional print runs, the first edition of the book achieved Mohammed Ayoob's goal of providing an accessible, intellectually rigorous introductory text on political Islam. The collaboration between Mohammed Ayoob and myself that led to this second edition speaks to the enduring need for such a book. We are grateful to the team at the University of Michigan Press that encouraged the publication of this second edition.

I adopted *The Many Faces of Political Islam* as a course text during my first semester at Grinnell College for a new, upper-level seminar on Islam and politics. It was the reading my students always valued the most, because it blended serious academic scholarship with multiple case studies to provide valuable comparative context. In recent years, however, students frequently observed that the material was out of date, and they longed to know if the book's arguments still held in light of changing global circumstances. A number of important events of the past decade have shaped political Islam across various contexts, such as the Arab uprisings of 2010–2011 and the regime changes that followed; the death of Osama bin Laden and the dramatic weakening of al-Qaeda; the Syrian civil war and the evolution of ISIS; authoritarian backsliding in Turkey; and an increase in Islamist violence in sub-Saharan Africa.

For a couple of years, I searched in vain for a text I could substitute for *The Many Faces of Political Islam* that would include this more contemporary content while providing the theoretical, conceptual, and historical insights of Mohammed Ayoob's book. While there is no dearth of scholarship on political Islam, including several interesting edited volumes published following the

Arab uprisings, I kept returning to *Many Faces* due to its accessibility and breadth. I decided to turn the students' critique of the text's being out of date into a research opportunity for the class: we would read the book with a critical lens for what material was dated, and students would research and write papers revisiting the original arguments in light of recent global events. In June 2017 I reached out to Mohammed Ayoob and asked if he might be available to have a Skype session with my students after they had completed their research papers. Our dialogue quickly turned into his inviting me to collaborate on this second edition, which the University of Michigan Press had invited him to consider writing.

Thus, when the students in my Islam and Politics seminar in fall 2017 began the research project described above, they knew that the exercise would not only produce their own knowledge, but help Mohammed Ayoob and me shape this second edition. My greatest thanks are to my students, Vincent Benlloch, Tony Bergida, Evan Bunis, Nathan Calvin, Alexander Claycomb, Madeline Danks, James De Mott, Mark Duncan, Haley El Mahassni, Evelyn Nkooyooyo, Deanna Taylor, and Dylan Welch, who created the intellectual community that incubated this project. They offered thoughtful critiques and analysis of the original book's arguments and produced a series of stimulating essays that helped shape this current edition. Their specific contributions informed my thinking about the compatibility of Islam and democracy (Haley and Mark), the inclusion-moderation hypothesis (Nathan and Deanna), political Islam following the Arab uprisings (Evelyn, Vincent, Maddi), the difference between Islamist national resistance and transnationalism (Dylan, Evan, and Alex), and political Islam in the context of war and state collapse (Tony and James).

I am also thankful for further resources provided by Grinnell College that allowed me to work with several students after the seminar concluded. A grant from the Committee for Support for Faculty Scholarship allowed me to hire student research assistants, and the Dean's Office funded honoraria for students to contribute research to the book over the summer. Alex Claycomb synthesized the extensive recommendations made by his classmates in their coursework to help develop a structure for the second edition. Vincent Benlloch completed a comprehensive literature review of political Islam in sub-Saharan Africa and research on Boko Haram that informed chapter 7. Mark Duncan provided valuable assistance on the cases of Tunisia, Indonesia, and Turkey. April Park systematized and formatted citations throughout the manuscript and built its bibliography. Of the many students who had a hand in shaping this work, my greatest debt of gratitude belongs to Dylan Welch. In addition to

contributing valuable research assistance on the last decade of organizational change and development for the cases of al-Qaeda, Hamas, Hizbullah, ISIS, and the Muslim Brotherhood, Dylan immersed himself in the broader literature on political Islam as a theoretical and empirical concept, joining forces with me to think through the dimensionality of Islamism and the best way to measure it. As a product of this work, Dylan developed the initial version of the typology elaborated in chapter 1, where he joins us as coauthor.

Throughout the work of the second edition of this book, Mohammed Ayoob has welcomed me as his full collaborator, and I am grateful to his openness to my ideas and suggestions, his identification of scholarly and policy-oriented sources that helped elucidate specific questions, and his keen editorial eye. I am indebted to my mentor, collaborator, and friend, Steve Fish, who first recommended *The Many Faces of Political Islam* to me when I queried him about texts for my new course. Lastly, I would like to thank my family, especially my husband, John Grennan, and our son, Abraham, for their encouragement and patience with me as I completed this project.

Danielle N. Lussier

Preface to the First Edition

This book is a work of synthesis that aspires to fill a major gap in the literature on political Islam—namely, the need for an introductory text that is readily intelligible to the nonspecialist reader while simultaneously highlighting the complexity of the subject and avoiding oversimplification. The book is written both for students and for general readers interested in the subject. The idea of the book emerged from my own experience over the past several years of teaching an upper-division undergraduate course on political Islam to students majoring in political science, international relations, history, and sociology. It became apparent to me that an overarching text written within a comparative framework was necessary to introduce undergraduates to the subject before they proceeded to study more detailed material specific to particular themes, regions, or countries.

There is no dearth of high-quality specialist literature on various aspects of the interaction of religion and politics in Islam. However, much of it is very dense, highly specialized, country-specific, and not easily ingested by students without adequate background in the study of Islam and/or of the Muslim world. Above all, there is no single text that analyzes comparatively the various forms of political activity undertaken in the name of Islam and presents them in a way that would make the multifaceted phenomenon intelligible to students and general readers alike. The book that I have written will, I believe, be able to perform this task. It aims not only at providing students and lay readers a comprehensive and comprehensible introduction to the subject of political Islam but also at directing them to further readings to which they can turn for additional and detailed information on individual themes and case studies. I believe that the greatest value of the book lies in its capacity to perform this dual function.

I reckon that the very same qualities of this book that are likely to appeal to students will attract the general reader genuinely interested in understanding the relationship between religion and politics in the Muslim world. The book will therefore help to dispel many of the misconceptions and stereotypes about political Islam—and, indeed, about Islam itself—among the general public, while still encouraging its readers to maintain a critical and analytical approach toward the subject. This, I believe, is an essential task given the distortions, whether deliberate or unwitting, apparent in a great deal of the writing on the political manifestations of Islam.

"Political Islam" has become a growth industry in the West in general and the United States in particular following 9/11. This has led to the emergence of a large number of half-baked "experts"—especially among the media and, with a few honorable exceptions, in the policy think tanks—who speak and write about the subject with a degree of confidence and authority that is usually related inversely to the amount of knowledge they possess about it. The situation in academia is, thankfully, much better. However, much of the scholarly literature on the subject is written by academics for each other, is highly specialized, and is not widely read either by the lay public or by students other than those who aspire to become specialists themselves.

This book attempts to bridge the gaps both between gown and town and between academic specialists and the large number of students in the social sciences and humanities interested in gaining an understanding of political Islam but not intending to become specialists in the subject. The large majority of undergraduates in political science, international relations, history, and related disciplines in the English-speaking and English-reading countries do not have adequate background of Islam and political Islam before taking a course on the subject. This book hopes to introduce these students and the general reader to the phenomenon of political Islam lucidly, without jargon, and without taking recourse—as far as possible—to non-English terms. At the same time, this book aims at alerting its readers to the complexities of the subject and its contextually rooted character. It does so by demonstrating, above all, that there are many faces of political Islam and that much of the political activity undertaken in the name of Islam is determined by discrete national contexts. The book therefore attempts to demolish the monolithic image of political Islam that has become standard fare in the West in much popular writing (the genre most read and most influential) regarding this subject.

Some of the major themes of the book were presented in seminars or lectures at a number of institutions, including the Center for Strategic and Inter-

national Studies (CSIS) and the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, both in Washington, D.C.; the Council on Foreign Relations and the International Peace Academy in New York; the International Institute for Strategic Studies, the Royal Institute of International Affairs, University College, the London School of Economics, and the Institute of Ismaili Studies, all in London; the Department of International Relations at Bilkent University, Ankara; the Foundation for Sciences and Arts (Bilim ve Sanat Vakfý) in Istanbul; the American University of Kuwait; the School of International Studies at Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi; the Centre for Security Analysis in Chennai; and the Institute for Defence and Strategic Studies at Nanyang Technological University, Singapore. The feedback I received to many of these presentations helped me to refine my arguments and sharpen my conclusions.

I am very grateful to Mustapha Tlili, founder and director of Dialogues: Islamic World—U.S.—The West, a program currently based at New York University and earlier at the New School University in New York, for inviting me to coauthor the background paper "Who Speaks for Islam?" for the project "Who Speaks for Islam? Who Speaks for the West?" and present it at a workshop hosted by Prince Hassan bin Talal in Amman. Chapter 2 of this book, "Islam's Multiple Voices," was inspired by the work I did on the background paper for the project, and Mustapha deserves much of the credit for focusing my attention on this very important topic. I am also grateful to Shireen Hunter, formerly director of the Islam Program of the CSIS and currently director of the Carnegie Project on Reformist Islam at the Prince Alwaleed bin Talal Center for Muslim-Christian Understanding at Georgetown University, for inviting me to participate in a CSIS project called "Barriers to Modernization and Democratization in the Muslim World." The paper that I presented on the interplay of internal and external factors obstructing the democratization of Muslim countries in the Middle East as part of that project helped to clarify much of my thinking on the prospects for democratization in the Muslim world. Several of the ideas first presented in that paper are reflected in parts of this book in more mature fashion.

This book would not have been completed but for a generous Capacity Building Grant from the MSU Foundation through the Office of the Provost of Michigan State University. The grant helped me get release time from teaching and funded research travel undertaken in connection with this project. Dean Sherman Garnett and Associate Dean Norman Graham of James Madison College, the school of public affairs at Michigan State University, supported my endeavors and facilitated the completion of the book in multiple ways, for

which I owe them a huge debt of gratitude. Hasan Kosebalaban, Gamze Cavdar, and Matthew Zierler, three of the brightest and most promising young scholars of international relations I have come across in recent years, helped me in several ways in bringing the project to fruition, for which I am deeply grateful. In particular, Hasan spent long hours on the final draft of the manuscript, making substantive comments, checking and formatting endnotes, and making sure that the manuscript conformed to the publishers' specifications. I cannot thank him enough for his assistance, always rendered with a smile and a request for more "work." Jim Reische, my editor at the University of Michigan Press, was an invaluable source of sage advice that helped to keep me on the "straight and narrow" and prevented me from going off on too many tangents.

This book has profited immensely from the fact that, thanks to the vision of current president and former provost Lou Anna Kimsey Simon, Michigan State University has in the past three years assembled a critical mass of faculty interested in diverse aspects and regions of the Muslim world. The presence on campus of my Muslim studies colleagues—young, energetic, highly intelligent, and exceptionally committed to the study of the Muslim world—provided me with an environment very conducive to thinking about and discussing various facets of political Islam. Their input, while often indirect, has been very valuable to my work. MSU has further demonstrated its commitment to the study of the Muslim world by simultaneously establishing a Muslim Studies Program and a Muslim Studies Undergraduate Specialization. Both these ventures have dramatically helped increase MSU students' and faculty's exposure to and understanding of the Muslim world. I am particularly proud of having been chosen to lead these efforts at Michigan State University at this critical juncture.

My wife, Salma, was, as usual, a source of great strength during the period I was working on this book. She has had a long-standing interest in the interaction between religion and politics in countries of the Middle East and South Asia. Her incisive comments about various aspects of this complex subject, based on her readings and her observations as we traveled together several times in the Middle East during the past few years, often helped me sort out in my mind issues that would otherwise have remained unresolved. The book is dedicated to her in gratitude for her support and in recognition of the fact that she is the only person whose ideas I have felt free over the years to appropriate without acknowledgment or attribution.

CHAPTER 1

Defining Concepts, Demolishing Myths

with Dylan Welch

Since the close of the twentieth-century, three major assumptions have inspired much of the popular discussion about political Islam. These are, first, that the intermingling of religion and politics is unique to Islam; second, that political Islam, like Islam itself, is monolithic; and third, that political Islam is inherently violent. This book argues that none of these assertions captures the reality of the multifaceted phenomenon termed "political Islam." It does so by demonstrating that the Islamic religious tradition is no different from many others in terms of wrestling with the issue of religion in politics and politics in religion. It explores the multiple voices that claim to speak for Islam and the discrete national contexts that give different manifestations of political Islam their distinctive local color. Further, it offers a multidimensional conceptualization of political Islam that differentiates objectives and tactics, to show that distinct types of Islamist formations arise in response to highly variable local contexts. This book shows that while some Islamist groups employ violent tactics, they are often resorted to out of a lack of peaceful alternatives. In addition, it argues that violent transnational organizations, such as al-Qaeda and ISIS, are fringe phenomena marginal to the primary political struggles going on in predominantly Muslim societies. Finally, it demonstrates that political Islam does not operate in a vacuum; variables external to Islamism, principally the nature of domestic regimes and the substance of major powers' foreign policies, have substantial impact on the emergence, popularity, and durability of Islamist movements and parties.

What Is Political Islam?

Before beginning a discussion of issues related to political Islam, one must adequately define the terms *political Islam* and *Islamism*—that is, Islam as political ideology rather than a religion or theology. At the most general level, adherents of political Islam believe that "Islam as a body of faith has something important to say about how politics and society should be ordered in the contemporary Muslim world and implemented in some fashion."[1] While correct as a broad, sweeping generalization, this is too nebulous a formulation to act as an analytical guide capable of explaining political activity undertaken in the name of Islam. Greg Barton points out, "Islamism covers a broad spectrum of convictions. At one extreme are those who would merely like to see Islam accorded proper recognition in national life in terms of national symbols. At the other extreme are those who want to see the radical transformation of society and politics, by whatever means, into an absolute theocracy."[2]

A more precise and analytically more useful definition of Islamism is offered by Guilain Denoeux, who describes it as "a form of instrumentalization of Islam by individuals, groups and organizations that pursue political objectives."[3] According to this definition, Islamism "provides political responses to today's societal challenges by imagining a future, the foundations for which rest on reappropriated, reinvented concepts borrowed from the Islamic tradition."[4] While Islamists do not necessarily agree on the strategies or tactics needed to recreate a future based on their conceptions of the golden age of early Islam, they share the yearning to "go back to the future" by reimagining the past based on their readings of the fundamental scriptural texts.

The reappropriation of the past, the "invention of tradition"[5] in terms of a romanticized notion of a largely mythical golden age, lies at the heart of this instrumentalization of Islam. The invention of tradition gives many Islamists the theoretical tools to dehistoricize Islam and separate it from the various contexts—in terms of time and space—in which Islam has flourished over the past 1400 years. In theory, this decontextualizing of Islam allows Islamists to ignore the social, economic, and political milieus within which Muslim societies operate. It therefore gives them a powerful ideological tool they can wield to "purge" Muslim societies of "impurities" and "accretions," natural accompaniments of the historical process that they see as the reason for Muslim decline. However, context has a way of taking its own revenge on abstract theory when attempts are made to put such theory into practice.

The Islamic Conception of the Golden Age

Patricia Crone characterizes the Islamic notion of the golden age, central to Islamist thinking, as a "primitivist utopia, both in the sense that it presented the earliest times as the best and in the sense that it deemed a simple society to be the most virtuous."[6] This notion of a golden age, limited to the time of the Prophet and the first four "righteously guided" caliphs, is not a novel twentieth-century idea.[7] It has existed, with certain variations, from the earliest centuries of Islam. However, its use by modern Islamists is relatively recent. These Islamists posit that it is possible to recreate that golden age in the here and now, and that the political energies of Muslims should be devoted toward achieving this goal by reshaping and reconstructing Muslim polities in the image of Islam's first polity, the city-state of Medina.

In contrast, the classical Muslim notion of the golden age hinged on the assumption that it is unattainable in historical time. This view implicitly contextualized the golden age in seventh-century Medina and thus ruled out its re-creation in the present or future. In fact, this understanding is still true of the majority traditionalist view of the golden age today. Carl Brown has pointed out, "[M]ainstream Muslim political thought throughout the ages has protected inviolate the idealized early community by resisting the temptation to relate too precisely the pristine model to stubborn reality. The model of the early community remains thus an unsullied norm, but in the terminology of modern political science the maxims derived from the idealized model are not readily operationalized."[8] This idealization but presumed inoperability of the golden-age model helped the vast majority of Muslims reconcile themselves to the reality of imperfect political arrangements, including unjust orders and tyrannical rulers.

Only some small groups no longer politically relevant, such as the Kharijites and the early Ismailis, advocated implementing the golden-age model in historical time. But they were either suppressed or unable to capture the imagination of the large majority of Muslims, who remained rooted in reality and suspicious of millenarian movements.[9] The largest minority sect, the Imami, or Twelver Shiites, came to terms with what they considered to be unjust rule through the mechanism of the occultation of the twelfth imam, the Mahdi, whose return they consider essential to usher in legitimate rule among Muslims and in the world.[10] Had it been otherwise—that is, had a substantial segment of Muslims perceived the golden age as a model to emulate in historical time—it

would have led to incessant turmoil, threatening Muslim societies with recurrent anarchy. The notions of justice and equality, enshrined in the golden-age model, would have attained priority over those of order and hierarchy, thus threatening the fragile stability, first, of the Umayyad and Abbasid Empires and, subsequently, of the multiple Muslim polities that succeeded them. Moreover, the model of the city-state of Medina would have never worked in the context of the huge agricultural and hydraulic empires that emerged out of early Muslim conquests. These needed dynastic rule to provide continuity and stability, thus rendering the quest for the ideal an exercise in futility.[11]

Justifying the Status Quo in Classical Islam

Political quietism, which, despite periodic turbulence, became the norm among Muslim masses living under Muslim rulers for a thousand years, was the product in part of the indefinite postponement into the far future of any attempt to replicate the imagined model of perfect justice and equality that were presumed to reign supreme during the time of the Prophet and his immediate successors. The Shiites, as pointed out earlier, achieved this by sending their twelfth imam into occultation and postponing the creation of a just order until his return. The majority Sunnis achieved the same result partly by accepting the notion of the return of their own Mahdi toward the end of time. In greater part, however, political quietism was justified by the Sunni *ulama*, the religious scholars, with the help of two interrelated arguments.

First, they argued that the alternative to tyranny would be anarchy that could lead to the dissolution of the *umma*, the community of believers, thus throwing out the baby with the bathwater. This argument was buttressed by selectively quoting from the Quran, especially the verse "O ye who believe! Obey Allah and obey the messenger and those of you who are in authority."[12] It was reinforced by reference to the maxim, often attributed to the Prophet, that "sixty years of tyranny is better than one day's anarchy." Carl Brown points out, "Rather than a divine right of rule, Islam came to recognize a divinely sanctioned need for rule. . . . The Islamic tradition asserted, in effect, that mankind's need for government was so overwhelming as to make the quality of that government decidedly secondary."[13] It would not be wrong to assert that Thomas Hobbes must have been familiar with this classical Islamic argument. His social contract theory mirrors it quite faithfully.

The second argument took as its starting point the assumption that a Muslim ruler, however corrupt and unjust, was essential to preserve and defend the

land of Islam against infidels and to ensure that Muslims in the realm could practice their religion freely. The existence of less-than-perfect political orders was also justified with reference to the belief that Muslims could not perform their religious obligations unless they had an imam or caliph presiding over the community, in whose name the Friday sermons could be read and who could be deemed the leader of the caravan (the metaphor used by Patricia Crone for the Muslim *umma*),[14] leading the community to salvation. Again, the character of the imam/caliph was deemed secondary, and Muslim theologians went to great lengths to legitimize rule by caliphs who were visibly unjust, cruel, and corrupt.

Sunni theologians of Islam's classical period turned the defense of the status quo into a fine art. When the Abbasid caliph became a mere handmaiden of Turkic warrior-rulers from the ninth to the thirteenth centuries, leading *ulama* devised ways to bestow legitimacy on him, even though he no longer exercised power in any real sense of the term. For example, in a novel interpretation of the caliph's role, the famous theologian Al-Ghazali of the eleventh and twelfth centuries advocated a division of labor between the sultan and the caliph, with the former exercising power on the latter's behalf while the latter continued to symbolize the religious unity of the *umma*. He went to the extent of justifying usurpation of power by Turkic dynasts, who constantly overthrew and replaced each other in different parts of the nominal caliph's domain, by ex post facto investiture by the caliph of their right to rule over territories they had acquired by force.[15] In fact, this practice became common in the later Abbasid period in a desperate attempt by the caliph and his advisors to make theory conform to reality. Writing 200 years later, the Hanbali theologian Ibn Taymiyya, commonly considered to be the forebear of Ibn Abd al-Wahhab and his puritanical interpretation of Islam, argued, "The essence of government . . . was the power of coercion, which was necessary if men were to live in society and their solidarity was not to be destroyed by natural human egoism. Since it was a natural necessity, it arose by a natural process of seizure, legitimized by contract of association. The ruler as such could demand obedience from his subjects, for even an unjust ruler was better than strife and the dissolution of society; 'give what is due *from* you and ask God for what is due *to* you.'"[16]

Despite the contemporary Islamists' admiration for Ibn Taymiyya, they have in theory radically reversed the traditional orientation of Islamic theological interpretation. Their position that the golden age of pure and pristine Islam can be recreated in the contemporary era has had the effect opposite to the political quietism and stable political orders so dear, for good reasons, to the hearts of most Islamic scholars of the classical period. The Islamists' current

rhetoric mobilizing popular opinion in support of their vision has capitalized on the increasingly democratic and participatory sensibilities of the modern age. It has thus helped to mobilize large segments of the population in many Muslim countries that may otherwise have remained politically apathetic. This mobilization has certainly had destabilizing effects, but at the same time, it has contributed in substantial measure to democratizing the political culture of several Muslim countries because of the high value it places on political activism and participation. We will return to this theme when discussing the impact of political Islam on important Muslim countries later in this book. However, it is clear that leading theologians of the classical period of Islam would not have approved of using political Islam for objectives that go against the status quo.

Colonialism and the Emergence of Islamism

As we know it today, Islamism, or political activity and popular mobilization in the name of Islam, emerged in response to a set of factors introduced into the Muslim world as a result of the latter's encounter with the West from the eighteenth century onward, when the West became increasingly powerful and the lands of Islam progressively weak. This, in Muslim perceptions, was a reversal of the normal and presumably divinely ordained order of things, at least as it had persisted for a thousand years before the beginning of European ascendancy. Thus it needed both explanation and remedy. One of the most powerful explanations of Muslim degeneration was provided by those who came to be known as Salafis (meaning emulators of the *salaf al-salih*, the "righteous ancestors"). They argued that the primary reason for Muslim decline was that Muslims—rulers and subjects alike—had deviated from the model set by their righteous ancestors. The Salafis advocated that the remedy for Muslim degeneration was to return to the original path of Islam and recreate the model that had prevailed in the presumed golden age of the Prophet and the first four caliphs.

To be fair to the original proponents of the idea of returning to the pristine Islam of the earliest centuries, leading figures among them, such as the nineteenth-century theologian and jurist Muhammad Abduh of Egypt, advocated such a course because they believed the original teachings of Islam to be in total accord with the scientific positivism and rationality that underpinned modernity. Eminent historian Albert Hourani explains things from Abduh's point of view: "[T]he mark of the ideal Muslim society is not law only, it is also reason. The true Muslim is he who uses his reason in affairs of the world and of religion; the only real infidel (*kafir*) is he who closes his eyes to the light of truth

and refuses to examine rational proofs."[17] Abduh's aim and that of his peers who thought on similar lines was to rescue Muslim societies from backwardness and superstition, which they saw as consequences of un-Islamic accretions introduced in the later centuries of Islam.

However, this modernist interpretation of the golden age was overshadowed by those among the revivalists, such as Abduh's Syrian disciple Rashid Rida, who interpreted the return to the golden age in literal terms and advocated the creation of an authentic Islamic polity based on their imagined model of Islamic society at the time of the Prophet and his immediate successors in seventh-century Arabia. Paradoxically, Abduh himself was responsible for opening the way for such a revivalist interpretation. Malcolm Kerr has argued convincingly, "[B]y asserting that Muslims must look back to their earliest history to discover the principles of their faith, he encouraged others to reexamine traditional institutions of government and law as they had presumably existed in the great days of the Rashidun [the righteously guided] and to explain in what respects they had become corrupted. ʿAbduh's stimulus thus made the almost forgotten classical theory of the Caliphate and the resurrection of the Shari'a as a comprehensive legal system live options for such men as Rashid Rida."[18]

Abduh's ideas, therefore, not only generated much of the modernist thinking in the Arab world but inspired what came to be known as the Salafi movements in the early decades of the twentieth century. H. A. R. Gibb has pointed out, "In the matter of doctrine he [Abduh] had made a stand against uncritical acceptance of authority, or *taqlid* [imitation]. . . . [But] his theological followers, led by a Syrian disciple, Shaikh Rashid Rida, continued the process with a characteristic glide toward extremism. By carrying the rejection of *taqlid* back beyond the founders of the schools [of jurisprudence] to the primitive community of the *salaf*, the 'great ancestors,' and combining with this the quasi-rationalism of scholastic logic, but without Muhammad Abduh's ballast of catholicity, they naturally gravitated toward the exclusivism and rigidity of the Hanbali outlook."[19] Scriptural fundamentalism and the rejection of accumulated tradition emerged out of this rigid literalist and decontextualized version of Salafism that has spawned much of contemporary Islamist thinking. Thus Abduh's prescription about returning to pristine Islam to rediscover the rational roots of the Islamic faith turned out to be a double-edged sword. It inspired both modernist and rationalist discourse within Islam as well as a more literal call to return to Islam's golden age and re-create it in the modern world.

The replacement of Muslim rulers by European colonial powers also reopened the whole question of legitimate authority in the Muslim world. As

long as Muslim potentates ruled over Muslim subjects, the fiction of religious legitimacy for such rule could be maintained, even if the rulers did not measure up to the original yardstick set up by the Prophet and his immediate successors. Colonialism, by replacing Muslim rulers with infidel ones, changed the entire paradigm on which authority was based in the Muslim world. Fundamental religio-political questions, including whether Muslim countries under European rule were any longer *dar al-Islam*, "the abode of Islam," began to be raised. It was argued that if they were not, then it was the right of all Muslims, collectively and individually, to restore them to their Islamic status. If they were, then it was by definition illegal under Islamic law for them to be ruled by infidels, and it became the duty of all Muslims, individually and collectively, to strive to overthrow colonial regimes.

Therefore, out of the colonial experience emerged the equation of the Islamic concept of jihad with "striving" and "struggle" for freedom and independence in the modern political sense. Jihad, in this sense, provided the motive and the justification for many anticolonial wars and uprisings, from British India, through the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan and Italian Libya, to French Algeria. Consequently, the defense of the homeland and the religious obligation to defend *dar al-Islam* became inextricably enmeshed with each other in the popular Muslim imagination.[20] Resistance against non-Muslim foreign domination and encroachment, whether direct or indirect, thus became the paradigmatic jihad of modern times. The use of the term *jihad* today by Islamists, denoting resistance not merely to direct foreign occupation but more generally to an iniquitous international order dominated by the United States and its allies, has emerged as a logical corollary of the jihads waged against European colonialism in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Today, political Islam as a major vehicle for resistance against occupation and domination receives its legitimacy and credibility to a large extent from this equation of the term *jihad* with resistance to foreign domination of Muslim lands and peoples.[21]

However, while it would be extremely difficult for common Muslims to disentangle the political and religious dimensions of resistance to foreign domination, there was and continues to be a clear distinction for Islamists between merely throwing out the foreign occupier and creating a state based on their imagined model of the pure and pristine age of Islam. The former was perceived as but the first step toward attaining the latter. The earliest instances of anticolonial jihad, such as those in Algeria, India, Sudan, and Libya, also witnessed attempts by the leaders of the premodern Islamist resistance movements to establish Islamic polities based on their conceptions of sharia law on territo-

ries liberated from colonial powers.[22] Contemporary Islamist political formations, such as the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt and the Jamaat-i-Islami in Pakistan, are heirs both to the Salafi intellectual tradition and to the practical endeavors on the part of the nineteenth-century anticolonial leaders in the Muslim world who strove to create Islamic polities (as opposed to merely independent Muslim ones) in zones liberated from colonial occupation.

Contemporary Islamism

As the preceding discussion suggests, political Islam as we know it today is a relatively modern phenomenon. Its roots lie in the nineteenth-century Muslim encounter with European domination and in Muslim reactions to subjugation by infidel powers. It is no wonder, then, that political Islam speaks the language of resistance to foreign domination not only in the political but in the cultural and economic spheres as well. This is true of most manifestations of this religio-political ideology and of the movements that represent it. The Islamic Republic of Iran, despite its Shia heritage, which sets it somewhat apart from the Sunni majority, has best epitomized this phenomenon in recent times.

It is also clear that the Islamists' totalistic bent betrays a very modern sensibility. Robert Hefner has pointed out, "Rather than fidelity to prophetic precedents . . . , the Islamist dream of an all-encompassing religious governance bespeaks a modern bias, one all too familiar in the twentieth-century West. It is the dream of using the leviathan powers of the modern state to push citizens toward a pristine political purity."[23] The twentieth-century concept of the "Islamic state," which has become the central focus for Islamist energies, emerged out of this preoccupation with capturing the state in order to change society. This emphasis on the importance of the state as the instrument of God's (and the Islamists') will sets the Islamists apart from Muslim traditionalists, who are usually wary of too much state interference in matters of religion.

The use of religious vocabulary as the vehicle for resistance against oppressive rule has given contemporary Islamists (as it did their nineteenth-century precursors) a powerful tool for bonding with and, thus, successfully mobilizing Muslim masses. Islamists speak the language of the people by using religious idioms that common Muslims can relate to because they have been socialized in them since childhood. This is one of the major reasons why Islamism has garnered so much emotive appeal in the current era and can capture the imagination of ordinary Muslims suffering under foreign domination or oppressive and autocratic rule.

Moreover, as stated earlier, Islamists argue that Muslim societies declined the more they moved away from the model of the golden age in their romanticized version of the early years of Islam. Their prescription is to return to the primitive utopia of early Islam. The model of the "strangers" having failed, there is a strong tendency to revert to a highly romanticized model of the "ancestors," despite such warnings as Fouad Ajami's that the "people who surrender to the ancestors are, strictly speaking, surrendering to strangers" and that "[a]uthenticity can be as much an escape as dependence and mimicry can be."[24]

Religion and Politics in Islam

Do the conception of a religiously inspired golden age and some groups' striving to turn this imagined model into reality mean that politics and religion are inextricably intertwined in Islam? Further, is the politicization of religion unique to Islam and absent from other religious traditions? These two questions, while closely interrelated, are analytically distinct and therefore need to be answered separately.

In much of the popular analysis and even in a substantial portion of academic discourse, it is frequently assumed that there is no separation between the religious and political spheres in Islam. This is a myth to which Islamist rhetoric has contributed in considerable measure, especially by making constant reference to the sharia and the concept of the "Islamic state." Consequently, an image has been created not merely of the indivisibility of religion and state but of religion determining the political trajectory of Muslim societies, including their inability to accept the notion of popular sovereignty and implement democratic reforms. Nothing could be farther from the truth.

Anyone familiar with the historical record of Muslim polities would realize that, in practice, the religious and the political spheres began to be demarcated very soon after the death of the Prophet in 632 CE. This was inevitable because, according to Muslim belief, revelation ended with the Prophet's death. His immediate temporal successors, the first four "righteously guided" caliphs, while respected for their piety and closeness to the Prophet, could not claim that their decrees were divinely ordained. Several of their actions and interpretations were openly challenged, and religious or political dissenters assassinated three of the first four caliphs. Civil war often loomed on the horizon, and two major intra-Muslim battles were fought during the reign of the fourth caliph, Ali, largely as a result of intertribal rivalry. Intra-Muslim strife culminated in the massacre at Karbala in 680 CE of Ali's son and the Prophet's grand-

son Hussein (himself a claimant to the caliphate) and his seventy-odd companions, by forces loyal to the newly established Umayyad dynasty. The religious schism between Sunni and Shia dates back to this supremely political event, a war for the throne. Politics was clearly in the driver's seat.

The fiction of the indivisibility of religion and state was maintained, however, primarily to legitimize dynastic rule to uphold the unity of the *umma*—even though, as stated earlier, leading theologians had to incessantly engage in intellectual acrobatics to demonstrate such unity. In short, the fiction of the inseparability of religion and politics provided a veneer over the reality not merely of the chasm between religion and state, but not infrequently, over the subservience of the religious establishment to temporal authority. The criteria established by Muslim jurists to determine the legitimacy of temporal rule were minimal. The consensus was that as long as the ruler could defend the territories of Islam (*dar al-Islam*) and did not prevent his Muslim subjects from practicing their religion, rebellion was forbidden, for *fitna* (anarchy) was worse than tyranny, since it could threaten the disintegration of the *umma*. The lessons of internecine conflict during the early years of Islam were well learned. As stated earlier, political quietism was the rule in most Muslim polities most of the time for a thousand years, from the eighth to the eighteenth centuries.[25]

The distinction between temporal and religious affairs and the temporal authority's de facto primacy over the religious establishment continued throughout the reign of the three great Sunni dynasties—the Umayyad, the Abbasid, and the Ottoman. The Ottomans not only combined in the same person the title and functions of both sultan and caliph (which had been divided during the latter part of Abbasid rule), but they institutionalized the subservience of the religious establishment to temporal authority by absorbing religious functionaries into the imperial bureaucracy. The Sheikh al-Islam (Şyehül Islam in Turkish), the highest religious authority in the empire, was appointed by the Ottoman sultan and held office at his pleasure. The Turkish Republic became heir to this Ottoman tradition and has continued to exercise authority over a highly bureaucratized religious establishment through the Directorate of Religious Affairs, this time in the name of secularism. The Arab successors to the Ottoman Empire also continued to uphold the tradition of the state's domination over the religious establishment, but have not been able to control religious institutions and discourse as effectively as Turkey has been able to do.[26]

The link between religion and state in the Muslim parts of South and Southeast Asia has been more complex and even more distant, thanks to the greater prevalence of Sufism and syncretism, which have allowed religion to carve a

sphere almost completely distinct from the state and autonomous from it in most respects. In the case of the Indian subcontinent, the presence of a large non-Muslim majority over whom Muslim potentates ruled for several centuries created a very special situation. In such a context, statesmanship demanded creative compromises that turned Mughal emperors into near deities for their Hindu subjects and that made the Hindu Rajputs into the sword arm of the nominally Muslim empire. Islam could only act as a periodic brake on this process, but it was certainly never in the driver's seat. Attempts to apply puritanical Islamic precepts in matters of state usually turned out to be extremely shortsighted and counterproductive because they alienated large segments of the Hindu military and civilian elites, whose allegiance and collaboration were critical to maintain an empire already suffering from imperial overstretch.[27]

Muslim polities are therefore heirs to the twin traditions of the separation of the political from the religious arena and, where the two intersect, temporal supremacy over the religious sphere. The history of Saudi Arabia, considered to be the most fundamentalist Muslim society, demonstrates that in decisive moments, the balance between the House of Saud and the Wahhabi religious establishment tilts decisively in favor of the former. Abd al-Aziz ibn Saud's suppression of the Ikhwan revolt during the early years of the kingdom provides overwhelming evidence of the primacy of the state over religious ideology in this most puritanical Muslim polity.[28] We will return to this topic in chapter 3.

In essence, therefore, the historical trajectory of religion-state relations in Islam, in terms of separation of the two or state domination over and instrumental use of religion, has not been very different from that of Western Christianity. However, since Islam has never had a single locus of religious authority (unlike in Christianity prior to the Reformation), the religious class did not pose the sort of challenge to temporal authority that the religious hierarchy the pope presided over did to emperors and kings in medieval and early modern Europe. The dispersal of religious authority in Islam therefore normally prevented a direct clash between temporal and religious power such as happened in medieval Christendom. Simultaneously, given the diffuse nature of religious authority, it prevented the total control, except sporadically, of the religious establishment by temporal rulers. It also helped preclude the establishment of a single orthodoxy that, in alliance with the state, could suppress all dissenting tendencies and oppress their followers, as happened in Christian Europe during the medieval and early modern periods. Wars of religion and persecution of "heretical" sects were therefore infrequent in Islamdom, in contrast with Christendom.[29] At the same time, these dynamics promoted the creation of distinct

religious and political spheres that by and large respected each other's autonomy. This did not mean that the state in classical Islam desisted from using religion to buttress its political legitimacy. Such attempts were made on occasion, particularly under the Sunni caliphates. But the state was never very successful in intruding massively into the religious arena, which largely retained its autonomy from the temporal sphere.

It is interesting to note in this connection that the major schools of Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh*) that have come to form the basis of what is known as sharia originated and evolved outside the sphere of the state and in the arena of theological scholarship. Theologians and jurists interpreted and applied Quranic injunctions and prophetic traditions within the realm of what would now be called civil society. As Wael Hallaq points out, "Islamic law did not emerge out of the machinery of the body politic, but rather arose as a private enterprise initiated and developed by pious men who embarked on the study and elaboration of law as a religious activity."[30] Although the *ulama* and the *fuqaha* worked largely in tandem with the state, especially through the offices of the *qadi* (religious judges) appointed by the state, this relationship was not free of tension. This was the case because the codification of Islamic law was in substantial part aimed at formulating rules based on Islamic teachings that would have the moral and legal capacity to constrain temporal authority in its dealing with its subjects. Sharia, as we know it today, evolved in a Janus-faced fashion, restraining both individual and state behavior. It was not an instrument of the state created by the state to serve the interests of temporal authority. It is ironic that many contemporary Islamists consider the state to be the principal agent for producing and enforcing the sharia. This reflects the changed role of the state, which has become much more powerful and intrusive in modern times, and the Islamist acceptance of this role, far more than it follows the practice during the classical era of Islam. It also demonstrates the Islamists' modern sensibility, which is very much at variance with that of the theologians and the jurists of premodern times who were much more wary of state intrusion than Islamists are today.

Despite the de facto separation of religion and state in classical Islam, the two spheres could not be completely insulated from each other, both because of the initial combination of temporal and religious authority in the person of the Prophet and the righteously guided caliphs, and because, as in any society, moral concerns, often couched in religious vocabulary, intruded into the political sphere. Furthermore, political and religious identities often overlapped significantly, thus making religious affiliation a marker of political identity. This

gave religion another entry point into politics, and vice versa. Finally, Muslim rulers attempted to use religion and religiously sanctioned titles and institutions as instruments to legitimize their rule.

However, these features are not unique to Islam, even if they manifested themselves in Islamdom in distinctive ways. Islam is no more politicized than Judaism and Christianity, as anyone conversant with the Hebrew Bible and the religious roots of Zionism, on the one hand, and with the Crusades and the political role of the papacy, on the other, will immediately recognize. Examples demonstrating the inextricability of religion and politics abound from non-Judeo-Christian traditions as well. Hindu nationalist organizations in India blatantly use religious terminology to spread their message. The Buddhist Sangha (monastic order) in Sri Lanka has played an important role in defining the national identity of that country in Buddhist and Sinhalese terms. Politics and religion can be a heady mixture; this is demonstrated in all religious traditions, not merely in Islam.

The Myth of the Islamic Monolith

The mixing of religion and politics is no Islamic monopoly. Religion has been used for profane purposes in all religious traditions, and this continues to be true in contemporary times. The assumption that Islam is unique in this regard is a myth. The same is the case with the assumption that political Islam is a monolith. Despite some similarities in objectives and even more in the rhetoric they employ, no two Islamisms are alike.[31] Political activities undertaken by Islamists are largely determined by the contexts in which they operate. What works in Indonesia will not work in Egypt; what works in Iran will not work in Turkey. Anyone familiar with the diversity of the Muslim world—in terms of socioeconomic characteristics, culture, political system, and trajectories of intellectual development—is bound to realize that the political manifestation of Islam, like the practice of Islam itself, is to a great extent context-specific and is the result of the interpenetration of religious precepts and local culture, including political culture. To quote a leading scholar of political Islam, "[I]t is intellectually imprudent and historically misguided to discuss the relationships between Islam and politics as if there were one Islam, timeless and eternal."[32]

It is true that there is an Islamic vocabulary that transcends political boundaries. However, this vocabulary is normally employed to serve objectives specific to discrete settings. In the process, while the Islamic idiom may continue to appear similar to the uninitiated observer, its actual content undergoes sub-

stantial transformation. As Eickelman and Piscatori have pointed out, politics becomes "Muslim" by "the invocation of ideas and symbols, which Muslims in different contexts identify as 'Islamic,' in support of . . . organized claims and counterclaims."[33] Since the borders of the sovereign, territorial state normally circumscribe such claims and counterclaims and the contestations that accompany them, much of the politics that goes on in the name of Islam is also confined within those boundaries.

The model of the sovereign territorial state, which had its origins in early modern Europe, was adopted by Muslim countries and the rest of the developing world following decolonization. Like elites in other postcolonial societies, Muslim state elites cultivated a sense of territorial nationalism (often a mix of ethnic and religious identities) among their populations, to legitimize the colonially crafted boundaries of their state and their right to rule over the state in the name of the nation. In some places—above all, in parts of the Arab world—these attempts at nation building were complicated by the existence of pannationalisms.[34] But overall—and including in the Arab world—these efforts to create nations based primarily on territorial criteria have largely succeeded, although they have often had to accommodate religious and ethnic loyalties that go beyond the territorial confines of the nation-state.[35]

That the Islamist political imagination is determined in overwhelming measure by the existence of multiple territorial states becomes very clear when one looks at the political discourse of Islamist movements, and even more, at their political action. The Jamaat-i-Islami has a Pakistan-specific agenda, just as the Islamic Salvation Front had an Algeria-specific agenda. Even the strategies of the Muslim Brotherhood—which, although founded in Egypt, has branches in various Arab countries—are largely determined by particular contextual characteristics. Thus the branches in Egypt, Jordan, Syria, Kuwait, and Palestine have adopted radically different political strategies in response to the specific challenges they face within their respective national boundaries. Indeed, as chapter 4 of the present study demonstrates, the Muslim Brotherhood's parent organization, in Egypt, has itself mutated over time, with its leadership in the early 1980s unequivocally rejecting the more radical and militant ideas associated with Sayyid Qutb, its chief ideologue of the 1960s. Islamist political formations are governed by the same logics of time and space as their more secular counterparts.

If there are several Islamisms operating within discrete political contexts determined by the existence of sovereign, territorial states, why do most pundits, especially in the West, consider political Islam to be a monolithic phe-

nomenon bent on implementing a single grand strategy? This is in part a function of many Western analysts' ignorance of Muslim societies and polities, especially those who dominate the media and habitually expound their views of political Islam with a degree of self-righteousness inversely related to their knowledge of Muslim societies. It is equally a function of the rhetoric of Islamists around the world, which to most outsiders appears to vary little, if at all.

The various Islamist movements have recourse to similar vocabulary because they draw their inspiration from the same sources, and also because this vocabulary is familiar to their audiences. However, once one begins to scrutinize the political objectives and actions of discrete Islamist formations, as we do throughout the rest of this book, it becomes clear that they are engaged primarily in promoting distinct national agendas, not a single universal agenda. Even the shared preoccupation of various Islamist groups with creating the "Islamic state" makes it very clear that they generally desire to do so within the territorial confines of existing states. Their objective is to Islamize existing states, not to join them into a single political entity. This demonstrates very clearly that, despite ostensible denials by some of them, Islamists have internalized the notion that the international system consists of multiple territorial states—and that it will continue to consist of such states into the indefinite future. It also implies that Islamists are acutely aware of the ethnic and cultural divisions within the Muslim world and concede, even if implicitly, that "Islam" is but one of the numerous identities that peoples in Muslim countries value—and not necessarily the most salient one.

Political Islam as a Multidimensional Concept

Despite political Islam's centrality to civic and political life in many majority-Muslim countries, Western political and academic discourse commonly discusses this highly consequential concept with little nuance or attention to its many actors' diverse tactics and objectives.[36] Political Islam is frequently defined by only its most general parameters, but these general parameters actually tell us very little about specific Islamist actors. Existing measures of political Islam too often divide movements of political Islam into binaries. For example, Jillian Schwedler notes that scholars often gravitate toward creating a radical/moderate binary for Islamist organizations, and she cites a number of scholars who do so.[37] The criteria for placing movements within this binary frequently take into account only one tactic, such as electoral participation or

use of violence, when in fact these are not mutually exclusive actions. The multidimensional nature of political Islam means that any attempt to categorize Islamist actors into neat, binary categories, such as violent and peaceful, radical and moderate, reformist and statist, etc., results in only a partial picture of how different Islamist actors relate to each other.

Islamist organizations are frequently similar in their instrumentalization of the religion of Islam as a political ideology in pursuit of political objectives. However, Islamist groups differ in meaningful ways in the types of political objectives they set, the tactics they use to pursue these objectives, and the constraints they experience in aligning objectives and tactics. These are differences not in *degree*, such as more or less violent, but in *kind*. Because these differences are qualitative in nature, a conceptual typology that allows observers to identify and describe elements of political Islam serves as a valuable measurement tool.[38] Conceptual typologies elucidate a concept's meaning by mapping out its dimensions and analyzing them in a systematic manner. A multidimensional typology is most appropriate for mapping out the dimensions of political Islam because Islamist organizations are multifaceted, and any attempt at classifying them based on only one dimension obscures the inherent differences that two groups that are similar on one dimension might have on other dimensions. Developing a multidimensional typology is a structurally more comprehensive and rigorous process than culling noncomplementary traits from Islamist groups (such as the use of violence for one group and electoral participation for another) and concluding that they lie on one end or the other of the radical-to-moderate continuum. Additionally, a typology is useful in identifying specific types of actors within political Islam as well as the spaces where each of these actors has agency in interacting with regimes.

The typology of Islamist groups proposed here focuses on three separate dimensions: political objectives, electoral participation, and the use of violence. Political objectives vary considerably across Islamist actors, ranging from merely seeking to influence public policy to establishing a caliphate by nullifying existing nation-state structures. If we were to think of these objectives as existing along a single, ordered continuum, one end would be marked by organizations that seek to affect policy by changes to legislation. Islamist organizations whose objectives fall closer to this end of the continuum do not seek to spread Islamist values through holding office; rather, they lobby and pressure those who hold office to do so on their behalf, perhaps through peaceful means or by engendering fear of violence. One such example is Indonesia's Islamic Defenders Front (Front Pembala Islam or FPI in Indonesian). The FPI has

called for the institution of local sharia regulations throughout democratic Indonesia, and is well known for organizing several protests against Jakarta's Christian governor prior to elections in 2017. At the other end of the continuum are organizations that seek to restructure the contours of the international system, such as ISIS. Such organizations view existing nation-state structures and an international system built on mutual recognition of temporal powers to be illegitimate. Between these two extremes we can identify a number of other objectives, such as holding political power by being elected or appointed to public office; restructuring a political regime while maintaining the existing boundaries of the nation-state; and restructuring the contours of the existing state, potentially by changing the state's internationally recognized borders. These different objectives reveal an order based on an underlying dimension concerning the legitimacy of existing governing structures, in which one end largely accepts the legitimacy of temporal rule and seeks to advance political objectives within the system, and the other fundamentally opposes it and seeks to overturn not only the temporal regime, but the entire foundation of political rule in the contemporary international system.

The tactics that Islamist actors select in pursuit of these objectives are also diverse. Electoral participation is a significant tactic that Islamist organizations often use, but the tactic itself often illuminates more about the regime under which a group operates than about the group itself. For example, the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood was barred from participating in elections for over three decades. As soon as the group operated under a more accommodating regime, it began to participate in elections again. This pattern of interaction suggests that the Brotherhood had a demand for electoral participation throughout the period during which it was banned, but that this demand could not be met until an Egyptian regime allowed it. Alternately, there are Islamist organizations that variously choose to lobby, endorse political candidates, or proselytize without contesting elections, despite their respective regimes allowing them to do so. Additionally, there are Islamist parties that abstain from contesting elections as a means of protest against the ruling regime. This was true of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt when it chose to boycott the 1990 parliamentary elections, which it deemed undemocratic. This is also true in the case of the Jordanian Islamic Action Front, which boycotted the 1997 and 2010 elections in Jordan for similar reasons.[39]

Another tactic that Islamist organizations deploy is violence. The use of violence by Islamist actors, however, is one of the most poorly understood

aspects of political Islam. While casual observers in the West often know only about the violent transnational groups covered extensively in the media, such as al-Qaeda and ISIS, most mainstream Islamist movements operate peacefully within national boundaries and attempt to influence and transform their societies and polities largely through constitutional means, even when the constitutional and political cards are stacked against them.[40] The Western policy focus on terrorism has abetted the myth that political Islam is inherently violent. Terrorism, however, is a deeply contested concept. The *Routledge Handbook of Terrorism Research*, for example, documents 260 different definitions of terrorism. Moreover, there is no universal legal definition of terrorism approved by the General Assembly of the United Nations, although attempts have been made to develop such a definition since 1972.[41] Consequently, legal definitions of terrorism vary across international borders, such that actions perceived as falling within the legal bounds of terrorism in one location might not be considered terror in a different location. Alex Schmid has identified several key points on which an academic consensus has emerged about the concept of terrorism, even if the contours of this consensus are not integrated into a single, uniformly accepted definition.[42] In particular, Schmid notes that (1) the violence of terrorism is comprised of single-phase acts of lethal violence, dual-phased life-threatening incidents, and multiphased sequences of action; (2) the primary victims of terrorist attacks are usually civilians or noncombatants; and (3) the direct victims of attacks are not the ultimate targets, but rather serve as a medium for generating a predominantly political message. Schmid writes that, "At the origin of terrorism stands *terror*—instilled fear, dread, panic, or mere anxiety—spread among those identifying or sharing similarities, with the direct victims."[43]

There are Islamist groups who engage in terrorist tactics. In his study of political violence and terrorism among Muslims, M. Steven Fish found that while Muslim-majority countries were no more prone to large-scale political violence than non–Muslim majority countries, "Islamists are responsible for a disproportionate share of terrorist bombings in the contemporary world."[44] Yet he also noted that most of the terrorist attacks in the data set from which he drew this conclusion took place in the context of larger territorial conflicts. He points out that the sites of terrorism tend to be concentrated in certain nations, and that "terrorist attacks are much more likely to happen in places beset by civil wars and insurgencies than in places that are not . . . While the terrorist events that happened in the West have received much public attention, only a

small fraction of all terrorism occurs there."[45] Given these dynamics, we cannot assume that the relationship between Islamism and terror in recent history is causal: terrorism may take place mainly in areas where civil wars and insurgencies abound, as they do today in a number of Muslim-majority territories. A measure of political Islam that categorizes actors based on whether they have appeared as perpetrators of "terror" places unequal weight on this aspect of violent tactics at the expense of understanding the broader context in which the violence is embedded.

That broader context is closely analyzed in Ioanna Emy Matesan's research on the intersection between ideology, violent tactics, and organizational structures. Matesan emphasizes the importance of a "tactical outlook," which she defines as "the extent to which the group justifies armed action, engages in it behaviorally and has the military capabilities to undertake it."[46] In her analysis of tactical outlooks, Matesan finds that not all groups that have armed wings engage in violent acts, and that groups without armed wings can still participate in limited violence. In particular, Matesan finds that ethnopolitical organizations with an armed military wing that do not engage in active violence are much more common than those that are armed and engage in violence. Once the conditions that initially inspired an organization to develop an armed wing have changed so that the group no longer pursues violent tactics, it is unlikely to formally disband the military unit, but rather keep it in passive reserve. In short, violence can be a "sticky" choice in which the formation of an armed wing can make it difficult for an organization to ever disassociate itself from violent tactics as militarization remains part of its possible toolkit. Matesan's research points to the complications of thinking about violence exclusively in binary terms.

Within political Islam, there are organizations that are exclusively peaceful, groups that are actively violent, and groups that have the capacity for violence but do not act on it. Among the groups that have the capacity for violence or actively engage in it, the targets of violence vary, as does whether the violence is embedded in a broader territorial struggle. In sum, depending on the Islamist group's political objectives, violence may be combined with electoral tactics. Whether electoral participation is a viable strategy for Islamist actors is largely determined by factors external to the organization—the regime, state, and international systems in which it operates. In surveying the landscape of modern Islamist organizations, we see that the three dimensions of political objectives, electoral participation, and violence intersect to form a number of specific Islamist "types," to which we now turn.

Islamist Ideal Types

Social scientists have a long history of using typologies to categorize phenomena that differ based on specific combinations of traits. Max Weber introduced the concept of "ideal types" in his discussion of legitimate authority, noting that pure, perfect examples of the types exist only in theory.[47] Weber's classification scheme of traditional, rational, and charismatic authority could be used to examine empirical reality by considering which type a specific example of authority most closely approximates. In examining the clustering of specific combinations that modern Islamist organizations display on the dimensions of political objectives, electoral participation, and violence, we have identified four potential Islamist ideal types: vanguard Islamist movements, nonviolent Islamist political parties, Islamist national resistance groups, and violent transnational Islamist actors. Chapter 2 discusses the theoretical and historical elements that gave rise to modern Islamism. The remaining chapters analyze these four types by examining case studies that represent typical cases of the specific type.

Vanguard Islamist movements reject the legitimacy of an existing set of state structures and focus on revolution within a territorially circumscribed area. They may employ both electoral and violent tactics, depending on the specific contexts. Sometimes consciously, at other times coincidentally, these movements are in the mold of Vladimir Lenin's vanguard of "professional revolutionaries" dedicated to developing the political consciousness of the masses to inspire them to rise up in support of revolution.[48] Vanguard Islamist movements generally share Lenin's view of the role of violence: it is a necessary tactic when seizing power, but will ultimately fade away in favor of peaceful representative institutions once an appropriate level of political consciousness has been achieved. As John Calvert has written, Islamists who adopt this approach "see a vanguard of true believers (*talia*) as the agents of revolution. According to the radicals, the Islamic revolution cannot be left to the people because their minds have been contaminated by the alien ideas of decadent forces."[49] For vanguard Islamist movements, Islam inspires an ideological commitment to political institutions and arrangements determined by religious tenets. However, as discussed earlier, Islam itself does not prescribe a specific set of political arrangements, so the shape of revolution is left to the interpretation and design of specific vanguard Islamist actors. Vanguard Islamist movements in general adopt an "ends justify the means" approach to tactics—working with both electoral tools and violence, as best fits their long-term revolutionary goals. As chapters 3 and 4 discuss in detail, vanguard Islamist movements have played an

important role in shaping politics in Iran, Egypt, and Pakistan. While these movements are a specific type of Islamist actor, their revolutionary nature cannot be sustained indefinitely. Once revolution is attempted, the vanguard Islamist movement may transform into another type of actor in response to the change in political circumstances.

Nonviolent Islamist political parties accept their existing state structures, although they may challenge the legitimacy of the regime governing those state structures. Their political objectives are generally policy-focused, and can include contesting elections within an existing regime or supporting overall regime change through nonviolent means. Accordingly, they do not engage in violence to achieve their political objectives, and they demand electoral participation. Whether the demand for electoral participation translates into actual political contestation, however, depends on the constraints imposed by the existing political regime. For example, Tunisia's Ennahda, from the period of its founding as the Islamic Tendency Movement in 1981 until the collapse of the Ben Ali regime in 2011, was barred from participating in elections. It first participated in Tunisian elections in 2011 and has continued to participate since. Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood, which renounced violence in the late 1970s, consistently demanded electoral participation for much of its history, but was only permitted to participate in 1984. The Brotherhood subsequently participated in every Egyptian election except 1990 until it was banned following the ouster of Egyptian president Mohamed Morsi in 2013. We examine the cases of nonviolent Islamist political parties in several important Muslim countries in greater detail in chapters 4 and 5, demonstrating that they are constrained by their own national contexts, and consequently that their policies and actions are shaped by the discrete settings in which they operate.

Islamist national resistance groups share several characteristics with vanguard Islamist movements and nonviolent Islamist political parties, yet they also differ in important ways on the dimensions of objectives and violence. Like nonviolent political parties, Islamist national resistance groups participate in elections when they are permitted to do so and when they feel they have the ability to compete effectively. They maintain a constant demand for electoral participation, but whether this demand results in actual contestation of elections is largely determined by the constraints imposed by the ruling regime. For example, the absence of elections in Lebanon between 2010 and 2017 and in Palestine since 2006 have limited the use of electoral tactics by Hizbullah and Hamas. Also similar to nonviolent Islamist political parties, Islamist national

resistance groups accept the legitimacy of temporal rule and the overall contours of the international system.

While vanguard Islamist movements and nonviolent Islamist political parties might aim to advance a broad range of policies, Islamist national resistance groups are more precise in articulating their objectives and connecting those objectives to violent tactics. Islamist national resistance groups instrumentalize Islam for political pursuit by drawing on Islamic identity features as a way to distinguish themselves from more secular articulations of specific national identities. Moreover, compared to vanguard Islamist movements that also employ violent tactics, Islamist national resistance groups have a narrower objective: to defend the territorial sovereignty of their nation from external threat, as in the case of Hizbullah, or to terminate foreign occupation, as in the case of Hamas. Yet the very real vulnerability to external aggression that Islamist national resistance groups feel based on current or recent occupation by foreign invaders compels them to maintain active military wings and use violence as needed to achieve their objectives. The violence of Islamist national resistance groups, however, is contained within specific territorial struggles, and is selected primarily when electoral tactics are unavailable or are likely to be ineffective. Hizbullah and Hamas, which will be analyzed in chapter 6, are clear examples of this particular type of Islamist actor.

The fourth and final Islamist type is comprised of violent transnational actors. Though small in number, violent transnational Islamist actors attract the lion's share of Western attention on political Islam. This type of Islamist group is on the extreme end of the objectives' continuum that anchors groups based on how they view the legitimacy of temporal rule. Like vanguard Islamist movements, they take inspiration from Islam to challenge existing political structures. Yet they do not necessarily have a fully developed revolutionary ideology or the disciplined organization of vanguard movements. The objective of violent transnational groups, of which ISIS and al-Qaeda are prime examples, is to restructure the contours of the international system by nullifying existing nation-state structures and constructing a political entity based on religious rule that obliterates existing political borders. Pursuing this objective necessitates violent tactics. Electoral participation is irrelevant when temporal political frameworks are perceived as illegitimate. Violent transnational Islamism will be discussed in chapter 7 through examination of the cases of al-Qaeda, ISIS, and Boko Haram.

These four types of Islamist organizations reflect a broad cross-section of

the Islamist movements observed over the course of the twentieth century up to the present. These types reflect a combination of specific characteristics on the dimensions of political objectives, electoral participation, and violence, and a single Islamist organization might move from one type to another over the course of its history. Movement across types often happens in response to changes in the overall context in which an Islamist group operates. For example, a regime change that leads to greater political accommodation of an Islamist group's goals could produce a shift in objectives from changing the regime to contesting elections within it. This shift in objectives might also result in a change in tactics, abandoning violence in favor of electoral participation. In such a dynamic, a specific actor that was once a vanguard Islamist movement might transform into a nonviolent Islamist political party. Similarly, if external threats to a nation's territorial sovereignty end, an Islamist national resistance movement could transform into a nonviolent Islamist political party. Alternately, a nonviolent Islamist political party, having achieved its primary policy objectives vis-à-vis Islam, could change the religious nature of its objectives and transform into a more secular political party, jettisoning its instrumentalization of Islam as a political ideology. Such an organization would no longer be classified as Islamist. As chapter 4 will discuss, Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood has moved across types over time.

In considering the four types of Islamist organizations contained in this typology, it is also worth briefly discussing which combinations of characteristics are not observed, either because they are logically impossible or simply because they have not occurred. For example, there are no examples of Islamist groups that challenge the legitimacy of existing state structures but abstain completely from violence. If a group's primary political objective is to change state borders or the international system that confers legitimacy on state borders, violence may seem like the only fruitful strategy to pursue, or at least it serves as a reliable defense if electoral approaches should fail. Similarly, no Islamist groups who accept the legitimacy of the existing regime actively engage in violence. While groups that originated as vanguard Islamist or Islamist national resistance organizations might not have formally disbanded all military units, once the electoral mechanism becomes a stable and predictable option for pursuing political objectives in a political regime and the groups perceive the state as legitimate, electoral participation predominates over violent tactics.

Lastly, while the typology proposed here helps us to categorize most Islamist actors that have emerged over the past century, there may be a few empirical

exceptions to these ideal types. For example, the unique relationship between the House of Saud and the Wahhabi *ulama* in Saudi Arabia is an exceptional form of Islamism that appears only in this specific case and cannot be generalized more broadly. As chapter 3 discusses in greater detail, an eighteenth-century contract between Muhammed ibn Saud, the founder of the Saudi dynasty, and Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab, the founder of a puritanical interpretation of Islam, provided the basis for an unusual alignment between temporal and religious rule, where religious leadership supported the dynasty's temporal rule as long as this rule provided a protected space for a specific form of religious interpretation. Notably, this arrangement predates the historical developments that gave rise to the twentieth-century expansion of political Islam.

Conclusion

This chapter has attempted to define and conceptualize political Islam and to address the most popular myths about it in the Western media and sections of academia. It has demonstrated that the relationship between religion and politics in Islam is not very different from that that exists in several other Abrahamic and non-Abrahamic religious traditions. It has argued that political Islam is not a monolith, and that Islamist movements in different countries pursue distinct political objectives, frequently framed in terms of nation-specific agendas and strategies, despite a superficial similarity in their rhetoric. This chapter has also shown that Islamist movements select tactics that align with those political objectives, pursuing both violent and electoral means of engagement depending on the context in which they are operating. In particular, groups that perceive the regime and state structures in which they operate as legitimate prioritize nonviolent, electoral tactics over violent pursuits when given the opportunity. In sum, variations in political objectives, tactics, and the constraints imposed by the operational context give rise to many faces of political Islam.

The next chapter takes up the issue of the multiplicity of Muslim voices and the consequent cacophony that has led most Western analysts and policymakers to focus on the most extreme and violent Islamist formations as the leading, if not sole, spokespersons for Islam. This is another myth that needs serious examination.

CHAPTER 2

Islam's Multiple Voices

Despite substantial evidence to the contrary, some of which has been presented in the first chapter of this book and will be elaborated on in later chapters, many in the West continue to consider Islam to be a monolith. This perception of Islam is regularly expressed in articles, commentaries, and editorials that posit a clash between "Islam" and the "West." The most influential incarnation of this thesis of a clash of civilizations, inspired by Princeton historian Bernard Lewis and most vividly presented by Harvard political scientist Samuel Huntington,[1] predates the events of 9/11. However, the continued presence of terrorism in the name of Islam, as well as the political violence perpetrated in Syria and Iraq by the entity known as the Islamic State or ISIS, have strengthened the credibility of this thesis among the Western public.

This thesis is predicated on an essentialist interpretation of Islam as "civilization" (in the singular) rather than as a religion and code of ethics that affects and is in turn affected by multiple cultural and geographic milieus. Consequently, its popularization has augmented a unitary impression of Islam and Muslims in the West that conceals the enormous diversity not only in Muslim opinion in general but even in groups characterized as fundamentalists or Islamists. The major impact of the essentialist, monolithic interpretation of Islam on Western perceptions is not merely to paint all Muslims with the same black brush, but to accord the most extremist and violent elements among Islamist activists, who fulminate viciously against the West and on occasion commit dramatic acts of terror, the position of authentic spokespersons for Islam. Extremist factions encourage this perception by often justifying their violent actions through selectively quoting from the Quran and the traditions of the Prophet. It is often ignored that they pluck such quotes out of context and stretch their meanings, through very creative interpreta-

tions, to absurd limits that include justifying the killing of civilians—Muslims and non-Muslims alike.[2]

The right of such extremist elements to speak for Islam or for the vast majority of Muslims is totally unjustified. As the first chapter has argued and later chapters substantiate, they are fringe elements in Islam and almost totally irrelevant to the fundamental issues most Muslims are busy tackling in their discrete societies. Moreover, just as there is no Islamic monolith, no single individual, group, or institution can rightfully claim to speak for Muslims, let alone on behalf of Islam. As Robert Hefner has pointed out, today "most Muslim societies are marked by deep disagreements over just who is qualified to speak as a religious authority and over just how seriously ordinary Muslims should take the pronouncements of individual scholars."[3]

A Historical Quandary

The question of who speaks for Islam is not a new quandary for most Muslims and has historically been difficult to answer. Islam has neither a pope nor a clearly delineated religious hierarchy. A loose hierarchical structure does exist among the Shia *ulama*, but even in Shia Islam, the minority branch, currently no single individual or organization can pronounce authoritatively on theological issues, let alone political ones.

In the middle of the nineteenth century, an attempt was made in Iran to establish a single source of religious authority in Shia Islam, with the title *marja-i-taqlid*, meaning "the source of imitation."[4] However, this system broke down after the death of Ayatollah Borujerdi in 1961. Since then, several leading religious figures have enjoyed the prerogative to issue edicts or rulings that become binding, but only on their respective followers—that is, on those who have chosen these particular figures as sources to emulate.[5] These rulings are not considered binding on the followers of other religious figures of equal status. It was therefore no surprise that Ayatollah Khomeini's arrogation of the right to speak on behalf of all of Shia Islam was greatly resented by many leading ayatollahs, both in and outside of Iran, several of whom outranked him in the religious hierarchy before the Iranian Islamic revolution he inspired in 1979.

These divisions of opinion have been very important in the political realm, dividing those among the Shia *ulama* who endorse politically quietist interpretations of Islamic injunctions from those who advocate politically activist interpretations of religious doctrines, and from those who hold various shades of opinion in between. While Ayatollah Borujerdi advocated a quietist line, Ayatollah Kho-

meini, a student of Borujerdi, expounded an activist position, but only after his mentor's death.[6] Ayatollah al-Sistani, currently the leading *marja* of the Iraqi Shia, falls somewhere in between. While disinclined to intervene in day-to-day political affairs, his "understanding of religious law leaves very little of the world beyond the scrutiny of religious leaders."[7] This has been demonstrated by his various rulings on unmistakably political matters, such as endorsing participation in elections organized by the occupation authority or approving or disapproving of various provisions of the draft interim Iraqi constitution. Such opinions have had binding force on his followers, who form a very substantial proportion of the Shia in Iraq. Al-Sistani may not want the Shia clergy to rule directly, as Khomeini did, but he certainly wants them to have a supervisory or at least an influential advisory role in the future Iraqi political system. This discussion points to the fact that even in the relatively hierarchically delineated clerical system in Shia Islam, no single person or institution is vested with the authority to issue edicts that are binding on all the faithful. Furthermore, national and ethnic divisions among the Shia, especially between Iranians and Arabs, circumscribe the reach and authority of even the most revered Shia *ulama*.

The problem of locating religious authority becomes much more acute among the majority Sunnis. The term *Sunni* is the shortened form of *ahl al-sunna wa'l-jama'a*, those who consider themselves to be the faithful followers of the traditions of the Prophet (*al-sunna*) and the upholders of the integrity of the Muslim community (*al-jama'a*). This nomenclature was adopted by the majority of Muslims, despite theological and jurisprudential differences among them, to distinguish themselves from the Shiat-i-Ali, the partisans of Ali, who were perceived as having split from the consensus within the *umma* regarding the succession to the Prophet, unleashing discord and dissension among the believers.

Multiple religious voices have historically been the rule, rather than the exception, among the Sunnis, for good reason. The term *Sunni* became a catch-all phrase for all those who had not radically broken from the established consensus within Islam, as had been the case first with the Kharijites and then with the various branches of the Shia. The group of people called Sunnis emerged as a result of various compromises among the rest of the believers that had become essential to keep the community united. Thus, as a matter of pragmatism, multiple interpretations of the Prophet's *hadith* (sayings) and *sunna* (practice) had to be tolerated to keep the community intact. Consequently, it became the rule among the Sunnis for numerous senior *ulama*, the learned in the law, to exercise the right to issue religious rulings, based on meticulous research on the sources of Islamic law (including the context in which particular revelations occurred) and on accumulated precedents. However, given the multiple centers

that can issue such edicts and the multiple sources on which they can base their interpretations, it is not uncommon to find rulings issued by different *ulama* and *fuqaha* ("jurists," from the singular *faqih*) to be at variance with each other, depending on the different weight they accord to sources from which they seek guidance and on the different contexts in which they issue their rulings.

The tradition legitimizing several sources of religious authority was institutionalized sometime between the tenth and eleventh century CE, with the consolidation of four major schools of Islamic jurisprudence among the Sunnis—the Hanafi, the Shafi'i, the Hanbali, and the Maliki, named after their most prominent founders.[8] The major Imami Shia school of jurisprudence, called Ja'afri after its most prominent *faqih* Ja'afar al-Sadiq (the sixth imam of the Shia), also emerged during this period. Followers of the major schools of Sunni Islam were expected to accord equal status and respect to each of the four Sunni schools and to consider the decisions of their representative *ulama* as binding on the followers of each of the respective schools. In time, similar respect came to be accorded de facto by the Sunnis to the Ja'afri school of Shia Islam as well.

This policy of live and let live produced several benefits over the centuries. As stated in chapter 1, it helped, above all, to preclude the establishment of a single orthodoxy that, in alliance with the state, could suppress all dissenting tendencies. But it also meant that theological disputations could never be conclusively resolved, because no single locus of religious authority could make binding rulings that would apply to all Sunni Muslims, let alone all Muslims.

Despite this decentralization of religious authority, there was a general consensus among Muslims during the premodern era regarding who speaks for Islam. It was commonly acknowledged that those recognized by their peers as learned in the religious sciences and Islamic jurisprudence had the right to speak for and about Islamic doctrines regarding both moral and societal issues. The *ulama* from different jurisprudential schools, and even from within the same school, may differ in their interpretations, but their right to interpret the scriptures was recognized based on their mastery of religious texts, both the original scriptures and the accumulated wisdom of authoritative commentaries and Islamic legal precedents.

Colonialism, Modernity, and the Undermining of the Ulama*'s Authority*

The premodern consensus in the Muslim world about who had the right to speak for Islam lasted until about the first half of the nineteenth century. It was then ruptured by the intrusion of modernity through its various agents—chiefly

European colonialism, the print revolution, and mass literacy. The cacophony we experience in the Muslim world today is the culmination of the process that started with the breakdown of this Islamic consensus in the nineteenth century regarding the role of the *ulama* as the sole legitimate interpreters of religion.

European colonial domination reopened the whole question of the nature of authority in Islam by decimating existing political structures and undercutting the legitimacy of the religious authorities. Both the parties to the original contract in *dar al-Islam* between the temporal and the religious—the Muslim potentates who presided over a minimalist state and the largely politically quietist *ulama*—were discredited. Many lay thinkers and activists in the Muslim world held the religious establishment to be as responsible as temporal rulers for Muslim political decline, because of the *ulama*'s perceived collaboration with or at least tolerance of decadent regimes. The *ulama* were inherently conservative because of their knowledge of and emphasis on accumulated tradition and legal precedents and their aversion to innovative interpretations that departed radically from the core of Islamic teachings as understood by the body of religious scholars. They therefore became the target of attack by both religious revivalists and the increasingly secularized intellectual and political elites, who saw them as practicing and preaching a fossilized form of Islam that had neither answers to contemporary problems nor a vision of the future.

This last conclusion was not completely true, since several *ulama* demonstrated considerable intellectual agility and doctrinal flexibility in an effort to respond to new issues and problems as they arose during the past two centuries. Some creatively reinterpreted earlier jurists' rulings to fit modern circumstances, while others attempted to think through contemporary problems de novo.[9] Nonetheless, the image persisted because the majority of the *ulama*, not trained in the modern sciences, continued to speak a language that appeared arcane, especially to the more modernized sections of Muslim societies. It was no coincidence that this modern stratum was and continues to be responsible for producing many lay Islamist thinkers.

The undermining of the *ulama*'s status as interpreters of the faith was accelerated by the print revolution and the increase in literacy in Muslim countries beginning in the mid-nineteenth century. Thanks to these twin phenomena, the fundamental texts of Islam became available to increasingly large numbers of Muslims, both in their original form in Arabic and, probably more importantly, in translations in the various vernaculars of the Muslim countries. Consequently, the Muslim world found itself in a situation in the second half of the nineteenth century analogous to that of Western Christendom in the fifteenth

and sixteenth centuries, when the printed word and vernacular translations of Christian scriptures became accessible to lay individuals and paved the way for the Reformation in Europe.[10]

Islam's Proto-Reformation

Two ingredients integral to the Reformation—scriptural literalism and the "priesthood of the individual"—also appeared in the Muslim world, with almost the same consequences. Just as Christian fundamentalism, which rejected the accumulated wisdom of religious tradition, was a product of the Reformation, its Islamic counterpart was born out of the proto-Reformation that swept the Muslim world once lay Muslims gained direct access to the fundamental texts of Islam.[11] Religiously inclined individuals, often those educated in nonreligious schools and engaged in secular professions, began exercising their right of individual interpretation of Islamic scriptures, in near total disregard of precedents and interpretations accumulated over centuries by those trained in religion and jurisprudence.

Many among these lay individuals rejected the argument that the four established schools of jurisprudence in Sunni Islam were the sole repositories and conduits of all religious and legal knowledge. Reflecting the phenomenon of the "priesthood of the individual," they exercised their right of *ijtihad* (innovative interpretation to suit changing times and circumstances) and strove to gain the real essence of Islam by going back in history—beyond the time when these schools were founded—to the time of the "venerable" or "pious" ancestors, the first generation of Muslims. They argued that this was necessary because religious scholars who were too obsessed with inconsequential matters of detail, too beholden to temporal rulers, and too fossilized in their approach to religion had distorted the true spirit of Islam in the process of transmission over the centuries.

The print revolution and mass literacy, by giving the laity direct access to the foundational texts of Islam, contributed tremendously to the popularity of revivalist thinking in the Muslim world. Contemporary Islamists are heirs to this revivalist tendency, although, as discussed later in this book, many of them have made significant concessions to the contemporary contexts in which they find themselves. These Islamist thinkers, many of whom were not trained in the traditional seminaries that impart religious and legal knowledge, have become the primary challengers, in the scholarly realm, to the *ulama*'s authority to speak for Islam. Consequently, they have contributed significantly to the crisis

of religious authority in the Muslim world set off by the twin processes of literacy and the print revolution. Technological advances of the twenty-first century, namely new avenues to spread information through internet platforms and social media, have further amplified the voices of interpreters of Islam who do not come from the traditional *ulama*.

Sunni Islamists and the Ulama

A major difference exists between Sunni and Shia Islamists in their relationship with the *ulama*. The Sunni Islamist formations are largely distinct from and often hostile toward the traditional *ulama*. Several of their leading figures have in the past condemned the *ulama* for practicing and preaching an ossified form of Islam incapable of responding to contemporary challenges. Hasan al-Banna, who founded the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt in 1928, contrasted the *ulama* of early Islam—who, according to al-Banna, challenged their caliphs, rulers, and governors without fear—to the weakened *ulama* of his time, who were preoccupied with ingratiating themselves with government authorities.[12]

The founder of the Jamaat-i-Islami in the Indian subcontinent, Abul Ala Mawdudi, also held negative views of contemporary religious scholars. Referring to Mawdudi's views on the *ulama*, Seyyed Vali Reza Nasr writes, "His discourse on the Islamic state deliberately sidestepped the *ulama*, depicting them as an anachronistic institution that has no place in a reformed and rationalized Islamic order. . . . Mawdudi derided the *ulama* for their moribund scholastic style, servile political attitudes, and ignorance of the modern world."[13] Sayyid Qutb, the chief ideologue of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood in the 1950s and 1960s, was even more critical of the *ulama*. He denounced the very idea of "'men of religion, who take from religion a profession,' corrupting the Qur'anic message to suit their needs and attributing to God what He did not reveal."[14]

The three thinkers-cum-activists just mentioned were the most important among the Islamist figures of the twentieth century. All were trained and engaged in modern professions.[15] Abul Ala Mawdudi began his career as a journalist in the Indian subcontinent, and Hasan al-Banna and Sayyid Qutb, both from Egypt, started their careers in the field of secular education. In 1941, Mawdudi established the Jamaat-i-Islami, which became an intellectual and political force in Pakistan after its creation. Al-Banna established the Muslim Brotherhood, the premier vehicle for Islamist mobilization in Egypt, in 1928. Sayyid Qutb became the chief ideologue of the Brotherhood in the 1950s and 1960s, until he was executed by the Nasser regime in 1966.

Qutb's writings provided much of the basic motivation for Islamist activism after his death. His more extreme interpreters used Qutb's ideas to preach the violent overthrow of the Egyptian regime, which, according to them, had deviated from Islam and could therefore be considered a legitimate target for jihad. Qutb's ideas about jihad being licit against nominally Muslim regimes by the proclamation of *takfir* (excommunication) provided a major departure from traditional Islamic political thought, in which jihad was permitted either for the expansion of *dar al-Islam* or for defensive reasons against non-Muslim opponents and had to be proclaimed by a legitimate Muslim ruler.[16] In this context, the more extreme followers of Sayyid Qutb followed in the footsteps of the Kharijites, an early sect of Islam now virtually extinct, who Patricia Crone identifies as the "first Muslims to engage in *takfir* in a systematic way." Crone explains: "They held themselves to be the only believers. All other alleged Muslims were infidels who could in their opinion be killed and/or enslaved, exposed to random slaughter . . . , and robbed of their possessions, just like the infidels beyond the borders."[17]

There are, however, exceptions to the rule that modern Sunni Islamists are lay intellectuals and activists who look on traditional religious scholars with disdain. Many Saudi radical Islamists are drawn from the ranks of Wahhabi religious scholars, and a nexus that has developed between the radical *ulama* and lay Islamists in Pakistan has produced a form a neo-Wahhabism in parts of that country.[18] Similarly, radical thinkers who share the basic premises of the Islamist worldview have emerged from among the ranks of the *ulama* in Egypt. We will return to these issues later, in chapters that discuss individual countries in greater detail.

The Ulama-*Islamist Relationship in Shia Iran*

The *ulama*-Islamist relationship in Shia Iran has been and continues to be quite different from that prevailing in most Sunni countries. That a group of *ulama* led by Ayatollah Khomeini became the primary vehicle for Islamism and the 1979 Iranian Islamic revolution is a function of the difference between the ways the Shia *ulama* are organized compared to their Sunni counterparts. The financial independence of the Shia *ulama* from the Iranian state (in contrast to the Sunni *ulama*'s dependence on state patronage) provides a part of the explanation. This independence was achieved to a large extent through the religious laity's payment of *khums* (one-fifth of a person's income) to their chosen *marja* (source of emulation) among the senior clerics. Also, the robust Shia tradition

of *ijtihad* allowed a politically activist faction of the Iranian clergy, inspired by Khomeini, to adapt its strategy to the circumstances in which it found itself in the 1960s and 1970s and ride the wave of the broad-based anti-shah movement to power. The same predilection for innovation gave Khomeini the opportunity to advocate his theory of Islamic government as one to be guided by the supreme jurist, with the Shia *ulama* acting as the ultimate repositories of both moral and political rectitude.[19]

This did not mean that lay Islamist radicals were totally absent from the Iranian scene. The writings and speeches of lay activists, such as the anticlerical and French-trained Ali Shariati, contributed substantially to the delegitimization of the shah's regime. However, in the final analysis, they could not compete with the *ulama* for the control of postrevolution Iran. The latter had superior organization and much greater financial resources, and the mullahs were able to exploit divisions that existed among the nonclerical forces.[20]

The Shia *ulama* have demonstrated, above all, that their capacity to remain relevant to contemporary issues is much greater than that of many Sunni counterparts. This does not mean that the Sunni *ulama* have remained completely fossilized in terms of their interpretation of Islamic doctrines, as many lay Islamists claim to be the case.[21] However, the pace of change has been considerably slower among them than among the Shia clerics. As a result, the political and social roles of the Sunni *ulama* have been overshadowed by those of the college-educated "new religious intellectuals,"[22] the lay Islamists, drawn from the secular professions.

The Nation-State and the Nationalization of Religious Authority

The *ulama*'s authority among both the Sunni and the Shia has been undermined and circumscribed by another phenomenon in the modern age: the emergence of nation-states in the Muslim world during the twentieth century. The establishment of sovereign states within boundaries largely defined by the European imperial powers effectively ended the notion of the universal *umma*, the worldwide community of believers, as a politically relevant category. While the Muslim world had been de facto divided among several empires, kingdoms, and principalities beginning with the secession of Umayyad Spain from the Abbasid caliphate in the second half of the eighth century CE, the ideal of the political unity of the *umma* had been maintained, at least among the Sunnis, by, among other things, the continuation of the institution of the caliphate trans-

ferred to Istanbul in 1517 following the Ottoman conquest of Egypt. The nominal caliphate was brought to an end in 1924, following the defeat of the Ottoman Empire in World War I and the subsequent proclamation of the Republic of Turkey in 1923.

Nation-states that became the rule in the Muslim world in the twentieth century were conceptually very different from the premodern kingdoms and principalities into which the Muslim world had been traditionally divided. The ideal of nationalism posed a fundamental doctrinal and practical challenge to the concept of the *umma*. It did so by insisting that the nation-state, recognizing no superior and conceived as an organic entity, become the exclusive repository of its citizens' allegiance. This paradigm became dominant despite a fact succinctly pointed out by Carl Brown: "The question not so readily answered . . . was what should be the basis of these presumably natural nation states. Who were 'we' and who 'they' in these nation-building exercises? The answers throughout the Muslim world—just as in the West where nationalism developed—were contradictory."[23]

Despite the lack of total congruity between "nation" and "state," a return to the ideal of a united *umma*, even as a hypothetical scenario, no longer remains a feasible proposition. The sovereign state is here to stay, and most Muslims, including most Islamists, have internalized the values of the sovereign state system and are perfectly at ease working within the parameters of the nation-state.[24] The division of the *umma* into multiple sovereignties is now taken as given. Individual Muslim states may face secessionist challenges, as Turkey, Iraq, and Iran (to name but a few states) have faced from their Kurdish populations. But all these challenges are mounted within the nation-state paradigm. Secessionist groups in the Muslim world are engaged in redefining territorial boundaries based on their preferred definition of the nation. Except for some fringe groups (mentioned in chapter 1 and discussed further in chapter 7), no one seriously raises the issue of reuniting the *umma* within one polity.

The partition of the Muslim world into sovereign nation-states has led to two other major outcomes. First, despite the spread of communication in the twentieth century, the *ulama*'s reach and authority has become restricted within specific national boundaries. For example, edicts issued by the Egyptian *ulama* can be enforced only within Egypt, just as the rulings issued by the Pakistani *ulama* can be applied only in Pakistan. For all practical purposes, the religious authority of the learned in religious law has been nationalized. Moreover, as the modern state has begun to penetrate society in a way that premodern Muslim empires had never done, it has expanded its control of the religious establish-

ment. This has been accomplished, above all, by the state bringing under its control the *awqaf* (plural of *waqf*), the charitable religious endowments created by wealthy and pious Muslims for the subsistence of religious seminaries, mosques, and large numbers of the *ulama*. Mark Sedgwick points out: "In the Sunni world, control of *waqf* is now generally in the hands of the state, the control having been assumed between 1826 and the 1960s as one of various measures aimed at producing strong, centralized states. With control of the *waqf* came the control of the mosques and madrasas they supported."[25]

Bringing religious endowments under state control drastically reduces the financial and, therefore, the intellectual and political autonomy of the religious classes, many of whom have become salaried functionaries of the state, often ruled in the postcolonial period by unrepresentative and authoritarian regimes. This is particularly true of countries where the Sunnis are preponderant. While the Iranian shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi attempted a similar policy in Iran as a part of his White Revolution, the strategy boomeranged and was substantially responsible for the growing hostility toward the Pahlavi dynasty of the Shia clergy who controlled large religious endowments.

Second, despite the disintegration of the *umma*, Islam continues to be part of the regimes' legitimacy formula in most Muslim countries. This may appear to be a paradox in the age of nation-states, but justifying policies in the name of Islam and projecting the regime's image as Islamic provides rulers considerable mileage with their populations and an aura of continuity with the rulers of the classical period. Therefore, leaders of Muslim states often portray their national and regime goals as serving the interests of Islam. They use the subservient *ulama* to bolster their image as Islam's spokespersons, adding further to the cacophony of ostensibly religious voices in the Muslim world. This is particularly true of self-proclaimed Islamic states (e.g., Saudi Arabia, Iran, and Pakistan) and of Egypt, the seat of the most prestigious Sunni Islamic institution, al-Azhar. However, it is clear to discerning observers that much of the regimes' "Islamic" rhetoric is little more than a subterfuge they use to enhance their image. This seems to be as much the case with "revolutionary" Islamic regimes such as Iran as with "conservative" ones such as Saudi Arabia. In the process, however, the rhetoric of these regimes further confuses international audiences as to who really speaks for Islam.

Islamist Political Formations as Spokespersons for Islam

The derogation in the authority of the *ulama* (consequent to their subservience to unrepresentative regimes) and the division of the Muslim world into fifty-

odd nation-states have provided the opportunity and the space for largely lay Islamist groups of various hues to advance their claims to be considered true representatives of Islam in the public sphere. These groups, such as the Jamaat-i-Islami in Pakistan and the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt, while they have emerged out of the earlier Salafi movements, are much more modern in their organization and much more in tune with their contemporary political environments. Daniel Brown points out, "While they staunchly defend the theoretical authority of the sunna, the revivalists' commitment to the reintroduction of Islamic law in *relevant* forms makes them pragmatists in practice."[26] This is the case because they are as much products of modernity as they are reactions to it. Their greatest strength lies in their ability to combine their image of the ideal past with a vision that a substantial number of Muslims consider relevant to the contemporary situation.

Although committed in theory to transforming their polities into Islamic states through the Islamization of society and the eventual enforcement of sharia law, the modern Islamists are adept at making compromises and working within the national frameworks and constitutional constraints imposed on them.[27] While paying rhetorical obeisance to the concept of the universal *umma*, these political formations do not challenge the existence of the nation-states in which they operate. In essence, they have become exponents of what Olivier Roy has called "Islamo-nationalism."[28] Their basic objectives are to improve the quality of governance in existing states by making it conform to Islamic law and to change the moral condition of their societies by making them correspond to Islamic norms. These goals are national, not universal.

These Islamist political formations have carved out substantial constituencies in important Muslim states, allowing them to stake a claim to speak for Islam and Muslims within their national boundaries. They have been able to do so primarily because of the nature of many Muslim regimes, especially in the Middle East. Authoritarian and repressive in character, these regimes have successfully stifled political debate and ruthlessly suppressed political dissent. Their effective decimation of nearly all secular opposition has created a vast political vacuum in their countries, which Islamist formations have moved in to fill. The Islamists have filled this gap because of the vocabulary they use and the institutions they employ to advance their political objectives. It is very difficult for even the most repressive regimes to outlaw or successfully counter the use of religious idiom for the expression of political dissent. Similarly, it is almost impossible for regimes to wield full control over religious institutions and charitable networks linked to such institutions. These institutions and net-

works give Islamist groups the organizational base through which they can mobilize support.

Consequently, Islamist formations have been able to present themselves as, in many cases, the primary and in some cases the sole avenue of opposition to unrepresentative regimes. By suffering for their defiance of dictatorial regimes, they can also portray themselves as champions of human rights within their societies. This strategy has bought them a great deal of goodwill from those whom one cannot consider to be Islamists either in religious or political terms. Thus, even while Islamist groups have in many cases become targets of state suppression, they have simultaneously emerged in several instances as the only credible alternative to repressive regimes.[29] The strength of Islamist credibility in the face of repressive secular authoritarianism was evident in the Arab uprisings that brought about regime collapse in Tunisia and Egypt in 2010 and 2011. As chapters 4 and 5 detail, Islamist parties were the immediate beneficiaries in the initial elections after the fall of the Ben Ali and Mubarak regimes, while other viable voices of political opposition were absent or muted. Yet the fact that Tunisia has emerged as the only democracy in the region raises important questions about Islamism as a reliable force for democratization. Islamic rhetoric that promises to bring Islam back to life and thereby provide solutions to the ills of Muslim societies resonates with large segments of Muslim populations, both because Islam as a solution has not been tried and because other models imported from the West—including secular nationalism, capitalism, and socialism—have largely failed to deliver wealth, power, or dignity to Muslim peoples. Moreover, Islamist groups appear to be paragons of probity compared to the corrupt regimes that they seek to displace. However, if they come to power, Islamist parties have to demonstrate the validity of their slogan "Islam is the solution" by addressing the concrete economic and social problems of their societies. Under such conditions their prescription that Islam possesses the solution to all social, economic, and political problems is severely tested.

Islamist parties already seem to be addressing this potential problem. One very credible analysis explains, "Islamist political movements no longer operate with a definite and demanding conception of the 'Islamic state' to be counterposed to existing states in the Muslim world and promoted at their expense. . . . As a result, these movements have increasingly explicitly broken with fundamentalist perspectives. Abandoning the revolutionary utopian project of *dawla islamiyya* [Islamic state] has led them to emphasize other themes, most notably the demand for justice (*al-adala*) and freedom (*al-hurriya*). . . . This evolution in political thinking has led Islamist political movements away from theocratic

conceptions of the Muslim polity . . . to more or less democratic conceptions which recognise that sovereignty belongs to the people."[30] Such a transformation, although far from complete and unevenly manifested among multiple Islamist formations, adds to their appeal among the Muslim masses, sensitized as they have become to democratic values. One may doubt whether the Islamists' conception of freedom coincides totally with the liberal notion of individual freedom, and it may contain communitarian, rather than individualist, connotations. But on the whole, this is a healthy development that needs wider recognition than it has received.

Transnational, Militant Islamists

A discussion of Islamism and Islamists' claims to speak on behalf of Islam must tackle the issue of the transnational manifestations of political Islam, including the proclivity of some transnational Islamists to engage in terrorist activities. The violent activities of such groups were thrust to the forefront of Western policy attention with the terrorist attacks of 9/11 and have evolved to consume global security concerns regarding the role of ISIS in armed conflict in Syria and Iraq. As stated earlier, increased global attention to the violent and militant character of transnational Islam has created the image that such groups have become the chief spokespersons for Islam. However, as explained in chapter 1, such transnational groups tend to be very marginal to the vast majority of Islamist political activities that are conducted peacefully within the confines of territorial states.

While ISIS and al-Qaeda will be treated in greater detail in chapter 7, a brief discussion of transnational Islamism is relevant here, since transnational Islamists, especially of the violent kind, make Islam appear threatening to Western eyes. The deadliness of the attacks perpetrated by ISIS, al-Qaeda, their affiliated groups, or individuals acting on their own in proclaimed allegiance with one or more of these groups, however, does not make them Islam's foremost spokespersons. In fact, it discredits them within the Muslim world itself. Their popularity has been exaggerated because of the electronic revolution, which has given them high visibility through audio and video recordings and websites on the internet that they use to propagandize their ideology and, sometimes, their violent actions.[31]

Transnational actors are not as centralized or structured as media portrayals might lead one to believe. What is commonly and alternately referred to as ISIS, the Islamic State, ISIL, or IS originally grew out of al-Qaeda Iraq, which

itself was part of a loosely connected network of jihadists from across the Middle East to South Asia. It has a number of terrorist affiliates, such as ISIS-Philippines, the Maute Group, ISIS-Bangladesh, ISIS-Somalia, Jund al-Khilafa-Tunisia, and ISIS-Egypt, but it is not always clear to what extent ISIS's leadership directs the actions of these affiliate organizations.[32] Likewise, Boko Haram, a violent transnational Islamist group with a primary stronghold in northeastern Nigeria, is not uniform in its command structure, with some factions in the group declaring allegiance to the Islamic State to form the Islamic State West Africa Province. The increased role of violent transnational Islam in the Middle East can be attributed directly to state failure, the failure of secular regimes to provide material prosperity, and the subsequent failure of more moderate Islamists to oust these secular regimes. Sectarian militias that serve as the backbone of most ISIS-affiliated groups arose as security providers in Iraq and Syria due to the weakness of these states in performing the most basic governing functions.[33] In Syria, the state became drastically weakened as a result of the fierce public opposition to Bashar al-Assad's regime during the Arab uprisings. In Iraq, the American invasion destroyed Iraqi state capacity, and the sectarian policies of postinvasion Shia-dominated governments alienated much of Iraq's Sunni community. The failure of more moderate Islamists to unseat secular autocratic regimes, such as in Egypt, also increased the appeal of violence and decreased the appeal of electoral participation.

As will be discussed further in chapters 7 and 8, it is paradoxical that the US government was largely responsible for creating the Frankenstein's monster that has now turned its guns against America and its allies. It is an irony of history that the "good Muslims" of the 1980s have turned into the "bad Muslims" of today. This is reflected in the vocabulary of Western journalism, which referred to Islamist fighters in the 1980s with the term *mujahedin* and refers to the same elements today with the term *jihadis*. Apparently, it is presumed that while the former term has positive connotations because it is borrowed directly from Islamic vocabulary, the latter term, a corrupted form of the former, is pejorative in its implication. Despite this change in terminology, it is clear that the al-Qaeda network and its successors would have withered on the vine and would certainly never have dared to speak for Islam had they not been encouraged in this venture by those who have now become the militants' primary targets. More recently—and perhaps consequentially—the United States' campaign in Iraq left a power vacuum that Sunni Islamist forces were eager to fill, creating a perfect storm of conditions for violent transnationalism to take root: porous borders; a population unmoored by violence and then neglect from its

own government; weak, absent, or ineffective state structures; and no other apparent pathways to accomplish political change.

The Modernists and Their Intellectual Progeny

At the other end of the political spectrum from the transnational militants stand the Muslim modernists. While less dramatic in their political impact globally, their significance in discrete Muslim countries is likely to be much greater in the long term than that of the transnational jihadis. They therefore deserve mention in this chapter as potential spokespersons for Islam. Chapter 1 referred to the contribution made by the nineteenth-century Egyptian jurist and theologian Muhammad Abduh to reopening the gates of *ijtihad* (independent interpretation) in Sunni Islam and to his attempt to reconcile revelation with reason by going back to the pristine precepts of Islam, which he considered to be in full consonance with rational reasoning. Albert Hourani has argued that Abduh's ideas have had a "lasting influence on the Muslim mind, not only in Egypt but far beyond," and have "become the unacknowledged basis of the religious ideas of the ordinary educated Muslim."[34]

More explicitly and unambiguously modernist thinkers, such as Sir Sayyid Ahmad in India, who was a contemporary of Abduh, made even bolder attempts to demonstrate that Islam, properly understood, was perfectly compatible with reason and did not contravene the laws of nature. Although Sir Sayyid relied almost exclusively on the Quran for his interpretation of Islam, he was no scriptural literalist. As Carl Brown has pointed out, he insisted that Islam was "completely compatible with reason and with 'nature.'" Brown explains: "This meant that any supernatural events in religion, even the Qur'an, could properly be interpreted allegorically or psychologically. In short, [Sayyid] was very much a nineteenth century advocate of science and positivism."[35] Sir Sayyid's ideas ran afoul of the traditional *ulama*, but he made a seminal contribution, at a very crucial time, to the spread of modern education and rationalist thought among the Muslim elite in India, especially by setting up the modern educational institution that eventually became Aligarh Muslim University.[36]

Recent decades have witnessed a renaissance of calls for *ijtihad*, based on rationalist interpretations of Islam in widely varied locales in the Muslim world, ranging from North Africa to Southeast Asia, and among Muslim communities in Europe and North America. A number of Muslim thinkers have approached the issue from different perspectives, but *ijtihad* has been a main point on the agenda of everyone advocating reform of Islamic thought in contemporary

times. Knut Vickor explains: "The importance that *ijtihad* has in these modern debates, stems from the possibility it may give to steer a new course for Islam and Islamic Law, a course that stays within the boundary of Islamic tradition, but at the same time avoids the blindness of simply imitating earlier scholars, without consideration of the changing conditions of society. In other words, both for modernists and Islamists, *ijtihad* is a prerequisite for the survival of Islam in a modern world."[37]

The range of reformist views advocating *ijtihad* in one form or another includes those propounded by Fazlur Rahman, Abdolkarim Soroush, Abdelmajid Charfi, Mohammed Arkoun, Nurcholish Madjid, Tariq Ramadan, Abdullahi Ahmed An-Na'im, Muhammad Shahrour, and Khaled Abou El-Fadl. Given the diversity of their approaches, interests, and contexts, it is extremely difficult—if not impossible—to synthesize their views into a coherent position. But Suha Taji-Farouki points out, "Their political ideas are often close to the heart of the liberal tradition, based on reason and values of freedom, liberty and democracy. Calling for the detachment of the entire public sphere from the purview of religion, they often project the Qur'an—Islam's foundational text—as a source of general ethical guidelines, rather than the answer to all human issues."[38]

While such standard-bearers of the new *ijtihad* do not claim to speak on behalf of all Muslims (let alone Islam), their scholarship denotes that contemporary Muslim intellectuals are not averse to accepting rationalist ideas, even if on their own terms. Their views have yet to find adequate resonance among ordinary Muslims, partly because a number of them use rather obscure vocabulary and complex forms of reasoning that make it hard for the lay reader to understand them. Furthermore, several of them are perceived as deviating far too much from mainstream and commonly accepted Islamic ideas to be able to counter the Islamist and traditionalist interpretations of Islamic texts and establish a credible constituency beyond a narrow segment of the intellectual elite. Daniel Brumberg points out, "The problem with the Islamic modernists' arguments is that their project hinges on a complex and often opaque interpretative schema difficult for lay people to grasp. More crucially, many find it difficult to avoid concluding that the core values that modernists' attribute to Islam come from Western political thought . . . [thus leading to the conclusion] that Islamic modernism is a Western project dressed in a thin Islamic garb."[39] Islamic modernists are therefore perceived by some as a fifth column for the West, intent on secularizing the sacred in Islam and carrying out a nefarious

Western agenda of undermining the consensus within the Muslim world regarding the fundamental precepts on which the religion is founded.

These modernist and reformist intellectuals ought to be taken seriously, not merely as interlocutors between Muslims and Westerners, but also in terms of religious and political thought in the Muslim world, as potential alternative foci to the more radical and revivalist interpretations of Islam. However, to translate this potential into reality, the reformist intellectuals must learn to speak the language of the masses and present their arguments in idioms that the common Muslim can understand. While Fazlur Rahman's ideas are possibly the most seminal among the scholars identified in the present discussion, it was his Indonesian student Nurcholish Madjid, popularly known as Cak Nur, who was able to achieve rapport with his people to a substantial extent. He was probably the only one among this group of scholars to have done so.[40] It is unfortunate that both Fazlur Rahman and Nurcholis Madjid passed away while in their most creative phases.

Multiple Voices, Competing Visions

In this chapter, we have tried to demonstrate that there is no individual, group, or school of thought in the contemporary era that can speak authoritatively on behalf of Muslims, let alone Islam. Instead, multiple voices express competing visions regarding both the essence of the faith and the optimum relationship between religion and politics within Muslim countries. The Muslim world is too diverse and too divided—along national, sectarian, jurisprudential, and ideological lines—for a single set of spokespersons to be acceptable to all major components of the worldwide *umma*. Despite attempts by the most extreme elements to usurp the right to speak for Islam, what we have today is a cacophony of different (and often competing) views and opinions in the Muslim world, rather than the deliberate orchestration of a single dominant voice. Furthermore, the extremist voices are a very small minority within the spectrum of political and religious views expressed in Muslim countries, a fact that will become increasingly clear as this book proceeds.

Islamist articulations, especially those considered mainstream, are no doubt very important among the range of opinions found in the Muslim world. But they are divided primarily along national lines, with Islamist political formations principally preoccupied with issues that matter within the territorial confines of the states in which they operate. Case studies of important, but

divergent, Muslim states where Islamist regimes have been in power or where Islamist parties and factions have been politically active in opposition will demonstrate this point more convincingly. The next few chapters will therefore be devoted to scrutinizing several important cases of Islamist governance or political activity and the relationship between Islamist political formations and the states and regimes that have set the parameters within which such formations operate.

CHAPTER 3

Self-Proclaimed Islamic States

This inquiry into the relationship between Islam and politics in discrete Muslim countries begins with the analysis of two states, Saudi Arabia and Iran, whose rulers have self-consciously and vociferously proclaimed themselves and their polities to be "Islamic." Their respective claims to rule as Islamic states are based on two contentions: that their societies and polities are repositories of Islamic normative values and that their regimes govern their respective societies on the basis of the sharia, the supposedly immutable legal code derived from the Quran and supplemented by the traditions of the prophet Muhammad and the practices of the early generations of Muslims, the *salaf al-salih* (righteous ancestors). However, even a superficial examination of the constitutive principles of these two polities and the policies enforced by their governments in the name of Islam demonstrates such astonishing dissimilarities between them that it is enough to disabuse the observer of the notion that there can be a single, monolithic expression of Islam in the political arena.

These two cases highlight, among other things, the dramatic absence of consensus on the forms and rules of governance that are supposedly derived from the same Islamic teachings and legal precedents. They underline the facts that the fundamental religious texts of Islam do not prescribe any particular model of temporal rule and that the moral principles underlying just governance advocated in the Islamic scriptures can be put into practice through different types of institutions in different times and places. These cases also warn us against accepting at face value claims made by regimes in predominantly Muslim countries that they embody Islamic values or that they are authentic models of Islamic governance. Frequently, such claims are made for self-serving purposes by regimes desperately in need of legitimacy.

This chapter compares the self-proclaimed Islamic states in three crucial

arenas: the processes of state making and regime legitimation, the internal organization of the two states as reflected in their systems of governance, and the expression of political dissent in the two states as reflected in the rhetoric and activities of movements opposed to existing systems and/or regimes. This comparison is intended to bring out the very different roles played by Islam in these arenas and the extremely divergent interpretations of what is supposed to be "Islamic" where concrete political issues are concerned. It allows us to highlight how a vanguard Islamist movement played an important role in the formation of an Islamic regime in Iran, while also showing the very distinctive nature of the Saudi regime. Although a long history of amicable relations between the United States and Saudi Arabia has perhaps instilled an image among Americans of Saudi Arabia as a prototypical Islamic regime, this chapter and those that follow will show that it is, in fact, an unusual case.

State Making and Regime Legitimation

The Centralization of State Power in Saudi Arabia

One of the best accounts detailing the history of Saudi Arabia begins with the following sentence: "The dominant narrative in the history of Saudi Arabia in the twentieth century is that of state formation, a process that started in the interior of Arabia under the leadership of the Al Sa'ud." The author goes on to state, "The twentieth century witnessed the emergence of a state imposed on people without a historical memory of unity or national heritage which would justify their inclusion in a single entity."[1] One can argue quite convincingly that it was largely the absence of a national myth and the near impossibility of creating one amid the diversity in the Arabian Peninsula that necessitated the House of Saud's use of Islam, albeit of the puritanical Wahhabi variety, as the principal ideological justification for their conquest of the disparate regions that today constitute Saudi Arabia.

The compact between Muhammad ibn Saud, the founder of the Saudi dynasty, and Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab, the founder of the puritanical reformist Wahhabi school that aimed at purging the tribes of Najd of un-Islamic accretions, goes back to 1744 when the latter visited the ibn Saud's capital in Dirriyah and was given protection by the Saudi chieftain. As a quid pro quo, Ibn Abd al-Wahhab declared, "You are the settlement's chief and wise man. I want you to grant me an oath that you will perform *jihad* (holy war) against the

unbelievers. In return you will be *imam*, leader of the Muslim community, and I will be leader in religious matters."[2]

Some authors, such as Natana Delong-Bas, have suggested that Ibn Abd al-Wahhab's definition of jihad was defensive and that he did not define non-Wahhabi populations of Arabia as infidels.[3] Others, such as Hamid Algar, have argued that Ibn Abd al-Wahhab and those who adhered to his teachings considered all Muslims who "did not share their understanding of *tauhid* [the unitary nature of God]" to be "guilty of *shirk* [associating others with God] and apostasy," thus justifying the conduct of jihad against them.[4] In light of subsequent developments in the Arabian Peninsula, it is obvious that Algar's depiction of the Wahhabi conception of jihad is closer to the truth. It soon became clear that by offering the religio-political compact to the Saudi chieftain, Ibn Abd al-Wahhab was not just providing religious cover to Muhammad ibn Saud's aspiration to conquer other principalities in and around Najd; he was also advancing his own agenda of purifying Islam in the Arabian Peninsula.

The contract reached in 1744 laid the foundations for a relationship between the House of Saud and Ibn Abd al-Wahhab's descendants that came to fruition in the twentieth century, during the third cycle of Saudi expansion, under Abd al-Aziz ibn Abd al-Rahman al-Saud, commonly known as Ibn Saud in the West.[5] Ibn Saud's conquests in the 1920s—including that of the Hijaz, the cradle of Islam, in 1924–25—laid the foundations of the present kingdom of Saudi Arabia. While the Saudi ruler was busy incorporating the diverse regions of the peninsula into his kingdom, the fiercely Wahhabi tribal levies from Najd, the Ikhwan (Brothers), revolted against him in the late 1920s. They cited, among other reasons for their revolt, his insufficiently Islamic behavior and what they perceived to be his unduly lenient policies toward the non-Wahhabi populations—especially the Shia—of the newly conquered territories.[6] The Ikhwan had formed the backbone of Ibn Saud's conquering forces, but the king did not hesitate to suppress their revolt with great ferocity. In this, he was supported, after some initial hesitation, by the Wahhabi *ulama* and by the British, who used the Royal Air Force against the Ikhwan in areas bordering their mandated territories, thus contributing critically to Ibn Saud's success.[7]

The consolidation of state power and the augmentation of the authority of the al-Saud were essential components of Ibn Saud's struggle against the Ikhwan. Madawi Al-Rasheed reports that this was the case because the latter's rebellion was "not only a religious protest against Ibn Sa'ud" but also "a tribal rebellion that exposed the dissatisfaction of some tribal groups with his increas-

ing powers." Al-Rasheed continues, "The *ikhwan* rebels refused to remain the instruments of Ibn Sa'ud's expansion and expected real participation as governors and local chiefs in the conquered territories."[8] The success of Ibn Saud's state-building strategy was predicated on the diminution of tribal power and clan loyalty that had, paradoxically, helped him to conquer much of the Arabian Peninsula. The suppression of the Ikhwan revolt, by diminishing the influence of tribal forces, considerably helped Ibn Saud to create a supratribal state centered on his family and bearing its name. He needed the support of the leaders of the Wahhabi religious establishment to achieve this goal. The latter, after some initial vacillation, were willing to oblige because they concluded that their corporate interests as well as their objective of purifying Islam in Arabia could be achieved best in alliance with the House of Saud.

The support of the Wahhabi *ulama* against their own protégés, the tribal confederations from whom the Ikhwan had emerged, clearly signaled that the religious establishment had become a partner in state consolidation and its corollary, the detribalization of the Saudi power structure. One should not, however, confuse detribalization of the Saudi polity with the integration of diverse regional elites into the power structure. Both political and religious power continued to be concentrated in the hands of the Najdi elite. Political power was monopolized by the al-Saud and families related to them by marriage, especially the maternal relatives of Ibn Saud's sons, who numbered several dozen. Religious power was controlled by the al-Shaykh, the descendants of Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab. The cosmopolitan Hijazi elite, which was the product of long association with the Ottoman court and possessed distinct cultural and religious traditions, remained peripheral to the power structure. The Shia living in the oil-rich eastern province of Hasa were and are denied access to political power and influence.[9]

The Wahhabi *ulama*'s endorsement—despite their initial ambivalence—of Ibn Saud's decision to crush the Ikhwan also denoted that they had come to accept their limited role as supervisors of morality and rituals in the unified state and had relinquished the political sphere almost completely to the House of Saud.[10] Consequently, the Wahhabi establishment became an instrument of the state, subservient to the wishes of the ruling family on political matters. However, since the state was constituted in the name of Islam, it was imperative that Islam continue to be used to legitimize its existence as well as Saudi rule over the newly unified polity. Here, the Wahhabi *ulama* played a crucial role in justifying Saudi rule in Islamic terms, by issuing religious edicts endorsing the regime's policies. This was especially important to the regime on controversial

issues such as girls' education, the introduction of television into the kingdom, and the stationing of American troops on Saudi territory. In return, the regime accepted the Wahhabi religious establishment's primacy in matters of religion and social mores and agreed to leave these spheres largely under their supervision, if not in their total control. The religious establishment's role in these arenas was augmented by Saudi state policy following the seizure of the Grand Mosque in Mecca by Islamist radicals in 1979 and its bloody aftermath. We return to this episode later in this chapter.

The Consolidation of State Authority in Iran

Just as the centralization of state power formed the basic objective of the Saudi regime in the first half of the twentieth century, the consolidation of state authority was the primary motif in the history of Iran in the nineteenth century and much of the first half of the twentieth century. The Persian or Iranian state has been in existence much longer than its Saudi counterpart, within more or less the same boundaries bequeathed to it by the Safavid shahs who had unified the domain in the sixteenth century. Despite this fact, Iran's nineteenth-century rulers were consumed by the struggle to maintain a minimum degree of centralized state control over the disparate ethnic and tribal groups inhabiting the country. In nineteenth-century Iran, communal conflicts were the rule rather than the exception. The weak center was presided over by equally weak Qajar rulers, whose authority was constantly challenged and who "remained in power by systematically following two concurrent policies: retreating whenever confronted by dangerous opposition; and, more important . . . manipulating the many communal conflicts within their fragmented society."[11]

However, unlike in the Saudi case, Islam, represented by the Shia *ulama*, was at best an uncertain ally and at worst a hostile force as far as Iran's temporal authorities were concerned. The relationship between Shia Islam (Iran's predominant religion) and Iran's monarchical regimes was highly ambivalent, for reasons embedded in Shia theological doctrines. Nikkie Keddie has explained: "There has always been potential opposition from the Shia *ulama* to the Shah. The latter is, theoretically, regarded a usurper, legitimate succession having passed down through the house of Ali until the last or hidden Imam who will reappear to establish legitimate rule."[12] Despite this injunction, a substantial segment of the Shia *ulama* served the temporal rulers when central authority was strong, under the Safavid monarchs. However, when monarchical authority became weak, the *ulama* were emboldened in their opposition to temporal

power, or at the very least maintained a respectable distance from it. Such was the case in the nineteenth century, under the Qajar rulers, when "most prominent mujtaheds [senior clerics] remained aloof from the court and interpreted the early texts of Shi'ism to argue that the state was at worst inherently illegitimate and at best a necessary evil to prevent social anarchy."[13]

With certain exceptions, this continued to be the case in the twentieth century, under Pahlavi rule. However, until the 1960s, the leading *ulama* (with certain exceptions) expressed this distrust of secular power more in terms of detachment from the political arena and its corollary of political quietism than in terms of active opposition to the existing regime.[14] The leading cleric, Ayatollah Borujerdi, who was the *marja-i-taqlid-i-motalleq* (sole source of imitation) until his death in 1961, was politically quietist and thus set the tone for the clerics' relationship with the court. This relationship underwent change with the death of Borujerdi and the rise to prominence of his former student Ayatollah Khomeini, who adopted an activist stand after his mentor's death and began to castigate Pahlavi rule as un-Islamic. Several other clerics joined in the opposition to the shah, in part in response to the latter's policies of economic reform (particularly land reform), which threatened to dispossess the leading *ulama* of the vast resources they controlled, thus endangering their financial autonomy.[15]

The relationship between the Shia clerics and the Iranian state changed dramatically after the Islamic revolution of 1979.[16] Politically active clerics now became state functionaries and found themselves at the center of political and economic power. Quietism in political life was replaced by a political ideology rooted in Islam. This vanguard variant of Islamism combined political radicalism with social conservatism and economic etatism to become the official ideology of the state and the primary instrument for regime legitimacy in post-revolution Iran. Nonetheless, several senior clerics expressed and continue to express a high degree of ambivalence toward temporal authority, even when exercised or at least supervised by the Shia *ulama*. This ambivalence, bordering on opposition, increased with the institution of the *vilayat-i faqih* (guardianship of the supreme jurist) as the cornerstone of Islamic rule in Iran. We will return to this issue later in this chapter, when discussing the Iranian model of governance.

The Divergent Trajectories of Saudi Arabia and Iran

The Saudi and Iranian cases underscore the fact that both of these states and their regimes are essentially products of modernity, especially of the processes

of state building and nation formation, though in widely divergent contexts. Comparison across cases makes clear that Islam has played very different roles in the construction and maintenance of the Saudi and Iranian states. This divergence of trajectories is determined not only by the role of the religious establishment in state formation and regime consolidation, but also by these states' discrete jurisprudential traditions and specific cultural practices. Saudi Arabia's strict interpretation of Hanbali jurisprudence, popularly referred to as Wahhabism, is very distinct from that of the Ja'afari school of law that forms the basis of Iran's current religio-legal code. Persian/Iranian cultural practices and norms are also influenced by their pre-Islamic imperial legacies. Similarly, the tribal codes and practices of Najd, the home of the political and religious elites of Saudi Arabia, have influenced the operation of the Saudi state in no small measure, often in the guise of Islam. These two cases of state formation and centralization of state authority in self-proclaimed "Islamic" states demonstrate clearly that Islam is filtered through a number of variables that mediate and in the process modify Islamic norms and values.

The ruling elites of both states recognize the unique contexts and features of their societies, even though they sometimes indulge in rhetoric that seems to imply that their regimes and states stand for universal standards and ideals and are therefore capable of being replicated around the Muslim world. Despite their occasional universalistic Islamic protestations, neither the Saudi nor the Iranian regime has ever claimed, even in theoretical terms, that they wish to create a universal Muslim polity based on their system of governance. Both Iran and Saudi Arabia are perfectly content to operate within a system of multiple sovereign states that, in theory, owe allegiance to no superior, a system that is itself a creation of Europe during the past 400 years or so.[17] Consequently, it is clear that the use of the Islamic rhetoric by Riyadh and Tehran in the international arena is largely instrumental, primarily aimed at furthering their state and regime interests by portraying them as Islamic ones.

Interestingly, Saudi Arabia and Iran often reserve their Islamic rhetoric, especially that of the vituperative variety, for each other, each with the aim of demonstrating their own system's superiority over the other. This is no coincidence; given their geographic propinquity and their clashing regional ambitions, their relationship with each other has often been adversarial or at least uneasy. Contiguous and proximate states at early stages of state making often develop conflicts with each other, for a number of reasons related to state and regime legitimacy and divergent conceptions of the regional balance of power.[18] Saudi Arabia and Iran are no exception to this rule. Sectarian animosities,

driven by Iran's stature as the leading Shia polity and Saudi Arabia's commitment to puritanical Wahhabism that considers the Shia to be beyond the pale of Islam, add a strong religious edge to their hostility toward each other. Thus, their self-proclaimed "Islamic" character does not mitigate but in fact adds to their regional rivalry, by overlaying it with sectarian rhetoric.

Comparing Political Systems

The Hereditary Monarchy of Saudi Arabia

Saudi Arabia is a hereditary monarchy whose regime draws its legitimacy from its familial and tribal connections in Najd and, above all, from its alliance with the equally hereditary Wahhabi religious establishment. As already explained, the system of rule in Saudi Arabia is basically an extension of the way Ibn Saud governed the kingdom of Najd. Not only the principles of governance but the religious orthodoxy of Najd, Wahhabi Islam, were imposed on other parts of the unified kingdom, setting the context for all political activity in Saudi Arabia and for the close relationship—in fact, interdependence—between the political and religious establishments in the country.

All forms of constitutionalism were abhorred in Saudi Arabia until recently. Ostensibly, there was no need for a man-made constitution, since, according to the official formulation, Saudi Arabia is governed according to the Quran and the traditions of the Prophet. Only in 1992, as a consequence of heightened criticism following the Gulf War, did the king announce the Basic Law of Government and set up the Consultative Council. These amounted to nothing more than cosmetic changes to the basic monarchical character of the government, however, as demonstrated by the fact that according to Article 6 of the Basic Law, "[c]itizens are to pay allegiance to the King in accordance with the Holy Koran and the tradition of the Prophet, in submission and obedience, in times of ease and difficulty, fortune and adversity." Article 7 states, "Government in Saudi Arabia derives power from the Holy Koran and the Prophet's tradition." The monarchy clearly derives its legitimacy from the fundamental texts and tenets of Islam.[19]

The senior Wahhabi *ulama* continue to be the repositories of religious and legal authority in Saudi Arabia. As official interpreters of the Quran and the Prophetic traditions, they are also key enforcers of the legal principles by which Saudi Arabia is governed. Consequently, the Basic Law of 1992 does not detract from the reality that Wahhabi doctrines and their foremost interpreters con-

tinue to be indispensable in maintaining the Saudi system and the legitimacy of the monarchy.

This arrangement, despite its potential downside for the Saudi regime, suited the ruling elite admirably during much of the twentieth century. It meant that they could dispense with a written constitution that would require codifying a social compact with their subjects and would thus hold them accountable for their actions. It also meant that the regime, with the support of the religious establishment, could outlaw all oppositional activity by declaring it un-Islamic, since Islam brooks no *fitna* (dissension). As long as the leading Wahhabi scholars continued to justify hereditary monarchy and the position of the Saudi ruler as imam (religiously anointed leader), the monarchy and its beneficiaries could pretty much ignore liberal opposition elements as out of tune with the Islamic ethos and as troublemakers who deserved to be incarcerated, if not eliminated.

The flip side of this arrangement is that Saudi rulers have to maintain, at least in public, the image of Islamic probity and puritanical behavior enjoined by Wahhabi doctrines. Public deviation from this code of morality immediately opens them up both to religious denunciation and to political criticism couched in religious terminology. What the Saudi regime most feared and continues to fear is political opposition couched in religious terms that can be justified with recourse to puritanical Wahhabi doctrines. Such criticism has the potential to challenge the Saudi-Wahhabi elites on their own ground and to bring them into disrepute. Such challenges have become more common in the last three decades; we return to this subject later in this chapter.

Since Wahhabi doctrines, based on rigid and literal interpretations of the Quran and the Prophet's traditions, strictly circumscribe relationships with non-Muslims, they have created major problems for the Saudi regime in the context of its security dependence and close economic ties with Western powers, especially the United States. Consequently, this has traditionally been the arena of greatest vulnerability for Saudi rulers. It is no coincidence that Islamist radicals inside Saudi Arabia and outside have chosen the Saudi-American nexus as the primary target of the attack aimed at the House of Saud. Bin Laden's diatribes in the 1990s against the presence of American troops in Saudi Arabia demonstrated the significance of this issue as the Achilles' heel of the Saudi regime. The criticism was very potent because it conformed to the Wahhabi worldview despite the fact that the Wahhabi religious establishment had issued a fatwa (religious edict), at the regime's behest, justifying American military deployment in the country to defend Saudi Arabia from attack. The International Crisis Group is therefore not wrong to assert, "The 1990–1991 Gulf war

was the most critical event in the history of Saudi Islamism and helps explain subsequent domestic politics."[20]

The Revolutionary Republic of Iran

Iran, in contrast to Saudi Arabia, is a fiercely antimonarchical republic that combines features of a democratic polity with elements of direct clerical rule. Both these traits arose out of the Iranian revolution and can be traced to Khomeini's own contradictory predilections, which combined democratic inclinations with authoritarian ones. It is no surprise, therefore, that both conservative clergy and the reformists can quote Khomeini in support of their respective positions.[21] But it was not only Khomeini who was responsible for the hybrid nature of the Iranian political system. He was the heir to a tradition going back to the early years of the twentieth century. The roots of Iran's current system can be traced to the Constitutional Revolution of 1905–6, when a similar debate raged among the antimonarchical forces, between those who espoused unalloyed representative government and those among the *ulama* who advocated clerical oversight of political authority.[22] The constitution adopted in 1908 included a compromise similar to the one in the current Iranian constitution. The antimonarchical coalition of 1905–8—consisting of the modern intelligentsia, the traditional merchant class, and the *ulama*—bore an uncanny resemblance, in terms of both the disparate elements that constituted it and the diversity of views expressed by them, to the coalition that brought down the shah in 1979.[23]

The fundamental laws adopted by the Iranian National Assembly following the Constitutional Revolution were essentially liberal in nature, although the representative character of the legislature was restricted by the requirement that only those who owned property could vote. However, as Ervand Abrahamian explains, the same laws enshrined clerical supervision of the lawmaking process by constituting "a 'supreme committee' of mujtaheds . . . to scrutinize all bills introduced into parliament to ensure that no law contradicted the shari'a." He continues, "This committee, consisting of at least five members, was to be elected by the deputies from a list of twenty submitted by the 'ulama."[24] The Council of Guardians overseeing executive and legislative functions under Iran's current constitution is a direct descendant of these provisions in the constitution adopted by the National Assembly in 1908, though the contemporary council has broader powers than its early-twentieth-century counterpart. Today, however, both the National Assembly and the president are elected by

universal suffrage, male and female, with the minimum voters' age fixed at fifteen, the lowest among countries practicing electoral democracy. Moreover, Articles 19 to 42 of the current Iranian constitution guarantee civic and political rights to all Iranian citizens.[25] While practice may differ from theory, the constitution provides a benchmark that can be used to hold violators to account. In short, the principles of both clerical oversight and representative governance have been simultaneously strengthened in contemporary Iran, making reconciliation between them doubly difficult.

Although the constitutional system of 1908 was aborted due to the machinations of the Qajar court followed by the coup staged by the Cossack colonel Reza Khan, the last shah's father, its democratic and antimonarchical thrust formed an essential building block for the framers of the Iranian constitution drafted after the 1979 Islamic revolution. Since 1979, Iran's leaders have in no uncertain terms denounced as un-Islamic the hereditary monarchical principle. The Iranian republican system is the polar opposite of the Saudi monarchy, even if it is circumscribed by clerical supervision. Despite the maneuverings of the clerical establishment, electoral outcomes in Iran can produce great surprises, as in the presidential elections of 1997 and 2001, which were won with large majorities by the reformist Mohammad Khatami against the wishes of the clerical establishment and the supreme jurist. In 2005, the electorate chose a dark horse, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, as president, on the basis of his populist appeal, thereby once again demonstrating its independent streak.[26] Similarly, in 2013 and 2017 Iranians elected Hasan Rouhani as president despite the clerical establishment's ambivalent attitude toward him.

Multiple crosscutting cleavages among the political classes in Iran do not conform to the simplistic division between conservatives and reformists depicted in popular Western accounts. Economic progressives can be religious and political conservatives, and political and religious progressives may turn out to be economic conservatives. A major division among the conservatives is that between pragmatist conservatives and radical conservatives, who are often at odds with each other, with the pragmatists often relying on allies among the reformists.[27] Furthermore, despite the attempt by hard-liners to restrict the freedom of expression and the press, Iran is a vibrant and politically competitive society that has turned evading such restrictions into a fine art. Newspapers banned one day appear the next day under different names, with the authorities often turning a blind eye toward such transgressions.

Iran's Council of Guardians, composed of twelve members, half of them senior clerics and the other half elected by the National Assembly, determines

the compatibility of all legislation with Islam and with the constitution. According to Article 96 of the constitution, a law's compatibility with Islam is determined by a vote of a majority of the clerics, and compatibility with the constitution is determined by a majority of the total membership of the council.[28] The coexistence of representative electoral institutions with clerical oversight reveals contemporary Iran's status as a hybrid regime. It combines competitive elections with nonelected tutelary interference by the Council of Guardians to severely infringe the civil liberties of citizens and the policy scope of elected officials, such that elections do not meet the benchmarks of fairness and freeness required in a democracy.[29] For example, the Council vets candidates seeking elected office, consistently pruning out reformist candidates. Its vetting has become more restrictive over time. For example, in 2009, only 4 of 476 potential candidates were approved to run for president; in 2013 only 8 of 680 candidates were approved; and in 2017, only 6 candidates of 1,600 were approved. Clerical interference in the electoral process was particularly blatant in 2009 with the reelection of Ahmadinejad in the face of discernible irregularities in voting that led to a wave of protests.

While in theory, Iran's various political institutions are designed to provide checks and balances between the executive and the legislature on the one hand, and the representative and the appointed or clerical bodies on the other, the clerical establishment has rarely acted as an impartial arbitrator.[30] In the post-Khomeini period, clerical institutions, with the support of the Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, have vetoed, interfered with, or otherwise blocked actions taken by representative institutions with which they did not agree. Moreover, the tutelary interference of the Council of Guardians already built in to the existing constitutional order has increased in scope with the growing influence of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, which frequently acts to curb the more liberal positions of elected officeholders.[31] Nevertheless, the space for pluralism that has flourished in Iran should not be discounted. While it is not a full-fledged democracy, Iran's hybrid regime contains competitive and liberal traits and a society and polity that are vastly different from its far more rigidly controlled counterpart in Saudi Arabia.[32]

Saudi Arabia and Iran as "Models" of Islamic Governance

While Iran and Saudi Arabia are polar opposites of each other, neither can qualify as "Islamic" if one defines Islamic governance in terms of the model offered by the Prophet's rule in Medina and that of his immediate successors,

the righteously guided caliphs, during the formative years of the Muslim community. It is true that the Saudi monarchical regime, based on family and clan solidarity, partially resembles a distorted version of the ideal model, just as the hereditary Umayyad caliphate did during the heyday of Arab imperial expansion. Those familiar with Islamic history will appreciate that this distortion during the earlier period was legitimized by most of the Sunni *ulama* out of fear of anarchy and the disintegration of the Muslim *umma*. This was discussed at length earlier in this book.[33] However, unlike the Umayyad and, later, the Abbasid caliphs, who traced their origins to Mecca and to the tribe of Quraysh, from which Muhammad was descended, the Saudis are of Najdi origin, from the backwaters of the Arabian Desert. They bear no kinship relation to the Prophet's tribe or clan, let alone to his family. Their background as Najdi chieftains derogates from their claim—made on the basis of heredity—to be the legitimate guardians of the holiest places of Islam, Mecca and Medina, which are located in the Hijaz, the cradle of Islam.[34]

Furthermore, the Saudi regime's oil-driven close economic relationship with the Western powers and its security dependence on the United States detract from its attempt to portray itself as the champion of Muslim causes. The more the United States is perceived by many Muslims as hostile to the interests of Muslim peoples, the more the image of the Saudi regime takes a beating because of its guilt by association.[35] Finally, despite its oil wealth, Saudi Arabia is far from being a major Muslim state. It cannot be considered to be on par with Turkey, Iran, Pakistan, Egypt, and Indonesia, which have large and educated populations, respectable military capabilities, and the capacity (actual or potential) to act as regional powers. Its relatively modest status among Muslim countries does not make Saudi Arabia a candidate, despite its financial clout, for leadership in the Muslim world. Its lack of military capabilities, despite huge purchases of sophisticated weaponry from the United States, was clearly demonstrated in the face of the threat from Saddam Hussein in 1990, when the United States had to come to Riyadh's rescue. Saudi Arabia's leadership in a coalition of Arab states who began intervening in Yemen's civil war in 2015 further challenges its standing as a leader of Muslims. The military escalation led by Saudi Arabia has fostered a humanitarian catastrophe and created further instability in a region already rife with conflict and security challenges. These actions impair Saudi Arabia's claim to a special role as the protector of Islam's holy places.

The Iranian model of a republican government with clerical oversight may be closer in spirit to that of the city-state of Medina, but its legislative and

executive institutions, including those of the supreme jurist and the Council of Guardians, are products of the modern age and bear no resemblance to the original Islamic model. It is an irony that has gone largely unnoticed that the institution of the supreme jurist, the ultimate repository of moral and political rectitude in Iran as the stand-in for the twelfth imam during the period of occultation, is the creation of a constitution written by fallible men and women in the latter part of the twentieth century, after the 1979 Iranian revolution.[36] Furthermore, the republicanism enshrined in the Iranian constitution was pioneered by the regicidal French Revolution of 1789. There is an obvious parallel between the French and Iranian revolutions; both sought to overthrow arbitrary and unpopular monarchs and replace them with popular rule. The conjoining of the term *Republic* with *Islamic* to describe the postrevolutionary Iranian state was therefore logical. However, it was also oxymoronic. Republicanism, in the sense we know it today in Iran or elsewhere, does not have any precedent in Islamic history, despite the contrived resemblance some may see to the way the early caliphs were seemingly chosen by the consensus of the elders of the community. One should not forget that it was the supporters of Ali, who later came to be known as Shia, who rejected the consensual model of the early caliphate in favor of the lineage principle that favored Ali (as the closest male relative of the Prophet) over other contenders for succession to the Prophet's temporal role. It is ironic that Shia Iran should justify its adoption of a republican model of government on the basis of the early "consensual" system that the partisans of Ali, dominant in contemporary Iran, rejected so unequivocally.

Iran's combination of representative government with clerical supervision is also a radical departure from almost all previous models of governance adopted in the Muslim world. In fact, as stated earlier, the only precedent for such a system was the short-lived experiment in Iran in the first decade of the twentieth century, following the Constitutional Revolution. The concept of *vilayat-i faqih* (guardianship of the supreme jurist), first advocated by Ayatollah Khomeini in his seminal work *Islamic Government*, is also a fundamental deviation from Shia theological doctrines.[37] It more closely resembles the Leninist concept of guardianship, which views the vanguard as comprising only a small number of dedicated revolutionaries who must provide leadership over the masses, who do not yet know enough to support the revolutionary goals that are in their best interests. While Khomeini viewed guardianship as divine in nature, both *vilayat-i faqih* and Lenin's vanguard yield the same practical con-

sequence of limiting the political agency of those being governed. As pointed out earlier, Shia doctrines characterize all temporal rule as illegitimate until the return of the Mahdi (the twelfth imam) from occultation. This implies that, unlike the Sunni *ulama*, the Shia clerics, while acting as the moral conscience of the faithful, ought to keep a healthy distance from all temporal rulers so as not to be tainted by association, not just for political and moral reasons, but also because of religious injunction. Furthermore, the creation of the office of the supreme jurist, by equating the powers of an ordinary mortal with those of the sinless imam, can be seen as an act of blatant blasphemy. Hamid Enayat pointed out that "Khumayni's thesis . . . has certain theological implications that are not entirely free of political significance. One of them is the weakening, if not the outright rejection, of a major tenet of popular . . . Shi'ism—the anticipation of the Mahdi (*intizar*)."[38]

This background explains why the very idea of legitimizing temporal rule in the absence of the twelfth imam by creating a surrogate for the Mahdi in the form of the supreme jurist, as Khomeini did, is anathema to many leading Shia theologians both inside and outside Iran.[39] Moreover, a number of leading Shia theologians see the involvement of the *ulama* in running the state as extremely harmful, because it has the potential to bring not just the clerics but Islam itself into disrepute when clerics are corrupted by their access to and exercise of temporal power.[40] As noted by Bahram Rajaee, these traditionalist theologians "represent the vast majority of the Iranian clergy that have largely remained outside government since 1979." Rajaee continues, "[T]hey are concerned with the loss of status for the clergy in Iran due to the politicization of a small number of their peers. . . . [E]ven today, it is estimated that no more than three per cent of the estimated 200,000 *ulama* in Iran are such 'regime clerics.'"[41] To top it all, explains Enayat, "Khumayni's main political ideas . . . obliterate some of the most important differences between the Sunnis and the Shi'is."[42] The institution of the *vilayat-i faqih*, by making the office look like a carbon copy of the ideal Sunni caliphate, epitomizes this convergence, thus making it even less acceptable to the traditionalist Shia clerics.[43]

The Saudi and Iranian regimes and the systems they preside over are vastly different, despite both their attempts to justify their rule on the basis of Islam. The radical dissimilarity between these systems is further demonstrated by an analysis of movements and parties that stand in opposition to them. Regime opponents usually hold up a mirror to the regimes they oppose, thus helping analysts better understand the nature of regimes they seek to analyze.

The Nature of the Opposition

The nature of oppositional politics is very different in Saudi Arabia and Iran, primarily because the content and structure of establishment politics vary between the two regimes. Interestingly, while opposition to the Saudi regime has come most dramatically from Islamist radicals espousing a form of neo-Wahhabism even more puritanical and insular than the Wahhabism of the religious establishment, the main opposition to the Iranian regime has come from groups and factions that can be considered more moderate, liberal, and democratic than the clerical establishment that supervises Iran's governance. In other words, the major opposition to the regime comes from conservatives in Saudi Arabia and from liberals in Iran.

This variation in the nature of opposition reflects the diversity of self-proclaimed Islamic states. In the case of Iran, the anticlerical character of the opposition echoes the greater openness of the Iranian society and polity, as well as the existence of a strong liberal and democratic strand in the political culture of the country, going back at least to the early years of the twentieth century. Opposition to the Saudi regime reveals the regime's ingrained illiberalism and the relatively superficial impact of Western liberal ideas on Saudi Arabia, especially on its Najdi heartland, where the country's power resides.

Most Iranians find it difficult to contemplate an opposition that could be more reactionary than the ruling religious class, although the latter is far more open to criticism, compromise, and even change than the Saudi ruling establishment. Most Saudis find it difficult to contemplate an opposition that is liberal and democratic in nature, because the Saudi political culture—particularly the rhetoric of political debate—is intimately intertwined with its Wahhabi religious ethos and the puritanical religious idiom used by the ruling House of Saud to justify its dominance.

Opposition in Saudi Arabia

The major opposition to the Saudi regime has come from religious radicals, themselves the products of Wahhabi religious education and the insular Saudi political culture. This has especially been the case since the deployment of American troops into the kingdom in 1990–91.[44] However, this challenge, although it matured in the 1990s, was foreshadowed by the seizure of the Grand Mosque in Mecca in November 1979 by a group of religious radicals critical of the Saudi regime's corrupt lifestyle and its deviation from puritanical Wahhabi

precepts. In hindsight, it is clear that the Grand Mosque incident was a harbinger of things to come. It signified the breakdown of the compact between the House of Saud and segments of the Wahhabi *ulama* that had undergirded the legitimacy of the regime since the inception of the kingdom. This social contract began to fray in the second half of the 1970s, for multiple reasons, including the demographic and educational explosion in the kingdom and the inflow of massive amounts of petrodollars following a boom in oil prices. Together, these factors changed lifestyles and societal expectations and created resentment among the most conservative elements.

Also important was the Saudi policy, adopted in the 1960s and determined by Riyadh's rivalry with Cairo, of giving refuge to radical members of the Muslim Brotherhood then being persecuted in Nasser's Egypt. Eric Rouleau points out that "Until the arrival of the Muslim Brotherhood, Wahhabi Islam . . . had been essentially apolitical, concerning itself mainly with puritanism in morals, the observance of proper dress, and correct religious practices per se. Under the impact of the new arrivals, however, part of the Saudi clergy progressively became politicized—and began, for the first time, to challenge the House of Saud's temporal power."[45] Several of the Brotherhood's exiles were appointed to the faculty of the Islamic University of Medina. It was no coincidence that many of the leaders of the group that seized the Grand Mosque in 1979 had been or were at the time students at that institution.

Many of the exiled members of the Brotherhood were disciples of Sayyid Qutb and took their cue from his radical political ideas, based on the denunciation of Muslim regimes as unbelievers (known as the practice of pronouncing *takfir*) because they were not truly Islamic but lived in a state of ignorance (*jahiliyya*) that made them legitimate targets against which holy war (jihad) could be waged.[46] In some ways, this was a throwback to the ideas propagated by Ibn Abd al-Wahhab in the middle of the eighteenth century but diluted in later Wahhabi teachings. What is ironic is that Qutb's teachings could be interpreted to include the House of Saud among regimes living in *jahiliyya*. However, the exiled members of the Muslim Brotherhood refrained from making this accusation, for good political reasons. Instead, they married this radical political philosophy to the socially and culturally conservative ethos of their adopted country, thus concocting a heady brew that appealed to three critical constituencies in the kingdom—the most socially and culturally conservative, the most disillusioned and disempowered, and the most idealist—and joined them in a union potentially very destabilizing for the Saudi regime. Al-Rasheed points out, "A strong Islamic rhetoric promoting a return to Islamic authentic-

ity attracted people who had grown frustrated with a truncated modernization, inequality, corruption of the government and close ties with the West, which began to be increasingly defined as the source of social and economic evils."[47]

The present generation of radical Islamist opponents of the Saudi regime, including those who identify themselves as members of al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula, are products of this marriage between Qutbist political ideas and the innate puritanism and conservatism of the Wahhabi doctrine. Wahhabism constructed from above was a pillar of the status quo. Wahhabism mobilized from below has become the mortal enemy of the same status quo. The most prominent among the contemporary religious radicals—call them "neo-Wahhabi," if you will—are young *ulama* who have come to be called *al-Sahwa al-Islamiyya* (the Islamic awakening), *sahwa* for short. These are the nonestablishment *ulama* who have proven to be strident critics of the regime, several of whom were imprisoned in the 1990s for opposing the regime's decision to invite American forces into the kingdom.[48] While the *sahwa* and the Saudi regime found some common realpolitik reasons to work together in the late 1990s and early 2000s, by the time of the Arab uprisings in 2011, Saudi Arabia saw the *sahwa* as more of a threat than an asset. In 2014 Saudi Arabia declared the Muslim Brotherhood a "terrorist group," and in 2017 it severed diplomatic relations with Qatar and imposed a trade embargo on it because of Qatar's support for the Muslim Brotherhood and Hamas.

Opposition in Iran

The Iranian opposition consists of many actors who would rather quote Thomas Jefferson than Sayyid Qutb. As numerous scholars have articulated, the Islamic character of the 1979 revolution unfolded only in the final stages, as opposition to the shah came from a broad range of actors. Opposition in contemporary Iran continues to come from forces that call for more democracy and less clerical control in the political system. Even those reformists who are committed to the current "Islamic" system of governance but would like to moderate it from within (e.g., former president Mohammad Khatami) speak of a "dialogue of civilizations" rather than a clash among them.[49]

In contrast to the Saudi situation, where the younger generation of the regime's opponents tends to be more radical in their commitment to Wahhabi Islam than the defenders of the status quo, Iranian children of the revolution, ranging from philosopher Abdolkarim Soroush to journalist Akbar Ganji, have emerged as firm opponents of clerical dominance and religious conformity and as advocates of individual freedom and political democracy.[50] One could argue

that at the base of the reformist Islamic trend in Iran, which is really several trends packaged as one, lies a philosophical vision best summed up in Soroush's writings, especially his advocacy of "the possibility and the desirability of secularization of an Islamic society without a concomitant profanation of its culture."[51] Many of these reformists or modernists in Iran are "themselves former radical Islamists who have changed to be broadly reflective of the modernist Islamist impulse."[52]

In other words, Islamic reformists in Iran, following Soroush's footsteps, would prefer the separation of religion and state, but without eradicating religion from the culture and conscience of the nation. Consequently, they are caught in the middle, under attack from both the secular purists and the religious revivalists. This framework of oppositional activity in Iran is very different from the one employed by the radical opponents of the Saudi regime. The trajectories of the main opposition movements in the two countries are therefore very distinct from each other, just like the regimes they oppose.

The most visible political challenge to Iran's Islamist regime came in 2009 following the contested reelection of President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, when millions of Iranians took to the streets in protests over concern about election fraud. Led by defeated reformist candidate Mir Hussein Mousavi, these protests became known as the "Green Movement." The protests were violently suppressed by the Revolutionary Guard. After encouraging their supporters to organize demonstrations in solidarity with protestors in the Arab world, Mousavi was placed under house arrest in 2011, together with defeated reformist candidate Mehdi Karoubi and their wives. The Iranian regime has continued to use the tutelary powers of the Council of Guardians to limit the freedom of speech, press, and expression afforded to opposition figures with the goal of reducing their popularity and claims on existing representative institutions. Many view the ongoing persistence of reformist opposition in the face of very real regime repression as an indicator that Iran has significant potential to move away from clericalism toward a more open polity. Abbas Milani suggests that "The abducted revolution of 1979 has only delayed but not destroyed the quest for democracy"[53] and that moderates will only become more radicalized if Khamenei continues to resist some political liberalization.

Conclusion

The preceding discussion makes clear that the Saudi and Iranian political systems are vastly different from each other; they are products of their unique contexts, and therefore cannot be replicated elsewhere. Neither bears much

resemblance to the ideal model of governance based on the times of the Prophet and his immediate successors. Both are modern constructs and products of nineteenth- and twentieth-century circumstances, when European colonial rule had an enormous impact, both direct and indirect, on Muslim societies in the political, economic, and intellectual realms. Iranian constitutionalism could not have taken root without contact with Western ideas and institutions. Saudi Arabia would not have existed in its present boundaries without British assistance to Ibn Saud at crucial points in the expansion of Saudi power from its Najdi heartland.

Despite the occasional universal pretenses in their rhetoric, both the Saudi and the Iranian leaders realize that their systems cannot be reproduced elsewhere. Moreover, the conjunction of factors that led to the emergence of these distinct regimes was unique to their place and time. Critical factors in the success of Ibn Saud were, on the one hand, the Wahhabi ideology, which provided a potent form of solidarity to the quarreling tribes of the Najd, and on the other, British interests in the Middle East that for a variety of reasons preferred the al-Saud over the Sharifian rulers of the Hijaz, despite the latter's support to the British during World War I.[54]

Similarly, the factors that led to the Iranian Islamic revolution of 1979 and the Shia clergy's role in it cannot be reconstructed in other locales and at different times. The Shia *ulama*'s financial autonomy from the state (which is unlike their Sunni counterparts in the Muslim world) and their relatively hierarchical organization were critical to the success of the Islamic revolution and the installation of a cleric-led government in the country. Although Khomeini's revolutionary approach bears some resemblance to the vanguard Islamist movements that arose in Egypt and Pakistan, as chapter 4 illustrates, the absence of a consolidated religious hierarchy in these cases necessitates that vanguard Islamists compete against a more decentralized set of actors. Despite some cross-fertilization of ideas among Sunni and Shia radicals in the second half of the twentieth century (especially the influences of Qutb and Mawdudi on Khomeini), the political and religious universes of the Sunni countries, which form the vast majority in the Muslim world, are vastly different from those of Shia Iran. This precludes the type of mullah-led mobilization that became the hallmark of the Iranian revolution. In short, both the Saudi and Iranian cases are sui generis developments that defy replication.

CHAPTER 4

Between Ideology and Pragmatism

Egypt and Pakistan are examples par excellence of the quest for ideological purity on the part of Islamist thinkers, and of the Islamist movements' ability to adapt to changing political circumstances. The two cases also highlight the importance of regime policies in determining Islamist trajectories. Cumulatively, these factors clearly demonstrate the validity of the proposition that expressions of political Islam in discrete countries are grounded in social and political realities specific to their contexts, and that Islamist movements undergo metamorphosis in response to changing situations and regime policies.

This chapter compares the leading and most long-standing Islamist movements in Egypt and Pakistan—the Muslim Brotherhood (MB) and the Jamaat-i-Islami (JI), respectively—to analyze, among other things, how much their strategies have been shaped in response to the regime policies and restraints imposed on them. However, the JI's and MB's strategies cannot be fully comprehended unless one understands the seminal ideas propounded by their founders and ideologues; accordingly, it is essential that we compare the views of their three major figures—Hassan al-Banna, Abul Ala Mawdudi, and Sayyid Qutb.

Pakistan and Egypt: The Background

The division of British India on the basis of Muslim- and Hindu-majority areas created Pakistan. Islam is therefore the primary cementing bond among its diverse ethnic groups, a fact that was clearly understood by its irreligious founders, who perceived religion principally in instrumental terms. The potency of political Islam therefore presented a major challenge to the modernist Pakistani elites, because they could not deny outright the political and legal role of Islam in a country created in its name. The Islamist parties in Pakistan,

especially the JI, were able to exploit this situation to promote what they characterized as an Islam-based agenda. This consisted principally of infusing selected provisions of sharia law into the legal code and the vetting of legislation to determine that it was compatible with Islamic law.[1] The Islamists' political agenda has been a constant cause of tension between Pakistan's modernist regimes and the Islamists, who have considered Pakistan's rulers as promoters of Anglo-Saxon law and thus as against the sharia.

Egypt, by comparison, took its Islamic character for granted, with a Muslim majority of around 90 percent going back centuries. However, during the first half of the twentieth century, its quasi-liberal, modernizing elite and its royal court failed to end the de facto British occupation of the country that had begun in the 1880s, making them easy targets of popular anger. The venality of Egypt's semifeudal ruling elite added to popular discontent. The situation became more acute at the end of World War II, with Egypt "facing critical internal and external problems and ruled by men without a semblance of popular support."[2] It was in this context that Islamist political ideology took root in Egypt, with the MB, the principal Islamist movement, projecting itself as the defender both of Egyptian national interests and of Muslim dignity against the foreign occupiers and their domestic collaborators.

A comparison of these two movements, the JI and the MB, which have led the charge for Islamization of their respective societies and polities, demonstrates how different the Islamist movements have been in the two countries, despite the similarities in their idioms and concepts, which continue to be couched in Islamic terms. Admittedly, there has been a certain degree of cross-fertilization of ideas; the influence of JI founder Abul Ala Mawdudi's writings on the ideas put forward by Sayyid Qutb, the MB's chief ideologue during the 1950s and 1960s, is clear. However, it is also evident that the two scholars-cum-activists were reacting to distinct challenges that required unique responses. Similarities in the concepts and idioms used by Mawdudi and Qutb and in their respective movements often concealed the different stimuli that led the two Islamist thinkers to expound their fundamental ideas and develop their theories in the first place.

Mawdudi, the chief theoretician of the JI, which he founded in 1941, was initially reacting to the challenge of preserving an Islamic identity under British rule in religiously plural India, where Muslims formed one-fourth of the total population. Then, in the run up to the partition of India in the 1940s and after the creation of Pakistan in 1947, he was responding to the challenge of establishing an Islamic state in Pakistan, whose foundational ideology of (Indian) Mus-

lim nationalism he had opposed. He had done so on the basis that nationalism was incompatible with Islam, and that the secular nationalist leaders of the Muslim League were bound to create a "Kemalist" state in the name of Islam while surrendering the rest of India to unadulterated Hindu domination. In Mawdudi's view, if Pakistan was to be created in the name of Islam, it had to be an "Islamic" state, not one that was predominantly Muslim merely in a demographic sense. Once Pakistan had been established, his program "was no longer to save Islam in India but to have it conquer Pakistan," and the JI "was therefore opposed not to Pakistan but [to] the [un-Islamic] Muslim League."[3] It is this latter struggle of Islamizing Pakistan that JI has been engaged in for the past six decades.

Hasan al-Banna, who founded the MB in 1928, was reacting to the British political and military presence in Egypt and to the Egyptian elite's collaboration with their de facto colonial masters. He did not have to wrestle with the problems of Muslim/Islamic identity in a plural society the way Mawdudi did. He took the existence of the Egyptian nation-state for granted and found no incompatibility between Egyptian nationalism and Islam: "Within appropriate bounds, nationalism, al-Banna held, was consistent with Islam. . . . The Muslim Brethren was a religious movement that embraced but transcended nationalism."[4] He went even further to argue that "Egypt's role is unique [in the Muslim world], for just as Egyptian reform begins with Islam, so the regeneration of Islam must begin in Egypt, for the rebirth of 'international Islam,' in both its ideal and historical sense, requires first a strong 'Muslim state.'"[5]

While the two movements shared ideological similarities and used vocabulary drawn from Islamic sources, there were differences that went beyond mere nuance, and in many cases reflected differences in the contexts in which the JI and the MB were founded. At the same time, the leading theoreticians of both organizations were highly innovative in their interpretation of Islamic terminology. Their conceptions of Islamic polities included characteristics that were distinctly modern and had no precedents either in Islamic jurisprudence or in the traits exhibited by the idealized Islamic state of the time of the Prophet and the first generation of Muslims.

Ideological Foundations: Mawdudi, al-Banna, and Sayyid Qutb

Mawdudi was the most seminal thinker of all the ideologues of the Islamist movement. His approach to Islam was quintessentially political. Two character-

istics distinguished Mawdudi—and therefore his party—from the *ulama* and their organizations in both India and Pakistan. The first was his denial of free volition, based on the idea that a true Muslim totally surrendered to God's command, a position that brought forth ripostes from leading theologians in the subcontinent. More relevant to our discussion is the fact that Mawdudi "accepted only politics as a legitimate vehicle for the manifestation of the Islamic revelation and as the sole means for the expression of Islamic spirituality, a position that correlated piety with political activity, the cleansing of the soul with political liberation, and salvation with utopia."[6] Consequently, to him, Islam was, above all, a political ideology that required its adherents to bend all their energies toward realizing the Islamist utopia of setting up an "Islamic" state.

The concept of the Islamic state, as propounded by Mawdudi and increasingly accepted by Islamists of various hues, was itself novel and a product of modernity, although its advocates made it appear to be a hoary Islamic institution. As stated earlier in this book, the modern sovereign nation-state bears little resemblance to classical Islamic polities, whether of the time of the Prophet or of the early Arab empires. Despite the lip service paid by Mawdudi to the concept of the universal *umma*, his practical aim was to make Pakistan Islamic by capturing political power and enforcing the sharia within the boundaries of the state. It was clear that Mawdudi's "Islamic state" sacrificed universality at the twin altars of particularism and pragmatism.

Mawdudi's idea of the Islamic state was based on the concept of God's sovereignty (*hakimiyya*). Accepting God's sovereignty implies that such a state would be governed according to the path laid out by God for Muslims to follow (the sharia). At the same time, he emphasized human agency in implementing God's will by stating that "the Quran vests vicegerency in the entire Muslim citizenry of the Islamic state," thus "[t]he right to rule belongs to the whole community of believers."[7] This vicegerency, according to Mawdudi, is implemented, above all, through the institution of a strong and pious executive, selected by the community from among its most upright members and committed to implementing the sharia with the help of advice from a consultative council made up of equally pious and wise Muslim males. However, Mawdudi emphasized that human agents, whether the executive, the elected representatives, or the judiciary, could only interpret, execute, and adjudicate God's law; they could not create new, man-made laws (except in exceptional circumstances), for that would by definition contravene Islamic teachings.

In theory, therefore, Mawdudi abrogated the independent legislative function of the state, limiting it almost entirely to the interpretation of God's law, the

sharia, with the exception of cases where the Quran and the sunna were silent. In such cases, the consultative council, the legislative wing of government, could exercise *ijtihad* (independent reasoning) and formulate laws as long as they did not violate the sharia. Where God's commands and the Prophet's practices were not self-evident, the legislature could presumably plug the holes, but it would have no right to change the basic legal architecture as laid out in the Quran and the sunna. Its role would be to supplement the sharia, not to replace it. However, since the Quran and the sunna are silent on a large number of issues that the modern state has to tackle, the legislative as well as the judicial and executive organs of Mawdudi's Islamic state had far greater power in practice than his theory seemed to allow.

Furthermore, Mawdudi averred that Muslim citizens of the Islamic state would have "limited popular sovereignty": "In effect, Mawdudi was claiming that both the will of God and the will of the people were effective loci of sovereignty since the latter would necessarily conform to the former."[8] This is why Mawdudi called his preferred system "theo-democracy," where the Muslim citizenry acts as the agent of God's will. One can see the impact his ideas may have had on Khomeini's conception of the Islamic republic in Iran, whose constitution also assumed that both the will of God and the will of the people should be reflected in the governance of the country and that they would not run contrary to each other.[9]

It was clear that Mawdudi was not bent on recreating the system of the city-state of Medina under the Prophet, despite the limitations he imposed on the state's legislative functions. He was taking his cue from Western representative institutions while adapting them to his concept of Islamic governance. That Mawdudi was fully cognizant of the requirements of twentieth-century polities and their organizational structures was reflected in his tripartite division of governmental functions among the principal organs of the Islamic state. The formal structure of the state, which included the separation of powers, was built on the model of representative governments found in Western democracies: "In his proposals and discussions, Mawdudi seldom made comparisons with the ethical teachings of other religions, but he did with various Western theories and systems of political organization and government, from communism to democracy."[10] Mawdudi's constant obsession with adapting Western forms of government while attempting to remain true to his conception of the Islamic state resulted in his institution of the "democratic caliphate," an executive elected by the people and responsible for ruling on the basis of God's law, with the legislature and the judiciary performing adjunct functions.

As mentioned earlier, Mawdudi laid great emphasis on the Islamic state's function of interpreting and implementing God's law. At the same time, he set the stage for contemporary Islamist thinkers to repudiate the importance of the accumulated wisdom of earlier interpretations and legal precedents. He argued that the function of interpretation could not be restricted by the existence of earlier *tafsir* (interpretative commentaries) and/or precedents in *fiqh* (jurisprudence). Answers to legal, political, economic, and social questions were to be traced to the Quran and the hadith and to the practices of the first generation of Muslims, before they became corrupted by *bida* (innovations): "In Mawdudi's view . . . the history of Islam stopped with the rightly guided caliphs, for the social and political institutions that followed were incapable of reflecting the ideals of Islam in any fashion. . . . The Islamic state therefore had to stand outside the cumulative tradition of history of Muslim societies. . . . In effect, the history of Islam would resume, after a fourteen-century interlude, with the Islamic state."[11]

This device of going back to the fundamental sources of law could be both constraining and liberating. It could be constraining in the sense that it limited options that had been provided especially by the more liberal schools of Sunni jurisprudence, such as the Hanafi school that was predominant in India and Pakistan. It was liberating because it did not insist on *taqlid*, or strict adherence to earlier theological and jurisprudential opinions, thus opening the way for innovative interpretations as long as they could be justified by analogy with decisions taken during the Prophet's time or that of his immediate successors. It could therefore act as an avenue for the introduction of novel concepts and ideas that were not available in the existing jurisprudential literature.

Mawdudi's approach to the construction of an Islamic polity was basically a top-down one. Vali Nasr points out that "Mawdudi believed in incremental change rather than radical ruptures, disparaged violence as a political tool, did not subscribe to class war, and assumed that Islamic revolution will be heralded not by the masses but by the society's leaders." Consequently, Nasr continues, "[t]he Jama'at's efforts have always aimed at winning over society's leaders, conquering the state, and Islamizing the government."[12] The JI's collaboration with General Zia-ul-Haq's military dictatorship in the 1980s conformed to a large extent to its founder's philosophy of capturing the state by Islamizing the ruling elite and implementing Islamic law to then Islamize society. Despite his rhetoric that constantly referred to Islam as a revolutionary force, Mawdudi's idea of revolutionizing society and polity was very evolutionary, and he aimed at achieving his objective of creating an Islamic state

in a piecemeal fashion: "[W]hat Mawdudi meant by the term revolution was a process of changing the ethical basis of society, which should begin at the top and permeate into the lower strata."[13]

Mawdudi's ideas about jihad were also far more moderate than the ideas of many of his contemporaries, especially Sayyid Qutb and those influenced by Qutb's thinking. Mawdudi made clear in 1948, in the context of the first India-Pakistan war over Kashmir, not only that Pakistan was bound by a cease-fire agreement it had reached with India but that only a properly constituted state authority could declare jihad over Kashmir or any other issue. Individuals and groups could not declare jihad on their own, for this, according to Mawdudi, would contravene Islamic principles.[14] Moreover, according to Mawdudi, jihad "was not war, but a struggle—a struggle not in the name of God but along the path set by God"; he made clear in 1954 that jihad could only be undertaken against an external enemy (not an internal one), only if the country was "actually, and not potentially at war," and then "only if the war was with *daru'l-harb* (abode of non-Muslims)."[15]

Unlike Mawdudi, al-Banna was, above all, an organizer and activist, rather than a political philosopher or even an ideologue. His primary legacy in Egypt was the tightly knit organizational character of the MB, fashioned to some extent on Sufi brotherhoods and owing unconditional allegiance and absolute obedience to a supreme guide. Al-Banna's conception of social order was embodied in the organization he founded, which had to be a total system covering all aspects of a Muslim's life: "He envisaged an Islamic utopia with no political parties, no class antagonism, and no legitimate differences of personal or group interests: the Islamist equivalent of the utopian Marxist classless society. In the case of the brotherhood, however, the utopia to be achieved in the future was based on restoring the utopia deemed to have existed in the past, at the time of the Prophet Muhammad and the rightly guided caliphs."[16] One can see the combined influences of the modern totalizing ideologies in the ideological and organizational framework espoused by al-Banna.

The MB under al-Banna, unlike the JI, was committed to a bottom-up strategy of first Islamizing society before attempting to capture power. This did not prevent al-Banna and the MB from participating in political maneuverings during the 1940s and from extending limited support to one or the other of the contending parties. But overall, "Banna and the Society [MB] had a traditional platform that the Society should exercise power only when the nation had been truly 'Islamized,' and thereby prepared to accept the principles for which the Brothers stood."[17]

For al-Banna, "[t]he *sharia*—its implementation or non-implementation—was the determinant in the definition of a true Islamic order." However, for al-Banna and for his successor as supreme guide of the MB, Hasan al-Hudaybi, the implementation of an Islamic order did not mean a return to the form of government that existed in the time of the Prophet and his immediate successors. For them, "the existing constitutional parliamentary framework in Egypt, if reformed, would satisfy the political requirements of Islam for a 'Muslim state.'"[18] Here, one finds considerable similarities between al-Banna's views and those of Mawdudi, whose conception of the Islamic state, as analyzed earlier, is remarkably like that of a quasi-democratic, representative system, in that it featured a strong executive, a consultative council with restricted legislative functions, and an independent judiciary, with the people staffing the various organs of government acting as human agents of God's will.

The model of the Islamic state as adumbrated by its leading exponents was usually limited to an enunciation of general principles without dictating a particular form of government. The latter could be left to the exigencies of time and place. Al-Banna was no exception in this regard. The MB in Egypt under al-Banna and his successors stipulated only three principles essential to the Islamic state: "(1) the Quran is the fundamental constitution; (2) government operates on the concept of consultation (*shura*); (3) the executive ruler is bound by the teachings of Islam and the will of the people." Moreover, "Banna described the relationship of ruler and ruled as a 'social contract' . . . in which the ruler is defined as 'trustee' . . . and 'agent.' . . . Since the ruler is the 'agent contracted for' by the nation, he is 'elected' by it. The Quran designated no specific ways of holding elections."[19] As these general principles denote, representative government, whether parliamentary or presidential, would qualify as "Islamic" as long as the laws promulgated by such a government did not contravene the sharia, defined as God's commands embodied in the Quran and the Prophet's practices, as attested to by the sunna based on hadith that are considered robust by authorities trained in the art of hadith verification. Such a definition, one could argue, not only is minimalist in character but has enough flexibility built into it to accommodate itself to contemporary political and social circumstances, whether in Egypt or Pakistan or elsewhere in the Muslim world.

The separation of the concept of the sharia from jurisprudential traditions forms the hallmark of modern Islamist thinking, especially in the writings of Qutb and Mawdudi: "Qutb, for example, notes the confusion between the sharia and 'the historical origins of Islamic jurisprudence.' The rulings of the legists of the Islamic tradition are obviously inadequate, he says, for the needs

of society through time."[20] The return to the original sources of religion, the Quran and the sunna, and the rejection of the intervening traditions (spanning centuries of praxis and interpretation) could be progressive, in the sense of being responsive to contemporary societal demands, or could signify a return to a romanticized and ahistorical past, divorced from context. It could also lead to a combination of these two apparently contradictory tendencies, thus producing a hybrid that was both retrogressive and progressive at the same time. Islamism generally became this hybrid, and especially in Egypt and Pakistan.

The strategy of downplaying—if not totally ignoring—the rich traditions of Islamic jurisprudence allowed the Islamists, especially Mawdudi and Qutb, much greater license in terms of envisioning their ideal polity than would have been possible had their imaginations been circumscribed by clearly defined jurisprudential rules. Without the jurisprudential baggage encumbering their imaginations, they could construct the past de novo while not being oblivious to the requirements of the contemporary era. As mentioned earlier, this process of imagining the golden age of the past while being sensitive to the realities of the present was demonstrated best in their conceptions of the "Islamic state." It is clear that the existence of sovereign states within clearly defined boundaries limits the geographic scope of the Islamists' imagination. While they pay lip service to the concept of the universal *umma*, their prescriptions for the ills of their society have limited relevance beyond their nation-state and are in fact designed to apply within existing political boundaries. This is also the case with the model that they advocate as the alternative to existing political systems, a model commonly known as the "Islamic state." This model takes the existence of sovereign states as given and does not attempt to replace them by a universal polity. All it does is advocate replacing existing political systems based on the "laws of men" with a system based, in theory, on the "laws of God."

It is instructive to note that Mawdudi, al-Banna, and Qutb were not primarily theologians by training. Although Mawdudi did receive a certificate that qualified him to become an *alim* (religious scholar), he abandoned a religious vocation for a secular one, began his career as a journalist, and then became a scholar-reformer and political organizer. In fact, Mawdudi was very critical of the *ulama*, who he considered largely responsible for producing a fossilized form of Islam that was not relevant to the modern world.[21] While several of the founding members of the JI in the 1940s were religious scholars, Mawdudi's disdain for the *ulama*, his authoritarian tendencies that gradually stifled debate within the party, and his dismissal of the wisdom of much of accumulated tradition strained his relations with the *ulama* within the JI fold and forced most

of them to leave the party. However, Mawdudi's disapproval of the *ulama* did not prevent him and the JI from cooperating with *ulama*-based parties to further the Islamist agenda in the Pakistani parliament and outside.

Al-Banna and Qutb both came out of the secular educational system in Egypt and were self-taught in theological matters. Both worked for the Egyptian ministry of education as schoolteachers. Qutb, in fact, began his writing career as a literary critic and spent two years in the United States on a government scholarship. The lay background of these leading Islamist figures is one of their foremost distinguishing characteristics. Among other things, it explains their contempt for the *ulama*, documented earlier in this book.[22] As Richard Mitchell explains, Al-Banna's "revulsion at the sense of futility in the Azhar in the face of the currents battering away at Islam can be said to mark his disenchantment with it as a citadel of defence for the faith," and his movement "was a direct challenge to Azhar authority and a demonstration of its impotence."[23]

Sayyid Qutb and the Radicalization of Political Islam

Sayyid Qutb, the foremost ideologue of the MB in the 1950s and 1960s, provided the major ideological thrust to the MB during the last fifteen years of his life and made a very distinctive contribution to the structure of Islamist thought. While he built on some of Mawdudi's ideas, such as *hakimiyya* (sovereignty of God) and *jahiliyya* (age of ignorance), he went much further than Mawdudi in giving these concepts radical content. Carl Brown observes, "Qutb built on Mawdudi's ingenious interpretation of a venerable Muslim term—*jahiliyya* or the time of 'ignorance' before God's message to Muhammad—to make it describe not a historical period but a condition that can exist at any time. In the Mawdudi/Qutb formulation, even professed Muslims who do not live up to God's comprehensive plan for human life in this world and the world to come are living in a state of jahiliyya."[24] Brown further points out that "Qutb's mature political theory . . . may be seen as a rigorously logical and consistent working out of the implications of his three concepts: jahiliyya, hakimiyya, and jihad. In simplest terms it comes down to this: God's sovereignty (hakimiyya) is exclusive. Men are to obey God alone. Men are to obey only rulers who obey God . . . [whose] mandate is clear and comprehensive. It is available for mankind's guidance in the Shari'ah. To set aside the clear and comprehensible divine mandate is to lapse into jahiliyya. Rulers who so act are to be resisted. Resistance under these circumstances is a legitimate act of jihad. The ruler's claim to being a Muslim ruling a Muslim state is null and void."[25]

While Mawdudi had also made a distinction between true and nominal Muslims, he had never given up on the latter and never declared them beyond the pale, the way Qutb did: "He tried to appeal to their religious, intellectual, and, ultimately, their political sensibilities. His concern lay with politics; hence, he needed to extend the reach of his message and persuade greater numbers to his cause."[26] Moreover, given Mawdudi's top-down strategy of Islamization, it was inconceivable that he and the JI would excommunicate members of the ruling elite, thus changing their relationship with successive Pakistani regimes into zero-sum games. Such a strategy would be totally counterproductive in their scheme of things and fatal to the cause they espoused.

Qutb was responding to a very different situation from those faced by Mawdudi and al-Banna. He was reacting against an authoritarian and repressive Arab nationalist regime in Egypt, which had cracked down severely on Islamist political formations, particularly the MB. He considered Nasser's regime, which had initially flirted with the MB and then turned against it, a product of *jahiliyya* (ignorance of God's commands, akin to the ignorance of the pre-Islamic pagans of Arabia) and, therefore, the equivalent of rule by infidels. Qutb's pronouncement of *takfir* (excommunication) against the Egyptian rulers and the political system they presided over has no parallel in the doctrine and rhetoric of Mawdudi.[27] This demonstrates, among other things, that while the hostility between the state and the Islamists had become a zero-sum game in Egypt in the 1950s and 1960s, it never reached a situation of irreversible antagonism in Pakistan. In the 1970s and 1980s, some of Qutb's more militant followers took his ideas to their extreme conclusion by declaring the whole Egyptian society—not just its regime—to be in a state of *jahiliyya*, and therefore a legitimate target for jihad. This set off a chain reaction of violence and counterviolence, including the assassination of President Sadat in 1981, major terrorist attacks in the first half of the 1990s, and subsequent brutal repression by the Egyptian state, a pattern that has been repeated in post-Mubarak Egypt.

Political Pragmatism

The preceding analysis makes clear that while there may be considerable correspondence in the idioms used by the JI and the MB and significant similarities in ideas espoused by the principal theoreticians of Islamism in Pakistan and Egypt, one should not conclude that the JI and the MB are cut from the same cloth. While both have acted at times as vanguard Islamist movements, they were and continue to be very different sorts of organizations in terms of

their strategies, with their respective characters determined largely by the milieus in which they have had to operate over several decades. Regime policies have formed a significant—in fact, dominant—component of their respective milieus, determining to a substantial extent the character of both Islamist movements, which have seen themselves as opponents of the existing normative and political order even when they have at times collaborated closely with regimes presiding over such an order.

Lisa Anderson has captured this reality very well: "Opposition . . . has the unusual characteristic of being defined partly by what it opposes; it develops within and in opposition to an ideological and institutional framework and, as such, reveals a great deal not only about its own adherents but also about the individuals, policies, regimes, and states in authority."[28] The action-reaction pattern between the state and Islamist formations is often determined by the former, with the latter largely reacting to regime policies. In the case of Egypt, as Maye Kassem has pointed out, the state's policy of "adopting 'cooperative' and 'coercive' tactics constituted a cycle that was not simply maintained and enhanced in the post-1952 republic, but significantly contributed toward determining the disposition of Islamist opponents in the contemporary era." Kassem continues, "On one level, [the Nasserite regime] crushed the Muslim Brotherhood movement in a manner unprecedented to date. On another level, the brutality involved in the regime's approach to the Brotherhood produced a reactionary Islamic ideology that not only was extremist in its interpretation, but was also the foundation of the more radical Islamist groups that emerged in the late 1960s."[29] A similar dynamic is observed in the period following the Arab uprisings. Initially, the newly liberalized political space gave rise to the MB establishing a formal political party—the Freedom and Justice Party (FJP)—which went on to win considerable legislative power and the presidency. Yet following the July 2013 military coup that ousted President Mohamed Morsi and subsequently banned the MB, the group has reacted by splintering into restrained, nonviolent factions and vocal, violent factions.

Pakistan has always been a more open polity than Egypt, even when under military rule. Given the political culture of the Indian subcontinent and the tradition of parliamentary politics inculcated from times of British rule, Pakistan's military rulers have usually felt compelled to use democratic forms to bolster their legitimacy. Pakistan has therefore remained a hybrid regime most of its life. It contains competitive electoral institutions with restricted civil liberties and tutelary interference. This regime organization has provided the JI

and other Islamist parties considerable political space to test their strength among the general public. The relative openness of Pakistan's hybrid regime has made nonviolent, electoral tactics of influence consistently available to the JI. In the process, it has also strengthened their commitment to democratic functioning, however imperfect. The JI perceives the democratic system as the primary bastion preventing it from being crushed by military regimes that, with the exception of Zia's rule, have tended to be relatively secular and modernist, and therefore not well disposed toward Islamist groups. This is why the JI, despite its Islamist activism, became committed to a constitutional political process from the 1950s despite the fact that it considered the political system in Pakistan to be un-Islamic. According to Nasr, "[t]he alliance between secularism and martial rule reinforced the party's commitment to Islamic constitutionalism, which could be the means for restoring the Jama'at's political fortunes."[30]

Despite ups and downs in its relations with the Pakistan government, the JI (unlike the MB in Egypt) has continued to operate as a legal political party during much of Pakistan's independent existence. The initial inroads that the Islamist forces were able to make during the constitution-writing process between 1949 and 1956 were substantially neutralized by the military coup of 1958. Relations with the government remained tense during the secularly inclined rule of General Ayub Khan between 1958 and 1969, when the JI opposed his policies as insufficiently Islamic and his regime as undemocratic. However, its relations with the army improved during the civil war of 1971, when its members in East Pakistan collaborated with the military in violently repressing supporters of Bengali independence from Pakistani rule.

The JI's relations with the Pakistan regime improved dramatically in the 1980s, for a couple of very important reasons. First, General Zia-ul-Haq, who seized power in 1977 and ruled until 1988, made Islam a principal component of his regime's legitimacy formula. He did so to fend off demands for a return to democracy. Second, the JI and other Islamist formations became major beneficiaries of the 1980s Afghan insurgency launched, with massive assistance from the United States and Saudi Arabia, against Soviet occupation. The JI and other Islamist groups and their offshoots became major partners with the Pakistan military, acting as conduits for financial and ideological support as well as for weapons supplies to various Islamist groups fighting the Soviet-supported regime in Afghanistan. Even during the 1990s, when the Afghan war came to an end and Pakistan returned to civilian rule, the JI and other Islamist parties continued to have close relations with the Pakistani military, the real power

behind the throne even when the country was under civilian rule. In the twenty-first century, however, the JI has tried to exert influence primarily through electoral politics, a point we will discuss in more detail below.

The MB's experience in interacting with the Egyptian regime was different, ultimately culminating in political activism through the FJP and President Mohamed Morsi in 2012–2013. With the exception of this experience, however, the MB has never had the close relationship with Egyptian leaders that JI did during Zia's rule in Pakistan. Even when Sadat encouraged the Islamists in the early 1970s to participate in the public life of the country to neutralize socialist and Nasserite elements opposed to him, his government closely circumscribed the MB's activities to prevent it from becoming too powerful and acting beyond the state's control. Although it was allowed to operate as a semilegal network and even publish its own newspapers and magazines, the MB was not permitted to function as a legal political party and to participate in elections under its own banner. Furthermore, the honeymoon ended in 1977 with Sadat's visit to Israel, and extremist members of an Islamist grouping, the Islamic Jihad, assassinated Sadat in October 1981.

While Sadat had cracked down on the MB following its opposition to his visit to Israel, his successor, Hosni Mubarak, once again attempted to provide limited public space to the MB, to co-opt it into the system and use it against his secular and socialist opponents. However, violence by extremist Islamist groups during the first half of the 1990s, the MB's impressive performance in elections to professional bodies (many of which it came to control), and its expanding network of social services (which came to fill the void that the state could not) convinced Mubarak that it was more a threat to his rule than a potential ally.[31] He changed course in the mid-1990s and once again suppressed MB activities with a heavy hand. The MB, accustomed to adapting itself deftly to bad times, lowered its political profile and waited for the next round of political liberalization to begin. At the same time, it meticulously distanced itself from extremist Islamist elements that had perpetrated violence in Egypt during the 1990s, thus preserving its moderate image among the Egyptian populace.

The Mubarak regime once again began to partially liberalize its authoritarian rule at the turn of the century, in great part due to American pressure on Middle Eastern governments to democratize. The regime permitted the still technically illegal MB to campaign more openly than before in the parliamentary elections of November and December 2005. That this was primarily a tactical, not a strategic, move on the part of the Mubarak regime to placate Western

demands for democratization became very clear when the regime, worried about the MB's electoral performance going beyond what it found comfortable, ordered the security forces to stop MB supporters going to the polls in the last phase of the elections, leading to a dozen or more deaths.[32] A similar dynamic unfolded after the introduction of new constitutional amendments in 2007, which created a path for MB supporters to form a political party. The regime continued to work to repress MB participation in electoral processes at municipal and national levels in order to contain its political power. When the National Democratic Party dominated the parliamentary elections in November 2010 amid allegations of widespread fraud, repression, and severe restrictions on opposition candidates, it was clear to MB supporters—as well as other Egyptians who favored greater political inclusion and democratization—that the Egyptian regime was unwilling to truly liberalize. Protests that erupted in Cairo in December following the elections were further galvanized by protests unfolding several days later in neighboring Tunisia. These events were the catalyst of the intense unrest that overtook Egypt in January 2011, culminating in Mubarak's resignation in February.

Metamorphosis

As has been stated earlier in this chapter, what makes Egypt and Pakistan very important examples of Islamist political activity is the fact that the Islamist formations in the two countries, principally the MB and the JI, have developed the most elaborate and sophisticated rationale advocating the establishment of political orders in the modern world based on Islamic principles. Even more remarkable is that Islamists in both countries were and remain convinced that this God-given order could only be implemented through the medium of a very modern instrument, the political party, which has no precedent in Islamic political traditions. In fact, one could argue that political parties, since they divide the *umma* on partisan bases, would be considered a source of *fitna* (dissension) according to traditionalist interpretations of Islamic teachings. Nonetheless, these twentieth-century political instruments for the implementation of God's will, the JI and the MB, were conceived as vanguard parties imbibing the values of discipline, hierarchy, and unquestioning loyalty to its leaders. In other words, they were and continue to be well-organized cadre parties in the Leninist tradition. This makes clear that the ideologues and leaders of the MB and the JI were fully cognizant of the requirements of twentieth-century poli-

tics and that their organizational structures reflected these requirements. They were thus very much products of modern circumstances, rather than throwbacks to the early period of Islam.

Moreover, the JI (from the 1950s) and the MB (at least from the 1980s) have developed a vested interest in the democratic functioning of their respective polities. The JI's restrained approach toward political activity was reflected in Mawdudi's antipathy toward violent change. Nasr notes that even after the first military coup in Pakistan that attempted to move the country in a more secular direction, the JI "did not radicalize, a development which stands in clear contrast to revivalist movements in Pahlavi Iran and Nasser's Egypt." Nasr continues, "Mawdudi wanted above all to avoid the fate of Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood under Nasser and to that end steered the Jama'at clear of radical solutions to the challenges posed by the Ayub regime."[33]

Although the JI entered a de facto alliance with General Zia's authoritarian regime in the late 1970s and into the 1980s, it became increasingly disenchanted with the regime as time wore on. Nasr notes that Zia's authoritarian tendencies became particularly galling to the JI "as it became apparent that the martial-law regime had in good measure dissipated Islam's political appeal and diminished the ability of religion to legitimate political action and authority." As Nasr observes, "Zia's triumph had proved to be a Pyrrhic victory for Islam."[34] However, the alliance with the regime provided the JI with opportunities that compensated to some extent for its guilt by association with an increasingly unpopular government. Nasr explains that it did so by opening the "government to the Jama'at's influence to an unprecedented extent," as the JI "now began to infiltrate into the armed forces, the bureaucracy, and important national research and educational institutions."[35]

Although the JI began as an elitist, vanguard organization consisting of ideologically committed members, its involvement in the day-to-day politics of Pakistan created the need to build coalitions with other groups and parties and to achieve accommodation with authoritarian and hybrid regimes. This soon turned the JI into a pragmatic political party that deemphasized ideology while increasing its commitment to the democratic political process, which it saw as the best guarantee against arbitrary suppression by unrepresentative governments. As a consequence, the JI's revivalist agenda not only moderated but took on a distinctly democratic hue.

The MB in Egypt shared a similar story until Morsi's ouster in July 2013. In forming the FJP and contesting legislative and presidential elections in 2012, the MB had moved dramatically from the ideologically charged and uncom-

promising stance its leaders had adopted during the period between 1954 and 1966. The latter position, most eloquently expressed in Sayyid Qutb's writings, was in fact repudiated by the MB's supreme guide Hasan al-Hudaybi as early as 1969, in an attack ostensibly aimed at Mawdudi's ideas. However, Hudaybi's views could be construed as unequivocally repudiating Qutb's radical ideas, since the latter's key concepts were borrowed from Mawdudi and often taken to conclusions that Mawdudi had never contemplated: "According to Hudaybi, the task of the Brethren was to preach Islam in the society in which they lived. He did not characterize the society as *jahiliyya*, but merely noted that many Muslims remained in a state of *juhl*. . . . [T]he latter means no more than ignorance of the sort that can be remedied by mere preaching. . . . There are Muslim sinners, of course, but one hardly excommunicates a Muslim merely because he has sinned."[36] The year 1969 was too early for the MB leadership to directly criticize the "martyr" Qutb. This stage was reached in 1982, when Hudaybi's successor, Umar al-Talmasani, wrote that "Sayyid Qutb represented himself alone and not the Muslim Brethren," thus distancing the MB conclusively from Qutb's radical views.[37]

The MB had long rejected Qutb's political line, by accommodating itself to the realities of political life under Sadat from the early 1970s and even cooperating with the regime on certain fronts (without openly admitting it was doing so). It had finally emerged ideologically from the shadow of Qutb's extremist interpretation. Certain Islamist groups, some disenchanted offshoots of the MB, continued to uphold the purity of Qutb's ideas and even take them to further extremes, but they were roundly condemned by leaders of the MB. The MB's criticism of Sadat's trip to Jerusalem in 1977 and the Israeli-Egyptian Peace Treaty of 1979 had soured its relationship with the regime, and Sadat had incarcerated a number of MB activists in prison during the last year of his life, but the MB did not advocate any form of violent resistance to the regime's repressive policies. This shift away from violent tactics signaled to the Egyptian regime that the MB might engage in other methods of influence.

Mubarak's decision to cautiously open up the polity during the early years of his regime gave the MB some political space, which it used to good measure. Although, as stated earlier, Mubarak cracked down on the MB during the latter half of the 1990s, its political base held remarkably well, due in part to its social welfare and educational activities and in part to its image as the only organized political force capable of standing up to authoritarian rule and advocating the protection of human rights. The MB's moderation from the 1970s until it was banned in 2013 was largely linear, despite the ups and downs in regime policies

that have tended alternately to permit a controlled expansion of its activities or to restrict them further.

The MB's trajectory provides some favorable evidence for the inclusion-moderation hypothesis, described by Jillian Schwedler as "the idea that political groups and individuals may become more moderate as a result of their inclusion in pluralist political processes."[38] In this context, moderation is generally defined as "the willingness to accept democratic norms of political participation, including non-violent opposition, respect for the results of free and fair elections, and willingness to give up power if voted out of office."[39] Moderation has both behavioral and ideological dimensions, a distinction that is often absent in discussions about Islamism. As Schwedler has noted, Islamists can comply with democratic rules without holding democratic convictions,[40] and much of the literature in support of the inclusion-moderation hypothesis presumes that behavioral moderation is sufficient for Islamist parties to be integrated as mainstream actors that will abide by democratic institutions and not seek to upset or overturn them.

The MB evolved and changed over time largely in response to regime policies, which gradually became more inclusive, expanding the range of tactics available to the MB to advance its agenda. Mubarak's harshest treatment of the MB was nowhere close to what the party and its leadership had suffered at the hands of the Nasserite regime in the 1950s and 1960s, making it feasible for the MB to find a niche within the system that it could exploit to its advantage. As the regime provided more political space for the MB to pursue electoral strategies of influence, the MB adapted. It demonstrated behavioral moderation in moving away from violent tactics and objectives rooted in system-wide change in pursuit of more specific, targeted reforms. This moderation was the result of both a cost-benefit analysis and a process of political learning that took place while this generation worked within the political space provided by a regime that alternated between repression and partial liberalization. The partial liberalization the MB encountered allowed them to take advantage of the limited opportunities available under Mubarak's rule while also inculcating in them the habit of cooperating with Egypt's non-Islamist opposition in an attempt to preserve and broaden democratic space. During the nearly three decades of Mubarak's rule, the MB itself underwent a metamorphosis from vanguard Islamist movement to nonviolent political party. It began participating in elections in 1984 and did so until the 2013 coup that removed Morsi from power. By playing within the limited electoral parameters set by Mubarak, the MB was able to demonstrate its substantial support among the population, as well as its

acceptance of more moderate positions than those articulated by the group's forbears.

The attempt by the MB to project its image as a party committed to democracy and pluralism in the first decade of the twenty-first century was not merely a veneer. Its travails over the previous several decades had led its leadership to conclude, just as the JI leadership had much earlier, that a constitutional democracy is the best guarantee for the party's protection from arbitrary repression. Participation in electoral activity, even if undertaken in very restrictive circumstances such as those present in Egypt in the waning years of Mubarak, has a way of transforming participants whose initial orientation may have been nondemocratic, if not antidemocratic.

Yet in a number of other respects, the MB's experience in positions of political leadership during 2012–2013 and the military coup and repression that followed cast considerable doubt on the inclusion-moderation hypothesis. Following his election as president from the FJP in June 2012, Morsi quickly moved to consolidate his power and reduce horizontal accountability across other branches of government. Within his first months of office, he fired the leader of the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF) and the acting chiefs of the Egyptian military, annulled SCAF decrees that reduced executive power, and issued a presidential decree declaring his decisions to be above judicial review and immunizing the constituent assembly from judicial dismissal.[41] Morsi used his new, insulated power to oversee the hasty development of a new constitution that was adopted in December 2012 in a referendum characterized by low voter turnout, voting irregularities, and weak judicial oversight.[42] These moves were met with significant popular unrest, paving the way for the July 2013 military coup that ousted Morsi and the subsequent crackdown against the MB. In sum, once elected, Morsi adopted a governing style more authoritarian than democratic, suggesting a relatively shallow commitment to democracy that valued transactional political gain over long-term institutionalization.

However, it is also valuable to scrutinize the context of "inclusion" in post-Mubarak Egypt. As Mark Lynch has suggested, "Islamist parties tend to adapt to their political environment,"[43] and one could view Morsi's power grab as a pragmatic, adaptive response to the fear that secularists would use the available democratic tools to undermine Islamist governance. Such a possibility was particularly ripe in Egypt, where the very elections that brought Morsi to power were tightly controlled, failing to meet international standards. Judicial interventions interrupted the political process of drafting a presidential election law, and several presidential candidates were disqualified by the Supreme Constitu-

tional Court on technicalities.[44] Indeed, it is not unreasonable to argue that the electoral process that originally brought Morsi to power was so severely flawed that all parties—even the victors—probably questioned their legitimacy and ultimate efficacy. Even at the high point of Egyptian political openness in 2012, the country never met the full set of procedural expectations to qualify as a democracy.

The MB's experience in governance through the medium of the FJP and Morsi raises valuable questions about whether a particular sequence needs to take place for inclusion to engender long-term, sustainable moderation among Islamist actors. One could argue that the post-Mubarak period permitted widespread inclusion without sufficiently institutionalizing democracy. Under these circumstances, it was difficult for all actors to feel secure in a long-term, inclusive, democratic process, hindering Islamists from making a credible commitment to democratic procedure. Therefore, perhaps inclusion and moderation only work under conditions of political stability and certainty, which are less likely in transitional contexts. Another question this example raises is the relationship between behavioral and ideological moderation. While ideological moderation may not be necessary as long as actors moderate behaviorally, perhaps they are more willing to submit to long-term behavioral moderation when they have adopted an ideological position that favors pluralism and playing by the democratic rules of the game.

Islamist Ulama *and Lay Islamists: Changing Equations*

As stated earlier, the JI has been more fortunate in its relations with governments in Pakistan than the MB has been in Egypt. However, its electoral performance had been meager until the parliamentary elections in 2002, when it joined *ulama*-based parties, the leading one being the neo-Deobandi Jamiat-ul-Ulama-i-Islam (JUI), to form a united "Islamic" bloc known as the Muttaheda Majlis-i-Amal (MMA), the United Action Front. The two parties could not be more dissimilar: the JI is an elitist urban-based party supported primarily by the urban, educated community of *muhajir* (refugees from India) concentrated in the port city of Karachi and the middle and lower-middle classes in urban Punjab. The JUI, led by puritanical Deobandi *ulama*, is populist in character, with a strong base among the Pashtuns, rural and urban, living in the North-West Frontier Province (NWFP) and Baluchistan. While the JI's *muhajir* base has been eroded over the past three decades by the emergence of an ethnic *muhajir* party, JUI's Pashtun base has been augmented during the same period

by the Afghan jihad and the consequent convergence of Islam and Pashtun nationalism in the areas bordering Afghanistan.

After the overthrow of the Taliban by U.S.-led forces in early 2002, the JUI embarked on a two-pronged strategy: supporting Musharraf against the moderate secular parties, the PPP and the Muslim League, and acting as the mouthpiece of Islamic radicalism combined with Pashtun identity/nationalism that made it highly critical of Musharraf's policy toward Afghanistan.[45] The MMA's electoral performance in 2002 cannot be understood in isolation from the JUI's two-pronged strategy. The MMA fared rather well in elections to the National Assembly, garnering 11 percent of the popular vote, which translated into a disproportionate number of seats, 59 out of 342.[46] It performed much better in the provincial elections in the NWFP and Baluchistan; it came to power on its own in the former and in partnership with Musharraf's party in the latter. Interestingly, however, its strongest performance came in areas that are considered bastions of the JUI, the NWFP and Baluchistan. The MMA performed much worse in those areas where the JI was expected to have popular support, urban Sindh and urban Punjab. JUI was the senior partner in this alliance, demonstrating that the combination of Pashtun nationalism and traditionalist Islam (rather than the lay Islamism of the JI variety) held considerable political appeal in Pakistan.

These results signaled a major shift in the Islamist center of gravity in Pakistan, from the JI to the JUI and related groups, a process that began in the 1980s but reached its culmination in the 1990s and was demonstrated clearly in the elections of October 2002. The real agents of change in this case were the external variable of the Afghan jihad, the importance of the Pashtun groups in this jihad, Pakistan's support of Islamist fighters during the war, and the Pakistani military's role in bringing the overwhelmingly Pashtun Taliban to power in Afghanistan. The Afghan venture allowed the Pashtun-based JUI to become the lead player among Islamist groupings. Its populist agenda and mass base gave it great advantage over the JI, with its elitist image and a middle-class urban base.

The union between the JI and JUI—who had been ideologically poles apart—proved short-lived, and the MMA split before the 2008 parliamentary elections, which JI choose to boycott. In 2013, JI won only three seats in the National Assembly and JUI won eight. The two parties ran under the MMA banner again in 2018, winning just thirteen seats nationwide. These elections showed a further shift in JI's positioning vis-à-vis other groups claiming Islamist credentials. The Tehreek-i-Labbaik Pakistan (TLP) takes an anti-moderate

stance and has firmly positioned itself as the hard-line Barelvi Sunni Muslim party. This party saw a dramatic rise in popularity in the year before the election, as its leader, cleric Khadim Hussain Rizvi, successfully drew on a number of political events to fan religious sentiments among voters. While the TLP failed to win any seats in the National Assembly, it won only about 300,000 fewer overall votes than the MMA, demonstrating its ability to serve as an Islamist alternative to the JUI and JI. According to an analysis of provincial-level vote shares by Zahid Hussain, the TLP's success probably came at the expense of the more moderate JUI and JI.[47] This shift may actually be a consequence of JI's own internal policies of inclusion, which have accommodated a range of doctrinal orientations among party members. According to Muhammad Qasim Zaman, JI's inclusivity is viewed "as a cause of some suspicion among their rivals, who have taken it to suggest that the Jama'at is lacking in religious scruples."[48]

The experience of JI and other Islamist parties in Pakistan shows that electoral strategies can produce a range of different consequences for political Islam. First, electoral strategies only work if the population is willing to vote for an Islamist platform, and recent electoral history in Pakistan shows limited electoral support. Yet as historian Farzana Shaikh has argued, the lack of electoral success does not prevent Islamists from exercising their clout to set national agendas.[49] Pakistan's claim to statehood as a Muslim homeland gives all political actors the license to invoke religious symbols and sentiment for political gain. Consequently, mainstream political parties are increasingly comfortable expounding the discourse of Islamist actors. This dynamic provides a different lens through which to consider the relationship between inclusion and moderation. The inclusion of Islamist parties in electoral politics has brought into mainstream politics questions about religion and policy that had been largely the domain of Islamist parties on the fringes. Rather than Islamist parties moderating their positions to gain vote shares, mainstream parties are adopting a more conservative, less moderate discourse on religious questions.[50] In other words, mainstream actors may be appropriating or co-opting Islamist discourse for their own instrumental ends.

Repression and Violence

As Islamist movements in Egypt and Pakistan have evolved and responded to the institutional incentives offered by the political regimes in their respective national contexts, a number of breakaway factions have appeared that have

used violent tactics in pursuit of more inflexible objectives. While such organizations do not have the support of significant segments of the populations in either Egypt or Pakistan, their dramatic use of violence has often grabbed headlines both domestically and internationally. Their presence and actions are indicative of the diversity of Islamists movements, even within a single national context.

The drift toward violence in Islamist politics in Egypt was induced by governmental repression, which radicalized the ideology and then the strategy and tactics of Islamist factions. Brutal repression of the MB under Nasser and Sadat, together with intermittent recourse to repressive tactics under Mubarak, gave rise to conditions under which nonviolent, more circumscribed objectives simply seemed unattainable to some Islamists. The emergence of al-Jama'a and the Egyptian Islamic Jihad and their increasingly violent attacks on foreign tourists as well as Egyptians can be directly traced to state repression, which set off a chain of violence and counterviolence that reached its apogee in the mid-1990s. Actions taken to suppress the MB since the overthrow of President Morsi in 2013 could mark a renewed drift toward violence among Islamists. The past several years have seen the most extensive and brutal repression of the MB by the Egyptian regime since the Nasser era. Banned by the military regime in September 2013 and subsequently named a terrorist organization in 2014, the MB has lost its ability to exist and operate openly in Egyptian society, depriving it of the nonviolent methods of influence it had adopted during the previous three decades. In addition to suppressing the MB by stripping it of its organizational presence and assets, the Egyptian regime has engaged in violent repression. More than 1,000 MB members were killed by security forces during protests against the military government in the second half of 2013. In April 2014, the Supreme Guide of the MB, Mohammed Badie, was sentenced to death along with 682 other alleged MB supporters, and in May 2015 MB-supported former president Mohamed Morsi and several other MB members were also sentenced to death.[51]

The MB response to this repression has increased internal fracturing. It is split between those who embrace confrontational tactics and those who aim for a conservative, conciliatory approach.[52] MB leadership has receded, and those leaders who have not been jailed or killed primarily live in exile or in hiding. They have responded with nonviolent hostility to the actions of the Egyptian regime, while younger Brothers have taken a more confrontational and vocal stand.[53] Lacking viable nonviolent tactics, this faction of younger Brotherhood members have engaged in lethal attacks on police stations and courts, and used

arson against government infrastructure.[54] The visibility of this more violent faction of Brothers in the context of quieted senior leadership begs the question whether the latter have the ability to control the former. While senior leadership advocates nonviolence, it is unclear if they tolerate or even condone the violence perpetrated by this younger faction. According to Sumita Pahwa, the internal fracturing is significant enough to bring about "the end of a unified movement confronting the single target of the Egyptian state that had prevailed for forty years."[55] Ultimately, the MB will respond to the constraints imposed by the Egyptian regime, but a reorientation of goals and tactics away from nonviolent, electoral methods aimed at inclusion in a participatory regime in favor of less tolerant forms of Islamist expression is one possibility.

In Pakistan, the drift toward violence and extremism was largely the result of the nexus that developed between the military, particularly the Inter-Services Intelligence, and certain Islamist factions in the context of the Afghan jihad and the subsequent decision by the Pakistani military to unleash Islamist terror in Indian-administered Kashmir.[56] This nexus was in many ways the intensification of an ongoing (although uneasy) relationship between the Islamist parties and the military to curtail the moderate and secular parties' room for maneuver. However, it is not only the military who has used the Islamists for its own purposes. Aqil Shah has pointed out that "Since independence in 1947, the Pakistani elite generally—not just the military—has sought to accommodate and manipulate Islamists. Yet, just who has been using whom has not always been clear."[57]

The proliferation in Pakistan in the 1990s of terrorist outfits, such as Lashkar-e-Taiba and Jaish-e-Muhammad, was a direct result of the support they had received from segments within the military and political elites. The latter perceived such groups as useful instruments of Pakistani policy that would help destabilize Indian-administered Kashmir in the context of the insurgency against Indian control in the region and the popular support that the insurgency has received in the Kashmir Valley. However, some of these groups developed an ambivalent relationship with the Pakistani regime after 2001, when, under American pressure, President Musharraf tried to curb their activities because they were funneling men and material into Afghanistan in support of the Taliban, then under attack by the United States and its allies. Nonetheless, the Pakistan government has failed to put the genie back in the bottle, partly because there is continuing support for jihadist groups among elements within the military, based on the strong belief that the Pakistan army can use them in the future for its own ends just as it had done in the past.[58]

Pakistan's military rulers also face a conundrum on the broader issue of the relationship between the military and the mainstream Islamist parties, particularly as they succeed in shaping the broader national discourse. The Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), for example, advocates against secularism and military involvement in political affairs. It has a history of attacks and suicide bombings on military targets in Pakistan.[59] As TLP and TTP have grown in influence, JI appears as a more moderate actor within the landscape of Pakistan's political Islam. Because it remains unclear whether JI will reemerge as the primary electoral vehicle for Pakistani Islamists or be permanently sidelined by more radical actors, the military has sought to position itself favorably with a range of Islamist actors. The blasphemy case against Asia Bibi, a Christian woman, is one example of how the military is balancing secular and Islamist forces. Asia Bibi was accused of blasphemy by her coworkers in 2009 and was sentenced to death by hanging in November 2010. The case drew global attention, with numerous human rights organizations and Pope Benedict XVI calling for the charges against her to be dismissed. Shahbaz Bhatti, the federal minister for minority affairs and the only Christian in the Cabinet, was assassinated by the TTP in July 2011 for his advocacy in support of Asia Bibi. In October 2018, the Supreme Court of Pakistan acquitted Asia Bibi, prompting TLP-led protests in Pakistan's major cities. In November 2018 the government signed an agreement with the TLP that would prevent Bibi from leaving Pakistan, where she and her family have had to remain in hiding due to death threats. This example shows that the military will allow the government to bend to Islamists in certain circumstances.

Conclusion

This chapter demonstrates not only that the Islamist phenomenon in Pakistan and Egypt is distinct from expressions of political Islam elsewhere, but that the two Islamisms are different from each other despite their use of similar vocabulary. It also demonstrates that both these expressions of political Islam are prisoners of their respective contexts. Furthermore, it reveals that mainstream Islamism in both countries has responded pragmatically, moving between inclusive electoral tactics and more violent and exclusionary tactics, depending on the constraints imposed by their respective regimes. Both cases demonstrate, however, that when offered credible commitments to gain a foothold in power through electoral politics, Islamists choose this path over violence.

This conclusion is especially striking given the fact that Pakistan and Egypt were home to the most prominent Islamist thinkers—Mawdudi and Qutb, in

particular. These thinkers expressed total philosophies that combined sophisticated and systematic analyses of the world around them with remarkable degrees of innovative thinking, laying out "Islamic" solutions to the predicaments faced by their societies. Pakistan and Egypt are also home to the two best-organized Islamist parties, the JI and the MB, which boast of dedicated cadres and the "purity" of their Islamist creed. None of these factors, which could be expected to militate against pragmatism and compromise, have prevented the mainstream Islamist formations in the two countries from engaging as nonviolent, mainstream actors in the political game according to the rules set by their countries' regimes, which have usually been unsympathetic to the Islamist cause.

In both Egypt and Pakistan, regime policies that brought Islamist parties into mainstream electoral politics engendered shifts from their historical vanguard movement orientations toward outlooks and behaviors more commonly found among political parties operating in democratic contexts. Yet neither Egypt nor Pakistan has succeeded in building democratic regimes, which reflects the limited value of electoral tactics for Islamists seeking to achieve their objectives. The questionable popular legitimacy of the contemporary regime in Egypt and its brutal response to the MB has forced that organization to reconsider its broader objectives and tactics. While Pakistan has always remained much more politically open than Egypt, the tutelary interference of the military limits the political power of the parliament, compelling Islamist actors to consider not only their electoral prospects, but also their position vis-à-vis the military. Chapter 5 shows the importance of context in the formulation and execution of Islamist agendas in democratic and democratizing settings, by analyzing and comparing Islamist political formations, their agendas, and their political maneuverings in Tunisia, Indonesia, and Turkey.

CHAPTER 5

Muslim Democracies

As the examples of Egypt and Pakistan demonstrate, Islamist actors choose their tactics in response to the organizational space permitted to them by their political regimes. Most Islamists have had to operate in nondemocratic political contexts, limiting their ability to rely exclusively or primarily on electoral tactics to advance their objectives. While democracy is no longer exclusive to the Euro-Atlantic region, it is still relatively uncommon in the Muslim world. Nevertheless, as the examples of Indonesia, Tunisia, and Turkey show, political Islam can play a role in democratization, and Islamist[1] political parties have used democratic institutions to advance their agendas.

Skeptics of the idea that Islamism and democracy can coexist point to examples of ostensibly moderate and democratic Islamists shedding their commitment to democracy after being elected, supporting the view that Islamists' commitment to democracy is limited to "one man, one vote, one time." Yet there are also examples of Islamists participating in politics, legitimizing democratic institutions, and taking moderate, effective stands in policy debates. Even though Muslim democracies are rare, the examples of Indonesia and Tunisia demonstrate that there is no inherent and irreconcilable contradiction between political Islam and democracy. Furthermore, as the case of Turkey shows, even when Islamist actors work against democratization efforts, the desire to build a theocracy is usually not the root cause.

Democratic Deficit in the Muslim World

Conceptualizing Modern Democracy

In the words of W. B. Gallie, "democracy" is an "essentially contested concept";[2] that is, it is a commonly used term, but different groups disagree on its mean-

ing. Scholars of comparative politics, however, have generally reached a consensus about the concept of democracy, and most scholarly definitions of democracy contain two key elements: what Giovanni Sartori terms "demo-protection," the protection of people from tyranny, and "demo-power," the implementation of popular rule.[3] As Robert Dahl has chronicled, modern democracy is not a phenomenon that was invented and then moved linearly through time to an end state of near-universal adoption.[4] Rather, the antecedents of modern democracy developed at different times in different places, with favorable local conditions in parts of Europe giving rise to political ideas, such as the consent and representation of the governed, that in turn supported specific practices, such as the development of local assemblies and their selection via an electoral mechanism.[5] The further evolution of these ideas and practices into demo-protection and demo-power gained particular momentum in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and political regimes combining these two elements spread dramatically across the globe from the mid-1970s until the turn of the twenty-first century. Rather than reaching an inevitable conclusion in which all political regimes have converged on democracy as the final stage of political evolution, however, since the early 2000s the world has witnessed a decline in transitions from authoritarian to more democratic forms of political rule, as well as an increase in threats to the survival of democratic regimes.

While threats to democratic sovereignty in the first half of the twentieth century generally came from regimes that did not base their claims to political legitimacy on liberal concepts such as consent and representation, contemporary authoritarian leaders across the globe have adopted the architecture of democratic institutions while disregarding their liberal values. In other words, many authoritarian regimes, including a number of political systems in Muslim-majority countries, offer demo-power without demo-protection. While executive and legislative systems, electoral rules, federalism, and policy objectives can take a variety of institutional forms in a democracy, scholars agree that for an existing political system to be a "democracy," it must meet certain minimal procedural requirements. The most frequently invoked articulation of this procedural minimum comes from Dahl, who outlined several criteria for modern representative democracy with universal suffrage: control of government decisions is constitutionally vested in elected officials; elections are free, fair, and frequent; there is protection for freedom of expression, freedom to access alternative sources of information that actually exist, and freedom to form independent associations, including interest groups and political parties; and citizenship is inclusive, ensuring that nearly all adult citizens have

the right to run for elected office, vote, and engage in the above-mentioned freedoms.[6] Collectively, these procedures ensure that demo-power is supported by demo-protection. In other words, while institutions that formalize popular sovereignty free the people *to* act, further protections are necessary to guarantee the state does not limit people *from* acting according to their will. Generally speaking, the presence or absence of these conditions exists along a spectrum, but the spectrum must meet a minimal threshold to qualify as a democracy.

The most common form of contemporary authoritarian regime is one that offers some form of electoral process, but undermines the real value of elections by circumscribing the genuine political power of elected bodies, failing to protect citizens' freedom to engage meaningfully in the electoral process, or both.[7] For example, a number of Muslim-majority countries, such as Iran, Pakistan, and Turkey, have adopted electoral frameworks based on popular sovereignty, but that also permit unelected bodies in the form of the military or religious authorities to constrain the agency and power of elected leaders. This tutelary interference reduces the demo-power and demo-protection of such regimes to the point where they are below the procedural minimum to be classified as democracies, even though they fall far short of the autocracy present in Saudi Arabia or in the monarchies of several Persian Gulf states.

Democratic Concepts, Colonialism, and Islam

Democratic political institutions, as well as some of the ideological concepts that underpin them, entered Muslim-majority territories largely through the colonial experience. As pointed out in chapter 1, the classical tradition of governance in the Muslim world emphasized order out of fear of anarchy and the division of the *umma*. Even those scholars and political actors who stressed the notion of *adl* (justice) as an important characteristic of rulership did not equate just government with popular rule. They were concerned primarily with the character of the rule, rather than with how the rulers were chosen. The truth is that Islam has little to say on the question of democracy, since it does not prescribe a single model of governance that is applicable to all societies across time and space. According to one scholar, the "Qur'an . . . knows no such concept of an 'Islamic' state, least of all one with the coercive powers of a modern leviathan."[8] The comparison in chapter 3 between the models presented by the two leading self-proclaimed Islamic states, Saudi Arabia and Iran, forcefully drives home the point that there are serious divergences of opinion regarding an ideal Islamic polity. The bottom line is that nothing in Islam militates against Muslim

polities adopting democratic forms of rule, just as there is nothing in Islam that prevents autocratic rule in Muslim countries.

Popular sovereignty, the precursor of democracy, was a concept alien not only to the classical age of Islam but also to Europe until the French Revolution of 1789. It did not put down intellectual roots in Europe until well into the nineteenth century. Even then, its practice was heavily circumscribed by property, gender, racial, and educational qualifications. Some Muslim thinkers became familiar with the terminology of liberal thought and democratic governance in the nineteenth century, as these ideas spread from Europe.[9] But only in the second half of the twentieth century did a considerable number of Muslim countries begin to experiment with representative institutions. Many such experiments were aborted soon thereafter, for reasons having to do more with colonial legacies, social structures, regime characteristics, and regional security environments than with Islam.[10] The spread of popular protests across the Arab world in 2011—optimistically labeled by many as the "Arab Spring"—revealed meaningful dissatisfaction with ruling regimes across the Middle East and North Africa. While these uprisings led to the collapse of several autocrats, they did not result in a democratic wave across the region.

Structural Explanations for Authoritarian Resilience in the Muslim World

Although there is no a priori reason why Islam and democracy are incompatible, democracy is relatively uncommon in the Muslim world. Analyses of cross-national measures of democracy and political openness across different countries in the world find that the political regimes in Muslim-majority countries are simply less democratic than those in non-Muslim majority countries.[11] Scholars have offered a number of explanations for this deficit, most of which draw from the Muslim world's encounters with colonialism, and the differential impact that industrial underdevelopment and reliance on natural-resource wealth have had on shaping politics in these states.

While scholars of democracy generally acknowledge that there are no specific social or economic prerequisites a country must achieve to be able to establish a democratic form of government, there is an assumption that democracies can only flourish within clearly defined state boundaries. Dankwart Rustow viewed this assumption as a "background condition" of national unity, noting that "Democracy is a system of rule by temporary majorities. In order that rulers and policies may freely change, the bound-

aries must endure, the composition of the citizenry be continuous."[12] Contemporary Muslim-majority states, many of which emerged from colonial rule, have had neither the luxury of centuries of time (as was the case in Western Europe) to build modern nation-states nor the autonomy to fashion their own political boundaries through war and diplomacy (as the Europeans did).[13] Their mostly artificially constructed boundaries, drawn by European colonial powers largely for reasons of imperial convenience—the Indonesia-Malaysia, Pakistan-Afghanistan, Syria-Lebanon, and Iraq-Syria borders immediately come to mind—have immensely complicated the twin processes of nation formation and democratic governance in many postcolonial countries, including Muslim countries. This incomplete process is solidly reflected in the interaction between religion and politics in Muslim countries, including the deliberate use of Islam in defining nationhood within artificially constructed states in the absence of other forms of solidarity. It is also reflected in the authoritarian nature of many regimes in Muslim countries, and in the authoritarian tendencies among rulers even in Muslim democracies. Incomplete processes of state-making and nation formation are foundational to all of these phenomena, and have complicated democratization attempts in Muslim-majority countries.

As in many other postcolonial countries, socioeconomic development in Muslim-majority countries generally lags behind levels in the advanced, industrialized economies of the Euro-Atlantic region. Although a certain level of socioeconomic modernization is not necessary for democracy to emerge, numerous studies have demonstrated that democracy is more likely to survive under favorable economic conditions that support human development across a country's population.[14] Similarly, scholars have illustrated the negative effects of natural-resource dependence on a country's likelihood of building a surviving democracy.[15] When an economy is flush with natural resources, political elites regularly find themselves in the position of offering citizens both generous benefits and low taxes. The absence of an extensive tax structure reduces citizens' claims for political accountability from the state, essentially perpetuating a political relationship defined primarily by paternalism rather than consent of the governed. Additionally, as Eva Bellin has argued, oil wealth has allowed states in the Middle East to develop extensive coercive apparatuses that further hinder citizens from demanding popular sovereignty and accountability.[16] As the cases of Syria, Bahrain, and Libya demonstrate, the loyalty of these coercive apparatuses was instrumental to ensuring that popular uprisings did not usher in an era of free elections in 2011.[17]

Social Factors Shaping Demand for Democracy

The above explanations for the relative lack of democracy in the Muslim world hinge primarily on structural conditions that are a product of historical and contextual circumstances and have nothing to do with religious principles. A number of other hypotheses for authoritarian resilience in Muslim-majority countries, however, relate more closely to social and political processes that might intersect with devotional beliefs or practices. One such argument is that democracy demands a secular state, which is not very common in the Muslim world. This view, however, ignores the role of religion in European state-building. As Jonathan Fox's Religion and State data set has consistently demonstrated, the United States is highly unusual in its level of secularism. Most modern democracies that guarantee freedom of religion are not completely free of state interference in religious affairs, including support for official religions or religious institutions, restrictions on minority religions, and regulation of the majority religion.[18] While Fox and Schmuel Sandler find that separation of religion and state is less common in the Middle East than in Western states, secularism does not appear to be necessary for democracy to flourish.[19]

A second set of arguments considers how social practices frequently associated with Muslim communities might influence public demand for democratic institutions. For example, some scholars have focused on gender inequality, theorizing that a general acceptance of male dominance in social relations can foster a culture that legitimizes domination and dependency at higher political levels.[20] Fatima Rahman has connected the ideas of secularism and social inequality by examining the degree to which Muslim-majority states incorporate aspects of Islamic law into their legal code.[21] Rahman finds that while the incorporation of sharia family laws into the legal code disadvantages women, contributing to gender inequality, the overall institutionalization of Islam does not explain variation in political openness across Muslim-majority regimes.

Other observers question if the relative weakness of democracy in Muslim-majority contexts might stem from a lack of support for democratic values, or perhaps a stronger preference for regime structures inspired by Islamic law than for democratic regime principles.[22] Without question, the concern that democratic values among Islamists were limited to "one man, one vote, one time"—based primarily on the antiliberal rhetoric that Islamist parties organizing in the latter part of the twentieth century regularly repeated—stoked fears among policymakers that Muslims as a whole had shallow commitments to

democracy. Yet in the first decade of the twenty-first century, Islamist parties and movements began to incorporate the language of human rights and democratic procedure into their platforms, and also started to more frequently employ electoral tactics when possible.[23] This visible, cross-national trend in Islamist accommodation with electoral politics has encouraged observers to scrutinize previously held assumptions about the nature of Muslims' political values. Empirical analysis suggests that a lack of desire for democracy cannot explain authoritarian resilience. Rather, studies show that while individuals who hold Islamic values are more favorably disposed to the legal incorporation of sharia guidelines and those with secularist values tend to support democracy, there is strong evidence that many Muslims do not see democracy as irreconcilable with Islamic values.[24]

In sum, while scholars are actively trying to untangle the different possible explanations for limited democracy in the Muslim world, the cases of Indonesia and Tunisia demonstrate that political Islam can be mobilized in favor of democracy and democratization. Similarly, the case of Turkey reveals that when democratization fails, factors other than political Islam are often responsible for this outcome.

Comparing Indonesia, Tunisia, and Turkey

Indonesia, Tunisia, and Turkey offer valuable examples of how Islamist actors can foster democratization. Indonesia and Tunisia provide strong evidence of nonviolent Islamist political parties' contribution to and incorporation into democratic systems. These two cases also reveal that democratic settings promote multiple expressions of political Islam in Muslim countries, further debunking the myth of Islamism as monolithic.

Indonesia and Tunisia are the two most robust democracies in the Muslim world. Indonesia is the largest Muslim country in terms of population and has built the longest-lasting democracy among Muslim-majority regimes. Tunisia is the only country to have successfully transitioned to democracy after overthrowing autocrat Zine El Abidine Ben Ali as part of the 2011 Arab uprisings. It remains the only democracy in the Arab world. Turkey, strategically located where Asia and Europe meet, is a long-standing member of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and an aspirant for membership in the European Union (EU). In spite of its turn to severely restrict democratic institutions and political openness following the 2016 coup attempt, Turkey has had the longest

engagement with representative institutions and democratic politics in the Muslim world, going back seven decades. It also has a history of Islamist parties participating openly in the political arena dating at least to the early 1970s.

These three countries share several characteristics that have aided Islamists in their quest to accommodate democracy with political Islam. All three developed meaningful national identities as part of their struggle for independent postcolonial or postimperial statehood. The national identities that emerged, while providing a space for religious devotion, were not as intimately tied to religious identity as the nationalisms that took root in most of the Arab world and Pakistan. All three countries had authoritarian or hybrid regimes that included the architecture of multiparty, representative institutions for decades. While elections to these institutions were rarely fair and free, their presence provided Islamists with a framework for articulating their grievances and desires in a nonviolent way: as political parties. The democratizing efforts undertaken by Islamist parties in Indonesia, Tunisia, and Turkey reveal both the potential for behavioral and ideological moderation offered by democracy, and the risks posed to Islamist parties by fringe actors in democratic contexts.

Expressions of Political Islam in Indonesia

Since its transition to democracy following the collapse of Suharto's New Order regime in 1998, Indonesia has built the longest-lasting democracy in the Muslim world. Islamic organizations have played an active role in Indonesia's political life since anticolonial movements took form in the first decades of the twentieth century. Multiple organizations have competed to spread their vision of Islam, going back to the founding of the two largest Muslim mass organizations, the modernist Muhammadiyah in 1912 and the traditionalist Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) in 1926.

Islamic forces were involved in the creation of Indonesia's 1945 constitution and participated in the country's early electoral system. While Indonesia was governed by authoritarian regimes from 1957 until 1998, even during this period some form of Islamic political expression was permitted. Nevertheless, only Muslim organizations that were willing to abide by the official, constitutional ideology of Pancasila were allowed to exist, leading to the promotion of more moderate, accommodating groups and the repression of those advocating for objectives that did not accept the legitimacy of the constitutional framework.

Political Islam has shown a broader range of organizational forms, objectives, and policy positions since Indonesia's transition to democracy. Even

within the realm of electoral politics, the variety of Islamist parties with representation in the Indonesian House of Representatives is impressive, from the National Awakening Party (PKB), which frequently finds itself supporting positions of the secular parties in opposition to other Islamist parties, to the Prosperous Justice Party (PKS), which initially achieved political success with a platform advocating for the introduction of Islamic law. More than two decades of fair and free elections have shown that Islamic-based parties are a lasting fixture in Indonesian politics. Yet the increased freedoms of speech, media, and association that accompanied Indonesian democratization have also provided space for views hostile to core principles of democracy to take form. Islamist organizations that operate outside the realm of electoral politics, such as the Islamic Defenders Front (FPI), have come under scrutiny for their intolerance toward religious minorities and their willingness to use violence. Though less troublesome, social conservatism that bristles at tolerance for a broader set of lifestyle choices visible in democracy has fueled support for the use of democratic institutions to impose greater social control. Reluctance on the part of national leaders to speak out forcefully in favor of individual rights in general, and minority rights in particular, threatens the survival of Indonesia's democracy.

A History of Islamic Accommodation

In many respects, the competitive, multifaceted nature of political Islam in Indonesia can be traced to the country's early Muslim mass organizations and the way different political forces came together in the Indonesian quest for independence from Dutch colonial rule. The ethnic, linguistic, religious, and geographic heterogeneity of the Dutch East Indies encouraged an inclusive nationalist ideology that sought to accommodate a broad range of identities. A constellation of political forces emerged in Indonesia, including nationalists, communists, the military, and Islamist organizations, keeping Islamism in check while giving it sufficient avenues for political expression. The furious debate over the role of Islam and over the place of the sharia in the Indonesian constitution during the first decade of independence attests to the importance of Islamist opinion in the early Indonesian polity. Ultimately, the accommodation between Islamists and secular nationalists reached in the 1945 constitution was enshrined in a composite state ideology termed "Pancasila" (meaning "five principles"), which included belief in one God, nationalism, humanism, democracy, and social justice, but did not directly refer to Islam. The failure of

Islamists to include references to the sharia in the constitution demonstrates the countervailing power of secular-nationalist forces during the formative years of the Indonesian Republic.[25]

In the period from independence in 1945 to democratization in 1998, adequate political space was provided for Islamist parties to remain in the public eye and to participate in public debates, even if in rather muted ways. After a brutal purge of the Indonesian Communist Party in 1965–1967 and the subsequent repression and marginalization of other political opponents, in 1973 Suharto forced the remaining Islamic parties, including NU, into the United Development Party (PPP). The PPP was one of the three official parties allowed to operate publicly, and the regime hoped that it would act as the public face of Islam acceptable to the authorities and also draw support from groups opposed to the regime. At the same time, by bringing together both modernist and traditionalist elements into the newly formed party, the regime ensured that it would remain in a perpetual state of internal friction and deadlock and would not pose a challenge to the established order. Moreover, the high level of authoritarianism that existed in this era placed a very real grip on the independent action of parties and mass organizations, who were often kept under close surveillance, limiting their ability to take any action without state approval.

Islam and Indonesia's Democratic Transition

Autonomous political activity by Islamists was anathema to the Suharto regime. However, the regime was not averse to the spread of Islamic social mores, in the hope that it would help maintain law and order and convey the message that the regime was not against Islam, but merely against its uncontrolled political expression, because it had the potential to upset the political equilibrium. Facing a gradual decline in support from the military over the 1980s, Suharto attempted to shore up backing for his ailing New Order regime by wooing the most conservative elements among the Muslim political and religious classes. Specifically, in 1990 he encouraged his then-minister of research and technology, B. J. Habibie, to form the Indonesian Association of Muslim Intellectuals, a group whose members gradually were placed in influential places in the central government. It was a deliberate and desperate attempt by the Suharto regime to use its newly acquired "Islamic" credentials to neutralize the prodemocracy movement that was gathering force. The strategy failed, thanks in part to the Asian financial crisis of 1997, which had devastating effects on the Indonesian economy and created great disillusionment with the regime. Although

most Islamist groupings joined the opposition that eventually brought down Suharto's New Order regime in 1998, this did not mean the triumph of Islamism in Indonesia. Islamist political forces not only had to contend with secular and nationalist elements, they had to come to terms with the fact that they were bitterly divided among themselves.

The end of the Suharto era and the transition to democracy spawned several "Muslim" parties, which were often in contention with each other and constantly searching for coalition partners among secular political formations. Activists from both Muhammadiyah and NU organized new political parties (the National Mandate Party, PAN, and the National Awakening Party, PKB, respectively), which together with PPP won a large number of seats in the first democratic elections in 1999. Their numerical force proved consequential in the selection of Indonesia's first president following the transition to democracy. While Suharto's vice president and successor, B. J. Habibie, and the head of the largest nationalist party, Megawati (daughter of Indonesian founding father Sukarno), were considered the primary presidential rivals for much of 1999, Habibie's party, Golkar, was mired in intraparty factionalism. Golkar's inability to settle on a single candidate paved the way for a third candidate supported by all Muslim parties and Muslim factions of Golkar: Abdurrahman Wahid, the longtime chairman of NU.[26]

Wahid's presidency lasted less than two years. The surprise coalition that brought him into executive office instead of the two front-runners was not well received by Indonesian nationalists, and his failure to bring immediate relief to Indonesians still struggling from the financial crisis hurt his popularity further. Nevertheless, the experience of Wahid's rise and fall from power imparted important lessons regarding Indonesian democracy and the role of Islamist actors. First, the experience of Islamist-secular coalition-building that engendered his election became a mainstay in democratic political organization. Second, dissatisfaction with the institutional path of indirect presidential election from the parliament spawned a series of democratization reforms that included direct election of the presidency.[27] Lastly, Wahid's presidency showed that, when in power, Islamic leaders behave no differently than secular political actors.

Indonesia's multiparty system stabilized over the following two decades. While forty-eight political parties competed in the first fair and free elections in 1999, sixteen participated in the 2019 elections. Four Islamic-based parties have consistently held seats in the parliament and played key roles in electoral and legislative coalitions: the Suharto-era PPP, PAN, PKB, and the Prosperous Jus-

tice Party (PKS). While the first three parties have roots in social and political organizations that predate Indonesian democratization and were able to maintain a public presence in the Suharto era, PKS represented a new form of Islamism in Indonesia. Its founders came from a religious movement, Jemaah Tarbiyah, which had emerged on university campuses starting in the late 1980s, inspired by the model of the Muslim Brotherhood. The original party organization founded after Suharto's downfall, the Justice Party, adopted the Muslim Brotherhood's ideological and organizational style.[28] It was committed to a program of sharia law, which was perceived as radical within the context of an Indonesia state that accepted Pancasila as its constitutional foundation. While it did not initially pass the voting threshold to enter parliament in 1999, the party regrouped as the Prosperous Justice Party and won 7.3 percent of the vote in 2004.

In many respects, PKS can be viewed as a paradigmatic example of the inclusion-moderation hypothesis.[29] The party was included in electoral competition, but initially failed to attract enough votes to enter parliament. In 2004 it toned down the explicit religious rhetoric in its campaign, emphasizing broader themes such as poverty alleviation and clean government, which broadened its vote share. While this shift may have reflected more behavioral than ideological moderation, the party gained a foothold in parliament and found that negotiation with other parliamentarians was an expected part of the job. In 2008 PKS revealed a new platform in which it confirmed the party's commitment to Pancasila and stated more moderate positions on a number of other issues, including opening the door to cooperation with non-Muslims. The party's move from a more absolutist set of positions to broader, centrist conservatism has simultaneously broadened its support base and alienated some of the party's initial supporters, who looked to PKS as an alternative to secular or long-standing Islamic parties.

The Impact of Political Islam on Indonesian Democracy

The structure of Indonesian electoral rules, which generally necessitate forming coalitions to nominate candidates for executive office, have demanded that Islamist parties work with secular parties to advance their policy objectives. At times, the four dominant Islamist parties have worked together in the same coalition with secular parties, but since the presidential election of 2014, it is more common for the PKB to work in alliance with the largest nationalist party, the Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle (PDI-P), while the other three

parties support coalitions of secular parties closer to the military establishment. This alignment reinforces a view of Indonesian politics as being split between a camp of nationalists and Islamists, although that characterization overlooks nuances across both Islamist and nationalist actors.

Although political Islam has been accommodated in a number of ways in the Indonesian political party structure, democracy has also seen an increase in expressions of Islamism that are less tolerant and more violent. While groups advocating terrorism, such as Jemaah Islamiyah, have never had more than a fringe following in Indonesia, other groups that seek to combine violence with participatory pressure on democratic institutions constitute a threat to the country's democracy. The magnitude of this threat became apparent in late 2016, when the Islamic Defenders Front (FPI), a militant Islamist group frequently implicated in hate crimes and religiously motivated violence, found common ground with a coalition of Islamist parties to upend the Jakarta gubernatorial election.[30]

While campaigning for election, acting governor Basuki Tjahaja Purnama (more commonly known as Ahok), a Chinese Christian governor of the capital city, made an offhand remark that voters should not heed warnings that they could not vote for him because of the Quranic verse al-Ma'idah 51. While Ahok did not quote the verse directly, it warns against taking Jews and Christians as friends. Ahok apologized for any misunderstanding, claiming that he was trying to criticize the use of religion in politics, but critics railed that the comment was blasphemous, and the FPI helped organize public protests in support of the accusation. Ultimately, formal charges of blasphemy were announced and the trial unfolded throughout the campaign and election. Ahok was defeated, found guilty of blasphemy, and sentenced to two years in prison. Numerous human rights groups, including Amnesty International, condemned Ahok's imprisonment. Supporters of the nationalist party that had nominated Ahok, PDI-P, largely see these actions as politically motivated, and many view it as a test of the boundaries of free speech and religious tolerance in Indonesia.

The relationship between political Islam and democracy in Indonesia exposes tensions at the heart of the balance between demo-protection and demo-power. The civil liberties that comprise demo-protection have given voice to expressions of social conservatism and even intolerance among segments of Indonesian society. Recognizing the need to address these views in an electoral context, the center of gravity of Indonesian politics has, at times, moved into a more conservative position that privileges aspects of Islamic values over other considerations. Secular parties, for example, have often sought

to campaign on religious themes to pull votes away from Islamist parties—a tactic on vivid display in the 2019 presidential election when incumbent president, Joko Widodo of the nationalist party PDI-P, selected Ma'ruf Amin, an Islamic scholar and chairman of the Indonesian Ulama Council, as his running mate. In a particularly interesting finding of secular actors' strategies of religious outbidding, Michael Buehler documented that the adoption of sharia bylaws by provincial governments in the period between 1998 and 2013 was largely fueled by the work of secular parties—Islamist parties often opposed implementation in an effort to appear more moderate.[31] As political Islam has influenced the debates and actions that Indonesian parties—both Islamist and secular—take to stay electorally relevant, we are left to question whether the demo-protection in Indonesia's democracy is strong enough to stand up to demo-power when the rights of minorities are violated.

Islamists and the Creation of Tunisian Democracy

After three centuries as part of the Ottoman Empire, Tunisia became a French protectorate in 1881 and gained independence from France over a four-year process that was completed in 1956. Habib Bourguiba, a leader of the independence movement, became president of Tunisia, a position he held for the next thirty years until Zine El Abadine Ben Ali ousted him in a bloodless coup in 1987. Similar to many postcolonial leaders, Bourguiba was a secular nationalist who pursued economic and social modernization in accordance with Western models, but with an autocratic governing style. His vision for Tunisia leaned heavily on French secular values at the expense of Tunisia's Arabic and Islamic heritage.[32] He sought a "rational interpretation of Islam," adopting policies that eased restrictions on fasting during Ramadan and placed restrictions on polygamy, the veil, and other forms of religious expression.[33] In spite of a few overtures to political liberalization, Tunisia remained a secular authoritarian regime under Ben Ali, who engaged in more active repression of Islamists. Following widespread protests, Ben Ali was ousted from power in January 2011, paving the way for Tunisia to become the only democracy in the Arab world.

The Islamist Ennahda movement was a leader in Tunisian democratization. Although the party refrained from participating in the initial protests that erupted in Tunisia in late 2010, once Ben Ali's fall was certain, Ennahda leaders joined the calls for regime change. While a number of oppositional movements—both secular and Islamist—sought to counter the authoritarianism of first Bourguiba and then Ben Ali, Ennahda was distinct in its advocacy for allowing

religion to play a role in the state alongside democracy. This position of instrumentalizing Islam through the promotion of democratic institutions and values positioned Ennahda to play a leading role in Tunisia's transition to democracy.

Islamists and Authoritarian Opposition

Ennahda's history can be traced to the early 1970s, when Rached Ghannouchi, a young graduate of Zaytouna University and the University of Damascus, founded Al Jamaa al Islamiya, an Islamist organization that focused mainly on discussion circles in mosques and schools, drawing primarily on the ideas and experiences of the Muslim Brotherhood. University students emerging from these circles generally came from the country's interior, with weaker family ties to the secular elite, and often found themselves marginalized from participating in larger debates against Bourguibism, largely because the concepts that underpinned their Islamism were silent or underdeveloped with regard to the specific economic, political, and social questions being discussed.

These students formed the backbone of the Islamic Tendency Movement (MTI), founded by Ghannouchi and Abdelfattah Mourou in 1981. Ghannouchi and Mourou were both graduates of Zaytouna University, one of the oldest Islamic universities in the Arab world.[34] Their thinking was influenced by the teachings of Hmed Ben Miled, who had participated in Tunisia's national liberation movement; Algerian philosopher Malek Bennabi; and Tahar Ben Achour, a former Zaytouna University president who encouraged a more rational approach to exegesis that emphasized the objectives of Islamic law over its process.[35] MTI's main strongholds were university campuses, where it ran discussion groups and fostered publications aimed at uniting individuals who felt excluded from the political system and also sought Islam as a source of inspiration. In these respects, MTI from its earliest roots represented a form of political Islam that was nurtured within the context of a modern, authoritarian, and largely secular regime distinctly different from Hassan al-Banna's Egypt.

In 1981, following Bourguiba's willingness to register a broader range of political parties, MTI applied for party registration, but the application was denied. An Islamist political party that sought to appeal to the masses was perceived as more threatening by the Bourguiba regime than the more peripheral Jamma discussion groups, leading to extensive repression and violence against MTI. Ghannouchi was imprisoned from 1981 to 1984 and sentenced to life in prison in 1987, but he was released in 1988. After coming to power in 1987, Ben Ali initially made overtures of political opening in Tunisia, granting amnesty to

political prisoners and encouraging multiparty democracy. In an attempt to enter the political realm at that time, in 1989 MTI changed its name to Ennahda ("The Renaissance") to comply with a ban on religious references in party names. Nevertheless, the party was denied registration three separate times in 1989. Ennahda members ran as independents in the election of 1989, winning an estimated 13 percent of the vote. Fearing that Ennahda's relative success threatened the regime, Ben Ali began a wave of widespread repression against members of Ennahda and their families. Thousands of Ennahda members faced extensive prison sentences in the 1990s and early 2000s, while others were forced into exile. Members and their families who avoided prison were subject to routine harassment, blacklisting from employment and education, and extensive surveillance of their personal and professional lives. Following the elections in 1989, Ghannouchi moved to the United Kingdom as a political exile, where he lived until January 2011.

Like many other twentieth-century postcolonial movements, Ennahda's evolution over time was deeply connected to Ghannouchi's own intellectual development in response to changing political circumstances in Tunisia.[36] The early Islamist formations of the 1970s were heavily influenced by the ideological positions of the Muslim Brotherhood, adopting an objective of developing an Islamic state. Yet by the 1980s, Ghannouchi had started to question the practicality of that vision, prompting the group to split in the late 1980s, with a faction continuing to support the objective of an Islamic state splintering off in a different direction. This split created space for those remaining in Ennahda to advocate in favor of a "civil" state (*dawla madaniyya*), in which religious values could inform policy-making but not serve as the fundamental core of policy. While Ghannouchi's intellectual leadership has been instrumental in developing Ennahda's objectives and tactics, the party's vision that Islamic religious values can best be accommodated through democracy is shared across the party. When Monica Marks interviewed seventy-two Ennahda leaders, activists, and supporters prior to the 2011 elections, she discovered that none sought to emulate the standard model of the Muslim Brotherhood. Instead, they "cast Ennahda as the enlightened cousin to the Egyptian Brotherhood's more recalcitrant older uncle."[37]

Ennahda's turn toward a greater commitment to democracy can be partially attributed to changing global political circumstances and their diffusion effects. A deeper accommodation of democratic institutions evolved during the 1990s as transitions to democracy took place across a broader range of global regions. Likewise, secular opponents to Ben Ali had come to recognize that working

with Ennahda as a political player would be necessary for a democratic transition to truly occur. This shift in stated objectives, which took place long before Tunisia's transition to democracy, paved the way for Ennahda to establish itself as a credible actor when multiparty elections became a reality in 2011.

Ennahda and Tunisian Democratization

Tunisia was the first country in the Arab world to experience uprisings in late 2010. Protests erupted in December 2010 when a Tunisian street vendor, Mohamed Bouazizi, immolated himself in response to extensive local police harassment. Bouazizi's action served as a catalyst for many frustrated Tunisians, who took to the streets to protest Ben Ali's regime, ultimately compelling Ben Ali to flee to Saudi Arabia on January 14, 2011. Following the regime collapse, Ennahda's exiled leaders returned and began to organize. In March 2011 the party was legalized for political participation. Nevertheless, Ennahda faced public suspicion over the depths of its commitment to democracy. To assuage fears and gain broader social acceptance ahead of the October 2011 elections, Ennahda promised that it would not support a presidential candidate and agreed to form a coalition government even if it won an outright majority of the vote. The October 2011 elections for the transitional National Constituent Assembly, charged with drafting the new constitution and serving as an interim parliament until the new constitution was adopted, are generally regarded as the first fair and free elections in Tunisia's history. Ennahda won a plurality of 89 seats in the 217-seat NCA, 4 other secular parties each won between 16 and 29 seats, 29 seats were divided among parties earning less than 4 percent of the vote, and 8 seats went to independents.

Ennahda immediately formed a coalition government with two left-leaning parties, the Congress for the Republic and Ettakatol. Ennahda's Hamadi Jebali became prime minister while members of the other two parties held the positions of speaker of the assembly and president (a largely ceremonial role). The process of drafting a new constitution took much longer than the initially agreed-upon one year, in part because Ennahda and secular parties reached gridlock over various points. Over the two-year constitution-writing process, Ennahda found itself engaging in ongoing compromises over deeply held Islamist values. It relinquished efforts to place sharia as one of the sources of legislation and stepped back on the criminalization of blasphemy. Ennahda ultimately accepted the provision of freedom of religion in the new constitution.

In addition to allowing Ennahda the political space to engage in electoral tactics to promote its brand of Islamism, Tunisian democratization has also provided space to voice a broader range of Islamist perspectives. Salafi-inspired parties, such as Hizb al-Asala and Jabhat al-Islah, have entered electoral competition. Yet alongside these nonviolent political parties, less tolerant, more violent expressions of political Islam have also emerged. In particular, a movement inspired by Salafist interpretations of jihad has taken root, attracting young people from more marginalized socioeconomic backgrounds. Though lacking a cohesive organization, Salafist-inspired Islamists have been implicated in acts of violence against Sufi shrines, and a number have taken up arms in Iraq and Syria.[38] Salafist-inspired violence in the form of an attack on the US embassy and an American school in Tunis in 2012 and two assassinations of secular parliamentarians in 2013 raised very real concerns about the Ennahda-led coalition government's willingness to push back against Islamist expressions that threatened values of pluralism and democracy. In April 2013 Ennahda declared Ansar al-Sharia a terrorist organization, blunting its ability to organize, but many viewed this move as too little too late. The party's slow response to Islamist violence was seized on by opposition parties and helped fuel support for Nidaa Tunis, an anti-Islamist party comprised largely by former officials from the Ben Ali regime. In summer of 2013 protestors positioned themselves outside of the Constituent Assembly and called for the government to resign. Some NCA members refused to participate in the constitution-drafting process, which was already behind schedule. While the protests were ultimately quelled through a national dialogue process, Ennahda paid at least a short-term price in being forced to yield to Nidaa Tunis or face potential political exclusion.

After several months of vocal Ennahda support, in August 2013 Ghannouchi came out against a popular lustration bill that would have prevented officials from the Bourguiba and Ben Ali regimes from holding political office in Tunisia. This move, which went against the wishes of Ennahda's Shura Council, was aimed at ensuring that supporters of Nidaa Tunis would not form a coup-supporting constituency that would compromise the nascent democracy's long-term survival. It is no coincidence that Ghannouchi's push against lustration took place only a few short weeks after the coup in Egypt that led to the ouster of Mohamed Morsi and subsequent repression of the Muslim Brotherhood. These events compelled Ghannouchi to consider the likelihood of democratic reversal in Tunisia, prioritizing the long-term goal of a democratic regime over a short-term advantage. While Ennahda maintained control of the transi-

tional government until the new Tunisian constitution was adopted in January 2014, it subsequently handed the transitional government over to neutral technocrats as a way to maintain credibility before the 2014 elections. The new constitution was approved by 93 percent of the NCA, representing a considerable achievement of consensus among Islamist and secular actors.

From Islamists to "Muslim Democrats"

In October 2014, Tunisia held its first parliamentary elections under the new constitution, with Nidaa Tunis winning a plurality of the vote, replacing Ennahda as the largest party in parliament. Ennahda saw its vote share decline from 2011, but still claimed the second-largest party faction in the parliament with sixty-nine seats. Although the alliance was not seamless and not fully endorsed by all members of either party, Nidaa Tunis included Ennahda in governing coalitions in the following years.

At its May 2016 party congress, Ennahda publicly separated itself from the Islamist label, rebranding itself as a "Muslim democratic" party. It announced a number of other changes that serve to formally separate the political party from involvement in broader social and religious activities, which it had been gradually decreasing to more specifically focus on politics. Ennahda party members are not permitted to preach in mosques and are no longer allowed to hold leadership positions in civil-society organizations. In a *Foreign Affairs* essay explaining this change, Ghannouchi wrote that "Our objective is to separate the political and religious fields. We believe that no political party can or should claim to represent religion and that the religious sphere should be managed by independent and neutral institutions."[39] He further noted that "Our values were already aligned with democratic ideals and our core convictions have not changed. What has changed, rather, is the environment in which we operate. Tunisia is finally a democracy rather than a dictatorship."[40] Part of Ennahda's desire for rebranding as a party of "Muslim democrats" instead of "Islamists" stems from its goal of presenting itself as a moderate group that is distinct from Islamists who hold objectives that are not congruent with the existing democratic regime. The change does not reflect a shift in how members of the party view themselves, but signals how they would like outside actors to view the party: as a mainstream political actor in a multiparty democracy. By drawing parallels with Germany's Christian Democratic Union, Ghannouchi and Ennahda are not denouncing the use of religion to achieve political objectives; rather, they are trying to prevent the media and international policymakers

from lumping Ennahda together with violent actors who do not see democracy as a legitimate process, such as the Islamic State.

Cavatorta and Merone argue that Ennahda's moderation—which began immediately on entering a coalition with the Congress for the Republic and Ettakatol in the NCA—did not evolve from inclusion in the electoral process, but rather came about over time as a result of its lengthy exclusion from the political system.[41] They suggest that "the harsh repression against the party at the hands of the state, the imprisonment or exile of its leaders and cadres together with the strong rejection the party faced in large sectors of Tunisian society" compelled Ennahda to "re-elaborate how political Islam could contribute to the developmental trajectory of the country."[42] Or, as Marks has suggested, "Ennahda is wrapping itself more and more tightly in the Tunisian flag and embracing its Tunisian history."[43]

Authoritarian Reversal in Turkey

The rise and fall of democracy in twenty-first century Turkey under the political leadership of the Justice and Development Party (AKP) and its leader Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, constitutes one of the most interesting cases of the intersection of democratization and Islamism in the Muslim world. Owing to the modernization project of Turkey's founding father, Kemal Ataturk, Turkey had developed one of the most secular regimes in the Muslim world. During the first two decades of its existence, the Turkish Republic functioned as an authoritarian one-party state that suppressed all expressions of Islam in the public sphere. Since the end of World War II, however, the political system has increasingly operated as a hybrid regime in which competitive, representative institutions were restrained by the tutelary interference of the military. The AKP succeeded in reducing the role of the military in Turkish politics through reforms that strengthened and supported electoral and judicial institutions. These reforms cast the party as one of the strongest and most effective proponents of Turkish democratization.

Nevertheless, the AKP has revealed authoritarian tendencies over the course of its political dominance, particularly with regard to its treatment of critical media and Kurdish nationalists. Erdoğan has consistently struggled against public criticism, and gradually used his and the AKP's political power to sideline critics and restrict other parties from playing an active role in politics. Abuse of executive power to further restrict Turkey's vulnerable demo-protection and demo-power intensified following Erdoğan's election as Turkish

president in 2014, culminating in a military coup attempt in July 2016. The failed coup gave Erdoğan the pretext to clamp down even further on freedoms of speech, media, and association, ultimately paving the way for an April 2017 constitutional referendum to erode checks and balances across the Turkish system in order to place more power in the hands of the president.

While the AKP under Erdoğan has been the main driver of authoritarian reversal in Turkey, questions of Islam and Islamist policy have been virtually absent from the discussion. The AKP's Islamist identity was much more prominent in the party's first decade of political rule. Erdoğan's attacks on political freedoms are not in the service of promoting an Islamist agenda, but rather in maintaining his own political control. The question is not about Islamist acceptance of democratic rule, which Erdoğan was happy to endorse when it served his own political interests, but rather concerns the appetite for power of a particular individual and his supporters.

Modernization, Secularism, and Authoritarianism

The combination of secularist nationalism and hybrid political regime that has characterized Turkey for most of its history fostered an uneasy relationship between political Islam and the secular state. The state has vacillated between hostility and tolerance toward political Islam, fostering dual effects. On the one hand, it restrained Islamist political activity to some degree. On the other, it provided enough space for Turkish Islamism to operate in the political arena and has prevented it from being driven underground and morphing into a clandestine and violent movement.

The first-generation republican elite considered Turkey's ills to lie in the backwardness of the Ottoman Empire (which drew its legitimacy in part from Islam) and in its refusal to fall in step with "civilization" as epitomized by Europe. Modernity, including changes in the alphabet and in dress codes as well as a militant form of laicism, was therefore forced down Turkish throats whether the people wanted it or not. The Turkish military, with its high prestige as the founder and protector of the republic, was charged with safeguarding the revolutionary legacy, a role enshrined in the constitution. Since "security" has been traditionally defined in Turkey to embrace internal as well as external issues that the secular elite finds "threatening," the military traditionally exercised virtual veto power on issues relating to political Islam and Kurdish ethnonationalism that the Kemalists perceive as threats to national security.

Since its inception, the Turkish state's control over the religious sphere has

been carried out by the Directorate of Religious Affairs, which appoints all religious functionaries (down to the prayer leaders in mosques) in all towns and villages. As a result, the directorate has become the second-largest public employer in the country, next to the Ministry of Defense, which controls the armed forces. One perceptive observer of the Turkish scene notes that "The state thus aimed to supervise religious observance, its content, and the limits within which it could be practiced. . . . Thus secularism, in its inception, was intimately linked to state authority. . . . An authoritarian, single-party regime had initiated and instituted the secularizing reforms at the cost of democratization. . . . The process of democratization in the country, in turn, was intimately linked to relaxing state control over religious life."[44] In other words, the implicit authoritarianism of the secular Kemalist state gave political Islam the opportunity to don the mantle of democracy and turned symbolic Islamic issues, such as the wearing of head scarves by women in universities and public offices, into major human rights issues.

At times, as in the 1980s, the secular state attempted to form a working relationship with Islamist factions, under the guise of what was euphemistically called "the Turkish-Islamic synthesis," to counter leftist tendencies in the country when the latter were strong. This nexus between the Turkish military and Islamist elements came to an end in the early 1990s. With the leftist forces crushed and the Kurdish insurgency under control, the military became increasingly wary of the rise of Islamist political forces—some of whom it had abetted—in the country's political life.

Rise of Islamism

The Turkish Islamism that gave rise to a mainstream political party in the form of the AKP owes its origins to a number of factors, of which secular authoritarianism is but one. Another relevant factor is overall social changes, specifically demographic shifts from rural to urban areas, and the increasing importance of the provincial bourgeoisie, largely religiously observant, in Turkish economic and political life.[45] Omer Taspinar explains: "What has periodically been perceived as the 'revival of Islamic fundamentalism' is rather part of a sociopolitical process whereby the traditional culture of the Anatolian periphery is carried to the political center. In other words, instead of an alarming situation signaling the imminence of an Islamic revolution, the rising visibility of Islam in Turkish society and politics is essentially related to the democratiza-

tion of state-society relations within the framework of a healthy departure from aggressive laicism."[46]

Consequently, the traditional supporters of the Islamist party in Turkey developed a vested interest in greater economic interaction with the outside world, especially the industrialized democracies of Europe, and have further internalized the values of political democracy. This has led, among other things, to a transformation of Islamic political identity in Turkey, away from rigid literalism and anti-Westernism and toward a more liberal definition of the faith resulting in moderation and accommodation with Europe.[47] It is no surprise that the AKP is firmly committed to economically liberal policies, in part because of Turkey's dependence on the International Monetary Fund and in part because it suits the interests of its traditional supporters in Anatolia.

In the late 1990s Islamists repackaged themselves to remain within constitutional bounds. Moderate and modernist Islamists split from more absolutist and conservative ones to form the AKP. They also built a broad coalition that cut across class and rural-urban cleavages to expand beyond their original Islamist constituency. This work culminated in the AKP's electoral success in the 2002 parliamentary elections, in which it won an outright majority of seats, paving the way for its political dominance for much of the next fifteen years. The party maintained its parliamentary majority after the 2007 and 2011 elections, making it possible to advance two referendums for constitutional changes that deepened Turkish democratization. The 2007 referendum called for direct elections for the presidency, a reduction of the presidential term from seven to five years, an increase in the frequency of general elections from five to four years, and a reduction in the size of the quorum needed for parliamentary decisions. The 2010 referendum included a number of provisions to strengthen the civilian justice system, thereby tipping the balance of power away from military courts in favor of civil courts, as well as stipulations to strengthen independent trade unions and collective bargaining. It is for these accomplishments that at the end of the first decade of the twenty-first century, the AKP and Erdoğan were heralded as a shining example of Islamist and democratic accommodation.

Authoritarian Reversal

In spite of reforms introduced by the AKP to reduce the role of the military in Turkish politics, since 2011 the AKP has moved Turkey in the direction of a competitive authoritarian regime.[48] As conceptualized by Steven Levitsky and

Lucan Way, competitive authoritarian regimes formally adopt the political rights and civil liberties that are part of the procedural minimum for a democratic regime to take root, but they use both formal and informal mechanisms to heavily skew the playing field in favor of the governing elite, thereby significantly raising the barriers for opposition to use democratic methods to come to power.[49] The authoritarian reversal ushered in by the AKP is comprised of several key features: sustained attacks on independent media aimed at reducing criticism of the government; exploitation of security threats to further clamp down on civil liberties, including freedom of association; and political reforms to reduce checks and balances across different institutions of government.

The AKP has made pressure on the media a key feature of its governing style since 2002.[50] Through a variety of strategies, the AKP successfully weakened demo-protection by chipping away at the availability of alternative sources of information as well as the freedom to access them. It has used intimidation and criminal prosecution of journalists to compel self-censorship among reporters, and bought off media financiers to compel a more government-friendly editorial policy. For example, the AKP used its governing power to push regulatory agencies to block YouTube and Twitter after a December 2013 corruption scandal, lifting the ban only after local elections in March 2014, effectively limiting citizens' ability to access and share information that might influence vote choice. Additionally, the AKP regularly used alleged threats to internal security, such as the possibility of terrorism or violence on its borders, to restrict the media. Kurdish journalists and publications have frequently been censored or targeted for noncompliance with antiterrorism laws.

Turkish citizens unhappy with the Erdoğan's government have regularly taken to the street to protest. Of particular consequence was a series of protests that took place across Turkey in 2013 following the violent eviction of a sit-in protesting an urban development plan in Istanbul's Gezi Park. Supporting protests and strikes took place across Turkey, raising a broad range of concerns regarding freedom of the press, expression, and assembly, and it is estimated that more than 2.5 million individuals participated in the protests.[51] The government fined media outlets that provided independent coverage of these events, and 270 demonstrators were subsequently jailed for their participation.[52] In late 2013, an investigation revealing alleged corruption by several members of the AKP unleashed further destabilizing protests. In an attempt to restrict this form of political participation, in April 2015 Erdoğan signed legislation that increased penalties for certain actions undertaken during protests and also allowed the police to use violence against those who instigate conflict.[53]

A particular group of rivals that Erdoğan and the AKP have tried to marginalize are supporters of Fethullah Gülen, a Turkish Islamic cleric who has lived in the United States since 1999. Gülen's supporters comprise a transnational Islamic movement (often referred to as *Hizmet* by participants) that advocates on social issues, primarily access to education.[54] The Gülen movement has historically emphasized the bottom-up Islamization of society in place of directly political Islam, and in the 1990s it was largely viewed as a rival to the Islamists who went on to form the AKP. The two groups forged a strategic alliance from 2002 until 2010. The AKP benefitted from the educated human capital among the Gülenists, and the Gülen movement was able to expand further across social, economic, and bureaucratic fields.[55] Their alliance was instrumental in a series of high-profile trials against military officers accused of plotting against the Turkish government that "neutralized the tutelary capacity of the military," and in the 2010 constitutional referendum that empowered the civilian justice system.[56]

Following these accomplishments, however, a different power struggle emerged between Erdoğan and Gülen supporters. Behind the scenes, Erdoğan sought to sideline Gülenists, who in turn used the levers available to them to criticize the AKP. The conflict became more visible following the 2013 Gezi Park protests. In November 2013, a government plan to close down a number of exam preparatory schools—one quarter of which were run by Gülenists—was leaked to the media. Erdoğan viewed the December 2013 investigation into government corruption as a Gülenist attempt to weaken his power, leading to "a massive anti-Gülenist purge across state institutions."[57] In May 2016, the Turkish government formally declared the Gülen movement—which it identified as a "parallel state" structure—a terrorist organization.[58]

Erdoğan and the AKP's attempts to reduce the voice of opponents and critics transformed into a broader set of repressions after the 2016 coup attempt. Erdoğan was quick to blame Gülen and his followers, who became some of the initial targets of repression.[59] In the two weeks following the coup attempt, the government closed 131 media outlets.[60] A state of emergency declared immediately after the coup attempt was renewed every three months until July 2018, allowing the government to rule largely by decree during that time. During this interval, the government removed the remaining vestiges of democracy from the Turkish regime by both altering the legal framework that protected civil liberties and purging real and perceived opposition from elected office. By the end of 2016, more than 1,500 foundations, associations, NGOs, and trade unions had been shuttered by the government and their property confiscated.[61]

The government gradually removed mayors sympathetic to the opposition, ultimately expanding this practice to its own party by forcing independently elected AKP mayors to resign.[62] According to Freedom House, by the end of 2017, more than 110,000 people had been suspended or dismissed from public-sector positions and more than 60,000 had been arrested.[63] Having established a highly skewed playing field that offered few opportunities to voice opposition, in April 2017 Erdoğan forced through a constitutional referendum that dramatically increased the power of the presidency and reduced checks and balances throughout the system. The new provisions went into effect following Erdoğan's reelection in 2018.

In the 2018 elections Erdoğan was re-elected president in the first round with 52.6 percent of the vote, and the AKP took 295 seats in the parliament, just 6 shy of a majority. Even under the highly skewed playing field that Erdoğan has created, the 2018 elections demonstrate that his desire for more power is meeting resistance. Almost half of the electorate opposed his rule and was able to demonstrate its dissatisfaction in spite of the very real constraints on political discussion and organization. These results show that the "secular-observant schism continues to form a major dividing line in Turkish politics."[64] Even though Islam has been generally absent from both the rhetoric and policy prescriptions that have accompanied authoritarian reversal in Turkey, the AKP's use of political power to monopolize political Islam may start to cast a negative image on Islam itself among the people. Erdoğan's steps to erode the limited political liberties and civil rights in the Turkish regime constitute a significant step back for democratization, and will probably continue for the foreseeable future. The re-autocratization of the Turkish regime all but ends Turkey's chances of joining the European Union. Only time will tell whether the secular-observant divide in Turkey can serve as the basis for Erdoğan's opposition to grow and unite in resistance to the Turkish regime.

The Limits of Political Islam and Democratic Accommodation

The cases of Indonesia, Tunisia, and Turkey offer important insights into the relationship between political Islam and democracy. Three cases where political parties based on Islamic principles played important roles in democratization processes, they show that the democratic deficit in the Muslim world cannot be explained by an essentialist view that Islamism and democracy are incompatible. Nevertheless, these cases reveal certain similarities that may provide some insight into the challenges that face democratization in Muslim-

majority authoritarian contexts. First, it is telling that all three countries had undergone meaningful nation-building processes that preceded democratization, and that this experience helped cultivate a sense of national identity separate from religious identification. In this context, political Islam had the potential to evolve as one of many ideologies competing for its own political vision of an inclusive nation. In countries in which the question of who constitutes the nation remains unresolved, Islamist parties may be perceived as threats rather than legitimate competitors for political leadership.

Likewise, the fact that the authoritarian regimes in Indonesia, Tunisia, and Turkey had the architecture of representative government, restricted elections, and tolerated some social pluralism made Islamists converge on the political party as a valuable vehicle for instrumentalizing their political objectives. As such, society had largely agreed on the value of a democratic regime, and to remain viable political actors Islamist parties needed to demonstrate their capacity to work within a democratic framework. If they did not display behavioral moderation, they were going to be excluded.

Although nonviolent Islamist parties have become mainstream political actors in democracies and democratizing contexts, as Olivier Roy has observed, Islamist parties who have gained some political power have come to realize that "they do not enjoy a monopoly on religious politics."[65] Whether they choose to tolerate other Islamists, as in Indonesia and Tunisia, or repress them, as in Turkey, may ultimately determine whether Islamist parties are accepted as legitimate political actors by the system as a whole. Moreover, the experiences of Indonesia, Tunisia, and Turkey show that partisan competition is unlikely to absorb all forms of instrumentalization of Islam in pursuit of political objectives. The example of Indonesia's FPI demonstrates that the freedom of speech and of association that are core principles of democracy provide space for objectives and principles to be voiced that are antithetical to democratic norms while still falling under the broad umbrella concept of political Islam. An indirect consequence of some groups' behavioral or ideological moderation on Islamist principles could be the creation of an opening for more uncompromising views and violent tactics to take form, as well as the use of democratic institutions to enact illiberal policies.[66] We cannot assume that demo-power will engender attitudes tolerant of positions that might go against core Islamic values. As Shadi Hamid and William McCants point out, "Democracy empowers and encourages all parties, Islamist or otherwise, to seek the center, wherever that may be."[67]

CHAPTER 6

Islamist National Resistance

In a few important cases, Islamist political groups with territorially circumscribed objectives—including those of liberation from foreign occupation, secession, or irredentism—clearly straddle the violent and nonviolent worlds. In many such cases, Islamism blends with nationalism, particularly in the context of resistance against non-Muslim foreign domination or occupation. Islam thus becomes an instrument to mobilize Muslim populations against control or domination by predominantly non-Muslim political authorities or foreign occupiers, thus giving the resistance its religious color. Such instances arise mainly in cases where ethnicity and Islam coincide to a substantial extent; in such instances, Islam can be used as a marker to define ethnic identity in opposition to the ethnoreligious identity of the dominating or occupying non-Muslim ethnic groups. This phenomenon is evident in such diverse locales as Russian-controlled Chechnya, Indian-administered Kashmir, and Israeli-occupied Palestine.

Movements of national or ethnic resistance that aim at liberation, secession, or irredentism usually turn to Islam as their principal instrument for mobilization when secular parties and groups fail to achieve their nationalist goals, be they ending foreign occupation or gaining autonomy or independence from existing parent states. This is clearly demonstrated in the Palestinian and Kashmiri cases, where popular support shifted to Islamist movements and organizations following the failure of more secular groups to achieve nationalist objectives. In the process, ethnonational movements also become ethnoreligious ones. When such movements take up arms under the banner of a hybridized ideology that combines nationalism and religion, major powers apprehensive of Islamist radicalism brand them "terrorist" organizations. As discussed in chapter 1, terrorism is a contested concept more relevant in international law

than in discerning differences across organizations that engage in violence. Both Hamas in Israeli-occupied Palestine and Hizbullah in Lebanon have received this label, although they are distinctly different from other groups that share the "terrorist" label, such as ISIS and al-Qaeda.

Islamist national resistance groups are a distinct type of Islamist actor characterized by a specific combination of tactics and objectives. Their primary objective is to defend their territory from an external threat to sovereignty. They employ both militant and electoral tactics to achieve this objective, adjusting in response to the opportunities available to them based on the local context. Because territorial borders are either not currently recognized as formal states by the international system, as is the case with Hamas and Palestine, or because they have been vulnerable to external aggression, as in Lebanon, Islamist national resistance groups maintain active military wings. They also regularly demand electoral participation, but their ability to participate directly in the electoral process has been largely determined by the degree of political openness in the regime and the overall presence and stability of elections. This combination of characteristics make Islamist national resistance groups a distinctive type of organization that differs from violent transnational groups, such as ISIS and al-Qaeda, who differ in both objectives and tactics, and will be discussed in chapter 7.

Hizbullah and Hamas

The foremost examples of Islamist national resistance movements are Hizbullah in Lebanon and Hamas in Israeli-occupied Palestine. This is the reason they have been chosen for detailed study in this chapter. The use by Hizbullah and Hamas of Islamic rhetoric and imagery to resist foreign occupation is reminiscent of nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century movements in Muslim countries resisting colonial rule or attempting to overthrow it. Hizbullah and Hamas are in the tradition of these earlier movements, which used the concept of jihad to justify resistance against foreign domination, thereby popularizing the modern interpretation of jihad as primarily defensive war against foreign occupation, aimed at driving out the occupier.[1] While both organizations have been careful to control and direct the exercise of violence by their members, the obligation of jihad to resist foreign occupation has been couched by them in terms of the individual duty of every Muslim under such occupation.[2]

This interpretation has been used as a mobilizing tool to recruit members to engage in resistance activity against very heavy odds. At the same time, it has

been responsible for attacks on civilian targets carried out by individual members of these organizations, including suicide bombings. One must note, however, that Hizbullah and Hamas are not the only organizations to undertake suicide bombings, which were initially popularized by the predominantly Hindu Tamil Tigers fighting for independence from the Buddhist Sinhalese-dominated Sri Lankan state. Even in the discrete Palestinian and Lebanese contexts, other nationalist and resistance organizations have participated as frequently in suicide attacks as the members of the two Islamist movements. According to Robert Pape, who has done extensive research on what motivates suicide bombers to do what they do, only eight of thirty-eight Lebanese suicide bombers who attacked Israeli targets were members of Hizbullah; the large majority belonged to leftist groups and included three Christians. Pape contends that "What these suicide attackers—and their heirs today—shared was not a religious or political ideology but simply a commitment to resisting a foreign occupation. Nearly two decades of Israeli military presence did not root out Hizbollah. The only thing that has proven to end suicide attacks, in Lebanon and elsewhere, is withdrawal by the occupying force."[3]

Hizbullah and Hamas are part of a larger trend that has come to combine nationalism with Islam in the Arab world since the 1970s. Such a tendency is partly a reaction to the failure of the secular Arab nationalist ideology and of parties and movements that represented that ideology, such as the Baath and the Nasserite groups, to deliver power, wealth, or dignity to Arab peoples. The failure of Arab nationalism as a potent force was demonstrated above all by Israel's humiliating defeat of Egypt and Syria in 1967. That event spawned two different tendencies as successors to Arab nationalism. The first was the particular nationalisms in individual Arab countries, exemplified in the case of the Palestinians by the Fatah's takeover of the Palestine Liberation Organization, which until then had been an instrument used by Arab rulers, especially Nasser of Egypt, to further their own objectives. The second tendency was the return of political Islam to the center stage of Arab politics in dramatic fashion. In several cases, Islamist groups became the foremost voices for expressing popular national grievances, and Islamist vocabulary came to be routinely used to promote nationalist agendas.

Political Islam thus became a surrogate for nationalist ideologies, seamlessly combining nationalist and religious rhetoric in a single whole. Francois Burgat observes, "Much more than a hypothetical 'resurgence of the religious,' it should be reiterated that Islamism is effectively the reincarnation of an older Arab nationalism, clothed in imagery considered more indigenous."[4] Hizbullah

and Hamas are unambiguous examples of the successful combination of nationalism and Islam in the Lebanese and Palestinian contexts, respectively.

Ideological Antecedents

Shia Activism and Hizbullah

Despite their similarities, Hizbullah and Hamas have their roots in very different Islamic religio-political traditions. Hizbullah is a product of Shia activism in Lebanon, going back to the 1960s and initially inspired and led by Ayatollah Musa al-Sadr, until his mysterious disappearance in 1978 while on a trip to Libya.[5] In the 1960s, Musa al-Sadr broke from the politically quietist mold of the Shia clergy in Lebanon at about the same time as Khomeini in Iran, and it is clear that he was inspired by the latter's ideas and activities.

Shia activism in Lebanon gained further momentum as a result of the Iranian Islamic revolution of 1979 and the increased political consciousness among the Lebanese Shia in the 1970s following economic changes and the outbreak of civil war in 1975. Given the traditionally close links between the Shia clergy in Iran and Lebanon, Ayatollah Khomeini's revolutionary interpretation of Islam, including his doctrine of *vilayat-i faqih*, had a major impact on the Lebanese Shia clergy and lay activists. Coming as it did in the midst of the civil war in Lebanon and the first Israeli invasion of Lebanon in 1978, which primarily affected the Shia south, this revolutionary religious impulse became an important instrument of radicalization among the Lebanese Shia. When it was formed in 1985, Hizbullah openly acknowledged Khomeini as its supreme guide in religious matters, and it continues, after his death, to acknowledge his successor, Khamenei, in the same role.[6]

However, accepting Khomeini and his successor as supreme guides did not mean that Hizbullah became subject to the dictates of the Iranian regime or committed to the promotion of Iranian state interests that did not coincide with its own. Hizbullah justified its autonomy of action by arguing that while it was subject to the supreme jurist's orders in terms of the "undisputable implementation of the doctrinal Shari'a principles," Khomeini himself had sanctioned its autonomy by recognizing "the objective and specific conditions of every group or country." The Hizbullah leadership, therefore, has historically had "substantial independence at the practical level not necessitating direct and daily supervision by the Jurist-Theologian."[7]

Despite the fact that the bombing of the American embassy and U.S. marine

barracks in Beirut in 1983 have been attributed to groups linked to Hizbullah, the movement did not formally come into existence in its present form until 1985. Moreover, since its formal proclamation, Hizbullah has demonstrated over the past three decades that it is not interested in waging a global war against the "far enemy," the United States in particular. This was true even during the period when it was waging an armed struggle to end the Israeli occupation of south Lebanon. It also held true during the fighting between Israel and Hizbullah in July and August 2006, despite the fact that the United States rushed sophisticated weapons to Israel to help it attack Hizbullah and other Lebanese targets.

While Hizbullah's militant activity has been contained primarily to Lebanon and its borders, in 2013 the group joined the forces of Syria's Bashar al-Assad in the Syrian conflict. This involvement has raised important questions about whether Hizbullah is experiencing mission creep that belies its classification as an Islamist national resistance group. Some quarters view Hizbullah's military action in Syria as proof that the group serves as Iran's strategic fighting force, perceiving it through the prism of sectarian conflict in which Shia forces throughout the Middle East battle with Sunni forces on behalf of Shia Islamic interests. This interpretation of events, however, downplays the importance of both regional security and financial backing to Hizbullah's ability to achieve its primary objective of Lebanese sovereignty.

Coverage of the conflict in the Western press regularly glosses over the impact of the Syrian civil war on Lebanon, whose border with Syria stretches more than 230 miles. According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, more than 1 million Syrian refugees had registered in Lebanon by the end of 2018. The Lebanese government estimates the number at 1.5 million.[8] Without question, the armed conflict within Syria and the externalities borne by Lebanon are among the country's primary national interests. It is natural for a state to be concerned about its vulnerability to aggression when armed conflicts occur on its borders. The war has already had a visible and destabilizing effect on Lebanese domestic politics. In both 2013 and 2014 the Lebanese parliament voted to postpone parliamentary elections, ultimately postponing until May 2018. While the underlying obstacle to new elections involved fundamental disagreements about the country's electoral system, increased demands on the state stemming from the refugee crisis and the sectarian arguments it has inflamed clearly provided little space to seek broader solutions to the country's political gridlock. Given this context, as well as Hizbullah's long-standing concern that the Lebanese military is insufficient to maintain the country's secu-

rity, Hizbullah's involvement in Syria is consistent with its overall objective of maintaining Lebanese sovereignty.

In justifying their military involvement in Syria, Hizbullah leaders have expressed concern that they would be fighting ISIS on Lebanese soil if they did not fight it in Syria.[9] Yet Hizbullah's ability to serve as an active force in protecting Lebanese interests itself depends on financial backing from Iran, which is estimated to provide upwards of $700 million to $1 billion annually to the organization.[10] From a tactical perspective, Hizbullah has relied on Assad's Syria as a conduit for financial and military assistance from Iran. Given this relationship, it is highly plausible that Iran quietly demanded that Hizbullah come to Assad's aid as a form of quid pro quo for its long-standing assistance.[11] Evidence further supporting this interpretation of events can be found in the political and physical costs Hizbullah has paid for its involvement in Syria. Hizbullah's image in the Arab world, as well as the popularity of its leader, Hassan Nasrallah, has suffered since the group became involved in Syria, hurting its credibility in the Middle East.[12] The true number of Hizbullah fatalities in Syria is unknown, but losses were estimated at between 1,700 and 1,800 fighters as of October 2017, a considerable loss for a 15,000-person fighting force. To put these numbers in perspective, Hizbullah reportedly lost 1,200 fighters during its eighteen-year conflict with Israel from 1982 to 2000.[13] These physical casualties undoubtedly hurt the organization's legitimacy within Lebanon.

The Muslim Brotherhood and Hamas

The ideological roots of Hamas are very different from those of the Shia Hizbullah. Hamas is the political arm of the Palestinian Muslim Brotherhood, itself an offshoot of the Muslim Brotherhood (MB) established in Egypt in 1928 by Hasan al-Banna. Like its parent organization, Hamas is a product of the Salafi tendency in Sunni Islam, which is doctrinally opposed to un-Islamic accretions and seeks to return to a pure and pristine Islam of the imagined golden age during the time of the Prophet and the first generation of Muslims. While the philosophical epicenter of Salafism may have moved away from the enlightened Salafi ideas propagated by Muhammad Abduh in nineteenth-century Egypt to those of his Syrian disciple Rashid Rida and the literalist and scripturalist interpretation of Islam favored by the Wahhabis, Salafi thinking is far from monolithic. Salafism is diverse enough to accommodate both the highly political—and therefore ideologically malleable—Muslim Brotherhood and the more literalist, rigid, and less overtly political tendencies evidenced in the Gulf

and Saudi Arabia. Hamas is an offshoot of the Muslim Brotherhood and falls toward the pragmatic end of the Salafi spectrum. Furthermore, Hamas's political ideology has been shaped by the interrelated Palestinian experiences of loss, expulsion, and occupation. It thus marries the relatively strict code of Salafi Islam to the current Palestinian situation of dispossession and occupation, seeking in Islam answers to and remedies for the Palestinian predicament and advocating in theory for the creation of an Islamic Palestinian polity as the panacea for the sorry plight of the Palestinian people.

Hamas therefore acts as a religiously inspired Palestinian political force that poses as an alternative to the secular nationalist Fatah, which dominates the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) and maintains control of the Palestinian Authority in the West Bank.[14] While inspired by the MB ideology first propagated in Egypt, Hamas fashions its political strategies not according to the dictates of the Egyptian MB but in response to Palestinian realities, particularly the Israeli occupation of Palestinian lands. Its political relationship with its Egyptian counterpart has historically been even weaker than Hizbullah's relations with the Iranian clerical establishment. In the final analysis, both Hizbullah and Hamas are autonomous organizations that respond to local situations and the needs of their constituencies as they see them. They are not part of international Shia or Sunni organizations—there is no "Comintern" of Shia or Sunni Islam—and they do not follow dictates from abroad on political issues.

As is the case with other Islamist formations, Hamas considers itself "an integral part of the world Islamic movement, affecting it and affected by it, both positively and negatively."[15] At the same time, it is a flexible organization, shifting between militant and electoral tactics in response to changes in the broader context that shapes Palestinian liberation. Hamas's ideological flexibility is borne out, above all, by clearly calibrated changes between its 1988 founding charter and the new charter it issued in 2017.[16] For example, while the original charter described Palestine as an "Islamic endowment" (*waqf*), the 2017 statement describes the region in nonreligious terms: "Palestine is the land of the Arab Palestinian people, from it they originate, to it they adhere and belong, and about it they reach out and communicate."[17] Hamas's 2017 description of itself places greater emphasis on its nationalist and resistance character than on its Islamic credentials, and the new charter further de-emphasizes the religious nature of the territorial dispute, stating, "Hamas does not wage a struggle against the Jews because they are Jewish but wages a struggle against Zionists who occupy Palestine. Yet, it is the Zionists who constantly identify Judaism and the Jews with their own colonial project and illegal entity."[18]

Hamas shares the worldview of most Palestinians—and, indeed, of most Arabs and Muslims—that Zionism and later Israel were and are part of the larger Western design to keep the Arab/Muslim world in submission and to prevent any challenge to Western hegemony from emerging from the Arab/Muslim world. Israel is seen as a willing instrument of this design because it reaps huge benefits from acting as the West's vanguard in the strategically placed and resource-rich Middle East.[19] However, unlike transnational Islamist movements (e.g., ISIS) that deem almost all Western targets legitimate, "Hamas considers its battle to be with Israel and Zionism and has declared its policy of not picking fights with regional and international powers."[20] Moreover, the 2017 charter affirms the credibility of the international system by framing Hamas's resistance struggle as "a legitimate right guaranteed by divine laws and by international norms and laws."[21] Hamas has been consistent in articulating this position despite the fact that the United States and its allies have declared it a terrorist organization, imposed rigorous sanctions on the Palestinian territories to punish the Palestinian people for daring to elect Hamas to power in 2006, and orchestrated policy incentives that rewarded Fatah for seeking to block Hamas from sharing power in the Palestinian Authority. This makes it clear that Hamas, like Hizbullah, does not share ideological or political kinship with ISIS and other transnational Islamist organizations that have no compunction in attacking American and other Western targets, from North America to Southeast Asia. Like Hizbullah, Hamas adheres to objectives that are territorially confined, despite its occasional rhetorical recourse to Islamic universalism.

Political Origins

Israeli Occupation and Hizbullah

Hizbullah emerged as the major Shia resistance movement against the Israeli invasion of Lebanon in 1982 and Israel's subsequent occupation of the Shia-dominated southern part of the country. While it was born in the midst of the civil war in Lebanon, which pitted several confessional groups against each other, it was not a direct product of that war and was only tangentially connected to it. The initial protagonists in the civil war were mainly Maronite, Druze, and Sunni factions, the last-mentioned supported by the PLO. The main Shia participant in the civil conflict was Amal, the Shia political group that emerged out of the "Movement of the Deprived" founded by Ayatollah Musa al-Sadr. Amal gradually moved in a secular direction and away from its Islamic

roots as it became a participant in the civil war as well as a patronage network for its constituency. Hizbullah emerged out of a split within Amal between the more religious and the more secular factions. The religiously oriented factions, inspired by the Iranian revolution of 1979 and with the blessings of Ayatollah Khomeini, coalesced to form their own organization and called it the Party of God, or Hizbullah, formally announced in 1985.[22]

Not until after the second Israeli invasion of Lebanon in 1982 and particularly its continued occupation of southern Lebanon did Hizbullah emerge as a formidable resistance organization, gaining considerable support from the Shia population of southern Lebanon, the Bekaa Valley, and the poor Shiite-populated suburbs on the southern outskirts of Beirut. It soon overshadowed Amal and flourished during the two-decade-long Israeli occupation of predominantly Shia south Lebanon, where it launched a disciplined and effective guerrilla campaign against the occupation forces and the South Lebanese Army, a Christian-led militia allied with Israel. Paradoxically, there may have been no Hizbullah today had Israel not invaded Lebanon in 1982 and not occupied the predominantly Shia south for eighteen years: "Without the raison d'etre of opposing the occupation, Hizballah would not have been able to build a broad Shi'i constituency."[23]

The party's leadership does not contest the fact that Hizbullah was aided militarily and politically by Iran and Syria in its resistance to Israeli occupation, and indebtedness for this support probably plays a key role in Hizbullah's involvement in the Syrian conflict. However, such assistance should not be confused with the factors that led to Hizbullah's creation and to the credibility it attained as the leading defender of the community's interests among the Shia of Lebanon and as the primary force of resistance to the Israeli occupation. Its appeal was based on the fact that it was responsive to the socioeconomic plight of the Lebanese Shia, their perceived political impotence within the Lebanese system, and, above all, their resentment against the prolonged Israeli occupation of predominantly Shia south Lebanon. Hizbullah's actions continue to be determined largely by Lebanese considerations.

Israeli Occupation and Hamas

The combination of political Islam and national liberation that distinguishes Hamas from other major Palestinian factions did not take place suddenly. The MB, of which Hamas is a progeny, had been active in Palestine since the 1930s and had taken part in the Great Palestinian Rebellion of 1936–39 and in the first

war over Palestine against the Zionists in 1948. The creation of Israel divided the Palestinian MB, with the West Bank movement submerging itself into the Jordanian MB and with the Gaza movement maintaining its strong links with the Egyptian MB. Although the MB in Gaza continued to be the more radical of these two movements, its leadership consciously decided to keep a low political and military profile and to concentrate on educational and *dawa* (missionary) activities. This course was adopted to create a successor generation steeped in the Islamic ethos and at the same time capable of fighting the Zionist enemy successfully.

The Gaza MB's reluctance to participate in the Palestinian resistance movement against Israel during the 1950s and 1960s led to the emergence of Fatah from the brotherhood itself. Several leading members of the MB in Gaza, including Salah Khalaf (Abu Iyad) and Khalil al-Wazir (Abu Jihad), broke away from the brotherhood to found the national liberation organization that came to be known by its acronym, as Fatah. Although the situation changed drastically with the Israeli occupation of Gaza and the West Bank in 1967, the Palestinian MB, especially in its stronghold in Gaza, continued to refrain from organized resistance to the Israeli occupation, concentrating instead on educational and social welfare activities again aimed at inculcating the Islamic ethos in the generation that would finally overthrow Israeli rule.

The initial split on issues of strategy between the Fatah-led PLO and the MB, later Hamas, has continued to this day despite the decision by the Palestine MB in the mid-1980s to become actively involved—both politically and militarily—in the resistance against Israeli occupation. Hamas was born as a result of this decision, as the political wing of the MB. It was publicly established in December 1987, just as the first Palestinian intifada was taking shape. However, the Palestinian MB had decided, probably as early as 1984, to change course, having made the assessment that its relatively apolitical stance had lost it a great deal of support among the Palestinian population. In an interesting reversal of roles, from 1993 onward, following the signing of the Oslo Accords, Hamas has come to represent the more militant face of Palestinian resistance to Israeli occupation. The Fatah-dominated PLO, which signed the Oslo Accords and was, as a result, transformed into the Palestinian Authority, has now come to be seen as the moderate face of Palestinian nationalism.

Even from this very brief account, it is clear that the strategies of Hamas and its parent organization, the Palestinian MB, have been shaped primarily by factors related, first, to fighting the Zionist project in Palestine that succeeded in establishing Israel, and since 1967, to resisting the Israeli occupation of Gaza

and the West Bank. They have also been shaped by Hamas's political competition with Fatah and the PLO within the occupied territories. Despite its occasional universalistic Islamist rhetoric, Hamas remains as much a Palestinian phenomenon as Hizbullah is a Lebanese phenomenon.

Combining Resistance and Politics

Hizbullah: From Clandestine Militia to Mainstream Political Party

Both Hizbullah and Hamas cut their teeth in the field of resistance to Israeli occupation. However, both have gradually but surely moved into the arena of competitive politics and adopted electoral tactics in the political game without giving up their right to resist occupation with or without arms. The end of the Lebanese civil war in 1990 led to Hizbullah's transformation from a radical, clandestine militia to a mainstream political party with an armed-resistance wing committed to driving Israel out of all Lebanese territory. The continued Israeli occupation of southern Lebanon gave Hizbullah's claim to act in both capacities great credibility, even among the Lebanese not sympathetic to its ideology. Thanks also to its vast network of social services, which caters to the needs of the most underprivileged and vulnerable sections of Lebanese society, including segments of the non-Shia population in the country, it has become an important player in Lebanon's political game.[24]

In 2009 Hizbullah issued a new manifesto, outlining its updated political views. The manifesto states, "From a liberating force to a commander of balance and confrontation to a power of defense and deterrence, the Resistance has built on its development phases to finally add an internal political role, one that is pivotal and influential for the creation of the capable and impartial Lebanese state."[25] The new manifesto revises and extends the 1985 founding declaration, demonstrating the organization's evolution in both objectives and tactics. From the perspective of objectives, while it continues to view international relations primarily through the lens of defending Lebanon from Israeli aggression, the manifesto emphasizes Lebanese nationalism over that of the international community of Muslims.[26] With regard to tactics, the manifesto elaborates goals for Lebanese democracy, stating that "Hizbullah shall exert every effort towards achieving this noble national goal, and will do so in collaboration with the various political and popular groups who share this vision."[27]

Hizbullah has participated in elections since 1992 and has performed quite

well, even though the seats allocated under Lebanon's confessional system to the Shia have had to be shared almost equally between Hizbullah and Amal, the weaker of the two main Shia political formations in Lebanon. During the Syrian occupation, Hizbullah had to share seats largely to placate the Syrian regime, which saw Amal as its surrogate in Lebanon and was wary that if Hizbullah acquired too much popularity and power, it could defy Syria's wishes and hurt Syrian interests. Syria's withdrawal from Lebanon in 2005 freed Hizbullah from the shackles of residual Syrian influence, allowing it to demonstrate clearly that it was the senior partner in the Hizbullah-Amal Shia alliance. Hizbullah has been very eclectic in building coalitions with other parties and factions, including some of the most hard-line Maronite elements, which would normally be considered its natural antagonists. Its principal non-Shia ally since 2005 is the Free Patriotic Movement (FPM), which was led for many years by Lebanese president Michel Aoun, the Maronite leader and former general who had been a strident opponent of Syria's presence in Lebanon and had spent years in exile until the Syrian withdrawal. Since 2011 Hizbullah has participated in a coalition of political parties known as the March 8 Alliance, which includes both Amal and FPM as the other major parties. In May 2018, Lebanon held its first parliamentary elections in nine years, having postponed elections since 2013 due to differing factions' inability to agree on electoral reform. These elections took place under a complicated new electoral law that combined proportional representation in reorganized districts with the post–civil war agreement that preserved a 50:50 ratio of Muslim-Christian representation in parliament. Under the new law, the March 8 Alliance won 68 out of the 128 seats, which is an overall increase in its representation. Gains in seats, however, all went to FPM and Amal, while Hizbullah maintained the same number of seats overall, at 13.

The withdrawal of Israeli troops from south Lebanon in May 2000 augmented Hizbullah's prestige as the only Arab force capable of compelling Israel to cede conquered Arab territory. One author claims that "It now commands respect among nearly all Lebanese, and its popularity among Shi'ites is immense. Having been never involved in intra-Lebanese infighting, it elicits trust even though its military wing refuses to disarm, citing continued Israeli presence on a sliver of disputed borderland known as the Sheba'a Farms."[28] Paradoxically, the Israeli withdrawal also appeared to make Hizbullah largely redundant as a military force and compelled it to emphasize its political role as a participant in the Lebanese polity committed to defending Lebanese sovereignty and national interests. Hizbullah's acceptance by others—such as Aoun and FPM—as a legit-

imate player in mainstream Lebanese politics has been conditioned partially on Hizbullah ultimately disarming its military wing. Yet Hizbullah has made it clear that its willingness to put down arms is contingent on the development of sufficient measures by the Lebanese state to protect Lebanon from Israeli threats.[29] While the deployment of Hizbullah military forces to Syria has been resisted within Lebanon, it has also helped legitimize the group as a defender of Lebanese national interests. For example, both the Lebanese Armed Forces and Hizbullah were simultaneously involved in efforts to dislodge militants on the Syrian-Lebanese border in summer 2017, but Hizbullah's secretary general Hassan Nasrallah sought to portray their efforts as cooperation.[30]

Hizbullah's movement between violent and electoral tactics is best explained by the fact that its political reputation rests in considerable measure on its role as a resistance movement. The United States and its allies have put pressure on Syria and Lebanon—through UN Security Council Resolution 1559, the US 2015 Hezbollah International Financing Prevention Act (HIFPA), and by other means, directly and indirectly—to force Hizbullah to disarm. This has led the organization to reemphasize its resistance role to preserve its military capacity, which is closely tied, in its perception, to its political credibility. The relationship between militarism and political credibility can be seen in the 2006 armed conflict between Hizbullah and Israel, in which international pressures to disarm pushed Hizbullah into a corner in which it felt compelled to take on the Israeli army. Hizbullah's decision to escalate tensions with Israel seemed to reflect the considered view of its leadership that resumption of this conflict was essential for Hizbullah to retain its resistance role and the military capacity so essential to its political image.[31]

Hizbullah's actions in 2006 demonstrate its unwillingness to rely exclusively on an electoral strategy to accomplish its political objectives. Such unwillingness can be understood in light of the fact that there is enormous imbalance between Israeli and Lebanese power, with Lebanon's armed forces incapable of defending the country's borders against Israel. Hizbullah therefore considers itself the defender of Lebanese sovereignty against incursions by Israel on the pattern of the 1982 invasion, a claim that strikes a sympathetic chord with a large majority of Lebanese from many sectors of Lebanese society: "Before the war [between Hizbullah and Israel in 2006], just over half the Lebanese said they supported Hizbullah's role as an armed resistance group that deterred Israeli attacks. Two weeks after the fighting started, more than 85 percent of Lebanese in one poll said they supported Hizbullah's military attacks against Israel."[32] Nevertheless, countervailing pressures on Lebanon make it difficult to predict the strength of support for Hizbullah's military arm going into the

future. While it has experienced meaningful domestic backlash for involvement in Syria, particularly among the Sunni population, the strong pro-Israeli position taken by the US administration following the election of Donald Trump as president in 2016 might improve opinions of Hizbullah. For example, the decision by the Trump administration to move the US embassy from Tel-Aviv to Jerusalem was perceived by Lebanese prime minister Saad Hariri as provocative, "igniting the anger of millions of Arabs, Muslims and Christians."[33] Such anger could increase support for keeping Hizbullah's military wing in active reserve.

Where Hizbullah's stance has distinctly changed as a result of entering electoral politics is on the question of turning Lebanon into an Islamic state, which was the organization's avowed objective during the early years of its existence. The compromises it has had to make to participate in the Lebanese political process have diluted Hizbullah's original vision of turning Lebanon into an Islamic polity à la Iran. Now, Hizbullah leaders openly accept the reality of Lebanon as a multiconfessional polity, while stressing their special role as an Islamic pressure group within that polity and their commitment to parliamentary politics.[34]

Hizbullah's leaders have tried to explain away their retreat from the party's original stand by claiming that an Islamic order cannot be imposed by force; it can only be introduced if it is the willing choice of the people of Lebanon. The 2009 Manifesto states, "We want Lebanon to be the homeland to all Lebanese," and outlines political objectives focused on eliminating the political sectarianism that guides the structure of Lebanese political institutions. Most notably, there is no mention of the word "Islam" in section 2.3 of the Manifesto, which is dedicated to "The State & the Political System." It is evident that in this case, Hizbullah's socialization into electoral politics has led it to jettison, for all practical purposes, its goal of turning Lebanon into a Shia Islamic state. It is reconciled to working within a multiconfessional democracy as a full participant in the system, but on the condition that its role as a resistance movement is respected until it decides to give up that role voluntarily, possibly following the augmentation of the Lebanese state's capacity to protect Lebanon's security vis-à-vis Israel.

Hamas: From Resistance to Interrupted Moderation

Hamas, like Hizbullah, was born as a resistance movement and has gradually adopted electoral tactics in addition to militant action in meeting the objective of securing Palestinian territory. However, functioning under Israeli occupa-

tion limits its capacity to set aside military tactics and pursue an exclusively electoral strategy, perhaps even more than is the case with Hizbullah in Lebanon. Ironically, Israel may have had more to do with Hamas's emergence than most Israelis and Westerners are willing to acknowledge. It appears that the Palestinian MB's ostensible apolitical stance between 1967 and 1984 led the Israeli leadership to assume that it could be used as an effective antidote to counter the PLO's increasing stature and popularity among the occupied Palestinian population as the sole voice of national resistance, and consequently the sole representative of the Palestinian people, both within the occupied territories and outside.

Israel's tacit, if not explicit, encouragement of the Palestinian MB has led some to argue that Israel was partly responsible for building up the MB in occupied Palestine in the 1970s and 1980s, in order to divide Palestinians who overwhelmingly supported the secular, Fatah-dominated PLO.[35] Some argue that Israel did so by providing space for the MB's front organization, the Islamic Association, to build mosques and set up charitable institutions in the occupied territories without let or hindrance. This conclusion is borne out by remarks made by Daniel Kurtzer, then US ambassador to Israel, at a seminar in Jerusalem in December 2001. Kurtzer argued that the growth of Islamist movements in the occupied territories, principally Hamas, was achieved "with the tacit support of Israel" because "Israel perceived it to be better to have people turning toward religion rather than toward a nationalistic cause."[36]

However, Israeli calculations went awry when the Palestinian MB decided to abjure political quietism and become explicitly involved with the Palestinian resistance to Israeli occupation. The first Palestinian intifada, which began in late 1987, acted as the crucial catalyst for the overt politicization and the subsequent militarization of the Palestinian MB. Largely because of the intifada, "[t]he Islamists reinvented themselves, making the transition from being a social-educational-proselytizing movement . . . to a political, armed resistance organization."[37]

While Hamas was able to build a popular following during the first intifada, the Madrid peace conference of 1991 and the ensuing Oslo Accords of 1993 led to it being largely overshadowed by the PLO, which took charge of the Palestinian Authority (PA). But as the PLO failed to liberate Palestinian lands according to the timetable envisaged under the Oslo Accords, Palestinian opinion began to turn against the Oslo process. In great part, this was the result of Israeli policies of continued Jewish settlement and interminable delays regarding turning over territory to Palestinian control. The sight of PA "president" Yasser Arafat

held in his headquarters in Ramallah as a prisoner of the Israeli occupation further demonstrated that Palestinian autonomy was nothing more than a charade. Consequently, Hamas gained greater popularity, since it had declared its unequivocal opposition to the Oslo process and predicted that it was not going to lead to the liberation of occupied territories. Hamas, successfully combining nationalism and Islam, thus became "the Palestinian incarnation of politicized Islam in the Middle East."[38]

Hamas's popularity was also related in substantial part to the PLO's conversion into the PA, whose corruption and inefficiency stood in stark contrast to Hamas's moral probity and record of social service, thus adding to the latter's appeal. Furthermore, with Israel's policies becoming more oppressive and strangulating the Palestinian economy and with the PA unable to deliver social services, Hamas's network of charitable organizations moved in to fill the void. This was particularly true in terms of providing help and succor to the most disadvantaged segments of Palestinian society, especially in the overcrowded refugee camps and shantytowns of Gaza.

At the same time, Hamas developed a military wing, especially in Gaza, which carried out attacks against Jewish settlers, the occupying Israeli military, and civilians within Israel. It is clear that for Hamas, since the mid-1990s, "the notion of liberating Palestine has assumed greater importance than the general Islamic aspect."[39] For most of its history Hamas left the concept of liberating Palestine deliberately vague, so that it could refer either to the entire Palestine mandate from the Jordan River to the Mediterranean Sea or to the territories occupied in 1967. In its May 2017 charter, Hamas expressed willingness to accept a Palestinian state based on the 1967 borders of Israel and Palestine. The statement, however, does not include recognition of Israel or acceptance of the two-state solution proposed by the Oslo Accords. Nevertheless, acceptance of the 1967 borders can be interpreted as a de facto acceptance of the preconditions for a two-state solution, and puts Hamas into closer alignment with the Fatah-led PA on this crucial point of Palestinian territorial claims.

Hamas's leaders have also accepted the idea that the future of Palestine ought to be determined either on the basis of a popular referendum or by freely elected representatives of the Palestinian people, and Hamas will abide by such a decision. Hamas's gradual movement into electoral politics, first by running in municipal elections in 2004 and 2005 and then by participating in the 2006 Palestine National Council Elections, is further evidence of a willingness to work within the two-state framework, without explicitly admitting that fact. Several considerations went into Hamas's decision to participate in the elec-

tions held in January 2006, among them the unpopularity of the PLO and the increasing Palestinian disenchantment with the Oslo process. Its participation was an implicit recognition that the two-state solution was the only feasible option available to the Palestinians and that the job of the elected PA was to get the best deal within the constraints imposed by that framework. Nevertheless, the aftermath of the 2006 elections, in which policies adopted by the US and Israel prevented Hamas from its electorally determined right to govern the Palestinian territories, halted Hamas's further development of electoral over militant strategies. Since taking control of Gaza in 2007, Hamas has not allowed elections in the region, and has boycotted elections in the West Bank, where it has been effectively banned from meaningful participation since 2007.

Although Hamas won a military victory in Gaza by rooting out Fatah from the strip, Fatah continues to wield power in the West Bank, where the Hamas military presence is much weaker. Egged on by the United States and Israel, Palestinian president Mahmoud Abbas removed the elected Hamas prime minister, dissolved the "unity" government established under the Mecca accord, and set up his own government that totally excludes Hamas. This has led to a de facto division of the Palestinian territories, with Hamas in control of Gaza and Fatah of the West Bank. The PA has in effect collapsed while Hamas and Fatah fight over its carcass. All this might well have been avoided had Hamas been allowed to take power smoothly after the January 2006 elections without hindrance from within and without and been socialized into accepting democratic outcomes.

Paradoxically, the political exclusion that Hamas experienced following its 2006 electoral success gradually paved a way toward adoption of more moderate positions. The blockade on Gaza and Egypt's hostility to a Hamas-controlled Gaza strip has contributed to the severe economic and social crisis in the territory, which threatens public support for Hamas as a governing entity. Confronted with a very difficult internal context, Hamas has sought pragmatic solutions to ease the blockade. For example, Hamas broke with the Assad regime and moved its exile headquarters from Damascus to Qatar in hopes of maintaining support among Sunni sympathizers in the Middle East more broadly.[40] It has sought—though not achieved—unity governments with Fatah, including unity pacts in 2007, 2009, 2011, 2014, and 2017, to bring the West Bank and Gaza back under a single governance structure. While Fatah and Hamas have been unable to reach an enforceable agreement about a unity government for the West Bank and Gaza, their positions regarding the overall struggle for Palestinian liberation have grown closer over time. As several scholars have

observed, internal divisions within Palestine are less problematic to the peace process than are the actions of Israel, which continues to expand settlement activity in violation of the Oslo Accords. Hamas's pragmatism is made clear in the 2017 manifesto, which leaves open the possibility of a two-state solution and willingness to work with the Palestinian Authority as a legitimate actor in a settlement process. In codifying the behavioral moderation it has demonstrated over the past fifteen years, Hamas is suggesting that some ideological moderation may be taking place as well. While Israel and the United States were quick to dismiss the new statement in public, as Khaled Hroub has noted, the language of the new manifesto seeks to distance Hamas from its labeling as a "terrorist organization" by presenting the group "as a responsible political partner, whose leadership won free and fair elections, which is capable of speaking the language of both politics and resistance in its own way."[41]

At the same time, the political exclusion Hamas has experienced since 2007 has pushed it into a resistance mode, and while electoral tactics have been unavailable due to the lack of elections, Hamas has engaged in militant tactics. Continuing Israeli incursions from the ground and attacks from the air a year after Israel's unilateral withdrawal from Gaza and following Hamas's election to office led Hamas to declare its cease-fire null and void and to return to its earlier position of armed resistance, including suicide bombings. This period of militant activity, however, remained relatively contained, and in January 2009 Hamas and Israel again reached a cease-fire in Gaza. While armed clashes between Israel and Gaza occurred again in the summer of 2014, this period of violence was also generally limited. The launching of the "March of Return" on March 30, 2018, with thousands of Palestinians attempting to breach the Gaza-Israel border and Israeli retaliation that has left scores of Palestinians dead, once again raised the political temperature in the region. While the march was initially launched by civil society actors and also had anti-Hamas undertones because of the people's dissatisfaction with Hamas rule, it has been increasingly taken over by Hamas, which now orchestrates the activities on the Palestinian side. Protests on the Gaza-Israeli border and violent responses to them persisted into 2019, raising concerns about an all-out offensive by Israel against Gaza in a repeat of the war of 2014.[42]

Conclusion

Hizbullah and Hamas share important characteristics as Islamist national resistance groups. Their primary objective is to defend their perceived national ter-

ritory from threats to its external sovereignty. They both perceive themselves as acting on behalf of a nation—a group united by shared cultural features and the belief in the right to territorial self-determination—not on the Islamic *umma* more broadly defined.[43] While there may not always be agreement about the precise physical boundaries of the territory they seek to defend, there is no question that the nations seeking territorial self-determination by Hizbullah and Hamas are Lebanon and Palestine. As national resistance movements, both groups have employed militant and electoral strategies, depending on the specific threats they perceive to territorial integrity, as well as the availability of peaceful means for pursuing self-determination. In the process, they have broadened their political base, built coalitions, and turned increasingly pragmatic. As peaceful electoral processes began to take hold in Lebanon and in occupied Palestine, Hizbullah and Hamas came to accept the rules by which the political game was being played. Their leadership and rank and file were becoming increasingly socialized into the culture of electoral politics. Both groups issued updated manifestos that highlighted the importance of national over religious interests, and articulated a clear role for peaceful, democratic political engagement.

However, events since 2006 make a complete dissolution of military wings in favor of exclusively electoral tactics impossible for Hizbullah and Hamas. Both the Lebanese and Palestinian political systems—the former as a result of the innate weakness of the Lebanese state and the latter due to continuing Israeli occupation—are extremely vulnerable to the behavior and interests of outside actors. This is particularly true of occupied Palestine, but it is also the reality of the Lebanese system and the extensive externalities Lebanon faces as a result of the Syrian civil war. The escalating hostilities between Hizbullah and Israel in 2006 and the pressure on the former to disarm seem to be forcing Hizbullah back into its original resistance mold. The Israeli "reoccupation" of Gaza in 2006 and its incarceration of dozens of Hamas legislators, including ministers, and the factional war between Fatah and Hamas have aborted the democratic process in the occupied territories, turning Hamas once again into an exclusively religio-nationalist resistance movement. The bottom line is that abnormal situations of occupation and state debility—along with the corollary of external intrusion—do not produce peaceful political actors or fully democratic political processes. It is clear, however, that it is not their Islamist ideologies that prevent Hizbullah and Hamas from setting down arms in favor of exclusively electoral strategies; the unusual situations in which they find

themselves—much of which are not of their own making—make such a transition impossible.

Nonetheless, events of the twenty-first century provide a ray of hope that, if the situations in Palestine and Lebanon stabilize, both Hamas and Hizbullah have the potential to refashion themselves as peaceful political actors and that it is not too far-fetched to envisage the transformation of these Islamist resistance movements into primary players of the political game within democratic settings. But for this to happen, the occupation of Palestine must end and the Lebanese state must build its strength to a level where it can insulate itself from unwanted external intrusion. There is little to suggest that either will happen quickly or painlessly.

CHAPTER 7

Violent Transnationalism

In the last several chapters we have examined self-proclaimed Islamic states, vanguard Islamist movements, nonviolent Islamist political parties, and Islamist national resistance movements. These various Islamist political formations, whether in opposition or in power, represent the vast majority of Islamist groups in terms of numbers, membership, and their impact on politics and society within the Muslim world. A major reason for the preeminence of national formations is the fact that political Islam cannot be relocated from one place to another easily. Transplanted forms of Islamism are not adequately sensitive to context, which, as earlier chapters have demonstrated, matters a great deal in determining the success or failure of Islamist movements.

Transnational Islam loses both relevance and authenticity in the process of transplantation. As Fawaz Gerges points out in his authoritative study of al-Qaeda, the transnational jihadis form "a tiny—but critical minority" among Islamist groups.[1] They are "critical" particularly for the international image of political Islam, because they engage in the most violent acts in the name of Islam across the globe. Consequently, they have the most dramatic impact outside the Muslim world, helping to shape the image of political Islam globally as a violent and extremist ideology. As a type of political Islam, transnationalism, generally speaking, is violent. The choice of violent tactics—regardless of the targets of violence—is intimately tied to the primary objective of transnationalists: to construct a political entity modeled on their image of the early caliphate. Pursuit of this objective demands a recognition of the existing international system as illegitimate, and the obliteration of existing nation-state structures. Given the contours of the Westphalian state system that serves as the basis for contemporary international relations, the only possible way such an objective can be pursued is through the use of violence.

Violent transnational Islamist groups share some similarities with both vanguard Islamist movements and national resistance Islamism. All three groups view Islam as a source of inspiration to challenge existing political structures, and all three employ violence as a tactic. In contrast to vanguard Islamists, however, violent transnational actors do not adhere to a fully developed revolutionary ideology. Rather, their ideological convictions are limited to a radical understanding of jihad as an offensive strategy and a view that Western powers (specifically the United States) are the source of their subjugation and humiliation. Violent transnational movements differ from Islamist national resistance groups in the scope of their territorial struggle. As chapter 6 demonstrated, national resistance groups such as Hizbullah and Hamas perceive themselves as acting on behalf of a specific Muslim nation within limited territorial boundaries. Violent transnationalists, however, do not recognize territorial boundaries and have as their goal the construction of a caliphate for the entire Islamic *umma*.

Violent transnational Islamism arises out of weak or failing state structures. When political authorities no longer hold the monopoly on the legitimate use of coercive power within the borders of a territory recognized as a sovereign state by the international community, it creates a political vacuum. This vacuum is a space for a variety of actors to engage in violent tactics, whether in an attempt to maintain or restore the political rule that is in decline, or to introduce a new power structure to create order amid chaos.

In addition to the background condition of weak or failing states, a number of other modern phenomena play an ancillary role in violent transnational Islamism. Modern communication structures that allow for the inexpensive production and dissemination of propaganda to a global audience have amplified the voice of violent transnationalists and given them platforms for recruiting human and financial support. Additionally, recent military activity in parts of the Muslim world has given supporters of violent transnationalism meaningful combat training and experience in warfare, providing an available source of recruits for violent organizations. This chapter explores the intersection of these factors through an analysis of three dominant cases of violent transnationalism: al-Qaeda, ISIS,[2] and Boko Haram.

Transnational Islamism: Background and Context

Before analyzing examples of violent transnational Islamism, it is valuable to consider the historical and geopolitical context that has given rise to it. Trans-

national Islamism in its modern sense—that is, as embedded in a system first of colonial empires that divided the Muslim world into several colonially crafted political entities and then into multiple sovereign states—is not a recent phenomenon. It has a hoary tradition going back at least to the second half of the nineteenth century. Then, it was termed pan-Islam, and Jamal al-Din al-Afghani, an Iranian-born scholar and activist, was its leading advocate.

Al-Afghani was remarkably catholic in his approach. Born a Shia in Iran, he portrayed himself as a Sunni activist to gain credibility among Muslims worldwide. He frequented the court of the Ottoman sultan-caliph, the titular head of the Sunni Muslim world, to enlist his support for a pan-Islamic movement, which he envisioned as the best way to force European colonial powers out of Muslim lands. The Ottoman sultan, who had devised his own pan-Islamic strategy to save his decaying empire by bolstering his role as the caliph of Islam, was more than willing to use al-Afghani for his own ends. But he was unwilling to support al-Afghani's formulation of the pan-Islamic agenda, which the sultan considered to be too radical and potentially deleterious to his state and regime interests and to the Ottoman Empire's relationship with major European powers.

Al-Afghani was himself a bundle of contradictions. An exponent of pan-Islam and Muslim unity across national boundaries as the panacea for Muslims' weakness when faced with the European colonial onslaught, al-Afghani was at the same time a supporter of nationalist movements that aimed to overthrow colonial rule. He was, in particular, an admirer of the Indian national movement led by the Indian National Congress. He advised Indian Muslims to make common cause with their Hindu compatriots to drive the British from the subcontinent. He severely criticized the great Indian Muslim reformer and educationist Sir Syed Ahmed because of the latter's pro-British stance that, according to al-Afghani, isolated Indian Muslims both from Muslims around the world and from their Hindu countrymen.[3] Al-Afghani considered nationalism and pan-Islam two sides of the same anticolonial coin; for him, adopting one or the other was a matter of tactics, to be determined largely by the different contexts in which anticolonial movements operated.[4]

According to the eminent historian Albert Hourani, for al-Afghani, pan-Islam meant that "the Muslim rulers should cooperate in the service of Islam": "There is no sign that he had in mind to create a single Islamic State or to revive the united caliphate of early times. When he talked of the caliphate he meant by it some sort of spiritual authority or else simply a primacy of honour."[5] Al-Afghani was perfectly willing to work within the system of multiple and sover-

eign states as long as he could advance the cause of Muslims and Islam against the forces of Western colonial domination. His pan-Islam was therefore not as transnational in character as many people assume. He was very sensitive to context and fashioned his strategies based on local circumstances. The shift to a more transnational form of Islamism happened more recently, a product of the political destabilization that the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan produced in that country, as well as greater economic interdependence between the United States and the oil-producing states of the Middle East.

Paradigm Shift: Transnational Jihadi Ideology

The fundamental difference between violent transnational elements and other Islamist groups and parties, including those working transnationally, centers on the concept of jihad. Violent transnational Islamists have elevated jihad, in terms of its political and military dimension, to the status of one of the fundamental pillars of Islam, referring to it as the sixth pillar, in addition to the five commonly accepted by all Muslims—profession of faith, prayer, fasting, charity, and pilgrimage. They have also interpreted jihad as *fard ayn* (individual obligation) rather than *fard kifaya* (collective duty). The latter has been the traditional interpretation by Islamic religious authorities and entails the existence of a community of believers with a legitimate ruler who has the sole authority to declare jihad on behalf of the community.

Violent transnational movements go beyond the local regimes to target the "far enemy," the West in general and the United States in particular. The latter are perceived by these groups as crucial supporters and sustainers of the "near enemy," the authoritarian and repressive regimes that stand in the way of turning the Muslim world into a true and borderless *dar al-Islam* based on the militants' conception of the ideal Islamic model.[6] Transnational jihadis have therefore turned the largely "defensive" mode in which mainstream Islamists operate both domestically and globally into an "offensive" one, by attacking the source of the problem—as they see it—that is located outside the Muslim world.

For transnational jihadis, offense on a global scale is the best defense locally. They believe that the only way to stop the West's unwanted interference in *dar al-Islam* is to inflict damage on Western interests where it hurts most, thereby weakening the resolve of Western powers, especially the United States, to intervene in matters affecting the Muslim world. Their stated objective, reiterated time and again, is to eject Western powers, principally the United States, from the Muslim world, not only militarily, but also in terms of their capacity—

politically, economically, and culturally—to influence developments in Muslim countries. In this sense, they not only represent the other side of the coin in terms of Huntington's clash of civilizations but also pose a paradigmatic challenge to the current Western-dominated international order. While offensive in tactical conception, al-Qaeda was able to portray this strategy as a part of the Muslim world's ongoing resistance to Western domination, in large part due to American policies in the Middle East that have been perceived by large segments of Muslim populations as deliberately hostile to Muslim interests, especially Washington's unqualified support to Israel's occupation of Palestine and the invasion and occupation of Iraq. Al-Qaeda's strategy of offense as the best defense was conceptualized in the statement "Jihad against Jews and Crusaders" issued by the World Islamic Front (led by Osama bin Laden) on February 23, 1998. This statement pronounced the following ruling: "To kill the Americans and their allies—civilians and military—is an individual duty incumbent upon every Muslim in all countries, in order to liberate the al-Aqsa Mosque [in Jerusalem] and the holy mosque [in Mecca] from their grip, so that their armies leave all the territory of Islam, defeated, broken, and unable to threaten any Muslim."[7]

The reorientation of the target of jihad and the shift to transnational offensive objectives constitute a change in paradigm in Islamist strategies, moving the focus of activity from the national to the global level and making indiscriminate violence, rather than agitation and mobilization, the primary instrument of political action. It is therefore important for us to examine the ideology and activities of these violent transnational actors, such as al-Qaeda, ISIS, and Boko Haram, and to assess the impact of their words and deeds on Western perceptions and the global image of political Islam as well as on the philosophy and activities of mainstream Islamist groups. The latter also take the transnational jihadist challenge very seriously, because it has the capacity to undermine their credibility among their own support base by demonstrating that, unlike the transnational militants, the mainstream Islamist parties have been contained, if not co-opted, by local regimes and, by extension, the United States and its allies.

Al-Qaeda and like-minded jihadi organizations, such as ISIS and Boko Haram, have come upon this interpretation not from their reading of the classical texts of Islamic jurisprudence but against the dictates of the leading jurists of classical Islam. They have inherited the idea of jihad as "a perpetual war and a personal obligation"[8] from the Egyptian radical Islamist thinker Sayyid Qutb, the Muslim Brotherhood's chief ideologue in the 1950s and 1960s. Qutb's idea of

jihad was both expansive and unapologetic. For him, interpreting jihad merely as defensive war did not make sense.

> The Jihaad of Islam is to secure complete freedom for every man throughout the world by releasing him from servitude to other human beings so that he may serve his God, Who Is One and Who has no associates. This is in itself a sufficient reason for Jihaad. . . . The reason for Jihaad exists in the nature of its message and in the actual conditions it finds in human societies, and not merely in the necessity for defense, which may be temporary and of limited extent . . . Those who say that Islamic Jihaad was merely for the defense of the "homeland of Islam" diminish the greatness of the Islamic way of life and consider it less important than their "homeland."[9]

For Qutb and those he influenced, such as Osama bin Laden and Ayman al-Zawahiri, jihad is a "liberating" mission, not just a "defensive" one.

The concept of jihad as a perpetual duty of every individual Muslim is one that the transnational jihadis share with all jihadi groups, including those who are working within the confines of existing states and periodically attempt to overturn domestic regimes by force. This is their common inheritance from Sayyid Qutb. Where they part company is in the transnational jihadis' global orientation, a fundamental departure from the domestic preoccupation of almost all jihadi groups until the mid-1990s, when a major break took place between the national and the transnational jihadis.

The transnational orientation of al-Qaeda, ISIS, and Boko Haram came through the conjunction of two major factors. The first was the launching and eventual success of the US-supported Afghan "jihad" against Soviet military occupation. The second was the failure of militant Islamists to overthrow authoritarian and "un-Islamic" regimes in their home countries, principally Egypt and Algeria, despite an escalation of violence by extremist groups during the 1980s and the first half of the 1990s. These two experiences led some militant groups, such as the Egyptian Islamic Jihad and the coalition of factions that eventually came to be known as al-Qaeda, to come to two conclusions. The first was that they could defeat a superpower by sustained armed attacks. The second was that local regimes, the "near enemy," could not be overthrown until their external patrons, the "far enemy," are forced to withdraw their support from these regimes and stop meddling in the affairs of the Muslim world.

The stationing of American forces in Saudi Arabia during and after the Gulf

War in 1990–91 provided the major incentive for the second conclusion. Despite bin Laden's persistent efforts to prevent the deployment of American troops in Saudi Arabia, neither the Saudi regime nor the Wahhabi religious establishment showed any signs of taking his arguments seriously.[10] Operation Desert Storm demonstrated the extent to which Gulf Arab regimes, most particularly the House of Saud, had become dependent on the United States for their security. It was only logical that al-Qaeda and elements of related jihadi organizations that had these regimes in their crosshairs would soon conclude that the "near enemy" could not be dislodged without first expelling from *dar al-Islam* the United States, the lone superpower in the post–Cold War world and the "far enemy" par excellence. The long-term presence of American forces in Afghanistan and Iraq during the twenty-first century has further reinforced this conclusion, while also serving to spread the validity of the argument to a broader range of sympathizers.

The transnationalization of jihad also took place as a result of disillusionment among some jihadi groups and general disarray among militant Islamist movements, who had lost their sense of direction both because of their effective suppression at home (especially in Egypt and Algeria, where much of their fire had been concentrated) and because of the end of the Afghan jihad abroad. The former demonstrated the militant Islamists' political and military impotence domestically, and the latter led to the descent of Afghanistan into chaos and anarchy due to internecine warfare among the various Afghan jihadi groups, who split largely along ethnic lines. Consequently, leading national jihadi figures, such as Ayman al-Zawahiri of the Egyptian Islamic Jihad (who had moved to Afghanistan to participate in the war against the Soviets), and the transnational leaders of the Arab Afghans, such as Osama bin Laden, came to the conclusion that the jihadi movement needed a radical change of direction to keep itself alive.

It was in this context that the transnational jihadi strategy of targeting the "far enemy," the United States and its allies, was born. The conventional priority of targeting domestic regimes as the essential prerequisite for reducing Western influence in the Muslim world was reversed. The leaders of the Afghanistan-based jihadi movements, largely consisting of the Afghan Arabs and increasingly coalescing under the umbrella organization of al-Qaeda, decided that attacking American targets and thereby forcing the United States out of the Muslim world was the essential first step toward bringing down un-Islamic regimes in the Muslim world—especially in the Middle East—that were supported by Washington. American presence in the Muslim world thus became a

prime justification for defining the United States as the logical major target of attack by the transnational jihadis. Attacks against US embassies in East Africa and against the USS *Cole* off the port of Aden in Yemen were among the preludes to the attack against New York and Washington on 9/11.

According to Fawaz Gerges, the decision to globalize jihad was reached only in the latter half of the 1990s. It was reached as a result of intense internal debate among jihadi leaders. Gerges claims that "The globalization of jihadist tendencies and the road to September 11 were directly related to the internal upheaval within the jihadist movement as well as to changing regional and international conditions. Al Qaeda emerged as a direct result of the entropy of the jihadist movement in the late 1990s and as a desperate effort to alter the movement's route, if not its final destination, and to reverse its decline."[11] The failure of the jihadis to bring down the "near enemy" was the catalyst for al-Zawahiri, bin Laden, and their colleagues in Afghanistan to settle on a strategy that would "drag the United States into a total confrontation with the ummah and wake Muslims from their political slumber."[12]

However, this did not mean that al-Qaeda came anywhere near representing the opinion of the majority of jihadis. In fact, most of the latter decided in the second half of the 1990s to make their peace with the local authorities and give up the strategy of terrorism and armed resistance. This was particularly true of the militant Islamists movements in Egypt and Algeria, which had been the major theaters of armed Islamist militancy during the first half of that decade. Most of the members of al-Zawahiri's own organization, the Egyptian Islamic Jihad, distanced themselves from al-Qaeda and its strategy of targeting the United States, believing that this strategy would further hurt the Islamist cause.

The Origins and Reach of Al-Qaeda

Al-Qaeda's espousal of a global strategy aimed at the United States became clear with the attack on US embassies in Tanzania and Kenya in 1998. This attack brought forth an equally fierce American response, under President Clinton's explicit instructions, and led to the bombing of suspected al-Qaeda bases in Afghanistan and Sudan. However, the American assault on al-Qaeda had deep ironies built into it. The American-supported and American-financed war against the Soviet Union and its client regime in Afghanistan during the 1980s was the crucial factor that made the transnational jihadi movement and its terror campaign against the United States possible in the late 1990s. It was the American-sponsored "jihad" against the Soviet Union in Afghanistan that provided fertile

ground for the ingathering in Afghanistan of Islamist radicals from around the world, many of them actively recruited by the CIA and its local agents.

The subsequent collapse of the Afghan state, which was largely the result of vicious infighting among the various American-financed and American-supported mujahedin groups, provided al-Qaeda—whose leaders, including Osama bin Laden, were onetime favorites of the CIA—the space to organize itself to launch the global jihad against American interests. The Saudi regime and other conservative establishments in the Gulf contributed to this outcome in no small measure. Not only did they bankroll the Afghan jihad, they facilitated the passage of radical young men to Afghanistan to fight the Soviets. Fawaz Gerges has eloquently summed up the end result: "A new transnational generation of young warriors was born. . . . Muslim men of various national and social backgrounds met on the battlefield and shed blood in defense of an imagined community. . . . The old rules no longer applied or mattered to the new warriors, who viewed themselves as the vanguard of the ummah, not as citizens of separate countries."[13] It was from this pool of international warriors that al-Qaeda recruited its foot soldiers.

Founded by an amalgam of political radicals (principally from Egypt) and social and cultural conservatives (largely from the Arabian Peninsula), al-Qaeda was able to consolidate its base in Afghanistan thanks to the failure of the Afghan state. Afghanistan's descent into a bloody civil war following the withdrawal of Soviet troops created a political vacuum in the country that led to the emergence of the Pakistan-supported Taliban, with whom the al-Qaeda leadership established a working relationship. It was able to do so by bankrolling the Taliban regime, which was under a stringent economic boycott thanks to the pressure of the American human rights lobby.

This combination of factors proved very conducive to al-Qaeda's plans to implement an agenda anchored in violence against international targets. The Taliban–al-Qaeda nexus was full of irony. The Taliban's agenda was primarily domestic rather than global, and their dependence on al-Qaeda eventually turned out to be a recipe for disaster as far as their own objective of "purifying" Afghan society was concerned. Nonetheless, this paradox does not detract from the fact that the American-supported "jihad" against godless communism and the consequent state failure in Afghanistan contributed not only to the creation of al-Qaeda but to giving it a safe haven in that country.[14]

Similarly, the American-led invasion of Iraq created conditions for the ingathering of transnational jihadis in that country, the intensification of the

insurgency in Iraq, and the emergence of ISIS. Much of this resulted from the collapse of the Iraqi state apparatus following the American invasion (especially the disbanding of the army) and from the inability of the occupation authorities to put a credible structure in its place. The consequent vacuum gave the jihadis space to move in and set up shop without much let or hindrance. The collapse of the Iraqi state actually came as a great boon to the transnational jihadis, who were looking for a new base after the fall of the Taliban in Afghanistan and after the dispersal of the al-Qaeda leadership and rank and file following the American-led offensive against them. At the same time, it gave the transnational jihadis the opportunity to engage in ideological rethinking and reformulation of their strategy.[15] The American occupation of Iraq demonstrated the validity of transnational jihadi arguments that the United States was engaged in a war against Islam and Muslims and not just against al-Qaeda. American interference in Iraq replaced Palestine as the foremost grievance of the Muslim world against the West and created a substantial reservoir of sympathy for violent jihadi opposition to the American occupation and the successor regime in Baghdad.

The American invasion of Iraq was a godsend for the transnational jihadis in another sense as well. Daniel Benjamin and Steven Simon have stated that "By invading Iraq the United States provided the jihadists with the ideal opportunity to fulfill their obligations and drive an occupying army out of the lands of Islam. . . . From the perspective of the jihadists, the targets were being delivered for the killing. . . . They have been making the most of it through the insurgency, turning Iraq into an unrivaled theater of inspiration for the jihadi's drama of faith."[16] State collapse also increased the salience of ethnic and religious fissures in Iraq: "Washington's conviction that the Ba'athist regime was essentially Sunni (it was not) and that large numbers of Sunni Arabs therefore were inherently opposed to its overthrow (they were not) became a self-fulfilling prophecy. Fearing resistance in Sunni Arab areas before it actually materialised, US forces treated them harshly. This helped heighten hostility from Sunni Arabs who increasingly, albeit reluctantly, identified themselves as such."[17] The consequent alienation of Sunni Arabs from the emerging post-Saddam structure helped create a hospitable environment for the transnational jihadis whose interests came to converge with those of Iraqi nationalists and former Baathists committed to driving the United States out of Iraq. It would be wrong to equate the Iraqi insurgency merely with transnational jihadi activities.[18] However, faulty American policies that alienated large segments of the

Sunni Arab community provided crucial momentum and operating space to shadowy organizations to prepare for and engage in acts of violence in both Iraq and neighboring countries.[19]

While these events were a boon to transnational jihadis in general, a series of unconnected events crippled al-Qaeda's capacity, which never fully recovered following the assassination of longtime leader Osama bin Laden in May 2011. The patchwork network became increasingly fractured, genuinely hobbled by the death and imprisonment of many of its members, as well as the increased independence of its branches. Bin Laden's successor, Ayman al-Zawahiri, has not had the political clout or moral authority of bin Laden, contributing to the weakening of the central leadership. Other top members of al-Qaeda's leadership, such as Atiyah abd al-Rahman and Abu Yahya al Libi, were assassinated in Pakistan in 2011 and 2012.[20] Not a traditionally hierarchical organization, the central or dominant al-Qaeda group led previously by bin Laden, and then by Zawahiri, does not exercise full control over its branches and franchises. Once a branch is authorized to operate in a particular region, the franchise has a great deal of freedom to determine its operations, although the branches are expected to consult with senior leadership before carrying out large-scale plans or attacking new classes of targets.[21] This organizational approach faced new challenges in the post–bin Laden era, which also coincided with the Arab uprisings that began in earnest in early 2011, ushering in a period of political instability across the region. The general upheaval experienced across the Middle East encouraged transnationalists to consider new potential places of action. In this context, al-Qaeda affiliates more frequently engaged in national or subnational struggles, despite their continued use of transnational rhetoric.[22]

The most consequential example of this shift in the dynamic between the central al-Qaeda leadership and an affiliate branch concerns al-Qaeda Iraq (AQI). In 2006 al-Qaeda Iraq announced its transition into the Islamic State in Iraq (ISI), and in April 2010 Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi became the organization's leader. Claiming descent from the Prophet Muhammad, Baghdadi earned a master's degree in Quranic recitation from the University of Baghdad. While in graduate school, he joined the Muslim Brotherhood, gravitating to those who called themselves "jihadist Salafis."[23] Baghdadi became the ISI leader immediately before the beginning of the Arab uprisings, which inspired Iraqis to take to the streets to protest dissatisfaction with the government, and also led to the beginning of a civil war in Syria. With the aim of exploiting these opportunities that resulted from state weakness, Baghdadi sought to expand ISI's domain. In

January 2012 he sent an emissary, Abu Muhammad al-Jawlani, to Syria to fortify al-Qaeda's network there, which led to the development of a Syrian branch of al-Qaeda called the al-Nusra Front.[24] Around the same time, Zawahiri called on all Muslims to help overthrow the Assad regime in Syria.[25] Al-Nusra began to grow in both strength and popularity in Syria, and in April 2013 Baghdadi claimed the group was an extension of his network and attempted to take control of it. Baghdadi allegedly wanted to merge the groups to consolidate territories captured by Islamist forces along the Iraq-Syria border. However, both al-Nusra and Zawahiri rejected this merger, and Zawahiri insisted that Baghdadi and his group re-concentrate their efforts solely on the Iraqi jihad. Baghdadi refused this demand and was expelled from the al-Qaeda network by Zawahiri.[26] This split caused an unprecedented division within the al-Qaeda network, and in many respects marks the ascendance of ISIS (the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria) over al-Qaeda as the premiere actor in violent transnationalism.

The transition from al-Qaeda Iraq to ISIS under Baghdadi's leadership constituted a severe blow to al-Qaeda. Baghdadi and his predecessors' leadership of al-Qaeda Iraq was controversial and damaged public perception in Iraq due to its brutality. Yet the organization's ability to wrest control of considerable portions of territory commanded respect from Islamists inclined to sympathize with violent transnationalism, weakening the credibility of al-Qaeda as a jihadi leader.

Rise and Fall of the Islamic State

In the second decade of the twenty-first century, ISIS surpassed al-Qaeda as the foremost example of violent transnationalist Islam in the world. It developed and deployed military capabilities and perpetrated violent attacks against civilians with the clear objective of using Islam as the basis to undermine the contemporary nation-state system. In 2013, ISIS spokesman Abu Mohammad al-Adnani stated, "Our goal is to establish an Islamic state that doesn't recognize borders, on the Prophetic methodology."[27] ISIS's hostility toward the existing state structures of the Middle East was apparent in Baghdadi's 2014 announcement of its caliphate, stating "Syria is not for the Syrians, and Iraq is not for the Iraqis."[28] In contrast to al-Qaeda, whose efforts were focused primarily on removing foreign occupiers and disrupting secular regimes in Muslim lands, ISIS succeeded in capturing territory and initiating the process of establishing an Islamic caliphate.

The ascent of AQI and its subsequent transformation into ISI are deeply

tied to the weakness of the Iraqi state following the American invasion and the regime change that was imposed. With the Ba'ath Party banned from political and public life, thousands of Sunni Muslims experienced political disenfranchisement as Iraq's long-suppressed Shia majority began to play a greater political role. In response, AQI's founder, Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, targeted Shia civilians in Iraq, a source of disagreement with al-Qaeda's central leadership and bin Laden. Seeking recompense for their ouster from public life, many former Ba'athists and their families found common ground with AQI. Zarqawi's militant organization was abetted indirectly by Syria's Bashar al-Assad, who allowed Salafists to enter Iraq via Syria to challenge American forces.[29] In doing so, Assad hoped to diffuse any threat that Islamists presented to his own regime by diverting them to a more convenient target, yet this action had the unintended consequence of facilitating networking between Zarqawi and other militants in Syria. Following Zarqawi's death in a United States airstrike in 2006, the transformation from AQI to ISI under Baghdadi, and the American withdrawal from Iraq, Iraqi prime minister Nouri al-Maliki began to target Sunni leaders, increasing sectarian tensions and support for ISI in Sunni tribal areas.[30]

Initially, ISIS recruited fighters from among those born into poverty and radicalized in prison.[31] The failure of both the Iraqi and Syrian states to perform the most basic security functions, however, facilitated the emergence of sectarian militias as security providers.[32] ISIS conveniently found a way to link together the availability of sectarian-based militias, weak state structures, and a sweeping transnational Islamist ideology, which further helped to generate sympathies from across the Muslim world more broadly. Like al-Qaeda before it, ISIS has a number of affiliate organizations that share its overall objective of building a transnational Islamic caliphate. These include ISIS-Philippines, the Maute Group, ISIS-Bangladesh, ISIS-Somalia, Jund al-Khilafa-Tunisia, and ISIS-Egypt.[33] It is not always clear, however, to what extent ISIS leadership maintains control over these affiliates. ISIS also sought to build sympathy for its cause beyond traditionally Muslim territories, publishing the online magazines *Dabiq* and then *Rumiyah*, which were published in several languages, including English, French, and German, and primarily directed toward non-Arabic speakers.[34] These magazines are part of ISIS's overall strategic use of the media, another tactic adopted from al-Qaeda. ISIS has relied on online media to share its vision and distribute videos of its brutality and ruthlessness around the world. The high production value of ISIS videos has contributed to Western media outlets relying on them as primary source material for reporting.[35] ISIS's

video recordings of its executions and other forms of brutality drew Western attention to the group, allowing ISIS to portray its agenda and achievements.[36]

In the period following the death of Osama bin Laden and al-Qaeda central's gradual decline, ISI's growing military capacity intersected with Syria's internal political crisis to expand the territorial arena for transnational action. When Assad ordered Syrian security forces to fire on protestors in March 2011, he hoped to decisively end the uprisings, but the use of violence fanned opposition further. In late April 2011, the Syrian army began engaging in a series of large-scale lethal military attacks against antiregime protestors, resulting in substantial civilian casualties. By summer 2011, pockets of the anti-Assad opposition had formed militias to take up arms against the Syrian army, and in August 2011 a group of military officers defected and organized a formal anti-Assad military force under the name of the Free Syrian Army. ISI's formidable combat presence and its physical concentration in northwest Iraq and northeast Syria complicated the unfolding armed conflicts and efforts to resolve them. Various attempts by both the Arab League and the United Nations to achieve peace between the armed factions failed, and by spring 2012 the conflict had evolved into a full-scale civil war. Not only did ISI contribute to the weakening of the Syrian state that made civil war possible, the group exploited the conflict to seek broader territorial gains for its Islamic State.

ISIS's violent insurgency led to the capture of large swaths of territory in both Iraq and Syria. Over the course of 2013, ISIS gradually seized control of territory in northern and eastern Syria. By January 2014 it took control of Raqqa, briefly the capital of the Abbasid Caliphate in the early ninth century, and the sixth-largest city in Syria. In June 2014 ISIS attacked Iraqi security forces in Iraq's second-largest city, Mosul, taking control of that city and subsequently declaring a caliphate in the territories it conquered in Syria and Iraq. At its peak, the group controlled territory roughly the size of Great Britain,[37] with an estimated twelve million inhabitants.[38] The terrain in ISIS's hands contained a wealth of resources, comprising valuable Syrian and Iraqi agricultural land, hydroelectric dams, phosphate mines, and oil fields.[39] During this period, ISIS began the process of building an Islamic state, setting up governing institutions and public services, including badly needed humanitarian relief.[40] For example, ISIS tried to maintain preconflict practices of food distribution in the territories it controlled, subsidizing the cost of flour and opening bakeries when necessary. It developed revenue sources from both taxation and the sale of oil. During the height of its strength in administrating an Islamic State, ISIS relied on financing from the sale of oil acquired from fields within its conquered territories. By 2014, it was

estimated that ISIS was selling as many as 70,000 barrels of oil per day, yielding a daily income between one and three million U.S. dollars.[41] Nevertheless, most of its social services were financed by taxes collected from inhabitants, including *jizya* taxes on non-Muslims permanently residing in Muslim lands governed by Islamic law. ISIS introduced a court system with a strict interpretation of sharia, particularly with regard to punishments for *hudud* crimes, demonstrating a state structure characterized by violence.[42]

Nevertheless, in spite of the brutality of its penal code, the order ISIS brought to the region provided a measure of predictability that had been missing in these territories for quite some time. The group's ability to provide some element of order amidst a state of anarchy was not lost on the population. As Lina Khatib reported in 2015, "The founders of the Islamic State capitalized on people's grievances regarding both the opposition and the regime, and offered Syrians an organization that promised to satisfy their anger through an extremism that exceeded that of al-Qaeda but that people regarded as less brutal than that of the Assad regime."[43] According to Khatib, some of those living under ISIS territories found the organization to be a better "deliverer of 'justice,'" particularly with regard to the predictability it offered with regard to disputes about property rights.[44] Unsurprisingly, while far from an Islamic utopia, some residents claimed that ISIS had created a more efficient governing structure than either of the regimes they had lived under in Iraq and Syria.[45]

ISIS's attempt at statehood was short-lived. Over the course of 2016 and 2017, the Iraqi army gradually regained control of most of the territory in Iraq that had been lost to ISIS, while the Syrian army recaptured Aleppo in December 2016 and went on to regain control of some areas in northern Syria. Meanwhile, the Syrian Democratic Forces, an opposition militia dominated by the Kurdish People's Protection Units (YPG), took control over much of the territory in eastern Syria. In May 2017 Baghdadi was injured by an airstrike near Raqqa and forced to surrender control of ISIS for several months, which likely hampered the organization's defensive capabilities.[46] By December 2017, it was estimated that ISIS had lost control of 95 percent of the territory it once held in Iraq and Syria. In March 2019, the Syrian Democratic Forces succeeded in recapturing the last 1.5-square-mile of Syrian land under ISIS control.[47]

ISIS and the "Far Enemy"

The relationship between ISIS's territorial acquisitions and losses and its use of violence against the "far enemy" reveals the extent of its reliance on violence to

achieve its objectives. ISIS has used violence as a form of intimidation, to display power and defiance, capture and maintain territory, and coerce civilian compliance within conquered territories. ISIS's most deadly terrorist attacks in western Europe and the United States coincided with the territorial withdrawal of the organization. For example, in September 2014, ISIS spokesman Abu Mohammad al-Adnani called on "lone wolves" to attack targets in the West, using whatever tools were available to them.[48] In January 2015, gunmen attacked the offices of the French satirical newspaper *Charlie Hebdo* while a simultaneous attack was carried out in a kosher supermarket, killing four people.[49] In December 2015 a married couple shot fourteen people and attempted to bomb a public health facility in San Bernardino, California, claiming inspiration from ISIS. In March 2016 three explosions at an airport and a metro station in Brussels, Belgium, killed at least thirty people and injured dozens of others; in June 2016, a gunman attacked a gay nightclub in Orlando, Florida, killing forty-nine people and injuring at least fifty more; and in July 2016 a man drove a truck through a crowd in France, killing eighty-four people. Several of these attacks are believed to be "lone wolf" actions undertaken by ISIS sympathizers without the direct knowledge or instruction of ISIS leadership. As in the case of the Orlando shooting, however, ISIS has been willing to claim responsibility for deaths caused by those pledging loyalty to ISIS, even if its leadership did not play a coordinating role.

It is noteworthy that ISIS's territorial holdings in Iraq and Syria peaked around October 2014, steadily declining over the next three years. There appears to be an association between offensive violence against the "far enemy" and the time of peak territorial control. While it is impossible to disentangle the potential reasons for this association, it is plausible that the group sensed heightening rhetoric from the United States (the American military began bombing ISIS in Syria two days before al-Adnani's exhortation to "lone wolves") and wished to become more combative in response to this rhetoric. It is also possible that ISIS gained more global adherents to its ideology at the height of its territorial strength as a state. As such, its perceived success is reflected in the spate of terrorist attacks perpetrated shortly thereafter by those who were inspired by ISIS during its ascent in 2013–2014. As ISIS encountered territorial losses, the group frequently resorted to guerilla methods of violence. For example, once the Iraqi army retook control of Iraqi territory, ISIS resorted to kidnappings and shootouts, with some analysts estimating that ISIS attacks in 2018 were more frequent than in 2016.[50]

At the peak of its territorial conquests, when ISIS controlled an estimated

40,000 square miles, the so-called "Islamic State" began to look something like a genuine, self-proclaimed Islamic state. In some respects, ISIS appeared to be modeling the behavior that had led to the genesis of modern European states over the course of the second millennium. In Charles Tilly's famous telling, the modern Weberian state is a product of coercion and capital, in which war-making was the central focus of the different entities that ultimately established the monopoly on the legitimate use of coercive power in a given territory.[51] As part of the state-building process, warring factions operated at times as protection rackets, extracting tribute for protection against other warring entities, ultimately developing a system of modern taxation to pay for their war-making capacity. At the zenith of its control, ISIS attracted soldiers by offering Syrian fighters monthly salaries of at least $300 per month, plus maintenance allowances for wives and children, more than was offered by any other group, including the Syrian regime or the Free Syrian Army.[52] Acknowledging the potential staying power the Islamic State displayed in 2014–2015, international relations scholar Stephen Walt published an op-ed asking the provocative question, "What should we do if the Islamic state wins?" to which he responded, "live with it."[53] Walt went on to point out that dominant Western powers, such as the United States, have a robust history of trying to ostracize revolutionary movements to only grudgingly recognize them once their staying power was proven, with the Soviet Union and the People's Republic of China as the prime examples.

Nevertheless, having lost control of all its territorial holdings in Iraq and Syria, an ISIS future as a legitimate state appears highly unlikely. The loss of territory, however, does not signal the end of ISIS as a violent transnational group. Even when its actions reflected the behavior of a proto-state, ISIS continued to recruit sympathizers on a global level and violently attack targets far outside of the territory it aimed to control. ISIS not only disregarded national boundaries, it operated in defiance of the system of mutual recognition of state sovereignty, taking territorial control by force, not negotiation. While it is unlikely to establish a lasting caliphate on the territories of Iraq and Syria, ISIS remains a viable player in efforts to exploit conflicts in weak states throughout the Muslim world. It is likely to benefit from new recruits across the Middle East who are attracted to a transnational vision of Islamism, particularly in the face of failed reform from the Arab uprisings.

Violent Transnationalism in Sub-Saharan Africa

If weak and failing states are fertile ground for the growth of violent transnationalism, it should be unsurprising that this type of Islamism has become a more

common phenomenon in sub-Saharan Africa, where Muslims comprise an estimated 30 percent of the population.[54] Perhaps more than in any other region in the world, the internationally recognized state borders across Africa reflect colonial boundaries drawn for the convenience of a European division of spoils rather than through an organic process of state building. The particular challenges that African countries have encountered in overcoming colonial legacies to build functioning states have generated an extensive literature on state weakness in Africa.[55] A look at the Fund for Peace's 2018 "Fragile State Index" reveals that fourteen of the twenty most fragile states in the world are located in sub-Saharan Africa.[56] Against this background of state weakness, the rise of Islamist organizations in general, and militant organizations specifically, can be viewed as part of a broader expression of dissidence and political contestation.[57]

Political violence appears to have become more pronounced in Africa over the past several decades.[58] Religion-based identity conflict is one manifestation of this violence, not only among Islamist groups, but among Christian militants as well.[59] Moreover, several African states that have experienced both political violence and weak state capacity have substantial Muslim populations, such as Sudan, Mali, Niger, Sierra Leone, Somalia, and Nigeria. A common theme across the different locales in the Sahel that have seen an increase in violent Islamist activity is a history of poor governance, limited state capacity, and ineffective channels for voicing grievances within existing political systems. As Caitriona Dowd has observed, both the level of violent Islamist activity and the emergence of Islamist violence in new locales have increased in recent years.[60] Dowd and others find that the most compelling explanations for these increases are rooted in the subnational and local socioeconomic conditions that give rise to all forms of antistate challenges.[61] Conditions of economic scarcity and state repression make communities receptive to violent groups, who then build external networks of resources and solidarity.[62] While Islamist groups might instrumentalize religious beliefs in strategic ways, other groups might draw on ethnic or other identity claims.

The questionable legitimacy of existing international borders in states that are already weak in their resource capacity creates a nexus of conditions that fosters transnational organization and mobilization. The territories around borders in sub-Saharan Africa regularly suffer from a chronic lack of state service provision and are vulnerable to spillage effects from neighboring conflicts.[63] In this context, religious identities—often helped by ethnic affiliations that may have a stronger identity pull than a weakly constructed national identity—can serve as tools for mobilization. One such example is the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF), an Islamist rebel group founded in 1995 by Islamist

insurgents that had been driven out of Uganda into the mountainous Rwenzori borderlands between Uganda and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). While their stated aim had been to build an Islamic state, much of the ADF's militant activity has focused on fighting counterinsurgency against both Uganda and the DRC. A consistent lack of state services in the borderland region and an influx of demobilized combatants who had not reintegrated into society fostered the emergence of the ADF.[64] While the ADF had been weakened considerably in the early 2000s, in recent years it has rebranded to give more emphasis to its commitment to Islam, presumably in an attempt to align itself with other militant Islamist groups, such as ISIS.[65]

Weak state reach in borderland territories contributed to the development of Boko Haram, the violent transnational Islamist group that has had the most significant impact in sub-Saharan Africa. In terms of tactics and experience, Boko Haram shares several parallels with ISIS. Both groups gained footings as militant Islamists operating in territories where the central state had weak control and limited capacity. Both had the stated objective of creating an Islamic state and succeeded in seizing and controlling some territory. Similarly, both groups were able to gain followings and recruit militants to their organizations, due to the dire economic circumstances and at times anarchic governing environments in the territories they sought to control. Common local conditions gave rise to both groups and fueled their success. In contrast to the manifestations of violent transnationalism displayed by al-Qaeda and ISIS, however, Boko Haram has not emphasized jihad against the "far enemy." Compared to the violent transnationalists originating from the Middle East, most Islamist organizations in sub-Saharan Africa do not engage in direct attacks against Western targets, focusing their efforts primarily on ousting the "near enemy."

Reconfiguring the Concept of State: Boko Haram

Boko Haram is routinely described by close observers as a dynamic and fluid organization that has reshaped and remodeled itself in different periods. Since its earliest configurations, Boko Haram has consistently represented itself as in opposition to the Nigerian state, not only in terms of the ruling government, but the entire concept of Nigeria as a state entity. Boko Haram has sought to replace Nigerian temporal authority with a political structure rooted in Islam, integrating the Muslim territories of Nigeria into a larger caliphate that rejects internationally recognized state boundaries. While originally targeting only state security forces, over time Boko Haram has used violence against a broader

range of individuals, including government and political actors, traditional faith leaders, and civilians thought to be in collusion with the Nigerian state. In its most extreme incarnation under Abubakr Shekau, it targeted Muslims who were not in alliance with Boko Haram.

The origins of Boko Haram can be traced to northeastern Nigeria in the early 2000s when a small jihadi movement connected to Muhammed Ali began engaging in military training at a remote camp near the Nigeria-Niger border.[66] The group was focused on preparing for armed jihad against state security forces with the ultimate goal of establishing an Islamic state in Nigeria modeled on the Taliban in Afghanistan. Often referred to as the "Nigerian Taliban" during this period, Muhammad Ali's group attacked police stations and government buildings across the Yobe state in 2003 and 2004, and were ultimately defeated in a clash with Nigerian security forces in the Mandara Mountains in 2004, which also killed Ali.[67] During this same period, Mohammed Yusuf, a charismatic and popular Quranic scholar, had also developed a following devoted to his teachings against secular Western institutions, known colloquially as Boko Haram.[68] Yusuf spent time in Saudi Arabia, and after returning to northern Nigeria in 2005, he connected with the surviving members of Muhammad Ali's group, bringing militants into what had previously been a religious movement.

Following the incorporation of Muhammad Ali's militant faction, Boko Haram grew in its animosity toward and critique of local and national government, although it remained primarily nonviolent until 2009. Yusuf had been involved in early efforts to implement sharia ordinances in several northern Nigeria states, and had developed valuable political contacts and patrons in local governments throughout the region.[69] He preached in favor of Muslim solidarity, a position that challenges Nigeria's multiconfessional, multilingual, and multiethnic composition. Yusuf called for the rejection of secular democracy and Western-style education and their replacement with institutions based on the Koran and hadith.[70] He briefly formed an alliance with Ali Modu Sheriff, an upper-level politician who would become a local governor in the Borno state, but this alliance fell apart when Sheriff was unable to deliver sharia ordinances on the timetable desired by Yusuf.[71] Between 2007 and 2009, Yusuf built a base of followers for Boko Haram, while experiencing arrest and harassment by Nigerian security forces. In July 2009 the group launched a violent attack on police headquarters, stations, and officers' homes, which provoked a counterinsurgency from Nigerian security forces resulting in the deaths of over 800 Boko Haram militants as well as the extrajudicial execution of Yusuf and other leaders.[72] This uprising and its consequences pushed Boko Haram underground,

leading to the development of several autonomous cells. Because many of the more moderate members had been killed in the uprising, the movement became more willing to use violence to achieve its objectives, a view reinforced with the addition of younger members supportive of taking up arms.[73] Abubakr Shekau emerged as the leader of the largest faction.

In the period from 2010 until 2013, Boko Haram sought to avenge the execution of Boko Haram militants from the 2009 uprising, and the intensity and scope of the organization's violence grew. Shekau has been motivated by an unusually broad understanding of *takfir*, or unbelief, proclaiming, "Know, people of Nigeria, and other places, a person is not a Muslim unless he disavows democracy and other forms of polytheistic unbelief."[74] Under Shekau's leadership, Boko Haram shifted its tactics from guerilla insurgencies that solely targeted security forces to broader campaigns of violence and retaliatory attacks against political leaders and civilians, including assassinations, bank robberies, and prison breaks.[75] Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb and al-Shabab provided funding and training following Yusuf's assassination, and some Boko Haram members are alleged to have traveled to Somalia, Algeria, and Afghanistan to receive instruction in guerilla techniques.[76] The movement abandoned mainstream politics in their entirety, rejecting all forms of negotiation or appeasement from the Nigerian government.[77] By 2013 Boko Haram was poised to try and capture and control territory in order to establish an Islamic caliphate in northern Nigeria.

As Alexander Thurston describes in his history of Boko Haram, several factors converged to create new openings for the group to seize and control territory.[78] First, in an attempt to decisively defeat Boko Haram, Nigerian president Goodluck Jonathan placed three northeastern states under a state of emergency for eighteen months. Second, the government supported the development of vigilante groups, which suppressed Boko Haram's presence in the northern cities, but had the unintended effect of pushing the group into the countryside, where it found new opportunities for control. In March 2014 it orchestrated the Giwa prison break; in April 2014 it abducted 276 schoolgirls from a boarding school in Chibok; and in August 2014 Shekau declared the captured town of Gwoza in the Borno state as the center of an Islamic caliphate. At its peak control in 2015, Boko Haram is believed to have held about 30,000 square kilometers of territory.[79] Aside from implementing a crude form of sharia, including *hudud* punishments, Boko Haram made no effort at actual state building in the territory it controlled, focusing primarily on destroying existing secular structures and sustaining war-making capabilities.[80] This territorial control lasted

less than a year, and in March 2015 Nigerian forces overran Gwoza, regaining control of the area. In the same month, Boko Haram officially pledged allegiance to ISIS.

In August 2016 Boko Haram officially split into two factions. Determining that Shekau's indiscriminate use of violence and inability to coordinate sustainable military strategy was hampering the objective of building an Islamic State, ISIS declared Abu Musab al-Barnawi the official leader of the Islamic State–West Africa Province (ISWAP). ISWAP is primarily located in Lake Chad and across the border with Niger, as well as in some parts of the Yobe and Borno states in Nigeria. In general, ISWAP has pursued a strategy that focuses on attacks on security forces and government personnel while simultaneously developing better relationships with local civilian populations, viewing such relationships as necessary to its survival.[81] While officially sponsored by ISIS, funding, training, and other resources appear to have ebbed for ISWAP as ISIS itself has been suppressed. Shekau's loyalists split into the Jama'atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda'awati wal-Jihad (JAS), which ISIS does not recognize. Located primarily in south-central Borno state, the Sambisa forest, and along the Nigerian-Cameroon border, JAS engages in more indiscriminate violence, including targeting Muslims who do not share the group's core objectives.[82] In contrast to ISWAP, JAS is less interested in building legitimacy among the civilian population, instead tending to raid and extort local communities for resources.[83]

Boko Haram has engaged in a variety of recruitment tactics, which have generally become more coercive over time. Yusuf successfully recruited members to the organization through his open preaching, drawing supporters from across northern Nigeria, Niger, Chad, and Cameroon. Under Shekau's tenure, financial incentives were introduced as recruitment tools. Boko Haram also became infamous for the use of abduction and forced conscription, particularly of women and youth.[84] A 2016 report by Mercy Corps found that Boko Haram recruits came from a broad range of demographic profiles, and levels of consent for their involvement were mixed.[85] Two important themes that emerged in the report, though, highlight the significant role played by the absence of state services. First, approximately half of the young people interviewed by Mercy Corps ran small, informal businesses and noted that Boko Haram provided the only reliable capital for their work, filling an important gap in financial services that would normally be provided by the state. Second, communal dissatisfaction with the Nigerian government and with Nigerian security forces had compelled some individuals to consider Boko Haram as an alternative to the existing government, which ignored their communities. The broad range of

recruiting tactics that Boko Haram has employed, and the fact that the level of consent of the individuals involved in the movement is unclear, pose very real security problems. Since it is often difficult to determine volition and affiliation, Nigerian counterinsurgency efforts have frequently resulted in violence against noncombatant populations, which serves to further undermine the credibility of the Nigerian state.[86]

The pattern of insurgency and counterinsurgency that began with the July 2009 uprising and reached a high point of action in 2015 was deeply destabilizing to the entire region surrounding Lake Chad. Both analysts of the region and civilians alike place considerable responsibility on Nigerian security forces and security policy for escalating conflict with Boko Haram, and for failing to address the human toll it has taken throughout the Lake Chad region. Civilians were displaced not only in Nigeria, but in Niger, Cameroon, and Chad. Moreover, all of these states found themselves hosting the displaced, creating new economic and security burdens on already fragile state structures.[87] These challenges further compound the particular dilemmas created in border regions, as described above. African armies have often been unable to restore security in the countryside, creating political vacuums and providing scant public services.[88]

Looking to the Future

The Afghan and Iraqi cases demonstrate very clearly that transnational jihadism flourishes in those exceptional cases when states collapse and normal politics is suspended. Among other things, the evaporation of the state makes national boundaries irrelevant, allowing transnational movements to permeate the stateless country without much hindrance. This was clearly the case with the fall of the Saddam regime in Iraq in April 2003 and the descent of Bashar al-Assad's Syria into civil war in 2011–2012. Moreover, the borders of Iraq and Syria are inherently weak. Rather than evolving from an organic process of nation and state building, they were created by decree and protested from their inception.[89] Similar problems regarding the questionable legitimacy of artificially constructed borders are present throughout sub-Saharan Africa, giving rise to an increase in both political violence and transnational Islamist elements in recent decades.

Fortunately, the vast majority of Muslim countries have not and will not experience the state weakness and failure that are fertile ground for the growth of violent transnational Islamism. This means that the arena of jihadi transnational activity in the Muslim world will be circumscribed. However, the prob-

lem with many Muslim states—particularly those in the Arab world, where demands for regime change have not been met with more open politics—is that their regimes stand on very narrow and insecure foundations. The same can be said of many regimes in sub-Saharan Africa, a region that has struggled to build lasting, functioning state institutions and democratic forms of government. At the same time, such regimes tenaciously refuse to open their systems to genuine political participation, which allows intense resentment to build underground. This resentment, often the product of a feeling of acute political impotence among the general public, is likely to provide the entry point for transnational jihadis and to help them put down roots in Muslim territories where their presence is currently shallow or nonexistent. This could especially be the case if nonviolent Islamist formations fail to remove repressive regimes through peaceful action. Their failure to do so may detract from their credibility and open the way for greater inroads into Muslim polities by organizations like ISIS and Boko Haram.

Despite the possibility that violent transnational movements may be able to exploit the democracy deficit in Muslim countries (especially in the Middle East and sub-Saharan Africa), domestic Islamist groups are generally the primary beneficiaries of regime repression, corruption, and inefficiency. Transnational jihadi groups, for all their dramatic acts of indiscriminate violence, so far have had little lasting impact on most Muslim societies, primarily because they lack genuine political agendas relevant to the needs and concerns of specific societies. The fleeting experiences of territorial control by both ISIS and Boko Haram offer little to suggest that violent transnationalists can offer a credible alternative to the existing state system.

Yet the appeal of groups like al-Qaeda, ISIS, and Boko Haram grows when nonviolent Islamists fail to unseat secular, authoritarian regimes or when these regimes fail to offer the chance to change government through competitive elections. While the Arab uprisings of 2011 revealed meaningful demands for reform across the region, the political consequences, which have generally left these demands unfulfilled, might create a renewed search for a radically different approach to political Islam. Mohamed Morsi's removal from power in Egypt, for example, served as a valuable recruitment asset for ISIS, whose claim that Islamists can only truly hold power in an Islamic state was bolstered by Morsi's fate.[90] Similarly, ISIS captured territory in Syria at the same time that more moderate Islamists had failed to bring about the collapse of the Assad regime. The lack of resolution to the conflict in Syria served to support ISIS's arguments in favor of violent transnationalism. Likewise, the Nigerian state's

inability to effectively dismantle Boko Haram has challenged its own legitimacy and further weakened its state capacity, making territories that have been subject to violence even more susceptible to appeals by violent Islamist formations that can offer an alternative to an absent and neglectful state.

In conclusion, violent transnationalism is only a small part of political Islam, much of which is conducted through nonviolent means. Modern communication tools, such as broadly accessible social media platforms that make it easier to produce and disseminate materials that propagandize for violent transnationalism, have helped transnational groups cast a wide net for attention. Yet as the experiences of al-Qaeda, ISIS, and Boko Haram have shown, violent transnational movements appear to rise and fall alongside broader intrastate conflicts. As such, the threat of state failure and intractable conflict in Libya, Yemen, and parts of the Sahel make these regions vulnerable to violent transnationalist elements. We have yet to see a violent transnational group succeed in building a lasting movement. As earlier chapters in this book have demonstrated, most political activities undertaken in the name of Islam are carried on within discrete national boundaries and are both products of and responses to the contexts in which they operate.

CHAPTER 8

The Many Faces of Political Islam

This book has attempted, among other things, to address the potential of political Islam to affect the future of major Muslim societies and polities around the world. It starts from the premise that political Islam is not a monolith, but rather a multidimensional concept that cannot be carved into convenient binaries of moderate and radical or violent and peaceful. What unifies all Islamist actors is the use of religion as a political ideology in pursuit of political objectives. Ranging from elected office in a democratic state to the construction of a transnational caliphate, the political objectives Islamists pursue vary widely, as do the tactics they use to pursue these objectives. Islamist groups and actors do not operate in a vacuum, but rather try to achieve their objectives in very different contexts, which can constrain or expand the options available for action. The self-proclaimed Islamic states explored in chapter 3, Saudi Arabia and Iran, far from being typical of political Islam, represent unique manifestations of Islamism and are very different from each other. Most Islamists operate in political regimes where religious leaders do not hold temporal power. The typology of political Islam elaborated in chapter 1 proposed three separate dimensions on which Islamist groups tend to vary: political objectives, electoral participation, and the use of violence. Our analysis of these dimensions, and of the specific, local conditions that give rise to particular intersections of the dimensions, yields four Islamist "ideal types": vanguard Islamist movements, nonviolent Islamist political parties, Islamist national resistance groups, and violent transnational Islamist actors. We examined these different types in chapters 4–7 through analysis of typical cases of each type, demonstrating that political Islam in the contemporary era is by and large a national phenomenon and that its trajectories, while subject to foreign influence, are primarily determined by factors that are discrete to particular contexts.

This book has argued, both in the introductory chapter and in the various case studies in subsequent chapters, that it is only natural that political Islam is manifested largely as a national phenomenon. The discrete national manifestations of political Islam result from the wide diversity in the Muslim world in terms of socioeconomic characteristics, culture, political systems, and trajectories of intellectual development, making it extremely difficult, if not impossible, for the political expression of Islam developed in one context to be replicated in other locales. Moreover, as the territorial boundaries of postcolonial nation-states have solidified and have come to be seen as legitimate and permanent, politics has become effectively circumscribed within national territorial limits. This is clearly demonstrated by the fact that the overwhelming majority of political actors in Muslim countries, Islamists and non-Islamists alike, have internalized the values of the nation-state system and are comfortable working within it rather than challenging its basic premise. Political Islam is therefore effectively nationalized in the contemporary era.

This is as true of self-proclaimed Islamic states, such as Saudi Arabia and Iran, as it is of countries where Islamists are in opposition rather than in power. The tremendous differences in the ideologies and political systems of Iran and Saudi Arabia demonstrate that, despite all rhetoric to the contrary, there is no consensus on what constitutes an "Islamic state." As chapter 3 has shown clearly, both the Saudi and Iranian systems are products of their own historical, cultural, and political contexts and cannot be replicated elsewhere. Similarly, as successive chapters have demonstrated, both vanguard Islamist movements and nonviolent Islamist parties, whether in Tunisia, Turkey, Egypt, Pakistan, or Indonesia, are all generated by their own milieus and specific to their geographic and cultural locales. The same is true of Islamist national resistance movements, analyzed in chapter 6. The chief among them, Hamas and Hizbullah, are as much products of their own context as the Muslim Brotherhood and the Jamaat-i-Islami. Both seamlessly combine nationalism and Islamism in their ideologies and objectives. In fact, one could argue that the nationalism of Hizbullah and Hamas defines their Islamist agenda, rather than the other way around.

It is obvious, therefore, that political Islam comes in various shapes and sizes. Differences among Islamist groups can be clearly perceived not only among countries but within countries. The latter phenomenon is related to the fact that Islamists in specific countries are usually divided both ideologically and over the objectives and strategies they seek to pursue in the political arena. The sometimes violent opposition to the Wahhabi Saudi regime from radical

neo-Wahhabi elements within the kingdom is irrefutable proof of this phenomenon.[1] As the chapters of this book have demonstrated, divisions abound among Islamist movements in countries across the Muslim world. There are, indeed, many faces of political Islam.

A core argument of the preceding chapters has been that local variables are preeminent over global factors in explaining the faces of political Islam. Indeed, several Muslim states share some local characteristics that can help account for similarities observed across different national contexts. For example, most Muslim-majority countries are ruled by nondemocratic regimes, and many have boundaries shaped largely by the whims of colonial powers. Nonetheless, in this concluding chapter some international variables, especially American policies toward the Muslim world, deserve analysis, even if in abbreviated form, because they have a major impact on the fortunes of political Islam in discrete societies when mediated through local concerns and domestic perceptions of the relationship between international and domestic factors. This applies especially to America's close relationship with several unrepresentative and authoritarian regimes in the Muslim world and to the general perception in Muslim countries that American policies are hostile to Muslim interests broadly defined.

Regime Character and Political Islam

The case studies examined in this book point to the important role of political regimes in shaping the tactics available to Islamist actors. Political Islam has been an especially effective oppositional ideology in the context of autocratic rule. As chapter 5 details, there is a real democratic deficit in the Muslim world, and while a country's predominantly Muslim population is probably not a cause of the lack of political openness, the association between these two factors fosters the political manifestation of Islam. One of the main findings that emerges from the cases analyzed in the previous chapters is that the repressive and unrepresentative nature of many regimes in the Muslim world has both provided the political space for and augmented the popularity of Islamist political formations. It has done so by decimating much of the secular and non-Islamist opposition, by occasionally attempting to co-opt Islamist groups to use them to discredit secular opposition movements, and often by default, giving Islamist parties the opportunity to emerge as major avenues of opposition to authoritarian regimes, thus boosting their credibility and popularity among a generally disenchanted citizenry. Paradoxically, the autocratic regimes that

dominate much of the Muslim world, by successfully eliminating secular opposition movements and parties and heavily restricting pluralism in politics, have created political and intellectual space for Islamists to move into.

As this book has repeatedly shown, the popularity of political Islam results substantially from the fact that even the most efficient and repressive regimes in the Muslim world cannot fully suppress opposition expressed through the religious idiom. Unlike secular groups, which can be neutralized by preventing them from speaking in public and from spreading their message through the media, Islamist political activity can never be effectively curbed, because of the vocabulary it uses and the institutions it can exploit. Islamic religious idiom, like the vocabulary of most other religions, has the potential to lend itself to political uses. At the same time, it can be made to appear politically innocuous and therefore immune to government retribution. Publishing houses that print religious literature, mosques and affiliated institutions that subtly disseminate Islamist propaganda, and religiously endowed charitable organizations sympathetic to Islamist causes can be used to send out political messages dressed up in religious garb and to build support for Islamist political activity.

The Islamic revolution in Iran is probably the leading example of this phenomenon. The shah's ruthless decimation of all opposition created the political vacuum into which the Islamists led by Ayatollah Khomeini moved in. This vacuum allowed the radical faction of the Shia clergy to portray itself as the primary, if not the only, avenue for opposition to the shah's repressive regime. The religious idiom used by the anti-shah *ulama* in their sermons—including elliptically portraying the shah as the twentieth-century incarnation of the usurper Caliph Yezid, on whose orders Imam Hussein, the grandson of the Prophet, was martyred in 680 CE—resonated with the Shia population of Iran. At the same time, the repressive agencies of the state were unable to respond adequately to the implicit political use of such imagery because it would have offended the religious sensibilities of the Iranian population and created further turmoil. This was borne out by the fact that the revolution was triggered by the shah's regime's decision in August and September 1978 to crack down on the radical clerics and to undertake a public campaign to discredit their leader, Ayatollah Khomeini. It was a strategy that backfired, with fatal consequences for the shah's rule.

Iran is not the only example of this phenomenon. The repressive policies of the regime of the National Liberation Front in Algeria gave a tremendous fillip to the popularity of the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) by decimating all its secular competitors. Similarly, successive Egyptian regimes so debilitated the secu-

lar opposition—ranging from the liberals through the Arab nationalists to the communists—that they created a huge void that was filled by the Islamists. One finds the same pattern repeated in country after Muslim country, especially in the broader Middle East. The nature of the political systems and regimes in many Muslim countries have had a major impact on the growth of political Islam and the strategies Islamists adopt in these countries. This variable is likely to substantially influence the future trajectory of Islamism. Closed political systems and authoritarian regimes are standing invitations for the growth in popularity of Islamist political formations and Islamist ideologies. Such regimes stifle political and intellectual debate and effectively decimate almost all secular opposition through the medium of the *mukhabarat* (intelligence/security) state, based on the effective penetration of their societies by the state's intelligence agencies with the sole objective of assuring the security and longevity of existing regimes. While the Arab uprisings unseated several long-standing autocrats—Zine El Abidine Ben Ali, Hosni Mubarak, Muammar Qaddafi, Ali Abdullah Saleh—they did not engender large-scale transformations of the regime practices these leaders embodied. Tunisia's successful transition to democracy was the exception, not the rule. In place of widespread political opening, the region continues to reckon with violent conflict and civil wars in Syria, Libya, and Yemen, as well as repression and instability in some of the countries that have avoided widespread violence.

Unrepresentative regimes, in addition to ruthlessly repressing political opposition, are frequently corrupt and unresponsive to societal demands. Consequently, they fail to provide social services and a social safety net to the most vulnerable segments of their populations. As various case studies in this book have demonstrated, this is another void that Islamist groups, from the Muslim Brotherhood to Hizbullah and Hamas, have moved in to fill through charitable networks that are either affiliated with or set up as front organizations for Islamist political formations. Such charitable institutions fulfill the religiously enjoined duty of helping the needy by providing social services to the weakest sections of society. More important, they help Islamist groups and movements cultivate crucial constituencies, especially among underprivileged population segments that, already alienated from unresponsive and corrupt regimes, can be mobilized for political action. The close nexus between Islamist charitable networks and Islamist political formations from Turkey through Egypt to Pakistan and Indonesia has come to provide Islamist groups with great staying power in the face of state repression. It also provides an essential explanation for their consistent popularity.

The nature of regimes in many Muslim countries, especially in the broader Middle East, is a crucial variable that explains the popularity of Islamist political formations. One can extrapolate from this analysis that as long as authoritarian and repressive regimes continue to rule Muslim countries, Islamism will continue to thrive as an ideology and political movement in those countries. It is true that the character of these regimes can be explained by multiple factors operating in diverse mixes in different locales, but as far as political Islam is concerned, the outcome is similar in almost all contexts. The nature of regimes, one can argue, is a crucial factor that determines how popular political Islam becomes in widely divergent Muslim countries.

Does Inclusion Lead to Moderation?

If the closed nature of political regimes in many Muslim-majority countries contributes to the manifestation of political Islam, would the phenomenon change under conditions of greater political openness? Once Islamists are allowed to become legitimate participants in mainstream political processes, with the prospect of achieving or sharing power, their oppositional rhetoric is no longer likely to suffice as a substitute for concrete policies; then, the Islamists' feet will also be held to the political fire. This book clearly demonstrates that this has been the case most clearly in Indonesia and Tunisia, the two Muslim democracies that have been analyzed in considerable detail. Millenarian ideologies lose a great deal of their shine when parties espousing such dogmas are unable to deliver on their political and economic promises to the electorate that has the power to remove them from office. Moreover, acquiring and holding power necessitates compromises, induces pragmatism, and leads to moderation, defined as the willingness to accept democratic norms of political participation. These norms include nonviolent opposition, respect for the results of free and fair elections, and willingness to give up power if voted out of office. Therein lies the logic of the inclusion-moderation hypothesis: by including Islamist opponents in broader, representative frameworks, these movements themselves will select tactics that appeal to a broader range of potential supporters, moving away from objectives that might be perceived as outside of the acceptable range of actions in mainstream politics and toward positions that hold more widespread appeal.

As the examples analyzed in chapters 4 and 5 reveal, however, the relationship between political inclusion and political moderation is not as straightforward as some have hoped. For much of the late twentieth and early twenty-first

century, it appeared that Islamist groups that had been excluded and marginalized from political life by predominantly secular, authoritarian, or hybrid regimes were slowly being permitted greater access to mainstream political processes. Broadening inclusion of Islamist groups that had been historically banned or repressed was generally met with a willingness on the part of many Islamist actors to work within the constitutional framework that offered the olive branch.

This dynamic was observed between several regimes and the Islamist actors within them, including Egypt, Turkey, Indonesia, and Pakistan. The Turkish case, for example, demonstrates the capacity of democratic systems to fracture the Islamist base. The Justice and Development Party (AKP) arose out of a division in the erstwhile Islamist formation—which had operated under different names, such as Refah (Welfare) and Fazilet (Virtue)—based partially on ideology and partially on differences in political strategy both at home and abroad. The rump of the conservative Islamists under the banner of the Saadet (Felicity) Party—led by the doyen of Turkish Islamists, Necmettin Erbakan—performed very poorly in the 2002 elections that the AKP won very handsomely. Indonesia and Pakistan are also good examples of this phenomenon. In the former, the split between the modernist Muhammadiyah and the traditionalist Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) was a long-standing fixture of social and political life that helped foster a number of Islamist political parties after democratization. In Pakistan, the *ulama*-based parties—such as the Jamiat-ul-Ulema-i-Islam and the Jamiat-ul-Ulema-i-Pakistan, the former espousing a more strict interpretation of Hanafi *fiqh* than the latter—have competed not only against each other but also against the lay Jamaat-i-Islami, thus dividing Islamist votes and demonstrating that political Islam is no monolith. Islamism has found multiple manifestations even in the Islamic Republic of Iran, which, as chapter 3 demonstrated, is replete with crosscutting political and economic cleavages. Consequently, one finds political formations competing in the Iranian political arena that range from liberal and reformist to hard-line conservatives, all swearing fealty to Islam and to the ideas of Ayatollah Khomeini.

These examples suggest that electoral regimes—even if they do not achieve the full range of civil liberties to meet the minimal requirements to be considered a democracy—create political space for Islamist parties, in the truly plural sense of the term. By splitting the Islamist base within polities and cutting individual Islamist political formations down to size, electoral competition neutralizes the possibility that a unified Islamist bloc will take and hold power. Democracy in action truly shows the many faces of political Islam in each Mus-

lim country. This makes Islamists appear less of a threat to their secular counterparts and more as mainstream players of the political game. Yet, as discussed in chapter 4, moderation includes both behavioral and ideological dimensions, and it remains unclear if ideological moderation will always follow behavioral moderation. The behavior of the Muslim Brotherhood once it gained political power through the Freedom and Justice Party (FJP) displayed a lack of commitment to democratic institutions. A similar argument can be made about Erdoğan and the AKP in Turkey. Moreover, with the exception of Tunisia, the only country in the region to transition to democracy following the Arab uprisings, the highly restrictive nature of political systems in the Arab world has generally meant that there is little reward for moderation.

Nevertheless, while the examples of Egypt and Turkey suggest that inclusion in competitive electoral processes does not necessarily inspire Islamist actors to embrace liberal principles, the behavior of Islamist political parties in a broader range of countries suggests that the power grabs and support for illiberal practices displayed by the AKP and the FJP may be more the exception than the rule. In their analysis of Islamic political parties' performance in parliamentary elections through the end of 2014, Charles Kurzman and Didem Türkoğlu found that Islamic parties did not perform much better following the Arab uprisings than they did before.[2] They conclude that the proportion of seats won by all Islamic parties "remained virtually unchanged, with a median figure of 14 percent both before and since the Arab Spring."[3] Kurzman and Türkoğlu's analysis also revealed that the platforms of Islamist parties have "focused less on Islamic themes of implementing shari'a and have instead endorsed democratic processes."[4] Taken as a whole, the trajectories of Islamist parties that have attained or come close to attaining or sharing power suggest that while ideological moderation should not be presumed to be the inevitable outcome of democratization, there appears to be evidence of a causal link in several instances.

Another element of the inclusion-moderation hypothesis that merits further scrutiny is the inverse relationship—that is, what are the consequences of political exclusion? As Cavatorta and Merone have pointed out, much of the discussion of inclusion and moderation rests on an assumption that political exclusion of Islamists encourages them to become more ideologically committed to objectives that cannot be achieved within existing regime structures and provokes them to seek violent tactics. While there is some evidence for this position—as with Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood in the post-Morsi era—it is also possible that political exclusion can encourage Islamists to reexamine their

objectives and the best tactics to achieve them. Tunisia's Ennahda serves as an example of this form of moderation.[5]

Some observers see the path taken by Ennahda—which separated its political party from its social and religious movement—as a template others may follow in the future, if not as organizations, then as individuals. If an individual's identification with Islam is increasingly seen as a reflection of personal piety rather than affiliation with particular social organizations or political currents, there may be less support for Islamist political formations in general. One could argue that the four Islam-based political parties in Indonesia, by accepting the legitimacy of the Pancasila constitutional order, were premised on the separation of social and political movements. As Olivier Roy has suggested, religiosity in the Muslim world has changed. He contends that the more individualistic view of religiosity that is becoming more widespread among Muslim youth "is compatible with democratization because it delinks personal faith from traditions, collective identity, and external authority."[6]

Yet while a sense of religiosity based more on individual than collective identity may reduce the pull of political entities organized around identity-based characteristics—such as religion—it does not necessarily engender the adoption of particular liberal values that are ultimately essential to democracy's survival. Indonesia provides a valuable example of the tension between electoral institutions and civil liberties when Islamists use electoral tactics to advance illiberal agendas. While the country remains one of the few Muslim-majority democracies in the world, with numerous Islamist parties operating alongside and in coalition with secular parties, it is also the country in which democratic procedures have led to the adoption of a range of sharia bylaws that restrict individual behaviors, and where freedom of speech and assembly are routinely used to target religious minorities and limit their civil liberties. As Freedom House has repeatedly noted in its *Freedom in the World Reports*, discrimination and violence against minority groups and the politicized use of blasphemy laws are key factors threatening political freedom in Indonesia.[7]

The consistent association between Islamism, which is determined largely by local context, and support for policy positions that are antithetical to respect for individual rights is one reason why Tunisia's Ennahda has dissociated itself from the Islamist label, preferring to call itself "a party of Muslim democrats."[8] In justifying this rebranding, Ennahda founder Rached Ghannouchi writes, "[U]nder the new constitution, all Tunisians enjoy the same rights, whether they are believers, agnostics, or atheists. The separation of religion and politics will prevent officials from using faith-based appeals to manipulate the public."[9]

This statement essentially describes a relationship between religion and state that aspires to keep the state out of religious affairs and protects the rights of individuals who choose not to practice religion. In switching the party's self-identification from "Islamist" to "Muslim democrat," Ghannouchi is implying that the commitment to keeping religion in the private sphere is the domain of democrats, not Islamists.

International Factors and Political Islam

While arising in response to domestic considerations, the various manifestations of political Islam do not operate in an environment insulated from broader international currents. One factor that has been discussed only tangentially so far is quite relevant to the future of political Islam and needs to be analyzed in some detail in this concluding chapter. This variable is related to the international power structure, especially the policies followed by the major powers regarding issues of genuine concern for much of the Muslim world.

The current distribution of political, economic, and military power in the international system is heavily tilted against Muslim countries. This power imbalance is in large part the result of the colonial legacy and the policies followed by the dominant powers in the postcolonial period to solidify and extend the strategic and economic gains they had achieved during the colonial era. Moreover, the violent conflicts that persist in several places in the Middle East following the Arab uprisings create the impression that Muslim territories are sacrificial lambs in power struggles for regional dominance between Iran and Saudi Arabia, or serve as proxy battles in multipolar turf wars being waged by the United States, Europe, Russia, and China. Such policies of direct and indirect domination have left an indelible mark on the psyches of most politically conscious Muslims. This is a mind-set that Islamists are in a good position to exploit, for a number of reasons.

The first such reason is that they have a simple and apparently coherent explanation for Muslim political decline. As stated earlier in this book, Islamists argue that Muslim societies declined the more they moved away from the model of the golden age that Islamists depict in their romanticized version of the early years of Islam. They argue further that if Muslims can recreate a true and pure Islamic society, they will once again attain their former glory or at least compete with the West on a basis of equality. Their slogan "Islam is the solution" emanates from this interlocking set of arguments. In theory, their prescription is simple, although it undergoes significant mutation when they

attempt to put it into practice in individual countries. As stated earlier in this book, this Islamist prescription has found great resonance in widely diverse Muslim societies because the secular, nationalist project in the immediate post-colonial decades was unable to provide dignity, freedom, power, or wealth to most Muslims around the world.

The United States and Violent Transnationalism

Many people do not realize that the United States has had a long history of flirting with political Islam, going back at least to the 1950s. Then, Washington encouraged Saudi Arabia, the "fundamentalist" kingdom par excellence, to use its Islamic credentials as the keeper of Islam's holiest places and the repository of conservative Islamic values to counter the rising tide of Arab nationalism as the unifying force in the Arab world. American policymakers perceived Arab nationalist regimes, such as Egypt, Syria, and Iraq, to be allied to the Soviet Union and therefore inimical to American interests. The United States looked kindly on and covertly supported the anti-Nasser activities of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood, because of its animosity toward an Egyptian leader who had come to symbolize Arab nationalism and the dream of Arab unity. It is ironic that the ideology espoused by transnational jihadis who target the United States is a combination of Wahhabi religious doctrines dominant in Saudi Arabia and the radical political ideas espoused by Sayyid Qutb, the ideologue of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood in the 1950s and 1960s, who spent many years in Nasser's prison before he was executed in 1966. America's erstwhile favorites in the Middle East have spawned tendencies highly inimical to American interests and objectives in that strategically important region.

As has been pointed out in chapter 7, the rise of violent transnational Islamism in its current embodiment owes a great deal to American policy during the 1980s, when the United States funneled massive resources, including funds and weaponry, in collaboration with Saudi Arabia and Pakistan, to fuel the Islamist insurgency against the Soviet military presence in Afghanistan. Al-Qaeda would not have emerged as a major security threat in the twenty-first century had it not been for the American policy that encouraged and facilitated the ingathering in Afghanistan of radical Islamist youth from all parts of the Muslim world to further America's own Cold War ends. Following this policy created a failed state in Afghanistan that became a safe haven for Osama bin Laden and his ilk.[10] American support to variants of political Islam in the 1950s and 1960s and in the 1980s has therefore had major unintended consequences

and produced tremendous blowback that was not anticipated by successive generations of policymakers in Washington.

The American invasion of Iraq in 2003 turned out to be a great boon for transnational extremists. The collapse of the Iraqi state created a political vacuum, which was exploited by sectarian militias. The timing of the dissolution of state power in Iraq provided transnational jihadists a new safe haven just as they were being deprived of their bases in Afghanistan by another American-led military operation. The invasion of Iraq led to increased recruitment of Muslim youth, including a considerable number from Europe, for the transnational jihadist cause. Moreover, the disintegration of the Iraqi state exacerbated a number of fissures that had been quietly simmering under the surface for some time.[11] While the decimation of state power in Iraq and Syria and the violent transnationalists who emerged in its aftermath are the most extreme examples, they are emblematic of the broader problem of building state legitimacy in a context where foreign hands have played a large role in determining who constitutes the nation. Modern-day boundaries through much of the Middle East and North Africa can be tied to the 1916 Sykes-Picot Agreement that essentially allowed France and Britain an outsized role in determining the state boundaries of the Arab territories of the decaying Ottoman Empire, while African boundaries are largely a product of the division of the spoils among European powers at the Berlin Conference (1884–1885). The accepted practice among leaders of global powers of adhering to the territorial integrity of existing states in the international system based on the Westphalian concept of mutually recognized sovereignty, regardless of whether the internal sovereignty that is the essence of the Weberian state is present in particular territories, has contributed to crises of state and regime legitimacy across territories that are home to substantial Muslim populations. Political Islam is, in many respects, a byproduct of this legitimacy crisis.

Unfortunately for the United States, both its support—for instrumental reasons—for certain forms of Islamic radicalism (seen as benign by American policymakers in the past) and the overall thrust of American policy, which most Muslims perceive as antithetical to their own interests, have combined to create in Muslim countries great disillusionment with and resentment toward the United States. Islamists of all varieties manipulate this general sense of disenchantment and anger to advance their own agendas against American-supported regimes in the Muslim world. When and where the sense of impotence becomes very acute, the prevailing climate of despair is exploited to defend the use of violent tactics in the name of "Islam" and justify such violence

as the only way to overcome the asymmetry in power between the "Muslims" and the "West."

American Policies and Political Islam

Most Muslims perceive the major powers and their policies as largely responsible for repressing the economic, social, and political power of Muslim societies. This perception applies with particular force to American policies dating back to the last quarter of the twentieth century. In much of the Muslim world, American policies are seen as akin to those followed by the erstwhile European colonial powers, aimed principally at preventing any challenge to Western domination arising from Muslim countries. This argument finds great resonance among politically conscious Muslims because it does reflect reality in significant measure. The policies of erstwhile colonial powers in the 1950s and the 1960s, especially in the Middle East, demonstrated that they were committed to maintaining their control over strategically important parts of the Muslim world despite the formal end of colonialism. Such policies ranged from the overthrow of the democratically elected Iranian prime minister Mohammad Mossadegh in 1953 after he had nationalized the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company in 1951 to the Anglo-French-Israeli invasion of Egypt following President Nasser's nationalization of the Suez Canal in 1956.

The bloody war of independence forced on the Algerians by France's intransigent insistence that Algeria was a part of France, and therefore inalienable territory, augmented the feeling among many Muslims that European powers were bent on the subjugation of Muslim lands even after colonialism had been discredited both as ideology and as a form of governance. Since the major European colonial powers were important allies of the United States and since the latter collaborated with Britain in the covert operation in Iran in 1953 and turned a blind eye toward French brutality in Algeria, the opprobrium heaped on the former colonial powers rubbed off on America as well.

The hostile Muslim perception of the United States was augmented by the Cold War strategies adopted by Washington and by its proclivity to step into the European powers' imperial shoes in the Middle East, ostensibly to contain Soviet expansion. Although American opposition to Arab nationalism and to the emergence of independent centers of power in the Middle East was the result largely of Cold War considerations, it confirmed for most Muslims that American policy was basically a continuation of the colonial policies of the previous era. America's military occupation of Iraq further convinced most

Muslims that the United States is working in the same imperialist paradigm used in the Middle East by the British and the French.[12] Washington's unqualified support for Israel is also seen as a part of America's strategy to create and strengthen proxies to better control the resource-rich Middle East.[13]

Furthermore, the support that Western powers—above all, the United States—have extended to authoritarian and repressive regimes in the Muslim world during the Cold War and after has alienated the Muslim masses from the West in general and from the United States in particular. The support to the shah of Iran is the quintessential example of this policy, but is not the only one. America's propping up regimes such as those of Sadat and Mubarak in Egypt and of King Hussein and King Abdullah in Jordan, along with collaborating with Saddam Hussein of Iraq to check the growing influence of revolutionary Iran in the 1980s, are part of anti-American folklore not only in the Middle East but throughout the Muslim world. All this augments the image Muslim populations have of America as a global power bent on supporting repressive client regimes to further its own strategic and economic objectives in Muslim countries.

Examples abound of purported American ideals applied in a way perceived as discriminatory to the basic rights of Muslims. Animus toward the Muslim world reached new heights of openness and directness under US president Donald Trump. Years before he became the 2016 Republican Party candidate for president, Trump challenged the validity of President Barack Obama's birth on US soil, fueling the unsubstantiated conspiracy theory that Obama was a closet Muslim. As a candidate, Trump suggested the possibility of monitoring and possibly closing mosques in the United States, and following the terrorist attack in San Bernardino, California, in 2015, he called for "a total and complete shutdown of Muslims entering the United States."[14] He later went on to claim that "Islam hates us."[15] Within a week of becoming president, Trump signed the first of several executive orders that attempted to suspend entry of Syrian refugees to the United States, as well as severely restricted travel to the US by citizens from Chad, Iraq, Iran, Libya, Sudan, Somalia, and Yemen. Colloquially referred to as the "Muslim ban," these orders have had the effect of severely curbing admissions of Muslim refugees and Muslim immigrants to the United States.[16]

In spite of an array of American policies that convey disregard for the interests of Muslims in a broad range of countries, the unstinting and unquestioning American support of Israel, especially of its policy of continued occupation of and settlement in Palestinian lands conquered in 1967, demonstrates to politically conscious Muslims that the United States is committed to treating Muslims and Arabs not only with insensitivity but with utter contempt. The Ameri-

can policy of vetoing or threatening to veto UN Security Council resolutions condemning Israeli policies provides to most Muslims proof beyond doubt of American-Israeli collusion to dominate the Muslim Middle East politically and militarily. America's insistence that Middle Eastern countries from Iraq to Iran to Lebanon abide by UN Security Council resolutions while it supports repeated Israeli defiance of a much larger number of resolutions passed by the same body further strengthens the feeling in the Muslim world that the United States unabashedly uses double standards when it comes to Israeli defiance of international opinion.[17] The American insistence that Iran give up its nuclear option while America condones—indeed, works to support—Israeli possession of nuclear weapons and sophisticated delivery systems augments the double-standards argument as far as most Muslims are concerned.

Many Muslims perceive America's discriminatory policies aimed against Muslim countries as a violation of their dignity. For most Muslims, antipathy toward America is not based on opposition to American values of democracy and freedom, as some superficial analysts pronounce. It is fundamentally grounded in their opposition to particular aspects of American foreign policy, especially the perception of the blatant double standards by Washington in relation to the Muslim Middle East.[18] Several Muslim concerns relating to dignity come together on the issue of Palestine, which has therefore become the Muslim grievance par excellence. Many politically conscious Muslims believe that all Muslims are potential "Palestinians," the ultimate outsiders, who can be dispossessed and dishonored with impunity, and the justice of whose cause will always be dismissed by the West—particularly by the United States—as irrational fanaticism.

These sentiments found renewed vigor in the December 2017 announcement by President Trump that the United States would recognize Jerusalem as Israel's capital. While Israel claims Jerusalem as its capital, since Israel's founding in 1948 nearly all countries in the world have refused to recognize this claim, aware that Jerusalem's status is a significant point of contestation in the Palestinian conflict. Arab and European leaders immediately criticized Trump's decision, noting that it would probably provoke a wave of violence and set back progress toward lasting peace in the region. The UN Security Council held an emergency meeting in which all members condemned the decision except for the veto-wielding United States. In response, Hamas urged Palestinians to renew uprisings against Israel, and protests that resulted in armed clashes between Palestinians and Israeli troops erupted in Gaza and the West Bank.[19] Rocket fire from Gaza into Israel escalated as well in December 2017. Hizbullah

staged similar protests in Beirut against the Trump announcement, encouraging a Palestinian uprising.[20] Demonstrators across the Muslim world—including in Malaysia and Indonesia—held protests outside US embassies.[21] Violence between Israel and Gaza intensified in the period leading up to and following the relocation of the US Embassy to Jerusalem in May 2018. As this episode demonstrates, America's support for Israel has worked to the advantage of Islamist political formations, Sunni and Shia alike, especially in the Middle East. Support for Hamas in occupied Palestine and for Hizbullah in Lebanon is in substantial part a reaction to perceived injustices inflicted on Muslim populations because of America's collusion with Israel. In the Muslim world, Islamism thrives on anti-Americanism.

The Interweaving of Domestic and External Factors

It is clear that American policies, especially those relating to the Middle East, have become a major factor in promoting the overall popularity of political Islam among ordinary Muslims. American policies help interweave domestic grievances against repressive regimes with international grievances against the general thrust of US policies toward the Middle East in particular and the Muslim world in general. Several of the authoritarian regimes in the Muslim world, including those ruling Morocco, Egypt, Jordan, and Saudi Arabia, are allies or clients of the United States whose security is guaranteed to a substantial extent by Washington. They therefore dare not oppose—except very feebly—American policies in the Muslim world in general and the Middle East in particular, for fear that the United States will withdraw its support, with consequences harmful to their regimes. This delicate balance of interdependencies is visible in the complicated political relationships in the Middle East following the Arab uprisings.

Islamists who are not themselves in power, but rather comprise political opposition, have no compunction in opposing American policies very vocally and virulently and in rebuking their regimes for collaborating with the United States to promote the latter's designs, seen as anti-Muslim by large segments of populations in many Muslim countries. This augments Islamists' political appeal, because they articulate opinions widely held by Muslim populations around the world. They therefore come to be seen as the primary vehicle for the expression of most Muslims' genuine grievances, both domestically and internationally. This gives Islamists the appearance of greater credibility within Muslim societies, because, in stark contrast to Muslim regimes, they speak to the concerns of large numbers of Muslims, Islamists and non-Islamists alike. It

is no wonder that anti-Americanism is highest in those Muslim countries whose regimes are most closely allied with the United States.[22]

The disparity between American ideals and American foreign policy actions is perhaps most apparent with regard to democratization in the Middle East. With the invasion of Iraq, the US justified military intervention for regime change, clothed in the language of democracy promotion. The result was a political vacuum, the near collapse of the state, and a new regime that falls far short of the procedural minimum to be called a democracy. When citizens across the Arab world took to the streets to demand change in their own regimes in 2011, the United States' response said more about its strategic interests in the region than its commitment to freedom. While the uprisings yielded only one genuine transition to democracy (Tunisia), they fostered numerous violent responses from domestic forces aimed at repressing protestors and opposition. Instead of encouraging political pacts that might usher in transitions, or at least condemning violence against civilians, the US was hesitant to speak out in any way that would antagonize its primary regional ally, Saudi Arabia. While one could argue that US and European involvement in the armed conflicts that followed the uprisings in Libya and Syria did not seek to repress prodemocracy movements, there appears to be little justification for the American supply of weapons in the Yemeni civil war other than a desire to please Saudi Arabia.

The popularity of political Islam is in significant part the result of a unique interplay of domestic and international factors that continuously reinforce each other. This is a nexus not easy to break unless domestic political systems and the major ingredients of American policy are substantially transformed. However, when all is said and done, the potency of political Islam rests in large measure on very distinct domestic contexts in individual Muslim countries. External factors such as American policies are filtered through domestic concerns and popular emotions, thus affecting the future of political Islam in discrete locales through a complex interplay of international and domestic variables. International factors have the ability to reinforce domestic trends and opinions, but they cannot (except in rare cases) create such trends and opinions in the absence of local conditions conducive to their growth. The future of political Islam in distinct contexts will continue to be shaped by the primacy of domestic concerns over external variables.

Notes

CHAPTER 1

1. Graham Fuller, *The Future of Political Islam* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), xi.

2. Greg Barton, *Jemaah Islamiyah: Radical Islamism in Indonesia* (Singapore: Ridge Books, 2005), 28.

3. Guilain Denoeux, "The Forgotten Swamp: Navigating Political Islam," *Middle East Policy* 9, no. 2 (June 2002): 61.

4. Denoeux, "Forgotten Swamp," 61.

5. For a discussion regarding inventing tradition, see the collection of essays in Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, eds., *The Invention of Tradition* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1983).

6. Patricia Crone, *God's Rule: Government and Islam* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004), 318.

7. The consensus in the majority branch of Sunni Islam over the theory of the four caliphs evolved over the first couple of centuries of Islam. Early on, there was great contention over the respective claims particularly of the third and fourth caliphs, Uthman and Ali. The minority Shiites do not accept the idea of the four righteously guided caliphs. For them the fourth caliph, Ali, should have succeeded the Prophet as the political head of the community, but he was denied the right to do so by the machinations of his rivals, especially Abu Bakr and Umar, who became the first and second caliphs, respectively. In *God's Rule*, Crone dates to the ninth century CE the consensus among the majority Sunnis that the first four caliphs were all "righteously guided."

8. L. Carl Brown, *Religion and State: The Muslim Approach to Politics* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000), 50.

9. For a discussion of Kharijites, Ismailis, and other small sects of Islam, see Crone, *God's Rule*, chaps. 5, 9, and 15.

10. For a discussion of Imami, or Twelver Shiite, beliefs, see Crone, *God's Rule*, chap. 10.

11. For a discussion of "hydraulic society" and its implications for imperial rule in the classical age of Islam, see Brown, *Religion and State*, 64–67.

12. Quran 4:59.

13. Brown, *Religion and State*, 54.

14. Crone, *God's Rule*, 21–22.

15. For a discussion of Al-Ghazali's innovative political theories, see Crone, *God's Rule*, 243–49.

16. Albert Hourani, *Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age, 1798–1939* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 19 (the quote is from Ibn Taymiyya).

17. Hourani, *Arabic Thought*, 148.

18. Malcolm H. Kerr, *Islamic Reform: The Political and Legal Theories of Muhammad 'Abduh and Rashid Rida* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1966), 155.

19. H. A. R. Gibb, *Modern Trends in Islam* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1947), 34.

20. Rudolph Peters, who has done extensive work on the subject of jihad, explains: "[T]o the best of my knowledge the word *watan* [homeland] was first used in combination with jihad during the 'Urabi revolt [in the 1880s in Egypt]. Many preachers that backed 'Urabi's cause, coupled the concept of defence of the fatherland with that of defence of religion" (*Islam and Colonialism: The Doctrine of Jihad in Modern History* [New York: Mouton, 1979], 196n72).

21. Mohammed Ayoob, "Challenging Hegemony: Political Islam and the North-South Divide," *International Studies Review* 9, no. 4 (Winter 2007): 629–43.

22. Peters, *Islam and Colonialism*, 152.

23. Robert W. Hefner, "Introduction: Modernity and the Remaking of Muslim Politics," in *Remaking Muslim Politics: Pluralism, Contestation, Democratization*, ed. Robert W. Hefner (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005), 23.

24. Fouad Ajami, *The Arab Predicament*, updated ed. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 242.

25. Brown, *Religion and State*, chaps. 3–7.

26. Mohammed Ayoob, "Turkey's Multiple Paradoxes," *Orbis* 48, no. 3 (2004): 457.

27. For a discussion of the rise and decline of the Mughal Empire in India, see John F. Richards, *The Mughal Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

28. John S. Habib, *Ibn Saud's Warriors of Islam: The Ikhwan of Najd and Their Role in the Creation of the Saudi Kingdom, 1910–1930* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1978).

29. The term *Islamdom*, analogous to the term *Christendom*, was introduced by the late Marshall G. S. Hodgson to describe predominantly Muslim societies. It helps mitigate the confusion that usually arises when, as is common in Western writings, "Islam" is juxtaposed against Christendom or the West or Europe. Hodgson explained: "'Islamdom' . . . is the society in which the Muslims and their faith are recognized as prevalent and socially dominant, in one sense or another—a society in which, of course, non-Muslims have always formed an integral, if subordinate, element, as have Jews in Christendom. It does not refer to an area as such, but to *a complex of social relations*, which, to be sure, is territorially more or less well-defined" (*The Venture of Islam*, vol. 1, *The Classical Age of Islam* [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974], 58).

30. Wael Hallaq, *The Origins and Evolution of Islamic Law* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 204.

31. Graham Fuller, "The Future of Political Islam," *Foreign Affairs* 81, no. 2 (2002): 48–60.

32. Olivier Roy, *The Failure of Political Islam* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1996), vii.

33. Dale F. Eickelman and James Piscatori, *Muslim Politics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), 4.

34. Adeed Dawisha, *Arab Nationalism in the Twentieth Century: From Triumph to Despair* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002); Malik Mufti, *Sovereign Creations: Pan-Arabism and Political Order in Syria and Iraq* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1996).

35. For an analysis of the process of state building in the postcolonial world, including its Muslim components, see Mohammed Ayoob, *The Third World Security Predicament: State Making, Regional Conflict, and the International System* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 1995), chap. 2.

36. This and the following section draw substantially from Dylan Welch, "Reclassifying Islamist Organizations: A Multidimensional Typology of Political Islam," Grinnell College (2019), https://digital.grinnell.edu/islandora/object/grinnell%3A26668

37. Jillian Schwedler, "Can Islamists Become Moderates?: Rethinking the Inclusion-Moderation Hypothesis," *World Politics* 63, no. 2 (2011): 347–76.

38. For more on conceptual typologies, see David Collier, Jody LaPorte, and Jason Seawright, "Putting Typologies to Work: Concept Formation, Measurement, and Analytic Rigor," *Political Research Quarterly* 65, no. 1 (March 2012): 217–32.

39. Nathan J. Brown, *When Victory Is Not an Option: Islamist Movements in Arab Politics* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2012).

40. See Carrie Rosefksy Wickham, *Mobilizing Islam: Religion, Activism, and Political Change in Egypt* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002); Vali Nasr, *The Vanguard of the Islamic Revolution: The Jama'at-I-Islami of Pakistan* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994).

41. Alex P. Schmid, "The Revised Academic Consensus Definition of Terrorism," *Perspectives on Terrorism* 6, no. 2 (May 2012): 158–59.

42. See Alex P. Schmid, ed., *The Routledge Handbook of Terrorism Research* (New York: Routledge, 2011); and Schmid, "Revised Academic Consensus," 158–59.

43. Schmid, "Revised Academic Consensus," 158.

44. M. Steven Fish, *Are Muslims Distinctive? A Look at the Evidence* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 156.

45. Fish, *Are Muslims Distinctive?*, 156.

46. Ioana Emy Matesan, "The Link between Ideology, Violent Tactics, and Organizational Structures in Opposition Groups" (Southwest Workshop on Mixed Methods Research, University of California, Riverside, 2017).

47. Max Weber, *The Methodology of the Social Sciences*, trans. Edward A. Shils and Henry A. Finch (Glencoe, IL: Free Press, 1949).

48. See Vladimir Lenin, "What Is to Be Done?" in *The Lenin Anthology*, ed. Robert Tucker [1st ed.] (New York: Norton, 1975).

49. John Calvert, "The Mythic Foundations of Radical Islam," *Orbis* 48, no. 1 (Winter 2004): 40 [article full pages 29–41].

CHAPTER 2

1. See, for example, Bernard Lewis, "Roots of Muslim Rage," *Atlantic Monthly* 266, no. 3 (1990): 47–60; Samuel Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1996).

2. For an insightful discussion of their arguments justifying the killing of civilians, see Quintan Wiktorowicz, "A Genealogy of Radical Islam," *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* 28, no. 2 (2005): 86–92.

3. Robert W. Hefner, "Introduction: Modernity and the Remaking of Muslim Politics," in *Remaking Muslim Politics: Pluralism, Contestation, Democratization*, ed. Robert W. Hefner (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005), 6.

4. Hamid Enayat, *Modern Islamic Political Thought* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1982), 162.

5. Nikki Keddie, *Modern Iran: Roots and Results of Revolution* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), 146.

6. L. Carl Brown, *Religion and State: The Muslim Approach to Politics* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000), 164.

7. Philip Kennicott, "The Religious Face of Iraq," *Washington Post*, February 18, 2005.

8. Patricia Crone, *God's Rule: Government and Islam* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004), 220.

9. For a convincing argument that this has been the case, see Muhammad Qasim Zaman, "Pluralism, Democracy, and the 'Ulama," in *Remaking Muslim Politics: Pluralism, Contestation, Democratization*, ed. Robert W. Hefner (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005), 60–86.

10. For commonalities between the Christian Reformation and the proto-Reformation in Islam, see Brown, *Religion and State*, 136–39.

11. For details of this argument, see Carl W. Ernst, *Following Muhammad: Rethinking Islam in the Contemporary World* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003), 66–67; Richard W. Bulliet, "The Crisis within Islam," *Wilson Quarterly* 26, no. 1 (2002): 11–19.

12. Saeed Abdullah, "The Official Ulama and the Religious Legitimacy of the Modern Nation State," in *Islam and Political Legitimacy*, ed. Shahram Akbarzadeh and Abdullah Saeed (New York: Routledge Curzon, 2003), 14–15.

13. Seyyed Vali Reza Nasr, "Mawdudi and the Jamat-I-Islami," in *Pioneers of Islamic Revival*, ed. Ali Rahnema (London: Zed Books, 1994), 105.

14. Charles Tripp, "Sayyid Qutb: The Political Vision," in *Pioneers of Islamic Revival*, ed. Ali Rahnema (London: Zed Books, 1994), 178.

15. Incidentally, the same is true of Osama bin Laden, who studied management and economics, and of his deputy, Ayman al-Zawahiri, who was trained as a physician.

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18. For Saudi Arabia, see Gilles Kepel, *The War for Muslim Minds: Islam and the*

West (Cambridge, MA: Belknap, 2004), chap. 5; for Pakistan, see Vali Nasr, "Military Rule, Islamism, and Democracy in Pakistan," *Middle East Journal* 58, no. 2 (2004): 195–209.

19. See Daniel Brumberg, *Reinventing Khomeini: The Struggle for Reform in Iran* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001).

20. Keddie, *Modern Iran,* chaps. 9–10.

21. See Muhammad Qasim Zaman, *The Ulama in Contemporary Islam: Custodians of Change* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002).

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24. This was argued eloquently three decades ago in James Piscatori, *Islam in a World of Nation-States* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1986).

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37. Knut S. Vickor, "The Development of Ijtihad and Islamic Reform, 1750–1850," paper presented at the Third Nordic Conference on Middle Eastern Studies, Joensuu, Finland, June 19–22, 1995.

38. Suha Taji-Farouki, introduction to *Modern Muslim Intellectuals and the Qu'ran*, ed. Suha Taji-Farouki (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 2. For selections of writings of some of the reformist scholars mentioned in text, see Charles Kurzman, *Liberal Islam: A Source Book* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998).

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40. For Fazlur Rahman's ideas, see his *Revival and Reform in Islam: A Study of Islamic Fundamentalism*, ed. Ebrahim Moosa (Oxford, UK: Oneworld Publications, 1999). For a study of Nurcholish Madjid's ideas, see Greg Barton, *Liberal Islamic Ideas: A Study of the Writing of Nurcholish Madjid* (Jakarta: Pustaka Antara/Paramadina/Yayasan Adikarya IKAPI, 1999); Anthony H. Johns and Abdullah Saeed, "Nurcholish Madjid and the Interpretation of the Qur'an: Religious Pluralism and Tolerance," in *Modern Muslim Intellectuals and the Qu'ran*, ed. Suha Taji-Farouki (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 67–96.

CHAPTER 3

1. Madawi Al-Rasheed, *A History of Saudi Arabia* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 1, 3.

2. Quoted in Al-Rasheed, *History*, 17.

3. Natana J. Delong-Bas, *Wahhabi Islam: From Revival and Reform to Global Jihad* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), chap. 5.

4. Hamid Algar, *Wahhabism: A Critical Essay* (Oneonta, NY: Islamic Publications International, 2002).

5. For details of the ebb and flow of Saudi power during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, see Alexei Vassiliev, *The History of Saudi Arabia* (New York: New York University Press, 2000).

6. According to John S. Habib, the Ikhwan were "those Bedouins who accepted the fundamentals of orthodox Islam of the Hanbali school as preached by 'Abd-al-Wahhab which their fathers and forefathers had forgotten or had perverted, and who, through the persuasion of the religious missionaries and with the material assistance of Ibn Sa'ud, abandoned their nomadic life to live in the *hujar* which were built by him for them" (*Ibn Saud's Warriors of Islam: The Ikhwan of Najd and Their Role in the Creation of the Saudi Kingdom, 1910–1930* [Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1978], 16–17). A major grievance for the Ikhwan against Ibn Saud was that he allowed the use of "automobiles, telegraph, wireless, and telephones, all of which were Christian innovations, and inventions of the devil" (Habib, *Ibn Saud's Warriors*, 122). One wonders if the contemporary Wahhabis and neo-Wahhabis would have been as successful in spreading their message as they have been without the use of such "inventions of the devil."

7. For British support to Ibn Saud's expansionist project and the suppression of the Ikhwan, see Joseph Kostiner, *The Making of Saudi Arabia, 1916–1936: From Chieftancy to Monarchical State* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993).

8. Al-Rasheed, *History of Saudi Arabia*, 70.

9. For the Hijazi reaction to political marginalization, see Mai Yamani, *Cradle of Islam: The Hijaz and the Quest for an Arabian Identity* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2004). Yamani asserts that the "urban Hijazi elites have sought not only to preserve but also to accentuate a distinct cultural identity . . . that serves to bolster a sense of cultural superiority and to counter their political and economic subordination to the country's Najdi rulers" (12). For the plight of the Saudi Shia, see International Crisis Group, *The Shiite Question in Saudi Arabia*, Middle East Report No. 45, September 2005.

10. Al-Rasheed, *History of Saudi Arabia*, 68.

11. Ervand Abrahamian, *Iran between Two Revolutions* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982), 41.

12. Nikki Keddie, "Religion and Irreligion in Early Iranian Nationalism," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 4, no. 3 (1962): 290.

13. Abrahamian, *Iran between Two Revolutions*, 40.

14. The major exception to this rule occurred in the period between 1951 and 1953 when some senior clerics first supported Prime Minister Mossadeq against the shah but later backed off in fear of communist and secularist influences in Mossadeq's government and contributed to its downfall. See Nikki Keddie, *Modern Iran: Roots and Results of Revolution* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), 146.

15. For details, see Said Amir Arjomand, *The Turban for the Crown: The Islamic Revolution in Iran* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988); Misagh Parsa, *Social Origins of the Iranian Revolution* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1989).

16. There is not enough space in this chapter to go into the details of the causes and consequences of the Iranian revolution. Interested readers can find incisive analyses in books by Abrahmian, Keddie, Arjomand, and Parsa referenced in this chapter.

17. See Martin Wight, *Systems of States* (Leicester, UK: Leicester University Press, 1977); Charles Tilly, *Coercion, Capital, and European States, AD 990–1990* (Cambridge: Blackwell, 1990); Hendrik Spruyt, *The Sovereign State and Its Competitors* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994).

18. For details of this argument, see Mohammed Ayoob, *The Third World Security Predicament: State Making, Regional Conflict, and the International System* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 1995), chap. 3.

19. The text of the Saudi Basic Law is available on the Internet at https://www.saudiembassy.net/basic-law-governance, accessed on December 3, 2018.

20. International Crisis Group, *Saudi Arabia Backgrounder: Who Are the Islamists?* (International Crisis Group, 2004), 4, https://d2071andvip0wj.cloudfront.net/31-saudi-arabia-backgrounder-who-are-the-islamists.pdf

21. The tensions within Khomeini's ideas, the impact they had on fashioning the postrevolutionary system in Iran, and their continuing relevance to contemporary debates between reformists and hard-liners in Iran are discussed insightfully in Daniel Brumberg, *Reinventing Khomeini: The Struggle for Reform in Iran* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001).

22. For a concise analysis of this revolution, see A. K. S. Lambton, "The Persian Constitutional Revolution of 1905–6," in *Revolution in the Middle East, and Other Case Studies*, ed. P. J. Vatikiotis (London: Allen and Unwin, 1972), 173–82.

23. For details, see Abrahamian, *Iran between Two Revolutions.*

24. Abrahamian, *Iran between Two Revolutions*, 90.

25. For details, see the text of the constitution on the Internet at http://www.iran chamber.com/government/laws/constitution.php, accessed December 3, 2018.

26. International Crisis Group, *Iran: What Does Ahmadi-Nejad's Victory Mean?* (Brussels: International Crisis Group, 2005), https://d2071andvip0wj.cloudfront.net/b18-iran-what-does-ahmadi-nejad-s-victory-mean.pdf

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28. See http://www.iranchamber.com/government/laws/constitution_ch06.php, accessed December 3, 2018.

29. For more on hybrid regimes, see Leah Gilbert and Payam Mohseni, "Beyond Authoritarianism: The Conceptualization of Hybrid Regimes," *Studies in Comparative International Development* 46 (2011): 270–97.

30. Mohammed Ayoob, "Iran's Protests Show the Cracks in the System," *National Interest*, January 3, 2018, https://nationalinterest.org/feature/irans-protests-show-the-cracks-the-system-23917

31. Ayoob, "Iran's Protests."

32. For two articles that unravel the complexities of Iranian politics, see Ali M. Ansari, "Continuous Regime Change from Within," *Washington Quarterly* 26, no. 4 (2003): 53–67; Mahmood Sariolghalam, "Understanding Iran: Getting Past Stereotypes and Mythology," *Washington Quarterly* 26, no. 4 (2003): 69–82.

33. See chapter 1.

34. For an eloquent case for a Hijazi identity that is very distinct from the Najdi/Saudi identity that dominates the Saudi landscape today, see Yamani, *Cradle of Islam.*

35. For a very thoughtful analysis of US-Saudi relations and the role of religion in complicating this relationship, see Rachel Bronson, "Rethinking Religion: The Legacy of the U.S.-Saudi Relationship," *Washington Quarterly* 28, no. 4 (2005): 121–37.

36. Article 5 of the Iranian constitution states, "During the Occultation of the Wali al-Asr (may God hasten his reappearance), the wilayah and leadership of the Ummah devolve upon the just ['adil] and pious [muttaqi] faqih, who is fully aware of the circumstances of his age; courageous, resourceful, and possessed of administrative ability, he will assume the responsibilities of this office in accordance with Article 107" (http://www.iranchamber.com/government/laws/constitution_ch01.php, accessed December 3, 2018). Articles 107–12 lay out the qualifications, functions, and responsibilities of the supreme jurist and the Council of the Guardian (http://www.iranchamber.com/government/laws/constitution_ch08.php).

37. Ruhollah Khomeini, *Islamic Government*, trans. Joint Publications Research Service (New York: Manor Books, 1979); Ruhollah Khomeini, *Islam and Revolution: Writings and Declarations of Imam Khomeini*, trans. Hamid Algar (Berkeley: Mizan, 1981).

38. Hamid Enayat, "Khumayni's Concept of the 'Guardianship of the Jurisconsult,'" in *Islam in the Political Process*, ed. James P. Piscatori (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 174.

39. See H. E. Chehabi, "Religion and Politics in Iran," *Daedalus* 120, no. 3 (1991): 69–91.

40. Grand Ayatollah Hossein Ali Montazeri, at one time anointed to succeed Ayatollah Khomeini as the supreme jurist but removed from his position because of his differences with Khomeini regarding the role of the clergy in governance, is the most vocal exponent of such views. He has even gone to the extent of calling the present system in Iran "a monarchical setup," an obvious reference to the powers of the supreme jurist. For more on Montazeri's views, see Christopher de Bellaigue, "Who Rules Iran?" *New York Review of Books* 49, no. 11 (2002): 17–19.

41. Rajaee, "Deciphering Iran," 161.

42. Enayat, "Khumayni's Concept of the 'Guardianship of the Jurisconsult,'" 174.

43. The late Grand Ayatollah Mohammed Kazem Shariatmadari, then under house arrest for opposing Khomeini's ideas about how Iran ought to be governed, said as much to Mohammed Ayoob in an interview in Qom in March 1981, just two years after the revolution. According to him, Khomeini's ideas were more akin to the Sunni concept of the caliphate, with which, he thought, the *vilayat-i faqih* had substantial similarities, than to the Shia concept of the imamate, which was based on extraordinary spiritual attributes rather than temporal power. He more than implied that Khomeini was more a Sunni than a Shia, a damning indictment of the supreme leader of the (Shia) Islamic revolution of Iran, who had declared himself the *rahbar* (supreme leader) under the postrevolution constitution. Ayatollah Shariatmadari emphasized his point by telling Ayoob, "He [Khomeini] is closer to you [a Sunni] than he is to me [a Shia]."

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45. Eric Rouleau, "Trouble in the Kingdom," *Foreign Affairs* 81, no. 4 (2002): 79.

46. For analyses of Sayyid Qutb's ideas, see Yvonne Haddad, "Sayyid Qutb: Ideologue of Islamic Revival," in *Voices of Resurgent Islam*, ed. John L. Esposito (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983), 67–98; Charles Tripp, "Sayyid Qutb: The Political Vision," in *Pioneers of Islamic Revival*, ed. Ali Rahnema (London: Zed Books, 1994).

47. Al-Rasheed, *History of Saudi Arabia*, 154.

48. For details of the *sahwa*, their views, and differences among them, see International Crisis Group, *Saudi Arabia Backgrounder.*

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51. Mahmoud Sadri and Ahmad Sadri, *Reason, Freedom, and Democracy in Islam: Essential Writings of Abdolkarim Soroush* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), xviii.

52. Rajaee, "Deciphering Iran," 161.

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Democracy: A Comparative Perspective, eds. Kathryn Stoner and Michael McFaul, (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2013), 342–77.

54. For external factors aiding the creation of Saudi Arabia, see Kostiner, *Making of Saudi Arabia.*

CHAPTER 4

1. For details of the struggle for the political soul of Pakistan during its formative years, see Khalid B. Sayeed, *The Political System of Pakistan* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1967).
2. Richard P. Mitchell, *The Society of the Muslim Brothers* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1969), 33.
3. Seyyed Vali Reza Nasr, *Vanguard of the Islamic Revolution: The Jama'at-I-Islami of Pakistan* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 7, 21.
4. L. Carl Brown, *Religion and State: The Muslim Approach to Politics* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000), 147–48.
5. Richard P. Mitchell, *Society of the Muslim Brothers* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1969), 232.
6. Seyyed Vali Reza Nasr, *Mawdudi and the Making of Islamic Revivalism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 59.
7. Charles J. Adams, "Mawdudi and the Islamic State," in *Voices of Resurgent Islam*, ed. John L. Esposito (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983), 116.
8. Adams, "Mawdudi," 119.
9. See the discussion of Iran in chapter 3.
10. Nasr, *Mawdudi*, 83.
11. Nasr, *Mawdudi*, 60.
12. Nasr, *Vanguard*, 8–9.
13. Nasr, *Mawdudi*, 77.
14. Nasr, *Vanguard*, 120.
15. Nasr, *Mawdudi*, 74.
16. Brown, *Religion and State*, 146.
17. Mitchell, *Society*, 103.
18. Mitchell, *Society*, 235.
19. Mitchell, *Society*, 246–47.
20. Mitchell, *Society*, 237.
21. For Mawdudi's views on the *ulama*, see Nasr, *Mawdudi*, 110–22.
22. See chapter 2.
23. Mitchell, *Society*, 211–12.
24. Brown, *Religion and State*, 156.
25. Brown, *Religion and State*, 156.
26. Nasr, *Mawdudi*, 68.
27. For details of Qutb's ideas and comparisons with the ideas of Mawdudi, see Gilles Kepel, *The Prophet and the Pharaoh: Muslim Extremism in Egypt* (London: Saqi Books, 1985); Ahmad S. Moussalli, *Radical Islamic Fundamentalism: The Ideological and Political Discourse of Sayyid Qutb* (Beirut: University of Beirut, 1992).

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31. For a detailed account of the relationship between the MB and the Mubarak regime and of their attempts to use each other to attain greater legitimacy, see Hesham Al-Awadi, *In Pursuit of Legitimacy: The Muslim Brothers and Mubarak, 1982–2000* (New York: Tauris Academic Studies, 2000); Hesham Al Awadi, "Mubarak and the Islamists: Why Did the 'Honeymoon' End?" *Middle East Journal* 59, no. 1 (2005): 62–80. See also Wickham, *Mobilizing Islam*.

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33. Nasr, *Vanguard*, 148–49.

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CHAPTER 5

1. Consistent with the definition of "Islamism" outlined in chapter 1, we use the adjective "Islamist" to describe any actor who makes use of Islam to pursue political objectives. Therefore, our application of the term is broadly inclusive of all political parties who relate their political purpose to Islam. Some of the actors described in this chapter might not self-identify as "Islamist" due to their desire to differentiate themselves from actors who hold more absolutist positions or engage in different tactics.

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CHAPTER 6

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CHAPTER 7

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CHAPTER 8

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United States—Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and the United Arab Emirates. Sixty-three percent of the respondents saw the United States as one of the two major threats to their countries, with Israel ranking at 70 percent, slightly above America. Eighty percent identified American policies, rather than values, as the reason for their negative attitude toward the United States. The poll was conducted jointly by the Anwar Sadat Chair for Peace and Development at the University of Maryland and the polling firm Zogby International. Details are available at https://sadat.umd.edu/landing/Polls

Glossary of Terms

dar al-Islam. Literally, "the abode of Islam"; territories in which Islamic law is, in theory, applicable. The opposite of *dar al-Harb* (literally, "the land of war"), which refers to all territories in which Islamic law is not applied or Muslims are not in political control. *Dar al-Islam* is differentiated from *umma*, which refers to the community of Muslims. *Dar al-Islam* refers to territories under Muslim political control. "Islamdom" is a good equivalent in English.

dawa. Literally, "call," that is, inviting others to Islam; the act of educating non-Muslims about Islam. Also used to invite Muslims to become better practicing Muslims.

fatwa. A legal pronouncement made by a scholar capable of issuing judgments on Islamic law.

fiqh. Islamic jurisprudence, which covers all aspects of life. In Sunni Islam, disagreement on authenticity of hadith to use as sources to arrive at a verdict on a particular issue has led to the emergence of several schools of jurisprudence. The four most prominent are Hanafi, Shafi'i, Maliki, and Hanbali, named after their most prominent founders. Unlike the Sunni-Shia division, these schools do not transform into social and political identities. Most Shia follow the Ja'afri school of jurisprudence, named after their sixth imam, himself a great jurist.

fitna. Mischief, dissension, and conflict within the *umma*.

hadith. Words and deeds of Prophet Muhammad. Collected and verified meticulously, they form the source for determining the sunna, the way of the Prophet.

hudna. Truce, armistice, or cease-fire. In Western parlance, the term is most frequently used in reference to an Israeli-Palestinian truce, particularly one that would involve such organizations as Hamas.

ijtihad. Derived from *jahada*, which means to struggle to attain an objective. The process of arriving at an Islamic legal decision through independent reasoning and interpretation of basic sources, such as the Quran and the sunna. The opposite of *taqlid*, or following precedent or existing practice without questioning it. A person who has the scholarly credentials to conduct *ijtihad* is called a *mujtahid*.

imam. Literally, "leader." In everyday usage, a prayer leader. In the Sunni tradition, a recognized religious leader or teacher. In Shia Islam, a descendant of the Prophet through his daughter Fatima and son-in-law Ali. These descendants were recog-

nized as spiritual leaders of the community. According to Shia belief, the twelfth imam went into occultation and will return at the end of time to inaugurate an era of absolute justice in the world. The Shias believe that all government is illegitimate pending the return of the Mahdi, the twelfth imam.

intifada. Palestinian uprising to free the West Bank and Gaza from the Israeli occupation begun in 1967. The first intifada began in 1987, the second in 2000.

jahiliyya. Literally, "state of ignorance." Refers specifically to the state of being ignorant of Islam, the condition in which Arabs found themselves prior to Islam. Modern Islamist scholars, such as Qutb and Mawdudi, used this term to describe Muslim societies where Islamic law did not prevail.

jihad. Literally, "effort" or "struggle." The term has been conventionally interpreted as armed struggle by Muslims to defend or advance Islam against unbelievers. After a saying of the Prophet, some traditions emphasize "greater jihad," which means struggle against one's inner temptations, as opposed to "lesser jihad," which connotes armed struggle.

jihadis. Muslim militants who favor and adopt violence as a means to achieve political ends, often in a transnational context.

madrassa. School; more specifically, schools in which religious instruction is offered.

Mahdi. The prophesied redeemer of Islam, who will change the world into a perfect Islamic society alongside the Prophet Jesus before the Day of the Resurrection. The belief in Mahdi is shared by both Sunnis and Shiites; however, Twelver Shiites believe that the twelfth imam is the Mahdi and will reappear from his hiding.

muhajir. Muslim refugee or immigrant who flees his or her homeland due to oppression and persecution. The term was initially applied to the Muslims of Mecca who migrated to Medina with the Prophet in 622 CE. Several groups in the past have also been referred to as *muhajirs*, including Muslim refugees from India who settled in Pakistan after independence in 1947.

Salafis. Members of the Sunni puritanical movement of *salafiyya*. Salafis favor a return to the practice of the *salaf al-salih* (the "righteous ancestors"), the first three generations of Muslims. Salafis are known by their strict interpretation of the Quran and the sunna and their strong opposition to traditional and Sufi practices. Salafis are also known for their strong anti-Shia discourse.

sharia. Literally "the way"; the body of Islamic law that governs individual and social aspects of Muslim life. The two basic sources of sharia are the Quran and the hadith. In the Muslim historical context, the term often refers more to rule of law than to a particular legal system.

Sheikh al-Islam (Şyehül slam in Turkish). Highest authority on religious issues in the Sunni political tradition. Title given to the highest Ottoman religious authority, in contrast to the political position of the sultan-caliph.

Shia. One of the two major sects in Islam. Cf. **Sunnis.** The Shia view is that succession had to come from the family of the Prophet (Ahl al-Bayt); hence, Ali bin Abi Talib, son-in-law of the Prophet, had to be the first legitimate successor. Shias believe that imams are infallible spiritual guides.

shura. Literally, "consultation." Muslim movements argue that Islam requires consultation as a decision-making principle, allowing for a synthesis of Islam and representative democracy.

sunna. The deeds, sayings, and approvals of Prophet Muhammad and, according to the Shia, those of the twelve imams.

Sunnis. One of the two major sects in Islam. Cf. **Shia.** Sunnis accept election or selection by the leaders of the community as the means of choosing the caliph. They regard the first four caliphs—Abu Bakr, Umar, Uthman, and Ali—as "rightly guided." Other than the question of succession, there are theological differences between the two. Sunnis regard caliphs as fallible political leaders.

takfir. The practice of denouncing as an apostate an individual who identifies himself or herself as Muslim. In classical Muslim scholarship, conditions of *takfir* are extensively discussed. In a modern context, marginal and extremist groups accuse entire Muslim societies of being apostates.

taqlid. The opposite of *ijtihad*; implies total acceptance of previous scholarly opinions on religious and daily matters without demanding a detailed justification of them.

ulama (pl. of *alim*). Religious-legal scholars of Islam.

umma. The worldwide Muslim community, including majority and minority Muslim populations.

vilayat-i faqih. Guardianship of the jurisconsult. The concept establishes the authority of the *faqih*, or expert in *fiqh* (jurisprudence), over religious as well as political matters. It was first developed by Ayatollah Khomeini in 1963 and incorporated into Iran's constitutional system in 1979, establishing him as the highest authority in the country.

Wahhabism. An Islamic puritanical doctrine of reform and renewal attributed to Muhammad ibn Abdul Wahhab (1703–1787), who allied himself with the House of Saud. Wahhabism has served as the official ideology of the Saudi regime. The term was coined by ibn Abdul Wahhab's opponents; his followers prefer to call themselves Muwahhidun (Unitarians).

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