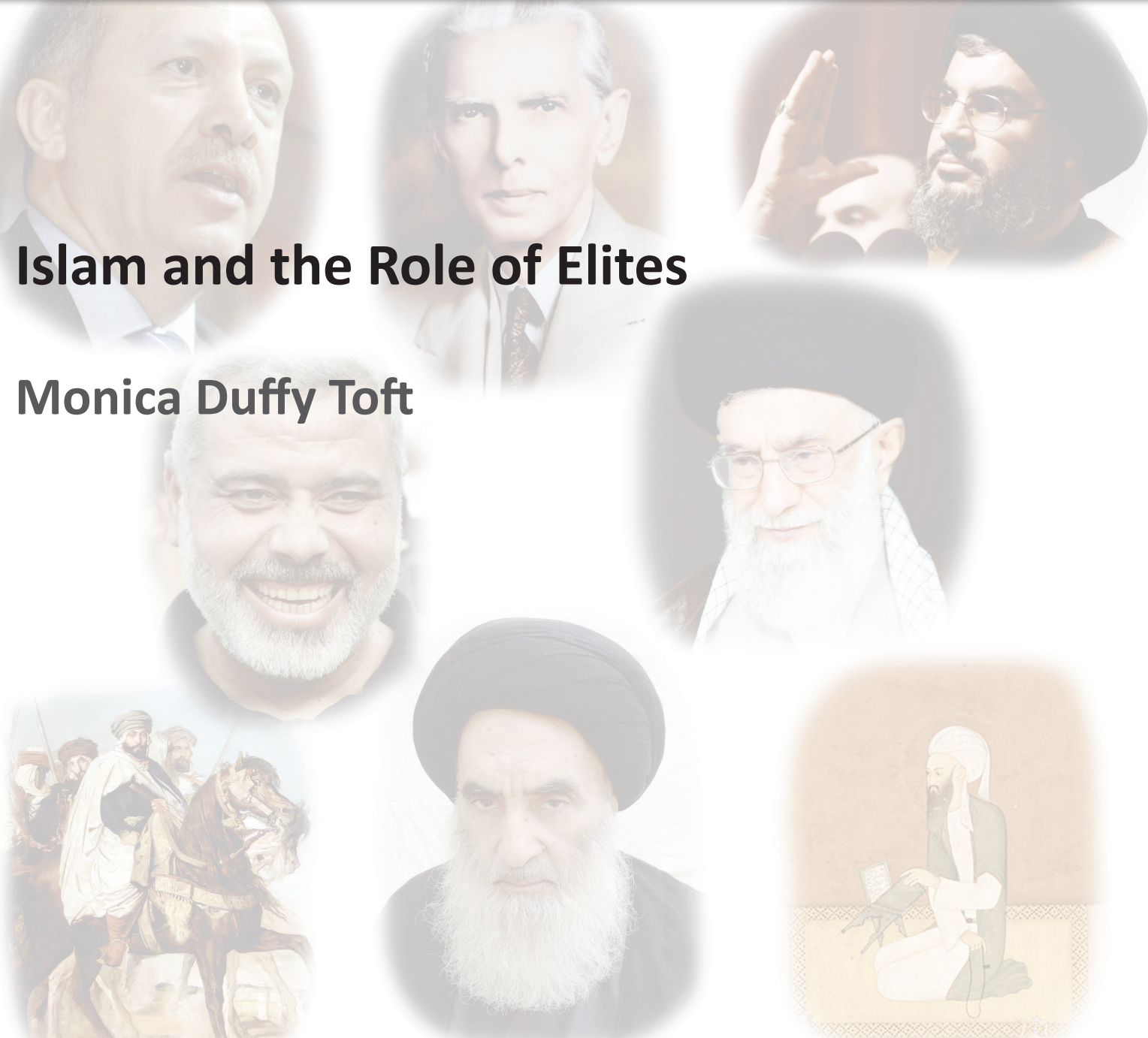


THE DUBAI INITIATIVE برنامج دبي

Policy Brief

Islam and the Role of Elites

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BELFER CENTER
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ISLAM AND THE ROLE OF ELITES

Dubai Initiative – Policy Brief

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This policy brief provides background information on how Islam in its various manifestations has developed and spread throughout the world and the role of elites in this evolution¹. Having emerged in seventh-century Arabia, Muslim communities have formed and thrived in Asia, Africa, Europe, North and South America, and Oceania. Today, the majority of Muslims live outside of the Middle East.² From the earliest days of Islam, the movement of people and ideas has impacted the institutions of political power in countless regions and modern nation-states. Such changes in religious and political landscapes have occurred with the help of migration, conversion, and decisions on the part of ruling elites about the desired character of their states.

To varying degrees, religious elites have often pursued a particular vision of the role of religion vis-à-vis the state. In some cases, gaining or retaining political power appears to hinge on religion—in particular, on how religion can provide authority and legitimacy in the eyes of the public. More recently, modern communication networks have amplified the resonance that religious messages have with coreligionists, both at home and abroad.³ Today, elites have the potential to gain transnational support as they seek political power.⁴ Where feelings of religious brotherhood exist between a local or global group and the group an elite figure desires to represent, they can yield benefits in the form of monetary assistance or by putting political pressure on local authorities. Thus, elites who make religious bids for power are in a position to gain both tangible material support and the more intangible asset of popular resonance.

In offering the following backgrounder, I point to a few key reasons why past elites have incorporated Islam into their bids for power and, with that precedent, why today's religious bids for control more often occur within Muslim societies as elites compete for power.

In the first section, I provide a brief account of the figures and events that have helped to shape Islamic history; focussing on how and where Islam has spread in the world. After discussing present-day population distributions, I provide a two-part account of how modern Muslim communities and schools of thought came to acquire their character. The first part of this narrative centers on the movement of people through mechanisms such as trade and commerce, migration, and conversion. In the second part, I focus on the movement of ideas and the transmission of knowledge by discussing the major legal schools of Islam and centers of learning. In all of this, the role of local influences are critical.⁵ To conclude, I will discuss modern developments in the growth of Islam, placing emphasis on new types of community formation, new ideologies, and their potential consequences.

BASICS

With Islam figuring prominently in countless news stories, time cannot be devoted in every instance to summarizing the intricacies of Islamic history. Although readers have heard numerous references to terms such as Sunnism and Shi'ism (the largest and second largest branches of Islam, respectively), journalistic pieces provide less detailed information on the differences between such groups than scholarly articles. Here, my aim is simply to touch on several key points that are important in gaining a basic overview of Islam and the varied groups that have practiced it over the centuries.

The earliest community of Islam, or *umma*, took a unified form under the guidance of the Prophet Muhammad, who began receiving revelations in 610 C.E. At the heart of the eventual split between Sunni Muslims and the Shi'a was the question of legitimate leadership following the Prophet's death in 632. Around that time, the death of the Muhammad brought about differences of opinion regarding who should succeed him as leader of the still young Muslim community. Elected to this position was Abu Bakr, who Sunnis came to know as the first of the four Rightly Guided Caliphs, or the Rashidun. Following Abu Bakr's death in 634, Umar ibn al-Khattab became the second Caliph and, in 644, established a committee to select his own successor. In doing so, Umar set a precedent for how power would be transferred in the future. That year, Umar died, leaving Uthman ibn Affan to be the third Caliph. After a reign in which the Qur'an was collected and organized into its present format, Uthman was assassinated and succeeded in 656 by Ali ibn Ali Talib, son-in-law of the Prophet and the last figure of the Rashidun Caliphate.

The period following Ali's appointment (656-661) would be known as the first *fitna*, or the first major civil war among Muslims. Specifically at issue was the question of which individual ought to succeed Muhammad as leader of the community. In the view of one party, Abu Bakr, Umar, and Uthman had ruled unjustly by the standards of Islam; only Ali's rule had been legitimate. Known as the Shi'at Ali, or "the partisans of Ali," that faction held that Ali was the rightful heir to Muhammad. After Ali's assassination in 661, the Shi'a continued to oppose the Sunnis and their line of leaders that began with the Rashidun.

The Sunni-Shi'a divide worsened in 680, when the second Muslim civil war (680-692) led Hussein, the son of Ali, to rebel against the Sunni Caliph, Yazid. The result of that confrontation—Hussein's martyrdom—would become a pivotal event in Shi'i history and has continued to hold considerable weight in the modern Shi'i religious imagination. The power of martyrdom and its accompanying mourning rituals was especially demonstrated in Iran's 1979 revolution. While Sunni leadership developed along the model of the Caliph ruler, the Shi'a passed power down through a succession of leaders known as Imams. In Arabic, the word *imam* simply denotes a leader—literally, one who stands in front.⁶ But

in the context of Shi'ism, the Imams were considered the infallible ones who would lead the Muslims justly in the absence of the Prophet. Beginning with Ali and continuing with his sons Hasan and Hussein, this line of Imams takes on different forms depending on the school of Shi'i thought.

The largest branch of Shi'i Islam—the Twelvers, or the Ithna 'Asharis—holds that the line of succession extended from Ali to the twelfth Imam, Muhammad ibn Hasan. He would become known as the Mahdi—a savior figure—due to the belief that God took him away from the world and would later send him back in an hour of need. When he disappeared in 874, the Shi'a declared that he had not died but had rather entered a state of occultation; at the right time, he would eventually reappear to bring peace to the world. Because the “Hidden Imam” is still alive according to Twelver theology, Shi'i scholars generally hold that political authority must be limited during the Mahdi's absence. This notion of restricted power has played out in differently over time.

For the second largest group of Shi'a, separation from the majority Twelvers became necessary at the time of death Ja'far al-Sadiq, the sixth Imam, in 765. Disagreement surrounding the selection of the seventh Imam led to the formation of the Isma'ili branch of Shi'ism—also known as the Seveners. According to this group, Isma'il, the son of Ja'far, should have been recognized as the seventh Imam despite the fact that he died before his father. The Twelvers rejected this idea, declaring Musa al-Kazim the next Imam, continuing their line of succession with him.

Following the Ithna 'Asharis and the Isma'ilis in size, the third largest Shi'i sect in existence today is the Zaydi branch, or the Fivers. The Zaydis separated with the Twelvers due to a disagreement over who ought to succeed Ali following his assassination in 661. Whereas mainstream Shi'a identified Muhammad al-Baqir as the rightful fifth Imam, the Zaydis were loyal to his brother, Zayd ibn Ali.

Thanks to expansion efforts from both Sunni and Shi'i dynasties, Islam grew far beyond its home in the Arabian Desert. In 638, only six years after the death of the Prophet, Muslims first occupied the city of Jerusalem. Conquests then moved into northwest Africa beginning in 670 and into southern Iberia in 711, with the Umayyad Caliphate (661-750)—a Sunni dynasty—holding capital cities first in Damascus and later in Córdoba. By the period 750-850, the Abbasid Empire had consolidated its power in Iraq, western Iran, Egypt, Syria, and Mesopotamia. Another Sunni Caliphate, the Abbasids (750-1258) had their capital first in Baghdad and later in Samarra until their defeat at the hands of the Mongols. Based in Cairo, the Fatimid Empire (909-1171) spread its Isma'ili Shi'i influence through North Africa and into parts of the Levant before being overthrown by Sunni leader Salah al-Din (Saladin). Ruling most of the Indian subcontinent until British pressure became too

great (1526-1857), the Sunni Mughal Empire left its mark most visibly in the form of architecture. Like the Fatimids, the Savafid Empire was a Shi'i power, though it promulgated Twelver Shi'ism and brought that influence to Persia during its rule (1501-1722). Finally, the Ottoman Empire (circa 1300 to 1923) expanded into a vast Sunni dynasty, stretching at its height from its home in Anatolia to southeastern Europe, Iran, the greater Middle East, and North Africa before being replaced by the modern state of Turkey. These political dynasties and others were crucial in shaping all aspects of life in their spheres of influence, including not only legal thought and political institutions but also language and artistic traditions.

DISTRIBUTION OF MUSLIMS

In 2007, Muslims constituted 21.01 percent of the global population—close to 1.5 billion people.⁷ As present-day population distributions show, most Muslims live outside of the Arab Middle East. To provide an idea of where the largest pockets of Muslims reside, the four most sizable Muslim populations exist in Indonesia, Pakistan, India, and Bangladesh, in descending rank. For Indonesia, a Muslim population of 86 percent translates into roughly 207 million followers of Islam. In comparison, Pakistan is home to approximately 167 million (95 percent of the population), India 156 million (13 percent), and Bangladesh 129 million (83 percent). Together, these four countries represent well over a third of the world's Muslims.

States where Muslim communities constitute numerical majorities are not necessarily officially Islamic states. In some cases, the imposition of secular governments in such states has contributed to the rise of political Islam and consequently to religious bids for power.⁸ Algeria in 1991, when the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) was poised to defeat secular incumbents, was an example of this trend, as was Iran leading up to its 1979 Islamic Revolution. From the above figures, one can see that a significant number of today's Muslims also live as minorities. In India, where the Muslim community is the second largest in the world, Indian society is majority Hindu and politics are officially secular. As will be discussed later, although Muslim communities are certainly not inexperienced with being minorities, more recent patterns of immigration and community formation pose new issues for those Muslims as well as their host nations, most notably in certain parts of Western Europe.

For the minority sects of Islam, the main population centers are arranged somewhat differently. Countries with majority Shi'a populations include Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Iran, Iraq and Lebanon. Followers of Ibadi Islam, which is neither Sunni nor Shi'i, predominate in Oman and can also be found in East Africa and parts of Algeria, Libya and Tunisia. Sufism, most commonly understood as Islamic mysticism or the "inner" side of Islam, has

grown in the form of brotherhoods or associations called *tariqas* since the twelfth century C.E. Many *tariqas* take the form of transnational networks, but Sufi influences are strong in the Caucasus, sub-Saharan Africa, South Asia, and elsewhere.

PHYSICAL SPREAD

The conquests that facilitated the spread of the empires described above were largely political phenomena; expanding and retaining political power was their primary goal. Nonetheless, they did carry with them particular forms of Islam that left visible marks on the territories over which they ruled, and in some cases these religious influences lasted far longer than the empires themselves. Although we may think of Iran as a resolutely Shi'i society today, it was only in 1501—with the rise to power of the Safavid Dynasty (1501-1722)—that the Shi'i character of Persia took hold and began to flourish. In regions of the world where Islam is no longer a dominant force, traces of formerly great Muslim societies remain clear. The lasting influence of the Andalusian Empire (711-1492) is not difficult to find in the Islamic architecture left standing in Spain, such as the mosque at Córdoba and the Alhambra in Seville, and in the philosophy of Ibn Rushd (Averroës).

In addition to the political vehicles that carried Islam, economic mechanisms also became a means for spreading the religion. Trade routes and commercial relationships created ready-made venues for syncretism and cultural exchange. When the first Muslims reached the coast of East Africa, they were primarily Arabs seeking to establish commercial relationships.⁹ With time, societies in that region incorporated numerous Arabic words into the Swahili language and developed a localized form of Islam in which they valued Muslim traditions alongside preexisting ideas and rituals. It was in that fashion of syncretism that Islam spread across the globe, developing in response to local needs and influences in ways that would make the new religion palatable to potential converts. Through this process, Islam became legitimate in local terms, and importantly, a potential source of political and social capital.

Frequently, long-standing trade relationships carved out the paths that large waves of migration would also follow.¹⁰ Such movement allowed Islam to carve out new niches, become influenced by local forces, and develop along new intellectual trajectories. When communities were formed, they reconciled their traditions with the needs of the present context but also had a significant impact on local cultural, religious, and political life.

Wherever Islam possessed power, conversions followed. Nonetheless, the passage of the Qur'an declaring there shall be "no compulsion in religion" (2:256) has inspired arguments for religious tolerance, complicating the matter of forced conversion for the ex-

panding Islamic empires.¹¹ Following the introduction of Islam, local elites would at times adopt the tradition as well. In these cases, the religion of the land would then follow suit, and many converted to Islam either out of conviction or for reasons related to the practical needs of the time. When ruling figures of the latter type converted to Islam due to pragmatic concerns, they saw the utility of adopting that faith in the context at hand. As William James argued, the substance of a given framework for thought or belief can matter less than the system of choosing that framework and its contents. For religious actors, this pragmatic method—an attitude “of looking towards last things, fruits, consequences, facts”¹²—can provide the motivation to opt for one faith over another if it is more likely to yield power or simple convenience.

In some parts of sub-Saharan Africa, Islamization took place through established vehicles for attaining power. Elite figures already in control could decide which religion would be most effective in helping them to gain further advantage. The nineteenth century, for example, saw leaders in present-day Uganda adopt Islam and encourage state officials and subjects to do the same because the religion was associated with potential gains: “Ambitious to encourage Buganda expansion, in military and commercial terms, and curious about the wider world of East Africa, [King Kabaka Mutesa] saw Muslim identity as a crucial ingredient of his strategy.”¹³

INTELLECTUAL SPREAD

As communities grew and new ones were formed, so grew Islamic scholarship. A vital part of Islamic learning took shape through efforts to understand and apply to the present context the primary sources of Muslim tradition: the holy book of the Qur’an, the collected *hadith* (the reported sayings and deeds of the Prophet Muhammad and other important figures), and the *sunna* (customs and traditions based on the Prophet’s example). As a result of such efforts, legal schools of thought blossomed among Sunnis and the Shi’a. Today, five main schools have survived to delineate Islamic legal tradition for the bulk of the world’s Muslims.

For most Shi’a, the Ja’fari School is authoritative. Under Ja’fari reasoning, the sources of Islamic legal reasoning are the Qur’an, the *sunna*, opinions based on consensus (*ijma’*) and human reasoning.

Meanwhile, four Sunni schools have remained powerful. The largest and oldest of these schools is the Hanafi tradition, which began in eighth-century Kufa, Iraq, and is now followed by approximately one-third of all Muslims. For Hanafi jurists, legal sources also include the use of analogical reasoning (*qiyas*). The Hanbali School, begun in ninth-century Baghdad, is the most conservative Sunni school in terms of religious rites and is

the official tradition of both Saudi Arabia and Qatar. The Shafi'i School—also founded in the eighth century—has followers from Egypt to Indonesia and gives preference to *hadith* over most other sources of legal reasoning. The Maliki School, widespread in North Africa and parts of its native Arabian Peninsula and active since the eighth century, also places an emphasis on *hadith* and on the example set by companions of the Prophet. By and large, Sufis maintain a distance from formal Sunni and Shi'i traditions, including their emphasis on Islamic law.¹⁴

As these legal schools developed, large centers of learning also took root and grew into centers of power. For the Shi'a, the Iranian city of Qom has grown since the nineteenth century as both the focus of much theological scholarship and a key venue for political activity, especially during the years leading up to Ayatollah Khomeini's revolution. Traditionally, Qom has been rivaled only by the city of Najaf in Iraq, which gained prominence in the fifteenth century. For Sunni scholarship, Cairo's al-Azhar University has remained unsurpassed since being founded in 969/970.

The longer these centers of scholarship survived and became more established, the more refined their methods became for transmitting knowledge from one generation to the next and determining who among the Muslim legal scholars, or *ulema*, should lead the community as a whole. Throughout Islamic history, a number of Muslim thinkers have risen to the fore, proving to be influential across geographic and generational boundaries. Among the most prominent Sufi thinkers was Ibn al-Arabi (d. 1240); the philosophical works of both Ibn Sinna (or Avicenna, d. 1037) and Ibn Rushd (Averroës, d. 1198) were significant; and al-Ghazali (d. 1111) proved to have a lasting influence in his work joining law, theology, ethics, and mysticism.

In the modern era, a number of ideologues have inspired various developments in political Islam. Often viewed as the father of revolutionary Islam, Sayyid Qutb was executed in 1966 by the Egyptian government for his role in the Muslim Brotherhood and for promoting the view that Muslims have a duty to overthrow unjust rulers. Qutb drew influence from figures such as Ibn Taymiyya (d. 1328), the Syrian thinker whose ideas also inspired Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab (the Hanbali scholar who founded the Wahhabi movement in the eighteenth century) and Hasan al-Banna (who established Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood in 1928).

Despite his early death, Qutb's writings and legacy have helped to fuel the growth of Islamist movements to the present day and have influenced a number of figures advocating (external/global) jihad—the most prominent being Osama bin Laden.¹⁵ This web of ideas that influences Islamist thinkers from one generation to the next remains important not only because their views can serve as the impetus for challenging existing political

authority, but also because of the way that discourse currently spreads. Increasingly, the Internet simplifies the task of recruiting new participants in radical movements regardless of location.¹⁶ Additionally, a globalized and ever more supranational discourse on political Islam means that political elites will likely find it easier to make religious bids for power that resonate with more people.

MODERN DEVELOPMENTS

In the wake of older ideologues, other Muslim thinkers have in recent years posed new challenges to traditional understandings of Islamic legal issues. Frequently, figures such as Abdullahi Ahmed An-Na'im and Khaled Abou El Fadl offer new views on matters such as human rights and the proper role of shari'a in modern society.¹⁷ While those who challenge convention are at times seen as radical or heterodox, they work from within Islamic tradition. That is, whenever they challenge the status quo on a certain issue, they make use of the same sources and reasoning as their opponents. Doing so means they operate within the same intellectual framework: they speak the same language and have the credentials to do so. The key is that they reach different, often more liberal conclusions about the topics of debate. For these scholars, Islamic thought must keep up with the times. Their argument, in simplified form, is that shari'a was always meant to respond to a given context: Islamic law ought not to be codified, but should instead offer a set of principles and guidelines for dealing with issues as they arise. Past rulings and tenets may have been perfectly appropriate at some time and place in the past but are irrelevant today. Likewise, because not all possible questions had come up by the time of the Prophet Muhammad's death, continued debate, building of consensus (*ijma*), and use of analogical reasoning (*qiyas*) remain vital tools for some schools of Islamic law.

Conversations also continue regarding how Muslims should relate to both civil society and the state—whether living under a formally Islamic government or not. This is not least due to the belief among some Muslim groups that they must live according to certain tenets of Islamic law. To balance such desires and the needs of non-Muslim citizens, some countries have forged hybrid national legal systems that integrate aspects of Islamic law with civil legal codes.¹⁸ The many states that have gone forward with this type of legal experiment include Afghanistan, Algeria, Sudan and Pakistan (whose legal system, despite Pakistan's status as an Islamic state, relies heavily on English common law). Integration of Islamic law with civil law codes have also been suggested for historically non-Muslim states as well. In 2008, for instance, the Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr. Rowan Williams, suggested that a larger public role for shari'a in the United Kingdom could be beneficial for all parties, yet his remarks were in the main disparaged.¹⁹

In recent decades, Muslims immigrating to Western Europe have formed substantial communities that have visibly impacted domestic politics and discourse—most prominently in France, Germany, and the Netherlands. Much of the debate over the public manifestation of religion in Europe stems from one issue: whether the European Union, an avowedly liberal polity that upholds individual freedoms, should tolerate religious practices that seem irretrievably illiberal and which explicitly aim at abridging many individual freedoms.²⁰ In France, a largely North African Muslim population of five to ten percent (approximately 3.2–6.4 million) has led to heated discourse around the issue of a headscarf ban. Dissatisfaction among that population has also contributed to large-scale rioting in recent years. Meanwhile, Germany's Muslim population stands at 3.7 percent (roughly 3 million) and is predominantly Turkish. The Netherlands, whose reputation still suffers for the religiously-inspired murder of the artist Theo Van Gogh in 2004 by a man with ties to Muslim extremism, has a Muslim population of 5.8 percent (or 970,000) that is primarily Turkish and Moroccan. Perhaps the most extreme contemporary example is the July 22, 2011 mass murder of fellow Norwegians by Anders Behring Breivik, who has claimed to be driven in part by his belief that the promotion of multiculturalism and the integration of Muslim immigrants and their beliefs and traditions in Norway was somehow diminishing the status of what it means to be Norwegian (and more broadly, European).²¹

Global networks, which include Islamist ideologues and terrorist organizations, have emerged to render the modern nation-state less important. For many, religious identity has become a *primary* means of identification for some and the basis for global causes. Thus, Muslims in one nation will at times feel intense solidarity with, and empathy for, Muslims living elsewhere. Whether this involves Turkish Muslims living in Germany standing up for their coreligionists in Turkey, Shi'i Muslims in Lebanon supporting the Shi'a in 1979 Iran, or the Shi'a of Iran protecting Shi'i interests in Afghanistan during Afghanistan's civil war, the processes of a transnational Islam are at work. For elites engaged in religious bids for power, this translates into more potential backing from international sources.

Two points in this context cannot be overemphasized. The first is the blind spot most Europeans and their cultural heirs have toward those who find the entire notion of state sovereignty meaningless. Since for most "westerners," the state is axiomatic, the existence of a burgeoning community of rational people for whom the very idea of the state is meaningless (or at least subordinate to the *umma*) is something hard to comprehend. Second, the observation that the schisms among various communities of faith in Judaism, Islam, or Christianity *should* make it difficult for them to advance a united political agenda is irrelevant; what matters is that many individual believers *imagine* a community of faith that transcends (or soon will) these differences.

The increased salience of religion in the public square is largely the result of global trends that began in the 1960s and continue today, notably the failure of modernization and its promises of a brighter future, the advancement of democracy, and globalization itself.²² Consider Kemalism, socialism, communism, and Baathism, all of which bolstered the regimes in the Arab world and beyond, but failed in the eyes of their populations. Even the ideology, or political theology, of the Iranian regime is failing despite its promises of deliverance for Iran's citizens with the overthrow of the secular, modern Shah. What the Arab uprisings revealed is that today's citizenry desire not a unified ideology around a single leader, or leadership, that touts triumphalism over some form of evil, but a system of governance that promotes accountability, transparency, and protection of individuals' needs and interests. Human dignity—*Ana Rajul* or "I am a man"—was the core message.²³

This assessment of Islam and elites reveals that the developing role of Islam in Muslim societies is but one resource among many that elites can harness, and that this resource changes depending on the context of the political situation at hand. In some instances Islam becomes a vehicle for the expansion of the good of the people while in others it is used expediently for the expansion of an elite's own power base. Such dualism is likely to continue. The most recent uprisings that started in December 2010 in the Arab world revealed that Islam provided an important source of legitimacy and mobilization capacity, but that it was not the only, or even the primary, force at work. Religious elites were often not in the forefront of leading the demonstrations against the regimes. Rather, they tended to enter the mass public demonstrations only after the regimes seemed to be faltering. The Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt, for example, entered the fray quite late in the process, only after the Egyptian people were united to fight against the oppression of the Egyptian government. Islam is likely to play a role not in forcing the establishment of Islamic states, as in Iran following its 1979 Revolution, but in determining whether certain issues enter politics, how they are defined, and how this process of definition unfolds. Today it seems that Muslim religious elites are as likely to follow the people as lead them. This is not new to Islam, nor is it unique to Islam. Just as the role of religious elites shifted in the past, it is likely to do so in the future. The key to remember, however, is that Islam and its religious authorities intertwine with politics: a simple fact that is likely to stay the same.

ENDNOTES

- 1 For research assistance, the author would like to thank Gwen McCarter and Meghan Tinsley. Generous funding was provided by the Dubai Initiative and the Carnegie Corporation of New York.
- 2 The current population distribution of Muslims worldwide is provided below.
- 3 Recent literature on transnational religious organizations, networks, and actors includes: Timothy A. Byrnes and Peter J. Katzenstein, eds., *Religion in an Expanding Europe* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006); Olivier Roy, *Globalized Islam: The Search for a New Ummah* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004); and Timothy Samuel Shah and Monica Duffy Toft, "Why God is Winning," *Foreign Policy*, Issue 155 (July/August 2006): pp. 38-43. See also: Robert O. Keohane and Joseph S. Nye, eds., *Transnational Relations and World Politics* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1971).
- 4 Monica Duffy Toft, Daniel Philpott and Timothy Samuel Shah, *God's Century: Resurgent Religion and Global Politics* (Norton, 2011).
- 5 Talal Asad puts forth the idea that Islam develops rather organically, relying on discursive traditions that shape the content of Islamic ritual and truth at each juncture in history. For more on the importance of *context* in the study of Islam, see Asad, *The Idea of an Anthropology of Islam* (Washington, D.C.: Center for Contemporary Arab Studies, Georgetown University, Occasional Papers Series, 1986).
- 6 The Arabic word for the preposition "in front of" (*amama*) led to the title of *imam* being given to the figure who leads prayer in a mosque. Traditionally, that person stands at the *minbar*—a structure set apart from the congregation that is similar to a church pulpit in form and function.
- 7 In July 2009, the global population was estimated at 6.8 billion. If we were to apply the 2007 proportion of 21 percent to obtain the current number of Muslims in the world, the Muslim population would be approximately 1.43 billion. Unless otherwise noted, all population figures are from the CIA World Factbook, 2009 edition, available online at <<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook>>.
- 8 Monica Duffy Toft, "Getting Religion? The Puzzling Case of Islam and Civil War," *International Security* 31, no. 4 (Spring 2007): 97-131.
- 9 David Robinson, *Muslim Societies in African History* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004), p. 32.
- 10 For one study of trade, migration, and religious and cultural exchange, see Engseng Ho, *The Graves of Tarim: Genealogy and Mobility across the Indian Ocean* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2006).
- 11 See, for example: Yohanan Friedmann, *Tolerance and Coercion in Islam: Interfaith Relations in the Muslim Tradition* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003), p. 100.
- 12 William James, "Lecture II: What Pragmatism Means," in James, *Pragmatism and The Meaning of Truth* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1975), pp. 27-44, p. 32.

- 13 Robinson, *Muslim Societies in African History*, p. 158. For more on the spread of Islam in Africa and the creation of African Islam, see generally: Robinson, *Muslim Societies in African History*; and Nehemia Levtzion and Randall L. Pouwels, *The History of Islam in Africa* (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 2000).
- 14 Detailed studies of Islamic law and its history can be found in Joseph Schacht, *An Introduction to Islamic Law* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982); and in the volumes of the Harvard Series in Islamic Law, ed. Frank E. Vogel (Cambridge, MA: Islamic Legal Studies Program, Harvard Law School, distributed by Harvard University Press, 2004).
- 15 See Seyyid Qutb, *Milestones* (American Trust Publication, 1991); Qutb, *Social Justice in Islam*, trans. John B. Hardie and Hamid Algar, revised ed. (Oneonta, NY: Islamic Publications International, 2000); and Gilles Kepel, *Muslim Extremism in Egypt: The Prophet and the Pharaoh* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984). On the relationship between Qutb and bin Laden, see Peter L. Bergen, *The Osama bin Laden I Know: An Oral History of al Qaeda's Leader* (New York: Free Press, 2006), pp. 18-19.
- 16 Assaf Moghadam, "Motives for Martyrdom: Al-Qaida, Salafi Jihad, and the Spread of Suicide Attacks," *International Security*, Vol. 33, No. 3 (Winter 2008/09): pp. 46-78, p. 54. See generally Marc Sageman, *Leaderless Jihad: Terror Networks in the Twenty-First Century* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008).
- 17 Representative works include: Abdullahi Ahmed An-Na'im, *Islam and the Secular State: Negotiating the Future of Shari'a* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2008); An-Na'im, *African Constitutionalism and the Role of Islam* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006); An-Na'im, ed., *Human Rights under African Constitutions: Realizing the Promise for Ourselves* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003); Khaled Abou El Fadl, *Speaking in God's Name: Islamic Law, Authority and Women* (Oxford: Oneworld Publications, 2001); Abou El Fadl, *Rebellion and Violence in Islamic Law* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001); and Abou El Fadl, *The Great Theft: Wrestling Islam from the Extremists* (New York: HarperCollins, 2005).
- 18 Noah Feldman, *The Fall and Rise of the Islamic State* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008).
- 19 Dr. Rowan Williams, "Civil and Religious Law in England: a Religious Perspective," (February 7, 2008) lecture given at the Royal Courts of Justice, available online at <<http://www.archbishopofcanterbury.org/1575>>.
- 20 For more on this matter, see Xiaorong Li, "What's in a Headscarf?" *Philosophy and Public Policy Quarterly*, Vol. 24, No. ½ (Winter/Spring 2004): pp. 14-18.
- 21 For background on the attacks see <http://topics.nytimes.com/top/news/international/countriesandterritories/norway/index.html>.
- 22 Monica Duffy Toft, Daniel Philpott and Timothy Samuel Shah, *God's Century: Resurgent Religion and Global Politics* (Norton, 2011).
- 23 Thomas Friedman, "I am a Man" *The New York Times*, May 11, 2011, available online at <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/05/15/opinion/15friedman.html>.

THE DUBAI INITIATIVE

The Dubai Initiative is a joint venture between the Dubai School of Government (DSG) and the Harvard Kennedy School (HKS), supporting the establishment of DSG as an academic, research, and outreach institution in public policy, administration, and management for the Middle East. The primary objective of the Initiative is to bridge the expertise and resources of HKS with DSG and enable the exchange of students, scholars, knowledge and resources between the two institutions in the areas of governance, political science, economics, energy, security, gender, and foreign relations related to the Middle East.

The Initiative implements programs that respond to the evolving needs of DSG and are aligned with the research interests of the various departments and centers of HKS as well as other schools and departments of Harvard University. Program activities include funding, coordinating and facilitating fellowships, joint fellowships with DSG, internships, faculty and graduate research grants, working papers, multi-year research initiatives, conferences, symposia, public lectures, policy workshops, faculty workshops, case studies, and customized executive education programs delivered at DSG.

For more information, please visit us at www.dubaiinitiative.org



The Dubai School of Government (DSG) is a research and teaching institution focusing on public policy in the Arab world. Established in 2005 under the patronage of HH Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice President and Prime Minister of the United Arab Emirates and Ruler of Dubai, in cooperation with the Harvard Kennedy School, DSG aims to promote good governance through enhancing the region's capacity for effective public policy.

Toward this goal, the Dubai School of Government also collaborates with regional and global institutions in its research and training programs. In addition, the School organizes policy forums and international conferences to facilitate the exchange of ideas and promote critical debate on public policy in the Arab world.

The School is committed to the creation of knowledge, the dissemination of best practice and the training of policy makers in the Arab world. To achieve this mission, the School is developing strong capabilities to support research and teaching programs including

- applied research in public policy and management;
- master's degrees in public policy and public administration;
- executive education for senior officials and executives; and,
- knowledge forums for scholars and policy makers.