Edited by ARMANDO SALVATORE
and DALE F. EICKELMAN

Public Islam and the Common Good

BRILL

PUBLIC ISLAM AND THE COMMON GOOD

SOCIAL, ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL STUDIES OF THE MIDDLE EAST AND ASIA

(S.E.P.S.M.E.A.)

(Founding editor: C.A.O. van Nieuwenhuijze)

VOLUME 95

PUBLIC ISLAM AND THE COMMON GOOD

EDITED BY

ARMANDO SALVATORE
AND
DALE F. EICKELMAN

BRILL
LEIDEN · BOSTON
2004

This book is printed on acid-free paper.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Public Islam and the common good / edited by Armando Salvatore and Dale F. Eickelman.
p. cm. — (Social, economic, and political studies of the Middle East and Asia, ISSN 1385-3376 ; v. 95)
Includes bibliographical references and index.
ISBN 90-04-13621-5
1. Islam and civil society. 2. Democracy—Religious aspects—Islam. 3. Islam and state. 4. Ummah (Islam) 5. Islamic countries—Politics and government. I. Salvatore, Armando. II. Eickelman, Dale F., 1942- III. Series.

BP173.63.P83 2004
297.2'72–dc22

2003069726

ISSN 1385-3376
ISBN 90 04 13621 5

PRINTED IN THE NETHERLANDS

For Amal, Miriam, and Yasmin

This page intentionally left blank

CONTENTS

PART III

RELIGIOUS AUTHORITY AND THE COMMON GOOD

PART IV

AMBIVALENCE IN THE PRACTICE AND PUBLIC STAGING OF ISLAM

NOTE ON TRANSLITERATION

Any book that draws on materials in Arabic, Hindi, Persian, Turkish, and Urdu, among other languages, poses considerable challenges for transliteration, especially as we incorporate colloquial as well as literary usages. With as much consistency as possible, we use the system adopted by the *International Journal of Middle East Studies* for Arabic, Persian, Turkish, and Urdu, using ʿ to represent the Arabic *ʿayn*, and ʾ to represent the Arabic *hamza*, as in Qurʾān, which we render as Qurʾan. We drop the terminal *hamza* and full transliteration from words such as ʿulama (*ʿulamāʾ*, men of learning), fatwa (*fatwā*), imam (*imām*), Sufi (*Ṣūfī*), and shaykh that now appear in standard English dictionaries. Sunni (Sunnī) and Shiʿa (Shīʿa) are also rapidly becoming standard English terms, so we have also simplified their transliteration. The plural of words in languages that have "broken" plurals is formed by adding an "s" to the singular, except for ʿulama, in which the plural form is becoming standard English usage. Only in the glossary are all terms fully transliterated. When persons or writers are known to have a preferred spelling of their name in a European language, we generally use this form.

This page intentionally left blank

PREFACE

PUBLIC ISLAM AND THE COMMON GOOD

Armando Salvatore and Dale F. Eickelman

Now more than ever, secular and religious Muslims have to confront issues concerning "public Islam and the common good" in open and public debate. Colombia may still lead the world in the number of deaths directly attributable to terrorism, but the events of September 11, 2001, the October 2002 bombings in Bali, May 2003 "kamikaze" attacks in Saudi Arabia and Morocco, and the staccato repetition of bombings and violence elsewhere, including Jerusalem, Baghdad, Gaza, and Ayodhya, test the limits of civility and trust. Ironically, "kamikaze" has become one of the first Japanese words to enter educated Arabic usage, being the word of choice in Moroccan newspapers and transnational Arabic-language newspapers such as *al-Sharq al-Awsāṭ* (London) because it offers an alternative to calling the perpetrators of such attacks either "martyrs" or "suicide bombers."

This book aspires to look beyond immediate—and often disturbing—events and to discern long-term trends and developments likely to shape world politics for years to come. It may only be a tiny minority of Muslims who use or condone terrorism in the name of religion, and apologists find a ready stock of counterpart examples among Hindus, Buddhists, Jews, Christians, and followers of other religions. Political trends in the Muslim majority world are often violent and contradictory, due in part to the authoritarian regimes of many states. "Public Islam" is not immune from such contradictions, but for the most part it works against violence.

A major theme in this book is that advancing levels of education, greater ease of travel, and the rise of new communications media throughout the Muslim-majority world have contributed to the emergence of a public sphere in which large numbers of people, and not just an educated, political, and economic elite, want a say in political and religious issues. The result has been challenges to authoritarianism, the fragmentation of religious and political authority, and increasingly open discussions of issues related to the "common good"

(*al-maṣlaḥa al-ʿamma*). At the same time, we recognize that this trend has been uneven and often contradictory. Thus there are several strands of "Euro-Islam," many of which strongly advocate civility and full participation in the wider civil society dominated by non-Muslims, but within the Muslim majority countries of the Middle East, as in Africa and Asia, it is often difficult to assess the strength of such voices beyond the confines of an educated and ruling elite.

"Public Islam" refers to the highly diverse invocations of Islam as ideas and practices that religious scholars, self-ascribed religious authorities, secular intellectuals, Sufi orders, mothers, students, workers, engineers, and many others make to civic debate and public life. In this "public" capacity, "Islam" makes a difference in configuring the politics and social life of large parts of the globe, and not just for self-ascribed religious authorities. It makes this difference not only as a template for ideas and practices but also as a way of envisioning alternative political realities and, increasingly, in acting on both global and local stages, thus reconfiguring established boundaries of civil and social life. Not all these trends are unique to the modern world. One can read Michael Cook's (2000) majestic account of "commanding right and forbidding wrong" in Islamic thought, a study that flows from the early Islamic centuries to the present, as an account of an engagement including both Muslim jurists and a wider Muslim public with issues of community concern and conduct. The present book primarily concerns the contemporary Muslim world, but the chapters on the emergence of ideas and communicative practices of the public in the late Ottoman period (Kırlı, Chapter 4, and Frierson, Chapter 5 in this volume) indicate that such concerns are profoundly shaped by the course of history.

Many of the emerging new voices and the leaders of movements within this proliferating public space—which is simultaneously physical and communicative—claim to interpret or be inspired by basic religious texts and ideas, and work in local or transnational contexts. These new interpreters of how religion shapes, or should shape, societies and politics, however, like their counterparts in Poland's Solidarity movement and the liberation theology movements in Latin America in the 1980s, often lack the theological and philosophical sophistication of the religious scholars of earlier eras who previously led such discussions. Such new leaders and spokespeople have nonetheless succeeded in capturing the imagination of large numbers of people. These trends often intensify the ties that bind Muslim communities

in the Muslim-majority world with Muslims in Europe, North America, and elsewhere in the world.

Muslims in South Asia, the Middle East, Africa, and the West have developed ideas and practices of the common good that have inspired historical and contemporary thinkers, movements, and associations. Only encyclopedias can aspire to global comprehensiveness. One could equally have drawn on the books and essays dealing with Islam in Southeast Asia, including Indonesia (Hefner 2000; Bowen 2003), Malaysia (Peletz 2002), Central Asia (Rashid 2002), "Euro-Islam" (Vertovec and Peach 1997, Modood and Werbner 1997, Allievi and Nielsen 2003), and the importance of Islamic values in redefining the ideas of "public" and "secular" in contemporary Turkey (Çinar 2001, White 2002). We refer to such work, but our primary concern throughout this volume has been to explore issues and themes that increasingly transcend the specifics of region or place. Thus the contemporary "publicization" of Islam is often more commonly rooted in practice than in formal ideology (Adelkhah, Chapter 10 in this volume). It has often created new social spaces, a trend significantly accelerated since the mid-twentieth century, and it has facilitated modern and distinctively open senses of political and religious identity.

Such practices and the resulting social spaces involve both emotional and intellectual engagement among participants in overlapping circles of communication, solidarity, and the building of bonds of identity and trust. Some of these are based on local communities. Others are geographically widespread and targeted to receptive audiences. One example is the use of e-mail among the Indonesian university students who coordinated nationwide campus protests that contributed to the downfall of President Suharto in 1998. These modern practices and new communication technologies create new, effective, and geographically more dispersed bases for effective mobilization—but they can also threaten tolerance and civil society by facilitating publicity and calls to action by extremist groups (Hefner 2003).

Social practices that are based on ideas of the common good and that contribute to shaping public Islam include collective rituals, such as popular festivals and religious and secular commemorations. They also encompass disciplining and performative practices as diverse as Sufi rituals, regional pilgrimages, the informal economy, the routines of modern schooling, and the use of the press and modern communications technologies.

Prevailing theories of modernity and modernization in the mid-

twentieth century assumed that religious movements, identities, and practice had become increasingly marginal, and that only those religious intellectuals and leaders who attached themselves to the nation-state would continue to play a significant role in public life. These assertions concerning the eclipse of religion in the public life of North America and Europe may have been exaggerated. Casanova (1994) was one of the first to note that by the late 1970s this prevalent view was challenged by the impact of several parallel developments: the Iranian revolution, the rise of the Solidarity movement in Poland, the role of liberation theology in political movements throughout Latin America, and the return of Protestant fundamentalism as a force in American politics. In the Muslim majority world, however, the role of religion in social and community life never receded. This does not mean that it did not change and develop in ways often underemphasized by Western observers and by Muslims themselves (Zaman 2002). Only in the last decade has the idea of an "Islamic public sphere"—*Islamische Öffentlichkeit* in German—come to the fore in contexts that Reinhard Schulze (2000 [1994]), responding to the work of Jürgen Habermas, discerned as forming the infrastructure of communication and discourse of a new intellectual class, from the classic era of Islamic reform in the late nineteenth century through the structural transformations of the 1960s and 1970s, and the present.

The contributions to this book trace how public Islam—a concept by which we also encompass nonelite practices and interactions and their premodern antecedents—has developed over the last two centuries. We seek to trace the problem of the authority of interpretation of sacred texts from the idea that the wider Islamic community, the *umma*, will never agree on error, to the essential tension that exists today between transcendent norms with their claims to divine sanction and ideas of the rule of law. The way that a shared sense of public is built into social interactions varies considerably with context and notions of personality, responsibility, welfare, justice and, not least, piety. Notions of public are rooted in those values that define the common good. The form of state authority has also affected how these values are elaborated.

Ideas of the common good are not an immutable heritage of religious or normative traditions, even if some Muslim spokespersons claim otherwise. They are defined by ethical notions and social values contested and redefined through interaction, practice, and transmission over generations. Sectarianism in Christian Europe provided

the habitus and the congregational form for developing such ideas and practices, and it is possible to see in the Sufi tradition and other Muslim religious practices a similar contribution to learning to participate in the public sphere, but also to notions of the limits of such participation and to the idea of the public sphere itself. Like the Christian sects, the more orthodox forms of Sufism and other styles of public piety (Soares, Chapter 9 in this volume) have also contributed to shape reasoning selves and to reconfigure the relationship between legitimate authority and independent pursuit of truth. Immanuel Kant was not born in Iraq; public reasoning has, however, a long tradition in Islamic jurisprudence, both Sunni and Shiʿa, that flourished in that country and inspired modern Islamic reform.

The processes through which one moves from a locally based practical apprehension of the common good to the level where it is debated in the wider public sphere create various and often fractured forms of public Islam. This process of gaining access to public spaces and shaping them is delimited by discursive traditions—including religious ones—authorized speakers, and the state. It has often been the case in the history of the West that religion has been privatized, as the Church and various Protestant sects were increasingly placed at the margins of public authority and set apart from direct influence on matters of the state. As Casanova (1994) argues, various sectarian movements in Europe played a major role in developing the idea of the modular self, empowered with a moral conscience and confronting the authority both of established religion and the state. In this European trajectory, only when the freedom of individual conscience is recognized and tolerated can a public sphere develop. It is, nonetheless, a more general argument that religious ideas and practice can foster through different paths the emergence of the public sphere, and we seek in this volume to show the ways that this has taken place in the Muslim-majority world.

The generative source of public Islam is the articulation of the common good in social practice in ways that cannot be captured by the predominantly European dynamics of privatization or deprivatization. There was no Church or churchlike establishment in the Muslim world to disestablish. In an essay on the so-called "inquisition" (*mihna*) initiated by Caliph al-Ma'mūn in 833, lasting until 848, Nimrod Hurvitz (2002) shows how the effort of four successive caliphs to support by force—through the torture and execution of dissidents—the belief that the Qur'an was created, in spite of intensely

held popular support for the contrary view that it existed forever, was doomed to failure from the start. The *mihna* involved both a struggle over people's imaginations and a contest over boundaries of authority. The result of this struggle—the suppression of the heinous tribunal—was gradually to establish and endow with authority the public space in which men of religious and legal learning, the ʿulama, could define religious belief and practice and set limits to a field of public action in which subsequent caliphs and temporal rulers intervened only with caution, and in general only to protect society against religious extremism. The modern fundamentalist cry that "religion and state" (*dīn wa-dawla*) have always been one and the same in Islam is not borne out by Islamic history, in which there has been a de facto separation of public religion and state authority since at least the eleventh century (Eickelman and Piscatori 1996: 46–47, 55–57).

It is important to incorporate historical and contextual accounts of ideas of public reason and shifting notions and practices of public life and social exchange in the Muslim majority world and elsewhere, rather than to assume, as has often been the case, that there is a single ideal form of the public sphere for all contexts and times. Ideas of the public are historically embedded and have strong links with culturally shared senses of self and community. They are situated at the strategic intersection between practice and discourse. In the context of the contemporary state, modern techniques of authority, persuasion, and control also shape ideas of the public sphere. Such techniques often promote a secular outlook of citizenship and social membership, but these usually coexist with the enduring vitality of religious traditions and the emergence of new socioreligious discourses and leaderships that intersect with and challenge nation-state projects.

How do these developments match views of the public sphere premised on the existence of a religiously neutral, indeed "secular" threshold of access to public debate? Some ideas of "secular" divest participants in public exchanges of their religious and cultural identities, or at least marginalize these identities. But the creation of a public culture promoting exchange and discussion can involve deliberation over issues of common interest, through the invocation of traditions of religious, moral, and legal discourses. It can also encourage the gradual emergence of ever more abstract patterns of membership and citizenship that rest on obligations and rights which increasingly fit a legal vocabulary and a contractual view of society.

Such developments, including the discontinuities between tradition and modernity created by the emergence of a "culture of publicness," have been the focus of interest of political philosophers, social scientists, and historians alike. It suffices here to mention such diverse authors as Giambattista Vico, Adam Smith, Immanuel Kant, Alexis de Tocqueville, Ferdinand Tönnies, and John Dewey. These thinkers have concentrated on developments in Europe and North America, developments that are specifically Western in our view but that they regarded as exemplary of universal trends.

The contributors to this volume explore the forms that ideas of the public take in social spaces inhabited and shaped primarily by Muslims—and increasingly in a world in which national, territorial, and cultural boundaries can be readily crossed. They also show how engaging Islam through associations and media communications facilitates more often than it impairs change through various trajectories, dynamic tensions, and background understandings of accepted social practice—to use Taylor's (1993: 213) term, the "social imaginary" of cultural understandings shared by a given people.

This book links the idea of the "public sphere"—a key concept in social thought and social science—to the formation, transmission, and shifting nature of Muslim traditions past and present. Thus in the eyes of some observers, Muslim majority societies—notwithstanding the experience of countries such as Indonesia (Hefner 2000)—are not fertile ground for the development of public debate over the common good. Although the idea of the public sphere has been developed to date primarily on the basis of the European and American experiences, it has often been criticized for not adequately representing the complexity and nuances of developments elsewhere. By focusing on the role of the public sphere in diverse contemporary and historically known Muslim majority societies, we suggest ways in which understandings of the public sphere can be enhanced and developed to encompass the evolution of societies in the non-Western world.

This book has two goals. It suggests answers to how the idea of the public sphere, applied to Muslim majority societies and to Muslim communities elsewhere, contributes to the main currents of social thought, and links these currents to Islamic studies. This book is also intended to encourage those engaged in thinking about historical and contemporary issues concerning Islam and Muslim societies in different parts of the world to look across boundaries of region and academic

discipline and to integrate various disciplinary approaches—including history, anthropology, political science, and philosophy—to area-based knowledge.

The editors, like many of the contributors, have become increasingly disenchanted with the presumption that secularism and secularly oriented practical rationality was the exclusive normative base for "modern" public life (Eickelman 2000; Salvatore 1997, 2002). Some of the contributions to this book suggest how religious thought and practice in the Muslim world inspires rational-practical orientations as much as do secular approaches to social action. Some practices, including Sufi (mystical) disciplines (Pinto, Chapter 8, this volume), interact and sometimes clash with different forms of secularism as incorporated in the ideologies and practices of most states within Muslim-majority societies or where Muslim minorities live (van der Veer, Chapter 2, and Zaman, Chapter 6, this volume).

For both the nineteenth century and the contemporary era, the contributions to this volume seek to identify the norms of exchange and discourse that are the product of these interactions and clashes, and also the creation of a variety of explicit and implicit Muslim forms of civility and publicness. This in turn requires an effort to discern the social history, or genealogy, of the emergence of a sense and structure of public communication and participation in societies shaped by Muslim cultural, religious, and political traditions (see Chapters 4 and 5, by Kırlı and Frierson, in this volume).

The present period differs from earlier ones in the speed, intensity, and large numbers of people involved in pushing the contours of tradition, but the publics of an earlier era were equally engaged in doing so. The reshaping of religious identity and forms of communication and publicness in the nineteenth-century Ottoman Empire is especially important in this respect. Kırlı and Frierson focus principally on Istanbul, a city inhabited by a religiously, ethnically, and linguistically diverse population who outnumbered the Muslims for a good part of the Ottoman era. The most commonly held assumption is that the confessional communities of the empire lived separately, with minimal reciprocal interaction, and developed social bonds and allegiances exclusively within their own communities. This assumption diverts an appreciation of the mobile and relational aspect of community relations in Ottoman Istanbul, and it says little about the people's sense of identity and of collective allegiance. These two chapters also suggest how an understanding of the ongoing trans-

formations of the Ottoman Empire from the nineteenth century to the present can facilitate a better grasp of the possibilities for change in the contemporary Muslim majority world.

The collective historical experience of coexistence among Muslims and non-Muslims in the Ottoman Empire can be analyzed on the basis of their common interests as members of a vibrant society. In India, the relation between Hindus and Muslims is crucial to the development of ideas of secularism and religiosity in relation to the public sphere. In such an historical and interreligious perspective, the forms of public Islam in the twentieth century appear as contingent crystallizations of much more complex historical processes. For example, imperial encounters have been of great importance to the historical development of public debate in the metropole as well as the colony (van der Veer, Chapter 2; Kırlı, Chapter 4; and Frierson, Chapter 5, this volume)—a circumstance that the U.S. occupation of Iraq in 2003 brings once again to light.

Notwithstanding this diversity of experience, most Muslims share inherited conceptions of ideas of the common good. These shared ideas of the past shape contemporary understandings of publicness in Muslim societies (see Eickelman and Salvatore, Chapter 1; Zaman, Chapter 6; and Didier, Chapter 7, this volume). For example, although Islamic religious scholars, the ʿulama, claim that God reveals the ideas of the common good to humankind, they also regard these ideas as discernable primarily by themselves—men with expertise in the science of scriptural hermeneutics. Nonetheless, these religious scholars debate vigorously among themselves about what the common good entails. Moreover, they are rarely the only participants in this debate. Their authority remains strong in the modern world, but is increasingly challenged by alternative religious authorities that often lack formal training in the traditional religious sciences. Even the constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran is based on two conflicting principles, the absolute sovereignty of God (Principles 2 and 56) and the people's right to determine their own destiny (Principle 3:8) (Islamic Republic of Iran 1980), thus opening the door to wide debate over issues of government and society. Within Sunni Islam, it is also becoming increasingly common for "lay" personalities to lead the Friday prayers at mosques. Thus like the state, the ʿulama rarely maintain a monopoly over the implicit understandings and formal ethical pronouncements guiding the Muslim community.

The increasing accessibility of the new media, including satellite

television, the Internet, and new uses of older media such as video- and audiocassettes and CDs contributes to fragmentation of the traditional structures of religious authority. It also facilitates innovative ideas of religious authority and representing Islam in public in unexpected ways (van der Veer, Chapter 2, and Anderson and Gonzalez-Quijano, Chapter 3, this volume). Several contributions to this volume show various combinations of fragmented and sustained old and new forms of religious authority and influence in the public sphere, making debates about what constitutes "good" or authentic Islam much more competitive than has been the case in the past.

One of the paradoxes of modern Muslim publics is that despite this discursive expansion in many Muslim-majority states and communities, the public good is increasingly defined within the parameters of Islam. Some states, such as republican Turkey, vigorously sought to domesticate and neutralize Islamic institutions and ideas, yet current Turkish politics are defined by a mutual accommodation and tacit bargaining, as the guardians of secularism and those who participate in Turkey's public sphere and civic life learn to accommodate one another through public debate and practice (White 2002). As Adelkhah (Chapter 10, this volume) indicates for Iran, the most powerful part of the women's movement is not formal and recognized organizations, all monitored and repressed by the state, but women's activities in the informal economy and in shaping religious practices. As in the French revolution, Adelkhah argues that such "informal" activities can be at least as powerful a vehicle for changing gender roles and ideas of Islam as explicit ideological statements and formal organizations. In all cases, Islamic ideas of the common good shift in content and elaboration over time and, despite explicit denials, may often converge with Western understandings of such major issues as democracy and tolerance for religious diversity (Hefner 2000; Sulaiman 1998). Thus the role of Islam in shaping understandings of the common good is unlikely to recede in importance in the years to come.

Muslims participate in crafting the idea of the common good in a variety of ways, and they also contribute to shaping the definitions of wider and more inclusive public goods in societies where Muslims are not a majority, as in Europe (Khosrokhavar 1997; Kepel 1997 [1994]); or, as in Syria and Turkey, they are confronted with a profoundly secular elite; or, as in Iran, with an increasingly unpopular, although powerful, clerical elite (Adelkhah, Chapter 10. this volume).

In India, Muslims live in a secular state strongly buffeted by religious extremism (van der Veer, Chapter 2, this volume). Such historically known and contemporary debates argue against efforts to find a single, overarching idea of the common good shared by all Muslim societies, even if some ideologues—both those claiming to represent Islam and those attacking it—make such essentializing claims. It is often the case that such debates or conflicts about what "good" or "true" Islam entails disrupt implicit or even camouflaged conceptions of the public sphere, as in many communities throughout the Muslim world (Didier, Chapter 7, this volume). The analyses of these debates and the contexts in which they occur throw into relief competing claims to speak in public, revealing threads of consensus and points of divergence or rupture.

The participation of religious authorities in public religious debate cannot be understood without an analysis of the audiences to which their discourses are directed and the elements that connect the followers of religious leaders to their persona. The new media, including sermons on tape, popular journals, and local radio broadcasts, may combine with more conventional media (including gossip or published fatwas, or religious interpretations) to widen spheres of participation and make them more complex. The degree to which the participation or influence of these new audiences alters conceptions and implementation of the common good, however, is a question that must always be asked rather than assumed (Eickelman and Salvatore, Chapter 1, and Frierson, Chapter 5, this volume). New authorities or speakers emerge in the space between the state and more traditional religious authorities, and thus come to represent alternative points of power.

Religious authority can be an essential part of the construction of public religious discourse in many different ways. For example, the participation of Sufis in public religious debate combines modern forms of conceptualizing and presenting religious arguments with membership in a hierarchical and intensely personalized religious framework. The public articulation of the common good does not require the equality of all participants in order to raise a claim to truth and justice. The relationship between religious authority—whether claimed by traditional religious scholars or by "new" religious intellectuals (Roy 1994 [1992])—and the public sphere is therefore profoundly ambiguous and much more complex than conventional Habermasian theories, in spite of their theoretical sophistication,

would make us believe (Pinto, Didier, and van der Veer, in this volume). Even in places where there is a state-sponsored Islamic ideology, as in Pakistan and Iran, individuals, groups, and communities often appropriate this ideology to reinforce their position in public religious debate by claiming Islamic credentials for defining the common good, or furthering particular interests in the guise of shared ones—a device common to public spheres everywhere.

Well before September 2001, the growing number of Muslims in Europe and North America had begun to address questions about national identity, citizenship and multiple loyalties, as in France and in Germany. Events since then have further foregrounded the vulnerability of Muslims living in the diaspora. At times this has lead to efforts to organize for more effective participation in the political life of the societies in question, and at times has lead to waves of self-estrangement, exposing the fragility of multicultural discourse. In these cases, some elements of public Islam become primarily a defense against the contingencies of global events and diaspora society, much as did the Black Panther movement in America in the late 1960s and a movement by the same name that developed shortly thereafter among North African Jewish Mizrahi immigrants in Israel in the 1970s. Even in such a predicament, however, a positive outcome of double estrangement with the home and the receiving societies is to encourage engagement with transnational Muslim causes, especially where Muslims are the victims of human rights abuses. Therefore, the fragilities of the diasporic predicament, exacerbated by the events of September 2001 and subsequently, might in the long run reinforce participation in transnational Muslim publics (Werbner 2002a, 2002b).

The contributions to this volume suggest that there is no singular public Islam, but rather a multiplicity of overlapping forms of practice and discourse that represent the varied historical and political trajectories of Muslim communities and their links and influences with societies elsewhere. Some elements of the approach underlying the chapters in this volume indicate that debates in the public sphere and about the common good encompass both words and practice. They are also profoundly shaped by new practices, new forms of publication and communication, and new ways of thinking about religious and political authority. The contributors to this volume intend this book as a significant port of entry for anyone wishing to understand Islamic debates and practices related to ideas of the public sphere and the common good as they have developed in the past

and as they are elaborated and reproduced in modern social and political contexts.

All but one of the contributors to this volume participated in a two-year Summer Institute, "The Public Sphere and Muslim Identities," that began in July 2001 and concluded in August 2002, funded by the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation (Bonn), administered by the Wissenschaftskolleg zu Berlin on behalf of an international consortium of institutes for advanced study in Europe and the United States and organized by this volume's editors. This book is not intended as the unique outcome of this project. These efforts share the intent of all the participants to make the study of Islam and Muslim societies a more integral element of the wider currents of social thought. We thank the Wissenschaftskolleg zu Berlin and Dartmouth College for providing the institutional infrastructure needed to realize this project, and Michael Becker for both intellectual and administrative support throughout. José Casanova generously commented on parts of the manuscript, Margaret Case read the contributions with the fine eye of a prepublication copyeditor, and Alison Schumitsch prepared the index. We also thank Alev Çinar, Dorothea Schulz, and Pnina Werbner for intensive and mutually enriching exchanges that contributed to the publication of this book.

References

Allievi, Stefano, and Jørgen Nielsen, eds.
2003 *Muslim Networks and Transnational Communities in and across Europe.* Leiden: E.J. Brill.

Bowen, John R.
2003 *Islam, Law and Equality in Indonesia: An Antrhropology of Public Reasoning.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Casanova, José
1994 *Public Religions in the Modern World.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Çinar, Alev
2001 "National History as a Contested Site: The Conquest of Istanbul and Islamist Negotiations of the Nation." *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 43, no. 2 (April): 364–91.

Cook, Michael
2000 *Commanding Right and Forbidding Wrong in Islamic Thought.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Eickelman, Dale F.
2000 "Islam and the Languages of Modernity." *Daedalus* 129, no. 1 (Winter): 119–33.

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

Hefner, Robert W.
2000 *Civil Islam: Muslims and Democratization in Indonesia*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
2003 "Civic Pluralism Denied? The New Media and *Jihadi* Violence in Indonesia." In *New Media in the Islamic World: The Emerging Public Sphere*, 2nd ed., edited by Dale F. Eickelman and Jon W. Anderson. Pp. 158–79. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
Hurvitz, Nimrod
2002 "The *Mihna* (Inquisition) and the Public Sphere." In *The Public Sphere in Muslim Societies*, edited by Miriam Hoexter, Shmuel N. Eisenstadt, and Nehemia Levtzion. Pp. 17–29. Albany: State University of New York Press.
Iran, Islamic Republic of
1980 "Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran" (ratified December 2–3, 1979). *Middle East Journal* 34, no. 2 (Spring): 181–204.
Kepel, Gilles
1997 [1994] *Allah in the West: Islamic Movements in America and Europe*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
Khosrokhavar, Farhad
1997 *L'Islam des jeunes*. Paris: Flammarion.
Modood, Tariq, and Pnina Werbner, eds.
1997 *The Politics of the New Multiculturalism in the New Europe: Racism, Identity, and Community*. New York: St. Martin's Press.
Peletz, Michael G.
2002 *Islamic Modern: Religious Courts and Cultural Politics in Malaysia*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
Rashid, Ahmed
2002 *Jihad: The Rise of Militant Islam in Central Asia*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
Roy, Olivier
[1992] *The Failure of Political Islam*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
Salvatore, Armando
1997 *Islam and the Political Discourse of Modernity*. Reading: Ithaca.
2001 "Introduction: The Problem of the Ingraining of Civilizing Traditions into Social Governance." In *Muslim Traditions and Modern Techniques of Power*, *Yearbook of the Sociology of Islam* 3, edited by Armando Salvatore. Pp. 9–42. Hamburg: Lit Verlag; New Brunswick, N.J.: Transaction.
Schulze, Reinhard
2000 [1994] *A Modern History of the Islamic World*. New York: New York University Press.
Sulaiman, Sadek J.
1998 "Democracy and *Shura*." In *Liberal Islam: A Sourcebook*, edited by Charles Kurzman. Pp. 96–98. New York: Oxford University Press.
Taylor, Charles
1993 "Modernity and the Rise of the Public Sphere," in *The Tanner Lectures on Human Values*, vol. 14, edited by Grethe B. Peterson. Pp. 205–60. Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press.
Vertovec, Steven, and Ceri Peach, eds.
1997 *Islam in Europe: The Politics of Religion and Community*. New York: St. Martin's Press.
Werbner, Pnina
2002a *Imagined Diasporas among Manchester Muslims: The Public Performance of Transnational Identity Politics*. Santa Fe, N.M.: School of American Research.
2002b "Editorial: Reproducing the Multicultural Nation." *Anthropology Today* 18, no. 2 (April): 3–4.
White, Jenny B.

2002 *Islamist Mobilization in Turkey: A Study in Vernacular Politics*. Seattle: University of Washington Press.

Zaman, Muhammad Qasim

2002 *The Ulama in Contemporary Islam: Custodians of Change*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Part I

The Public Sphere and Religion in Contemporary Societies

This page intentionally left blank

CHAPTER ONE

MUSLIM PUBLICS*

Dale F. Eickelman and Armando Salvatore

The Precolonial Muslim-majority World

The ideas of public accountability and political belonging are not recent in the Arab or the Muslim-majority world. Consider, for example, the oath of allegiance (*bayʿa*) to the ruler in precolonial Morocco. In that setting, political "belonging" was not based on unquestioned belief but on a continuing process of contest and reaffirmation. From at least the fifteenth century onward, Moroccan monarchs circulated almost continuously throughout their domains. In these royal progresses (*harka*s) with their entourage, they embodied their personal authority in constantly shifting locales, including the four imperial cities of Fez, Marrakesh, Meknes, and Rabat (Geertz 1983 [1977]: 136–37).

The legal and popular dimensions of the *bayʿa* shed light on the nature of Morocco's precolonial public. Bettina Dennerlein (2001), for example, discusses the October 1873 oath of allegiance in Fez to Sultan Mawlāy al-Ḥaṣan. The artisans of Fez insisted on making the *bayʿa* contingent on the abolition of certain non-Islamic taxes. The men of learning (*ʿulama*) and others (notables, and military leaders) who drew up the *bayʿa* agreed to this provision, although a few days later "certain people" prepared to reinstate the tax. Learning of this development, the tanners of Fez and their followers attacked and plundered the residence of the tax administrator, who took refuge with his family in the shrine of Mawlāy Idrīs, the patron saint of Fez.

A month later, Mawlāy al-Ḥaṣan announced an amnesty for those involved. When the sultan himself arrived in Fez in April 1884, however, he ordered the non-Islamic taxes restored. Again conflict erupted. This time the royal army besieged the rebellious quarters, killing and pillaging until the inhabitants again accepted the same taxes as had

---

* An earlier version of this chapter was published as Dale F. Eickelman and Armando Salvatore, "The Public Sphere and Muslim Societies," *European Journal of Sociology* 43, no. 1 (2002): 92–115.

been levied under the ruler's father and predecessor, Mawlāy Muḥammad ibn ʿAbdarraḥmān.

The *bayʿa* documents that Dennerlein analyzes indicate the contingent nature of collective identities. Kinship, social status, locality, and occupation were all "possible organizing principles for the construction of political belonging." An important element in achieving notable status was the ability—whether as judge, military leader, descendant of the Prophet (*sharīf*), head of a guild of merchants or artisans, or tribal leader—to secure loyalty and obedience to the ruler. *Bayʿa* documents were read aloud in public in every town in which they were prepared, generally in mosques. Some represented collectivities, others prominent notables, and the texts of various *bayʿa*s were circulated throughout the monarchy.

The specifics of these texts varied, but the standard components included elements affirming the ruler's legitimacy and at least implicitly limiting him to rule according to the precepts of Islamic law and "generally accepted standards of how a ruler should act" (Dennerlein 2001: 309). Another element venerated the descendants of the Prophet Muhammad, the *shurafāʾ*. As Dennerlein concludes, the *bayʿa* "obviously did not represent a contract freely agreed upon between equal parties and creating mutually binding, immediately obtainable rights and obligations." Neither, however, did it merely justify autocratic rule by the sultan. Its significance "lay in its contribution to sustaining and acting out a sense of political belonging." Recognition of the ruler was "rather the result of a combination of different forms and different levels of empirical involvement of individual and collective actors with a particular discourse on political ruler in Islam." Religious discourse was rarely used to delegitimize a particular ruler, but it "nevertheless created a certain space for debate." It also indicates that the various social actors were "actively" involved in sustaining the sense of political community (Dennerlein 2001: 310).

The practical workings of the precolonial *bayʿa* in Morocco point to the existence of a premodern public sphere, offering a wide-ranging flow of discursive social action. In this public sphere, members of the social body monitored one another and acted through a combination of at least partial consensus and a shared hierarchy of leaders of influence. There were some formalized institutional arrangements, such as pious endowments (*awqāf*), but informal and pervasive patterns of influence, responsibility, and shared expectations were equally important. These arrangements offered a framework for discourse and practice that extended beyond households, villages, and imme-

diate localities, facilitating discussions of the common good and of shifting, continually contested, boundaries of inclusion and exclusion.

The public sphere is thus not limited to "modern" societies. It is the site where contests take place over the definition of the "common good," and also of the virtues, obligations, and rights that members of society require for the common good to be realized. This emergent sense of public goes hand-in-hand with the sharing of norms that define ideas of community and the responsibilities of those who belong to it. The idea of the public sphere is thus a wider and at the same time more specific notion than that of civil society. As Shmuel N. Eisenstadt (2002: 141) explains:

> civil society entails a public sphere, but not every public sphere entails a civil society, whether of the economic or political variety, as defined in the contemporary discourse, or as it has developed in early modern Europe through direct participation in the political process of corporate bodies or a more or less restricted body of citizens in which private interests play a very important role. We do indeed expect that in every civilization of some complexity and literacy a public sphere will emerge, though not necessarily of the civil society type.

In claiming that the *bayʿa* in precolonial Morocco suggests the existence of a public sphere, we encounter a limitation, noted by Eisenstadt, that is still at the core of much current social theory. In spite of the fact that several historical and anthropological works on Africa and Asia have shown the elements of transaction and legitimacy present in clan, lineage, and tribally based collectivities, social theory still foregrounds developments in Europe to the detriment of other world regions (see Chakrabarti 2000: 3–6). In the introduction to his sociology of religion, Max Weber (1920: 1) stated that his interest was to explain the combination of factors that resulted in European uniqueness. Later scholars were less cautious. They used European institutions as the comparative basis against which to measure social and cultural institutions elsewhere.

Even if he did not intend to create a yardstick for interregional comparison, Jürgen Habermas, whose name is closely associated with the idea of the public sphere, sees as its essential element the historical emergence in Europe of "rational-critical" discourse among the "reasoning public" of eighteenth-century bourgeois society (Calhoun 1992: 7). The vast international echoes that Habermas's argument gained after the translation of his book into English and after the fall of the Soviet Union have made his argument on the public sphere an equally powerful token of Eurocentrism in social theory.

The Public Sphere: Beyond Europe and Before Modernity

At its base, Habermas's idea of the public sphere implies a realm separate from the formal structure of political authority and the space of households, kin, and, later, the European "nuclear" family. Habermas defines the public sphere as "a realm of our social life in which something approaching public opinion can be formed. Access is guaranteed to all citizens. A portion of the public sphere comes into being in every conversation in which private citizens assemble to form a public body" (Habermas 2001 [1989]: 102–103). In a notion that can be traced back to Immanuel Kant (1724–1804), the public sphere is for Habermas ideally an intermediate space in which ideas are presented on their own merits by self-reflective moral subjects rather than as emanating from authorities such as preachers, judges, and rulers. Authority is vested in the public sphere itself. In it, all participants have in principle an equal opportunity to persuade others.

Even for early modern Europe, however, the early Habermas neglected the role of religion in the development and expansion of the public sphere. For example, he ignored the movements of pietism and religious revivalism that were so successful in different parts of Germany, including Prussia, as well as in Scandinavia and other Protestant-majority parts of Western Europe. These movements instituted a sense of legitimacy through congregational forms of deliberation, as opposed to the dominant state-bound Lutheran churches. In later writings, Habermas acknowledged that the process through which norms are produced, which reflect general interest and create an "overlapping consensus" in society, can only be rooted in tradition, familiarity, and culture, through which individuals internalize the procedures of consensus. This also applies to "those who do not belong to the lucky heritage of Jefferson." The communicative presuppositions for generating such a consensus are not the privilege of a particular culture (Habermas 1992: 84–86).

In emphasizing the "rationality potential" of communicative action rooted in the "life world" as the generating source for shared notions of justice, Habermas (1992: 62–77) in his more recent writings has made a major contribution in showing that there is no inherent reason why the notion of public sphere has to be restricted to an idealized European bourgeoisie. Building on Habermas's work in discussing the eighteenth century and later periods, Casanova (1994: 56) reminds us of the "public and political posture of free, congregational, 'lev-

eling,' non-conformist sects or of any disestablished religion ready to clash with an unjust and sinful state."

Although the complex relationship of the Enlightenment to movements of religious renewal was known to European thinkers before Habermas, and has been increasingly evidenced by historians after the translation of Habermas's main work in English (Salvatore 1997: 26), prevailing theories of modernity and modernization in the mid-twentieth century assumed that religious movements, identities, and practices had become increasingly marginal to modern societies. These conventional assumptions have also until recently blocked the search for distinctive public spheres in "traditional" societies in general and "Muslim" societies in particular. Ernest Gellner (1994: 211), for example, regarded Islam as imposing "essential" constraints on the conduct and thought of those committed to it. Similarly, consolidated frames of interpretation of the evolution of the Ottoman Empire discouraged consideration of continuities between the religiously legitimated empire and the ensuing secular republic. New approaches to social, political, and economic history point instead to how the Ottoman Empire initiated many of the underlying developments of modern Turkish society, including changing notions of belonging, land, and territory. Modernity as a process antedated the republican era (Meeker 2002; Duben and Behar 1991; Frierson, Chapter 5, this volume).

Discerning the Public

In *The Public and Its Problems* (1927), John Dewey (1859–1952) argues that in no two ages or places is there the same idea of the public. By "public," Dewey means an institution with recognized common goals and at least an informal leadership, so his notion anticipates Habermas's concept of the public sphere. Dewey (1927: 33) writes, "What the public may be, what the officials are, and how adequately they perform their functions, are things we have to go to history to discover." When acting in the public interest, people behave neither like business or professional people transacting private affairs, nor like members of a constitutional order subject to the legal constraints. The state is part of this public insofar as it is seen as legitimately representing the interests of the community. The public is "organized and made effective by means of representatives who as guardians

of custom, as legislators, as executives, judges, etc., care for its especial interests by methods intended to regulate the conjoint actions of individuals and groups. Then and in so far, association adds to itself political organization" (Dewey 1927: 35). Dewey reaffirms the necessary role of intermediary institutions and authorities, as against the emphasis that Kant and Habermas place on the freedom of the public sphere from the influence of such authorities. Admittedly, Dewey saw little future role for religion in public life, arguing that "religions now prevent, because of their weight of historic encumbrances, the religious quality of experience from coming to consciousness and finding the expression that is appropriate to present conditions, intellectual and moral" (Dewey 1934: 9).

Antagonistic to the role of *religion* in modern life, he argued instead for the pervasiveness of religious *values*, the rational-practical orientation of individuals and communities, that "introduce perspective into the piecemeal and shifting episodes of existence" and sustain the "implicit public interest," turning into practice the human impulses "toward affection, compassion and justice, equality, and freedom" (Dewey 1934: 24, 28, 80–81). We argue that the dividing line between "religion" and "religious values" is not as hard and fast as Dewey claimed (cf. Ryan 2003: 43).

Dewey's approach also offers an alternative to treating history in monolithic "chunks" such as "Pre-Axial/Agrarian," "Axial," and "Modern," categories that inadvertently deflect attention away from how societies change. Political forms for Dewey (1927: 84) develop incrementally through "the outcome of a vast series of adaptations and responsive accommodations, each to its own particular situation." He also cautioned against the idea of technology itself structuring culture. The invention of the printing press, for example, did not inevitably lead to democracy (Dewey 1927: 110). Yet at the same time, inventions such as the electric light bulb contributed vastly to restructuring the use of space and time, just as television has been crucial in constructing the leisure time of privatized and passive late-twentieth-century consumers. For Dewey, writing in the aftermath of World War I, the great transformation was the "machine age," which had "so enormously expanded, multiplied, intensified and complicated the scope of the indirect consequences" of vast, impersonal economic and political actions. The result is too many "inchoate, conflicting, and uninformed" publics, whose common interests are difficult to discern and construct (Dewey 1927: 126, 131).

If a sense of the public, including "local communal life," can be established in the modern "machine age," Dewey argued, then "it will manifest a fullness, variety and freedom of possession and enjoyment of meanings and goods unknown in the contiguous associations of the past." It will be "alive and flexible as well as stable, responsive to the complex and world-wide scene in which it is enmeshed" (Dewey 1927: 216).

Dewey's formulation of the public is more open and flexible than that of Habermas and thus can be applied to more historical contexts. Habermas himself has cautiously and indirectly recognized the value of Dewey's non-Kantian approach (Habermas 1992: 211). Dewey highlights the features of "modern" society—for Dewey, the "machine age" of the 1920s—that distinguish it from earlier eras. At the same time, Dewey eschews the attribution of public to merely one type of society or historical era. He emphasizes the vast number of practices, habits, and responsive adjustments to different situations that contribute to shaping a sense of public based on overlapping interests.

The development of mass higher education in Muslim majority societies since mid-century (Eickelman 1992) and, more recently, increasingly accessible forms of communication and new media have played a significant role in fragmenting and contesting political and religious authority (Eickelman and Anderson 2003). But these recent developments did not call a public sphere into being. Instead, they contributed significantly to reshaping a sense and structure of public—based on shared inherited notions of "common good"—that was already available. The intensified fragmentation of religious and political authority characteristic of the modern era does not lead inevitably to democracy or "civil society," but the transparency that recent developments—including rapid communications by telephone, fax, Internet, and a greater ease in travel—obliges even the most authoritarian of regimes to justify its actions. It also increases the scope, intensity, and forms of involvement in a multiplicity of overlapping public spheres. Human rights organizations, nongovernmental organizations, women's rights groups, and religious organizations (including Sufi orders), among others, can operate more quickly and independently across national and regional boundaries in modern conditions. Actors in a repressive "homeland" public sphere can also enter more readily into contact with their "diaspora" counterparts, who often live in circumstances less subject to political control and intimidation.

The increased possibilities for transnational communication also contribute significantly to widening "homeland" public spheres. Some ideas of public can be intensely local; others can be transregional and transnational, expressing multiple ideas of group and community. Participation in the contemporary public sphere implies an openness and at least implicit pluralism in the sense of a capacity to act—or at least communicate—independently from state or ruling authorities.

Islam in the Public Sphere: Linking Past and Present

The significance of informal ties in creating a vital public sphere becomes more salient when we focus on accepted and socially legitimated means of accomplishing a task, rather than just on formal institutions authorized or acknowledged by some authority or ruler. These clusters of frameworks for reasoning and dialogue, shared understandings, and practices underpin the public sphere in any historical era (Taylor 1993: 213). Guilds of merchants and craftsmen, although recognized by the Ottoman administration, operated in an autonomous manner, punishing infractions by their members, defining acceptable practice, and settling disputes. Pious foundations (*waqf*; pl. *awqāf*) enjoyed a similar autonomy.

Due to their informal organizational character, Sufi orders, or religious brotherhoods offer an excellent locus for understanding historical shifts in the public sphere in Muslim majority societies. In recent centuries these developments have become increasingly entangled with European ones, although they do not necessarily follow the same trajectory.

Although informal, the ties between master and disciple in Sufism have a substance and concreteness as significant as such formal and legally recognized institutions as guilds, pious endowments, and mosque-universities (*madrasa*s). Acknowledging the change in political forms over time, anthropologist Abdellah Hammoudi (1997) argues that the master-student tie in Sufism serves as the key metaphor and practice by which authority is legitimated throughout the Arab world in general, and Morocco in particular, notwithstanding the formal trappings of parliamentary and other representative institutions since independence.

Hammoudi's argument can be criticized for imputing to earlier historical contexts the social relationships of later periods. However,

other historians show how many Sufi orders shifted in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries toward more formal and hierarchical organization. This shift allowed some orders to serve as vehicles for social and political change (Levtzion 2002). In some cases the authority of the shaykh expanded beyond the narrow range of both the *madrasa* and the *ṭarīqa* (brotherhood) and became a vehicle for internalizing Islamic norms in the wider society. Dealing with the early-nineteenth-century Sudan, Hofheinz (1992–93) pointed out how religious specialists with a high degree of formal schooling worked to spread the norms of scriptural Islam among the illiterate population of smaller towns and the countryside, as opposed to forming a more aloof scholarly or mystical elite. In a manner comparable to the Pietistic missions in the countryside in central and northern Europe, these movements inculcated the know-how needed to adapt emotionally and structurally to the wider socio-political transformations taking place as part of incorporation into the colonial system and the slow formation of nation-states. These transformations are part of what sociologist Norbert Elias (2000 [1939]) called the "civilizing process." They consisted of the formation among wide sectors of the population of more or less uniform norms that helped anticipate the consequence of one's behavior in wider society, and therefore created a sense of public interest.

In a similar vein, Sufi leaders and orders in Algeria, long discredited because of their reputation for compromise with French colonial authorities, reemerged in the 1980s together with Islamic associations as a backbone for collective action independent from both Islamic extremists and the state (Rouadjia 1990: 34, 59, 74, 111; Andezian 2001: 76–78, 86–88). As in the example of the Sudan in the nineteenth century, Sufism offered a template—as did other forms of religious association—for developing norms and expectations that encompassed social life in general and not just that of the religious order.

The common element among Sufi organizations in earlier eras and in the present is the tenacity of the master-disciple relationship and its potential for legitimating various forms of religious and political authority (Pinto, Chapter 8, this volume). Sufi orders reached out to a variety of constituencies, using not only *madrasa* Arabic but also its colloquial counterparts and the vernacular languages of different regions. Ruling authorities were often deeply suspicious of the orders because of their autonomy and capacity for independent action, linking the local with much wider spheres of influence. In

fifteenth- century Morocco, for example, saints or "pious ones" (*ṣāliḥūn*) manifested not only a closeness to the Divine presence (*walāya*) but also exercised worldly authority (*wilāya*) (Cornell 1998). Saints embodied a just moral order. Both in practice (for living saints were prominent in North Africa as elsewhere) and as cultural metaphors, saints set limits to the abuse of authority and contributed to the creation of Morocco's political order.

More generally, the innovative Sufi movements of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in many parts of the Muslim world, from the Maghrib to South and Southeast Asia, interpreted texts and practices far beyond the narrower compass offered by scripture- and law-based religious scholarship. Sufi practices in this period increasingly favored understandings that were less oriented to the esoteric and mystical than to inculcating collective understandings and shared practices that could cut across lines of occupation, wealth, lineage, and region. These notions were still ambiguously poised between the disciplines of mystical self-denial and a more socially oriented disciplined participation in society (Gran 1979: 42–49; Salvatore 1997: 41–48). Still, these shared habits and practices contributed significantly to developing Islam as a principle of the *social* order.

Sufi "revivalism" in the last three centuries paved the way for a new conception of Islamically legitimated action in public life by implicitly developing the idea of the social Muslim. Sufism asserted the right of individual believers to experiment with the "truth" independent of the *sharīʿa*, or accepted practice and the conventions of legal scholarship. Sufi orders, often interconnected over large distances, were usually not directly political but offered a template for intervention in society independent from both the state and from local affinities such as tribe, village, or region (Reichmuth 2000). These orders often offered a secure social role and engendered a strong sense of interdependence. Several revivalist movements in North and West Africa even led to the foundation of new forms of political domination, including Sufi and Mahdist movements in Cyrenaica, Sudan, and Nigeria (Keddie 1994; Reichmuth 1996). These movements became increasingly active in politics—sometimes within major centers of learning and sometimes challenging the established order. The neo-Sufi movements often grew in response to European political and economic domination, but responded equally to local developments.

Parallel to the emerging sense of social Islam engendered through Sufi orders by the eighteenth century, religious scholars and the gen-

eral public alike increasingly began to see the *sharīʿa* as more than a specialized juridical-theological notion. The spread of printing, in particular, accelerated the standardization of texts (Robinson 1993). It also encouraged making the *sharīʿa* a popular trope rather than just a jurist's notion, encompassing the explicit and implicit, taken-for-granted rules, habits, and practices needed to live a good life as a Muslim. In Egypt, for example, by the late nineteenth century the concept of *sharīʿa* took on a new meaning as a template for reasonable, just, and expected social practice—in short, social normativity. In this sense, it acquired a meaning distinct from the concrete law applied by the courts and from the science of jurisprudence (*fiqh*) charged with making sense of it (Salvatore 2000). This discourse was illustrated and propagated by the rise of a print culture that increasingly incorporated issues of economic prosperity and their associated social and moral requirements into the public virtues of faith (Gasper 2001).

The Emerging Public Sphere in Muslim Majority Societies

Even in societies where religious expression and practice are strongly regulated or circumscribed in the public sphere, such as constitutionally secular Turkey—governed as of late 2003 by a political party strongly imbued with religious principles—and Baʿthist Syria, they serve as an important element of the background understandings for most members of society. Adapting such understandings to current social practice, Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood (*al-ikhwān al-muslimūn*) emerged in the late 1920s to become what many observers still consider the only genuinely popular mass political movement in twentieth-century Egypt, reaching its heyday after the Israeli defeat of the combined Arab states in 1948. Royalist Egypt allegedly saw the movement as a sufficiently serious political threat to organize the assassination of its leader, Ḥasan al-Bannāʾ, in 1949. Two years after the 1952 Egyptian revolution, Nasser ruthlessly suppressed the movement for the same reason. Again in 2002, the Egyptian state indicted the movement as a threat to state security in spite of prior tacit approval for some of its key figures to participate in the parliament.

The Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood was well organized for gaining popular support in an earlier era and served as a model for similar movements elsewhere. It retains a strong hold in Egypt. However, popular political and religious movements of more recent origin,

including Lebanon's Hizbullah, Palestine's Hamas, and—for the sake of a non-Islamic comparison—Israel's Shas have adapted themselves to play a role in their respective public spheres. It is easy to think of such movements primarily in terms of their political influence. At their base, however, they appeal to their respective constituencies through their implicit and explicit invocation of shared moral understandings of social action. In the case of the two Arab groups, the social base includes a primary commitment to social work or action (*al-iltizām bi-l-ʿamal al-ijtimāʿī*). Morally and religiously inspired social action underlies the building of networks that provide assistance to the needy, basic health care, and education—services that the state often cannot efficiently provide. Such social action can be informally organized, based on affinities of shared habits, expectations, practices, and interests. It can also coalesce around formal institutions and associations. Such movements can also provide nonstate forms of arbitration and justice, media representations, and blueprints formulated for the entire national polity (see Deeb 2002). These associations provide dependable personal ties to cut through poorly understood bureaucratic regulations and indifferent bureaucracies. Religiously based charitable associations, focusing on a wide array of services (medical, educational, family welfare, and emergency assistance), play exactly such a role. They build initially on ties of local trust (Benthall 2000) and community, although they can also provide a base for subsequent political participation.

Such forms of religiously motivated charitable and service association involve an intricate web of informational and expressive transactions, which are constitutive of the public sphere (McQuail 1992: 2). They remind us that the public sphere is composed of more than agents who actively participate in specific institutions or associations, although the existence of such associations is an important element of the public sphere. Other groups lack formal organization and are clustered more on the basis of affinity. This is the case for the groups and activities associated with Fethullah Gülen in Turkey, for example. They lack central organization and coordination—an asset when elements of the state turn repressive and seek to seize assets and people—but their component associations and groups share a common moral orientation to action within society and polity.

An indicator of the dynamic, underlying values on which such informal and formal activities are based is the proliferation of what have been called "Islamic books," a style of writing that appeals to

new audiences. These are inexpensive, attractively printed mass-market texts that address such practical questions as how to live as a Muslim in the modern world and the perils of neglecting Islamic obligations. Some offer advice to young women on how to live as a Muslim in modern urban society, and some take the form of popular catechisms. These books articulate basic questions bearing directly on the lives of average citizens. For example, do Islamic traditions and practices—subject to deep and traumatic strains and transformations, especially since the colonial era—still offer sure guidelines for how to conduct one's life, educate one's children, and participate in community affairs, mosque, nation, and community of Muslims worldwide? If not, how can such traditions or practices be restored or adapted to current practice?

Such "Islamic books" break with the cadences of traditional literary Arabic (and with parallel traditions in other languages widely used by Muslims, including Bangla, Urdu, English, and French) and instead are often written in a breezy, colloquial style. They often are sold on sidewalks and outside mosques, and since the 1970s have competed strongly with other types of books in the market (Gonzalez-Quijano 1998: 171–98). The more conventional sort of "grand" intellectual discourse continues, but is often confined to narrow intellectual circles (Salvatore 1997: 219–41), or is displaced by that of younger intellectuals more geared to wider audiences, who situate themselves between the style of "Islamic books" and the highly restricted fashion of conventional religious scholarship. Equally pervasive are audio- and videocassettes, and popular preachers who have mastered the new media. Some of the more successful, such as Shaykh Yusuf al-Qaradawi, combine multiple media—personal appearances, books (often based on the spoken word), pamphlets, audio- and videocassettes, radio, television, satellite television, and Internet—to reach a variety of audiences.

The Public Sphere as the Site of "Shared Anticipation"

The transformations associated with the rise of modern nation-states, bureaucracies, and capitalist sectors within societies are related to a phenomenon that can be termed an "education into anticipation." This notion builds on Norbert Elias's (2000 [1939]) concept of the "civilizing process" and overlaps with the notion of habitus as "a

matrix of perceptions, appreciations, and actions," a "generative principle of regulated improvisations that makes possible the achievement of infinitely diverse tasks" (Bourdieu 1977 [1972]: 78, 83). However, the notion of habitus downplays the importance of the "externalities" of discourse in setting rules of communication and interaction (Calhoun 1993: 73–74). Dewey offers a more comprehensive approach, arguing that shared habits and practice, mediated by discourse accepted as authoritative, allow a community to build up a sense of expectation about others.

Equally important are common forms of resistance to the state. Thus Iranian villagers, faced with the disruptions of the Shah's White Revolution, developed shared practices to deflect or indirectly defeat state intervention in their affairs (Goodell 1986). Iranian youth born since the 1978–1979 revolution are also beginning to participate in a "post-Islamic" public space in which they increasingly ignore regime restrictions on dress, leisure activities, relations between the sexes, and other aspects of life (Khosrokhavar and Roy 1999: 143–205). Throughout the Muslim-majority world, as elsewhere, students learn not only the formal elements of the curriculum in school but also the hidden lessons of bureaucratic indifference, hierarchy, class, ethnicity, and gender identity. In the diverse, rapidly changing conditions of modern society, the state cannot provide guidance from above to shape all activities. More complex ways of inculcating and negotiating background understandings are needed to provide the "connecting tissue" of information, expression, and solidarity.

In drawing attention to the communicative and interconnected aspects of social life that we call the public sphere, Dewey shows how acts become public when their consequences, even if initiated in private, indirectly affect the welfare of many others (Dewey 1927: 13). For this reason, the state or the community also acts to regulate or to limit certain actions of individuals if these actions threaten the community. The public sphere entails awareness among members of a society that discrete acts have a general impact on others. Hence the sense of public is the means through which this perception of the consequences of actions is generalized. People are "educated" into this perception, anticipating the consequences of one another's actions. This is the point at which Dewey's notion of the public and Elias's of the "civilizing process"—despite their divergent theoretical concerns—show an interesting convergence. Shared anticipation is the condition of possibility of a public sphere.

The emergence of the public coincides here with the opening up of the circles of reciprocity and mutual obligations, which also allows for the crystallization of a notion of social welfare and general interest. The consolidated effect of the socialization that allows people to anticipate the consequences of their actions can also be called "moral agency," a broader notion than citizenship.

Of course, media-mediated, mass forms of communication that are not face-to-face are also crucial to the modern public sphere. Schooling and television broadcasts (including interview programs and soap operas) contribute to developing a collective sense of anticipation and internalization of norms. These patterns of anticipation are crucial to debates on the common good, but they are not the whole story. Liberal political theory, as exemplified by Kant and Habermas, assumes that participants in the public sphere are engaged in basically free exchanges of opinions unrestricted by considerations of status or authority. Dewey's approach requires no such idealism. For him, the public sphere is at once more dynamic and more fragile. Speakers and their audiences take a variety of background information into account and engage in a great deal of miscommunication and misapprehension.

In the context of modern, complex societies, shared standards of anticipation must still be based on ties that are perceived as local, even if these "localities"—taking advantage of modern communications—are not local in a geographical sense. Even in the 1920s, Dewey (1927: 216) called for a restoration of "local communal life," a task perhaps technically easier today than in earlier eras. The public spheres of contemporary societies and polities are made up of highly diverse groups. These groups all possess a strong sense of local knowledge, but not always the same local knowledge, although they, like the public spheres to which they belong, significantly overlap. Modern public spheres are constituted through a frail, overlapping consensus based on shared mechanisms of anticipation. In the Turkish case, for example, nationalists may say that loyalty to the nation transcends all other identities. Yet, as Bellér-Hann and Hann (2001: 22) explain, many other identities emerge from the "continuous flow of social interaction." National identity combines with "identities of a more traditional sort, such as those linked to language, gender, family and religion, and with newer identities that people create in increasingly globalised marketplaces." Moral agency does not necessarily operate with the same intensity or in the same way in all

shared circles of consensus. For example, a media campaign to raise funds for relief work in Bosnia or Palestine, or to provide meat for the poor on Muslim feast days, entails dimensions different from those of a movement based primarily in a single locality.

Among the multiple modern public spheres, the nation-state claims primacy, prescribing models of homogeneous identity formation and ritual constitution for the whole community. One key ritual, even in authoritarian states, is the general election. The complexity of social life, the modularity of identities, and the contest over primacy cannot be reduced to nor obliterate the importance of "warm" circles of community and obligation. Warm circles offer mutual trust and familiarity. They are also open-ended. They demand loyalty and imply reciprocity, yet loyalties are intersecting, overlapping, and inevitably divided. "Cold" circles of community—those that are formal, distant, and single-stranded—also make claims to primacy, but they are too removed from daily practice and concerns to secure the ultimate loyalty they claim. What is distinctive about the modern public sphere is the rapidity with which cold circles of community can sometimes merge with and incorporate warm ones, creating novel senses of belonging and identity. Thomas Scheff (1990: 22) argued that there has been a paucity of systematic studies of bonds of communal solidarity, with the result that Durkheim's distinction between mechanical and organic solidarity—or for that matter the distinction between community and society—deflects attention away from the possibility that these two types of solidarity are often interwoven.

Inculcated and shared standards of anticipation, generated and transformed through habit and practice, often are conceived in terms of a stable "tradition" (Elias 1997: 67). In this form, they establish the cohesiveness of norms in modern societies. The reproduction and transmission of these norms always requires an endless capacity for creative adaptation. Nicolas Haddad, a major Egyptian reformer and "proto-sociologist" of early-twentieth-century Egypt, reformulated the tradition of *adāb* (manners) in terms of acquisition of the skills necessary for "social commerce"—a notion that resonates with Elias's underlying idea of the civilizing process. Haddad maintained that "unlike other species, man's struggle for survival is associated specifically with two ideas: life expectancy (*al-ajāl al-madīd*) and quality of life (*al-hazz al-saʿīd*, literally, good luck). These two ideas come together in the concept of the future (*al-mustaqbal*)" (Farag 2001: 109). This new sociology—paralleled for the Turkish context by Ziya Gökalp

and for the Iranian context by Ahmad Kasravi (Parsi 2000: 133–39)—was also a new program of education. Haddad's examples of how normativity works—through teaching anticipation—evokes Gellner's (1995) conception of building a "modular self," a modern sense of responsible agency based on a distinction between different fields of social action and action within these fields. Gellner's notion of the emergence of the modular self may be too regimented, but it presages the sense of "social agency" and the autonomous individual so crucial to modern societies (Giddens 1984: 314).

The way a sense of public is built into social interactions varies considerably with social context and notions of personality, responsibility, and justice inherited from older traditions. In the context of the contemporary nation-state, modern techniques of authority, persuasion, and control must be taken into account. These may limit the construction of a freely flowing sense of social agency. State techniques such as military conscription, policing practices, the perceived pervasiveness of informers, and modern schooling dramatically influence the sense of shared anticipations. In repressive regimes, this is done through persuading the public of the omnipresence of informers.

Less sinister forms of social control also abound. Discussion may often be "channeled," so that the major media (radio, television, and mass-circulation newspapers) are carefully regulated in what is said and not said, while the "little" media, such as books and magazines of more limited circulation, are given considerably more latitude for expression. Modern censors and state authorities often allow some open forums for discussion, knowing that these media fail to reach the majority of the audience effectively (Eickelman 2003: 39). Not only the state, moreover, but also private organizations and interest groups seek to regulate and control their presentation of self in the public sphere (Jackall and Hirota 2000).

There are many forms of state, as Dewey says, but in most societies the modern state, whether authoritarian or liberal, is strong and pervasive, and there are continuing debates about the proper limits to state authority. The modern state says that it exercises censorship for the good of its citizens, and polices society for the same reason. Whether in Muslim-majority societies or in Europe, the state sets the stage and the rules of conduct. On the other hand, the state may be increasingly challenged or criticized. Such criticism may not always be effective and sometimes may be dangerous to those who utter it and to the state, but most state authorities are increasingly

aware that their current secrets or indiscretions, and those of the past, may be the subject of public commentary and discussion.

The existence of a modern nation-state, however, does not inevitably lead to an open public sphere in which the discipline of shared anticipations (only part of which emanates from the state) and the possibility of deliberation on public matters emerge together. For this to occur, other social actors are needed who have some degree of autonomy, who are not instruments of the state (although detractors may impute this role to them), and who communicate through available and effective forums and communications media. The mix of resources will vary. In Syria, it may be the salons of established businessmen and intellectuals, gatherings known to state authorities but tolerated because they are not mentioned in formal media (Al-Azm 2000). Other venues include the new media, audio- and videocassettes, and photocopied leaflets, as well as coffee shops, mosques, and church congregations. They may also include secret or "non-declared" associations (see van der Veer, Chapter 2, this volume). Just as secret lodges were important for the Enlightenment movement in Europe, organizations neither formally declared to the state nor reported to it often acquire a major significance. Sometimes the same people are involved in both kinds of activities. This was as much the case for French *philosophes* such as Denis Diderot as for Muslim reformers such as Muhammad ʿAbduh. In the end, however, not all authority ends up being absorbed into the public sphere. There is a constant tension between state and society over the space allowed for the public sphere.

Solidarity and Circles of Communication in the Modern Public Sphere

Communications within "warm" circles and the creation of public circuits of communication in wider, "cold" public spheres do not mark two different social types of public. They are crosscurrents within the same societies and the same or overlapping public spheres. Consider, for example, Egyptian Islamic intellectual and media star Mustafa Mahmud (born 1921). His career, especially after he became identified with Islamic thought and practice, shows how expressive and informational transactions are linked to representations of social solidarity (Salvatore 2001). Mahmud's particular role in the Egyptian

public sphere has been to articulate the scholarly discourse of ʿulama with the needs and practices of wider groups, contributing to a "re-intellectualization" of Islam in an accessible vernacular form. Before becoming an Islamic intellectual in the 1960s, he was a secularist. Following vigorous protests from some religious figures, in 1956 state authorities confiscated his book *Allāh wa-l-insān* (God and man) on the allegation that it spread atheistic and impious thoughts. By his account, he then began a journey in the search of truth that brought him "from doubt to faith" (*min al-shakk ila-l-imān*), the title of one of his later best-sellers. He began his "Islamic career" in the late 1960s with the publication of a Qurʾanic commentary (*tafsīr*). Its popularity was due to the inclusion of both the vocabulary of the natural sciences (Mahmud was a medical doctor) and the vernacular of everyday experience. This blend of religion, science, and common sense—and showing the consistency among them—proved a winning formula.

His public liked him because he helped them to identify Islam (erected against a wall of doubt elaborated by poorly understood but respected modern science) as a blueprint for social responsibility that transcended material and individual interests. By the early 1970s, Mahmud built up a successful television series, "Science and Faith" (*al-ʿilm wa-l-imān*), founded his own mosque, and created a charitable medical association. These actions legitimized his public discourse because the public—primarily Egyptians, but also Palestinians and Jordanians—knew that it was accompanied by concrete social acts.

Mahmud's rapid rise in popularity did not represent the ascendancy of "lay" religious authority over that of the ʿulama. His ascent and the crucial support he received from the Shaykh al-Azhar of the time, ʿAbd-al-Halim Mahmud, shows how much he still depended on an implicit association with traditional ʿulama. Nor did the Egyptian public see his style of media authority as radically alternative to that of the leading television preacher of the time, Shaykh Muhammad Mutawalli Shaʿrawi (d. 1998). Mahmud's audience considered these two "stars" as different in style but mutually reinforcing. In Mahmud's heyday in the 1980s and early 1990s, his public also listened to him in a different way than they had listened in an earlier era. In an earlier period, Nasser spoke *to* audiences. Mahmud spoke *with* them. Families gathered in their living room to watch his program, so that he shared their domestic space. Invoking the master-disciple relationship of Sufism, some people who knew him only through television referred to him as "their" shaykh, a claim made more vivid by knowledge

of his charitable works. In his clinics, some patients expected to be treated by him (although he had ceased practicing medicine decades earlier) rather than by the regular clinic staff. Whereas public figures such as Muhammad Shahrur and Sa'id Ramadan al-Buti of Syria represent opposing types with incompatible views, Sha'rawi and Mustafa Mahmud made more of a double billing of complementary personalities in Egypt.

The ability of some actors and messages to transform the "cold" sphere into a "warm" one, as Mustafa Mahmud successfully did, is characteristic of the modern era. This transformative ability is rapidly being accelerated by new interactive media such as the Internet and satellite television—media freed from many conventional state restrictions. The result is an intensified cross-cutting of messages. There has long been a de facto pluralism in the Muslim majority world, although sometimes masked by some groups and leaders asserting their leadership over the *umma*, the worldwide community of Muslims. Intensified communications have resulted in a sort of horizontal transnationalism of nonstate actors. This may be expressed in a concern for Muslim minorities, the boundaries of accommodation to non-Muslim majorities, and the permeability of the frontiers of Muslim thought and practice. The cross-cutting includes "Western" and "Muslim" circles of communication. The two circles often overlap and are mutually supportive. Debates over "being Muslim" can be intensely local or follow lines of language. They can also be regional or even global, as in a Kuwaiti newspaper debate over whether women should participate in the 1995 Beijing World Conference on women (Shahrur 1998). In these discussions and practices, "being Muslim" is never an exclusive identity, for one also has identities of family, language, nation, region, gender, and others that make identities situational and which also require pragmatic compromise and accommodation.

In modern societies, including authoritarian ones, there are other actors besides the state. For example, engaged Muslims who have the means to do so use media as well as the ability to support collective projects for the public good, creating vehicles for teaching others in words and in deeds how to be a good Muslim. This consciousness of media power and the partial accessibility of some media even in authoritarian sociopolitical contexts also provide alternatives to thinking of Islamic action in immediate political terms. It can equally mean contributing to the construction of an Islamically informed public as a more realistic goal than the establishment of a local or worldwide

Islamic state (Yasīn 1999: 75–83). This option also corresponds to a Dewey-like gradualistic (in Arabic, *mutadarraj*) view, which is also a pragmatic means of accommodating to authoritarian states or militant secularism. Following the World Trade Center bombings of September 11, 2001, David Martin (2003) argued against the idea that the relation between religion and modern society can be arrayed on a continuum ranging from minimal relations between the two, as "required" by the "Western Enlightenment," and the maximal relations between the two, as found in "Islam." An alternative view is that in all societies, including both Muslim majority ones and those of Europe and North America, religion can play an important role in providing ethical and moral guideposts to individuals as they take responsibility for their lives. This has been the case for liberation theology in South America beginning in the 1970s, and may be one of the currents paramount in the Muslim world today. Such an empowerment of individuals can motivate the actions of small but deadly groups of extremists. It can also support individuals breaking with authoritarian religious and political authority.

Conclusion: Whither Modularity?

Modern identities are basically modular and individualistic. They are often inculcated through formal education and state practices, but they always have to be socially sustained and are subject to change over time. Modularity is never self-sufficient and self-sustaining, but needs underlying, horizontal, ties of solidarity without which social identity is ineffective. There are cultural differences in how collective frameworks of reasoning, or even a "public reason", are distilled and legitimized out of these overlapping "ties that bind" and how they interact with the "firmest tie," as Islam is called in the Qur'an (2:256; 31:22). On the other hand, in seeking to understand the link between the public sphere and Muslim identities, we see more than a pure politics of "identity," of almost optional affinities, as is the case in the entitlement politics of certain U.S. and European contexts. Contemporary Muslim publics encompass the publishing business (magazines, books, and audiocassettes, and their networks of distribution), reading groups, relief associations, solidarity networks and political movements, and—of particular significance—the mosque and the collective Friday prayer and sermon. These media and sites

combine in multiple ways. These Muslim publics are grounded in practices that emerge through the complex process of ingraining of Muslim traditions into modern social life. Eisenstadt's (2000) notion of "multiple modernities" is one way of accounting for these different trajectories and relating them to the idea of the public sphere.

One reason for the importance of seeing continuities between the public spheres of the past and the present is to foreground the element of shared standards of anticipation that make public spheres—and in some cases, democracy—work. This chapter suggests some points of departure for understanding a variety of historical trajectories and cultural and religious traditions that can shape public spheres. It also suggests ways of accommodating some of the European-centered main currents of social thought to the variety of ways in which religion continues to play a dynamic, and often constructive, role in shaping public spheres.

References

Al-Azm, Sadik J.
2000 "The View from Damascus." *New York Review of Books* 47, no. 10 (June 15): 70–77.

Andezian, Sossie
2001 *Expériences du divin dans l'Algérie contemporain: Adeptes des saints de la région de Tlemcen*. Paris: CNRS Éditions.

Bellér-Hann, Ildikó, and Chris Hann
2001 *Turkish Region*. Oxford: James Currey; Santa Fe: School of American Research Press.

Benthall, Jonathan
2000 "Civil Society's Need for De-deconstruction." *Anthropology Today* 6, no. 2: 1–2.

Bourdieu, Pierre
1977 [1972] *Outline of a Theory of Practice*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Calhoun, Craig
1992 "Introduction." In *Habermas and the Public Sphere*, edited by Craig Calhoun. Pp. 1–48. Cambridge: MIT Press.
1993 "Habitus, Field, and Capital: The Question of Historical Specificity." In *Bourdieu: Critical Perspectives*, edited by Craig Calhoun, Edward LiPuma, and Moishe Postone. Pp. 61–88. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Casanova, José
1994 *Public Religions in the Modern World*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Chakrabarti, Dipesh
2000 *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Cornell, Vincent J.
1998 *Realm of the Saint: Power and Authority in Moroccan Sufism*. Austin: University of Texas Press.

Deeb, Lara
2002 " 'Doing Good, Like Sayyida Zaynab': Community Welfare and Shi'i Islamic Social Mobilization in the Southern Suburbs of Beirut." Paper presented at the workshop on Islamic Movements and Discourses in Local, National and Transnational Public Spheres, Florence, March 21–24.
Dennerlein, Bettina
2001 "Legitimate Bounds and Bound Legitimacy: The Act of Allegiance to the Ruler (*Bai'a*) in Nineteenth-Century Morocco." *Die Welt des Islams* 41, no. 3: 287–310.
Dewey, John
1927 *The Public and Its Problems*. New York: Henry Holt.
1934 *A Common Faith*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
Duben, Alan, and Cem Behar
1991 *Istanbul Households: Marriage, Family, and Fertility, 1880–1940*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Eickelman, Dale F.
1992 "Mass Higher Education and the Religious Imagination in Contemporary Arab Societies." *American Ethnologist* 19, no. 4 (November): 643–55.
2003 "Communication and Control in the Middle East: Communication and Its Discontents." In *New Media in the Muslim World: The Emerging Public Sphere*, 2nd ed., edited by Dale F. Eickelman and Jon W. Anderson. Pp. 29–40. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
Eickelman, Dale F., and Jon W. Anderson
2003 "Redefining Muslim Publics." In *New Media in the Muslim World: The Emerging Public Sphere*, 2nd ed., edited by Dale F. Eickelman and Jon W. Anderson. Pp. 1–18. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
Eisenstadt, Shmuel N.
2000 "Fundamentalist Movements in the Framework of Multiple Modernities." In *Between Europe and Islam: Shaping Modernity in a Transcultural Space*, edited by Almut Höfert and Armando Salvatore. Pp. 175–196. Brussels, Berlin, and Oxford: Presses Interuniversitaires Europeénnes—Peter Lang.
2002 "Concluding Remarks: Public Sphere, Civil Society, and Political Dynamics in Islamic Societies." In *The Public Sphere in Muslim Societies*, edted by Miriam Hoexter, Shmuel N. Eisenstadt, and Nehemia Levtzion. Pp. 139–61. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.
Elias, Norbert
1997 *The Germans: Power Struggles and the Development of Habitus in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries*. Boston: Polity.
2000 [1939] *The Civilizing Process: Sociogenic and Psychogenic Investigations*. Rev. ed. Oxford: Blackwell.
Farag, Iman
2001 "Private Lives, Public Affairs. The Uses of *Adab*." In *Muslim Traditions and Modern Techniques of Power*, *Yearbook of the Sociology of Islam* 3, edited by Armando Salvatore. Pp. 93–120. Hamburg: Lit Verlag; New Brunswick, N.J.: Transaction.
Gasper, Michael
2001 " 'Abdallah Nadim, Islamic Reform, and 'Ignorant' Peasants: State-Building in Egypt." In *Muslim Traditions and Modern Techniques of Power*, *Yearbook of the Sociology of Islam* 3, ed. Armando Salvatore ed. Pp. 75–92. Hamburg: Lit Verlag; New Brunswick, N.J.: Transaction.
Geertz, Clifford
1983 [1977] "Centers, Kings, and Charisma: Reflections on the Symbolics of Power." In his *Local Knowledge*. Pp. 121–46. New York: Basic Books.

Gellner, Ernest
1994 *Conditions of Liberty*. London: Allen Lane.
1995 "The Importance of Being Modular." In *Civil Society: Theory, History, Comparison*, edited by John Hall. Pp. 32–55. Boston: Polity.
Giddens, Anthony
1984 *The Constitution of Society*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press.
Gonzalez-Quijano, Yves
1998 *Les Gens du livre: Édition et champ intellectual dans l'Égypte republicaine*. Paris: CNRS Éditions.
Goodell, Grace E.
1986 *The Elementary Structures of Political Life: Rural Development in Pahlevi Iran*. New York: Oxford University Press.
Gran, Peter
1979 *Islamic Roots of Capitalism. Egypt, 1760–1840*. Syracuse: Syracuse University Press.
Habermas, Jürgen
1992 *Faktizität und Geltung*. Frankfurt: Suhrkamp.
2001 [1989] "The Public Sphere: An Encyclopedia Article." In *Media and Cultural Studies: Keyworks*, edited by Meenakshi Gigi Durham and Douglas M. Kellner. Pp. 102–107. Oxford: Blackwell.
Hammoudi, Abdellah
1997 *Master and Disciple: The Cultural Foundations of Moroccan Authoritarianism*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
Hofheinz, Albrecht
1992–1993 "Der Scheich im Über-Ich, oder Haben Muslime ein Gewissen? Zum Prozess der Verinnerlichung schriftislamischer Normen in Suakin im frühen 19. Jahrhundert." *Wuquf*, no. 7–8: 61–481.
Jackall, Robert, and Janice M. Hirota
2000 *Image Makers: Advertising, Public Relations, and the Ethos of Advocacy*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
Keddie, Nikki R.
1994 "The Revolt of Islam, 1700 to 1993: Comparative Considerations and Relations to Imperialism." *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 36: 463–87.
Khosrokhavar, Farhad, and Olivier Roy
1999 *Iran: Comment sortir d'une revolution religieuse?* Paris: Seuil.
Levtzion, Nehemiah
2002 "The Dynamics of Sufi Brotherhoods." In *The Public Sphere in Muslim Societies*, edited by Miriam Hoexter, Shmuel N. Eisenstadt, and Nehemiah Levtzion. Pp. 109–118. Albany: State University of New York Press.
McQuail, Denis
1992 *Media Performance: Media Communication and the Public Interest*, London: SAGE.
Martin, David
2003 "Blinded by the Enlightenment" (review). *Times Literary Supplement*, June 20, pp. 11–12.
Meeker, Michael E.
2002 *A Nation of Empire: The Modernist Legacy of Public Life in a Turkish Province*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press.
Parsi, Rouzbeh
2000 "Reforming Society: Intellectuals and Nation-Building in Turkey and Iran." In *Between Europe and Islam: Shaping Modernity in a Transcultural Space*, edited by Almut Höfert and Armando Salvatore. Pp. 109–40. Brussels, Berlin, and Oxford: Presses Interuniversitaires Européennes—Peter Lang.

Reichmuth, Stefan
1996 "Education and the Growth of Religious Associations among Yoruba Muslims—The Ansar-ud-Deen Society of Nigeria." *Journal of Religion in Africa* 26, no. 4: 365–405.
2000 "'Netzwerk' und 'Weltsystem': Konzepte zur neuzeitlichen 'Islamischen Welt' und ihrer Transformation." *Saeculum* 51, no. 2: 267–93.
Robinson, Francis
1993 "Technology and Religious Change: Islam and the Impact of Print." *Modern Asian Studies* 27, no. 1: 229–51.
Rouadjia, Ahmed
1990 *Les Frères et la mosquée: Enquête sur le mouvement islamiste en Algérie*. Paris: Karthala.
Ryan, Alan
2003 "The Power of Positive Thinking." *New York Review of Books* 50, no. 1 (January 16): 43–46.
Salvatore, Armando
1997 *Islam and the Political Discourse of Modernity*. Reading: Ithaca.
2000 "The Islamic Reform Project in the Emerging Public Sphere: The (Meta)normative Redefinition of *sharīʿa*." In *Between Europe and Islam: Shaping Modernity in a Transcultural Space*, edited by Almut Höfert and Armando Salvatore. Pp. 89–108. Brussels, Berlin, and Oxford: Presses Interuniversitaires Européennes—Peter Lang.
2001 "Mustafa Mahmud: A Paradigm of Public Islamic Entrepreneurship?" In *Muslim Traditions and Modern Techniques of Power*, *Yearbook of the Sociology of Islam* 3, edited by Armando Salvatore. Pp. 211–23. Hamburg: Lit Verlag; New Brunswick, N.J.: Transaction.
Scheff, Thomas J.
1990 *Microsociology: Discourse, Emotion, and Social Structure*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
Shahrur, Muhammad
1998 [1995] "Islam and the 1995 Beijing World Conference on Women." In *Liberal Islam: A Sourcebook*, edited by Charles Kurzman. Pp. 139–42. New York: Oxford University Press.
Taylor, Charles
1993 "Modernity and the Rise of the Public Sphere." In *The Tanner Lectures on Human Values*, vol 14. Pp. 203–60. Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press.
Weber, Max
1920 *Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Religionssoziologie*. Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr.
Yasīn, al-Sayyid
1999 *Qaḍāya al-muʿāṣira wa-al-khilāfa: hiwār ʿalmānī-Islāmī*. Cairo: Mirāt lī al-nashr wa-maʿlumāt.

This page intentionally left blank

CHAPTER TWO

SECRECY AND PUBLICITY IN THE SOUTH ASIAN PUBLIC ARENA

Peter van der Veer

Some authors conflate the notions of civil society and public sphere, while others distinguish them sharply and argue for one against the other (Calhoun 1993, Dean 2001). I think that the two belong together. In my reading, civil society comprises institutions and social movements that are independent enough from the state to be critical of it, and the public sphere comprises the spaces, sites, and technologies available for public discourse that is critical of the state. Both concepts carry overtones of liberal political theory. This is especially true of Habermas's understanding of the public sphere, with its emphasis on a particular kind of secular rationality and subjectivity, excluding the not–yet–modern subject. Despite Habermas's training in the Frankfurt School, there is much in his analysis of the emergence of the bourgeois public sphere and its transformations that is close to liberal political thought (Habermas 1989 [1962]).[1] His emphasis on freedom of expression combined with rationality of debate reminds one of John Stuart Mill's famous "Essay on Liberty" (1982 [1859]). For both Habermas and Mill, it is clear that only rational adults can participate in this debate. Habermas writes about the emergence of the bourgeois public sphere in England without any reference to the British Empire. Mill, a colonial administrator, is more direct in his denial of the possibility that the colonized world can create and participate in orderly, public debate. The colonized are like children who have to be educated before they can engage in rational debate. Postcolonial studies have sufficiently shown that this "little England" perspective is a nationalist fallacy. For instance, in her discussion of the concept of freedom in Edmund Burke's famous reflections on the corruption of the East India Company,

[1] Horkheimer refused to accept Habermas's *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* as a Habilitationsschrift, so Habermas submitted it instead in Marburg under Wolfgang Abendroth. See Calhoun 1992: 1–5.

Sara Suleri (1992: 24–75) demonstrates clearly how political theories about Britain in the eighteenth century were directly related to thoughts about empire. As I have argued elsewhere (van der Veer 2001: 3–14), imperial encounters have been of great importance for the historical development of public debate in the metropole as well as in the colony. The imaginary of the nation-state itself is a product of global history. Moreover, it is important to highlight the imperial genealogy of the public sphere in order to understand better the current transformation from the national public sphere to a transnational public sphere. Keck and Sikkink (2000), for instance, rightly point to the antislavery societies of the nineteenth century as precursors to present-day transnational movements and advocacy networks.

Another significant congruence between Habermas's thought and that of J.S. Mill is that neither sees a place for religious argumentation or religious movements in the public sphere, since in their view religion is an obstacle to the freedom and rationality of debate, because of its absolutist claims on truth. Their assumption is that society has to be secular before one can have a critical, public debate. Habermas's public sphere is an ideal-typical construction that fits parts of liberal political thought, and this would explain why his later writings, focusing on procedural democracy, are close to the theories on rational argumentation in liberal democracies developed by the American political theorist Rawls, but antithetical to Foucault's fundamental critique of liberalism.

The limits of liberal political theory for understanding the world do not have to be outlined here, but nevertheless it may be useful to retain some aspects of the notions of civil society and public sphere insofar as they are productive in interpreting the social sources of self, community, and imagination. To do this, one may emphasize the element of "openness," publicity, and open debate that is so clearly conveyed in the German term *Öffentlichkeit*, used by Habermas and translated into English as the "public sphere" in English. At the same time, one may look at the opposite of openness—secrecy—to understand better the nature of a space for criticism of the state.

The aspect of communication and the role of technology therein seem crucial for civil society and public sphere, but also for religion. In this connection it is interesting that Benedict Anderson (1983, 1999) has argued that one media revolution, the rise of print capitalism, has had a profound impact on the way human societies imagine themselves. Although his interest is in the rise of a secular national

consciousness—crucial to the formation of civil society and public sphere—he also pays some attention to the ways in which religion has been transformed by later media revolutions. Not only the imagination of community is important here, however, but also the imagination of the "self." The mediation and virtuality involved in new technologies of communication, like the book and now the Internet, may have a profound impact on religious communication. Religion is not only mediated but is also crucially concerned with the forms and practices of mediation. According to William James, religion is founded on the subjective experience of an invisible presence. This may be true, but we only have access to that subjective experience through the mediation of concrete practices, such as speaking, writing, and acts of worship, while at the same time, these acts may be considered to produce the experience. There is a whole range of activities that induce religious dispositions and concern the relation between human subjects and what I call provisionally, for lack of a better term, the "supernatural." Crucial in that mediation is the relative invisibility of the supernatural or, perhaps better, its virtuality. There is always ambivalence in religious mediation about the addressee and the arrival of the message that is connected to epistemological uncertainty.

Not only are communication and "openness" crucial to civil society, public sphere, and religion, but also, paradoxically, so is publicity's opposite: secrecy. Reinhart Koselleck (1988 [1959]) has argued in a book that appeared three years earlier than that of Habermas and became almost as influential, that the emergence of secret societies of freemasonry were crucial in the development of Enlightenment critique of the absolutist state.[2] In the mid-eighteenth century, the Masonic lodges saw an immense increase in membership and can be seen as the most important sites for the new sociability of the Enlightenment, besides the more public ones such as coffeehouses, clubs, salons, and literary societies. The important point here is that these lodges were able to erect a wall of protection for their debates and rituals against both intrusion from the state and intrusion from the "profane" world.

Religion is a privileged site for examining an aspect of secrecy that is simultaneously the opposite of the public sphere and foundational for it. Religious movements and religious sites are often suspected

[2] Habermas (1973) has sharply criticized Koselleck's view that totalitarianism finds its roots in the dialectic between absolutism and Enlightenment critique.

of secret conspiracy by the powers that be. And it is precisely the moving away from state institutions and official politics that gives possibilities for fundamental moral critique. It should be clear that this critique can take an unpleasant and terrorist form, as it did in the Jacobin ideology of the French revolution. This uncomfortable dialectic is what German theorists like Koselleck and Habermas were interested in after the Nazi period. The events after September 11, 2001, have put this element of secrecy and terrorism again sharply into focus. The al-Qāʿida campaign to attack in a number of covert operations what it perceives to be the hegemonic force of the United States has become a major challenge for the functioning of modern, liberal society in many parts of the world. The government of the United States has responded with a war on terrorism that furthers national security by limiting civil liberties and the functioning of the public sphere. The specific operations of the U.S. government within that war, such as the removal of the regime in Iraq, are, however, themselves legitimated by secret intelligence that is only partly revealed in the public sphere and put to democratic scrutiny. The theme of secrecy and public discussion in an open society is therefore wider and more fundamental than that of secret groups that have to be countered by liberal states that are controlled by representatives of the people. The debates in 2003, especially in Britain, surrounding the decisions to wage a war against Iraq without U.N. support, show its significance even after a military victory.

In this chapter, I first examine the emergence of the public sphere in colonial India as part of colonial modernity. Second, I discuss the use of Protestantism as a model for understanding the effects of the print revolution on other modern religions. Finally, I examine the dialectic of openness and secrecy in two major religious movements in South Asia today: the Tablīghī Jamāʿāt and the Vishva Hindu Parishad.

The Colonial Public Sphere

One finds a new configuration in the modern nation-state that allows citizens to follow different religions without immediately raising the question of political loyalty. The loyalty to one's king and state no longer follows from religious affiliation, but from national identity, of which religion can be one ingredient among others. Nationalism replaces religion in this regard, and one can come to nationalism

by way of a variety of religious affiliations. Another way of expressing this is that in the modern era, religions are nationalized. Separation of Church and State does not lead to the decline of the social and political importance of religion, but with the rise of the nation-state there is an enormous shift in what religion means. Religion produces the secular as much as vice versa, and this interaction can only be understood in the context of the emergence of nationalism in the nineteenth century.

In India, the religious neutrality of the colonial state left the public sphere open for missionary activities of Christian organizations. A great number of Hindu, Muslim, and Sikh organizations emerged in the nineteenth century to resist the Christian missionary project. This dialectic of aggressive missionizing and Hindu resistance contributed to the formation of a public sphere in British India in the nineteenth century that is not at all secular. Secularity and religion receive particular historical meanings in this atmosphere of debate, however. The administration and upkeep of Hindu temples and rituals fell to new, emergent elites that used the British legal apparatus to create a new "corporate Hinduism" that was fully modern. These elites were not only interested in controlling Hindu institutions, which especially in south India, were quite powerful and immediately connected to political control. They also had a reformist agenda concerning religious education, ritual action, and customs that is crucial even today.

The colonial state not only attempted not to interfere with native religions but also did much to disavow any connection to the missionary project and to Christianity as such. One can indeed speak of a secularity of the British state in India that was much stronger than that in Britain itself. The British considered a sharp separation of Church and State essential to their ability to govern India. Their attempts to develop a neutral religious policy in a society in which religious institutions played an important political role could not be anything but ambivalent. In the management of both south Indian Hindu temples and north Indian Sikh and Muslim shrines, the colonial government remained involved, despite all efforts to the contrary. Nevertheless, externality and neutrality became the tropes of a state that tried to project itself as playing the role of a transcendent arbiter in a country divided along religious lines. Again, however, this did not contribute to a secular atmosphere in society. Indian religions were transformed in opposition to the state, and religion became more important in the emergent public sphere. As in Britain, religion

was transformed and molded in a national form, but that form defined itself in opposition to the colonizing state.

The denial of participation in the political institutions of the colony led Indians to develop an alternative set of institutions of a jointly political and religious nature. Indians did not conceive of the colonial state as neutral and secular, but rather as fundamentally Christian. Similarly, popular conceptions of British rule, as evident in the Cow Protection Movement of the 1880s, portrayed it as having an alien, Christian nature. When in 1888 the North-Western Provincial High Court decreed that the cow was not a sacred object and thus did not have to be protected by the state, the decision galvanized the movement not only against Muslims but also against Christian rule by "cow-eaters." When the state started to use religion among its census categories, it came itself to be understood in terms of religious categories. Although the legitimizing rituals and discourses of the colonial state were those of development, progress, and evolution, and were meant to be secular, they could indeed easily be understood as essentially Christian. The response provoked by both the state and the missionary societies was also decidedly religious. Hindu and Islamic forms of modernism led to the establishment of modern Hindu and Muslim schools, universities, and hospitals, superseding or marginalizing precolonial forms of education. Far from having a secularizing influence on Indian society, the modernizing project of the secular, colonial state in fact gave modern religion a strong new impulse.

The development of a public sphere of debate, petitions, and pamphlets is in Habermas's view the privilege of a literate, bourgeois public. In the later part of the nineteenth century this public sphere, according to Habermas, deteriorates in democratic mass politics, in which critical debate is replaced by agitation. Habermas raises the important issue of elites versus the masses. A number of studies explore whether we can speak of a rise of a bourgeoisie in nineteenth-century India or whether more fundamentally the category "bourgeoisie" is significant in a society that is stratified by caste and not by class. I would think that it is, and that it is signified by the emergence of a literate group of businessmen, educators, and administrators whose careers show the geographical range of imperial business. The spread of education, the improvement of transport, and the modern need for mobility make this possible. The fact that caste endogamy is still practiced does not mean that this is not a bourgeoisie, but it is a bourgeoisie fractured, as in many parts of the modern world, by eth-

nic and religious bonds. According to Dipesh Chakrabarty (2000), the formation of the bourgeois individual has been incomplete in India because one does not find an interiorized, "private" self that is reflected in autobiographies, novels, diaries, and so on. This kind of formation of the self does belong to a particular Western history, of which Protestant Christianity is one of the most important sources. But although this is true, I do not take it to imply that there are no Hindu individuals or Muslim individuals with private selves and public personae, but that the discursive sources of the self are different. Moreover, there are a number of technologies of the self, such as modern education, novel writing, autobiographies, newspapers, and modern art, that emerge in India in the nineteenth century as they do in Britain. Similarly, there are technologies of public debate, such as pamphlets, petitions, newspapers, but also processions in public arenas, that emerge in India as carriers of "public opinion" outside of the older patterns of elite patronage and influence (Freitag 1989).

Partha Chatterjee (1993) has argued for the rise in India of another kind of private and public distinction under colonial rule. This is a division of the world of social institutions and practices into two domains—the material and the spiritual. In Chatterjee's analysis, it is the private sphere of the household that is the site of spirituality and has to be protected against colonial materialism. Reforms of the household, female education, and the transformation of marriage practices, however, are all the subjects of public debate. The modern notion of spirituality that appears in the imperial encounter between Britain and India is not, moreover, against materialist science. Hindu nationalists claim that science is part of India's spiritual heritage, and they find support among Britain's theosophists and spiritualists.

The rise of mass politics, of a politics of numbers in both the metropole and in colony, transforms the public sphere in major ways at the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth centuries. In the absence of democratic participation, it leads in India to the development of mass agitation in the form of political rituals such as Tilak's Ganapati festival in Maharashtra. It also leads to the representation of Hinduism as a majority religion and Islam and Christianity as minority religions. In the context of a politics of numbers, questions of untouchability, Dravidianism, and Sufi syncretism acquire new meanings, and in this transformation of the public sphere the print revolution is of great importance. In the analysis of the transformation of religious communication through the print revolution Protestantism is often used as a model.

Is Protestantism an Appropriate Model?

Historical sociology has always highlighted the profound effects of the rise of the market for printed books on Christianity in Europe. The expansion of Protestantism is generally thought to have been connected to that historical phenomenon. Benedict Anderson highlights how central Luther was to the great expansion of the market for printed books in Germany in the early decades of the sixteenth century. Protestantism was the main product on the vernacular print market and created new reading publics, essential for the rise of national consciousness. Before the novel, we have the printed bible and the huge proliferation of religious tracts that enabled Christians to have direct, personal access to religious truth without the mediation of a class of priests; this even involved, in some cases, the abolition of a priesthood. What is important here is that the modern reading public is a religious public. This is true not only for the period of early Protestantism in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries but also for the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the centuries that witnessed the emergence of both a national and an imperial consciousness. Protestantism plays a role in the shift from hierarchical, mediated-access societies to horizontal, direct-access societies. As Charles Taylor (1998: 39) argues, hierarchy and mediated access went together in the ancien régime, and modernity implies an image of direct access. Like Habermas and Anderson, Taylor understands this within a larger narrative of liberation from religion. Protestantism is then seen as a step in the unfolding story of secularization. If one does not accept that story, however, it is possible to arrive at a better understanding of the religious public sphere and the religious subject under modern conditions of direct access through literacy and mass education.

Not enough has yet been done to understand the effects of literacy and the availability of a printed religious literature on the construction of the Christian subject and his or her communication with the supernatural. But study of the effects of developments like print and literacy on the construction of the Hindu or the Muslim subject has hardly begun. The consequences of low and gendered literacy rates like those in Pakistan, Bangladesh, and India for the spread of certain forms of religiosity rather than others are insufficiently examined. What we find in South Asia is a not yet fully developed market for reading that competes with a rapidly expanding market

for viewing films, videos, and television. In this and other cases, the ideal-typical comparison with Protestantism opens up certain questions, but forecloses others.

Nevertheless, there are a great number of interesting attempts to use the sociological interpretation of the rise of Protestantism as a model for understanding transformations in Hinduism and Islam. These studies emphasize the commonality of the search for the authentic authority of the basic texts and the circumvention of received authority by reading these texts directly or by reading pamphlets that refer to them. Crucial to this search is a religious notion of scripture as the ultimate source of truth. This notion is readily available in religions in South Asia such as Islam and Sikhism, and to a lesser extent in Buddhism and Hinduism. According to Gombrich and Obeyesekere (1988: 15–29), who use an explicitly Weberian approach, Theravada Buddhism in Sri Lanka derives its authority from the teachings of the Buddha as given in the Pali Canon. At the same time, however, they acknowledge the fact that the religious life of Sinhalese Buddhists has always included belief and action that was not authorized in Buddhist scripture. They describe the development of what they call a Protestant Buddhism, which stresses the authority of scripture as against that of monastic hierarchy, as well as the development of what they call spirit religion, in which divine possession is central and positively valued.

The status of scripture in Hinduism is even more complicated than in Buddhism. On the one hand, there is the great authority of the Vedic tradition but, on the other, that tradition can hardly be made available for moral guidance outside of the strictly ritual sphere that is dominated by highly specialized priests. Something similar can be said about more regional scriptural traditions, such as the Āgamas that are crucial in south Indian temple practice. Nevertheless, even Hinduism has witnessed some quasi-Protestant movements, such as the successful Arya Samaj that advocates a return to the Vedic tradition while at the same time completely transforming it. Similarly, in south India there has been a strong lay movement to force Brahman priests to make a scriptural knowledge of the Āgamas more central to their practice.

The comparison with Christian Protestantism is often forcefully made in the case of Islam. The attack on traditional Islam characterized by the veneration of Sufi saints may strike us as a Protestant iconoclasm. This attack also entails the undermining of the traditional

authority of Sufi shaykhs and ʿulama with the ascendancy of the literate middle class. Islam has in the Qurʾan something similar to the Bible, a central scripture that can be used to give moral guidance, but it is important to observe that Qurʾanic interpretation has never been carried out in one centralized authority structure like a church.

It is striking that the Islamic world rejected printing until the later part of the nineteenth century, and that it was only in the 1920s that the Egyptian standard edition of the Qurʾan rolled from the presses. Francis Robinson (1993) argues that the negative Muslim response to printing has to be explained by the nature of Islamic transmission of knowledge. He neglects the extent to which imperial structures such as the Ottoman and Mughal empires have been obstacles for the spread of print, but he certainly brings out an important element. For Muslims, the Qurʾan is God's word. It has always been transmitted orally. Learning the Qurʾan by heart and reciting has for a long time been the defining feature of Islamic education in madrasas. This system is also the basis of the transmission of other knowledge. Written texts are only used as aide-mémoire (often in rhyme) for learning by heart. The oral tradition passed from person to person, always with reference back to the original author, is superior to writing. Muslims only adopted print, according to Robinson, when it was felt to be a necessary weapon in the defense of Islam against the attacks of Christian missionaries. This emphasizes the fact that the ideal-typical comparison with Protestantism should not obscure the real influence of Christianity on other religions in the colonized world.

The first Islamic books printed in South Asia, where one-fourth of the world's Muslims live, were the revivalist books by Sayyid Ahmad Barelvi (1768–1831) in the first part of the nineteenth century. In the latter part of the nineteenth century, revivalists at Deoband in northern India started a major program of translating Arabic and Persian works into Urdu. This—and the emergence of Muslim newspapers—enabled an interest in things Islamic to extend beyond the South Asian region to a larger part of the Muslim world. The most important change was, however, the decline of the authority of the ʿulama in relation to the well-educated laity. Their challengers were modernists like Syed Ahmed Khan, founder of Aligarh Muslim University, and Islamists like Sayyid Abu Ala Maududi, founder of the Jamāʿā-i Islāmī. Both were laymen who were not traditionally educated.

Although the ideal-typical comparison with Protestantism offers a number of important parallels with the history of other religions,

such as Islam and Hinduism, it is crucial to recognize that the place of scriptural authority and the nature of scripture are quite different in different religions and thus cannot be easily compared. If we can show that the authority of scripture becomes more important in a kind of Protestant revolution in a number of religions in the modern period, this does not imply that therefore the construction of scriptural authority has the same or even similar religious and political effects. Not only is the text different but also the context. The Protestant revolution is a sixteenth-century phenomenon in Europe that is not easily comparable to nineteenth- or twentieth-century developments elsewhere.

In the next section I examine the role of openness and secrecy as well as orality and visuality in two contemporary movements that are crucial in the transformation of the public sphere in South Asia.

Islam: The case of the Tablīghī

At least two major developments affect the mediation of modern Islam: mass education and mass communication. These developments result in a certain measure of objectification and packaging of religion. Dale Eickelman (1992: 643) calls objectification "the process by which three kinds of questions come to be foregrounded in the consciousness of large numbers of believers: What is my religion? Why is it important to my life? and How do my beliefs guide my conduct?" Eickelman argues that the fact that a large number of people debate these questions is a distinctively modern phenomenon. He observes that engineers (like the leaders of the Islamic Virtue Party in Turkey), journalists (like Mawdūdī), literary critics (like Quṭb in Egypt), and Sorbonne-trained lawyers (like the Sudanese leader Ḥasan al-Turābī) have replaced ʿulama as leaders of religious opinion. Islam, like Sinhalese Buddhism, has now seen the emergence of the notion of a religious curriculum and of a catechism. These developments are crucial in the "objectification" of religion. Religious statements become more explicit and less contextualized when broadcast on television and radio or put in general textbooks.

It is interesting that the new media simultaneously build on the earlier Muslim preference for orality and presence, and enable decontextualization and objectification of religious messages. Eickelman (1992) points out that Islam becomes a subject that has to be explained

or understood. Some local group's particular understanding of Islam can become a subject of transnational debate thanks to the new media. Since religious and political activists often try to dominate the debate about religion in the new media, the control over the media is of paramount political significance. As elsewhere, states try to limit and control these debates, but they face great difficulties in doing so.

The objectification of Islam in mass education is paralleled by the packaging of Islam on television. In an analysis of the emergence of commercial television in Turkey in the 1990s, Ayse Öncü speaks of the "issuetization" of Islam on television: "Islam, as packaged for consumption by heterogeneous audiences, becomes an 'issue'—something that has to be addressed and confronted—demanding each and every member of the audience to make a choice and decide where they stand, for or against" (Öncü 1995). Whereas the secular state television had made Islam invisible, as it were, commercial television packages it either as a "viewpoint" on a number of issues and thus part of democratic debate, or as a "global machination" that is a matter of international conspiracies. Öncü's general point is that Islam is not any more something relegated to tradition or to "the bazar mentality of small town shopkeepers," but through the packaging on commercial television is part of the culture of the present. The effects for Turkish politics, but also for the Muslim subject, are significant. Nevertheless, it remains important to realize that the so-called "impact" of new media on audiences is always multifaceted and complex as well as contradictory (cf. Anderson and Gonzalez, Chapter 3, this volume). Tradition is certainly not swept away by television, but television is an important new element in a process of transformation inherent in living traditions.

This argument about the centrality of mass media and mass education in Islam today is challenged in interesting ways by the most successful transnational movement in Islam: the Tablīghī Jamāʿāt. This is an internal missionary movement among Muslims, founded in north India in 1926. It is associated with the famous seminary of Deoband (with which the Taliban are also associated; see Metcalf 2001), but less focused on learning and more on simple preaching. Its origins are only understandable in the colonial context in which a politics of numbers and communal competition made it essential for both Hindu and Muslim movements to strengthen their ranks and numbers. Hindu purification (*shuddhi*) movements tried to "invite

back" and reconvert Muslim communities that had recognizable Hindu customs. Movements like the Tablīghī Jamāʿāt tried to counteract this by asking such communities to reform their practices and become "good Muslims." Like the Jehovah's Witnesses, they go in small groups from community to community to "invite" Muslims to join them and perform simple Islamic tasks such as going regularly to the mosque and reading the Qur'an. They have annual gatherings, some of which, such as the ones in Raiwind in Pakistan and Tong in Bangladesh, are, except for the annual pilgrimage to Mecca, the largest gatherings of Muslims in the world (some two million). There are three important elements in the Tablīghī Jamāʿāt discussed in this chapter—their attitudes toward media, politics, and the creation of a transnational space.

Research on the Tablīghī is difficult because, unlike many Islamist movements, they put no value in media such as books, pamphlets, and certainly not video—or audio—tapes in spreading their message. They have some official publications, such as transcripts of lectures delivered by leading Tablīghī, mostly containing simple short, edifying stories. There are also some hagiographies of the founder of the movement, Muhammad Ilyas, and some leading figures. This kind of literature is fundamentally antihistorical. Like stories of the behavior of the Prophet and his companions, they have value only as models for behavior. History is a worldly (*duniyāvī*) pursuit and simply distracts from ritual observance (*dīn*). The message is spread through small groups who go to Muslims and speak to them. The focus is not on reading but on ritual observance. The movement is definitely secretive in its way of organizing. Communication between Tablīghī activists is largely oral, and letters are destroyed after being read. Still, some letters have been retained, and this allows researchers to do some historical research on the spread of the movement.

Yoginder Sikand argues in his recent study of the Tablīghī that, despite the turn away from reading, they remind him of the early Protestants. Like the early Protestants, Tablīghī leaders call for stern self-control, hard work, thrift, a simple lifestyle, abstinence from excessive worldly indulgence, the giving up of wasteful customs and ceremonies involving great expenditure not sanctioned by the *sharīʿa* and proper, measured use of time—all ingredients of an inner-wordly asceticism of the Protestant sort that Weber has described (Sikand 2002: 260).

What is indeed striking is the focus on individual, behavioral change connected with the creation of a unmediated public sphere of huge gatherings (*ijtimāʿāt*) and taking time off to go in groups (*jamāʿāt*). It is a kind of pietistic quietism that wants to change the world (and make it a place controlled by Islamic Law) by transforming the Self.

To what extent does the Tablīghī Jamāʿāt belong to civil society and provide a space for criticism of the state? The answer is ambiguous, since the Tablīghī explicitly do not want to be of this world and explicitly do not want to be political. Nevertheless, the movement's stress on personal matters such as "Islamic" dress and education brings it into direct confrontation with the agenda of the secular nation-state, which cannot refrain from intervening in the ways communities organize their lives. When Tablīghī immigrate into Western societies, they cannot help but come into conflict with secular arrangements in schools and so on. Integration into secular societies is the opposite of what this movement wants to achieve. Their personal jihad may be less overtly political than the jihad of Islamist groups, but within the conditions of modern state formation it is still of great political significance. Khalid Masud (2000: 111–18) reproduces a 1971 letter in Urdu from a Tablīghī missionary in Flint, Michigan, to the headquarters in Delhi that is full of severe criticism of the consumerism and racism of American society, which is, according to the letter, largely controlled by Jews. The ardent, deeply emotional tone of its condemnation is striking, and there seem to be two possible outcomes: rejection and passive pietism, or moving on to a more active struggle as offered in the Islamist groups.

The Tablīghī Jamāʿāt is the largest transnational Islamic movement in the world. Thanks to its universalist message, it can escape from the claims of national societies and play a significant role in providing models for migrant communities. The studies collected in Masud's volume show how Tablīghī cope with the different circumstances in Canada, South Africa, Morocco, France, Belgium, and Germany. By being in a transnational space, these migrants can create a sphere of their own that is relatively independent of their daily breadwinning activities. This sphere offers them a dignity and routine that is unavailable in the leisure activities offered by the host societies. It allows for a moral condemnation of the state without taking any political responsibility, just as Koselleck (1988) describes the sphere of criticism in Masonic lodges.

Hinduism: The Vishva Hindu Parishad

The twentieth-century impact of media on religious transformation in South Asia is not limited to printed words, but is significantly broader in that it includes printed devotional posters, audiocassettes, videocassettes, movies, radio, and television. It is difficult to separate strictly religious communication with the supernatural from broader communal communication. The use of Sanskrit or Arabic (in the South Asian context) would safeguard the linguistic marking of the religious situation, but much of religious communication is carried out in vernaculars that in the second half of the nineteenth century have become increasingly communalized. David Lelyveld (1993) points out how vehemently contested the language of All-India Radio was before Independence, since Hindi was considered to be Hindu, Urdu Muslim, and Hindustani the syncretistic solution for an undivided India. Similarly, in the field of music the interactions between Muslim and Hindu devotionalism are reinforced by the linguistic conventions of popular film songs. Themes and styles connect more strictly religious performances with broader popular ones. On the other hand, it is necessary to relate this broad interactive field of daily practice with discursive traditions that carry a debate about how to conceptualize textuality and visuality from a religious perspective.

In Hinduism, there are at least two elements in the debate about textual and visual mediation that deserve our attention. In the first place, there is the notion that the Word is God or that the utterance of the mantra is tantamount to the presence of the supernatural. Perhaps even more than in Hinduism, the power of the Word is explicit in Jainism where it is believed that the founder, the Jina, emanated a divine sound when he achieved liberation form suffering. All living beings in the universe turn to listen to that sound. That is why Jains refer to themselves as *shrāvakas*, listeners. In Hinduism there is a complex theology connected to the transmission of the mantra and the divine character of powerful words. Because of the esoteric nature and secrecy of the transmission, there are serious limitations to the formation of religious communities that transcend guru-disciple networks. This is true even in the face of globalization, in which these networks are formed through the constant travel of gurus like Bombay's Swami Chinmayanand, the founder of the Vishva Hindu Parishad. This can be assisted by the new media and especially

audiotapes and videotapes, as in the case of the Swadhyaya movement, which involves more than one million people worldwide (Little 1995). They use tapes by means of which the guru's sermon (*pravacan*) is distributed to the various centers in the world. Television sets are garlanded when the video is played, marking a sacred event. The circulation of the videos is restricted to group gatherings (*satsang*s). Despite these possibilities of global devotional gatherings, the importance of a personal relation with a guru continues to be a crucial element of mediation even in this form of Hinduism. Videos can enable the globalization of religious sermons and devotional gatherings, but they cannot provide the secrecy necessary for the transmission of the mantra. Wherever that relation is replaced or superseded by an unmediated relation with the Word, we see the potential for the formation of more stable groups, such as the Sikhs or the Arya Samajis.

The other element is visuality. This is a field in which mass media play a major role. Central to Hindu worship is *darshan*, or "sacred seeing." The viewing of a divine image brings one into the presence of the supernatural. Certainly some images are more powerful than others, so that indeed Hindus go on long pilgrimages to be in the presence of divine power. Also time is important in this regard: some spaces are more powerful at some moments. Nevertheless, the mass reproduction and dissemination of certain images have a strong influence on religious experience. To use Lawrence Babb's (1995: 3) terminology, it has made an increasing mobility of images possible. This in turn allowed for the spread of certain devotional cults not only spatially but also socially, beyond the social circles in which they originated.

The processes of objectification and packaging through mass education and mass media are not limited to Islam. Similar processes can also be detected in Hinduism. As in the packaging of the Rāmāyaṇa and Mahābhārata on Indian television. Considering the significance of visuality in Hindu practices, it is important to note that television makes dramatic performances and mythical places, such as Ayodhya, visible in a way that is simultaneously decontextualized and "superreal." For many centuries, pilgrimage to Ayodhya in Uttar Pradesh was a regional affair of limited significance. "Ayodhya" of the Rāmāyaṇa, however, has always been visited in the mind by those who read any of many Rāmāyaṇas. This virtual pilgrimage received a visual actualization in the televised version of the Rāmāyaṇa that helped the political packaging of Ayodhya. It is not simply a question

of whether the televised Rāmāyaṇa has replaced or marginalized the rich variation of popular performances of the Rāmāyaṇa in India. I agree with Philip Lutgendorf (1990) when he argues that the televised Rāmāyaṇa incorporates older forms of Hindi Kathā and Rālīlā traditions and that it should be seen as adding to that rich variation of performances. Central to it is *darshan*, and there for me is the crucial question of the form of mediation between the viewer and the sacred view. To transform the streets of Ayodhya into the sacred streets of heavenly Ayodhya (Saket) depends on a deliberate, meditative effort by the viewer, assisted by the priest or monk who takes him around in actual, historical Ayodhya. Or it depends on a particular, theatrical framing in a Rālīlā performance. On television, however, viewing is not guided by theologically inspired meditative practice. Television's melodramatic conventions may derive from Rālīlā performances, but its virtuality relates in novel ways to religion's virtuality by making the viewing "superreal," but theologically undisciplined. To travel to Ayodhya by actual pilgrimage transforms a person into a pilgrim, but to travel to it by way of television transforms a person in someone who might have an opinion. In the end, it is these transformations of religious mediation that enable political interventions of the kind we have witnessed in India over the last decade. The major agent in these transformations has been the largest transnational movement in Hinduism, the Visva Hindu Parishad.

The Visva Hindu Parishad (VHP), or World Hindu Council, is of much later date than the Tablīghī Jamāʿāt. It is an initiative taken in 1964 to "unite the Hindus" worldwide in order to recapture the Indian state from the Nehruvian socialists who dominated it and to prevent conversions from the Hindu fold to Islam. The Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) plays an important role in the VHP. This militant organization emerged in the 1920s and has been continuously involved in communal violence against Muslims since then. The ideology of the VHP is not much different from that of other Hindu Unity (*sangathan*) movements over the past century. It expresses the need to reassert Hindu dignity and pride in the face of alleged attempts of the state to secularize society and appease the Muslim community. It sees itself as an alternative to parliamentary politics in Delhi, but its organization, which depends on changing alliances between religious leaders, is very unclear and secretive. Its secular leadership, which derives from the RSS, depends on decisions taken in a public debate among religious leaders in what is called a

Parliament of Hindu Religion (*dharm saṃsad*) which convenes in one of the big Hindu bathing festivals, the last being the Kumbh Mela in February 2000 in Allahabad (Hindu name: Prayag), where more than twenty million pilgrims and monks convened for a holy dip in the Ganges. The tone in these meetings is highly critical and demands a change in the policies of the government toward the Hindu community. The political role of the VHP is indirect but very important, since its campaigns have led to electoral successes of the allied BJP, which dominates the current Indian government.

The VHP had its first success on a terrain very similar to the one in which the Tablīghī Jamā'āt originated: the context of mass conversion as part of a politics of numbers and communal competition. After the oil crisis of 1973, there had been an explosion of allegations and violence centering on the idea that conversions to Islam were induced, it was alleged, by oil money. The most important of such conflicts related to Meenakshipuram, a south Indian village in which an untouchable community converted to Islam in 1981. The VHP successfully mobilized some of the nation's Hindu majority by arousing fears of being overwhelmed by the Muslim minority, and saw its following increase to the extent that it could mobilize support for a far-reaching attack on the Babar Mosque in Ayodhya, which was destroyed in 1992.

In contrast to the Tablīghī Jamā'āt, the VHP has nothing against the use of media for spreading its religious message. Although its religious leaders are ascetic renouncers, the movement also has nothing against acting in the world as such, but everything against secularism and Islam. It is highly conscious of the positive impact that the religious soap operas on Indian television in the 1980s have had on their campaigns. Moreover, as visuality (*darshan*) is a central medium of worship and communication in Hindu belief, its challenge is to capture this field of visual imagery in a market that is saturated with cable television broadcasting fashion shows, advertising, and music clips. The most interesting aspect of this is the way in which the VHP is able to capture both a peasant audience in rural India and an urban, middle class. It does so by packaging its message in campaigns that are modeled on Gandhi's Salt March and involve the traversing of the country by motorized processions that are simultaneously packaged in video messages and websites. The VHP is very astute in using religious symbolism in its campaigns. In doing so it is informed by the long Bollywood tradition

of cinematic melodrama. An important aspect of this is its syncretism, the creation of a unified, national religion that can bridge the gaps between the various strands that make up the Hindu tradition. Not only is this new religious unity excellent for use outside of India, it is in fact created in a transnational space in which transnational migrants contribute to the transformation of religion at home. A guru in India can only be called successful if he can show support from Hindu followers abroad. These networks are enabled by constant air travel, like that of the late Chinmayanand, the founder of the VHP, but also increasingly by digital religion, that is websites where one can "click a deity," as in www.prarthana.com.

The VHP is a movement that is very active globally, and one of the prime agents of the globalization of Hinduism. It performs an important function for professionals who increasingly operate in this transnational space. I am referring here to what are called "astronauts," software engineers and entrepreneurs who shuttle from India to the United States to create and maintain a transnational service industry. In the United States, the VHP has been active since 1974, following sizable immigration from India. The anti-Muslim politics that is central to its activities in India does not make much sense in America, and is not emphasized. Antiglobalization rhetoric is also conspicuously absent from VHP propaganda in the United States, since its supporters there are strongly in favor of the liberalization and globalization of the economy (Rajagopal 1997). As nonresident Indians, they have also direct personal advantage in the free flow of capital. The focus of the VHP in the United States is, as with many religious movements globally, on the family. Indian migrants struggle to reproduce Hindu culture in a foreign environment in order to socialize their children in the hybridity of Indian-Americans. Their fear is often that the children will lose all touch with the culture of the parents and thus, in some sense, be lost to them. Both Internet chat groups and youth camps are organized by the VHP to keep Hinduism alive among young Indians in America. As Arvind Rajagopal (1997) rightly observes, the VHP needs different tactics, different objectives in different places in order to be able to recruit members. In India, it is a Hindu nationalist movement, but in the United States it is a global religious movement. Arjun Appadurai's work on globalization has reminded us how important it is to keep these disjunctures and differences in global flows in view (see Appadurai 1996).

The globalization of production and consumption, including the

flexibility and mobility of labor, is addressed by movements like the Vishva Hindu Parishad and is a major element in their nationalist politics of "belonging." The idea that "symbolic analysts"—to use Robert Reich's (1992) term—are rootless because they are highly mobile misunderstands the imaginary nature of roots. To have roots requires a lot of work for the imagination (dream work). One element of that dream work is that pride in one's nation of origin is important in the construction of self-esteem in the place of immigration. It gives a different feeling to admit that one is from a country ravaged by famines and floods than to say with pride that one is from a superior civilization that is also very good in high-tech developments (see van der Veer 1995). The coherence of a Hindu modernity tied to the sovereignty of India's past and territory has gradually given way to a postmodern bricolage of deterritorialized and dehistoricized discourses on family values and cyberspirituality that is very hard to capture. Contrary to what their opponents think, these movements are not "outside" of modernity—they have been very much part of it and are now moving beyond it.

Conclusion

There are six general conclusions to be drawn from this discussion. First, the transnational public sphere today is the successor of a public sphere that in many societies is formed in the context of the interaction between empire and the nation-state. When one examines the colonial context of British India, one finds a public sphere that is perhaps better characterized as a public arena in which religious movements challenge the colonial state and each other. The form of criticism is not only debate, although public oratory (as for example in religious polemic, such as s*hāstrārtha* in Hinduism), and pamphlets as well as lithographic posters are crucial, but also includes religious symbolism and ritual processions.

Second, religious issues and movements that articulate them are crucial in the formation of the public sphere. A politics of numbers in the context of democratic politics in a colonial or national state is the context of the articulation of religious issues such as conversion. The debates around them do involve critical, rational discussion of history and geography, but also violent attacks on the symbols of the other community. It is striking how many of current forms of

mass mobilization in South Asia are prefigured in the colonial period.

Third, mass education, mass media, and mass politics are essential elements of the transformation of the public sphere. Religious movements, however, such as the Tablīghī Jamā'āt and the VHP, challenge generalizations in this field. The Tablīghī can easily communicate without a focus on reading and writing and modern media. The VHP continues some of the older forms of communication, such as processions, while also connecting to the religious melodramas in the mass media.

Fourth, transnational migration is a defining element in these new religious movements and in the emergence of a transnational public sphere. The technologies of transport and communication developed under the present conditions of global forms of production define the transformation of the life worlds of a growing number of people, but also the religious responses to it. It is especially the constant shuttling between countries of origin and countries of immigration that constitutes such a transnational field.

Fifth, technologies of communication, such as print or the Internet, create a new sense not only of community and the public sphere but also of the self. The act of reading in private shields one off from direct interactions with the immediate life worlds, while linking one to a larger world of virtual interactions. The same seems to be true for the Internet. The act of reading and writing constitutes the world of print but also the world of the Internet. The kind of virtual interactions enabled by the Web is characterized by indeterminacy and secrecy. The decentralized nature of the Internet even allows secrecy at the level of authorship, which copyright has made difficult in the world of print. Again, as in religious movements, it seems also that in cyber salons the play between publicity and secrecy constitutes a critical debate.

Finally, in the contemporary world moral visions with different genealogies clash in a transnational public sphere. These visions are communicated in media that mix the genres of the virtuous and the virtual. In an unbounded media landscape with mixed genres, terrorist attacks by engineers look like video games and the responses to it have a mimetic quality. Public debate itself about the virtues of imagined world orders (enlightened, Islamic, or otherwise) seems not to be able to escape the indeterminate, continuous, secret nature of contemporary technologies of communication (see van der Veer and Munshi 2004).

References

Anderson, Benedict
1983 *Imagined Communities*. London: Verso.
1999 "The Goodness of Nations." In *Nation and Religion: Perspectives on Europe and Asia*, edited by Peter van der Veer and Hartmut Lehmann. Pp. 197–203. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Appadurai, Arjun
1996 *Modernity at Large*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Babb, Lawrence A.
1995 "Introduction." In *Media and the Transformation of Religion in South Asia*, edited by Lawrence A. Babb and Susan S. Wadley. Pp. 1–18. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.

Calhoun, Craig
1992 "Introduction." In *Habermas and the Public Sphere*, edited by Craig Calhoun. Pp. 1–48. Cambridge: MIT Press.
1993 "Civil Society and the Public Sphere." *Public Culture* 5, no. 2: 267–81.

Chakrabarty, Dipesh
2000 *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Chatterjee, Partha
1993 *The Nation and Its Fragments: Colonial and Postcolonial Histories*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Dean, Jodi
2001 "Cybersalons and Civil Society: Rethinking the Public Sphere in Transnational Technoculture." *Public Culture* 13, no. 2: 243–67.

Eickelman, Dale F.
1992 "Mass Higher Education and the Religious Imagination in Contemporary Arab Societies." *American Ethnologist* 19, no. 4 (November): 643–55.

Freitag, Sandria
1989 *Collective Action and Community: Public Arenas and the Emergence of Communalism in North India*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press.

Gombrich, Richard, and Gananath Obeyesekere
1988 *Buddhism Transformed*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Habermas, Jürgen
1973 "Zur Kritik an der Geschichtsphilosophie (R. Koselleck, H. Kesting)." In *Kultur und Kritik: Verstreute Aufsatze*. Frankfurt am Main: Fischer.
1989 [1962] *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere. An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*. Cambridge: MIT Press.

Keck, Margaret, and Kathryn Sikkink
2000 "Historical Precursors to Modern Transnational Social Movements and Networks." In *Globalizations and Social Movements: Culture, Power and the Transnational Public Sphere*, edited by John Guidry, Michael Kennedy, and Mayer Zald. Pp. 35–54. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.

Koselleck, Reinhart
1988 [1959] *Critique and Crisis: Enlightenment and the Pathogenesis of Modern Society*. Cambridge: MIT Press.

Lelyveld, David
1993 "The Fate of Hindustani: Colonial Knowledge and the Project of a National Language." In *Orientalism and the Postcolonial Predicament*, edited by Carol A. Breckenridge and Peter van der Veer. Pp. 189–215. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.

Little, John T.
1995 "Video Vacana: Swadhyaya and Sacred Tapes." In *Media and the Transformation of Religion in South Asia*, edited by Lawrence A. Babb and Susan S. Wadley. Pp. 255–83. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
Lutgendorf, Philip
1990 "Ramayan: The Video." *Drama Review* 4: 127–76.
Masud, Muhammad Khalid
2000 "Ideology and Legitimacy." In *Travellers in Faith. Studies of the Tablighi Jama'at as a Transnational Islamic Movement for Faith Renewal*, edited by Muhammad Khalid Masud. Pp. 79–121. Leiden: E.J. Brill.
Metcalf, Barbara Daly
2001 " 'Traditionalist' Islamic Activism: Deoband, Tablighis, and Talibs." Paper available at <www.ssrc.org/sept11/essays/metcalf.htm>.
Mill, John Stuart
1982 [1859] *On Liberty*. New York: Viking.
Öncü, Ayse
1995 "Packaging Islam: Cultural Politics on the Landscape of Turkish Commercial Television." *Public Culture* 8, no. 1: 51–73.
Rajagopal, Arvind
1997 "Transnational Networks and Hindu Nationalism." *Bulletin of Concerned Asian Scholars* 29, no. 3: 45–58.
Reich, Robert
1992 *The Work of Nations: Preparing Ourselves for 21st Century Capitalism*. New York: Vintage.
Robinson, Francis
1993 "Technology and Religious Change: Islam and the Impact of Print." *Modern Asian Studies* 27, no. 1: 229–51.
Sikand, Yoginder Singh
2002 *The Origins and Development of the Tablighi Jama'at (1920–1990)*. Delhi: Orient Longman.
Suleri, Sara
1992 *The Rhetoric of English India*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
Taylor, Charles
1998 "Modes of Secularism." In *Secularism and Its Critics*, edited by Rajeev Bhargava. Pp. 31–54. Delhi: Oxford University Press.
Van der Veer, Peter
1995 *Nation and Migration. The Politics of Belonging in the South Asian Diaspora*, edited by Peter van der Veer. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
2002 *Imperial Encounters: Religion and Modernity in India and Britain*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
Van der Veer, Peter, and Shoma Munshi, eds.
2004 *Media, War and Terrorism: Responses from the Middle East and Asia*. London: Routledge-Curzon.

This page intentionally left blank

CHAPTER THREE

TECHNOLOGICAL MEDIATION AND THE EMERGENCE OF TRANSNATIONAL MUSLIM PUBLICS*

Jon W. Anderson and Yves Gonzalez-Quijano

Contemporary Islam is swept up in transformations that move discourse conventionally bound to institutions into more open "publics," alter the balance of topics and emphases of public talk, and forge new alliances for cultural production, all the while attempting to exploit, expand, or renew ideas and discussion about what "being Muslim" now entails. These moves involve all media from down-market cheap print and cassette tapes to the mass market of satellite television and the increasingly transnational hypermarket of the Internet. These new media bring messages into the forums of mosque, *madrasa*, and other sites of conventionalized discourse of and about religion that range from religious courts to the more informal settings of lesson circles and others characterized by "lay" hosting. On the Internet, particularly, they range from "chat" groups, to old-line religious schools' posting scholarly texts, to a mushrooming of sites dedicated to women asking for and discussing religious guidance. In these contexts, mediatized messages and channels complement, displace, and expand discourse of and about Islam, much as the arrival of print a century ago facilitated new people and ideas moving into the public sphere of Islam. Then as now, religious renewal movements, the rise of religious parties, increasing levels of literacy, and new modes of consumption facilitated by rising mass education are leading to a technological reshaping of the political economy of meaning. Both technologically and sociologically, the Internet represents a similar leading edge: it includes

* This chapter was conceived while we were visiting faculty at the Summer Institute on "Public Spheres and Muslim Identity," sponsored by the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation at Dartmouth College in August 2002. We particularly appreciated the opportunity to read and discuss the work of the institute's fellows. It stimulated us to synthesize our thoughts and research from the past decade on new media technologies and the publics associated with them in the countries of the Middle East where we have worked. These include Egypt, Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, and Qatar.

features of other media and forges a new public sphere through its capacity for potentially infinite linkages, notably within disapora populations but today also with a growing "native" audience, reshaping public priorities, interests, capacities, and practices deemed Islamic. As the print revolution fostered new classes, styles, and sites of Islamic interpretation complementing the ʻulama-based ones of mosque and *madrasa*, the Internet provides a similar site and body of technical practice in the contemporary public spheres of the Muslim majority world. The aim of this chapter is to tie the emergence of new Muslim publics to particular forms of media.

Mediated Communication and the Public Sphere

Connections between media and the public sphere are widely assumed to be pervasive and profound, but the generalizability of models linking them is problematic. The basis of modern media studies is the general theory of communication first articulated by Claude Shannon (Shannon and Weaver 1949), who drew on new theories of information as the reduction of uncertainty to conceptualize communication in terms of improving choices (Rogers 1994). This had the effect of focusing on the enhancement of individual decision making or agency by receivers of messages, and in time converged with the development among European theorists of more reflexive "reader-response" theories (Holub 1992) concerned with "completion" of messages in reading or their use as structural features of input loops. Such views applied particularly to mass media, with their structure of few senders and many receivers, and focused on analyzing the responsibility of recipients of messages, in both critical-deconstructive (European) and pragmatic-applied (American) perspectives on media. Manipulation, conscious or unconscious, critical or not, by but above all of receivers, is central in such perspectives.

Such narrowing of focus to receivers' agency and of its scope to effects on their choices, even in resistance and reflection, is sociologically weak. It discounts the material base and social fields of media and of communication generally, and treats the nodes in systems of communication as black boxes. More comprehensive interpretive approaches can open up the black boxes by providing fuller accounts of senders and receivers. Even these, however, can still fall short of accounting for the social life of media to the extent that they

focus on messages in a unified fashion. Thus, an unreflective emphasis on "impacts" and global measures deflects attention from the social organization of communication and techniques of media (Anderson 2000). It also leaves aside accounts of the wider social settings that are the context of mediated communication, except to assume that they are modern. Where media actually "fit" is only thinly described, implicitly modeled on the mass media and generalized from their modern form (e.g., Lerner 1958), thereby limiting sociological analysis to the assembling of audiences and to identifying the public sphere with a consensus of opinion or market share.

In contrast to these approaches, the perspectives of Jürgen Habermas (1962) and Benedict Anderson (1990) start instead from the mechanisms of communication in the public sphere. Each places media in crucial, even causal, relation to the emergence of bourgeois public spheres, although neither is specifically focused on the media per se. Both focus more on the content of messages, although for some critics their approach is still insufficiently attentive to gender, class, and non-European experience. In particular, they draw attention to the social contours of media as the practical composition of the public sphere. Each locates the process in the social dynamics of the onset of modernity rather than in the later or "high" modernity of mass industrial society that is the focus of most media studies theory.

For Habermas, the public sphere has prototypical sites where relatively unrestricted communication flourishes and becomes established as a normative alternative, such as the salons and coffee houses of early modern European cities. In these locations, diverse people gather outside the restricted spheres of private domesticity and the public sphere of ritual communicative acts that enact privilege and justify status. Instead, relatively unencumbered by responsibilities for ritual representation, speakers' words and utterances must convey their own responsibility without the crutch of the speaker's status. Habermas's various elaborations of this view (most systematically in Habermas 1989 [1980]) have been roundly criticized for, among other things, disregarding gender distinctions, the implicit privileging of the bourgeois over other social classes, and equating "rationality" with "freedom" and even more narrowly with modernity (for example, see Calhoun 1992, Benhabib 1992, Fraser 1992). From an anthropological perspective, in which communication is seen as a socially organized process, the value in Habermas's analysis is less in identifying a public sphere of opinion, which is still problematic, than in identifying a

more pragmatic sphere of communication relatively free from demands of status representation, particularly representation of authority (royal or ecclesiastical). Semiprivate but quasi-public in its original type-sites, Habermas's bourgeois public sphere emerges structurally over time. It develops from an intermediate site between the private and the public into an arena of debate within a limited public identified with appropriate communicative skills, and finally as a generalized social space with a new and evolving kind of authority that is not fundamentally dependent on status and ritual responsibilities.

Another virtue of Habermas's view is that it is developmental, which makes it useful in contexts beyond the unfolding of early European modernity in which he set it, and which is obscured by retrospective views of the public sphere from within its later settings, which Habermas himself came to view with suspicion as a late bourgeois counterpart to earlier royal and ecclesiastical spectacle. The public sphere unfolds through practices that in time set their own generalized context. Although concentrating on responsibility to the exclusion of other issues, his concept of a bourgeois (as opposed to a royal or ecclesiastical) public sphere usefully calls attention to the relocation of responsibility in alternative sites of communication, and thus to its dispersal or—from the point of view of existing authorities—its dilution. A more serious limitation lies in its flattened view of communication that limits it to denotative rationality (Habermas 1989: 77ff.) that ultimately becomes a type of ritual, which was his point of departure.

Benedict Anderson compensates for this shortcoming in Habermas's theory by locating the origin of a public sphere earlier in creolization. Anderson's (1990) approach, like that of Habermas, is situational and dialectical but more strongly tied to an experiential and material base in an alternative sense of community (of dynastic states or religious identity) that became attached to shared linguistic practice in the earliest period of European expansion in Latin America and Southeast Asia. There, Anderson identified a new sense of community—of a "public" in Habermas's terms—in the experience of "creole journeys" on the margins of empire that found expression in the form and medium of "print capitalism." Anderson focused on how shared ideas of ethnolinguistic community emerged as seemingly "natural" with no experiential basis other than common language and a growing sense of "reading together" in a shared time-out-of-time.

His notion of creoles lacks a full linguist's sense that they are not so much mixed languages as intermediate speech communities; but it is sensitive to how language expresses identity and feeling beyond referential meaning, and to media. Central to his whole theory is the emergence of print capitalism—with forms and genres of writing from newspapers to novels to standardized "national" languages—as magnifying and focusing the experiences, practices, and techniques of creole journeys. The public sphere for Benedict Anderson—although he does not use the term, preferring instead to speak of "imagined community"—is thus a mediated one conveyed by and exemplified in media that separate messages from senders into a separate marketplace of and for ideas and alternative ways of expressing them.

Our interest is in the generalizable features of the close identifications of emerging public spheres with changing practices of communication and institutions of new media. Public spheres develop out of practices of communication that become instantiated in media, which in turn have careers that leave their own origins and originators of messages behind. State and market are part of this context, evolving with it and, as Anderson noted, beyond it to the point that they seem natural. The Muslim world today is experiencing something similar to Anderson's creole journeys in seeking to extend the margins of what being Muslim can mean in the modern world, and something similar to the structural transformation of the public sphere that Habermas identified with the emergence of bourgeois consciousness as its frame. We would insist that this is a contingent and ongoing process that has to be placed in historical context to avoid anachronism. Key features of this development include the emergence of intermediate social-communicative spaces with media as their tools and expressions. These public spheres are mediatized in ways not predicted by models derived from mass media of mature modernity, but are similar to earlier print revolutions. We suggest the utility of directing attention to the relatively neglected material base and practical techniques of media and to the social milieus in which they become new resources or factors of production that help project communicative practices aligned with new—often but not always emergent—social strata. Social milieus, material bases, forms of communication, techniques of media, intermediate social spaces, and wider bodies of practice compose this public sphere and its habitus in the actions of individuals drawn to it.

The Media Ecology of Islam Today

The leading-edge communication technology in the Muslim world today is arguably the Internet. Less popular or less widely utilized than television, or even print, structurally it includes their features of multiple channels and thus of choice, to which it adds its own hypermedia of potentially infinite links. The ease of creating such links blurs distinctions between cultural production and consumption, and at a very low cost opens production as much as consumption to new participants and to deeper participation in cultural production through more interactive engagements than mass media provide. Early theorists of the social impact of the networked computing model in the Internet (for example, Pool 1990) put this as convergences of information streams, user control that reverses the mass media revolution, and the "death of distance" including social distance (see also Cairncross 1997). To the mass media world of few senders and many receivers, the Internet counterposes a many-to-many model of communications, interactivity, and an underlying mode of production more comparable to the early days of print than to the later days of broadcasting.

The Internet in the Muslim world likewise has a trajectory more like that of the print revolution than like broadcasting, which everywhere in the Muslim world was until recently a state monopoly and closely tied to the centralizing, nation-building states of the independence period of the mid-twentieth century. Widespread use of print came relatively late to the Muslim world in comparison to Europe and as a late-stage accompaniment to industrialization, urban growth, and modernization in the era of colonial domination. Print brought newspapers in a relatively developed form—not as shipping news, from which they originated, but as political news and commentary into which they developed under nineteenth-century "official" nationalism. Mechanical printing stimulated book publishing, including Islamic publishing, and the new voices that came, like newspapers, with projects to inform and to express sensibilities attendant upon or stimulated by challenges of modernization under the conditions of imperialism. Among their innovations was Islamic publishing in the vernacular and for what were no longer conceived as classically trained audiences (see Gonzalez-Quijano 1991).

In this new creole space, intermediate between classic and vernacular discourse and between secular rulers and the masses, the exemplary,

defining figure might be Muḥammad Rashīd Riḍā (1865–1935). Riḍā was the scion of Syrian village notables; he obtained both a religious and modern education and became a journalist in Cairo in the 1890s (Cole 1983). In a city of 168 periodicals and newspapers, he founded a religious journal with the aim of linking orthodox Sunni jurisprudence to journalism in order to "guide the faithful in the ways of progress and civilization" (Hamzah 2002). Hamzah describes his expository technique as a "discrete" and "discontinuous" journalistic style that Riḍā applied to writing about religion, in contrast to the intensely intertextual style of the ʿulama, a style that requires their professional guidance to read. Although the content of his writings is about Islam, his style is not the rigorous demonstrative one of jurisprudential categories or of religious rulings (fatwa) but the "omniscient and omnipresent" style of writing in science or medicine (Hamzah 2002). Articles were in turn to be assembled into books, previously the domain of the ʿulama, whom Riḍā invited to join him in his mission to free Muslim lands and institute a viable political system compliant with both Muslim identity and modern conditions. Hamzah points out that Riḍā's approach also involved a knowledge of market conditions and required a determination to shape the public sphere through both commentary and public debate.

The result was thoroughly the product of a creole journey tied to an emerging public sphere, which Riḍā conceptualized as the "common good" (*al-maṣlaḥa al-ʿamma*) that was forged partly through the new print media of his day and that found its way to India, repeated across the range of Muslim responses to British imperialism from Deobandi revivalists to Aligarh integrationists (Metcalf 1982). In this context, Riḍā is an intermediate figure, who collaborated with Muḥammad ʿAbduh, a key leader of the Salafī renewal movement among nineteenth-century ʿulama, and influenced the Muslim Brotherhood, founded in 1928, that came to define political Islamic activism in the twentieth century.

Riḍā's efforts and the contexts they addressed help identify the material bases and social fields of a mediatized public sphere. The contexts include rising levels of education, but more mixed forms of education than the classical disciplines imparted in *madrasa* are implied by the alternative style of writing about Islam that aims to persuade on its own rather than by adherence to demonstrative conventions. Riḍā represents more than an alternative voice using a new medium. New vehicles of communication, from mechanical printing itself to

the newspapers and the book trade (Gonzalez-Quijano 1991), were profoundly modifying the shape of the intellectual field as a mode of production, as well. Riḍā's activities were part of the diversification of discourse of and about Islam initiated in the religious-intellectual field through a new medium (journalism) tied to a material base (mechanical printing) in a social context of rapid urban growth in a colonial economy that, more than fully formed institutions, was the setting of creole journeys like his that made the links.

Today, a similar pattern is playing out with the advent of digital technologies. Arabic word processing first appeared in the mid-1980s, which facilitated a recreation of Arabic newspapers to reach a worldwide readership through the Internet. These range from the explicitly transnational *al-Sharq al-Awsaṭ*, published in London since 1978, to the conversion of the Lebanon-based *al-Ḥayāt*, to a fully computerized editorial process after 1987 (Gonzalez-Quijano 2003). Nearly every major Arabic-language newspaper now has an on-line edition, and hundreds of Arabic publications are available on the Internet: some six hundred are linked on a site, www.mafhoum.com, maintained by a Syrian computer technologist in Paris. Preceding and surrounding this development is a burgeoning of publishing activity in venues small and large that include local and regional papers (Eickelman and Anderson 1997) and a new genre of modern "Islamic books" that address contemporary topics and are written in the vernacular (Gonzalez-Quijano 1998), all facilitated by the spread of personal computers and Arabic-language software.

The context of all this activity includes other media technologies. Since the 1970s and the period leading up to the Iranian revolution, sermons have circulated on audiocassette tapes, which are widely available in audio shops alongside popular music and oral performances of folklore. Religious shaykhs now routinely appear on television dispensing fatwas to callers, engage in question-and-answer exchanges with moderators, and offer formal televised lessons and Friday sermons, later sold on video tapes or even CD-ROM. These various media share a common body of technique and patterns of consumption as well as the technology. Religious texts and teaching materials, particularly for children, are widely produced by software companies, which often acquire the content from others and then "program" it much as they do calculus lessons or large text databases of secular material from parliamentary proceedings and government regulations to business guides and the archives of newspapers, such as currently

on offer from *al-Ḥayāt*. These new media combine production values and intellectual techniques shared with contemporary products of popular culture and what Starrett (1996: 11) has called a "functionalist" approach to education as training that imparts syncretic and highly creolized qualities to the Islamic discourse that migrates to these media. In turn, consumption of that discourse is set not only in well-established religious practices but also in the habits developed around commercial popular culture (see Hirschkind 2001).

This migration is importantly a function of another wave of people who join the new technology and contemporary Muslim discourse in the intermediate public space that their activities are forming. These activities range from conscious efforts like Riḍā's to open Islamic discourse to wider audiences through alternate discursive forms, broadening its authority, to the forging of new links and practical alliances not based on ideological motives but in the practices of organizing and delivering media on a market basis. These new links and alliances unfold in contexts where computer use and Internet growth are hemmed in by costs and limited infrastructure that initially shape the social field. Although the extension of Islam's emerging public sphere to the Internet is in its infancy, the Internet's "horizontal" format, in which peers comment on one another's ideas and arguments, especially among the rising generation, bypasses the more "vertical" hierarchies of authority and creates a public beyond earlier, established religious authorities.

Like the earlier print revolution, the Internet today involves a material base and social field that is already transnational. This includes the Internet itself, but also a recentering of the worldwide Muslim diaspora in a transnational sphere associated with middle classes, professional educations, and the global diffusion of an emerging industrial regime centered on practices of what are called "knowledge industries" (e.g., Pool 1990) or, more prosaically, on the service sectors that make it work and to a considerable extent are its work. Their roles and influence are both functional and expressive. Beginning in the 1980s, these middle classes acquired the skills and access to the technology before the national governments and ruling elites in Muslim countries from Malaysia to Morocco came (in the later 1990s) to see the Internet's potential role as a development tool and as a potential development sector in itself (Anderson 1997). They were not only drawn to the Internet professionally, however, but also early claimed a place for Islam in it.

A Tri-Phased History of Islamic Media

At the time that the Internet itself was being formed in the 1980s, students who went from Muslim countries to leading Western universities and research institutes that were developing it soon followed the example of their colleagues by bringing avocational interests into what began as an engineers' work tool (Anderson 1998). In pious acts of witness, they scanned and placed on line texts of the Holy Qur'ān and *ḥadīth* of the Prophet. These students and a penumbra of émigré and other diaspora Muslims who joined them on line engaged in often fierce discussions of how to apply Muslim rules and interpretations to conditions of modern life—particularly modern life in non-Muslim-majority societies that lacked many familiar reference points, extended family life, and public institutions. Their discussions were often focused on conditions of diaspora life in Western societies, international affairs, and practical issues such as how to find a mosque or a *ḥalāl* butcher, cheap flights home, or matrimonial services that betoken continuing links.

These discussions were characterized by an absence of contributions from ʿulama, and they did not show much training in religious hermeneutics. Used to the methods of the physical sciences, contributors to these discussions had a habit of sanctioning interpretation by quick recourse to texts treated analytically as sources to be reasoned about objectively (Anderson 2003), much as Eickelman (1992) has described with the spread of modern education in Muslim countries themselves. This gave early on-line discussion of Islam a widely ranging character that, as much as the medium, attracted the attention of more conventional spokespersons of official Islams and of oppositional or militant voices as the Internet became more public with the advent of the World Wide Web in the early 1990s (Fandy 1999, Mandaville 2001, Sreberny 2002). Citing needs to present interpretations and views of Islam that they define as "correct," Muslim governments and oppositional movements or parties began establishing publication-like websites that purvey more institutional views of religious establishments and of oppositions to them. Some classic *daʿwa* organizations brought their conventional apologetics on-line in a context of free-for-all *ijtihād* (see Bunt 2000). Most were also located in the Muslim world's émigrés to Europe and North America, where Internet expertise and infrastructure were available and were also being tapped by Arab media conglomerates that were likewise establishing initial presences in cyber-

space (Anderson 1997). Generally, these second-round Web sites were static, often directly transposed from other media, and preserved their formats and the diction of formal, official pronouncements.

This second phase is giving way to a more modulated one, orthodox in theology and mainstream in interpretation but more dynamically attuned to developing an audience or public on line. This phase takes technological advantage of the development of the World Wide Web to provide more interactive content and sociological advantage of the Internet's demographics to reach a transnational population of middle-class professionals. Their habits of work and often of leisure bring them on line for news and information that they extend to finding an Islam that is expressively and in its focus attuned to their interests, problems, resources, and practices of information seeking. These sites use the latest Web techniques of instant polling, searchable databases, on-the-fly formatting of results, and email queries to engage a base of users and build sites that respond to their interests and grow with them. This may include databases of fatwas and also of advice of a more social and psychological sort, material for religious instruction of children as well as formal sermons, news with a Muslim interest and other kinds of religious commentary on current issues. The format is shared with portals that organize and provide links to other sites and with newspapers whose on-line editions adopt continuously changing content, searchable databases, other query features, and user-modifiable interfaces that invite interaction of users with a website. Indeed, the style is indistinguishable from that toward which news, and newspaper, sites have evolved, exemplified in the completely on-line multilingual news portal, Albawaba.com, produced in Jordan.

These sites are distinguished by the ideological profiles they project and their practical profiles. An example is the website of Shaykh Hussein Faḍlallāh, the spiritual authority of Hizbullah, in Lebanon, which has replaced Hizbullah's own earlier static collection of pronouncements and position papers with a growing collection of the shaykh's fatwas, sermons, and links to extensive Shīʿa websites in Iran that provide access to libraries of digitized religious documents, including those produced by ʿulama. From the Sunni world, the website of Islamonline.net features perhaps the currently most famous Sunni preacher, Shaykh Yūsuf al-Qarādawī, and a cohort of other "young Azharis" (Zeghal 1999) who contribute sermons, fatwas, social and psychological advice, lessons, and commentary that is modern in expression, orthodox in theology, and middle-of-the-road in interpretation.

This fully bilingual site is produced in Arabic and English versions by a company in Qatar that also designed and maintains the website for al-Jazeera Satellite Television. Its content is produced in Cairo, where Shaykh Yūsuf and his colleagues are based near al-Azhar University. Others range from strict Salafī and Wahhābī to Sufi "outreach," and from Iran's religious universities to hybrid organizations of local and national Muslim organizations in Western countries. Whatever their ideology, their styles are modern, engaging, and oriented to pious middle-class professionals who seek an Islam that is orthodox and accessible and that addresses how to lead a Muslim life in a modern society, whether Muslim-majority or where Muslims are a minority and immigrants.

These phases are not mutually exclusive. The first phase is characterized by technological adepts in diasporic settings who reached out through the Internet for a shared Muslim community, which they primarily found with each other. They were tied not only by the Internet but also to the world of universities and research centers that produced it and housed them and provided their skills and social base. This is a contemporary diaspora population that in addition to students includes professionals pursuing careers in adopted countries as well as exiles and other émigrés. They place online an Islam of textual objects and intellectual techniques rooted more in professional milieus into which they have been tracked from early schooling than in the hermeneutics that is the forte of ʿulama training and interpretation that requires them.

A second phase was dominated by content providers who restored interpretive contexts that surround the texts, and hence claims to interpretive privilege, both in traditional and in political Islams. Here, technological prowess took a back seat or was purchased, often from outsiders with additional media skills lacking among the technological adepts of the initial phase. Formal and formulaic expression returned, often in the conventional apologetics of *daʿwa*, or missionary (literally, call) organizations, but primarily in English, the lingua franca of the Internet—it was in but not of the diaspora. A third phase presents a coming together of content providers and programmers in a transnational population of Arabic speakers, Muslims, and modern professionals including modern shaykhs, who are at home with the Internet, with which many of them work and which some of them are building. What they are building is a transnational composite of business practices and religious outreach, both of which are mobile and can

be produced from multiple locations, just as the Internet is consumed in multiple locations. Indeed, these initiatives open alternatives in cyberspace that may not be available locally and which produce a new "deterritorialized" Islam specific to the Internet (Roy 2002).

The result is not an interest-group Islam, for it lacks the sharp edges and singular focus distinctive to special interest groups and their activism. It is multidimensional, user-oriented, modulated to the settings and concerns of professionals, and set within the concerns of pious middle classes. It implicitly mobilizes Muslim traditions of choice in seeking guidance by providing more rather than less information through the linking capabilities of the World Wide Web's technology, which is not only hyper-linked but also increasingly interactive. Above all, this is a social field of people on the move or potentially ready and able to move. Through cyberspace they find organized expressions of Islam and communities that are unavailable closer to home. In this respect, they mirror the model of the creole journey, forming a sort of inner diaspora that is a counterpart in the region to the diaspora outside it and in some respects continuous with it.

This is an "inner" diaspora in several respects. It is scattered in modern occupations and high-tech corners in the Muslim world, but rarely in numbers sufficient to constitute a local community with enough patronage to shape a distinctive religious profile. It is highly mobile population, like Benedict Anderson's creole journeymen, or the technological adepts of the first phase, but also able to pursue modern careers from their homelands through the Internet without emigrating, or in moves within the region or to neighboring countries and on shorter cycles than long-term international migrants. These practices carry over to seeking out others like themselves in cyberspace and extending to religious lives the habits of working with others at a distance developed through the Internet. The diaspora of the third phase is also inner, in that the process of bringing Islam on line that began in the external diaspora and centered on its characteristics comes full circle in a transnational public whose primary concerns are increasingly post-Islamist (Roy 1999; see also Kepel 2002).

The institutional side of this process is deeply enmeshed in the market, but in an unexpected way. Just as Arabic-language newspapers have not been commercial ventures but are supported by special interests, so also getting Islam on line has been an important motive and a source of support for companies that develop and provide services and products for Arabic text processing. In the experimental

period marked by technological adepts, a fully searchable Arabic text of the Holy Qur'ān was the first product of what developed into the largest Arab software firm with a full range of programs for processing Arabic text. Although some content activists turned initially to foreign firms, religious patronage has been crucial in developing the businesses that Arabize content, and crucial to businesses created to provide web hosting, site design, text-processing software, and graphics that today compose Web technology. Services that were often sought initially from foreign firms are shifting to local firms, which assemble their own network of suppliers that further embed the Internet in institutions and practices of the marketplace and make religious interests important factors in that market's priorities.

Technological Mediation and the Public Sphere

Transnational Islam is recentering diasporic contexts, and in those contexts is linking new sensibilities of minority status to the concerns and habits of professionals, middle-class priorities, and marketplace practices. Much attention has focused on political and particularly on militant Islam; but contemporary Islamic-oriented discourse actually engages a much broader range of concerns and practices. It ranges over social, personal, and identity issues, psychological matters and behavioral issues, over questions of authority that are often implicit and made problematic by increasing choice. Indeed, it has been argued (Kepel 2002) that the discourse of political Islam is receding at least partly in favor of social and psychological discourses focused more on personal and behavioral issues than on political constitution and governance. If this is so, it is not yet clear how much it is an artifact of observation, although the observation gains strength as attention turns from intellectuals (for example, Moussalli 1992, Lawrence 1989, Rahnema 1994) to wider publics that would be called "lay" in Christian terms. Issues engaged in this context have focused on authority, its multiplication, and the dilution implicit in that. Evidence suggests that the range is broader still, and that it includes the techniques of media, from journalism's pithy formats that feed the discursive style of political Islam to the capacities for linkage that make the Internet "smart" and increasingly interactive.

Little of this is captured in easy dichotomies such as Barber's pop-

ular "Jihad vs. McWorld" (1996) and others that would relegate Islam and information technologies to clashing sides of a great divide or project one as the impediment of the other. Such formulas draw on too narrow views of both Islamic activism—not to say of Muslims—and information technology that not only excise their histories but also miss the real sociology of their intersections. Those intersections include the spread of mass education and before that of print in Muslim countries, on the one hand, and the diasporas of Muslims, on the other hand, that increasingly extend to mobile professionals in the global information economy. They also miss the more interesting contribution of religious patronage in actually developing this information economy, both internationally and in Muslim-majority countries, and the contemporary internal diaspora of professional middle classes that it unites through the medium of information technology.

In drawing these processes together, it is easy to overstate the role of new media. Muslims throughout the world have multiple channels for religious expression and for seeking religious guidance. Many such messages, and messengers, "migrate" to new media, whose contribution is to delocalize choices and voices. In this sense, newer media join older ones as channels for religious expression and outreach, but do not necessarily accept all their established conventions. Each has a material base, a corpus of practices, and a network of actors who produce them. Migrations of Islamic discourse into new media are accompanied by vernacularization, whether in print or on television or on the Internet, and by their location in the market space of commodities (Starrett 1995, Gonzalez-Quijano 2003: 72–76) rather than as circulated ritual objects. Thus, an Osama bin Laden might pose before a library of bound classical commentaries while recording a video message in ordinary Arabic, whereas the traditional ʿulama deploy classical Arabic and a more esoteric diction that recalls books that are out of sight. Not apparent on the surface but implicit in such migrations and the transformations that accompany mediatization are altered conditions of cultural production that bring new skills, practices, and habits, and a new constellation of actors to the media ecology of Islam.

Applying models of mass media to the Internet aligns modes of consumption but not their modes of production, which with the Internet reduce social distance between producers and consumers. The Internet joins the mass media of modern print and broadcasting

by adding to an already expanding range of choices for consumption. In this model, a newsstand, a television with fifty or two hundred channels delivered by cable or satellite, and the Internet are equated as media characterized by choices, which in modern media theory express the agency of actors (Rogers 1994). Such comparison makes them contemporary, but at the expense of recognizing the different stages at which each is present. Print is relatively mature and broadcasting a maturing medium in comparison to the Internet, whose early stages are not yet obscured by years of later development, history of reconceptualization, and reflexive understandings that have their own lives.

One important history that is obscured by the comparison to mass media is the technological development of the medium itself. Here, the Internet stands apart in that the basic technologies diffused quickly and then experienced local development, not just application, in context that already included the print and broadcast computing technologies, mass education, and economic globalization which particularly privileges the technologically adept and the knowledge worker. Development, which had commenced in Arabic text processing that made on-line Arabic newspapers practical, has been followed by Internet-servicing businesses that draw support from religious customers and utilize the highest available Internet technology to service their needs and capabilities to interact with users, who are not just an audience but also a community, this time in "cyberspace."

More than a century after the widespread diffusion of print technology in the Middle East, cultural production under conditions of globalization also ties the Internet particularly to a diasporic sphere. The Internet revolution is fluid, transnational, and connects stocks of knowledge, common orders of practice, and similar social actors. Islam on the Internet began in the diaspora; and the Internet increasingly resonates in Muslim-majority countries as a channel for expressions, interests, populations, and projects of an inner diaspora that is the late modern counterpart to early modern creole journeys. Likewise, its habits and techniques are the practices of the emerging public sphere that is transnational, not because it is Muslim but because those practices are.

References

Anderson, Benedict
1990 *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. Rev. ed. London: Verso.
Anderson, Jon W.
1995 "Cybarites, Knowledge Workers and New Creoles on the Information Superhighway." *Anthropology Today* 11, no. 4 (August): 13–15.
1997 "The Internet in the Middle East: Commerce Brings the Region Online." *Middle East Executive Reports* 20, no. 12 (December): 8, 11–16.
1998 *Arabizing the Internet*. Occasional Paper, no. 30. Abu Dhabi: Emirates Center for Strategic Studies and Research.
2000 "Producers and Middle East Internet Technology: Getting beyond Impacts." *Middle East Journal* 54, no. 3 (Summer): 419–31.
2003 "The Internet and Islam's New Interpreters." In *New Media in the Muslim World: The Emerging Public Sphere*, 2nd ed., edited by Dale F. Eickelman and Jon W. Anderson. Pp. 45–60. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
Barber, Benjamin R.
1996 *Jihad vs. McWorld: How Globalism and Tribalism Are Reshaping the World*. New York: Ballantine Books.
Benhabib, Seyla
1992 "Models of Public Space: Hanna Arendt, the Liberal Tradition, and Jürgen Habermas." In *Habermas and the Public Sphere*, edited by Craig Calhoun. Pp. 73–98. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
Bunt, Gary
2000 *Virtually Islamic: Computer-Mediated Communication and Cyber-Islamic Environments*. Cardiff: University of Wales Press.
Cairncross, Frances
1997 *Death of Distance: How the Communications Revolution Will Change Our Lives*. Boston: Harvard Business School Press.
Calhoun, Craig
1992 "Introduction." In *Habermas and the Public Sphere*, edited by Craig Calhoun. Pp. 1–48. Cambridge: MIT Press.
Cole, Juan R.I.
1983 "Rashid Rida on the Baha'i Faith: A Utilitarian Theory of the Spread of Religions." *Arab Studies Quarterly* 5, no. 3 (Summer): 276–91.
Eickelman, Dale F.
1992 "Mass Higher Education and the Religious Imagination in Contemporary Arab Societies." *American Ethnologist* 19, no. 4 (Winter): 643–55.
Eickelman, Dale F., and Jon W. Anderson
1997 "Print Islam and the Prospects for Civic Pluralism: New Religious Writings and Their Audiences." *Journal of Islamic Studies* 8: 43–62.
2003 "Redefining Muslim Publics." In *New Media in the Muslim World: The Emerging Public Sphere*, 2nd ed., edited by Dale F. Eickelman and Jon W. Anderson. Pp. 1–18. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
Fandy, Mamoun
1999 "Cyber-Resistance: Saudi Opposition between Globalization and Localization." *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 41, no. 1 (January): 124–47.
Fraser, Nancy
1992 "Rethinking the Public Sphere: A Contribution to the Critique of Actually Existing Democracy." In *Habermas and the Public Sphere*, edited by Craig Calhoun. Pp. 109–42. Cambridge: MIT Press.

Gonzalez-Quijano, Yves
1991 "Les Intellectuels et la production des valeurs." In *Études du monde arabe: Approches globale et approches spécifiques*. Pp. 99–115. Cairo: Dossiers du Centre d'Études et de Documentation Économique, Juridique et Sociale.
1998 *Les Gens du livre: Édition et champ intellectual dans l'Egypte républicaine*. Paris: CNRS Éditions.
2003 "The Birth of a Media Ecosystem: Lebanon in the Internet Age." In *New Media in the Muslim World*, 2nd ed., edited by Dale F. Eickelman and Jon W. Anderson. Pp. 61–79. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
Habermas, Jürgen
1962 *Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit*. Darmstadt: Hermann Luchterhand.
1989 [1980] *Theory of Communicative Action*. Volume 2. *Lifeworld and System: A Critique of Functionalist Reason*. Boston: Beacon.
Hamzah, Dyala
2002 "From 'ilm to sihāfa: Defining the Public Interest in Egypt at the Turn of the 20th Century." Paper presented at the Alexander von Humboldt Summer Institute on Public Spheres and Muslim Identities. Dartmouth College, Hanover, N.H.
Hirschkind, Charles
2001 "The Ethics of Listening: Cassette-Sermon Audition in Contemporary Egypt." *American Ethnologist* 28, no. 3 (Autumn): 523–650.
Holub, Robert C.
1992 *Crossing Borders: Reception Theory, Poststructuralism, Deconstruction*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press.
Kepel, Gilles
2002 *Jihad: The Trail of Political Islam*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
Lawrence, Bruce B.
1989 *Defenders of God: The Fundamentalist Revolt against the Modern Age*. San Francisco: Harper and Row.
Lerner, Daniel
1958 *The Passing of Traditional Society: Modernization in the Middle East*. New York: Free Press.
Mandaville, Peter
2001 *Transnational Muslim Publics: Reimagining the Umma*. New York: Routledge.
Metcalf, Barbara D.
1982 *Islamic Revival in British India: Deoband, 1860–1900*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
Moussalli, Ahmad S.
1992 *Radical Islamic Fundamentalism: The Ideological and Political Discourse of Sayyid Qutb*. Beirut: American University of Beirut Press.
Pool, Ithiel de Sola
1990 *Technologies without Boundaries: On Telecommunications in a Global Age*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
Rahnema, Ali, ed.
1994 *Pioneers of Islamic Revival*. London: Zed Books.
Rogers, Everett M.
1994 *A History of Communication Study: A Biographical Approach*. New York: Free Press.
Roy, Olivier
1999 "Le Postislamisme." *Revue des mondes musulmans et de la Méditerranée* (Aix-en-Provence): 9–30.
2003 *L'Islam mondialisé*. Paris: Seuil.
Shannon, Claude E., and Warren Weaver
1949 *The Mathematical Theory of Communication*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press.

Sreberny, Annabelle
2002 "Media, Muslims, and the Middle East: A Critical Review Essay." *Political Communication* 19, no, 2 (April–June): 273–80.
Starrett, Gregory
1995 "The Political Economy of Religious Commodities in Cairo." *American Anthropologist* 97, no. 1 (February): 51–58.
1996 *Putting Islam to Work: Education, Politics and Religious Transformation in Egypt*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press.
Zeghal, Malika
1999 "Religion and Politics in Egypt: The Ulema of Al-Azhar, Radical Islam, and the State (1952–94)." *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 31, no. 4 (Winter): 371–99.

This page intentionally left blank

Part II

The Historical Emergence of Publics in the Ottoman Empire

This page intentionally left blank

CHAPTER FOUR

COFFEEHOUSES: PUBLIC OPINION IN THE NINETEENTH-CENTURY OTTOMAN EMPIRE

Cengiz Kirli

Informers and the Making of Public Opinion

If it were possible to travel back to Istanbul in the 1840s to find out what was going on in the Ottoman Empire, not even the only newspaper that existed at the time, *Takvim-i Vakayi*, would satisfy your curiosity. It would reveal only the promotions and demotions in the higher bureaucracy and the accomplishments of the Ottoman state in a bland official narrative. Walking into one of the thousands of coffeehouses, however, would allow you to catch up with the latest developments and current events. Going from one coffeehouse to the next, eavesdropping on conversations carried out at different tables, you would feel as if you were turning the pages of a newspaper.

If you wanted to find out the intricate politics behind the promotions and dismissals in the bureaucracy, the coffeehouses along the Divan Yolu near the Topkapı palace would be your best bet. There, you could hear the internal gossip from the clerks working in these offices. If you were interested in learning about the latest developments in the near and distant provinces of the empire, you would visit the coffeehouses built into the dwellings of the inns in several districts of the capital. If you were curious about the state of trade in the Mediterranean, you would listen intently to the conversations of ship captains in the coffeehouses of Galata and the nearby small docks. Even information about the European states would not be beyond your reach. The places that would provide you with that kind of information were not the embassies in Beyoğlu, but rather the coffeehouses in Galata, where you could find residents and merchants from various European nations chatting about European politics, economy, and international relations.

The coffeehouse was essentially a place where coffee was served, but after its introduction to Istanbul in the mid-sixteenth century, it

emerged as the most important site of public sociability—at least for adult males, if not for women and children, who were excluded from it altogether. As Lumières, a nineteenth-century French traveler, said (in Georgeon 1997: 39), Istanbul looked like "a big coffeehouse." There was one coffeehouse for every six or seven commercial shops, and perhaps as many as 2,500 Istanbul coffeehouses in the first half of the nineteenth century (White 1845: 282).

Throughout its long history, the coffeehouse as a ubiquitous place of sociability has served multiple functions. Coffeehouses were places of leisure where Istanbul men met, played games, smoked tobacco, listened to political fables told by story tellers, and laughed at the grotesque characters of shadow theater that displayed profanity, irony, and humor with a highly political subtext. They served as commercial venues where merchants struck deals, ship captains arranged their next load, and brokers looked for potential customers. They were occupational spheres where practitioners of different professions and trades frequented particular coffeehouses, where employers found new laborers and laborers found new employers. They were the nodal points of migration networks where new immigrants found temporary and sometimes even permanent shelter, and established contacts in setting up a new life in Istanbul. They also were spheres of manifest resistance and opposition. They were used as headquarters for the janissaries, the elite soldiers of the sultan that significantly shaped Ottoman politics from the seventeenth century until the corps was abolished in 1826.

Coffeehouses were the primary place where people gathered to talk and exchange news, information, and opinions. Modern means of mass communication such as newspapers did not exist until the late nineteenth century, but there was hardly a demand for them by the predominantly illiterate public. Nonetheless, this public had a dense oral communication network running through rumor and gossip, and the coffeehouse was at its center. Displaying an unending appetite to know and to inform others about the events affecting their lives, the people were especially curious about politics and affairs of state, even though they were supposedly not involved in political discourse.

What did they talk about? How did they make sense of the events affecting their lives? When it comes to ordinary people's actual dialogues and conversations, the historian usually runs into a wall of silence. We are fortunate, however, in having access to an unusual set of documents in the Ottoman archives. These documents, dating

from the period between 1840 and 1845, contain gossip, rumor, and hearsay told by Istanbul men about current events in various public places. In hundreds of pages, there are thousands of paragraphs, each containing the record of a comment or a rumor on various social and political issues. Upon close reading, it becomes clear that these documents were the reports recorded by spies and informers in charge of listening to anything said in public places.[1]

Given the relative absence of evidence reflecting ordinary people's views on social and political issues surrounding them, these spy reports—*jurnal*s as they were called then—are of exceptional value for providing that rare glimpse. They enable us to suggest people's perceptions of, and reactions to, the rebellion in Egypt by Mehmet Ali Pasha, views on the new tax system, gossip about the new appointments in the administrative bureaucracy, complaints about prices and living standards in Istanbul and in the provinces, attitudes toward other confessional communities in Istanbul and elsewhere, opinions about ethnic movements in the Balkans, and assessment of the Ottoman Empire's relations with European powers. In short, capturing the ordinary language of the people, these spy reports provide an ample opportunity to trace a distinct trajectory of public opinion in the mid-nineteenth-century Ottoman Empire.[2]

---

[1] The documents in question are located in the *Cevdet* classification and the *İradeler* (1255–1309 *Yılları İradeleri, Dahiliye*—herafter ID) section of the Prime Ministry's Ottoman Archives in Istanbul, Turkey. The documents in the *Cevdet* classification are neither signed nor dated. Their contents reveal, however, that they were produced in 1840 and 1841. The documents in the *İradeler* section are catalogued with a date and cover the period between 1840 and 1845. The specific reports used in this article are cited in the following pages.

[2] My goal is not to prove the existence of "public opinion," but to trace its working through individual opinions uttered in the public sphere in the mid-nineteenth century Ottoman Empire. The notions of "public" and "public opinion" are contested notions in recent historical literature. Especially after Habermas's (1989 [1962]) *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, these terms have come to acquire a meaning related to the development of the notions of democracy and citizenship. The relationship between the state and "public opinion" as posed by Habermas is essentially an antagonistic one. Influenced by Habermas, historians, in particular those of eighteenth-century France, have almost unanimously agreed that public opinion emerged as a powerful force in the second half of the eighteenth century in Western Europe, which is characterized by the growing literacy, developing press, and people's increasing awareness about politics. They argue that it is from this antagonistic relationship that political consciousness developed and transformed the established order by reform or revolution. The elusive nature of the notion of public opinion, however, may lead to serious anachronisms (Gunn 1995: 6–7; Kaiser 1998: 189–206) not only in arriving at an understanding of the development of democracy and citizenship in Europe but also in understanding the relevance of

Other than the reports themselves, our information regarding the details of this systematic spying activity is inadequate. We do not know, for instance, how the reports were prepared or who the informers were. What is certain, however, is that these reports occupied a central place in the Ottoman administrative system. As the cover page on each set of reports indicates, they went up as far as Sultan Abdülmecit (1839–1861). Each week the chief of police collated some of these public conversations gathered by his spies and presented them to the grand vizier, who in turn submitted them to the sultan to keep him informed about what was being talked about in public.

Informers were mainly stationed in coffeehouses, a perfect locale for the informer to "steal information" in the form of rumors, grumbling, and criticisms both from local residents and from transients coming from the provinces or abroad. In a rough estimate, coffeehouse conversations constituted half of the available reports. Coffeehouses played a central role in circulating information for the conduct of daily business in Istanbul, and for this reason they were the primary focus of attention for informers. However, informers operated in other settings, including barber shops, mosques, streets, public baths, lighter-boats, cemeteries, and even private homes and hotel rooms.

The lack of information about the informers prevents us from shedding light on how they were recruited. We do not know if they were trained employees from the security department or recruited from among the people. Some indicators scattered between the lines in the reports, however, support the assumption that the informers may have been recruited from among locals. There are several instances indicating that the informers were personally acquainted with the purveyor. Sometimes we find the informer sitting in a shop and engaging in a heated debate with friends, sometimes walking down a street encouraging acquaintances to talk, asking "What's the latest?"

It is also very likely that some of these informers were recruited from among coffeehouse keepers. An English traveler who resided in Istanbul in the early 1840s wrote: "Here the gossips and quidnuncs of the quarter assemble to discuss private as well as public affairs. . . . The coffee-houses are therefore watched by the police, and in many instances the cahvagees [coffeehouse keepers] are paid spies" (White 1845: 282).

The characteristic tone of these reports is monotony; the same narrative style is used throughout the reports. All begin with "it has been heard that" in such and such place, so and so person said this

or that. Some of the conversations are written in a dialogue form. The wording and composition of the reports indicate that the informers offer almost no personal interpretation; every word is in narrative form and seems to have been directly quoted from the initial author. Informers were not passive listeners, however. They would occasionally intervene as direct participants or ask questions to direct the conversation. To be sure, informers did not invent questions on their own initiative. They can be likened to modern questioners who conduct opinion polls. Undoubtedly, they were instructed to pull words out of people, and their reporting served to measure popular opinions on certain issues for the Ottoman administration.

Reading these reports, one is struck by the precision about who and where the rumors were uttered. There are almost no impersonal expressions referring to the authors. In these reports it is extremely rare to find usage of subjects like "they," "people," or expressions such as "they think that," or "people say that." Only occasionally do we come across the grumbling of a group of people, without any names mentioned. Details were so obsessively noted that it is not uncommon to find in which month, day, and even at what time the rumor was uttered. As for the people whose words were reported, not only their names and titles recorded, but also their occupations, places of residence, and even marital status. If the person in question was a transient, where he came from and where he was staying in Istanbul were also punctiliously recorded.

There is no indication that the purveyors of the rumors recorded in the reports were persecuted for their involvement in political discourse.[3] In other words, it seems certain that the reason for the reports'

---

these concepts in Ottoman political culture. First, since the term is strongly associated with the birth of a literary public in eighteenth-century Europe, the existence of public opinion in Ottoman society and in the rest of the world alike is implicitly ignored. Second, the discussion that frames the notion of "public opinion" tends to equate the emergence of the concept with the criticism of absolutism in Europe. For examples of the abundant literature on the development and politicization of public opinion in France, see Ozouf 1988; Baker 1990, esp. 167–99; Baker 1992; Chartier 1991; Darnton 1995, esp. 232–46; Darnton 2000; Farge 1995; and Gunn 1995. For England, see Gunn 1983. For Germany, see Bödecker 1990.

[3] I have come across only one instance involving punishment, ID 1038 (September 28, 1840). However, the punishment was not given because of political sedition or insolent talk about the higher state officials, but because the persons mentioned in the report were soldiers. The case involved a military servant who shot a captain in the hand over a prostitute. A note written just above the report orders the transfer of the matter to Daruşşura-ı Askeriye (Military Council) for the proper punishment of the soldiers involved.

persistence in individuating the source of a rumor was not to find and to persecute his purveyor. Surveillance of the public in minute detail by the state and the emergence of public opinion as a legitimate force in the business of governance are the constituents of the same historical process. In other words, the state's appeal to public opinion inevitably brought about an active involvement of the state in people's daily lives. In this sense, the operation of spying on the people in the mid-nineteenth-century Ottoman Empire bore strong resemblances to, for example, spying in eighteenth century France or the late-nineteenth-century Ottoman Empire during the reign of Abdülhamid II (1876–1909). In the latter, however, the chief purpose of spying was the denunciation of subversive political discourse and its perpetrators, although capturing public opinion was also an important concern (see Farge 1995, Darnton 1995: 232–46, and Darnton 2000). Inevitably, the vast majority of such police reports recorded only those who were, at least potentially, criminals, and not the large majority of the population who went about their daily business.

The main purpose of spying on the people in the mid-nineteenth-century Ottoman Empire, however, was to capture public opinion, evident in the spy reports' apparent lack of concern to record sedition or subversion in order to build an indictment for criminal conduct. These spy reports are therefore not strictly conventional police reports, and at least potentially were more comprehensive in reflecting popular opinions than the spy reports produced in eighteenth-century France or the late-nineteenth-century Ottoman Empire.

Now let us turn to the content of the reports and provide examples.

Mehmet Ali Pasha and Egypt

In 1840, the major topic of conversation in Istanbul coffeehouses was the war with Mehmet Ali Pasha, the rebellious governor of Egypt. Starting his long career as the Ottoman governor of Egypt in 1805, Mehmet Ali Pasha, unlike his predecessors, managed to establish effective control over this lucrative province, and proved his loyalty to Sultan Mahmut II (1808–1839) on several occasions by suppressing rebellions with his powerful army in different parts of the empire (see Marsot 1984, Fahmy 1997). Once a loyal governor, he then turned against the sultan in the early 1830s in an attempt to secure hereditary governorship of Egypt. He defeated Ottoman armies repeatedly and

conquered a substantial portion of Ottoman lands that stretched from the neighboring province of Syria to inland Anatolia. The first episode of the ordeal ended with a peace agreement in 1833, with the assistance of Russia, but the struggle between Cairo and Istanbul was far from over. The final episode started with yet another defeat of Ottoman armies in 1839 by Mehmet Ali's forces led by his son İbrahim Pasha. Mahmut II died just before the news of disaster reached Istanbul, and his son Abdülmecit ascended the throne when he was only sixteen.

The repercussions of the events surrounding the Mehmet Ali affair were strongly felt on the streets of Istanbul. The helplessness of the Ottoman government and this very direct and concrete challenge against the sultan were translated into a fearful anxiety among the ordinary people. Feelings of loss of trust, pessimism for the future, and the expectations of chaos are palpable in the reports that started to record public mood in the midst of this unparalleled political crisis. Mustafa was heard saying in a Yeniköy coffeehouse that "Ottoman lands will be lost whether we fight or not (ID 1038, September 28, 1840). Public weariness with the continuing uncertainty of the situation was reflected in Veli Mehmet Ağa's desire that "things would take their course in one way or the other as soon as possible; then, at least, we would have peace of mind" (ID 1038, September 28, 1840).

This weariness and pessimism were accompanied by rising rage against the source of this chaos. Coffeehouse conversations are full of examples of anger and hate focusing on the person of Mehmet Ali. His name, when uttered, was accompanied by cursing and swearing. People in coffeehouses told each other elaborate methods of torture they would inflict if he fell into their hands (ID 1210, November 13, 1840).

The rage against Mehmet Ali was compounded by the fact that this was a conflict among Muslims and that it resulted in the intervention of non-Muslims. The ordinary folk of Istanbul were humiliated and profoundly confused when the Ottomans sought help from Russia, their longtime nemesis, to solve an internal problem. The thorny problem that the empire was on the verge of destruction by a Muslim was resolved in the popular consciousness by declaring Mehmet Ali an "infidel." "If somebody rebels against his sultan, he becomes an infidel; he rebels against God, too. Mehmet Ali is not a Muslim" (ID 1210, November 13, 1840). Through gossip, people in Istanbul were propping up their confidence and further justifying

the perception that Mehmet Ali was committing the greatest of sins, rebelling against God's will; he was supposed to have said, "*Allah* cannot dictate. I can do whatever I want to do" (ID 1210, November 13, 1840). Two soldiers who fought in the battle of Nezip were heard telling one another what they had heard there: in a moment of anger Mehmet Ali's son İbrahim Pasha drank his liquor by tossing his glass against God, saying that "God, you make me angry. Look, I am drinking my *arak* in your face" (ID 1210, November 13, 1840).

This threatening state of events was intensified when the Grand Admiral Ahmet Pasha, nicknamed "the Traitor," defected and handed over the entire Ottoman fleet to Mehmet Ali Pasha in July 1839. From the reports we learn that the people in Istanbul were anxiously waiting for the fleet to return to the capital, and their anxieties crystallized around political maneuvering at the highest level of the empire. The people were convinced that the reason for Ahmet Pasha's "treason" was the appointment of Hüsrev Pasha, a long-standing nemesis of Mehmet Ali Pasha, as grand vizier (Cevdet-Dahiliye, 12037, undated).

The enmity between Mehmet Ali and Hüsrev dates from 1801, when both joined the Ottoman navy sent to Egypt to fight against Napoleon's army. At the time, Hüsrev Pasha was a protégé of the grand admiral and Mehmet Ali was his subordinate, commanding the troops of Albanian origin. After Napoleon's army was evicted from Egypt, Hüsrev was appointed as the governor. Soon after his appointment Albanian troops, provoked by Mehmet Ali, revolted against him. Mehmet Ali took Hüsrev prisoner, deported him from Egypt, and eventually was appointed as the new governor in 1805. The bitter rivalry and enmity between the two continued for another three decades, and it was the common belief that Hüsrev would do everything in his power to dispose of his foe. Upon the succession of Abdülmecit to the throne in 1839 by snatching the imperial seal, Hüsrev Pasha appointed himself as the grand vizier. This act created much dismay on the part of Mehmet Ali Pasha, who later launched a campaign to have him deposed (Fahmy 1997: 285–90).

Hüsrev was not immediately dismissed, but his term of office lasted less than a year. Despite the official statement that Hüsrev resigned due to old age, the people inferred that he was dismissed from office because of the Mehmet Ali affair. In Istanbul coffeehouses, the whole issue was seen as a concession to Mehmet Ali. Rumor circulated that Abbas Pasha, Mehmet Ali's son, brought a letter from his father

to the sultan, asking for Hüsrev's dismissal (Fahmy 1997: 285–90). Although this concession was to some extent seen as a sign of weakness of the Ottoman administration, the great joy over Hüsrev's dismissal prevailed over the sense of humiliation that the sultan was taking orders from his insurgent governor. Not only did people hold Hüsrev as much responsible as Mehmet Ali in this ordeal, they also blamed him for seeking the assistance of Russia, probably the most notorious country in the popular perception. In an exemplary instance of how inside information from an office found its way almost immediately to coffeehouses throughout Istanbul, we hear "fresh news" from a clerk who overheard the conversation in a meeting of the Supreme Council for Judicial Ordinances: "Hüsrev Pasha said we should take care of Mehmet Ali. Let us send for Russia and hand Istanbul over to them. Then we can be at ease" (Cevdet-Dahiliye, 12037, undated). The reliability of this information is trivial in itself. What is important was the people's readiness to believe information that derived its credibility from their distrust of Hüsrev. In the eyes of the people, his image was already tainted with rumors of bribery, nepotism, and his self-serving character: "It is very good that Hüsrev Pasha was dismissed. This relieved a great burden from everybody's shoulders. Even the ground he is stepping on should be removed" (Cevdet-Zaptiye, 1833, undated).

The reception of Hüsrev Pasha's case shows us the search of the ordinary people for something to hold onto in periods of crisis. People quickly turned his dismissal into a sign of hope. "The moment he was dismissed from office" said Hacı Hasan in Üsküdar, "the curse on us has been lifted. With God's will, we will be given our salaries at the beginning of each month as it used to be" (Cevdet-Zaptiye, 315, undated). Mehmet talking in a Mahmutpaşa coffeehouse, said that "he was such a cruel man. During his term all business stopped. We all became indebted" (Cevdet-Zaptiye, 315, undated).

The abundant evidence of political conversations throughout the reports reveals that one of the most important functions of gathering rumors was to uncover popular sentiments toward the sultan in the wake of the Mehmet Ali affair. This crisis, which shook the empire and threatened to bring an end to the Ottoman dynasty, and was defused only by Mehmet Ali's hesitation and British help, caused concern for the Ottoman ruler's legitimacy. It is no surprise, then, that the reports include several public utterances directly about

the sultan himself. The following report, composed and narrated in an unusual way, demonstrates the informer's impressions and interpretation about the mood of the populace:

> Your humble servant has observed in the past month that the people's dislike and hatred against Mehmet Ali has aggravated to such an extent that they are praying from the bottom of their hearts for his wretchedness. Even more, hearing the roars of cannons last night on the occasion of the birth in the palace, the people in coffeehouses and other places felt immense joy, for they assumed that "God willing! Egypt was conquered" or "Ibrahim Pasha was caught and brought to Istanbul" (ID 1210, November 13, 1840).

The reports are full of extremely positive remarks about the sultan. Muslims and non-Muslims prayed for him, cherished him, and cursed his opponents. Are we to believe that informers did not come across anyone in Istanbul who opposed the sultan? Despite the impossibility of answering this question authoritatively, three possibilities could be raised to tackle this conspicuous absence.

First, even though some people had uttered insolent words about the sultan, informers might have distorted the reports in an attempt to protect gossipmongers from possible punishment. Second, people were aware of the pervasiveness of informers and therefore held their tongues in check. Although, as mentioned earlier, surveillance of the population was not primarily intended to punish sedition or subversion, gossipmongers, and possibly informers themselves, were not necessarily aware of that. A strong fear of being punished for talking about affairs of state can easily be detected in their voices. When a politically sensitive subject comes up, most of the time we find the purveyor warning his friends not to leak the information he provided by such cautionary remarks as "this is between you and me," or "don't tell this to anyone, spies are everywhere." Third, it is possible that these reports were not distorted by informers or their superiors, and that the people thought positively about the sultan. This is also a strong possibility, because one of the main tenets of the premodern popular consciousness in relation to the ruler was that esoteric power was usually attributed to the ruler. He was not merely human but had a power and authority that emanated directly from God. For ordinary people, his power could not fully be comprehended but only marveled at and obeyed.

Consider, for instance, the following example:

> İsmail Ağa, residing at Şekerci Street in Aksaray, said in the coffeehouse next to the Katip mosque that I read the new issue of the *Takvim* [a newspaper]. May God protect our mighty sultan, he conquered many places. Nobody can cope with sultans; they possess power of sanctity that creates miracles, and their breath melts stones and mountains. Once Sultan Beyazıd was having a mosque built, a European king's envoy came and deliver the message that his king had declared war. Our mighty sultan said "Go and tell your king, when I move my fingers, I make him blind." Then the king goes blind. You see. Sultans possess the power to make such miracles (ID 1232, November 20, 1840).

Since the ruler was perceived as having supernatural attributes, reconstructing the popular imagination of the state, which was embodied in the ruler, is an exceptionally difficult task. The otherworldliness of the ruler makes his popular representation ambivalent. This ambivalence does not emerge immediately from a literal reading of the reports; rather it becomes salient in between the lines and through metaphors. What could be a more suitable medium than fairytales to articulate fears, anxieties, expectations, and hopes? Through the instrumentalization of fantasy, there is in almost each fairytale a sociopolitical statement about existing conditions (Zipes 1979, 1988) In other words, fairytales and legends were the means through which the ordinary people could articulate and convey the world as they experience it. For example:

> İbrahim, the son in law of petitioner Hüseyin Efendi residing in Üçler neighborhood, said in his own shop: "[Once upon a time] a child was born in Egypt. His mother puts him in his cradle and goes inside to knead dough. Then the child gets up, eats and drinks whatever he finds in the house, and sits on the sofa. After a while, his mother comes and sees that her child is not in the cradle, and somebody is sitting in the sofa. 'Mother,' says the child, 'I ate everything in the house.' Then his father shows up, and then their neighbors. Unable to understand how this was possible, they eventually decide to inform the governor. When the governor questions the child, the child says, 'I am hungry and thirsty, how can I talk like this.' They give him a table full of food, and he eats them all and asks for more. Another round of food comes, and he again eats it all, and asks for more, then again, then again. After eating three or four such full tables of food, he says, 'Let me tell now.' There will be much drought, blood will run as water, and a messiah will appear in 75 [1275/1859]. The governor says he would rather be dead than alive, and orders his execution. For three or five days, the knife cannot sever his head from his body, so they kill him by hammering on his head (ID 1210, November 13, 1840).

This fairytale feeds into a desire for mystical, unusual, and impossible happenings but can also be read as foreshadowing the biography of Mehmet Ali seen through the eyes of the Ottoman state. Just like the greedy child in the tale, Mehmet Ali Pasha could enhance his power to unprecedented proportions almost from nothing. During his reign for over thirty years, his preemptive actions were accepted and his endless demands were fulfilled, and these in turn carried him to the doors of the capital. This is not to say that replacing Mehmet Ali Pasha with the greedy child of the tale was necessarily what the teller had in mind. Its ambiguity served as a buffer against accusations of uttering antiregime sentiments. What prompted him to tell a fairytale like this is more important. Telling a story is a complex process. In between the lines of tales, fantasy and reality are intertwined; and the real and the imaginary characters often collapse into one another. Fairytales offer imaginary, yet desired, solutions to real problems (Zipes 1979: 4). Mehmet Ali's head was never smashed, but the story nonetheless underlines the desire to challenge his authority.

The unease in Istanbul coffeehouses was further compounded in the summer of 1840, when the Ottoman, British, Russian, Prussian, and Austrian delegates convened in London to discuss the Mehmet Ali affair. According to the subsequent agreement, Mehmet Ali was offered the hereditary governorship of Egypt and Acre in return for the evacuation of his armies from Hijaz, Syria, Crete, and Adana, as well as the immediate return of the Ottoman fleet. The terms of agreement sent to Mehmet Ali in the form of an ultimatum quickly began to echo in Istanbul's streets. The diplomatic traffic between Ottoman and European officials was being monitored in minute detail by the people. The arrival of every foreign noncommercial ship into the Bosphorus was taken as a sign of arrival of a European ambassador to discuss the matters relating to Mehmet Ali's answer to the ultimatum, and the news of these landings hastily spread to streets and coffeehouses and fueled speculation.

The popular hope for peace swiftly turned into dismay when war became inevitable upon Mehmet Ali's rejection of the ultimatum. Public mood changed swiftly as contradictory news led to conflicting views, speculations, and opinions grafted onto changing circumstances. One day, the biggest concern was whether France would fight along with Mehmet Ali's forces against the Ottomans and its allies. As some people were spreading news that France was mobilizing its forces against the Ottomans, others were convincing their friends that France

would never fight against Britain and Russia over Egypt (ID 1210, November 13, 1840). The next day, new concerns and new opinions were generating novel perspectives. Conversations often included certain traits attributed to the people of other countries, friends and foes. The imaginative content in these attributions supported the rumors in circulation. In İsmail's coffeehouse in the district of Sultan Mahmut, Hüseyin Ağa, a glazier, raised his concern that British forces could easily be defeated by Mehmet Ali's army because England had not fought a war for several decades. Russians from ages seven to seventy, on the other hand, were all considered warriors, and untrustworthy (ID 1210, November 13, 1840). In the same coffeehouse Mustafa Ağa kept his hopes high by attributing fraudulence to Arabs, whom he thought "will react against Mehmet Ali as soon as they understand how much trouble he is in" (ID 1210, November 13, 1840).

The pessimism and anxiety haunting the streets of Istanbul in early 1840 was transformed into an air of optimism toward the end of the year, when the Ottoman-British alliance defeated Mehmet Ali Pasha's army and ended his rule over the province of Syria. News of fresh developments reached Istanbul quickly during the course of the war. While an Austrian merchant in a Galata coffeehouse was bringing the news that British forces besieged port Alexandria, İsmail Ağa read out the capture of Acre recounted in *Takvim-i Vakayi* in an Aksaray coffeehouse (ID 1232, November 20, 1840). Istanbul echoed with joy at the news of the victory, and the general mood of the public was enthusiastically reflected in the reports of the informers: "Your humble servant reports that in most coffeehouses in Istanbul and its environs, the people are indulged in pleasure and jubilation, and pray for our mighty sultan" (ID 1232, November 20, 1840).

Popular comments, however, did not constitute a monody. "I am surprised by how quickly Acre was captured. It cannot be our navy. It must be the British or Austrian navy," said someone in response to a newspaper read out in a Kemeraltı coffeehouse (ID 1232, November 20, 1840). Informers were curious regarding the popular reception of the news of the triumph. An informer commented to incite others: "Egypt is over. We hear that they have been devastated in each fight." "Wait and see the end. There must be something else in this," replied Hacı Mustafa, expressing weariness in his response (ID 1232, November 20, 1840).

Ambivalent and discontented voices were also loud after the peace between Mehmet Ali and the Ottoman government in May 1841.

For Osman Efendi, granting Mehmet Ali the hereditary governorship of Egypt was a complete disgrace to the Ottoman government. "They have not had the peace published in the *Takvim* [newspaper]. They must be embarrassed" (ID 1776, April 14, 1841). Similarly, Yorgaki was not content with the outcome, saying to his friend Anaştaş of Ankara in his home, "What kind of a peace is this? They put the other four kings to shame as well. For the sake of four *sancak*s [administrative units] they depleted the whole treasury. You'll see, this dude would take them back anyway and all this money spent would be in vain. They call this peace. He is called Mehmet Ali, you'll see the end" (ID 1776, April 14, 1841).

There are voices in these reports that also remind us the fact that this was a conflict within the empire that had contradictory repercussions for its various subjects. Kostandi, a Greek broker, told in a Karaköy coffeehouse the story of an Arab he witnessed the other day on a lighter boat crying after his family trapped in Egypt (ID 1210, November 13, 1840). Two Arab shopkeepers watching the parade of Egyptian prisoners of war in Sultan Beyazıd said, "they are all soldiers of Egypt. Some are our brothers, some our relatives. Even in our own lands our children perish like this. God damn Mehmet Ali" (ID 1210, November 13, 1840). These examples challenge the misleading black-and-white picture that draws a clear-cut boundary between the Ottoman as self and Egypt as the other, as the enemy. It was a victory, albeit a broken one. There were plenty of those who were wounded and disenchanted caught within the jubilant atmosphere of the Istanbul streets and coffeehouses. These voices not only frame the gray and shady areas of the picture but also give depth and perspective to it.

What triggered conversations in coffeehouses were events and circumstances. As the Mehmet Ali problem was settled in the summer of 1841, popular talk about it slowly faded away. Whereas one day it was rumors of a war against Russia, the next it was war against Greece that invaded the smoky coffeehouses. Yet again, in between sips of coffee, for a time the Druze uprising was the most favorite topic; another time, it was the Serbian rebellion.

"Domestic news," however, was not all the people talked about. "International news" constituted no less an important topic of conversation. One source of this news was European newspapers that were read aloud by merchants, especially in coffeehouses in Galata—the heart of international commerce in Istanbul—and then dissem-

inated quickly to other parts of the city by word of mouth. The popularity of topics regarding international politics among ordinary people was matched by the keen interest of informers in eavesdropping on the conversations of foreign merchants trading between Istanbul and European ports. Although information from the European Great Powers took up much of the space in the reports because of their centrality to Ottoman affairs, some seemingly less inconsequential news for the Ottomans—ranging from the Portuguese king's visit to France to the British opium war in China—were also discussed by the people and recorded by informers. Despite the fact that the rumors recorded in the reports were written in simple Ottoman Turkish, reflecting the language of the streets, sometimes the informer mentioned the original language of the conversation that he had overheard and translated into Turkish. Throughout the reports, one finds records of conversations translated into Turkish from Arabic, Persian, Greek, Bulgarian, Russian, English, French, German, and Rumanian. The variety of languages suggests that informers were widely recruited from among the non-Muslim as well as Muslim communities. It also points to the extent of the spying activity.

State Officials

Besides the changing topics determined by political atmosphere, there were other persistent themes. One of these was the overall discontent and frustration against state officials. Although popular criticism of the sultan was never direct but rather hidden and latent, when state officials and local functionaries were concerned, the populace was direct and uninhibited in articulating discontent. Thus, in expressing condemnation, people, as Rudé (1980: 31) aptly writes, "tended to prefer the 'devil they know' to the one they did not know."

While Istanbul locals were preoccupied with palace officials, immigrants and transients continued to grumble about the officials in the provinces. For instance, we hear constant complaints coming from people from the Erzurum province about Hafiz Pasha, the governor. "There can't be any vizier as ruthless as Hafiz Pasha. He is forcefully taking money from the villagers. If he were to be dismissed many would be happy," said dervish Hasan from Arapkir (Cevdet-Zaptiye, 2474, undated).

Centrally appointed tax collectors (*muhassıl*) were one of the main

targets of complaints. They were seen as instigators of disorder, corruption, and havoc. In 1840, the first year in which the spy reports started to record popular opinions, the Ottoman state launched a cadastral survey to identify the tax base. There are numerous grumblings in the reports regarding the inconsistency and arbitrariness of the survey. Zekeriya from Niğde complained that their *muhassıl* was registering land in Niğde and people in Nevşehir (Cevdet-Zaptiye, 1833, undated). Let us listen to Mehmet of Yalakabat talking in Kadir Ağa's coffeehouse in Sultan Beyazıd: "In our district we were supposed to pay according to our lands. Then, notables said we were to pay 250 *guruş* per head. Yet again, they began to ask 500 *guruş* per household. But still not being satisfied they told us to pay 1200 *guruş*. The poor came to the Porte and submitted a petition. Let's see how it's going to turn out" (Cevdet-Zaptiye, 1833, undated).

Discontent did not remain only in the form of coffeehouse grumbling. In several places *muhassıl*s were killed by peasants, and some *muhassıl*s resigned due to fear (Cevdet-Zaptiye, 2474, undated). The people of Istanbul were no less unhappy about their taxes. Mıgırdiç, an Armenian shopkeeper, complained that he was asked for 15 percent of the value of his newly built house as tax. He said, "I applied to higher offices and they said to me: 'Look, infidel, this 15 percent is an emergency tax.' I don't know what to do. Now we are in the hands of God. There is no *kadı*, no court, who is to look after our case?" (ID 1038, September 28, 1840).

All this popular discontent boiled down to an overarching moaning about the difficulty of life and times. Disgruntlement was articulated and expressed by people as it impinged upon their subsistence or economic well-being. If people were angry at Mehmet Ali Pasha, it was because they believed that he obliged the Ottoman government to print worthless paper money instead of silver coins for the first time, or that he blocked the importation of flour from Egypt and made them buy expensive dark bread. If people raged against *muhassıl*s, it was because they saw or heard of people dying due to famine in their lands. If people hated Hüsrev Pasha, it was because they believed that during his tenure business slowed down. We hear plenty of stories from those who have immigrated to Istanbul with the dream of building a better and more secure life, almost always to be disappointed in the end. Albanian Zeynel Ağa remorsefully remembers that he did not listen to those who told him not to move to Istanbul while he was in Edirne: "Just as they told me I regret my decision thousands of times" (ID 1038, September 28, 1840).

Thanks to the informers' style, we can learn about individual life stories in a strikingly vivid fashion, in contrast to the layers of rhetorical cloaking of critiques of high officials. Neither poverty nor misery is wrapped up in blandly general or impressionistic accounts, obscuring the singularity of the voices of ordinary people who lived in the first half of the nineteenth century. From among many let us hear one:

> It has been heard that the retired captain Mehmet Ağa of Ayntab who migrated from Tripoli said in the barbershop next to the restaurant in Irgat Pazarı: It's no longer possible to secure a living in Istanbul. I regret that I moved out from Tripoli. They are giving me a ninety *guruş* salary. If I were to seek to be a subject of another country, they would not accept me because I'm a former officer. I am now thinking of going back to Tripoli. It seems that there are only two places left to make a living, one is Baghdad, the other is Tripoli. . . . My subordinates have now become captains or colonels. The wife kicked me out after thirty-one days. I divorced her, then I heard that I had a child. They make me pay thirty *guruş* alimony per month. I don't know what to do. I'm going to drift away (ID 1232, November 20, 1840).

Intercommunal Relations: Differentiated Opinions?

Popular voices reflected in the reports were not homogeneous, though the topics of conversation were not significantly different from one neighborhood to another or from one coffeehouse to the next, for certain events that affected people incited these conversations. Popular opinions were always reflexive, interactive, and related directly to the developments and to other opinions. As much as there were agreements, there were also disagreements and opposing views, and moreover, within agreements and disagreements, there were nuances, fine differences, and a persisting ambivalence reflecting multivocality and resistance to the idea of public opinion in the singular.

On what basis, then, did opinions differ? More particularly, is it possible to discern clear patterns in this heterogeneous and multidimensional public opinion that distinguished Muslims from non-Muslims, and one non-Muslim community from another? Looking for possible differentiation of opinions along confessional lines allows us to use these unique forms of evidence to question both Ottoman historiography and Ottoman history.

The dominant Ottoman scholarship has stubbornly imagined the different confessional communities of Istanbul in hermetically sealed boxes, a city that was inhabited by a religiously, ethnically, and

linguistically diverse population. Instead of trying to recapture the social meanings of the nineteenth century in the dynamics and the interactions of its complex social world, the accepted historiographical paradigm obscures this complexity with superimposed contemporary categories and conceptual tools that are heavily loaded, and often tainted by nationalist imaginations even when the empirical evidence suggess otherwise.

To overcome this methodological fallacy, the first order of business is to refute the idea of the compartmentalization of Ottoman society along confessional lines. In so doing, I do not mean to imply that religious affiliation was trivial, or that it did not contribute to making sense of the self and the other. Religion did matter, of course, and provided a significant foundation for people in organizing their mental universes. Religious identities did not restrict people's sense of society above and beyond confessional lines, however. Opinions were formed dialogically; social meanings were created through dialogues between the different confessional communities in the course of everyday life practices in an urban context.

The reports make it strikingly apparent that opinions routinely crossed confessional lines to create a common discourse. As much as confessional differences divided, poverty and power unified. For many people, Muslims and non-Muslims alike, the feeling that they were on the same boat was very strong. Kostandi of Tatavla, a broker, was heard complaining in a Galata coffeehouse about the missionary activities of the British and the French, arguing that the non-Muslim communities of the Empire were unified in their opposition against "these Franks" (ID 1210, November 13, 1840). Hurşit Ağa, recounting a conversation he had witnessed among some non-Muslims, was telling his friend that he heard them saying: "Thanks to the Ottoman state for years our ancestors have been living peacefully. Now the Great Powers are intervening in our state affairs and chained the [Ottoman] state to themselves. God protect the Ottoman state and God forbid us from slipping into their hands" (ID 1210, November 13, 1840). Dimitri of Kayseri said in Silivrikapı: "I went to Büyükdere the other day. The English fell upon me and told me, 'Come let's make you a British citizen.' And I replied to them, 'My lineage is Ottoman. I can't do it.' These people are offering this to anybody they see" (Cevdet-Zaptiye, 556, undated).

A romanticized interpretation of popular opinions that assume the harmonious coexistence of the different confessional communities,

even if it were acknowledged that that popular opinions did not necessarily differentiate along confessional lines, would be equally erroneous. The populace expressed their opinions in response to ever-changing events and circumstances. Thus, in order to better understand the dynamics of everyday life in Istanbul and the molding of public opinion among the ordinary people in the mid-nineteenth century—especially regarding the issue of relations between and within confessional communities—popular opinion needs to be contextualized in the larger world of the Ottoman Empire. Only a decade before, Greece had become a separate state, and the separatist movements in the Balkans were gaining momentum at this very period. Although in general the sense of Ottoman imperial identity remained strong among the populace, this identity was strongly challenged by the rising nationalist tide. The Christian subjects of the Ottoman Empire in particular were standing at a crossroads that provided them with options and alternatives in crafting their identities. In this period, incentives to redefine themselves allowed them to acquire powerful European patrons, and to take advantage of the economic benefits that the Ottoman Empire granted to several European states. Numerous Greek subjects acquired British or Greek citizenship, Armenian Catholics French, and Gregorian Armenians Russian. Austrian İspiro's words reveal how easy it was to acquire various citizenships: "If a non-Muslim approaches me to ask for a citizenship, I can get the passport of the state he chooses, whatever that may be. . . . Lately an Armenian came and asked for a Wallachian passport. . . . He gave me three hundred *guruş* in return. I can do the same for anybody" (ID 1776, April 14, 1841).

Precisely because the Ottoman imperial imagination, and the set of values, allegiances, desires that came with it, had a strong presences in shaping the beliefs and projections of the ordinary men of Istanbul, the rebellious turmoil around and within the Ottoman Empire ignited animosities at the heart of the Ottoman society. Those who were being left behind to sail on the imperial ship that was getting increasingly leakier were translating their disenchantment into anger and animosity against those who had already left or who were trying to jump ship. This was especially apparent among the edgy segments of the Muslim population. The reports reveal a few examples that convey feelings of abandonment, fear of losing their lives as they knew them, and blame toward the non-Muslim peoples of the empire for these problems.

İbrahim Efendi, talking on the tailors' street in the bazaar, said that "In the old days these tailors were all Muslims. Now there aren't any left, they are all non-Muslims. Muslims are becoming extinct. God help us" (ID 2704, March 23, 1842). A Muslim in a Samatya coffeehouse was heard saying that "In the old days these non-Muslims did not wear furs. Even if they did they would not walk in the streets in them. In today's order furs belong to them, I wonder what will be left for us in the next order" (ID 4191, February 11, 1844).

Further, despite the common identification of Christians as a group, reflected in Ottoman historiography to date, popular opinions captured in the reports testify to the absence of a homogeneous Greek identity in the imperial capital. On the one hand, we read of a perceivable anxiety among the subjects of the recently established state of Greece. Most of them believed that a war between the Greek state and the Ottoman Empire was inevitable, and this anxiety was especially salient among import-export merchants who were burdened by "an unprecedented customs duty on imports from Greece" (ID 1776, April 14, 1841). Widespread rumors began to circulate in Istanbul streets that the subjects of Greece living in Istanbul would be deported. A pharmacist called Yanni was heard saying that his embassy advised him not to further increase his stocks since the shops were in danger of being closed down (ID 1038, September 28, 1840).

On the other hand, the words of Yanko remind us of the persistence of imperial allegiance among the Greek subjects of the Ottoman Empire: "Nowadays the Greek [Rum] millet has so much freedom. . . . Everybody supports the sultan. If this had been the case before, the people of Morea [Greece] wouldn't have fought the war and perished like that. They would continue to be the subjects of the [Ottoman] state" (ID 3218, August 21, 1842).

Conclusion: Opinions versus Public Opinion

"Word on the street travels quicker than fire," said an officer of the US forces ruling Iraq in a report published in the *Chicago Tribune* (July 11, 2003). This proverbial statement reflected one of the most important concerns of the U.S. occupiers in the months following the military collapse of the Iraqi regime. That "night-vision goggles let soldiers see through women's clothes"; that "the country's oil is being piped to Israel"; and that "U.S. authorities are keeping power

off in Baghdad as punishment" for attacks against American troops were among the rumors circulating, according to the newspaper report, among Iraqis who were living in a regime of uncertainty and doubts. It was exactly this kind of uncontrollable rumor that worried U.S. authorities most, rather than the more than 130 Arabic-language newspapers published across the country since the occupation of Iraq, despite the fact that many newspapers oppose the U.S.-led regime. Newspapers could be silenced at will, rumors cannot. Recognizing the mobilizing capacity of rumor for dissent, U.S. authorities reportedly devised measures to counter the rumors, including handing night-vision goggles to local imams, who are considered to be among the main sources of dissemination of rumors, "to prove the limits of their power" (ibid.). If modern technology will be capable of penetrating Iraqi minds as much as it does Iraq nights remains to be seen. But, as a high-level U.S. official in Iraq bitterly acknowledged, "we are losing the information war" (ibid.). The war on public opinion was indeed one that the U.S. and the nineteenth-century Ottoman state alike waged desperately and usually ineffectively.

Complex, disjointed, ever-changing, and fragmented, popular opinions of mid-nineteenth-century Istanbul examined in this article revealed that the floating of information in the streets, shops, and coffeehouses of Istanbul was a process intertwined with personal interactions in the public sphere. Unlike contemporary times, when news is heard through professionalized medium, information in the nineteenth-century Ottoman Empire was never reified. It was always coupled with intimate life stories of the people, directly related with the life of the teller. The developments regarding Mehmet Ali Pasha or Hüsrev Pasha or any other public figure were attached to the personal concerns of a Mustafa or a Mıgırdic or a Manol or a Mehahim.

Does the sum of individual opinions amount to public opinion? Habermas, whose writings on the historical formation of public sphere continue to inform the burgeoning scholarship on public opinion, answers the question negatively, making a clear distinction between opinion and public opinion. He argues: "Whereas mere opinions (things taken for granted as part of a culture, normative convictions, collective prejudices, and judgments) seem to persist unchanged in their quasi-natural structure as a kind of sediment of history, public opinion, in terms of its very idea, can be formed only if a public that engages in rational discussion exists" (Habermas 1991: 399). In the examination of popular opinions here, however, it makes little

sense to make a clear-cut distinction between mere opinions and public opinion. These mere opinions that Habermas relegated to the "sediment of history" were not private exercises but utterances produced in the intimate atmosphere of public sociability. Every individual opinion articulated in a public setting incited comment from others, then further disseminated through the word of mouth, and ultimately contributed to the formation of public opinion. The means of written communication networks such as newspapers, which in part led Habermas to distinguish between opinion and public opinion in the "specific constellation" of an idealized Western European history, did not exist, but neither does a serious need for them in the dense oral information network in nineteenth-century Istanbul.

Neither did the Ottoman state of the mid-nineteenth century perceive these opinions simply as collective prejudices enveloped in rumor and gossip. If general characteristics of rumor are its orality, anonymity and elusiveness, then individual opinions recorded in the spy reports show none of these. By recording these opinions without the purpose of persecuting political gossipmongers, the state turned the oral into the literal, the anonymous into the authored, and the elusive into the tangible. This was, in fact, the process in which rumor became news; and the individual opinions that were hitherto persecuted for their political content became a public opinion to which the nineteenth-century Ottoman state was obliged to appeal.

References

Baker, Keith Michel
1990 *Inventing the French Revolution: Essays on French Political Culture in the Eighteenth Century*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
1992 "Defining the Public Sphere in Eighteenth-Century France: Variations on a Theme by Habermas." In *Habermas and the Public Sphere*, edited by Craig Calhoun. Pp. 181–211. Cambridge: MIT Press.

Bödecker, Hans Erich
1990 "Journals and Public Opinion: The Politicization of the German Enlightenment in the Second Half of the Eighteenth Century." In *The Transformation of Political Culture: England and Germany in the Late Eighteenth Century*, edited by Eckhart Hellmuth. Pp. 423–46. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Chartier, Roger
1991 *The Cultural Origins of the French Revolution*, translated by Lydia G. Cochrane. Durham: Duke University Press.

Darnton, Robert
1995 *The Forbidden Best-Sellers of Pre-Revolutionary France*. New York: W.W. Norton.

2000 "An Early Information Society: News and the Media in Eighteenth-Century Paris." *American Historical Review* 105, no. 1 (February): 1–35.

Fahmy, Khaled
1997 *All the Pasha's Men: Mehmed Ali, His Army and Making of Modern Egypt*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Farge, Arlette
1995 *Subversive Words: Public Opinion in Eighteenth-Century France*, translated by Rosemary Morris. State College: Pennsylvania State University Press.

Georgeon, François
1997 "Les Cafés à Istanbul à la fin de l'Empire ottoman." In *Cafés d'Orient revisités*, edited by Hélène Desmet-Grégoire and François Georgeon. Pp. 39–78. Paris: CNRS Ethnologie.

Gunn, J.A.W.
1983 *Beyond Liberty and Property: The Process of Self-Recognition in Eighteenth-Century Political Thought*. Montreal: Queen's University Press.
1995 *Queen of the World: Opinion in the Public Life of France from the Renaissance to the Revolution*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Habermas, Jürgen
1989 [1962] *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere. An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*. Cambridge: MIT Press.
1991 "The Public Sphere." In *Rethinking Popular Culture: Contemporary Perspectives in Cultural Studies*, edited by Chandra Mukherji and Michael Schudson. Pp. 398–404. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press.

Kaiser, Thomas E.
1998 "Enlightenment, Public Opinion and Politics in the Work of Robert Darnton." In *The Darnton Debate: Books and Revolution in the Eighteenth Century*, edited by Haydn T. Mason. Pp. 189–206. Oxford: Voltaire Foundation.

Marsot, Afaf Lutfi al-Sayyid
1984 *Egypt in the Reign of Muhammad Ali*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Ozouf, Mona
1988 " 'Public Opinion' at the End of the Old Regime." *Journal of Modern History* 60, supplement: 1–21.

Rudé, George
1980 *Ideology and Popular Protest*. London: Lawrence and Wishart.

White, Charles
1845 *Three Years in Constantinople; or, Domestic Manners of the Turks in 1844*. Volume 1. London: H. Colburn.

Zipes, Jack
1979 *Breaking the Magic Spell: Radical Theories of Folk and Fairy Tales*. London: Heinemann.
1988 *Fairy Tales and the Art of Subversion*. New York: Routledge.

This page intentionally left blank

CHAPTER FIVE

GENDER, CONSUMPTION AND PATRIOTISM: THE EMERGENCE OF AN OTTOMAN PUBLIC SPHERE

Elizabeth B. Frierson

When our Summer Institute first met in Berlin in July of 2001, we thought, spoke, and wrote against a rich backdrop of encounters between everyday beliefs in twenty-first-century Europe: headscarf controversies in France, unassimilated and assimilated German Turks, homosexuality and conservative Muslim clerics in the Netherlands were all conflicts between secularism and faith communities, but also between what should be public and what should be private. In these encounters, ordinary objects played extraordinarily important roles: a piece of cloth on a woman's head as she attempted to teach in a state school, or work in other state (and therefore rigorously secularized) spaces; or barbecue grills in public parks in Berlin; or, of course, newspapers, magazines, cassette tapes, computers, radios, and televisions. Little did we know that our scholarly discussions of the importance of making literacy "ordinary" in the Middle East, of widening spheres of literate or informed debate beyond palaces to schoolyards, and of how everyday objects assume vast symbolic importance were soon to be thrown into a harsher light by the weaponizing of an increasingly ordinary and, in the last decade, cheaper mode of transport. In a sense, the 9/11 bombings were a militant takeover of advanced Western technology, and an attempt to use this technology to sear the hearts and minds of heedless Westerners with anti-Western rage at the global costs of Westernization and U.S. foreign and domestic policies in particular.

Then, as we met again in August 2002, U.S. voters and armed forces were being prepared for an invasion of Iraq and a continuing occupation of Afghanistan in terms that most of us, as scholars of the modern Middle East and North Africa, found specious. And, as we go to print in 2003, the causal links between 9/11 and Saddam Hussein are collapsing like poorly wrought tin passing as steel. In a story often pushed to the background of war coverage, the United

States' staunchest ally in the region, Turkey, has been transforming its internal terms of debate and reform, and its foreign policies, in terms that are increasingly Muslim, and straining for autonomy from NATO and the United States. The country that once sent its troops to fight and die alongside U.S. troops in Korea, and in the winter of 2001 sent troops to serve in Afghanistan, refused to open its airbases to facilitate a U.S. invasion of Iraq from the north. In July of 2003, Turkish politicians were still refusing to send Turkish troops in to support U.S. forces in Iraq; in the words of one national leader, "Turkish soldiers should not be human shields for American soldiers" (Temel Karamollaoğlu, quoted in the *Turkish Daily News* online edition, "Political Parties against Sending Troops to Iraq," July 23, 2003). Some observers have drawn a direct line between the rising prominence of moderate Muslims in Turkish politics (first as reformist mayors of Istanbul and other major cities, and then as politicians on the national stage pursuing diplomatic contacts with Islamic regimes), and Turkey's reluctance to wage war on Iraq. They articulate the fear that one of our "secular" allies in the region will become a haven for "Muslim fanatics"—even as Turkey struggles to comply with European Union conditions for full participation in the E.U. (see *Turkish Daily News* online edition, "Turkey Adjusts Press Law to EU Standards," July 23, 2003).

In fact, Turkey has a long history of adapting Western ideas and technologies to its own internal purposes, and of moderating both Western ideas and Muslim ideas to create compounds of modernity closely tied to regional and local realities, and fueled by active trade economies and diplomatic wrangling with Western powers. Turkey also stands as an object lesson in regime change, first from empire to nation-state, then to its own tutelary regime under a reformist strongman, then to multiparty secular democracy, and now to a democracy that can accommodate religious beliefs informing political action. Ottomans' and then Turks' insistence on setting their own terms for modernity, including how, when, where, for what reasons, and in what quantities their people would communicate with one another, is a consistent theme from the outset of their efforts at modernization. Here I present the prelude to a regime change that proved important not only for who held ruling authority but also for who had voice in what the state should be to its subjects and later its citizens. This prelude played out in the most ordinary of ways—family magazines,

discussions of fashion, children's schooling, good nutrition, and gossip—and as such, its themes were carried forward seamlessly into the otherwise startlingly new national culture of modern Turkey.

Empire to Nation-State

Historians and social scientists writing on Japan have long referred to the period from 1895 through 1945 as the "fifty years war." This term denotes an era when the Japanese state was either preparing for or actively waging war with one or more Western powers or its neighbors in East Asia. In addition, the era is portrayed as containing the fundamental moments that defined how Japan would become a modern nation-state, since it encompasses the formation of a constitutional monarchy, and the development among ruling elites of the aspiration to become a stable, modern state, a leader in East Asia, and, ultimately, a world power. Japanese politicians and intellectuals devoted much of these fifty years to training Japanese subjects to become "modern," devoted to the Japanese state. They sought to retrain the public into a new relationship with the state, inducing patriotism and individual responsibility for the Japanese public (Hane 1986; Gluck 1985; Jansen 2000).

One can draw similar brackets around spans of war-torn decades that cross regimes to encompass the massive political, social, and economic changes that comprise the foundations of the modern nation-states in the Middle East and North Africa. For each successor state of the Ottoman Empire, the bracketed era bears different dates. To construct Egypt's timeline of modernization, for example, one could begin with the aggressive industrialization of Egypt in the time of Mehmet Ali (r. 1805–1848), or with the era of expanding public education for ordinary Egyptians under Khedive Ismail at mid-century, punctuated through the 1960s with efforts to restrict public education (under the British) or expand it (under the Free Officers). For Iraq, state-led reform began in earnest under the reformist Ottoman governor, Midhat Pasha in the late 1800s, and then lurched forward by degrees between 1920 and 1932 under the uneasy alliances between British Mandate forces, local notables from different ethno-religious communities, and the imported royal family; then forward again with oil wealth; then the great leap forward in expanding

public education under the early Ba'th regime of the 1960s. In both these cases, various education and literacy agendas were forwarded most often as complexes of selective adaptation of Western models combined with local Muslim traditions or, for minority communities both in and out of state systems of education, as Western models less critically adopted by Christian and Jewish educators born or educated in the West.

For the creation of modern Turkey, the roughly fifty years spanning 1876 and 1928 mark an era containing three major regime changes, starting when the Ottoman sultan aborted his brief experiment in constitutional monarchy in 1876, and ending five years after the establishment of modern Turkey as a secular nation-state in 1928. This era begins with a significant reinvestment of interest and energy in saving an empire from colonial and military encroachment, largely through weaving new ideas about Muslim identity and Islamic statesmanship into the fabric of Ottoman daily lives. It ends with a modern state whose leaders turned their backs in anger and mistrust on the people and ideologies affiliated with a modern Islamic polity, and with a charismatic state founder who in hundreds of speeches equated Islam with superstition and despotism at a state and individual level. At the same time that Atatürk was pushing Islam out of definitions of the public good—whether with speeches, or laws, or with the execution of clerics—he built popular support for radical changes by borrowing liberally from the tool kit of the despotic reform and liberation ideologies that preceded him in Ottoman territories. He assessed and utilized the resources of the people for a forced march to modernity. Islam was replaced with Turkishness as the prime identifier after 1923, but reform-minded elites continued to motivate people to serve state agendas by appealing to a public good and delineating how, precisely, individuals could serve it.

In this chapter I argue that a modern public sphere took shape in Middle Eastern state-society relations as early as the 1890s in the Ottoman capital of Istanbul. It differed from previous articulations of the public good in its reliance on a rapidly expanding print sector; rising enrollment in primary schools that produced potential readers and respondents to print production, increasing interaction among commerce, advertising, and étatism; modern wartime economies, and ethnic self-identification tied to patriotic values. As an exercise in comparative history, positing a modern Ottoman public sphere allows us not only to illuminate hidden or forgotten state-society

interactions in Ottoman society but also to interrogate relations of power both within and across state boundaries of the late imperial age. Central to the purposes of this volume, the Islamic despot, Sultan Abdülhamid II (r. 1876–1909) and his revolutionary successors, the Young Turks (r. 1908–1923), and the founder of modern Turkey, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk (r. 1923–1938), all based their policies in a rhetoric of the public good (Hanioğlu 1995, 2001).

One key marker in understanding the continuities and the real (as opposed to the fictive) breaks with the past in the late nineteenth century is the way Islam was defined and utilized by state actors. It was articulated as one element among many contributing to the public good of the Ottoman Empire and the Muslim world. By the beginning of the twentieth century, "Islam" was increasingly used as an identifier superseding the ethnicity of refugees pouring into the empire from the Balkans. Finally, by the Republican era, the ruling elite saw "Islam" as a wrapper in which to discard the inconvenient events and *mentalités* of the nineteenth century. Of signal importance in this articulation were cheap, and free, illustrated publications that had wide circulation in public schools, news kiosks, and home subscriptions beginning in the Hamidian era and continuing until today. Twentieth-century Turkey's vibrant, complicated, and raucous print culture, with its overlapping spheres of contestation over the meanings of modernity, had its origins in the last decades of the reign of Sultan Abdülhamid II and has continued to the present.[1]

An Ottoman Public Sphere

Sultan Abdülhamid II took control of a state apparatus vastly changed in the decades preceding his reign. From the 1820s forward, Ottoman sultans and reformers recentralized the state apparatus, using for this purpose a number of pedagogical and quasi-pedagogical projects that also carried direct benefits, such as founding new school—from kindergartens through professional training academies—recruiting the military from among ordinary subjects of the empire, and using the

[1] By print culture, I refer to the compound of economic and intellectual capital and, for the purposes of this chapter, the producers and consumers of print materials, state regulation or attempted regulation of publication and circulation of print materials, and the active formation of debates among publishers, journalists, illustrators, and their readers.

latest communication technologies to recruit civilians among the populace into the new ideologies articulated in heterogeneous and often competing formulations by the empire's ruling elites. Sultan Abdülhamid II took these practices and added the new technologies of communication as they became available—first, teaching more Ottoman subjects to read, then expanding the number and thematic breadth of publications for them to read, and also making abundant use of telegraphs and improved postal technologies internal and external to the empire. As a result of these and other state initiatives, what one could reasonably call a public sphere had expanded exponentially by the late 1890s.

Since its articulation in 1962, Jürgen Habermas's notion of *Öffentlichkeit* ("publicness" or "public sphere") has been tested, prodded, expanded, stretched to the breaking point to fit different cultural settings, and not infrequently dismissed as irrelevant. A number of scholars of non-European popular presses have also used the public sphere paradigm against non-European settings. In particular, Gary Marker (1985) and Louise McReynolds (1991) have both challenged and drawn on Habermas's model in their studies of the imperial Russian press in ways that are relevant to the Ottoman case.

Roughly stated, the Ottoman public sphere was compounded of three sectors: first, the state apparatus, divided into servants of the Porte and servants of the sultan, and the sultan himself; second, the press, divided into its larger, official and loyalist, group, and its smaller, opposition, group; and third, unofficial and private society. These three categories are useful only insofar as they mark out the boundaries of interaction among elements in each sector. The Hamidian cheap, illustrated press can be read today to understand the points of rigidity, flexibility, and permeability of these boundaries on specific topics. The late Ottoman cheap, illustrated press made a major contribution to the political public sphere because of the highly flexible practices of censorship, the cheapness of serial publications and their illustrated sections to aid unsophisticated readers, the high numbers of participants in its production, as well as the topics discussed. The critical thrust of this sector of the press was not, however, like Habermas's public sphere, aimed at the indigenous monarch but rather at loci of power and secrecy formally external to the Ottoman polity. By the late nineteenth century, this type of press was deeply interwoven into Ottoman daily political, social, and commercial life. Journalists and their readers engaged in long-running

discussions of the modern empires of Europe and the Americas. Europeans and Americans, both external to and resident within Ottoman territories, and their clients among non-Muslim communities within the empire, played a central role in popular constructions of new Ottoman identities. Late-Ottoman journalists and their readers articulated criticisms of the rising power of Europe and the Americas to constrict both the material and mental, as well as the spiritual autonomy of Ottoman state and societal developments.

This chapter is based primarily on the cheap, illustrated press for families, including women and children, including not only serials but also pocketbooks and pamphlets of the official and (apparently) unofficial presses of Istanbul. The several thousand pages of print material to which I refer represent only a fraction of an extremely active print sector. The prevailing narrative, that Hamidian censorship was highly effective at suppressing critical rhetoric, is a myth. As with new print sectors in other state settings, Ottoman print capitalism was a compound of state support, entrepreneurship, and ideologies that both competed with and overlapped each other. As others (Gelbart 1987; Judge 1996) have documented for prerevolutionary France and China, Ottoman regimes of censorship until 1909 were effective in promoting reams of loyalist print but less effective in catching all criticism of internal events in the empire. Moreover, there is clear archival evidence of officials from ministries, such as Interior or the Police, intervening to protect their client publishers from shutdown and exile by other ministries such as Education, which tried to use press laws and codes to silence critical response to their policies (Frierson 1996: 58–63). Understanding censorship as a continual series of negotiations allows us to see more complexity in the prerevolutionary Ottoman press than is allowed by most current historiography.

Family and Women's Magazines

In addition to the women's supplements to journals primarily addressed to men, publications entirely for women were founded with some frequency. Many folded after a short run, whereas others achieved an impressive longevity. *Hanlmlar* (Ladies), for example, was founded in 1882 and published only one issue, whereas *Mürüvvet* (Munificence) published nine issues in 1887. *Kadn* (Woman), was one of several

publications bearing this title, as opposed to "Ladies," after the 1908 revolution. It began publication in 1911. Twenty-six biweekly magazines were issued before it closed in 1912. The hardy survivor of these magazines was *Hanımlara mahsûs gazete* (Ladies' own gazette, cited below as HMG). It not only thrived for fourteen years (1895–1909) but also published its own supplement for girls and a separate gazette for children, and was financially successful enough to found its own press. It circulated throughout the empire, Europe, and Russia. In its pages we can trace the results of Hamidian reforms in education as well as changes in the economic and social environment. Although *Hanımlara mahsûs gazete* has been mentioned occasionally in earlier studies of Turkish women, it has generally been dismissed as an upper-class phenomenon, a publication severely restricted by stiff Hamidian censorship, and in any case unreadable by women—as the vast proportion of women were presumed to be illiterate In short, many have assumed it a pre-Kemalist failure, a fiction of literacy.

In fact, although the first writers for this magazine, and almost all writers for earlier publications, were indeed daughters of high civic officials and an occasional princess presented to the public with layers of protective attributions such as *edibâne* (cultured, master/mistress of erudition), by 1896 professional journalists and schoolteachers almost entirely took over writing for the magazine, a trend that was to continue through the Young Turk and early Kemalist eras. The journalists, schoolteachers, and entrepreneurs of *Hanımlara mahsûs gazete* and its less successful competitors, along with the writers of hundreds of letters to the editors and authors, have left us a record of how their attitudes and activities were increasingly tied to a general conception of the public good, patriotic service given through everyday civilian activities such as raising and educating children, dressing appropriately for leaving the house, and shopping for a family's needs.

At the same time, the success of this magazine, as with its successors in the Young Turk and Kemalist eras, may also be attributed to state or high bureaucratic patronage, or at the least to a savvy negotiation of censorship and self-censorship. The founding goals of the magazine, pronatalist and proeducation, also survived in the women's press through war and regime changes: to enable women to continue their education after leaving school and, more fundamentally to train women to be good Muslims (later, good Turks), good wives, and able mothers of loyal Ottoman subjects (later, patriotic Turks). Its scope rapidly exceeded this goal, or perhaps expanded the parameters

of what being a good Muslim and a good mother entailed, as the parameters of Ottoman identity narrowed to exclude Greeks, Armenians, and other "suspect" subjects of the empire. *Hanımlara mahsûs gazete* presented short items in nearly every issue about foreign women entering professional life, qualifying as doctors, forming unions, or being invited to join professional honorary associations. The editors frequently included statistics on the numbers of Western women in various professions, such as secretarial, accounting, architecture, publishing, and advertising. At the same time, these exemplars of Western progress were set against frequent discussions of Ottoman and Muslim women's productive and reproductive capabilities framed in an anticolonial rhetoric, presenting an Islamic critique of capitalism and Western mores, which were identified increasingly with minority communities within the empire. In addition, the greatly expanded public education system under Abdülhamid II was both a conduit toward and site for women's employment as schoolteachers, skilled workers, and footsoldiers in the front lines of the economic warfare over markets and manufacture.

As with other changing sectors of society and state, women's family life, their education, and economic life as both producers and consumers were ceaselessly debated by the editors, writers, and readers of this type of cheap, illustrated family magazines in the Hamidian era. Within the family, the women's traditional role—raising healthy, devout, ethical, and responsible children—was examined and adapted to the demands of a modernizing state and society to add to maternal duties those that fostered a sense of patriotism. Many of these roles were taken from family elders (commonly mothers-in-law, aunts, and grandmothers) and transmitted to relatively young women, new brides who were also heads of conjugal instead of extended households (Duben and Behar 1991). Even stepmothers, in the serial monogamy set into motion by death or divorce in many upper-middle-class and upper-class households, were given hundreds of column inches of prescriptive and hortatory literature to guide them in their family roles. The meaning of education also changed dramatically. It came to mean not only literacy and recitative memory but also knowledge of the life sciences, ethics, religious traditions, commerce, geography, and logical reasoning, knowledge of which allowed a woman to steer herself and her family through the ever more chaotic and crowded pathways of information available to Ottoman subjects. Women were also encouraged to learn skills that could turn them into economically

productive members of society, branching out from traditional arenas of female entrepreneurship and piecework, such as the textile and clothing industry, into factory work and skilled technical work.

This latter trend became especially evident as the wars of the 1870s were followed by the wars of the 1880s, bringing Balkan refugees into the Ottoman heartlands and creating the necessity of incorporating them into state and society at all levels. Constant warfare at the frontiers translated at the local level into a steep drop in the male population and sharp rises in the number of Muslims proportional to ethnic minorities throughout the empire (Shaw and Shaw 1977: 115–18). These Muslims complicated the pan-Islamic project of the Hamidian state in the sense that they had assimilated into Balkan society and had to be retrained for life in Istanbul and other refugee centers in Anatolia. Throughout these changes and the debates that accompanied them, religious and then ethnic identities became threads that were constantly reworked into new patterns and textures in the fabric of public life.

The late nineteenth century saw increasing numbers of new working women on Ottoman city streets, such as factory girls, teachers, and telegraph operators, cutting a wider swath in the streetcars, steam ferries, traditional manufacture, commercial districts, government offices, and the streets of the city. The state sought to regulate these new demographic currents through the ancient practice of sumptuary laws, prescribing frockcoats, tailored trousers, cravats and fezzes for men and the much looser category of "modest dress" for women (and postrevolutionary regimes used sumptuary laws well into the early days of the Republic to effect a new public order). The result was something similar to Revolutionary France as depicted by Lynn Hunt (1998: 224–49): men became drab and uniform in their dress, while women stepped over old boundaries and into new patterns of display. In Istanbul as in Paris, much to the delight or dismay of many observers, women fought bitterly among themselves over the semiotics of dress. To the dictates of reformist concerns shared by French revolutionaries and Ottoman loyalist reformers, we must add the multivalent, vexing question of Ottoman Christian identity and all that it came to convey by the turn of the twentieth century: wealth (seen as unfairly won by ethnic minorities), social prestige (gained by association with and protection of powerful foreign powers), potential treason and disorder (ethnic-nationalist movements, often supported by foreign powers), and religious competition (sparked by missionaries

and their schools, orphanages, and hospitals). Increasingly these questions were put and answered on the streets of Istanbul and other port cities of the empire—arson, architecture, print capital, and patriotic consumerism reformulated an Ottoman modernity.

Editors' Prescriptions and Readers' Responses on the Streets

Modernist Islam was on display in Istanbul in its model factories, new governmental architecture, piped-in gas and water, and neighborhoods constantly being rebuilt in the spirit of Haussmann, Viviani, and the Vienna Ringstrasse, as frequent fires burned away Istanbul's old wooden houses (Çelik 1986, 1992). The resulting cityscape conveyed in physical form many distinctive mixes of Ottoman Westernization and Islamic neotraditionalism that were constantly crafted and recrafted by journalists and their readers. The new stone and brick architecture was on display not only to pedestrians on the old, narrow streets and the new, widened boulevards but also to those plying the Bosphorus in caiques or the new steam ferryboats. The waterway in a sense opened the city to view and also became a dividing line between the most modern and the most traditional parts of the city. As earthquake, fire (both arson and accidental), and renovation remade the city, however, this sharp division between the new and the old, and the foreign and the familiar, began to be recreated in hairline fractures within neighborhoods with old wooden houses and artisanal quarters cheek by jowl with new mansions, apartment houses for conjugal households, and dormitories for foreign and migrant workers—the latter being a new form of the old *bekarhane*s, or bachelor hostels, that had always vexed city administrators.

With the addition of display windows to new department stores in Pera and Galata, and the competition these stores represented to the cloth merchants and tailors of the old city, the nature of displaying goods and shopping was changed. Shoppers themselves also became part of street scenes, with goods displayed on their bodies. The presence of, among others, European capitalists, diplomats, engineers, doctors, merchants, teachers, and missionaries, combined with people's aspirations to link Western fashions in the popular mind with wealth, education, and power. The new culture of display seems, however, to have presented an immediate problem for Muslim women: how could they display their mastery and adaptations of the new European

fashions, which included the new notions of health and physical fitness, while remaining in keeping with traditions of Islamic modesty, which dictated full and loose coverage from head to instep? By contrast, minority and European women were relatively free to adopt the new hats and corseted styles, and thus to display a streamlined, rock-solid profile of modernity—a profile that traced their cultural and commercial connections with European wealth, power, and privileges such as the extraterritoriality that had been exploited for commercial and political purposes by Europeans and their minority clients for centuries.

Recently, we have come to see the veil and its accompanying overcoat or sheet of fabric covering the body as an option increasingly chosen by religious Muslim women in secular states such as Algeria, Turkey, France, or Germany, or as a black bag dropped by ayatollahs and Revolutionary Guards over the bodies of Iranian women forcibly abducted into the modernists' past. In the Ottoman era, however, *tesettür* (literally, being veiled, curtained, hidden, shrouded; or, concealed) was a custom, a matter for sumptuary law, and a street marker of ethnic identity among several different types of headgear. Its forms, primarily a type of overcoat (*ferace*), or sheet of fabric (*çarşaf*), loose skirt and mantle or *pelerin* (also referred to as *çarşaf*), and a veil (*yaşmak, peçe*), were legislated by sultans, tussled over by police and women, and contested in ordinary, everyday encounters between women, and between women and men, on the street. These everyday encounters became increasingly aggressive and even dangerous as the veil took on new meanings, moving from a basic marker of ethnic identity and family status and honor to become also a means of display of fashion and of wealth in an increasingly monetized economy. Through richness of fabric, embroidery, ornamentation, and color in even the cheapest of cotton overcoats and headscarves, and in sheerness or strategic draping of the veil and overcoat, women's curtain from observation (*peçe*) had become a bold statement of identity and access to goods, as well as of the politics of shopping. As such, it became a contested object in arguments not only over standards of modesty but also against consumption of European and Christian goods and against adopting, wholesale, European fashions and behaviors.

In the last quarter of the nineteenth century, the upper-class uniform of *ferace* and *yaşmak*, reinforced by the protection of livery, maids, and chaperones, began to appear more frequently on the streets, on

the bodies of less high-ranking Muslim women who were unaccompanied by chaperones and male servants. The wives and daughters of upwardly mobile bureaucrats, for example, as well as female journalists, schoolteachers, businesswomen, and housewives added to the numbers of middle- and upper-ranking women visibly active in the public life of Istanbul. Perhaps in an effort to cloak themselves against the effects of this unaccustomed visibility, women began increasingly to adopt the two types of *çarşaf*, a move that aroused the anger of *ferace* manufacturers and merchants who were losing profits to the new fashion, as the *çarşaf* took less fabric and time to sew (Issawi 1980: 305). It is perhaps precisely for this reason that it became popular with women, who were able to afford more variety in their outerwear, a variety that was both functional—as they were out in the dirt of the city more often—and more productive of varieties of display. The municipality of Beçiktaç attempted to forbid the wearing of *çarşaf*s, but to no avail as they gradually replaced *ferace*s for all but the most formal occasions such as visits to the palace (Tascioglu 1958: 23–24).

In 1900, the translator, journalist, and novelist Gülistan İsmet posed a question for the readers of *Hanımlara mahsûs gazette* (HMG): "Where does fashion come from?" Although she never really answered her opening question, she argued forcefully against the expense and wastefulness of fashion, but with compassion for its victims. They were either interested in fashion and were caught up in competitiveness and covetousness, or they ignored fashion altogether and were then subject to mockery and contempt. Her only recourse was to recommend moderation—that women seek harmony and appropriateness to their own persons in their choice of clothes, in essence arguing for timeless fashions immune to the latest trend from Paris, and thus requiring less frequent expenditure (HMG December 9, 1900: 3).

In the next issue of the same magazine, the journalist Mustafa Asim related a Salonican Frenchwoman's description of the Istanbul two-piece *çarşaf* and *peçe* as revealing and highly ornamented with braids and laces, and thus out of keeping with Islam—not all that different, in fact, from Parisian *pelerines* and *voilettes*. The author agreed, adding his own opinion that these styles were not only improper but also expensive and soon outdated, leading to wasteful expense. "We are absolutely convinced that we are heading for great dangers if our women continue for the sake of show their practices of day by day reducing their veiling in imitation of each other, and increasing their ornamentation and toilette" (HMG December 13, 1900: 3–4). In

this respect, women's changing fashions were a burden on the head of household. In late-Ottoman sociopolitical dialect as elsewhere, the household was the building block of the nation and women bore ultimate responsibility for the soundness of the household (Duben and Behar 1991; Frierson 1995). Thus, in its transmutation from protector of honor to destroyer of household finances, the outerwear of Muslim women had come to endanger national security at its foundation.

Underpinnings of Modernity

The seemingly trivial matter of what people wore had profound effects on the Ottoman economy. Istanbul was especially suited to serve as a matrix for interwoven enterprises of factory, sweatshops, and home industries. Hundreds of thousands of Balkan refugees in 1877–1878 and from other conflicts through the end of World War I and the Turkish War of Independence made the city's labor pool vast and inexpensive. Coincidentally, these survivors of the flight to *Dar ül-Islam* brought with them fresh resentments against Europeans and Christians and aroused pity and anger among the Istanbul population, as well. The survivors fed a pool of cheap labor that, along with the new and growing infrastructures of communication and transport at the disposal of merchants, made "Istanbul particularly suitable for the emerging low-wage industries of the late nineteenth century" (Quataert 1993: 55–56). Modern factories and free-enterprise zones were key elements in Istanbul's display of its mastery of Western technology both at home and abroad through the endeavors of photographers extensively subsidized and patronized by Abdülhamid II (Çelik 1986: 35–38). These photographs were published in the dozens of papers circulating in the city in European languages, and in Arabic, Armenian, Greek, Persian, Turkish, Russian, and mixtures of all of the above (Frierson 1996: 49–58). Home-produced lace, rugs, and embroidered goods were also increasingly important for domestic and export markets, and shoemaking and ready-made clothing became growth sectors of domestic manufacture that relied on sweatshops, home manufacture, and advertising in the cheap, illustrated press (Quataert 1993: 56–57). Although at the moment the experiences and attitudes of these low-wage workers have been captured only partially and in the aggregate through statistics, foreign and Ottoman reportage, and strikes, for the middle-ranking participants in late-

Ottoman manufacture, a familiar dynamic was at work in the textile industries. Just as the Hamidian government undercut the European monopoly on tobacco (the Régie) by not enforcing antismuggling laws, so it supported the emergence of new Muslim entrepreneurs and retailers to compete with Europeans, especially in Istanbul, through a variety of formal and informal means.

Ottoman consumers were increasingly urged to buy local, and popular writers hastened to support this effort by denigrating the quality of imported goods, and their poor ratio of cost to value. Even though, or perhaps because, Muslim manufactures were on the rise, feelings against minority landowners, merchants, factory owners, and retailers ran higher and higher as the century wound up. The cheap, illustrated press was intimately tied to the textile industry, as display space for Ottoman progress in manufactures; in advertising fabrics, ready-made clothes, and tailoring services; and in instructing the public what to wear, how and when to wear it, and, if necessary, how to sew it. Women's gazettes in particular were closely tied to fabric, fashion, and handicrafts from their inception. Merchants and manufacturers in textiles and other dry goods were the first to make use of advertising in the cheap, illustrated press, as in the first advertisement appearing in *Terakki* in 1879: "Osman Efendi sells all types of Trabzon *bezi* (linen or cotton cloth) at low prices in the number two room of Baltacı han in Tahtakale" (*Terakki* July 18, 1879: 4). This brief announcement was one of two in this particular issue, the other presenting a new book, written in "very clear Turkish," available at all newspaper stands, and entitled *Ekonomi Politik*. The editors promised that the book would be useful to both male and female readers, as it discussed how individuals could earn money and, on a society wide level, how wealth is attained.

By the 1890s, basic tailoring and embroidery were taught in magazines as part of a package of scientific housewifery that drew on traditional Ottoman handicrafts. Patterns for lace, embroidery, and clothing made up most of the illustrated sections of general interest magazines or women's and girls' magazines. The rest of the sections were generally taken up with "tableaux" such as a woman or girl in Western-style clothing displaying her educational interests or accomplishments. The illustrations came with instructions, and in 1901–1902 Gülistan İsmet translated an entire Western sewing manual, including instructions to make the corset-requiring wasp-waisted fashions of the day. Serialized as feature articles over a period of several weeks, this

manual was greeted with eagerness and expressions of gratitude, but ultimately not with unmitigated delight. Readers wrote to the translator in extreme frustration with the instructions, to which she responded that her translations were accurately transmitting what was in the original text, and, with all humble apologies to her respected readers, she was doing the best she could with a very difficult book (HMG October 31, 1901–May 15, 1902).

In the midst of Gülistan İsmet's sewing lessons, however, yet another article on the corset appeared, this time in the imperative "Do not wear the corset" (HMG April 17, 1902: 1–2). There were sixteen feature articles devoted to this topic over fourteen years in this magazine alone, and writers of hundreds of general articles on health, physical fitness, and exercise usually managed to fit in a bad word or two against the corset. Illustrated with diagrams of crushed ribs and dislocated organs, these articles must have left readers in a quandary as to how they were to fit their bodies into the wasp-waisted fashions featured under the heading of *Son Moda Libaslar*, or "Clothes in the Latest Fashion." Whatever lexical and pictorial confusion may have reigned in the press, the temper of the times was clearly for European fashions, especially if they could be bought in Muslim stores or sewn from fabric bought in Muslim stores. A number of state decrees prohibited Muslim women from shopping in Christian stores, a prohibition that was easily skirted or defied. Still, there are signs that this idea was in force in subtle and not so subtle ways.

Many goods were advertised in the press with illustrations and Greek, Armenian, Latin, or even Japanese characters to convey a foreign cachet. Muslim tailors and retailers received different treatment in the advertisement section of *Hanımlara mahsûs gazette*. They were presented, generally without illustrations, as editors' announcements or recommendations. This format was originally developed to announce the services and addresses of Muslim men of the new professions, describing in detail their Ottoman or Western degrees, honors, and honorable characters (Frierson 1996: 204–206). By the late 1890s, editors began to describe Ottoman female entrepreneurs in similarly glowing terms. Raşide Hanım's bridal shop near the Bayezid complex, for example, was given an endorsement for her "appropriate" fashions at low prices: blouses, jackets, skirts, bridal gowns, dresses, and overcoats, as well as jewelry and supplies for banquets (HMG December 13, 1900: 6). In format, then, the Muslim purveyors of Istanbul fashions and services were on equal footing with the new

experts in the critical fields of medicine and health, a significant promotion in professional status achieved entirely through their Muslim identities, honest characters, and national loyalties.

Journalists argued for informal boycotts of foreign manufactures, and for patronizing Ottoman stores and buying Ottoman, and more particularly Muslim, manufactures. The Young Turks reified these and similar attitudes in their National Economic Program in 1914, but consumers had learned to think and act protectively towards Ottoman products well before the 1908 revolution (Zürcher 1993; Toprak 1982). In this light, the *Son Moda Libaslar* and *Tablo* features take on an added meaning. Whereas these sections ostensibly gave models, descriptions, and sometimes instructions and patterns for the latest fashions, I could not find illustrations of veils or *çarşaf*s "in the latest fashion" portrayed on a human body, or indeed anything that would identify the women in more Westernized fashion illustrations as Muslim or even Ottoman minorities. The fashions shown on bodies, rather than sketched and hanging on empty air, were, in fact, Western women on display, and the constant iteration of the corset's ill effects no doubt gave the thinking woman pause before imagining and then putting herself physically into some version of *son moda libaslar*. With the corset's physical and psychological discomforts as a foundation, as well as an air of national betrayal hovering around any new *allafranga*, or European, suit, one has to wonder if the whole ensemble did not provide wear with all the comfort of a hairshirt woven of interethnic tensions and conflicting self-perceptions.

As if crushed ribs and low treason were not enough weight to put on such slight confections as embroidered belts and pin-tucked blouses, even a woman who had hidden her corseted body under the loosest of *çarşaf*s on the street was bombarded with enough images of half-naked women in corsets to add an element of impropriety to the simple act of getting dressed. An illustrator's convention of depicting European *salonières*, actresses, and female authors with one sleeve dropping off the shoulder was frequently deployed in corset illustrations, implying that women who wore corsets were as suspect in their morality as the most bold and forward of European women. Unlike the economic protectionist agenda and the corset's physically harmful effects, however, this latter point could cut two ways, either to make the new fashions unthinkable or to make them infinitely more entertaining to wear. Portraits of two or three generations of women in one family suggest that both perspectives held sway.

Whatever the individual Ottoman woman's sense of her *son moda libaslar* may have been, she could create her own version of the latest fashions by watching and judging European women on the street and in vitrines from behind the anonymity of her veil and overcoat of honor. A second means of observation lay in the press, as she could be an entirely anonymous viewer of Western women who had been flattened, despite their exaggerated curves, into two-dimensional, monochromatic caricatures of fashionable creatures.

Tesettür *and the Enforcement of Identity*

Ottoman women's clothes could have had any number of points of origin and transmission. They could have been imported ready-made, tailored out of imported or local cloth by Muslim or minority seamstresses, sewn at home with directions from women's magazines, manufactured by factory workers from local or imported fabrics, and ornamented with lace made in Silivri by Jewish girls, or sewn with embroideries by women in Bosphorus villages (Quataert 1993: 56). By the turn of the century, the vast majority of middling to elite women of all ethnicities showed remarkable though not uniform similarity in their suits, dresses, and toilettes. Once in overcoats and headgear on the street, however, even minute details of appearance became ground for contests between popular will and *allafranga* aspirations. Police officials made various failed attempts to dictate and enforce height of hemlines and thickness of veils, but they were often compelled to withdraw their announcements or see them ignored altogether.

Mary Mills Patrick described an effort by the police to reinstitute thicker veils and longer skirts, launched with this notice: "The adoption of new forms of apparel has become a public scandal in Constantinople. All Mohammedan women are given two days in which to lengthen their skirts and to substitute thick veils for thin ones." The police notice caused an uproar.

> At sight of this notice, the wives of Turkish aristocrats, of ministers, and of high government officials united in general indignation. All the women's organizations threatened to stop work unless the order was rescinded. The following day this very humble notice appeared:
>
> "We regret that, because of the meddling of certain old women, a subordinate of the police department attempted to regulate the length of women's dresses. The police department regrets the blunder and cancels the previous order" (Patrick 1934: 303–304).

Patrick's observations about the continuing vitality of sumptuary laws and their inevitable corollary, difficulties in enforcement, are borne out by a directive from the Ministry of the Interior in 1901 in response to a police request to hire and train female police detectives. They were pushed to this innovation by women's strategies for evading interrogation, which relied largely on Muslim female etiquette in refusing to speak with "strange men" (policemen), even as they walked the boulevards of the city in close-fitting fashions adapted from Paris and London (Frierson, 1996). Far more effective at holding the line against European fashion was day-to-day enforcement on the street. Selma Ekrem, granddaughter of Namık Kemal, suffered constant harassment over her beloved hats; here, she was accompanying her elder sister who was that day gladly wearing her *çarşaf* and veil for the first time:

> We left the house, mother and Abla in their tcharshafs and Beraet and I walking behind in our hats. Abla had thrown back her veil and her face was proud and self-conscious. We walked from our ill-paved street to a steep hill lined with little shops where the pounding of hammers filled our ears and the windows were cluttered with shining copper kettles and bowls. The copper drew me to it when suddenly I heard angry voices in my ears.
>
> "To what days are we left? Women going about open to the world! Hey, hanim, do you want your daughter to go to hell? Cover her face!"
>
> I looked into the angry eyes of a turbaned hodja [sic] who was waving a finger at Abla. We quickened our pace but the hodja was following us threateningly.
>
> "It is the like of you who bring ruin to this nation! Imitating the Christians, showing your face!" the hodja screamed out.
>
> A crowd was about us, mother was almost running and Abla threw down her black veil over her face. We children were hurrying along but I felt my heart turn blazing hot with fury. Why should that old priest interfere? By what right should he chase us and heap maledictions on our heads?
>
> "What is it to you, you narrow-headed priest!" I screamed back, but mother dragged me away so fast that my words fell on the dumb stones. But my anger could not be pacified with my broken words. I wished I had been big and strong and had crashed my mother's umbrella over that hodja's [sic] head. But the crowd would then have closed over me and crushed me as the sea crushes pebbles into sand (Ekrem 1947: 180–81).

There was clearly a class component to this encounter. The Ekrem family were long-time residents of wealth and modernist standing in their neighborhood. More glaringly apparent than any criticism of

consumption habits, though, is the *hoca*'s rage that this mother is dressing her daughters like Christians, and in so doing abandoning the good fight for Muslim female integrity and beauty on its own turf and in its own terms, as defined against the standards set by minorities and Europeans with their myriad unfair advantages and suspect morality.

Politics in the Latest Fashion

Muslim women exploited their ability to be anonymous as well as their female identity to achieve political ends. They acted as couriers for opposition groups in the empire, concealing correspondence, and probably banned newspapers and books as well, under their inviolable overcoats. Women's protests over arrears in pensions and salaries were frequent, furthermore, and were generally expressed both vocally and as written petitions stuck onto the points of umbrellas and shoved through the railings of iron gates locked against them in front of modern ministry buildings. One foreign resident spoke with admiration of their persistence during a pension protest: "they filled every corridor, blocked every door they could find, and made the building resound with lamentations and clamors for payment . . . the authorities bowed before 'the might of weakness,' and made the best terms they could induce the victors to accept" (van Millingen 1906: 250–51). With the rise of ethnonationalist terrorism and the wars of the last quarter of the nineteenth century and the first quarter of the twentieth century, public expressions of discontent became both more loaded with dangerous meaning and more direct in their anger at Europeans and their proxies, local Christians. The last years of the Hamidian era were marked by riots, strikes, and massacres, and it was this popular discontent that facilitated the constitutional revolution that brought the Young Turks to power in 1908.

At the very outset of their rule, the Young Turks attempted to use public protest to their own ends, as when they called for boycotts of Austrian goods after the Habsburg's formal annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina on October 5, 1908. Religious students and Young Turk ideologues led demonstrations in front of the Ministry of War three days later, but the field of operations rapidly moved to the shopping districts and the docks as demonstrators blocked customers' entry to Austrian stores. On October 10, appeals began to

appear in the newspapers, calling for revenge in the name of the Ottoman nation. For its part, the state fez factory increased production to make up for a projected shortfall in Austrian fezzes that, along with sugar, were the main Austrian export to the empire. Austrian Lloyd ships stood laden in the harbors of Istanbul and Salonica, as the lightermen's and dockworkers' guilds refused to unload their goods.

Although the boycott was rumored to be ending on October 10, on October 11 religious scholars and military officers urged a crowd of roughly 15,000 in Sultan Ahmet Square to continue. Although the retail boycott was not initially effective, the port workers' continued refusal to deal with goods from Austrian Lloyd ships began both to cost the Austrian firms and local merchants time and money, and to cut the number of goods reaching the shops. When the guild refused to obey the grand vezir's command to stop the boycott, the Young Turks stepped in and took over the boycott as a weapon both against the Austrians and in their struggles with the Sublime Porte and the Palace. On November 3, a committee was set up to run the boycott, and this committee launched a Union of Economic Warfare, in charge of issuing certificates for display to merchants who complied with the boycott, and denouncing those who did not. The leaders of the boycott demanded reparations from Austria for the annexation, ironically and aptly in the form of taking on part of the Ottoman public debt. Porters and lightermen continued during the winter at ports throughout the empire to refuse to disembark passengers, mail, or goods from Austrian ships, despite increasing pressure from the grand vezir and the minister of commerce and public works. A brief effort by Greek lightermen to unload the ships in Istanbul was rapidly quashed with forced oaths of allegiance. Efforts by Lloyd to bring in its own workers met with a warning from the minister of police that he could not guarantee their safety, and the boycott syndicate ultimately controlled receipt or refusal of all European goods coming in to the port.

When an agreement containing Austrian concessions was signed on February 26, the grand vezir ordered that Austrian ships be unloaded immediately, but the minister of interior argued that as it was the people's boycott, the people should be allowed to decide when it ended. The next day the porters accepted the arguments of a prominent Young Turk ideologue and agreed to end the boycott, but lightermen pressed for better pay and the removal of foreign workers. Ultimately, after a strike from March 4 to 11, all foreign

shipping firms agreed to the lightermen's terms, bringing to an end this five-month contest among guilds, import/export merchants, ministers, shopkeepers, consumers, and foreign capitalists. Ultimately, the Kurdish porters used the Greek attempt to break the boycott against them, eliminating Greeks from the porters' guild, as they had eliminated Armenians in 1895 by more brutal means (Zürcher 1993: 86–88). In 1908–1909, they succeeded in defeating the Armenian plea for reinstatement and maintained their hegemony over the docks (Quataert 1993: 121–45).

The matter-of-fact conclusion of the following announcement in *Kadın* (Woman) on the third anniversary of the Young Turk Revolution shows that protectionist agendas survived the Young Turk revolution, and in fact became even more part of what journalists hoped would become a popular consciousness:

> To our honored readers . . .
>
> In order not to be overwhelmed or deceived by the deep torrents of Istanbul trade; if you wish to make a visit that is pleasant, elegant, graceful, and good-natured . . . if you would both encourage an Ottoman place of business and also be of service to our nation then, dear readers, we sincerely recommend that you visit the Nejidler Store, next to the Qomanto Han, for inexpensive, elegant, sound and beautiful *çarşaf*s, fabric for clothes, laces, cords and ribbons and so forth, all of these things inexpensive to an astonishing degree, our hope being that Ottoman money would stay in the Ottoman state (*Kadın* July 23, 1911: 13).

Capital and Nation

From this point forward, disillusionment with Western goods, Western economic policy, and the social outriders of Western capitalism came to play increasingly greater parts in the construction of a Turkish identity in the press and in other public spaces. In the 1909 counterrevolution against the Young Turks, manned largely by religious students, the revolutionaries demanded an end to such Western intrusions as bars, theatres, photography, and women's presence in public life. In the course of the uprising, a woman's club was burned down, and after the suppression of the revolutionaries, *Hanımlara mahsûs gazete* Publishing House, which had published political journals in the period 1908–1909, apparently ceased operations (Zürcher 1993: 100). Although the counterrevolution was suppressed and women continued to increase their public presence in new jobs and socially, for the first time in the company of their husbands, there was an

acceleration in the move away from the sheer veils and colorful *çarşaf*s of the nineteenth century and toward the more puritanical and neotraditional *çarşaf* with a thick veil that could be worn down or thrown back. When the Young Turks allowed Muslim Turkish girls for the first time officially to enter the American Constantinople Women's College, which Gülistan İsmet had attended secretly and illegally during the reign of Abdülhamid II, the headmistress noted that the "fashion in Turkish dress at that time no longer included the gay colors and white veils of the early days; loose black outer garments and thin black veils were worn. It constantly thrilled us to welcome groups of these black-robed students, eager for a life of study. Once across the threshold, the black veils disappeared, and modern seekers for knowledge came to view" (Patrick 1934: 210).

The stringencies of revolution, wartime, and British occupation during the War of Independence heightened the closeness with which Ottomans scrutinized each other's behavior and beliefs, and in novels Westernized women changed from figures of fun to traitors, showing "a primary preoccupation with the moral decay that Westernization creates in women, or rather a predilection for female characters as the ideal bearers of corruption and decay" (Kandiyoti 1988: 42–43). As during the Hamidian era, however, the women of the Young Turk era were as adept at negotiating with the paternalist state to open new avenues for themselves as the state was in finding new uses for women. Telegraph operators formed their own union and political clubs blossomed, even after one of them was targeted and destroyed during the 1909 counterrevolution. Hundreds of women became nurses and postal clerks, appointed by the government, and a group of women founded and ran their own dry goods store in Pera (Çakır 1993). The Young Turk era, as well as the physical misery of poverty and shortages experienced by Istanbul at war and then under occupation between 1911 and 1922, led to the dampening of women's displays of beauty and fashion, and perhaps this closure in conjunction with women's increasing public visibility as nurses, clerks, and public speakers can illuminate the rigidity, fragility, and quest for legitimacy of the postrevolutionary state. In the rising tide of anti-Western sentiment and the bitterness of defeat and occupation, the politics of display became too risky, and too costly. Sheer veils and streamlined, ornamented bodies came to represent a force that at a carefully measured distance had held enormous appeal, but which as an enemy and arbiter of national shame and destruction became intolerable.

Conclusion

In this essay I have argued that producers, consumers, and regulators of public information created a modern public sphere in the last decades of the Ottoman Empire, with its most consistent critical component being directed at Western states and societies. Looking West from the East allows us to question the degree of freedom of allegedly free presses in Europe or elsewhere. The Western press, like its counterparts in the Ottoman Empire, was entangled in relations of power and structures of authority, and the very familiarity and commonality of human experience in the face of state structures built in conformity with or in apparent rebellion against Abrahamic world views common to rulers—de facto or de jure—of Europe, Asia, and Africa at the turn of the twentieth century. In an era of increasing intrusion by the Ottoman state on individual subjects' lives, print culture became a vibrant realm of contestation over prescriptive literatures, modern practices and ideas, and the duties and responsibilities (*vazife ve mesuliyet*) of Ottoman men, women, and children in the struggle to save the empire. At the same time, this process was both ancient and extremely new. For example, prescriptive literature grew directly out of the *adab/edeb* or advice literature offered for centuries in the Mediterranean and Mespotamian regions before and after the advent of Islam. Classical *adab* literature, however, was written for rulers and their elite core of state servants, whereas Hamidian *adab* literature was written for the newly literate masses, giving them for the first time in Muslim history a key civic role, a patriotism, that required continuous exercise of will and independent reason, fluidity in social definitions of self and other, and active intellectual involvement in deciding the fate of the empire.

In modern Ottoman patriotism, subjects were presented a value set that reduced the ancient duty of loyalty to the ruler to one of many loyalties—to one's fellow Muslims, to Ottoman civilization, modernity, and progress, and against parts of Western culture that were deemed dangerous or weakening—and they were urged through the new world of widespread print culture to incorporate this value set into every act of their daily lives. The activities encouraged included bearing healthy children, "shopping local," refusing to become fashion victims of the West, and surrendering one's sons and husbands to lifetime terms of conscription on the shrinking frontiers of empire. Ultimately, ordinary Ottoman men, women, and children were made responsible for the public good of the empire and its

subjects, regardless of ethnicity (though religious identity became increasingly important in including and excluding groups from perceptions of the public good), family relations or the lack of family ties, or any of the traditional ties to neighborhood, guild, or Sufi order. The state, in the persons of hundreds of reformers great and humble, reached into individuals' lives and turned these traditional loyalties toward the state and the larger society in crisis that surrounded most Ottomans in the cities of the empire. The revolutions of 1908, and the great project of building a modern Turkish republic in the 1920s, were able to succeed insofar as they did because their leaders inherited a population steeped through public schools and new urban architecture and print culture in modern patriotism, accustomed to the mental and physical processes of self-correction, and committed to becoming *edibâne*, no longer meaning just cultured and civilized, but also modern and progressive.

References

Çakır, Serpil
1993 *Osmanlı kadın hareketi*. Istanbul: Metis Yayınları.

Çelik, Zeynep
1986 *The Remaking of Istanbul: Portrait of an Ottoman City in the Nineteenth Century*. Seattle: University of Washington Press.
1992 *Displaying the Orient: Architecture of Islam at Nineteenth-Century World's Fairs*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press.

Doğramacı, Emel
1984 *The Status of Women in Turkey*. Ankara: n.p.

Duben, Alan, and Cem Behar
1991 *Istanbul Households: Marriage, Family, and Fertility, 1880–1940*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Duman, Hasan
1986 *İstanbul Kütüphaneleri Arap Harfi Süreli Yayınlar Toplu Kataloğu 1828–1928. Union Catalogue of the Periodicals in Arabic Script in the Libraries of Istanbul*. Istanbul: Research Centre for Islamic History, Art and Culture.

Dwight, Henry O.
1881 *Turkish Life in War Time*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons.

Ekrem, Selma
1947 *Turkey Old and New*. New York: Scribner.

Frierson, Elizabeth B.
1995 "Unimagined Communities: Educational Reform and Civic Identity among Late-Ottoman Women." *Critical Matrix* 9, no. 2 (Fall): 57–92.
1996 "Unimagined Communities: State, Press, and Gender in the Hamidian Era." Ph.D. dissertation, Department of Near Eastern Studies, Princeton University.
2000 " 'Cheap and Easy': Patriotic Consumer Culture in the Late-Ottoman era." In *Consumption in the Ottoman Empire*, edited by Donald Quataert. Pp. 243–60. Albany: State University of New York Press.
2001 "Mirrors Out, Mirrors In: Domestication and Rejection of the Foreign in Late-Ottoman Women's Magazines (1875–1908)." In *Women, Patronage, and*

Self-Representation in Islamic Societies, edited by D. Fairchild Ruggles. Pp. 177–204. Albany: State University of New York Press.

Gelbart, Nina
1987 *Feminine and Opposition Journalism in Old Regime France: "Le Journal Des Dames."* Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press.

Gluck, Carol
1985 *Japan's Modern Myths: Ideology in the Late Meiji Period*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Habermas, Jürgen
1989 [1962] *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*. Cambridge: MIT Press.

Halid, Halil
1903 *The Diary of a Turk*. London: Adam and Charles Black.

Hane, Mikiso
1986 *Modern Japan: A Historical Survey*. Boulder, Colo.: Westview.

Hanımlara Mahsûs Gazete, published 1895–1909 in Istanbul.

Hanioğlu, Şükrü.
1995 *The Young Turks in Opposition*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
2001 *Preparation for a Revolution: The Young Turks, 1902–1908*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Hunt, Lynn
1998 "Freedom of Dress in Revolutionary France." In *From the Royal to the Republican Body: Incorporating the Political in Seventeenth- and Eighteenth-Century France*, edited by Sara E. Melzer and Kathryn Norberg. Pp. 224–50. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press.

Issawi, Charles
1980 *The Economic History of Turkey 1800–1914*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Jansen, Marius B.
2000 *The Making of Modern Japan*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Judge, Joan
1996 *Print and Politics: "Shibao" and the Culture of Reform in Late Qing China*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Kadın, published 1911 in Istanbul.

Kandiyoti, Deniz
1988 "Slave Girls, Temptresses, and Comrades: Images of Women in the Turkish Novel." *Feminist Issues* 8, no. 1 (Spring): 35–49.

McReynolds, Louise
1991 *The News under Russia's Old Regime: The Development of a Mass-Circulation Press*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Mabro, Judy
1991 *Veiled Half-Truths: Western Travellers' Perceptions of Middle Eastern Women*. London: I.B. Tauris.

Mardin, Şerif P.
1974 "Super Westernization in Urban Life in the Ottoman Empire in the Last Quarter of the Nineteenth Century." In *Turkey: Geographic and Social Perspectives*, edited by Peter Benedict, Erol Tömertekin, and Fatma Mansur. Pp. 403–46. Leiden: E.J. Brill.

Marker, Gary
1985 *Publishing, Printing, and the Origins of Intellectual Life in Russia, 1700–1800*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Patrick, Mary Mills
1934 *A Bosporus Adventure—Istanbul (Constantinople) Woman's College 1871–1924*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Quataert, Donald
1993 *Ottoman Manufacturing in the Age of the Industrial Revolution*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Rogan, Eugene
1996 "Aşiret Mektebi: Abdülhamid II's School for Tribes (1892–1907)." *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 28, no. 1 (February): 83–107.
Shaw, Stanford J., and Ezel Kural Shaw
1977 *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey*, Volume 2. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Taşçıoğlu, Muhaddere
1958 Türk Osmanlı Cemiyetinde Kadı nın Sosyal Durumu ve Kadın Kıyafetleri. Ankara: Akın Matbaası.
Terakki, published 1879–1880 in Istanbul.
Toprak, Zafer
1982 *Türkiye'de Milli İktisat, 1908–1918*. Ankara: Yurt Yayınları.
Van Millingen, Alexander
1906 *Constantinople*. London: Adam and Charles Black.
Worringer, Renee
2001 "Comparing Perceptions: Japan as Archetype for Ottoman Modernity, 1876–1918." Ph.D. Dissertation, Department of History, University of Chicago.
Zürcher, Erik Jan
1993 *Turkey: A Modern History*. London: I.B. Tauris.

This page intentionally left blank

Part III

Religious Authority and the Common Good

This page intentionally left blank

CHAPTER SIX

THE ʿULAMA OF CONTEMPORARY ISLAM AND THEIR CONCEPTIONS OF THE COMMON GOOD

Muhammad Qasim Zaman

As scholars of Islamic law and the traditions of the Prophet Muḥammad, as exegetes of the Qur'an and religious guides, the ʿulama have shaped or contributed to the dominant religious discourses in Muslim societies for more than a millennium. Their position has varied in different Muslim societies, and their views—no less varied—have scarcely ever remained uncontested by rivals within or outside their ranks. Yet they have carried, and in many cases continue to enjoy, considerable influence in Muslim societies. The impact of mass education, new technologies for disseminating knowledge and information, and dramatically changed social, economic, and political contexts have led to a "fragmentation" of religious authority since the nineteenth century; and the traditionally educated scholars, the ʿulama, have paid a considerable price on account of these changes (Eickelman 1992; Eickelman and Piscatori 1996: 37–79, 131–35). Yet they have also adapted to these changes in ways that have often enabled them to expand their influence, forge new alliances at the local, national and transnational levels, and participate in new ways in religious and political discourse in contemporary Islam (Zaman 2002).

The ʿulama self-consciously represent a complex scholarly tradition that they typically see not so much as being inseparable from Islam as constituting its very definition. It is with reference to this tradition that they view themselves and the world around them, express their ideas of an Islamic society and state, and elaborate their conceptions of the common good. The ʿulama's conceptions of the common good are important for understanding not just their thought but also the processes through which facets of that thought are articulated, as well as the public sphere in which they are constituted. Yet what these conceptions of the common good are and how they relate to the ʿulama's long-standing tradition—as well as to their

contemporary contexts—are questions that have seldom been asked. This chapter represents a preliminary effort to address these questions in a broadly comparative framework.

The "Common Good"

The common good, what it consists in, and how it is best realized, are matters of contestation in any society—a contestation that is central to any adequate understanding of how the common good is itself constituted (cf. Mansbridge 1998: 3–19; Calhoun 1998: 20–35).[1] This suggests, as Calhoun (1998: 20–35, esp. 20) argues in his critique of communitarianism, that the common good cannot be seen "ahistorically in substantive terms—for example, as rooted in communities that always already exist or in Aristotelian virtues." Given, moreover, that the conception of the common good is produced by ongoing public contestation, there can scarcely be a single conception of it, nor can it simply be equated with that which is best for most people. In the former case, it is the dominant group that ends up defining what ought to count as the common or public good. And in the latter case, that which best suits most people may not conform to the minorities' sense of the good (Calhoun 1998: 29). The common good is best seen, therefore, as expressing itself in a variety and diversity of forms rather than in a single, idealized formulation (Calhoun 1998: 20–35).

How do these conceptions of the common good relate to the ʿulama? They often exemplify many of the things that Calhoun and Mansbridge caution *against* in understandings of the common good. The ʿulama typically imagine the common good as something discoverable rather than as a "social and cultural project." If they can have their way, they would not like this concept—or any other, for that matter—to

[1] Mansbridge and Calhoun are both concerned with examining the implications of the fact that "*public* good" is a contested concept (Mansbridge 1998) and that it ought to be seen as a "social and cultural project" (Calhoun 1998). Whether or how "*public* good" is to be differentiated from the "*common* good" is itself a matter of some disagreement among sociologists, though the distinctions are not crucial for my discussion in this chapter. Suffice it to note that, although my discussion of the *common* good is indebted to Mansbridge and Calhoun, it does not presuppose the identity of the common and the public good any more than it presumes the concurrence of Mansbridge and Calhoun with how I draw on some of their insights in examining the thought of the contemporary ʿulama.

be a subject of contestation, as Mansbridge thinks such concepts ought to be. And many of their conceptions of society would be unsuitable for, if not hostile to, liberal conceptions of a civil society.

Yet, however much the ʿulama might wish to be able to define the dominant discourses in contemporary Muslim societies, their voices are at best only one of several competing views and voices. And inasmuch as they are part of this landscape, and are often loud, even articulate, contributors to public debate, the ʿulama help shape the public sphere. Indeed, their discourses contribute in practice to precisely the sort of contestation that constitutes not just the public sphere but also notions of its common good. For all the ʿulama's wish simply to discover and enunciate concepts rather than acknowledge creating them, it is precisely through a long history of discourse and contestation that the tradition in terms of which they define themselves has been constituted. The ʿulama's discourses in the present are not just articulated in contestation with other, rival voices in society but are also in constant dialogue and argumentation with the resources their own tradition offers.

A number of doctrines and methods in medieval Islamic jurisprudence concern themselves with what may be regarded as matters of the common good. In their writings on the principles or foundations of the law (*uṣūl al-fiqh*), medieval jurists often posited five fundamental values as encapsulating the "purposes" of God's law, the *sharīʿa*. These values—religion, life, progeny, property, and rationality—were based not on any explicit listing of their contents in the foundational texts but were derived, the jurists believed, through what Wael Hallaq has characterized as "inductive corroboration." These fundamental values converged on the preservation, within the limits prescribed God, of the interests of human beings—their individual and collective good.[2]

The concept that best expresses this concern with securing the interests of the people, and around which much of the discussion on the purposes of the *sharīʿa* revolves, is *maṣlaḥa* (pl. *maṣāliḥ*). *Maṣlaḥa* (or, more precisely, *maṣlaḥa ʿāmma*, "public interest") can, broadly speaking, be understood as the "common good," though it is more accurate to see it as a means, or a legal criterion, through which

[2] I am indebted to Weiss 1998: 116 and passim for the formulation "foundational texts." For helpful discussions of the five fundamental values or "purposes" of the *sharīʿa*, see Weiss 1998: 78–87, 145–71; Hallaq 1997: 89–90, 112–13, 168–74. On "inductive corroboration," see Hallaq 1997: 166–70.

the common good is realized. Yet because considerations of *maṣlaḥa* usually lacked explicit justifications for themselves in the foundational texts, it was a rather controversial doctrine in medieval jurisprudence (Hallaq 1997: 112–13, 214). Those inclined to the use of *maṣlaḥa* did, however, come to find support for it in terms of the general purposes of the law—purposes that *maṣlaḥa* was thought to promote. And several medieval scholars, most notably the Ḥanbalī jurist al-Ṭūfī (d. 1316) and the Spanish Mālikī jurist al-Shāṭibī (d. 1388), gave *maṣlaḥa* considerable importance in their writings.[3]

The doctrine of *maṣlaḥa* came to enjoy a new salience in modern legal thinking. Muslim reformers of the twentieth century extensively invoked it to justify reformulating their legal tradition. Among the best known of these was the Syrian Muḥammad Rashīd Riḍā (d. 1935) who, as Malcolm Kerr has shown in some detail, saw *maṣlaḥa* as the cornerstone of "a utilitarian methodology" in terms of which to reform the *sharīʿa* (Kerr 1960, part 1: 101 and passim; Kerr 1966: 187–208). In this venture, Riḍā sought to muster the support of figures from the medieval Islamic tradition, reintroducing his audience to the works of Ṭūfī and Shāṭibī.[4] He argued that considerations of *maṣlaḥa* were far more pervasive in Islamic jurisprudence than was commonly recognized (Riḍā n.d.: 143–44).

I will briefly discuss *maṣlaḥa* with reference to certain scholars more recent than Rashīd Riḍā. Although the idea of *maṣlaḥa* comes closest to the topic of this chapter, my concern here is much broader than *maṣlaḥa* in the conventional juristic sense. It is to understand the ʿulama's notions of the common good even when they do not necessarily use a particular term or phrase that translates as such, and even when they are not specifically discussing issues of law and legal theory.

---

[3] For a study of *maṣlaḥa* in medieval juristic thought, with detailed attention to Ṭūfī and Shāṭibī (among others), see Opwis 2001. For the text of Ṭūfī's treatise on *maṣlaḥa*, see Zayd 1964: 205–240. Among legal theorists who attended to *maṣlaḥa* prior to Ṭūfī and Shāṭibī was the famous jurist al-Ghazālī. For his discussion of *maṣlaḥa*, see al-Ghazālī 1995, I: 257–66.

[4] Riḍā published Ṭūfī's work on *maṣlaḥa* in his journal, al-Manār, in 1906 (see Kerr 1966: 206; and cf. Zayd 1964: 194). He also edited and published al-Shāṭibī's *al-Iʿtiṣām* (Shāṭibī 1914).

Maṣlaḥa *and the Contemporary ʿulama*

In the work of Rashīd Riḍā, as Kerr (1966) has demonstrated, *maṣlaḥa* or public interest becomes the principal means of effecting legal change. Riḍā argued that although matters of liturgical practice (*ʿibādāt*) as laid down in the *sharīʿa* remain immutable, God and the Prophet intended for the laws regulating the affairs and interactions of people in the community to remain receptive to change. The criterion for rethinking and change was the public interest or the common good. Ṭūfī's controversial view—that instead of necessarily basing considerations of *maṣlaḥa* on explicit indications in the foundational texts, the texts themselves should be interpreted in light of *maṣlaḥa*—was one that Riḍā found congenial to his own way of thinking (Kerr 1966: 194; on the break with medieval jurisprudence that this entailed, cf. ibid.: 196, and Hallaq 1997: 219).

Yet, as Kerr (1966: 203–208) points out, there is a highly instructive tension in Riḍā's legal thought that reveals his discomfort with the implications of his own proposals. As concerned as he was with demonstrating—and making room for—the responsiveness of the law to changing needs, the case for such responsiveness threatened to make this law appear as a product of human effort, a matter of historical evolution, rather than as a divine blueprint. Riḍā could not have it both ways; and his discomfort with seeing the divine and sacred dimension of the *sharīʿa* dissipated by the emphasis on its historical dimension is best illustrated by his polemics against those who seemed to him to emphasize the human and historical dimension of the *sharīʿa*.

Riḍā's dilemma has not quite been resolved by more recent scholars and activists. The Qatar-based Egyptian scholar Yūsuf al-Qaraḍāwī—a major figure among the contemporary ʿulama—who has written on *maṣlaḥa* in addition to many other themes, seems to be aware of the dilemma but wants to steer clear of it.[5] His book, *al-Siyāsa al-sharʿiyya fī ḍawʾ al-nuṣūṣ al-sharīʿa wa maqāṣidihā* ("Governance according to the *sharīʿa* in light of the texts and purposes of sacred law," 2000), offers a substantial discussion of *maṣlaḥa*. This book is part of a series of his writings that "treat diverse intellectual issues—

[5] For a pioneering overview of the significance of al-Qaraḍāwī, see Salvatore (1997: 197–209).

of law and legal theory, faith and practice—where the [true] path might have become obscured." In clarifying these intellectual issues, the series focuses each of its published or planned volumes on one or more of the "Twenty Principles" enunciated by Ḥasan al-Bannāʾ (d. 1949), the founder of the Muslim Brotherhood.[6] Qaraḍāwī's *al-Siyāsa al-sharʿiyya* is one volume in this series.

Qaraḍāwī discusses *maṣlaḥa* primarily in the context of areas where, according to Bannāʾ, one ought to act in accordance with the opinion of the ruler (*imām/walī al-amr*). Three such areas are identified: matters that are not explicitly regulated by indications in the foundational texts; matters on which several different options are available; and matters of *maṣlaḥa* (Qaraḍāwī 2000: 65–98). Qaraḍāwī largely follows the medieval jurist al-Ghazālī (d. 1111) in characterizing considerations of *maṣlaḥa* as themselves being of three kinds: those for which the *sharīʿa* provides clear indications, and which therefore are clearly authoritative; those against which the *sharīʿa* provides clear indications, and which consequently are clearly inadmissible; and, finally, those on which the foundational texts provide neither clear support nor reasons for rejection. Ghazālī's argument for *maṣlaḥa* rests on the *sharīʿa*'s purposes—themselves classifiable as matters of "necessity," important "need," and finally, "amenity." Foremost among these purposes are the five necessities of religion, life, progeny, property, and rationality that the divine Lawgiver is presumed most interested in preserving. It is around these issues that considerations of *maṣlaḥa* must revolve (al-Ghazālī 1995, I: 257–59; Qaraḍāwī, 2000: 76–80).

Maṣlaḥa, Ghazālī is careful to note, is not just a matter of seeking that which is beneficial and warding off what is injurious. Instead, it signifies the safeguarding of the *sharīʿa*'s aforementioned purposes (al-Ghazālī 1995, I: 258). The criterion of what counts as *maṣlaḥa* is therefore provided by the *sharīʿa* itself rather than by the people, for all that it is the latter who are the beneficiaries of the *sharīʿa*'s concerns. Qaraḍāwī concurs with this crucial qualification, but he also wants to make Ghazālī's category of the "necessities" that the *sharīʿa* protects through *maṣlaḥa* more expansive. He writes:

> If I were to add to Ghazālī's definition of *maṣlaḥa*, I would use his original formulation but say [the following]: "By *maṣlaḥa*, we mean

[6] For a brief description of this series, see Qaraḍāwī (2001: 5–9; the quotation describing the purpose of the series is from 5.

> safeguarding the purpose[s] of the *sharīʿa*. And the purpose[s] of the *sharīʿa* for the people are to protect their religion, life, rationality, progeny, property, honor, peace, rights and freedoms, the institution of justice and shared responsibility in [what ought to be] a model community, and everything [else] that makes life easier for them, removes oppression, perfects their character, and guides them to what is best in manners and customs, in [social] arrangements and in interactions." I don't think that our imam, Ghazālī, would object to such an addition [to his definition], for it conforms to his goals in [showing] the link between *maṣlaḥa* and the purposes of the *sharīʿa*; and what we have mentioned is, without doubt, a part [of those purposes] (Qaraḍāwī 2000: 84).

It is uncertain whether Ghazālī would have concurred with Qaraḍāwī on this extended list. A more pertinent issue is how *maṣlaḥa* is the cornerstone—as it was for Riḍā—of Qaraḍāwī's vision of an ideal Islamic society and state. *Maṣlaḥa*, Qaraḍāwī writes, is central to codification of the law as well as to legislation on matters not regulated by the *sharīʿa* but necessary for the proper ordering of a modern society. Discretionary punishments need to be legislated, he says, to curb usury, bribery, usurpation of the rights of the orphan, neglecting prayers, harassment or assaulting of women on the streets, and other evils. "Sermon and admonition is not a sufficient deterrent [against such evils], and it is known that God restrains with [political] authority what He does not restrain through the Qur'an [alone]. There are hundreds of sins, forms of opposition [to the divine law], and wrongs that the *sharīʿa* has forbidden, or has commanded doing the opposite of, but it has not established a specific penalty for them; and so they need legislation" (2000: 95–96). The distinction between sin and crime, and between moral and legal infractions, collapses here. Qaraḍāwī seeks the regulation of both through new legislation, and he sees the justification for such initiatives in *maṣlaḥa*—public interest and the common good.

Public interest likewise requires the codification of the law, as was attempted, Qaraḍāwī says, by the Ottoman *Majalla* (1869–1876). Unlike the nineteenth-century *Majalla*, however, which was a partial codification of civil law on the basis of the Hanafi legal tradition, Qaraḍāwī seeks a codification that brings together the resources of the different schools of law, even opinions that are no longer part of any recognizable or existing school of law. Such resources would include matters not previously regulated by the *sharīʿa* in terms of definite penalties, but the imām is now to exercise his discretion in how to implement them (Qaraḍāwī 2000: 96). Yet although *maṣlaḥa*

falls, for Qaraḍāwī, within the purview of things that are to be left to the imām or ruler, the overall impression is that the religious scholars, the ʿulama, determine whether considerations of *maṣlaḥa* can legitimately be taken into account in a particular legal issue. The purposes of the *sharīʿa* guide considerations of *maṣlaḥa*, of course, but only if there are no explicitly contravening indications in the foundational texts against the resort to *maṣlaḥa*. The scholars of the *sharīʿa*, he implies, are best qualified to determine this (see Salvatore 1997: 202–204).

The question of possible contradictions between *maṣlaḥa* and the purport of specific *sharīʿa* rulings is important, and Qaraḍāwī devotes considerable attention to it. It is in this context that he defends the medieval Ḥanbalī jurist Ṭūfī against the criticism that he had ranked *maṣlaḥa* above even the foundational texts. Though Ṭūfī did not always make this explicit, it is clear, Qaraḍāwī says, that *maṣlaḥa* can override indications in the foundational texts only when such indications are not a matter of certainty as to their meaning. When, however, they are, there can be no question but that *maṣlaḥa* must be subordinate to them, and Ṭūfī never asserted otherwise (Qaraḍāwī 2000: 145–50).

Qaraḍāwī's reading of Ṭūfī enables him to navigate between what he takes to be two extremes concerning *maṣlaḥa*. On the one hand, there are those who exclusively follow the literal meaning of specific rulings, ignoring their broader aims and thereby keeping the law frozen in time (Qaraḍāwī 2000: 214–27). At the other extreme are those who profess to base themselves only on what they discern as the larger purposes of the law irrespective of whether such putative purposes contradict the explicit injunctions of the foundational texts. Ṭūfī's views are taken, without justification, as a major justification by such people (Qaraḍāwī 2000: 228–42).

The third group, among whom Qaraḍāwī no doubt counts himself, comprises the "moderates." They base themselves on the specifics of the law, without however, losing sight of its larger purposes; and they are guided by considerations of public interest, but only insofar as such considerations are not contradicted by the foundational texts. And it is here, with this group, that medieval scholars like Ṭūfī and Shāṭibī are held to belong (Qaraḍāwī 2000: 243–64). This is the group that, for Qaraḍāwī, ensures the receptivity of the *sharīʿa* to change and to the common good through the resources provided by the *sharīʿa* itself rather than at its expense.

If Qaraḍāwī thinks that his discussion of *maṣlaḥa* avoids Riḍā's dilemma, he doesn't say so. Indeed, Riḍā is conspicuously absent from Qaraḍāwī's discussion, even when he lists the names of the major modern scholars of Islamic law (*fuqahā al-ʿaṣr*) who have written on matters of *maṣlaḥa* (Qaraḍāwī 2000: 94–95).[7] This remarkable absence can scarcely be imputed to anything but Qaraḍāwī's distaste for Riḍā's position on *maṣlaḥa*, whereby it had essentially become a none too subtle means of circumventing the legal tradition itself.

Riḍā's name, however, is not the only thing missing from Qaraḍāwī's discussion. Given that Qaraḍāwī's book is on "governance according to *sharīʿa* norms" (*siyāsa sharʿiyya*), it is striking that he says so little on the question of how the ruler's authority and his exercise of *maṣlaḥa* are regulated. Qaraḍāwī would probably respond to this objection by noting that, unlike Riḍā, he sees considerations of *maṣlaḥa* firmly embedded in the foundational texts, and that this removes the dangers of willful manipulation on the part of the ruler or anyone else who wants to invoke *maṣlaḥa* for self-serving ends. More generally, and in the spirit of other writings, Qaraḍāwī refers to the ʿulama as a check on the ruler's "governance according to *sharīʿa* norms." Yet, if *sharīʿa* norms in themselves are not necessarily a check on the morals of society—as he himself acknowledges, and which is why he wants new penal laws to be enacted even where the *sharīʿa* had previously done without them—the norms of the *sharīʿa* would be even less of a constraint on the ruler's authority.[8] And how far the ʿulama can constrain the ruler is anything but certain.

For all his apparent awareness of the danger that *maṣlaḥa* can become a plaything in the wrong hands, that is precisely the danger that lurks in Qaraḍāwī's delineation of "governance according to *sharīʿa* norms." It is this danger that has led other contemporary ʿulama to take a more stringent view of *maṣlaḥa*. The ambivalence toward *maṣlaḥa* comes out strongly in a detailed legal opinion on the legitimacy of land reforms by Muftī Muḥammad Taqī ʿUthmānī, a former judge of the Sharīʿat Appellate Bench of the Supreme Court of Pakistan and the Vice President of the Dar al-ʿulūm of Karachi, a major Deobandī *madrasa* of Pakistan (ʿUthmānī 1993a). With its

[7] Qaraḍāwī does, however, mention Riḍā in other writings, and with approval.

[8] Qaraḍāwī's position here is no less circular than was Riḍā's on the question of how disagreement on the interpretation of the foundational texts was to be resolved. Such disagreement, he had suggested, ought to be resolved with reference to those texts themselves (see Kerr 1966: 201).

categories of the lawful and the forbidden, Islam regulates the means through which property might be acquired or augmented, he says; but if property is acquired through lawful means, then there is no restriction on the amount acquired (ʿUthmānī 1993a: 20). Taqī ʿUthmānī acknowledges that an "Islamic government" (*Islāmī ḥukūmat*) would be within its rights if it were to impose some restrictions (for example, on the amount of landed property that one can own) in view of public interest. But such restrictions, or the usurpation of property beyond a prescribed limit, must only be temporary, not permanent. He writes that permanent restrictions of this sort would imply that the government was making forbidden something that was explicitly allowed by God (ʿUthmānī 1993a: 24–27). Furthermore, it is not enough merely to invoke "a vague justification in the public interest" for either the limitation on the ceiling within which one can own property or for the government's takeover of property beyond that ceiling; to be legitimately undertaken, such measures require a careful determination of "necessity" (*ḍarūra*), and this necessity is only applicable in life-threatening or other extremely desperate straits ʿUthmānī 1993a: 115–16, 139; quotation from 116).

All this might suggest a deep-seated unwillingness to allow any substantial change in the legal tradition. Yet it is worth noting that Taqī ʿUthmānī never explicitly says that more substantial change is inadmissible, just that such change does not seem to him to be necessary in the instances in question. The overall framework in which the Deobandī (and many other) ʿulama of South Asia typically operate is that of *taqlīd*, adherence to the established doctrines of their own school of law—which in their case means the Ḥanafī school of Sunnī law.[9] Yet while insisting on this overall framework, ʿulama like Taqī ʿUthmānī are careful not to rule out possibilities of *ijtihād*—creative rethinking in light of the foundational texts to arrive at new rulings (cf. ʿUthmānī 1993b). But unlike the "modernist" interpreters of Islam, who are typically in charge of formulating state policy in Pakistan, ʿulama like Taqī ʿUthmānī are reluctant to invoke *ijtihād* or *maṣlaḥa* as an excuse for stepping outside the established

[9] Deobandī ʿulama—whose designation derives from their association with the parent *madrasa* at Deoband, founded in 1867, or with any of the thousands of other Deobandī *madrasa*s in South Asia—represent one of the major religious orientations in modern South Asia. On the Deobandī ʿulama and their discourses and politics in contemporary South Asia, see Zaman 2002.

juristic tradition except in the most pressing circumstances.[10] Their objections against the indiscriminate use of "necessity" are similarly motivated. This distrust is not merely a continuation of the ambivalence that even medieval jurists sometimes felt toward *maṣlaḥa*. It is, rather, a facet of the misgivings toward the state that many ʿulama feel, an attitude with deep medieval roots (Zaman 2002: 87–110). Considerations of public interest and the common good thus become suspect not just because their relationship with the foundational texts might be tenuous. To many ʿulama, they are also suspect because the state and its modernist elite can easily wield them for their own ends. To Taqī ʿUthmānī, as to many others all the way back to Ghazālī, the good in *maṣlaḥa* is defined by the *sharīʿa*. The *sharīʿa*'s good is meant for the people—and it is common or public in that sense—yet it is not the people who determine it. The importance of the common good in the overall vision of the *sharīʿa* is recognized and indeed stressed, but any such idea only holds inasmuch as it is grounded in the *sharīʿa*.

Contestation on the Common Good: Illustrations

Is there more to the ʿulama's conception of the common good than the assertion, on the one hand, that the *sharīʿa* is concerned with it and, on the other, that modernist constructions of the common good violate rather than further the *sharīʿa*'s concerns? Where, in other words, might we locate more specific discussions of matters relating to the common good? I argue that the ʿulama's general and often vague assertions on how the *sharīʿa* secures such good are not the primary site of their discussions on these issues—although such assertions, too, cannot be dismissed lightly. Instead, their conceptions of the common good, and their contribution to the further articulation of such conceptions, are to be located in how they seek to deal with particular issues and specific problems in their societies.

My first example concerns arguments about the dissolution of marriage in India. In colonial India, Muslims were a minority, and they remain so in contemporary India. In both contexts, issues relating to

[10] On the different ways in which the ʿulama, the modernists, and the Islamists view the Islamic tradition, see Zaman 2002: 3–11, 31–37. On the difficult relations between the modernists and the ʿulama in Pakistan, see ibid., 74–93.

the laws of personal status (marriage, divorce, and inheritance) and especially the dissolution of marriage have caused severe controversies. In colonial India, the issue often centered on the absence of Muslim judges who, the ʿulama believed, were required for the implementation of *sharīʿa* rules on matters of personal status. Many ʿulama had argued that in the absence of such judges, even simple legal provisions of the *sharīʿa* about the dissolution of marriage could not be implemented. The implications of such a view were unbearable for many Muslim women in the Punjab. Because Ḥanafī law considered apostasy one of the grounds for the dissolution of marriage, many women apostasized in the 1920s in order to end undesirable marriages. Eventually the leading Deobandī scholar Mawlānā Ashraf ʿAlī Thānawī (d. 1943) devised a formula to make it possible for undesirable marriages to be dissolved by recourse to certain provisions in the Mālikī (as opposed to the Ḥanafī) school of law, even as that formula closed the door of apostasy from Islam (Zaman 2002: 21–31). In the 1980s, issues of personal status again came to the fore with the Shāh Bāno controversy: the Indian Supreme Court ruled that a divorced Muslim woman had the right to demand alimony from her former husband, even though the *sharīʿa* made no such provision. This initiative of a Hindu-dominated court, which also involved the court's venturing its own reading of the Qur'an in justifying its verdict, had considerable support from India's Muslim modernists, but it was vigorously opposed by the ʿulama; and it was the latter who played an important role in eventually having this decision reversed through parliamentary legislation (Zaman 2002: 167–70).

Neither of these instances does much to inspire great confidence in the ʿulama's concern with the general community good. Ashraf ʿAlī Thānawī's initiative made it easier for women to secure the dissolution of a marriage, but he took this initiative only after Muslim women had begun to renounce Islam in order to dissolve their marriages. And the Shāh Bāno case illustrated that safeguarding the *sharīʿa* norms was a greater good for the ʿulama than protecting the rights of indigent women. Yet both of these episodes make better sense when we recall that the common good for the ʿulama lies not just in following the *sharīʿa* but also in making the *sharīʿa* itself the arbiter of the common good.

If the ʿulama's common good is not a sum of individual interests, a recent initiative of the Indian ʿulama reveals considerable recognition of the need to make a greater effort to reconcile the *sharīʿa*-

centered common good with individual interests. The Muslim marriage contract is notorious for the ease, and indeed the arbitrariness, with which it allows the husband to divorce his wife. Many modern Muslim states have taken measures to restrict this arbitrariness, though the ability to end an undesired or undesirable marriage remains unequally distributed between women and men. In 1995, India's Islamic Fiqh Academy gathered leading Indian scholars to deliberate on the question of whether it was permissible from the Islamic legal viewpoint to add specific clauses to the standard contract of marriages in the interest of ameliorating the rights available in a marriage to men and women (Qasimi n.d. [ca. 1992]). The ʿulama freely recognized the social ills entailed by irresponsible resort to divorce, and they submitted formal responses to the questions posed to them in this regard by the Fiqh Academy. These responses, together with some of the ensuing discussion, were later published in the form of a book on the question of "a conditional marriage contract" (*mashrūṭ nikāḥ*).

Not all ʿulama were equally eager to see much change in the existing contract, and they invoked different legal authorities to defend or criticize the various proposals. There was genuine debate on the matter; and many members of the seminar convened to consider the question eventually agreed that as long as the basic goals of marriage or the basic rights conferred by the *sharīʿa* on the spouses were not violated, additional conditions could validly be attached to the marriage contract. Not all ʿulama agreed on what this meant in practice, although many took it to mean that a woman could add the condition that her husband would not object to her pursuing a career, that the amount of the dower payable by the husband to his wife would be substantially augmented if the husband divorced her without valid grounds, and that the right to end the marriage in certain circumstances would be delegated by the husband to his wife (or to local scholars or notables) *at the time* the marriage was solemnized. A model marriage contract, drafted for further deliberation, was sent to leading ʿulama and also made part of the published volume in order to elicit further commentary and debate.

Debates of this sort do not necessarily lead to dramatic results. Even so, answers to a question such as the Fiqh Academy had set for itself are not necessarily predictable, and the ʿulama of different contemporary societies or of the same society disagree among themselves and with others on how to approach them. They often approach them,

however, in the form of public or publicized debates, as in the case of the initiative to rethink the marriage contract, or by mobilizing public opinion, as in case of the Shāh Bāno controversy. The debates on such matters and the public contestation that they generate may be a more significant contribution to the discourses on the common good than the precise conclusions that emerge from them.

Examples of such public contestation—on where the common good lies and how to realize it—are varied. For instance, while Yūsuf al-Qaraḍāwī would like to see a ruler "governing according to *sharīʿa* norms" legislate penal laws even for moral infractions and thus extend the reach of the *sharīʿa* in new, unprecedented areas of individual and collective life, Pakistan's Taqī ʿUthmānī resolutely seeks to restrict the scope of *maṣlaḥa* even when resorted to by an Islamic state. And Taqī ʿUthmānī's elder brother, Muḥammad Rafīʿ ʿUthmānī, who is the president of the *madrasa* at which they both teach in Karachi, seeks to restrict the interference of the state in the lives of its citizens even further. The latter's views, discussed below, shed further light on conceptions of the common good and the ʿulama's ambiguities in this regard.

Referring to the *sharīʿa* law of retaliation (*qiṣāṣ*) and blood money for personal injury (*diya*), which Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif had introduced as part of his initiatives toward the implementation of the *sharīʿa* during his first tenure in office (1990–1993),[11] Rafīʿ ʿUthmānī argues that the state should have little to do with such matters. It is the right of the injured party or his kin to decide whether they want retaliation for a death or injury, or monetary compensation for it, or else that they want to forgive the offending party altogether. Such decisions belong to those who have been affected directly by a crime, Rafīʿ ʿUthmānī argues, and it was one of the grave injustices of British colonial rule to make the state an arbiter in such matters. Having the state take up such matters means that the aggrieved party often gets no recompense: the corrupt and inefficient courts fail effectively to punish a crime, and there is no question of monetary compensation even if the aggrieved party should desire that option. Conversely, because the offender is thrown in jail, his family also loses what may well have been its sole breadwinner. Both families thus suffer on account not only of the crime itself but also

[11] For the provisions of the law of *qiṣāṣ* and *diya*, put into effect through sections 299–338H of the Pakistan Penal Code in 1993, see Waqar-ul-Haq 1994.

of the state's arrogation to itself of the right to settle it. But the *sharīʿa* laws of *qiṣāṣ* and *diya* allow for the matter be settled among private individuals or by their *ʿāqila*. Traditionally, the *ʿāqila* has meant the family, kin, or tribe of the parties to a dispute; but, as Rafīʿ ʿUthmānī notes, a labor union of which the offender (for example, a taxi driver guilty of involuntary manslaughter) might be a member, may equally be seen as an *ʿāqila*. Such an organization may well be made responsible for the payment of the blood money if the offender himself is unable to do so. Not only does this enable the payment to be effectively made, he writes, but the members of the trade union would now also come to have a vested interest in preventing crimes or acts of negligence for which they might end up becoming financially liable (ʿUthmānī 1999:10–25).

This is a remarkable vision of the practice of the *sharīʿa*. It is remarkable for how little it concedes to the changed modern context in which the *sharīʿa* is to be implemented, except in such things as the innovative equation between the *ʿāqila* and the labor union. The state is, of course, the guarantor of the implementation of the *sharīʿa*: in the matter of *qiṣāṣ* and *diya*, it sees that private claims are adequately settled between the parties concerned. But the state is otherwise external to such settlements and the common good is seen not just in the proper implementation of the *sharīʿa* but also in the state's not intruding beyond what is essential for such implementation.

Rafīʿ ʿUthmānī's vision of the practical working of the *sharīʿa* is also remarkable for what it leaves out: the question of the abuses to which the private settlement of claims might lead. There have been cases in Pakistan where the killing of a girl by her own father—because the unmarried girl was suspected of pregnancy—was "forgiven" by the victim's immediate kin (*Dawn*, July 27, 2002b). In another incident that took place in the Punjab province of Pakistan in July 2002, eight young girls were to be given "in marriage" to a rival family as part of a settlement—that also involved a large sum of money—in exchange for which the receiving family would forgive the murder of two of its members. Four members of the family providing the girls and the money were on death row for these murders. The understanding was that the state would not execute them provided that the plaintiff family forgave the defendants. This deal, brokered by local notables, was said to follow ancient custom in its surrender of virgin girls to the rival clan as part of the price of reconciliation. The state was expected to honor this arrangement as a form of blood

money (*diya*). As it turned out, the state intervened as soon as the incident was reported in the national press, and the grooms of the rival clan were forced to divorce the young girls before the marriages had been consummated. Significantly, however, the state's intervention was only against what was seen as the local custom involving the girls, not against the rest of the settlement, which the representatives of the state in fact endorsed. Thus, even as it voided the "marriages," the state recognized the right of the parties to settle their own dispute privately, that is, to forgive the murderers on the basis of monetary compensation (*Dawn*, July 24–27 and 29, 2002; *News*, July 24 and 26–27, 2002).

Rafīʿ ʿUthmānī would probably approve of the intervention of the state in the aforementioned incident and take it as indicating the proper limits of such intervention—in this instance, against custom so the *sharīʿa* can do its work. But the ambiguities in the *sharīʿa*'s own practice in such instances remain unaddressed. This practice not only divests the modern state of some of its basic functions; it also divests particular individuals—for instance, the girl who was murdered by her own father, or the eight girls who were part of the settlement agreement in the murder case—of recourse against their fate. How the common good is being furthered in instances such as these, apart from the fact that the *sharīʿa* is supposedly in effect and that *that* is deemed to be a good in itself, remains unclear.

The question of the role that the state is to play in making and keeping a society "Islamic" is only one of the countless issues relating to the common good on which the ʿulama disagree. Of these, I take as my final example in this section the question of what an Islamic society looks like—that is, a society which is the embodiment of the common good. Qaraḍāwī (1996) addresses this question explicitly and at length in a book entitled *Malāmiḥ al-mujtamaʿ al-islāmī alladhī nunshiduh* (Features of the Muslim society that we seek).

Qaraḍāwī writes that there are two sets of ideas of that Muslims ought to rid themselves on their path to an ideal Islamic society. The first kind are those which Muslims have acquired in the course of their intellectual decline. They include such things as confusing reliance on God with indifference to one's condition, predestinarianism, and a servile imitation of earlier legal opinions. The second set of ideas derives from the modern West, and they have come to define everything "relating to religion and the world, man and woman, [standards of] excellence and degradation, freedom and rigidity,

progress and backwardness, the permissible and the forbidden" (Qaraḍāwī 1996: 85–86). It is for the ʿulama and the intellectuals of the "moderate school" to lay down properly Islamic norms to take the place of the prevalent non-Islamic ones. They ought to do this by "bringing together [ideas derived through] reason with [those drawn from] the transmitted tradition; religion and the world, the ordinances of the *sharīʿa*, and the needs of the age" (Qaraḍāwī 1996: 86–87; quote from 87).

Qaraḍāwī's vision of Islamic society not only has a moral foundation, there is no real differentiation between moral and other norms in it. As he says with some emphasis, "There is no separation in this society between knowledge and morality (*akhlāq*), art and morality, economics and morality, politics and morality, or between war and morality. Morality is, indeed, an element that guards all facets of life—the small and the large, the individual and the collective" (Qaraḍāwī 1996: 110). This idea returns us, of course, to his view that even moral infractions should be subject to penal regulation. Yet Qaraḍāwī seems not to think that this vision of an Islamic society might scare some people away from it. On the contrary, despite the high degree of moral regulation in such a society, he is clearly at pains to depict it in what he considers appealing colors. His emphasis on moderation, and on combining the old and the new, is part of that effort. But unlike most other contemporary ʿulama, let alone the college- or university-educated "Islamist" (or "fundamentalist") activists, his vision of an Islamic society also includes attention to such things as forms of entertainment in that society. "Entertainment and the arts are among the most complex of issues relating to the Islamic society," he writes, for people have fallen between the extremes of either imagining their society in ascetic terms or, conversely, of losing sight of all constraints in pursuit of pleasure (Qaraḍāwī 1996: 265–66; quotation from 265).[12] Again, Qaraḍāwī invokes a path of moderation, and suggests that such moderation has ample room for legitimate arts and acceptable forms of entertainment. Even listening to music, he argues, is not forbidden, so long as it is enjoyed within limits. The "ancient jurists"—of whom his prime example is Ghazālī—were more permissive of music than

[12] For Qaraḍāwī's discussion of "entertainment and the arts," see 1996: 265–76; on music, 277–312; on pictorial arts, 313–30; on humor and comedy, 331–45; and on sports, 347–51.

latter-day jurists, and this reflects a general preference of the former for that which was easier for people to follow as contrasted to the inclination of the latter-day scholars for the more demanding course of action in all matters (Qaraḍāwī 1996: 305). Extremes are forbidden even in religious practice, he says, which makes self-evident the avoidance of extremes in matters such as entertainment (Qaraḍāwī 1996: 301). As to where the limits lie in listening to music, and how to navigate the proper path in this respect, Qaraḍāwī (1996: 298–301) cautions against anything that excites the passions, content that violates the teachings of Islam, or anything that is accompanied by such forbidden matters as drinking or the free mixing of the sexes. In other respects, he says, "every listener is his own jurist and his own muftī" in deciding where the precise limits of his action ought to lie (Qaraḍāwī 1996: 301).

At least in Qaraḍāwī's extended and self-conscious attention to arts and entertainment, his vision of an "Islamic society" can be read as a rejoinder not just to Islamist views of a morally upright and puritanical community but also to scholarly depictions of what Olivier Roy (1996: 195–97) has characterized as Islamism's "bleak society." Yet many Islamists and ʿulama would find Qaraḍāwī's Islamic society altogether too permissive, making every listener of music his own muftī simply too dangerous. Mawlānā Taqī ʿUthmānī, for instance, is scarcely among the most stringent of the Pakistani ʿulama, yet in his *madrasa*'s monthly journal, *al-Balāgh*, he has repeatedly decried the media's role in corrupting the country's youth through music and film, and lamented the irony that an "Islamic state" should not just tolerate but promote them on national television (see ʿUthmānī 1994: 7–59). Again, what Qaraḍāwī would see as part of the common good in his Islamic society is, in this respect, quite different from Taqī ʿUthmānī's vision of either that society or of its goods.

Public Contestation, the ʿUlama, and the Muslim Public Sphere

The ʿulama usually agree—with each other and with their forbears—that the common good lies in following the *sharīʿa*, and that it is from within the resources provided by the *sharīʿa* that the common good is further defined and sought. Yet, as we have seen, the ʿulama often have very specific notions of what the common good is or how it is to be realized in a particular situation. They differ not only

with non-ʿulama but also amongst themselves, and not always with civility. Even if sometimes lacking civility, these debates are usually very public. The ʿulama are not the only ones contributing to religious debates in Muslim societies and to discussions of the common good. Indeed, the "new" religious intellectuals are often more vocal and more prolific on these matters (see Eickelman and Piscatori 1996: 13, 43–44, 77, 180). Nor do the ʿulama's contributions to public discourses alleviate the fragmentation of the public sphere. The public sphere remains an arena of contestation, with the ʿulama's discourses a part of it. But inasmuch as the common good itself is not ahistorical—it is defined through contestation—the ʿulama are important contributors to the public discourse about it.

I am not suggesting that this is necessarily how the ʿulama themselves see their contribution to articulating common good. Their conception of how it is realized is not that of Jane Mansbridge or Craig Calhoun. The ʿulama typically argue that the *sharīʿa* is ultimately the criterion of what counts as the common good, and that devices such as *maṣlaḥa* merely extend, to better realize, what is already provided for in the *sharīʿa*. All this being so, the fact remains that they have constantly to debate with their peers and others over the meaning of "true" Islam, what Islam asks of people in any situation, the goods that Islam secures (beyond, say, the five fundamental values safeguarded by the *sharīʿa*, and how even these are to be ranked, or just how they are to be safeguarded). This is the sort of public discourse through which the common good becomes the site of contestation, an ongoing "social and cultural project"—even when the parties involved, especially the ʿulama, have no desire to encourage contestation.

However, not all ʿulama are equally wary of contestation. Indeed, Qaraḍāwī has written a book (2001) whose title bespeaks its concerns in this regard: "How Should We Deal with the Heritage, with the Difference of Schools, and with Disagreement." The "disagreement" to which he refers is primarily that of the jurists in their legal opinions, long a recognized and crucially important area of Islamic law. Such disagreement, Qaraḍāwī writes, is a human necessity (Qaraḍāwī 2001: 140). It can be a blessing, for some legal opinions suit certain times better than do others, and it is a "treasure" whose richness ought to be valued (Qaraḍāwī 2001: 141, 144–47. That the *sharīʿa*'s record of earlier disagreements can relate to contemporary thought suggests that disagreements among present-day scholars ought to be tolerated as well, and the idea that every competent jurist can

be right in his judgment even when jurists disagree on any given issue should be taken seriously (Qaraḍāwī 2001: 148–209 and passim).

Yet Qaraḍāwī is not inviting his audience to open or unconstrained public debate and contestation. Following Ibn Taymiyya, he distinguishes between disagreement that produces "variety" (*ikhtilāf al-tanawwuʿ*) and that which amounts to "opposition" or "contradiction" (*al-taḍādd*). The former is not merely acceptable but welcome; but the latter sort is forbidden (Qaraḍāwī 2001: 210–15). Besides the disagreements of the jurists, those of the kind that constitute "variety" are all largely benign—for example, the differences in ritual practice or in readings of the Qur'an (Qaraḍāwī 2001: 211–12). Qaraḍāwī's claims about the tolerance of difference are, however, more expansive than his own examples suggest:

> Great civilizations are those that make room for variety in their midst. . . . For instance, the civilization of Islam, in the days of its flowering, accommodated religions and cultures within it, as well as different peoples, nations and races. Its slogans were "tolerance for all" and "deriving benefit from everyone." Consequently, many different religions and customs participated in its formation and preservation; and they lived therein as honored [inhabitants] (Qaraḍāwī 2001: 211).

In historical terms, this may not be an inaccurate picture of many societies in medieval Islam. But Qaraḍāwī's firm distinction between disagreement as variety and as opposition or contradiction does not allow much room for a similar present-day society. Significantly, he does not enter into a discussion of disagreement as contradiction, even as he asserts that, for all their particular differences, committed Muslims are in agreement in their overall orientation (Qaraḍāwī 2001: 213–15). The disagreement that Qaraḍāwī lauds turns out, then, to be only among otherwise likeminded people, rather than a contestation among people committed to divergent epistemological assumptions.

Yet, inasmuch as ʿulama like Qaraḍāwī or Taqī ʿUthmānī challenge intellectuals representing divergent assumptions and orientations, they (as well as numerous other, less distinguished ʿulama) help constitute and sustain the Muslim public sphere, just as they help constitute conceptions of the common good. Contestation between the ʿulama and others, and among the ʿulama themselves, keeps public discourse vibrant even in authoritarian states, where opportunities for debate are otherwise severely constrained. Conversely, as became strikingly apparent in Iraq with the fall of Saddam Hussein's

regime in the spring of 2003, even decades of severe repression had left the Shiʿi ʿulama with sufficient authority, appeal, resources, and networks to become major players in the effort to fill in the political vacuum resulting from the regime's collapse as well as from the inability of the occupying U.S. and British coalition forces to quickly establish their own authority in the country. There continues to be severe rivalry for influence and authority within the ranks of Iraq's Shiʿi ʿulama—to take this as our final example—just as there are competing views on the extent to which these and other ʿulama ought to directly involve themselves in the effort to shape Iraqi politics.[13] Despite repeated expressions of the wish, or the need, to forge a new unity between Iraq's Sunni minority and the long-repressed Shiʿi majority, there remain grave fears that the latter would want to settle old scores (cf. *al-Ḥayāt*, July 3, 2003); and there are many, and not just among the coalition forces, who find the ʿulama's influence and their attempts at mobilizing support menacing for prospects of a civil, pluralistic, and democratic society. Yet, for all that, the Sunni and the Shiʿi mosque preachers of Baghdad and other cities and, in particular, *both* the high ranking as well as the young, low-level, Shiʿi ʿulama have been among the most prominent of those shaping or contesting conceptions of the common good and its loci in a time of radical change in Iraq.[14]

Such contestation was evident in a June 2003 fatwa by Āyat Allāh ʿAlī al-Sīstānī, one of the most influential of Iraq's Shiʿi scholars, questioning the authority of the coalition forces to oversee the making of the new constitution for Iraq: there was no guarantee, he said, that a constitution drafted by appointees of the coalition forces, rather than by the people's elected representatives, would "conform to the supreme interests (*al-maṣāliḥ al-ʿulyā*) of the Iraqi people and express their national unity, among whose basic pillars is the true religion of Islam" (*al-Ḥayāt*, June 30, 2003). But this contestation was illustrated no less clearly in the assertion of Farqad al-Qazwīnī, the scion of a Shiʿi scholarly family and director of a Shiʿi religious college in

[13] For an account of the rivalries and the contestation among the Shiʿi ʿulama, with particular reference to Mutada al-Ṣadr, one of the most strident of the Shiʿi leaders to emerge with the fall of the Saddam Hussein regime, see the six-part series by al-Amīn 2003.

[14] On the mosque preachers, see: *al-Ḥayāt*, April 19, 2003; ibid., June 28, 2003.

al-Hilla, that strident fatwas by other Shiʿi scholars requiring the veiling of women or permitting the burning down of liquor stores were based on "a lack of understanding of the real public interest of the country (*al-maṣlaḥa al-wāqiʿiyya li'l-bilād*) at the present time," a public interest and a common good that, he strongly implied, lay rather in working constructively with the coalition forces (*al-Ḥayāt*, June 29, 2003). Some of al-Qazwīnī's Shiʿi opponents sought, for their part, to discredit him by alleging that he had once collaborated with the fallen regime—a highly incriminating accusation of which this, however, was scarcely the only invocation (Tyler 2003; for other accusations, cf. *al-Ḥayāt*, July 13, 2003).

Members of the Shiʿi religious establishment and other, secular, contenders for political influence in the anarchic aftermath of Iraq's occupation also competed with one another in founding newspapers, sometimes testing the limits of the occupying coalition's own endurance for what the latter thought were especially strident voices. Furthermore, and like Islamist groups in many other countries, lower-ranking Shiʿi ʿulama were at the forefront of efforts to oversee the provision of urgently needed relief work, but they were hardly averse to also probing ways in which they could extend their own oversight to newly emerging professional and civil society associations (cf. Shadid 2003; Moaveni 2003).

The contestation among the ʿulama, and between them and others—of which post-Saddam Hussein Iraq is but the latest instance—does more, however, than help constitute the public sphere. As we have seen throughout this chapter, this contestation also suggests that, within the larger and generally accepted framework of the *sharīʿa*'s equation with the common good, there is in fact considerable disagreement among the ʿulama themselves on how the *sharīʿa* advances the common good. This is a point worth emphasizing for several reasons. It allows us to move beyond any simple equation of the *sharīʿa* with the common good, even from the perspective of the ʿulama, and it lets us hear them ask specific questions about how the common good is realized in specific situations. It also enables us to see that their opposition to any simple utilitarian approach to the *sharīʿa* does not necessarily entail a lack of responsiveness to the needs of their own local or larger communities.

Conclusion

In concluding this chapter, I would like to touch briefly upon two rival views of the role of public religion in modern Western societies as a way of further elucidating the ʿulama's conceptions of the common good. Neither of these views takes any account of Islam, let alone of the ʿulama, but they both have bearing on how we might better understand the modern ʿulama and the meaning and significance of their discourses.

The sociologist José Casanova has argued that the presence of religion in the public sphere "force[s] modern societies to reflect publicly or collectively upon their normative structures" (Casanova 1994: 228). "Public religions" bring moral and ethical perspectives to bear on issues of politics and economics, even as they shape public discourses in ways that reflect their conviction that the common good is more than the sum of individual interests (Casanova 1994: 228–34). A religion's public roles are acceptable, however, and indeed become valuable, only when they unequivocally recognize the functional differentiation of social spheres—that is, when they agree to operate within the framework of secularization. This sense of secularization is the only one (as opposed to secularization as either the decline or the privatization of religion) defensible on both empirical and theoretical grounds, he argues, and this is the sense in which Catholic and Protestant traditions have become "public religions" since the late twentieth century (Casanova 1994: 11–39).

Casanova is highly optimistic about what public religions can, under his terms, contribute to modern societies and to discussions of the common good, but the moral philosopher Alasdair MacIntyre (1998 [1997]) is equally pessimistic of any such prospects. MacIntyre argues that contemporary liberal societies tend systematically to exclude any serious discussion of the foundations on which those societies themselves rest, that the modern "compartmentalization" of society into particular spheres means in effect that professional politicians and big business interests are the only ones that make all the decisions that matter, and that, for this and other reasons, any shared deliberation on the common good has become impossible in such societies. Whereas Casanova (1994: 225) sees globalization as creating new prospects for public religions to contribute to discussions of the common good beyond national borders, MacIntyre thinks that the

sheer scale on which modern societies operate makes any meaningful discourse on the common good an illusion. And where, for Casanova, the functional differentiation of modern societies is the precondition for an acceptable public role of religion, MacIntyre (1998 [1997]: 243) considers precisely this differentiation—or compartmentalization, as he calls it—as foreclosing opportunities for shared participation in "asking those questions that most need to be asked." MacIntyre's proposal is consequently to form small, local communities that have a shared commitment to their own traditions; and it is in such communities that he sees the best prospects of collectively devising understandings of, and of realizing, the common good according to values and criteria recommended by the tradition in question. He recognizes that "there can only be continuing conflict" (MacIntyre 1998 [1997]: 252) between such communities, on the one hand, and the modern state and the market, on the other, although he does not say how that conflict is to be mediated or resolved.

It is tempting to see the ʿulama's conceptions of the common good along lines sketched by MacIntyre. Elsewhere, I have argued that MacIntyre's idea of "tradition" as an ongoing engagement with internal interlocutors and external critics over the practices and virtues that constitute that tradition can—especially as mediated by the work of anthropologist Talal Asad (1999)—lend itself well to understanding the world of the ʿulama and their views of Islam (Zaman 2002: 3–11 and passim). In Mawlānā Rafīʿ ʿUthmānī's equation of the common good with the government leaving the people alone to work out their disputes according to *sharīʿa* norms, we might perhaps see a rough analogue to MacIntyre's local communities in practice. From a different set of premises, Yūsuf al-Qaraḍāwī's notion of the best sort of disagreements being those which arise among people committed to a shared larger worldview again puts us in mind of MacIntyre's view that, if there is to be any meaningful discourse on the common good, local communities must have a shared commitment to a tradition and its attendant practices. If some of MacIntyre's views seem to approach those of the ʿulama, however, some of Casanova's conditions clearly distance his public religions from what many ʿulama would like to see as Islam's public roles. Irrespective of the ways in which a functional differentiation of spheres is often accepted by the ʿulama in practice (Zaman 2002: 60–86), their theory does not allow for such differentiation, that is, for the sort of secularization Casanova requires for any acceptable role for a religion in a modern society.

It should be clear from the foregoing that the ʿulama bring to public discourse many of precisely the sort of issues—the moral and religious dimensions of public policy, the normative foundations of the polity, and the common good—that Casanova commends modern religions for representing in the public sphere. Casanova's argument requires, of course, that issues of this sort be brought to the public sphere within a larger framework that is defined by certain other agreements over the structure and orientation of society. Yet others would contend that such agreements—over the public and the private, for instance, or over the proper role or scope of public religions—are in fact much more elusive even in contemporary Western societies than Casanova allows (cf. Asad 1999). It is not my intention to force Casanova's criteria onto the ʿulama, any more than it is to commend what the latter do or say in the Muslim public sphere. It is simply to suggest, once again, that the ʿulama's discourses and the contestations they provoke or sustain are constitutive of the public sphere, and that they bring to this sphere issues similar to what public religions and their representatives do anywhere else. It is from such issues and the contestation on them that ideas of the common good emerge—in contemporary Islam as elsewhere.

References

al-Amīn, Ḥāzim
2003 "Jumhūriyyat Muqtada al-Ṣadr wa jadīd al-ʿIrāq." *al-Ḥayāt*, July 10–15.
Asad, Talal
1999 "Religion, Nation-State, Secularism." In *Nation and Religion*, edited by Peter van der Veer and Hartmut Lehmann. Pp. 178–96. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
Calhoun, Craig
1998 "The Public Good as a Social and Cultural Project." In *Private Action and the Public Good*, edited by Walter W. Powell and Elisabeth S. Clemens. Pp. 20–35. New Haven: Yale University Press.
Casanova, José
1994 *Public Religions in the Modern World*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
Dawn (Karachi)
July 24, 2002 "Girls and Gold Save Four from Gallows."
July 25, 2002 "S[upreme] C[ourt] Takes Notice of Mianwali Pardon Deal."
July 26, 2002 "Two Girls Rescued as Aged Grooms Forced to Divorce."
July 27, 2002a "Girl Wants Wani Custom Abolished."
July 27, 2002b "Heirs Pardon Killer Father under Qisas Law."
July 29, 2002 "Parties in Mianwali Stick to Revised Deal."
Eickelman, Dale F.
1992 "Mass Higher Education and the Religious Imagination in Contemporary Arab Societies." *American Ethnologist* 19, no. 4 (November): 643–55.

Eickelman, Dale F., and James Piscatori
1996 *Muslim Politics*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
al-Ghazālī, Abū Ḥāmid
1995 *al-Mustaṣfā min ʿilm al-uṣūl*, edited by Muḥammad Yūsuf Najm. 2 vols. Beirut: Dār ṣādir.
Hallaq, Wael B.
1997 *A History of Islamic Legal Theories*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997.
al-Ḥayāt (London)
April 19, 2003 "Taẓāhurāt ḥāshida baʿd ṣalāt al-jumʿa taṭālab bi-khurūj al-amrīkiyyīn wa dawla islāmiyya."
June 28, 2003 "A'immat al-masājid fī Baghdād: Lan yughirrunā Bremer bi-dūlārātihi wa wuʿūdihi."
June 29, 2003 ". . . al-Sīstānī yuftī: Lā sharʿiyya li-l-majlis al-dustūrī."
June 30, 2003 "Farqad al-Qazwīnī: Min nahj Muḥammad Ṣādiq al-Ṣadr ilā al-tansīq al-siyāsī maʿa al-taḥāluf."
July 3, 2003 "al-Shīʿa yatma'innūn al-sunna: Lā khawf min intiqāmāt."
July 13, 2003 "Ṣadr thānin fī l-Kāẓim . . . ṣawt al-marjaʿiyya al-sīstāniyya al-hādi'a fī Baghdād."
Kerr, Malcolm H.
1960 "Rashīd Riḍā and Islamic Reform: An Ideological Analysis." *Muslim World* 50, no. 2: 99–108 (part 1); 50, no. 3: 170–81 (part 2).
1966 *Islamic Reform: The Political and Legal Theories of Muḥammad ʿAbduh and Rashīd Riḍā*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press.
MacIntyre, Alasdair
1998 [1997] "Politics, Philosophy and the Common Good." In *The MacIntyre Reader*, edited by Kelvin Knight. Pp. 235–52. Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press.
Mansbridge, Jane
1998 "On the Contested Nature of the Public Good." In *Private Action and the Public Good*, edited by Walter W. Powell and Elisabeth S. Clemens. Pp. 3–19. New Haven: Yale University Press.
Moaveni, Azadeh
2003 "Iraq's New Mania for Media." *Los Angeles Times*, June 11: A1.
The News (Islamabad)
July 24, 2002 "Four Convicts 'Sacrifice' Eight Girls to Rivals for Life."
July 26, 2002 "Mianwali Case: Girls' Hand-over Stopped."
July 27, 2002 "Strict Law against 'Vani' Soon: Minister."
Opwis, Felicitas Meta Maria
2001 *Maṣlaḥa: An Intellectual History of a Core Concept in Islamic Legal History*. Ph.D. dissertation, Yale University (UMI Microform 3007400).
al-Qaraḍāwī, Yūsuf
1996 *Malāmiḥ al-mujtamaʿ al-islāmī alladhī nunshiduh*. Beirut: Mu'assasat al-risāla.
2000 *al-Siyāsa al-sharʿiyya fī-ḍaw' nuṣūṣ al-sharīʿa wa maqāṣidihā*. Beirut: Mu'assasat al-risāla.
2001 *Kayfa nataʿāmal maʿa'l-turāth wa-l-tamadhhub wa-l-ikhtilāf*. Cairo: Maktabat wahba.
Qāsimī, Mujāhid al-Islām, ed.
N.d. [ca. 1992] *Mashrūṭ nikāḥ*. Karachi: Idarat al-Qur'an wa'l-ʿulūm al-islāmīyya.
Riḍā, Muḥammad Rashīd
N.d. *Yusr al-Islām wa uṣūl al-tashrīʿ al-ʿamm*. Cairo: Maktabat al-salām al-ʿālamiyya.
Roy, Olivier
1996 *The Failure of Political Islam*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Salvatore, Armando
1997 *Islam and the Political Discourse of Modernity*. Reading: Ithaca.
Shadid, Anthony
2003 "Clerics Vie with US for Power." *Washington Post*, June 7: A1.
al-Shāṭibī, Abū Isḥāq Ibrāhīm
1914 *al-Iʿtiṣām*. 2 vols. Cairo: Maṭbaʿat al-Manār, 1914.
Tyler, Patrick E.
2003 "After the War: Leadership." *New York Times*, July 13: A10.
ʿUthmānī, Muḥammad Rafīʿ
1999 *Dīnī madāris awr nifāz-i sharīʿat: Nifāz-i sharīʿat main Dīnī madāris awr ʿulamaʾ ka ahamm kirdār*. Lahore: Bayt al-ʿulūm.
ʿUthmānī, Muḥammad Taqī
1993a *Milkiyyat-i zamīn awr us-ki taḥdīd*. 2nd edn. Karachi: Maktaba-i Dār al-ʿulūm.
1993b *Taqlīd ki sharʿī ḥaythiyyat*. Karachi: Maktaba-i Dār al-ʿulūm.
1994 *Iṣlāḥ-i muʿāshara*. Karachi: Maktaba-i Dār al-ʿulūm.
Waqar-ul-Haq, Mohammed
1994 *The Major Acts, with . . . Commentary [on the] Criminal Law (Amendment) Ordinance (Qisas and Diyat Ordinance)*. Lahore: Law Times Publications.
Weiss, Bernard
1998 *The Spirit of Islamic Law*. Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1998.
Zaman, Muhammad Qasim
2002 *The Ulama in Contemporary Islam: Custodians of Change*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
Zayd, Muṣṭafā
1964 *al-Maṣlaḥa fī- l-tashrīʿ al-islāmī wa-Najm al-dīn al-Ṭūfī*. 2nd ed. Cairo: Dār al-fikr al-ʿArabī.

This page intentionally left blank

CHAPTER SEVEN

WHEN DISPUTES TURN PUBLIC: HERESY, THE COMMON GOOD, AND THE STATE IN SOUTH INDIA

Brian J. Didier

This chapter explores how a religious conflict became transformed as it was propelled into the public sphere. I take it for granted that when any debate or conflict goes public, public opinion will alter its course. Here I will consider whether "going public" exacerbated tensions inherent in an enduring religious conflict that has weighed heavily on the Muslim community of Androth Island, one of ten inhabited atolls of India's Union Territory of Lakshadweep. What started as a benign dispute between the island's ʿulama and a nascent Sufi brotherhood known as the Shamsiyya over questions of ritual practice became increasingly acrimonious during the 1980s as the participants experimented with new forms of disputation. Their use of heresy accusations (*takfīr*), public debates, *sharīʿa* protection committees and fatwas of condemnation—all familiar instruments in the arsenal of South Asian sectarian conflict—signaled that Islam on Androth, mirroring trends throughout the Muslim world, was "going public" (Casanova 1994). The fact that island Islam was not merely going public but was doing so in disconcerting ways became all too apparent in 1986 when the Androth ʿulama decided to forfeit the civility of persuasion for unprecedented and violent coercion. Unsatisfied with the rhetoric embodied in the fatwa, the ʿulama felt compelled to enforce their condemnation with social sanctions including mosque expulsion and a modest degree of violence against the alleged *kafir*s (infidels), the Shamsiyya. When their members attempted to enter the island's only Friday mosque, fights broke out around the island. In order to avoid any additional post-fatwa confrontations and to maintain civil order, the island police simply shut the mosque while the local administration pushed the parties to resolve their dispute through the civil courts.

A conflict such as that described here offers insight into the dynamics of the public sphere. If the public sphere is defined generally as an intermediary site between the individual and the state—yet excluding neither—where disputes are conducted over both the definition of the "common good" and those virtues required to implement such a conception, then it follows that the presence of some form of a public sphere is culturally ubiquitous, yet often amorphous and evanescent (see Eickelman and Salvatore, Chapter 1, this volume; also Calhoun 1998: 20, and Freitag 1989: 177–96). One of the best ways of illuminating the public sphere is to highlight precisely those moments when the political atmosphere becomes charged by the collision of competing conceptions of the common good. A public debate, a fatwa of condemnation, a fight over mosque entry, and a high court ruling mark some of the more significant episodes of a conflict that foreground the island public sphere. By tracing the trajectory of the island conflict as it evolved from private dispute to public conflict, we can explore in detail both the emergence of a public sphere around the issue of what constitutes good Islam and the consequences that follow when such a debate becomes public.

In this chapter I will focus on one of the conflict's most critical episodes: the public debate of 1980. If the violence that followed the 'ulama's fatwa in 1986 marked the end of civility, then it was the public debate six years earlier, I argue, that represents the fulcrum upon which the balance of this conflict tipped from civility to incivility and from "private" interaction to "public" performance. Although certainly not inevitable, the intolerance and acrimony of the fatwa and its violence were the culmination of a process that found public expression in the debate of 1980. I use the metaphor of a tipping balance here intentionally, for I do not want to give the impression of a sudden and comprehensive shift in the nature of the conflict. The public debate was a novel form of disputation for the islanders, but elements of publicness and acrimony can certainly be detected in the quarreling that came before it. The public debate thus represents more the "intermeshing of public and private spheres" than a clean break between them (Casanova 1994: 7).

My assertion that the island situation gradually *became* public implies that conflict and contention often extend beyond the limits of the public sphere. Logically, our conception of the public sphere presupposes something that it is not. Empirically, we know that the origins and trajectories of conflicts often lie outside the public sphere

in the sense that they are not always about the common good, or that they command only limited attention. Whether or not we categorize such phases or spaces as "private," it remains the case that if the cluster of concepts relating to publicness is to have analytic value, then there must be something that they do not encompass. As I have argued elsewhere (Didier 2004), the histrionics of public sphere activities should not obscure from view the routine, unspectacular, and often discreet negotiations of difference that make up much of the conflict process. Private or "less-than-public" forms of disputation are certainly more difficult to document, but they must be known to appreciate the genesis of conflict.

The trajectory of the island conflict also allows us to paint a more detailed picture of political Islam in the subcontinent. We know much, for instance, about the debates produced within and among South Asia's prominent Islamic movements, including the Deoband, Farangi Mahall, the Ahl-e Sunnat and the Jamāʿat-i Islami (see Metcalf 1982, Robinson 2001, Sanyal 1996, and Nasr 1994). Unfortunately, we know relatively little of the analogous discourse produced by less distinguished and "peripheral" ʿulama administering Islam beyond these centers of grand intellectual production (see Zaman 2002: 131). Equally, we know little of how the caustic discourse of the ʿulama, prominent or otherwise, alters the social relations and religious behavior of attentive audiences at the local level. Usha Sanyal, for example, provides a rich account of Ahmad Riza Khan's condemnation of fellow clerics. Urging his followers to shun Muslim opponents and *kafir*s, he demanded: "If they fall ill, don't ask about them, if they die, don't join their funeral. . . . Don't sit near them, don't drink or eat with them, don't marry them" (Sanyal 1996: 205). It is uncertain, however, if any of his followers were listening and willing to put into practice what he was preaching. If inconsequential in terms of wider political or intellectual impact, we do know that the discourse of the island ʿulama produced serious local repercussions in the form of mosque expulsion, social ostracism, and physical assault. That the ʿulama sought to render their theological verdict into collective social action thus allows us to explore the relationship between religious discourse and practice.

Finally, there are a few points regarding the relationship between conflict and violence that need reiterating, particularly in light of a world transformed by the horrific violence committed recently in the name of Islam. The first is that conflict in any society or religious

community is normal, quotidian, and often productive. The second is that not all religious politics are contentious or coercive. The question that arises, therefore, is not why Muslims engage in religious conflict but rather how are religious conflicts are transformed from civil engagement to coercive force, from routine politics to "transgressive contention" (Tarrow 2001: 7). Muslims engage in religious disputes all the time, be it with coreligionists or non-Muslims, and they are hardly unique in this regard. It is certainly not the case that such conflicts invariably involve coercion or violence. Unfortunately, a myopic focus on the public sphere, or on the contentious politics and violence performed in the public sphere—an astigmatism shared not only by the popular media but also by many of us who study religious politics—risks distorting the picture of how Muslims engage in conflict. As I intend to show, by the time conflicts enter the public sphere serious transformations have already occurred: publics have become involved, legitimacy is at stake, disputational strategies have changed, and the state is usually extra vigilant. I am not suggesting that all public politics are tainted by incivility, or that politics conducted outside the public sphere are idyllic. Rather, my point is that contentious and violent religious politics generally are found in the public sphere. Therefore, if we want to appreciate the conditions under which conflicts become more contentious and if we want to explore how disputes are often conducted without the use of violence, then our purview must extend beyond the public sphere. In short, in order to understand the unfortunate outcomes of religious politics, Muslim or otherwise, we must consider the full trajectory of the religious conflicts that produce them. The islanders' conflict is compelling precisely because they made use of both civility and coercion, thus providing a unique window onto the world of Muslim politics "going public."

Private Admonishment: The Androth Conflict's Early Phases

Because such events occurred some time ago and outside the "public" eye, there is a dearth of detailed information regarding the nature of the initial confrontation between the ʿulama and the Shamsiyya. We do know that the dispute began before the public debate in 1980, and that the ʿulama expressed concerns before making their

allegations so forcefully in public. Less clear is how the ʿulama expressed this initial discontent.

In order to shed indirect light on the conduct of the early conflict, consider a more recent and unrelated confrontation involving the island ʿulama and the shaykh of Androth's oldest and largest Sufi brotherhood. As we consider this and the Shamsiyya confrontation, two points should be kept in mind. The first is that virtually all of the island ʿulama are themselves members of a Sufi brotherhood. In fact, all of the leading ʿulama whom I interviewed—many of whom signed the fatwa against the Shamsiyya—were quite explicit about the fact that every Muslim ought to complement the path of the *sharīʿa* with that of the *ṭarīqa*. In reference to the potential banality of faith tied exclusively to the law, one island *ʿālim* quipped: "*La illaha illallah* . . . it only makes you a Muslim, like a light bulb with low voltage." Although many island clerics were affiliated with the more sober and "orthodox" of the island brotherhoods, they were willing not only to tolerate but also to defend the ecstatic and intercessionary ritual practices of their island coreligionists. Among other things, these "howling dervishes" performed dramatic and boisterous rituals of drumming, chanting, and self-mortification that emphasized the Rifāʿī side of their spiritual legacy (see van der Veer 1992). According to most of the ʿulama, as long as such things were done in a pious frame of mind, they were legitimate and salutary forms of worship (*ʿibādāt*). We should keep in mind, therefore, that the clerics' opposition to the Shamsiyya was not part of any resolute anti-Sufi reform movement. Such movements, though common throughout the Indian subcontinent and much of the Muslim world, did not exist in any institutional form on Androth during the course of this conflict.

All the Androth Sufis I interviewed (which included the shaykhs of all three island brotherhoods) confirmed that although *ṭarīqa* supplemented the *sharīʿa*, it never took priority over the *sharīʿa*. Moreover, in recognizing the primacy of the *sharīʿa*, the Sufis also acknowledged the authority of the ʿulama when evaluating the practice of Islamic law. When the Shamsiyya agreed to take part in the public debate with the Androth ʿulama, their interlocutor was not the shaykh but a follower from the mainland who was also a trained *ʿālim*. As we shall see, this cleric did not challenge the place of ʿulama at the top of the island religious hierarchy. He did, however, question the

integrity of the Androth men who held such office. A consequence of this obeisance on the part of the island Sufis was that while they often disputed the details of the ʿulama's allegations, they never questioned the nature of their authority to nurture and defend island orthodoxy. Thus when the shaykh of Androth's oldest brotherhood, known as Shāttariyya ul-Qādiriyya wa Rifāʿiyya, recounted his spat with the ʿulama, he readily admitted: "As ʿulama, it is their job to see that we Sufis do not exceed the limits of the *sharīʿa*."

Part of the legacy of the Shamsiyya conflict was the closing of the Juma Masjid in 1986. Given this closure and the subsequent dispersion of the congregation to various smaller mosques around the island, the shaykh of Shāttariyya ul-Qādiriyya wa Rifāʿiyya decided to conduct Friday prayer by himself at home. When the ʿulama noticed that he had been absent, they approached him for an explanation. The shaykh was told that if someone missed Friday prayer too often, he would be considered a *kafir* (an unbeliever). The shaykh's response was to tell the visiting ʿulama a story of when the Prophet Mohammed demanded that a mosque be destroyed. As the story goes, some people of suspect loyalty invited the Prophet to their newly built mosque and begged him to consecrate it with his prayers and presence. When he discovered that this group represented a potential threat to his young community, the Prophet sent men to burn the structure and condemned those who built any mosques out of opposition (see the Qur'an, Sura 9). The shaykh's simple reply to the ʿulama was: "If the Prophet came to Androth he would surely destroy all the mosques, since they too were built out of opposition. And if the Prophet would destroy them, why should I go?"

The dynamics of this exchange and the nature of the accusations are important, particularly in contrast to those that emerged in the public debate and later stages of the Shamsiyya dispute. Of particular interest is that the two sides met face-to-face in an informal encounter. While the ʿulama expressed their concerns in person, the shaykh was also given a chance to defend himself in what appears to have been a creative and civil dialogue. The ʿulama's suggestion of *kufr* (disbelief) was indirect and private. The scene was not played out in the company of the shaykh's followers, which would cause some embarrassment, but took place in the relative privacy of his home. They did not demand that the shaykh justify his absence from the mosque in a public forum, nor did they make formal, by means of pulpit preaching or publication, their accusation against him. They

certainly did not call a meeting of the *sharīʿa* protection committee to issue a collective fatwa of condemnation against him.

Much the same can be said of the shaykh's reply. He neither returned the accusation nor paraded his defense in public. Obviously, the shaykh was not hesitant to engage the ʿulama on the shared ground of the *sharīʿa* and its sources. He neither denied his actions nor attempted to justify his behavior through the exposition of some esoteric Sufi doctrine. Instead, he defended himself with a clever yet straightforward interpretation of the orthodox sources of Islamic law. Regardless of whether the ʿulama found his defense theologically convincing, it appears that they left without further confrontation. Having made their respective points without offending one another, the issue appears to have been dropped, or at least tabled. Perhaps what was most important from the perspective of the ʿulama was that the shaykh offered a legitimate defense of his position and yet did not recommend that others adopt his position. Both parties knew that not attending Friday prayer was at best unorthodox, and at worst a serious threat to the principle of solidarity behind the congregational prayer. The ʿulama's quiet challenge served as a warning that such behavior ought not to be emulated, whereas the shaykh's defense preserved a sphere of personal religious expression. At the time of my interview, no further confrontations regarding this issue had taken place, and the shaykh continued to conduct Friday prayer at home.

With regards to the accusations made, it is clear that ʿulama were exhibiting not a kind of "zero orthodoxy" in which the slightest deviations from recognized orthodoxy requires an explicit accusation of heresy and firm application of repression. Instead, they exhibited a rather more flexible "orthodoxy-in-the-making" that accommodates the kind of minor deviations, individual or idiosyncratic expressions of piety, and minor tinkering that we see in the case above (see Knysh 1993: 64–65). An equally compelling example of this kind of flexible orthodoxy can be found in the ʿulama's willingness to indulge the local system of matrilineal descent and inheritance, which they recognize as unorthodox, in order to prevent social disarray (see Dube 1967). As one prominent cleric argued, the social disadvantages and chaos that would surely result from an attempt to uproot customary matriliny in favor of Qur'anic patriliny far outweigh the benefits of strict adherence to the *sharīʿa*. Moreover, "the Prophet would surely disapprove of such a social disturbance." The ʿulama

here do not act as aggressive morality police and do not seize every opportunity to confront "un-Islamic" behavior. Recognizing that the shaykh's behavior was neither persistently nor outrageously deviant, the ʿulama put into practice the Augustinian principle that "not every error is a heresy" (Kurtz 1983: 1088). Were the early confrontations between the Shamsiyya and the ʿulama of the same character? It appears that during the early days of the Shamsiyya's emergence during the 1960s, the ʿulama had no reason to approach them in anything but a quiet and nonconfrontational manner.

In the dispute's initial stages, we know that the nascent brotherhood and its founder, Shaykh Attakoya, found themselves under the suspicion of numerous island ʿulama almost immediately after the group's establishment in the mid 1960s. Having left the islands to undertake a spiritual journey, Attakoya returned a "shaykh" with the license (*ijāza*) to initiate his own followers and thus establish a distinct Sufi *ṭarīqa*. Members of the Shamsiyya claim that the ʿulama's opposition was the result of jealousy; apparently Shaykh Attakoya attracted many island followers at the expense of the other island brotherhoods. Other islanders confirm that Attakoya met with immediate success, but offer a more intriguing explanation for this achievement and his subsequent troubles. Shaykh Attakoya, it seems, had some novel ritual techniques to offer his new followers. The exact nature of these practices is difficult to determine. Virtually all of his opponents agreed that Shaykh Attakoya's early followers would lie on the beach during mid-day and "worship" the sun; hence the derogatory name "Shamsiyya" applied to the group and grudgingly tolerated by its members (*shams* is the Arabic word for sun). More neutral voices assured me that it was only "sun-staring"—an innovative if hazardous form of meditation. A few followers of the Shamsiyya reluctantly admitted that it was a misguided, yet innocent healing technique for those who suffered eye disorders.

Whatever the exact nature of the practice, it seems that Shaykh Attakoya made use of some rather curious ritual or healing methods that soon drew the attention of a number of the island ʿulama. His innovations upon an already unconventional repertoire of religious practices (including the self-mutilation rituals and matrilineal descent patterns noted above) were apparently more than the ʿulama could countenance. But what kind of attention did the shaykh receive? One of the authors of the 1986 fatwa impressed on me that at this early stage he only "advised" Attakoya to abandon the practices.

Another cleric I interviewed claimed that he wrote a fatwa against the Shamsiyya in the late 1960s, but he had no copy of the fatwa and claimed no co-authors. (The ʿulama did not form their *sharīʿa* protection committee until much later, in 1986.) Although the exact nature of the encounters remains unclear, it seems the case, given the lack of evidence to the contrary, that this dispute, like the one over Friday prayers discussed above, required no dramatic public airing, no collaborative opposition on the part of the ʿulama, and no aggressive condemnation.

Public Debate

At the time of Attakoya's death in 1980, the dispute between him and his opponents had failed to escalate into anything more than a tedious pattern of informal allegations. For the ʿulama in particular, such a situation ought to have been acceptable. Given that the Shamsiyya's island membership had been decimated by lingering suspicions of un-Islamic tendencies, they no longer formed a thriving island brotherhood. What is more, it appears that the practices in question (the sun-staring/sun-worship) had been abandoned years before. A feeble island brotherhood suffering the loss of its charismatic founder seems hardly worth the risk of a bitter and public confrontation, let alone of incurring the wrath of an irritated Indian state. Within a year of the shaykh's death, however, this initial period of tolerant coexistence came to an abrupt end as the ʿulama's restrained warnings of unorthodox practices turned to provocative accusations of infidelity, and the Shamsiyya's compliance turned to resentment and angry recriminations.

A number of factors appear to have disrupted the fragile détente between the Shamsiyya and the loose collection of concerned ʿulama. Foremost was the death of Attakoya. For one reason or another, this eccentric shaykh never gave in to the temptation to combat his accusers vigorously. His successor, however, was not so willing to endure the persistent ridicule. According to many of the islanders who knew him, Shaykh Pookoya had high ambitions for the faltering brotherhood. The nagging questions regarding ritual orthodoxy needed to be addressed and the defensive strategy of non-confrontation adopted by Attakoya apparently had done little to stem the flow of allegations. The strategy that the Shamsiyya adopted is vital for

explaining the shift to public debate and acrimony. As the situation on Androth remained tense, Shaykh Pookoya focused much of his attention on the less hostile environment of Muslim Malabar, and met with great success. While island membership declined, the set of followers in Kerala (the Indian state nearest the islands) expanded dramatically. A number of this Kerala-based cohort were trained ʿulama, and it appears that they were the ones chosen to lead the Shamsiyya's defense. The confrontation that served as the immediate catalyst for the public debate occurred in an island mosque when one of these well-trained followers became embroiled in a debate with an island Sufi of another brotherhood, Qādiriyya Sūfiyya. Crucially, this was the brotherhood to which many of the opposing ʿulama were affiliated. Their debate, which apparently entailed each accusing the opposing shaykh of associating with God (*shirk*) and of cataloging the ritual innovations (*bidʿa*) of the other, soon spread. In consultation with the administrative officer on the island, it was decided that a more formal public debate should take place.

The public debate as a forum for airing disagreements within the religious community—although an apparent innovation upon the island repertoire of collective behavior—has been a prominent mode of religious disputation in the subcontinent for some time. Barbara Metcalf's (1982) detailed account of the emergence of these debates during the nineteenth century provides us with useful points of comparison. Such debates, she argues (1982: 216), were "part of the general trend toward increased public role for Indians," and in particular became a forum in which rival interpretations of Islam could compete for recognition. To borrow the words of Sandria Freitag, these debates formed part of an "alternative world" of collective activities that provided "legitimacy and recognition to a range of actors and values denied place in the imperial order" (Freitag 1989: 6). Apparently, this was especially true for South Asian ʿulama. Suffering from the decline of the Mughal Empire, and having lost the benefits it bestowed on its courtly class, the ʿulama took advantage of the public debates as an instrument for boosting their own religious and political fortunes, and for forging a sense of religious identity among their followers in colonial India.

In stark contrast to the decorous debates of the Indian courts, and any idealized version of dialectical exchange in the public sphere, the nature of interaction in these debates was not only "intense and

bitter" but provided little "occasion for serious intellectual exchange" (Metcalf 1982: 215). As the participants engaged in verbal sparring, "the spokesmen tended to argue within their respective ideological systems and to develop a series of stereotyped points that satisfied their supporters more than their opponents" (Metcalf 1982: 232). More combative than collegial, the new style of religious debates emerging in this period minimized dialogic exchange among interlocutors, circumscribed communities while confirming the differences between them, and thus propelled disputes down a path of incivility.

Well over a century later, the public debate continues to serve many of the same functions. Of course the island 'ulama had experienced no precipitous fall from imperial heights, but their use of the public debates coincides with a period of political uncertainty. Their choice of an unconventional mode of disputation can be explained in part by the fact that as the conflict escalated during the 1970s and 1980s there was little political convention on which to rely. Although nominally under external authority from the Ali Rajas (and Bibis) of Cannanore in the eighteenth century and the Malabar Collector and the Madras Presidency in the twentieth century, the islanders' remote location afforded them a degree of political autonomy. Such "indict rule" ended in 1964, when India's centrally imposed island administration shifted from its home on the coast (in Calicut) to its permanent location on Kavaratti Island (see Bhargava and Samal 2001). By the late 1960s, we see the traditional land tenure system decline and the fortunes of the landowning class diminished. They had previously held a monopoly on positions of local administration and adjudication. Island councils (made up of elite family heads) were disbanded and replaced with a centralized bureaucratic administration, a professional judiciary, and a police force that left few islanders in positions of authority. With so little political authority left to contest, it seems that the remaining contests became more intense and required new arenas.

Although the Indian state imposed itself quite heavily on most spheres of island life, it left considerable room for the expression of authority in the religious sphere. Like the colonial state before it, the Indian state withdrew itself from the "alternative cultural space" in which local expressions of cultural or religious value could flourish (Freitag 1996: 213). In fact, one could argue that the religious sphere on the islands is even wider than that of other Muslim communities

in India. Due to the peculiar administrative design of this Union Territory and the government's desire to tailor judicial and bureaucratic policy to fit a strategic border area, the Sharīʿat Act of 1937, which defines the realm of personal law for most Indian Muslims, does not apply on the islands.[1] The state largely abdicated the authority to adjudicate on matters concerning Islam. Thus, when the opportunity arose to debate the nature of good Islam and to identify the *kafir*, those endowed with religious authority seized it.

No transcript of the islanders' debate exists, but witnesses' accounts confirm that in many ways it resembled that of their nineteenth-century coreligionists and was in stark contrast to their own period of discreet and unprovocative negotiation. The debate was well attended, but without a moderator or formal means for determining an outcome. It was conducted openly and forcefully by competing sets of ʿulama who presented their respective cases in the form of monologues delivered to the audience. Although certainly aware of the events taking place, the *ṭarīqa* shaykhs neither participated nor attended. The result of the islanders' debate, like those described by Metcalf, was inconclusive. Both sides claimed victory in what was an aggressive exchange of insults and reciprocal accusations of *kufr*.

A significant difference between the early phase of private admonishment and that of public debate is audience participation. The public's role is largely incidental in the case of private or discreet admonishment, although a wider audience beyond immediate participants may come to know of a confrontation by means of gossip, and thus indirectly participate. Public debate, however, is obviously designed to reach or create wider audiences. In their reliance on "the public" or "public opinion," those who participate in the public debates confirm Talal Asad's crucial observation that religious authority is "a collaborative achievement between narrator and audience" (1993: 210). Reflecting this collaboration, those engaging in the oral debates offer arguments less to their interlocutors than to those in attendance. The public's presence, therefore, is hardly inert and rarely neutral. There is little doubt that those debating hope to

[1] One of the consequences of the application of the Sharīʿat Act in India was that customary practices "contrary" to the *sharīʿa* were legally abolished. Given that the system of descent and inheritance on many of the islands is a complex mix of matrilineal (*marumakkathayam*) and Islamic law, any application of the Sharīʿat Act would have serious social and legal consequences.

bring the weight of public opinion or public humiliation to bear on their opponents. In this sense, the public becomes an instrumental and potentially coercive force. What makes this public terrain hazardous, however, is the fact that public opinion is not easy to manipulate. When making strong arguments and allegations in public, those responsible also face the scrutiny of the audience and can be held to account. With regards to the island conflict, many were convinced by the arguments made against the Shamsiyya, and in this sense the ʿulama's persuasion was successful. Such success, however, would not last forever when discourse was combined with what many perceived an inappropriate means of coercion. Although many islanders believed that those involved with the Shamsiyya were indeed *kafir*s, and ostracized them on account of this, they were not willing to convert that alienation into violence. Such indifference on the part of so many islanders is an illuminating example of the public exercising its own power as a third party. When the ʿulama resorted to more extreme forms of disputation and accusation, they did not anticipate that their intemperance would stimulate alternative sources of religious authority.

Accusations of Heresy

Given the nature of the islanders' debate, it is hardly surprising that little resolution was achieved as a result. The gross allegations alone indicate that resolve for persuasive reconciliation was waning and that a moral divide was being constructed, rhetorically at least, between the Shamsiyya and the island ʿulama. In seeking to construct this divide, the islanders relied not only on the public debate but also on the shared idiom of heresy accusations or *takfīr*. Publicly accusing an opponent of heresy is a popular and provocative tool that Muslim clerics in the region use to denigrate their rivals. Curiously, however, the nature of *takfīr* and its role in buttressing the ideological and social divide between Muslim factions and constructing exclusive sectarian identities in the subcontinent remains unappreciated.[2]

Recent studies on medieval Islam and Christianity suggest that heresies and heretics serve a number of religious and political functions.

[2] Both Metcalf (1982) and Sanyal (1996) note that a prominent part of the fatwa wars between factions of nineteenth-century ʿulama were these accusations of *kufr*, but neither isolates *takfīr* as a common strategy.

One the one hand, heresy plays an integral role in forming any religious orthodoxy by forcing religious authorities "to define its doctrines and to anathematize deviant theological opinions" (see Lambert 1992: 3). Although it is obvious that Islam has no Church or ecclesiastical council invested with the authority to determine or enforce a universally accepted dogma, it does have a consensual orthodoxy. Moreover, religious authorities in Islam are perfectly capable of producing—and here coercion is sometimes needed to reach consensus—layers of thick local orthodoxy to which their audiences subscribe. Islam has had its own heresiologists and has a rich vocabulary for distinguishing degrees of infidelity (see Lewis 1953, Taylor 1967, Peters and De Vries 1977, and Knysh 1993). As Knysh (1993: 52) notes, the polemics that surround the definition and identification of *kufr* and *kafir*s often result in a "reformulation" of disputed beliefs. The dispute over the Shamsiyya's ritual innovations resulted in a public statement of the alleged unbelief during the debate, and a published account of *kufr* in the form of the 1986 fatwa of condemnation. Thus, the debate was the first step in the 'ulama's attempt to produce an explicit conception of the "common good" defined in terms of their own version of Islamic orthodoxy. It is no surprise, however, that not everyone shared this interpretation of the common good.

In addition to intellectual or theological functions, heresy debates also serve as a vehicle for identity politics and organizational power. Heresy is a particularly effective way of creating or maintaining the religious identity of a community through the identification of a dangerous internal threat. One can, of course, use external "others"—such as Hindus, Christians, foreigners, or the secular state—as the negative standard against which to construct affiliation. But with few of these others present or available on the island, the internal dissident represented an available option. Heresy accusations can also serve institutional elites by allowing them to fortify their authority by taking the lead role in the identification and suppression of a common enemy (see Kurtz 1983: 1085–87). Following this pattern, accusations of *kufr* catapulted the island 'ulama into public prominence. As discussed above, those making public accusations of heresy are at some risk if the accusations are seen to be unjust or the application of punishment excessive. This is particularly true when the public is invited to serve as a participant and witness in public debate.

The island debate was about more than sun-staring and other alleged innovations of the Androth brotherhoods. Behind their lofty concerns over sacred matters and the spiritual well-being of fellow islanders lies a more profane dispute about religious authority that appears to confirm the heresiologist's hypothesis that "what is immediately at stake in any specific incident of heresy is the authority to judge the Truth" (Asad 1986: 355). Not every ritual error warrants a provocative and public accusation of *kufr*. We also know that the island ʿulama can admonish without making use of the forceful condemnation of heresy. Why then the need to go public and caustic? When the Shamsiyya were compelled to defend themselves after the death of their founding shaykh, they employed mainland ʿulama to go on the offensive against their local counterparts. Rather than explaining or justifying their own rather ignominious ritual past, the Shamsiyya ʿulama attacked the religious integrity of their accusers by pointing out their own ritual infidelities and *kufr*. It was a brave and provocative strategy, but ultimately a conservative one designed to preserve their own orthodoxy. They did not, for example, employ a strategy adopted by many Islamic reformists who condemn the ʿulama as authoritarian and mired in legal tradition, and thus unqualified to lead the Muslim community. The Shamsiyya recognized that if you attack the role of the ʿulama as those most qualified to interpret Islamic law and their place atop the island interpretive hierarchy, the whole concept of island orthodoxy would tumble, and with it the legitimacy of the Sufi brotherhoods. Such a strategy coming from a brotherhood would have been self-defeating. Instead, the Shamsiyya questioned the integrity of the incumbent Androth ʿulama in two different ways. First, they invited outside ʿulama with identical ideological stances to conduct their debate, thus hoping to send the message that these were more qualified and competent clerics. Second, by accusing their Androth opponents of jealousy, political motivation, and *kufr*, the Shamsiyya called into question their moral integrity to act as ʿulama. These two tactics together constituted a serious assault on the intellectual and moral qualifications of the incumbent island ʿulama, but not of ʿulama in general.

Two clues offered by the Androth ʿulama themselves help confirm that what tipped the balance toward acrimonious accusation was the Shamsiyya's challenge to their religious authority. In the fatwa of condemnation issued in 1986, the ʿulama list the ritual and doctrinal

errors of the Shamsiyya. The final allegation is explicit in stating that part of what constitutes *kufr* was the Shamsiyya's contempt for the ʿulama and their accusations. According to the fatwa, the Shamsiyya had "declared, without proper reason, that the recognized scholars were kafirs." In conversation, one of the prominent island ʿulama also admitted to me that it was only when "they introduced ʿulama from Kerala" that the Androth clerics became resolute in their opposition.

The combination of the public debate and *takfir* served multiple functions. The public's subsequent debate over what constitutes heterodoxy and what counts as an appropriate response has helped create a religious identity or religious self-consciousness that did not exists before their conflict. Moreover, by anathematizing the Shamsiyya, the island ʿulama were able to reformulate island orthodoxy, making it more impervious to novel innovations and threats. In the short term at least, the debate and accusations of heresy also served to highlight the authority of the ʿulama. In their attempt to impose a version of the "common good"—defined in terms of Islamic orthodoxy—the ʿulama made a claim for a more public and prominent role in the public sphere. In would be inappropriate, however, to mistake function and consequence for cause. There is little or no evidence to suggest that behind the shift in strategies lie grand ambitions, and this is particularly true for the ʿulama. It would be easy, for instance, to strip them to their naked political ambitions, as many islanders did when arguing that the conflict was not about religion but "politics." Although it may be true that "few heresy accusations were ever launched out of pure concern for purity of doctrine" (Lambert 1992: 15), one cannot exclude the possibility that such concerns form part of the conflict equation. The fact that many of the Androth ʿulama maintained their case against the Shamsiyya in spite of a later Indian Court ruling that seriously circumscribed their authority to impose religious conformity suggests that piety was mixed with religious politics.

Conflict, Community and the State

The Indian state was virtually absent during the early stages of this conflict. Only at a later date did the administration, police, and courts intervene. Between the inception of the dispute in the mid-1960s and the violence following the fatwa in 1986, the state was appar-

ently willing to let the islanders resolve the conflict on their own. An equally plausible explanation is that the minor bureaucrats and policemen posted on the island from Kerala would have known little of the conflict until it boiled over. Given the lack of earlier island religious conflict, they did not expect the islanders to resort to acrimony and violence. One can certainly argue that the state left the islanders bereft of "traditional" means of adjudication. The conflict, however, took place in an environment largely determined by the state that—in both the private and public spheres—kept the possibilities wide enough to allow the islanders to conduct their own conflict and inflict their own damage. To suggest that the state was somehow responsible for the escalating conflict through its own inaction ignores the agency and actions of the islanders themselves.

When the state and its agencies eventually weighed in after the modest violence, they did so heavily. The police closed the contentious mosques in 1986, and years later were responsible for the shooting deaths of two islanders during a confrontation at the Juma Masjid. Opposing the police in the aftermath of the mosque expulsion, the island administration, through its Androth magistrate, tried to keep the contentious sites open while referring the matter to the Kerala High Court. In a compelling decision, the Muslim judge argued, relying on court precedent, that a Muslim could worship in any mosque, regardless of "sect" (see Shamsuddin 1987: 762). Since followers of the Shamsiyya fulfilled the minimum requirements for being a Muslim—which according to the Court entailed embracing the principles of the *shahāda*—they could not be banished from Androth religious sites. Having overruled the ʿulama's decision regarding the Shamsiyya's *kufr*, the High Court Justice then turned to the ʿulama's authority to "excommunicate." In a remarkable aside from the immediate issues of the case, the judge argued that for Sunni Muslims the "power of ex-communication" is not an integral part of the faith (Shamsuddin 1987: 768). The High Court's decision thus reveals the ultimate irony of this conflict: despite the intentions of the island religious authorities to preserve the integrity of island Islam and to leave the religious hierarchy intact, a source of authority critical of the existing orthodoxy emerged in the form of the Indian state.

Viewed from this post-fatwa perspective, one might be tempted to see this contest between the ʿulama and the Indian state as an inevitable collision, virtually predetermined by the hegemonic inclinations of those involved. On the one hand we have a religious

conflict propelled into the public sphere by religious men who see themselves as representatives of Islamic law and who either don't recognize the distinction between religious and political spheres or intend to shape the public sphere with their own narrow interpretation of the common good. On the other, we have an ever-expanding, centralizing, and interventionist state seeking to impose its authority on the public and private lives of its constituent communities and individuals. Thus, any attempt by the ʿulama to exercise public authority necessarily represents a threat to the state's apparent hegemony (see Das 1995: 91), while any attempt by the state to limit the conflict and make its own claims on Islam necessarily represents a threat to the authority of the ʿulama. Meanwhile, somewhere in between lie individuals and communities squeezed by the aspiration to authority of the others.

The island conflict presented here paints a complicated picture of the relationship between religious authority, community, and the state as played out in the public sphere. First, the islanders' conflict reveals that the state is neither monolithic in its objectives nor hegemonic in its power to implement its objectives. To assume that the modern bureaucratic state is either willing or able "to establish a monopoly over ethical pronouncements" (Das 1995: 92) or "to bring all areas of life under its regulation" (Zaman 2002: 1) is to overestimate its power and misinterpret its multiple and often contradictory objectives. Arguing for a more nuanced approach to the state, Robert Hefner has noted that "Postmodern and Foucauldian theories greatly oversimplify our world when they assert that modern politics has involved no more than the ever-greater intrusion of a 'panopticon' state into the public sphere and our private lives" (Hefner 1998: 10). The Indian state's hesitant, inconsistent, sometimes coercive, often magnanimous behavior throughout the conflict belies this popular model of a one-dimensional and voracious institution. Instead, the state appears more like the inchoate institution sketched by Alasdair MacIntyre (1998 [1997]): "a large, complex and often ramshackle set of interlocking institutions" (236), which he argues "needs and has a ragbag of assorted values, from which it can select in an *ad hoc* way what will serve its purpose in this or that particular situation with this or that particular group" (245). Ultimately, the Indian state intruded on the public and religious spheres of the island, but it did so haltingly. Moreover, what prompted the imposition was neither

that the ʿulama were exercising their authority on matters of orthodoxy nor that they were asserting political authority in the public sphere. Rather, what induced the police, the administration, and the courts to act was the ʿulama's decision to forego civility for violent coercion.

A conflict between the islanders and various state agencies regarding the use of violence and the abuse of religious authority was also a conflict *within* the community. Exhibiting the competitive and often nasty politics of local community, the island conflict leaves little room for what Veena Das has called the "nostalgic rendering of the community" (1995: 51). Although there was scant disagreement over the nature of local orthodoxy defined by the ʿulama, and little local opposition to the attempt by the ʿulama to fuse religious orthodoxy with the common good, their exercise of authority within the public sphere did not go unchallenged. From the Shamsiyya came challenges to the Androth ʿulama's integrity in the form of alternative and combative ʿulama from Kerala and civil court litigation. Perhaps most surprising was the challenge from the public itself, as many opposed the more extreme methods used by the ʿulama when enforcing orthodoxy. Exercising their own religious authority, many chose a strategy of indifference or nonparticipation.

Finally, the islanders' conflict reveals a compelling picture of the ʿulama themselves. Often portrayed as impulsive and reactive, steeped in static tradition and intolerant of doctrinal or liturgical innovation, the ʿulama of Androth reveal a striking degree of patience, tolerance, and latitudinarian thought with regard to dissent and religious innovation. Even when confronting un-Islamic behavior, they proved capable of doing so in unprovocative ways. Unfortunately, when faced with the challenges posed by the Shamsiyya, the ʿulama chose the path of incivility. Their fatwa and attempted mosque expulsion were actions of last resort designed to maintain religious orthodoxy and their own authority to define it when other less provocative modes of disputation proved ineffective. The consequence of their decision is that their authority to act in the public sphere has been severely circumscribed by both the state and the community. The ʿulama, however, have not disappeared. If not a "resurgence of great moment," it seems likely that their performance in this conflict was only the first step toward a more public and prominent role in the religious and political life of this Muslim community (Zaman 2002: 1).

References

Asad, Talal
1986 "Medieval Heresy: An Anthropological View." *Social History* 2, no. 3: 345–63.
1993 *Genealogies of Religion: Discipline and Reasons of Power in Christianity and Islam*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.
Bailey, F.G.
1996 *The Civility of Indifference: On Domesticating Ethnicity*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
Bhargava, B.S., and Avinash Samal
2001 *Lakshadweep: Towards Decentralised Governance*. New Delhi: Kanishka.
Calhoun, Craig
1998 "The Public Good as a Social and Cultural Project." In *Private Action and the Public Good*, edited by Walter W. Powell and Elisabeth S. Clemens. Pp. 20–35. New Haven: Yale University Press.
Casanova, José
1994 *Public Religions in the Modern World*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
Das, Veena
1995 *Critical Events: An Anthropological Perspective on Contemporary India*. Delhi: Oxford University Press.
Didier, Brian
2004 "Conflict Self-Inflicted: Dispute, Incivility and the Threat of Violence in an Indian Muslim Community." *Journal of Asian Studies* 63, no. 1 (February).
Dube, Leela
1967 *Matriliny and Islam: Religion and Society in the Laccadives*. Delhi: National Publishing House.
Eickelman, Dale F., and Armando Salvatore
2002 "The Public Sphere and Muslim Identities." *European Journal of Sociology* 43, no. 1: 92–115.
Freitag, Sandria B.
1989 *Collective Action and Community: Public Arenas and the Emergence of Communalism in North India*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press.
1996 "Contesting in Public: Colonial Legacies and Contemporary Communalism." In *Making India Hindu: Religion, Community, and the Politics of Democracy in India*, edited by David Ludden. Pp. 211–34. Delhi: Oxford University Press.
Hasan, Mushirul
1997 *Legacy of a Divided Nation: India's Muslims since Independence*. Delhi: Oxford University Press.
Hefner, Robert
1998 "On the History and Cross-Cultural Possibility of a Democratic Ideal." In *Democratic Civility: The History and Cross-Cultural Possibility of a Modern Political Ideal*, edited by Robert Hefner. Pp. 3–49. New Brunswick, N.J.: Transaction.
Knysh, Alexander
1993 "'Orthodoxy' and 'Heresy' in Medieval Islam: An Essay in Reassessment." *Muslim World* 83, no. 1: 48–67.
Kurtz, Lester R.
1983 "The Politics of Heresy." *American Journal of Sociology* 88, no. 6: 1085–1115.
Lambert, Malcolm
1992 *Medieval Heresy: Popular Movements from the Gregorian Reform to the Reformation*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Lewis, Bernard
1953 "Some Observations on the Significance of Heresy in the History of Islam." *Studia Islamica* 1–2: 43–63.
MacIntyre, Alasdair
1998 [1997] "Politics, Philosophy and the Common Good." In *The MacIntyre Reader*, edited by Kelvin Knight. Pp. 235–52. Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press.
Metcalf, Barbara Daly
1982 *Islamic Revival in British India: Deoband, 1860–1900*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
Nasr, Seyyed Vali Reza
1994 *The Vanguard of the Islamic Revolution: The Jama'at-i Islami of Pakistan*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press.
Peters, Rudolph and Gert J.J. De Vries
1977 "Apostasy in Islam." *Die Welt des Islams* 17: 1–25.
Robinson, Francis
2001 *The 'Ulama of Farangi Mahall and Islamic Culture in South Asia*. Delhi: Permanent Black.
Sanyal, Usha
1996 *Devotional Islam and Politics in British India: Ahmad Riza Khan Barelwi and His Movement, 1870–1920*. Delhi: Oxford University Press.
Shamsuddin, J.
1987 "Attakoya Thangal v. Union Territory of Lakshadweep." *Kerala Law Times* 1: 762–68.
Tarrow, Sidney
2001 "Silence and Voice in the Study of Contentious Politics: Introduction." In *Silence and Voice in the Study of Contentious Politics*, edited by Ronald R. Aminzade, Jack A. Goldstone, Doug McAdam, Elizabeth J. Perry, William H. Sewell, Jr., Sidney Tarrow, and Charles Tilly. Pp. 1–13. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Taylor, John
1967 "An Approach to the Emergence of Heterodoxy in Mediaeval Islam." *Religious Studies* 2: 197–210.
Van der Veer, Peter
1992 "Playing or Praying: A Sufi Saint's Day in Surat." *Journal of Asian Studies* 51, no. 3: 545–64.
Zaman, Muhammad Qasim
2002 *The Ulama in Contemporary Islam: Custodians of Change*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

This page intentionally left blank

Part IV

Ambivalence in the Practice and Public Staging of Islam

This page intentionally left blank

CHAPTER EIGHT

THE LIMITS OF THE PUBLIC: SUFISM AND THE RELIGIOUS DEBATE IN SYRIA

Paulo G. Pinto

Sufism constitutes one of the main forms of social expression of Islam in contemporary Syria, attracting followers from all social strata. The social relevance of Sufi identities make them an important element in the constitution of the public sphere in Muslim majority societies such as Syria, where religious identities often provide the conceptual and practical framework for public participation (Eickelman and Piscatori 1996: 108–31). The notion of "public sphere," defined by Jürgen Habermas (1989 [1962]: 27–30) as a space of disputes and negotiations structured by rational discourse, was historically connected with the emergence of open and inclusive spaces for debate in the bourgeois milieus of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Europe.

Habermas's focus on the European genesis of the modern public sphere must be put into perspective by the fact that Middle Eastern societies also had spaces for social participation in which "contests take place over the definition of 'common good,' and also of the virtues, obligations and rights that members of society require for the common good to be realized" (Eickelman and Salvatore Chapter 1). Furthermore, Habermas's emphasis on the rational aspects of the public sphere overlooks the importance of religious identities in the creation and organization of the public sphere. The role of religious identities in the production of the public sphere became evident with the rise of "public religions," that is, of religious communities engaged in what José Casanova defined as the "repoliticization of the private religious and moral spheres and renormativization of the public economic and political spheres" (Casanova 1994: 5–6). This process of "deprivatization" happened within various religious traditions, including Islam, and in societies with different cultural, political, and economic realities, such as the United States, Brazil, and the Middle Eastern societies (Casanova 1994: 6).

This chapter has two goals. The first is to explain how Sufism contributes to the production of the public sphere in Syria. The second is to understand the constraints and possibilities created for public debate among Sufis in Syria when their religious identities are defined by their emotional attachment to the persona of their shaykh, or religious guide. The answer to these questions highlights important issues connected to the emergence of "public religions" on modern public spheres.[1]

There are several levels of Sufi participation in the organization and dynamics of the public sphere in Syria. Sufi identities provide its adherents with cognitive, emotional, and practical dispositions that shape their understandings, perceptions and actions in the public sphere. These dispositions, which constitute what Pierre Bourdieu (1997 [1972]: 78–95) calls *habitus*, are expressed in forms of presentation and use of the body, affective ties, and moral feelings. Sufism offers normative models of what constitutes the "common good" and how social relations and individual lives should be managed and organized. The Sufis understand and experience their communities as an experiential path embodied in the affective links between the Sufi master (*murshid*) and his disciples (*murīd*, pl. *murīdūn*). Sufism also constitutes one of the main topics in public religious debate in Syria, where the polemics over the Islamic credentials of Sufi doctrines and practices reflect the disputes over the definition of the boundaries of Islam as a religious system.

Public Limits: Syria under the Baʿth

The political order that emerged after the independence of Syria in 1946 was plagued with structural instability due its limited social support beyond the small urban elite that controlled the state (Ahsan 1984: 302). After there were a series of coups and a brief political union with Egypt, military officers linked to the Baʿth, a socialist-oriented Arab nationalist party, seized power in 1963. Baʿth rule was marked by its struggle against the economic and political power of

[1] The data used in this text were collected during sixteen months of field research from 1999 to 2001 at Arab and Kurdish Sufi *zāwiya*s in Aleppo and in the villages of the Kurd Dagh region of northern Syria. For an account of this research, see Pinto (2002).

the traditional elite. Land reform was implemented, and banks and factories were nationalized (Ahsan 1984: 306–308, Picard 1980: 163–64). A 1970 coup d'état brought Hafiz al-Asad to the leadership of the Ba'th party and the presidency of Syria. Asad started a policy of limited economic liberalization, and he increased state control over Syrian society by institutionalizing the surveillance and intimidation of actual or potential opponents by the security services (*mukhābarāt*) (Le Gac 1991: 124–43).

The control of Asad's regime over Syrian society was implemented both through repressive measures and the cooptation of many social sectors. The institutions of civil society, such as trade unions, were transformed into instruments for coopting the working class into a corporatist framework controlled by the state. In addition, the inefficiency and corruption of the state bureaucracy made more necessary the resource to bribery and personal mediation (*wāsṭa*) to provide access to resources and services; this facilitated the integration of individuals and communities into clientelistic networks under state patronage (Perthes 1995: 133–203).

The loss of substance of political debate under Ba'th rule, which reduced debate to the repetition of empty slogans (Le Gac 1991: 118–23), enhanced the role of public debate on religion as an instrument of participation and open dispute. Discourses of dissent and discontent could be publicly voiced—even if opaquely—as the moral condemnation of the regime and its policies, while direct political debate offered a much narrower range of discursive possibilities. Furthermore, the political and social mobilization of large strata of Syrian society through their Muslim identities was facilitated by Asad's use of 'Alawī sectarian ties for assuring a cohesive social base for his regime (Van Dam 1996: 62–74).[2] The combination of sectarian mobilization and political repression was the breeding ground for Islamic militancy against the regime. The Islamic opposition attracted members from widely differing social backgrounds ranging from traditional artisans and the trading bourgeoisie to the professional middle classes, including lawyers, engineers, and doctors (Batatu 1988: 129).

[2] The 'Alawī are a Shi'ī sect that comprises an estimated 15 percent of the Syrian population. Many Sunnī Muslims regard their beliefs and practices as heretic. The Asad family and a large portion of Syria's political and military elite are 'Alawī (Chouet 1995: 106–11).

Although the Muslim Brothers (*al-Ikhwān al-Muslimūn*) had a leading role in the Islamic opposition, Sufi shaykhs and their followers also joined the struggle and mobilized militants across class divisions.[3] The Syrian Muslim Brothers had close links with Sufism, and some Muslim Brotherhood leaders had a Sufi background, such as the late Saʿīd Ḥawā (Geoffroy 1997: 13). In the late 1970s, the various groups that composed the Islamic opposition united under the Islamic Front of Syria and began to carry out violent acts against the regime (Le Gac 1991: 138–39; Seurat 1989: 72–83). The conflict degraded into a spiral of violence that culminated in the military defeat of the Islamic Front after a major confrontation with the Syrian army in the city of Hama in 1982, resulting in the destruction of most of the city and the massacre of many of its inhabitants.[4] The destruction of Hama marked the end of an organized political Islamic opposition and reaffirmed the state's control over Syria. After Hama, Asad slowly adopted a more accommodating position toward the public expression of Islam and started a gradual liberalization of the regime. The hopes for faster reforms that rose with the accession of Asad's son, Bashar al-Asad, to the presidency of Syria in 2000 have not been met, however, and the political debate remains under tight state control.

Sufism and the Production of Public Islam in Syria

After the tragedy of Hama, the overtly political and militant Islam fostered by the Islamic Front sharply declined in Syria. Nevertheless, in the last two decades in Syria there was a visible increase in the public display of individual signs of Muslim piety and religiosity, such as mosque attendance and veiling. This phenomenon is particularly present in cities such as Aleppo, where religious and local urban identities are combined as an affirmation of difference and resistance

[3] The Muslim Brothers, an Islamic political movement founded in Egypt in 1928, combined Sufi conceptions of truth and authority with Salafī religious doctrines (Mitchell 1969: 14; Geoffroy 1997: 12–13).

[4] The number of victims varies with the sources of each author. Hanna Batatu (1988: 129) attributes the lower figure (5,000) to Western diplomats and the higher one (25,000) to eyewitnesses of the massacre. Umar Abd-Allah (1983: 192) estimates the number of deaths as 25,000. Nikolaos van Dam (1996: 111) estimates between 5,000 and 25,000 victims, suggesting that the higher figure is probably more accurate.

toward the secular order of the state and the dominance of Damascus (Seurat 1989: 103–109). Although most Sufis in Syria come from the rural or urban working class, there are clear signs of the internal renewal and social expansion of Sufism and *sharīʿa*-minded Sufi orders attract many followers from the professional middle classes as well as state cadres. The appeal of Sufi disciplines to the professional middle classes and the economic and political elite resides on their possibility of channeling individual expectations and anxieties while accommodating to the hierarchical structures that frame Syrian society.

Women have been important carriers of Sufi identities into the urban middle classes, for Sufism offers several channels and forms of female religiosity. Sufi identities also provide women with a culturally and morally legitimate channel to engage actively in the religious public sphere. The participation of women in Sufism was enhanced among the *sharīʿa*-minded Sufi orders, such as the Kuftāriyya, which created female branches in which women can participate as disciples or even as deputies (*khalīfa*, pl. *khulafāʾ*) of the shaykh (Bottcher 1999: 129–30). In Syria there are also female Sufi orders leaded by female shaykhas, such as the Qubaiysiyya. The importance of reading circles and religious education as instruments of socialization in these female orders expresses their orientation toward a highly educated public of women from the urban elite (Geoffroy 1997: 16).

The continual production of a "public Islam," understood as the objectification and systematization of Islamic values and practices as a normative model for the moral order of society (Salvatore 1998: 91), based on the display of individual piety, has a pervasive influence on the public sphere in Syria. This framework for the creation of an Islamic society as the cumulative effect of the moral reform of each individual has a strong doctrinal and practical influence of Sufism (Roy 1992: 102–17). The relative indifference of this religious trend toward political projects centered on the state allowed for an easier accommodation with the Baʿth regime, which started to encourage pietistic forms of religiosity in order to channel and coopt the production of a public Islam into its political agenda. The production of state-sanctioned piety in Syria parallels similar strategies of cooptation of public Islam used by the Egyptian state (Salvatore 1998: 91). The policies of the Syrian regime range from sponsoring of the Kuftāriyya Sufi order (Bottcher 1998: 137) to broadcasting on state TV programs that emphasize social order, national cohesiveness, and religious morality during the month of Ramadan

(Christmann 2001). Nevertheless, this diffuse form of public Islam is difficult to control and effective in spreading its conception of the "common good" throughout Syrian society.

Sufism is one on the main sources of this individualistic and pietistic public Islam, for it is centered on the individual mystical search for the dissolution in God (*fanā' fī-llāh*). The emphasis that Sufism places on the control of the self (*nafs*) and the devaluation of the external, or manifest (*ẓāhirī*) truth in opposition to the esoteric, or hidden (*bāṭinī*) one in the path toward the divine reality (*ḥaqīqa*) are powerful mechanisms for subjectification, meaning the production of a morally and socially bounded individual self through a process of inward reflexivity (Asad 1993: 165–67; Foucault 1998 [1978]: 17–35). The individualized social actors thus produced can cope with the challenges posed by a society that it changing and mobile, albeit authoritarian and crossed by traditional values, such as contemporary Syria. Furthermore, Sufi identities are produced and expressed in a hierarchical framework based upon the personal relation between shaykh and *murīd*, which gives to individuals community support as well as an effective mechanism to fit into the clientelistic networks that structure Syrian society.

A possible parallel can be traced with the emergence of the romantic model of individual in nineteenth-century Germany, in which the core of the "true" self was an emotional and intellectual inner life that had no place for expression in the authoritarian structures of society (Elias 2000: 5–35). Another useful comparison is with contemporary Iran, where traditional themes of poetic self-awareness and social righteousness are being transformed into an individualizing social ethic (Adelkhah 2000: 18–46). The psychological and moral models of individualization present in the German romanticism and in contemporary Iranian ethics are very similar to the mystical one present in Sufism, for they consider individuals to be constituted by a reflexive, emotional, and moral "inner self" that is only partially expressed through their "social self," due the constraints imposed by the social order. In all these cases, individualistic values and social actors can emerge from and articulate with hierarchical and/or traditional social structures without necessarily causing their disappearance or fragmentation.

The model that arises from these examples gives a view of "modernity" as a process in which traditional and modern values and structures are differently articulated and confronted according to each

particular social context, thus going beyond the dichotomy between tradition and modernity that pervades the main anthropological theories on Sufism. For example, Ernest Gellner (1993 [1981]: 56–69) considered Sufism as inherently incompatible with modernity, which according to him can only coexist with Salafī Islam. A more complex approach can be seen in Michael Gilsenan's analysis of Sufism in Egypt, which pointed to the *sharīʿa*-minded, centralized, and bureaucratized Sufi orders as adaptations to the rationalization of modern Egyptian society (Gilsenan 2000 [1982]: 237–50). Gilsenan's analysis was still informed, however, by a static model of modernity and tradition, for while reformed Sufi orders survived and expanded throughout the all strata of Egyptian society the same occurred to "traditional" orders such as the Burhāniyya, which became the fastest growing Sufi order in Egypt in the 1990s despite its heterodox practices and doctrines (Luizard 1991: 40–46). Similar patterns can be seen in Syria, where both reformed and traditional expressions of Sufism take part in the production of local and national forms of public Islam.

In Syria, the Sufi conceptions of the self are confronted not only with other moral constructions of Muslim identities but also with the secular "civic self" that the Baʿthist regime tries to mold in the individuals in order to construct its secular moral order. The Baʿthist political project is centered in the creation of the material basis for the expression of the Arab nation through the transformation and modernization of the Syrian society. The production of social agents committed to the Baʿthist ideology has a central role in this political project, which can be seen in the political and ideological investment of the Syrian regime in the control of the educational system. While in the primary and secondary schools the curriculum is filled with Baʿthist ideals and the teachers are compelled to join the party, in the universities party membership and ideological correctness are as important as intellectual excellence for achieving academic success (Le Gac 1991: 141–42; Seurat 1980: 137–39).

The production of the "civic self" of the Baʿthist project also required the organization of individuals in corporate groups that could harmonize and direct individual efforts toward the construction of the nation. The innumerous Baʿthist organizations, such as those destined to assemble workers, peasants, youth, or women, have the role of creating groups with a definite and complementary role to perform in the larger nationalist project (Perthes 1995: 170–72).

These organizations therefore have a role complementary to that of the educational system in disciplining the "civic self" of individuals as carriers of the Baʿthist project by providing them roles and expectations that are connected to their social persona.

In Baʿthist ideology, the Arab nation is not the political result of social and political processes that different social groups create through their actions, but rather a transcendent reality that can only be achieved through submission to the political leader. Thus, as the Sufi shaykh embodies the path toward esoteric truth, the Baʿthist the leader embodies the political and social path toward the "true" Arab nation. Another similarity between Sufism and the political metaphysics of the Baʿth is the opposition between an imperfect reality that is manifest and a perfect one that is hidden from our ordinary senses. This means that the social and political realities of Syria do not reflect the actual potentialities of the Arab nation, which can only be fully expressed in a social and moral order constructed under the enlightened guidance of the leader.

The role of the leader in connecting the "civic self" of the individuals with the supreme reality of the Arab nation in the Baʿthist system can be seen in the metaphysical epithets that are still used to designate Bashar al-Asad, such as "our eternal leader" (*qā'idunā ilā al-abad*) or "the great leader" (*al-qā'id al-ʿazīm*), which can be seen repeated in the posters and banners that covered much of the surface of public buildings in Syria. Similarly the existential character of the relationship between the individuals and the leader is expressed in emotional terms. For example, an inscription painted on an arch over one of Aleppo's major streets stated that "in our hearts there is love for our eternal leader and devotion to the nation" (*fī qulūbinā ḥubb ilā qā'idinā ilā al-abad wa ikhlāṣ ilā al-waṭan*), showing how belonging to the nation is fused with emotional attachment to the leader in the Baʿthist political discourse.[5]

The anthropologist Abdellah Hammoudi (1997: 150–58) suggested that the homologies between the hierarchical moral order of Sufism and the authoritarian political order in the Morocco could be the expression of a cultural model present in all Arab societies. Analysis

[5] I thank professor Nasr Abu Zayd for his insightful comments on my paper in the Fourth International Conference on Islamic Legal Studies on May 2003 in Murcia, Spain, highlighting the parallels between the secular transcendance of the Baʿth party and the mysticism of the Sufi path.

of the Syrian case reveals, however, a picture more complex than the political replication of cultural models originated from Sufi notions of authority. Although there are many points of convergence and articulation between the Sufi communities and the Ba'thist regime, there are also important differences and contradictions that can be potential sources of conflict between them. Despite all the ideological emphasis on the creation of a "new man," the Syrian regime focused its efforts on the insertion of social groups into its web of patronage as a way to implement its project of social governance. The allegiance with traditional social groups allowed for a more accommodating relation between regime and society, which was needed for the stabilization of the regime after the conflict with the religious opposition.

On the individual level, this meant that the regime required the performance of the outward signs of allegiance to the regime and its leader. This can be seen in the innumerable forms of devotion to the figure of Hafiz and Bashar al-Asad that the Syrians of all social strata ostentatiously express. All commercial establishments in Syria have a picture of the president, all public speeches start with a formulaic praises to the leader, and even in personal conversations in public settings one often hears ritualized flattering comments on the president's intelligence, strong will and character. Despite the pervasive presence of the personality cult elaborated around the figure of the president, and the hyperbolic and sometimes absurd character of many of the slogans and images that constitute it, however, there is no monitoring of the effect of these ideological devices on the subjectivity of the individuals. The simple enunciation of the slogans and the display of the pictures of the president are signs of allegiance to the regime accepted as sufficient by the security forces (Perthes 1995: 189).

The emphasis on the strictly public forms of allegiance to the regime has allowed individual Sufis as well as Sufi communities to negotiate their insertion in the Ba'thist political order. The compromise between the moral order fostered by Sufism and the political order of the Ba'th regime is based on the outward and performative level of the social identities of their adepts, which is devalued by the Sufis as being part of the deceptive universe of appearances (*ẓāhirī*). This compromise leaves untouched the realm of the inner self, which constitute the core of Sufi identities. The structural similarity between the Sufi and the Ba'thist two-layered construction of reality is crossed

by their practical emphasis on distinct levels of the individual subjectivity as the main focus for the normative investment of their disciplinary mechanisms, creating a large margin for practical accommodation between the two systems. Indeed one can find Sufi shaykhs and their communities integrated in all levels of the networks of power relations that connect the Baʿthist regime with Syrian society. The Sufi engagement with the regime can range from the establishment of semi-institutional links with the state apparatus by Sufi orders such as the Kuftāriyya, to the participation of Sufi shaykhs in diffuse webs of reciprocity and patronage that connect the neighborhoods in Aleppo to the power centers of the regime, ensuring local support to state policies.

The participation of Sufi communities and their leaders in the networks of patronage that structure local forms of social governance does not mean, however, their complete incorporation into the state apparatus. The relation between the Sufi communities and the Baʿth regime in Syria is marked by a constant tension over the boundaries that define their areas of cooperation, indifference, and opposition, with the Sufis jealously guarding their autonomy and social status from state control. Even among the Sufis who are integrated in the state-sponsored networks, the commitment to the Baʿthist order is less imbedded their identities than the allegiance to their shaykh. This means that the Sufi communities that participate in the structure of governance of the Baʿthist regime may distance themselves or even break their ties with it if they become alienated by or dissatisfied with state policies. I could see this process of rupture going on in some *zāwiya*s in Aleppo in May 2002, during the height of the Israeli repression of the Palestinian upheaval, when many of their members expressed harsh comments of dissatisfaction and criticism of the government's inaction in the face of what one of the shaykhs called "the murder of our Muslim brothers."

By keeping its internal autonomy, the network of Sufi leaders and their communities have the capacity to survive the fall or disintegration of the regime and to emerge as the main producers of order and meaning in the local level. This seems to be the case of the Shiʿi religious leaders in Iraq, who appeared as major political and social actors with a strong local and regional constituency immediately after the destruction of Baʿth regime by the Anglo-American war against it in 2003. These religious leaders were probably already working and gathering followers within the state-sponsored networks

of patronage much before the war, which explains the short amount of time they needed to emerge as an organized social and political force, and the fact that they passed unnoticed by most observers of the situation in Iraq before the war.

Sufism and Public Religious Debate in Syria

The debate over the Islamic legitimacy of particular doctrines and practices has effects on the definition of the "common good" in Syrian society, for it aims to define which traditions will constitute the normative framework of society and who has the full rights to implement it. Sufism is a central object of religious debate in Syria, with Its critics arguing that Sufi doctrines and practices are "blamable" innovations (*bidʿa*) created by the founding saints (*walī*, pl. *awliyāʾ*) of the Sufi orders (*ṭarīqa*, pl. *ṭuruq*) which should be eliminated in order to restore Islam to its original purity.

The polemics over Sufism reaches a vast audience beyond the restricted circle of religious specialists, such as the ʿulama or Sufi shaykhs, through books, TV programs, and religious preaching. In order to answer their critics, many Sufis try to make more clear and explicit, thus more public, the connections between their doctrines and practices and the texts of the Qur'an and the *ḥadīth*, or sayings of the Prophet. The contemporary resonance of the accusations against Sufism with the religious consciousness among literate social milieus requires more than simple apologetic responses by the Sufis (Eickelman 1995: 261–66). This challenge pushed some shaykhs to engage in the publication of the mystical literature produced by their *ṭarīqa*. For example, the Damascene branches of the *ṭarīqa* Rifāʿiyya have published both classical and new texts (Jong 1986: 215), in particular doctrinal treatises. The emphasis on doctrinal texts can be understood as a strategy to fight the widespread image of the Rifāʿiyya as a heterodox order that thrives among illiterate and popular milieus.

This effort of making accessible the doctrinal basis of the various Sufi traditions and incorporating them into the public religious debate was paralleled by a process of self-criticism and reform within Sufism itself which led to the "objectification" of the Sufi religious consciousness (Eickelman and Piscatori 1996: 37–45). In Syria, reformed versions of Sufism are currently promoted by major figures in the national religious scene, such as Shaykh Aḥmad Kuftārū, the mufti

of Syria as well as the leading shaykh of the Naqshbandiyya Kuftāriyya order, which carries his family's name. He uses his dual identity as religious scholar (*ʿālim*) and Sufi shaykh to foster an Islam that is both centered on the textual tradition and open to Sufi moral and mystical concerns. Kuftārū tries to reshape Sufism into a moral system subordinated to the doctrinal and ritual principles systematized by the *sharīʿa* and the Qurʾan (Ḥabbash 1996: 264–68). This text-centered mysticism is responsible for spreading Sufism among the upper and middle classes.

Although there are national and transnational dimensions in the public religious debate, the understanding and appropriation of the ideas and values that they convey is always done within local social and cultural conditions. Therefore, the prestige and the relevance of authors and texts in the public debate varies from one local community to another despite the fact that there are figures of undisputed national or international reputation. In Aleppo, where Muslim identities are connected to both traditional forms of urban sociability and political militancy, the main promoter of a reformist Sufism was ʿAbd al-Qādir ʿĪsā, the shaykh of the *ṭarīqa* Qādiriyya Shādhiliyya Darqāwiyya ʿAlawiyya (ʿĪsā 1993: 627–29), and imam at the ʿĀdiliyya mosque in Aleppo. ʿĪsā's commitment to a socially engaged Sufism led to his involvement with the Islamic opposition to the Baʿth regime and to his exile in Jordan after 1982.

ʿĪsā's major book, *Ḥaqāʾiq ʿan al-Taṣawwuf* (Truths about Sufism), is widely read in Aleppo by the followers of all trends in Sufism as well as non-Sufis. ʿĪsā presented his book as a systematic explanation of Sufism, in order to combat the "deliberate calumny" (*al-ṭaʿn al-maqsūd*) and the "violent aggression" (*al-hujūm al-ʿanīf*) directed against it by secular and Salafī critics (ʿĪsā 1993: 8). The esoteric dimension of Sufism was played down in ʿĪsā's model because he defined Sufism as the moral consciousness of the Islamic community, which he considered as defined by the principles of the *sharīʿa* (ʿĪsā 1993: 473–77).

ʿİsā was clearly thinking of the construction of a large community of moral agents able to act in society and transform it according to the principles of Islam, which required the codification of religious experience in a doctrinal discourse (see Whitehouse 2000: 3–5). It is not surprising, therefore, that he constructed his exposition of the principles of Sufism as a "disciplinary" text in the sense of producing an impersonal and reflexive tool through which the

religious discourse can "regulate, inform and construct religious selves" (Asad 1993: 125). The moral qualities required from the Sufis, such as *tawba* (repentance) or *ṣidq* (righteousness), and their function in the Sufi path are explained in a very clear and pedagogic way (ʿĪsā 1993: 284–310) that differs significantly from the metaphorical or poetic exposition present in Sufi classical treatises or in the hagiographic literature. The text in ʿĪsā's book follows modern editorial style, including footnotes and an index that allows readers quickly to locate the desired information. These editing techniques suppose a reading public that has had modern schooling, allowing the use of the text without any supervision and according to personal needs. This style was one of the causes of success of this book beyond Sufi milieus.

The emergence of reformed forms of Sufism changed the configuration of forces in the public religious debate in Syria by presenting a form of Sufism easier to integrate with the *sharīʿa*-centered Salafī definition of Islam. As a result of this new challenge, many Sufi shaykhs in Aleppo started to make explicit the connections between their practices and doctrines and the Qurʾan by doing commented readings of Sufi texts and organizing study groups after Sufi gatherings (*ḥaḍra*s). Sufi ritual practices that had no direct reference in the Qurʾan, such as the *ḍarab al-shīsh* (body piercing with skewers), were discontinued in many *zāwiya*s of Aleppo, in particular those in which the participants had a higher educational level and thus were more exposed to the polemics concerning these rituals.

The convergence of Sufi and non-Sufi reformist positions encourages the rise of a Sunni consensus in the definition of the common good. This process is similar to the creation of a shared legal and ritual universe through the downplay of the differences among the four Sunni legal schools (*madhhab*, pl. *madhāhib*) that occurred during the last century. Such a phenomenon could be easily replicated in Syria today, where there is no sharp division between Salafī and Sufi practice, with many practitioners fusing the two religious identities. Saʿīd Ḥawā, the later leader of the Syrian Muslim Brothers who was also a Sufi, proposed the creation of a "Salafī Sufism" as a necessary step in the creation of an Islamic society that can effectively respond to the challenges posed by secularism (Ḥawā 1979: 217–18). These ideas find echo in the preaching of Shaykh Kuftārū, who proposes the transformation of Sufism into the moral consciousness of the *sharīʿa* and the change of its name to *iḥṣān* (Geoffroy 1997: 14).

Nevertheless, such a consensus is not likely to be created in the nearby future. Important divergences still exist between reformist Sufis and other Muslims. Reformed and traditional Sufis alike see the hierarchical relationship between master and disciple as the pivotal element in Sufism. Shaykh Kuftārū is the absolute leader of his *ṭarīqa* and his followers are personally committed to him and his deputies. Similarly, ʿAbd al-Qādir ʿĪsā's writings defend the religious primacy of the Sufi shaykhs, saying that "the legalistic [*ẓāhir*] ʿulama guard the borders of the *sharīʿa*, while the Sufi scholars guard its morals and its soul" (ʿĪsā 1993: 476–77). Furthermore, Sufis consider the power of their shaykhs to be connected to the *baraka* (grace) that they receive from God and express in their *karamāt* (miraculous deeds), but many other Muslims see this as *bidʿa* (blamable innovation) and *shirk* (polytheism).[6]

The reproduction of the hierarchical relationship between Sufi shaykhs and their disciples as the defining element of Sufi identities in the public sphere shows a different trend in the constitution of a "public Islam." The hierarchical links between master and disciple are not based on the monopoly of doctrinal discourse by the former, but rather on the capacity of the shaykh to discipline as legitimate mystical experiences the emotional and sensory elements that are induced by the performance of Sufi rituals. The analysis of the role that Sufi identities play as constitutive elements of the Syrian public sphere must therefore take into account the effects of the power relations that they embody and reproduce as emotional attachments.

Individual Limits: The Experiential Character of Sufi Identities

The Sufi path is constituted by experiential states that are based on a set of bodily sensations and emotions, such as love (*ḥubb*), which are induced and disciplined according to the Sufi concepts linked to each mystical stage (*maqām*) reached by the disciple. Therefore, the mystical experiences that define the Sufi path consist of emotional and sensorial elements that are induced, combined, and mobilized in social contexts and for cultural purposes legitimized by the Sufi

[6] Saʿīd Ḥawā accepted the religious reality of *baraka*, but he considered that the ʿulama had social primacy over the Sufi shaykhs (Ḥawā 1979: 219–20).

tradition. Sufis base their doctrines on the distinction between the manifest and hidden dimensions of reality, with the latter being closer to the divine truth. The epistemological consequence of this conception of knowledge is that the "real" meaning of things can only be unveiled by those who had a direct experience of the divine truth.

The process of Sufi initiation (*tarbiyya*) starts with the study of the manifest *zāhirī* tradition, which consists of the *sharīʿa* and the doctrinal and ritual basis of Sufism. It presents a version of the Sufi path in close connection with the religious rules prescribed by the *sharīʿa* and slowly moves to texts with a deeper esoteric (*bāṭin*) message. The importance of the Sufi textual tradition in providing adepts with the conceptual apparatus for constructing their mystical experience suggests how higher degrees of literacy can change power relations. Nevertheless, the Sufi conception of religious knowledge requires the tutorial figure of the shaykh because it values existential over intellectual understandings of religious truth. This point was nicely summarized by a Qādirī shaykh who, after showing me some volumes from his private library, told me that "it is one thing to be knowledgeable on Sufism, studying it from books, and a very different thing to be a Sufi. . . . The *ḥaqīqa* is something that you feel in the heart (*tashʿaruhā fī-l-qalb*). . . . I can read five hundred books on Sufism, but if after that I am still the same, I am not a Sufi" (personal communication, June 2000).

This statement shows how the transformation of the self is the core of Sufi initiation. Such an existential transformation is the result of mystical exercises with both physical and spiritual implications, which can only be effective if performed under the continuous supervision of the shaykh. One of the first tasks that the disciple has to accomplish in the process of initiation is to purify his heart through repetition of the devotional formula (*wird*) received during the performance of his oath of allegiance (*bayʿa*) to the shaykh. The repetition of the *wird* is a form of performing the *dhikr*, or mystical evocation of God, which is one of the main Sufi rituals. The mystical exercises that constitute the Sufi path aim at producing mystical states (*ḥāl*, pl. *aḥwāl*) that are experienced as God's presence in the heart of the faithful. Therefore, the disciple must concentrate not only on performing the task but also on a search for the emotions and physical sensations that inform him of the success of his effort in "engraving the name of God in his heart," as a disciple of a Rifāʿī shaykh in Aleppo explained.

A shaykh's guidance is fundamental in shaping the efforts of the disciple into effective mystical practice. Most shaykhs have weekly meetings with their disciples, where they address the whole group and each disciple individually. During these meetings the shaykh usually explains the features of one mystical exercise—the kind of sensations one should expect to attain by performing it, and the relation between these sensations and the stages of the Sufi path. Once I witnessed a meeting between a Shādhilī shaykh and his disciples. The shaykh delivered a sermon on the importance of "fighting against the *nafs* (self)" in order to avoid the sin of *kibr* (pride) that led Satan to revolt against God. He concluded by saying that one only begins to win this fight when he attains the state of *dhikr* from the heart. Then he invited all the present to perform the *dhikr*, repeating *Allāh* while moving the head back and forth. During the ritual the shaykh sat in front of each one of the disciples in turn, pressed his finger on the heart of each one, and said "This is your heart; you will feel God here. At the beginning you will feel nothing, but love (*ḥubb*) will open your heart to him. You will feel it like life coming out from an egg." While still pressing his finger on the disciple's heart, he repeated *Allāh*, *Allāh*, *Allāh*, *Allāh*, *Allāh*, and then moved on to the next disciple.

This example shows how the teachings and the ritual guidance of the shaykh induce in his disciples the anticipation of a sequence of sensations that will allow them to recognize their success in performing the *dhikr* correctly. The shaykh made sure that the description in words of mystical emotional sensation and love was accompanied by the physical sensation of pressure over one's heart while the name of God was repeated. In resembling the pressure that a newly formed life makes on the egg that contains it, this sensation reveals in an experiential way the meaning of one of God's name, *Ḥayy* (Living One).

The emotional and physical intimacy that pervades the relationship between the Sufi shaykh and his disciples raises some problems when there are female disciples of male shaykhs, which is the usual situation in traditional *zāwiya*s. The love and complete submission that the disciple must devote to the shaykh stand in opposition to the shared understandings of female honor and gender roles that prevail in Muslim religious milieus. Although these tensions are minimized in Sufi orders such as the Kuftāriyya, which have a female

branch in which female deputies of the shaykh mediate between the world of privacy and honor and the universe of public devotion, they are only completely solved in female orders that have a female shaykha, such as the Qubaysiyya. The relation between these shaykhas and their *murīda*s has a strong emotional drive of devotion and dedication constructed within a framework of puritanical piety and strict discipline. The Sufi path fostered by shaykhas tends to combine the public observation of the norms of veiling and modesty with practices of self-accountability and reflexivity. For example, in Aleppo it is possible to recognize the disciples of a famous shaykha linked to the Naqshbāndiyya order because, besides being fully veiled in black, they carry a small counting machine where they register every *wird* they recite. The goal pursued here is the establishment of a permanent connection to the shaykha in a perpetual state of *dhikr*, and the total number of prayers achieved in lifetime is expected to count as a proof of good deeds and pious thoughts on Judgment Day.

Similar efforts to achieve complete control over the self (*nafs*) are pursued in male *zāwiya*s within the framework of ascetic practices, such as spiritual retreat (*khalwa*). The *khalwa* is a traditional practice among many Sufi orders, consisting of a period during which a shaykh's disciples engage in a total retreat from the world, living in the *zāwiya* in complete isolation, meditating, and fasting in order to advance on the mystical path. Although the *khalwa* has been adapted to the constraints of modern life—its period has been shortened from forty to four days—it still is performed in many *zāwiya*s in Aleppo. During the periods of seclusion in individual cells or rooms, the shaykh assigns specific positions or body movements to the disciples to perform while meditating on their personal *wird*.

The *khalwa* contributes to the embodiment of the power relations that constitute the Sufi community via the emotions and bodily sensations that it produces in the Sufi neophytes, thus inscribing the hierarchical relationship between shaykh and disciple into the corporeal dimension of the latter. For example, a middle-class professional from Aleppo who is the disciple of a Shādhilī shaykh told me that he had to perform the *khalwa* for four days: "[I was] in complete isolation in a dark room. On the wall there was a picture of the shaykh and there was a light over it. I had to stay there for hours staring at the picture and reciting the *taṣbiḥ* (prayer beads) over my heart and repeating *Allāh* with my tongue pressing on the

palate. After a while I could feel God's presence and I felt that the shaykh was the link between Him and me. . . . The same love that I felt for God I could see in my shaykh and I could feel that he [the shaykh] was part of the *ḥaqīqa*."

This example reveals how the sensations produced in the disciples by the disciplinary practices of Sufi initiation relate to symbols and images in order to produce an emotional and physical experience of the divine nature of the shaykh's authority. The shaykh has a central role in inculcating the mystical formulas of training, so that the emotions and experience associated with it are reworked from the ordinary experience of the disciples until they execute the normative models transmitted by the Sufi tradition. This is a fundamental element in the incorporation of the shaykh's authority as part of the emotional basis of Sufi identities, for it leads the disciple to identify the affection that he has toward his master with the love that he devotes to God.

The disciplinary efficacy of continuous training and exercising in body techniques—the culturally determined ways of using the body to achieve expected social and physical results (Mauss 1995 [1934]: 371–72), which are transmitted by the mystical path—is constantly tested during the collective performance of the *dhikr* at the weekly *ḥaḍra*. The organizational principles of the *dhikr* also produce and reinforce emotional attachments to the figure of the shaykh among the participants, even beyond the circle of the initiated. The shaykh is the focal point of the ritual, the efficacy of which is attributed to his *baraka*. The hierarchical organization of the ritual centered on the shaykh's mystical persona produces the notion that the differences among individual experiences come from the degree of personal attachment and physical proximity that each participant has to the shaykh. Furthermore, *karamāt* (miraculous deeds) performed by a shaykh or attributed to him by his followers create a sense of respect and awe among those who hear the accounts of these acts or see them happen during the ritual practices. Thus, the religious persona of the Sufi shaykh is experienced by his followers as the main element in the production and definition of their Sufi identities, which means that the power relations that exist in their relationship are fused with affective ties of love, gratitude, and devotion.

The Limits of the Public: Sufi Identities and Forms of Participation in the Public Sphere

The various biographic and hagiographic accounts of living and dead shaykhs that are published and circulate among Sufi groups in Syria show how Sufis consider their shaykhs as central to their own religious identities. Some of the texts downplay their miraculous deeds and emphasize their religious and legal knowledge or their moral virtues. However, when these texts circulate within the Sufi communities, they are complemented by oral accounts of *karamāt* that shift the base of the shaykh's persona from his knowledge and piety to his *baraka* (see Chih 1997: 32–34). This apparent contradiction between the biographical texts and their use by Sufis is the result of a strategy displayed in the composition of these narratives, which aims at facilitating the acceptance of the authority of Sufi shaykhs among non-Sufi Muslims in public religious debate.

The emphasis on textual and doctrinal aspects of the religious authority of Sufi shaykhs is the result both of the strategies of the Sufis and the structure of the public religious debate itself. This debate in Syria is centered on the doctrinal aspects of the Islamic textual tradition, showing that the doctrinal challenges posed by the reform-minded trends in Islam have a social appeal strong enough to define the central topics of public religious debate. Although this phenomenon affected certain areas of Sufism, it left untouched elements that constitute the core of Sufi identities, such as the emotional attachments that link Sufis to their shaykhs. The absence of public discourse on the emotional and experiential elements of Sufi identities in Syrian religious debate is not the result of their supposedly idiosyncratic nature but of the bodily nature of the disciplinary mechanisms used to produce them. Furthermore, although it is true that doctrinal texts are not particularly suitable to convey emotional states or individual experiences, this can be done by other literary genres, such as autobiographical narratives. For example, the vast circulation and consumption of novels, romances, and confessional autobiographies in nineteenth-century Europe delimited and disciplined an experiential universe of emotions and sexual impulses as the "inner self" that defined the bourgeois individual (Foucault 1998 [1976]: 17–35).

There are no equivalent literary genres among the Sufi texts produced in Syria. The biographies and hagiographies follow formulaic

rules of composition that prevent a deeper description or analysis of the emotional universe of the individual. Traditional Sufi poetry and literature is too allegorical to provide the readers with reflexive disciplinary mechanisms that could work independently from the tutelage of a shaykh. Even the mystical manuals, both traditional, such as the *Dalā'il al-Khayrāt*, and modern ones, such as the *Ḥaqā'iq ʿan al-Taṣawwuf*, which are widely read in the Sufi circles of Aleppo, are not suitable to create mechanisms of "rationalization" of the mystical experiences. These manuals give access only to the basic elements of the Sufi path. Anyone wishing to pursue it further needs to search for the guidance of a Sufi shaykh.

The differences between the individualization of the Sufi self and the forms of individualization present in modern European traditions are based on the fact that the former combined in each individual the notion of idiosyncratic uniqueness with that of community belonging, whereas the latter separated or emphasized these features as distinct conceptions of individuality. Although the construction the Sufi self is pursued through the cultivation of an emotional and experiential inner life, it can only be fully achieved and expressed through the constitution of a community. The connections between the individual selves in the Sufi communities are done not through the construction of shared normative discourses about the self, as in the French and Anglo-American bourgeois tradition, but by the dissolution of all individual differences in the emotional attachment to the shaykh. The fact that the emotional dimension of the power relations inscribed in Sufi identities was not objectified in the public debate allows them to be unconsciously reproduced as affinities and dispositions within the practices and worldview of Sufi adherents.

The Sufi idea of common good is centered on the concrete reality of the Sufi communities as the guardians of the values of an abstract *umma*, allowing for many different ways to reach accommodations with an authoritarian public order. This attitude facilitates understanding the variety of the Sufi reactions to colonial occupation in various Muslim societies, ranging from fierce resistance to active collaboration (Gellner 1993 [1981]: 221–30; Gilsenan 2000 [1982]: 157–63). A recent example of the potential radicalization of Sufi communities when faced with foreign threat was seen during the Anglo-American war and occupation of Iraq. Sufi shaykhs and their followers in Syria considered the military campaign an attack on Arab and Muslim society, with which they have strong personal

and religious ties. Many Sufi shaykhs in Aleppo trace their genealogical origins to Iraq, and the most important Sufi saints, ʿAbd al-Qādir Jailānī and Aḥmad al-Rifāʿī, are buried there.

On the other hand, the terrorist attacks of September 11 and the war against the Taliban and al-Qāʿida in Afghanistan had little mobilizing effects on the Sufi communities in Syria, for it involved a foreign power set against groups whose interpretation of Islam that was perceived to be deeply hostile to the Sufi worldview. The American support to Israel during the second intifada and the war against Iraq strengthened the perception among the Sufis in Syria, however, that the American government is inherently hostile to Muslims and Arabs. The political and economic pressure and the threats of a military attack against Syria that were done by the American administration during and after the war in Iraq transformed political antipathy into mobilization for resistance. This process culminated with the statement by shaykh Kuftārū in March 2003 that all forms of resistance to occupation, including "martyr operations," were legitimate and necessary to combat the "American, British, and Zionist invaders,"[7] showing the degree of radicalization that can be reached in Sufi communities if faced with threats from a power perceived as inimical to Islam.

The final picture shows the existence of spaces and mechanisms of both accommodation and confrontation with those power hierarchies that try to control the public sphere and shape the official public discourse. Whereas Sufism contributes to the reproduction of certain aspects of the Syrian authoritarian public order, the Sufi communities can also pose limits to state authority. Sufi models of the common good tend to favor hierarchical forms of social organization and participation by defending the charismatic authority of shaykhs in public religious debate. Nevertheless, the emotional attachment of the Sufis to their shaykhs is also linked to the idea of the existence of multiple individual paths toward the divine truth, preventing the imposition of an easy consensus on public debate. This creates a degree of plurality and even a space for individual autonomy in the Syrian public sphere.

This analysis of the public religious debate in Syria shows that the limits that determine the dynamics of the public sphere are not simply imposed by the state or set by institutional structures, for they

[7] Agence France Presse, March 27, 2003.

are also produced by the power relations embodied as emotional and habitual dispositions in the identities of the agents. So the public sphere cannot be reduced to a homogeneous space of rational exchanges where objective interests are pursued through calculated strategies, for the logic of discourse is contradicted and modified by affective attachments and emotional dispositions inscribed in the agents' identities. However, the notion of alternative or multiple rationalities does not give an accurate idea of the dynamics of the public sphere, either, for it still supposes that the limits of rational debate are given by equivalent, albeit distinct, logical and normative principles.

In order to grasp the limits of the public sphere one has to look to the processes of subjectification displayed by the various groups, for they connect power relations with emotional elements in the constitution of public identities. The production of emotional attachments toward particular forms of authority limits the possibilities of the construction of shared ideals of the "common good" through public debate. The embodied character of these dispositions keeps the basis of power legitimacy dependent on personally established emotional ties that remain beyond the reach of public argument. This is clear in relation to the consensus on the necessity of implementing Islamic values as the normative social model that was built in the public religious debate in Syria, but that was fragmented by personal attachments to conflicting structures of authority inscribed in the various Muslim identities. Thus, the emergence of "public religions" does not mean the simple incorporation of new perspectives into public debate, but rather the organization of distinct normative universes defined by power relations that are inscribed as emotional dispositions in the public identities of their adherents. This process can either lead to the failure of public debate or allow for the emergence of a more inclusive configuration of the public sphere, the outcome depending on the possibilities for the objectification and public challenge of the forms of power that define and support its limits.

References

Abd-Allah, Umar
1983 *The Islamic Struggle in Syria*. Berkeley: Mizan Press.
Adelkhah, Fariba
2000 *Being Modern in Iran*, translated by Jonathan Derrick. New York: Columbia University Press.

al-Ahsan, Syed Aziz
1984 "Economic Policy and Class Structure in Syria: 1958–1980." *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 16, no. 3 (August): 301–23.
Asad, Talal
1993 *Genealogies of Religion: Discipline and Reasons of Power in Christianity and Islam*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.
Batatu, Hanna
1988 "Syria's Muslim Brethren." In *State and Ideology in the Middle East and Pakistan*, edited by Fred Halliday and Hamza Alavi. Pp. 112–32. New York: Monthly Review Press.
Bottcher, Annabelle
1999 "L'Élite feminine kurde de la Kaftariyya, une Confrérie Naqshbandi Damascene." In *Islam des Kurdes* (*Les Annales de l'Autre Islam*, no. 5), edited by Martin van Bruinessen and Joyce Blau. Pp. 125–39. Paris: ERISM/INALCO.
Bourdieu, Pierre
1977 [1972] *Outline of a Theory of Practice*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Casanova, José
1994 *Public Religions in the Modern World*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
Chih, Rachida
1997 "Entre tradition soufie et réformisme musulman: La literature hagiographique dans le soufisme égyptien contemporain." *Egypte/Monde Arabe* 29: 23–35.
Chouet, Alain
1995 "L'Éspace tribal alaouite a l'épreuve du pouvoir: La desintegration par le politique." *Maghreb/Machrek* 47 (January-March): 93–119.
Christmann, Andreas
2001 "An Invented Piety? Subduing Ramadan in Syrian State Media." In *Muslim Traditions and Modern Techniques of Power*, *Yearbook of the Sociology of Islam* 3, edited by Armando Salvatore. Pp. 245–263. Hamburg: Lit Verlag; New Brunswick, N.J.: Transaction.
Eickelman, Dale F.
1985 *Knowledge and Power in Morocco: The Education of a Twentieth-Century Notable*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
1995 "Mass Higher Education and the Religious Imagination in Contemporary Arab Societies." In *The Book in the Islamic World*, edited by George N. Atiyeh. Pp. 255–72. Abany: State University of New York Press.
Eickelman, Dale F., and James Piscatori
1996 *Muslim Politics*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
Elias, Norbert
2000 [1939] *The Civilizing Process: Sociogenetic and Psychogenetic Investigations*. Rev. ed. Oxford: Blackwell.
Foucault, Michel
1998 [1976] *The History of Sexuality: An Introduction*. London: Penguin.
Gellner, Ernest
1993 [1981] *Muslim Society*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Geoffroy, Eric
1997 "Soufisme, reformisme et pouvoir en Syrie contemporaine." *Égypte/Monde Arabe* 29: 11–21.
Gilsenan, Michael
1973 *Saint and Sufi in Modern Egypt*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
2000 [1982] *Recognizing Islam: Religion and Society in the Modern Middle East*. London: I.B. Tauris.
al-Ḥabbash, Muḥammad
1996 *al-Shaykh Āḥmad Kuftārū wa manhajuhu fī al-tajdīd wa al-iṣlāḥ*. Damascus: Dār al-Shaykh Āmīn Kuftārū.

Habermas, Jürgen
1989 [1962] *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere. An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*. Cambridge: MIT Press.
Hammoudi, Abdellah
1997 *Master and Disciple: The Cultural Foundations of Moroccan Authoritarianism*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
Ḥawā, Saʿīd
1979 *Tarbiyyatunā al-Rūḥiyya*. Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿArabiyya.
ʿĪsā, ʿAbd al-Qādir
1993 *Ḥaqāʾiq ʿan al-Taṣawwuf*. Aleppo: Maktaba al-ʿIrfān.
Jong, Fred de
1986 "Les Confréries mystiques musulmanes au Machreq arabe." In *Les Ordres Mystiques dans l'Islam: Cheminements et situation actuelle*, edited by Alexandre Popovic and Gilles Veinstein. Pp. 203–43. Paris: Éditions de l'École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales.
Le Gac, Daniel
1991 *La Syrie du Général Asad*. Brussels: Éditions du Complexe.
Luizard, Pierre-Jean
1991 "Le Rôle des confréries soufies dans le système politique égyptien." *Monde Arabe/Maghreb-Machrek* 131: 26–53.
Mauss, Marcel
1995 [1934] "Les techniques du corps." In his *Sociologie et Anthropologie*. Pp. 365–86. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France.
Mitchell, Richard P.
1969 *The Society of the Muslim Brothers*. London: Oxford University Press.
Perthes, Volker
1995 *The Political Economy of Syria under Asad*. London: I.B. Tauris.
Picard, Elisabeth
1980 "La Syrie de 1946 à 1979." In *La Syrie d'aujourd'hui*, edited by André Raymond. Pp. 143–84. Paris: Éditions du CNRS.
Pinto, Paulo G.
2002 *Mystical Bodies: Ritual, Experience and the Embodiment of Sufism in Syria*. Ann Arbor, Mich.: University Microfilms International.
Roy, Olivier
1992 *L'Echec de l'Islam Politique*. Paris: Seuil, 1992.
Salvatore, Armando
1998 "Staging Virtue: The Disembodiment of Self-Correctness and the Making of Islam as Public Norm." In *Islam—Motor or Challenge of Modernity, Yearbook of the Sociology of Islam* 1, edited by Georg Stauth. Pp. 87–120. Hamburg: Lit Verlag; New Brunswick, N.J.: Transaction.
Seurat, Michel
1980 "Les Populations, l'état et la société." In *La Syrie d'Aujourd'Hui*, edited by André Raymond. Pp. 87–141. Paris: Éditions du CNRS.
1989 *L'État de Barbarie*. Paris: Seuil.
Van Dam, Nikolaos
1996 *The Struggle for Power in Syria*. London: I.B. Tauris.
Whitehouse, Harvey
2000 *Arguments and Icons, Divergent Modes of Religiosity*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

CHAPTER NINE

ISLAM AND PUBLIC PIETY IN MALI*

Benjamin F. Soares

Since the late nineteenth century and the onset of colonial rule in West Africa, scholars, including colonial scholar administrators, have devoted considerable attention to the study of what has been assumed to be the main institutional form for the practice of Islam in West Africa: the Sufi orders, the mystical paths. In an almost unending stream of studies, various scholars—political scientists, sociologists, geographers, historians, and those in religious studies—have focused on Sufi orders in various countries of the region. It is important to note, however, that Sufi orders have never had the importance in large parts of West Africa—in Mali, Niger, Côte d'Ivoire—that they may have had, say, in Senegal or elsewhere in the Muslim world (cf. Soares 1997, 1999). When scholars in West Africa have not focused on Sufi orders, they have tended to study the critics of the Sufi orders—so-called "reformists," Salafis, or, more recently, Islamists (for example, Rosander and Westerlund 1997). Most West African Muslims I have encountered during the course of my research—and,

* Various parts of the research for this study, including field and archival research in Mali, Senegal, and France in 1991, 1992, 1993–1994, and 1998–1999, were funded by the U.S. Department of Education (Fulbright-Hays), the Fulbright Program of USIA through the West African Research Association/Center, the Wenner-Gren Foundation, and Northwestern University. The NIMH Program on Culture and Mental Health Behavior at the University of Chicago Committee on Human Development and the National Science Foundation-NATO provided funds in the form of postdoctoral fellowships for the writing. Portions have been presented to the European and American Young Scholars' Summer Institute, "Public Spheres and Muslim Identities" in Berlin; the Department of Anthropology, the London School of Economics; the conference, "L'Internationalisation du religieux" at the Institut d'Études de l'Islam et des Sociétés du Monde Musulman, EHESS, Paris; the West Africa Seminar, UCL, London; the Islamwissenschaftliches Kolloquium, Universität Bayreuth; and the Third Mediterranean Social and Political Meeting, Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies, European University Institute, Florence. I am grateful to those audiences. As always, I am most indebted to the many people in West Africa who have helped me with this material and its analysis.

I claim, many of those I have learned about through reading colonial archives—are neither formally affiliated with any of the Sufi orders present in West Africa nor are they "reformists" or Islamists. Moreover, many West African Muslims categorically reject such appellations. This is not to deny the importance of Sufi orders, Sufism, or "reformism" in Mali. Rather, since all of these objects of study are so thin on the ground, it would seem to follow that we should shift our attention away from preoccupations with such presumed forms of Muslim social activism, not least since the events of September 11, 2001.

In this chapter, I do not privilege such categories in my analysis. During the course of fieldwork in Mali in the 1990s, it would have been difficult to avoid, let alone ignore, the many discussions Malian Muslims were having about Islam. Some of these discussions focused on questions of doctrine and "correct" ritual practice—for example, whether Friday communal prayers had to be performed in a mosque. Others focused on Muslim politics—for example, whether Muslims should be opposed on principle to the Gulf War and subsequent U.S. and British air strikes against Iraq in the 1990s. However, many of the discussions about Islam in Mali centered on more general questions of piety and the "correct" ways of being a pious Muslim. Indeed, there seemed to be considerable concern with—and often debate about—the public signs of piety.

On numerous occasions during my fieldwork, Malian friends and informants asked me whether I had noticed the mark or sign on a particular person's forehead. They used the term *seere* in Bamana/Bambara, Mali's most important lingua franca (or *seede* in Fulfulde/Pulaar), which some of my informants told me derives from the Arabic, *shahāda*, meaning testimony or witness, as in the Muslim profession of faith. This term, *seere*, refers to the sometimes circular spot or mark on some people's foreheads. Many Malians note that such a mark indicates regular prayer—even beyond the obligatory five ritual daily prayers—and presumably appears from touching the forehead to the ground. For many, such marks index piety. By all accounts, these marks are much more prevalent that they used to be. I myself have noticed the appearance of the marks on the foreheads of several friends and acquaintances between different periods of fieldwork in Mali, sometimes to my astonishment. What follows is an attempt to make sense of such signs. However, I must first

present quite a bit of background information in order to understand the link between piety and some of its public signs in Mali.

Islam in Malian History

Although Islam has been practiced in Mali for at least a millennium, it was only in the twentieth century that Islam became the religion of the majority. It has largely been through the development of a public sphere that this Islamization has occurred. Arguably, a public sphere has been developing in Mali that differs considerably from the idealized bourgeois public sphere described by Habermas (1989 [1962]; cf. Calhoun 1992), in which there is a space for so-called rational critical debate, and religion clearly has no place. Elsewhere, I have traced some of the elements of such a public sphere in Mali back to the colonial period, when the spread of newspapers, publications, political parties, associations, and organizations opened new spaces for political and social debate and deliberation (Soares 1996, 1997). Following John Bowen, who has written about Aceh in Indonesia, I would argue that in Mali there is a "public sphere of discourse that combines religious, social, and political messages" (Bowen 1993: 325). By considering the development and contours of this public sphere, I explore here some of the enduring paradoxes that have accompanied the spread of more standardized ways of being Muslim in Mali.

First, let us examine briefly the features of Islam in the region (cf. Launay and Soares 1999). Although it is difficult to speak with great precision about the nature and extent of Islamization before the twentieth century, we do know that in the precolonial and early colonial periods (at least until the first decades of the twentieth century), religious practices often reflected membership in hereditary social categories. That is, whether people practiced Islam and the way in which they did so often had to do with their hereditary social status. Certain lineages were known as Muslim religious specialists or *marabouts* in French colonial parlance. They historically had control over Islamic religious knowledge, education, and sometimes trade. The hereditary transmission of both learning and sanctity has been historically very important here. Members of lineages of religious specialists and their descendants were generally those who performed

the ritual daily prayers, fasted during the month of Ramadan, and abstained from consumption of alcohol. In short, they exhibited some of the outward signs of the practice of Islam. Other lineages, sometimes even members of the political/military elite who were Muslims, did not—nor were they expected to—conform to the standards of piety that were typical of clerics.

If before colonial rule Muslim elites had almost a monopoly on Islam, transformations of the entire political economy during colonial rule would change this. The increased movement of persons and commodities rendered some of these elites obsolete and helped to facilitate the Islamization of large segments of the population. Indeed, the period of French colonial rule in West Africa—from the late nineteenth century until 1960—witnessed the rapid spread of Islam in new areas and among groups that had historically not been Muslim. Many non-Muslims, including urban and agricultural laborers, conscripts to the army, students in colonial schools, and increasingly their village kin were converting to Islam. At the same time, more standardized ritual norms were spreading among virtually all Muslims, including those Muslims who had previously not been expected to conform to such norms. Thus, people from all sectors of society (members of the precolonial political/military elite, recent converts to Islam, and those of marginal social status—hereditary "caste" and servile status) began to emulate the religious practices of Muslim clerics. Religious practices, such as regular prayer and fasting during the month of Ramadan, became ritual norms for all Muslims regardless of social distinctions, hereditary or otherwise. This helped to make the practice of Islam—especially in its public ritual forms—more uniform across space and time. It is striking that today one of the most commonly used terms for Muslim in Bambara, *selibaa* (most likely from the Arabic, *ṣalāṭ*), means quite literally "one who prays." To ask "do you pray?" or "does he pray?" is the ordinary way to inquire whether someone is a Muslim.

Although it is important to look to the colonial era to understand such changes, there are also generally overlooked antecedents for the public sphere in nonsecular discursive forms in this part of West Africa. Prior to colonial rule, debates between Muslim religious figures—a small educated elite for whom classical Arabic was the main language of written communication—often centered on such questions as the legitimacy of rule by particular Muslims and non-Muslims, including the French, the licitness of trade with non-Muslims, and

so forth.[1] We have evidence of such debates in the form of various treatises in Arabic and oral histories and narratives from the precolonial and early colonial periods.[2] During the colonial period, the French administration sought the "loyalty" of virtually all Muslim clerics to whom ordinary Africans were assumed to owe allegiance.[3] Although during colonial rule some Muslims migrated for politico-religious (not to mention economic) reasons to areas beyond French control and argued that others should do the same, most did not. Most Muslim elites accepted the fact that they were living under non-Muslim rule and did not deem flight or migration (*hijra*) from such rule necessary.[4] Acceptance of French rule occasionally came enthusiastically and, at other times, grudgingly. As the decades of French rule passed, for those least enthusiastic about the French presence there was resignation if not acceptance. Debate and deliberation between Muslims about political and economic issues such as the legitimacy of non-Muslim rule was, on the whole, attenuated during the colonial period. This was more or less the case until the 1950s, the decade leading up to independence.

Muslim Preachers and Public Sermons

There was an important development in the propagation of information about Islam during the colonial period that is useful for helping us to understand the emergence of more uniform ways of being Muslim. Drawing upon preexisting discursive forms and particularly written forms, Muslim preachers during the colonial period began to address sermons on specifically Islamic themes to the public outside the context of the mosque. Such preachers came to constitute

---

[1] For examples of such debates in the precolonial period, see Mahibou and Triaud 1983 and Hunwick 1996. For discussion of one such debate under French colonial rule, see Soares and Hunwick 1996.

[2] Many from the region can be found at the Centre de Documentation et de Recherches Ahmad Baba in Timbuktu and in private collections. See Hunwick 2003 for an extensive list of some of the extant documents and published works from the region.

[3] On French colonial policy toward Islam and Muslims in West Africa, see Harrison 1988; Launay and Soares 1999; Robinson and Triaud 1997; Brenner 2000; and Soares 1997, 2000b.

[4] Certain Muslims did migrate, for example, to the Middle East. See Ould Cheikh 2000 for a discussion of a West African living in Palestine who condemned West African Muslims for accepting life under French "infidel" rule.

in effect a new category of religious personality. In large parts of French West Africa, public sermons came to be known in various vernacular languages as *waaju* (or *warate* in Wolof) from the Arabic *waʿz*, meaning sermon (cf. Launay 1992). Such sermons became an increasingly popular form of communicating to large groups of people, both Muslim and non-Muslim. Although it is not possible to date the arrival of this discursive form in West Africa or to trace its relationship to developments elsewhere in the Muslim world, it certainly existed prior to colonial rule. The expanded public sphere under colonial rule facilitated the spread of public sermons, however, and they became one of the principal means for facilitating the spread of Islam and for the standardization of Islamic practices, with implications for public piety in Mali.

It is important to note that there were various kinds of Muslim preachers who used the public sermon. In fact, preachers from the colonial-authorized Muslim establishment sometimes gave public sermons on subjects of interest to the colonial administration. French colonial attempts to use Muslim clerics to exert influence over Muslims in this part of Africa are perhaps best exemplified in the career of one religious personality, Seydou Nourou Tall. From the 1930s onward, Seydou Nourou Tall was the Muslim religious leader in West Africa closest to the French, perhaps even the embodiment of the colonial-authorized Muslim establishment.[5] A grandson of al-Ḥajj ʿUmar Tall, the leader of a nineteenth-century state who had clashed militarily with the French, Seydou Nourou traveled thousands of kilometers across French West Africa on behalf of a succession of colonial administrations, encouraging colonial subjects not only to obey the French and its representatives but also to pay taxes, to work in colonial projects, to ignore calls to strike, to use colonial health facilities, not to immigrate to neighboring colonies, and to perform their Islamic "religious duties."[6] Many of Seydou Nourou

[5] Seydou Nourou Tall's colonial-era activities are discussed in documents throughout colonial archives in Mali, Senegal, and France. See, for example, the collection of documents compiled upon his behalf in the Archives Nationales du Sénégal (Dakar), 19G 43(108), Oeuvres de Seydou Nourou Tall en AOF, 1923–1948. For discussions of his career, see Garcia 1994, 1997; Soares 1997; and Seesemann and Soares n.d.

[6] See, for example, Archives Nationales du Mali, Koulouba (hereafter ANM), 4E 2382 (I) Traduction des conseils donnés par El Hadj Seydou Nourou Tall à tous les musulmans, June 25, 1941.

Tall's public pronouncements—usually in the vernacular language of his audience—took the form of a public sermon in which he related the topic at hand to the discursive tradition of Islam, and especially the Qur'ān and the *ḥadīth*. In one of his sermons in the 1940s, he spoke about such "civic" duties as obedience to French authority and the need to fulfill one's religious obligations as Muslims, which he stressed were much easier given the conditions of colonial rule (see also Chailley 1962). In any case, this new form of public sermon—*waaju*—that sometimes linked Islam with the objectives of the state spread throughout French West Africa. Such public sermons also helped to spread a more standardized Islamic culture premised on the notion that all Muslims should have similar duties and ritual obligations. Eventually, such preachers would widen their appeals to encourage those who could afford to do so to perform the *ḥajj* and to contribute funds toward the construction of new Friday mosques in colonial centers, such as Bamako, the Malian capital.[7] But these public sermons were not to remain the preserve of the colonial-authorized Muslim establishment, nor were members of this establishment the only ones to use such sermons to promulgate the idea that regular prayer and fasting during the month of Ramadan were to be ritual norms for all Muslims.

Paradoxically, the new colonial public sphere created a space in which various kinds of Muslim preachers flourished and made public pronouncements about the practice of Islam that were nonpolitical (at least from the perspective of the French). That is, they did not contest French authority. In colonial archives, one can read about individual Muslims—I want to call them freelance Muslim preachers—who gave sermons and sometimes traveled around to do so. Many of these preachers actively sought to convert non-Muslims to Islam; they also admonished people to give up their un-Islamic practices. In many reported cases, they tried to get people to relinquish or to destroy their allegedly un-Islamic ritual objects—"fetishes" in the colonial lexicon. It was usually when such preachers disrupted the colonial "public order" that they came to the attention of the French and were sometimes arrested and even sent into exile—hence traces in the colonial archives. Indeed, colonial reports document numerous cases in which conversion to Islam and the destruction of

[7] See Centre des Archives d'Outre-Mer, Aix-en-Provence, France (hereafter CAOM), 1 Aff. Pol. 2259/4, L'Islam au Soudan, Rapports Trimestriels 1954.

ritual objects in various places led to open conflict, often along generational lines.[8] That is, younger people, frequently migrants, contested the authority of non-Muslims, who were quite often their elders. Issues of gender were also important here, since most of the first converts seem to have been men. There are also reported cases of certain preachers haranguing those who considered themselves Muslims for failing to practice Islam correctly. For example, some preachers openly criticized African colonial civil servants for drinking alcoholic beverages and/or for exceeding the maximum of four wives permitted according to the rules of Islamic jurisprudence.[9]

Many of these freelance preachers, some not discussed in detail in the colonial archive or discussed only in passing, carried out the work of spreading Islam. Sources here include triumphalist oral narratives and hagiographic accounts in Arabic (and sometimes in French). One of the freelance preachers frequently discussed today, who also left considerable traces in the colonial archives is Cheikh Salah Siby (ca. 1888–1982), a Dogon convert to Islam, largely credited with spreading Islam among the Dogon.[10] Although those familiar with the Griaule school of French ethnology might find the idea of a Dogon Muslim an oxymoron, Cheikh Salah is just one of many such Dogon converts to Islam. During the colonial period, Cheikh Salah actively began to instruct people in what he took to be proper Islamic religious practice—ritual daily prayer, fasting during the month of Ramadan, getting people to slaughter animals according to the rules of Islamic jurisprudence (*ḥalāl*), and so forth—some of the outward signs of Islam. From the 1940s on, he mainly directed his attention to two groups of socially marginal people: first, his fellow Dogon, many of whom took him to be a living Muslim saint, and second,

[8] Documents in ANM and CAOM list many cases from the twentieth century that are too numerous to mention here. For example, see CAOM 75 APOM 4/4, Haut-Sénégal-Niger, Internement de Fodé Ismaïla et consorts, Rapport, September 25, 1911. Early published colonial accounts include some of Paul Marty's writings (for example, Marty 1920), whereas later colonial accounts include one of Griaule's rare discussions of the spread of Islam in West Africa (1949) and Cardaire 1954. See also Manley 1997.

[9] See, for example, ANM, 1B 150, Letter, Fama Mademba, Sansanding, to the Administrator, Ségou, April 23, 1909. I am grateful to Richard Roberts for bringing this document to my attention.

[10] See, for example, CAOM 1 Aff. Pol. 2259/4, Soudan français, Direction Locale des Affaires Politiques (hereafter Aff. Pol.), Bulletin No. 2 (Confidential), November 1953, "Note sur l'Islam au Macina."

some of the many former slaves in the region. These were sizeable groups whom their Muslim neighbors often treated with disdain. In any case, such people—mostly recent converts to Islam—were beginning to emulate the conventions of religious practice, as well as standards of piety, of those with claims to Islamic religious authority—the Muslim elites. Most of the newly Islamized also abandoned other public signs—such as long braided hair for men and certain forms of facial scarification for their children—that indexed them as non-Muslims. In any case, this particular preacher was helping to facilitate the emergence of a more generally shared way of being Muslim. Such developments were only possible given the complex transformations occurring under French rule and with the expansion of the public sphere.

It would be hasty, however, to assume that the adoption of outward—indeed public—signs of Islam meant that allegedly un-Islamic traditions were no longer important. Over time, various kinds of such "traditions" were desacralized and made into local and regional folklore. In some cases, the therapies or medicines of non-Muslim healers were also desacralized and, therefore, rendered licit for Muslims who might seek to use these along with or as an alternative to the increasingly available Western biomedicine. Other "traditions," such as certain masking traditions, were not so much desacralized as made into children's games held at certain points in the Islamic calendar, and, therefore, rendered "harmless." Still yet other allegedly un-Islamic "traditions"—forms of spirit possession and the use of certain non-Islamic ritual objects—have been increasingly relegated to private or at least semipublic venues, that is, out of the view of potential critics, Muslim or otherwise.[11] It is here that one can see some of those excluded from the expanding public sphere in which Islam dominates.

Muslim Associations and New Muslim Intellectuals

In contrast to the freelance Muslim preachers, new Muslim associations were founded in urban areas, increasingly from the 1930s onward. These new Muslim associations ostensibly admitted all

[11] Since such "traditions" are often not public or are only semipublic, the analytical optic of "counterpublics" is arguably applicable here.

Muslims as members, but tended to attract those who were colonial civil servants, former soldiers, and others involved in the new colonial urban centers of economic activity (cf. Loimeier 1999; Meillassoux 1968; and Gomez-Perez 1991, 1997). Some of these early associations sought to encourage and facilitate the *ḥajj*, which increasingly became a goal of an expanding and aspirant African Muslim bourgeoisie.[12] Several of the associations organized public meetings where invited speakers, including prominent African Muslim intellectuals, talked about such topics as Muslim unity and morality.[13] Working with one association, Fraternité Musulmane, Mahmoud Ba, a West African educated in Mecca in the 1930s, gave public addresses in which he condemned Muslim youths for being more drawn to drink and pleasure than to practicing religion.[14] According to French accounts, such meetings were decidedly nonpolitical or at least generally avoided political issues. In 1948, however, after developments in Palestine, one organization made public statements that "this dispute" did not concern West African Muslims living under French rule.[15] It is noteworthy that the public meetings of these associations generally ended with speakers thanking France for her "civilizing mission," however perfunctory such statements might seem.[16]

By the early 1950s, certain West African Muslim intellectuals began to enter the public arena in new ways. In contrast to those Africans who had engaged in French-language secular schooling, such as many of the members of the early Muslim associations, these intellectuals were part of a newly emergent, highly educated Muslim elite, who had undergone advanced Islamic education, whether in Mali, elsewhere in West Africa, or abroad, at institutions like al-Azhar in Cairo

---

[12] On the *ḥajj*, see Cardaire 1954 and Chailley 1962.

[13] For example, in the late 1940s, a new organization, Fraternité Musulmane (founded in 1936), organized "des réunions publiques où les mêmes thèmes de morale, sociale et religieuse, sont developpés: condamnation du gaspillage à propos de mariage; union des musulmans, respect du Coran; condamnation de la frequentation des salles de bal." See CAOM, 1 Aff. Pol. 2259/1, L'Islam en AOF, Aff. Pol. Musulmanes, Rapport Trim., 2d & 3d trim., 1948. These same themes are among those discussed by many Muslim associations in Mali today.

[14] See CAOM, 1 Aff. Pol. 2259/1, Aff. Pol. Musulmanes, Rapport Trim., 2d trim., 1950; see also Kane 1997: 447ff. for a discussion of Mahmud Ba's preaching from the 1940s onward, and Brenner 2000.

[15] See CAOM 1 Aff. Pol. 2259/1, L'Islam en AOF, Aff. Pol. Musulmanes, Rapport, 2d & 3d trim. 1948.

[16] See, for example, CAOM 1 Aff. Pol. 2259/1, Aff. Pol. Musulmanes, Rapport Trim., 3d trim., 1950.

or the Dar al-Ḥadīth in the Hijaz. Inspired by the nationalism sweeping the Arab world, the independence of British colonies, most notably, India and Pakistan in 1947 with their large Muslim populations, and the independence of Libya from Italy in the early 1950s, some of these Muslim intellectuals sought to connect anticolonialist ideas with more reformist ideas about Islam. Given that their activities were under constant surveillance, they were not able to act as freely as the colonial-authorized Muslim establishment. Indeed, some "reformist" preachers were subject to harassment after making their own public pronouncements that were deemed insulting to the French or other Muslim clerics; they sometimes had their schools closed and were occasionally imprisoned for allegedly disrupting public order (see Brenner 2000; Kaba 1974).

In the early 1950s, "reformist" Muslim intellectuals[17] in what is present-day Mali (together with intellectuals from the neighboring French colonies of Senegal and Guinea) founded the Union Culturelle Musulmane (the UCM, Muslim Cultural Union), a voluntary organization whose stated objectives included "the establishment of a reformed Islam [*un Islam renové*], education, and the liberation of the African Man [*l'Homme Africain*]" (cited in Chailley 1962: 46).[18] Some of these reform-oriented intellectuals also published pamphlets in French and Arabic that explicitly expressed anticolonial views. In the introduction to one such pamphlet, Cheikh Touré boldly identified "the trio" of the "Capitalist, Marabout [Muslim cleric], [and] Colonialist," who "exploited, misled, and oppressed" people in West Africa (Touré 1957: 1). This author even decried "the collaboration with the [colonial] authorities carried on even in our mosques, meetings, and [during] religious holidays" (Touré 1957: 9–10; see also Diané 1956 and Chailley 1962). In 1954, after the outbreak of war in Algeria, some of these intellectuals demanded that West African Muslims not be sent to serve in North Africa. In some of their public pronouncements and published writings, these reformists criticized

[17] During the colonial period in West Africa, French colonial administrators used "Wahhabi" rather loosely to refer to "reformist" Muslims, and this terminology continues to be used there today in both French and in the region's vernaculars. On such "reformists" in Mali, see Kaba 1974; Hamès 1980; Amselle 1985; Triaud 1986; Niezen 1990; Brenner 1993, 2000; Soares 1997; and Hock 1999.

[18] Mali's first postcolonial socialist regime of Modibo Keita disbanded the UCM. Following the overthrow of the regime in 1968, the UCM was allowed to reorganize, but disbanded a second time in 1971. On the UCM in Soudan/Mali, see Kaba 1974 and Amselle 1985.

certain Muslim clerics for what they considered to be un-Islamic practices. They condemned in particular their use of the Islamic esoteric sciences, those areas of secret or mystical knowledge ("magic" by most anthropological definitions), as well as for the pedagogical style of "traditional" Islamic education centered on the memorization of texts. In general, these new Muslim intellectuals sought to change the way Islam had long been practiced in West Africa in order to bring it more in line with what they deemed to be more "correct" practices, modeled on the presumed center of the Islamic world, the Arab Middle East. Toward this end, a number of them set up their own "modern" Islamic educational institutions in some of the largest towns, borrowing their pedagogical style from the colonial French-language secular schools (see Brenner 1991, 2000).[19]

When these "reformists" entered public debate, they helped to animate discussions about what it meant to be Muslim—what was the proper way to be Muslim. And since the 1950s, some of the ongoing debates and sometimes conflicts about Islam in Mali have been between the heirs of some of these urban-based reformists and those we might call "traditionalist" Muslims, who are more closely identified with Sufi orders and traditional Islamic education. Over time, there have been heated debates between these groups about religious doctrine and practices—for example, about whether to cross one's arms across the chest during prayer. What is remarkable, however, is the actual convergence between such reformists and those they criticize about the practice of Islam and piety over the past few decades. In fact, "reformists" and "traditionalists" generally agree that all Muslims should practice a more standardized Islam—regular prayer, fasting during the month of Ramadan, and the *ḥajj* whenever possible. They are frequently in agreement about the kinds of "traditional" or "magicoreligious" practices—most notably, spirit possession and the use of un-Islamic ritual objects—that they find objectionable (Soares 1999). Moreover, they are also sometimes united in their opposition to the secularism of the postcolonial state.

[19] See Brenner's discussion of the colonial-backed "counterreform movement" (2000). There were also other Muslim intellectuals whose perspectives might be called pro-French "modernist" Muslim.

The Public Sphere, Standardization, and Difference

The public sphere that developed under colonial rule and through which public sermons spread has only continued to expand in the postcolonial period, in which the Malian state is ostensibly committed to the principle of *laïcité*. Today the public sphere is animated by religious education, sermons, print and audio-visual media, and the country's Islamic organizations, all of which have been influenced by transnational and global interconnections (cf. Bowen 1993; Eickelman and Piscatori 1996; and Anderson 1991). This public sphere has helped to make information and ideas about Islam (not to mention other areas of knowledge), including that from beyond the immediate area, more readily available to the public. Although this public sphere is perhaps more vibrant in urban areas, it also extends into some of the far reaches of the country where for many people to be Malian means to be Muslim. The public sphere has, if anything, helped to foster a supralocal sense of shared Muslim identity in Mali, an imagined community of Muslims often linked to the Malian state whose members are to varying degrees attentive to the broader Islamic world that lies beyond the state boundaries.[20] There are of course those excluded from such a sphere, most notably, Christians and other non-Muslims in Mali. Although some Malians see themselves as participating directly and unambiguously in the global Islamic community—the *umma*—many other Malian Muslims recognize differences between themselves and others that cannot be elided in the imagining of such a transnational community.[21] This imagined community of Muslims in Mali helps shape the way ordinary Muslims practice Islam. This public sphere has helped to create pressures to standardize Islamic practices, especially in their public ritual forms.[22]

With the shift to more standardized norms of piety and the rise of an ostensibly more uniform way of being Muslim, what Eickelman has called a "generic Islam" (1989b), one might suspect that there

[20] This formulation of a Muslim community has been influenced by van der Veer's (1994) discussion of religious nationalism in India.

[21] This is not in any way to suggest the existence of anything like the African Islam ("Islam noir") of the colonial imagination.

[22] The debate about "orthopraxy" in Islam is relevant here. Cf. Smith 1957; Asad 1986; and Eickelman 1989a.

would no longer be any place for the hereditary transmission of learning or hereditary sanctity or charisma. This is not, however, the case. In many places in Mali, including western Mali, lineages of religious specialists have been able to retain control over Islamic religious education and leadership positions such as imam, not to mention roles in the various Sufi orders. This has also been the case in some urban areas where people have objected to recent converts to Islam and even their descendants acting as imam.[23] Members of lineages of religious specialists continue to have reputations for their knowledge and use of the Islamic esoteric sciences.[24] Almost without exception, Muslim saints and other esteemed living or deceased religious personalities come from these same lineages thought to have access to such secret knowledge. In some cases, certain living Muslim saints have flourished along with the expansion of the public sphere (Soares 1997, 1999, 2000a).

If these might seem to be examples of all that is "traditional" in contemporary Mali, it is useful to consider one of Mali's—may I dare say—more postmodern religious personalities to understand how differences between Muslims continue to be so important. Chérif Ousmane Madani Haïdara (b. 1955) is the head (or "spiritual guide") of *Ançar Dine* (in Arabic Anṣār al-dīn), one of the more successful of the many new Muslim organizations that have proliferated in Mali since the overthrow of President Moussa Traoré's authoritarian regime in 1991 (see Hock 1999 for an extensive, though necessarily incomplete, list of such new organizations). He is perhaps Mali's most controversial and flamboyant Muslim media personality. Ever since being arrested and banned from preaching on several occasions in the late 1980s for allegedly insulting remarks, Haïdara has managed to garner considerable public attention.[25] He states quite emphatically that he

[23] See Chailley (1962: 29–31) for a discussion of a case from the mid-1950s when groups of Soninke and Toucouleur founded their own mosque in Bamako rather than accept an imam who was Bambara. I learned about similar contemporary cases during field research.

[24] Such knowledge and its use are no less important to what it means to be Muslim for many whose lives are increasingly associated with the modern—here higher rates of literacy and secular schooling.

[25] Some of the Malian newspaper coverage of Haïdara and his followers include Sidibé 1993; Traoré 1996; Coulibaly 1999, 2000; and Diarra 2003. He is invariably mentioned as among the country's most influential preachers in recent newspaper coverage of "Islamic" issues in Mali.

fashions himself after the Egyptian preacher ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd Kishk (see Kepel 1986), and that Kishk's sermons have provided inspiration for his own. Haïdara appeals to a mass public—including many who are illiterate—in Mali and among Malian migrants elsewhere in Africa and in Europe largely through his sermons (in Bamana/Bambara) on audiocassette and video that circulate widely.[26] Haïdara has received considerable media attention for provocative public statements he has made about the immorality and dishonesty of politicians (much like Kishk), merchants, and other clerics, as well as for his interventions in debates about public morality and the correct practice of Islam. His is a project focused on the shaping of moral subjects in the public sphere, a very public Islam that also includes a social agenda. In this way, he is not unlike such colonial-era Muslim preachers as Seydou Nourou Tall. In his sermons and other public pronouncements, Haïdara has insisted that Malian Muslims—many of whom know little Arabic—can perform the ritual daily prayers (*ṣalāt* in Arabic) in whatever vernacular language they speak. The discussions and controversy about this and other subjects raised in his sermons have undoubtedly helped to spread his reputation, even notoriety.

Although the media have been central to the making of Haïdara's career, his ability to receive a forum—even to enter public debate about morality and Islam—seems to relate in no small part to his status as a member of a lineage claiming descent from the Prophet Muhammad. In fact, his patronym, Haïdara, indicates sharifian descent here, as it does in large parts of Muslim West Africa. However important his personal charisma, which includes his skills as a talented orator and his media savvy, authoritative hereditary charisma seems to be the condition of possibility for the making of his career. Furthermore, Haïdara—whom some consider an Islamist—is often venerated much like a "traditional" Sufi saint. I have watched as people have approached him to kiss his hand or be touched by him, that is, in exactly the same way many Malian Muslims approach descendants of the Prophet Muhammad or other saintly Muslim figures. Although I have witnessed Malian "reformist" and "modernist" Muslims react to such displays toward Haïdara with dismay,

[26] In 1999, Haïdara told me that he had been making sermons on audiocassettes for more than sixteen years.

sometimes even utter disbelief, most Malians do not find the veneration of Haïdara in any way surprising.

Islam in Public

Ritual daily prayer and particularly communal Friday prayer have become perhaps the most public of all signs of piety in contemporary Mali. Fasting during Ramadan and the breaking of the fast at sunset have increasingly become public acts, especially in urban Mali. The *ḥajj*—the pilgrimage to the Holy Cities—is also a public act, when pilgrims embark on their voyage and upon return. Such public signs have not, however, guaranteed the probity of everyone's piety. It is interesting to note that those of "caste" and servile status and recent converts to Islam were among the first to finance the construction of large and imposing mosques in their natal villages throughout Mali. Even these acts, perhaps the most visible and therefore public acts of piety, have not erased individual actor's marginal status in relation to Muslim elites—clerics and marabouts—as far as matters Islamic go. Even today, when such people have been able to perform the *ḥajj* their motives have been questioned. More generally, as the number of those from broad sectors of the society going on the *ḥajj* has increased, so have suspicions that many ordinary Malian Muslims might have less than pious motives for performing the *ḥajj*. Many Malians joke about their compatriots performing what they call "the business *ḥajj*," that is, traveling to the Holy Cities under the pretext of the *ḥajj* with the real objective being commerce—to purchase consumer items such as electronics, jewelry, and so forth to resell at a substantial profit in Mali.

At the beginning, I mentioned one public sign of piety that is especially important. This is *seere*, the dark, sometimes circular, spot or mark on some Muslims' foreheads. As I have noted, some state that the mark indexes regular prayer beyond the obligatory five ritual daily prayers and presumably appears on the forehead from touching the ground during prayer. Many Malians readily note that the Prophet Muhammad's close companions had such a mark. Those with formal Islamic education can easily identify textual sources where this mark and those close people to the Prophet Muhammad are discussed—most importantly in one of the *sura*s in the Qur'an (*al-fatḥ*, 48: 29).

It is instructive to focus on these publicly visible signs of piety not only because they were the subject of considerable discussion in Mali but also because they are not limited to any one group of Muslims. That is, they are not limited in the way that, say, beards and black veils might be limited to reformists or so-called Islamists. In a sense, they concern all Muslims and the more standardized set of norms that have become widespread in this setting.

When some of my Malian informants and friends spoke about the marks on people's foreheads, they did so as a way to refer to how much a particular person apparently prays as a Muslim. In this way of thinking, the mark indexes piety. Or, at the very least, it indexes performance of prayer that is regular, even out of the ordinary in its regularity. Many Malians think and state otherwise, however; they note that many of the most pious Muslims they know do not have this mark, though admittedly some do. Some refer mockingly in French to those with the dark spot as having *le tampon noir*, the black stamp—the ubiquitous bureaucratic seal the French colonial state introduced—on their foreheads. Many state that certain Muslims will go to great lengths for people to think they are pious. Indeed, some even speculate that many Malians will rub something on the forehead—even a stone—until such a mark appears. Several people told me that they too could easily have one of these marks if they wanted.

Over the course of my fieldwork, I began to notice these marks on various people's foreheads, almost all of whom were adults. They were from all sectors of society, from schoolteachers and civil servants to market traders, the unemployed, and Muslim clerics. They included some of my male friends in their thirties and forties, and relatives of my informants, including a few adult women. Although some of those who have these marks were esteemed religious leaders, including some with saintly reputations, they were clearly not the overwhelming majority. In fact, the overall pattern was, at least for me, entirely unexpected.

Prominent Muslim religious leaders aside, many of the Malian Muslims whom I know with these marks fall into two categories (what follows draws on conversations with some of my more sociologically minded informants). First, there are those of relatively marginal social status, who, despite the performance of the practices of a standardized Islam that has become more widespread through the public sphere or even the financing of new mosque construction, are not readily accepted as Muslims on par with the descendants of the

hereditary Muslim clerics. For example, former slaves, members of "castes," and descendants of recent converts.[27] A subcategory here would be some of the ordinary Muslim women I know who are childless and have these marks. The exemplary piety of such women and the mark that indexes this piety, I suspect, relate to their inability to bear children in a setting where childbearing is greatly valued. Second, there are various persons from all sectors of society whose moral character is in question, usually because of charges of corruption, embezzlement, or illicit sexual activities; or because of the amassing of considerable wealth under economic conditions that are very precarious. For example, I know several civil servants—some of whom are members of prominent lineages of Muslim religious specialists—who have been charged with stealing public funds upon whose foreheads the marks have appeared. In one case, the mark appeared after a period in prison. Similarly, there is the case of one friend accused of embezzling money from his father's prosperous import company who also had a mark appear. I also know young well-to-do businessmen—French-educated in some cases—with reputations as notorious womanizers with these marks.

One might read the appearance of such marks as attempts to clear one's name after public embarrassment or to safeguard one's reputation. But it is perhaps unwise for the anthropologist to speculate about the intentionality of actors. Indeed, it might even be churlish to read these signs as acts of deliberation—that is, actions of mindful bodies. Be that as it may, it is clear that there is no better way to prove one's piety than through signs that are publicly recognized as valid.[28] Whether the individual actor uses such signs consciously is perhaps beside the point. What is important to note is that actors exhibit their piety according to certain accepted norms and they do so publicly, that is, in ways that the public sphere encourages. As I have suggested, some of these signs of piety, and the marks in particular, are not unlike what linguists have called hypercorrection

[27] See Ahmed 1981, who discusses low-status Bengali Muslims whose strategies of "upward mobility" included claiming descent from high-status Muslim groups in Bengal and emulating their practices. I am grateful to Naveeda Khan for bringing this source to my attention.

[28] Cf. Salvatore's discussion of "staging virtue" in Egypt (1998) and Hirschkind on the ethics of listening (2001).

in language use, or the quest for what Bourdieu (1984) has called "distinction."

Unlike Habermas's view that "public opinion" is key to the public sphere (1989 [1962]), the "consensus" (*ijmāʿ*) of the Muslim community is what seems to be of paramount importance in Mali. After all, on the one hand, there does seem to be "consensus" about proper Islamic religious conduct, the appeal of a more "generic Islam," and identifiable processes of the standardization of religious practice and public piety. On the other hand, there are real differences, which belie the existence of any such publicly proclaimed or tacitly accepted "consensus." As I have argued, hereditary sanctity and distinction remain very important factors in how Islam is practiced in postcolonial Mali. Moreover, the "consensus" about proper public conduct and piety excludes all of those whose actions in private or in semipublic venues do not partake of the consensus. It is the much-discussed *seere* that helps to illustrate some of the paradoxes of the "consensus" about public piety within the broader public sphere in Mali. Some of those Muslims with such an ostensibly visible sign of piety on their foreheads actually risk publicly betraying their inauthenticity—in short, their very lack of piety—to other Muslims. This has been a topic of much discussion, both in public and in private, among many, if not all ordinary Malian Muslims for whom piety and its public signs have become in recent years matters of considerable concern.

References

Ahmed, Rafiuddin
1981 *The Bengal Muslims, 1871–1906.* Delhi: Oxford University Press.
Amselle, Jean-Loup
1985 "Le Wahabisme à Bamako (1945–1885)." *Canadian Journal of African Studies* 19, no. 2: 345–57.
Anderson, Benedict
1991 *Imagined Communities.* Rev. ed. New York: Verso.
Asad, Talal
1986 *The Idea of an Anthropology of Islam.* Washington, D.C.: Center for Contemporary Arab Studies, Georgetown University.
Bourdieu, Pierre
1984 *Distinction*, translated by Richard Nice. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
Bowen, John R.
1993 *Muslims through Discourse.* Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Brenner, Louis
1991 "Médersas au Mali." In *L'Enseignement islamique au Mali*, edited by Bintou Sanankoua and Louis Brenner. Pp. 63–85. Bamako: Jamana.
1993 "Constructing Muslim Identities in Mali." In *Muslim Identity and Social Change in Sub-Saharan Africa*, edited by Louis Brenner. Pp. 59–78. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
2000 *Controlling Knowledge*. London: C. Hurst.
Calhoun, Craig
1992 "Introduction." In *Habermas and the Public Sphere*, edited by Craig Calhoun. Pp. 1–48. Cambridge: MIT Press.
Cardaire, Marcel
1954 *L'Islam et le terroir africain*. Koulouba: IFAN.
Chailley, M.
1962 "Aspects de l'Islam au Mali." In *Notes et études sur l'Islam en Afrique noire*, edited by M. Chailley et al. Pp. 9–51. Paris: Peyronnet.
Cissé, Seydou
1992 *L'Enseignement islamique en Afrique noire*. Paris: L'Harmattan.
Coulibaly, I.
1999 "Haïdara accusé de division d'un village." *Liberté*, October 11: 2.
2000 "La Fête de Laïlatoul Kadr tourne au drame." *Liberté*, January 24: 6.
Diané, el-Hadji K.
1956 *Le Coran, lumière du Créateur*. Algiers: Guiauchain.
Diarra, Boubacar S.
2003 "Fête de Maouloud: Wulibali, le Mouride malien confirme sa réputation." *Aurore*, May 22.
Eickelman, Dale F.
1989a *The Middle East: An Anthropological Approach*. 2nd ed. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall.
1989b "National Identity and Religious Discourse in Contemporary Oman." *International Journal of Islamic and Arabic Studies* 6, no. 1: 1–20.
Eickelman, Dale F., and James Piscatori
1996 *Muslim Politics*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
Garcia, Sylviane
1994 "El Hadj Seydou Nourou Tall, 'grand marabout' tidjane; L'histoire d'une carrière (1868–1980)." Mémoire de maîtrise, Université de Paris VII.
1997 "Al-Hajj Seydou Nourou Tall, 'grand marabout' tijani'." In *Le temps des marabouts*, edited by David Robinson and Jean-Louis Triaud. Pp. 247–75. Paris: Karthala.
Gómez-Perez, Muriel
1991 "Assocations islamiques à Dakar." *Islam et sociétés au sud du Sahara* 5: 5–19.
1997 "Une Histoire des associations islamiques sénégalaises (Saint-Louis, Dakar, Thiès): Itinéraires, stratégies et prises de parole (1930–1993)." Thèse de doctorat, Université de Paris VII.
Griaule, Marcel
1949 "Islamisme." In *Encyclopédie de l'empire français*. Volume 1. Pp. 140–44. Paris: Encyclopédie Coloniale et Maritime.
Habermas, Jürgen
1989 [1962] *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere. An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*. Cambridge: MIT Press.
Hamès, Constant
1980 "Deux aspects du fondamentalisme islamique." *Archives de sciences sociales des religions* 50, no. 2: 177–90.

Harrison, Christopher
1988 *France and Islam in West Africa, 1860–1960*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Hirschkind, Charles
2001 "Civic Virtue and Religious Reason." *Cultural Anthropology* 16, no. 1: 3–34.
Hock, Carsten
1999 *Fliegen die Seelen der Heiligen? Muslimische Reform und staatliche Autorität in der Republik Mali seit 1960*. Berlin: Klaus Schwarz.
Hunwick, John O.
1996 "Secular Power and Religious Authority in Muslim Society." *Journal of African History* 37, no. 2: 175–94.
2003 *Arabic Literature of Africa*, Volume 4: *The Writings of Western Sudanic Africa*. Leiden: E.J. Brill.
Kaba, Lansiné
1974 *The Wahhabiyya*. Evanston: Northwestern University Press.
Kane, Mouhamed M.
1997 "La Vie et l'oeuvre d'Al Hajj Mahmoud Ba Diowol (1905–1978)." In *Le Temps des marabouts*, edited by David Robinson and Jean-Louis Triaud. Pp. 431–65. Paris: Karthala.
Kepel, Gilles
1986 *Muslim Extremism in Egypt*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press.
Launay, Robert
1992 *Beyond the Stream*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press.
Launay, Robert, and Benjamin F. Soares
1999 "The Formation of an 'Islamic Sphere' in French Colonial West Africa." *Economy and Society* 28, no. 4: 497–519.
Loimeier, Roman
1999 "Political Dimensions of the Relationship between Sufi Brotherhoods and the Islamic Reform Movement in Senegal." In *Islamic Mysticism Contested*, edited by Frederick de Jong and Bernd Radtke. Pp. 341–56. Leiden: E.J. Brill.
Mahibou, Sidi M., and Jean-Louis Triaud
1983 *Voilà ce qui est arrivé. Bayân mâ waqa'a d'al-Hâgg 'Umar al-Fûtî*. Paris: CNRS.
Manley, Andrew
1997 "The Sosso and the Haidara." In *Le Temps des marabouts*, edited by David Robinson and Jean-Louis Triaud. Pp. 319–36. Paris: Karthala.
Marty, Paul
1920 *Études sur l'Islam et les tribus du Soudan*. Volume 4. Paris: Ernest Leroux.
Meillassoux, Claude
1968 *Urbanization of an African Community*. Seattle: University of Washington Press.
Niezen, Ronald
1990 "The 'Community of the Helpers of the Sunna.'" *Africa* 60, no. 3: 399–423.
Ould Cheikh, Abdel Wedoud
2000 "Les Perles et le soufre." In *La Tijaniyya*, edited by Jean-Louis Triaud and David Robinson. Pp. 125–63. Paris: Karthala.
Robinson, David, and Jean-Louis Triaud, eds.
1997 *Le Temps des marabouts*. Paris: Karthala.
Rosander, Eva Evers, and David Westerlund, eds.
1997 *African Islam and Islam in Africa: Encounters between Sufis and Islamists*. Athens: Ohio University Press.

Salvatore, Armando
1998 "Staging Virtue: The Disembodiment of Self-Correctness and the Making of Islam as Public Norm." In *Islam—Motor or Challenge of Modernity, Yearbook of the Sociology of Islam* 1, edited by Georg Stauth. Pp. 87–120. Hamburg: Lit Verlag; New Brunswick, N.J.: Transaction.
Seesemann, Rüdiger, and Benjamin F. Soares
In press "'Being as Good Muslims as Frenchmen': On Islam and Colonial Modernity in West Africa." In *Religious Modernities in West Africa*, edited by John H. Hanson and Rijk van Dijk. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
Sidibé, S.
1993 "Islam et société: Prédicateurs." *L'Essor*, December 25–26: 4.
Smith, William Cantwell
1957 *Islam in Modern History*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
Soares, Benjamin F.
1996 "The Public Sphere of Islam and a Cancelled Christian Crusade." Paper presented at the African Studies Association annual meeting, San Francisco.
1997 "The Spiritual Economy of Nioro du Sahel: Islamic Discourses and Practices in a Malian Religious Center." Ph.D. dissertation, Northwestern University.
1999 "Muslim Proselytization as Purification." In *Proselytization and Communal Self-Determination in Africa*, edited by Abdullahi A. An-Na'im. Pp. 228–45. Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis.
2000a "Muslim Saints in the Age of Neoliberalism." Paper presented at the workshop, "The Politics of Social Reproduction in Neoliberal Africa," University of Chicago.
2000b "Notes on the Anthropological Study of Islam and Muslim Societies in Africa." *Culture and Religion* 1, no. 2: 277–85.
Soares, Benjamin F., and John Hunwick
1996 "The *shaykh* as the Locus of Divine Self-Disclosure." *Sudanic Africa: A Journal of Historical Sources* 7: 97–112.
Touré, Cheikh
1957 *Afin que tu deviennes un croyant*. Dakar: Imprimerie Diop.
Traoré, I.
1996 "Islam." *Le Républicain*, December 11: 4.
Triaud, Jean-Louis
1986 "Abd al-Rahman l'Africain (1908–1957), pionneur et précurseur du wahhabisme au Mali." In *Radicalismes islamiques*, edited by Olivier Carré and Paul Dumont. Volume 2. Pp. 162–80. Paris: L'Harmattan.
Van der Veer, Peter
1994 *Religious Nationalism*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press.

CHAPTER TEN

FRAMING THE PUBLIC SPHERE: IRANIAN WOMEN IN THE ISLAMIC REPUBLIC*

Fariba Adelkhah

It is possible to understand the 1979 Iranian Revolution and the Islamic Republic that emerged from it in terms of the formation of a public space. The successive crises that the regime experienced should then be read according to the splits that such a process creates. Major political scandals, such as the trial of the former mayor of Tehran, Gholamhossein Karbashi (1998), or more recently the Sharam Jazaeiri Arab affair (2002), originated with the private appropriation of public funds, although the distinction between private and public was hardly clear from the perspective of the different protagonists. The repression of Islamic intellectuals critical of the Republic, such as Mohsen Kadivar or Hassan Yossefi Eshkevari, was justified not for what they thought but because they expressed their views in public rather than within the "qualified" circles of the clerical establishment. Not all truths are good to say in public. The conflict between "conservatives" and "reformers" turns in large measure on the definition of public space and the modes of legitimate action within it. The polemics and repression engendered by student demonstrations, the use of satellite dishes, and women's presence in sports stadiums exemplify this conflict.

For over forty years the relation between the private and public spheres has been a subject of constant debate in Iran. It was shaped by the issue of social being (*adām-e ejtemāi*), characterized by committing oneself to others in the public domain and redefining one's relations with others. Secular and religious thinkers, as well as social movements, have been major contributors to this process. Beginning in the 1960s, this theme was developed in the struggle over what has been called the "modernization" of Iran. It has concerned the

* Dale F. Eickelman translated this chapter from French into English, and Gene R. Garthwaite provided assistance in transliterating Persian technical terms.

socially recognized means for citizens to deal with one another as "enlightened" and distinguished authorities in both the public and private spheres.

From the outset, it involves thinking of the private and public spheres as a continuum and not as polar opposites. From this perspective, these ongoing debates over social being have worked against the partitioning or atomization of social life in the residential quarters that characterized urban life prior to the oil boom, demographic growth, and the emergence of a "middle class." This theme is threaded though the "modernization" of the 1960s, the calls for liberty at the time of the revolution, the necessity of territorial defense during the war with Iraq, and throughout the period of liberalization under Rasfanjani (1990–1997). It is equally at the core of the transformations under way since the electoral victory of Mohammad Khatami in 1997 and the concept of *zābeteh*, or rule of law (as opposed to that of *rābeteh*, or clientelism) that Khatami sought to foster. The terms of this aspiration have changed from one period to the other. Simply put, the accent in the 1970s was on enhancing the value of the public sphere. For example, this period witnessed the double process of the individuation of space—with the appearance of separate rooms for parents and for their children—and the opening up to the outside world; rooms for receiving guests henceforth became living rooms situated near the entrance of homes. After the revolution—again simplifying—a new value was placed on the private sphere. People sought to enhance and protect the private sphere through a public and rational discourse, that of rule of law, in which each person is treated as an equal.

Forms of sociability multiplied in the wake of the Islamic Republic—religious meetings, sport, and cultural events. They took their legitimacy from legal demands, but informally thrived to the extent that they could evade formal registration or state control. These new forms of sociability developed in family space, among neighbors, and in professional milieus. Two examples are the funds for interest-free loans and women's religious meetings (*jaleseh*). The at least partially private conduct of public practices facilitates their appropriation and control by actors in a mass society. These practices are a factor of trust and predictability in an otherwise uncertain environment, be it from the declining value of currency or the fluctuations in parity between the Iranian rial and the U.S. dollar, or in the context of a minimalist state.

Whatever the continuity between the public and the private, their imbrication is of major significance. One of the political weaknesses of the reformers since 1997 is not to have understood the importance of this permeability. They relied instead on a stereotyped and dated conception of public space hardly understood by those who voted for Khatami in 1997 and 2001. This lack of understanding is suggested by the high rate of abstention in the 2003 municipal elections in the larger towns. At issue is less the weight of legitimacy of religious authority in politics, as is often thought, than the exclusive and unidimensional nature of this authority and its claims to a monopoly in a society that has become complex, differentiated, and open to foreign influences. This continuum of public and private is based on the use of reason in both the public and private spheres, and in the passage from one to the other by means of a multiplicity of small activities. The goal of this chapter is to show this through analyzing the social and political participation of women in society.

Women played a crucial role in the major protests against the imperial regime in 1978, a mass mobilization that gave birth to an Islamic feminism (Adelkhah 1991). Many women resisted when Imam Khomeini indicated his preference for the wearing of the headscarf, and the left and the "democrats" refused to support them, giving priority instead to the "anti-imperialist struggle." Although some Islamic feminists took the side of the protestors in the name of the freedom of choice inherent to belief in Islam, the obligation of wearing the headscarf (*hejāb*) gradually emerged, and the women's movement appeared gradually to split, asphyxiated by the rising political violence, the increasing state repression, and the exigencies of the war against Iraq. The involvement of Islamic feminists in public activities, which rose with the appointment of some women to high government posts immediately after the revolution, subsided with the increasing intensity of the war against Iraq and authoritarianism.

This interpretation is corroborated by the problematic nature of the role of women in society, an issue that remains unresolved by the process of democratization in Iran. A genuine women's social movement continues to smolder in Iran, somewhat like the embers under the cooling brazier of the revolution. This does not involve a systematic confrontation with the state, although there are occasional conflicts with institutions or authorities. Moreover, the emerging power of this feminist movement springs in part from the war with Iraq and the recurring economic crises of the 1970s.

Our interest in the growth of the women's movement in Iran stems less from the exemplar of the mobilization of women at the time of the revolution than from the continuity and vigor of a women's movement burrowed deep in the undercurrents of the Islamic republic. To understand this growth, we must avoid a linear or strictly political vision of this movement. In the Iranian case, it consists of a form of regulation and of reshaping of the relationship between the private and public spheres. In outlining the mobilization of women on themes pertaining to the public sphere (such as debates about polygamy, divorce, and dowry), their public presence—in the media, in courts, and in Parliament—has made a major contribution. Inversely, this participation in the public sphere has allowed women to change the balance of power in private family space to their advantage. In this perspective, this social movement draws its force less from the confrontation between state and society than from the inevitable articulation between private and public.

The Participation of Women in Public Space

The election of Mohammad Khatami to the presidency of the Republic appeared to mark a new era for Iranian women, said to be obstinately subject to and closed within the archaic and phallocratic Republic of the Ayatollahs and the misogyny of Islam. Many women supported his candidacy, and his victory was seen as one for women as well as the younger generation. In November 1998, many saw the demonstration of several hundred female sports "fans" in Tehran's Azadi stadium, where crowds had gathered to celebrate the triumphal return from Australia of the national soccer team and to defy the prohibition against demonstrations, as a confirmation of this evolution of women's public roles.

This evolution of women's public roles antedates the Khatami era and is integrally linked to the history of the Iranian revolution and the Islamic Republic. Since the end of the 1980s it was clear that the new order could not be reduced to a binary opposition between dominators and the dominated, including women. Paradoxically, the veil permitted many women of the lower middle and middle classes, as well as those from working class families and the countryside, to occupy public space and to play active economic and social roles, especially during the Iran-Iraq war of the 1980s.

The mobilization of women to support the Islamic revolution and the ideology of at least some Islamic thinkers, such as Ali Shariati, Ayatollah Morteza Motahhari, and Mehdi Bazargan, contributed significantly to widening women's sphere of action. Broadly speaking, the status of women was more profoundly transformed by the Islamic revolution than it had been by the superficial authoritarian modernization of the Shah. Nonetheless, the achievements of the old regime were largely preserved, at least after the tense first stage of the revolution, thanks to the resistance of women themselves—Islamic militants among them—to efforts to turn them away from public roles. The support of women for the Islamic Republic, or at least certain of its policies and practices, cannot be underestimated. It is based on moral convictions; notwithstanding the obligatory nature of the wearing of the veil (*hejāb*), wearing it signifies the rejection of *fesād*, corruption signified by social disorder. In this way, it legitimates the presence of women in the public sphere.

After the Iran-Iraq war and with the politics of liberalization led by Ali Akbar Hashemi Rasfanjani, the presence of women in public space grew throughout the 1990s. Once again, the decisive contributing factors were socioeconomic, including increased women's access to education, accelerated urbanization, the spectacular transition to lower birth rates (Ladier 2003), and, facilitated by the economic crisis, women's role in informal trade with the other Gulf states, Turkey, and Syria, often combined with pilgrimages to holy places (Adelkhah 1999). The salient feature of these practices was the nearly systematic blend of trading activities—mostly in contraband—with religious and welfare ones.

In these contexts, translation into politics was almost inevitable. After 1979, Parliament had only a handful of women (only four women deputies in the first three legislatures of 1980, 1984, and 1988), and in the government women were noted for their absence. The turning point was the 1996 parliamentary elections. Women candidates were more plentiful than before (82 in 1992, 324 in 1996—and 504 in 2000). During the campaign, women were highly active and often formed "propaganda fronts" (*setādhāh-ye tablighāti*) that paralleled those that men organized. This mobilization was not limited to the large cities. Finally, the electoral campaign in 1996 was marked by unexpectedly strong support for certain candidates, such as Jamileh Kadivar, Nahid Shid, Bibik Qodsyeh Alavi, Elaheh Rastgou, Iran Ahou Riya, and Faezeh Hashemi (Adelkhah 1998:

138–39). By her spirited style even more than her status as daughter of the president of the Republic, Hashemi Rasfanjami became a media presence and gave a new look to Islamic feminism. In the end, the results of the balloting did not equal the visibility of the candidates and the intensity of the electoral campaigns that they conducted, since only twelve women were elected. But the roughnecks of the populist organization nostalgic for the original revolutionary values, the Ansar-e Hizbollah, recognized the significance of the strong showing for women. Several weeks after the second round of balloting, they attacked women bicycling in Tchitgar Park, which was opened to them for recreation by Tehran's reform-minded neighbor, Gholamhossein Karbastshi, politically close to Faezeh Hashemi.

The local elections of February 1999, the first of their kind since the revolution, confirmed for the first time that women were fully exercising their rights under universal suffrage, The number of women candidates rose to 7,000 out of a total of 300,000. This number may appear small, but the political significance was real. In spite of the disproportionately low numbers of female compared to male candidates, women became candidates in the holy cities, remote provinces, and rural areas—for example, Qom, Sistan-Baluchistan, Hormozgan, and Khuzistan—confirming that the social or political participation of the "second sex" was not merely an appendage of the large metropolitan areas or the privileged classes. Only 781 women were elected (out of a total of 200,000 municipal councilors), but this should not negate the fact that women's political participation has taken root in society. Out of 781 women elected, 484 were from rural regions.

We stress that this change in women's status has been brought about by transformations in the "objective" conditions of women—employment opportunities, education, reduction of birth rates—and by a lively press and publication opportunities for women. Likewise, women represent more than 40 percent of the student body of universities and have obtained a more than 60 percent success rate in university entrance examinations since 2000.

Under pressure from the participation of women in society, political and legal debates concerning them, and women's specific cultural contributions, including those in the religious field, men's discourse has had to change. Ayatollah Khomeini, who challenged the legitimacy of the right to vote that the Shah gave to women in 1963, did not reopen the issue after the Islamic revolution and reg-

ularly received delegations of women. Nowadays no one has doubts about the necessity for women to participate in social and political life, not even the conservatives. Whatever their political inclinations, politicians and administrators have women as collaborators and advisers, and they deal with issues concerning women like any other public issue. They do not evade the obligatory discussion of the role of women in the Islamic Republic, celebrating the annual women's day that coincides with the anniversary of the Prophet's daughter, Fatima, and giving awards to "outstanding" women. As for women, theoretically exercising their civic rights as equals of men, it is noteworthy that none of the clerics has tried to enforce within the Parliament a rule that female votes shall count for half that of men, since the Qur'an states that woman's testimony is worth half of that of a man (Ebadi and Zeymaran 1375/1996).

The Islamic Republic is built around a balance. It recognizes and even promotes the social and political discourse of women, which is omnipresent in its discourse, even in its silences, but strict limits are imposed on them at the same time. One limit is veiling, which no one officially calls into question. Its sacred character is the regime's last defense, both in terms of domestic and international politics.

The Questions of Women and the Contingencies of the Political Order

The municipal elections of 1999 and the parliamentary elections of 2000 showed the weakness of the women's movement, including the strictly Islamic one mentioned earlier. Recall that women were only 781 of 200,000 candidates, less that one percent, in the 1999 elections. The 2000 Parliament had only thirteen women, as opposed to fourteen in the prior session and, even more troublesome, these are all teachers and doctors. Six of them are from Tehran, and the others from the major regional cities with the exception of a delegate from Dashtestan in Boushehr province. What appears as an element of progress in the view of some observers—the fact that these deputies belong to the reform movement—in our view shows instead how narrow is the social representation of politically active women. At the same time, women show themselves highly active in other domains, including informal business, certain service professions, in welfare activities, and in religious ones. There is no woman, however, who has been minister in the government for the more than

twenty years since the revolution, even if since Hashemi Rafsanjani the presidency of the Republic has had women advisors; there are no women prefects, mayors, or diplomats, even if no law blocks this possibility. Finally, women continue socially and often juridically to be subject to discriminatory practices that the Committee on Human Rights of the United Nations calls into question year after year.

In this respect, Mohammad Khatami has done no better than his predecessors, and he has not adopted for women's rights the same words and deeds that have characterized his reformist activities in other fields. In his words, women remain idealized in the image of the Prophet's daughter, Fatima Zahra. Women are encouraged to be mothers and guarantors of the well-being of the society that men continue to manage. The leftist press is very timid on this theme. If it took part in the juridical debates in favor of improving women's status, or rather that of mothers, it has refrained from arguing such issues in explicitly political terms. It has shown no fear in opening debate on the constitutional principle of the government by clerics (*velayat-e faqih*), but it is silent concerning the obligation of veiling, which is stipulated neither by the constitution nor by law.

The feminist movement, including Islamic feminists, is not politically autonomous, and female political candidates are not emancipated from the factional struggles that remain dominated by men. In this context, the reformers continue to ask women to scrupulously wear the *hejāb* and to show moderation in their demands to avoid giving ammunition to their adversaries. The conservatives stress strict adherence to veiling in order to set themselves apart from the political tendencies that from their perspective betray the revolutionary principals of the Islamic Republic. Taking into account how the factions loyal to the regime ejected the independents imposed on them by the 1996 elections, and again in the 1999 elections, it is easy to doubt that a specifically female political voice can take hold at the core of the existing political institutions. The determination of those holding on to power to protect "the honor of the system"—according to the consecrated formula, that is, its unity—leaves little place for a more gender-balanced politics.

Politically active women are themselves ambiguous in this regard. The principle of *hejāb* appears internalized and sustains a near-unanimous adherence. The declarations of the most prominent women candidates in the February 2000 elections illustrate this. On the question of whether the *hejāb* could be the subject of a referendum,

Jamileh Kadivar, the woman with the second strongest showing on the Tehran electoral list, told us: "On the basic idea of the *hejāb*, absolutely not, but as to its exact form, there has never been full agreement. Today you can find many forms of *hejāb*. The deputies who were elected were chosen on the basis of their religious faith. They are believers and do not want to call into question such a basic Islamic principle" (interview with the author, February 2000). Moreover, a main current in Islamic feminism, represented particularly by Mrs. Taleghani and her magazine, *Payām-e Hajar*, explicitly challenges a gender-based approach that, from her point of view, marginalizes women by distancing them from the real social problems.

At the extreme, the social and political participation of women also emanates from elaborating on the famed "honor of the system," rather than subverting it. The feminist movement does not go beyond its clichés and rituals. The political liberalization that unleashed social debate in so many other domains has not really addressed women's issues. The *hejāb* question, which does not contradict a real movement, and which is largely accepted since it has created a "thrust"—as it is often worded—between sexes, is nowadays stuck in a narrow but legitimate conception of women's condition. It has not permitted more "audacious" claims. Under the veil, women are confined to tactical issues and have not succeeded in developing a genuine "strategy" specific to them. In certain ways, Faezeh Hashemi, in stressing participation in sports and new forms of *hejāb* better suited to a modern, active life and contemporary tastes, has obliquely felt the importance of the women's movement and the need to transform the status of women. However, in the heat of the February 2000 electoral campaign, the significance of her activities was lost. The principle of the *hejāb* is always susceptible to being used by men as a means to delegitimize women's conduct, as the former are reluctant to give up their privileged status. Some say that this is evidence that the *hejāb* creates social exclusion. But a complication stems from the fact that historically there never was an exact time in the history of Iran when the *hejāb* did exclude women, and to the contrary, *hejāb* favored the access of women to the public sphere, often against the will of their father, husband, brothers, and some religious authorities. Many religious dignitaries consider the presence of women in the public sphere, raising their fists outside their chador, shouting slogans, and marching alongside men as the epitome of corruption, leading society directly to the gates of hell. We emphasize

this point. It is only after having provided room for the massive presence of women in the social realm that the *hejāb* as a mobilizing tool was neutralized because of the internal weakness of the women's movement, the escalating political crisis, the war, and the resulting coercive policy of the regime.

This seeming contradiction between first encouraging the participation of women in public life and the subsequent hardening of the regime against women's rights dissipates by looking at a case study, the electoral district of Fariman in the Khorassan region, where we observed the 1996 legislative elections. In February 2000, we did not see women participating in the core electoral activities, as we witnessed in the "propaganda fronts" four years earlier. In 1996, of course, there was no woman candidate in this town, which was largely conservative and traditionally-minded in spite of a solid leftist presence. In this context the candidacy in 2000 of Amenah Beyraghdar—the sister of a martyr, married, and in charge of religious training in a secondary school—could appear to reaffirm the general tendency of the growing political presence of women. The circumstances of her participation, however, make us hesitate to reach this conclusion. Hossein Ghazizadeh, historically the leftist leader in the region, asked several of his supporters to declare themselves candidates in order to replace him in case the Council of the Guardians of the Constitution prohibited him from running. Amenah Beyraghdar was one of these surrogate candidates.

The Council of Guardians denied Ghazizadeh the right to run in the election. He asked for Jafar Afghani to represent him and campaigned for him. Mrs. Beyraghdar chose nonetheless to remain in the race, hoping to keep the left alive and take advantage of its networks. Despite her courage, dynamism, and family support—her husband went so far as to sell his house in order to pay her campaign expenses—she found herself isolated. The local notables refused to endorse her campaign and instead supported Jafar Afghani or, rather, the virtual candidate that he represented, Hossein Ghazizadeh. Lacking financial support and campaign workers, she had trouble making her voice heard. Moreover, to limit campaign costs, the electoral law limits the number of campaign posters that a candidate can post in small towns. It was not possible for women to meet with men, so women stayed away from campaign rallies, limiting their activities solely to women's religious meetings (*jaleseh*) and family visits.

Moreover, the Fariman electoral district includes the electoral district of Sarakhs, mostly Sunni, noted for violent incidents pitting farm workers against one of the most powerful institutions of the Republic, the pious foundation (*vaqf*) of the Astan-e Qods, which today manages a free-trade zone devoted to the transit of goods between Dubai and Central Asia. It was unthinkable for a woman candidate to campaign four hours away from her home and to sleep in communal places such as mosques, where men were able to stay. As an anthropologist, I also had problems of this sort in following the electoral campaign. The candidates did not think of offering me a place in their vehicles and immediately raised the objection that I would have no place to stay or I would be in the company of men. Women were unable to compete as equals outside the main towns. At the most, they campaigned by proxy, through their male relatives.

In the light of the low number of votes obtained by the majority of female candidates, we can ask whether the real objective of the candidacy of some of them was to gain recognition in order to improve their professional standing, especially in the state educational system, or to acquire symbolic capital for other goals. Nonetheless, the obstacles that women face in electoral politics derive less from Islam or current legislation than from economic constraints, local customs, and factional rivalries among local notables in contexts profoundly marked by the control of property and people.

These conditions are different from those prevailing in the larger towns. Even in this context, however, Islamic feminism lacks wide-ranging leaders, with the exception, for a brief period, of Faezeh Hashemi, who was defeated in the last elections. She may have paid for her audacity, or perhaps was a collateral victim of the violent campaign targeted against her father. Would Faezeh Hashimi have won in 1996, or been defeated in 2000, if she had not been the daughter of the president of the Republic? Can we not say the same of Jamileh Kadivar, the wife of Ayatollah Mohajerani, the highly visible minister of guidance and Islamic culture, and sister of the dissident theologian Mohsen Kadivar? They did not rely on family support alone, but it is clear that their activities were facilitated by family connections, making their candidacy different from that of candidates without such a base.

Conclusion: I Get Around, Therefore I Am

In sum, the social participation of women, for which the Islamic Republic remains the paradoxical vehicle, remains largely outside of politics. Above all it reflects the structural mutations of Iranian society, such as urbanization, schooling, the opening of the labor market to women because of the crisis, and the professional segregation of sexes as in health and national education. It is only marginally dependent on political ideology in the strict sense of the term, in spite of the role that women played in the 1979 revolution and the stereotyped homage regularly offered to them. Women's energies are directed instead to informal commerce, welfare activities, and the religious sector, ending fourteen centuries of male monopoly on religious expression.

In practice, the Islamic state is shaped largely by surviving traditional norms capable of reproducing or accommodating local elites and major social forces. These Islamic principles have a highly flexible relation to concrete social practices. The difficulties that Iranian women encounter are due less to the ideology or legislation of the Islamic Republic, which are constantly reformulated, than to the heavy hand of cultural structures and representations that encourage conformity.

From this perspective, the democratic process in turn reflects ambivalence about women's conditions in Iran. The implementation of a genuine Islamic democracy depends more on the inclusion of women in debates about democracy than on the factional fights and rivalries of an elite concerned with safeguarding the "honor of the system" that favors their interests. One of the challenges facing the Islamic Republic is the adaptation of its institutions and forms of political transformation to very rapid social transformations. The women's movement is one such movement, and soon it will have to be recognized politically. Mrs. Beyraghdar placed the following slogan in the space reserved for her posters in the main square of Fariman: "We do not want guardians." Her slogan could be taken to mean Jafar Afghahi standing in as a candidate for Hossein Ghazizadeh. But her allusion to other forms of guardianship—of notables over political life and men over women—was clear. Mrs. Beyraghdar was defeated electorally, but she called social norms and power relations into question, calling for an end to the male monopoly on the political scene of this small, conservative provincial town.

This movement of women has hardly had an impact on the political sphere. Nevertheless, its erosion of the guardianship powers of men over women must be taken seriously. It is above all a movement in the strict physical sense of the term, and most of the social practices of women in the private sphere, as in the public one, affirm it. In contemporary Iran, women travel unsupervised from one place to another and sometimes over long distances. Their right to drive automobiles has never been challenged and many do so, especially in large towns. Elsewhere they move about, generally in groups, both in Iran and in neighboring countries, visiting religious shrines, trading, touring, and visiting family. These images of women traveling alone or together among towns, taking the bus to Damascus, or forming contraband "caravans" are common today, reflecting a largely new situation compared to twenty years ago. Such movement among women benefits several types of economic activity, including travel agencies, transport companies, and hotels. Men's guardianship of women is absent de facto, although the rule requiring a husband's or father's authorization to travel abroad is still in effect.

In addition, women active in the formal or informal market place high value on activities requiring such movement and on the social visibility of their customers. Many women have opened beauty salons and body-building studios or become dressmakers, video photographers of family occasions, cosmetic sellers, or teachers, health workers, and salespeople. It is ironic to note that Islamic morality and regulations have rehabilitated, legitimated, and systematized women's employment in many of these domains. But it is even more important to recognize the fact that these women are now in the workforce, making it easier for other women to do the same. Clothing, beauty products, and sports celebrate women's activities and presence in public. In this respect, the women's social movement becomes a series of "embodiments" (Marcel Mauss) learned by apprenticeship and that facilitate women's socialization. This is crucial, as these practices are not limited to particular places, times, or specific social categories. They have become facts that assure the presence and visibility of women in the public sphere.

Movement, the body, and words about women's bodies and practices and their relation to others are all matters of concern in these activities. This is in terms not only of public policies set into motion by the state but also of personal activities and claims. The fact that this women's movement takes place and is "registration phobic"—

by definition contraband activities and also most of the service activities in which women participate are without administrative authorization or the paying of taxes—is no reason to underestimate their importance. They form part of a continuity of Islamic feminism from the first years of the Republic and in some ways consecrate the movement, even if their specific Islamic and revolutionary form has been largely dissipated or made banal. There decidedly has not been a stalemate of political Islam (Roy 1994). To the contrary, it has spread far beyond the narrow circle of the first generation of militants. These are not the only activists; ordinary women also are. It is true that the social mobilization of women is for a large part limited to the private sphere rather than politics or trading. This is for good reason: women's inequality before the law occurs essentially only in the sections of the civil code pertaining to the family, notably in matters of divorce, the custody of children, polygamy, parental or marital authority, and succession. (The disposition of the penal code concerning "blood money," in which the value placed on a woman's life is much less than a man's, fortunately concerns only few women!) With these exceptions, women enjoy the same rights as men, particularly in the domain of business.

That which appears as a shortcoming—the fact that women's mobilization is occurring in the private sphere—actually shields them from regime control and coercion. This is because the regime respects the private sphere and because the women's movement thus averts political confrontation. In contrast men, who have priority in public space, are more vulnerable, as is shown by the offensive of the Ministry of Justice against reformers, including their newspapers and their candidacy in different elections. We should not underestimate the potential for change emanating from transformations in informal economic and social activities, including those in the private sphere, as some historians see in the origins of the French revolution (Chartier 1991). Without assuming that the same factors are at play in Iran, we can nonetheless see in the women's movement one of the basic vectors of change, less spectacular but more effective than many explicit social movements. Anthony Giddens poses this crucial question, more important to our eyes than any other gloss defining social movements: "Is the expansion of a diversity of different forms of organization—in which the conditions of reproduction are reflexively monitored—a medium of emancipation from preestablished modes of exploitative domination?" (Giddens 1984: 206). The movement of

Iranian women today meets this criterion, at least in part, because it is progressively setting into motion a codification of rules and even laws, a necessary if not sufficient condition for democracy to take hold.

References

Adelkhah, Fariba
1991 *La Révolution sous le voile. Les femmes islamiques d'Iran*. Paris: Karthala.
1999 "Le Retour de Sindbad. L'Iran dans le Golfe," *Les Études du Ceri* 53, Paris: Ceri-Sciences-po.
2000 *Being Modern in Iran*, translated by Jonathan Derrick. New York: Columbia University Press.
Chartier, Roger
1991 *The Cultural Origins of the French Revolution*, translated by Lydia G. Cochrane. Durham: Duke University Press.
Ebadi, Shireen, and Mohammad Zeymaran
1375/1996 *Sonnat va tajaddod dar hoquq-e iran* (Tradition and modernity in the laws of Iran). Tehran: Gandjeh Danesh.
Giddens, Anthony
1984 *The Constitution of Society*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press.
Ladier, Marie
2003 *Population et politique en Iran. De la monarchie à la République islamique*. Paris: Cahiers de l'INED.
Roy, Olivier
1994 [1992] *The Failure of Political Islam*, translated by Carol Volk. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

This page intentionally left blank

GLOSSARY

Terms are defined according to local usage. Many terms, especially religious ones, appear in slightly different form in each of the major languages of the Middle East and Asia; not all variants are given here. Spellings, consequently, often reflect local usage and not the conventions of the major literary languages. Pages where the terms are explained in context are indicated below. A = Arabic; T = Turkish; H = Hindi; U = Urdu; P = Persian.

adāb (A), *adab* (T): advice literature, 18, 122

akhlāq (A): morality, 145

ʿAlawī (A), *Alevi* (T): Shiʿi religious sect found in Turkey, Iraq, Syria, and Lebanon, 183, 192

ʿālim, pl. *ʿulamāʾ* (A): knowledgeable person; religious scholar, 3, 21, 38–39, 54, 59, 62–64, 67, 121, 129–53, 157–76, 191–92, 194

ʿāqila (A): family, kin, or tribe or any group of agnatic relatives corporately liable to pay blood money under *sharīʿa*; in general, party to a legal dispute for blood money, 143

baraka (A): grace, supernatural blessing; abundance, especially as transmitted by a Sufi *shaykh*, 194, 198–99

Baʿth (A): literally "awakening", name of the ruling socialist-oriented nationalist party in Syria (and, with separate leadership, in Iraq until March 2003), 13, 102, 182–83, 185, 187–90, 192

bāṭinī (A): hidden, concealed; esoteric, 186, 195

bayʿa (A): oath of allegiance given to a Sufi shaykh, or to a caliph or, as in Morocco, a religiously legitimized monarch, 3–5

bidʿa (A): unlawful ritual innovation, 166, 191, 194

çarşaf (T): veil donned by women, as mark of the private; literally "sheet" of fabric, 110–11, 115, 117, 120–21

darshan (H): sacred seeing, 44–46

ḍarūra (A): necessity, requirement, according to *sharīʿa*, 136

Dar ül-Islam (T): the abode of Islam, the territories inhabited by Muslim majorities and governed by Muslim rulers under the *sharīʿa*, 112

daʿwa (A): outreach, proselityzing, 62, 64

dhikr (A): Sufi practice of mystical evocation, consisting in the repetition of certain words or phrases in praise of God, 195–98
diya (A): blood money for personal injury under *sharīʿa*, 142–44
edibâne (T): cultured and civilized, modern and progressive, 106, 123
fanāʾ fī-llāh (A): dissolution in God, final stage of the Sufi path, 186
fatwā (A): legal opinion delivered by an expert upon a legal question, 59–60, 63, 149–50, 157–58, 161, 163–65, 169–73, 177
fesād (P): corruption, 231
ḥadīth (A): saying or deed of the Prophet Muhammad, 191
ḥaḍra (A): mystical gathering of a Sufi brotherhood, 193
ḥāl, pl. *āḥwāl* (A): mystical state of exaltation, 195
ḥalāl (A): Islamic legal category meaning "lawful," "permitted," 212
hejāb (P): veil or headscarf, 229
hodja (T): religious leader, 117
ḥaqīqa (A): divine reality; absolute truth; God, 186
hijra (A): flight, migration, including the Prophet's migration from Mecca to Madīna, 209
ḥubb (A): (divine) love, 188, 194
ʿibādāt (A): religious obligations, mainly concerning liturgical practice, 161
ijāza (A): license to teach, or to initiate a Sufi group, 164
ijmāʿ (A): consensus among *ʿulamāʾ*, 223
ijtihād (A): procedure in Islamic jurisprudence consisting in creative reasoning in light of the foundational texts to arrive at new rulings, 62, 138
imām (A): ruler; also spiritual leader; prayer leader, 95, 135, 192, 218, 229
Islāmī ḥukūmat (U): Islamic government, 138
jaleseh (P): women's religious meetings, 228, 236
kadı (T): judge, 90
kāfir (A): unbeliever, 157
karamāt (A): miraculous deeds, 194, 198–99
khalīfa (A): deputy of a Sufi master; also caliph, 185
khalwa (A): Sufi practice of retreat from the world, 197
kufr (A): disbelief; heresy, 157, 162, 168–73
madhhab, pl. *madhāhib* (A): legal school, 193
madrasa (A): Islamic college, usually attached to a mosque, 10–11, 38, 53–54, 59, 137–38, 142, 146
Majalla (A), (T): Ottoman codification of civil law based on the Hanafi legal school (1869–76), 135

maqām (A): each mystical stage reached by a disciple of a Sufi master, 194

marumakkathayam (Malayalam): a system of matrilineal descent and inheritance found in south India, 168

maṣlaḥa (plural: *maṣāliḥ*); *maṣlaḥa ʿāmma* (A): public interest, 131, 149

muhassıl (T): centrally appointed tax collector, 89–90

mukhābarāt (A): intelligence services, 183

murīd (A): disciple of a Sufi master, 182, 186, 197

murshid (A): Sufi master, 182

nafs (A): self; soul, 186, 196–97

pravacan (H): sermon, 44

qalb (A): heart; physical source of love; corporeal link with God, 195

qiṣāṣ (A): law of retaliation under *sharīʿa* (*lex talionis*), 142–43

rābeteh (P): clientelism, 228

salafīyya (A): Islamic reform movement, 184, 187, 192–93, 203

sancak (T): administrative unit of the Ottoman Empire, 88

sangathan (H): (Hindu) unity, 45

satsang (H): devotional gathering, 44

shahāda (A): declaration of faith, 173, 206

sharīʿa (A): the revealed, or canonical, law of Islam, 12–13, 41, 131–47, 150, 152, 161–63, 168, 185, 187, 192–95

shāstrārta (H): religious polemic, 48

shaykh (A): religious leader; Sufi master; (lay) personality endowed with social and sometimes charismatic power, 11, 15, 21, 27, 38, 60, 63–64, 71, 166, 168, 171, 184–86, 188, 190–201, 203

Shiʿī (A): belonging to a major subdivision in Islam that only recognizes as legitimate the authority of the descendants of the Prophet through the lineage of ʿAlī and his successors, the *imām*s, 183

shirk (A): impiety consisting in associating with God, "polytheism," 166, 194

shrāvaka (H): "listener," Jain devotee, 43

ṣidq (A): righteousness, 193

Sunni (A): belonging to the mainstream, orthodox division in Islam that recognizes as legitimate the authority of the consensus within the religious community: some 90 percent of the world's Muslims are Sunnī, 59, 63, 149, 155, 173, 193, 237

sūra (A): chapter of the Qurʾān, 162, 220

takfīr (A): accusation of heresy, 157, 169, 172

ṭarīqa, pl. *ṭuruq* (A): mystical path, Sufi order, 161, 164, 168, 191–92, 194

taqlīd (A): adherence to the established doctrines of one's own school of law, 138, 155
tarbiyya (A): (mystical) upbringing, initiation, 195
taṣawwuf (A): Sufism, Islamic mysticism, 200
tawba (A): repentance, 193
tesettür (T): veiling, 110, 116
vaqf (P): pious foundation, 237
velayat-e faqih (P): constitutional principal of government by clerics in the Islamic Republic of Iran, 234
waʿẓ (A): sermon, 210
Wahhābī (A): followers of Ibn ʿAbd al-Wahhāb, more properly known as al-Muwaḥḥidūn, or "the Unitarians," 64
walī (A): saint, 191
walī al-amr (A): ruler, 134
wāsṭa (A): personal mediation; intercession, 183
wird (A): mystical devotional formula, 195, 197
zābeteh (P): rule of law, 228
ẓāhirī (A): manifest, external, unconcealed, exoteric, legalistic; generally opposed to *bāṭinī*, 186, 189, 194
zāwiya (A): Sufi lodge, 182, 190, 193

NOTE ON CONTRIBUTORS

Fariba Adelkhah is a Research Scholar with the Centre d'Études et de Recherches Internationales in Paris. She received her doctorate in Social Anthropology from the École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales, Paris. Among her publications are "Les Iraniens de Californie: Si la République islamique n'existait pas . . ." *Les Études du CERI*, no. 75 (May 2001); *Ramadan et politique*, coedited with François Georgeon (2000); *Being Modern in Iran* (1999); and *La Révolution sous le voile, Femme islamique d'Iran* (1994).

Jon W. Anderson is Professor and Chair of Anthropology at the Catholic University of America and Adjunct Professor of Arab Studies at Georgetown University's Center for Contemporary Arab Studies, where he also codirects the Arab Information Project. Recent publications include *New Media in the Muslim World: The Emerging Public Sphere*, 2nd ed. (coedited with Dale Eickelman, 2003), and *Arabizing the Internet* (1998).

Brian J. Didier is a Mellon Postdoctoral Fellow at Dartmouth College. He received his Ph.D. in Social Anthropology from the University of Cambridge, and wrote a thesis entitled "Islam and the Dynamics of Religious Dispute on Androth Island, South India." His current research focuses on modes of disputation and forms of reconciliation used by modern Muslims while engaging in religious conflict.

Dale F. Eickelman is Ralph and Richard Lazarus Professor of Anthropology and Human Relations at Dartmouth College. His publications include *The Middle East and Central Asia: An Anthropological Approach*, 4th ed. (2002); *New Media in the Muslim World: The Emerging Public Sphere*, 2nd ed. (coedited with Jon W. Anderson, 2003); *Muslim Politics* (coauthored with James Piscatori, new ed., 2004); *and Knowledge and Power in Morocco* (1985).

Elizabeth Frierson is Assistant Professor of History at the University of Cincinnati. She received her Ph.D. from Princeton University's Department of Near Eastern Studies, writing her dissertation on

cheap illustrated women's magazines in the era of Sultan Abdülhamid II (1876–1909). Her publications include "Unimagined Communities: Educational Reform and Civic Identity among Late-Ottoman Women" (1995), which won the 1996 Ömer Lütfi Barkan Prize. She is currently revising her dissertation manuscript for publication. She also co-directs the Modern Middle East Sourcebook project, which can be previewed at <www.umd.umich.edu/middleastsourcebook/index.html>.

Yves Gonzalez-Quijano teaches contemporary Arabic literature at the Université Lyon II-Louis Lumières. He returned to France in the early 1990s after six years attached to French research institutes in Lebanon and Egypt. He has worked for the Institut du Monde Arabe, led a project for UNESCO, translated several novels, and created a collection of contemporary Arab writings for the French publishing house Actes Sud. He is the author of *Les Gens du livre: Édition et champ intellectuel dans l'Égypte républicaine* (1998) and numerous articles.

Cengiz Kirli teaches in the Atatürk Institute for Modern Turkish History, Bogazici University, Istanbul. He received his Ph.D. in History from the State University of New York, Binghamton, and wrote a dissertation on coffeehouses and the public sphere in nineteenth-century Ottoman Istanbul.

Paulo G. Pinto is a Visiting Professor at the Graduate Program in Anthropology and Political Science of the Universidade Federal Fluminense (PPGACP-UFF) in Brazil. He received his Ph.D. in Social Anthropology from Boston University in 2002, and wrote a thesis on ritual practices, religious experience, and the embodiment of religious identities in the Sufi communities of Aleppo and the Kurd Dagh in Syria. In addition to his research on Sufism in the Middle East, he is doing fieldwork on local and transnational interpretations of Islam in the Muslim community in Brazil with a research grant from the Brazilian National Research Council (Conselho Nacional de Pesquisa, CNPq).

Armando Salvatore is a Senior Research Fellow at the Institute of Social Sciences, Humboldt University, Berlin. His dissertation was granted the 1994 Malcolm Kerr Dissertation Award in the Social Sciences by MESA. He founded in 2000 the "Forum of Social

Research," and he coedits (with Georg Stauth) the "Yearbook of the Sociology of Islam." His publications include *Between Europe and Islam: Shaping Modernity in a Transcultural Space* (coedited with Almut Höfert, 2000), and the edited volume *Muslim Traditions and Modern Techniques of Power* (2001). His most recent works are a manuscript on "Communication, Trust, and Authority: Religious Traditions and the Genealogy of the Public Sphere," and the volume "Religion, Social Practice, and Contested Hegemonies: Reconstructing the Public Sphere in Muslim Majority Societies" (coedited with Mark LeVine).

Benjamin F. Soares, a researcher at the African Studies Center in Leiden, is an anthropologist whose research interests center around religion and modernity in Africa. He has taught at the University of Chicago, Northwestern University, and the University of Sussex, and held fellowships at the University of Chicago and the École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales in Paris. He is the author of a forthcoming book, *Islam and Modernity in a West African Town*, and coeditor of a forthcoming collection of essays on Muslims and the public sphere in Europe.

Peter van der Veer is Professor of Comparative Religion at the University of Amsterdam. He is the author of *Gods on Earth* (1988), *Religious Nationalism* (1994), and *Imperial Encounters* (2001), and the editor of numerous other works. Currently he is doing a study of transnational networks of Indian software engineers.

Muhammad Qasim Zaman is the Robert Gale Noyes Associate Professor of the Humanities and Associate Professor of Religious Studies at Brown University, where he has taught since 1997. He received his Ph.D. in Islamic Studies from McGill University in 1994. He is the author of *The Ulama in Contemporary Islam: Custodians of Change* (2002), *Religion and Politics under the Early ʿAbbasids* (1997), and numerous articles. He is currently working on two books, "A History of Islamic Law in South Asia" and "The Idea of Consensus in Islamic Thought.

This page intentionally left blank

INDEX

See the Glossary for references to italicized terms.

SOCIAL, ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL STUDIES OF THE MIDDLE EAST AND ASIA

1. Nieuwenhuijze, C.A.O. van. *Sociology of the Middle East.* A Stocktaking and Interpretation. 1971. ISBN 90 04 02564 2
6. Khalaf, S. and P. Kongstad. *Hamra of Beirut.* A Case of Rapid Urbanization. 1973. ISBN 90 04 03548 6
7. Karpat, K.H. (ed.). *Social Change and Politics in Turkey.* A Structural-Historical Analysis. 1973. ISBN 90 04 03817 5
9. Benedict, P., E. Tümertekin and F. Mansur (eds.). *Turkey.* Geographic and Social Perspectives. 1974. ISBN 90 04 03889 2
10. Entelis, J.P. *Pluralism and Party Transformation in Lebanon:* Al-Kata'ib, 1936-1970. 1974. ISBN 90 04 03911 2
14. Landau, J.M. *Radical Politics in Modern Turkey.* 1974. ISBN 90 04 04016 1
15. Fry, M.J. *The Afghan Economy.* Money, Finance, and the Critical Constraints to Economic Development. 1974. ISBN 90 04 03986 4
19. Abadan-Unat, N. (ed.). *Turkish Workers in Europe, 1960-1975.* A Socio-Economic Reappraisal. 1976. ISBN 90 04 04478 7
20. Staffa, S.J. *Conquest and Fusion.* The Social Evolution of Cairo A.D. 642-1850. 1977. ISBN 90 04 04774 3
21. Nieuwenhuijze, C.A.O. van (ed.). *Commoners, Climbers and Notables.* A Sampler of Studies on Social Ranking in the Middle East. 1977. ISBN 90 04 05065 5
23. Starr, J. *Dispute and Settlement in Rural Turkey.* An Ethnography of Law. 1978. ISBN 90 04 05661 0
24. el-Messiri, S. *Ibn al-Balad.* A Concept of Egyptian Identity. 1978. ISBN 90 04 05664 5
25. Israeli, R. *The Public Diary of President Sadat.* 3 parts
    1. The Road to War. 1978. ISBN 90 04 05702 1
    2. The Road of Diplomacy: The Continuation of War by Other Means. 1978. ISBN 90 04 05865 6
    3. The Road of Pragmatism. 1979. ISBN 90 04 05866 4
29. Grandin, N. *Le Soudan nilotique et l'administration britannique.* Éléments d'interprétation socio-historique d'une expérience coloniale. 1982. ISBN 90 04 06404 4
30. Abadan-Unat, N., D. Kandiyoti and M.B. Kiray (ed.). *Women in Turkish Society.* 1981. ISBN 90 04 06346 2
31. Layish, A. *Marriage, Divorce and Succession in the Druze Family.* A Study Based on Decisions of Druze Arbitrators and Religious Courts in Israel and the Golan Heights. 1982. ISBN 90 04 06412 5
34. Atiş, S.M. *Semantic Structuring in the Modern Turkish Short Story.* An Analysis of *The Dreams of Abdullah Efendi* and Other Short Stories by Ahmet Hamdi Tanpinar. 1983. ISBN 90 04 07117 2
36. Kamali, M.H. *Law in Afghanistan.* A Study of the Constitutions, Matrimonial Law and the Judiciary. 1985. ISBN 90 04 07128 8
37. Nieuwenhuijze, C.A.O. van. *The Lifestyles of Islam.* Recourse to Classicism—Need of Realism. 1985. ISBN 90 04 07420 1
38. Fathi, A. (ed.). *Women and the Family in Iran.* 1985. ISBN 90 04 07426 0
40. Nieuwenhuijze, C.A.O. van, M.F. al-Khatib and A. Azer. *The Poor Man's Model*

of Development. Development Potential at Low Levels of Living in Egypt. 1985. ISBN 90 04 07696 4

41. Schulze, R. *Islamischer Internationalismus im 20. Jahrhundert*. Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der islamischen Weltliga. 1990. ISBN 90 04 08286 7
42. Childs, T.W. *Italo-Turkish Diplomacy and the War over Libya, 1911-1912*. 1990. ISBN 90 04 09025 8
45. Lipovsky, I.P. *The Socialist Movement in Turkey 1960-1980*. 1992. ISBN 90 04 09582 9
46. Rispler-Chaim, V. *Islamic Medical Ethics in the Twentieth Century*. 1993. ISBN 90 04 09608 6
47. Khalaf, S. and P. S. Khoury (eds.). *Recovering Beirut*. Urban Design and Post-War Reconstruction. With an Introduction by R. Sennett. 1994. ISBN 90 04 09911 5
48. Mardin, Ş. (ed.). *Cultural Transitions in the Middle East*. 1994. ISBN 90 04 09873 9
49. Waart, P.J.I.M. de. *Dynamics of Self-Determination in Palestine*. Protection of Peoples as a Human Right. 1994. ISBN 90 04 09825 9
50. Norton, A.R. (ed.). *Civil Society in the Middle East*. 2 volumes. Volume I. 1995. ISBN 90 04 10037 7 Volume II. 1996. ISBN 90 04 10039 3
51. Amin, G.A. *Egypt's Economic Predicament*. A Study in the Interaction of External Pressure, Political Folly and Social Tension in Egypt, 1960-1990. 1995. ISBN 90 04 10188 8
52. Podeh, E. *The Quest for Hegemony in the Arab World*. The Struggle over the Baghdad Pact. 1995. ISBN 90 04 10214 0
53. Balım, Ç. *et al.* (eds.). *Turkey: Political, Social and Economic Challenges in the 1990s*. 1995. ISBN 90 04 10283 3
54. Shepard, W.E. *Sayyid Qutb and Islamic Activism*. A Translation and Critical Analysis of *Social Justice in Islam*. 1996. ISBN 90 04 10152 7
55. Amin, S.N. *The World of Muslim Women in Colonial Bengal, 1876-1939*. 1996. ISBN 90 04 10642 1
56. Nieuwenhuijze, C.A.O. van. *Paradise Lost*. Reflections on the Struggle for Authenticity in the Middle East. 1997. ISBN 90 04 10672 3
57. Freitag, U. and W. Clarence-Smith. *Hadhrami Traders, Scholars and Statesmen in the Indian Ocean, 1750s to 1960s*. 1997. ISBN 90 04 10771 1
58. Kansu, A. *The Revolution of 1908 in Turkey*. 1997. ISBN 90 04 10791 6
59. Skovgaard-Petersen, J. *Defining Islam for the Egyptian State*. Muftis and Fatwas of the Dār al-Iftā. 1997. ISBN 90 04 10947 1
60. Arnon, A. *et al. The Palestinian Economy*. Between Imposed Integration and Voluntary Separation.1997. ISBN 90 04 10538 7
61. Frank, A.J. *Islamic Historiography and 'Bulghar' Identity among the Tatars and Bashkirs of Russia*. 1998. ISBN 90 04 11021 6
62. Heper, M. *İsmet İnönü. The Making of a Turkish Statesman*. 1998. ISBN 90 04 09919 0
63. Stiansen, E. and M. Kevane (eds.) *Kordofan invaded*. Peripheral Incorporation and Social Transformation in Islamic Africa. 1998. ISBN 90 04 11049 6
64. Firro, K.M. *The Druzes in the Jewish State*. A Brief History. 1999. ISBN 90 04 11251 0
65. Azarya, V., A. Breedveld and H. van Dijk (eds.). *Pastoralists under Pressure?* Fulbe Societies Confronting Change in West Africa. 1999. ISBN 90 04 11364 9

66. Qureshi, M. Naeem. *Pan-Islam in British Indian Politics.* A Study of the Khilafat Movement, 1918-1924. 1999.
ISBN 90 04 11371 1
67. Ensel, R. *Saints and Servants in Southern Morocco.* 1999. ISBN 90 04 11429 7
68. Acar, F. and A. Günes-Ayata, *Gender and Identity Construction.* Women of Central Asia, the Caucasus and Turkey 2000.
ISBN 90 04 11561 7
69. Masud, M.Kh. (ed.) *Travellers in Faith.* Studies of the Tablīghī Jamāʿat as a Transnational Islamic Movement for Faith Renewal. 2000.
ISBN 90 04 11622 2
70. Kansu, A. *Politics in Post-Revolutionary Turkey, 1908-1913*. 2000.
ISBN 90 04 11587 0
71. Hafez, K. (ed.) *The Islamic World and the West.* An Introduction to Political Cultures and International Relations. 2000. ISBN 90 04 11651 6
72. Brunner, R. and W. Ende (eds.) *The Twelver Shia in Modern Times.* Religious Culture and Political History. 2001. ISBN 90 04 11803 9
73. Malik, J. (ed.) *Perspectives of Mutual Encounters in South Asian History, 1760-1860*. 2000. ISBN 90 04 11802 0
74. Ahmed, H. *Islam in Nineteenth Century Wallo, Ethiopia.* Revival, Reform and Reaction. 2001. ISBN 90 04 11909 4
75. Fischbach, M.R. *State, Society and Land in Jordan.* 2000. ISBN 90 04 11912 4
76. Karpat, K.H. (ed.) *Ottoman Past and Today's Turkey.* 2000. ISBN 90 04 11562 5
77. Jahanbakhsh, F. *Islam, Democracy and Religious Modernism in Iran (1953-2000).* From Bāzargān to Soroush. 2001. ISBN 90 04 11982 5
78. Federspiel, H.M. *Islam and ideology in the emerging Indonesian state :* The Persatuan Islam (PERSIS), 1923 to 1957. 2001. ISBN 90 04 12047 5
79. Saleh, F. *Modern Trends in Islamic Theological Discourse in 20th Century Indonesia.* A Critical Survey. 2001. ISBN 90 04 12305 9
80. Küçük, H. *The Role of the Bektāshīs in Turkey's National Struggle.* 2002.
ISBN 90 04 12443 8
81. Karpat, K.H. *Studies on Ottoman Social and Political History.* Selected Articles and Essays. 2002. ISBN 90 04 12101 3
82. Ali El-Dean, B. *Privatisation and the Creation of a Market-Based Legal System.* The Case of Egypt. 2002. ISBN 90 04 12580 9
83. Bos, M. van den. *Mystic Regimes.* Sufim and the State in Iran, from the late Qajar Era to the Islamic Republic. 2002. ISBN 90 04 12815 8
85. Carré, O. *Mysticism and Politics*. A Critical Reading of *Fī Ẓilāl al-Qur'ān* by Sayyid Quṭb (1906-1966). 2003. ISBN 90 04 12590 6
86. Strohmeier, M. *Crucial Images in the Presentation of a Kurdish National Identity*. Heroes and Patriots, Traitors and Foes. 2003. ISBN 90 04 12584 1
87. Freitag, U. *Indian Ocean Migrants and State Formation in Hadhramaut.* Reforming the Homeland. 2003. ISBN 90 0412850 6
88. White, P.J. and J. Jongerden (eds.). *Turkey's Alevi Enigma.* A Comprehensive Overview. 2003. ISBN 90 04 12538 8
89. Kaschl, E. *Dance and Authenticity in Israel and Palestine.* Performing the Nation. 2003. ISBN 90 04 13238 4
90. Burr, J.M. and R.O. Collins, *Revolutionary Sudan.* Hasan al-Turabi and the Islamist State, 1989-2000. 2003. ISBN 90 04 13196 5
92. Gaspard, T.K. *A Political Economy of Lebanon, 1948–2003*. The Limits of Laissez-faire. 2004. ISBN 90 04 13259 7

93. Méouchy, N. and P. Sluglett (eds.). *The British and French Mandates in Comparative Perspectives /Les Mandats Français et Anglais dans une Perspective Comparative*. 2004. ISBN 90 04 13313 5
94. Karpat, K.H. *Studies on Turkish Politics and Society.* Selected Articles and Essays. 2004. ISBN 90 04 13322 4
95. Salvatore, A. and D.F. Eickelman (eds.). *Public Islam and the Common Good*. 2004. ISBN 90 04 13621 5