

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION: MODERNITY AND THE REMAKING OF MUSLIM POLITICS

ROBERT W. HEFNER

THE TERRORIST ATTACKS of September 11, 2001, and the subsequent military campaigns in Afghanistan and Iraq placed the question of Islam and Muslim politics squarely in the American public's mind. In bookshops and classrooms, and on radio and television talk shows, Americans were treated to crash courses on the history of Islam, Muslim attitudes toward democracy, the reasons (some) Muslim women veil, and the question of whether the Western and Muslim worlds are indeed fated to a "clash of civilizations."

The impact of this heady media brew was decidedly mixed. In February 2002, a half year after the 9-11 attacks, the liberal-minded leader (*imam*) of one of Washington D.C.'s largest mosques told me that the number of invitations he had received to speak at churches and synagogues had increased twentyfold from the year before, and the number of American citizens whom he had helped to convert to Islam had quadrupled. "Never in my eighteen years of living in the United States have I encountered such an outpouring of interest in Islam, most of it quite sympathetic!" On the other hand, in the months following the 9-11 attacks, there were dozens of unprovoked assaults on Americans of Muslim and Middle Eastern background. Several prominent conservative evangelists blamed the 9-11 attacks not just on individual extremists, but on Islam itself, which they decried as worship of a false god (Cooperman 2003). More alarming yet, surveys conducted by the Pew Forum on Religion and Public life revealed that, two years after the terrorist attacks, growing numbers of Americans believed that Islam encourages violence among its followers (Pew Forum 2003).

In a society as culturally diverse as the United States, it was inevitable that there would be contrary pushes-and-pulls to the post 9-11 reaction. With the passage of time, it was not surprising too that the events of September 11 came to be seen against the backdrop of other events: the U.S. invasion of Afghanistan, the conflict in Chechnya, border skirmishes between India and Pakistan, the war in Iraq, and continuing strife between

Israelis and Palestinians, among others. Other than the fact that, somehow, they all involved Muslims, there was no agreement on the narrative thread with which to tie these events together. What *was* clear was that the question of Muslim politics loomed larger than at any time in modern American history.

As public discussion continued, two broadly opposed positions emerged concerning Islam's compatibility with democracy and civic pluralism,¹ one pessimistic, the other cautiously optimistic. Prominent in the former camp was the distinguished senior historian of the Middle East, Bernard Lewis. Written just prior to the September 11 attacks, Lewis's best-selling *What Went Wrong?* attributed the Muslim world's turbulence to the fact that, in the course of its encounter with Western modernity, "[t]he Muslim attitude was different from that of other civilizations that suffered the impact of the expanding West" (Lewis 2002, 36). In particular, Lewis argued, the premodern history of Muslim confrontation with Europe insured that in the modern era Muslims showed a defensive or even hostile attitude toward things Western. Muslims were "willing enough to accept the products of infidel science in warfare and medicine, where they could make the difference between victory and defeat. . . . However, the underlying philosophy and sociopolitical context of these scientific achievements proved more difficult to accept or even to recognize." This rejection, Lewis concluded, "is one of the more striking differences between the Middle East and other parts of the non-Western world that have in one way or another endured the impact of Western civilization" (Lewis 2002, 81). The difference ensures that it is unlikely that Muslim societies will embrace democracy and pluralism any time soon.

Certainly there is no dearth of *jihadi* militants willing and able to enunciate the starkly anti-Western rhetoric Lewis has in mind.² But other observers wonder whether it is fair to take such individuals as representative of Muslim opinion as a whole. There is compelling evidence that many among the world's Muslims endorse no such rejection of modernity and democracy. To take just one example, Ronald Inglehart and Pippa Norris's recent World Values Survey compared opinion in eleven Muslim-majority societies with several Western countries and found in all but one of the Muslim countries (Pakistan) public support for democracy was equal to or even greater than in Western countries (Inglehart and Norris 2003). Where Muslim and Western attitudes diverged was not on matters of democracy, but in relation to "self-expression values" only recently ascendant in the West, such as gay rights and full gender equality.

Recent developments in Turkey, Iran, and Indonesia offer an even more striking indication of Muslim interest in democracy and civic pluralism. On November 3, 2002, voters in Turkey gave their overwhelming

support to a new, Islam-oriented party, known as the Justice and Development Party (JDP). The JDP is a reformist party that traces its origins back to a series of Islamist parties banned by secular Turkish authorities in previous decades (White 2002). Despite rumblings from the country's secular-minded Constitutional Court, the JDP managed to escape the wrath of authorities while broadening its appeal among Turkish voters, many of whom had previously been skeptical of Islamic parties. It did so in large part by tapping voter resentment over corruption and the country's continuing economic crisis, while distancing itself from the Islamist rhetoric of its predecessors. More significant yet, as Jenny White explains in chapter 4 in this volume, the party leadership made clear its commitment to principles of human rights, the rule of law, and pluralist democracy. The leadership explained that rather than providing an alternative to democratic institutions, Islam should deepen the values of justice, equality, and human dignity on which those institutions depend.

The terrorist attacks on synagogues and British-owned buildings in Istanbul in November 2003, in which dozens died and more than five hundred were injured (Smith 2003), showed that not all Turkish Muslims agree with Justice and Development's democratic commitments. But the Turkish public's horrified reaction to the bloodshed showed just where most citizens' sympathies lay. In this sense, events in Istanbul were illustrative of a struggle for the hearts and minds of Muslims taking place not just in Turkey but around the world. The contest pits those who believe in the compatibility of Islam with democracy and pluralist freedom against those who insist that such values and institutions are antithetical to Islam.

Events in Iran since 1997 offer a second example of a similar pluralization and contestation of the forms and meanings of Muslim politics. Iran is especially interesting because it is the only country in the Muslim world to have undergone the political metamorphosis from an Islamic revolution to the establishment of an Islamic Republic and, finally, the emergence of a postrevolutionary society (Brumberg 2001; Hooglund 2002). During its first quarter-century, the republic was seen by Islamist activists around the world as proof of their religion's ability to provide an alternative to Western-style democracy. As Bahman Baktiari explains in chapter 5, however, the third, or postrevolutionary, phase of the Islamic Republic's evolution has yielded some surprises. Events since the election of the reform-minded President Khatami in May 1997 show that the youth, women, and professional wings of Iran's new middle class have grown disenchanted with the reigning repressive interpretation of Muslim politics. They seem more interested in the creation of a civil society with genuine pluralism and freedoms than they are the shibboleth of *velayat-e faqih* (lit., "rule by the religiously learned," i.e., clerics; see Arjomand 1988,

148–59). As yet the dream of a democratic spring in Iran remains unfulfilled, and, as in Turkey, the long-term success of efforts to remake Muslim politics is far from guaranteed. But what is clear is that, in Iran as in Turkey, a growing number of faithful have concluded that there is no contradiction between their great religion and civil-democratic decency.

The Southeast Asian nation of Indonesia offers a third example of a Muslim politics as plural and contested as its counterparts in Turkey and Iran. Although often overlooked in discussions of Muslim societies, Indonesia is the largest Muslim-majority country in the world. In the final years of the Soeharto dictatorship (1966–98), a powerful movement for a democratic Muslim politics took shape. In alliance with secular Muslims and non-Muslims, the movement succeeded in May 1998 in toppling the long-ruling Soeharto. No less remarkable, Muslim participants in the democracy campaign dedicated themselves to devising religious arguments in support of pluralism, democracy, women's rights, and civil society (Abdillah 1997; Barton 2002; Hefner 2000). Unfortunately, as I discuss in chapter 11, in the months following Soeharto's overthrow, Indonesia was rocked by outbreaks of fierce ethnoreligious violence. Some of the violence showed the telltale signs of ancien regime provocation. But other acts were linked to independent extremists, including one group with ties to al-Qa'ida. The violence slowed the reform movement and put the Muslim community's pluralist experiment in question.

Notwithstanding these and other setbacks, events in Turkey, Iran, and Indonesia have proved that Muslim politics is not monolithic, and that there is more to its contemporary ferment than the bleak alternatives of secularist authoritarianism or extremist violence. Less widely noted but no less important, there is an effort underway in many countries to give Muslim politics a civic, pluralist, and even democratic face. In some nations, perhaps the majority, the initiative is still so preliminary or disorganized as to hardly merit the label "movement." Elsewhere, as in Saudi Arabia (chapter 8), the reformers are not clamoring for full-fledged party democracy, but greater pluralism and citizen participation. In these and other Muslim countries, however, there are hints of change in the air, and hope of better things to come.

THE MODERN MAELSTROM

It was with an eye toward exploring these changes that the Institute on Culture, Religion, and World Affairs at Boston University, with the generous support of the Pew Charitable Trusts, brought together fourteen specialists of Muslim politics for three meetings, in May 2002 and in January and September 2003. The meetings were part of an eighteen-month

program of research and analysis on social supports for, and obstacles to, pluralism and democratization in the Muslim world. The project was not intended to address the September 11 violence as such. Having directed a small program on Islam and Civil Society for the previous nine years, I had submitted the project proposal to the Pew Trusts in August 2001, a few weeks prior to the events of September 11. The aim of the “Working Group on Civic-Pluralist Islam,” as our project came to be known, was to look at Muslim politics from within, examining the local roots for a pluralist public sphere and a democratic politics. In undertaking this program, we also hoped to bridge the gap between, on one hand, academic scholars and, on the other, policy makers and a general public increasingly concerned about developments in the Muslim world.

The contributors to this volume are first and foremost scholars of Islam and Muslim politics. But all share the conviction that policy-oriented public scholarship is intellectually important in its own right. Some of our colleagues in academia may not share this conviction; even those who do often regard public scholarship as a lesser intellectual genre. What this viewpoint forgets is that most of the great Western social theorists of the nineteenth and early-twentieth century were public intellectuals as well as or even more than they were academics. They understood well the rhetorical demands and intellectual benefits of having to communicate specialized insights to general audiences. What this perspective also overlooks is one of the most impressive aspects of cultural life in the contemporary Muslim world: its proud legacy of public intellectualism (see Abaza 2002, 55–74; Eickelman and Anderson 1999). All this said, the main motive for bringing together the authors who contributed to this volume was our shared conviction that efforts to understand events in the Muslim world can succeed only if we move beyond sound bites and stereotypes and acknowledge the plurality and contest of modern Muslim politics.

To begin to appreciate this variety, and to understand the background to the essays in this volume, we need to look beyond the categories of Western liberal history and recognize several distinctive concerns of Muslim politics. Three are particularly relevant to the chapters that follow. First, far more than is the case in contemporary Western democracies (but not unlike some Western subcultures; see Casanova 1994; Wuthnow 1988, 173–214), Muslim politics is informed by the conviction that religious scholars, the *ulama* (literally, “those who know,” sing., *alim*), have the right and duty to make sure that all major developments in politics and society are in conformity with God’s commands. Notwithstanding a few radical experiments like revolutionary Iran or Afghanistan’s Taliban, this first feature of Muslim politics is not typically understood as an imperative for theocratic rule. Religious scholars do not govern and, again,

notwithstanding certain utopian Islamisms to the contrary, real-and-existing Muslim polities are not characterized by a seamless fusion of religion and state or a dictatorship of “clerics” over a supine civil society (see Arjomand 1988, 147–63; Brown 2000; Zubaida 2003). Indeed, in a manner that may at first appear paradoxical, most Muslim societies are marked by deep disagreements over just who is qualified to speak as a religious authority and over just how seriously ordinary Muslims should take the pronouncements of individual scholars.

Rather than an all-powerful theocracy, then, the more general effect of this first principle of Muslim politics is diffusely cultural. The principle makes it difficult for public political deliberation to lapse into *laissez-faireism*, leaving urgent ethical questions to individual choice or the marketplace of public opinion alone. As Muhammad Qasim Zaman (chapter 3) and John Bowen (chapter 13) illustrate in their discussions of “normativity” in this volume, social and political initiatives are in principle subject to ethical assessment by scholars whose charge is to assure that the developments are consistent with God’s commands. The latter are in turn understood in relation to the body of revealed regulations or Islamic “law” known as *shari‘a* (lit., “the path,” “the way,” as in divine regulations or law; see Murata and Chittick 1994, 25–27). In this sense, contemporary Muslim politics operates on two levels: a generalized or mass level driven by the actions and concerns of ordinary Muslims, and a restricted or specialized track involving the efforts of religious scholars to respond to modern problems within the normative horizons of the *shari‘a* and Islamic tradition as a whole.³ Much of the fevered argument of contemporary Muslim politics centers on questions as to how these two tracks are to be harmonized.

Although this first concern informs Muslim political ideals today just as it did during Islam’s classical age, its social urgency has varied over time. As occurred with the rise of secular nationalism in the middle decades of the twentieth century, there are times in Muslim history when popular culture drifts away from normative-mindedness, and the public appears less concerned with justifying its political choices with reference to religious ideals. However, when, as in much of the Muslim world after the 1960s, a society experiences a period of deepening Islamization, the concern for religious legitimation will rebound into public awareness, unleashing a torrent of debate on what is and what is not in accord with God’s commands.

This social fact points to a second feature of Muslim politics, this one related to contemporary efforts to remake that politics in a pluralist and democratic mold. A key requirement for such a reorientation will be the emergence of public intellectuals backed by mass organizations with the social and discursive resources to convince fellow Muslims of the com-

patibility of Islam with pluralism and democracy. It goes without saying that the formulation of such religious rationales would have been unnecessary had Muslim societies undergone the process of radical secularization Western theorists had predicted back in the 1950s. But the resurgence of the 1970s and 1980s ensured that contemporary politics in most Muslim societies shows a deep concern with religious powers and discourses.

Viewed from another perspective, this second concern of Muslim politics might seem like a particular example of a general theme in contemporary democratic studies. In recent years “democracy in the vernacular” has been a new and welcome focus of attention in political studies, in large part as a result of efforts to extend that theory’s cultural horizons beyond the Atlantic-liberal West (see, for example, Bhargava, Bagchi, and Sudershan 1999; Hansen 1999; Kymlicka 2001). As with Kay Warren’s (1998) examination of Mayan activist intellectuals in contemporary Guatemala, or Robert Weller’s (1999) study of village temples and women’s networks in Taiwan, vernacular approaches emphasize that democratization needs local roots if it is to grow. While recognizing that there are, in the Wittgensteinian sense, “family resemblances” to democratization across cultures, vernacular studies insist that such resemblances are not proof of an end of history or a culturally homogeneous modernity. Notwithstanding certain family resemblances, modernity is multiple in its organizations and meanings (Eisenstadt 2000; Hefner 1998c; Knauff 2002). Democracy and democratization will be as well.

In the case of Muslim societies, there is a distinctive organizational tension to the requirement that pluralism and democratization have vernacular roots. Although Islam has jurists and religious scholars, it has no pope, sacerdotal priesthood, or ecclesiastical hierarchy to coordinate their actions. In most times and places, religious scholars (*ulama*) claimed the main responsibility for fulfilling Islam’s prime ethical imperative, “commanding what is right and forbidding what is wrong” (*al-amr bi’l-ma’ruf wa’l-nahy ‘an al-munkar*; see Cook 2000). They did so on the grounds that they were most knowledgeable in the sciences of the Qur’an and the traditions of the Prophet.

Even in premodern times, however, just how scholars carried out this duty and who among them was most qualified to do so were questions on which consensus was often difficult. The *ulama* might recognize an informal hierarchy in their ranks, and, in the Shi’a Muslim world in particular, at times the hierarchy’s behavior bore a passing resemblance to the ecclesiastical disciplines of Western Christianity (see Arjomand 1988, 177–188; Cole 2002, 189–211). In many countries, however, Muslims recognized more than one school of religious law (*madhhab*). Even where a community adhered to just one school, individual jurists (*fuqaha*) could reach different conclusions on matters of social importance, and the most

expert reserved the right to issue opinions of their own. Although they usually shied away from interfering directly in debates on the *shari'a*, rulers, too, did not hesitate to meddle in religious affairs indirectly. They patronized scholars and mystics who voiced opinions on *shari'a* similar to their own. They supported shrines to Sufi saints and sponsored religious festivals that, while avoiding comment on the details of the law, nonetheless enacted a visual model of the way religion, politics, and the social were to be imagined (see Eaton 1984, 334; Hammoudi 1997, 68–80; Woodward 1989, 199–214). Rulers also appointed court jurists to serve as spokespersons before the scholarly community. It is telling, however, that the latter experts were viewed as having “no monopoly of giving *fatwas* [religious opinions], and the practice of consulting private scholars of high reputation has never ceased” (Schacht 1964, 74). Stories of holy men resisting rulers’ interference were a classic theme in the popular religious imagination (Messick 1993, 143; Munson 1993, 27). Not the centralized Church of Roman Christendom, religious authority in the Muslim community as a whole tended toward a fissiparous pluricentrism.⁴

As Zaman illustrates in his discussion of modern Pakistan (chapter 3; see also Zaman 2002), in most contemporary Muslim societies the *ulama* still play a role in public ethical discussion. However, modern pressures for pluralism and popular participation are increasingly apparent as well. They can be seen in the fact that the precise influence of *ulama* on public discussion varies widely, as do local understandings of just who is and who is not qualified to provide informed religious opinion. In recent years, then, the long established pluricentrism of religious authority has been compounded by a participatory revolution transforming Muslim culture and politics as a whole.

As Dale F. Eickelman and James Piscatori have observed (1996, 13; cf. Abaza 2002; Esposito and Voll 2001, 3–22), one of the most significant elements in this transformation has been the emergence of “new Muslim intellectuals” across the Muslim world.⁵ Although some are graduates of religious schools (*madrassa*) and are familiar with classical commentaries, the majority of new Muslim intellectuals are alumni of national educational systems who acquired their religious knowledge through self-study or participation in small discussion groups (*balaqah*). As recent events in Zaman’s Pakistan, White’s Turkey, Eickelman’s Morocco (chapter 2), and Michael Peletz’s Malaysia (chapter 10) all illustrate, one characteristic of their autodidactic education is that the new Muslim intellectuals tend to be more interested than their classical predecessors in linking their religious studies to nontraditional concerns. Some of these are of a loosely populist nature, touching on questions of how to raise one’s children, how to live a good life, or how to make household ends meet. At the elite end of the public spectrum, however, others among the new in-

tellectuals grapple with the question of Islam's relation to science, democracy, human rights, and globalization (cf. Abdillah 1997; Eisenstadt 2002; Esposito and Voll 2001; Meeker 1991). Religious conservatives may reject such reflexive extensions of the tradition as "innovations" (*bid'a*) incompatible with God's law. But other Muslim thinkers, as well as masses of ordinary believers, will beg to differ.

There is an additional organizational feature to these efforts to press public culture and politics into a more participatory mold. The Islamic resurgence took place in the aftermath of a great social and cultural transformation across most of the Muslim world. Urbanization, migration, and growing socioeconomic differentiation combined to undermine received and often village-centered religious disciplines. The state's inability to meet all but a portion of the needs of the new urban masses also created a demand for alternative providers of public services in the fields of health, education, and public security. Finally, mass education, literacy, and a growing network of mosques and Islamic schools combined to strengthen the determination of ordinary Muslims to exercise choice and take charge of their faith (Eickelman 1992). Together, these developments generated a great popular appetite for a more participatory practice of public life and religion. Dale Eickelman and James Piscatori (1996) have rightly seen these events as a potential foundation for a democratic reformation of Muslim politics.

This democratic potential is real enough. However, its realization will depend upon more than the mere fact of heightened popular participation. As events in Europe during the first half of the twentieth century showed all too tragically, mass participation under conditions of ethno-religious pluralism can generate enormous social tensions, the effects of which may be anything but democratic. As with European fascism and communism, if popular participation and social competition are not embedded in cultures and powers of a civic-pluralist sort, the result may be more polarizing and violent than it is democratic. There is no dearth of such examples in today's world (Brass 2003; Hansen 1999; Hefner 2000; Mamdani 2001). Whether the mass participation that so marks the modern age is democratizing, then, depends on not just participation or associations in civil society, but the higher-level cultures and organizations to which ground-level mobilizations are linked.

In the case of Muslim societies, in particular, the outcome of the new pluralist participation will depend upon a third feature of contemporary Muslim politics: the efforts of rival groupings to "scale up" their influence by strengthening their organizations in society and forging pacts or alliances with influential actors and agencies in the state. Mobilizational initiatives like these usually begin at the local level, with efforts to bring together like-minded actors in associations dedicated to some social, religious, or

welfare task. It is activities like these that recent studies of civil society have tended to privilege as the spring from which democratic cultures flow. However, if they are to have a lasting influence in society as a whole, at some point these activities and networks must be drawn into what the sociologist Peter Evans (1996) has described as collaborations “across the state-society divide.” As Theda Skocpol has also observed (arguing against Durkheimian portrayals of civil society as entirely independent of the state), civic groups in nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century America were not merely local and not always nonpolitical. Many were linked to translocal organizational networks that sought to forge ties with national leaders and associations so as to influence state policies (Skocpol 1999, 33).⁶ There are myriad reasons for civic groups in modern Muslim societies to want to do the same. From the perspective of prodemocracy groupings in particular, it is clear that without some measure of coordinate support from the state and the legal system, democratic elements in society remain vulnerable to attack by uncivil elements in state and society (Hefner 2001; Keane 1996).

It goes without saying, of course, that collaborations across the state-society divide can be put to nondemocratic ends as well. As in Zia ul-Haq’s Pakistan (chapter 3), post-Nasser Egypt (chapter 6), modern Saudi Arabia (chapter 8), and post-Soeharto Indonesia (chapter 11), some state officials may conclude that it is in their interest to make common cause with ultraconservative Islamists, rather than Muslim democrats. At other times or in other places, however, ruling elites may choose to lend a hand to the reformist cause. Whatever the political establishment’s tack, the prevalence of such mobilizations and alliances in countries across the Islamic world shows that contemporary Muslim politics has changed. It is no longer restricted to a handful of elites, religious dignitaries, and representatives of the privileged classes. The age of mass mobilization has dawned, and with it has come not merely a pluralization of the political field, but a *contestive* pluralization centered on rival interpretations of Muslim politics, and rival efforts to organize in society and across the state-society divide.

In the competitions that ensue, Muslim parties and organizations sometimes enjoy a distinctive advantage over their secular rivals. As Jenny White (2002) has demonstrated for Turkey and Carrie Rosefsky Wickham (2002) in Egypt, some of the most successful of today’s Islamic mobilizations owe their success not to formal ideology or top-down party organizations, but to the local networks and relationships from which they draw their membership. Muslim mobilizations often take preexisting religious networks built around neighborhood mosques and religious schools and weave them together into a parallel Islamic sector. As in the Egyptian case (Wickham 2002, 93–118), some Islamic organizations do so

by offering educational and health services the state is unable or unwilling to provide. However, the really decisive advantage enjoyed by these mobilizations is their ability to organize their constituencies “on an individual level through known, trusted neighbors, building on sustained, face-to-face relationships, and by situating its political message within the community’s cultural codes and norms” (White 2002, 7). While government parties show a preference for a top-down and bureaucratic organization, the new Islamist mobilizations are a politics in the vernacular par excellence.

Again, whether this participation in the vernacular is democratizing is another, more complex question. The contrast between the Egyptian and Turkish examples on this point indicates that the political outcome of the effort can be varied, to say the least. Egypt’s Islamists have tended to be conservative on matters of democracy, pluralism, and women’s rights, although there are signs this may be changing. Turkey’s Islamic parties have tended to look more favorably on democracy and pluralist freedoms. The difference reflects not merely basic cultural differences between these two societies, but, as Richard Norton shows in his chapter, the Egyptian state’s unfortunate habit of combining the repression of democracy activists with mobilization of conservative Islamic clients (cf. Sullivan and Abed-Kotob 1999, 126; Wickham 2002, 21–35).

These and other examples illustrate once more that there is no uniform Muslim modernity, nor a monolithic Muslim politics. What Muslim-majority societies do have in common, however, is a new dynamic of popular participation and contestive pluralism. In a growing number of nations, this condition is not merely challenging the old ways of doing things; it is inspiring dreams of a Muslim politics that is civil and democratic.⁷

REMAKING MUSLIM POLITICS

Against the backdrop of these three features of contemporary Muslim politics, it is perhaps easier to understand the distinctive aims and methods of the groups discussed in this volume, most of whom hope to bring about a civic-pluralist reformation of Muslim politics. In light of the first concern of Muslim politics, the concern for religious legitimation, we should not be surprised to see that reformers devote what is, from a Western utilitarian perspective, an inordinate amount of time and energy to coming together to read, write, and formulate the terms for a new practice of Muslim politics. Some reformers do little more than share their reflections with a handful of like-minded intellectuals; others may have access to public platforms in institutions like universities and research

institutes. Some, too, may take advantage of new publishing technologies and the Internet to disseminate their writings to larger and more anonymous publics. As Dale F. Eickelman and Peter Mandaville show in their essays on media and transnational Islam (chapters 2 and 12; see also Anderson 2003; Eickelman and Anderson 1999), modern print and electronic media have allowed for the transmission of new ideas even into communities once walled off by established guardians of the faith.⁸

Where conservatives still command a significant mass following, these tentative probes toward pluralist reform may often display a “nonpolitical” guise. As in Diane Singerman’s discussion of legal reform in contemporary Egypt (chapter 7) or Gwenn Okruhlik’s analysis of pluralism in Saudi Arabia (chapter 8), proponents of reform in such circumstances may choose to focus their efforts not on formal politics, but on educational programs, incremental legal reforms, and public discussions that offer ordinary Muslims an element of choice and participation. Sometimes they also do so because, as Okruhlik makes clear, the reformers are not clamoring for a full-fledged party democracy as much as they are simple pluralist freedoms. Not public spheres of citizen participation in the modern sense of the phrase (see Calhoun 1992; Habermas 1989), the limited-access nature of these activities may also be intended to reduce the risk of conflict with conservative opponents. If and when these “nonpolitical” initiatives begin to make headway, however, the effort almost always goes public, and, as with Singerman’s legal activists, is accompanied by attempts to forge alliances with sympathetic actors in state and society.

But going public has its risks. It may only galvanize the ultraconservative opposition and increase the likelihood of confrontation. Committed as they are to a less state-centric practice of their faith, civic-pluralist Muslims may feel torn when confronted by conservative violence and intimidation. Some are willing to, and do, give their lives for the pluralist cause. Recognizing that the success of their efforts depends on long-term changes and the demobilization of “uncivil” groupings, others may quietly retreat to the security of private life and friendships, away from the threat of state repression or public confrontation, praying the storm will pass. Satellite dishes, Internet connections, and the quiet circulation of pamphlets and books may be the only signs of a profession of the faith at odds with those in the commanding heights of religious society.

In the best of circumstances, however, the reformists may succeed at building social coalitions and even creating collaborations across the state-society divide. If and when they achieve the latter, they may get access to the legal and educational resources needed to scale up their influence well beyond the limited-access groupings of society (Eickelman and Anderson 1999, 14; Bowen 2003, 258–68; Hefner 1997). A process of

this sort is already underway in countries like Turkey, Iran, Morocco, Malaysia, and Indonesia. In these countries, the movement for a civic-pluralist Islam is no longer just a matter of limited-group discussions, Internet chat groups, or tacit pacts with sympathetic government officials; it has become a powerful stream in public politics and culture. The setbacks that have occurred in several of these countries cannot hide the fact that the struggle to remake Muslim politics is here to stay, and that the circumstances and desires to which it responds are widespread across the Muslim world.

With some 1.3 billion of the world's 6 billion people professing Islam, the outcome of this struggle to reorient Muslim politics is likely to be one of the defining political events of the twenty-first century. As a result of globalization and immigration, the contest will also impact Western societies directly. As John Bowen and Peter Mandaville's essays make especially clear, several Western countries are themselves in the midst of a great Muslim immigration, and their strategies for accommodating the new immigrants vary. Already there are 5 million to 7 million Muslims in the U.S., and no fewer than 30 million in Western Europe, where their numbers are growing more rapidly than the general population (Cesari 1994; Nielsen 1992). As Bowen and Mandaville both show, many among the new population are grappling with the question of what it means to be European or American and Muslim (see AlSayyad and Castells 2002; Ramadan 1999). Although, as Mandaville's essay also illustrates, a few have lent their support to international *jihadi* causes, the more prominent have begun to play a central role in the pluralist stream of transnational Islam (see Mandaville 2001). Their ability to do so effectively over the long run, however, will depend on the willingness of Western societies to accord Muslims full rights of citizenship. This will demonstrate more effectively than any media campaign that there is no clash of civilizations between Islam and the West, but a convergence of interests among people of civil-democratic conviction.

CONDITIONS OF A MODERN POSSIBILITY

There is a broader background to this volume's examination of contemporary efforts to remake Muslim politics. It bears on the question of how we are to understand that politics in relation to processes of participation, pluralization, and democratization seen in other parts of the world. In the late 1980s and early 1990s, the collapse of communism in Eastern Europe and the successful transitions from authoritarianism in Korea and Taiwan inspired optimism about the prospects for transitions of a similar nature in other non-Western societies, including Muslim ones. A

host of political scientists, sociologists, and anthropologists threw themselves into the task of determining just why authoritarian regimes collapse and what their fate says about the conditions that might allow for transitions elsewhere.

As is not uncommon in such high-stakes endeavors, the academic community never reached a consensus on most of these questions. Pressed by real-world problems, however, Western policy analysts had no such luxury. They were compelled by force of circumstances to come up with actionable guidelines for democratic transitions. Unlike their obstreperous academic counterparts, then, policy circles soon settled on a few rival models, each with a very different view of the cross-cultural prospects for democracy.

The first model emphasized that the key to democracy and sustainable prosperity lay with the bedrock institutions emphasized by Western Cold Warriors during their half-century of battle with Soviet totalitarianism: free markets and fair elections. In 1993, the historian and policy analyst Francis Fukuyama presented one of the more celebrated versions of this argument. He suggested that the modern world had arrived at “the end of history,” in the sense that it was no longer possible for any serious person to believe that there were weighty alternatives to liberal democracy and capitalism. Each time Fukuyama voiced his views, of course, one could hear the sighs of British social democrats, Christian conservatives, deliberative democrats, and American communitarians, all of whom (from different perspectives) lamented what they regarded as a slighting of their recommendations for amendments to liberalism’s orthodoxy.

For several years in the early 1990s, however, the Fukuyama formula had an air of commonsense inevitability about it, at least in American policy circles. This was the case not so much because policy makers subscribed to the Hegelian claim that history had ended, but because in anxious circumstances like those of postcommunist Europe, Fukuyama’s model was one of the few that seemed to offer a workable guide for the future. The key to sustainable democracy was, simply enough, free elections and “getting markets right.”

It was not long, however, before the din of real-world events began to raise questions about the adequacy of the markets-and-elections model. It was not that free elections and equitably competitive markets are not useful things. The problem was that knowing that they are useful is not quite the same as understanding what is required to get them up and running and sustainable. As a series of setbacks in Eastern Europe and Russia during the 1990s showed (Gray 1993), free markets are not “free” in the sense that they are the spontaneous product of unconstrained social exchange. Their free and fair operation depends upon a host of resources in state and society that together “embed” the marketplace (Granovetter

1985; Hefner 1998b; Hollingsworth and Boyer 1997). To build trust, enforce contracts, control crime, and, in a word, make a modern market work, a good deal more is needed than self-interested exchange among so many Robinson Crusoes (Clegg and Redding 1990; Hamilton 1998).

This same qualifying note is all the more relevant when it comes to understanding what is required to make pluralist democracy work. Ethno-religious violence in Yugoslavia, the genocide in Rwanda, Hindu-Muslim strife in India, racial attacks on immigrants in Germany—these and other developments during the 1990s demonstrated that, at least outside of Washington's Beltway, there were a fair number of people who had yet to learn that history had ended. Indeed, rather than the end of history, outbreaks of communal violence in the 1990s seemed to indicate that, with the Cold War over, "local" histories and cultures had reasserted themselves with a vengeance.

One response to this disturbing realization was to throw up one's hands and conclude that democracy is, above all, a Western institution that depends on Judeo-Christian values; as such, it can take root only in societies of Judeo-Christian background. The most influential statement of this position was that of the Harvard political scientist Samuel P. Huntington, first in a widely read article (Huntington 1993) and then in a later book, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (1996). Whereas Fukuyama had implied that Muslim societies were unlikely to resist the great wave of democratization (Fukuyama 1993, 45–46), Huntington argued that democracy depends on a complex of values and institutions lacking in many non-Western societies, not least of all Muslim ones. The list of requisite values and institutions included "individualism, liberalism, constitutionalism, human rights, equality, liberty, the rule of law, democracy, free markets, the separation of church and state" (Huntington 1993, 40).

Huntington's pessimism represented a departure from his earlier views on the "third wave" of democratization (Huntington 1991). In writings subsequent to his 1993 article, as well as a two-year monthly seminar on cultural globalization at Harvard University that I was invited to attend, he softened the argument somewhat, recognizing that its strict cultural assumptions might be taken as a counsel of relativist despair. European and American policy analysts shared this reservation. In these and other circles, pressure mounted for an alternative to the clash-of-civilizations model.

The alternative was forthcoming soon enough. Setting aside generalizations about civilization and top-down emphases on markets and elections, the new paradigm stressed the importance of grassroots initiatives for building democracy. There were many variations on this model, but perhaps the most influential was Robert Putnam's *Making Democracy*

Work: Civic Institutions in Modern Italy (1993). In this engagingly well written book, Putnam took a page from Alexis de Tocqueville's nineteenth-century *Democracy in America* (1969) and argued that civil society and social capital are "the key to making democracy work" (1993, 185). Drawing on, but also narrowing, a theoretical concept earlier developed by the sociologists Pierre Bourdieu and James Coleman, Putnam defined social capital as "features of social organization, such as trust, norms, and networks, that can improve the efficiency of society by facilitating coordinated actions" (Putnam 1993, 167). Putnam's main thesis was that it was in these voluntary, "horizontal" networks that citizens develop the trust, cooperative skills, and egalitarian attitudes required for democracy. Within these analytic horizons, it was hard to resist Putnam's bold conclusion: "Membership in horizontally ordered groups (like sports clubs, cooperatives, mutual aid societies, cultural associations, and voluntary unions)" is "positively associated with good government," while "membership rates in hierarchically ordered organizations" are "negatively associated with good government" (Putnam 1993, 176). For one brief shining moment, it seemed as if the long-sought recipe for democracy had been found.

The press of real-world events made the concepts of civil society and social capital all the more appealing in policy circles. With several post-communist states teetering on the edge of collapse, and with the awful evidence that rulers in some countries had deliberately provoked acts of ethnoreligious violence to neutralize rivals, the state in some post-Cold War countries had begun to look like a part of the problem rather than the solution. The idea of civil society provided policy makers with the license they needed to look beyond the halls of state for partners in society.

However beneficial its program impact, the idea of civil society was just not strong enough to stand up under the weight of the theoretical burden it had been assigned. Irrigation associations, small-credit cooperatives, and women's crisis centers are one thing, but what about racially based secret societies, civilian militias, or fundamentalist cults? Sociologically speaking, the latter are all voluntary organizations situated in the space between the family and the state. As such, they qualify for membership in civil society, at least according to the definitions most widely used during the 1990s (see Hall 1995; Hann 1996; Hefner 1998a; Rotberg 2001; Skocpol and Fiorina 1999). However, as with Hindu nationalists in India mobilizing their networks to attack Muslims (Brass 2002, 6; Hansen 1999, 203–14), or Rwandan priests using their leadership capital to goad parishioners to kill Tutsis (Mamdani 2001, 226), the idea that all civil society associations and all social capital are "good" for democracy runs up against one unnerving complication: social capital can be used for all manner of ends, including antidemocratic ones.⁹

All this is to say that associations that are, locationally speaking, part of civil society are not always “civil” in terms of the attitudes they inspire or the political culture they promote (Hefner 2001; Keane 1996, 10). Some forms of social capital and some civic organizations are democracy-friendly, but others—Hutu death squads, the Ku Klux Klan—are not. Robert Putnam’s 1993 work attempted to anticipate this objection by emphasizing that it is horizontally organized civic associations that are democracy-friendly, while vertically controlled ones are not. Associations of a horizontal sort, he argued, foster “robust forms of reciprocity” and communicate mutual expectations in “reinforcing encounters,” thereby enhancing trust and increasing the flow of communication (1993, 173–4). But many of America’s extreme right-wing militias, as well as religious extremists in many parts of the world (Juergensmeyer 2000), show these same robustly reciprocal qualities. And, unfortunately, they do so without producing habits of the democratic heart.

In a subsequent study of social capital in the United States (Putnam 2000), Putnam introduced a useful qualification on his earlier argument, one broadly consistent with the lessons from several essays in this volume. Recognizing that not all social capital is democracy- or pluralism-friendly, Putnam distinguished what he called an exclusive or “bonding” social capital from an inclusive or “bridging” variant. Bonding organizations, he observed, are “inward looking and tend to reinforce exclusive identities and homogeneous groups” (Putnam 2000, 22). By contrast, bridging social capital tends to “generate broader identities and reciprocity” (23). The latter may be well suited for mediating ethnic and religious divisions.

Another way of saying this is that real-and-existing civil societies are always rife with social tensions, not least of all because, rather than being blissfully homogeneous, they are crosscut by divisions of religion, ideology, ethnicity, gender, and class (Hefner 2001; Keane 1996; Stolle and Rochon 2001). Unless counteracted by more encompassing organizations and discourses that extend participatory rights beyond the in-group, these divisions can generate social tensions that are anything but democratic. Moreover, notwithstanding the romantic view of civil society as entirely independent of the state, the development of these stabilizing arrangements depends not only on forces in society, but on symbiotic collaborations across the state-society divide (Evans 1996; Hefner 2001; Skocpol 1999).

Here, then, are a few lessons from recent discussions in democratic theory relevant for understanding events in the Muslim world. They provide important clues as to when the participatory revolution transforming contemporary Muslim politics may be democratizing, and when it may not.

RESURGENCE AND DEMOCRATIZATION

As noted above, during the 1970s and 1980s, the Muslim world witnessed a resurgence of piety and public religious activity unprecedented in modern history. The physical signs of this change were ubiquitous: in mosque construction, the proliferation of religious studies circles, crowded Friday worship, pilgrimages to Mecca, bearded men, veiled women, and the growth of Islamic publishing. Earlier, during the heyday of modernization theory in the 1950s, Western analysts had forecast that Muslim societies would inevitably experience the same processes of privatization and decline that, it was assumed (too simplistically), religion in the modern West had undergone. Muslims might be latecomers to the secularization process, the argument went, but they too would succumb to the secularist juggernaut (Lerner 1958). By the time the Islamic revolution swept Iran in 1978–79, this forecast had begun to look jejune. By the early 1990s, it seemed simply absurd.

Ironically, part of the foundation for the resurgence had been laid back in the 1950s and early 1960s not by pious Muslims, but by the secular nationalist leaders who governed most of the newly independent countries of the Muslim world. However meager their achievements in economic policy, the nationalists made headway in the field of general education. Certainly, their record was still modest by comparison with educational programs in East Asia, not least of all because in some Muslim societies women's education lagged significantly behind that of men. In addition, in a few poor countries, like Pakistan, Afghanistan, and the Sudan, rates of education even for males remained stubbornly low (UNDP 2002). Notwithstanding these qualifications, nationalist governments in the majority of countries succeeded in creating the first generation of Muslim youth with general literacy and educational skills (see Eickelman 1992).

During these early years, most among the newly educated applied their skills to more or less secular ends, exactly as nationalist leaders had hoped. From Morocco to Indonesia, socialist and secular nationalist slogans predominated among the educated middle class. With the notable exception of Saudi Arabia, where the state was officially based on *shari'a* law, Islamist issues and parties seemed to have been outflanked by their secular rivals, and seemed marginal to the central currents of postcolonial Muslim politics.

Although their specific views varied from country to country, nationalist ideologues agreed in asserting that folk culture was to blame for the Muslim world's backwardness, and popular culture would have to be aggressively recast if society were to progress. In this regard, the nationalists shared an elite-modernist impulse with Mustafa Kemal, the secu-

larizing founder of modern Turkey (see Berkes 1998). However, with the exception of Kemalist Turkey, nationalist leaders hesitated to launch a too-direct attack on religious institutions. Recognizing Islam's crowd appeal, leaders instead cloaked their secularist programs in a nationalist garb that "retained a modest Islamic façade, incorporating some reference to Islam in their constitutions such as the ruler must be a Muslim or that the *shariah* was a source of law, even when it was not" (Esposito 2000, 2).

Soon, however, the nationalist edifice began to weaken. Having raised popular expectations to such unrealistic heights, the nationalists only insured the population's greater disappointment as it became clear that the state was unable to deliver on its promises. The sense of crisis was exacerbated by a demographic transition taking place across the Muslim world. From 1950 to 1990, the proportion of the population living in urban areas swelled, as a result of rural-to-urban migration and, especially in Africa and the Middle East, some of the world's highest fertility rates. In forty years, urban populations grew 200 to 300 percent, without a corresponding expansion in urban infrastructures. Still predominantly rural in 1950, by 1990 all but a handful of Muslim countries saw 35 to 55 percent of their population residing in cities and towns. There residents suffered the usual ill effects of pollution, crime, unemployment, and poor state services (see Brown 2000, 123–30).

By the early 1970s, then, the secular, socialist, and nationalist stars that had once shone so brightly had begun to lose their luster. Yet the need for some kind of public ethical compass was more compelling than ever. With masses of people from different ethnic and regional backgrounds packed into slums, the old ways of village and town had become obsolescent. The impersonal and often corrupt bureaucracies of state and party inspired even less confidence.

It was during this period, then, that neighborhoods across the Muslim world witnessed a steady expansion in the number of mosques and *madrasas*. Americans familiar with the role played by urban churches in their own country during the late-nineteenth century, when ethnically based congregations helped to integrate foreign immigrants into American society, should find little startling in this phenomenon (Finke and Stark 1992; Wuthnow 1988). Researchers who have examined the wave of Protestant conversion in urban Latin America during the 1970s and 1980s (Martin 1990; Stoll 1990) will also recognize parallels. For the urban poor and lower-middle class, mosques and religious schools offered islands of civility and moral clarity in a turbulent sea. In the face of growing class- and status-differentiation, these institutions provided avenues of participation for believers otherwise consigned to society's margins. As in the late-nineteenth-century United States, the pervasiveness of

religious associations gave a deeply religious hue to interactions in civil society. That society was not made up of modern liberalism's individuals freed from ethnoreligious bonds, but individuals and groups bound by crosscutting ties of kinship, ethnicity, and religion.

One telling indicator of the public's heightened interest in religion was the rapid development of a market for inexpensive Islamic books and magazines. The literature provided a means for people who had never had an opportunity to study in religious schools to familiarize themselves with the fundamentals of their faith (Gonzalez-Quijano 1998; Eickelman and Anderson 1999). The opportunity also stimulated the emergence of a new class of teachers and preachers, with target audiences different from those of the classically trained *ulama* (Eickelman and Piscatori 1996). Most of the preachers had only a vague familiarity with classical religious scholarship, although, as in Egypt, a few were unemployed graduates of religious colleges (Gaffney 1994). More important yet, the new preachers made their message relevant in ways different from the scholastic preaching of mainstream *ulama*, adapting their topics to the concerns of urban publics. Such were the demands of entrepreneurial success in an increasingly competitive religious market.

Here then was the background to the great religious resurgence seen across the Muslim world in the 1970s and 1980s. Described in the language of modern political theory, the resurgence was primarily an affair of civil society, not the state.¹⁰ Equally important, notwithstanding its impact on rural society, its leading lights and organizations were urban in ethos and organization. The resurgence created a great reservoir of social capital, comprised of networks and solidarities dedicated above all else to public piety and expressions of Islamic identity. As with denominational Christianity in America in the nineteenth century (Finke and Stark 1992; Hatch 1989), the heightened religiosity was accompanied by fierce competition among purveyors of different religious messages. Among the case studies offered in this book, only Afghanistan stood apart from the general pattern of a public Islam redefined by the interests and choices of urban consumers (see Barfield's chapter 9).

Although the cultural temperament of the Islamic resurgence varied from country to country, the process as a whole shared three basic characteristics. The first was that, in scope and density, the resurgence represented a historically unprecedented mobilization of civil society, one that created vast new reserves of social capital—"features of social organization, such as trust, norms, and networks" for "facilitating coordinated actions" (Putnam 1993, 167). In the first instance, the networks and energies of this Islamic social capital were primarily dedicated to public religious activities. Mosques and *madradas* became the anchors for new forms of public association. The call to prayer marked the rhythms of the

day. More women began to veil. Greetings and other everyday commensalities were peppered with Islamic gestures and phrases.

A second observation is equally important, although it is sometimes overlooked in commentaries that overemphasize the politics of the resurgence or, worse yet, confuse it with radical Islamism. In its early years, the resurgence was a profoundly *public* event, but not one that was especially *political* in any formal sense of the term. Most of the newly pious were primarily interested in just what they claimed to be: religious study, heightened public devotion, expressing a Muslim identity, and insuring that public arenas were subject to ethical regulation. The key symbols of the resurgence were similarly pietistic: reciting the Qur'an, keeping the fast, wearing the veil, avoiding alcohol, giving alms. The Muslim world was not alone in witnessing a resurgence of public religion in these years. As José Casanova has noted, a similar "deprivatization" of religion took place among Hindus in India, evangelicals in Africa and the Americas, and in many other countries (Casanova 1994; cf. Berger 1999, Martin 1990; van der Veer 1994). Many of the faithful in these settings were as much concerned with creating islands of civility and piety as they were anything strictly political.

The third feature of the resurgence, however, raises a more sobering question concerning its long-term political impact. In light of its scale and the competition among its promoters, it was inevitable that at some point religious entrepreneurs would move to channel the resurgence's social capital into political ends. The process was made all the more likely in that religious associations were among the few public arenas in which ordinary people could make their voices heard.

Again, however, it is important to emphasize that the range of political ideals voiced varied enormously. Some believers insisted on the compatibility of Islam with pluralism and democracy. Others called for a totalizing transformation of the social order according to an unchanging plan, modeled on an ideal of pristine unity identified with the first generation of Muslim believers (see Voll 1991). Nowhere was the tension between these two visions of Muslim politics more apparent than in matters of women's rights and personal status law. In some countries, conservative Islamists tried to mobilize their membership to reverse legislation on women's rights dating from the earlier nationalist period, on the grounds that it was un-Islamic (Keddie 1991; Kandiyoti 1995). At the same time, developments in education and employment continued to draw growing numbers of women, even from conservative Islamist families, into public life. The result has been an ambiguous and unfinished remaking of women's roles. In all but the most conservative organizations, women today are more prominent than ever in the workforce, public religious life, and even political parties (see Abu-Lughod 1998; White 2002, 52).

At the same time, in many societies conservative Islamists militate in support of polygyny, gender segregation, and mandatory veiling. In short, women's participation in public life has increased in most of the Muslim world. Whether that participation is to take place on the basis of equality and democratic dignity is a question that has yet to be resolved.

Whatever its social ambiguities, the resurgence has clearly acquired a new and, in at least some circles, more political tack. The question now is which among the variety of Muslim politics is to prevail.

AT THE CROSSROADS

To understand why some resurgents would turn to an undemocratic interpretation of Muslim politics, it is helpful to recall that although the radicals' ideas represented a break with mainstream Muslim politics, they did not emerge from a cultural vacuum. Most radical Islamists justify their actions with reference to the ideas of a few seminal thinkers who rose to international prominence in the 1950s and 1960s. The most influential of these are the Egyptian literary critic turned Islamist, Sayyid Qutb (1906–66; see Moussalli 1992), and the Pakistani theorist Mawlana Sayyid Abu'l-A'la Mawdudi (1903–79; see Nasr 1996). Both of these writers were in turn influenced by the earlier, ultraconservative reformism of Ibn Abd al-Wahhab in what is today Saudi Arabia (Voll 1991, 345–52).

A key theme in these writers' works is that God alone has sovereignty (*hakimiyya*) over the world, and that he has provided Muslims with what amounts to a complete (*kaffah*) ethical model for social and political life. This guidance, these authors claim, is contained in a religious law for all times, the *shari'a*. Whereas classically trained scholars regarded the law as complex, subtle, and always in need of expert exegesis (Zubaida 2003, 24–27), modern Islamists tend to insist that the law's meaning is transparent to all willing to submit to its commands. The fact that even radical Islamists cannot agree on the law's myriad details does not diminish this faith in the clarity and singularity of divine command. Inasmuch as God's law is clear, those who refuse its implementation are seen as having allied themselves with the forces of godlessness (*jahiliyya*). Muslims, even the masses of ordinary Muslims, are to be shunned if and when they fall into such error. Through injunctions like these, radical thinkers provide a cultural rationale for a "bonding capital" that is "inward looking and tend[s] to reinforce exclusive identities and homogeneous groups" (Putnam 2000, 22). At the limit, where rulers and publics are deemed in violation of God's command, armed struggle against both may be required.

According to these same writers, a key feature of Islam's comprehensiveness is that Islam does not recognize a separation of religion and

state, but demands their unitary fusion in an “Islamic” state. This formula is said to be based on the model of the Prophet and his rightly guided successors. As a number of writers have observed (Brown 2000; Roy 1994; Zubaida 1993), this alleged precedent actually neglects as much as it claims to recall. It forgets that, historically, the great majority of Muslim jurists believed that “the law is God’s law, not to be harnessed to the needs and the interests of the state” (Tucker 1998, 37). The conservative formula also fails to recognize that a richly differentiated political landscape took shape even during the Prophet’s lifetime, and developed all the more after his death, as the Muslim community evolved from a small charismatic movement to a great world civilization (Lapidus 1975; Zubaida 1993, 2). For it to have been otherwise, for Muslim society and politics to have remained an undifferentiated totality, would have meant the impoverishment and inevitable collapse of Muslim civilization. Muslim societies thrived precisely because their leaders adopted a flexible and differentiated approach in matters of governance, culture, and society.

Rather than fidelity to prophetic precedents, then, the Islamist dream of an all-encompassing religious governance bespeaks a modern bias, one all too familiar in the twentieth-century West. It is the dream of using the leviathan powers of the modern state to push citizens toward a pristine political purity. As the author of an excellent biography of Mawdudi has remarked, there is little in this vision that is specifically Islamic:

Mawdudi’s assimilation of Western ideas in his discourse flowed without interruption. The Islamic state duplicated, assimilated, and reproduced Western political concepts, structures, and operations, producing a theory of statecraft that, save for its name and its use of Islamic terms and symbols, showed little indigenous influence. (Nasr 1996, 90)

Another stream in modern Muslim politics, however, has spoken out against an étatist and essentializing interpretation of politics, calling instead for a pluralistic organization of state and society. Whether with Abdolkarim Soroush and the reformists in postrevolutionary Iran (Soroush 2000), Nurcholish Madjid and the “renewal” (*pembaruan*) movement in Indonesia (Hefner 2000), or Rachid Ghannouchi in Tunisia (Tamimi 2001; cf. Kurzman 1998, 19), a central theme of civil Islam has been the insistence that some degree of separation of state and religious authority is necessary to protect the integrity of Islam itself. The point is not that religion should be a purely private matter, but that its values are more susceptible to corruption if responsibility for religious affairs is surrendered to state elites.

“Religion forbids us from assuming a God-like character,” writes the Iranian dissident (and former anti-American militant) Abdolkarim Soroush (Soroush 2000, 64). He goes on: “This is especially true in politics and

government where limiting the power of the state, division of powers, and the doctrine of checks and balances are established in order to prevent accumulation of power that might lead to such Godly claims” (64). Like many Muslim reformers, Soroush’s formula borrows some of its vocabulary from Western democratic theory. But it also speaks in a movingly evocative vernacular, invoking the example of Islam’s great jurists, who protected Islam’s ideals by refusing to grant rulers a monopoly over religious truth. Rather than a pristine fusion, then, civil Islamists relocate the center of public religion to the associations and dialogue of civil society, while also pressing for a system of pluralist government subject to effective checks and balances.

Whether the civic-pluralist stream in contemporary Muslim political culture will spread and become the model for a broader, pluralistic reformation of Muslim politics will depend upon more than the cogency of a few intellectuals’ arguments. Since September 11, 2001, in particular, Muslim and Western scholars alike have realized that the civil Islamic effort faces a new and unexpected challenge. The September attacks showed that an armed fringe in the radical Islamist community is attempting to overcome its disadvantage in numbers by pressing its one comparative advantage. Groups like the al-Qa’ida and the Jema’ah Islamiyah in Southeast Asia have taken advantage of globalization to link their finances and military resources to local conflicts to which Muslims are party (see Gunaratna 2002; ICG 2002; see chapter 11 below). Prior to the overthrow of the Taliban in late 2001, the arms, training, and ideological guidance provided at al-Qa’ida camps in Afghanistan added fuel to some of the Muslim world’s most flammable conflicts. As Barfield’s essay illustrates (chapter 9), the Taliban and al-Qa’ida made an odd couple indeed. Al-Qa’ida is an internationalist organization led by well-heeled dissidents from the ranks of the Muslim upper-middle class, while the Taliban were a ragtag gang of parochial ethnics who emerged from the ruins of the most backward state in the Muslim world.

Unfortunately, as recent attacks in Indonesia, the Philippines, Turkey, Pakistan, and Saudi Arabia have shown, al-Qa’ida and like-minded groupings seem intent on extending odd-couple collaborations like these to other parts of the world. They have made their methods clear. They channel transnational flows of money, arms, and fighters into local conflicts. In so doing, they also portray these conflicts not as local, but as part of a global clash of civilizations pitting Christians, Jews, Hindus, and other “crusaders” against Muslims. Having described the struggle in these Manichaean terms, the radicals provide a moral rationale for attacking the enemies of Islam everywhere they are to be found. For Western readers of the present book, it is essential to realize that the violence

is targeted not only at Western interests, but at pluralist and moderate Muslims. The violence aims to polarize local conflicts and, in so doing, destroy the political center.

In a few instances, these tactics have succeeded in giving local *jihadis* an influence greatly out of proportion with their actual numbers in local society (see chapter 11). In all but the most desperate circumstances, however, most Muslim publics have been repelled by these actions. They recognize that the threat to the West posed by the globalization of *jihadi* adventurism is minor compared to the threat such violence poses to Muslims and Islam.

CONCLUSION

The long-term outcome of this struggle for the heart and soul of Muslim politics will depend on not only the clarity of rival visions, but concrete balances of power in state and society. The strengthening of the civil democratic stream in Muslim politics will also depend on a long-term collaborative effort by governmental and nongovernmental agencies in the Muslim and Western worlds.

Owing to, perhaps, an unfamiliarity with the nuances of Muslim politics, as well as regrettably short-term policies, governments in the West have not been as consistent as they should be in their policies toward the Muslim world (Gerges 1999; Hinter 1998). One especially unhelpful factor has been a concern in Western policy circles that if the democratic dam is opened wide, the groups most likely to rush in will be authoritarian Islamists little interested in pluralism or democracy. "One vote, one time," was the phrase that summarized this anxiety in Western circles at the time of the Algerian elections in 1991. The fear led French and American officials to side with the forces of military repression in Algeria, after the electoral triumph of an (admittedly complex) alliance of moderate and militant Islamists (Willis 1996).

It does little good simply to wave this anxiety aside. As in the early-twentieth-century West, there *are* political radicals eager to take advantage of democratic openings so as to pursue undemocratic ends. However, it is helpful to remember that rulers in most Muslim societies have not gone so far as the Algerian authorities to repress moderate opponents and, in so doing, paint the political process into a corner. The essays in this book provide numerous examples of societies in which a vigorous measure of grassroots pluralism is still available for, so to speak, scaling up. Equally important, as noted above, there is a wealth of evidence indicating that most Muslims yearn for democracy and civic decency. They do so not

because these ideals were “made in the West,” but because they are the most effective and just response to problems of pluralism and participation widespread in our age.

If Muslim governments and their Western friends do not take the steps needed to promote civic pluralism and democracy, the result will likely be only more radicalism and popular disenchantment with the West. The main reason reform must not be delayed is that Muslim societies are already *sociologically* modern. They are modern in the sense that they are well on the way to developing the characteristics distinctive to the condition of modernity: a pluralization of life-worlds, heightened pressures for participation, and a growing popular demand that the script for coordinating roles on the public stage be, in some vernacularized sense, civil and democratic.

This is not to say that democratization is inevitable or that efforts to support Muslim democratization have to be all or nothing. The history of democratization in the modern West shows that the process is enduringly incremental, always incomplete, and, alas, reversible even where it is achieved (Keane 1996). The process typically unfolds in a piecemeal and domain-specific manner, its course specified not just by the brilliance of its ideals, but by concrete balances of power and participatory struggles. The most effective way for Western agencies to support the process in Muslim societies, then, is to invest in those spheres where local actors are already pressing for heightened participation and civic decency. In efforts like these, civil society groupings will be crucial. But programs in civil society will remain vulnerable and incomplete unless complemented by democratic reforms in the state. Democratization is sustainable only when based on leveraged collaborations between state and society that scale up the democratic powers of each.

In light of the centrality of education and public discussion in the Islamic resurgence, investment in general education represents a second and no less critical support for a pluralizing Muslim politics. Skeptics might point out that some of the more violent radicals in recent years have come from the ranks of well-educated youth. The militants who carried out the attacks of September 11, 2001, were not the illiterate offspring of an impoverished underclass. But it is far more noteworthy that some of the most gifted proponents of Muslim pluralism come from the ranks of public intellectuals and religious scholars with a great knowledge of the law, and a habit of enriching its insights by juxtaposing it to other traditions of knowledge (see Abou El Fadl 2001; An-Na'im 1990; Safi 2003). More, not less, education is the key. And education has a greater democratic benefit when it conveys a spirit of intellectual “bridging” rather than exclusive “bonding.”

There are two additional reasons for focusing investments in education, including, especially, women's education and higher education. First and most important, this is what the great majority of modern Muslims yearn for. Studies like the recent *Arab Human Development Report 2003* provide vivid demonstrations of the depth of this desire, and the calamity its nonfulfillment has created. The deficit is no more tragically apparent than in the continuing exclusion of women and girls from equal access to education (UNDP 2003, 31).

A second reason for highlighting investment in education is that education is the most paradigmatic of modern cultural institutions. Today no society can compete even in the lower rungs of the global order without a well-run educational system. In its diverse specializations, its encouragement of innovation, its (relative) gender equality, and its culture of civility-in-plurality, higher education is a shimmering example of all that is best about modern freedom and civic decency.

The recent revolutionary experiments in Iran, Sudan, and Afghanistan demonstrate that attempts to use the state to deny modern pluralism, and to implement a totalizing (*kaffah*) practice of the faith, run contrary to the demands of modern education and society as a whole. Again, in sociological fact, Muslim societies are already modern. The growth of the professions, the expansion of the press, the fascination with the Internet, the demand for women's education—these and other pluralizing developments are well under way in all but the poorest Muslim nations. Religious radicals may deny the public's hunger for pluralist fruits. No doubt the Taliban in Afghanistan went to the greatest lengths to deny this interest and press society back toward a pristine, undifferentiated whole. But this only reminds us that Taliban programs bore a more striking resemblance to Pol Pot's Cambodia than they did the model of the Prophet.

Here, then, is the strongest support for democracy and civic decency in the Muslim world. The support is especially significant because it comes from Muslims themselves, not from a West that, unfortunately, has been less than consistent in its attitudes on Islam. The support originates in Muslims' recognition that efforts to impose a repressive homogeneity on a diverse society only damages their faith and consigns believers to backwardness. This latter conclusion will be rejected, of course, by those who insist that Islam has unchanging instructions for everyone and all aspects of social life. Just as was the case with totalitarian schemes in the modern West, efforts to implement such totalizing programs will do great harm to society. Even more serious from believers' perspective, the more radicals press for a fusion of religion and state, the more they remove the checks and balances necessary for maintaining the integrity of not only the political process, but of religion itself. The urge for absolutist union creates

the conditions for religion's abuse. Power corrupts; absolute power corrupts absolutely. And nothing more certainly degrades religion than human absolutism in God's name.

These are the lessons that give the civil Islamic project its historic urgency and relevance. Recent events have demonstrated that it is in the best interest of Islam itself that Muslim politics be plural and democratic. In an age of mass participation and powerful states, to do otherwise is to guarantee religion's subordination to the powerful and corrupt. "The modern world has also undermined a right that has always been a source of evil and corruption," writes Abdolkarim Soroush (2000, 64), "that is, the right to act as a God-like potentate with unlimited powers." This is the conviction, so historic and deep, from which civil democratic Islam flows. Originating at the heart of the Muslim experience of modernity, the conviction is becoming more, not less, widespread in our world. Its diffusion ensures that the struggle for a civic-pluralist politics will remain a central stream in Muslim civilization for years to come.

NOTES

1. "Civic pluralism" refers to a public culture and social organization premised on equal rights, tolerance-in-pluralism, and a legally recognized differentiation of state and religious authority (see Eickelman and Piscatori 1996, 158; Hefner 2000, 12). Where such a civic pluralism is in turn linked to a system of free and fair elections, a separation of powers in the state, the rule of law, and human rights we may speak of a civic pluralist *democracy*. As I have discussed elsewhere (Hefner 1998a), the benefit of this phrase is that it makes clear that there are versions of modern democracy other than liberal variants alone. Much like the civic republicanism Charles Taylor has described (1989, 1995), Muslim civic pluralism may well dedicate greater attention to the cultivation of public values, including religious ones, than is deemed appropriate by modern liberal democrats. However, even some of the latter have recently begun to reexamine their heritage's secularist premises. See Rosenblum 2000.
2. For a sample of some of the more radical denunciations, see Parfrey 2001.
3. It goes without saying, of course, that this effort to engage the modern within the horizons of a religiously grounded discourse is by no means unique to Islam. Charles Taylor (1999) and José Casanova (1994) provide compelling reflections on such efforts within modern Catholicism; Tu Wei-ming's (1996) volume provides a richly nuanced sense of the effort in East Asian Confucianism. Thomas Blom Hansen (1999) provides a powerful overview of the politics of the process in contemporary Hinduism.
4. In addition to the varied legal schools, the relative autonomy of religious scholars, the popularity (after the eleventh century) of Sufi mystical orders, and imperial support for shrines and festivals, another institution that served