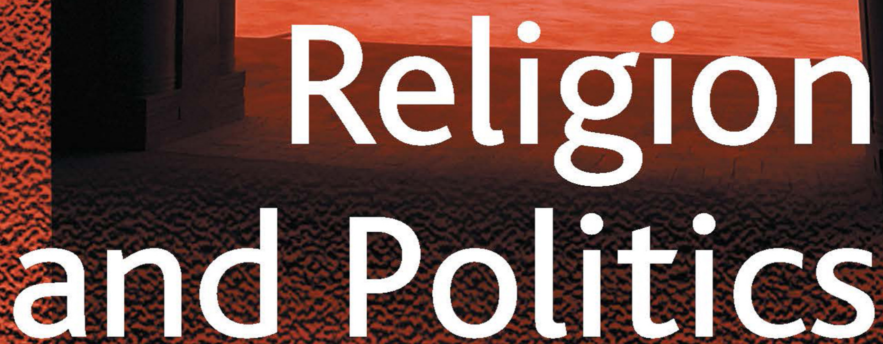

Religion and Politics

Islam and Muslim Civilization

Second Edition

Jan-Erik Lane
and Hamadi Redissi

RELIGION AND POLITICS

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Preface

The focus of our book, the outcome of close collaboration between the Calvinist University of Geneva and the Muslim modernist University of Tunis on the Muslim civilisation, is the social impact of religion, especially upon politics. Max Weber was correct in underlining the immense social consequences of religious beliefs and values, but this insight can be used to launch a new analysis of Islam, different from Weber's own perspective upon this world religion. Posing the question "Why were the European powers early modernisers whereas the Muslim countries were late modernisers?", or reformulating it as "Why did the high Islamic cultures of the medieval period experience a decline in modern times while the Western European developed in the other direction?", entails a Weberian approach. Weber emphasised the role of religion when accounting for the economic differences between the major civilisations of the world, especially the rise of modern capitalism in the Occidental sphere. Weber launched his thesis in 1904.

How are we to understand the Muslim societies today? They now face late modernisation, hesitance towards post-modernity and the emergence of Islamic fundamentalism. Our work has the purpose of presenting a new analysis of Islam, following Weber's emphasis upon the social consequences of religious beliefs. Broadening the perspective on religion to also include politics in comparison with Weber, we concentrate upon the status of human rights and the *Rule of Law*. The Muslim societies today are struggling under two seminal forces, viz. the need for economic modernisation on the one hand and the drift towards Islamic fundamentalism on the other hand. The balance between these two forces – modernity and religious purity – is struck differently in the various Muslim societies, depending upon the constellation of elite groups as well as historical legacies. However, the tension is most real across all of Arabia, not to mention other Muslim countries, such as Pakistan, Bangladesh, Afghanistan and Indonesia.

No one doubts that Islam is a religion with strong economic, social and political consequences. However, the impact of this world religion upon the Muslim societies cannot be subsumed under Islamic fundamentalism. As shown below, radical Islamism emerged in the twentieth century in the form of a new interpretation of the Koran. All through the history of Islam there have been different interpretations, from a liberal and rational approach to the Koran, as with the great Spanish philosopher Averroes, over the firm legal approach typical of the Sunni legacy, to the charismatic bend of Shiism. Actually, the various doctrines linked with the Koran constitute a most complicated web of schools, including for example the very different forms of Shia approaches such as the moderate Alids or Alawites and radical Iranian Shiism, as well as the Sufi orders.

We wish to claim that there is no fundamental opposition between Islam and modernity or post-modernity. Contrary to Islamic fundamentalism, we will argue that the Koran is reconcilable with both modernity and post-modernity. Although using the same perspective as Weber, namely religion and society, our opinion is that Weber's thesis about the link between Calvinism and rationality has limited relevance for understanding why the Muslim societies have fallen behind since the Renaissance. Weber did not clearly separate Islam as a religion (a set of beliefs and values), on the one hand, from Arab traditionalism, which was early married to Islam. If one makes a clear separation between Islam as a religion and Muslim traditionalism, then the slow process of modernisation in Arabia and elsewhere becomes more understandable.

It has been observed that there is one book missing by Weber, namely a book analysing Islam (Huff and Schluchter, 1999). Weber wrote monographs on the major world religions with the exception of Islam. In his comparative studies of religion Weber analysed Islam as a religion and the Arab tradition interchangeably, which creates the confusion that protecting or promoting Islam implies going back to medieval Arab customs. For instance, Weber writes (1978: 818–822) that the *benefice* of the Islamic *ulemas*, or that of examined aspirants for the offices of the *qadi* (judge) or *mufti* (religious juris-consultant), was often granted for only a short time, in order to facilitate its circulation among the aspirants. This amounts merely to a rational policy of preventing permanent appropriation on the part of the individual, thus not impairing the *esprit de corps*. One should make a sharp distinction between the Koran as a system of religious beliefs and values on the one hand and traditional Arab or Muslim institutions such as the *qadi*, the *mufti* or the imam. If traditionalism has hindered the modernisation of Muslim societies, including the arrival of the market economy and democracy, there is nothing in Islam as a religion that makes Muslim societies more backward than other civilisations adhering to Hinduism, Buddhism, Christianity or Judaism.

The structure of the books is as follows: First, Weber's thesis linking religion and the rise of capitalism is examined, emphasising that Weber omitted another very important link between religion and modernity, namely democracy and human rights. Second, Weber's conception of Islam as a religion is analysed by collecting the analytical pieces spread out in his various works. Third, the separation between Islam and traditions is forcefully made, with an analysis of how historical legacies hindered modernisation in the Muslim countries. Fouth, the political developments in one part of the Arab world, North Africa or the Maghreb, are scrutinised with an emphasis on the sources of political instability in the Muslim civilisation. Finally, we bring up the question of the possibility of reconciling Islam with the requirements of post-modernity.

Weber analysed a culturally and politically homogeneous sphere before the formation of the modern Muslim states. Today Islam encompasses 57 countries belonging to the Organisation of the Islamic Conference (the 22 countries of the Arab League, Iran, five Asian countries, The Maldives and Turkey, the remainder being African countries with Muslim majorities or minorities, such as Senegal,

Togo, Ivory Coast and Mozambique, and several former USSR republics). Islam comprises more than a billion people, who are found mostly in the Third World, have a tradition of 15 centuries of history and speak several major languages such as Arabic, Persian, Bengali and Turkish. There are several Islams according to history, language and culture. One may approach this variety with a search for its cultural core of religious ideas and behaviours, although one should not assume a homogeneous cultural type. In relation to Islam it is possible to speak of several specific subcultures like the Arab countries, the Ottoman legacy and the non-Arab countries.

Weber promoted the discipline of the sociology of religion by showing in numerous studies the strong economic consequences that different kinds of religious beliefs have had in various civilisations. Weber believed that the content of religion mattered very much for the behaviour of both elites and ordinary people. He substantiated his claim that religion matters with full-scale investigations of all the world religions, except Islam. Given the emergence of Islamic fundamentalism in the twentieth century, Weber's omission presents us with a lacuna in our knowledge of religions, society and politics.

Setting out to try to fill this gap in our knowledge about Islam and its consequences for society, economics and politics, we first examine the short analyses of Islam that Max Weber presented in a few key passages. Weber's position was extremely negative towards Islam, which calls for an alternative attempt to reconcile Islam with the requirements of modernity, the market economy and democracy. We sincerely believe that such reconciliation is possible, especially if one draws upon the currents of liberalism within the Arab countries. Many of the negative features of Islam that Weber focused upon stem from Arab legacies, which need not be combined with Islam as a system of beliefs. Thus, we examine these Muslim legacies and spell out their consequences for economic and political retardation.

The division of labour between the authors has seen Hamadi Redissi make an initial version of the manuscript in French, which Jan-Erik Lane has then translated into English, adding parts and pieces while creating a new synthesis. A chapter by Riadh Sidaoui was added to the volume in order to unravel the logic of Islamic fundamentalism through an analysis of the FIS in Algeria. Sidaoui holds a doctorate from the University of Tunis but works in Geneva, Switzerland. Erik Verkoyen, then at Geneva University, was highly instrumental in bringing the parts together into a final first edition. In this second edition, the entire text has been updated, corrected and expanded with three new chapters.

Jan-Erik Lane, Suva, Fiji
Hamadi Redissi, Tunis

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SECTION I
The Muslim Civilisation and Modernisation

The Muslim world harbours more than a billion people adhering to the religion of Mohammed and regarding the Koran as *The Book* containing their basic guidelines in life. It consists of the Arab civilisation as well as the huge Muslim countries outside of it, for example Iran, Indonesia, Bangladesh and Pakistan. Furthermore, there is the religiously neutral state of Turkey with its Muslims, as well as the Turkic-speaking populations in the former USSR (Khanates and Caucasia), and the people of Kurdistan. Finally, it comprises sizeable Muslim populations in several African countries, such as Senegal, Mali and Guinea, including religiously divided societies like those in Nigeria, Ivory Coast and Kenya, as well as that in India, and considerable Muslim minorities in many other countries, including Western Europe, such as those in France and Germany.

The Muslim world is as large in terms of population as the Christian world, but it is far less developed. It is bigger than the Buddhist world, but again it is less developed. Whatever measures one applies concerning modernity or post-modernity, it is the case that the Muslim world scores lower than other civilisations, including indicators of affluence and human rights. It is true that the Muslim world is not only of one kind, as it comprises countries that are super-rich as well as countries with a quasi-democratic regime. However, the general trend is that the Muslim world underperforms on modernity or post-modernity. Why is this so?

We may formulate our general question in several ways: is there an irreconcilable conflict between Islam and rationality or can the Muslim societies accommodate the ideals of post-modernity? Developments in and around the Muslim civilisation are very much at the centre of the world's attention after the events of 11 September 2001, 11 March 2004 and 7 July 2005. The emergence of global Islamic terrorism is the most spectacular indication of the challenges that post-modernity and globalisation pose to Muslim societies. How these challenges will be met will have a decisive impact upon world politics. Muslims' responses to post-modernity and globalisation depend critically upon how they reconcile religion and rationality. In the field economics, the concept of Islamic finance has been offered as a solution, but in the field of politics things appear to be more problematic, as it is argued that Muslim societies need a strong or even authoritarian government to control extremist groups.

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Chapter 1
Modernity, Post-modernity and the Muslim World

Introduction

The question about religion and modernisation may be designated "Weberian", because Max Weber developed a most coherent approach to the analysis of modernity, focusing on the religious element in the major civilisations of humanity. Around 1900 he started to write about the economic consequences of religion, which theme by the end of his life in 1920 had grown into his general sociology of religion (Weber, 1993). Weber dealt only with one aspect of modernity, namely economic development or affluence. Today the majority of Muslim societies are still underperforming on economic modernisation, although the institutions of the market economy have arrived in the Muslim world. Table 1.1 indicates a negative correlation between affluence and the size of the Muslim population.

Table 1.1 Gross Domestic Product and the Relative Size of the Muslim Population 1970–2000

Correlations		MUSLIM 1970	MUSLIM 1980	MUSLIM 1995	MUSLIM 2000
GDPCPP80	Pearson Correlation	–.142	–.146	–.166	–.185
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.155	.147	.092	.061
	N	102	100	104	103
GDPCPP85	Pearson Correlation	–.217	–.219	–.241	–.247
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.024	.025	.011	.010
	N	107	105	110	109
GDPCPP90	Pearson Correlation	–.265	–.261	–.290	–.285
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.004	.005	.001	.001
	N	117	114	129	128
GDPCPP98	Pearson Correlation	–.269	–.263	–.277	–.272
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.003	.004	.001	.001
	N	122	117	137	136

When examining a large set of countries of the world, whatever measure on affluence is employed, we find that Muslim countries tend to score lower than non-Muslim ones. Moreover, Figure 1.1 shows that most Muslim countries had a low level of affluence in 1980, with a few outstanding exceptions, such as the Arab *rentier* states.

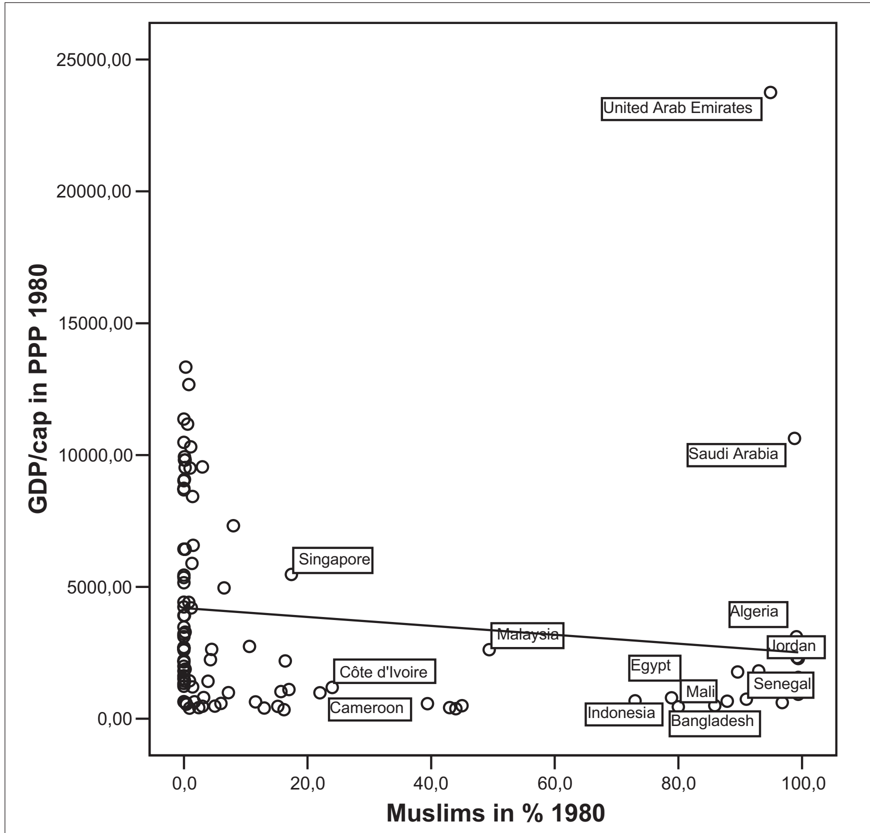

Figure 1.1 Size of Muslim Population and Affluence in 1980

Figure 1.2 shows the interaction between Muslim societies and affluence around 2000. It confirms that the Muslim countries also remained economically backward close to 2000, but there were notable exceptions, such as the UAE, Saudi Arabia and Malaysia. One may also note that very affluent Singapore has an important Muslim minority. Thus, the Weber perspective – religion and affluence – remains relevant today, but it must be broadened to include human rights and democracy. One may wish to enquire into why the Muslim world has great difficulties in accommodating the imperatives of post-modernity, such as individualism, human rights and democracy, and not merely examine the Weber focus, i.e. affluence.

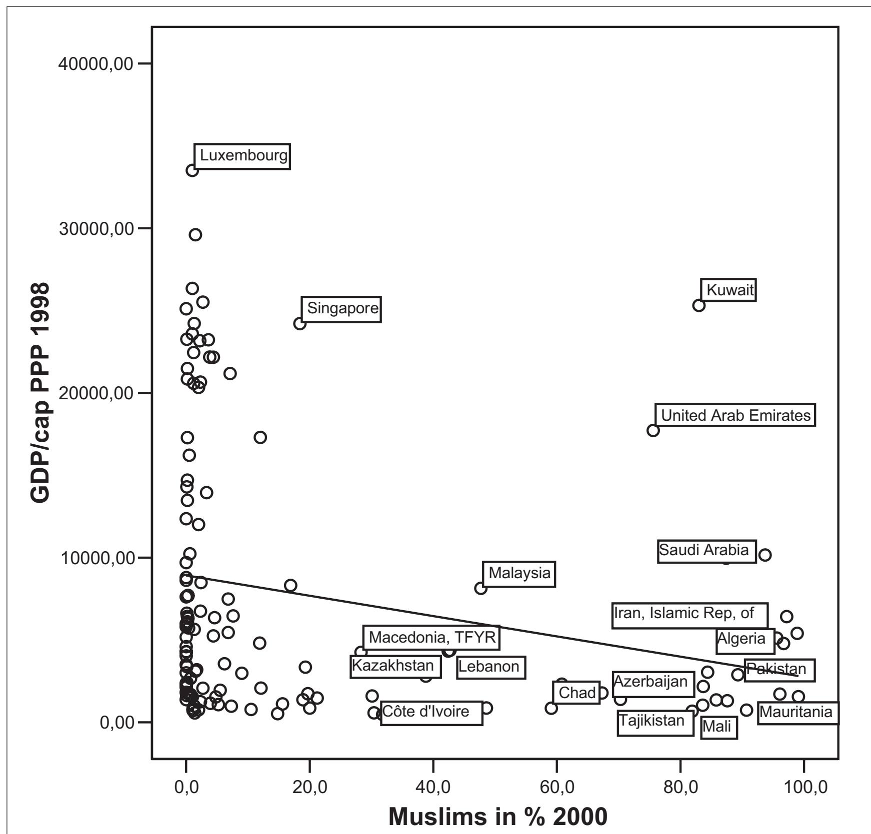

Figure 1.2 Size of Muslim Population and Affluence in 2000

The Two Muslim Worlds

The Muslim civilisation may be divided into two worlds: the Arab world and the non-Arab Muslim world. This distinction is not merely based upon the historical emergence of the Muslim civilisation over time, but it retains its relevance today in view of the ethnic composition of the Muslim population. The Arab world consists of more than 300 million people speaking Arabic and adhering to the Arab culture. It stretches from Morocco in the west to Iraq in the east. Many of its members today live in Western Europe, but there are also Arab minorities in African countries like Sudan, Somalia and Mauritania. The Arab world is the origin of the Muslim civilisation and it has maintained its distinctness within it. The Arabs constitute an *ethnie* with several common features such as one language (the language of the Koran), a historical legacy and a shared culture (Ahmed, 1998; Anderson, 2000; Armstrong, 2001a; Gardet, 1967/2002; Gibb and Kramers, 1995; Lippman, 1982).

The non-Arab Muslim world is larger than the Arab world in terms of population. It consists of several *ethnies* with different pasts, languages and cultures. The evolution of the non-Arab Muslim world coincides with the spread of the religion of Mohammed from the Arab peninsula in various directions. Thus, Iran was early included in the Muslim world, when many Persians became active in Baghdad as the centre of the second of the great caliphates, the Abbasids (750–1258). The Mongol and Turkic (the word is borrowed from a linguistic subgroup covering similar languages from Turkish in the west to Uigur in the east) peoples entered the Muslim civilisation during the medieval period, creating the Mongol empires and the Ottoman Empire with the conquest of Constantinople in 1453.

Although the Muslims (the Moors) were ejected from Western Europe when Granada fell in 1492, the Muslim world during the high medieval period had started a deep penetration into Asia along several routes. Islam strengthened its grip upon Afghanistan, Mongolia and parts of Western China. Furthermore, Islam penetrated India, Malaysia and Indonesia. The traditional tension between the two Muslim worlds, the Arab world and the non-Arab Muslim world, was heightened by the expansion of the Ottoman Empire into the Arab peninsula. Thus, large parts of Arabia came under Turkish rule, which from the Arab point of view constituted a period of colonisation.

Actually, the period of colonialism affected the Muslim world tremendously. The Arab countries were colonised not only by the Turks but also by the European powers, not least when the Ottoman Empire was broken up. Thus, several Arab countries came under European domination. The non-Arab Muslim world was equally affected by colonialism. Mogul India and Malaysia came under British rule, whereas the Dutch governed Indonesia. Moreover, Russia penetrated deep into the Khanates and encountered the British in Afghanistan.

Almost all of the modern Muslim states were created in opposition to Occidental colonialism. Thus, only a few Muslim countries, such as Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Iran and Afghanistan, were never colonised by European powers. Many

Muslim countries had to fight wars of liberation before an independent state could replace various forms of colonial rule. In both the Arab and the non-Arab Muslim world political independence and the erection of a modern state proved highly controversial, resulting in massive political violence where foreign powers were often involved one way or another. The Palestinian issue has remained totally unsettled for decades, as is also now the situation regarding Iraq. In both cases the United States of America is heavily involved. Algeria and Sudan have suffered badly from recent civil wars and Morocco has to face the problem of Polisario in Western Sahara.

The Arab world today consists of a number of independent states that collaborate in the loosely organised League of Arab States, comprising Algeria, Bahrain, Comoros, Djibouti, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, Oman, Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates and Yemen. The Egyptian government proposed the Arab League in 1945 and its charter created a regional organisation of sovereign states that is neither a union nor a federation. The Arab League attempts to promote the interests of member states. It has served as a forum for member states to coordinate their policy positions and deliberate on matters of common concern, settling some Arab disputes and limiting conflicts such as the Lebanese and Palestinian civil wars. The Arab League has promoted economic integration among member states, such as the creation of the Joint Arab Economic Action Charter. It has played a role in preserving the Arab cultural heritage by launching literacy campaigns, reproducing intellectual works and translating modern technical terminology. The Arab League has also fostered cultural exchanges between member states, encouraged youth and sports programmes, helped to advance the role of women in Arab societies and promoted child welfare activities (Mansour, 1992).

In the non-Arab Muslim world, nation-states have been put in place on the basis of different *ethnies*. Iran managed to maintain its independence, but its oil attracted much Western attention and interference until a Shiite regime was established in the wake of the fall of the Shah. After the demise of imperial rule in India, two giant Muslim countries eventually emerged, although it is worth emphasising that India still has a huge Muslim minority. Pakistan (1947), Bangladesh (1971), Malaysia (1957) and Indonesia (1949) became independent after the Second World War. In Saharan Africa we find several Muslim countries, or countries where a majority or large minority of the population is Muslim, e.g. Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad and Niger.

To sum up, the Muslim civilisation may be decomposed into the smaller Arab world and the larger non-Arab world. Typical of both is retardation of post-modernity. The Muslim civilisation as a whole is less developed than the other civilisations of the globe, whatever measure one employs: affluence, human rights, gender equality or social development. It is true that the Arab world comprises a few extremely rich countries – the Gulf states. However, their advancement is based upon their being so-called *rentier* states, where governments extract an immense economic rent from selling oil or gas abroad. It is generally true that the

Muslim civilisation is less developed economically and politically than the Western or Buddhist civilisations. Let us look again at the evidence. Table 1.2 shows the correlations between the size of the Muslim population and human rights.

Table 1.2 Correlations between Muslim Population and Human Rights 1981–2000

		Human rights 1981–1985	Human rights 1995–2001
MUSL70	Pearson Correlation	–.374	–.528
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000
	N	129	135
MUSL80	Pearson Correlation	–.358	–.527
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000
	N	128	129
MUSL95	Pearson Correlation	–.371	–.550
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000
	N	130	150
MUSL2000	Pearson Correlation	–.371	–.554
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000
	N	129	149

As a matter of fact, the correlation between the lack of enforcement of human rights and the size of the Muslim population is even more pronounced than is true of affluence. This basic fact puts immense pressure upon the Muslim civilisation to accommodate post-modernity.

Figure 1.3 shows that no Muslim country scored high on democracy in the 1980s, with only a few countries scoring medium, such as Malaysia, Lebanon, Bangladesh and Senegal. Many Muslim countries are not politically stable and are far from being consolidated democracies.

Figure 1.4 confirms that most Muslim countries score medium or low on human rights today, the only exceptions being Mali and Bangladesh. In fact, there is no country with a sizeable Muslim population that is a highly stable democracy, with the exception of India with its huge Muslim minority.

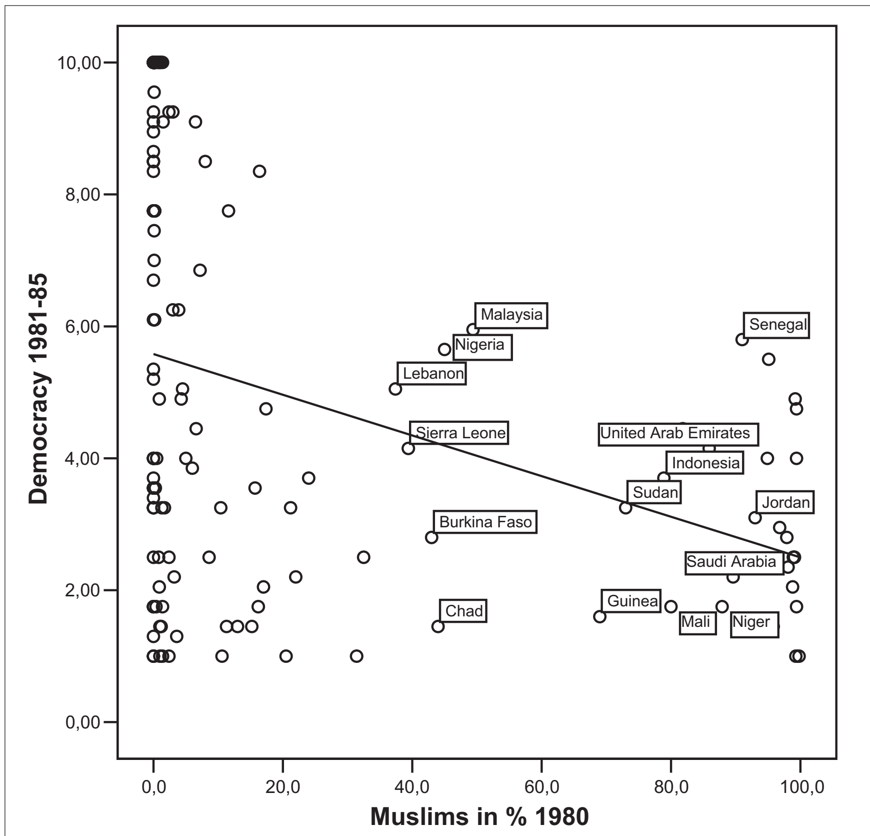

Figure 1.3 Democracy in the Muslim World 1981–1985

Many factors have played a role in Muslim retardation, some of which are peculiar to the Arab world while others are more relevant for the non-Arab world. In this book we focus upon the role of the common elements in the Muslim civilisation, whether Arab or non-Arab. For example, Fish has used six variables to explain authoritarian rule in the Islamic civilisation: Islamic tradition, economic development, sociocultural division, economic performance, British colonialism and communist heritage (Fish, 2002, 4–37). Our enquiry is broader: is Islam the major cause of the confrontation between tradition and post-modernity that is so characteristic of Muslim societies today? This way of framing the question is distinctly Weberian.

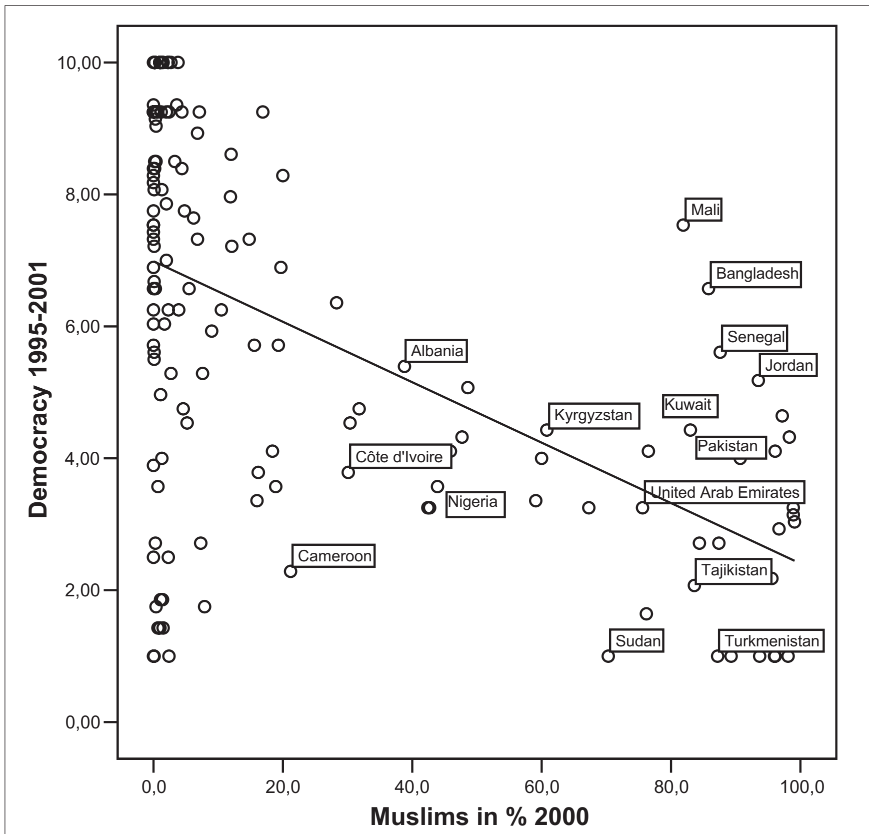

Figure 1.4 Democracy in the Muslim World 1995–2001

Turbulence in the Muslim Civilisation

Today, several Muslim societies are in uproar (Roy, 2004; Kepel, 2004). Where these societies border countries adhering to other civilisations we often find violent confrontations. Why can Muslim societies not settle down and embark upon a slow but steady advancement? These internal and external convulsions occur in several parts of the Muslim civilisation, in the Arab and non-Arab parts. Muslim societies do not have modern advanced economies. Muslim governments do not implement human rights, and Muslim countries do not support the struggle of women for gender equality. On the contrary, Muslim societies tend to be plagued by extensive poverty, by dictatorship and by sharp gender inequalities. Judged by the standards of modernity and post-modernity, Arab societies are less developed than, for instance, many Christian or Buddhist societies (Pryce-Jones, 2002).

In recent years this backwardness has been further underlined by the policy of Islamisation, the most typical feature of which is the reintroduction of Muslim law into the legal orders of Muslim countries. Sharia law is the core of Muslim law and its position in the legal order of the country is an indicator of development. In the most backward Muslim societies Sharia law is the constitution of the state. In other countries Sharia law is applied only in civil law cases. Finally, there are a few Muslim countries where Sharia law has been replaced by modern law, such as Tunisia and Turkey. A few countries that had diminished the role of Sharia law in their efforts towards development and secularisation have recently reintroduced elements of Sharia law or reinforced its position in the entire legal system of the country (Mohammadi and Ahsan, 2002).

Internally, several Muslim countries operate on the edge of anarchy, as political violence results in numerous deaths every year. A few have suffered from civil war over a long period of time, for example Sudan, Algeria and Afghanistan. Others, such as Lebanon and Iraq, have been torn by short but bloody civil wars. Countries like Egypt and Indonesia have also experienced political violence. In border areas, where Moslems live in countries with another civilisation, political violence occurs, for example Kashmir, southern Thailand, Mindanao, Xinjiang and Chechnya.

Regime instability is characteristic of several Muslim countries. In the Arab world traditional authority has a position not experienced in any other civilisation. Thus, several Arab countries are real kingdoms or emirates. Oman has a sultan, as has Brunei in the non-Arab Muslim world. The royal families in Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Morocco, Bahrain, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates are hardly secure and feel the need to strengthen their legitimacy by referring to religion. In the republican Muslim countries, constitutional stability is rare, for example Pakistan is politically as well as constitutionally unstable with numerous coups and deaths from political violence. After independence, all the Muslim republics have changed regime, sometimes several times, like Iraq and Algeria. Two countries that were never colonised, Iran and Afghanistan, have been characterised by much regime instability. Afghanistan remains tribal even today and Iran has opted for an authoritarian religious regime. Among the secular republics in the Muslim world, presidential or parliamentary regimes prevail. It is only Libya that has a constitution with elements from the Soviet model.

Authoritarianism appears in almost all of the Muslim republics, although to varying degrees depending upon the country and the time period. Several of them display a soft form of authoritarianism, such as Tunisia and Egypt. Lebanon, Bangladesh and Malaysia are closer to democracy, whereas Syria and Algeria must be classified as dictatorships. Why do Muslim countries score low on one of the key aspects of modernity and post-modernity – the implementation of civil and political rights?

Given the lack of democracy in the Muslim world, the internal instability characteristic of the Muslim states is not difficult to account for. Why would many citizens and inhabitants in Muslim societies not yearn for human rights in general and political rights in particular? Yet, there are other sources of instability

in Muslim societies besides the general lack of rule of law. Where there is religious fragmentation and the Muslim community is large, then political instability is highly likely. The same holds when the country has two large communities of Moslems, Sunnis and Shias. Where Islam collides with other religions, political instability prevails, as for example along the borders of Russia and in the Khanates (derived from Genghis Khan), the seven nations that emerged from the former USSR and referred to as “Central Asia”.

A large Muslim population lives in India, where religious confrontations between Muslims, Hindus and Christians occur despite the formal confessional neutrality of the Indian State. Tensions have increased recently, partly because of the rise of Hindu nationalism, provoked perhaps in turn by the appearance of Islamic activism. In many religiously divided societies the split between the Muslim community and other communities results in political violence (Hourani, 1995; Qureishi, 1962; Ro’l, 1995; Van Schendel and Zurcher, 2000; McAmis, 2002; Raymer, 2001; Spencer, 2002). One recent example is the Ivory Coast, which has been split into two parts, the southern Christian part and the northern Muslim part. Nigeria is also politically unstable because of a similar regional tension between the north and the south that resulted in the civil war around Biafra in the late 1960s and early 1970s. In addition, Sudan has been torn apart by the same kind of split.

Appendices 1.1 and 1.2 present an overview of the religious fragmentation of Muslim majorities or minorities in today’s nations. They show the expansion of Islam, as relative numbers increased between 1900 and 1995 in many countries, especially in Africa. In China there are two provinces with large Muslim populations, Xinjiang and Ningxia, although they are not numerous on the scale of the Chinese population.

There is yet another source of instability in Muslim societies, namely the tensions among different Islamic groups. Historically, there have been three major groups, the Sunnis, the Shiites and the Karijites, although these groups display several subgroups or sects, especially among the followers of Ali, the Alawites. The split between Sunnis and Shiites is today mainly focused upon the politics of Iran and its relation to other Muslim countries such as Iraq with its Shiite majority, mainly living in the south. India has a sizeable Shiite minority.

Externally, where Muslim countries encounter other civilisations there is often tension and armed conflict. Palestine and Kashmir are perhaps the most spectacular examples of military confrontation between Muslims and non-Muslims. The same tension occurred in the Balkans (Norris, 1993). It also occurs along the southern borders of Russia and in southeast Asia, where Christian East Timor liberated itself from Muslim Indonesia and the Philippines have been affected by a Muslim rebellion on the islands of Mindanao. The Khanates, e.g. Turkmenistan, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, lie in the zone between the Muslim civilisation and other civilisations. Their populations are mixed both ethnically and religiously. Not only do these countries suffer from internal instability, but they are also in the firing zone between civilisations. The emergence of Islamic fundamentalism has aggravated their situation.

The turbulence, internal and external, surrounding the religion of Mohammed became particularly acute around 1998 with the birth of Islamic terrorism on a global scale in the shape of the al-Qaeda network. Most of the world religions contain fundamentalist movements, but what is unusual about Islamic fundamentalism is that it is a relatively late phenomenon and that it received such strong support in the twentieth century. Islamic fundamentalism presents a major challenge to Muslim societies and states and it fuels conflict with other civilisations. Internally, it has been a major source of political violence, for instance in Algeria and upper Egypt. Externally, it has led to armed conflict between states, for instance the destruction of the Taliban state by the United States and the ongoing terrorism in Iraq. What needs to be emphasised here is that Islamic fundamentalism pushes Muslim civilisation away from the mainstream development in the other civilisations that we subsume under the labels of modernity and post-modernity.

The modernisation of society – changing the social structure from agrarian towards industrial or post-industrial – requires an intellectual atmosphere that is receptive to human rights, research, technology and academic values. All kinds of fundamentalism are at odds with such an atmosphere. If Islamic fundamentalism prevails in Muslim civilisation, then its retardation will only become more pronounced. Although it is difficult to give a concise definition of modernity and post-modernity, these concepts refer to the triumph of science, pure and applied, that is, the search for unbiased knowledge and its application in technology with the consequent immense ramifications for the economy. Can, then, Islam accommodate post-modernity?

Modernity and Post-modernity

It could be said that modernity got its breakthrough with the Great French Revolution and its focus upon liberty, equality and brotherhood among peoples. The values of the French Revolution can be pursued in very different activities and contexts, from the market economy to democracy. When modernity replaced tradition, societies were transformed from agrarian to industrial. The post-modern society is a continuous development along the same path. Weber equated modernity with rationality and found it in both bureaucracy and modern capitalism. The French Revolution ended the legitimacy of traditional rule and put in place the Enlightenment Project that still goes on, increasing the role of science and technology in all kinds of human affairs and inviting all people to share in the fruits of progress on the basis of equality between man and woman.

Characteristic of post-modernity is the emphasis upon affluence, human rights and gender equality. Modernity replaced the traditional society with a society based upon individualism, contract and calculation. Urbanisation and industrialisation created wealth and a class structure conducive to democracy. The post-modern society puts the service sector in the centre of the economy and makes information transmitted globally the essential link. The philosophy of the post-modern society

adds a strong dose of scepticism to the modern condition at the same time as it reinforces individualism.

Modernity and post-modernity have spread around the globe and can be found in all countries, although to varying degrees. What is striking is the retarding effect of the Muslim civilisation on the chief expressions of modernity and post-modernity. In both the Arab and the non-Arab Muslim worlds, liberty and equality are not strongly institutionalised. The same is true of rationality and individualism. Why is this? The modernisation of society and culture has been an asset to the Western and Buddhist civilisations, but it constitutes a threat to many in the Muslim civilisation. The adherents of Muslim values sometimes argue that modernisation is a Western phenomenon, meaning it should be rejected *ipso facto*. This constitutes a serious mistake.

The Western domination over the Muslim civilisation has taken other forms, which must be pointed out here. It is stunning that Weber, in his comparative analysis of civilisations, had nothing to say about the effects of Western colonialism. Weber was certainly right in claiming that modernisation was initiated in the Western civilisation and it gave it an undeniable advantage in its interactions with other civilisations, such as the Arab world, the Moguls and Imperial China, as well as the South American Indian civilisations of the Aztecs and the Incas. Understanding what started modernisation in Western Europe was the research project of Weber. However, he failed to enquire into the consequences of Western supremacy for the other civilisations. For instance, the Arab world has still today not understood what caused its civilisation to lose its edge and start a seminal process of degeneration. In the medieval period, the Muslim civilisation was second to none, with Muslim historians speaking of it as the Golden Age.

The Western Grip

Ever since the fall of Granada in 1492, the Muslim civilisation has been under pressure from Western powers. It is true that the Turkish threat against Europe was a real one for almost two centuries, but Ottoman expansion was turned around in the face of continuous Western advances, including those of the Russians against the Ottoman Empire and in Asia. Many Muslim scholars speak of the New Period as the beginning of a long period of Muslim decline or even decadence (Spuler, 1994a, 1994b; Kissling, 1996).

After the First World War, at the height of Western imperialism, the Western grip on Muslim civilisation formed. France dominated the Maghreb, while the British exercised firm control over Egypt and the Fertile Crescent. The dissolution of the Ottoman Empire made new Western inroads possible. Thus, the entire Middle East came under Western influence, which still remains today, albeit in a different from. Muslim rule in Mogul India was overthrown by the British in 1857. When the British left South Asia in 1947, two independent States emerged, one of which was Muslim, later to split itself into Pakistan and the independent Bangladesh,

formerly “East Pakistan”. The tension between India and Pakistan opened up an opportunity for Western powers, mainly the Russians and the Americans, to play a role. Western presence in southeast Asia is far smaller than in the Middle East, although Singapore, as a rich enclave between giant Muslim countries, has links with both the UK and the United States. Australia is another Western power with interests in southeast Asia, and it intervened in favour of East Timor against Indonesia when the East Timorians were struggling for their independence.

It is thus mainly the Arab world that still remains in the Western grip, at least to some extent. Much has been written about the cultural domination of the West in relation to the Arab world – so-called *orientalism* (Said, 1979). However, here we emphasise the power relations between Western civilisations and the Muslim world. As a matter of fact, it suffices to analyse the immense consequences of Western imperialism in relation to the Muslim worlds, especially the Arab world, to understand the suspicion of many Muslims against so-called Western values. The Western grip upon the Muslim civilisation is still a real one, albeit it is far less extensive than during the twentieth century. Yet, the road ahead for the Muslim civilisation cannot be to deny modernisation. The Buddhist civilisation, covering all the different mixtures of Buddhism with Confucianism, Taoism and Shintoism, did overcome the Western advantage through forced modernisation and some very rapid catch-up processes.

Islamic Fundamentalism

After the events of “9/11”, some asked what had gone wrong (Lewis, 2002b). Fundamentalism within the Islamic civilisation, which led to the destruction of the twin towers of the World Trade Center in New York and the loss of many lives, is driven by a new form of religious zeal. It links up with the notion of *jihad*, but pursues this classical idea in Islam on a global scale, where the fight against the domestic tyrant (*taghut*) is replaced by the confrontation with the “world enemy number one”, the United States. The events of 9/11 not only constituted a challenge to the United States, whatever the long-run outcomes of the Iraq invasion and the Afghan war may be, but also call for a profound analysis of the place of violence within Islam and the future of the Muslim societies. Let us recall some basic facts about Islamic fundamentalism before we discuss Arab terrorism. The key articles in the development of Islamic fundamentalism are collected in Moaddel and Talattof (eds) (2000).

A search for the roots of Islamic fundamentalism originates in the nineteenth century, starting from the official version of Islam in the Ottoman Empire, Islam being practised in a literary, quiet and aristocratic manner. The first kind of Islamic fundamentalism was an intellectual movement, which called for a return to an idealised Islam but at the same time felt that this new Islam should be purified of its taints from a rigid past. The renewal of Islam would make the Arab countries

capable of facing the challenge from the West (Holt, 1958; Lelyveld, 1978; Rizvi, 1982; Metcalf, 1982).

The position taken within the first fundamentalist drive was more reformist (*islah*) in tone, which rejected both blind adherence to the ancients (*salafs*) and servile imitation of the Occident (*taqlid*) (Hourani, 1983: Chapters 3–5; Peters, 1980: 132–145). This first wave of Islamic fundamentalism – the *Nahdha* or renaissance – was carried forward by several currents, all sharing the quest for originality, as with the lay Protestants in Syria and Lebanon (Fontaine, 1996) as well as religious fundamentalists in Egypt. The key question in the search for Islamic and Arab origins was the classical one, put forward in a succinct manner by the emir Shakib Arlan in 1930: "Why are the Arabs underdeveloped whereas the others develop?" (Abu-Rabi', 1996).

In the second kind of Islamic fundamentalism a reinterpretation of tradition transforms *jihad* (Jansen, 1986; Peters, 1996; Ahmed, 1991) from a collective duty into a personal one as a kind of concrete obligation. It used to be the case that there were five individual duties that weighed on each Muslim, the so-called five pillars of faith, but *jihad* as an obligation rested with the entire community of Muslims. This collective duty would be taken care of by a small group of professionals or volunteers while the rest of the community was free from this duty. The social strata that supported this second fundamentalism were for the most part young people in the cities (Ph.D. + beard). They could amass sufficient numbers to present themselves as a challenge to authoritarian regimes.

One may speak of a third kind of fundamentalism, where the focus upon *jihad* is combined with terrorism, or when radicalism is married to criminal or military activity. This third form of fundamentalism belongs to a network of people devoted to the Holy War operating in various countries, often secretly. Among the personalities connected with al-Qaeda one finds at the side of Bin Laden first Aymen al-Zawahiri, who was involved in the killing of Sadat in 1981, and second Suleiman Abu al-Ghaith, who used to be employed by the government of Kuwait as a priest preaching in a mosque. When making the statement to al-Jazira on 13 October 2001, the cassette conveying the message of al-Qaeda contained the phrase: "*Jihad* has become a duty or personal obligation" (*fardh 'ayn*).

Radical Islamic fundamentalism of the third kind has excellent relations with certain Muslim countries such as Palestine and Saudi Arabia and, contrary to the first kind of Islamic fundamentalism, namely reformism, it is not always hunted by the secret police or rejected by society. Radical Islamism does not support itself by means of the private resources of dethroned princes, as was the case for Islamic reformism, nor does it live from collecting money in the street. Instead, new Islamic fundamentalists receive substantial economic support as a windfall gain. They live, in other words, from subventions given to charitable organisations by the Gulf monarchies, which somehow end up with fundamentalist organisations.

Islamic terrorism also benefits from the international economy by employing the various means – legal or otherwise – through which capital can earn income and at the same time avoid control. Bin Laden as the key person in the network(s)

has somehow linked various groups together: financial Islam, official Islam, diplomatic Islam, secret Islam and of course radical Islam. Bin Laden comes from a very rich commercial family, is related to one of the wealthiest bankers in Saudi Arabia and is linked with the royal prince Turki al-faycal, who was fired as the head of the secret police a few days before 9/11. He came under the influence of salafism and created al-Qaeda in 1987, during the period in which he fought the Red Army in Afghanistan with the blessing of the Americans (Abrahamovici, 2002: 10–11).

Bin Laden brought many things to Islamic terrorism, such as aristocratic descent, diplomatic ties, the experience of secret information, as well as massive bank guarantees, which have transformed this type of fundamentalism so that it is no longer a movement of the disinherited, the wretched of the earth – the *mustazifin* searching for glory. The network of Islamic terrorists has become an almost global one, as its participants are recruited in a heterogeneous manner. Thus, the terrorists of 9/11 were of different nationalities (although the majority of them were Saudi Arabians or Egyptians) and had various social backgrounds (*Le Courrier International*, 2001: 11–17/10). Islamic terrorists are the new international militia who have transcended both their nationality and the Arab context and found a new home in al-Qaeda. From now on this militia of *Mujahidins* live outside the confines of Humanity, including the House of Reconciliation (*dar solh*) where many Muslims forced to leave their country find a place of comfort in order to express their faith. These warriors abandon the rude appearance of beard and *jellaba* and turn to useful studies in the sciences (aviation, biotechnology). Yet their primary goal is to reach Paradise, as combat supposedly renders eternal life.

Understanding Arab Modernity and Post-modernity

Understanding modernity in the Arab civilisation requires an effort to analyse the roads along which Islamic rationality has orientated itself. The rationalisation of the Occident has proceeded in determined spheres with a special direction involving a methodical conduct of life that incarnates the representations of life within institutions, possessing certain autonomy structurally and functionally. It is this institutional incarnation in the structure of consciousness which "differentiates Weber from the functional theories of modernisation" (Habermas, 1987: vol. 1, 231; 1988: 3). In order to compare historically the processes of modernisation of societies, one must examine empirically which spheres were rationalised, according to what internal or external factors, as well as determining the directions the processes of rationalisation took and the driving forces (Zubaida, 1989: 129–130).

Arab modernisation has accommodated modern capitalism. This could be done without difficulty to the extent that medieval Islam encouraged private appropriation (*kasb*) and the colonisation of the land, which it subsumed under "settlement of land" (*imarat al-ardh*) or countries (*imarat al buldan*). Even usury interest rates (*riba*), which the puritan Islamic ethics forbid, were redirected without