

# Islamic Perspective

## Journal of the Islamic Studies and Humanities

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The Journal of Islamic Perspective is a peer reviewed publication of the Center for Sociological Studies, affiliated to the London Academy of Iranian Studies (LAIS) and aims to create a dialogue between intellectuals, thinkers and writers from the Islamic World and academics, intellectuals, thinkers and writers from other parts of the Globe. Issues in the context of Culture, Islamic Thoughts & Civilizations, and other relevant areas of social sciences, humanities and cultural studies are of interest and we hope to create a global platform to deepen and develop these issues in the frame of a Critical Perspective. Our motto is *homo sum; humani nihil a me alienum puto*. Contributions to Islamic Perspective do not necessarily reflect the views of the editorial board or the Center for Humanities and Sociological Studies. The mailing address of the journal is:

Dr. S. J. Miri, Islamic Perspective Center for Sociological Studies, 121 Royal Langford, 2 Greville Road, London NW6 5HT, UK, Tel: (+44) 020 7692 2491, Fax: (+44) 020 7209 4727, Email: [islamicperspective@iranianstudies.Org](mailto:islamicperspective@iranianstudies.Org)

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## **Is there an Islamic Nation-State?**

**Nassef Manabilang Adiong**

Founder, Co-IRIS  
International Relations and Islamic Studies Research Cohort  
Ankara, Turkey

### **Abstract**

The defining problem lies in the vagueness of interpretations in the conceptualization of nation-state in International Relations (IR) and Islamic Studies (IslStud). The proponent selected two frameworks: 1) selected mainstream theoretical IR survey, i.e. Realism, Liberalism, and Social Constructivism, and 2) Islamic political understanding. It will humbly try to examine, analyze, and decipher the origin, idea, and operationalization of nation-state by the usage of Comparative Analysis Method (CAM). Three data analytical or coding stages under CAM will be utilized: 1) Textual Codes via alpha-numerical representation, 2) Arithmetical Codes, and 3) Categorical Codes. The probable outcome is to locate areas of via media between IR and IslStud.

**Keywords:** Nation-State, International Relations, Islamic Studies, Islam, Politics

### **Initially Building an Approach to the Study**

This initiative is a deliberated mental effort of contemplating whether there is an Islamic impact in today's praxis of international relations, i.e. the trends, events, and related dominions (directly or not) influenced by the practices, actions or movements in the international community or arena. One way to look at it is to specifically consider one element that has had a significant role in conceiving international relations as an academic discipline, whereby debates (major and minor) and

discourses (mainstream and periphery) were centred upon that element.

The element of Nation-State played a prominent part in conceptualizing international theories (including International Relations, International Law, and Philosophy), particularly on the political spectrum, and has been, and will always be, a contentious issue, particularly on its complex characterizations and its relations with other elements, i.e., system, structure, agency, actor, society, civilization, etc.

Nation-State is a kind of polity or political unit of analysis. It comprised the elements of authority (form of government), nationality (large number of people called citizens), territoriality (juridical set of legal boundaries), and *sovereignty* (supreme or final authority of a political entity over its own affairs and is recognized externally) (Diez, 2011: 215). Moreover, it is a modern entity (mostly secular in nature) that evolved from Greek/Italian city-states, Roman's *res publica* (public affairs) to the Western nation-state system, which was conceived by European political elites and commonly attributed by some political/social scientists as a product of the Peace of Westphalia in 1648.

In spite of that understanding, Western scholars (orientalists) oftentimes and consciously overlook the contributions of Asian or Middle Eastern scholars, particularly *Islam cists* (those who passionately study Islam and its civilizations based on different bodies of knowledge), to the literature on the study of the nation-state. The Prophet Muhammad, subsequent members of *ulama* (scholars), and jurists, have also contributed to the conception and evolution of the nation-state phenomenon.

## **Tracing the Significance of the Research Problem**

The idea will primarily focus on the vagueness of interpretations and understanding on the conceptualization of nation-state in both disciplines: International Relations (IR) and Islamic Studies (IslStud),<sup>1</sup> and how a *via media* (middle way) of linkage of understanding may be reached. The primal research inquiries are how the nation-state originated, was conceptualized, and operationalized in IR and Islamic Studies. While the secondary (supporting) query is what the similarities and differences of IR's and IslStud's understanding on the conceptualization of nation-state are so as to locate a probable *via media* of understanding.

The proponent hopes to discover an area or element that will show a profound and explicit relation between Islam and IR by studying the significant role and meaning of nation-state. Thus, in comparing the concept of nation-state in both disciplines, the author may lead to the discovery of their probable mutuality or reciprocity with support of the method (which will be further elaborated at the

methodological section). The null hypothesis is the opposite of it, i.e. it will not help him provide answers to the posited statement of the problem.

This idea is particularly concerned with contributing to the expanding (and exclusively extant) literature and significantly emerging sub-discipline in the form of relations between 'Religion' and 'International Relations'. How religion interacts with IR and vice-versa, especially on the current waves of religious movements affecting the behaviour of nation-states and their relations with one another. An imperative example is the 9/11 event that changed the relations of mostly Western countries (US and Europe, geographically speaking) and Muslim-dominated countries (Arab nations, Iran, Turkey, Indonesia, Pakistan, Malaysia, among others).

The scope of the research only dwells on three entities: 1) Nation-State, 2) International Relations, and 3) Islamic Studies. It is delimited by the relevance of time period (meaning the data and instrumentation that will be included, analysed, and examined are works of contemporary scholars, authors, and commentaries that have similar research interests, written aspects that are relevant to the study, and relatively related points of view). So, this is not purely objectively done (caveat), but is intersubjectively (pertains to sets of similarities, views, consensus, and partially shared divergences on meanings subject of previous contention by scholars) constructed instead.

Islamic Studies is explained (in conjunction with the study) as within the parallels or equation of Islamic views on politics, governance, leadership, and to some extent foreign relations experiences. Islamic philosophy has been excluded and only political Islam and jurisprudence will be concentrated on.

## **Contemplating the Theoretical Framework(s)**

There is one observation which may help in the progress of the study. That is, observing the nation-state by incorporating two distinct frameworks in a demarcated theoretical phenomenon. Selected mainstream theories of International Relations and Islamic politics and jurisprudence are the focus of its theoretical and conceptual frameworks.

Realism, Liberalism, and Social Constructivism are the selected theories on the part of International Relations. Concepts such as *ummah*, *dar al-Islam*, *dar al-Harb*, *dar al-Ahd*, etc., which are within the tenets of political and jurisprudential Islamic views will be utilized on the part of Islamic Studies. The suggested independent variables are International Relations and Islamic Studies, while the dependent variable is nation-state. It hopes to straighten the line connecting these variables.

## **Seeking and Modifying Methodology for Appropriation**

A preliminary exploratory research (which means it is for the purpose of formulating hypotheses worth testing and complementing the tools used at Comparative Analysis Method) will help create an efficacy of research design and data collection for the purpose of reviews.

To ameliorate our focal understanding on a specific operational method, the proponent selected 'Comparative Analysis Method (CAM)' put forward by (Glaser and Strauss, 1967) Barney G. Glaser, A.L. Strauss, and J. Corbin. While theirs is called 'Constant Comparative Method (CCM)' under the grounded theory -- mine was a renovation of their method which I named CAM. The CCM is a method for analysing data in order to develop a grounded theory. The goal of grounded theory is to develop a theory that emerges from and is therefore connected to the reality that the theory is developed to explain.

CAM does not concern itself with extrapolating previous theories and comparing them with current theories so as to develop a grounded theory. It instead removes the use of constancy by making it a presentation of two variables and compares them appropriately. CCM uses a parallel vertical approach of comparing the past to present, while CAM uses a parallel horizontal manner, regardless of periodicity, historicity, or element of time. CAM involves coding, the process of going through the data 'with a fine-toothed comb' looking for themes, ideas, and categories. (Strauss and Corbin, 1990) Three data analytical or coding stages under CAM will be operationalized: the first stage is the Textual Coding, next is the Arithmetical Coding, and the last step is the Categorical Coding.

Through these CAM codes, the inferential chart of 'compare and contrast' will compose the result of the data analysis; thus allowing us to categorically pinpoint inferences of similarities and differences, and further it through the use of analytical induction, which is inducing specific facts or imperative details. The generalization or probable outcome of this study is to humbly locate areas of via media (middle way) between perceived extreme poles on the concept of nation-state in IR and IslStud.

## **Analysis of Nation-State in International Relations**

In this section, the proponent will first discuss the interpretation or description of a particular IR theory about nation-state, and followed by their characterizations and selected events to manifest how it was operationalized. It will briefly tackle Liberalism, Realism, and then Social Constructivism subsequently.



### ***Origin and Idea of Nation-State in International Relations***

The liberal<sup>2</sup> tradition conceived nation-state as not unitary actor or main actor in the international system. It emphasized the significance of interdependence between states under the presumptive conclusion of ‘power of reason’ that would result to a harmonious cooperation with positive outcomes or gains as the key feature of international relations. Thus, concepts like interdependence and world society suggest that in the contemporary world the boundaries between states are becoming increasingly permeable.

Daddow commented that ‘the unifying theme across all these writers is that progress is possible via ‘modernization’ – of economies, of technology, of human morality, and of communication within and between states. (Daddow. 2009: 70) Thinkers and figures such as ‘Erasmus, Hugo Grotius, John Locke, Adam Smith, Immanuel Kant, Jeremy Bentham, Abraham Lincoln,’ (ibid 69) Norman Angell, Woodrow Wilson, David Mitrany, Ernst B. Hass, and among others have immensely contributed to the academic and practical richness of liberalism.

Realists<sup>3</sup> have very different take on the interpretation of nation-state, although they (realists and liberalists) both started to have considered it as a central ‘sovereign’ actor in an anarchical international system, but ended up in differing various terms of understanding. (cf Daddow, 81) Thomas Hobbes argued that ‘nation-states are ruled by sovereign governments that have the absolute authority and credible power to protect them from both internal disorders and foreign enemies and threats’ thus ‘sovereign states are not willing to give up their independence for the sake of any global security guarantee’. (Jackson and Sørensen, 2007: 65-66)

Thucydides, whom most realists referred to, states that ‘in order to survive and prosper, states of all sizes had to adapt to the reality they found themselves in and conduct themselves accordingly to stay safe’. (cf Daddow, 84) In addition, realists compared nation-states to individuals in a society which are unified and purposive as a rational actor.

They believed that nation-states are motivated by a drive for power and pursuit of national interest, thus, the aggressive intent, combined with the lack of world authority or government means that conflict is an ever-present reality of international relations. Realists also noted that international organizations or institutions can be efficient if backed up or supported by nation-states that allied themselves based on the premise that they will advanced their interests and positively gain from it. Prominent authors such as E.H. Carr and Hans Morgenthau have immensely developed realism.

Social constructivists<sup>4</sup> contested the positivist approach and assumptions in how to 'do' IR theory in 1980s. (cf Daddow, 114) One of the pioneers in conceiving IR theory based on social constructivism is Alexander Wendt. He wanted "to give identities and interests more of a say in the explanation for state behavior and the outcomes that result from the interaction between states in the international arena." (ibid, 116.) Moreover, these (interests and identities) are not given to nation-states but are constructed by themselves on the basis of learning from the past experience, the experience of present actions, and expectations about the future.

With regard to the state capabilities, nation-state calculations are based on more than the assessment of absolute or relative capabilities of other nation-states. For the concept of anarchy, he viewed that it is authored by nation-states and therefore a social construct. (ibid, 117) Overall, nation-states are also theoretically construct where collective identities and interests are not pre-given and denote ideational structures, i.e. the medium by which nation-states understand and evaluate the behavior of other nation-states.

### ***Operationalization of Nation-State in International Relations***

Woodrow Wilson's *Fourteen Point* which initiated the establishment of League of Nations through the Paris Peace Conference in 1919 is a prime example of practicing the theory of liberalism. The application of this theory was also manifested via the creation of the United Nations (UN) after the Second World War and regional or continental organizations such as European Union (EU), Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), Gulf Cooperating Council (GCC), North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), African Union (AU), Union of South American Nations (USAN), Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), Amnesty International, Greenpeace, McDonalds, General Motors, and among others.

Thus, it literally points the importance of international organizations, non-governmental organizations, and multinational corporations as key players in the process and regulation of an anarchic international system. This does not mean that they entirely ruled out nation-states, but considered as one of the actors or units of analysis.

The manifestations of applying realism in explaining international events can be seen through the following examples: the rise and actions of the Axis powers (Germany, Italy, and Japan) in World War II, the Great Depression (1929-39) and financial crisis (2007-present) in the United States have greatly affected the

economies of many nation-states in the world, Arab-Israeli wars, and among others. The Middle East region was an operational specimen for realists as their logical assumptions were realized and materialized.

Wars between states have immensely contributed to further the research agenda of realists in conceptualizing the international relations of the Middle East. The driving factors that spearheaded the invasion of Kuwait by Iraq were intricately embedded on its interests to survive for which they need the oil wealth to compensate their casualties after their 8-year war against Iran. The Arab-Israeli wars in 1948, 1967, 1982, and current aggression by Israel bestowed against its neighbors were interpreted as pursuing the primacy of power and interest of Israel in an anarchical nature of the politics in the region.

Transtate/irredentist ideas were the ingredients for social constructivism: Arabism v. Islamism, conservative v. radical Arabism, and even Zionist-religious v. Zionist Israeli were the debatable extremities confined within this theory. In Syria, the rise of the Ba'ath and the advocacy of Arabism over nationalism or Islamism have led to the definition of nation-state as an Arab republic without reference to the Islamic character. In Jordan, the severing of ties with the West Bank in 1989 signaled a further detachment of the Palestinian component of the Jordanian identity.

The meaning of Israel's Jewishness has been hotly contested in Israel's internal and external debates. Iraq's identity, always a part of the Arabist-statist debate, now has the amplified dimension of subnational debate. Iran, which witnessed a genuine revolution in the ascendance of the Islamic regime, has been the subject of internal and external debates. And Egypt, which had led the pan-Arab movement in the 1950s and 1960s, was the first to abandon it in the 1970s, much to the shock of many Egyptians and Arabs.

## **Analysis of Nation-State in Islamic Studies**

This is not an exhaustive undertaking on the Islamic interpretation of nation-state, but rather an introductory manifestation from selected literature as referenced below. The proponent has still to add accounts of Hassan al-Banna, Syed Qtub, Ayatollah Khomeini, etc. Thus, it was purposely prepared as introductory piece only.

### ***Origin and Idea of Nation-State in Islamic Studies***

Islamicists regard nation-state as an equivalent of *dawlah* (country) under the guidance of the concept of *ummah* (community of believers of Islam). There are two

approaches related to the emergence of *dawlah* in Islamic history. (Davutoglu, 1994: 191) The first approach was the post-*Hijrah* period (the migration or escape from persecution of the Prophet and his followers from Mecca to Madinah in 622 CE) where Madinah under the tutelage of the Prophet carried all functions of a state structure and the institutionalization of political power. The second one claims that the Madinan society is based not on state structure but on a community structure because the Prophet was merely a religious leader and not a political one.

*Hijrah* is viewed as a great event in the history of Islamic civilization because it is the beginning of strengthening a more consolidated community of believers of one God. It is a stage of the Prophet's political life in which he displayed outstanding diplomatic skills and prudence that enabled him to unite all tribes, ethnicities, religious communities (Jews and Christians) in Madinah into a single political polity through the establishment of a constitution or charter (*Al-Kitab or Al-Sahifa*), which is agreed by all parties to provide mutual support especially in times of war (collective security), equal socio-political recognition, and economic solidarity.

*Ummah* is considered as the basic unit of analysis. According to Ayubi, the *ummah* is given an 'ideological' definition by the jurists: its universal function is the propagation of the divine message (*da'wa*). The Islamic nation-state is not, therefore, an autocracy or a theocracy, but rather a nomocracy (government based on the rule of law). (Ayubi, 1991: 22) In addition, the term *ummah al-muslimah* (Muslim community) has more significance than the earlier term *ummah al-muslimin* (community constituting Muslims). The *ummah al-muslimah* logically includes the *ummah al-muslimin*, but the latter would not necessarily be the *ummah*. The *ummah* signifies that in addition to each member's being a Muslim, and thus obedient to God, the community qua community must also be submissive to God. (cf Davutoglu, 182-183)

### ***Operationalization of Nation-State in Islamic Studies***

The most striking antecedent of early Islamic history is the composition of the Madinah Charter. (Ibn Ishāq, 1955: 231-233) It modified a state of solitary enmity to a harmonious condition of living together, i.e., mutually exclusive and symbiotically beneficial. The Madinah Charter defined a new political membership and status which destroyed traditional tribal membership in Arab society. (cf Davutoglu, 192) Contrary to ethnic origin, *Jus soli* (place of birth), or *Jus sanguinis* (nationality of his/her parents) as the criterion for citizenship in a secular nation-state system, Islamic political understanding presupposes a voluntary acceptance of a Muslim

community through a socio-political identification dependent on a unilateral declaration before two witnesses: (1) to the unity of Allâh and (2) the prophetic function of Muhammad to become a bona fide member of the *ummah*. (ibid, 184)

According to Hassan (Hassan, 1981: 40), every human being has the right to become a Muslim regardless of gender, race, color of the skin, or language as accorded in the Qur'ânic verse (49:10) stating "believers are but a single brotherhood..." and (49:13) "...And we made you into nations and tribes, that you may recognize each other." It emphasized that all regional and tribal distinctions are merely of a geographical nature.

'People of the Book' (*ahl al-kitab*) or resident non-Muslims mainly Jews and Christians (*dhimmis*), who accept the political sovereignty and patronage of the Muslim state as the realization of the political power of the *ummah* and have the autonomy to pursue their own lifestyles within a pluralistic legal structure, (cf Davutoglu, 186) are also bound to the community by the same concept of loyalty. They are accorded their freedom of belief, security of life and possessions, and usually exemption from military service, in return for paying a sort of 'poll tax' or *jizya* (cf Ayubi, 23). In addition, other non-Muslim religious minorities also formed an integral (social and economic) part of the Islamic nation-state particularly during the Ottoman regime.

Islamic nation-state system (cf Davutoglu, 179) is divided into *Dâr al-Islam* (the House of Islam, where Muslims rule), *Dâr al-Harb* (the House of War, comprising the rest of the world), and *Dâr al-'Ahd* (the House of Truce) or *Dâr al-Sulh* (the House of Covenant) which indicate those states that have peaceful agreements with an Islamic state from those that do not. However, many Hanafî scholars insisted that there were only two divisions because if the inhabitants of a territory had concluded a treaty of peace it became a part of *Dâr al-Islam* automatically. (ibid, 187) *Dâr* (place) has been applied to the Islamic juristic scheme together with its dimension of political authority and power. Ibn 'Abidin defines *dâr* as "the country under the government of a Muslim or non-Muslim" while al-Jassâs refer it to political power and hegemony. (Özel, 1982: 69)

Another evolutionary characteristic was the three stages of semantic transformation of the concept of *dawlah* (cf Davutoglu, 191). In the first stage, the word was used to mean a change of political power or the victory of one dynasty over another. The second stage was used for the ultimate political authority and structure rather than to mean political change. The last stage occurred after the political supremacy of the Western international system based on individual nation-states. The

concept of *dawlah* has been used as the translation of “nation-state” in several Muslim languages during the last stage.

Consequently, the main function of a nation-state in juridical Islamic writings is ideological: an expression of a militant ‘cultural mission’ that is religious in character and universal in orientation. (cf Ayubi, 23) Furthermore, Islamic nation-state in reality emphasizes cultural cohesion which is significant than societal fraternity; it defines morality and does not give importance to any private and/or public ethical domains, and in which rejects any forms of physical borders or ethnical boundaries. Simply, it philosophically aims and encompasses the whole universe or entire cosmos.

## **The CAM Analysis of Nation-State in International Relations and Islamic Studies**

Presentations of coding stages from textual, arithmetical, to categorical are shown. As it was explained in the section of “utilizing an appropriate methodology,” the mechanics of these codes were to emphasized analytical induction of textual development to induced specific facts or imperative details.

Moreover, it will categorically pinpointing inferences of similarities and/or differences at the same time (where coding stage takes place), which will be presented as a separate table of comparison of categorical codes as concluding remark(s).

Legends: **A** = Analysis; **OI** = Origin/Idea; **L** = Liberalism; **R** = Realism; **C** = Constructivism;

**Is** = Islamic Studies; **1...2...3...** = represent the citations of a phrase or sentence which will be arithmetically added during the Arithmetical Coding stage to avoid redundancy upon categorizing them under the Categorical Coding stage.

***The CAM Analysis of the Origin and Idea of Nation-State in International Relations and Islamic Studies***

*Table 1: CAM Analysis of Origin and Ideas of Nation-State*

<i>Textual Codes</i>	<i>International Relations</i>	<i>Textual Codes</i>	<i>Islamic Studies</i>
A(OI)L1	▪ not unitary actor or main actor in the international system	A(OI)Is1	▪ equivalent of <i>dawlah</i> (country)
A(OI)L2	▪ interdependence between states	A(OI)Is2	▪ under the guidance of the concept of <i>ummah</i> (community of believers of Islam)
A(OI)L3	▪ uses power of reason	A(OI)Is3	▪ post- <i>Hijrah</i> period (the migration or escape from persecution of the Prophet and his followers from Mecca to Madinah in 622 CE) where Madinah under the tutelage of the Prophet carried all functions of a state structure and the institutionalization of political power
A(OI)L4	▪ result to a harmonious cooperation with positive outcomes or gains		
A(OI)L5	▪ boundaries between states are becoming increasingly permeable		
A(OI)L6	▪ progress is possible via 'modernization' – of economies, of technology, of human morality, and of communication within and between states	A(OI)Is4	▪ the Madinan society is based not on state structure but on a community structure because the Prophet was merely a religious leader and not a political one
A(OI)LR	▪ central 'sovereign' actor in an anarchical international system	A(OI)Is5	▪ <i>Hijrah</i> is viewed as a great event in the history of Islamic civilization because it is the beginning of strengthening a more consolidated community of believers of one God ... enabled him to unite all tribes, ethnicities, religious communities (Jews and Christians) in Madinah into a single political polity
A(OI)R1	▪ ruled by sovereign governments that have the absolute authority		
A(OI)R2	▪ credible power to protect them from both internal disorders and foreign enemies and threats	A(OI)Is6	▪ establishment of a constitution or charter ( <i>Al-Kitab or Al-Sahifa</i> ), which is agreed by all parties to provide mutual support especially in times of war (collective security), equal socio-political recognition, and economic solidarity
A(OI)R3	▪ not willing to give up their independence for the sake of any global security guarantee		
A(OI)R4	▪ adapt to the reality they found themselves in and conduct themselves accordingly to stay safe	A(OI)Is7	▪ <i>Ummah</i> is considered as the basic unit of analysis
A(OI)R5	▪ unified and purposive as a rational actor	A(OI)Is8	▪ the <i>ummah</i> is given an 'ideological' definition by the jurists: its universal function is the propagation of the divine message ( <i>da'wa</i> )
A(OI)R6	▪ motivated by a drive for power		
A(OI)R7	▪ pursuit of national interest		

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A(OI)R8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the aggressive intent, combined with the lack of world authority or government means that conflict is an ever-present reality</li> </ul>	A(OI)Is9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>not, therefore, an autocracy or a theocracy, but rather a nomocracy (government based on the rule of law)</li> </ul>
A(OI)R9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>international organizations or institutions can be efficient if backed up or supported by nation-states</li> </ul>	A(OI)Is10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The <i>ummah</i> signifies that in addition to each member's being a Muslim, and thus obedient to God, the community qua community must also be submissive to God.</li> </ul>
A(OI)R10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>advanced their interests and positively gain</li> </ul>		
A(OI)C1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>give identities and interests more of a say in the explanation for state behavior and the outcomes that result from the interaction between states in the international arena</li> </ul>		
A(OI)C2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>these (interests and identities) are not given to nation-states but are constructed by themselves on the basis of learning from the past experience, the experience of present actions, and expectations about the future</li> </ul>		
A(OI)C3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>With regard to the state capabilities, nation-state calculations are based on more than the assessment of absolute or relative capabilities of other nation-states</li> </ul>		
A(OI)C4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>For the concept of anarchy, he viewed that it is authored by nation-states and therefore a social construct</li> </ul>		
A(OI)C5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>denote ideational structures, i.e. the medium by which nation-states understand and evaluate the behavior of other nation-states</li> </ul>		
<i>Arithmetical Codes of International Relations</i>		<i>Arithmetical Codes of Islamic Studies</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A(OI)L1 + A(OI)LR = A(OI)L1LR</li> <li>A(OI)L2 + A(OI)L4 = A(OI)L6</li> <li>A(OI)L3 + A(OI)R5 = A(OI)LR8</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A(OI)Is1</li> <li>A(OI)Is2 + A(OI)Is4 + A(OI)Is5 = A(OI)Is11</li> <li>A(OI)Is3 + A(OI)Is9 = A(OI)Is12</li> </ul>	



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <math>A(OI)L5 + A(OI)L6 = A(OI)L11</math></li> <li>▪ <math>A(OI)R1 + A(OI)R3 = A(OI)R4</math></li> <li>▪ <math>A(OI)R2 + A(OI)R4 + A(OI)R8 = A(OI)R14</math></li> <li>▪ <math>A(OI)R6 + A(OI)C3 = A(OI)RC9</math></li> <li>▪ <math>A(OI)R7 + A(OI)R10 + A(OI)C1 = A(OI)RC18</math></li> <li>▪ <math>A(OI)R9</math></li> <li>▪ <math>A(OI)C2 + A(OI)C4 + A(OI)C5 = A(OI)C11</math></li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <math>A(OI)Is6</math></li> <li>▪ <math>A(OI)Is7</math></li> <li>▪ <math>A(OI)Is8</math></li> <li>▪ <math>A(OI)Is10</math></li> </ul>	
<i>Categorical Codes</i>	<i>International Relations</i>	<i>Categorical Codes</i>	<i>Islamic Studies</i>
<p><math>A(OI)L1LR</math>  <math>A(OI)L6</math>  <math>A(OI)LR8</math>  <math>A(OI)L11</math>  <math>A(OI)R4</math>  <math>A(OI)R14</math>  <math>A(OI)RC9</math>  <math>A(OI)RC18</math>  <math>A(OI)R9</math>    <math>A(OI)C11</math></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Level of Analysis*</li> <li>▪ Cooperative Mechanism</li> <li>▪ Rationality</li> <li>▪ Modernization and Territoriality</li> <li>▪ Sovereignty and Authority*</li> <li>▪ Securitization Framework</li> <li>▪ Influence</li> <li>▪ Interests</li> <li>▪ Role of Non-State Actors (e.g. International Organizations)</li> <li>▪ Constructed Ideational Structures</li> </ul>	<p><math>A(OI)Is1</math>  <math>A(OI)Is11</math>  <math>A(OI)Is12</math>  <math>A(OI)Is6</math>  <math>A(OI)Is7</math>  <math>A(OI)Is8</math>  <math>A(OI)Is10</math></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Equivalent nomenclature</li> <li>▪ Community[of Believers]</li> <li>▪ Authority*</li> <li>▪ Constitution</li> <li>▪ Level of Analysis*</li> <li>▪ Role of Community</li> <li>▪ Submission to the Will of God (Sovereignty)*</li> </ul>

\*Underlined words demonstrate clear similar notions of concepts between IR and IslStud. However, it all depends on the interpretation or understanding of that category or terminology under the categorical codes.

It is quite apparent that the first factor in tracing the comparison or contrast of the concept of nation-state in both bodies of knowledge (IR and IslStud) is on the notion of 'level of analysis'. The nation-state is the unit of analysis for the IR, while the Ummah is for the IslStud. However, if you are going to deeply analyse the context, the Ummah is considered as an imagined space of community where people believe they are part of

that space. In the modern context, nation-state is also considered as an imagined community where people think and feel they are affiliated within the boundary of that community. Thus, nation-state and Ummah are similar at a certain degree of understanding, while interpreted in various ways.

Secondly, the notion on sovereignty lies a fundamental difference between them. In IR, it is the government elected/appointed by the citizenry that has the utmost will of authority over its jurisdiction, where their sovereignty is recognized and respected by other sovereign nation-states and international organizations. Thus, bestowing them legitimacy and accorded rights in the international community. In IslStud, it is their God that has the sovereign power, where all believers are subjects and considered part and parcel of the whole Ummah (societal) system. Consequently the last clear explicit comparison is that the government has the authority in IR’s nation-state interpretation, while God has the sole authority in IslStud’s nation-state interpretation.

**Legends:** **A** = Analysis; **OP** = Operationalization; **L** = Liberalism; **R** = Realism; **C** = Constructivism; **Is** = Islamic Studies; **1...2...3...** = represent the citations of a phrase or sentence which will be arithmetically added during the Arithmetical Coding stage to avoid redundancy upon categorizing them under the Categorical Coding stage.

***The CAM Analysis of the Operationalization of Nation-State in International Relations and Islamic Studies***

Table 2: CAM Analysis of Operationalization of Nation-State			
Textual Codes	International Relations	Textual Codes	Islamic Studies
A(OP)L1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Woodrow Wilson’s <i>Fourteen Point</i> which initiated the establishment of League of Nations through the Paris Peace Conference in 1919</li></ul>	A(OP)Is1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ composition of the Madinah Charter</li></ul>
A(OP)L2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ creation of the United Nations (UN) after the Second World War and regional or continental organizations</li></ul>	A(OP)Is2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ the Madinah Charter defined a new political membership and status which destroyed traditional tribal membership</li></ul>
		A(OP)Is3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ a socio-political identification dependent on a unilateral declaration before two witnesses: (1) to the unity of Allāh and (2) the prophetic function of</li></ul>

A(OP)L3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ it literally points the importance of international organizations, non-governmental organizations, and multinational corporations as key players in the process and regulation of an anarchic international system</li> </ul>	A(OP)Is4	<p>Muhammad to become a bona fide member of the <i>Ummah</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ It emphasized that all regional and tribal distinctions are merely of a geographical nature.</li> </ul>
A(OP)R1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ the rise and actions of the Axis powers (Germany, Italy, and Japan) in World War II, the Great Depression (1929-39) and financial crisis (2007-present) in the United States</li> </ul>	A(OP)Is5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ resident non-Muslims mainly Jews and Christians - have the autonomy to pursue their own lifestyles within a pluralistic legal structure</li> </ul>
A(OP)R2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Wars between states have immensely contributed to further the research agenda (Arab-Israeli wars)</li> </ul>	A(OP)Is6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>Dār al-Islam</i> (the House of Islam, where Muslims rule) vs. Dar al-Harb (the House of War, comprising the rest of the world) vs. <i>Dār al-'Ahd</i> (the House of Truce) or <i>Dār al-Sulh</i> (the House of Covenant)</li> </ul>
A(OP)C1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Transtate/irredentist ideas: Arabism v. Islamism, conservative v. radical Arabism, and even Zionist-religious v. Zionist Israeli</li> </ul>	A(OP)Is7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ the main function of a nation-state in juridical Islamic writings is ideological: an expression of a militant 'cultural mission' that is religious in character and universal in orientation</li> </ul>
<i>Arithmetical Codes of International Relations</i>		<i>Arithmetical Codes of Islamic Studies</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ A(OP)L1 + A(OP)L2 + A(OP)L3 = A(OP)L6</li> <li>▪ A(OP)R1</li> <li>▪ A(OP)R2</li> <li>▪ A(OP)C1</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ A(OP)Is1 + A(OP)Is2 + A(OP)Is3 + A(OP)Is4 = A(OP)Is10</li> <li>▪ A(OP)Is5</li> <li>▪ A(OP)Is6</li> <li>▪ A(OP)Is7</li> </ul>	
<i>Categorical Codes</i>	<i>International Relations</i>	<i>Categorical Codes</i>	<i>Islamic Studies</i>
A(OP)L6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Establishment of non-state actors</li> </ul>	A(OP)Is10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Structure of Political Process</li> </ul>
A(OP)R1		A(OP)Is5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Toleration and Plurality</li> </ul>
A(OP)R2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Wars</li> </ul>	A(OP)Is6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Muslim and non-Muslim</li> </ul>

A(OP)C1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Economic Crisis</li><li>▪ Ideological Conflicts*</li></ul>	A(OP)Is7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Regimes</li><li>▪ Ideological in Nature*</li></ul>
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\*Underlined words demonstrate clear similar notions of concepts between IR and IslStud. However, it all depends on the interpretation or understanding of that category or terminology under the categorical codes.

The operationalization of constructivism to the nation-state is primarily influenced by idea, ideology, or set of ideas. These ideas are embedded within the construction of the nation-state. The inhabitants or people who believed they belong to that nation-state are the ones who formulate, describe, and define what constitutes the characters, elements, and compositions of it. The juridical understanding of an Islamic nation-state is purely ideological, where there is a strong emphasis on the essence of religiosity, cultural, and the claim of being universal.

### Conclusions and Recommendations

There are stark differences between the interpretations of IslStud and IR on the conception of the nation-state. Selected categorical claims under the selective coding stage include citizenship or membership, limits of boundaries or territoriality, the jurisdiction of the authority, and the sovereignty issue. For categorical claim of citizenship, the political prism of IR is based on nationality of parents or birthplace of an individual, while in IslStud, it is the individual’s affinity with Islam regardless of racial or geographical orientations that define his/her citizenship.

For the categorical claim of territoriality, IR respects or is subdued to international treaties and agreements, and sometimes via domestic referendum of the citizenry, while IslStud is finite as long as there are presences of Muslims. In addition, IslStud submits to juridical divisions of ‘dar’. For the jurisdiction of authority, IR’s interpretation depends on the style of leadership or form of government, whether totalitarian, dictatorship, monarchical, or democratic.

In IslStud, there are different variations or descriptions laid by scholars, particularly Sunni’s and Shia’s different political schools of thought, and Sufi’s philosophical description of a leader. The sovereignty issue is primarily a contestation between the people and recognition from other nation-states and God. Consequently, as of this moment, the researcher has not found any clear elements for reaching a via media or middle way in their (IR and IslStud) understandings of nation-state.

## Note

1. Kindly please be reminded that the proponent will abbreviate 'Islamic Studies' into 'IslStud', which will be used all throughout the essay. It is for abbreviation purpose only, same as with 'International Relations' into 'IR'.
2. For more information regarding liberalism, please refer to few magnum opus of the following thinkers: Grotius' *On the Law of War and Peace: Three books* (1625), Locke's *A Letter Concerning Toleration* (1689), Kant's *Perpetual Peace* (1795), Angell's *The Great Illusion* (1933), Wilson's *The Fourteen Points* (1918), Mitrany's *A Working Peace System* (1943), and Haas' *Beyond the Nation State* (1964).
3. For more information regarding realism, please refer to few magnum opus of the following thinkers: Carr's *The Twenty Years' Crisis': 1919-1939* (1939, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. in 1945), Morgenthau's *Politics Among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace* (1948, 7<sup>th</sup> ed. in 2005), Waltz's *Theory of International Politics* (1979), Mearsheimer's *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics* (2001), and Gilpin's *Global Political Economy: Understanding the International Economic Order* (2001).
4. For more information regarding constructivism, please refer to few magnum opus of the following thinkers: Alexander Wendt's "*Anarchy is What States Make of It: the Social Construction of Power Politics*" (1992) and *Social Theory of International Politics* (1999), Nicholas Onuf's "*Constructivism: A User's Manual*" in Kubáľková, et al. (eds.), *International Relations in a Constructed World* (M.E. Sharpe 1998), and Peter J. Katzenstein's *A World of Regions: Asia and Europe in the American Imperium* (2005).

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## **Few years after the Arab Spring in the eyes of young Moroccans and Egyptians living abroad: are there transnational links?**

**Roberta Ricucci**

Associate Professor at Department of Culture, Politics and Society  
University of Turin  
Turin, Italy

### **Abstract**

In numerous European cities, North Africans remembered about Arab Spring. From Egyptians to Tunisians, first and second generations living in Western immigration countries came together to discuss what had happened and what was happening in their former countries. The point of view of this diaspora has been underestimated in the political debate about the Arab Spring, yet the consequences of those events have reached some immigration countries, such as Italy, where there are significant North African communities. Among immigrants' descendants (i.e. both 1.5 and second generations), those events can assume great relevance, enforcing ethnic identities and belonging to their (or their parents') countries of origin. On the other hand, in the case of young immigrants who prefer to take a distance from their past, there has been no attention to or involvement in those events. What is happening in Italy, where a significant second generation (mainly with Moroccan and Egyptian origins) is growing? Is there awareness of, involvement in and attachment to what their peers are going through on the other side of the Mediterranean Sea? If yes, how are young immigrants living in Italy organizing themselves to follow, debate on and interact with the transformations which are taking place in their former home countries?

This paper will present an initial attempt, through (30) qualitative interviews, to analyse how a sample of young Moroccans and Egyptians living in Italy have reacted to and continue to be linked with those events, answering the

following questions: Are they really interested? Are they involved in on-line participation? Is there a generational effect in their involvement? Has their way of expressing their identity changed?

**Keywords:** Morocco, Egypt, Identity, North Africa, Arab Spring

## **Onstage and backstage: young immigrants grow up**

The number of minors has increased in the immigrant population, especially among those groups who arrived at the end of the 1970s, such as Moroccans and Egyptians. The proportion of immigrant minors, 22% of the foreign population, is higher in the North and reaches levels of between 24% and 27% in various provinces of the Lombardy region (Istat, 2011). The presence of immigrant minors in Italy has by now been an established fact of life for at least 15 years, highlighting the stabilizing character of migratory flows towards the country: a rapid evolution which affected first schools and then the whole society. Various studies have investigated the characteristics of these minors and young people, mainly through their school participation, but also recently in other fields (identity definition, plans for the future).

A synthesis of the main findings of the above-mentioned studies portraying foreign minors (and some second generations) in Italy reveals a group:

- which is growing and will continue to grow in the future from a demographic point of view, in line with national data;
- which is varied as to background, age of arrival, family circumstances and future possibilities;
- which is increasing at senior high-school level – with the great majority going to technical-vocational rather than grammar schools;
- which is beginning to be visible in ethnic and intercultural associations not only as recipients but also as organizers.

Turin fits in this scenario, sharing with the rest of Italy the fact that immigrant presence is more and more a structural phenomenon. If we analyse the age structure of the immigrant population, it is composed essentially of young people, a proportion which increases year by year.



**Tab. 1 - Minors and young people resident in Turin by age and incidence of foreigners (as of 1 January 2011).**

Age group	Resident citizens (Italians + foreigners)	% of foreigners
0-4	39,991	26.0
5-9	36,046	19.2
10-14	33,824	16.7
15-19	35,117	17.0

Source: Istat, 2012.

North African immigrants were among the first to arrive in Piedmont – and in Italy as a whole – and for a long time they were the most numerous group. Among them Moroccans predominated – and still do – followed by Egyptians. They are the two groups to whom researchers paid most attention, especially in the past, investigating various aspects such as their social and economic insertion, family structure and religion. Further studies focussed on the youth component, in particular second generations and unaccompanied migrant minors.

In the last decade, the rapid rise of immigration from Eastern Europe has shifted research towards understanding the characteristics of the new waves.

Thus in recent years monographic studies of the two North African groups have given way to comparative works, dedicated to work insertion, with particular attention paid to free-lance and entrepreneurial activity (CCIAA Torino and Fieri, 2008, 2009; Scannavini, 2010), to the role of women (Balsamo, 1997) and the children's academic insertion (Cotesta, 2009).

Not only is the updating of the overall situation lacking. The themes which are becoming increasingly important for decision-makers are either only hinted at or totally ignored in the scientific landscape of in-depth analysis of immigration from North Africa. First among these subjects is the social and work insertion of second generations who, as a result of older migratory flows, are today numerically significant and also need to be studied from the point of view of their relationship with the world of work. Then there is the question of transnational behaviour on the part of both first and second generations, with particular emphasis on the relationship between the North African collectivity in Italy and the delicate, decisive political phase which their countries of origin are going through. The importance of social media in the recent phenomena of popular protest in many North African countries, especially Egypt, has unequivocally underlined the innovatory element of web-related technology which has burst in upon the social and political scene. More

generally, Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) are a factor which is profoundly affecting the behaviour and transnational relations of migrant collectivities and those originating from migrations. Thus it is a most interesting field of study, albeit hitherto largely neglected (Premazzi, 2011). In particular, there are no specific analyses of the use of ICT by diaspora North Africans to create and main transnational links (there are some preliminary considerations in Premazzi and Scali, 2011).

### **Young immigrants: religion and identity**

Processes of identity definition and relationship with society, still little studied in Italy (Mancini and Secchiaroli, 2003; Marazzi and Valtolina, 2006) are shown up in all their complexity by many interviews.

A 16-year-old Moroccan boy, born and bred in Italy, when asked the question: “Do you feel more Italian or Moroccan?” replied *“That’s a hard one. It depends on the circumstances...”*. On the other hand, an 18-year-old Egyptian girl, 5 years in Italy, responded to a similar query by affirming: *“My country is deep in my heart but in any case I feel I belong in Italy. My future is here”*. There is no lack of voices testifying to this equilibrium between different identities.

Once again the determining variable is the age of arrival in Italy: adolescents and pre-adolescents who have not been here long are the ones who feel least Italian. The family environment has an essential influence on identity perception.

*“I feel more Italian than Moroccan, partly because my family has never given much weight either to religion or to Moroccan traditions”*  
(24-year-old Moroccan girl).

*“At home we watch Egyptian TV, we see Egyptian programmes. On Saturdays we go to school to learn Arabic. It is not easy to forget Egypt, even though my two youngest brothers switch to Italian programmes and don’t think about Arabic. As far as they are concerned, there is only Italian – Egypt is only a place where they have relatives and go from time to time. For me it’s different: at the beginning I was like them, then as you grow it’s as if there were a force inside you. You have to take the past into account and make your choice. I have decided to make it part of me – only in that way am I truly myself”* (23-year-old Egyptian girl).

No less interesting are the answers of those who are still unsure how to define their own identity.

*“Sometimes we live balanced between two worlds. We refuse to be classified according to daily gestures. People often talk about diversity, about origins, because they still talk about frontiers, about first- and second-class citizens, there seems to be no place for those of us who cannot be labelled”* (22-year-old Moroccan girl).

The interviews demonstrate that some identity definition or recomposition strategies are more common than others and that the young people try to keep as many options open as possible, without relying upon the “Italian at all costs” option but exhibiting flexibility towards change and moving back and forth between one affiliation and the other. All this happens in a way which is a function of the situations the young people find themselves in and the roles they are called upon to play, in a kind of identity exploitation.

For the moment we have not encountered instances of young people having recourse to conscious ethnic identification and outright conflict with the values and rules of the residence or welcoming society. Attachment to the community of origin versus opening out to the Italian context is more a necessity than a choice. Indeed the community, and therefore the ethnic net, are pillars of support for the youth who have learnt little or no Italian and have not developed a mixed network of friends but have made meeting compatriots and activities organized within ethnic circuits the main loci of their identification. In these cases, identification with the community of origin does not so much assume the characteristics of strenuous defence of the values and norms of reference but rather as a refuge where one feels well because one can move around with self-confidence, but at the same time it obstructs improvement in the conditions of social insertion. This is the situation of some Moroccans who arrived as unaccompanied minors.

At the other extreme we find the “assimilated”, those who claim they want to be “Italian” to improve their chances of insertion. This strategy, which often emerged some years ago among both parents and children as the only possible way of distancing themselves from a condition of occupational segregation and stereotyping, is no longer very popular.

*“I’m Italian but I also wish to respect my parents’ religion and culture, letting people see that I’m also Moroccan and proud of it” (20-year-old Moroccan girl).*

*“When I was younger I said I was Italian but now I say I’m Moroccan too. I remember asking my mother whether it was true that I had an Italian passport because my friends wouldn’t believe me. Now that I am grown-up, there are still people who do not believe that I am Italian. But what can I do? I have two identities, and I neither can nor want to hide either of them” (18-year-old Moroccan boy).*

Sometimes being foreign causes problems, as the interviewees make clear, but they do not intend to cancel this component of their identity. Even among those who were born in Italy, and among those who have obtained Italian citizenship, the tendency is to refuse to disown anything connected with their past.

*“Every time there is a news item about one of my compatriots, our language-and-literature teacher asks my opinion about it. What can I tell her? I was born in Italy, I go back to Morocco once a year, and here in the city I visit only my own relatives. It seems to me that the others – the Italians – think that we are all the same because we are foreigners and we should all know one another. Do they have any idea of many Moroccans there are in Italy?” (18-year-old Moroccan girl).*

The growing numbers of foreign pupils in schools, the widespread experience of meeting people from different backgrounds, along with shared models and lifestyles, can reduce the importance of distancing elements between young Italians by extraction, by marriage and by residence. Among youths whom it is possible to define as well-integrated we find greater confidence about the future: they believe that for them who are foreign or of foreign origin it will be easier to find work than in the past.

*“In my opinion, today is not the same as 10 years ago: my mother has told me that when she was walking along the street, people avoided her because she was wearing a veil. Times have changed. Perhaps older people will not get used to seeing a woman with a veil or a black man working in a bank, but for us young people it’s different” (17-year-old Moroccan girl).*

Positive evaluation of double cultural identity seems to prevail within this group. There is an “avant-garde”, boys and girls that have decided to become actively involved in making their voice heard, communicating to society that they are different from their parents, that they have no intention of staying on the side-lines but are going to be active players in the social field. Some of them do this by getting themselves trained as youth leaders and taking part as volunteers in intercultural recreational activities, others by becoming involved in associations.

From the religious point of view, we can identify two groups.

First there are those for whom religion is part of the education received from the family and nothing more: as Guolo would say, they are secularized young people who participate in some rites, maintaining a Muslim collective identity in the face of relative indifference on the level of faith (2005, 31). This is what emerges from this interview, for example:

*“It is not easy for young people to follow their parents’ teaching. Some people who came here have forgotten Islam, especially those who have worried Italians. Perhaps both parents work and the children knock about with their [Italian] friends, so they don’t even speak Arabic. Luckily there are now antennae for watching television from all over the world, which didn’t exist before. This enables young people to get to know Arabic and the religion better. In our days it all depended on us, and that was not enough. Nowadays it’s easier, also because there are more Muslim youth. We have educated them to be like us, but they go their own ways. They have more Italian friends than Egyptian. When they ask me whether they can do something, I leave them to it because they’ve learnt the religion and know what they can and cannot do” (53-year-old Egyptian man).*

Here an important aspect of young people’s relations needs to be stressed, viz, “strength in numbers”, whose signs can be seen predominantly in the increased visibility of Muslim families, the number of schoolchildren declaring themselves to be Muslims, girls wearing the veil and an associational protagonism linked to religion. These phenomena may encourage the emergence of “hidden” or latent religious identities which have hitherto remained in the background for fear of stigma or discrimination. However, prayer halls in the city – a point of reference for the first, pioneering, immigrants and new arrivals – seem to be playing a declining role, mostly fulfilling the typical functions of religious organizations in emigration, which is to

say, not only a religious but also – and mainly – identity reference (Mckay, 1982; Portes e Hao, 2002).

There is, on the other hand, a group of young people who attribute great importance to religion, considering it a fundamental characteristic of their identity. This orientation they express in a symbolic way (e.g. women wearing the veil) or by ritual observance (daily prayer, attending mosques). Their positions do not gel with their parents', whose choice in emigration was to develop a more private – and, above all, less visible – religiosity. We might say that, for these youth it is not a matter of “passing themselves off as Italians” (thus relegating to the private sphere every cultural and religious reference which does not seem to be in tune with the environment) but rather of “being Italian and Muslim” – which is to say, demonstrate the multiple forms which Muslim identity may assume. This stance, differentiating parents and children, is synthesized in the words of the following interviewee:

*“My mother does not wear the veil. I decided to put it on after a trip to Egypt. Although we were born in Italy, we should not deny our roots. And religion is part of those roots. I am not afraid to say that I come from a culturally rich country which has been important to the history of the Mediterranean. I am proud to be the daughter of Egyptians and a Muslim. My mother has chosen differently. She has given up the struggle. We know that, here in Italy, life is not easy for Muslims. Now things are a little different. Today at the university many of us wear the veil and nobody makes cracks when we go round and about, to the cinema, in shops, at the pizzeria, nobody gives us dirty looks. It was different twenty years ago. So, to cut it short and so as not to be always a target, my mother said: ‘No more veil for me’”* (22-year-old Egyptian girl).

Compared with the recent past, you notice many more girls whose behaviour is an interesting thermometer of the complex reality of the children of immigration, including from the religious point of view (Salih, 2009). For them, belonging to Islam is manifested in a convinced, visible, proud and active way, and is sometimes accompanied by associationist commitment. The desire to break out of the vicious circle leading these actors into the double stigmatization of being Muslims and being children of immigration results in public engagement aimed at presenting their daily lives and showing how similar they are to their [Italian] peers' biographies. They are attempting to demonstrate themselves to the citizenry as part of Turin youth – with parents born in another country, yes, and with a religious affiliation different from

that of the majority, yes, but not for those reasons any the less interested in dedicating themselves to the society where they were born, grew up, and in which they are becoming adults.

### **The advance of a “transversal” generation**

“Transversal generation”: that is how a blogger defines the children of immigration who have found their voice, who participate in associationism, preferably represented by the G2 network. A generation bridging geographical, identity and generational divides, expressing something that is a long way from the fear and anxiety which characterize the host society faced with the children of immigration. Indeed some are afraid that they will question the values of that society, having consolidated neither the roots, traditions and norms of their parents nor those of the host society.

The debate about their relationship with their origins, for many young people, preceded the Arab Spring. But for others these events presented an occasion to interweave once again the present and the past. We are justified in claiming that they represented a watershed in the lives of many young people of North African ancestry who grew up in Italy. The leading role played by young people in the events stimulated, on the opposite shore of the Atlantic, reflections on how to intervene incisively in the public debate in order to contribute their own thoughts and ideas to the Italian society of tomorrow.

*“Young people were the real leaders. It was they who brought about change in Tunisia. This shows that young people, if they want to, know how to commit themselves to the good of their country, to changing society. We too are doing it, in a small way, in Italy every time we explain what it means to be a Muslim, when we demonstrate, in our daily lives, that it is not hard to be Italian and Muslim. Would you like an example? We have a female football team here in Turin. Some of us play wearing the veil and others, who have decided not to practise the religion, without” (19-year-old Moroccan girl).*

Two elements need to be underlined. Above all there is young leadership. Young people are on the march: in the Arab world they have found their voices in both virtual and real forums; in Italy mostly the virtual are used. But apart from the means used, what is important is the assumption of responsibility by youth on either shore of the Mediterranean. In North Africa 70% of the population is under 25 years old and this

generation too is a child of globalisation and the digital revolution like their diaspora peers. Young, therefore, and involved – which is the second element to recall.

Before involvement in events come shared commitment, active participation, expressing by voice (and action) one's being citizen of a place. Many of the young people living in Italy are not yet citizens, but this fact has in no way diminished their commitment to promoting the image of children of immigration as being like their Italian peers.

*"We on this side of the Mediterranean have a part to play, almost a duty towards those young people who had the courage to take to the streets. We, who are at the same time Muslims, Italians, Egyptians Moroccans and Tunisians, can help Italians understand what is going on".*

"Why, do they think we Italians are uninformed?" (Ed.)

*"Perhaps you are getting the wrong information. I heard a television debate where Italians were talking about anti-Islamic demonstrations. No such thing. Islamic extremism is being rejected, not the moderate forms. Indeed the Muslim Brothers and Ennahda organizations have returned to the fore in Egypt. One of the reasons Morsi won was that he said he wanted to go back to the Islam of the past, without excesses or extremism. Perhaps it is the word Islam itself which raises so much fear in Italy" (24-year-old Moroccan boy).*

Yet the African happenings, whose consequences we have not yet fully understood or deciphered, have also meant the victory of Islamicist parties in Tunisia, Morocco and Algeria, which seems to repudiate Roy's thesis whereby "The Arab world is by now living in a post-Islamicist phase deriving from the failure of political Islam, which phase has broken the connection between Islamicist commitment and political assertion" (*Le choc de l'Islam politique*). In truth, although Roy's theory may be confirmed by the demonstrators' lay demands, it is too soon to talk about political Islam's exit from the scene: it returns to the forefront whenever – apart from Tahrir Square – the movement is institutionalised" (Campanini, 2012).

Relations with religious identity are common ground for children of the diaspora and those of the revolt, an identity which is being reinterpreted, not disowned, as an Egyptian girl reminds us:



*“Perhaps our parents are changing. Living here, being always careful not to seem too different, not to be too Muslim, has conditioned them. They have taught us the religion and taken us to the mosque, but are not over-insistent. I have chosen to wear the hijab. At the beginning they were opposed, they were afraid. Now lots of girls wear the veil, and they know how to answer Italians who make fun of them. This is the point: here you have not yet understood that being Muslim does not mean the same as being an Egyptian or Moroccan 30 years ago who did not speak Italian and only felt at home in a mosque” (23-year-old Egyptian girl).*

For second generations the forms of discrimination of which they are often victims and the questions of classmates are factors that stimulate reflection on their personal identity and religious affiliation. Young people often choose “to go on their own way, looking for compromises and new syntheses, asking themselves questions about the inherited tradition, living faith in a personal and authentic manner and not on the wave of uncritical adherence” (Granata, 2010).

Deciding whether to wear the hijab or not is an experience that old generations ever lived through but the new generation has to face. There is in fact a big difference between their way of being Muslim practicers and that of their parents. As previous research has demonstrated: “Among Muslims religious practice is subject to revision and reinvention processes that reflect a growing subjective autonomy against inherited tradition. There is a progressive detachment from ethnic Islam and the affirmation of a personal relationship with the religious dimension” (Pacini, 2005).

## **Between participation and lack of interest**

We have underlined the elements of similarity between the young participants in the Arab Spring and those of the diaspora; now we shall see how the latter followed and perceived the events. Independently of their provenance, the interviewees can be divided into two groups: on one hand, there are the “involved and active”, those who followed unfolding events last year and still keep in touch with their development; on the other, there are the “indifferent”, detached both in the hottest months, when news and media attention were most intense, and today. A third group emerged from empirical research, those who followed the events more because they seemed part of a familiar script than from personal interest; that is to say, young people who saw the

happenings from the perspective of “tradition and education” without considering them part of their identity.

The Arab revolution made second generation Moroccans and Egyptians rediscover their pride in being Moroccans and Egyptians, and made them reconsider migratory networks and ties with their parents' country of origin as a resource. As one girl says:

*“We have a great advantage in that we can be Italians and Moroccans, can speak two languages, and follow attentively and understand the dynamics of both countries. I was not aware of this until I realized that I understood the revolts better than my teachers did. We children of immigrants are lucky to have two languages, two histories, two countries. These links are not to be undervalued, even when you are thinking about where to look for work”* (24-year-old Moroccan girl).

Reflection on identity in this group is nothing new, but it assumes a more transnational connotation than before from the episodes of the Jasmine Revolution, as one boy testifies:

*“Identity is somewhat our mantra. Everybody asks us who we are, how we feel, whether we are more Italian or Moroccan. Sometimes I want to shout “Stop it!”. The country of your passport is one thing, another what you feel in your veins, in your head, guiding your behaviour. My passport is Italian, but for some time now I have felt much more Moroccan.... I experienced the days of the revolt, the demonstrations in Casablanca squares, as part of my history. Some people call us young transnationals but I don't know if spending your holidays down there from time to time is enough to be called that. Certainly if you follow politics and take an interest in what's going on, there is some connection.... My life is here, but that does not mean I cannot be involved in or contribute to changing the country. Don't Italians abroad who vote in elections do the same thing? You are not surprised by them but you are by us. It's always the same thing: you forget your own historical memory”* (25-year-old Moroccan boy).

In the Egyptian case, in particular, the combined dynamic of the rediscovery of their roots, the birth of a new pride in being Egyptian and being masters of their destiny, able to overcome dictators and to create real democracies, is upsetting

space/time links and transforming the parents' country of origin not only as the past, but also as a new future in which they can be involved not only as audience but as participant actors:

*"I thank my mother who gave me this love for the country. And this love has grown greatly since the Revolution because before I did not know everything – about politics, nothing. I only knew the name of the President; I didn't know what the country was like, how people lived. When my father watched the TV news, I hid in my room. Now I'm the one who watches the news to see how the country is going now. I've signed up to web sites that I would never have imagined. I know all the parties, the Parliament, the ministers.... Maybe it's because of what's happened that I'd like to be there, even during the Revolution. I cried when I saw them all in Tahrir Square and I wanted to be one of them – but we're here instead..."* (20-year-old Egyptian girl).

The "involved and active" group is made up mainly of young people of both genders born in Italy or who arrived as children, third-level students or already graduated, active in associationism, children of parents with good cultural capital whom migration has forced into downward social mobility. It is interesting to note the leading role played by girls who – even a year later – continue to take an interest in what's happening and are active in posting articles or commentaries on socio-political events in both countries in their Facebook pages. For them, the Jasmine Revolution was a kind of earthquake changing their way of thinking and seeing themselves. They seem more aware and proud of their roots, of belonging to the history of other countries, included in the role of representing – in the diaspora – the forces of change. They are a bridge from first-generation migration to the new generation of Italians, of which they are also the avant-garde.

In comparing this group with that of the "indifferent", the weight of cultural and family capital is clear. Those who took no interest in what was and is happening in North Africa, apart from seeing some TV images, have in common low educational qualifications (almost all went to vocational schools), parents without a high-school diploma and no experience of participation in associations. To the questions "Are they really interested? Are they involved in on-line participation? Has their way of expressing their identity changed?" the answer for this group is "No". And yet these young people are in close contact, by telephone or "chatting", with relatives in Morocco or in Egypt: they just haven't made the leap from family to socio-political links. Nor are they interested in Italian politics, a fact that they share with Italian peers

in the same socio-economic condition. As against Italian adults' fears about identity claims on the part of young children of immigration, we should remember that "The problem is not so much the second generation in itself as schools' inability to provide a solid work-oriented education and the neighbourhoods in which a youth culture based on trials of strength and challenges grow" (Eve, 2009: 3).

Some followed events only on the most intense days, not so much out of interest as by accident, as an interviewee recalls:

*"I know very little. I saw a few things on TV at home. My parents watched all the news. They are thinking of going back to Morocco if my father cannot find work. I hope to stay here. In Morocco I have cousins and friends but maybe here I can find work. I have to think about this so I have no time for what is happening there. My parents think about it because their heads are always down there. My life is here"* (20-year-old Moroccan boy).

Transnational participation through on-line involvement, face-to-face comparison with other young people and debates are a "luxury" which not everybody can afford. It is perhaps no accident that they concern mainly university students, young people living at home with their parents and floating fairly calmly in the rough waters of the economic crisis. For the others, who see themselves as less secure, their interest in asking themselves "Who am I? What is my connection with young people in Morocco or in Egypt?" is dampened by their need to work or by a circle of friends who are little inclined to discuss identity, politics and participation.

### **Children in front of their parents: is it the same story?**

The last point is about comparison between first and second generations with regard to the events. Distinguishing provenance is important from this point of view. The different progress of happenings in Egypt resulted in adults being caught up more than their Moroccan peers.

*"In Egypt in January everything got better. We should keep more in contact with our country because it is now that they need us. Before we were not free so could not do much. Now we can do more to encourage elections and check the voting"* (Egyptian parent).

In following the development of the revolts, parents and children drew close together, albeit with two different states of mind. For the parents it was like living through a moment of historical importance, watching radical changes in the country in which they grew up and which they left. For the children it meant reclaiming an identity and participating – virtually – in the laboratory of ideas which was Tahrir Square. Social networks showed the different ways of taking part of parents and children. The older people watched TV, tried to keep in touch with their relatives and understand what was happening in the country which they had left physically but stayed close to in their hearts. The younger followed protests on the web, giving rise to forms of co-operation with young people living in Egypt as well as organizing meetings and protests with the purpose of expressing their support: for example, a demonstration in front of the consulate in Milan which many young Egyptians attended.

*“Twelve of us, including my parents, went from Turin. There was an incredible crowd. We had to be there, to show our solidarity. There were others too, Tunisians and Moroccans, all united by the Revolution” (23-year-old Egyptian girl).*

If we want to synthesize the differences across 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> generations, we can look at Tab. 2

Tab. 2 – Differences across generations

- |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Trans-generational changes: ICT <i>versus</i> TV</li> <li>■ Lack of 1st-generation associations interested in both national and transnational matters</li> <li>■ Integration level: from parents “guest workers” to children who are “Italian citizens-in-waiting”</li> <li>■ Mothers vs daughters: a new way of being active</li> </ul> |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

The Arab Spring highlighted the role of new media. And the use of these new technologies divides generations. Young people use social networks, adults (namely) first generations continue to follow events in their homelands on television. Involvement in home-country affairs seems to have a collateral effect on how first generations intervene in the Italian socio-cultural life. Second generations are now on the scene: the “Youth Muslim of Italy” association appears to be on the way to becoming an important reference point for both young people (with a migratory

background) and for local institutions. Like the young people who contributed to starting the Arab Spring, also those of the diaspora wish to give an independent voice to their own expectations and points of view. Perhaps they are tired of being considered (even on the religious level) as being replicants of the first generations, and want to see an evolution which takes into account their organizational capacity, their diffusion throughout the land and – above all – the children of immigration’s need for expression, in the religious field too (Junker, Amiraux, 2006).

The first particular element to be noted refers to second generations’ associationism characteristics. It is, among young people, a reflection and involvement itinerary which is not limited to one ethnic group or one country of origin but transversal to all immigrants of whatever Muslim background. The key to entry is sharing Islam as one’s cultural-religious reference, not a common national origin. As one representative recalls: “We do not ask our members for a certificate stating that they are good Muslims. Our associations is called ‘Young Muslim of Italy’, so the access criteria are clear. We are not connected with any specific country: the common point of reference is Italy and, for our section, Turin” (22-year-old Moroccan boy).

Another element which appears from comparing the two generations’ associationism concerns leadership. Young people tend to devise elective mechanisms to define roles, whereas the pioneers prefer to entrust themselves to consensus-type processes. In one case, therefore, there are elections, directives, established deadlines; in the other it is reputation (as a good Muslim and a person endowed with high cultural and social capital) which is the criterion for choosing a representative (Asgi, Fieri, 2005).

A third difference regards gender. First-generation associations (religious and country-based) are mostly male; there are few women<sup>1</sup>. Among the young, girls are more in evidence, even though they do not take on leadership roles. As one interviewee says:

“[they are] *the most active in organizing activities. Let’s say that they prefer backstage to on-stage. Maybe they are afraid to show themselves in public*” (24-year-old Egyptian male).

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<sup>1</sup> Obviously there are exceptions: sometimes women emerge as stakeholders, especially in the world of ethnic-national associationism.

It is not a matter of fear of the audience but rather a cautious attitude aimed strategically at avoiding family arguments, since parents do not always appreciate or approve of their children's - especially their daughters' - activism. As many of them emphasize, however, this does not mean not making their voices heard:

*“Within the family we argue, we speak up, we make our voices heard. For example, we use Facebook a lot, social media. There we can express ourselves more comfortably [...] for some of us it is also a question of shyness. Some are able to speak out freely and give as good as they get about the same old comments on the veil, on arranged marriages, on the role of women in Islam. Others – yours truly includes – are more shy. We prefer not to be exposed in public. We prefer to do other things like prepare flysheets, work on the web, take photos” (22-year-old Moroccan girl).*

What remains for many people a few years later is a regret that they were not there. For the adults there is also the awareness that emigration has not cut profound ties and the hope of possibly returning; for the youth, on the other hand, a new era of commitment and political awareness has been born, seeming to assume the contours of a more conscious transnationalism.

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## **Insights into the Qur'an, 4:34 Ruling as Regard Wife Beating in Islam**

**Kamal- deen Olawale SULAIMAN**

(Ph. D) Department of Religious Studies  
Ekiti State University  
Ado-Ekiti, Nigeria

### **Abstract**

Islam is singled out as the main cause for wife beating based on the interpretation of Qur'an 4:34. There has been much discussion of this verse, criticism as well as justification, in online forums, articles, books, magazines, TV, youtube etc. More recently, disputes have arisen amongst the Muslims with regard to the correct meaning of this verse, with some translations of the Qu'ran now opting for a different understanding. However, this paper intends to answer these questions: Is there any logical explanation given regarding men being allowed to beat their wives, as stated in Qu'ran 4:34? Does Islam allow wife beating? The methodology employed in this study was derived from the Holy Qur'an, *Ahadith*, Islamic Books, and selection of commentaries from some of the greatest scholars in Islam on the Quran, 4:34. The paper therefore, reveals that, this verse was often interpreted out of context and Islam's position on wife beating is confused with the issue of *nushuz*. It observed that, before dealing with the issue of wife-battering in Islamic perspective, one should keep in mind that the original Arabic wording of the Holy Qur'an is the only authentic source of meaning. If one relies on the translation alone, one is likely to misunderstand it. While it concluded that, at any reason wife beating is not condoned by Islam.

**Key Words:** Quran, Islam, Logical Explanation, Violent Environment, Women.

## Introduction

Islam came to light in a brutal and cruel environment. Violence was a common practice in Arabia and around the world at that time (Hatimy, 1991: 57). The weak and needy, orphans and widows, slaves and servants had no defined rights in such a world. One of the most grotesque abuses against females at the time was female infanticide (Sulaiman, 2011: 168-179). Moreover, Sulaiman, (2012: 56- 68) added that, women were considered the property of men.

Also, in pre-Islamic Arabia, it was considered a socially acceptable punishment for a man to kill his wife if he suspected her of having an affair with another man (Guillaume, 1955: 651). The Qur'an prohibited this grotesque act of violence against women and introduced reforms to protect the wife and those who were accused of immoral conduct by introducing less destructive ways to address the problem. Yet, Islam is still commonly portrayed as condoning wife abuse (in all its forms, especially wife beating (Jamil, 2007: 49 and 6.Gillum, et al, 2006): 240-250). Now before dealing with the meaning, translation and commentary of the verse, there is a need to know the Islamic rulings on the relationship between the husband and wife

## The Relationship between Husband and Wife

The relationship between the husband and wife in Islam should be based on mutual love and kindness (Qur'an 30:21). In the event of a family dispute, the Qur'an exhorts the husband to treat his wife kindly and not to overlook her positive aspects (Qur'an 4:19). It is important that a wife recognizes the authority of her husband in the house. He is the head of the household, and she is supposed to listen to him. But the husband should also use his authority with respect and kindness towards his wife. If there arises any disagreement or dispute between them, then it should be resolved in a peaceful manner. Spouses should seek the counsel of their elders and other respectable family members and friends to batch up the rift and solve the differences. The Prophet always was against violence over women. He never hit any female, and he used to say that the best of men were those who do not hit their wives. In one *hadith* Narrated by 'Abdullah bin Zam'a: he said the prophet strongly reprimanded men who first hit their wives and would later have intimate relations with them (Sahih al-Bukhari, Hadith, 7:62 and 132).

Also, the Qur'an eloquently describes the reciprocal marital relationship stating "...they (your wives) are your garment and you are a garment for them..." (Qur'an, 2:187). In the Qur'anic paradigm, marriage is represented as a means of tranquility,

protection, encouragement, peace, kindness, comfort, justice, mercy, and love (Qur'an, 2:187 & 229-237, Qur'an, 4:19 & 25; Qur'an, 9:71; Qur'an, 30:21). It indicates that marriage is a sharing between two halves of society and that its objectives, besides perpetuating human life, are emotional well-being and spiritual harmony. In fact, an entire chapter exclusively entitled "The Women" describes guidelines of behavior, a code of ethics and conflict resolution in all aspects (e.g., care, inheritance, marriage, divorce, conflict resolution, etc.) that relate to women (Qur'an, 4:1-176).

The precedent of a marital relationship based on care, mercy, kindness, mutual consultation and justice was set by direct examples from the life of Prophet Muhammad (SAW) and was well-documented in *hadith*. For instance, Abu Huraira reported that the Prophet said, "The believers who show the most perfect faith are those who have the best behaviors, and the best of you are those who are best to their wives" (An-Nawawi, 1999: 271). In reference to the relationship between husband and wife, Abu Hurairah reported that he heard Prophet saying "A believer should bear no malice to his wife, if he dislikes one of her habits, he likes another of them" (Ibid: 269). Mu'awiyah al-Qushayri narrated that when asked about a husband's responsibility toward a wife, the Prophet said "Give her food when you take food, clothe her when you clothe yourself, do not revile her face, and do not beat her" (Sunan Abi Da'ud, Book 11: Number 2138-2139). In his farewell pilgrimage sermon, according to El Fadl (2006: 110) he further asserted the importance of kind treatment of women, equating the violation of women's marital rights to a breach of God's covenant.

This value of mutual respect amongst humans is a keynote to the Islamic moral code. Abu Huraira reported that the Prophet said: "A Muslim would neither abuse nor speak bad words to, nor curse others." (Sahih al-Bukhari, Good Manners and Form (Al-Adab), Volume 8, Book 73, Number 137). Also, he always stressed the fact that men should treat their women in a fair way and never to use violence in dealing with them. Abu Huraira reported that the prophet said: 'Whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day should not harm his neighbors. And I command you to take good care of the women (Sahih Muslim, The Book of Marriage (Kitab Al-Nikah), Book 008, Number 3468).

Even when women misbehave, tolerance and not violence is recommended, as a way to solve the problem. Abu Huraira reported to have heard the Prophet said: "No believing man should hate a believing woman, if he hates one of her manners, he should be satisfied with another" (Ibid, Book 008, Number 3469). Also, Abu Huraira

reported that the Prophet also said: “The believers who have the best manners are those who have the most perfect faith. The best amongst you are the best towards their wives”. (Sunna al- Tirmidhi, Hadith Number, 3895 and Sunan Ibn Majah, Hadith Number, 1977). Furthermore, Abd al Ati: 1977) one of the classical and contemporary Muslim scholar view wife beating as oppression. Not only the wife beating, but all kind of Abuse against wives is a form of injustice and is hence prohibited, as decided by the Council of the International Islamic Fiqh Academy, (2015)

What is meant by violence is words and actions committed by a member of the family against another member, which are marked by severity and harshness, and which cause physical or moral harm to the family as a whole or to one of its members. This behavior is forbidden because it contradicts the objectives of *shari'ah* as regards the preservation of life and reason, and because it contradicts the divine approach that is based on righteousness and kind treatment.

Hence, the ignorant and selfish mentality that prevailed throughout the Arab lands did not allow women even the most basic of rights and the treatment of women was abhorrent. Women were being treated as property, even less than the status of livestock. They were offered in trade or taken in marriage without consent or consideration for their feelings at all. The customs of the people at the time were far away from anything one might imagine today. So, if Islam does not condemn all forms of violence against women, then what does Qur'an 4:34 sanction?

## Translation of Qur'an 4:34

The most commonly misquoted and misunderstood verse of the Holy Qur'an is Q4:34. Here, attempt shall be made to study the meaning of this verse by explaining the crucial Arabic words in question. It shall further interpret the passage in the light of the Holy Qur'an and *ahadith*. The Chapter reads thus:

Men are the protectors and maintainers of women, because Allah has given the one more (strength) than the other, and because they support them from their means. Therefore the righteous women are devoutly obedient, and guard in (the husband's) absence what Allah would have them guard. As to those women on whose part you fear disloyalty and ill-conduct, admonish them (first), (next) do not share their beds, (and last) beat (tap) them (lightly); but if they return to

obedience, seek not against them means (of annoyance): for Allah is Most High, Great (above you all).

To distinguish between wife beating and the legal meanings in Q4:34, the following Arabic key terms found in the verse need to be understood in context: *qawwamuna*, *nushuzahunna*, and *wadribuhunna*.

### ***i, Qawwamuna***

The verse begins with the statement that 'men are *qawwamun* over women'. The root of the key word, *qawwamun* (pl. of *qawwam*), is *qama* which means 'to stand or to make something stand or to establish something' (Hans Wehr, 1976: 538). It is often used in the Holy Qur'an in the sense of establishing religion or prayer. A related word is *qa'im* which means 'one who stands or makes something stand'. *Qawwam* is an intensive form of *qa'im* and has a sense of continuity in the action involved. So it means one who is responsible for' or 'one who takes care of a thing or a person. *Qawwam* can be used to mean keeper, custodian, guardian, to be in charge of, manage, run, tend, guard, keep up, preserve, take care of, attend to, watch over, look after, direct, superintend, but it also means maintainer, caretaker, provider, and supporter. It carries the sense of stewardship over an environment as opposed to exploitation.

Syed Anwer 'Ali, (1982: 42) adopts the English translation "guardians" for *qawwamun*, it was also translated as "protectors" by Ali A.Y (1403 AH), "in charge" by Pickthall (1938), Al'Suyuti and Mahalli, (1352 A.H), Ibn Abbas "overseers" by Abdul Maajid Daryabadi (2007: 327), and "maintainers" by Mohammad 'Ali (1953), Qurtubi and Baidawi, (1960) "guardians" by Muhsin Khan (1993).

The different meanings indicate that there is no one meaning that can be or has been consistently adopted by the translators and provide for a very wide spectrum of interpretations from which various rights and obligations may be derived. Muhammad 'Ali however considers "guardians" to be the most appropriate English translation of *qawwamun*. Ibn Kathir: (Vol.1, 1996:241) argued that *qawwamun* over women means that men are the boss of women, have authority over them and can discipline them. Tafsir- al- Tabari, (1321 A.H) noted the many interpretations that could be given for *qawwamun*, but considered the most appropriate interpretation to be that men are in charge of or responsible for women. Muhammad Asad's commentary on the verse points out that the phrase *qama'ala 'l-ma'rah* signifies he

undertook the maintenance of the woman' or 'he maintained her'. He also pointed out that the word *qawwam* combines the concepts of moral responsibility as well as physical maintenance and protection, and that was why he chose the words 'full responsibility' in his translation (Asad, M., 1980). It is the husband's responsibility to treat his wife well, to be kind, caring and just- not as a domineering dictator, but in a marital partnership.

An appropriate starting point is the contextualization of the verse as presented by the material of *asbab al-muzil* (occasions of revelation). In his commentary, al-Tabari provides us with six accounts, the most skeletal of which is the one he attributes to Ibn Jurai: "A man slapped his wife. The Prophet wanted (to apply) *qisds* (retaliation). As they were in this situation, the verse was revealed". According to another account, attributed to al-Sudd, when the aggrieved woman's kinsfolk went to the Prophet he recited the verse to them (Ibrahim and Abdalla, 2015).

The first reason then why men are *qawwamun* over women is their physical ability to protect women. The second is that 'they (i.e. men) spend out of their wealth.' Although the Holy Qur'an permits women to earn and own wealth, it expects that men will generally be able to earn more than women because of the natural differences between them. This means that they will generally be responsible for the economic needs of women and this responsibility also makes them *qawwamun*. In thinking of men as *qawwamun* over women one should not limit their role to mere protectors and providers. Proper taking care of women requires more than ensuring their physical security and providing food and shelter. It also requires looking after their psychological and emotional needs which can be summed up in terms of the need for love (Qur'an, 30:21). Thus man's role in the relationship between men and women (as husbands and wives) generally consists of three things: protecting the woman, looking after her economic needs and giving her love.

Thirdly, it's very important to understand that Allah has created human beings as males and females, following the "dual" role which is central to the system of creation. He has given the woman the great tasks of child-bearing, breast-feeding and looking after her children. These are certainly not tasks of the type which may be fulfilled without careful preparation, physically, psychologically and mentally. She could not be given all those tasks and be still required to work in order to earn her living and to look after her children at the same time. One should realize that mothers raise generations. Women moreover build families with their love and care. It is only just, therefore, that the other part, i.e. man, should be assigned the task of providing

the essential needs and the protection required for the woman to fulfill her highly important duties.

## ***ii, Nushuzahunna***

There is disagreement among classical and contemporary scholars about the meaning of *nushuz* in verse 4:34. This word is often translated into English to mean “disobedience” (Bewley, & Bewley, 1999: 73), “flagrant defiance” (Hammad, 2007: 138), “ill-conduct” (Al-Hilali, & Khan, 1993: 131) and “misbehavior” (Murad, et al, 2000: 84). As with the English translations of the word *wadribuhunna*, *nushuz* needs to be understood in context.

Therefore, the proper meaning of *Nusuhu* should be derived on the basis of the three criteria, namely: linguistic analysis of the text of the Qu’ran, *Ahadith* and what the Qur’an says elsewhere about dealing with wives in difficult situations. The Prophet himself explained and interoperated this verse in his Farewell Pilgrimage by which one can determine the correct meaning of the word *nushuz*.

Lo! My last recommendation to you is that you should treat women well. Truly they are your helpmates, and you have no right over them beyond that except if they commit a manifest indecency [*fahisha mubina*, ranging from immorality to adultery]. If they do, then refuse to share their beds and hit them without indecent violence [*fadribuhunna darban ghayra mubarrih*]. Then, if they desist, do not show them hostility any longer. Lo! you have a right over your women and they have a right over you. Your right over your women is that they not allow whom you hate to enter your bed nor your house. While their right over you is that you treat them excellently in their garb and provision (El Fadl, 2006: 110)

The Prophet uses the expression ‘*fahisa mubina*’ as the equivalent of ‘*nushuz*’. The word ‘*nushuz*’ in this verse therefore refers to ‘*fahisa mubina*’, which refers to manifest obscenity. The word ‘*nushuz*’ used in reference to the wife therefore doesn’t mean disobedience or a case of simple disagreement. It means lewd acts, immoral behaviour that could lead to adultery. *Nushuz*: Animosity, hostility, rebellion, ill-treatment, discord; violation of marital duties on the part of either husband or wife. In the context of the above verse the most appropriate meaning for *nushuz* is ‘marital discord’ (ill-will, animosity etc).

### iii, *Wadribuhunna*

The word in question in Qu'ran, 4:34 is '*driboo*' / أَضْرِبُوْ for which the Arabic root is Dad-Ra-Ba (ض ر ب). The 1st verb form (DaRaBa) derived from this root has many different meanings, in fact, it is possibly is one of the most diversely used words in the Arabic language. This is primarily because it is often used figuratively as an expression meaning something different to the literal meaning of the phrase (Haddad, 2000). It is estimated that about 100 meanings in all have been given for this form in Classical Arabic dictionaries (Hans Wehr, 1976: 538). It is also recorded in these sources that specific meanings are associated with certain prepositions or subjects, and whilst these are not rigid laws, they can be seen as patterns of common usage. The Qur'an itself uses this word in different ways as will now analyze below. With regard to the translation of DRB in the above verses there is variation, depending on translator, e.g. some use variations in Qur'an, 17:48, 25:9, 43:58, 43:17.

A recent translation renders the meaning of *wadribuhunna* as “strike them with a light hand (*wadribuhunna*)” (Hammad. A. Z, 2007: 138). But if they obey you, then do not seek to go against them in any way. Indeed God is ever exalted, all great”. Also many Scholars such as Muhammad Habib Shakir, Abdullah Yusuf Ali, Arthur J. Arberry, Muhammad Asad, and Mufti Muhammad Taqi Uthmani translate the contentious verb *wadribuhunna* as “beat them” (Ibrahim and Abdalla, 2015 ) translate it as “beat them (lightly, if it is useful)” (Al-Hilali, & Khan, 1993: 131), Irving, (1998) says “and (even) beat them (if necessary)”, while Pickthall, (1938) says it should mean “scourge them”. Al'Suyuti and Mahalli, (1352 A.H) says it means “strike them, but not violently”. Clearly, there is disagreement on how best to translate *wadribuhunna*, but all translations give an explicit negative connotation and, read out of context, provide reasonable evidence for wife “beating”. Few translators depart from the above conventional translation. Laleh Bakhtiar, (2007) suggests that the word *wadribuhunna* should actually be translated to mean “to go away,” because “God would not sanction harming another human being except in war”. He adopts this translation and believes that it is appropriate based on the premise that the Prophet did not beat any of his wives when he had difficulties with them, and that the “beat” translation contradicts Quran, 2 verses 231 that a wife should not be mistreated after being divorced. Given that there is no agreement on the translation of *wadribuhunna* it is necessary to look beyond English translations for a proper understanding of its legal meaning (MacFarquhar, 2007).

From the foregoing, '*idribuhunna*', means 'beat'. The issue with all of the Arabic words that are derived from the word '*daraba*' is that they don't necessarily mean



‘hit’ (<http://www.islamawareness.net/Wife/ beating1.html>). The word ‘*idribuhunna*’ for instance, could very well mean to ‘leave’ them. It is exactly like telling someone to ‘beat it’ or ‘drop it’ in English. Allah Almighty used the word ‘*daraba*’ in Noble Verse 14:24 “Seest thou not how Allah sets (*daraba*) forth a parable? A goodly Word like a goodly tree, whose root is firmly fixed, And its branches (reach) to the heavens”. ‘*daraba*’ here meant ‘give an example’. If one say in Arabic ‘*daraba laka mathal*’, it means ‘give you an example’.

### ***The Meaning and Legal Implications of the Verse***

In the present context, the Qur’anic usage allows two meanings: 1, separating from the wives in the sense of living apart from them, 2, beating them. The first meaning fits the context well, for some kind of physical separation is a very understandable step after suspension of sexual relations does not work. The second meaning is more natural from a linguistic point of view and has the support of a strong consensus among the commentators (El Fadl, 2006: 110). In other words the “beating” is conditional, and is “symbolic” as argued by Murad, Badawi, and Hutchinson: If a man has to administer physical correction to a wife, his strokes should be symbolic, the law forbids that which leaves bruises or other marks. A wife with a complaint against her husband’s treatment may apply to a magistrate to deal with the matter (Murad, et al, 2000: 84).

There is agreement that if all fails a husband may “discipline” his wife when there is clear evidence that she has committed *nushuz*, through a symbolic hitting that is not humiliating, injurious, or deformative. This symbolic “hitting” should be with a *miswak* (a small natural toothbrush not thicker than the index finger (Ibn Kathir: vol.1, 1996:241) or a folded handkerchief, but with the proviso that this symbolic “hitting” should be *ghayr mubarrih*. Additionally, the symbolic “hitting” should not be on the face for it is prohibited in the *shari’ah* to hit anyone on the face; a sinful act that requires monetary compensation (*qawad*).

Al-Qaradawi, (1982: 205) describes “beating” to be permissible (if all other measures fail) only in some extreme cases of a wife’s rebellion. He defines it as beating *lightly with the hands*, avoiding the face and other sensitive parts. He stresses that in no cases should the husband resort to a stick or any other instrument that might cause pain and injury. Badawi also states that under no circumstances does the Qur’an encourage, allow, or condone wife beating, but in extreme cases in an effort to salvage a marriage the husband may administer a “gentle tap with a *miswak*” without causing

any physical harm to the body or leaving any mark; stressing that this option is a last resort after exhausting all other prerequisite steps (Jamal Badawi, 1995: 13).

Yet other scholars like Taha Jabir Alalwani and Maher Hathout, hold the view that even light tapping is not appropriate (F.T.I, 2007). They argue that verse 4:34 should be interpreted in light of the historical and environmental context. Taking it as an absolute to apply to any time or any person is erroneous, given that the Qur'an orders one to live with his wife in kindness and equity. These scholars also argue that to interpret the word *wadribuhunna* to mean "hitting" is to err with the practice of the Prophet who during a severe situation of marital discord, practiced a period of separation (or boycott) from his wives, which renders the meaning of *wadribuhunna* to "boycott them" and not "beat them".

It is evident from the above discussion that no classical or contemporary Muslim scholar has ever argued that *wadribuhunna* actually means "beat" your wives, despite the fact that this is how English translations render the meaning. In fact, these scholars made every attempt to stipulate strict conditions to govern the actual process of *wadribuhunna*, which in any case is understood to be a last resort in a marriage that has become seriously dysfunctional due to the *nushuz* of the wife. By extension, under no other circumstance can a husband beat his wife, regardless of social, psychological, or cultural influences that may be imposed on the husband.

Additionally, and to make matters more stringent, during the gradual three steps of reconciliation specified in verse 4:34, it is emphatically stressed that if marital harmony is restored following any of the first or second steps (before *wadribuhunna*), then it is legally binding on the husband "not to engage in any further acts that may annoy the wife" (Badawi, A, 2007: 424). If the husband abuses this legal guideline by resorting to the second or third step where the first suffices, then his action is prohibited and he is liable to pay compensation under Islamic law (Abd al Ati, 1977: 158). All of these steps are articulated in verse 4:34 and elaborated by Islamic law, to safeguard the wife from being abused when in a state of *nushuz*. Under no other circumstance is the imperative *wadribuhunna* applicable for it goes directly against verse 4:34 and Islamic law.

When the classical Muslim jurist Ibn Rushd was asked whether a man who caught his wife performing lewd acts with a foreign man in bed could beat his wife and imprison her, he responded that the husband may forgive his wife or divorce her and anything beyond that would be considered a transgression (Abou El Fadl, 2009: 111). This is based on Qur'an 2:231, "And when you divorce women and they reach their prescribed time, then either retain them in good fellowship or set them free with

liberality, and do not retain them for injury” and Qur’an 65:2 mentioned earlier. Given the above, it seems evident that wife beating is not only “immoral”, but is inconsistent with *maqasid*, namely, the preservation of life, honor, and intellect. It is also inconsistent with the Prophet’s example and many traditions that describe beating as “hateful and detestable” (Ibid). Now, there is need to consider the question: how is ‘beating’, if that is what is intended in the verse, is to be interpreted in the light of the passage as a whole and the general teaching of the Qur’an.

In this connection, it must be immediately noted that there is no warrant here in this verse for wife battering. The suggestion to use beating is made specifically to deal with *nushuz* on the part of the wife, that is, to deal with her deliberately nasty behavior that poses a threat to the marriage. Ibn Kathir, (vol.1, 1996:242) was of the view that a woman is *nashiz* if she behaves as though she is above her husband, if she disobeys his orders, if she separates herself from him, or if she hits him. According to al- Tabari, (1321 A.H: 299), a wife is *nashiz* if she acts arrogantly or snobbishly towards her husband, refuses to have sex with him, or disobeys him in matters where she must obey him. Beating is to be done after due admonition and suspension of sexual relations and therefore by husbands who have some moral standards and have sufficient control over their sexual passions (Murad, et all, 2000: 84). Moreover, this beating is not to go on and on but is to be tried as a last step to save the marriage. Once it is clear that it is not working it is to be abandoned in favor of some other steps involving relatives of the husband and the wife mentioned in the next verse (Qur’an, 4:35).

There is no absolutely license here for the type of regular and continual wife beating that goes on in some homes, where each time the husband is angry with his wife or with someone else he turns against her and beats her up. In most such cases, the husband has no moral superiority over the wife: the only rule of *Shari'ah* that he cares about is this suggestion about beating. He also does not have the kind of control over his sexual passions needed to separate the wife in bed and often beats her the day before or the day after making love to her, an action specifically condemned by the Prophet (<http://www.quran434.com/wife-beating-islam.html>). In regard to the suggestion about beating, the following further points should also be noted:

a) According to some traditions, the Prophet said in his famous speech on the occasion of his farewell pilgrimage that the beating done according to the present verse should be *ghayr mubarrih*, i.e. in such a way that it should not cause injury, bruise or serious hurt. On this basis some scholars like al- Tabari, (1321 A.H: 299) and Al-Razi, (1405/1985 10.90) say that the beating should be largely symbolic and

should be administered 'with a folded scarf' or 'with a *miswak* or some such thing'. However, it is not clear how such a beating can help overcome *nushuz* of the wife, a point that supports the first meaning of *dharb*. If *dharb* is translated as 'beating', as most commentators do, then 'beating' should be effective in its purpose of shaking the wife out of her *nushuz*. This means that it should provide an energetic demonstration of the anger, frustration and love of the husband. In other words, it should neither seriously hurt the wife nor reduce it to a set of meaningless motions devoid of emotions. As for the argument that the Prophet intensely disliked beating, one can say that his intense dislike was for the type of beating done outside the limits set down by God.

b) The wife has no religious obligation to take the beating (Al-Qaradawi, 1982: 205). She can ask for and get divorce any time. In such instance the judge will issue a restraining order against the husband without imposing any kind of punishment upon him (Ibn Qudama, 145/1985, Volume.8: 163). The Malikiyyah, on the other hand, held that the judge first admonishes him, but if he still does not desist from abusing his wife, then asks the wife to desert him in bed. If the husband continues the felony, then the judge should order that he be physically punished (beating) by way of *ta'zir* (Ibid). The suggestion applies only in the case when the husband is seriously disturbed by a prolonged nasty behavior on the part of the wife but neither he nor the wife is as yet seriously thinking of breaking up.

c) If the husband beats a wife without respecting the limits set down by the Qur'an and *Hadith*, then she can take him to court and if ruled in favor has the right to apply the law of retaliation and beat the husband as he beat her. Narrated Umar ibn al-Khattab: "The Prophet said: A man will not be asked as to why he beat his wife (Sunan Abi Da'ud, Book 11: Number 2142) is not a part of the authentic teaching of Islam (Silas, 2015). Even, if beating on account of *nushuz* resulted in the death or serious injury to the wife The majority held that the husband in such cases would be guilty of homicide or causing grievous hurt to his wife (Mughni al-muhtaj, n.d, vol, 5:262). Hanabilah, however, do not consider him liable for such offences on technical ground, namely the legal permissibility negates criminal liability (Al-Bahuti, 2001, Vol,5: 210).

d) Some Muslim jurists were of the opinion that beating is permissible but not advisable (Haddad, 2000). They based their view on the fact that the Prophet intensely disliked the action. For instance, Abdul Majid Daryabadi states: The fact must not be lost sight of that the Holy Word is addressed to people of all ages and of all grades and stages of social evolution; and it may well be that a remedy that is unthinkable in

a particular grade of society is the only feasible and effective corrective in another (Muhammad al-Talbi, 1996:120).

But to say that beating is only permissible but never advisable is to say that there is never any good in it, but the husband can nevertheless resort to it if he wants to; in other words he can beat up his wife without any good reason. This, however, is a view that cannot possibly be attributed to the Qur'an. One can expect the Holy Qur'an to mention beating only if some wisdom is accomplished. Therefore, if one translates *dharb* as 'beating' one must not be apologetic but ask what the wisdom behind the Qur'anic suggestion is. There could be, it seems, two possible points of wisdom in the suggestion of *dharb* in the sense of 'beating'.

First, the beating done within the limits defined by the Qur'an may indeed bring the husband and wife to some kind of understanding. This is not because of the pain involved, which in any case cannot be too much if the guidance in the Qur'an and *Hadith* are to be observed. Rather, the husband and wife may come closer together after beating because of the emotions involved. The wife might experienced the depth of hurt and disturbance her *nushuz* is causing and if there is any love left among them may decide for that reason to change her conduct. Ibn al-Attiyah states: These things exhortation, turning away and beating – are in sequence. If she becomes obedient with one, the other options are not to be resorted to (Muhammad Ibn Sa'd, 1997: 395-97). 'Ali bin Abi Talib is reported to have said: (The) Husband should (first) admonish her with words; if she stops (with her transgressive attitude) he would have no more recourse (to be harsh with her). But if she remains rebellious then he may stop sharing her bed, and if she still remains like that then he may beat her. And if she does not take admonishments even with beating then call for arbitrators from both sides (Al-Fakhr al-Razi, n.d, 10: 90). That physical chastisement comes only after the other corrective measures is obvious because exhortation and the leaving of the marital bed would be meaningless after having resorted to the former.

It seems from observations of human behavior that a show of male physical energy can sometimes bring a woman out of a prolonged bad mood (Jamal Badawi, 2015) even though this energy may be seemingly directed against her in the form of angry words or a slap, provided in this manifestation of energy there is an undercurrent of love and desire for the woman and no real harm is done to the woman. In the situation with which the present verse is dealing, it is understood that in his heart the husband does have some love and desire for the wife. For, he has the option of divorcing her but he is not taking that option.

Second, the mention of beating may have the wisdom, ironically, to protect wives against what is called wife battering. The Qur'an does not always combat undesirable behavior by legal prohibition but by some other means. Experience also shows that legal prohibition of an action may not always be the most effective method to stop it (<http://www.mombu.com/religion/general/t-top-ten-rules-in-the-quran-that-oppress-and-insult-women-women-rules-possession-prophet-ethics-14597503.html>). The Qur'an by requiring that before any beating there should be admonishing and suspension of sexual relations is providing a more effective measure against wife battering, since battering is the result of uncontrollable anger or aggression and this anger or aggression can be tamed during admonishing and suspension of sexual relations. No statistics exist, but there is confidence that if one researches the behavior of men in different religious groups over a long enough period and a vast enough area of the globe, one will find that the incidents of cases of wife battering and other forms of cruelty to women have been less, both in terms of numbers and seriousness, among Muslims than in other groups (Ibid).

The argument is that according to the Qur'an, in such circumstances the husband has a three-fold remedy: he may admonish her, refuse sexual relations with her, and, if she still persists in being *nashiz*, he may beat her. 'Ali was of the view that in regards to refusing sexual relations, a man should not take a separate residence. This would give the wife a chance to become more arrogant and indifferent towards her husband, whereas the object of the separation is to make her realize her fault (Syed Anwer 'Ali, 1982: 42). If a woman persists despite this, she may be beaten, but without causing her physical injury resulting in a wound or fracture of any bone (Ibn Kathir: vol.1, 1996:242).

It is also important to note that even this "light strike" mentioned in the verse is not to be used to correct some minor problem, but it is permissible to resort to only in a situation of some serious moral misconduct when admonishing the wife fails, and avoiding from sleeping with her would not help. If this disciplinary action can correct a situation and save the marriage, then one should use it.

If the problem relates to the wife's behavior, the husband may exhort her and appeal for reason. In most cases, this measure is likely to be sufficient. In cases where the problem persists, the husband may express his displeasure in another peaceful manner, by sleeping in a separate bed from hers. There were cases, however, in which a wife persists in bad habits and showing contempt of her husband and disregard for her marital obligations. Instead of divorce, the husband may resort to another measure that may save the marriage, at least in some cases. Such a measure was more

accurately described as a gentle tap on the body, but never on the face, making it more of a symbolic measure than a punitive one. In relation to the punishment that may be imposed on women, Ibn Kathir noted that there is a linguistic dispute concerning the meaning of *Alhajar*; that is, how is punishment of the wife to be imposed? He cited Ibn Abbas, who was of the view that a man may sleep in the same bed as his *nashiz* wife but should not have sexual relations with her, nor should he speak to her. When he shares his bed, he should give her his back. Another opinion of Ibn Abbas was that a husband could have sexual relations with his *nashiz* wife, but should not speak to her if he does so, as this is hard on women. If this punishment fails to correct a wife then she may be beaten (Ibid, p. 243). Ibn Kathir relied on a number of *ahadith* to substantiate this explanation; primarily those relied upon by ‘Ali. It is interesting that Ibn Kathir thought that it is hard on women if their husbands have sex with them without speaking to them. Even here, that maximum measure is limited by the following:

a. It must be seen as a rare exception to the repeated exhortation of mutual respect, kindness and good treatment. Based on the Qur’an and *Hadith*, this measure may be used in the cases of lewdness on the part of the wife or extreme refraction and rejection of the husband’s reasonable requests on a consistent basis (*nushuz*). Even then, other measures, such as exhortation, should be tried first.

b. As defined by *Hadith*, it is not permissible to strike anyone's face, cause any bodily harm or even be harsh. What the *Hadith* qualifies as ‘*dharban ghayra mubarrih*’, or light striking, was interpreted by early jurists (Jamal Badawi, 1995: 13) as a (symbolic) use of *Siwak*! They further qualified permissible ‘striking’ as that which leaves no mark on the body. It is interesting that this latter fourteen-centuries-old qualifier is the criterion used in contemporary American law to separate a light and harmless tap or strike from ‘abuse’ in the legal sense (<http://www.thereigionofpeace.com/quran/003-wife-beating.htm>). This makes it clear that even this extreme, last resort, and ‘lesser of the two evils’ measure that may save a marriage does not meet the definitions of ‘physical abuse,’ ‘family violence,’ or ‘wife battering’ in the 20<sup>th</sup> century law in liberal democracies, where such extremes are so commonplace that they are seen as national concerns (<http://www.islamic-myths.com/page/14/>).

c. The permissibility of such symbolic expression of the seriousness of continued refraction does not imply its desirability. In several *hadiths*, the Prophet discouraged this measure. Here are some of his sayings in this regard, Abu Huraira reported that the Prophet said: “Do not beat the female servants of Allah” (Sunan Abi Da’ud, Book

11: Number 2141). Also reported by Abu Huraira that the Prophet said, "Some (women) visited my family complaining about their husbands (beating them) These (husbands) are not the best of you." (Sunan Abi Da'ud, Book 11: Number 2141) In another *hadith* reported by Narrated 'Abdullah bin Zam'a the Prophet said: "How does anyone of you beat his wife as he beats the stallion camel and then he may embrace (sleep with) her?" (Musnad Ahmad, 1955, No.7396, 3 and Sahih al-Bukhari, vol. 8, Hadith 68:42-43)

d. True following of the *Sunnah* is to follow the example of the Prophet who never resorted to that measure, regardless of the circumstances.

e. Islamic teachings are universal in nature. They respond to the needs and circumstances of diverse times, cultures and circumstances. Some measures may work in some cases and cultures or with certain persons but may not be effective in others. By definition, a 'permissible' act is neither required nor encouraged or forbidden. In fact it may be to spell out the extent of permissibility, such as in the issue at hand, rather than leaving it unrestricted or unqualified, or ignoring it all together. In the absence of strict qualifiers, persons may interpret the matter in their own way, which can lead to excesses and real abuse.

f. Any excess, cruelty, family violence, or abuse committed by any 'Muslim' can never be traced, honestly, to any revelatory text (Qur'an or *Hadith*). Such excesses and violations are to be blamed on the person(s) himself, as it shows that they were paying lip service to Islamic teachings and injunctions and failing to follow the true *Sunnah* of the Prophet.

Nevertheless, Islam protects the soul of the woman, defends her biological structure. Her creature is weaker than the man's and if Islam gave the wife the right to beat her husband, her husband would break her!. True or not? The husband with his build and muscles, the wife cannot handle him. But Islam gave the woman the right that the husband will be beaten by someone on her behalf. The husband is beaten by a man, and then the battle is waged between two men, and not between a man and a woman. Therefore, if the husband scorned the wife, humiliated her, or treated her disrespectfully, the wife can go to court, and then the judge rules the wife her right. And so, if the wife wants the husband to be beaten, he will be beaten! But he will be beaten by court order, and then the battle is waged between the judge and the husband, and not between the husband and the wife, within the home.

Also, some scholars argued that, in the context of the verse the most appropriate meaning for *nushuz* is 'marital discord' (ill-will, animosity etc), and for *adriboo* is



‘to separate’ or ‘to part’ (Ibrahim and Abdalla, 2015 ). Otherwise, it is inviting the likelihood of a divorce without any reconciliation procedure. Such a step would blatantly contravene the Qur’anic guidance shown in verse Q4:35 below. Therefore, a more accurate and consistent translation of the above verse would be: (Q4:34) as for those women whose animosity or ill-will you have reason to fear, then leave them alone in bed, and then separate; and if thereupon they pay you heed, do not seek a way against them. The separation could be temporary or permanent depending on the reconciliation procedure. Such as construction is legitimate within the terms of the language and fits in very well with the divorce procedure outlined in the Qur’an. The verse following the above verse gives further weight to the above translation (Q4:35). And if ye fear a breach between them twain (the man and the wife), appoint an arbiter from his folk and an arbiter from her folk. If they desire amendment Allah will make them of one mind. Lo! Allah is ever Knower, Aware.

Finally, as stated earlier, the word ‘*daraba*’ means to ‘strike’ or ‘hit’. It includes everything from a tap with a tooth-stick to what in English called beating. If it is stated that so-and-so “hit” so-and-so without further description, it would be assumed to be a single blow and it could be of any magnitude. If one took a shoe lace and hit someone on the hand with it, one could properly say ‘*dharabtahu*’ in Arabic but in English one could never say that you had “beaten” that person. So in what sense has the verb ‘*dharaba*’ been used in verse 4:34? To answer this important question, there is need to turn to the fundamental rule of Qur’anic exegesis, which is that the exegesis of the Qur’an is carried by the Qur’an itself, or ‘al-Qur’an *yufassiru bacduhu bacdan*’ (different parts of the Qur’an explain one another) and ‘*yuhmal al-mutlaq cala-muqayyad*’ (unqualified statements should be interpreted in the light of qualified ones). Since the implied intensity of the strike mentioned in Qur’an, 4:34 has not been qualified there explicitly, it will interpret in the light of the qualified statement made at the only other verse in the Holy Qur’an that categorically refers to what some people wanne label as ‘wife beating’. The verse in question refers to the Story of Prophet Ayuba. When Ayuba was being tested, his wife lost her faith and blasphemed. As a result, he took an oath to hit her as punishment. A dilemma was thus created: a prophet example for the believers should not engage in ‘violent’ and ‘unworthy’ behavior towards his wife. On the other hand, a prophet may not violate his oath. The divine solution to this dilemma is expressed in a Qur’anic verse. It instructs Job to satisfy his oath to hit his wife by ‘hitting’ her with a handful of fragrant grass (or basil). The intent was to satisfy the promise without ‘harming’ the wife. In this way, he resolved his dilemma. (To Ayuba): And take in your hand ‘a bundle of thin grass’ ‘*dighth*’ and ‘strike’ therewith (your wife), and break not your

oath (Qur'an 38:44) rather, it uses the idiom '*jalada*' (to lash, to whip, to flog etc.), as in Qur'an, 24: 2. By this one can see already that the Prophet Ayuba was informed on 'how' to 'hit' his wife in this particular instance, in a way such that he would not harm her, yet still fulfill his oath. God ordered him to use what in Arabic is called '*dighth*'. The Arabic word '*dighth*' means a handful of grass, basil or soft palm leaves. The above verse therefore proves that the expression 'hit your wives' (*wadribuhunna*) in Qur'an 4:34 refers to strikes with something relatively soft such as a bundle of thin grass. Even, Tafsir- al- Tabari, (1321 A.H: 313) simply listed the various opinions, ranging from a symbolic strike with a brush to forceful corporal punishment. Also, in expounding upon the Qur'anic verses and Prophetic instructions, the following is reported from Ibn Abbas, the prime commentator of the Qur'an from amongst the companions of the Prophet: 'Ata narrated, I asked Ibn 'Abbas: What is the beating that leaves no marks? He said, 'With a tooth stick and the like (Ibid, Vol, 8, 315 Narration 9387)'. These narrations demonstrate that the beating in question is not beating proper, but a symbolic reproach to highlight the significance of the transgression to the wife. Before drawing the conclusion on this paper, there is a need to examine the *Ahadith* of the Prophet being the second source of Islamic Law.

## Ahadith on Wife Beating

The traditional narrations/*ahadith* contain a mix of narrations: some alleged sayings state that prophet disproved of beating one's wife in any way whilst on other occasions he apparently allowed it, some say beat but not on the face, some not severely, sometimes stating husbands who do such a thing are not the best among the believers, sometimes saying the best are those who treat their women/family well. For instance, Aisha claims that, Prophet Muhammad did not hit a woman but reports in another narration that, he struck her and caused her pain etc. Such variation is common amongst hearsay recorded generations after an event, and is not equal to dealing with one consistent source (Qur'an, 4:82, 39:29). At best, traditional narrations are seen as a mix of truth and falsehood, hence weak and strong classification.

If one assume these narrations somewhat resemble actual discussion of the time, there does seem to be a mix of opinion, or at least one can say there is no coherent view. It is possible some at the time wished to interpret Qur'an, 4:34 to mean hit/beat and favoured this view, or this view became dominant shortly afterwards amidst the

misogynist environment which the Qur'an was revealed in. Some references are shown below for the traditional narrations

Narrated Mu'awiyah al-Qushayri: "I went to the Apostle of Allah and asked him: What do you say (command) about our wives? He replied: Give them food what you have for yourself, and clothe them by which you clothe yourself, and do not beat them, and do not revile them" (Sunan Abi Da'ud, Book 11, Marriage, Kitab Al-Nikah, Number 2139). Narrated Mu'awiyah Ibn Haydah: "I said: Apostle of Allah, how should we approach our wives and how should we leave them? He replied: Approach your tilth when or how you will, give her (your wife) food when you take food, clothe when you clothe yourself, do not revile her face, and do not beat her" (Ibid, Book 11, Marriage, Kitab Al-Nikah, Number 2138). Abu Huraira reported Allah's Apostle as saying: "He who believes in Allah and the Hereafter, if he witnesses any matter he should talk in good terms about it or keep quiet. Act kindly towards woman, for woman is created from a rib, and the most crooked part of the rib is its top. If you attempt to straighten it, you will break it, and if you leave it, its crookedness will remain there, so act kindly towards women" (Sahih Muslim, The Book of Marriage (Kitab Al-Nikah), Book 008, Number 3468) The Prophet forbade striking on the face: Narrated Salim: "...Umar said: The Prophet forbade beating on the face" (Sahih al-Bukhari, Volume 7, Book 67, Number 449) "The best of you is the one who is best to his wife, and I am the best of you to my wives" (Sunna al- Tirmidhi, 3895 and Ibn Majahi, 1977). Umar reported the prophet as saying: "A man will not be asked as to why he beat his wife" (Sunan Abi Da'ud, Chapter, 709 - On Beating Women, #2142). "You have rights over your wives, and they have rights over you. You have the right that they should not defile your bed and that they should not behave with open unseemliness. If they do, God allows you to put them in separate rooms and to beat them." (Ibn Ishaq's : 651). Aisha narrates, "He (the Prophet) struck me on the chest which caused me pain." (Sahih Muslim, 4:2127) "Iyas bin 'Abd Allah bin Abi Dhubab reported the Prophet as saying: Do not beat Allah's handmaidens, but when 'Umar came to the Prophet and said: Women have become emboldened towards their husbands, he (the Prophet) gave permission to beat them." (Sunan Abi Da'ud, 2141) "The Prophet said: A man will not be asked as to why he beat his wife" (Ibid, 2142). Says Aisha: "He struck me on the chest which caused me pain" (Sahih Muslim, vol. 2, no. 2127). "Umar b. al-Kattab reported the Prophet ... as saying: A man will not be asked as to why he beat his wife" (Sunan Abi Da'ud, Vol. 2, No. 2142).

## Conclusion

This article demonstrated that Islamic law and views of leading jurists and scholars are clearly against wife beating, as it creates havoc in marital harmony. The Qur'an chapter 4 Verse 34 does not condone violence against women, and a proper understanding of its implications can only be achieved through a contextual deliberation of the verse. The verse only addresses a specific case of *nushuz* and a proper understanding of what constitutes *nushuz* is vital. English translations of the contentious word *wadribuhunna* must not mean "beat them", or anything similar, for this gives a misleading connotation to the legal meaning and intended implication. The paper observed that, within the Muslim community, there are individuals who are unaware of the actual intent of the verse. So, many of the cases of wife beating (in particular) can be invalidated by a proper understanding of the intent of the verse. The objectives of the *Shari'ah* are to protect life and foster marital harmony, not condone violence. Similarly, the verse can only be utilized to foster marital harmony and to prevent marital breakdown when there is an established case of *nushuz*. It recommended that, before dealing with the issue of wife-battering in Islamic perspective, one should keep in mind that the original Arabic wording of the Holy Qur'an is the only authentic source of meaning. If one relies on the translation alone, one is likely to misunderstand it. This article establishes the prohibition of wife abuse, including wife beating.

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## Modern Muslim: A Possibility or Paradox?

**Vildan Özertürk Sofu**

MA graduate in Humanities and Social Sciences  
Yildiz Technical University  
Istanbul, Turkey

*By 'modernity' I mean the ephemeral, the fugitive, the contingent, the half of art whose other half is the eternal and the immutable.*

**Charles Baudelaire, *The Painter of Modern Life***

### Abstract

Jurgen Habermas sees *modernity* as an unfinished project in his same-titled essay. Even though this project was formulated originally as a project of the Enlightenment in the eighteenth century, it by no means stayed in the eighteenth century alone, but extended its influence further onwards in different contexts to describe different periods of history and aspects of life. Therefore, it is not possible to talk about *the* modernity, but rather, as Shmuel Eisenstadt introduces the concept, there are *multiple modernities*. Setting out from this concept, this paper aims to discuss modernity's relation to religion by focusing on their confrontations, clashes and/or crossroads. In order to comprehend this relation better, the paper uses the context of Turkish society, specifically its practicing religious community as its research setting.

Starting with the first modernization efforts in the nineteenth century of the late Ottoman era, and peaking in the early Republican periods, modernization and 'being modern' were perceived to be a must for the Turkish State to rise up to the level of developed civilizations. Consequently, this goal was attempted to be achieved through a series of reforms, which mostly concentrated on the *appearance* –to be modern, one should *look* modern. Since then in the Turkish context, modernization efforts have mainly tended to be interpreted over the visual, namely the clothing, and especially over the clothing of the women. In line with this tendency, this paper touches upon the

common perceptions of ‘what is modern, and what is not’ that are profoundly embraced by the secular elite within Turkish society, who have a tendency to oppose being modern with being religious. However, the focus of the paper is on the perception of ‘modern’ by the conservative Turkish population. This perception is specifically portrayed (but not claiming as all-representative) over the headscarf-wearing women through a survey analysis as well as a case study on the rising popularity of ‘*tesettür* fashion’ in recent years in Turkey.

All throughout the study, the paper questions the possibility of ‘modern Muslim’, and eventually suggests ways to overcome the modern/anti-modern tension profoundly present within Turkish society. The paper, however, does not associate headscarf as the only way of being “modern Muslim”, but rather provides an open floor for discussing its possibility through other cases and definitions.

**Keywords:** modernity, religion, Islamic modernity, *tesettür* fashion, Turkey

## Introduction

It is possible to come across various definitions of *modernity* particularly in the field of sociology. The classical social theorists, in their definitions of modernity, profoundly dwelled upon the problems brought about with modernity and its ideals: with Marx in his critique of the capitalist economy and of the deformities it brings on man such as alienation and exploitation, with Weber in his critique of the ‘iron cage’ of bureaucratic rationality and increasing depersonalization, with Durkheim’s concern on the weakening of collective conscience and morality, and with Simmel’s focus on the city in his concept of the ‘tragedy of cultures’ (Ritzer 2010). In line with these classical views, Anthony Giddens would later define modernity and specifically the modern world as a ‘juggernaut’ which “crushes those who resist it, and while it sometimes seems to have a steady path, there are times when it veers away erratically in directions we cannot foresee” (1990, 139). Unlike such perception of modernity mainly in the negative, Jurgen Habermas (1997) sees it under a positive light as a ‘project’, which has a high potential for the advance of societies yet stays unfinished.

Coming onto the stage first with the French Revolution and the rise of the industrial age in the West, the modern age, with its inevitable urge on modernization, definitely did not stay within the confines of the West only. In spite of the pervasive Eurocentric reading of modernity, which assumed that the cultural and institutional program of modernity that emerged in Western Europe would ultimately take over in all modernizing societies, different societies in different times and settings, and having different needs, have gone, and are still going through different types of

modernization. This takes us to Shmuel N. Eisenstadt's concept of *multiple modernities* (2000) as "conceptualizing any phenomenon in the singular –be it civilization, modernity or globalization- is intended to bring about homogeneity and tends to become a tool of hegemonization" (Oommen 2005, 149).

Eisenstadt writes that even though modernizing societies tend to follow similar structural differentiation "in family life, economic and political structures, urbanization, modern education, mass communication, and individualistic orientations", how these societies define and organize these structures may greatly differ from each other "giving rise to multiple institutional and ideological patterns" (1-2). Instead of approaching the term 'modernity' as a grand-narrative of Western European experience, under the light of Eisenstadt's concept of *multiple modernities*, this paper, on one level, attempts to better understand how Turkish society, a non-Western and a mainly Muslim society, perceived modernity and implemented it in its institutions through a number of modernizing reforms, beginning in the late Ottoman *Tanzimat* era in the nineteenth century and peaking with the constitution of the Republic and thereafter in the first half of the twentieth century.

On the other level, the paper specifically focuses on the relation between religion and modernity, and tries to portray the perception of 'modern' by the headscarf-wearing women in Turkey through a survey analysis as its methodology. The target group was formulated as young-to-middle-aged, educated, urban headscarf-wearing women. As a caveat, the findings of the survey could have been different with a rural, more domestic target group, as the majority of the current respondents seem to have already critically meditated on the concept of 'modern' before they took the survey. Over this analysis, the paper eventually tries to shed light on the question concerning the possibility of being religious *and* being modern, or as Nilüfer Göleposes it "how are we to grasp the dialectical juxtapositions between modern temporality and the quest for ever-same?"(2000, 92) which also forms the main research question of the study at hand. Important to note, it is not my ultimate goal in this paper to try to *prove* that it is possible to be Muslim *and* modern, or vice versa; rather, this paper aims to better understand the nature of Turkish modernization and the perception of 'modern' by the conservative public -portrayed specifically over the headscarf-wearing women, who define their identities mainly over religion,.

Other research questions that the study will attempt to find answers are: What is the nature of modernity in the context of Turkish society? What has been the role of Islam, as the religion of the majority of Turkish society, in the modernization efforts

of the nation? How is 'being modern' generally perceived in Turkey? How do headscarf-wearing women define themselves in terms of being modern?

On the whole, the paper claims that multiple and alternative modernities are possible and the nature of modern is not static but constantly-evolving in different contexts having different needs and priorities. Last but not least, in the Conclusion, the paper will suggest solutions for the modern/anti-modern tension profoundly present within society. Having said that, I envision that the reflections and insights I lay down here will spark a broader debate on the concept of modernity in the wider picture, and specifically on the Turkish perception of modernity, and thereby stimulate future research on the possibility and invention of alternative modernities

### **Westernization: A Means or An End?**

In the classical perspective, modernity is a linear process with a set of necessary transformations that all societies –sooner or later- are expected to undergo. The starting point of this process is the West, and if all societies follow the example of Western modernization, they, too, will become all modern, of course 'in a Western sense'. This perspective necessarily takes the West (and particularly Western Europe) as the center, with the rest of the world as margin. However, "Eisenstadt observes the emergence of new centers of modernity all round the world in which the originally Western model of modernity is continuously reinterpreted and reconstructed" (Kaya 2009, 1). Thus in each modernization process, the modernizing society becomes a center through its own interpretation of modernity, thus creating a unique outcome. In short, the claim of multiple modernities refutes the equivalence of modernity (and modernization) with Westernization, even though Western modernity "[enjoys] historical precedence and continue to be a basic reference point for others" (Eisenstadt, 3).

Returning to the Turkish context, in spite of the general assumption, modernization efforts did not start with the constitution of the Republic, but extend back to the Ottomans. (Barbarasoğlu 2006; Göle2000; Ocak 2007). Here, one can talk about two phases: the first phase corresponds to the Empire's declining period, when the Ottoman Empire accepted its declining position against the West following a series of defeats on the battleground. However, since the Ottoman sultans attributed this decline to their falling back on technology in terms of armory, they preferred to focus the modernization efforts mainly on the army, including weaponry and the clothing of the soldiers. The reforms made during the reigns of Selim III and Mahmud II are of this nature. In other words, the modernization steps taken by the Empire

during those periods served *instrumental* rather than becoming an overall aim. (Subaşı2007, 66; Ortaylı 2007, 114). Additionally, Şerif Mardin (1989) writes that this“early reform of the army was not a direct threat to the *ulema* [the religious authorities]. In fact, some higher ranking *ulema* had collaborated with the reforms of Selim III and Mahmud II” (106). However, like all modernization efforts, these reforms, still, encountered resistance and criticism by some public. The calling of Sultan Mahmud II by some as *Gavur Sultan* –the infidel Sultan- is a portrayal of such resistance.

This instrumental use of westernization then evolves into the second phase in the second half of the nineteenth century with the *Tanzimat* Period, the time when the intellectuals of the time frequently found themselves in hot debates around whether westernization should be a means to achieve the most aspired goal of rising to the level of the most prosperous and civilized nations of the world, or an end in itself as to be westernized would ultimately mean to be civilized. In spite of the voices advocating an instrumental view of westernization, namely the popular formula of ‘taking the technology of the West while keeping the local culture’, under the influence of *Tanzimat* elites, modernization generally tended to be understood equivalent to westernization, and a change started to take place in mentality as well as in life styles and clothing (Koloğlu 2007, 194) which could be observed in the upper governing classes. And with the constitution of the Republic in 1923, a *voluntary* cultural change was in question (Göle2000). Westernization was adopted as one of the ideological tenets of the new regime, which required *all* of its subjects, not only upper classes, to go through this change of mentality and lifestyles.

## **The Role of Women in the Modernizing Republic**

The new Turkish Republic adopted itself a ‘westernized modern secular Republican’ identity. Each defining adjective in this definition almost turned into sacred where making compromises in any of them were out of question. In a way, these concepts were deemed essential so as to “raise [the] national culture above the contemporary level of civilizations” as M. Kemal Atatürk sets the goal in his famous speech of the Tenth Anniversary of the Republic. Fatma Barbarasoğlu, in her book *Şov ve Mahrem* (2006), writes that what Mustafa Kemal [the founder of Turkish Republic] did was to make the modern view of life -that started in the 19<sup>th</sup> century Ottoman social life among upper class women- compulsory for the middle and lower classes, as well (127). The stress on *women* deserves a special attention here since the early Republican reforms generally targeted at the modernization of women, who were

seen by the reformist authorities as the showcase of the new State, or as Giddens (1992) puts it, as “the emotional revolutionaries of modernity” (1992, 130 as cited in Ritzer 2010, 556).

The Republic’s Woman project of the early Republican period (which could be set between 1923-1950) serves as a perfect epitome to better understand this new identity and the role of women in the image of a ‘modern Turkish Republic woman’. In such a crucial time at the dawn of a new state, new regime and a new domestic and international agenda, the Girls’ Institutes were established to raise and educate girls to become modern Republic women who would be modern wives and also mothers to bring up the Republic’s future generations. Upon this agenda, the first girls’ institute, ‘Ismet Pasha Girls’ Institute’ was established in 1928. However, instead of endowing girls with the necessary knowledge and practice to participate in the scientific, political or economic endeavors like men, these institutes aimed at making Turkish women excel in western-type clothing, manners, family household and kitchen culture.

Girls’ Institutes were an attempt to reproduce and redefine the Turkish woman in order to fit her in the fast modernizing and westernizing new Republic by stripping her from her traditional (and also religious) mentality and attire. However, this definition of the modern and westernized Turkish woman is quite different than the image of modern Turkish woman today. In this early period of the Republic, she was expected to look and think and behave modern, yet she should also not stand out, but rather be modest both in her looks and social visibility, and function as complementary to the Turkish Republican man and be a good role model and raiser of Republic’s future generations. She was expected to be a display case for the fast westernizing and modernizing Republic, yet she was also expected to stay indoors to perform excellent housewifery. Today, those are definitely not the exact expectations from the modern Republic woman. Today’s definition expects her to adopt westernized attire, manners, lifestyle and thoughts, yet not necessarily expects her (or even desires her) to excel in housewifery and/or family household. In fact, these last two are generally seen as features of the domestic, traditional woman who does not that much have a say outdoors in the social, political and/or economic life.

This new definition of modern woman addresses the urban woman. As for the domestic, traditional, ‘village’ woman, she is respected as the industrious, hard-working, sturdy Anatolian woman, as long as she stays where she belongs, in her ‘natural’ setting. This same woman can be gazed at contemptuously in an urban, more ‘modern’ setting, and regarded as misplaced as she does not align with today’s defined

Republic woman image -a westernized-looking, educated, modern, independent woman. In a similar fashion, the urban headscarf-wearing woman living in the metropolis is subjected to similar contemptuous gaze, in fact to even a more dramatic one, as she, too, is *visually* not appropriate to the idealized Republican image no matter how educated or independent she might be.

In the Turkish experience of modernization, the birth of a new state and regime demanded reforms in an attempt to dissociate itself from the old empire as quickly as possible in order to be able to start anew and afresh. Nevertheless, in this fast transformation, certain crucial and indispensable elements of the people, like traditions, religion, beliefs, and history, were preferred to be disregarded, and instead, to ‘look’ modern in appearance, in lifestyle as well as in mentality was targeted in order to catch up with the fast-moving modern Western world. Therefore it could be claimed that it was more an experience of *visual modernity* where the West was taken as the center as well as the target. This visual transformation was hoped to bring the desired social transformation; yet, it did not at large, since its enactment did not come gradually in parallel with the needs and demands of the people, but rather came forcefully, in some cases demanding change overnight<sup>1</sup>. This later proved to bring deep gaps of understanding between the state and its own people, as well as among the varied subjects within the body of the nation.

## **The Encounter of Religion and Modernity**

Western modernity was characterized by a disenchantment of religion as the Church was seen as a hindrance on the way of science and advancement. This paves the path that leads to the popular modern/religious dichotomy, since the impediment was not seen as the dominating influence of the Church, but generalized as religion altogether. Likewise, “modernism was used on the purpose of refusing religion, as modernists think that religion is old and can no longer address the problems of mankind” in the modern world (Barzinji 2003, 51). A strong argument as to the clash of religion and modernity points out the continually changing nature of ‘modern’ in contrast to the static dogma of religion. The Turkish sociologist, Nilüfer Göle (2000) poses this argued contrast in her question: “How are we to grasp the dialectical juxtapositions between modern temporality and the quest for ever-same?” (92).

On the other hand, the confusion might be arising from the equalization of the concept of *traditional* with the concept of *religious* even though they do not refer to the same phenomenon. The antonym of ‘modern’ is *traditional* among others, and, in this respect, *religious* could only be said to be a *perceived* antonym for ‘modern’.

With secularism being a component of Western modernity, (deriving from the secular/religious binary opposition) the religious/modern dichotomy can be claimed to be a constructed dichotomy. However, this construction does not also mean that there is a perfect harmony between these two concepts, either, as they fall against each other in some of their claims as stated in the previous paragraph. One other source of modern/religious opposition is the belief that religion is a phenomenon of the past, therefore it cannot address issues in the contemporary world. This proposition is invalidated by Islam (at least for the Muslim population) since Muslims believe that Islam is the religion of all times and places and it was sent to all humanity from back then up to this day.

Among the defining characteristics of modernity, in this case of Western modernity, rationality, evidentialism, positivism, empiricism, individualism and secularism could be counted as the most prominent.<sup>2</sup> These same characteristics are also said to be in contrast with the nature and teachings of religion: with rationality, evidentialism, positivism and empiricism advocating an understanding of the world through totally and objectively accessible and measurable data disregarding the metaphysical, the philosophical and the religious *a priori*; with individualism stressing the independence of the individual from all mediating structures such as family and church; and with secularism<sup>3</sup> requiring the loss of religious influence and belief from the state and societal level.

To such claims stressing the clash of modernity and religion, there are also claims advocating the absence of such rigid clash (Koloğlu 2007; İnalçık 2007; Mardin 1989; Woodward 2002; Yıldız et al 2013). For example, in his article Orhan Koloğlu writes that the holy book of Muslims, the Quran, presents the general behavioral principles, and expects man to apply them according to the needs of the changing time and conditions of the age (2007, 186). Mark R. Woodward (2002) attempts to prove that the disenchantment of life, which is a prominent feature of modernity, is, in fact, “a characteristic of modern Christian theology, [and] not a necessary component of modernization. Rather, it is the result of the conflict between Christian and scientific ways of knowing which dates from the sixteenth century” (81). Woodward here points out modernity’s rejection of the hegemonic influence of the Catholic Church, and not of the religion itself, in the social and political level. Mardin, in his analysis of social change in the modernizing Turkey together with the place of religion in such setting, points out the vital role of religion in fast changing societies “in providing the overarching canopy of symbols for the meaningful integration of society” (1989, 103).



Having talked about the compatibility of modernity and Islam, it is necessary to mention the influential Muslim modernists of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, who believed in the harmony of Islam and modernity and who “made an articulate and conscious effort... to integrate modern thought and institutions with Islam” as Fazlur Rahman (1919-1988) defines them, himself being one (Rahman 1969, 222 as cited in Amir, et al 2012, 66). In his articles, Rahman summarized the solution to the modernization challenge of the Islamic world as modernization with Islam or while staying Muslim instead of Westernization unquestioningly and at all costs (Ocak 2007, 41). Other important figures in Islamic modernism are Jamaluddin al-Afghani (1838-1898), Mohammed Abduh (1849-1905), Tariq Ramadan (1962- ) and Mohammed Arkoun (1928-2010). This group of modernist thinkers<sup>4</sup> believe in the ‘constructedness’ of the Islam-modernity clash, and therefore attempt to resolve this clash on a sociological, scientific and intellectual level within the framework of a rational scientific program avoiding any contradiction with the essence of Islam (40). With Islamic modernism what they aim at is a revival of religious consciousness.

Needless to say, religion today continues to survive even in the most modernized (and secular) societies. What Western modernity did, on the other hand, is to turn religion into a matter of personal conscience and thus privatize it by reducing its public scope. (Hervieu-Léger 2005, 327; Mardin 1989, 129-130; Woodward 2002, 90). As Mark R. Woodward further writes “modernity leads to a greatly diminished role for religious cosmologies both as systems to explain the natural order and as models for social and political institutions” (89). This given role of religion in modern societies as a private ethical consideration only, desirably not having a say in the public sphere, is problematic for the ones who define their identities primarily over religion and who, at the same time, get closely engaged with the institutions of the modern world by using its instruments.

### **‘Modern Muslim’ or ‘Muslim and Modern’?**

In the case of Turkish society, the experience of modernity is accompanied with a stark opposition between religion and secularism, where, among other components of modernity, a stronger emphasis is attributed specifically to secularism together with the constitution of the Republic. By the secularists in Turkey, secularism has always been seen as the guardian of the Republic, and therefore any act or discourse in relation to religion has been perceived as a serious threat to the existence and future of the Republic, therefore it should be avoided, banned or at least contempted. Ahmet Yaşar Ocak (2007) in his article “Islamic Sciences and the Problem of

Modernization”<sup>5</sup> writes that the majority of the secular elite in Turkey regards secularism almost as an anti-Islamic contra-religion (47).

In terms of the relation between religion [Islam] and secularism, while Islam is more than a belief in the personal conscience, and that, as Mardin writes, “it penetrates the smallest interstices of daily life and of social and political organization” of Islamic societies (1989, 3), secularism dictates a retreat of religion from political and public arena into the domestic zone only. This basic difference creates the secular/religious dichotomy. Thus, in Islamic societies, talking from the perspective of Western-type modernity with its emphasis of disenchantment of life, it is not possible to talk about being religious [in this case, Muslim] and modern.

In spite of this obvious contrast, the prominent Turkish sociologist, Nilüfer Göle coins a new concept in an attempt to better understand the experience of the modern by the religious population, and specifically by the headscarf-wearing women in Turkish society: modern mahrem -the forbidden modern. Through this concept, Göle offers an alternative reading of the relation of the mahrem (in this case the headscarf-wearing women) to the modern vis-à-vis an increasing public visibility in spite of all attempts on the contrary. On a broader interpretation, in her book *Hybrid Designs*<sup>6</sup>, Göle writes that the forbidden modern, modern mahrem, tries to open doors to a new man, time and civilization by reminding mysticism (tasavvuf) instead of the timeliness captivating modern man, by preserving privacy (mahremiyet) against exhibitionism, by prioritizing the inner self (nefs) over an individual defined by desires and passion, by pluralizing materiality through transcendence and by inducing the heart to speak rather than the mind<sup>7</sup> (2000, 13). Through this definition, Göle talks about the possibility of Islamic modernities (with modernities again in the plural as each Muslim society experiences the modern in its unique way).

Islamic modernities, as Göle uses the concept, denote experiences of modernity within Islamic contexts. The globalization of culture through increasing means of media and communication technologies does not allow any culture to stay unaffected even if desired the contrary. Islamic communities are no exception. Today in Turkish society, the Islamic agents crowd modern urban spaces, use global communication networks, participate in public debates, follow dominant consumption patterns, learn market rules, step into the secular time, become acquainted with such values as individuation, professionalism and consumerism, and think about these new practices (Göle 2012, 90). In other words, the Islamic agents experience the modern as much as their secular counterparts. The question here is ‘does interaction with the modern create modern agents? Or is ‘modern muslim’ possible?’

In her book *Hybrid Designs [Melez Desenler]*, Nilüfer Göler reminds that living in modern times, and getting engaged with the instruments of these times are definitely not enough to be defined as modern. And she adds “the modern is produced on the line of interaction between action and analysis” (2000, 8). Put it differently, being modern requires continuous critique, self-critique, invention and re-invention. Being modern requires the subject to be able to see the bigger picture, the hinterland, the back stage of what is ‘on-air’ instead of getting squeezed and lost in the present image. Being modern necessitates an escape from the surface, the superficial, and requires “to understand, to articulate and to transform” the actual (10). Being modern requires escaping the clutch of the ‘modern’ fetish.

In Turkish modernization, it is possible to talk about the fetishization of certain concepts, one of which is *secular* as has been discussed in the previous paragraphs. The concept of *modern* is definitely another one, and the latter has a wider area of influence, as well. In Turkish society, being modern is closely and directly associated with being open-minded and progressive, which makes the non-modern narrow-minded and retrogressive. Therefore, conservative or secular, for the majority of population, being modern functions as an important component of identity construction. In line with the subject matter of the paper, the following section will focus specifically on how being modern can be fetishized by headscarf-wearing women over the increasing popularity of the ‘*tesettür*’ fashion’.

### **The Increasing Popularity of *Tesettür* Fashion<sup>8</sup>**

Today especially and profoundly in the big cities of Turkey, it is quite possible to frequently come across a headscarf-wearing woman either opening a high-end boutique mainly for conservative clothing, or designing clothes, or making styling for conservative brands and magazines. It is evident that in the last few years, the *tesettür* fashion, as it is generally called, is on the rise more than ever. In order to better understand this recent rise of *tesettür* fashion among headscarf-wearing women, it is crucial to be aware of the underlying factors paving the path during the last three decades of Turkish politics and social life. Following the 1980 military coup, an increasing consciousness and fear against Islamization of the state jutted to the surface while the mainstream media ran a flux of images of women all-covered in black during the 1979 Islamic Revolution of Iran. And this conscious, or unconscious fear, manifested itself, maybe the most explicitly, in the ‘headscarf’ which was re-defined as a political symbol -a symbol of ‘political Islam’ under the name of ‘*turban*’<sup>9</sup>, instead of a religious one. It came to be seen once again a threat on the way of secularism and modernization of the state and society, and consequently a ban on

headscarf was enacted forbidding its appearance in the public sphere; i.e., in state offices, public schools and universities.

Yet, this was also the time when Turkish society came to witness the rise of 'Islamic capital' through the neoliberal policies adopted which also encouraged Islamic entrepreneurialism and the consequent flux of Anatolian-based and migrant capital to the urban setting. With the establishment of associates following a conservative line, like MUSIAD<sup>10</sup> and ASKON<sup>11</sup>, various companies in various sectors flourished to a great extent, some of which directly targeted the conservative population with their product lines and/or services. The emergence of *tesettürfashion* companies coincides to such political, social and economic environment. (Gökarişel and Secor 2009; 2010; 2012). However, that fashion produced by a few companies was far from affecting a wide population with its relatively plain line of design and modest colors<sup>12</sup>. Instead, what this section aims to dwell upon is the more recent rise of *tesettürfashion*<sup>13</sup> which stresses a reconciliation of fashion (and also being modern) with an Islamic duty; i.e. *tesettür*-the covering of the hair and body of women in a modest way<sup>14</sup>.

The headscarf ban in the public sphere not only placed an economic and educational barrier on the way of women wearing headscarf, but it also affected this population in a psychological way. The increased prejudice against headscarf and its identification by the secular elite with backwardness, traditionalism and *shari'a*<sup>15</sup> together with its unwelcome in the public sphere, as well as in the 'modern setting' such as certain cafes, restaurants, shopping streets, holiday areas which are regarded chic and classy as well as certain activities, such as going to theater, opera, art exhibitions, and concerts, caused lots of women wearing headscarf to retreat to their domestic milieus accompanied by a hurt self-esteem and an acceptance of disappearance. Still a good number of women wearing headscarf went abroad to pursue their education and/or profession for greater chances of a thriving life. And some tried to accommodate themselves and their identity within this challenging setting through a compromise: they revised their understanding of *tesettür*, and instead of long skirts, overcoats and large headscarves in plain designs and muted colors, they preferred a more 'modernized' way of clothing, and started to wear tunics with pants, more colorful scarves and dresses, as well as attention grabbing accessories together with an increasing interest in the consumption and possession of brand items. While it is definitely possible to interpret this revision as a part of getting influenced and being a part of the fast globalizing consumer culture, it can also be read as an attempt to dissociate headscarf and *tesettür* (and in the wider frame, the

Islamic way of life and Islam, itself) from the images of extremism, bigotry, backwardness and the ‘all-covered dark veil’ of Iran.

Parallel to the rise of ‘Islamic capital’ -‘green capital’ as some call it, and the increasing prosperity of the conservative middle classes, this accommodation attempt described in the previous paragraph in time took a relatively different turn, and started to manifest itself as an overt resistance to the labels directed at the conservatives, and specifically to the label of ‘non-modern’ and ‘backward’ among others. As a way of refuting such labels, and in order to expose their identity as both religious and modern, fashionably dressed young urban headscarf-wearing women started to crowd places and activities, which have long belonged to the modern secular elite. Starting with the first modernization efforts during the Tanzimat period of the late Ottoman era, modernity and ‘being modern’ have tended to be interpreted over the visual, namely the clothing, and especially over the clothing of women. When it comes to the millennium, modernization efforts over the visual/body seem to be still dominating. In the fast flourish of the *tesettürfashion*, too, it marks its say with the appearance of headscarf-wearing designers, and styling advisors, boutiques, conservative lifestyle and fashion magazines, and an increasing favor towards international brand items -a tendency which implicitly, or quite explicitly, draws a direct correlation between wearing brand with being chic, fashionable and modern. Through such correlation, the young urban headscarf-wearing woman in her fashionable attire spiced up with upper-end brand items in a way has felt ready to step in the fashionable shopping and eating areas dominated by the secular ‘white turk’<sup>16</sup>.

Even though the *tesettürfashion* and its applications through fashion shows and organizations, fashion magazines, blogs and boutiques are harshly criticized especially by the conservative religious population as of degenerating Islamic values and missing the essence of religion with their focus on the material and the ostentatious, its continuous attraction and favor by especially the young urban headscarf-wearing women seems to deserve a deeper analysis as to the motives behind. This attraction could be interpreted, among many other motives, partly as a resisting reaction of the long-devalued, silenced, excluded and/or ignored ‘other’ who has been continuously labeled as opposed to being modern and all the positive attributes that are associated with being modern, such as progressive, open-minded and rational.

Yet, if we could interpret this rising attraction to *tesettürfashion* and the increasing and attention-grabbing visibility of the headscarf-wearing women in public arena as reactionary, this reaction is in no way free of complications, either.

The fact that such reaction is coming while staying within the discourse of the powerful secular context and, likewise, exhibiting its resistance over the instruments and claims of this very same discourse is problematic in itself. Resisting against the claim which correlates wearing headscarf with backwardness and being not-modern re-creates the claim that modernity is related to the visual, as the refutation of the label does not come from the anti-claim that being modern is a mental process, and not a material/visual one; quite the contrary, it comes from an attempt to ‘modernize’ the traditional look. Moreover, this attempt does not question the nature of ‘being modern’ and its relation with religion, either, or whether it is something that is vital to be achieved at all costs. Like many other concepts which are loaded with extra meanings other than what they really and directly connote, ‘being modern,’ too, in the Turkish context, has been made and is perceived as a pre-requisite for being open-minded and progressive. The rise of tesettürfashion in its ‘modernized’ way can be seen just as another example of this perception.

### **The Perception of ‘Modern’ by Headscarf-Wearing Women: A Survey**

Although the phenomenon of tesettürfashion has been analyzed as another reproduction of the modern-progressive/religious-retrogressive dichotomy within the Turkish context in spite of its claim on the contrary, it is important to get a hint of how headscarf-wearing women, themselves, actually see this relation between being modern and being religious, and basically how they perceive the ‘modern’. As an attempt to better understand this perception, a survey was carried out with a target audience of educated, urban, and generally middle-to-upper class, young (below forty years of age) headscarf-wearing women. In the survey, instead of ‘modernity’, the phrase of ‘being modern’ was used, as the latter is the common usage within Turkish society. This section of the paper will dwell upon the findings of this study, where five open-ended questions were asked to the respondents. In spite of the challenge of analysis, which turned out to be more time-consuming, open-ended questions were preferred in the survey in order not to influence the respondents and direct them to certain answers through options. The questions, which were formulated in a way to better understand where headscarf-wearing women place themselves within the context of a modernizing Turkey, are as follows:

Do you define yourself as ‘modern’? Why yes/no?
Does your social milieu define you as ‘modern’? If yes/no, due to which characteristic(s) of yours?
Which characteristics does being modern require?
Do you think Muslims should be modern? Why yes/no?
What do you think the prevalent definition of ‘being modern’ is within Turkish society?
Do you think this definition is the same in the world? Yes/No

### Survey Statistics

100 headscarf-wearing women, preferring different tesettür styles<sup>17</sup>, took the survey:

Headscarf	65%
Shawl	59%
Overcoat	34%
Turban/Bonnet	18%
Black Veil	7%
Other <sup>18</sup>	13%

In order to better picture the target group under analysis, respondents were asked to fill in their basic credential information; i.e. age, education and occupation, resulting in the following breakdown:

AGE	
17-19	6%
20-29	44%
30-40	50%

EDUCATION	
Primary School	1%
High School	15%
University (Bachelors)	62%
Masters/PhD	22%

OCCUPATION	
Employed in various occupations	59%
Housewife	23%
Student	18%

In the first question where the respondents were asked whether they define themselves as modern or not, 55 respondents replied in the positive (Yes), 37 in the negative (No), and 8 respondents replied both yes/no (and in some cases neither yes/no). While the respondents responding in the negative mainly stressed the incompatibility of Islam with modernity, the indecisive 8 respondents preferred to give conditional answers by meticulously separating their religious/conservative part of their identities, and elevating it in comparison to the phenomenon of 'being modern':

I rather define myself as 'in-between' –neither totally gave up tradition nor became totally 'modern'. And I believe that all the pain results from here. (36, PhD, teacher)

For me, it [the answer] changes from topic to topic: I feel modern in clothing and appearance; however, I am traditional in my family and friends relations. (30, Masters, academician)

I can define myself as modern in some cases, and not modern in others. (33, university, editor)

Actually neither yes nor no; i.e. tesettür is not related to being modern as [in tesettür] we are given a certain standard to abide by. It is not confined to this age only, but lasts and stays valid until the Judgment Day. Returning to my first sentence, I can be modern in other topics, but in tesettür, no, I am not modern. (24, high school, housewife)

If what is intended with 'being modern' is to be engaged in the ease and difficulties that this age brings, yes; however, if what is intended is to possess a human-centered worldly perception, no –as much as possible, of course. (30, university, engineer)

In some cases yes, in some no. I can be modern in things that are reasonable to me, but being modern is not my preference in cases contradicting my ideas. (26, university, state employee)



Today being modern is defined in various ways. If it is used to mean keeping pace with the age, yes, I am modern. However, if it is defined as detached from self, no, I am not modern. (25, Masters, teacher)

Both yes and no. Yes, because we have kept pace with the age in terms of clothing. No, because my identity has traditional parts which will not get modernized. (32, Masters, trainer)

Since in this study the primary aim was to find out the perception of modern, special focus was given to the respondents who answered the question in the positive, defining themselves as ‘modern’. Here, the reasons of this definition were categorized under the headings of Intellectual; i.e. seeing being modern as an intellectual process, such as being open to different ideas and innovations, and being impartial, unprejudiced and respectful to other ideas, lifestyles and beliefs, among which the most frequent answer happened to be ‘being open-minded’; Education, deriving from the general perception of the more educated ~the more modern; Clothing/Fashion; i.e. how one dresses and the relation to current fashion trends; Lifestyle/Technology ; i.e. being actively engaged with the blessings of the age such as internet, machinery, cars, etc., a less domestic, more active social life, and following technological developments, and Other option for answers apart from these headings:

YES, BECAUSE...	
Lifestyle/Technology	50%
Intellectual	26%
Clothing/Fashion	12%
Education	7%
Other	5%

In the second question where the respondents were asked whether their social milieu defines them as modern or not, 68 respondents replied in the positive (Yes) and 32 in the negative (No). Here again, concerning the ones responding in the negative, the most frequent reason appears that their physical appearance (clothing) as well as lifestyles, which are in line with the requirements of the religion, are not compatible with the modern image presented by the media and the secular society. For the respondents responding ‘yes’, again a categorization was made for the reasons basically under the same headings with the first question, in order to better see and

evaluate the differences, if any, in the perception of modern by the respondent and by her social milieu, which is not always composed of conservative people:

YES, BECAUSE...	
Lifestyle/Technology	34%
Clothing/Fashion	25%
Intellectual	23%
Education/Culture/Occupation	18%

Out of these percentages, another result that is worthy of analysis is the contrasting answers given by a respondent and her social milieu; i.e. while the respondent sees herself modern (or not modern), her social milieu regards her just the opposite. In the survey, 7% of the respondents who define themselves as modern are perceived as non-modern by their social milieu. The common reason for this discrepancy was given by the respondents as their conventional lifestyles which are not perceived modern by the general public.

I am modern according to my mother and grandmother, yet I may not be perceived so by my peers. My peers do not generally find me modern, because I did not finish school to start my working life; moreover, I have three kids one after another, I stay at home, yet I am happy. All these do not comply with the general definition of modern. To comply, I should have had one at most two kids, and I should have been complaining about my time that is spent at home instead of outside. (32, housewife)

At a greater percentage, 16% of the respondents who define themselves as non-modern are defined as modern by their social milieu. The respondents who do not define themselves as modern generally think so due to the incompatibility of an Islamic way of life with that of a modern one. Yet, they explain their being seen by others as modern due to their non-conventional clothing style<sup>19</sup>. The answer given by a respondent, in a way, gives these reasons in a nutshell:

My social environment may define me as modern even though I do not. I am open to innovations and outgoing. I care about my clothing. I have social activities, a wide social network and I do sports. These are always enough for others to define you as modern. (33, Masters, engineer)

In the third question, the respondents were questioned concerning their thought on whether Muslims should be modern. To this, 34 respondents replied that they

should not be mainly because the requirements and teachings of Islam and modernity are not compatible with each other, and because being modern is generally seen as violating the frame that Islam draws for Muslims to regulate their lives, thoughts and actions. While the remaining 66 respondents replied in the positive, 18 out of these replied ‘yes’ only conditionally; i.e. Muslims should be modern as long as and only when it [being modern] does not contradict their faith.

In the attempt of understanding how headscarf-wearing women perceive modern, being modern, and in the wider frame modernity, it was also important to explore the thoughts of the respondents concerning what Turkish society at large understand from being modern; namely, the general perception of modern within Turkish society. Better stated, the data acquired from this question reflects how headscarf-wearing women see the general Turkish society in terms of the latter’s perception of being modern, and not necessarily how the general Turkish society see it themselves. Since modernity was introduced into the context of the Turkish Republic with and through the reforms in the early Republican period which targeted to establish a Westernized, modern, secular, national Republic, the respondents’ (as well as the conservative population’s) perception of modern by the general public most probably refer to the secular public in Turkey, who have always been the most zealous advocates of modernity.

The answers of the respondents concerning the prevalent definition of ‘being modern’ were also categorized under the headings of Intellectual, Visual, Non-Religious, and Other. In the analysis of the results, the responses including fashion, being fashionable, being westernized, and blind following the West were also included under the heading of Visual as they all refer to a superficial interpretation of modernity; likewise, the frequently appearing responses of wearing body-revealing clothing, and being non-covered (i.e. without tesettür) were added under the heading of Non-Religious as the answers’ tones imply a contrariness to abiding by the requirements of religion in general.

THE PREVALENT DEFINITION OF MODERN IN TURKISH SOCIETY	
Visual	68%
Non-Religious	27%
Intellectual	0%
Other <sup>20</sup>	5%

Even though the category of Intellectual did not receive any mention, it was still placed in the chart as it was the second most mentioned reason by the respondents as to why they define themselves as modern.

### **Analysis of Findings**

Modernity and being modern as well as the concept of modern are definitely not easy to deal with by the ones who define their identity primarily over their religious belief in Turkish society. The contradicting answers to the questions given in the survey by the respondents, who do not differ majorly in terms of lifestyles, age, and attitude to religion, are of nature to support this claim. The tension, or challenge, of being religious in a modern world is more visible on the ones who do not give up 'being modern' as a complementing part of their social identities. In the survey, this group can be identified with the respondents who replied in the positive to the questions whether they are modern, and whether Muslims should be modern or not.

The basic difference between 'pro-moderns' and 'con-moderns' seems to stem from the difference in what is actually understood by modern or being modern. For con-moderns, modern functions as the antonym for religious with direct association to the West, western materiality and lifestyle that is perceived to be detached from religion and morals, as well as to the modernizing reforms of the early Republican period until 1950s. Therefore, being modern should be neither targeted nor desired, as that would ultimately mean renouncing one's religious sensitivity. In the survey, this rejecting tone is accompanied with a disapproving attitude towards headscarf-wearing women who desire (or are assumed to desire) to be modern, which finds embodiment in the phrase of 'modern covered'<sup>21</sup> –modern kapalı.

Today, shopping from alcoholic venues, interpreting the hadith<sup>22</sup> according to this age saying that conditions were different back then [in the time of the Prophet], making tesettür more colorful and fashionable, getting always dressed differently and chic without paying attention to 'israf'<sup>23</sup> [wasteful expenditure], spending time at cafes, not minding interaction with men (hand-shaking, conversing, spending time together), in the name of general culture, following everything from paparazzi to world news show that the person is a modern covered. Since I do not do these, and thus I am thought as excessively backward by others, alhamdulillah [thank God], I am not modern. (26, university, housewife)

As it could be seen above from the answer of the respondent, what is rejected in being modern is deeds and lifestyles which are against Islam more than a mentality of modernity, as a 27 year-old respondent states "today modernism promotes a non-ethical life" (high school, housewife). Likewise, another respondent gives the

substitute for modern in her answer: “I believe a Muslim cannot be modern but civilized” (24, university, teacher).

On the other hand, it may not come that easy to reject modernity altogether especially if one lives in an urban setting, being closely engaged with modern instruments. In the survey, a good number of respondents who define themselves as modern think so because they ‘make use of the blessings of the age’<sup>24</sup>. Even though the respondents did not openly express what they actually meant from this phrase, these blessings could be thought of as means which make one’s life easier and more comfortable; like cars, machinery, technological equipment, internet, and the like. However, in the context of Turkish society, modernity is not only related to leading a life equipped with modern instruments. More than that, being modern is almost equalized with certain character traits, such as ‘being open-minded’, ‘progressive’ and ‘rational’. Due to this equivalency, rejecting being modern and stating it so can automatically be perceived as the person’s lacking in these character traits. Thus, a person who openly rejects being modern, or more commonly who is not perceived as modern, runs the risk of being labeled as narrow-minded, retrogressive/backward and irrational/superstitious. In the case of headscarf-wearing women, who are already not seen modern by the secular public due to their appearance, this risk may be disturbingly challenging to embrace especially in the case that these women are well-educated, active in their occupations, having a busy social life, or having a taste in arts and an interest in sciences. Even though one may not have a preoccupation with being modern or not, as a good number of the respondents stated so in the survey, yet no one desires to be called with all these negative adjectives regardless of how misinterpreted they may be.

Concerning the general secular population’s tendency of equalizing any non-modern appearance with backwardness, headscarf-wearing women save themselves only when they are seen as exceptions. This takes us to the covered<sup>25</sup> but ... rhetoric. When an interaction takes place between a headscarf-wearing woman with her ‘modern’ counterpart from secular community, and if, in this encounter, there is anything perceived as modern in the headscarf-wearing woman, such as a good education, a successful career, getting socialized with men at work/school, having seen the West through travel/study/work, etc., then she can be addressed with the covered but modern ‘compliment’. Apart from ‘modern’, other adjectives with positive connotations are also used in this rhetoric; such as covered but open-minded, covered but cultured, and the like. Even though uttered like a compliment, in fact, for headscarf-wearing women, this comment is quite degrading their values and priorities, as that phrase automatically refers to a deficiency in *tesettür* and in Islam,

as well. One other similar phrase is the rhetoric 'you are not like them'. Here again, lack of interaction and knowledge results in a generalization that leads to a separation of the appreciated person from the rest of women who wear headscarf.

Since in the context of Turkish society, looking modern tends to be regarded as a prerequisite in order to be called modern, the data concerning clothing/fashion is worthy of analysis, as well. In the first question, while 12% of the respondents, who replied 'yes' to whether they are modern, listed their clothing style and appearance as one factor in their definition of themselves as modern, this percentage is more than doubled (25%) in the second question where the same respondents were asked why their social environment thinks that they are modern. This data shows us that headscarf-wearing women attribute a more visual and superficial definition of modern to the society at large, while they, themselves, have a more intellectual definition.

Yes, wearing shirt over pants, for example. Since it [this style] is not appropriate for tesettür, they say that I am a modern covered. (27, university, accounting)

Even though I am in tesettür, I wear trousers, but of course with a tunic on top. And since I am working, I naturally get in contact with men. All these are enough for others to call me modern. (33, Masters, research assistant)

Other than clothing style, a less domestic lifestyle as well as education are also factors which are credited for being modern for the headscarf-wearing women as opposed to the generally assumed traditional roles, such as being a housewife, a mom of more than two kids, and quitting/not attending school.

Yes, First of all, I am frequently told that even though I am in tesettür, I look 'modern'. In addition, I am told that I fill in this [modern] image with my non-Islamic academic studies, my interest in movie industry even as an amateur, and my ability to speak western languages well. (29, Masters, student)

Yes, because when choices such as an individual life, not getting married and working are made by women, that woman is perceived modern. (33, university, teacher)

Yes, they may [define me modern]. I am trying to improve myself. I even try to play the piano. (24, high school, housewife)

I am 25 years old, and I have three kids. Therefore I feel that they [my social environment] probably do not define me as modern. Even though I do not agree with this, they regard having many kids as backward. (25, high school, housewife)

When we look at the data on the interpretation of modernity as an intellectual process (26% of the respondents who define themselves as modern), one frequent reason was given as ‘being open-minded’. To list a few:

Yes, I am open-minded, open to novelties. I evaluate any idea unprejudiced and objectively. Apart from my mind and reason, I do not have any bonds that tie me to any view or any group. I do not judge people, and believe that everyone has lines that should be respected and not interfered. And I think that one’s religion, opinion, race, clothing, etc. do not make one superior or inferior than others. (32, university, engineer)

Yes, I define. I work. I am open-minded. I don’t have any preoccupation with a monotypic life. I regard different lifestyles and cultures as ordinary. I try to listen/get to know others. I studied at university in Europe. And I have been to many European countries in the last ten years. (32, university, computer engineer)

Yes, because I think that I am open-minded enough. My education and studies have influence [on my definition of myself as modern], as well. (28, university, student)

Being open-minded is almost fetishized within the secular discourse through a direct association with being modern. This over-emphasis functions to create a binary opposition, as well, where the non-modern is naturally regarded as narrow-minded and monotypic. Therefore, the usage of this specific trait by the respondents (and in general by the conservative population) as a sign of their being modern can be interpreted as an attempt to reappropriate modernity (and being open-minded) within the context of an Islamic lifestyle. However, using the instruments of a discourse reproduces that very discourse despite targeted the contrary. Reappropriation before deconstructing the now solidified binary opposition can definitely have little effect in making a change in the secular discourse.

Even though pro-moderns and con-moderns differ in their approach to the concept of modern, they, in a way, unify in their perception of the prevalent definition of modern within Turkish society. While none of the answers attributed an intellectual side to this definition, the majority of respondents (68%) regarded Turkish modernity as superficial and related to appearance only. Parallel to this, 39% of this amount stated that the Turkish understanding of modern includes an imitative attitude towards whatever is Western, from lifestyles to fashion and to social activities. This association results from the fact that the Turkish modernization experience started with the acceptance concerning the superiority of the West at the time (late Ottoman period), and the accompanying belief that the only way to save the empire from

collapse was westernization. Bernard Lewis, in his book *The Emergence of Modern Turkey* (1961), writes “for the extreme Westernizers, the remedy was not less, but more Westernization” by giving a quote from Ahmed Muhtar, an Ottoman general and Grand Vizier as well as an intellectual of the time. In an article published in 1912, Muhtar writes ‘either we westernize, or we are destroyed’ (235-236).

With the establishment of the new Turkish Republic under the leadership of M. Kemal Atatürk, westernization was adopted as an ideology to ‘raise the nation to the level of the most civilized nations’. Consequently, several reforms were implemented both in the political, and especially in the social arena. A good number of these reforms<sup>26</sup> targeted religious communities and traditions as religious practices were seen as an impediment on the way of development and turning the new Republic into a modern, secular, nation-state. However, even though westernization was thought to be an instrument to achieve the end of being an influential, civilized and modern Turkish nation, it in time became an end in itself, and the level of Western civilization was attempted to be achieved through imitation, by taking whatever is Western and applying it to the local setting with insufficient regard to the local needs and values. This basically created the modern/religious dichotomy in the collective memory of Turkish society. This dichotomy could also be observed in the survey data where 27% of the respondents defined the prevalent understanding of modernity in Turkey as being non-religious.

Due to this anti-religious impression of modern and modernization, regardless of their views on being modern, headscarf-wearing women make a special effort to separate Islam from modernization efforts. Among the survey answers, one attitude is the self-definition as modern by referring to the timeless nature of Islam:

Yes, because I am trying to abide by a modern book which is above ages in every age; i.e. the Quran, I am modern. (35, university, housewife)

Being modern suits Muslims and Islam the most. The religion of Islam is a timeless religion. To be modern does not mean changing the rules and principles of Islam. It is necessary to live the age in line with the Islamic rules and principles. (29, university, teaching)

Another attitude is to draw a line to ‘living as the age requires’ when this requirement touches Islamic duties:

Yes, if it [being modern] does not contradict the faith. If modernism defines going to mosques as narrow-minded, then a line is drawn there. But if it does not affect, then it is necessary to keep pace with the age. (31, associate, editor/writer)



Yes, but one should be modern-minded and open in science, not in Islamic issues. Those limits were drawn by Allah and Prophet Mohammed (pbuh). The religious principles do not change according to periods or age. (37, high school, housewife)

One other attitude suggests the use of modernity as an instrument to empower Islam:

Yes, we have to be modern; being Muslim does not mean isolation from the age. In fact, time is passive; it is Muslims who have to influence the age since the Quran was sent to all ages. We should use science and technology for the benefit of humanity. We should participate in scientific projects. (33, Masters, architect)

Yes, I believe that it [being modern] is a way to truly reflect Islam everywhere, which is called bigot today, through right methods and without distracting from its essence. (23, university, student)

Lastly, the majority of respondents (76%) think that the prevalent definition of 'being modern' in Turkish society is not the same in the rest of the world, which attributes a less visual, more intellectual attitude towards modernity in the global arena, and specifically in Europe, the birthplace of modernity.

### **Conclusion: To be Modern or not Modern –Is that all the Question?**

Talking about his concept of multiple modernities, Eisenstadt (2000) writes “the variability of modernities was accomplished above all through military and economic imperialism and colonialism, effected through superior economic, military, and communication technologies” (14). Today, on the other hand, we could rather talk about voluntary modernities. Nîlüfer Göle in her book *Seküler ve Dinsel: Aşınan Sınırlar* (2012) [trans *The Secular and the Sacred: Eroded Borders*<sup>27</sup>] calls the Turkish experience such a 'voluntary modernization' as the modernizing reforms were implemented by the new Republic itself through state laws.

In this paper, this voluntary modernization experience of Turkey, from the early years of the Republic through reforms till today, have been touched upon while specifically focusing on the perception of 'modern' by Turkish society. Today, within the context of Turkish society, and especially in the urban setting, the modern is generally perceived over the visual; to put it differently, to look modern is accepted as essential in order to be defined as modern. Moreover, due to its constructed connotations such as being open-minded, progressive and rational, which are among the essential values of today, being modern has almost turned into a fetish by the majority of population as well as an end that needs to be achieved at all costs. Even

though there is absolutely nothing wrong in the claim of modern, creating binary oppositions out of it is problematic. In Turkish society, it is possible to talk about an abundance of such binary oppositions with modern/non-modern, secular/religious, covered/ non-covered (in terms of women's wearing/not wearing the headscarf) among the most popular. Since these oppositions are generally to the disadvantage of the conservative public (especially those who define themselves as religious), there is a tendency to overcome this disadvantage through reconciliation of the perceived opposites, thus creating secular Muslims, modern covereds (headscarf-wearing women) and modern Muslims to name a few. As it is also the title, the paper has questioned the nature of 'modern Muslim' –whether it is possible or a paradox.

The paper has claimed, following Eisenstadt, that multiple as well as alternative modernities are possible within a social setting, especially if this social setting is composed of various and differing identities as is the case in Turkish society. However, one could only talk about an alternative modernity as long as it is invented by related subjects in a conscious and active manner, instead of blind following a meta-modernity. Only then, a consistent understanding of modernity could be achieved instead of a patchwork-like modernity. Turkish modernity, as imported from Western modernity, could be claimed to take secularism as its basis, and targets a modern, secular, Westernized Turkish society in order to line up with the most civilized nations of the world. Göle calls this emphasis on the secular within Turkish modernization efforts 'an excess of secularism' when "secularism becomes a fetish of modernity" (2012, 102). Since secularism aims to "reduce, or even weaken, the visibility of religion in daily life" (Subaşı 2007, 7), an essentially Islamic way of life is not compatible with a secular life. As Şerif Mardin also writes "Islam is more than simply a religious belief, that...it penetrates the smallest interstices of daily life and of social and political organization" (1989, 3). Comparing the nature of Islam regulating all aspects of the lives of its followers with the secular claim of Turkish modernity, the phrase of 'modern Muslim' sounds like a paradox.

However, in order to better understand how conservative population perceives the modern, specifically portrayed but not claiming as all-representative, over the headscarf-wearing women in Turkish society, a survey was carried out addressing 100 headscarf-wearing women, under 40 years of age, with good education and living in an urban setting. In terms of the data, more than half of the respondents stated in the positive to questions concerning whether they and their social circle define them as modern, and whether Muslims should be modern or not. While this result definitely challenges the claim of 'modern Muslim' paradox, the majority of these respondents explicitly made an effort in their answers to keep their religious beliefs and practices

outside of the modernizing tendencies of the modern age, especially the practice of tesettür.

Here, we are facing a revised, or reappropriated understanding of modernity and being modern by the headscarf-wearing women, who tend to replace the focus on the secular and the visual with a more intellectual view of modernity which requires one to be unprejudiced and respectful to different views and beliefs, being open to novelties and keeping up with the fast pace of the age. Here it can be claimed that the headscarf-wearing women who define their identity as modern take “traditional” and “bigoted (fanatical)” as the opposite of modern instead of ‘religious’ as the mainstream secular view claims. In addition, the respondents think that there is a distorted perception of modern prevalent within Turkish society as being modern is mainly described over the visual and the non-religious by the secular public. Taking these into account, being a Muslim and modern do not create a paradox for the respondents.

On the other hand, the number of respondents who believe that being a Muslim and being modern are not compatible with each other is not small, either, as 37% of the respondents did not define themselves as modern, and 34% thought that Muslims should not be modern. This group basically believes that being Muslim and being modern are in fact each other’s opposite setting out from the non-changing principles of Islam as opposed to the continually changing nature of the modern.

From the perspective of the conservative population, the paper regards the total rejection of modernity and the reappropriation attempt of Western modernity within an Islamic context by using the discourse of Western modernity as both problematic since both of these views regard Western modernity as the modernity disregarding the possibility of alternative modernities. While the first may fail in addressing the problems of the modern age as well as the changing needs of the individual, the latter may lead to confused individuals feeling stuck between the requirements of the modern age and those of the religion, as one respondent in the survey states:

Sometimes yes, sometimes no [I define myself as modern]. Because unfortunately the circles I enter and the people I interact with influence my attitude. In our country where the social norms are that dictating, for example, I can no longer go to work with a long overcoat and a big scarf even though I wanted, because the modern always tries to cover the traditional. I can at times object to this, at other times I cannot. And this in-between situation turns all of us into inconsistent people. (26, Masters, marketing/sales)

In order to overcome this in-betweenness, it is crucial to produce an alternative modernity that does not push one's priorities into the margin. Within the Islamic context, an Islamic modernity should be invented by developing methodologies in order to enable Muslims not to fall back from the fast pace of the age as well as to deal with the problems and needs that the modern age brings on Muslims without making concessions from any of the Islamic principles. Instead of the reconciliation attempt of the binary oppositions of the dominant secular discourse, what is necessary is to create a "collective identity that works critically against both traditional subjugation of Muslim identity and mono civilizational impositions of Western modernity...—basically, those of secularism and Western-boundedness" (Göle 2000, 93). Specifically speaking of Turkish society, it is crucial to produce a modernity that is not essentially based upon the visual and the secular so as to address the majority of population who prefer to follow a conservative lifestyle. As previously stated in Mardin's quote, since 'Islam is more than simply a religious belief', a modernity that attempts to exclude religion and any religious visibility from public sphere results in a continuous tension within society, both among secular and non-secular members as well as within the identity of the conservative individual himself. Moreover, the binary oppositions created through such perception of modernity further put the aim of a strong, unified Turkish nation at stake by creating insurmountable gaps among different communities within society.

Producing an Islamic modernity also helps save the religious population from the grasp of the secular-modern fetish that, in a way, leads to the most problematic rhetoric of 'modern Islam'. As this phrase connotes a lack in Islam that refers to its inability in addressing the modern age, the resistance by the religious population to modernity altogether over this phrase is quite understandable. This paper advocates for an Islamic interpretation of modernity rather than a modern interpretation of Islam. Especially within the conservative population, certain modern attitudes, from clothing to social interaction, if not compatible with the teachings of religion, should not be acknowledged as 'inevitable in this age' -the idea of which requires the individual to make concessions from his/her belief and identity, which ultimately leads to shattered identities due to a continuous feeling of in-betweenness. However, that should not come to mean that a modern interpretation of Islamic methodology is unnecessary; quite the contrary, Muslim scholars should focus on developing modern methodologies to better interpret and understand the teachings of Islam and to make a clear distinction between the traditional and the sacred to be able to prevent tradition-based practices from being perceived as part of the religion.

The answers of the respondents in the survey are also stimulating:

A Muslim should not be modern; a Muslim should be conscious, knowledgeable and well equipped. He should work more than others, he should succeed in everything. (23, university, textile)

Of course not. A Muslim should be not modern but intellectual [münevver]. (31, university, teaching)

Last but definitely not least, to have a conscious outlook onto life, it is important to get free from the grasp of fetishes and definitions. In terms of being modern, one does not need to be that concerned with being defined so or not; rather, what matters is one's contribution to his identity and society, that he produces, is just to his fellow beings and leads a conscious life. Returning to the question in the subtitle of the section: to be modern or not modern –is that all the question?, well, it definitely should not be.

## Note

5. The Alphabet Reform of 1928 can be given as an example to such change where the Arabic letters were replaced with the Latin alphabet, which required all citizens to go to Millet Mektepleri (National Schools) to learn how to read and write.
6. For the complete list, please refer to <http://www3.dbu.edu/mitchell/modernit.htm>.
7. Necdet Subaşı, in his article “The Modernization of Muslims and the Example of Turkey” –“Müslüman Modernleşmesi ve Türkiye Örneği”- makes a distinction between laicism and secularism, with the first denoting the loss of religious influence from state affairs, and the latter denoting a diminishing or weakening visibility of religion in social daily life. (in *Islam and Modernity –İslam ve Modernite-*, 2007, p.71.
8. Tariq Ramadan stresses the need for the West to acknowledge that the road to the Western Enlightenment was paved in the Muslim Spain -the scientific center of Europe for 500 years, the claim of which invalidates the assumed clash of Islam and science/rationality (Pultar 2007, 17). Jamaluddin al-Afghani insisted on the importance of the unity of all Muslims (pan-Islamism) to resist Western imperialism while focusing on internal reforms in line with the Quran and the sunnah of the Prophet in Muslim societies to be able to create a grand Muslim civilization (Islamic Encyclopedia). In his *Tafsir al-Manar*, Mohammed Abduh challenged the rigid and conservative interpretation of the Quran to

prove that the Quran addresses the social needs of the time (Amir, et al 2012, 68). Lastly, Mohammed Arkoun considered ways to adapt Western scientific and scholarly thought to Islam (Gifford Lectures).

9. Original title in Turkish: “İslami Bilimler ve Modernleşme Sorunu” For details, see bibliography.
10. Original title in Turkish: Melez Desenler: İslam ve Modernlik Üzerine.
11. My translation.
12. Other possible names could be veiling-fashion, hijabi fashion, Islamic fashion, and conservative fashion.
13. Within the secular Turkish context, while ‘headscarf’ is given a more neutral, religious meaning in its attribution to the headscarf of the industrious Anatolian village woman, ‘turban’ was started to be used frequently by the secular elite after the 1980 military coup. Drawing a relation with the 1979 Iran Revolution, ‘turban’ has always been seen as a political symbol alone, with an accusation of its wearers of being against the republican regime of Turkey. The distinction between headscarf and turban was made by the secular elite as the first one loosely tied under the chin with a more traditional way of covering the hair, while the latter is worn tightly permitting no hair to be visible.
14. Independent Industrialists and Businessmen’s Association
15. Association of Anatolian Businessmen (a.k.a. ‘Anatolian Lions’)
16. The forerunner of such companies is Tekbir, which was founded in 1982, yet became a brand especially after the first tesettür fashion show organized by the company in 1992. In spite of leading the sector with its brand name, Tekbir was not regarded a trendsetter - with its long skirts and classic-cut jackets and overcoats especially by the young urban headscarf-wearing women.
17. Other possible names could be veiling-fashion, hijabi fashion, Islamic fashion, and conservative fashion.
18. Even though tesettür connotes more than just the covering of hair and body, and necessarily extends to a modest way of living and attitudes, it is generally regarded in relation to clothing and in a way equalized specifically with the headscarf by society.
19. Islamic law. In the Turkish context, it also symbolically corresponds to a fear of ‘becoming like Iran’ -a country governed by ‘molla’s after the 1979 revolution, where women are forced to wear the black garment and headscarf at all times.
20. A phrase coined by the Turkish journalist Ufuk Güldemir, which he used to define the wealthy population living detached from the general public. The Turkish sociologist Nilüfer Göle also used this term to refer to the military and civil bureaucracy and the

intellectuals who regard themselves as progressive. The phrase was later used also to refer to the secular elite.

21. At the end of the survey, respondents were asked to mark their tesettür style with options including headscarf (regular square scarf), shawl (later popularized rectangular scarf), turban (the neck revealing scarf tidied at the back of the neck), black veil, overcoat, and an 'other' option for the respondents to fill in as they like. The respondents were also allowed to mark more than one option.
22. Other category includes tunic & pants and abayah (the traditional Arabic long black dress, which has recently received popularity in Istanbul, though generally in more ornamented chic designs).
23. This style could be exemplified in more colorful clothes, tunics and pants, heels, and use of accessories as opposed to plain designs, muted colors, big scarves and overcoats which are more in line with the requirements of tesettür.
24. Being innovative and open to innovations, being against the traditional, sociability, being civilized.
25. This phrase is a direct translation from the respondents' answers, with covered meaning the covering of the head. 'Modern Muslim' is a more common usage; however, as the respondents are talking about same-gender; i.e. female, Muslims, they seem to have preferred to use 'modern covered'.
26. Prophet Mohammed's words, which are accepted as the source of Islam after the Holy Quran.
27. Israf is a sin in Islam.
28. In the categorization of the data, this specific reason was listed under the heading of Lifestyle/Technology.
29. Covered is a common word that is used in Turkey for women who apply tesettür, which refers to the covering of the head and the body.
30. The abolition of the Caliphate and the Islamic Law (Shariat)-1924; the abolition of dervish brotherhoods -1925; the abolition of the traditional fez with the Hat Law -1925; the adoption of western calendar instead of the Islamic calendar -1925; the adoption of the Latin alphabet instead of the Arabic alphabet -1928; the conversion of the Arabic call to prayer -adhan- to Turkish -1933.
31. My translation.

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## Time and Relativity beyond verses of the Quran

**Vahideh Sadeghi**

Freelance Research Assistant  
Institute of Humanities and Cultural Studies  
Tehran, Iran

*"What then is time? If no one asks me, I know what it is. If I wish to explain it to him who asks, I do not know."*

*Saint Augustine*

### Abstract

The Nature of time is one of those questions which has, since time immemorial, captured the inquiring mind of human beings. It is the question which has constituted a major concern of many physicists, mathematicians, philosophers, and religious scholars. Historically, several theories have been put forward about the essence of time, to some of which we intend to refer herein. Our main focus will be on "*Einstein's Theory of Relativity*" and its correspondence with the Quranic verses. In a world where some believe that the fusion of religion and science results in backwardness, there are other groups who maintain a unity between religion and science. That is why many scientific findings have been given both monotheistic and agnostic interpretations. Here, we wish neither to reject one interpretation in favor of the other, nor to explicate the two. Rather, we wish to spell out Einstein's Theory of Relativity as one of the most fundamental time-related scientific theories, beyond the Quranic verses. Therefore, a brief explanation of time-related theories and concepts will first be presented, followed by an elaboration of *Einstein's Theory of Relativity* and its accordance with the Quranic verses.

**Key Words:** Time, Quran, Einstein's Theory of Relativity, Kant, Newton.

## Introduction

People, at any historical interval, regardless of their geographical or social status, are tied with a reality known as *time*, a defeat of which has been one of the most primary desires of human beings that regard themselves as overpowered by *time*'s claws. Therefore, humanity has always been in doubt about *time*'s nature. Since this concept carries broad dimensions in different branches of science, it has been reflected on not only by physicists and mathematicians, but also by philosophers and religious scholars. In the passage of time, diversified theories have been made on this concept among which Einstein's theories of relativity are most prominent. This article, though brief and concise, is intended at pointing to the most important theories thereon, while it will maintain its main focus on the theory of relativity and its conformance with the Quranic verses. What propelled me to carry out such a study is to emphasize on the relationship between religion and science in a world where separation of the two is visible in both Western and domestic atmospheres to the extent that some think that incorporation of the two paves the way for profound backwardness. Since there are different viewpoints toward the two areas of religion and science, in many occasions there have been cases that scientific findings have been interpreted differently from theistic or atheistic point of views. (q.v Golshani, 2003) Although entanglement between science and religion has often denied by some theorists, others believe that there are common communication grounds between religion and science. Still, many presume there is a unity in religion and science. Nonetheless, religion and science carry more similarities than often identified. Although religion is based on revelation, several important scientific discoveries have been made by inspiration, with religious ideas affecting on scientific notions in numerous cases. (Golshani, 1998; 2004) This research is not for or against any of the discussed notions as it needs further investigations and analysis. The main concern of this study is to investigate and describe one of the most noted and fundamental scientific notions, i.e. Einstein's theory of relativity, under the intricate concept of *time* in the light of the Quranic verses. Although there are some articles and case studies on how science can be conformable with religious text, unfortunately, I haven't come across to any accredited research only focusing on this subject, particularly within the context of holy Quran. There are many reasons behind the lack of conducting such researches elaboration of which is out of the purpose of this study. I will first of all bring a brief description of *time*-associated concepts and theories which would enable a full-scope entrance into the theory of relativity. Finally, conformances and common grounds between cited issues and the Quranic verses are addressed.

## The Concept of time

The concept of *time* and its nature have always been considered as one of the most complicated and controversial problems in philosophy which is tinted with a mixture of comprehension, doubt, and skepticism. A tangible, while mystifying, concept, *time* can be known as the most indomitable issue whose resolution may constitute the most annoying aspect of human life, since humanity has no way but to succumb to its unstoppable current. *Time*, as well as the convolutions thereof, has run the humanity's historical mentality into such a "Gordian knot" that has profoundly entangled his memories since the beginning of time. It was represented at times with such powerful, mythological manifestations that people fabricated *time* goddesses and philosophies known as the Zarvan goddess. (Bahar, 2001) Some speeches by Plato can be adopted to mean that he regarded time, just like God, as everlasting and eternal, believing that time has been created concurrent with the universe and is demolished just as it ends. (Plato, 1892) Certain features of this concept have goaded many thinkers at different ages to contemplate over the *time*'s nature, making attempts to find a key to reality by modeling and presenting seemingly minor theories and opinions.

When the issue of *time* is addressed, two questions come to one's mind: (1) What is time? (2) How it is measured? The first and second questions have mostly been answered by philosophers and physicists, respectively. This, although does not imply a detachment of the two, as well as those upcoming, questions as the passage of history is indicative of the interrelationships and interplants of the two queries. For instance, Einstein's theory of relativity, to which I will refer later on, indicates that the second question can be answered without the need to provide an utter answer for the first one. Such response has influenced the philosophers' opinions regarding the nature of time. Anyhow, I am here going to keep my focus on the nature of time rather than the manner to measure it. *Time* literally means moment, whether long or short. French translation of time is *Temps*. (Saliba, 2002, p 382) but in philosophic terminology, time is interpreted as a continuous and ceaseless quantity, characterized by restlessness and transience, which happens upon objects by movement. (Tabatabaei, 2001, p 269) There are diverse definitions offered for time which are aligned sometimes and incongruent in other occasions. The difficulties in giving a single definition on time is how it can't be touched or experience by any of human senses directly, however, at the same time it is one of most sensible concepts in the material world. (Mesbah Yazdi, 1998, p 147) Here, I will briefly bring some definitions on *time*:

- In their myths, the ancient Greek considered *time* as a god who was responsible for developing objects and enabling them to reach at their ultimate.
- Theologists supposed that *time* is such a fictitious and conventional phenomenon.
- As suggested by Ash'arites, modern *time* is a definition whereby another fictitious modernity is evaluated.
- *Time*, as regarded by some philosophers, is either past or future. It means that there is no present time, which is defined by them as a delusion shared between the past and future.
- In the new philosophy, *time* is an intermediate affair, not such a final, unlimited issue as location on which all incidents occur. Thus, all incidents possess time and time is appreciated by mind in a non-divided manner, whether absolutely imperative or mental.
- Most scientists situate *time* on a direct, unlimited line, each of whose points correspond to its other points.
- Some new thinkers such as Bergson believe that *time* is a continuous change that makes past the present. Therefore, genuine time, which includes passage and motion, is other than mathematical or scientific time.
- Abul-Barakat al-Baghdadi regards time as the existing amount. (Sadr-ol-Mote'allehin Shirazi, 2004, p 147)
- Aristotiles believed that *time* is the Necessary Being. (Ibid, p 148)

## **Time as Viewed by Thinkers and Philosophers before Einstein's Theory of Relativity**

Thinkers and philosophers since ages ago have professed different opinions about time, to some of which I will concisely refer hereunder. Many of such theories were abrogated as another one appeared. Three main points were addressed in most *time*-related opinions: existence of time, proportion and relation of time to motion, and the issue of continuity. Heraclitus drew upon the issue of becoming as an aperture to the Hegelian theory of thesis and antithesis. *Timeless realm of existence* and *time-bound area of change* are among the most significant concepts in which many prominent theorists such as Saint Augustine (*time as extension of the self*), Spinoza (*eternity of the mind*), Laplace (*timeless realm as equal to general law of the universe*), and

Schopenhauer (*volition for timeless realm*) believe. Besides, Aristotle expressed time in terms of movement, but he did not regard movement as equal as time. (Aichelburg, 2005) He, finally, suggested the concept of the *uniform cosmic time*, which indicates that there would be no time without movement of celestial bodies. Bruno, nevertheless, rejected the notion of *uniform cosmic time*, believing that there are different times as there are movements.

Another noticeable viewpoint was professed by Kant and idealist philosophers who regarded *time* to be a mental and abstract phenomenon, believing that there is no objectivity therein. Existentialism was generator of another philosophical lookout whereby *time* is the main concept in questioning the *being* of human life. It considers *being* as a correspondent to *time*. Henri Bergson holds that *time* is neither a real homogeneous medium nor an abstract concept but rather a duration (Bergson, 1998). All in all, what ultimately could get the upper hand among several *time*-related notions were two chief physical viewpoints on time: absolute time and relative time.

The concept of *absolute time*, which was invented by Newton and was inimitably dominant for years, indicates that: "Absolute, true, and mathematical time, of itself, and from its own nature flows equably without regard to anything external, and by another name is called duration; relative, apparent, and common time, is some sensible and external (whether accurate or in-equable) measure of duration by the means of motion, which is commonly used instead of true time." (Newton, 1967) Some figures as Gottfried Leibniz the German mathematician and Ernst Mach an Austrian philosopher were opponents of this theory, though.

Leibniz believed in relativity of time and place considering time as a sequence of perceptions. The train of incessant theory making and reviewing finally stopped in the station of Einstein's theory of relativity. Proposing that time passes more slowly for a space-based observer than for an earth-based one, Einstein's theory could eventually cast off that of Newton after years of absolute dominance on scientific debates. At this point of the history, relative time superseded the absolute time. Shortly after Einstein's explanation of his new theory, Kurt Gödel justified the philosophical expression of the new structure in his article entitled "A Remark on the Relationship between Relativity Theory and Idealistic Philosophy." (Gödel, 1969) Relative concept of time was and still is discussed as creditable and legitimate in scientific and philosophical circles. It constitutes the central concept of the present study.

## **Einstein's Theory of Relativity and Time in the Holy Quran**

Albert Einstein studied the behavior of the universe and published articles in this regard during 1930 and 1955. He managed to cross out the Newton's absolute time by means of his special theory of relativity at his 25 and general theory of relativity at his 35. Full description of the two theories and their affirmation enter into the mathematical and physical contexts, and are thus beyond the scope of this research. The interested reader may, for further information, refer to multiple creditable resources authored in this regard. (Einstein, 1966; Max Born, 1965; Binesh, 2008) Substantial for the present research are parts of this theory to which I will briefly refer, where necessary. Einstein's special theory of relativity is expressed as follows hereunder:

- I. The speed of light is identical for different observers;
- II. Time stops in moving at light's speed;
- III. Mass of a movable becomes infinite in moving at light's speed;
- IV. In thinking about space, four dimensions should be taken into account: length, width, height, and time. Time is the fourth dimension and any event occurring in the universe happens in a 4D space-time world.

Relativity, according to Einstein, causes some events to advance slower for some observers than for others. This includes life incidents such as growing old. This is important to note that special relativity does not claim that everything is relative. It conversely indicates that objects like time and space that have been absolute in the antecedents' views are relative, and speed of light that has been regarded to be relative is absolute.

Among significant fallouts of this theory, one may refer to the relationship between time and space, and that all existences in the universe are associated with and affect upon one another. Although Newton suggested that time is fixed and serves equally at all points, Einstein proved that this is incorrect.

The typical example in this regard is the story of two hypothetical twins, one stays at home, on Earth, and the other journeys into space in an ultra-fast rocket, nearly as fast as the speed of light. Afterwards, when the twins are reunited on Earth, the travelling twin is markedly younger compared to his stay-at-home brother!

In Nov. 1915, Einstein made a series of speeches at the PROS Academy of Sciences where he pointed to his new gravity theory known as the general theory of relativity. In his last speech, Einstein proposed an equation known as Einstein's Field



Equations (EFE), which superseded Newton's law of universal gravitation. This theory claims that all are identical and equivalent: not only those who are moving at a fixed speed, but also all other observers. In general relativity, gravity is, unlike Newton's law of gravitation, no more a force, but a repercussion of the curvature of space-time. According to Einstein's special and general theories of relativity, when moving along the direction of movement at the light's speed, amount of a movable tends to zero and time stops. That is why the speed of light, i.e., 300,000 kilometers per second, or, more accurately, 299,792.5 kilometers per second, is the highest speed possible.

In this section, references are made to the hallowed book of the Muslims, the Holy Quran, accompanied by a brief explanation of its verses' conformance to the Einstein's theory of relativity. This is important to declare that since empirical sciences' theories are exclusively made to justify our observations out of the cosmos (Golshani, 1998), the proper way in delving into empirical sciences is to extract and categorize from the Holy Quran and Imams' narrations the necessary information regarding time, place, creation of the universe, and other affairs related to the cosmos. New theories can, then, be made using a methodology in the empirical sciences or one which is obtainable from the religion or a combined methodology of empirical and Islamic sciences. This, unfortunately, has not been the case in any of the fields of natural sciences. In the recent decades, although, a number of seminary and academic scholars have made efforts to establish such a methodology, they are still at the embryonic stages of their attempts. Anyway, any scientific interpretation out of religious texts may be regarded by some as a type of eisegesis until there is not an Islamic system of physics and Islamic information is insufficient. Here, however, I have tried to cite the Quranic verses which are clearly quoted in this divine book.

After above short introduction on Einstein's theories of relativity and time, I will contemplate on some verses as follows:

According to the Quranic verses, wise creatures are categorized into three classes:

1. Human beings, who are made of soil;
2. Jinns, which are made of fire;
3. Angels, which are made of light. (Majlesi, 1987, V 56, p 191)

Angels are immaterial creatures that are intermediary between the world of abstracts especially the Almighty God and human world. They are constantly

surrounding the God' Throne and involved in acclaiming Him (39:75). Angels apportion some matters (51:4) and record human beings' deeds (43:80 and 10:21).

In different verses of the Holy Quran, excerpts conforming to the theory of relativity—which talks of relativity of the time—are observable. One of such relativity theory-conformed excerpts is the 70:4, in which, as well as other verses, the speed of light is given by revelation in almost 1,400 years ago.

تَعْرُجُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ وَالرُّوحُ إِلَيْهِ فِي يَوْمٍ كَانَ مِقْدَارُهُ خَمْسِينَ أَلْفَ سَنَةٍ

*[Whereby] the angels and the Spirit ascend unto Him in a Day whereof the span is fifty thousand years. (70:4)*

According to this excerpt, a one-day flight by the angles lasts for human beings 50,000 years.

وَيَسْتَعْجِلُونَكَ بِالْعَذَابِ وَلَنْ يُخْلِفَ اللَّهُ وَعْدَهُ وَإِنَّ يَوْمًا عِنْدَ رَبِّكَ كَأَلْفِ سَنَةٍ مِمَّا تَعُدُّونَ

*And they will bid thee hasten on the Doom, and Allah faileth not His promise, but lo! A Day with Allah is as a thousand years of what ye reckon. (22:47)*

This verse indicates that the Day of Resurrection will last 1,000 years.

Another verse's reply to the Day of Resurrection is:

إِنَّهُمْ يَرَوْنَهُ بَعِيدًا وَنَرَاهُ قَرِيبًا

*Lo! They behold it afar off. While we behold it nigh (70: 6-7)*

Why indeed this is so?! Indeed, people see it [as] distant, but We see it [as] near. Is not it that time is relative and is not as equal for God and human beings?

The surah Kahf represents another instance of difference in passage of time.

وَكَذَٰلِكَ بَعَثْنَاهُمْ لِيَتَسَاءَلُوا بَيْنَهُمْ قَالَ قَائِلٌ مِنْهُمْ كَمْ لَبِثْتُمْ قَالُوا لَبِثْنَا يَوْمًا أَوْ بَعْضَ يَوْمٍ

*And in like manner we awakened them that they might question one another. A speaker from among them said: How long have ye tarried? They said: We have tarried a day or some part of a day (18:19)*

Was the passage of time equal for them as compared to others who took it to be three hundred years?

يَتَخَفَتُونَ بَيْنَهُمْ إِنْ لَبِثْتُمْ إِلَّا عَشْرًا نَحْنُ أَعْلَمُ بِمَا يَقُولُونَ إِذْ يَقُولُ أَمْثَلُهُمْ طَرِيقَةً إِنْ لَبِثْتُمْ إِلَّا يَوْمًا

*Murmuring among themselves: Ye have tarried but ten [days]. We are Best Aware of what they utter when their best in conduct say: Ye have tarried but a day.*  
(20:103-104)

What would be our response to duration of the limbo life of the primary human beings? We would say: "One milliard years, for instance," but, is this their own response, too?!

Above verses authenticate not only the *relativity of time*, but also the fact that time, time segmentations, and speed are concepts which can be defined in both material and trans-time, trans-place worlds. Respecting passage of time, one should pay attention to the point that several factors including difficulty or comfort, knowledge or ignorance, pain or joy, expectation or acceleration, etc., influence on our understating regarding shortness or lengthiness of time. What scientific theory of relativity emphasizes that the factors of time originates the speed of motion. This speed is calculated by the light's speed as the highest possible speed, according to the Einstein's theory of relativity.

According to the theory of relativity, when an object is accelerated with a speed as high as that of light, time is felt for it slower compared to that for us. Global speed of light is a content principle in the special theory of relativity, according to which speed of light in vacuum (C) is measured to have the same value for all inertial observers, and is independent of the motion of either light's source or observer. One of the mind-blowing calculations by the Holy Quran is precise computation of speed of light, to which I will refer hereunder.

At first, Note to the following verses, please:

هُوَ الَّذِي جَعَلَ الشَّمْسَ ضِيَاءً وَالْقَمَرَ نُورًا وَقَدَرَهُ مَنَازِلَ لِتَعْلَمُوا عَدَدَ السِّنِينَ وَالْحِسَابَ مَا خَلَقَ اللَّهُ ذَلِكَ إِلَّا بِالْحَقِّ يُفَصِّلُ الْآيَاتِ لِقَوْمٍ يَعْلَمُونَ

*He it is Who appointed the sun a splendour and the moon a light, and measured for her stages, that ye might know the number of the years, and the reckoning. Allah created not [all] that save in truth. He detaileth the revelations for people who have knowledge. (10:5)*

وَهُوَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ اللَّيْلَ وَالنَّهَارَ وَالشَّمْسَ وَالْقَمَرَ كُلٌّ فِي فَلَكٍ يَسْبَحُونَ

*And He it is Who created the night and the day, and the sun and the moon. They float, each in an orbit. (21: 33)*

يُدَبِّرُ الْأَمْرَ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ إِلَى الْأَرْضِ ثُمَّ يَعْرُجُ إِلَيْهِ فِي يَوْمٍ كَانَ مِقْدَارُهُ أَلْفَ سَنَةٍ مِمَّا تَعُدُّونَ

*He directeth the ordinance from the heaven unto the earth; then it ascendeth unto Him in a Day, whereof the measure is a thousand years of that ye reckon. (32:5)*

In this verse, Distance traveled by angels in one day equal to the distance traveled by the speed of light in a day and equal to the Length of lunar orbit in 1000 years (12000 month). Therefore, the following formula is used:

$$x = C.t = 12000.L$$

It should be noted that Equality of speed of light and Speed of Angels, conclude of meanings of verses. According to this verse, elapsed time of Material world to Spiritual world equals to 1000 years. As previously mentioned, Angels interface material world and the spiritual world and record human's actions. In this verse, "yarojo" (يعرج) refers to angels, which are made of light. In the above formula:

**C:** Is the speed of angels, which we intend to calculate and then compare to the known speed of light.

**t:** Is Earth Day outside gravitational fields i.e. time for one rotation of Earth about its axis with respect to stars.

**L:** Is the length of the lunar orbit outside gravitational fields.

But for the determination of L, we need to know a variety of calendar (Synodic and Sidereal).

**Synodic system (Sun):** depends on the position of the Moon with respect to the Sun as seen from the Earth.

$$\text{Earth day} = 24 \text{ hours} = 86400 \text{ sec}$$

$$\text{Lunar Month} = 29.53059 \text{ synodic days}$$

This is the average period of the Moon's revolution with respect to the line joining the Sun and Earth. The synodic month is the period of the Moon's phases, because the Moon's appearance depends on the position of the Moon with respect to the Sun as seen from the Earth. While the Moon is orbiting the Earth, the Earth is progressing in its orbit around the Sun. After completing a sidereal month the Moon must move a little further to reach the new position having the same angular distance from the Sun. This longer period is called the synodic month.

**Sidereal system (Stars):** Depends on the relative motion of the sun and moon into the stars in the Universe.

$$\text{Earth day} = 23 \text{ h } 56 \text{ min } 4.0906 \text{ sec} = 86164.0906 \text{ sec}$$

$$\text{Lunar Month} = 27.321661 \text{ synodic days} = 655.71986 \text{ hours}$$

The period of the Moon's orbit as defined with respect to the celestial sphere is known as a sidereal month because it is the time it takes the Moon to return to a given position among the stars: 27.321661 days.

**L** Calculate with Observation The pathway of the month in one sidereal month that isn't Circular motion but it's such as length of curve **L=v.T**.

**L:** Length of the pathway of the month in one sidereal month (Length of lunar orbit)

**v:** (The lunar velocity relative to the universe) The average lunar velocity

**T:** full rotation of the moon which is 27.321661 days

With a simple proportion calculate, when the moon makes 360 degrees around Earth with respect to stars the Earth-moon system moves 26.92952225 degrees around the sun. Hence the lunar orbit's twist angle  $\varnothing = 26.92952225$  degrees. We can calculate  $\varnothing$  from the period of one heliocentric revolution of the Earth-moon system (365.2421987 days):

$$\varnothing / 360 \text{ degrees} = 27.32166088 \text{ synodic days} / 365.2421987 \text{ synodic days} = 26.92952225 \text{ degrees.}$$

We have two velocities for lunar:

I. Lunar velocity relative to the Earth which is equal to  **$V_e = 2 \pi R/T$**

*Radius of the full rotation of the lunar:*  $R=384264 \text{ km}$

*Period of the full rotation of the lunar:*  $T= 655.71986 \text{ h}$

$$V_e = 2 \pi R/T = 2 * 3.14162 * 384264 / 655.71986 = 3682.07 \text{ km}$$

II. The lunar velocity relative to the universe which Albert Einstein's formula for this kind of velocity is:  **$v=V_e.\text{Cos}(\varnothing)$** . In this formula  $\varnothing=26.92848$  which is calculated in above proportion.

Now, the main question can be solved:

$$T = 86164.0906 \text{ s}$$

$$V_e = 3682.07 \text{ km/h}$$

$$\text{Cos } \varnothing = \text{Cos } (26.92848) = 0.89157$$

$$T = 655.71986 \text{ h}$$

$$C.t = 12000.L$$

$$C.t = 12000.v.T$$

$$C = 12000. (Ve.Cos \varnothing).T/t$$

$$C = 12000 * 3682.07(\text{km/h}) * 0.89157 * 655.71986(\text{h}) / 86164.0906 = \mathbf{299792.5 \text{ km/s}}$$

(Hassab-Elnaby, 2008)

Speed of light was calculated through the verses of Quran exactly equal with the speed of light which was calculated by Evanson and his colleagues at the National Institute of Standards and Technology in Boulder (U.S.A) with employing the laser technology in 1972. (Evanson et al, 1972)

These are just some of the items mentioned in the Qur'an, which is associated with Einstein's relativity laws. Another example is deviation of light from its direct way which was expressed clearly in Quran (18:17) 1400 years ago. While human was unaware of it until 1915. I abstain of this proof in this article, because it has more aspects of the physics. For reading more about this, see written sources in this field.

Finally, there are many signs and answers to many questions and concerns of the human mind beyond the verses of Quran, Muslim holy book and the miracle of the last Prophet on earth, for them to be discovered and understood needs more contemplation and deepened thinking.

«لَوْ أَنزَلْنَاهُ هَذَا الْقُرْآنَ عَلَى جَبَلٍ لَّرَأَيْتَهُ خَاشِعًا مُّتَصَدِّعًا مِّنْ خَشْيَةِ اللَّهِ وَتِلْكَ الْأَمْثَالُ نَضْرِبُهَا لِلنَّاسِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَذَكَّرُونَ»

*If We had caused this Qur'an to descend upon a mountain, thou [O Muhammad] verily hadst seen it humbled, rent asunder by the fear of Allah. Such similitudes coin We for mankind that haply they may reflect. (59:21)*

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## **Malcolm X on Violence, Religion and Extremism**

**Seyed Javad Miri**

Associate Professor of Sociology and History of Religions  
Institute of Humanities and Cultural Studies  
Tehran, Iran

### **Abstract**

Malcolm X is one of the most original thinkers of the 20th century whose possibility has not been exhausted yet. There are many reasons for such an intellectual lag but it is undeniable that the history of America would be incomprehensible without engaging with Malcolm X. There are many who argue that the rise of Hossein Obama in the context of American high politics should be interpreted in reference to Malcolm X's radical view on racism but there are still others who dispute his significance today. To put it differently, Malcolm X was not looking for a simple regime-change in America. On the contrary, he was looking for colossal changes which would not only liberate blacks from their historical negritude traumas but also emancipate white people from their alienating inhumanity. This is an important question within post-colonial social theory which needs to be studied anew. In this paper, the author has taken issue with the questions of religion, violence and extremism.

**Key Words:** Malcolm X, Religion, Racism, Violence, Postcolonial Social Theory

### **Introduction**

It is not a secret that the world is in a mess. The scope of chaos is not regional but global in nature and like a virus moves all over the world with an unprecedented speed. Many scholars and distinguished intellectuals across the globe have attempted to address questions which are directly or indirectly related to violence, extremism and mass suicides either under the banner of religion or the so-called humanitarian-bombing-paradigm/humanitarian-peace-bombing-paradigm. Regardless of posteriori

reasons which are made up by politicians and terrorists for their inhumane activities the results are surprisingly similar in both camps, i.e. devastating forms of atrocities around the globe. But the question is how should we understand the current situation? The roots of these atrocities lie in *militant secularism* and *fanatic religionism*. Both of these perspectives are totalitarian in nature and do not allow any free space for the *truly different*. The militant secularism bans all forms of beings under the pretext of “transcultural reason” and the fanatic religionism forbids all forms of knowledge by resorting to a “mythical pure perception.” In both of these readings the living forms are negated any kind of relevance and doomed to be re-formed along the abstract form of reason and mythical mode of perception. In other words, the problems which have overwhelmed humanity today are not only of political nature but they have intellectual roots which should be attended if we are serious about tackling them. If we focus on the political dimension alone then we shall repeat the stupidities of our forefathers but in different forms and modalities which could have destructive consequences beyond sound imagination. In this context, we think the outlook of Malcolm X is of great significance as he realizes the important dynamism of religion in the public square, on the one hand, but he, at the same time, does not disregard the significance of diversity in matters of society, politics and culture. In his speech in the Cleveland on April 3, 1964, he makes clear that he is a Muslim but the problem is that this concept is not an innocent term today. We see images of people who shout on top of their voices that they are Muslims but commit abhorrent atrocities against fellow Muslims or fellow human beings on different channels on TV every now and then. In other words, we need to have a critical approach toward the concept of “Muslim” and see in what sense Malcolm employed this term as this is a controversial issue in a post-globalized world. In his view, religion is not a means for oppression but a medium for inquiry and this distinction is of pivotal significance. He argues that “I’m still a Muslim . . . [but] . . . I’m not here to try and change your religion” (1966. 24). What does this mean? What does he mean by being a Muslim and not desiring to change the religious views of the others? In a *missionary mindset* of both militant secularism and fanatic religionism which embraces all dimensions of our life today, it is hard to understand what Malcolm X stands for. In other words, why should he argue that the dialog is possible even when we have differences? To be more accurate, it seems Malcolm X is of the opinion that dialog is only possible when we not only concede to the principle of diversity but also celebrate differences as the absence of diversity would benumb the possibility of growth in the world of humanity. To put it differently, he was convinced that diversity was not only a fact but also a “divine sign,” i.e. a means for manifestation of divinity in the world of humanity—and as

such it should be cherished and employed as a fertile form of dialog. If this is a sane argument then both forms of exclusivist interpretations of militant secularism and fanatic religionism should be combated as modes of politics and religiosity in the public square.

In other words, it is possible to envision Malcolm X's approach to human problems in a non-secular as well as non-religious fashion which celebrates diversity without denying one's own identity. However, there are scholars who have approached Malcolm X differently and argue that he was a militant and fanatic. Was he a militant and fanatic? In other words, it is impossible to employ the legacy of Malcolm X in overcoming militancy, extremism, violence and sectarianism in a divided world which we find ourselves today.

Some may argue that Malcolm X's position is ethnocentrism or "inverted racism," i.e. Black Racism against the racism waged on Afro-Americans by the Whites. Although it is undeniable that there is a rage in X's speeches but it is wrong to assume that he is a black racist or Muslim fanatics. Why do I argue this? Could this claim be backed up by solid evidence? Are there references in his work which could support my argument?

In his speech which was delivered in the Cleveland on April 3, 1964, Malcolm X talked on a serious political question which he entitled it "The Ballot or the Bullet." In this speech he argued that although

I'm still a Muslim, I'm not here tonight to discuss my religion. I'm not here to try and change your religion. I'm not here to argue or discuss anything that we differ about, because it's time for us to submerge our differences and realize that it is best for us to first see that we have the same problem, a common problem. . . . Whether you are educated or illiterate, whether you live on the boulevard or in the alley, you're going to catch hell just like I am. We're all in the same boat and we all are going to catch the same hell from the same man. He just happens to be a white man. All of us have suffered here, in this country, political oppression at the hands of the white man, economic exploitation at the hands of the white man, and social degradation at the hands of the white man. Now in speaking like this, it does not mean that we're anti-white, but it does mean we're anti-exploitation, we're anti-degradation, and we're anti-oppression. And if the white man doesn't want us to be anti-him, let him stop oppressing and exploiting and degrading us (1966. 24-5).

I quoted this in length to show the spirit and the content of Malcolm X where he makes a clear distinction between “biological racism”—which was elaborated by Ku Klux Klan, on the one hand, and early phases of the Nation of Islam at the hands of Elijah Muhammad, on the other hand—and “cultural racism”—which could have socio-politico-economic reasons and for such underlying reasons the proponents of exploitation support “apparent racial ideologies” for keeping others in submissive modes of life.

In other words, Malcolm X makes a distinction between “inherent racism of the White” and “accidental racism of the White” by arguing that the White Man “just happens to be” (1966.24) the political oppressor, economic exploiter, and social degrader of the Black Man “in this country” (1966.24). To put it differently, if we could change the oppressive system then Malcolm would argue that “*we’re [not] . . . anti-white . . . but we’re anti-exploitation, . . . anti-degradation, . . . anti-oppression*” (1966. 24-5).

This mode of analysis transforms the theoretical configuration of Malcolm X’s social theory by making it transculturally relevant and humanistically significant due to the fact that he addresses the “real riddles” of the capitalist world-system which is based on “oppression,” “exploitation,” and “degradation” of the *other*—both within the state and outside the political boundaries of the state. Said differently, racism may be a fundamental element in race-conscious or race-plagued cultures but if there was not any race problem we should not rest in peace in a context which is based on “OED,” i.e. oppression/exploitation/degradation. Because today we may not have racial problem as we had in the 20<sup>th</sup> century but “OED” is not over yet as the system could stay alive as long as it does not yield into ideals of justice, fraternity, equality and liberty. In other words, Malcolm X seems to argue that the world capitalist system is not the defender of the Enlightenment Ideals of Justice, Fraternity, Equality and Liberty. On the contrary, it is its destroyer *par excellence* due to the fact that it could only prolong its life as long as a world based on such ideals is not born. The ideals of Enlightenment are the anti-thesis of the capitalism which uses racism, as it did in the 20<sup>th</sup> century in USA, as an instrument for creating systematic hate, systemic violence, societal division, organized conflict, studied crises and planned war between nations and in the hearts of people so they could not care about each other or lest unite under the same flag of Fraternity, Justice, Liberty and Equality. Malcolm X, by moving away from “biological racism” freed himself from “inverted racism” and also made his discourse more of universal significance—which could be employed by alternative social theorists who are seeking to understand the underlying mechanisms

of tutelage of the “restern world” before the “eurocentric global hegemony.” (Byrd, 2011. 245-58)

## Racial Revolution

By living in Euro-America one could realize that the Euro-Atlantic civilization is one of the most over-conscious and over-sensitive social structures as far as the race and color are concerned. However, it is interesting to note that most of the giants of disciplinary social theory such as Freud, Marx, Durkheim, Weber, Small, Parsons and Pareto do never talk about the racial structures of the modern society and how the racially-motivated elements could overshadow the potentials of social structures as well as contours of human agency. The story of sociology was founded upon *Western White Male* (WWM) and in this fashion the mentality of founding constructors of disciplinary social theory conceptualized the Black people in America as the *colored people*. In other words, the subconscious of Anglo-American subject was so deeply engaged with the issue of race that the demarcative lines between various people were constructed along the issue of “skin color.” This racial attitude was not only confined to lay people but it included all strata of white society both in Europe and America. The founding fathers of sociologists did not fare any better in this regard as most of early social scientists preferred to employ the *dismissive strategy* even in discursive contexts. For instance, in modern American history a myth was constructed by mainstream social scientists that the Blacks were responsible for the failures of the *Reconstruction Era*. This orthodox view was not challenged by any of key white founding fathers of American social theorists such as Albion Small or Talcott Parsons. Although they were conceptualizing social theory in the so-called universal terms but issues of race and ethnicities which were haunting the American society escaped their attention in a complete fashion. But this pivotal question did not go unattended by one of the key sociologists, i.e. W. E. B. Du Bois who realized that the main issue of American social theory is not the question of rationality but race. In other words, Du Bois challenged the myth of universality concocted by disciplinary social scientists, on the one hand, and he, on the other hand, demonstrated that social theory could not be a theory of all societies but particular society. This is to argue that we cannot talk about social theory without taking into consideration burning issues of particular society. To put it differently, in a racially conscious society of America the dismissive strategy of Parsons on racial questions speaks about a malaise which needs to be conceptualized sociologically but this was not discussed until early years of 80s in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. But Du Bois was years ahead than other White

Western Male sociologists who disregarded the question of race in the constitution of self and society in the context of America. The question of the *Reconstruction Era* is one of the key questions which one can discern the partisan interpretations of White social theorists against the Black People in USA. In 1935, he published his *Black Reconstruction in America* and there he challenged the prevailing orthodoxy that blacks were responsible for the failures of the Reconstruction era (Du Bois, 1935). It seems that Du Bois believed that racism is an offshoot of capitalism and this conviction led him to choose Socialism as his ideological frame of analysis. In other words, it could be argued that Du Bois is more in line with Marxist theories of capitalism according to which colonialism and imperialism are high stages of capitalism. Racism, in this line of interpretation, provides the ideological justification for colonialism and imperialism. But what has Du Bois to do with Malcolm X? Why is Du Bois important in reimagining of Malcolm X? As I mentioned earlier there are few who have looked at Malcolm X in terms of sociological theory and social theory but even those few who have paid scant attention to his intellectual legacy seem to read him in a Du Boisian fashion. This is to argue that they attempt to interpret Malcolm X in a fashion that he will appear at the end as a Du Boisian critical theorist who views racism in a Marxist mode of analysis. By establishing this interpretative strategy, the American scholars have been able to read him in a Marxist fashion and also minimize the importance of Islamism or Political Islam in Malcolm X's frame of analysis. Although it is accepted that he has not developed very extensively on Islamism in his critical theory but there are ample references that he has not taken Islam solely as a *form of devotion* but a way of political strategy in rectifying the ills of society. For instance, in his speech entitled *The Ballot or the Bullet* he states that although "I'm still a Muslim, I'm not here to discuss my religion but [find a solution] for a common problem [which we suffer from] in this country; political oppression at the hands of the white man" (1966. 24). This is to argue that he interprets religion as a frame of political action and in so doing he comes very close to the position of advocates of Islamism within the parameters of liberation theology or social theology. In other words, his position on social issues is not of theological nature but sociological one and this would assist us to differentiate between his inclusive Islamist position and those of extremist Salafism of today, on the one hand, and highlight the fundamental differences between the socialist position of Du Bois and Islamist position of Malcolm X, on the other hand. These are issues which need to be discussed by anyone who is interested in the politics of social theory in the American context as well as in regard to the global context of Islamism and social theory.

Now let us go back to the question of race and its relation to the American society in Malcolm X's view which seems to differ from the position of Du Bois who was also critical of racial politics in USA but believed that racism is an offshoot of capitalism. There are certain passages in Malcolm X's works where one can find references to racism as a product of society rather than an inherent biological tendency. For instance, in Haryou-Act Forum, December 12, 1964, he explained his position to the American ambassador in Africa by arguing that

I told him, "What you're telling me, whether you realize it or not, is that it is not basic in you to be a racist, but that society there in America, which you all have created, makes you a racist." This is true; this is the *worst* racist society on this earth. There is no country on earth which you can live and racism be brought out in you—whether you're white or black—more so than this country that poses as a democracy. This is a country where the social, economic, political atmosphere creates a sort of psychological atmosphere that makes it almost impossible, if you're in your right mind, to walk down the street with a *white* person and not be self-conscious, or he or she not be self-conscious. It almost can't be done, and it makes you *feel* this racist tendency that pops up. But it's the society itself (1966. 214).

Here we can see that racism is a complex result of various socio-politico-economic factors along with psychological features but there are other instances where Malcolm X seems to suggest a contradictory view on racism. For instance, by arguing that in the West,

There has been much talk about a population explosion. Whenever [the Whites] are speaking of the population explosion, in my opinion they are referring primarily to the people in Asia or in Africa—the Black, Brown, Red, and Yellow people. It is seen by people of the West that, as soon as the standard of living is raised in Africa and Asia, automatically the people begin to reproduce abundantly. And there has been a great deal of fear engendered by this in the minds of the people of the West, who happen to be, on this earth, a very small minority. In fact, in most of the thinking and planning of Whites in the West today, it's easy to see the fear . . . [which] . . . governs their political views and . . . it governs their economic views and it governs most of their attitudes toward present society . . . the social structure [of the modern

world system] . . . [is like a] . . . racial powder keg . . . [which lies beneath the capitalist social structures] (1966. 45-6).

In other words, it looks like Malcolm X oscillates between two different positions; in the first position he is suggesting that racism is a product of social organization while in the second position it seems he considers capitalist social organization as a product of racism. However, I think there may be a third possibility here too, namely I don't think he is claiming causality of capitalism. Rather, he is arguing that white racism causes underdevelopment of blacks. To put it differently, the question is about the relationship between white racism and capitalism. It seems he attaches a specific accent on the socio-cultural organization of the White culture within the parameters of capitalism which has no equal in other forms of racism. In other words, the black people cannot redeem and emancipate themselves from their oppressed position if they take the *Negrofragae* in Marxist or Du Boisian frame of references. Here it seems the question of religion plays a significant role as Christianity has played a pivotal role in domesticating the Black people by not only justifying slavery but enslaving their minds too. In other words, for the Black community (and all the oppressed nations around the globe) it is necessary to alienate themselves from the symbolic universe of the White and this strategy will enable them to actualize their authentic self anew. Seen in this fashion, then one could understand why Malcolm chose Islam as a religion for his struggle against racism in America and not Christianity. In addition, this could explain that in what sense he followed Du Bois and where he differed from the Du Boisian frame of envisioning the future of the Black People in America. In sum, it could be emphasized that Malcolm X sees a close link between the structures of America and the world capitalist social organization and at its heart he discerns the problem of "race" rather than "Das Kapital," "Rationality," or "Anomie." This is a question which is better understood and conceptualized in post-racial discourses than in mainstream/eurocentric paradigms of disciplinary social sciences.

## **Historiography of Revolt/Revolution in Sociology**

Turning-points are the keys for understanding the underlying frames of references in the constitution of self and society. It could be argued that a turning-point is a time at which a decisive change in a situation occurs, especially one with crucial results. Although it is a temporal event but it has spatial consequences and its corollaries would transform the ways through which one perceives reality as such. In other words, a turning-point is a type of perspectival *feng shui*, i.e. a conceptual system of



arranging one's location in the configuration of things in the myriad forms of realities. To put it differently, as the feng shui practice discusses architecture in metaphoric terms of *invisible forces* that bind the universe, earth, and man together, a turning-point makes sense of unknown accidents which surround one at some point of time in a specific context. Said differently, by attaching a significant importance to a particular turning-point we prefer one interpretation of an event (or series of events) over against the other interpretations. In other words, talking about turning-points is always tantamount to choosing an interpretative system over its competing forms of analyses. This is to argue that a turning-point is not simply a historical event which has occurred and observable by everyone regardless of their points of departures. On the contrary, a turning-point is a point which is more of philosophical significance than merely a historical accident which has taken place in a particular place at a specific time. In other words, each society, each group, each epoch and each tradition may have their own particular turning-points which may not be upheld as significant by those who do not share the meaning-blocks of society A versus society B or tradition C versus tradition D. If one could distinguish between history and historiography then it would be readily accepted that "universal turning-points" are not easy to define as defining moments may differ in each context depending on one's vector. But why is it important to be wary about turning-points in humanities, social sciences and, in particular, in the context of social theory? In sum, a turning point could be defined as a fundamental change in one's perception of the past that occurs in a historical time and has a far-reaching influence in the later period. Such turning points should lead to the rise of new ruptures in history, hence contributing to a new form of living that (re)shapes one's vision of the past, the present, and the future. This new mode can exert its influence within its own culture, or without, having a global, cross-cultural impact. In other words, a turning point involves deeply the question of legitimacy in its most fundamental fashion, i.e. who has the final verdict upon defining the complex patterns of reality as a whole. For instance, the year 1968 plays a vital position in the context of disciplinary social theory for anybody who considers it as a turning-point. The future of humanity in a global sense is, for example, defined in terms of the 1968 revolt in France by Rojas who argues that the

post-1968 Europe has ceased to be the radiating center of the dominating culture of the Western World, at the same time in which music, sculpture, painting and the arts of all the regions of the world become universal and are disseminated everywhere, asserting themselves as so many other cultural, alternative and possible cosmovisions have within the new situation of cultural and social

polycentrism. These are movements where centers decline. And where the role itself of centrality as a global mechanism of social functioning is delegitimized in its own foundations, which may basically express the opening of a new and radically different situation of world capitalism, that after 1968–73 began entering into a clear situation of historical “bifurcation.” This situation of divergence in which the mechanisms of stabilization and reproduction of the world capitalist system as a whole ceased to function, announcing its inevitable end as well as the pressing need for its deep mutation and transformation. Following Immanuel Wallerstein’s incisive hypothesis, we could ask ourselves if 1968 did not then have, in addition to its profound character as a global reaching cultural revolution with civilizing consequences, a new and additional supplementary significance: that of having inaugurated with its irruption, this clearly terminal phase of the life of modern capitalism that was initiated more or less five centuries ago. However, as we have well been reminded by the “soixante-huitard” generation the world over, history is not an automatic process with is inevitably one way, but rather it is a process carried out by men themselves, who with our collective action and our reflections help to decide their possible destinies, in accordance with the conditions of possibility of each specific historic moment (Rojas, 2004. 213-4).

Said differently, 1968 is considered as the symbolic sign by which every aspect of meaningfulness should be weighed by and this has become like a bizarre mantra where eurocentric sociologists conceptualize the history of modern world in terms which are deeply parochial rather than universal. This is to restate that 1968 is one of those dates which have been conceptualized as a “turning-point” in the context of social theory. This cliché has been internalized by the Iranian intellectuals and social theorists who view *1968 Event* as the turning-point without realizing that this year may be of significance for eurocentric social sciences and societies. In other words, we tend to forget that every society may have its own turning-points and it is wrong to assume that “1968” is the criterion for all global changes. This mode of viewing global issues is what one could term as “House Negro-Mentality” in the sense Malcolm X conceptualized it, i.e. one who associates himself with the “master-narrative” in a way that he denies his own subjectivity by becoming one with the eurocentric vision of the world. Malcolm X presents another turning-point in

historiographical sense and for him the year 1964 is when the worldwide revolution of the oppressed people took place (1966. 49). Malcolm X argues that

1964 will see the Negro revolt evolve and merge into the world-wide black revolution that has been taking place on this earth. . . . The so-called revolt will become a real black revolution. Now the black revolution has been taking place in Africa and Asia and Latin America; when I say black, I mean non-white—black, brown, red or yellow. Our brothers and sisters in Asia, who were colonized by the Europeans, our brothers and sisters in Asia, who were colonized by the Europeans, and in Latin America, the peasants, who were colonized by the Europeans, have been involved in a struggle . . . to get the colonialists . . . off their land. . . . And there is no system on this earth which has proven itself more corrupt, more criminal, than this system that in 1964 still colonizes 22 million African-American, still enslaves 22 million Afro-Americans (1966. 49-50).

To put it bluntly, for Rojas the symbolic year is 1968 when “that great rupturing—event—occurred” (Rojas, 2004. 197) but for Malcolm X the rupturing event is 1964 when the black people shook off their yoke in America and looked for “freedom, justice, equality” (1966. 51) and refused to be considered as a colonized community (1966. 50) within America. In other words, the turning-point for Malcolm X differs surely from Rojas’ perspective and this would clearly have fundamental bearings upon their respective frames of their social theory. In the eurocentric historiography

It is clear that the fundamental dividing circumstance of 1968 has spread on a worldwide scale. And it is now also clear that—way and beyond its multiple and diverse forms of expression at the different geographic spots, obviously associated with the historic features of each respective region, nation or space—, the 1968 movement is deep-down (basically) a true cultural revolution. Consequently, at its most representative and characteristic epicenters as well as at the entire group of places and spaces of its multiple appearances, the historical 1968 rupture always emerges with a double scenario: one, as a process in which the explanation is never entirely complete stemming only from the data of the corresponding local situation—forwarding us therefore to its universal dimension—and the other, also as a transformation in which, whatever might be the political fate or the mediate or immediate destiny of its direct actors, as individuals or

collectively, it always ends up by radically upsetting, without any possibility of turning back, the forms of functioning and of reproduction of the main cultural structures that it refutes and questions (Rojas, 2004. 197-8).

For Malcolm X seems the history is conceived in a different fashion as instead of 1968, it is the significance of 1964 which is symbolized in his narrative, i.e. it has the possibility of having a “world-wide [consequences] . . . on this earth” (Malcolm X, 1966. 49-50). This creates a different mindset and based on this symbolic difference the subjectivity which is developed within the parameters of Malcolm X’s point of departure would surely generate other sets of turning-points. Although it is undeniable that we may be able to find common grounds as the objective is freedom, justice and equality in all truly humanistic traditions which are neither integrationist nor separationist but recognitionist, i.e. “fighting for the right to live as free humans in . . . society” (Malcolm X, 1966. 51). These are the ideals which Rojas discerns in the 1968 revolt by arguing that

History is not an automatic process with is inevitably one way, but rather it is a process carried out by men themselves, who with our collective action and our reflections help to decide their possible destinies, in accordance with the conditions of possibility of each specific historic moment (2004. 214).

## **Revolution and Radical Means of Political Transformation**

No doubt that Malcolm X is a revolutionary thinker and it is wrong to define his body of knowledge within the narrow boundaries of disciplinary academia. In other words, his mode of sociological imagination bears no resemblance to what Allama Jafari terms as *clerkish mentalité in human sciences* (Miri, 2014. 58). This is to argue that he symbolizes a type of thinker which I would like to conceptualize as a *street thinker*. What does this concept mean? I can explain this by a brief reference to sport terminology which would enable us to comprehend the concept of the “street thinker” in a better fashion. I am sure all of you are familiar with boxing more or less. In boxing field, the experts talk about two kinds of boxing styles, i.e. the professional boxing and the street fight boxing. The skills which a boxer may learn in the boxing clubs are very useful but when one steps outside the ring the techniques which have been adopted inside the ring they should be modified to fit the new environment. Otherwise one may get beaten by harsh realities of fighting which are ongoing in

violent streets of our cities. If this comparison is permitted then I would draw your attention to the fact that academic social thinkers look similar to professional boxers who are trained within specific parameters of academia and their particular styles do obstruct the transmissions of realities which they intend to study and understand. In other words, the type of encounter which Malcolm X portrays in his lifework demonstrates a profound affinity to the models of *street fighting* where the fighters do not use gloves and come in touch with harsh realities in bare forms. To put it differently, the position through which Malcolm X approached social problems were the violent streets of Bronx and Manhattan which were fundamentally in contradiction to ivory towers of Harvard or Princeton. Isn't perspective everything? How does our perspective emerge? Isn't biography pivotal in the constitution of our perspective? Some may argue that everything we see is a perspective, not the truth, i.e. the way we gain insight about life is not separated from where we are positioned in society and the world. Said differently, in the matrix of Malcolm X's social theory, I discern a model of intellectual engagement which is more suited to realities of the 21<sup>st</sup> century where academia as a symbolic world of learning has lost its integrity as well as sovereignty due to its marriage with corporate knights. Malcolm X presents the concerns of streets and embodies the spirit of streets in a world which have lost the spirit of *caring engagement* with the other.

Now let me get back to the question of revolution and how Malcolm X understood the "real revolution" as it seems he believed that we could orchestrate certain political changes and sell it as revolution to oppressed groups or people in any society. In other words, Malcolm X argued that a real revolution involves systemic transformation which would create a *free*, *just*, and *equal* social context for all citizens who happen to live in a particular political order (1966. 50). The core of revolution in Malcolm X's discourse is interconnected to the question of "Land." Because the model he has in mind is related to the experiences of non-whites around the globe who has lost their lands and have been turned into refugees in their own homelands such as Palestinians and South Africans respectively under the governments of Zionist regime or ex-Apartheid regime of South Africa. In other words, displacement brought about by Colonialism lied at the heart of Malcolm X's notion of revolution which could not be dissociated from the question of "Land." Once you lose your land you turn into a tenant and being a tenant could have grave consequences for the patterns of group mentality in strict political sense of the term. In addition, we should add the racial dimension into Malcolm X's perception of the "other" which was deeply interwoven with the historical trauma of slavery as far as the Afro-Americans are concerned. To put it differently, Malcolm X was not looking for a simple regime-

change in America. On the contrary, he was looking for colossal changes which would not only liberate blacks from their historical negritude traumas but also emancipate white people from their alienating inhumanity. But these changes are not possible through merely political decrees which do not touch the hearts of people in truly existential sense of the term. At any rate, the concept of revolution is “always based on land” (1966. 50). But it is wrong to assume that one can get back the land through negotiation because the land is where the identity is constructed upon and once you lose your land you lose your sense of being someone or losing your sense of belonging – and the one who has robbed your land surely has robbed your sense of identity before that he has taken the physical territories where you used to reside. In other words, Malcolm X’s insistence upon land was an attempt to carve a sense of identity in the symbolic universe in America and when he realized that this is not possible then he struggled for separation. Of course, he oscillated between various positions depending on different scenarios which appeared before him during turbulent years of the Cold War in US.

However, Malcolm believed that what has been taken cannot be returned peacefully and a revolution “is never based on begging somebody for an integrated cup of coffee” (1966. 50). Maybe it is useful to mention that he was the master of figurative form of speech as he was deeply well-versed in the Holy Scriptures in an unprecedented fashion which is rarely seen in other social theorists of his caliber. What does he mean by an integrated cup of coffee in relation to the revolutionary sentiment? In order to understand Malcolm X’s symbolic language we need to get a picture of the American society during the racial revolution which led to the assassination of Malcolm X in Harlem on February 21, 1965. There are different narratives about the racial question in America but the one which Malcolm X relates seems to be different than the mainstream accounts. In his view, the black movement was derailed from its primary objectives by a complex plot which was designed by influential power elites who brought John F. Kennedy into the White House. Malcolm X relates the story in the following fashion, i.e.

Roy Wilkins attacked King; . . . they accused King and Congress of Racial Equality of raising all the money and not paying it back. This happened; I’ve got it in documented evidence. . . . Roy started attacking King, and King started attacking Roy, and Farmer started attacking both. And as these Negroes of national stature began to attack each other, they began to lose their control of the Negro masses. The Negroes were out in the streets. They were talking about how they were

going to march on Washington. Right at that time Birmingham had exploded. They began to stab the crackers in the back and bust them up. . . . That's when Kennedy sent in the troops, . . . and said "this is a moral issue." They even said they were going out to the airport and lay down on the runway and not let any airplanes land. That was revolution. That was the black revolution. It was the grass roots out there in the street. It scared the white man to death, scared the white power structure in Washington, D. C., to death; they called Wilkins, they called in Randolph, they called in these national Negro leaders that you respect and told them, "Call it off." Kennedy said, "Look, you all are letting this thing go too far." And Old Tom said, "Boss, I can't stop it, because I did not start it." They said, "I'm not even in it, much less at the head of it." They said, "These Negroes are doing things on their own. They're running ahead of us." And that old shrewd fox, he said, "If you all aren't in it, I'll put you in it." They had a meeting at the Carlyle Hotel in New York City. The Carlyle Hotel is owned by the Kennedy Family. A philanthropic society headed by a white man called all the top civil-rights leaders to gather at the Carlyle Hotel. And he told them, "By you all fighting each other, you are destroying the civil-rights movement. And since you're fighting over money from white liberals, let us set what is known as the Council for the United Civil Rights Leadership. Let's form this council, and all the civil-rights organizations will belong to it, and we'll use it for fund-raising purposes." A million and a half dollars—split up between leaders that you have been following, going to jail for, crying crocodile tears for. And they're nothing but Frank James and Jesse James and the what-do-you-call-'em brothers. As soon as they got the setup organized, the white man made available to them top public-relations experts; opened the new media across the country at their disposal, which then began to project these Big Six as the leaders of the march. Originally they weren't even in the march. The same white element that put Kennedy into power—labor, the Catholics, the Jews, and liberal Protestants; the same clique that put Kennedy in power, joined the march on Washington. (1966. 14-16)

This is the narrative which Malcolm X depicts about the background contours of the Black Movement which evolved into the Black Revolution but gradually was infiltrated and finally hijacked by powerful elements of the *White Ancien Régime*. It

is in this context that Malcolm X uses a figurative language to explain how authentic social movements lose their political objectives and turn, instead, into reactionary hooliganistic gangs without any progressive political objectives. To highlight this point, Malcolm X argues that the *White Ancien Régime* uses the coffee and cream policy to derail authentic oppositions to the capitalist world system both within and without America. What is the coffee and cream policy? It's just

Like when you've got some coffee that's too black, which means it's too strong. What do you do? You integrate it with cream, you make it weak. But if you pour too much cream in it, you won't even know you ever had coffee. It used to be hot, it becomes cool. It used to be strong, it becomes weak. It used to wake you up, now it puts you to sleep. This is what they did with the march on Washington. They joined it. They did not integrate it, they infiltrated it. They joined it, became a part of it, took it over. And as they took it over, it lost its militancy. It ceased to be angry, it ceased to be hot, it ceased to be uncompromising. Why, it ceased to be a march. It became a picnic, a circus. Nothing but a circus, with clowns and all (1966. 16).

In other words, Malcolm X seems to believe that within the context of capitalism authentic revolutions are not possible unless revolutionary groups breed a sense of militancy within their body of praxis. If not then the power elites in the capitalist system would take over and change the course of emancipative movements by the policy of integrating coffee and cream. His model of revolution could be employed in contexts such as the one between Israel and Palestine where the latter has lost her land and the other using the policy of integrating coffee and cream. If Malcolm X was alive he would surely have argued against those who encourage Palestinians to turn "the other cheek" (1966. 50). In other words, he would have argued that revolution is

Never based on begging somebody for an integrated cup of coffee. Revolutions are never fought turning the other cheek. Revolutions are never based upon love-your-enemy and pray-for-those-who-spitefully-use-you. And revolutions are never waged singing "We Shall Overcome" (1966. 50).

On the contrary, Malcolm X believed that revolutions

Are based upon bloodshed. Revolutions are never compromising. Revolutions are never based upon negotiations. Revolutions are never



based upon any kind of tokenism whatsoever. Revolutions are never even based upon that which is begging a corrupt system to accept us into it. Revolutions overturn systems (1966. 50).

This is to argue that structural changes should occur but these transformations should not be only confined to external structures. On the contrary, the structures which make up the contours of human mindsets should be transformed too. Otherwise, the corrupt system would reform itself upon the patterns of the old Ancien Régime which deprives people from their inalienable rights as human beings.

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## **Book Review**

***Islamisation of Pakistani Social Studies Textbooks*, Yvette Claire Roser, Rupa & Co, Pages: 109, ISBN: 81-291-0221-8.**

**Reviewed by: Yoginder Sikand**

Freelance Professor

The Centre for the Study of Social Exclusion and Inclusive Policy at the National Law School  
Bangalore, India

Contrary to what professional historians might claim, there is really nothing as an objective, unbiased and completely accurate writing of history. After all, not everything, even of significance, of what happened in the past can possibly be included in a text, and history book writers have to pick and choose from past events that they deem fit be recorded. The very process of picking and choosing from the past is determined, among other factors, by the subjective biases of the history writer as well as his or her own social and institutional location. Then, history writing is not simply about narrating the past but also involves a certain element of evaluating it. Here, again, this is strongly determined by the personal biases and preference of the individual historian.

The element of bias is greatly exacerbated when history textbooks are—as they are in almost every country today—commissioned by the state. The state wishes to mould its citizens in a particular way, to make them what it considers as ‘good’ and ‘law-abiding’ citizens, who have completely internalized the underlying logic and ideology of the state. The state, in its capacity of representative of a country’s ruling class, seeks to impose through state-sponsored history texts the hegemonic ideas of this class upon its citizenry. It is thus not surprising that such texts generally parrot the state-centric view of history that seeks to bestow legitimacy on the state and the country’s ruling class and ‘normalise’ their logic and world-view. This incisive critique of state-sponsored social science textbooks in Pakistan

highlights the convoluted politics of historiography and what this means for the production of a 'social commonsense' for a state's citizenry. Although Roser does not say it in so many words, the current turbulent political scenario in Pakistan, in particular the rise of radical Islamist forces in the country, cannot be seen as inseparable from the narrow political agenda that the Pakistani state, ever since its formation, has consistently sought to pursue as is reflected in the social science textbooks that it has commissioned, and through which it has sought to impose its own ideology on its people.

Ross's study focuses on the textbooks used in Pakistani school for the compulsory subject called 'Pakistan Studies', which was introduced in the reign of the American-backed military dictator General Zia ul-Haq in the mid-1970s. Pakistan Studies replaced the teaching of History and Geography, and was moulded in such a fashion as to instill in students an undying and unquestioning loyalty to the official 'Ideology of Pakistan' (called the *nazariya-e Pakistan*, in Urdu). This ideology, questioning which is considered a punishable crime in the country, is based on the far-fetched and completely bankrupt notion of the Muslims and Hindus of the pre-Partition Indian subcontinent as constituting two homogeneous and wholly irreconcilable 'nations'. (Incidentally, this is the same perverse logic that underlies radical Hindutva in India). It claims that Muslims and Hindus have never been able to live amicably together, that they have always been opposed to each other, that they share nothing in common, and that, hence, it was but natural that Pakistan should come into being for the sake of the Muslims of South Asia.

There are several defining and characteristic features of the Pakistani social science textbooks that Rosser examines. Firstly, as she notes, their extreme anti-Indianism. This is a reflection of the fact that the 'Ideology of Pakistan', indeed the very rationale for the creation and continued existence of the state of Pakistan, is premised on the notion of undying and perpetual hatred of and opposition to India. India thus comes to be presented as viscerally opposed to Pakistan and as constituting a mortal threat to its very existence. In this way, a form of Pakistani nationalism is sought to be fostered through the texts that is hyper-chauvinistic, and one that is based on a constant reinforcement of an almost crippling sense of being besieged by what is projected as an 'evil' neighbor.

Secondly, and linked to the anti-Indianism that pervades these texts, are the repeated negative and hostile references to the Hindus and their faith. Hinduism is portrayed and projected in wholly negative terms, as if lacking any appreciable elements at all. Its followers are presented in a similarly unflattering way: as allegedly

mean and cruel, and constantly scheming against Muslims and their faith. Hindus, like Muslims, thus come to be presented in strikingly stereotypical terms: the former as virulently hostile enemies, and the latter as brave soldiers in the path of God. They are portrayed as two solid, monolithic blocs, and as being without any internal differences whatsoever, of class, class, gender, region, language, political orientation and ethnicity. The only identity that they are projected as possessing is that of religion, which is presented in starkly reified terms that often have little resonance with empirical reality. In the process, the diverse, often contradictory, interpretations, expressions and the lived realities of Islam and Hinduism in South Asia are completely ignored in favour of extreme literalist, 'orthodox' and textual understandings. 'Popular' religious traditions, such as certain forms of Sufism and Bhakti, that bring people of diverse communal backgrounds together, are totally ignored, because they obviously stridently contradict the claims of the 'two-nation' theory.

Thirdly, the textbooks present Pakistani history as synonymous with the history of political conquests by successive Muslim rulers, starting with the Arab commander Muhammad bin Qasim in the mid seventh century. All these invaders and rulers, so the books piously claim, were goaded by a powerful sense of religious mission to establish 'Islamic' rule in the region. This alleged religious aspiration of theirs is presented as having finally culminated in the creation of Pakistan in 1947. Contrary to what is popularly known about him, Muhammad Ali Jinnah, the ideological founder of Pakistan, is presented as an 'orthodox' Muslim, allegedly inspired by the vision of establishing an 'Islamic' state run by Muslim clerics—something which was not the case at all. The fact that most of the Muslim rulers and conquerors that these texts lionise might actually have been inspired by less noble motives—to plunder or rule—is, of course, conveniently ignored. Religion—in this case Islam—thus comes to be seen and projected as the sole motor of history, with other factors, such as power and economics, having, at best, only a minor role to play. The history of South Asia before Muhammad bin Qasim is hardly mentioned at all, although it was in what is Pakistan today that the Indus Valley Civilisation flourished, that the invading Aryans composed the Vedas and that Buddhism led to a great flourishing of various arts and sciences.

In other words, every effort is made in the textbooks to present Pakistan as an extension of 'Muslim' West Asia, instead of a part of the Indic-dominated South Asia. Not surprisingly, as Rosser observes, the texts single out particular historical figures who are known for their battles against Hindu rulers as heroes, among these the most

important being Muhammad bin Qasim, Mamhud Ghaznavi and Aurangzeb. Other Muslim rulers, most notably Akbar, who sought to reconcile Hindus and Muslims and promote a generous ecumenism, are either totally ignored or else reviled as alleged 'enemies of Islam'. Furthermore, these figures, of both 'heroes' and 'villains', are isolated from their historical contexts, leading to biography turning into hagiography or demonology, as the case might be, in order to serve the agenda of the advocates of the 'two nation' theory.

The same holds true in the texts' depictions of certain key Muslim religious figures. Thus, 'orthodox' ulema or Islamic clerics who stressed the claim of the inferiority of the Hindus and advised Muslim rulers to take harsh measures against them are hailed as heroes of Islam, while others, including many Sufis, who sought to preach love and tolerance between Muslims and others and preached an ethical monotheism transcending narrowly-inscribed boundaries of community, are conveniently left out or else branded as 'un-Islamic'.

A fourth characteristic feature of these textbooks is their distinctly anti-democratic character. They purport to tell the story of the Muslims of South Asia from the point of view of Pakistan's ruling elites. In the process, history comes to be presented as simply a long list of battles and other 'achievements' (whether real or imaginary) of a long chain of Muslim rulers. 'Ordinary' people have no voice, being completely invisibilised in these texts. It is as if history is made only by rulers, and that the histories of 'ordinary' people are not worth recording or commemorating. It would seem as if the writers of these books are wholly ignorant of new developments in writing 'peoples' or 'subaltern' histories.

The starkly elitist bias of the texts is also reflected in the fact that they almost completely ignore perspectives of ethnic groups other than Pakistan's dominant Punjabi and Muhajir communities. This is hardly surprising, since, as Rosser notes, most of these texts have been penned by authors who belong to these two communities. She writes that the absence of the perspectives and historical experiences of the numerically smaller ethnic and regional communities of Pakistan, such as the Baluchis and Sindhis, also has serious implications for policy making, for the demand of smaller provinces for regional peace in South Asia and equitable local development is not sufficiently appreciated and incorporated in national policies. This, Rosser comments, is reflected in the great 'tension between official history manufactured in Islamabad and the historical perspectives of regional ethnic groups' (p.4).

The anti-democratic thrust of these texts is also reflected in what Rosser describes as ‘a radically restrictive brand of Islamic exclusivism’ that they project and propagate. The sort of Islam that these texts seek to promote is premised on the notion and dream of Muslim political hegemony and a deep-rooted sense of the innate inferiority of people of other faiths. This is—and this is important to note—just one version of Islam among many, and one which Muslims who believe in an inclusive version of their faith would vehemently oppose. However, the texts present this, what Rosser calls ‘authoritarian’, ‘legalistic’ and ‘ritualistic’, brand of Islam as normative and defining, and completely reject alternate, competing, more democratic and humanistic interpretations of the faith (p.9).

Rosser’s findings are of critical importance, particularly in the context of present developments in Pakistan, which is witnessing the alarming growth of radical Islamist groups, impelled by a version of Islam very similar to the one these texts uphold. Obviously, explanations of the growing threat of radical Islamism in Pakistan cannot ignore the crucial role of these texts, which are compulsory reading for all Pakistani students, thus playing a central role in moulding their minds and worldviews. The texts are also a reflection of, as well as a cause for, the pathetic state of social science research and discourse in present-day Pakistan.

Rosser’s Indian readers need not have much cause to be self-congratulatory, however. Although historiography in India is certainly more sophisticated in many senses than in Pakistan, a significant section of Indian history writers, particularly of the Hindutva brand, are no different from those Pakistani writers whose texts Rosser examines. Indeed, they speak the same language of hatred and communal supremacy, propelling the same tired, debunked myth of Hindus and Muslims being perpetually at odds with each other. Likewise, they are both profoundly anti-democratic, having no space for the voices and aspirations of socially, culturally and economically oppressed groups, upon whose enforced silence is premised the artifice of the ‘nation’ (‘Islamic’ or ‘Hindu’, as the case might be), whose sole representative ruling elites claim to be.

***Windows on Dialogue*, Edited by Ambrogio Bongiovanni, Leonard Fernando, Gaetano Sabetta & Victor Edin, 2012, ISPCK, Delhi, Pages: 157, ISBN: 978-81-8465-205-5.**

**Reviewed by: Roshan Shah**

Visiting Researcher

Henry Martyn Institute at Hyderabad, India

Dialogue between people who (claim to) follow different faiths has now become an existential necessity for the very survival of the human species. A great deal has already been written on interfaith dialogue, but the very urgency of the task requires that much more be written about it. This book is a welcome addition to the corpus of writings on the subject, bringing together a rich variety of perspectives and a wealth of insights.

Jesuit and sociologist Rudolph Heredia's article neatly summarises the case for interfaith dialogue. Going beyond the all-too-common tendency to see interfaith dialogue as a means to enable others to understand and appreciate one's own faith better (or even to convert to it), Heredia stresses that dialogue is—or, rather, should be—a valuable means for each dialogue partner to be spiritually enriched and to grow through encountering and learning and benefitting from other religious traditions and their adherents. Seen in this way, interfaith dialogue becomes a “mutually enriching encounter”. For us to be able to be truly transformed by this encounter, Heredia tells us, romanticizing our own religious traditions (and also refusing to recognize that they might, in part, need to be rethought or revised—a possibility that the dialogical encounter might provoke) is indefensible. Heredia also adds that for dialogue to be more than people talking past each other there must also be a realization that God or the Ultimate Reality is a mystery that is far beyond human comprehension and that, therefore, no single religion or other such worldview can contain or represent Him/Her/It in His/Her/Its totality.

Heredia pleads for religionists to move beyond mere tolerance of religious diversity to actually celebrating religious pluralism. Passive tolerance can often mean simple indifference to the religious ‘other’. A higher level of tolerance, Heredia says, is love and acceptance of people of other faiths. At this stage, there is a growing recognition that each of our religious truth-claims is necessarily partial and limited



and needs to be complemented by the equally partial truth-claims of other faiths. But even here, the 'other' remains the 'other'. However, at the highest—mystical or spiritual—level of tolerance that Heredia talks about—the 'other' and the 'self' cease to exist in contradistinction to each other and together merge into the One. This is the level reached by mystics in all religious traditions, for whom different religions as such no longer exist. Although he recognises that to expect entire societies to reach this level of spiritual realisation may not be practical, Heredia holds it out as an ideal for individuals to strive to work towards.

Michael Amaladoss, another Indian Jesuit, reflects on positive shifts in the Catholic Church's position on other faiths—from its insistence on Catholicism as the only way for salvation to recognition of the salvific worth of other faiths. He quotes from official Catholic documents to highlight this welcome development, showing how the Catholic hierarchy now officially recognizes, accepts and respects the spiritual treasures of other religions, including in their scriptures, worship forms and symbols, and acknowledges that God can draw people to Him through them. This indicates a sea-change in Catholic understandings of 'mission'—from conversion of non-Christians to Christianity to working together with people of other faiths as fellow pilgrims for jointly building the 'Kingdom of God'.

In her article, Bettina Baumer, an Austrian scholar of Christian background who has spent almost half a century based in Varanasi studying Indian forms of spirituality, indicates that while dialogue at the theological level is not unimportant, it is dialogue at the mystical or spiritual level that holds the greatest promise for mutual enrichment and for building bridges between votaries of different religious traditions. She cites Kabir and the Kashmiri woman mystic Lal Ded as two (among several) Indian spiritual masters who, through their deep spiritual experiences and realization, transcended the apparent differences between various religions, thus becoming icons of trans-religious ecumenism. This sort of dialogue at the spiritual level, Baumer writes, goes far beyond institutionalized religion and theology, touching a level where spiritual experiences meet, no matter from which religious tradition they may have started off from.

Baumer also suggests that theologians of different religions can re-read their respective scriptures in order to understand the religious 'other' in more positive and accepting ways than hitherto. In this regard, she rightly remarks, "It is by searching in our scriptures for traces of openness, tolerance and appreciation of 'other' traditions and their followers that we can overcome fundamentalism, the greatest enemy of inter-religious understanding." Such rethinking of how we understand the

religious ‘other’ in ‘our own’ religious traditions is an absolute must for interfaith dialogue efforts to be at all meaningful.

Jesuit G. Gispert Sauch’s paper provides a historical overview of Hindu-Christian dialogue in India. He recognizes that many of his fellow Christians have been dismissive of other faiths. He appeals to them to make repent and amends for this long tradition of hatred and scorn and to recognize the great spiritual worth of other religions, including Hinduism. In this regard, he advocates inclusive Christian theologies of religious pluralism and pleads for the Indian Church to shed its Western trappings.

Several other papers included in this volume do not deal specifically with the issue of interfaith dialogue as such but touch upon issues related to inter-community relations. JPS Oberoi’s presentation highlights the importance of the Divine Name in many religious traditions, indicating that this could be an important basis for trans-religious unity. Ambrogio Bongiovanni’s paper deals with challenges to Christian theology posed by contemporary European society: a case here of the need for dialogue not so much between different religions as between Religion as such and a society where religion is no longer taken seriously by many. Gurdrun Lowner’s paper on Ambedkar’s conversion to Buddhism reflects on key aspects of Ambedkarite Buddhism—in a sense a dialogue with, and revolt against, Brahminism.

Jesuit scholar John Mundu’s paper reflects on aspects of the spiritual traditions of the Adivasis or ‘tribal’ people of Chhotanagpur in eastern India. He indicates that given the phenomenon of widespread dispossession of many of these Adivasis from their lands and displacement in the name of ‘development’, “any genuine inter-religious dialogue from the subaltern Adivasi perspective demands that the starting point and the basis of it must necessarily be the existential material base” of land and nature. Such dialogue, he helpfully informs us, “needs to be guided by the goal of restoration of the destroyed material base and the dehumanized face of the Adivasi people”.

Jesuit scholar Victor Edwin’s paper explores widespread negative perceptions that many Christian and Muslims have for each other, showing how these are conditioned by a range of factors, including theology, politics and history. He highlights that such differences have to be recognized and handled with care in any effort to promote Christian-Muslim dialogue.

This book is a welcome addition to the growing, albeit still limited, corpus of writings on interfaith dialogue from a largely Indian perspective. Given the importance of the subject that it deals with, one wishes it could be abridged and made available in various Indian languages. That would help promote greater awareness of the interfaith dialogue imperative, going beyond the restricted English-speaking readership that the vast majority of books on the subject presently caters to.