

## **Islam in the West: From Immigration to Global Islam**

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The immigration of Muslims to Europe, North America, and Australia and the complex socioreligious dynamics that have subsequently developed have made Islam in the West a compelling new field of research. The Salman Rushdie affair, *hijab* controversies, the attacks on the World Trade Center, and the furor over the Danish cartoons are all examples of international crises that have brought to light the connections between Muslims in the West and the global Muslim world. These new situations entail theoretical and methodological challenges for the study of contemporary Islam, and it has become crucial that we avoid essentializing either Islam or Muslims and resist the rhetorical structures of discourses that are preoccupied with security and terrorism.

In this article, I argue that Islam as a religious tradition is a *terra incognita*. A preliminary reason for this situation is that there is no consensus on religion as an object of research. Religion, as an academic discipline, has become torn between historical, sociological, and hermeneutical methodologies. With Islam, the situation is even more intricate. In the West, the study of Islam began as a branch of Orientalist studies and therefore followed a separate and distinctive path from the study of religions. Even though the critique of Orientalism has been central to the emergence of the study of Islam in the field of social sciences, tensions remain strong between Islamicists and both anthropologists and sociologists. The topic of Islam and Muslims in the West is embedded in this struggle. One implication of this methodological tension is that students of Islam who began their academic career studying Islam in France, Germany, or America find it challenging to establish credibility as scholars of Islam, particularly in the North American academic context.

There is a need to overcome such disparities by considering Islam as a global religious tradition. This approach will allow us to better un-

derstand Islam's contemporary trends within specific cultural contexts throughout the world. It is also becoming increasingly clear that no single academic discipline is equipped to accommodate a complete understanding of Islam in the West. Therefore, an interdisciplinary methodology is indispensable for pursuing this new field of research. Only such an approach will be capable of addressing and appreciating the multivalent realities that Muslims face in the West.

### **Islam in the West as an Object of Research: The Atlantic Divide**

The differences between European and American scholarship on Islam and Muslims are striking. The first difference lies in the intensity and level of academic production. Islam in Europe has been a topic of interest for at least the last three decades. This period has been marked by a steady increase of books, articles, and reports that are devoted to the subject, as well as an increase in the variety of disciplines—including sociology, religious studies, and political science—that are engaged in this field. Although it would be wrong to assert that Islam in America emerged as a topic of interest only after September 11, 2001, the level of research has risen significantly since that event. It is beyond the scope of this article to evaluate all aspects of this immense and continually developing body of literature on Muslims in the West. My goal is to discuss the most salient aspects of these studies and to highlight some of the implicit assumptions that they contain.<sup>1</sup>

The second remarkable difference between European and American approaches to Islam and Muslims is their respective disciplinary approaches. In Western Europe, the scholarship on Islam and Muslims arose primarily from an investigation into the integration of recent waves of immigrants to the region, and to a certain extent, the inquiry into Islam in this part of the world remains within this framework. One repercussion of this historical circumstance is that social sciences (including anthropology, politics, and sociology) have risen to preeminence in the analysis of Islam in the European context. In the United States, on the other hand, the study of Islam in the U.S. has been of interest to only a small group of Islamicists and anthropologists. In the aftermath of 9/11, however, the gap between European and American attention on Islam in the West is rapidly being bridged by a growing

body of work by lawyers and terrorism and security experts on both sides of the Atlantic.

### **Islam in Europe and the Challenge of Integration**

In Europe, sociological research on Muslims can be traced to the 1980s, when it formed a significant part of general studies on immigration. The objective of this early research was primarily focused on the integration of Muslims immigrating to Western Europe. An important question that remains relevant is whether the integration process for Muslims is analogous to the experience of other immigrants or whether the Islamic background of these immigrants introduces a distinctive element.<sup>2</sup> Sociologists specializing in immigration issues continually regard an individual's religious identity as a Muslim to be a "given" and consequently consider this dimension of the immigration experience to be less worthy of in-depth analysis. Other factors (such as position in the economic market place and other social and political factors) are repeatedly emphasized over religion for providing an explanation for the condition of "being a Muslim." However, the interest in processes of integration has since grown to cover more and more aspects, not only social but also cultural and political. In this way, scholars with different disciplinary backgrounds have become involved in the study of the integration of Muslims.

The overarching inquiry in all these studies is concerned mainly with the integration of Muslims into different segments of European societies, including the workplace, schools, and the political sphere. These three domains coincide with three main theories of integration—a structural approach focused on economic issues, a culturalist approach focused on stigmatization, and theories on political participation. An initial lack of interest in academic research into the specifically Islamic dimension of these different components of integration has been prevalent. This began to change in the 1980s, when several issues specific to Islam became increasingly pertinent to the immigration issue. The institutional and organizational aspects of Islam are usually emphasized in these areas of study. The huge body of literature concerned with mosques—in both country-based and comparative studies—is a case in point. These studies include research on the construction of mosques and the legal status of mosques, and the recent scholarship of Maussen, Fregosi, and Cesari<sup>3</sup> has also been germane to both of these considerations. Architecture is also growing topic of interest because evolving architecture styles of mosques are seen as a sign of acceptance or rejec-

tion of the dominant environment.<sup>4</sup> Another area of longstanding interest is Islamic schools. This is especially true in countries like the Netherlands or the United Kingdom, both of which boast significant numbers of these schools.<sup>5</sup> The majority of the research on Islamic schools is comprised of inquiries into the educational curriculum and the relationship between the schools and state institutions. There is very little research on the practice of Islam in these new educational environments.

A third consideration for research into the integration of Islam in the West is the question of religious authorities.<sup>6</sup> This area of focus includes the status of imams as well as religious training. Most of the studies on Muslim authorities focus on the interactions among clerics, leaders, Islamic organizations, and political institutions, noting the diverse ways that these entities adapt to each other. By contrast, the struggle within the Islamic community itself over the exercise of authority and the ensuing reconfiguration of traditional authority structures has received little attention from contemporary sociologists of Islam. This is undoubtedly another consequence of the ascendancy of political scientists in the study of Islam in countries like France. One reason for this preeminence is the highly prevalent political concern with the mode of institutional integration of Islam as a minority tradition combined with a lack of interest in, as well as understanding and appreciation of, the religious debates on authority internal to Islam.

Also significant, however, is the influence of the international agenda in highlighting certain features in the contemporary study of Islam. In France, this international influence did not start with 9/11 but came into being in dialogue with a long history of political interaction between France and its former colonies, as well as the influence of certain Islamic political movements in neighboring Islamic countries such as the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) in Algeria or the AKP (Justice and Development Party) in Turkey (a reincarnation of the Refah Party, banned in 1998).<sup>7</sup>

The institutionalization of Islam—including Islam's position within the relationship of church and state in various countries and Islam's place with regard to secular institutions—represents another challenge for immigrants. The work of lawyers on legal pluralism and the adaptation or inclusion of *Shari'a* has been increasingly instrumental in mediating this relationship.<sup>8</sup> Legal pluralism and Islam's adjustment to secular norms are also central to the question of the legal status of the *hijab*, as studies addressing the public debates about the headscarf and

the regulations on wearing the *hijab* in specific institutions (such as schools and workplaces) have exemplified.<sup>9</sup>

In the accommodation process, there has been a growing research interest in the backlash of anti-Islamic attitudes that have resulted in different strands of Islamophobia. It should be noted that the term *Islamophobia* emerged as early as 1997 during the discussions in Great Britain on the topic of anti-Muslim discrimination.<sup>10</sup> Since then, the use of this term has spread throughout Europe, intensifying after 9/11, the Madrid bombings of 2005, and the London bombings of July 2006. Most of the works on Islam that are published in France are consequently attempts to combat Islamophobia and deconstruct the misrepresentations and false notions that characterize discrimination against Islam and Muslims.<sup>11</sup> A good example of this kind of scholarship is Vincent Geisser's 2005 book *La nouvelle islamophobie*.<sup>12</sup>

### **Islam as a Religion**

Despite this preeminence of legal, institutional, and political concerns, an inquiry into Islam as a religious tradition has also emerged in European scholarship. From the 1990s onward, with the rise of a new generation of scholars, the question of the status of religion in modern society has become increasingly central to research on Islam in Europe. This approach was initiated by Belgian sociologist Felice Dassetto, who influenced a significant number of scholars in this new generation with his employment of the theory of Thomas Luckmann in his study of Muslim minorities in Europe.<sup>13</sup> This new approach was far more concerned with the use and reconstruction of religious knowledge and symbols by European Muslims.<sup>14</sup> Thanks to this work, the relationship between believer and spiritual goods (beliefs, rituals, moral prescriptions) and the importance of individual choice in religious matters have become more prominent in research on European Islam.<sup>15</sup>

A significant amount of work focuses on the individualization of Islamic practices among new generations of Muslims who are born or educated in France.<sup>16</sup> Individualization of religious choice is presented in much of the contemporary scholarship as a democratization of the religious sphere, especially in contrast with the status of Islam in the country of origin. Being Muslim in France often translates into the loss of one's relationship to Islam as a cultural and social fact of life and instead questioning one's faith through the rubric of individual choice. This is not to say that such individualism is a characteristic solely of Western Islam. In the Muslim world, too, people make individual choices and question their relationship to tradition. Nevertheless, the

context of such individualism is quite different in the West. In secular democracies, the multiplicity of possible—and sometimes contradictory—choices is not only more noticeable but also more accepted. Although first-generation immigrants often live in a state of relative harmony within religious, social, and national identities, their children face a tension, if not an outright conflict, among the layers of individual, collective, and national identities. In a society that is at best indifferent and at worst hostile to Islam, being a Muslim for this second generation is no longer a given.

The individualization of religious practice thus leads to a range of possible Muslim identities that have been explored and classified.<sup>17</sup> Some scholarship focuses on female religiosity and its relationship to Islamic prescriptions on dress code.<sup>18</sup> These scholars note that while the *hijab* is viewed by many outsiders as a symbol of patriarchal oppression, many European Muslim women wear the veil voluntarily. Nevertheless, scholars do not agree on the overall consequences of this individualization process. In other words, it is an unresolved question whether such individualization leads to the liberalization of practice and interpretation or, on the contrary, to greater fundamentalism. Some scholars, such as Olivier Roy, contend that individualization tends to produce a predominance of fundamentalist interpretations because it makes Muslims more vulnerable to strict doctrines that insist on personal responsibility and the duty of believers to follow Islamic prescriptions.<sup>19</sup> Others argue, in contrast, that both liberal and fundamentalist paths are possible and present among French Muslims in particular and Western Muslims in general.<sup>20</sup>

There is also an increased literature on the high degree of fragmentation in Islamic religious authority and its accentuation through interaction with the secular environment. Traditionally, religious authority was conferred on the body of *ulema* (religious experts) in accordance with their theological knowledge and their mastery of the techniques of interpreting the Qur'an and hadith (the deeds and words of the Prophet Muhammad). Only those who possessed knowledge that had been passed down through a chain of authorities or a line of recognized masters could claim legitimacy as religious leaders.<sup>21</sup> This method of transmitting religious authority was not necessarily a matter of formal education, particularly if the knowledge passed down was esoteric in nature, as in the case of the Sufi masters. For centuries, the *ulema* class enjoyed a monopoly on the interpretation of the Qur'an and hadith. They were creators and guardians of Islamic orthodoxy by means of a huge body of muftis (Islamic scholars who issue fatwas, or religious de-

crees), qadis (judges), and other religious agents, such as teachers or guardians of waqfs (religious endowments). Under colonial rule and especially as postcolonial states developed systems of secular education, the situation began to change, however. The *ulema* were deprived of their monopoly and secular court systems based on foreign legal codes that undermined the *ulema*'s judicial status.<sup>22</sup>

These social and religious changes facilitated the appearance of a Muslim intellectual class that claimed to speak on behalf of Islam. The vast majority of the most influential Muslim thinkers of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries are no longer members of the trained *ulema* but rather graduates of secular universities. Established religious figures like the sheikhs of Al-Azhar or Medina and other established imams are therefore increasingly supplanted by the engineer, secular scholar, student, businessman, and autodidact who mobilize the masses and speak for Islam in arenas, in stadiums, on the radio, or, with increasing frequency, on the Internet. The expanded availability of communication technology such as magazines, cassette tapes, and Internet sites aids in this multiplication of Islamic voices. These changes are enhanced in the Western context where Muslims are a minority and often lack an institutionalized body of imams.

Unlike their American counterparts, European researchers have been attempting to establish a general interpretative framework for the study of Islam in the West.<sup>23</sup> An important concept informing this attempt is sensitivity to minority status and its sociological and political consequences. For example, many scholars consider the fact of being a minority within a democratic and secularized context as a decisive element in the transformation of Muslims' practices and relationship to Islam. However, this approach often amounts to a mere description of the modalities according to which Muslims adapt to their new context.<sup>24</sup> Another (more innovative) approach takes into account the modes of interaction between Muslim groups and different segments of Western societies. A process-based approach to identities entails a refusal to essentialize either the minority or the dominant culture and can ultimately lead to an understanding of the social construction of Muslim communities within the dialectic formed between surroundings and group resources.<sup>25</sup>

### **The Fragmented Nature of American Research on Islam**

Turning to American scholarship on Islam and Muslims, we find that the body of literature is much more sparse and sporadic. Muslim groups

are remarkably absent from the sociological and anthropological literature on immigration. Research on the sociology of immigration generally does not consider the issue of contemporary Islam and Muslims in the United States to be relevant to the discipline. As a result, until recently the topic of Islam in America has been the monopoly of specialists on Islam who are not particularly well versed in the sociology of American immigration.<sup>26</sup> Such paucity is probably linked to the dominant methodologies that dominate the discipline of sociology and does not facilitate an investigation of religion. Moreover, ideological, political, and financial concerns tend to draw research to the big numbers of Hispanics (seen also as the most problematic group when it comes to integration and immigration).

Despite the fact that religion is not deemed a taboo subject in American scholarship, scholarship on the sociology of religion has been lacking while an ethnographic approach has instead dominated research on Muslims in the United States. The extreme ethnic diversity of American Islam has encouraged a focus on localized ethnic communities, some of which have received more attention than others (for example, Arabs in Detroit or African American Muslims).<sup>27</sup> However, studies on U.S. Muslims that focus on specific ethnic groups (such as Arabs, South Asians, or African Americans) often take for granted the ethnic boundaries in question. This, too, is problematic insofar as the resulting literature tends to downplay or ignore the persistence and mechanics of various forces of assimilation. Regardless of the existence of pioneering studies, there is a lack of systematic comparisons between different ethnic groups that directly address the diversification and adaptation of their religious practices to the American context.<sup>28</sup> For some time now, the assimilationist paradigm, which describes immigration primarily as a process of trading one culture for another, has dominated the study of Islam in America.<sup>29</sup> Scholars such as Abdo Elkholy and Elaine Hagoopian expect Muslims to eventually assimilate into a mainstream U.S. culture and become a distinctive religious group that is devoid of any explicit ethnic identity. This approach implicitly follows Will Herberg's Protestant, Catholic, and Jewish melting-pot model.<sup>30</sup> Current debates in the sociology of immigration have questioned for some time now this paradigm. The contention is that although the assimilationist model may reflect the reality of the first wave of Muslim immigrants in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (comprised mainly of Lebanese and Syrians but also Turks and Albanians),<sup>31</sup> it does not adequately capture the more recent experiences of Muslim immigrants to the United

States. Indeed, since the 1963 publication of *Beyond the Melting Pot*, sociologists have sharply criticized the assimilationist model.<sup>32</sup> In the case of U.S. Muslims, ethnic and cultural diversity has not actually facilitated the dissolution of ethnic boundaries in favor of a “Muslim melting pot.” According to ethnographic studies on Muslim immigrants, primary relationships, particularly marriages, have tended to remain within the limits of the ethnic group.<sup>33</sup> Insofar as the majority of Muslim immigrants are part of the post-1965 immigration wave, it seems probable that ethnicity will continue to play a role in the participation of recent immigrants in U.S. society. New research, therefore, advocates a pluralist rather than an assimilationist approach to American society to account for the ways in which immigrants maintain or reinvent ethnic and cultural identities even as they navigate their new cultural context.<sup>34</sup>

At the same time, a significant amount of sociological scholarship from the 1980s onward has argued for the recovery of the term *assimilation*, through the restoration of its descriptive value in tandem with the erasure of its prescriptive baggage.<sup>35</sup> According to this line of thinking, “assimilation without assimilationism”<sup>36</sup> remains a useful term for understanding the social processes that take place in interactions between minority and majority groups. Many of the Muslim immigrants who arrived in the United States after 1965 have successfully assimilated into the socioeconomic market and they continue to participate in mainstream financial and social institutions. The high level of education and the professional skills these immigrants possess have allowed them to take part in the U.S. economy in services such as computer science, medicine, and education.

A related problem in immigration scholarship is the over-reliance on the term *ethnicity*, which these scholars often allow to do analytical work for them. Recent research, especially in anthropology, has appreciably called into question this term’s usefulness as an analytical construct. Questions have also been raised about traditional notions of culture, often described as something akin to a “thing” that we carry around with us. In all of these cases, ethnicity is understood as an internally consistent factor, clearly defined, and even logically coherent. This conception of ethnicity has come under heavy criticism for being essentialist, insufficiently relational, and far too static to capture the contradictions and complexities of identity.

Scholarly models of exclusion that are applied to nonimmigrant groups (such as African Americans) can also prove relevant for the study of Muslim immigrants to the West. These models can be particu-

larly valuable for understanding the situation of immigrant Muslims after 9/11. Viewed from this perspective, ethnicity emerges as the result of discrimination<sup>37</sup> developed in a social logic that reveals the deeply embedded nature of racial differences in American social institutions. Studies that convincingly argue that current national security issues recast American Muslims as the epitome of a distinct and disadvantaged group within American society support this reading of and approach to ethnicity.<sup>38</sup>

Furthermore, ethnicity-based and assimilationist models of immigration presuppose the nation-state as a bounded unit, excluding the transnational connections and processes that have become increasingly important in a globalizing world.<sup>39</sup> U.S. Muslims—like many other recent immigrant groups—maintain ongoing ties to their countries of origin in what might be called transnational migrant labor circuits. That is, U.S. Muslims tend to return to their countries of origin on an annual or semiannual basis to attend family events and to allow their children to immerse themselves in their linguistic and cultural backgrounds. Indeed, after retirement, immigrants frequently return to their countries of origin permanently. Thus, although immigrants assert that they are “American,” they simultaneously tend to identify themselves as “Dominican,” “Nigerian,” “Egyptian,” and so on. This trend is further illustrated by the increasing popularity of dual citizenship, as well as a decline in using territory or land as a primary locus of identification. The transnational dimension of the lives of new immigrants is just recently being emphasized in recent scholarship on this topic.<sup>40</sup> Between assimilationism, ethnic and racial discrimination, and transnational connections, which model best explains the post-1965 Muslim immigrant experience in the United States? To some extent, all of them do. Nevertheless, the methods employed in all of these studies fail to comprehensively address the social reality of immigration or to develop a constructive theoretical framework by which to analyze the issue.<sup>41</sup> In Europe, alternatively, anthropologists have been able to address more general issues of transnationalism and multiculturalism as they pertain to different national contexts.<sup>42</sup> As a final complication, there are still virtually no comparative studies of Islamic religiosity,<sup>43</sup> and it is only recently that scholars have begun to examine religious practice in any depth.<sup>44</sup> The first attempts to collect information on the religious observances of Muslims were carried out by Project MAPS (Muslims in the American Public Sphere) in the first few years of this century.<sup>45</sup> Yet even in this study, religious practice was deemed a secondary issue after po-

litical participation, and questions on the topic of religion were limited in both scope and number. Moreover, these surveys can be criticized on the grounds that they reused standard questions that had been developed for the purpose of polling Christians. The meaning of a question on church attendance, for example, is fundamentally different than a question about going to a mosque. For Christians, going to a church is a direct sign of religious observance, whereas for Muslims, going to a mosque may be motivated by purposes beyond religious worship. Similarly, although the polls carried out by the Pew Charitable Trusts in 2007 indicate a continuing interest in questions of Muslim religious practice, they are subject to the same kind of criticism.<sup>46</sup>

Despite the transatlantic divide in the study of Islam in Europe and in the United States, it is nevertheless possible to locate two points in common—(1) the normative approach to Islam as a religion and (2) an expanding corpus of literature on contemporary Islam that is influenced by the international agenda and the rise of Islam as a political force on the international scene.

## **The Normative / Essentialist Bias**

Afshin Matin Asgari<sup>47</sup> has pointed out that most studies on contemporary Islam are influenced by Weberian axioms. The point here is not to criticize the hypothetical contradiction between Muslim beliefs and capitalism; early critics such as Maxime Rodinson<sup>48</sup> and Patricia Crone<sup>49</sup> have already done so, brilliantly. Rather, the point is to acknowledge that in those disciplines that have distanced themselves from an Orientalist bias (anthropology or sociology), the Weberian influence is still present. This influence results in the conception of Islam as a unified whole, an emphasis on the centrality of Islam in defining the cultural ethos of Muslim groups, and a supremacist approach to Western heritage. For example, mainstream historiography, despite Hodgson's warning, has added the adjective "Islamic" to all categories—cities, societies, art, and so on—imbuing history with a religious essence. Consequently, "the historiography of primarily 'Islamic' cultures and societies is shaped by the assumption that Islam somehow defines the character of entire cultures, civilizations and historical epochs."<sup>50</sup>

In the case of Islam in the West, the perception of Islam as a whole translates into a definition of Islam that is rudimentarily characterized

by the Five Pillars. In this way, normative approaches to Islam pervade the study of Muslims in Europe and America, often unconsciously. In this form of research, Islam appears as a set of decontextualized rules that define and constrain any Muslim at any given time. Most studies on Muslims open with a recapitulation of these rules, which include the Five Pillars of faith, dietary rules, and dress code.<sup>51</sup> In addition to contributing to definitions of Islam as a fixed set of texts and practices through which a Muslim's individuality is effaced, this normative approach exaggerates the role of Islamic doctrine in determining an individual's behavior. Additionally, the presence of the Orientalist tradition lingers behind this intellectual treatment of Islam, which reduces vast complexes of practice to the prescriptions of revealed texts and their professional interpreters. Instead of being confined by such legalistic frameworks, we need to be aware of the fluidity and flexibility of certain theological concepts.<sup>52</sup>

This essentialism is not as much ethnocentric, however, as it is simply normative—an approach that characterizes most of the studies on Muslims in European countries or North America. France is an exception, where such a normative approach is dominant in nonacademic essays by journalists or indeed by Muslims themselves but less apparent in academic literature.<sup>53</sup> Such a rigid presentation of Islam erases the actual diversity of practices and ways of being Muslim that exist alongside the so-called orthodox perspectives. It also ignores the importance of the societies in which Muslims are living and attempting to practice their faith and the extent to which different contexts often demand the reimagining of a living tradition. Muslims, like all religious practitioners, are constantly renegotiating their relationship to the dogmas and prescriptions of their tradition.

Moreover, normative approaches to Islam preclude analysis of the relationship between modernity and Islam on the individual or broader social level. In reality, the relationship between Islam and modernity is complex, nuanced, and variable. For example, certain movements in Islam (such as the *jihadi* groups) reject modernity as an import from the West, while others endorse modernity and praise its Western character.<sup>54</sup> An example of the latter group would be those represented by Kemal Atatürk and the Turkish Republic. Beginning in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the *salafi* movements of Jamal al-Din al-Afghani (1839–1897), Muhammad Abduh (1849–1905), and Rashid Rida (1865–1935) strove to gain a middle ground, embracing modernity even

as they sought to redefine it in Islamic terms.<sup>55</sup> This trend continues today among some Sufi movements and groups inspired by the Muslim Brotherhood (see the section below on global Islam).

Afshin also notes the basic Weberian fallacy of defining societies primarily in terms of their cultural ethos, often articulated in terms of religion.<sup>56</sup> The risk here is to look for Islam in places where it is not—in social, political, sexual, or cultural attitudes—and consequently subsuming this diversity under the catch-all adjective *Islamic*. One case in point is the debate on gender relations and gender roles among Muslims in the West, which tends to attribute to Islam as a whole attitudes that may in fact be expressive of other motivations, often from patriarchal cultures.

The third prominent Weberian fallacy is to posit Occidental culture as superior in terms of rationality and scientific knowledge, a tendency that is certainly ethnocentric. Such a supremacist vision of the West is often apparent in the endless discussion of Islam's claims to universalism in contemporary discourse.<sup>57</sup> By equating Islamism with particularity, certain authors, such as Samuel Huntington<sup>58</sup> and Al-Azmeh,<sup>59</sup> commit the corresponding error of conflating the West with universalism. Such a bias is apparent in the majority of surveys described above concerning the integration and assimilation of Islam and Muslims. Most of this research, including studies on the individualization of religious beliefs, takes the idea that Muslims must necessarily adjust to the secular and cultural norms of the West and implicitly or explicitly consider this as an improvement over any other status.<sup>60</sup>

## **The Influence of International Politics**

These normative and ethnocentric leanings are even more pronounced in the current growth of research on Islam and Muslims in the West by experts on terrorism. On both sides of the Atlantic, the visibility of Islam is related to the international geopolitical context and the rise of political and radical Islam. Long before the 2001 attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, political Islam was a source of fear for Westerners, many of whom now see Islam as both a foreign and a domestic enemy. When people were asked, in a 1994 U.S. poll, if they considered Islamic resurgence to be a danger, 61 percent of the respondents said yes.<sup>61</sup> In a 1991 survey in Europe, 51 percent of the French respondents stated that the greatest danger to France came from the

“Islamic” south. Moreover, they listed Iraq, Iran, Libya, and Algeria as the four countries to be feared most, citing their Islamic character as the principle reason.<sup>62</sup> At the root of much of this fear are Western perceptions of Islam as both “foreign” and monolithic. Representations of political events in the Muslim world often gloss over the political and cultural contexts at play, thereby reinforcing stereotypes of an undifferentiated and homogeneous Islam.<sup>63</sup>

Over the past thirty years, there has been a series of events, each more explosive than the last, that has created indelible images of a militant Islam. These include the 1979 Iranian Revolution and the seizure of hostages at the American embassy, the assassination of Egyptian president Anwar al-Sadat in 1981, the Lebanese hostage crisis from 1982–1992, the Salman Rushdie affair in 1988, the Islamist insurgency in Algeria in the 1990s, and the multi-decade conflict in Afghanistan. Islam, now perceived as a significant risk factor in international relations, has taken the place of Communism as the most prominent geopolitical threat. In the language used by both the U.S. defense department and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, countries or regions “of an Islamic character,” from Iran to Sudan, top the American administration’s list of “terrorist” areas.

Not surprisingly, scholarly research on contemporary Islam has often fallen into the trap of presenting Muslims as exceptional because of the widespread conception of Islam as being synonymous with political turmoil. Sociologists and political scientists who are not scholars of Islam are particularly prone to this bias. As a result, they often accept common stereotypical assumptions about Islam, seeing it as inseparable from politics or interpreting Islam’s message as necessarily violent. Among contemporary scholars, these Orientalist assumptions are exemplified by Samuel Huntington’s portrayal of Islam in *The Clash of Civilizations*.<sup>64</sup> And yet despite their popularity, such characterizations of Islam as a “religion of the sword,” a tradition that is definitionally opposed to Western—that is, Christian—civilization, are not validated by any serious historical analysis.<sup>65</sup> Nonetheless, ideologically biased assessments of Islam influence academic studies, and scholars often assume that being Muslim does indeed constitute an extraordinary situation largely due to Islam’s antithetical position with respect to the West.<sup>66</sup>

This question underlies almost all European research on Islam and has been exacerbated by various political agendas. In the postcolonial context of the 1980s, Europeans began to take a politically motivated in-

terest in Islamic integration due to the domestic influence of political movements linked to Islam, particularly the Algerian Islamic Salvation Front (FIS), as well as the close ties maintained between European nations and certain Islamic nations such as Algeria, Morocco, and Turkey. In the United States, on the other hand, current political interest and media coverage are closely tied to the aftereffects of September 11. If the European model serves as a precedent, this will likely impact research on Islam in the West for the next decade. In this regard, it is interesting to observe the emergent literature of security experts on contemporary Islamic issues.<sup>67</sup>

## **A Sociology of Islam as a Global Tradition**

Muslim immigration to Europe and North America can be seen as the foundational moment for a new transcultural space—a space where individuals live and experience different cultural references and values that are now disconnected from national contexts and boundaries. This kind of moment occurs within the context of globalization during a period of mobility of cultures and religions. Any comprehensive understanding of Muslim minorities in the West needs to take the phenomenon of global Islam into account. The inherent tension in this approach is that it runs the risk of removing Islam from its particular contexts and reducing it to a series of essentialized symbols and principles. To break through the iron cage of stereotyped representations of Islam, it is necessary to consider discursive practices in the field of religion in general and Islam in particular. Religions and cultures can never be taken as a given. Rather than trying to discover the essential constitution of Islam, it is necessary to examine the social and historical contexts within which Muslims create discourses about what is important or unimportant to *their* Islam.

In this regard, Talal Asad's study of Islam as a discursive tradition may be helpful to avoid the Weberian fallacies described above. Most of all, this approach helps to bridge the gap between a textual or literal approach and the study of Islam as a living religion, a challenge that is currently plaguing research on contemporary Islam. Social scientists have extricated the study of religious texts from their approach to contemporary Islam because of the risk it entails for interpreting groups, societies, or situations monolithically. For example, anthropologists tend to reject Islam as a nonlocalizable artifact and alternatively

consider local expressions of “lived Islam” as the exclusive object of legitimate research.<sup>68</sup> Launay convincingly argues<sup>69</sup> that many anthropologists are now handling Islam in the same way they approached “totemism.” After working with this concept for decades, anthropologists now realize that it is an artifact of academic discourse rather than an actual feature of the cultures it was supposed to describe.<sup>70</sup> The problem is that it is not possible to treat Islam as a mere artifact of anthropological study because Muslims identify with Islam (which is not the case with totemism). Like it or not, anthropologists and social scientists have to work with the universalist claims of Islam to a certain extent because Muslims themselves make such claims and continually calibrate their practices to them. In fact, references to what is right or wrong, just or unjust, possible or not possible within Islam are largely determined by sources and materials that anthropologists have unfortunately excluded from their domain of research. Although I agree with Abu Lughod<sup>71</sup> that it is a healthy impulse to study a religion through what its practitioners say and do, it is by no means sufficient because the debates about the nature of Islam and what it means to be a Muslim themselves shape people’s actions and discourse.

Islamic texts and sources are both polyvocal and contradictory, and there are dialogues between texts and practices as well discussions that are internal to the domain of practice. A relevant illustration of this process is the way that Muslims—from their position in the West—question the heterodoxy of certain practices like homosexuality or music, both of which are frequently described in the fixed corpus of orthodox interpretations as being outside the realm of Islam. It is also relevant to note how the current global debate on the “true Islam” led by transnational groups like *salafi*, is influencing the ways that practitioners in the West define themselves as Muslims.

As Talal Asad has noted, tradition is a conglomeration of discursive practices that allow believers to determine what is correct and meaningful at a given time.<sup>72</sup> Thus, to combat the essentialist assumption that meaning is constructed as a unified system extending from the international through the national to the local level, Islam should instead be envisioned as a conglomeration of discursive practices that are context specific, including the context of Western democracies. Although it is impossible to define an “Islamic” religious experience that is ultimately distinct (as Geertz attempted to do)<sup>73</sup> or describe a uniquely Islamic social structure (as Gellner does),<sup>74</sup> one can speak of Islamic discursive constraints and tradition. The challenge is to find a framework capable

of coherently analyzing the relationship between the singular, global entity of the Islamic tradition and the multitude of religious practices and beliefs of Muslims within distinct communities at specific moments in history.<sup>75</sup> Asad's "tradition" is the concept that allows him to avoid the pattern of Islamic civilizations with respect to the infinite multiplicity of local meanings. Tradition is a "historically extended, socially embodied argument and an argument precisely in part about the goods which constitute that tradition."<sup>76</sup> The pursuit of goods expands and evolves through different generations, and tradition establishes orthodoxy and orthopraxy in historical and material contexts.<sup>77</sup> In these conditions, research on Islam in the West must take into account the ways in which Muslims embrace current definitions of the Islamic tradition and how they define themselves amid intense debates that dominate the current struggles to authorize a "correct" form of Islam.

Throughout time, teaching and arguing about doctrine and practice has transcended locality and encompassed various Islamic spaces. The actual mechanisms and media through which this interaction among various local orthodoxies takes place and the power relations involved therein should be the object of research.<sup>78</sup> These discursive practices include debates about the content and form of Islamic observance, as well as the meaning of practice in Islam. The act of going to the mosque to pray, the choices of whether to eat halal or drink wine, wear the *hijab* or a miniskirt—all of these considerations are just as much a part of current discourse as discussions in books, at conferences, and on websites. It is therefore necessary to examine how cultural symbols and the production of meaning intersect at different levels of communication and action, as well as in local, national, and international contexts, without predefining these levels of meaning and the contexts of their production.

A second major benefit of Asad's approach is to avoid the supremacist discourse of the West by paying attention to the indigenous narratives of Muslims and reintroducing rationalities of behavior that are not simply affected by the external environment (as in the idea of "Western democracy under siege") but are in dialogue with it. Generally speaking, contemporary research should focus on the *mutual* transformation of Islam and Western societies, for nationalism and secularism of Western societies are transformed by the presence of Muslims just as much as the new political and cultural circumstances may transform Muslims' practice into increasingly private acts of faith.<sup>79</sup> The secularization of Islam is also visible in the vast and silent majority of Muslims' acceptance of the separation between public and private space in their

particular society. In some European countries, this secularization has also manifested itself in the creation of Islamic organizations charged with representing Islam in the public sphere. These organizations are often associated with or even established by the government, as is the case in Belgium and in France.

It is also necessary to recognize that through their words as well as their actions, Muslims in the West contribute to the imagination of contemporary Islam. As Arjun Appadurai has pointed out, the imaginary itself is now a social and cultural force.<sup>80</sup> Participation in the Islamic imagination is concretely expressed through disparate religious practices and mobilizations. The most visible of these practices entail participation in transnational radical or proselytizing movements such as *salafi*, Tablighi, or Sufi Islam. Some of these groups promote a defensive and reactive identity, which can often produce a veritable theology of hate. On the opposite end of the spectrum are more inclusive and hybridized practices of Islam such as hip-hop music and gay Muslim groups. These practices signal an acceptance of modernity and are sometimes accompanied by real innovations and new, syncretic forms of religious practice. Moreover, transnational movements, such as that led by Fethullah Gülen, are promoting an inclusive Islam that is open to different cultural contexts.<sup>81</sup>

It is also important to examine how the encounter with democratic and secularized culture has encouraged religious innovation at the same time that it has brought certain longstanding crises in the Muslim world into sharp relief, particularly with respect to religious authority. Muslims of the diaspora are enacting all the theoretical and conceptual debates about democracy that have troubled the Muslim world for centuries and are questioning many interpretations of Islamic tradition. In the process, they are instigating an unprecedented series of changes within Islam, both in terms of ritual practice and intellectual reflection.

Finally, the situation of Muslims in Europe and the United States deserves careful study because none of these developments are occurring in isolation: they contain dramatic consequences for the West and for the climate of the Muslim world as well. The Muslim world's reaction to the French law of 2004 that prohibits religious symbols in public schools, for example, is a clear illustration of the phenomenon of global Islam. The 2006 Danish cartoons crisis is another proof positive. In short, the Americanization and Europeanization of Islam cannot be dissociated from the cultural space-time of global Islam and the political crises that sometimes accompany it.

The main influences that have been exerted by the globalization of Islam in the Western context are (1) the plurality of discourses in Western public spheres that are creating a metanarrative of Islam, (2) the complex interplay between national origin, ethnicity, culture and religion, and (3) the dynamics of deterritorialized Islamic movements such as *salafi* organizations or Jamaat Tabligh. The last two features are particularly salient in the sociology of contemporary Islam.

### **Global Interpretations of Islam: The Struggle for Orthodoxy**

As Taji-Farouki and Nafi have noted, contemporary Islamic thought tends to respond to and react to external forces, such as colonialism, nationalism, communism, and globalization.<sup>82</sup> Islamic approaches to modernity that are systematically associated with the West because of their responsive and reactive character tend to be highly polarized. Consequently, there is a lack of consensus among the vast diversity of Islamic perspectives on what comprises religious tradition and little agreement on how to deal with the West and the political-cultural movements associated with it—secularism and globalization. The increased circulation of both people and ideas has furnished intense polarization within Islamic thinking.

Within this broad market of ideas and interpretations, there is now a global source for Islamic thought, resulting in an exponential increase of Islamic authority figures. Established religious leaders like the sheikhs of Al-Azhar or Medina are increasingly supplanted by the engineer, student, businessman, and autodidact, mobilizing the masses and speaking for Islam in stadiums, on the radio, and on the Internet.<sup>83</sup> Increases in the availability of communication technology have also contributed to the multiplication of voices for Islam. Some of the most notorious of these spokesmen are those with explicitly militant political messages, such as Osama bin Laden. Others, however, simply espouse their own alternatives to traditional Al-Azhari or Sufi interpretations. This is the approach taken by the Syrian engineer, Muhammad Shahur, whose Kantian interpretation of the Qur'an has sold millions of copies in Syria in addition to the pirated copies circulating throughout the Arab world.<sup>84</sup>

As far as their connections to Muslims in the West, global trends in Islam can be loosely divided into two types. The first can be termed diasporic, insofar as it is characterized by ties between immigrant communities and their countries of origin. In this case, either official state organs or specific religious agents from the country of origin provide re-

ligious interpretations for these diaspora communities, disseminating nationalized versions of Islam throughout the West. The most prominent national versions of Islam in the West come from Morocco, Turkey, Pakistan, Iran, and Algeria. Within these nationalized definitions, religious education is geared toward the production and reproduction of collective memory, and individual critical engagement with authoritative texts is discouraged. The manifestations of the diasporic trend are a classic case of a closed theological corpus that serves the purposes of the State. Within the European and American contexts, while some groups of Muslim immigrants may identify with these traditions, new generations of Muslims have begun to criticize the exportation of bureaucratic leaders and the fixed interpretations they use to govern their Islamic activities and instead assert that diaspora communities must be given authority over their own development.

The second trend in the propagation of Islamic thought consists of theological and political movements such as the Muslim Brotherhood, the Jamaat Tabligh, or the Wahabis, which emphasize a universal link to the community of believers (*umma*) instead of national communities. Today, conditions for the free movement of people and ideas and the decline of national ideologies make the *umma* even more compelling as an identity marker. Although the diversification of interpretation tends to lead to a proliferation of independent sects in religions such as Protestantism, the unity of the *umma* is generally successfully maintained as an imagined and constantly renewed community founded on a shared fate.

Virtual Islam is part of this second form of transnational Islam. "Electronic religiosity" is causing Islam to expand globally via the circulation of audio and videotapes, the broadcast of independent television satellite shows, and, most significantly, the creation of websites. Bulletin boards, chatrooms, and discussion forums on the Internet are promoting alternative and even contradictory understandings of Islam where monolithic, national interpretations previously existed. In the process, technological developments are affecting Islamic discourse and breaking up the monopoly of traditional religious authorities on spiritual issues.<sup>85</sup>

Here it is important to distinguish between radicalism and fundamentalism. The desire for a version of Islam that is based on a direct relationship to divine revelation frequently motivates people to join *salafi* or Wahabi movements. Therefore, members of those groups may be classed as fundamentalists. They refer back to the original sources of

the religion—the Qur’an and the hadith. This return to the source texts may also be considered conservative, as it is for the increasingly popular Jamaat Tabligh or for those who draw their inspiration from the thought of the Saudi Sheik al-Albani.<sup>86</sup>

A return to divine revelation can also produce more inclusive interpretations that adapt easily to Western sociopolitical contexts. In many instances, the Muslim Brotherhood movement asserts that Islam is compatible with the democratic, secular contexts of the West and advocates participation in the political and civil life of mainstream societies.<sup>87</sup> Sheikh Yusuf Qaradawi, who teaches at University of Qatar, is an eminent proponent of this position.

Although transnational forms of Islam often include inclusive returns to fundamental principles and texts, it is just as important to note that, in most cases, they do *not* encourage a critical approach to source materials. To question the status of the Qur’an remains largely taboo, and this includes employing hermeneutic or historical methods of interpretation to the Qur’an. More generally, while modernizers have tended to be less influential within Muslim-majority societies, fundamentalist, puritan, and radical interpreters of Islam have gained ground, especially since 1967. Nonetheless, modernizing figures such as Abdullahi An-Nai’im (b. 1946), Fazlur Rahman (1919–1988), and Muhammad Said al-Ashmawi (b. 1932) have managed to develop a critical discourse on the Islamic tradition in their introduction of new interpretations to Muslim societies, particularly in the areas of human rights, gender, secularism, democracy, and epistemology.<sup>88</sup>

The tensions surrounding transnational Islam are not only those between an essentialized Islam and an essentialized West. Considerable tension also exists between modernizers and antimodernizers among Muslim thinkers and activists. Such tension has led to increased polarization over issues such as democracy, human rights, women’s rights, and secularism. Islamic thinking on these issues cannot follow the Western model but will need to carve out its own approach with reference to its own traditions. Whether this process will facilitate the transformation of Muslim societies through democratization and secularization remains to be seen.

Even this brief glimpse into the complex of local, national, and international groupings that characterize Islam in Europe and the United States reveals some of the shortcomings of current scholarship on the subject. Due to the centrality of transnational networks for Western Muslim communities, any analysis that emphasizes Muslims’ obliga-

tions to the host society, to the exclusion of international influences, will inevitably fail to provide a balanced view. The adaptation of Islam to a democratic context is a twofold process: it involves identification with global or transnational forms of Islam as well as with national cultures of the West.

## Conclusion

The creation of a specific methodology is a priority for research on Islam in the West. If we accept that the dialectic between a Muslim group and its social surroundings must be considered as a key factor in the construction of Islamic identities, then we must also avoid essentializing these surroundings to properly account for their significant variances. This methodological challenge calls for both synchronic and diachronic comparison. We need to compare Muslims with other contemporary religious groups and the present situation to past historical precedents in Western societies. In other words, to understand the current formation of Islamic identities in Europe and the United States, we must consider how other immigrant groups from other religious traditions (such as Buddhists and Sikhs) integrate into a given society. We must also examine how religious groups that are now settled (such as Jews and Catholics) experienced this integration process in earlier historical periods.

Only an approach that links the sociology of immigration with the sociology of religion and the sociology of ethnic groups will allow us to assess this complex situation adequately. There is much work to be done to make sure that the notion of “the religious” ceases to be the black box in models of Muslims’ integration in Europe and the United States.<sup>89</sup>

## Notes

1. For an extensive review of the academic production on Islam in Europe, see Marcel Maussen, “The Governance of Islam in Western Europe: A State of the Art Report,” IMISCOE Working paper (June 2007).

2. See, for example, Frank Buijs and Jan Rath, *Muslims in Europe: The State of Research* (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 2003).

3. Marcel Maussen, “Mosques and Muslims in Marseilles,” *ISIM Review* 16 (2005): 54–55; Franck Fregosi, *La formation des cadres religieux musulmans en France: approches socio-juridiques / sous la direction de Franck Fregosi* (Paris: L’Harmattan,

1998); Jocelyne Cesari and Sean McLoughlin, eds., *European Muslims and the Secular State* (Burlington, Vt.: Ashgate, 2005).

4. Eric Roose, "Fifty Years of Mosque Architecture in the Netherlands," *EJOS* 8-5 (2005): 1-46, and "From Kampong Mosque to Kaaba: Moluccan Mosque Design in the Netherlands," *EJOS* 9-5 (2006): 1-99.

5. W. A. Shadid and P. S. Koningsveld, "Islamic Religious Education in the Netherlands," *European Education* 38-2 (2006): 76-88.

6. See Franck Frégosi, *La formation des cadres religieux musulmans en France: approches socio-juridiques* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1998); Alexandre Caeiro, "Transnational Ulama, European Fatwas, and Islamic Authority: A Case Study of the European Council for Fatwa and Research," in *Production and Dissemination of Islamic Knowledge in Western Europe*, ed. Martin van Bruinessen and Stefano Allievi, (London: Routledge, 2006); and "Religious Authorities or Political Actors? The Muslim Leaders of the French Representative Body," in *European Muslims and the Secular States*, ed. Cesari and McLoughlin, 71-84; John Bowen, "Beyond Migration: Islam as a Transnational Public Space," *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 30-5 (2004): 879-894; and "Does French Islam Have Borders? Dilemmas of Domestication in a Global Religious Field," *American Anthropologist* 106-1 (2004): 43-55.

7. See Bobby Said, *A Fundamental Fear: Eurocentrism and the Emergence of Islamism* (London: Zed Books, 1997).

8. See the work of Mathias Rohe and M. C. Foblets.

9. B. Gokariksel and K. Mitchell, "Veiling, Secularism, and the Neoliberal Subject: National Narratives and Supranational Desires in Turkey and France," *Global Networks: A Journal of Transnational Affairs* 5-2 (2005): 147-65; W. A. Shadid and P. S. Koningsveld, "Muslim Dress in Europe: Debates on the Headscarf," *Journal of Islamic Studies* 16-1 (2005): 35-61; J. R. Bowen, *Why the French Don't Like Headscarves: Islam, the State and Public Space* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2006).

10. The Runnymede Trust, *Islamophobia: A Challenge for Us All* (London: Runnymede Trust, 1997).

11. Despite these academic efforts, however, anti-Islamic discourses have multiplied in France in recent years. During the 1990s in France, anti-Islamic statements were almost exclusively the prerogative of the far right. Today, however, intellectuals, journalists, writers, and artists unabashedly express their aversion to Islam. See Vincent Geisser and Françoise Lorcerie, *La nouvelle islamophobie* (Paris: La Découverte, 2005). In an interview in the September 2001 issue of the magazine *Lire*, the writer Michel Houellebecq stated: "Islam is definitely the most f—d up of all the religions." Oriana Fallaci's *La rage et l'orgueil* (*The Rage and the Pride*) (Paris: Plon, 2002), which sold more than a million copies in Italy and France, was an incendiary diatribe against Muslims and the Islamic faith that resulted in the author's prosecution for inciting racial hatred in October 2003; she was ultimately not convicted. That same year, on October 24, Claude Imbert, the founder of the newspaper *Le Point*, declared himself on the French TV station LCI to be "un peu islamophobe" and characterized Islam as upholding "une débilite d'archaïsmes divers."

12. Geisser and Lorcerie, *La nouvelle islamophobie*.

13. Felice Dassetto, *La construction de l'islam européen: approche socio-anthropologique* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1996).

14. Felice Dassetto, ed., *Paroles d'islam: individus, sociétés, discours dans l'islam européen contemporain* (Paris: Maisonneuve et Larose, 2000).

15. T. Luckmann, *The Invisible Religion: The Problem of Religion in Modern Society* (New York: Macmillan, 1967).

16. Jocelyne Cesari, *Musulmans et republicains: les jeunes, l'islam et la France*

(Bruxelles: Éditions Complexe, 1998); Farhad Khosrokar, *L'islam des jeunes* (Paris: Flammarion, 1997); Leila Babes, *L'islam positif* (Lille: Éditions de l'Atelier, 1997).

17. See Jocelyne Cesari, *When Islam and Democracy Meet: Muslims in Europe and the United States* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004).

18. See Nadine Weibel, *Par-delà le voile: femmes d'islam en Europe* (Brussels: Complexe, 2000); Nancy Venel, *Musulmans et citoyens* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 2004); Amel Boubakeur, *Le voile de la mariée: jeunes musulmanes—voile et projet matrimonial en France* (Paris: Éditions l'Harmattan, 2004).

19. Olivier Roy, *L'islam mondialisé* (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 2002).

20. Cesari, *When Islam and Democracy Meet*.

21. See Dale F. Eickelman and Jon W. Anderson, *New Media in the Muslim World: The Emerging Public Sphere* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999). See also Brinkley Messick, *The Caligraphic State: Textual Domination and History in a Muslim Society* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 135–51.

22. See Suha Taji-Farouki and Basheer M. Nafi, *Islamic Thought in the Twentieth Century* (London: St. Martin's Press, 2004), 1–27.

23. See J. Rath, R. Penninx, K. Groenendijk, and A. Meyer, *Western Europe and Its Islam: The Social Reaction to the Institutionalization of "New Religion" in the Netherlands, Belgium and the United Kingdom* (Leiden: Brill, 2001).

24. T. Gerholm and Y. G. Lithman, eds., *The New Islamic Presence in Western Europe* (London: Mansell, 1988); B. Lewis and D. Schnapper, eds., *Muslims in Europe*, (London: Pinter, 1994); G. Nonneman, T. Niblock, and B. Szajkowski, eds., *Muslim Communities in the New Europe* (Ithaca: Ithaca Press, 1996); W. A. R. Shadi and P. S. Van Koningsveld, eds., *The Integration of Islam and Hinduism in Western Europe* (Kampen: Kok Pharos, 1991); *Religious Freedom and the Position of Islam in Western Europe* (Kampen: Kok Pharos, 1995); and *Muslims in the Margin: Political Responses to the Presence of Islam in Western Europe* (Kampen: Kok Pharos, 1996); S. Vertovec and C. Peach, eds., *Islam in Europe: The Politics of Religion and Community* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997); S. Vertovec and A. Rogers, eds., *Muslim European Youth: Reproducing Ethnicity, Religion, Culture* (London: Ashgate, 1998).

25. Jocelyne Cesari, "Muslim Minorities in Europe: The Silent Revolution," in *Modernizing Islam: Religion in the Public Sphere in the Middle East and in Europe*, ed. John Esposito and François Burgat, (Piscataway, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 2003). Also see the work of the Network of Comparative Research on Islam and Muslims in Europe (NOCRIME), <http://www.nocrime.org>. Its work borrows much from a strain of research that accords prime importance to the dialectic process in the analysis of interactions between groups and cultures, notably when the recognition of one group by another group is at stake. See N. Sakai, "Modernity and Its Critique: The Problem of Universalism and Particularism," in *Postmodernism and Japan*, ed. H. Harootunian and M. Myoshi (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1989); R. Sakamoto, "Japan, Hybridity and the Creation of Colonialist Discourse," *Theory, Culture and Society* 13-3 (1996): 113–128.

26. Yvonne Yazbeck Haddad, Jane Smith, John Esposito, and Sherman Jackson are all significant examples of specialists in Islam who are not trained in sociology.

27. For examples of this trend, see Muhammad Arif, *Salaam America: South Asian Muslims in New York* (New York: Anthem Press, 2002), and Linda Walbridge, *Without Forgetting the Imam* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1997), both of which treat South Asian Muslims in New York City and Lebanese Muslims in Dearborn, Michigan.

28. See, for example, Yvonne Yazbeck Haddad and Adair Lummis, *Islamic Values in the United States* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987).

29. For example, Abdo A. Elkholy, *The Arab Moslems in the United States: Religion and Assimilation* (New Haven, Conn.: College and University Press, 1966), and

Elaine C. Hagopian and Ann Paden, *The Arab Americans: Studies in Assimilation* (Wilmette, Ill.: Medina University Press International, 1969).

30. Will Herberg, *Protestant, Catholic, Jew: An Essay in American Religious Sociology* (Garden City: Doubleday, 1955).

31. Alixa Naff, *Becoming American: The Early Arab Immigrant Experience* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1985), and Yvonne Yazbeck Haddad and Adair T. Lummis, eds., *Islamic Values in the United States: A Comparative Study* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987).

32. Nathan Glazer and Daniel Patrick Moynihan, *Beyond the Melting Pot: The Negroes, Puerto Ricans, Jews, Italians, and Irish of New York City* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press and Harvard University Press, 1963).

33. For example, Karen Isaksen Leonard, *The South Asian Americans* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1997); Michael W. Suleiman, ed., *Arabs in America: Building a New Future* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1999); Barbara Daly Metcalf, ed., *Making Muslim Space in North America and Europe* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996).

34. Richard Alba, *Remaking the American Mainstream: Assimilation and Contemporary Immigration* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2003); Mary Waters, *The New Americans: A Guide to Immigration since 1965* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2007); Alejandro Portes, *Immigrant America: A Portrait* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006).

35. Josh Dewind and Philip Kasinitz, "Everything Old Is New Again: Processes and Theories of Immigrant Incorporation," *International Migration Review* 31-4 (1997): 1096–111.

36. Rogers Brubaker, "The Return of Assimilation? Changing Perspectives on Immigration and Its Sequels in France, Germany, and the United States," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 24-4 (2001): 539.

37. Gunnar Myrdal, *The Negro Problem and American Democracy* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Transaction, 1996).

38. Karen I. Leonard, *Muslims in the United States: The State of Research* (New York: Russell Sage, 2003), and Inderpal Grewal, "Transnational America: Race, Gender and Citizenship after 9/11," *Social Studies* 9-4 (2003): 535–60.

39. Arjun Appadurai, *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996); Linda Basch, Nina Glick-Schiller, and Cristina Blanc-Szanton, *Nations Unbound: Transnational Projects, Post-colonial Predicaments, and De-territorialized Nation-states* (Langhorne, Pa.: Gordon and Breach, 1994); and Ulf Hannerz, *Transnational Connections: Culture, People, Places* (London: Routledge, 1996).

40. Peggy Levitt, *The Transnational Villagers* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), and Alejandro Portes, Luis Eduardo Guarnizo, and William J. Haller, "Transnational Entrepreneurs: An Alternative Form of Immigrant Economic Adaptation," *American Sociological Review* 67-2 (2002): 278–98.

41. Examples of ethnographic studies include Nabeel Abraham and Andrew Shryock, eds., *Arab Detroit: From Margin to Mainstream* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2000), and Linda Walbridge, *Without Forgetting the Imam*.

42. Modood, *Multicultural Politics*; Vertovec and Peach, *Islam in Europe*; Vertovec and Rogers, *Muslim European Youth*; Pnina Werbner, *Imagined Diasporas among Manchester Muslims* (Santa Fe, N.M.: School of American Research Press, 2002); Werner Schiffauer, *Die Gottesmänner: Türkische Islamisten in Deutschland* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 2000).

43. By "religiosity," I mean beliefs, practices, and acts that are driven by religious values in social life.

44. One recent exception is Rogaia Mustafa Abusharaf's study of Yemeni practice,

“Structural Adaptations in an Immigrant Muslim Congregation in New York,” which appears beside pieces on the religious practices of other immigrant communities in Stephen Warner and Judith Wittner, eds., *Gatherings in Diaspora* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1998).

45. In cooperation with Zogby International, Project MAPS conducted two polls of American Muslims, the first in 2001 and the second in 2004, and published the results online. Although the MAPS website ([www.projectmaps.com](http://www.projectmaps.com)) is now defunct, the 2001 poll as well as a digest of the results are available through the Pew Charitable Trusts, which financed the research. For the most recent Pew survey of U.S. Muslims, go to <http://pewforum.org/surveys/muslim-american>. For analyses based on the first phase of MAPS research, see Zahid Bukhari et al., eds., *Muslims' Place in the American Public Square* (Walnut Creek, Calif.: AltaMira, 2004).

46. Pew Research Center, “Muslim American: Middle Class and Mostly Mainstream,” Washington, D.C., 2007, <http://pewresearch.org/pubs/483/muslim-americans>.

47. Afshin Asgari, “Islamic Studies and the Spirit of Max Weber: A Critique of Cultural Essentialism,” *Critical Middle Eastern Studies* 13-3 (2004): 293–312.

48. Maxime Rodinson, *Islam and Capitalism*, trans. Brian Pearce (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1978).

49. Patricia Crone, *Meccan Trade and the Rise of Islam* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1987).

50. Asgari, “Islamic Studies and the Spirit of Max Weber,” 299.

51. See, for example, Arif, *Salaam America*, or Jane Smith, *Islam in America* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999).

52. For example, the term *Islam* cannot be reduced to the common gloss “submission,” although orthodox definitions often do so. The term also signifies the critique of fixed rituals, as well as universal meaning, since all God’s creation is Muslim. See the work of Abd al-Majid Sharafi, e.g., *L’islam entre le message et l’histoire* (Tunis: Sud Editions, 2004).

53. One other reason for the lack of essentialist bias in French academic writing is probably related to the fact that few Islamicists were interested in Islam in France, unlike their German or Dutch counterparts. For an example of the Orientalist bias in the literature on Islam in Europe, see W. A. R. Shadid and P. S. van Koningsveld, eds., *Religious Freedom and the Neutrality of the State: The Position of Islam in the European Union* (Leuven: Peeters, 2002); Jean Jacques Waardenburg, *Islam et occident face à face: regards de l’histoire des religions* (Genève: Labor et Fides, 1998).

54. Even groups that rhetorically reject modernity as a Western project may actually be involved in processes of modernization. There is a key distinction here between modernity as a narrative that is often taken to be synonymous with “the West” and modernization as a process that entails an individuation of religious practice and social behavior. See Faisal Devji, *Landscapes of the Jihad: Militancy, Morality, Modernity* (London: Hurst, 2005).

55. Born in what is now Iran, al-Afghani traveled widely as he sought an audience for his pan-Islamic thought. In the 1870s, he met Abduh in Egypt, and although Abduh was subsequently exiled by the British, he later returned to Egypt to become first a National Courts judge and then Grand Mufti. In turn, Rida, a Syrian, was Abduh’s disciple.

56. Asgari, “Islamic Studies and the Spirit of Max Weber,” 310.

57. S. Sayyid, “Anti Essentialism and Universalism,” *Innovation* 11-4 (1998): 377–89, 385.

58. Samuel P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of the World Order* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1998).

59. Aziz Al-Azmeh, *Islam and Modernities* (London: Verso, 1993).

60. For instance, Daniel Lerner’s argument that Islam is an obstacle to modernization, democratization, and capitalism has influenced scholarly discourse for many years.

Daniel Lerner, *The Passing of Traditional Society: Modernizing the Middle East* (Glencoe, Ill.: Free Press, 1958). More recently, Bassam Tibi has asserted that Islam is incompatible with modernity. See his *Islam between Culture and Politics* (New York: Palgrave, 2001). The widespread acceptance of such views hinders and discourages analysis of the relationships between Islam and modernity.

61. John E. Reilly, ed., *American Public Opinion and U.S Foreign Policy 1995* (Chicago: Chicago Council on Foreign Relations, 1995), 21.

62. *Le Monde*, September 20, 1991, p. 12, quoted in Samuel Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1996), 215.

63. For example, Bernard Lewis's popular *What Went Wrong* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), treats "Islamic civilization" as a unified, coherent entity. Cf. also the widely read précis of the book, "What Went Wrong?," *Atlantic Monthly* 289-1 (2002): 43-45.

64. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*. Compare with Huntington's earlier article, "The Clash of Civilizations?" *Foreign Affairs* (Summer 1993): 22-49.

65. Roy Mottahedeh, "The Clash of Civilizations: An Islamicist's Critique," *Harvard Middle Eastern and Islamic Review* 2-2 (1995): 1-26.

66. Buijs and Rath, *Muslims in Europe*.

67. See Marc Sageman, *Leaderless Jihad: Terror Networks in the Twenty-first Century* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008), and Bruce Hoffman, *The Victims of Terrorism: An Assessment of Their Influence and Growing Role in Policy, Legislation, and the Private Sector* (Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Center for Terrorism Risk Management Policy, 2007).

68. Abdul Hamid El Zein, "Beyond Ideology and Theology: The Search for the Anthropology of Islam," *Annual Review of Anthropology* 6 (1977): 227-54.

69. Robert Launay, *Beyond the Stream: Islam and Society in a Western African Town* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992).

70. Launay, quoted by Ovamir Anjum, "Islam as a Discursive Tradition: Talal Asad and His Interlocutors," *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East* 27-3 (2007): 656-92.

71. Abu Lughod Lila, "Zones of Theory in the Anthropology of the Arab World," *Annual Review in Anthropology* 18 (1989): 267-306.

72. Talal Asad, *Genealogies of Religion: Discipline and Reasons of Power in Christianity and Islam* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University, 1993).

73. Clifford Geertz, *Islam Observed: Religious Developments in Morocco and Indonesia* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1971).

74. Ernest Gellner, *Muslim Society* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983).

75. Anjum, "Islam as a Discursive Tradition."

76. Alasdair MacIntyre, *Whose Justice? Which Reality?* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1988).

77. *Ibid.*, 661.

78. *Ibid.*, 691.

79. Jocelyne Cesari, *When Islam and Democracy Meet: Muslims in Europe and in the United States* (New York: MacMillan, 2004).

80. Arjun Appadurai, *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996), pp. 27-65.

81. Born in 1941, Fethullah Gülen promotes interfaith dialogue and an inclusive vision of Islam. At the same time, his insistence that Islam can and should guide public life has led to conflict with secularists in his native Turkey. Gülen's group is active internationally and maintains an English-language website at <http://en.fgulen.com>.

82. Suha Taji-Farouki and Basheer M. Nafi, *Islamic Thought in the Twentieth Century* (London: St. Martin's Press, 2004), 9.

83. Traditional forces, however, have not disappeared. Along with other clerics, members of the *ulema* have adjusted to modern conditions and adopted reformist attitudes. Malika Zeghal has demonstrated, for example, that when the 1961 reform of Al-Azhar transformed the university into a state institution and introduced secular sciences into the curriculum, it also contributed to the politicization of the *ulema* and the emergence of radical and reformist thinkers. Malika Zeghal, "Religion and Politics in Egypt: The *Ulema* of Al-Azhar, Radical Islam, and the State, 1952–94," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 31-3 (1999): 371–99. Men who exemplify the blurring of the distinction between activist and *ulema* represent a variety of viewpoints and include Sheikh Abd al-Halim Mahmud (1910–1978), who called for the incorporation of *Shari'a* into all aspects of law in Egypt, and Umar Abd al-Rahman (b. 1938), a graduate and former sheikh of Al-Azhar, who was responsible for the 1993 World Trade Center bombing. Another activist *ulema*, the Egyptian Sunni Yusuf Qaradawi (b. 1926), is close to the moderates of the Muslim Brotherhood and has become a global *mufti* with his popular al-Jazeera program, *ash-Shariah wal-Hayat* (Sharia and Life) and IslamOnline, a website that he helped found in 1997. Qaradawi has also published some fifty books, including *The Lawful and the Prohibited in Islam (al-Halal wa al-haram fi al-Islam)* (Dimascus: al-Maktab al Islami, 1962) and *Islam: The Future Civilization (al-Islam: hadarat al-ghad)* (Beirut: al-Maktab al Islami, 1998). On a more general level, the Islamic revolution in Iran provides another good illustration of the resilience of the traditional *ulema* class. Kamel Ghozzi, "The Study of Resilience and Decay in *Ulema* Groups: Tunisia and Iran as an Example," *Sociology of Religion* 63-3 (2002): 317.

84. Muhammad Shahur, *Dirassat islamiya mu'açira fi ad-dawla wa al-mujtama* (Contemporary Islamic Studies on Government and Society) (Damascus: Al-Ahali, 1994); Dale F. Eickelman, "Islamic Liberalism Strikes Back," *Middle East Studies Association Bulletin* 27-2 (1993): 163–68.

85. Peter Mandaville, "Information Technology and the Changing Boundaries of European Islam," in Felice Dassetto, ed., *Paroles d'islam, individus, sociétés et discours dans l'islam européen contemporain* (Paris: Maisonneuve et Larose, 2000), 281–97. It would be misleading, however, to consider online Islam as an indicator of a new democratic public space without attending to specific social changes within particular Muslim contexts. In other words, to assess accurately what Muslim websites are accomplishing in terms of knowledge, perspective, and affiliation, sociologists must investigate how electronic religiosity is resonating with significant social changes in general.

86. Al-Albani, who died several years ago, was a specialist in hadith and taught at the University of Medina.

87. Cesari, *When Islam and Democracy Meet*.

88. A scholar of law and human rights, Abdullah An-Na'im has worked to reconcile *Shari'a* with international laws on human rights. See his *Toward an Islamic Reformation, Civil Liberties, Human Rights, and International Law* (Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press, 1990). Fazlur Rahman advocated historical interpretation of the Qur'an. Among his many works, see, for example, *Prophecy in Islam: Philosophy and Orthodoxy* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1958), and *Major Themes of the Qur'an* (Minneapolis: Bibliotheca Islamica, 1980). Muhammad Said al-Ashmawi served as chief justice of the High Court in Cairo and advocates an Islamic humanism. See his *Against Islamic Extremism* (Gainesville, Fla.: University of Florida Press, 1998).

89. For introductory reflections on the American case, see Jose Casanova and Ari Zolberg, "Immigration and Religion in New York City," Working Paper, New School, New York, 2002.