Modern Islamic Thinking and Activism

Erkan Toğuşlu, Johan Leman

Published by Leuven University Press

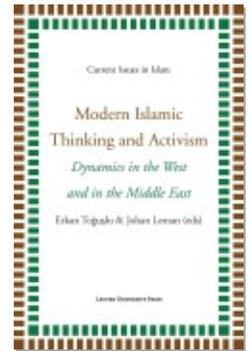➡ For additional information about this book

Fethullah Gülen, Tariq Ramadan and Yusuf al-Qaradawi: The Pluralisation of Islamic Knowledge

Erkan Toğuşlu

It is difficult to attribute to Islamic public intellectuals and actors the classical Islamic vocabulary of *muftis, alims, cheikhs* (van Bruinessen and Allievi 2011). They exist in theory, but in reality different types of Islamic actors have legitimacy and a specific social-religious authority in Islamic settings such as educational institutions, mosques and associations has emerged (Bowen 2011:24). Bowen notes that the roles of teachers, *imams* and leaders of local associations are equally important in discussing the traditional (dis)continuity of Islamic scholars in France. One may simplify this list into Islamic public intellectuals and actors who speak for Islam and in the name of Islam.

This chapter reveals the paradoxes and dynamics in Islamic public reasoning used by Muslim public intellectuals among Muslims in Europe. This public reasoning is much more fragmented due to the secularism and individualization effect on the pluralization and functionalization of Islamic knowledge in Islamic settings such as schools, mosques and associations. Secularism signifies the decline of religious influence and its role in society in many areas. In the secularization processes, Muslims' presence and their individuality in secular Europe may be seen as an automatic decline in religious practice and religious authority. In other words, Islamic intellectual authority loses its orthodoxy and power to channel the main Islamic debates.

The rise in educational opportunities and the global effect of mass media on the formation of Islamic discourse do not mean the breakdown of the monopoly of the traditional *ulama* over religious interpretation, as some scholars say they

do. They are not autodidacts and practise and teach the theology in a classical way. Engaged in secular matters and issues, they do not do as classical traditional *ulama* did. They attempted to reconcile the modern values and challenges they faced with the ethics and morality of Islam. These intellectuals are more acceptable than the classical *ulama*. They provide adequate economic, social and cultural solutions and alternatives to the needs of Muslims in Europe. Preoccupied with a variety of Islamic disciplines such as Islamic philosophical theology (*kalam*), exegesis (*tafsir*), jurisprudence (*fiqh*) and prophetic tradition (*hadith*), their ideas bring together diverse networks of knowledge. Their ideas are formulated in mosques, cafes, through the pulpit, books and media.

This chapter highlights what kind of arguments and justifications Islamic scholars use and pursue, and how these arguments are circulated, accepted, refused and received by local Muslims. Through these questions this chapter problematizes the question of Islamic reasoning and authority following three Muslim scholars: Fethullah Gülen, Tariq Ramadan and Yusuf al-Qaradawi. When I use authority here, I mean people who speak about Islam and have been endowed with legitimacy coming from their talents and ability to interpret Islam. This authority is attributed to the new pioneers of Islam by Muslim followers and local and national institutions. Public reasoning reveals the justification positions on different policy issues. Bowen talks about repertoires of evaluation (Bowen, 2010:6). He says, "repertoires, therefore, can be mapped onto particular territories" (Bowen 2010: 6). The particular question is how Muslims engage in deliberating about Islamic practices, the issue always being whether they are pure Muslim or becoming something other than just Muslim. Particular political territories play a significant role in determining and forming these deliberations and justification processes.

The first dimension and instrument analysed in this chapter consists of the discussion of their work as Muslim scholars, re-activating the classical Islamic terminology in secular coding and time. In the second dimension, we will try to analyse the discursive and pragmatic change which has occurred during the last decade. This shift has become an important element in seeing the new articulation of Islamic reasoning among young Muslims. The last aspect of this chapter looks at how Islamic reasoning is produced alongside the question of *ijtihad*.

Muslim public intellectuals

A brief look at the educational journey of these Islamic scholars according to what we say about the new faces of Islam shows how Muslim intellectuals, Muslim authority and its transformation came about.

Fethullah Gülen

Fethullah Gülen completed his three primary years in a state school. He continued his traditional Islamic education in eastern *medreses* (traditional Islamic education institutions) and in a mosque school. He became an official preacher and *imam* in the Turkish Directorate of Religious Affairs in Turkey in various cities during the 1970s and 1980s. In those years, Gülen became very influential among young university students and middle class people. He organized lectures, preaching in several mosques. His sermons focused on morality, education, social cohesion and civility. His ideas were followed by a younger generation to establish a system of modern secular educational institutions in Turkey and abroad after the 1990s. Known as the Gülen movement or *Hizmet* (service), the movement became transnational and active in education, dialogue, media and charity (Ebaugh, 2010).

A heuristic glance at Gülen's works and speeches enables us to define him as *arif-alim* who gathers together two poles which are called *zahiri* (exoteric) and *batini* (esoteric). Gülen plays this double role and figure between *arif* and *alim*; spiritual and rational. On this point, Gaborieau and Zeghal (2004:7) propose the *alim-arif* framework that indicates a combination of *ulama* and *sufi*'s understanding of Islam. Through this framework related to an esoteric style of interpretation of the Qur'an, in various subjects, Gülen refers to spiritual knowledge (*marifa*). He emphasizes this *sufi* way of interpretation, while Ramadan's discourse, which we will discuss farther in the text, will be outlined by a critical position in *academia*. Gülen develops a language shaped by *sufi* idioms and narrations.

Elizabeth Özdalga notes, "[Gülen] adopts a solid, conventional Hanafi/Sunni understanding of the religious traditions. So it does not seem to be the content of the religious interpretation as such, but the very existence of a new relatively strong group, filled with religious fervor and claiming a place in the public arena that annoys the establishment in Turkey radical margins who see this as a threat to their ideology" (Özdalga, 2005:441).

Tariq Ramadan

Our second Muslim intellectual is Tariq Ramadan, a Swiss-born Muslim. His grandfather, Hasan al-Banna (1906-49), was the founder of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt. He studied philosophy, French literature, social sciences and Islamic studies. He is professor of contemporary Islamic studies at Oxford University, in the Oriental Institute. His works emphasize Islamic studies, theology and European Muslims, and he endeavours to reinterpret Islam on many issues according to contemporary developments. Ramadan's use of fluent English and French is very influential on young Muslims, especially among France's suburban young Muslims.

Ramadan's career is considerable, putting him among the emerging new Islamic authorities. Basically new Islamic intellectuals almost always come from the secular education institutions and have access to a modern type of knowledge (Göle 1996). Ramadan however studied the *Qur'an* and *Hadith* for many years, and he refers to classical Muslim scholars on different issues in his books and speeches. At the same time, he uses the same language and vocabulary with secular thinkers, even participating in debates with leftist and far leftist intellectuals.[1] He circulates this Islamic knowledge in connection with contemporary issues such as globalization and women's emancipation (Limpens 2013).

Al-Qaradawi

Al-Qaradawi, an Egyptian Muslim scholar, is considered a 'global mufti' due to his fatwas on broadcasts on Al-Jazeera and Islamonline, a popular website. He was born in Egypt in 1926. He has published more than 120 books. He has long been a prominent intellectual leader among the Muslim Brotherhood. He obtained his PhD at Al-Azhar University on Islamic almsgiving (*zakat*) and its modern usage. His expertise on *zakat* provided him with a position in the emergence of Islamic finance and banking (Benthall 2013). He is the founder of many Islamic centres at different universities. He himself is actually at Qatar University. He is also an important figure in the establishment of the religious education system in Qatar (Graf and Skovgaard-Petersen, 3). He is closely linked to the al-Jazeera TV station. Al-Qaradawi is the head of the European Council for Fatwa and Research, a Dublin-based private foundation established by the Federation of Islamic Organizations in Europe. In the Council they try to re-establish the role of *ulama* for European Muslims to refer to.

Al-Qaradawi's profile corresponds to that of the traditional *ulama* who deals with daily questions. He illustrates the relative importance of the role of *ulama* in

Europe having an intellectual capacity, recognized as having authority to answer many crucial questions linked to contemporary problems such as the example of Islamic banking, insurance. In the main, Qaradawi's pragmatic approach to Islamic jurisprudence as a response to urgent questions is followed by young Muslims. A brief look at *fatwas* shows a concentration on issues for the Muslim minority living in Europe. Skovgaard-Petersen finds Qaradawi's scholarship ambiguous. He resumes his understanding: "…skeptical questioning of established knowledge and dogma … is clearly an evil to be avoided" (Skovgaard-Petersen and Graf, 2009: 43).

His popular book *The Lawful and the Prohibited* in Islam (1960) is an often translated book providing guidance on the daily life of Muslims. In his famous broadcast programme, *Shariʿa and Life*, a programme of TV channel, al-Qaradawi develops a discourse based on argument and on educational aspects of life which is not contradictory to Islamic beliefs.

These three Muslim scholars are involved as activist, preacher and intellectual in various areas that transcend the limits of national borders. Through their homepages, translated into many languages, their ideas are transmitted globally. These three people are impressively 'gifted orators'. Among these Muslim intellectuals, Qaradawi has received the label of 'global mufti' (Skovgaard-Petersen, 2004). Al-Qaradawi addresses a Muslim World from an Arabic Muslim context.[2] Using the Arabic language, he is currently working in Qatar on Islamic theology. Meanwhile, Gülen and Ramadan live in a country with a Muslim minority. They directly face issues relating to Muslims in the West, being aware of the post-secularity of Western societies. They try to reformulate new social and political issues comfortable with an original and 'authentic' way.

The origin of modern intellectual pluralization in Islam

The three Islamic public intellectuals studied in this chapter issue Islamic discourses to suggest how best to create a workable Islamic reality in the contemporary world. As Islamic public actors, they exercise an influence and impact on Muslims living in Europe. Their writings in blogs and on websites and their books are translated into different languages and their views channel debates on Islam. Each of those Muslim scholars has his own type of legitimacy and justification based on Islamic tradition: a professor at a European university,

a scholar who gives *fatwas* and interprets scriptural texts, an inspirational leader of a transnational movement living in the US. These figures' messages are circulated in the transnational public sphere. They formulate their own judgements and commentaries on current issues such as gender equality, secularity, democracy and modernity. Those transnational public authorities develop their opinions to answer different questions: Tariq Ramadan's writings emphasize how Muslims live their faith in secular societies such as marrying and worshipping. Fethullah Gülen highlights the establishment of a common moral language between different peoples and beliefs. Yusuf al-Qaradawi looks for a possible restoration of Islamic formulations on contemporary problems that face Muslims.

Promoting a moderate Islamic view arguing for the limitation of the expansion of militant islamists is one of the ideas that one obtains from this new discourse and from this change of authority (Bayat 2007, 2010). A quick outline of this new authority, which is based on both the traditional and modern role of Islamic intellectuals, seems to support a non-state oriented Islam (Yılmaz 2005). It is not a product of official Islam under strict control of the state, but is becoming a transborder and transnational phenomenon.

In the last century, the media, the Internet and communication technologies have played a significant role in the production and expansion of Islamic knowledge. The nature of the traditional mode of Islamic knowledge adapted to these new technologies – blogs, web pages, facebook, youtube forums – have become new channels and mediums in the spreading of Islamic idioms, narratives and information. Mass media and education also influence the fragmentation of Islamic knowledge (Eickelman 1992; Mandaville 2001). A modern discourse of textuality has emerged among Muslim scholars in recent years. Including this textuality, the hermeneutical-historical approach is underlined by Islamic scholars (Roussillon 2005; Filaly-Ansari 2003). As a result of this new discursive and methodological approach to and interpretation of Islam, the pluralization of knowledge has been noted (Mandaville 2007). In numerous ways, we can observe a meaningful shift in the production of knowledge from a traditional one to a more modern complex of contextual interpretations. In our case, all of the three Islamic intellectuals we have presented use the new media and communication technologies to expand their views and ideas.

Classical Islamic reasoning and modernity

The three Islamic scholars continue the classical *nasiha* tradition in Islam. Asad discusses in his work the practice of *nasiha* in Saudi Arabia as an example of public reasoning (Asad 1993: 200-238). According to him, this public reasoning is different from liberal criticism. It has its own authority, logical arguments and set of moral principles. Another notion that we use for understanding the modern articulation of Islamic reasoning of these three scholars is the term *maslaha*. I use *maslaha* with broader reference to the conventional juristic sense. My aim is to understand the contemporary use of this notion to scrutinize the salience and limits of flexibility in Islamic discussions. As suggested Armando Salvatore,

> "...the principal focus here is not the specifically juridical articulation of this key concept of Islamic jurisprudence. Rather, it is *maslaha's* capacity to open up specific discursive alleys to publicly engaged *ulama*, so as to allow them to articulate positions of some political relevance, yet distinct from the discourse of "political Islam" proper. In this sense, *maslaha* has become....a privileged tool for the insertion of *ulama* into modern public spheres" (Salvatore 2009:240).

Compared to Ramadan, Gülen accentuates the question of the coexistence of differences and shared human values. In Ramadan's and Gülen's teachings one discovers a kind of social-religious pragmatism seeking the general Muslim interest and public good (*maslaha*), which is founded on the quest to give space for Muslims in different contexts. Qaradawi focuses on Muslims' daily questions relating to the licite-illicite issue. Salvatore argues that Qaradawi's use of the term public good (*maslaha*) gives rise to debates on social questions and activism (Salvatore 2009). *Maslaha*, a general term, is understood as a practical solution "for devising solutions to new, and in this sense modern, social problems" (Masud et al. 2009: 241). For Salvatore, this engagement around that term signifies a concrete contribution to social economic problems that face Muslims. Responding to a question about the duty of Muslims living in Europe, Qaradawi underlines firstly the religious responsibilities and obligations of Muslims being in a Muslim community. Calling and inviting non-Muslims to Islam is another duty and responsibility. Qaradawi's focus is on the whole of the Muslim community and the individual Muslim believer's role in this community. He has written more than 100 books on different subjects such as Islamic jurisprudence

and Islamic education. Graf and Skovgaard-Petersen argue that an independent civilization (*hadara*) and a comprehensive way of life (*shumiliyya*) are two essential terms that Qaradawi emphasizes in the Islamic awakening (*al-sahwa al-islamiyya*) (2009:5). The main themes developed in his works and writings are: Islamic finance, the Muslim family, Muslim women and minority rights. He sees secularization and pluralism as a danger and threat to Islamic civilization and the Muslim community.

Discursive changes and the double agenda issue

Asef Bayat (2002) remarks on the shift from the discourse of politicization of Islam to personal piety and ethics. This pluralization of Islamic knowledge and attitude has an effect in the public sphere involving social and political debates in Europe. Islamic issues are taken as a discursive practice, and in this approach we forget to look to daily practices that give rise to new debates about the implementation of Islam. The encounter with the West and the secular meaning of life force Muslim authorities to rethink traditional settings and corpus of text.

The new Islamic public intellectuals question the very strict and limited views on Islam, and on Europe and non-Muslims. They criticize the fact that these views look only at the scriptures and their literal meaning, not at their interpretative meaning. They contextualize the Islamic past, but do not touch the essential question: what are the new ways of reasoning and teaching for today's Muslims? However, there are complexities of Islamic knowledge within the tradition that can extend this knowledge into new domains such as social responsibility, citizenship and secularism, as we see in the modern discourse of Muslim intellectuals. Masud states that studying Islamic modernism is quite problematic, because no Muslim thinker calls himself or herself a modernist (Masud, 2009). For Masud, Islamic modernism takes into consideration the challenges posed by modernism to the classical Islamic theology. For this reason, modernist Muslim thinkers seek a new theology (Masud, 2009: 238). Defending a modernist way, but without calling them modernist, is symptomatic of our three Muslim public intellectuals. Ramadan is quite open to defining himself as a reformist, but not a modernist. The relationship with the idea of the West, westernization and western modernity is still contentious. This ambivalence is seen in the argument that modernity is compatible with Islam and there is no contradiction with human values and Islam.

The teachings of these three Muslim scholars highlight what we found from the Islamic tradition. What do the *ulama say?* To decrypt the complexities between today and the past, they try to understand what are the aim, the context and the environment. And finally, these three Islamic scholars propose alternatives and judgements based on general framing of Islamic knowledge, to find coherence in Islam with today. There is no abandonment of the past, of tradition, of a legal school of Islamic thought; indeed, there is a deeper and conscious understanding to renew the Islamic thinking in the contemporary world. The past was very different from today's societies, and there is a need for a general, comprehensive and complete view on socio-economic problems that Muslims face today.

The confrontation with the West was a challenge in the 19th century for Muslim thinkers and reformists who were tackling the question of why the Muslim world was undeveloped and backward. In effect, the question of reform was debated among those Islamic scholars and intellectuals. Today we are not speaking about simply a confrontation between the West and Islam, because Muslim visibility is a part of the Western side of the debate (Göle 2005). In recent years, at a time when an "Islamic threat" (Esposito 1999) has emerged as the dominant categorization of Muslims in Europe, some influential discourses and initiatives have been highly articulated around the Islamic scholars whose ideas are inspired by a cumulative traditional Islamic language. These intellectuals have pluralistic discourses giving rebirth to an Islamic knowledge facing modernity. These voices are mistrusted and have all too frequently been accused of having a double agenda and language. The reality however is much more complex and not all three intellectuals we discuss in this chapter correspond to a similar pathway in their internal developments. The way Fethullah Gülen has elaborated his thinking has become quite different from Qardawi's path.

Before examining the internal division among the Islamic scholars and intellectuals, referring to the political Islam whereby religion becomes a means and a way for the expression and politics of Islam, their discourse and writing can be associated with political Islamic discourses as far back as the middle of the 19th century. The young ottomans expressed some notions imported from Europe through the prism of Islam. For them, Islam was not a belief, but was taken as a social and political system which is accountable to foster the creation of independent, modern nations based on rationality, development and free thinking. Addressing *ijtihad* and giving a new interpretation of Islamic issues as a result of confrontation with modernity, Muslim thinkers focused on minimizing the gap between the West and the Muslim world. The Muslim world experienced

the entry of modernity mostly as a shock like military and political intrusion into their lands.

The early years of the 1900s met the emergence of political voices and establishments which put political activism into action by means of religion in public areas. The foundation of Hassan Al-Banna's Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt, Maududi's Jamaat-e-Islami, the Islamic revivalist party in British India, Sayyid Qutb's effectiveness and influence in increasing the Islamic activities and efforts to delegitimize the existing states expanded the Islamist movements. In fact, many of the followers and militants joined some fundamentalist organizations to overthrow power. By the failure of political Islam (Roy 1996), the islamist organizations and groups are losing their influence among the young generation which is open to and seeking an individual quest and salvation. Called market Islam (Haenni 2005) the breakup and separation from the Islamist top down ideology leaves the non-hierarchical and pyramidal organization of Islam (Ibid.). Suffering from the dialectic of "Islam is the solution for all ills", such organizations prefer to use a multi-layered language, and previous discourses no longer fit into a single profile and etiquette.

In this regard, we should try to analyse our three Islamic scholars' views and their typology in a way that gives them a quite different place in their discursive changes. We should portray them as new pioneers of Islam in a secular context, inside a process of variegating shifting Islamic thinking in today's Europe. Our aim is to understand the emergence of these new personalities in the changing context of evaluating the West, nationalization, *ijtihad* and the coexistence of Muslims and non-Muslims. While the first generation's views and ideas, like Mawdudi's and Al-Banna's, emphasized anti-imperialism and were against westernization, our second group of Islamic intellectuals speaks about the coexistence between East and West, pluralism, democracy and human rights, but their options for answering these challenges may be different. Familiarizing themselves with these notions, Muslims in Europe who are following new Islamic scholars' ideas seek to accommodate them in their public-private life, to adjust religious principles in social and economic fields, but in line also with these differences in thinking, Muslims in Europe will also become a highly pluralist cluster of communities.

Some authors will claim that all these Muslim intellectuals emphasize democracy, human rights, rule of law, but do it as a departure from an Islamist strategy going to new doctrinal strategies, in other words turning from Islamism to post-islamism. The term post-islamism has been used to refer to the shift in attitudes and strategies of Islamist movements and militants in the Muslim world

(Roy 1999; Kepel 2000). Post-islamism is a term used for the metamorphosis of Islamism in structural, ideological and practical ways.[3] Before identifying these intellectuals as post-islamist, we should note that some Muslim intellectuals, such as Fethullah Gülen, have just defended fundamental rights as universal values which are compatible with Islamic ones.

What all three intellectuals have in common is that they do not believe in the ideologization of religion. In their writings, the attempt to reconcile between faith and secular, sacred and profane, liberty and submission to God is obviously made to rediscover the Islamic texts in new circumstances. They endeavour to find possible links between the West and Islam, to intensify the interaction between Muslims and the whole of society. It can be seen in the emergence of the new Muslim actors in Europe who refuse Muslim exceptionalism, a discourse of victimization. They promote an inclusive attitude, a "positive constructive dialogue"[4]. But they do it in different ways and gradations. The case of Qaradawi, who abandoned his traditional ideas about an exclusivist Islamist discourse which is biased in favour of the Islamic state, may be seen indeed as a post-islamist adaptation. For Al-Qaradawi, the rule of God or Shariah is valid for all time and there are some contradictions between so-called modern society's requirements and Islam; thus he rejected values of the modern world (Al-Qaradawi 1983: 121). Salvatore argues that the emphasis on *maslaha* allows Qaradawi to accept moderation and inclusivism in Islam. Thus, for Salvatore, Qaradawi applies *ijtihad* and free reasoning to modern social problems (Salvatore 2009: 241).

However, he has a binary concept of the world between religious and secular in which religion loses its role and capacity. His close ties with the Muslim Brotherhood, even if he rejects it, and his explicit support for suicide terrorist attacks in Iraq and Israel, have as a consequence that he is considered a fundamentalist preacher and *ulema* representing a militant Islam.

Between openness and exclusivism

Along with a disapproval of secular society and political regimes, the islamists' conception of the organization of society is based on re-establishing the *Sharia,* as some small radical groups advocate. In the case of interpretation of the Qur'an and *hadiths*, contrarily to a literalist approach, as if the sacred text remains frozen in time and place, the new *ijtihad* approach of Muslim intellectuals such

as Gülen and Ramadan seeks to revive and reconceptualize the Islamic notions and vocabulary in today's' context. The question of *ijtihad* is not only a renewal of Islamic tradition and past, but it also signifies an openness and inclusivism. Muslim scholars who oppose a literalist-frozen version of Islam as a misguided interpretation embrace a dynamic and context-driven multiple regards approach that enables Muslims and non-Muslims to co-habit.

According to them, the Qur'an invites humans to think, to discover rather than to imitate unconsciously the religious texts which are to be known only through reasoning and deliberation. Free thinking is the first phase in being faithful and understanding the Qur'anic message and prophetic tradition. Their efforts and discourses are comprehended as a continuum of revitalization of Islamic concepts and notions. These efforts are identified as "...a continuation of the radical *tajdid* tradition in Islam. In practice, they built on the accomplishments of the early Islamic modernists and the new-style Muslim associations. ...but at the same time, went far beyond the traditionalism of the remaining conservative *ulama* establishment" (Esposito and O.Voll, 2001: 20).

In the former exclusivist Qur'anic interpretation, the capacity and faculty of understanding of new changing and evolving circumstances is absent. For the literalist tradition, the gates of *ijtihad* are closed because all things are examined. The duty is only to understand what has been said before; in other words simple imitation is sufficient for Muslims. For the new voices of Islam, the *ijtihad* is an "élan vital" of religion. By the way, the religion is readapted to modern circumstances respecting the traditional jurisprudence. To present viable solutions to the complex social and economic problems arising, our three Islamic scholars look to *ijtihad* to renew some issues. On the contrary to call believers to regress into an *umma* (great community) and mythical past, Gülen and Ramadan offer ideas for breaking stereotypes and advocate investing in social economic life. In this sense, Gülen says, "We are in search of an awakening of reason, as well as of heart, spirit and mind. Yet, if it possible to assume a harvest fruits of efforts and works resulting from this" (Gülen 2005: 458). In parallel to these lines, Ramadan argues, "a new, positive and constructive posture which relies on a fine comprehension of Islam's priorities, a clear vision of what is absolute definitively fixed and what is subject to change and adopting..." (Ramadan, 1999: 132-134). For him, Muslims strive for change and adaptation "to avoid reactive and overcautious attitudes and to develop a feeling of self-confidence, based on a deep sense of responsibility" (Ramadan 1999: 150).

In this vein, the concept of what Ramadan uses, *shahada* (testimony), appears interesting, and significantly for him it becomes more applicable in a global period, which permits Muslims to participate in and be involved in their society. "This *shahada* is not only a matter of speech. A Muslim is the one who believes and acts consequently and consistently. *"Those who attain to Faith and do good works"*, as we read in the Qur'an, stress the fact that the *shahada* has an inevitable impact on the actions of the Muslim whatever society he/she lives in. To observe the *shahada* signifies being involved in the society in all fields where need requires it: unemployment, marginalization, delinquency, etc. This also means being engaged in those processes which could lead to a positive reform of both the institutions and the legal, economic, social and political system in order to bring about more justice and a real popular participation at grassroots level" (Ramadan 1999: 147).

Qaradawi most of the time does not go as far as Ramadan, but he also uses the traditional Islamic concept of "*taysir*," translated as "facility," to argue that Muslims in the West are feeble and are not equivalent to Muslims living in Islamic countries. One of the principal terminologies is *wasatiyah* (middle way), aiming to reconcile the renewal of Islamic thought (in other term tajdid) and religious orthodoxy (Benthall 2013). This tendency is seen in his book *al-Halal wa-al-haram fi al-islam* (*The Lawful and the Prohibited in Islam*). Qaradawi, for instance, promulgated a decision permitting a European woman to remain married to her non-Muslim husband after she converted to Islam. A second example is about taking mortgages on houses and business. For western Muslims, mortgages to buy houses or invest in business are permitted, but these were forbidden in traditional interpretations of Islamic law. For European Muslims, Qaradawi has developed various interpretations from Islamic jurisprudence called *fiqh al-aqalliyyat* that apply legal theory to a Muslim minority that lives in the West. But he continues to use the binary position between *dar-ul islam* and *dar-ul harb,* which means, in his thinking, that the needs of Muslims living in a non-Muslim country, as well as their conditions and circumstances, may differ from those in other countries where Muslims live as a majority. But in the case of Muslims living in the West, the rules can be adjusted in accordance with the rule of their country. And that makes him again different from some more traditionalist thinkers.

Conclusion: in search of authority

An analysis of these three Muslim scholars shows how religious tradition is reproduced and transformed in new contexts. The production of Islamic knowledge and authority is seen as fragmented and diluted. Due to this enlargement it becomes clearly more problematic and questionable among the Muslim young generation raised in Europe. Their religious life is influenced by individualism, privacy, autonomy, eclecticism and ethnicity. These factors are influential on the practices and deliberating processes. Bowen argues that Muslims took two possible ways to justify this: first, a transnational one based on norms and traditions of Islam; and, second, a national local one based on local norms and values (Bowen, 2004). These two ways of carrying out practices do not require a diametrical opposition one to other, but each one uses a different repertory which explains and justifies actions. In our case, three Muslim scholars, encountering issues at transnational level, each in their own way, try to produce arguments which are workable in national contexts. To fit Islam into national contexts, values and norms, these scholars revisit and renew the Islamic history, practices and identity.

The problems that the Muslim generation encounters are to find an authoritative Islamic tradition that challenges the fragmented character of their identity. The difficulty of referring publicly to an Islamic identity without withdrawing into the Muslim community, shaping their moral and ethical views based on Islamic principles pushes young Muslims to follow new figures.

Politically, Qaradawi has a classical Islamist tendency stemming from the Muslim Brotherhood background. He divides the world between Muslims and non-muslims and takes his position along this formulation. In his book, *Sharia and Life*, he continues to follow this mainstream interpretation in Islam. This political stand is significantly manifested in several Muslim campaigns, such as the calling for a boycott of Danish products after the cartoons affair published by the Danish Jyllands-Posten newspaper. As Husam Tammam argues, Qaradawi has positioned himself not only as an activist of Egyptian Muslim Brothers, but also as a mentor of the political language of Muslims (Tammam, 2009). One may describe Qaradawi as a 'religiopolitical activist'. The term is used by Muhammad Qasim Zaman to identify the political reference intermingled with religious discourse. He employs the language of *fiqh* to address the modern political questions.

Notes

1   See his book *L'Islam en questions* (Actes-Sud/Sindbad, 2000) with Alain Gresh, a far leftist columnist in Le monde diplomatique.

2   Muslim World does not express an entity covering all Muslims. It signifies the cultural, theological and social divergence and variety of Muslims who live in different countries. The term should not evoke some essentialistic view which inadequately describes the whole of the Muslim people.

3   First used by Bayat. For him, post-islamism represents a condition and project. It attempts to reconcile faith and democracy, Islam and liberty. It is a result of inadequacies and contradictions that persuade Islamist militants to change their discourse and strategies (Bayat, 2007, p. 10-11).

4   This motto appears mainly in many Gülen-inspired dialogue centres such as the Dialogue Society in London and Intercultural Dialogue Platform in Brussels. For more see www.dialoguesociety.org and www.idp-pdi.be

References

Agai Bekim (2003). 'The Gülen Movement's Islamic Ethic of Education', in Esposito, John L. and Yavuz, M. Hakan (ed.), *Turkish Islam and The Secular State, The Gülen Movement*, New York, Syracuse University Pres, 48-68.

Alkan, A. T. (1996). Entellektüel ile arifin kesişme noktası. *Fethullah Gülen Hocaefendi ile Ufuk Turu*, Eyüp can, İstanbul: Milliyet Yayınları, 202.203.

Asad, T. (2003). *Formation of the Secular, Christianity, Islam, Modernity*, Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Ayoob, M. (2005). 'The future of political Islam: the importance of external variables,' International Affairs 81: 951-961.

Babes, L. (1997). *L'islam positif. La religion des jeunes musulmans de France*, Editions de l'Atelier, Paris.

Bayat, A. (2007). *Making Islam democratic: social movements and post-Islamist turn*, Stanford, California, Stanford University Press.

Bayat, A. (2002). 'Piety, Privilege and Egyptian Youths', *ISIM Newsletter*, 10.

Bulut, F. (1998). *Kim Bu Fethullah Gülen: Dünü, Bugünü, Hedefi (Who is Fethullah Gülen? His Past, Today and Target)*, Istanbul, Ozan Yayıncılık.

Çetinkaya, H. (2004). *Fethullah Gülen'in Kırk Yıllık Serüveni (The 40 years adventure of Fethullah Gülen)*, Istanbul, Günizi Yayıncılık.

Davie, G. (1994). *Religion in Britain since 1945: Believing without Belonging*, Oxford.

Demir E. (2007). *Les nouvelles sociabilités religieuses, Les logiques organisationnelles et discursives du mouvement néo-communautaire de Fethullah Gülen en France*, Master Thesis l'Institut Politique de Strasbourg.

Ebaugh, H.R. (2010). *The Gülen Movement: A sociological analysis of a civic movement rooted in moderate Islam*, New York, Springer.

Esposito, John L., Yavuz, M. Hakan (eds) (2003). *Turkish Islam and The Secular State, The Gülen Movement*, New York, Syracuse University Press.

Esposito, J.L. and Voll, J.O. (2001). *Makers of contemporary Islam*, New York, Oxford University Press.

Esposito, J.L. (1999). *The Islamic threat: Myth or reality?*, New York, Oxford University Press.

Favrot L. (2004). *Tariq Ramadan dévoilé*, Lyon, Lyon Mag.

Filali-Ansari, A. (2002). *Reformer l'Islam? Une introduction aux débats contemporains*, Paris, La Découverte.

Fourest C. (2004). *Frère Tariq: discours, stratégie et méthode de Tariq Ramadan*, Paris, Grasset.

Fraser, N. (1992). 'Rethinking the Public Sphere: A Contribution to the Critique of Actually Existing Democracy' in Craig Calhoun (ed.), *Habermas and the Public Sphere*, Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 109-142.

Gaborieau, M. and Zeghal, M. (2004). 'Autorités religieuses en islam', *Archives de sciences sociales des religions,* 125.

Graf, B. (2007). 'Sheikh Yusuf al-Qaradawi in cyberspace', *Die Welt des Islams*, 47 (3-4), 403-421.

Graf, B. and Skovgaard-Petersen, J. (eds.) (2009). *Global Mufti: The phenomenon of Yusuf Al-Qaradawi*, London, Hurst.

Göle, N. (1996). *The Forbidden Modern: Civilization and Veiling*, The University of Michigan Press.

Göle, N. (2005). *Interpénétrations. L'Islam et l'Europe*, Paris, Galaade Editions.

Gülen, F. (2005). 'An Interview with Fethullah Gülen', in 'Islam in Contemporary Turkey: the Contributions of Fethullah Gülen', *Muslim World*, v. 95, n. 3.

Kepel, G. (2005). *The Roots of Radical Islam*, Saqi Books.

Kepel, G. (2003). *Jihad: The trail of political Islam*, Harvard University Press.

Koningsveld, V.P.S. and Shadid, W. (2002). 'The Negative Image of Islam and Muslims in the West: Causes and Solution,' in Shadid, W and van Koningsveld, P.S (eds), *Religious Freedom and the Neutrality of the State: The Position of Islam in the European Union*, Leuven.

Lamine, A.S. (2004). *La coexistence des Dieux, Pluralité religieuse et laïcité*, Paris, Puf, 2004.

Mandaville, P. (2007). 'Globalization and the Politics of Religious Knowledge: Pluralizing Authority in the Muslim World,' *Theory, Culture and Society*, Vol. 24, No. 2.

Mandaville, P. (2001). *Transnational Muslim Politics: Reimagining the Umma*, London: Routledge.

Masud, M.H., Salvatore, A., van Bruinessen, M (eds). (2009). *Islam and Modernity, Key Issues and Debates*, Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press.

Michel, T. (2003). 'Fethullah Gülen as Educator,' in Esposito and Yavuz (eds).

Özdalga, E. (2000). 'Worldly ascetism in islamic casting Fethullah Gulen's inspired piety and activisms,' *Critique:Journal for critical studies of the Middle East*, n. 17.

Özdalga E. (2005). 'Redeemer or Outsider? The Gülen Community in the Civilizing Process', *Islam in Contemporary Turkey: The Contributions of Fethullah Gülen, The Muslim World*, V. 95, N. 3: 441.

Pauly, R.J. (2004). *Islam in Europe: Integration or Marginalization?,* Burlington, VT Ashgate Publishing.

Al-Qaradawi, Y. (1994). *Al-ijtihad al-moâsir bayna al-indibat wa al-infiraat*, Cairo, Dar attawziâ wa an-nachr al-islamiya.

'The Qaradawi Fatwas', *Middle East Quarterly*, Summer 2004.

Al-Qaradawi, Y. (1985). *Al-ijtihâd fi achariâ al-islamiya maâ nadharat tahliliya fi al-ijtihad al-moâsir*, Dar al-Qalam, Koweït.

Al-Qaradawi, Y. (2010). *Introduction to Islam*, Malaysia, Islamic Book Trust.

Al-Qaradawi, Y. (1983). *Al-Hulul al-mustavradah wa kayfa janaat 'alaa ummatina*, Beirut, Mussa al-risal.

Ramadan, T. (1999). *To Be a European Muslim*, Leicester, The Islamic Foundation.

Ramadan, T. (2003). *Western Muslims and the Future of Islam*, New York: Oxford University Press USA.

Roussillon, A. (2005). *La pensée islamique contemporaine, acteurs et enjeux*, Paris, Teraedre.

Roy, O. et Haenni, P. (eds.) (1999). 'Le post-islamisme', special issue of *Revue des mondes musulmans et de la Méditerranée*, n° 85-86, Aix-en-Provence, Edisud.

Roy, O. (1996). *The Failure of Political Islam*, Harvard University Press.

Tammam, H. (2009). 'Yusuf Qaradawi and the Muslim Brothers: The Nature of a Special Relationship,' in B. Graf and J. Skovgaard-Petersen (eds), *The Global Mufti: The Phenomenon of Yusuf al-Qaradawi* (Columbia/Hurst).

Salvatore, A. (2009). 'Qaradawi's Maslaha' in Graff, B. and Skovgaard-Petersen J. (eds.) *Global Mufti: The Phenomenon of Yusuf Al-Qaradawi*, New York: Columbia University Press.

Skovgaard-Petersen, J. (2004). 'The Global Mufti,' in B. Schaebler and L. Stenberg (eds), *Globalization and Muslim World: Culture, Religion and Modernity*, New York, NY: Syracuse University Press, 153-165.

Van Bruinessen, M. and S. Allievi (ed.) (2011). *Producing Islamic Knowledge, Transmission and Dissemination in Western Europe*, Oxon, Routledge.

Voll, J.O. (1983). 'Renewal and Reform in Islamic History: Tajdid and Islah,' in John L. Esposito (ed.), *Voices of Resurgent Islam*, New York, Oxford University Press.

Yılmaz, I. (2003). 'Ijtihad and Tajdid by Conduct', in M. Hakan Yavuz, John L. Esposito (eds), *Turkish Islam and Secular State, The Gülen Movement*, New York, Syracuse University Press.

Yılmaz, I. (2005). 'State, Law, Civil Society and Islam in Contemporary Turkey', *The Muslim World*, v.95, n.3.

Watt, W.M. (1971). *Muslim Intellectual, A study of al-Ghazali*, Edinburg, Edinburg University Press, 1971, 128; www.muslimphilosophy.com/gz/articles/watt-p1.htm.

Zaman, M. Q. (2002). *The Ulama in Contemporary Islam: custodians of change*, Princeton, Princeton University Press.

Zaman, M.Q. (2004). 'The Ulama of Contemporary Islam and their Conception of the Common Good,' in A. Salvatore, D. Eickelman (eds.), *Public Islam and the Common Good*, Leiden: Brill, 129-156.