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Modern Islamic Thinking and Activism

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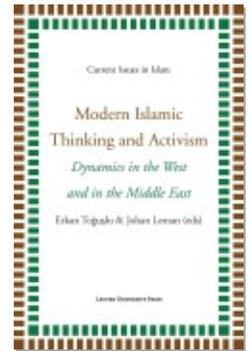
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CHAPTER 6
The Arab Revolutions
and Islamic Civil Society

Emilio Giuseppe Platti

Introduction

From February 2011 on, until Friday, August 9, 2013, when the Muslim Brothers were attacked and declared “a terrorist organization”, I attended Tahrir Square in downtown Cairo and the huge demonstrations, sometimes called *milyûniyya*, a protest of one million people. I was not actually participating in the demonstrations, just observing, trying to understand and analyse the slogans, the speeches and discussions on different platforms, the Friday sermon, on most occasions given by the now famous “*Tabrir-Khatib*”, the “Tahrir-preacher” Mazhar Shaheen, imam of the nearby Omar Makram Mosque, expressing the weekly changing themes of the demonstrations.

It is obvious that the themes changed considerably, from “Raise your head! You are Egyptian!”, “Egypt is one, Muslims and Copts hand in hand”, “Religion is for God, Homeland is for all!”, or “the army and the people, hand in hand”, to “the people wants the army to relinquish power”; or “Islamic citizenship (*muwâtana islâmiyya*), without discriminating against the Copts”, and “*Shari’a* Law is the Constitution of *al-Rahmân* (the Merciful God)”, or “People want *Shari’a* Law legislation”, and “*Shari’a* Law is the only source of Legislation”; while on October, 19, 2012, people shouted “Egypt is not the Muslim Brothers’ estate (*Masr mish izbat al-Ikhwân*)”, a slogan printed on the first page of the *al-Tabrir* newspaper...

Shari'a Law and the Arab spring

From these very few slogans of the Revolution, out of hundreds, it becomes clear that different expressions of identity are involved, and that a fundamental ideological diversity could be found as early as in the first weeks of the Revolution, even if “freedom, citizenship and democracy” united the demonstrators in the first half of 2011, until July 29, 2011, when Muslim Brothers and Salafis suddenly overpowered the democratic youth by greatly superior numbers.

From this particular moment on, everything seemed very clear; for most observers, Egyptian society was, and still is, split into two parts, pro or contra *Shari'a* Law, secular or Islamic; and most of the time everything is reduced to the question whether or not Islamic *Shari'a* Law will be applied, without asking what this *Shari'a* Law actually means in this particular society. There is a kind of presupposition that everyone knows very well what it means to apply *Shari'a* Law.

No attention is given to the apparent contradiction in the term “Islamic citizenship” used on Tahrir Square. And the same kind of apparent contradiction is to be found in the *Constitutional Declaration* issued on March 30, 2011, by the Egyptian Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF), saying that “individual freedom is a natural right” and that “all citizens are equals in Citizenship (*Muwâtana*), with “no discrimination between them based on gender, origin, language, *religion or creed*”, adding simply that Islamic *Shari'a* Law is the main source of legislation (*al-masdar al-ra'isi li-l-tashri*)!

An analysis of the different ideological bases for legitimacy expressed in the (Tunisian, Egyptian, Libyan and Syrian) “Arab Spring Revolutions” will make it clear that the “Islamic” and “Arab” nations involved do not have the same, univocal, understanding of Islamic *Shari'a* Law, but that this *Shari'a*, which they all still want to respect and in one way or another want to keep in their Constitutions, is mixed with elements of other bases of legitimacy. These bases are not always clearly defined, and talk about Islamic *Shari'a* Law is mostly narrowing the perception to the simple dichotomy already mentioned.

When Mustafâ 'Abd al-Jalîl was confirmed as chairman of the National Transition Council of Libya in September 2011, the Western media quoted only one sentence from his long speech: “[t]he new leader of Libya who says that *Shari'a* Law will be used as a basis to guide the country after the fall of the Qaddhâfi regime...”. In this quotation, the term *Shari'a* Law is not explained; it is supposed to be understood, and seems to have one well-defined meaning..., but in fact, it lacks the background of the whole of the speech, where chairman Mustafa 'Abd

al-Jalil is opening up the new horizon of Libya's future, where not only Islam and Islamic Law but also very strong tribal links are the basis for identity. Even if tribal adherence is weaker than religious identity, it is not to be forgotten, as it may in its way challenge the will to unify the citizens of the country under the only religious Law. In the post-revolutionary clashes in Libya, in Sinai and in Iraq, it became clear that tribal links are not to be underestimated. On the contrary, we will argue that *the actual challenges the Islamic Community as a whole is confronted with* are coming from the lack of a single definition of the term Islamic *Shari'a* Law itself, which is a result of the strong presence of alternative bases of legitimacy, the Western models of society being the most fascinating and attractive challengers, with their high respect for freedom, democracy and undiscriminating citizenship.

In fact, the kind of "secular-Islamic" dichotomy put forward in analysing the situation in the Middle East can only be understood from the point of view of a kind of Islamic exclusivism, actually very much alive in extreme Wahhabi or Salafi militant thinking, and ideologically expressed by the famous Muslim Brother Sayyid Qutb (d. 1966), who wrote that an '*almâni mujtama'*, or "secular Society" (in French: "*une société laïque*"), is a kind of uncivilised, non-human, society: "*al-Mujtama' al-islâmi...*, *huwa wahdahu al-mujtama' al-mutahaddir*" ("Islamic Society is the only one to be civilized"), "*al-Islâm huwa al-hadâra*" ("Islam is the civilization") (Sayyid Qutb 1964: 116-117).

This is however not the only way to understand Islam and its Law. There are other interpretations of society given by Muslims, linked to different interpretations of *Shari'a* Law, such as those expressed by Ahmed Osâma, a *Young Muslim Brother* (Al-Masry al-Youm 2012), representing what is called "the mainstream current", when he says that "eighty percent of the Egyptian people are religious. They fast and pray, watch television, go to theatres, walk by the Nile corniche, fall in love and get married... Some Salafis want Egypt to become like Saudi Arabia, and some liberals want Egypt to become like the United States... I don't want Egypt to become like Saudi Arabia or the American society...".

As Wahhabis and Salafis are thinking like Sayyid Qutb, we should not of course turn down as irrelevant Sayyid Qutb's interpretation. In Tahrir Square, in Cairo, I discovered through many discussions that the term "*mujtama' almâni*", with an explicit reference to the French model of "laïcité", was excluded, taboo, not to be used, at least in the context of the Egyptian Revolution, as it was identified with "*lâ-dîniyya*", a society without religion, or without God. In this sense, it was rather seen as an insult, a blasphemy...

From what we saw in Tahrir Square it was obvious that Sayyid Qutb's dichotomy "Islamic Society" (*al-mujtama' al-islâmi*) versus uncivilized society, a society in a state of ignorance ("*jâhiliyya*"), is not at all the model of society to be achieved in the future of Arab nations! On the contrary, more democratic and pluralistic models were the main inspiration of the young democrats who started the revolutions, reflecting a very deep change in the attitudes of younger generations towards the ideologies of "*Political Islam*" and its strict interpretation of *Sharî'a* Law.

This evolution is evident in the text of an interview given by the Egyptian Grand Mufti published on January 11, 2012, in the *Egypt Independent* newspaper, and summarised as follows:

"Egypt is a liberal country governed by a democratic system approved by Muslim scholars, Grand Mufti Ali Gomaa told *Al-Masry Al-Youm* in an interview published Wednesday. Gomaa stressed that the concept of a civil state doesn't contradict Islamic law, but conforms to it. In Egypt, a civil state means a modern Nation State that is compatible with Islamic provisions, Gomaa said. He said that Egypt did not import the civil state model from the West and that the model has existed for about 150 years".

Let me simply underline that this is not a quotation from the president of one of the smaller Egyptian liberal political parties, who actually lost the elections for the new people's assembly (November 2011-January 2012), but from Dr. 'Ali Gomaa, Mufti of the Egyptian Republic, the second highest religious authority after Dr. Ahmad al-Tayyib, the Grand Imam of Al-Azhar.

Let me underline the three main ideas put forward by the Mufti, and then summarize these statements:

First: *a democratic system in accordance with the Muslim scholars' general opinion.*

Second: *the concept of a civil Nation-State does not contradict Islamic law.*

Third: *the Egyptian model of a modern nation-state is embedded in Egypt's history.*

That means that there is no contradiction between a democratic system and Islamic *Sharî'a* Law. The concept of a civil nation-state – this means a *Dawla madaniyya*– does not contradict Islamic Law. This means that Dr. 'Ali Gomaa

implicitly refuses the notion of *Dawla dīniyya*, “a religious state”. The particular history of an Islamic country like Egypt has to be taken into account: there is no general pattern of an Islamic state as the unique model for all.

At Tahrir Square, people used the complex term of “*muwâtana islâmiyya*”, “Islamic citizenship”, meaning a civil nation-state (*dawla madaniyya*) with an Islamic reference or background; few want the Islamic character of Egypt to be completely erased from the new Constitution. And that is the reason why the Constituent Assembly did not want to change much of the text of the September 11, 1971, Egyptian Constitution’s two first paragraphs, amended in 2007:

Art. 1. *The Arab Republic of Egypt is a democratic state, based on citizenship... [According to the new Constitution, approved by referendum: The Arab Republic of Egypt is an independent sovereign state, united and indivisible, its system democratic. The Egyptian people are part of the Arab and Islamic nations (juz’ min al-Ummatayn al-‘Arabiyya wa l-Islâmiyya), proud of belonging to the Nile Valley and Africa and of its Asian reach, a positive participant in human civilization].*

Art. 2. *Islam is the religion of the State and Arabic its official language. Principles of Islamic Law (Shari‘a) are the principal source of legislation (mabâdi’ al-Shari‘a al-Islâmiyya al-masdar al-ra’îsi li l-tashri’).* [Identical in the New Constitution, approved by referendum, December 16-23, 2012].

It was obvious in the discussions in the Constituent Assembly that this second paragraph, which was accepted by the Muslim Brothers', does not express the ideas of the Wahhabi and Salafi militant Islamist groups, as they proclaimed them in this way in Tahrir Square on July 29, 2011: “God the highest said: «Sovereignty is for none but Allâh!» (Qur’ân 12, 40). We want the Islamic Religion to be the only source (*al-masdar al-wahid*) of legislation, not the main source (*al-masdar al-ra’îsi*) of legislation...”.

The objectives of *Shari‘a* Law

For a long time, Muslim scholars have opened the debate on a modern understanding of *Shari‘a* Law. That is the case with the Tunisian thinker

Mohamed Talbi (1998), whose standpoint in this regard was summarized by Abdou Filaly-Ansary:

“M. Talbi can be located in line with the Maghreb school, which places the emphasis more on the “*maqâsid*” (the objectives of the Law: *La finalité de la Loi*), and less on the “*qiyâs*”, the argument by analogy whereby one sets out to imprison present day life in the patterns of the past In other words: one can transcend the *Shari‘a* without contradicting it, in as far as we are certain that we are still following the direction it has indicated” (Filali-Ansary 2003: 172 translated by Platti (2008: 262).

It is clear that Grand Mufti Ali Gomaa’s statement mentioned before is exactly in this line, and also the two *Documents* issued by El-Azhar, referred to in paragraph 4.4, can no longer be understood according to the classical models of “*fatwa’s*”, the juridical advices given by Islamic legal authorities, with the “*qiyâs*” argument. These statements are very much in line with an argument based on the “*maqâsid*” the objectives of the *Shari‘a* Law (Attia 2007).

Some Muslim scholars are explicitly studying this fundamental aspect of the Islamic Law system, but none of them proposes a most detailed classification of theories on Islamic Law as Jasser Auda does in his book on the “objectives” of *Shari‘a* Law – *al-maqâsid* (Auda 2008). Extracts from his book in the following quotation make clear what we intended to say that simply referring to *Shari‘a* Law with the implicit understanding that we already know clearly what is meant is completely irrelevant and inadequate:

“This book proposed a shift in the ‘levels of authority’ from the usual binary categorisation of valid/invalid evidence into a multi-level ‘spectrum’ of validity of evidence and sources. Current sources in theories of Islamic law are identified as Qur’anic verses, Prophetic narrations, traditional schools of Islamic law, *maṣāliḥ* (i.e. *common interest*), rational arguments, and modern international declarations of rights. The current major ‘tendencies’ in various contemporary theories of Islamic law are identified as **traditionalism**, **modernism**, and **postmodernism**

Traditionalism includes the streams of scholastic traditionalism, scholastic neo-traditionalism, neo-literalism, and ideology-oriented theories ... Neo-literalism agrees with classic literalism in being against the idea of the purposes/*maqâsid* as legitimate source of jurisprudence. Finally,

ideology-oriented theories criticises modern ‘rationality’ and values for their biased ‘western-centricity’.

Islamic **modernism** includes the ‘streams’ of apologetic reinterpretation, reformist reinterpretation, dialogue-oriented re-interpretation, interest-oriented theories, and *uṣūl* (i.e. the fundamentals of Islamic Law) revision. Key contributors to Islamic modernism integrated their Islamic and Western education into new proposals for Islamic reform and ‘re-interpretation.’ ... *Uṣūl* revisionism attempted to revise *uṣūl al-fiqh* (i.e. the fundamentals of Islamic Law), through questioning the notions of ‘consensus’, ‘authenticity’ and ‘abrogation’, and introducing new interpretations of *maṣlaḥa* (common interest).

Islamic **postmodernism** included streams of post-structuralism, historicism, critical legal studies, post-colonialism, neo-rationalism, anti-rationalism, and secularism. The common method in all these postmodern approaches is ‘deconstruction’, in a Derridean style” (Auda 2008: 206-7).

Three bases of legitimacy

When the Egyptian people prepare for the elections for a new people’s Assembly, and on 25th January 2013 commemorate the second anniversary of the revolution, observers have the impression that two important ideological blocs are confronting each other: the more secular, democratic, “liberal” movements, inspired by the aspirations of the new generations for “freedom, citizenship and democracy” based on the rules of a nation-state (1°), and the more radical Islamic parties, *de facto* inspired by what in the last third of the twentieth century has been called “political Islam” (2°), in the sense that Islamic *Shari’a* Law is to be the only basis for legitimacy. We understand that the Grand Mufti expressed himself in terms of the first ideology. But the statements from the Egyptian Mufti of course remained not unchallenged, and in particular by the Salafis, the members of the *Nūr* party, the second party in the now disbanded parliament, with a quarter of the votes and 125 seats. And it is clear that their ideological background is indeed the ideology of political Islam. But let us not forget that this ideology, and the movements linked to it, became strong in the last third of the twentieth century because they were challenging the authority of the two presidents who came after Jamāl ‘Abd al-Nâsir (d. 1970), Anwar al-Sadât (assassinated on October 6, 1981) and Hosnî Mubâarak. They were the last representatives of a

third pan-Arabic post-colonial ideology, the still influential, but very much declining nationalistic and militaristic ideology (3°). We can find reminders of the pan-Arabic nationalism, indeed, in the texts of the old and new Constitutions (“*The Egyptian people are part of the Arab and Islamic nations....: Min ummatayn, al-‘Arabiyya wa l-Islâmiyya*”), and in Tahrir Square, we saw pictures of Jamâl ‘Abd al-Nâsir and references to Nasserism; and the term “Arab Spring” itself has an implicit reference to pan-arabism! In Egypt, Arab nationalism was the ultimate basis of legitimacy for more than half a century, the Egyptian Revolution of July 23, 1952, with a military coup d’état staged by the Free Officers’ Movement, a group of army officers led by Muhammad Naguib and Gamal Abdel Nasser. The revolution was completed by first overthrowing King Farouk and, ultimately, the monarchy with King Fuad II, born on 16 January 1952, who reigned for less than a year until 18 June 1953. King Fuad II was Egypt and Sudan’s last monarch and the last of the Muhammad Ali Dynasty. But let us not forget that Arab nationalism was also the ultimate basis of legitimacy under Saddâm Husayn (Iraq), Zayn al-‘Âbidîn Ben ‘Alî (Tunisia), Mu‘ammar al-Qaddhâfi (Libya), ‘Alî ‘Abdullâh Sâlih (Yemen), Bashshâr al-Asad (Syria), Yâsir ‘Arafat (Palestine)...

Revolutionary Nationalism and military rule

Now that everyone has been talking about “the Arab spring”, let us not forget 1998 and similar events in Indonesia, when President Suharto and his military regime were replaced by a democratic system, with an elected president. As with the Egyptian situation, there was a feeling of “Kefâya: enough is enough”: Suharto was re-elected for another five-year term in March 1998, thanks to family and business associates’ support. But, increasingly, people spoke out against Suharto’s presidency, and university students organised nationwide demonstrations. He resigned on May 21, 1998.

It is so often said that Indonesia is the biggest “Islamic” country in the world. But what does it mean? In what sense is this country an “Islamic” country? With a population of more than 245,000,000 people and 86.1% Muslims (*World Factbook 2011: “Indonesia is now the world’s third most populous democracy, ... and home to the world’s largest Muslim population”*). The constitutional system, however, is not “Islamic”: the basis of legitimacy is indeed not, in one way or another, *Shari‘a* Law, but the *Pancasila*, i.e. *the Five Principles of the State*: (1°) Belief in the one and only God, (2°) Just and Civilized Humanity, (3°) The Unity of Indonesia, (4°) Democracy and (5°) Social Justice.

Abdurrahman Wahid (who died in 2009) was the first elected president of Indonesia after the resignation of Suharto in 1998 (from 1999 to 2001), and long

the president of the biggest Indonesian Islamic cultural organisation, *Nahdatul Ulama*, with perhaps 30 million members. We met him in 2005 for a long interview, in which he underlined, on the one hand, the *specific cultural relevance* of the local Islamic traditions, and on the other hand *the danger of the Wahhabi missions*, who refuse any cultural and religious diversity, propagating one single “Islamic” model for organizing society.

As was the case for Indonesia, the post-colonial period, the second half of the twentieth century, has also been characterized elsewhere by military dictatorship and nationalism. And this was the case not only in “Islamic” countries, Burma being the last example of this evolution. For “Islamic” countries, these regimes were often identified to be a typical “Islamic, non-democratic” way of organizing society. Most of the time, this had nothing to do with “Islam”.

To make this case clear, allow me to analyse shortly one of the most important charters of the post-colonial period, the Constitution of the *Ba’th* Party, written for the first National Congress, held in Damascus in April 1947. As we know, the *Ba’th* ideology was the basis of the Iraqi regime (until the fall of Saddam Husayn on 30 December 2006; he had been a leading member of the revolutionary Arab Socialist *Ba’th* Party, and later, the Baghdad-based *Ba’th* Party – *Ba’th* meaning “*Renaissance*” – of Arab nationalism). But it is, even now, also the basis of the Syrian regime of Hâfiz al-Asad, and his son Bashshâr al-Asad.

Under the title “Constitution of the Socialist Arabic *Ba’th*-Party”, we find the definition of the party:

“The Socialist Arabic Ba’th-Party is a national movement, popular and revolutionary, fighting for Arab’s unity, freedom and socialism”. There are three fundamental principles:

“(1°) The Unity and freedom of the Arab Nation; (2°) The Personality of the Arab Nation; (3°) The Mission of the Arab Nation” (Renaud 1982: 12-33).

The Arabs, spread from the Gulf of Bassora to the Atlantic Ocean, are united through their common Arabic language and culture, so that they become one motherland (*al-Umm*), which has a sacred character and an “*eternal*” mission.

The basis of legitimacy is the national, popular and revolutionary movement of the Arab citizens, united in one Arab Nation, culture and language; and nobody is allowed to divide it. Not the tribal identity (Berbers – *qabâ’il* – in Algeria, but also in Libya, Iraq, Yemen, Arabia, Sinai...), not an ethnic identity (Kurdish...), not a communitarian identity – *tawâ’if* – (Lebanon, Syria...), or a religious identity (*Sunnî*, *Shi’î*, Coptic, Assyrians).

In the ten pages of that *Ba'ath* Constitution, no mention at all is made of Islam, Islamic Law or Muslims. It is a purely secular, National-Socialist Document.

That is the reason why Arab Christians could easily join the nationalist movements in the region (e.g. Palestine – *Fath* – and Iraq/Syria – *Ba'ath*): the basis of legitimacy marginalized religious criteria of differentiation. That is also the reason why Christians in Iraq had a much better time under Saddâm Husayn than after the American intervention, when democratic elections resulted in a new power struggle between Sunni, Shi'a and Kurdish identities, Sunni and Shi'a based on religious identities, and Kurdish on a ethnic identity, unlike the pan-Arabic national identity of the *Ba'ath*.

We tend to forget that this kind of post-colonial nationalist ideology represented by the *Ba'ath* Constitution has produced most of the military regimes in power in the so-called “Islamic countries” of the second half of the XXth century, including Indonesia and Turkey, Algeria, Egypt, Palestine, Yemen, Syria and Iraq... The search for national unity is tragically represented by Jamâl 'Abd-al-Nâsir, the failed union between Egypt and Syria (1958–1961: *Al-Jumhuriya al-'Arabiyya al-Muttahida*) and the call for other unions later on.

We know how the West reacted to the different independence movements. The colonial powers France and Great-Britain did not like them. We know what happened between France and the Algerian independence movements from 1954 to 1962, and the independence war, until General de Gaulle signed the Évian accords, which led to Algeria gaining its independence from France. But we know also how the military regime crushed the Islamic movements when the FIS (Front Islamique du Salut – Islamic Salvation Front) won the first round of the parliamentary elections in December 1991, initiating a bloody civil war.

What is completely forgotten is the plot organised by Britain and the United States against Mohammed Mossadegh who was prime minister of Iran from 1951 to 1953, and was overthrown when he wanted to nationalize Iran's oil industry. We should not forget that in March 2000, Madeleine Albright, who was at that time Secretary of State, “*stated her regret that Mossadegh was ousted*”, as “*it was a setback for Iran's political development*”, and it is now “*easy to understand why many Iranians continue to resent this intervention by America*”.

A completely different ideological movement was appearing: Islamic radicalism. From Khomeini's time on, these Western powers started to reconsider their position. The West, and France in particular, supported the military regimes of the Middle East, considered to be more “secular”, more “*laïc*”, and useful allies in their fight against “Islamic terrorism”. France's sympathy towards the military

regime in Algeria was unshaken during the second civil war between 1990 and 1993, while it became clear that the radicalization of the Islamists and the violent uprisings that dominated political life in 1992 and 1993 resulted from the revived political authoritarianism led by the army...

But it became clear very soon that from the seventies on, the nationalist ideologies lost much of their credibility.

The Islamist ideology of Political Islam

Under President Anwar as-Sadât, and much more under Hosni Mubâarak, the legitimacy of the regime, based on the nationalist ideology, vanished altogether, in the same way as happened in Algeria, in Iraq, in Indonesia and even in Palestine, where the national liberation movement of *Fath* has been challenged since the appearance of *Hamâs*. Based on the principles of “Political Islam” gaining momentum throughout the Arab world in the 1980s, *Hamâs*, (*Harakat al-muqawwama al-islâmiyya*, the Movement of the Islamic Resistance), was founded in 1987, during the first *Intifâda*.

But *Hamâs* was not the only movement of its kind; it was the political expression of another ideology, more profoundly rooted in the culture of Muslim peoples, unlike the nationalist ideologies influenced by Western thinking.

The ideology of “Political Islam” is indeed a completely different source of legitimacy, and fundamentally challenges all nationalist ideologies. In the eighties and nineties it became stronger to the extent that the military regimes lost all credibility. It was and is still very much a pan-Islamic ideology, and can be traced back to the early thirties of the twentieth century, when Hasan al-Bannâ in Egypt, followed by the Muslim Brother ideologist Sayyid Qutb (executed in 1966), and Abû I-Alâ Maudûdî (d. 1979) in India, were propagating a new, coherent and modern way to understand the social and political implications of traditional Islamic thinking; radically purifying the Islamic *Way of Life* from non-essential, devotional or Western-inspired practices. Their systematic way of thinking, based on a neo-literalistic reading of the Qur’ân², is still very much the primary source of inspiration of all radical Islamic movements who want the application of *Shari’â* Law (*tadbiq al-Shari’â*), all over the world, to conform to their literalistic understanding of God’s Law (Sabanegh 1980; Bellani, and Borrmans 1986).

An incredible rush towards the Arabic-Islamic literary heritage – *al-turâth al-‘arabî al-islâmî* – was one of the consequences of their vision of the *Revival* of the pan-Islamic community, with new-born Islamic States, based on the unique legitimacy of Islamic Law and Constitution, basically rediscovered in the

fundamental texts of the Arabic-Islamic literary heritage. But, as the eminent scholar Mohamed Arkoun (d. September 2010) wrote in his last book, “The way this Arabic-Islamic literary heritage is used in modern times is *“anachronistic”* (Arkoun 2010: 53). We agree completely with this statement, and will make it clear in analysing Maudûdî’s way of considering *Shari‘a* Law, analysed later on.

As was the case with the nationalistic ideology, the West was again unable to grasp the profound impact of this until 1975 mostly hidden, ideology, until the dramatic events of the Iranian revolution in 1979 and 1980, and the assassination of president Anwar as-Sadat on October 6th, 1981.

Observers in the West did not realize the impact of this ideology on the whole of the Islamic world: I saw people reading Maudûdî’s booklet *Towards Understanding Islam* in Brussels³, in Manila, in the metro in Paris, in London, and of course in Cairo... For many Muslims, at least, after centuries of decadence, of Western arrogance, revival was possible, based on the very principles of their revealed Book, explained in a simple and apparently modern way.

The military regimes understood the threat of Political Islam’s legitimacy much better. The repression was ferocious: emergency law in Egypt and continuous persecution of Muslim Brothers and more radical Muslims until the fall of Mubarak; civil war in Algeria; the massacre of Hama in February 1982 under Hâfiz al-Asad; what has been described as one of *“the single deadliest acts by any Arab government against its own people in the modern Middle East”*, Hâfiz’s son Bashshâr doing even worse... On the other hand, the most radical groups of this “Islamic” political movement became more and more violent and evolved towards action identified as “terrorism” by the West...

In the most ambiguous political situation of Pakistan and its political instability since independence from British rule and *Qâ'id Azam* leader Muhammad Ali Jinnah (d. September 11, 1948), with continuous interaction between democratic legitimacy, military rule, and Islamic political traditions, it was Abû l-A'lâ Maudûdî who presented a coherent alternative, called revolution (Maudidi 1947; 1991), based on the principle that *“no man made Law, only God’s Law”* has legitimacy (Platti 2008; Maudidi 1978 and 1964)⁴.

We know now how deeply these ideas were absorbed by radical Muslims all over the world, even if Maudûdî did not intend to incite to violence. Maudûdî was very explicit in defending his global vision on the fact that Islam and Western civilization *“are in conflict with each other”* (Maudidi 1991). He remained fundamentally peaceful, arguing that only education can bring about a global change, and not a sudden, violent revolution. Nevertheless, we saw how some of

his main ideas, expressed in his articles in “*West versus Islam*”, became a terrible reality on September 11, 2001: radical Muslims made Huntington’s book *The Clash of Civilizations* (1996) look like a prophecy in the sense of “*Islam versus West*”.

According to Maudûdî, the Muslim community has its own “*complete code of life*” (Maudûdî 1985: 30), which is diametrically opposed to that of the West, the latter being based on foundations different from those of Islam. The West, for example, has detached economic and social existence from the ethical principles of religion on account of its “struggle for liberation” from the church and from clericalism. Maudûdî claims that, as a consequence of this historical evolution, therefore, Western society is established on three principles: ***nationalism***, whereby the nation is the ultimate ground of all legitimacy and not universal human dignity rooted in the oneness of God; ***democracy***, whereby the law is dependent on alternating majorities made up of different interest groups and not on the difference between justice and injustice; ***the absence of religion from matters of state***, whereby alternative interests are *de facto* at work and not the question of ethical responsibility; this is the real agenda of the West (Maudûdî 1987).

The impact of Maudûdî’s Islamic Political System based on the principle of God’s Sovereignty – *Rubûbiyya* – cannot be underestimated (Maudûdî 1992: 72). Even in Tahrir Square, on July 29, 2011, this principle was clearly proclaimed by militant Salafis: “*Islam admits no Sovereignty except that of God and, consequently, does not recognise any Law-giver other than Him*”; so the slogan in Tahrir Square said: “*Inna al-Hukm illâ li-llâh. Ad-Dîn al-islâmî huwa al-masdar al-wahîd li-t-tashrî*”: “*Sovereignty belongs to God. The Islamic Religion is the only source of legislation*”, not even the primary source of legislation, as proposed by the *Supreme Council of the Armed Forces*, the SCAF, in their constitutional document of March 31, 2011.

Since the turn of the new century, it has, however, become clear that Maudûdî’s Islamic political system has a fundamental weakness. His vision of Islamic Law is not compatible with any modern apprehension of natural causes and natural law⁵. The negation of the historical dimension of the Islamic tradition and of the particular roots of Islamic civilisation not only leads to the refutation and rejection of global multiculturalism and the idea of an evolving Islamic way of life; it also reveals an overwhelmingly crushing image of God⁶. History and culture, human engagement and freedom to engage lose their consistency. The point of reference par excellence is a univocally understood statement from the Qur’an: *al-hukm li-llah* – legitimacy belongs to God alone.

And it is exactly this verse from the Coran that was exhibited by Salafis on Tahrir Square: “«Sovereignty is for none but Allāh! » (Qur’ān 12, 40); We want Islamic Religion to be the only source of legislation, not the main source of legislation: let us stop combining his legislation with other legislations (*an nushrika mā’a tashrī’ihī tashrī’ātin ukbrā!...*)”.

For these radical Islamists, there are no such things as subsidiarity, no delegation, no consistent human (co-)creative engagement, no legitimacy of any kind in human interference with God’s Law: all of that is considered *shirk*, polytheism (the use of “*nushrika*” in the Salafi slogan is already suggestive!). It seems to me that all of this, however, represents a flagrant contradiction of the Qur’anic concept of *khalīfa* – the human person as the *locus tenens* of God! – and the ebullient creative and inventive activities of older Islamic civilisations. Human contingency is driven to its extremes by the Islamists, monotheism is stretched to its limits, and nothing ultimately exists apart from God.

Maudūdī was given the first prestigious King Faisal Prize in 1979, some months before he died. This event symbolizes the recognition by the two-centuries-old Wahhabi movement of the similarity of Maududi’s action to the Wahhabi *jihādī* revival. It goes back to Muhammad Ibn ‘Abd al-Wahhāb (d. 1792) and his disciples’ action against “polytheism” – *shirk* -7.

A short analysis of Muhammad Ibn ‘Abd al-Wahhāb’s most important book, *Kitāb al-Tawhīd (Book on Monotheism)*, shows:

- (1) Its extreme exclusivist attitude: characterized as “*Shirk*” are the Shi’a (with the “saints” of the Family of the Prophet), the Sufis (with their “mystic saints”), and Christians (with their icons, tombs, saints...). *Shirk* has to be extirpated by way of *Jihād*.
- (2) The importance of obedience to God’s Law: and God’s attribute of Justice. “islam” is almost reduced to his casuistic interpretation, and the rulings of fatwas.
- (3) The strict (and literal) interpretation of *Sharī’a* Law as a unique model for the Islamic Way of Life.

At a certain moment of the Egyptian revolution, in April-May 2011, Salafi and Wahhabi movements attacked Sufi shrines in Cairo and Alexandria: « *In Alexandria, ... at least 16 historic mosques belonging to Sufi orders are targeted by members of the Salafi movement, who attempted to demolish tombs of important*

Islamic scholars because they oppose the veneration of saints as heretical. One of the mosques allegedly attacked by Salafis is the historic mosque of al-Mursī Abū l-‘Abbās, which dates back to the 13th century and is a popular site for visits by Egyptians from across the country. ...) There are about half a million registered Sufis in Alexandria, which has a population of 4.1 million people. The city contains 36 of Egypt’s 76 registered Sufi orders » (Al-Masry Al-Youm 2011).

This reminds us of the terrible attack on July, 1, 2010, in Lahore, on the shrine of the great mystic Abū l-Hasan ‘Alī al-Ghaznawī al-Hujwayrī (d. 1074), the author of the famous book on Islamic mysticism, *Kashf al-Mahjūb* (Nicholson 1990). This attack, with more than forty pilgrims killed, against one of the most prestigious Muslim-Sufi shrines, reminds us of other attacks against Sufi and Shi‘a shrines in Libya, Mali and Iraq.

In the minds of these radical Muslims there can be no other model of living Islam than the way of life of the “*Salaf*”, the early companions and ancestors, who lived, according to them, the pure life of Muslims according to the Qur‘ān and the Sunna, the way of life of the Prophet. They reject all other practices seen as “innovations”, different from the simple rituals from Muhammad’s time, like visiting the tombs of saints, or the Sufi “prayer” of *dhikr*. Sometimes, they refer to the medieval scholar Ibn Taymiyya (Taqī al-Dīn Ahmad Ibn Taymiyya, 1263 – 1328), who refuted radically any mediation by saints or holy people between God and humans. Ibn Taymiyya indeed also condemned the Sufi’s *dhikr*, mentioning God’s name (Bannerth 1974; Michot 2012; Ibn Taymiyya 1996).

It is obvious that the ideology of “Political Islam” is influencing extremist and exclusivist groups, using violence against Sufis, Shi‘ites and Christians, or Western societies in general. But it is too easy to reduce Islamic activism or even fundamentalism to this kind of “radical extremism”. In the same way Islamic *Shari‘a* Law can be understood in different ways, to characterize a society as “Islamic” does not mean that the ideology of “Political Islam” is the only basis for legitimacy in that society. Society can have intertwined ideological bases. This is indeed the case in the first paragraph of the new Egyptian Constitution, bringing together pan-Arabism and Islam: *the Egyptian people are part of the Arab and Islamic Nations (juz’ min al-Ummatayn al-‘Arabiyya wa l-Islāmiyya)!*

Democracy and the liberal Nation-State

The ideology of “Political Islam” was already conceived decades before Western public opinion became aware of it between 1975 and 1981, with the Iranian

Revolution and the murder of president Anwar al-Sadât, and much later on with terrorism and al-Qâ'ida. In the same way the ideas of democracy, freedom and citizenship were already expressed long before democratic youth movements started the "Arab Spring" revolutions, taking Western public opinion by surprise. The legitimacy of the old regimes was shaken long before 2011. But in Tahrir Square the authority of the old regime is openly de-legitimized: corruption, arbitrary action, violence, repression and falsified elections are to be replaced by "a Nation-State with citizenship, justice and democracy" (*min ajl Dawlat al-muwâtana wa l-'adl wa l-dîmuqrâtiyya*). At the same time, a religious state (*dawla dîniyya*) based on a purely Islamic model of society is banned: "May the Crescent live together with the Cross!" (*'ûsha al-Hilâl mâ'a al-Salîb*). The old Wafd party was happy to remind the Egyptians of their slogan from the time of Egyptian independence from British rule (1922) and their hero Sa'd Zaghlûl (d. 1927): "Religion is for God and Homeland is for all" (*al-Dîn li-llâh wa l-Watan li l-jamî'*).

In the time when militants of "political Islam" were still persecuted and imprisoned, intellectuals were already discussing secularism... In the eighties of the twentieth century Fouad Zakariyya criticized "political Islam" and its revival (Zakkariyya 1989)⁸. Judge Muhammad Sa'îd al-Ashmâwî argued for enlightenment instead of "political Islam", the title of his most renowned book (al-Ashmâwî 1987; Anawati 1989). And Faraj Fûda, who was murdered in 1992, dared to write *On Secularism/Laïcité* in his book *Hawla l-'almâniyya* (1987). Some Tunisian intellectuals were very explicit in defending modernity. We have already mentioned Mohamed Talbi; Saâd Ghrab, Hmîda Ennaifer and Abdelmajid Charfi analysed secularization trends already active in Arab countries (Charfi 1996; Ghrab 1996; Ennaifer 1996).

In India, Syed Alam Khundmiri (d. 1983) criticized the theological principles of modern Islamic fundamentalism, referring to al-Ash'arî (d. 938) and Ghazâlî (d. 1111), whose theology implied, according to him, that "human agents have no role to play, no creativity or initiative. Human beings are determined objects and not active, creative subjects". For this Indian philosopher, this means that modern Islamic fundamentalism is in fact traditionalism and stagnation, and is "not a victory for the Prophetic Tradition" (Ansari 2011: 34, 48).

The most interesting evidence of a personal evolution from militancy for "political Islam" towards an open and tolerant Islam is given by the Indian scholar Maulana Wahiduddin Khan in his book *Islam rediscovered* (2001: 152).

Khan joined the Indian branch of Maudûdî's movement in 1949, but left it in 1962, convinced that the view of Islam represented by Maudûdî was "a grave misinterpretation": "What made matters worse ... was the emergence of certain Muslim leaders in the first half of the twentieth century, who expounded their own political interpretation of Islam, according to which Islam was a complete system of State and Muslims had been appointed by God to fulfill the mission of establishing this Islamic State throughout the world. Some well-known names associated with this interpretation are the following: Syed Qutb in Egypt, Ayatollah Khomeini in Iran, and Syed Abul Ala Maududi in Pakistan. This political view of Islam, in spite of being a grave misinterpretation, spread rapidly among Muslims".

In this context, it is interesting to see how Professor Vali Nasr, who was the author of the most comprehensive analysis of Maudûdî's life and work (Reza Nasr 1996; 1994), has been feeling the radical change going on in the Middle East, referring to the Turkish model as a "promising way forward for the wider region" in his book published in 2009 with this subtitle: "Why the new Muslim Middle Class is the key to defeating Extremism" (Nasr 2009). Other sociological analyses are needed to link this statement to the democratic youth connected by the Internet and Facebook who were the driving force of the Arab revolutions. It is however clear for me that economic and social problems in Tunisia and Egypt were also very much at the back of the insurrections. We cannot forget the pre-revolutionary movement of 6 April (*Harakat 6 April*) involved in the 2008 strike at the textile factories of Mahalla al-Kubrâ in the Egyptian Delta.

We started by referring to the second highest religious authority in Egypt, the Mufti Shaykh Ali Gom'a, and his interview on "democracy". In this context, the most spectacular document coming from the highest Islamic authority in Egypt is certainly the Document for *Basic Freedoms in Society* (January 11, 2012) issued by the Shaykh al-Azhar, Dr. Ahmad al-Tayyib. Nobody can ever say after this Document that democracy, citizenship and freedom are alien to Islam. It is clear that Al-Azhar is very much aware of the radical changes in Islamic societies and wants the Islamic community to integrate the globalized world, upholding an open, tolerant and Islamic identity, in dialogue with international institutions. In this sense, this Document on freedoms is a step further than the first Document, a *Statement about the Future of Egypt* (June 19, 2011).

The most important articles (out of the eleven) of this first Document describe modern post-revolutionary Egypt as follows (excerpts):

First. A modern and democratic State, according to a Constitution..., ... This Constitution should establish rules, guarantee the rights and the duties of all the citizens equally (*musâwât*) It differs from other states which rule according to the model of a “religious and clerical state” (*dawla dîniyya kabnûtiyya*). ... Islamic *Shari‘a* Law is the fundamental source of legislation (*al-Shari‘a al-islâmiyya hiya al-masdar al-asâs li-l-tashrî‘*).

Second. Al-Azhar embraces a democracy based on free and direct voting which represents the modern formula for achieving the Islamic precepts of “*Shura*” (consultation).

Third, commitment to fundamental freedoms of thoughts and opinions (*al-hurriyyât al-asâsiyya fî l-fikr wa l-ra‘y*), with full respect of human, women’s and children’s rights (*huqûq al-insân wa l-mar‘a wa l-tifl*).

Fourth. Al-Azhar supports dialogue and mutual respect between citizens

Fifth. Commitment to all international conventions

The basic rights of citizens are formulated in the four articles of the second Document (excerpts):

First: *Freedom of Belief*

Freedom of belief and the associated right of full citizenship for all – which is based on complete equality in rights and duties – is regarded as the cornerstone in the modern social structure. This freedom is guaranteed by the authentic conclusive religious texts and the clear constitutional and legal principles. Almighty Allah says, {*There shall be no compulsion in the religion. The right course has become clear from the wrong...*} (Qur‘ân, *Al-Baqarah* 2: 256). And He also says, {*So whoever wills – let him believe; and whoever wills – let him disbelieve...*} (Qur‘ân, *Al-Kahf* 18: 29). Accordingly, any aspect of compulsion, persecution, or discrimination on the basis of religion is prohibited

Second: *Freedom of Opinion and Expression*

Freedom of opinion is the mother of all freedoms, and it is most manifest in the free expression of opinion by all different means, including writing, oratory, artistic production, digital communication.

Third: *Freedom of Scientific Research*

Serious scientific research in humanities, physics, mathematics, etc., is the driver of human progress and the means to discovering the laws of the universe so as to use them for the goodness of humankind Great Muslim scholars, such as Ar-Râzî, Ibn Al-Haytham, Ibn An-Nafis, were the leaders and pioneers of knowledge in the East and the West for many centuries. It is time now for the Arab and Muslim world to make a comeback to the race of power and the age of knowledge.

Fourth: *Freedom of Literary and Artistic Creativity*

There are two types of creativity. One type is scientific creativity, which was tackled earlier. The other is literary and artistic creativity, which comprises different genres of literature, such as lyric and dramatic poetry, stories and novels, theatre, biographies, and visual plastic arts, and cinematic, television, and musical arts, in addition to other forms newly introduced to all these genres.

It has to be underlined how much these two documents contradict the current negative image of “Islam” essentially influenced by the Salafi, Wahhabi or Maududian ideologies and their inherent censorship, completely in contrast with the last paragraph of al-Azhar’s second document: “[t]he more the reasonable freedom is entrenched in society, the clearer the proof of its civilization. Literature and arts are the mirror of the consciences of societies and the true expression of their variables and invariables. They paint a bright picture of their aspirations for a better future. We implore Almighty Allah to guide us to that which is good and right”.

Conclusion

Dozens of times I went to Tahrir Square, observing the Egyptian revolution evolving from the formidable *milyûniyyas* in January-February 2011 towards the vibrant acclamation of Dr. Muhammad Morsi as the new elected President of Egypt on Friday, June 29, 2012, at 6 p.m., and the Friday, October 19, 2012 manifestation against the Muslim Brothers and the draft of the New Constitution. From everything I saw and heard, I tried to understand the background, sometimes confronted with apparent contradictions in one and the same Friday sermon, let alone the differences between the women’s emancipation platform

and the Salafi candidate Hâzim Abû Ismâ'il's discourse in the same square. And so I came to the conclusion that it was, and still is, impossible to reduce everything to some simple univocal concepts, but, on the contrary, that different projects for building a new society were intertwined, conforming to the complexity of the Egyptian society and the Middle East realities.

From everything I have read since I visited Pakistan in 1992, I was able to distinguish the three fundamental ideologies of Nationalism, Political Islam and Democracy⁹. All three are clearly influential in the so-called "Arab Spring", now more and more evolving towards political activism and unresolved conflicts. But as freedom of speech became a reality, none of these ideologies had the absolute upper hand, as was the case under Nasser and is still the case in Saudi Arabia; but for how long? It has been evident in Egypt since the new century that, intellectually speaking, the third ideology of freedom and democracy is slowly becoming stronger and the pan-Arabic option weaker. And younger generations are no longer fascinated by their parents' struggle for political Islam as they were in the eighties and nineties.

In Tahrir Square, democratic activists were killed by anonymous adherents to the old regime. This was the case for the most eminent Sheikh, 'Emâd ad-Dîn 'Effat, Director for Fatwa's at Dâr al-Iftâ', who was gunned down in the square on December 16, 2011, and proclaimed a Martyr of the Revolution with many others. Salafis and Muslim Brothers and Sisters were liberated from prison and showed new strength. But ultimately, they were not able to impose their views completely. It is a kind of "Islamic citizenship" (*muwâtana islâmiyya*) which is ultimately prevailing. Nobody was able to silence the newly discovered consequence of the Revolution: freedom of expression and pluralism (*ta'addud*), legitimized by Egypt's supreme religious authority in his second Document.

A clear sign of this evolution, but above all of the complexity of the new realities, is this sentence in that second Document, mixing freedoms and *Shari'a* Law: "The basic freedoms ... are the freedom of belief, the freedom of expression, the freedom of scientific research, the freedom of literary and artistic creativity. All these freedoms should have their roots in serving the objectives of the *Shari'a* (*maqâsid al-Shari'a!*) and grasping the spirit of modern constitutional legislation and the requirements of human knowledge advance".

The diversity of interpretations of the fundamental concept of *Shari'a* Law, clearly analysed by Auda, is in itself a sign that a great number of Muslim scholars are really joining the actual globalisation of intellectual life in our world, leaving

behind dictatorial regimes, but also the narrow-minded identity of “*Political Islam*”.

Post-scriptum (August 31, 2013)

On October 19, 2012, people on Tahrir-square shouted “Egypt is not the Muslim Brothers’ estate”. It was the beginning of increasing criticism towards the way president Morsi and the Muslim Brothers were governing the country. There was, on November 22, 2012, the Constitutional Declaration issued by president Morsi bringing him beyond the bounds of judicial supervision. A new Constitution is pushed through and endorsed by referendum (December 25, 2012); there is however nationwide protest against article 219 specifying how article 2 (“principles of *Shari‘a*-law”) has to be understood in a very restrictive way: according to the principles and rules of the Islamic Law-system (*qawā'id usūliyya wa-fiqhiyya*) and the four Sunni-schools of the Islamic community (*madhāhib Abl al-Sunna wa l-Jamā'a*); excluding other possible interpretations. On the second anniversary of the revolution, January 25, 2013, anti-Morsi protesters fill Tahrir-square. In February-March, opposition increases, given the total inefficiency of the government in basic social and economic matters. Anti-Brotherhood sentiment is on the rise: the “narrow-minded identity of Political Islam” becomes obvious, and, more important, his fundamental inability to address social problems. On Tahrir-square, speakers reject the Muslim Brothers: they are seen as “traders in religion – *tujjār al-Dīn*”, “they follow al-Bannā’s *Shari‘a* and not Muhammad’s *Shari‘a* (sic)”! It appears clearly that the Brothers’ slogan “Islam is the solution – *al-Islām huwa al-hall*” is not at all realized. And the Sinai Peninsula becomes increasingly a war-zone against jihadist infiltrators. From May on, an anti-Morsi campaign called *Tamarrud* – Rebellion, aims to force Morsi out of office by collecting 15 million petitions. On the evening of Sunday June 30, millions gather on squares and streets in all the big cities of Egypt to support *Tamarrud*. The opposition to Morsi’s regime is such that general Sisi, the Defense minister, appears on television on the evening of July 3, with high ranking commanders of the army, the great-Imam Ahmad at-Tayyib, the Coptic Patriarch Tawādro and representatives of the opposition and the Salafi Nūr-party – all of them together symbolising the unity of the Egyptian people. They present a Declaration removing Muhammad Morsi from office, describing a road-map towards new elections and democratic institutions, and the appointment of Adly Mansour as

Egypt's interim President. The Muslim Brotherhood's reaction is furious: they try to convince the world that this is simply a military coup (*inqiláb 'askarî*), and not a popular uprising representing the Nation's legitimacy (*al-shar'iyya*). On July 26, a similar *milliûniyya* in favour of Sisi and the removal of Morsi will be seen as a confirmation of the Egyptian people's will for radical change. On August 14, there is the violent intervention of the security forces and the army against the Muslim Brothers on Râbi'a al-'Adawiyya and Nahda-squares, with the following repression of the Muslim Brotherhood.

From the three intertwined ideologies, fundamentals of legitimacy, explicitly present on Tahrir-square, one is out (for the time being): Islamist movements imposing « Political Islam », a « religious State » (*dawla dîniyya*) (1°). Representatives of the democratic tendencies have been dominating the (new) constitution-drafting process, and they abolished article 219, seen as imposing too strict an interpretation of *Shari'a*-law on Egyptians. These democrats want a « liberal » *Nation-State* with freedom and citizenship, without discrimination between Christian Copts and Sunni Muslims (*dawla madaniyya*) (2°). In July, some pictures of 'Abd al-Nâsir appeared more frequently on Tahrir-square: but it doesn't mean that Nasser's post-colonial nationalism can be revived; it is certain however, that Egyptian nationalism was overwhelmingly present on Tahrir-square in July. Demonstrators wanted national unity: a strong Egyptian Nation (*dawla wataniyya*) (3°). Evolving towards a new military rule? Nobody knows what the military has in mind for the future... Hopefully, they will hold firm to the new, more liberal, post-Morsi, Constitution, in a context of polarization and violence; a tragic situation not at all conform to the ideals of the January 2011 "Arab Spring Revolution".

Notes

- 1 As we know, the Democratic Alliance, guided by the *Party for Freedom and Justice*, won a 47% majority out of 498 seats in the November-January 2011-2012 elections. This party is directly linked to the movement of the *Muslim Brothers* founded in 1928 in Egypt by the Islamic scholar and schoolteacher Hasan al-Bannâ (who was shot and died on February 12, 1949, in Cairo). At these elections, they won 234 seats for the People's Assembly which was later dissolved by the court.
- 2 For a modern Western mind it is amazing that society is to be organized according to commentaries of revealed texts: (Maudidi 1988; Qutb 1999).

- 3 Syed Abul A'la Maududi (all editions have different transcriptions of his name Sayyid Abu l-A'lâ Maudûdî), *Towards Understanding Islam* (Delhi: Markazi Maktaba Islami, 1989, 14th Ed.), (Leicester: The Islamic Foundation, 1980 reprint); translation in French and Dutch: *Comprendre l'Islam* (Leicester: The Islamic Foundation, 1983); *De Boodschap van de Islam* (Den Haag: Moslim Informatie Centrum, 1992, tweede druk).
- 4 In our book (Platti 2008: 199-225), we analysed Maudûdî's "Political Islam", and in particular his book *Islamic Law and Constitution* (Lahore: Islamic Publications, 1955: cf. the second part: "Political and Constitutional Thought of Islam", on *Political Theory of Islam, Political Concepts of the Qur'ân, First Principles of the Islamic State, Fundamentals of Islamic Constitution*.
- 5 See the discussion on the contradictions in Maudûdî's thought: Frank Griffel (2007). Griffel is referring to my article "La théologie de Abû l-A'lâ Mawdûdî", in *Philosophy and Arts in the Islamic World: Proceedings of the Eighteenth Congress of the Union Européenne des Arabisants et Islamisants* (ed. U. Vermeulen and D. De Smet), (Leuven: Peeters, 1998), 242-51; see p. 60: "Emilio Platti's observation that Mawdudi held a contradictory position regarding the relationship between Shari'a and natural law" (...). "Since the believer is unable to establish natural law from any source other than Shari'a, he must obey Shari'a and not what he may think natural law is"; "Sayyid Qutb and Mawdûdî respond to the scientific and modernist claim that nature is the realm of reason with the alternative concept that equates Shari'a with the moral laws established in 'nature'".
- 6 See also: Wael B. Hallaq 2004, "Theory, however, is one thing, reality another. A most central and vexing problem remains, and the solution to it seems thus far untenable. The question that today's Muslims must answer is to what extent they are willing to subscribe to modernity and to adopt its products. To reject it completely is obviously out of the question..." pp. 47-48.
- 7 Muhammad bin Abdul-Wahhab, *Kitab at-Tauhid, The Book of Monotheism* (Riyad: Darussalam, 1996/Hidjra 1416). Interesting is the report of a French diplomat written in 1806, on the Wahhabis attacks, e.g. on the Shi'a shrine of Husayn in Kerbelâ' (Iraq), and their extreme rigorism: *La « purification rigoriste » des wahhabites qu'évoque un rapport français de 1806: Mémoire sur les origines des Wahabys, sur la naissance de leur puissance et sur l'influence dont ils jouissent comme nation*. (Rapport de Jean Raymond daté de 1806), (Le Caire: IFAO, 1925): « *L'Alcoran dans toute sa pureté. Restauration morale (...). Abdul-Aziz fils de Saoud: le Coran dans une main, le glaive dans l'autre. Victoires éclatantes, glorieux butin, la terreur alentour...* ».
- 8 Some of his articles were translated with this typical French title: Fouad Zakariya, *Laïcité ou islamisme. Les Arabes à l'heure du choix* (Paris-Le Caire: La Découverte-Al-Fikr, 1991).

- 9 I have been very much inspired in this research by professor Van de Putte's analyses: (van de Putte 2000; van Leeuwen and Tinnevelt 2005).

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