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RETHINKING FUNDAMENTALISM:
RUHOLLAH KHOMEINI, MAWLANA MAWDUDI, AND THE
FUNDAMENTALIST MODEL

The term "fundamentalism" is used to label a diverse range of religious movements and ideologies.[1] The ways in which scholars have deployed the term vary considerably. A common theme, however, is the identification of fundamentalism as a response to modernity, which is generally defined in terms of the post-Enlightenment worldview and the practical consequences of its implementation. Fundamentalism connotes a refusal to adapt tradition to the dictates of modern thought and a vigorous rejection of the Enlightenment's marginalization of religion. In recent years the term's origins in American Protestantism early last century—and specifically in a series of pamphlets entitled *The Fundamentals*— have become quite well known. "Fundamentalists," coined by a Baptist journalist in 1920, labeled Protestants who opposed what modernity implied for their religious tradition. Those so labeled, however, often saw the term as pejorative, tending to identify themselves as "conservative" or "evangelical" rather than fundamentalist.[2] From early in its history, then, the term has often connoted, or been perceived to connote, something more negative than positive, more disapproved than

approved. For approximately five decades after its identification, fundamentalism was generally seen as a Protestant phenomenon. This changed dramatically upon the advent of the Iranian Revolution. Ruhollah Khomeini's prolific rise captured attention in the West, stimulating the observation that analogs to Protestant fundamentalism could be found in the Muslim world. The overthrow of a pro-Western regime and establishment of a "fundamentalist state" was indeed a watershed event, appearing as it did to invert established norms of development.[3]

The growth of interest in fundamentalism precipitated by the Revolution finds paradigmatic expression in the five-volume *Fundamentalism Project* (University of Chicago Press, 1991-95), edited by Martin Marty and R. Scott Appleby, leading scholars.[4] Generally operating within a positivist framework, its authors identified fundamentalism as a discrete phenomenon of historic importance, and set forth a detailed schematic description of it. In the following discussion I will refer to this schematic description as the fundamentalist model. Its most notable feature is perhaps the delineation of fundamentalism as a cross-cultural phenomenon that is manifest not only within Protestantism and Islam, but within every major tradition. According to the model, then, although certain Protestants had been labeled fundamentalist decades before followers of other traditions, they had by no means been unique in articulating the ideas labeled by that word: many others were similarly disapproving of modernity. Hence, the *Fundamentalism Project* identifies structurally analogous examples of fundamentalism in such diverse traditions as Judaism, Hinduism, Buddhism, Sikhism and Confucianism, which are treated as members of a "family," sharing notable "resemblances" or "common traits." According to this interpretation every religious community is divisible into fundamentalist and non-fundamentalist camps.

Since 1991 very many scholars have adopted and applied the model, and produced a vast array of literature. Particularly important is *Strong Religion: The Rise of Fundamentalisms around the World* by Gabriel A. Almond, Appleby and Emmanuel Sivan, which condenses the *Fundamentalism Project* into a single volume. Also notable is Karen Armstrong's bestselling and influential *The Battle for God: A History of Fundamentalism*, as are works by scholars such as Malise Ruthven, Richard T. Antoun, Tariq Ali, Tessa J. Bartholomeusz and Chandra R. de Silva.[5] At the same time, a minority of scholars have critiqued the model and

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[3] Sayyid Vali Reza Nasr, "Communalism and Fundamentalism: A Reexamination of the Origins of Islamic Fundamentalism," *Contention* 4 (1995): 121. See also David Zeidan, *The Resurgence of Religion: A Comparative Study of Selected Themes in Christian and Islamic Fundamentalist Discourses* (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 61-63.

[4] See also Earle H. Waugh's review essay, "Fundamentalism: Harbinger of Academic Revisionism," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 65 (1997): 161-68. The *Fundamentalism Project*'s continuing relevance is seen in its 2004 publication in paperback.

[5] Gabriel A. Almond, R. Scott Appleby and Emmanuel Sivan, *Strong Religion: The Rise of Fundamentalisms around the World* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003); Tariq

offered alternatives. This group includes Khalid Blankinship, David H. Watt, Jay M. Harris, Ervand Abrahamian, Susan Harding, Daniel Varisco, who finds the terms Mohammedan and fundamentalist comparably unhelpful, and Bruce Lincoln, who favors the term maximalist over the term fundamentalist.[6] I share certain concerns with these critics, and in this article I argue that the model is incapable of capturing and explaining what it identifies as "fundamentalism." Where Harris and Watt advance similar arguments through focusing on the model's inapplicability to Judaism and its definitional imprecision respectively, I make my case through focusing on Islam. Having labeled myself a critic, it seems important to note that the model's advocates have acknowledged and grappled seriously with dissenting views, resulting in a fruitful dialogue. In a recent work Malise Ruthven notes that the model suffers from "obvious drawbacks" brought to light by critics and others. Hence he finds that its application outside of Protestantism is "to put it mildly, problematic."[7] But following Almond, Appleby, Sivan, Armstrong, Antoun, Bartholomueusz, de Silva and many others Ruthven finds that the model's global application is nonetheless valid and worthwhile. Indeed, he finds the case for such application compelling. For these and other advocates it is the notion of "family resemblances" that upholds the model and ensures its continued vitality. However imprecise or problematic the word may be, all who are labeled "fundamentalist" can be shown to belong to a common family.

Significantly, while the model depends upon the "fundamentalist family" being a genuinely global one, that family unquestionably is seen to have a particularly strong association with Islam. One recalls that *The Fundamentalism Project* contained more articles on Islam than on any other religion, and that many of its articles dealing with other religions also bore on Islam.[8] The same orientation is

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Ali, *The Clash of Fundamentalisms: Crusades, Jihads and Modernity* (London: Verso, 2002); Richard T. Antoun, *Understanding Fundamentalism: Christian, Islamic and Jewish Movements* second edition (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2008); Tessa J. Bartholomeusz and Chandra R. De Silva eds. *Buddhist Fundamentalism and Minority Identities in Sri Lanka* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1998). Malise Ruthven, *Fundamentalism: A Very Short Introduction.* Although Ruthven endorses the model in his preface, his thoughtful discussion at times reads more as exploration than endorsement.

[6] See Watt, *op. cit.*, and "What's In a Name?: The Meaning of 'Muslim Fundamentalist'," *Origins* 1 (2008): 1-5; Jay Michael Harris, "Fundamentalism: Objections from a Modern Jewish Historian," in *Fundamentalism and Gender*, ed. John Stratton Hawley (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994): 137-73; Ervand Abrahamian, *Khomeinism: Essays on the Islamic Republic* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 13-38; Daniel Varisco, "The Tragedy of a Comic: Fundamentalists Crusading against Fundamentalists," *Contemporary Islam* 1 (2007): 207-230 (see especially 212n11); Bruce Lincoln, *Holy Terrors: Thinking about Religion after September 11* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003), 5; and Mark Juergensmeyer "Thinking about Religion after September 11," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 72 (2004): 221-234.

[7] Ruthven, ix.

[8] Waugh, 162.

seen in recent scholarship, particularly since 2001.[9] Who then are the "Islamic fundamentalists?" The list is long, but in addition to Khomeini, Hasan al-Banna (d. 1949), Mawlana Mawdudi (d. 1979) and Sayyid Qutb (d. 1966) have been seen as especially notable.[10] Al-Banna's significance lies primarily in his establishment and leadership of the Muslim Brotherhood, namely, in his work as a "fundamentalist activist." Qutb's significance lies in his role as the Brotherhood's ideologue, namely, as popularizer of "fundamentalist ideas." His profile has risen dramatically since 2001. He has been featured on the cover of the *New York Times Magazine,* which rather glibly labeled him "Al-Qaeda's Philosopher."[11]

Yet Mawdudi, while lacking Qutb's media profile, is arguably the most influential Sunni Muslim to be labeled a fundamentalist. Indeed, the model's advocates trace the genealogy of fundamentalist ideology from Mawdudi through Qutb to contemporary fundamentalist discourse.[12] For instance, in the view of Almond, Appleby and Sivan, Mawdudi's decisive contribution lay not in his being the very first to embrace Islamic fundamentalism but in his provision of its key vocabulary. Mawdudi established "a religiopolitical idiom for Islamic fundamentalism." This emphasized the need to bring to an end and overturn a prevailing "age of ignorance" (*jahiliyyah*), Mawdudi's "powerful metaphor" for Islam's decline, to which we return below.[13] This reworking of a classical notion encapsulated his vision and was a particularly formative influence on Qutb and thence on many others. For this reason, Mawdudi's biographer deems his contribution "singularly significant," labeling fundamentalism Mawdudi's "brainchild."[14] Khomeini remains the ultimate figurehead for Islamic fundamentalism. He played a unique role, setting in motion events precipitating the model's very formation. Whatever position on the model's utility individual scholars adopt, his special relevance to fundamentalism is almost universally acknowledged. Earle H. Waugh observed in his 1997 review of *The Fundamentalism Project* that Khomeini's rise "forced the hand of the academic

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[9] Gabriele Marranci, *Understanding Muslim Identity: Rethinking Fundamentalism* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 1. Marranci notes that since 2001, more than 100 books and 5,600 articles have been published on Islamic fundamentalism.

[10] On these and other notable fundamentalists, see Antoun, 20-27; Armstrong chapters 7-9; Mansoor Moaddel and Karam Talattof eds. *Modernist and Fundamentalist Debates in Islam: A Reader* (New York: Palgrave Macmillian, 2000), 16-21; Zeidan, 283-304; and Lawrence Davidson, *Islamic Fundamentalism* (Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1998), 87-111.

[11] *New York Times Magazine*, March 23, 2003. See Paul Berman's accompanying article. Berman's characterization of Qutb was promptly rebutted by Hamid Algar, an authority on Qutb.

[12] Almond, Appleby and Sivan, 24-25.

[13] Almond, Appleby and Sivan, 24-25, 107.

[14] S.V.R. Nasr, "Communalism and Fundamentalism," 122-23. Nasr is not necessarily to be counted among the model's advocates. As discussed below, while he does not reject the model's application to Mawdudi, he does significantly revise it. On Mawdudi's pertinence, see also Charles J. Adams, "Abu-'l A'la Mawdudi's Tafhim al-Qur'an," in *Approaches to the History of the Interpretation of the Quran*, ed. Andrew Rippin (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 322.

establishment,"[15] and the endurance of this catalytic effect is noted in the most recent scholarship. A new ethnographic work on fundamentalism and Muslim identity is introduced by its publishers as contributing to the attempt ongoing since the Iranian Revolution "to understand what has been called Islamic fundamentalism."[16]

Two points appear clear here. First, the matter of what exactly "Islamic fundamentalism" is or means remains on the table. Secondly, investigation of it must reckon with Khomeini and Mawdudi at some point. Given the constraints of space, I will limit my discussion to these two cases. Notwithstanding the efforts of the model's critics, current scholarship on fundamentalism relies on seeing the two as representatives of its Islamic variety, namely, on understanding the two as fundamentalist in the way theorized by the model. The *Fundamentalism Project*'s dependence upon them endures.[17] Appleby, perhaps the model's leading advocate, lately observes that Khomeini represents "the most prominent and politically consequential example of Islamic fundamentalism" while also noting Mawdudi's "pervasive" influence on contemporary Islamic fundamentalist groups.[18] A similar reliance on Khomeini and Mawdudi is seen in numerous recent works that explicitly or implicitly adopt the model, and in works that simply adopt its vocabulary.[19]

My critique, then, is framed as follows. The model's viability depends upon its global application. In this, its dependence on Islam and thus on Khomeini and Mawdudi is especially important. Conversely, if in these two cases the model and the examples that would support it do not align, the model's utility is called into question. This is what is at stake in my argument. The significance of this point is perhaps best appreciated by way of a brief excursion to Asia: a clear retreat from the global thesis is made for the cases of Hinduism and Buddhism. The model's advocates frankly acknowledge that while the model *does* apply to Asia, it does not apply very easily.[20] Appleby lately observes with some candor that "Hinduism and Buddhism do not readily lend themselves to the political

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[15] Waugh, 162.

[16] The work is Marranci's *Understanding Muslim Identity: Rethinking Fundamentalism*.

[17] The *Fundamentalism Project* references the two in numerous of its articles. Khomeini is referenced over one hundred times.

[18] Appleby, "Fundamentalism," in *Encyclopedia of Politics and Religion* second edition, ed. Robert Wuthnow, (Washington: CQ Press, 2007), 325.

[19] See for instance Mansoor Moaddel and Karam Talattof eds. *Modernist and Fundamentalist Debates in Islam: A Reader*, 1-7. The reader includes three essays each by Khomeini and Mawdudi. See also Armstrong's *The Battle for God: A History of Fundamentalism* and Zeidan's *The Resurgence of Religion: A Comparative Study of Selected Themes in Christian and Islamic Fundamentalist Discourses*.

[20] Almond, Appleby and Sivan, 15-16. On this point, see also Bartholomeusz and De Silva, "Buddhist Fundamentalism and Identity in Sri Lanka," in *Buddhist Fundamentalism and Minority Identities in Sri Lanka*, 1-35. While finding the model applicable to Sri Lankan Buddhism, the authors note difficulties in that application.

dynamics of fundamentalism."[21] Thus, whereas terms such as "Christian fundamentalism" and "Islamic fundamentalism" are deemed illuminating, terms such as "Hindu fundamentalism" and "Buddhist fundamentalism" are deemed insufficient. The model is reconfigured to accommodate this lack of fit through the use of additional terms. For instance, Almond, Appleby and Sivan distinguish "mixed" or "synthetic" fundamentalisms, most of which are Asian, from "unmixed" or "pure" fundamentalisms, which are Abrahamic. That is, in Hindu and Buddhist varieties "fundamentalism" is mixed or synthesized with what is more appropriately labeled "ethnonationalism."[22] One is left with the complex formulation that Abrahamic religions produce unadulterated fundamentalisms, while Asian religions produce ethnonationalist fundamentalisms.

This very significant concession to Asia reinforces the model's dependence on Islam. If the model's capacity to withstand such concession to Hinduism and Buddhism is questionable, its incapacity to withstand like concession to Islam is unquestionable. A retreat from world religions generally to Abrahamic religions exclusively may or may not be viable, and on this point one notes the tendency of scholars such as Armstrong and Antoun to focus squarely on the latter. But without Islam the notion of a global phenomenon whose various manifestations share family resemblance or structural affinity is untenable, particularly in light of Harris's powerful critique of the model's application to Judaism. I make my argument in three stages. First, I acknowledge that *as theory* the model is appealing and in fact quite attractive. Secondly, having established the pertinence of Khomeini and Mawdudi above, I argue through examining their discourses that the model is insufficiently supported by evidence to capture and explain what it labels "fundamentalism." Thirdly, I argue that three attempts to uphold the model in spite of this problem are inadequate. I conclude that the term fundamentalist is not particularly helpful. It muddies more than illuminates. Hence other terms, including Islamist and maximalist, are preferable. In making this assertion, I also note the concern that it might seem to entail a mere shifting of the terms from one all-encompassing or abstract "-ism" to others. Addressing that concern, I argue that some "-isms" are clearly more useful and less obfuscating than others.

The Model's Theoretical Appeal

According to the model, Muslims, like practitioners of all religions, were divided in their responses to post-Enlightenment modernity and its marginalization of religion. By no means did they respond with a unified front when called to the privatization of faith, humanism, universalism, progressivism, rational investigation of tradition, and the separation of powers through the

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[21] Appleby, 320.
[22] Almond, Appleby and Sivan, 16-17, 90-115.

establishment of nation-states.[23] Islamic fundamentalism, like all fundamentalisms, rejects these modern essentials in favor of religious "fundamentals" that are "selectively retrieved" from tradition. Moreover, it does so uncompromisingly, militantly, and sometimes violently.[24] In this way, the model neatly distinguishes fundamentalism from traditionalism, secularism, and Islamic modernism. Traditionalism differs through its indifference to modernity: its passivism contrasts with fundamentalism's activism. To its critics traditionalism exemplifies a mentality of *taqlid* or "blind following."[25] Al-Azhar University in Cairo was widely seen as a bastion of traditionalism well into the twentieth century, its scholarship arcane, its shaykhs indifferent to modern learning.

Secularism differs from fundamentalism through enthusiastically embracing modernity, even adopting European cultural norms. The Kemalist state established in Turkey, officially devolved of Islam, is considered a paragon of secularism, while notable Arab secularists have included Ahmad Lutfi al-Sayyid (d. 1963), 'Ali 'Abd al-Raziq (d. 1966), and Taha Husayn (d. 1973).[26] Islamic modernism also embraces modernity, but unlike secularism does so with a view to reviving and strengthening Islam. Modernists such as Muhammad 'Abduh (d. 1905) and Rashid Rida (d. 1935) directed much of their attention to critiquing *taqlid*. To modernist eyes traditionalists blindly follow religious tradition, while secularists such as Ataturk (d. 1938) blindly imitate European civilization and are indifferent to Islam's rich resources. Against *taqlid*, modernists endorse *ijtihad* (independent reasoning), embracing a modern worldview while retaining a religious identity.[27] Arabic discourse distinguishes the modernist response

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[23] On the pertinence of the nation-state to modern conceptions of religion see Lincoln, 62-76.

[24] Almond, Appleby and Sivan, 2, 17, 99; Armstrong, 370; Zeidan, 17, 57; Davidson, 64, 84; Johannes J.G. Jansen, *The Dual Nature of Islamic Fundamentalism* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997), 10, 178.

[25] In Islamic discourse *taqlid* denotes simply "following" tradition or, much more negatively, "blind following" of tradition. Western scholars have generally rendered it "blind following," reflecting the Islamic modernist interpretation of *taqlid*. For a detailed discussion, see N. Calder "taklid" in *Encyclopedia of Islam* (CD-Rom vers., Brill, 2003), hereafter *EI*.

[26] 'Abd al-Raziq's essay *Al-Islam wa Usul al-Hukm* (Islam and the Bases of Power) (Cairo: Matba'at Misr, 1925) controversially called for a separation of powers. For translated excerpts, see Kamran Talattof and Mansoor Moaddel eds. *Modernist and Fundamentalist Debates in Islam*, 95-100 (trans. Talattof); and Charles Kuzman ed. *Liberal Islam: A Sourcebook* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 29-36 (trans. Joseph Massad). On the essay's impact, see D. Sourdel, "Khilafa" in *EI*.

[27] On Rida's modernism in general see Simon A. Wood, *Christian Criticisms, Islamic Proofs: Rashid Rida's Modernist Defense of Islam* (Oxford: Oneworld, 2008), 48-64. For a modernist critique of traditionalism see Rida's *Muhawarat al-Muslih wa al-Muqallid* (Conversations of a Reformer and a Traditionalist) (Egypt: Dar al-Manar, 1906); for a modernist critique of secularism see his *Shubuhat al-Nasara wa Hujaj al-Islam* (The Criticisms of the Christians and the Proofs of Islam) (Egypt: Dar al-Manar, 1905), 86-101, translated in Wood, 189-208.

through the term "reformer" (*muslih*), in contrast to the traditionalist "imitator" (*muqallid*) and secularist "thinker" (*mufakkir*).[28]

This distinguishing of fundamentalism from traditionalism, secularism, and modernism enables a closer examination of its character. According to the model, fundamentalists, while appealing to tradition, establish new interpretations of religion. That is, the fundamentalist mindset is not simply "medieval" or indicative of a desire to "turn back the clock." Fundamentalism, then, is not a straightforward case of anachronism, although certain manifestations of it may at times appear to have anachronistic characteristics. Rather than simply anachronistic, then, the fundamentalist reading of religion is "selective," "partial," "creative," "not traditional" and departing from precedent. According to the model, then, fundamentalists are engaged in the business of "selective retrieval," which is seen as a unifying characteristic of diverse forms of fundamentalism.[29] In my view it is difficult to see how the notion of selective retrieval, as such, is sufficiently narrow to distinguish fundamentalism from other responses to modernity, to say nothing of the notion that fundamentalists hold views that are "not traditional." For instance, it is difficult to see how it does not apply to Islamic modernism: Islamic modernists certainly "select" some aspects of tradition over others (e.g., the paradigms of *al-salaf* over those of *al-madhhab*, or "sound" prophetic traditions over juristic works). But according to the model fundamentalism and modernism are very different things.

More promisingly, the model also identifies particular religious fundamentals that fundamentalists select to uphold against modern essentials, and it is here that "family resemblances" between different members of the fundamentalist family are observed. Against universalism or pluralism, fundamentalists uphold a dualistic "enclave culture." Against tradition's subjection to rational scrutiny, fundamentalists reify tradition, upholding such notions as scriptural inerrancy and scripturalist literalism. Against the nation-state and its marginalization of religion, fundamentalists appeal to images of a real or imagined "golden age." Here, the model appears lucid and theoretically appealing. Fundamentalists reject one set of conceptions in favor of another set. Further, both sets are clearly defined. However, as seen in the cases of Khomeini and Mawdudi, the model and examples that would support it do not align very well. This may be seen with regard to these three "family resemblances" or "fundamentals of fundamentalism."

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[28] See Jakob Skovgaard-Petersen "Portrait of the Intellectual as a Young Man: Rashid Rida's *Muhawarat al-Muslih wa al-Muqallid*," *Islam and Muslim-Christian Relations* 12 (2001): 93-104.

[29] Almond, Appleby and Sivan, 17-18, 92, 94-95; Armstrong, 366; Martin E. Marty and R. Scott Appleby, *The Glory and the Power: The Fundamentalist Challenge to the Modern World* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1992), 19-20, 116; Davidson, 88; Zeidan, 80.

Dualism: The Enclave Culture

According to the model, fundamentalist culture is at odds with the exigencies of modern life, exigencies largely conceived in positivist terms. Fundamentalism vainly struggles against the dictate that as societies develop religion becomes marginalized from public life.[30] Following the model, then, one might conclude that while fundamentalism may succeed temporarily or partially, it is ultimately doomed to fail. Some have suggested that Islamic fundamentalists vainly resist what has largely been confirmed by Christian and Jewish experience.[31] There is, then, a disconnect between fundamentalist ideal and facts on the ground, giving fundamentalist culture a paradoxical or simply contradictory quality: it *rejects* the modern world, but is *of* the modern world. Fundamentalists subscribe to a "black and white" worldview that divides the world into "enemies" and "fellow defenders," and profess, however vainly or unrealistically, to brook no "shades of grey."[32] Fundamentalists seek to build symbolic walls between themselves and those who would accommodate modernity, embracing an enclave mentality and resisting what is un-Islamic. Yet according to the model fundamentalism is a far more complex phenomenon than mere anti-modernity: it is not primitivism or restorationism.[33] Rather, it is the child of modernity, the very historical development whose ideology it rejects. Those described as fundamentalists are frequently individuals much influenced by modern forms and norms, including the "new intellectuals" who are journalists, teachers, lawyers, and autodidacts rather than scholars in the traditional mold. Furthermore, fundamentalists avail themselves of modern technology to propagate their messages – witness Khomeini's use of cassettes – and enthusiastically compete in the modern "marketplace of ideas." Such modern contaminations inevitably erode the "walls" isolating the fundamentalist enclave, even as they are built. Fundamentalism's paradoxical and contradictory "modern while anti-modern" character, then, is integral to the model.[34]

On these points I find that while the model makes a helpful contribution, it is ultimately problematical. Certainly, many described as fundamentalist have been considerably influenced by modernity. Those viewed as a fundamentalists are more likely to be professionals than graduates of a madrasah, at least in the Sunni world. On this point, Antoun, Almond, Appleby and Sivan emphasize the lay backgrounds of al-Banna, Mawdudi (revisited below) and Qutb.[35] In its emphasis on this debt to modernity, then, the model is helpful. The crux of the matter, however, is that if the model successfully delineates fundamentalism as *modern*, it less successfully delineates fundamentalism as *anti-modern*. In other

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[30] Jansen, 1.

[31] On this point, see B.S. Turner, *Orientalism, Postmodernism, and Globalism* (London: Routledge, 1994), 10.

[32] Almond, Appleby and Sivan, 38-39; 42-3; Armstrong, 146, 243-44.

[33] Almond, Appleby and Sivan, 92.

[34] Almond, Appleby and Sivan, 11-12, 92-95; Jansen, 11; Marty and Appleby, *The Glory and the Power*, 30-34; Zeidan, 82.

[35] Antoun, 21-22. Almond, Appleby and Sivan, 82.

words, I question the premise upon which fundamentalism's putative paradox rests. Do fundamentalists resist modernity by walling themselves off from it or struggling against it? Is it helpful to characterize fundamentalists as ideologically anti-modern? As seen in the cases of Khomeini and Mawdudi, I suggest, the model's advocates have not furnished sufficient evidence for affirmative answers to these questions. In the following discussion, after acknowledging a congruity between the model and the flourish of rhetoric, I argue that the discourses of Khomeini and Mawdudi diverge from the model far more than they conform to it. That is, the "sound" of fundamentalist rhetoric belies complexity and novelty, packaging discourses that may be seen as modern in notable respects.

Khomeini's rhetoric frequently appears to conform to the model. In *The Revealing of Secrets* (1943-44) he voids constitutionalism, legislation and representation, deeming them defective, subject to corruption, and generally implicated with European evils. Alternatively, he advocates absolutism and "no law but God's law," the shari'ah.[36] In *Islamic Government* (1970) he rejects the separation of powers, and argues that the shari'ah itself is ruler. Under Islam rulers do not themselves legislate, but implement divine legislation. Khomeini avers that God alone is sovereign, and that Islam is fully self-sufficient and comprehensive.[37] In various leaflets published during the 1970s, he envisions an Islamic system and ideology (*maktab-i tawhid*) that pervades society. The Iranian Constitution (1979), while eclectic, follows Khomeini's lead in affirming Islam's comprehensiveness, and avers that the state's *raison d'etre* is the establishment of shari'ah. Authority to lead is said to derive from religious qualifications, while law is said to derive from Shi'ite tradition. Freedoms are curtailed through "Islamic limits" (by the early 1980s a highly oppressive clergy-dominated state would quash dissent). The media, rather than upholding freedom of speech, are to spread God's word through propaganda. The union of powers is reinforced through clerical supervision of electoral processes, the fusion of prayer and political discussion, and the spreading of God's word by the Republic's "*tauhidi*" army through propaganda and jihad (a telling feature, as most Muslim militaries are highly secularist).[38]

In sum, much appears to embody a fundamentalist worldview, per the model. Shades of gray are conspicuously absent, and an enclave mentality apparently

[36] Vanessa Martin, *Creating an Islamic state: Khomeini and the Making of a New Iran* (London: I.B Tauris, 2000), 105-07. Martin finds that Khomeini is not a fundamentalist, variously labeling his stance as pragmatist, third-worldist, populist, Islamist totalist and Islamist anti-imperialist. But she does not critique the model per se. After unequivocally rejecting the term fundamentalist for Khomeini and certain others she comments, "That said, the extreme literalism demonstrated by some Islamists in their adherence to the holy texts and the Islamic law (*shari'a*), is fairly implied in the term fundamentalism." Martin, xii.

[37] Ruhollah Khomeini, *Islamic Government: Governance of the Jurist* (*Velayat-e Faqeeh*) (Tehran: Institute for Compilation and Publication of Imam Khomeini's Works, 2002), 16, 20, 29-30, 46.

[38] Martin, 160-61, 167-68.

embraced. Almond, Appleby, and Sivan rate Khomeini's movement together with various other fundamentalisms as exhibiting a "high" degree of dualism.[39] Khomeini's rhetoric, however, veneered something quite different to an embrace of an enclave culture or a dualistic fundamentalist discourse: an idiosyncratic, novel, and even modern reading of Shi'ism. These features are seen in "the guardianship of the jurist." Whatever this theory is, it is something other than fundamentalism, and the model, I suggest, throws little light upon it. It is to be noted that Khomeini's theory developed considerably over several decades, with the jurist's role in governance gradually increasing. It is not easily depicted with a single stroke, or easily encapsulated by a single label, much less the fundamentalist label. In *Islamic Government* Khomeini advances the notion of juristic supervision of rule outlined in *The Revealing of Secrets*, asserting that the Imam's executive role devolves onto the juristic class, commenting, "the true rulers are the jurists themselves."[40]

This claim is Khomeini's seminal contribution, and it departs considerably from Shi'ite tradition, wherein the juristic role was primarily jurisprudential. Where traditionally "those who hold authority" (*ulu al-amr*) had referred to prophets and Imams, Khomeini had determined that jurists too belong to this class. Further, he found that juristic authority derived not from Imamic delegation but from the jurists' role as the Imam's "agents."[41] Granted, Khomeini's conception was not utterly devoid of precedent. He had been influenced by others who had reconsidered the juristic role, including Ahmad Naraqi (d. 1831 or 1832) and Mirza Muhammad Husayn Na'ini (d. 1936).[42] And he sought to extensively ground his conception in tradition, buttressing it with distinctive readings of Qur'anic verses and Imami traditions.[43] Ultimately, however, "the guardianship of the jurist" is idiosyncratic and lacks specific precedent in traditional Shi'ism. To a considerable extent it depends upon Khomeini's idiosyncratic views, views not easily reduced to the notion of fundamentalist family resemblances. Here, the model would not appear to illuminate Khomeini's thinking very well. According to the model, fundamentalists engage in selective retrieval of tradition, selecting particular themes for special emphasis: Protestant fundamentalists "select and fortify" apocalyptic prophesy; Shi'ite fundamentalists selected and fortify juristic rule.[44] While Khomeini certainly read tradition, his conception embodies novelty established much more than tradition selectively retrieved and fortified.[45]

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[39] Almond, Appleby and Sivan, 247.

[40] Khomeini, 32.

[41] For a succinct discussion of Khomeini's conception see Almond, Appleby and Sivan, 79-82. Beyond its emphasis on the importance of Khomeini's personal charisma, it is difficult to see how this discussion furnishes evidence for fundamentalism. See also Martin, 121.

[42] Khomeini, 48, 65, 76; Martin, 104, 109, 117-18.

[43] Khomeini, 38-77.

[44] Almond, Appleby and Sivan, 94-95.

[45] The Institute for Compilation and Publication of Imam Khomeini's Works notes that Shi'i jurisprudence lacks a detailed discussion of juristic governance. Khomeini, 3. On Khomeini's conception as novel, see also Hamid Mavani, "Analysis of Khomeini's

Further, it is difficult to see how it conforms to the definition of fundamentalism as a reaction to the marginalization of religion in the modern world. The marginalization of the clerical or juristic class from Shi'ite political life is a long-standing and traditional feature of Shi'ism, not a consequence of modernity. That Khomeini's conception was more absent from tradition than selected from it is reflected in the negative reception it received from other clerics, including Abu al-Qasim al-Khu'i (d. 1992). Several labeled it "Sunni" or "un-Islamic." One found Khomeini's formulation of juristic mandate to rule and lead (*vilayat-i amr*; *imamat-i ummat*) entirely lacking a basis in Islamic jurisprudence.[46]

In 1988 Khomeini dramatically advanced his theory, introducing the new notion of "the *absolute* government of the jurist" (*vilayat-i mutlaqayi faqih*), subordinating shari'ah to state, and asserting that governance is a primary Islamic precept taking precedent over all secondary injunctions. The ruler-jurist, then, embodies the state, and is placed *above* the shari'ah. Where earlier he had deemed the shari'ah immutable and comprehensive – "no law but God's law" – it is now, through the ruler-jurist's preeminence, subject to the exigencies of the age and to a degree of relativism.[47] This is a distinctive conception, and one that also does not align with the model very well. It is difficult to see how it might reflect an anti-modern fundamentalist mindset, or embody a combination of the selectively retrieved "old" and the "new." Rather, it embodies a vision in which "new" considerably outweighs "old." Further, the clerical discourse concerning it is difficult to comprehend outside the framework of Shi'ite jurisprudence and the ongoing elaboration of the Imams' legacy. On this point, the model does little to illuminate a complex intra-Shi'ite debate. Whereas it characterizes Islamic, Christian and Jewish fundamentalism as familial, it is extremely unclear that Khomeini's conception would easily find analogs in, for example, Sunnism or Protestantism. The subordination of shari'ah to state, for instance, departs significantly from Sunni visions of statehood. Here, comprehending Khomeini might be better facilitated by reckoning with dynamics endemic to Shi'ism than by deploying the model, or positing a "family resemblance" between his conception and those of fundamentalists in other traditions.

Beyond his reading of Shi'ism, Khomeini also assimilated notable aspects of a modern worldview. This is clearly seen with regard to the nation-state, to be discussed below. Here it may be noted that his general critique of traditionalist ossification is palpable and relentless. He observes that traditionalist *akhunds* and "pseudo-saints" – who strikingly recall the *muqallidun* mocked by Rida – obsessively occupy themselves with legal minutiae, render Islam archaic through

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Proofs for al-Wilaya al-Mutlaqa," in *The Most Learned of the Shi'a: The Institution of the Marja' Taqlid*, ed. Linda S. Walbridge (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), especially 197-98. On Khomeini's ideas as generally modern see Khalid Blankinship, "Islam and World History: Towards a New Periodization," *The American Journal of Islamic Social Science* 8 (1991): 432.

[46] Martin, 165-66.

[47] Martin, 170.

limiting it to worship, and fail to engage the politics of modernity, thereby allowing imperialists to dominate Iran.[48] He urged his followers to shun such a stance, and adopt modern civilization (*tamaddon-i jadid*) together with its technologies, mocking traditionalists who would reject it. Mohammad Javad Hojjati-Kermani, a disciple, followed his mentor in rejecting a "return to the age of the donkey," asserting "what we need is not the worship of the past but a genuine renaissance."[49] While fundamentalists are said to challenge those of their co-religionists who refuse to innovate,[50] Khomeini's specific criticisms of traditionalism and particularly its indifference to imperialist agendas hardly seem sufficient to warrant the fundamentalist label. As such, they are insufficient to distinguish him as a fundamentalist, or to separate him from other critics of traditionalism. Indeed, his stance might resemble the modernism of 'Abduh and Rida more than it conforms to the model. His program incorporated more than the exclusively Islamic, and he felt that while religion brings continuity, it can also constrain. He was conscious of the limitations of withdrawing into a cultural enclave, and favored a flexible view of the relationship between the Islamic and the non-Islamic, the Shi'ite and the non-Shi'ite. For instance, while delineated in the vocabulary of Shi'ism, Khomeini's ruler-jurist also recalls Plato's philosopher-king and al-Farabi's virtuous ruler.[51] Here too, the model would seem to throw little light on his discourse.

Turning to Mawdudi, while he operated in an extremely different context, a similar dynamic applies. That is, while in numerous works the fundamentalism of his rhetoric may appear inescapable, it veneers a discourse that diverges from the model much more than conforms to it. Of numerous examples of apparently fundamentalist rhetoric, take the flourishes of "The Fallacy of Rationalism." This 1934 essay laments the corrupting influences of secular Western education on Muslim youth. Corrupted secularist Muslims, Mawdudi avers, reconfigure Islam along "Christian" lines. This renders it permissive, liberal, privatized, and devolved of any doctrines (e.g., the reality of hell) or practices (e.g., ritual sacrifice) at odds with modern sensibility, even those constituting "fundamentals of the religion" enumerated in Qur'an and shari'ah. As Mawdudi sees it, secularists are Muslims in name only. Hence, their authority to speak meaningfully on Islam is void, while their courage to acknowledge that they are effectively operating outside the fold of Islam is lacking. He finds secularists occupying an "irrational middle ground" between what are the only two logical choices: either one is a Muslim, or one is not. If a Muslim, one's rational investigations must *follow* submission to Islam, not *precede* it – faith must not be contingent on rational satisfaction. For Mawdudi, his is not a critique of rationalism per se, but the "irrational rationalism" of secularists, whose arguments he finds ill-formed and simply confused. The "fallacy of rationalism" is the notion that Western civilization is rationalistic. To the contrary, Mawdudi

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48 Khomeini, 16, 42-43, 47, 71-72.
49 Quoted in Abrahamian, 16.
50 Almond, Appleby and Sivan, 92.
51 On juristic virtue, see Khomeini, 20, 32-33, 37, 64; and Martin, 103, 162, 173, 200, 203.

finds that under the "garb of renaissance" it is based on unbridled materialism, empiricism, and the triumph of animal instinct over human disposition. The secularist claim to develop Islam through rationalistic means, then, is mere vanity. He goes on to compare the "apostasy" of secularism with the insubordination of a soldier. The systemic viability of Islam, like that of an army, precludes any toleration of dissent.[52]

Much here appears to conform to the model. The discourse offers Muslims who care about the "fundamentals of their religion" a black and white choice with no "middle ground." Further, Islam and the West are diametrically opposed. Elsewhere, Mawdudi invokes an enclave culture, characterizing Islam as fully self-contained and self-sufficient: Muslims need not borrow from the West. Hence it might again seem unremarkable that the model's advocates characterize Mawdudi's ideology in terms of dualism and sharp boundaries.[53] Yet Mawdudi's discourse is oversimplified by its reduction to its dualistic anti-secularist and anti-Western rhetoric. In comprehending Mawdudi's anti-secularism, it is to be emphasized that he was equally critical of traditionalism. This is telling in that in addition to the lay background noted by Antoun and others above, Mawdudi was also traditionally trained in the Deobandi school, albeit his rooting in it may not have been completely firm. Significantly, however, he concealed his qualifications (*ijazah*), and these were not generally known until after his death.[54] Similarly, concerned to present his vision as novel, he refrained from using the title *'alim*. He described his stance towards traditionalism as "*ghayr maqallad*," seeing no requirement to imitate tradition and no ultimate authority in classical paradigms.[55] He deemed the ulama ill-equipped to provide Muslims with modern solutions to modern problems, finding their traditions obscurantist. Hence, for instance, he urged Muslims to learn Arabic, obviating reliance on traditionalist ulama. And together with rejecting the secularist "*taqlid*" of blind Westernization, he impugned traditionalist *taqlid* as blind imitation of tradition, as the shackles that bound Muslims to an "anachronistic existence."[56]

Here, however else it may be described, Mawdudi's discourse is hardly anti-modern. Further, the rejection of secularism and traditionalism does not embody a fundamentalist rejection of modernity, but an assimilation of modernity. That assimilation, to be sure, entails a complex combination of tradition and modernity. But, and this is the heart of the matter, that combination is not, per the model, a case of high irony or essential contradiction. Rather, it embodies what is a categorically modernizing and reformist agenda that is obfuscated by

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[52] Abu-'l A'la Mawdudi, "The Fallacy of Rationalism," trans. S. Waqar Ahmad Gardezi and Abdul Waheed Khan, reprinted in Moaddel and Talattof, 207-221.

[53] Almond, Appleby and Sivan, 107.

[54] Hamid Enayat, *Modern Islamic Political Thought* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2005), 101. S.V.R. Nasr, *Mawdudi and the Making of Islamic Revivalism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 18-19, 51, 107.

[55] Adams, "Abu-'l A'la Mawdudi's Tafhim al-Qur'an," 314.

[56] S.V.R. Nasr, "Communalism and Fundamentalism," 130; S.V.R. Nasr, *Mawdudi and the Making of Islamic Revivalism*, 52.

apologetics, an obfuscation necessitated by local conditions: Mawdudi addressed a Muslim population disempowered by colonialism and its legacies. His intention, then, was to facilitate Muslim subscription to his agenda through framing it as an *Islamic* agenda, through lending Islamic cultural legitimacy to phenomena generally associated with the West.

While Mawdudi commented that even a bulldozer could be Islamic, that radio could disseminate Islamic messages as much as any other, his integration of modernity was by no means limited to its technologies. His works embody the lure of modern thought, and a genuine attempt to understand the likes of Descartes, Hobbes, Spinoza, Leibnitz, Locke, Hegel, Darwin, Marx, Lenin and Shaw.[57] Mawdudi felt that modern thought, simply as such, was culturally neutral, and could animate Muslim minds as much as any other. Thus Muslims, he commented, "have to assess thoroughly the developments in the field of knowledge and changes in the conditions of life that have been brought during the last eight hundred years" and become modern creatures not merely scientifically, but also socially, politically, and culturally.[58] Here, where the model, as noted above, usefully points to those who are considered fundamentalists as modern creatures, in Mawdudi's case a second critical point is missing: Mawdudi's project was not merely *modern*, but *modernizing*. According to the model, fundamentalism is, in Ruthven's phrasing, symptomatic of the "spiritual dystopias" of modernity.[59] Yet Mawdudi's object was not to "rescue" or isolate religious sensibility from the distopias of modern society, but to establish just such a society. His view might be encapsulated by a comment made in his eulogy of Muhammad Iqbal (d. 1938), a literary figure he admired. Mawdudi noted that Iqbal remained strong in his Muslim convictions not in spite of his modern Western education, but because of it.[60]

While Mawdudi's views here plainly recall certain ideas elaborated by 'Abduh and Rida in Egypt, it would be difficult to label him as unambiguously modernist, given that he was very critical of Indian Muslims he labeled as such, and whose agenda he saw himself resisting. But neither does the model illuminate his stance towards modernity very well. It might be more helpful to conclude that while his rhetoric upheld the Islamic past, his vision for Muslim life was very much in the nature of the modern world, past and present being integrated through the notion of empowerment. That is, where pre-modern Muslims had been empowered, what drew Mawdudi to the West and its ideologies was its contemporary demonstration of power.[61] Here, it might be observed that there is nothing distinctively fundamentalist in the desire for

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[57] S.V.R. Nasr, *Mawdudi and the Making of Islamic Revivalism*, 51. See for instance the 1934 essay, "Intellectual Subjugation – Why?" in Mawdudi, *Islam Versus the West* (Delhi: International Islamic Publishers, 1991).

[58] Quoted in S.V.R. Nasr, *Mawdudi and the Making of Islamic Revivalism,* 51.

[59] Ruthven, ix.

[60] S.V.R. Nasr, *Mawdudi and the Making of Islamic Revivalism*, 158n27.

[61] S.V.R. Nasr, *Mawdudi and the Making of Islamic Revivalism*, 51.

power. Where borrowings from the West might empower Muslims, then, Mawdudi found that they should be embraced. But that borrowing need not entail a Kemalist abandonment of Islam. While, again, the resulting vision involves a sometimes difficult combination of tradition and modernity, it does not embody paradox or contradiction, but reformism which through political need is veneered with apologetics.

Reification of Tradition and Literalism

Literalism is a well-known characteristic of fundamentalism. Journalistic and scholarly references to "fundamentalist literalism" abound.[62] This characterization clearly reflects the original American Protestant context. For instance, Armstrong notes that in 1917 William Bell Riley (d. 1925) and Reuben Torrey (d. 1928) formed an association "to promote the literal interpretation of scripture."[63] Even within the Protestant context, however, the soundness of broadly applying the literalist label is not beyond question. Do those who are considered Protestant fundamentalists believe, for instance, that Jesus intended "I am the gate" (John 10:9) to be taken literally? The applicability of the literalist label to Islam is still more questionable. On this point a frequent and unsound conflation of two discrete views easily leads to the perception that Muslims generally, and fundamentalists especially, are literalists. These are, first, the view that Muslims take the Qur'an to be inerrant (which, with few exceptions, they do) and, secondly, the view that Muslims interpret the Qur'an literally (which, with few exceptions, they do not).[64] Hence, it is highly doubtful that broadly describing those who are considered fundamentalists as literalists is sound, at least in relation to matters of Qur'anic and other exegesis. Here, it is notable that the Qur'an refers to its inclusion of *mutashabihat*, ambiguous or non-literal statements (Qur'an 3:7). Granted, some exegetes have followed Ibn Hazm (d. 1064) in rendering almost the entire Qur'an literally comprehensible by limiting

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[62] On the literalist character of Islamic fundamentalism see for example Mehran Kamrava, "Reformist Islam in Comparative Perspective," in *The New Voices of Islam*, ed. Kamrava (London: I.B. Tauris, 2006), 10; Zeidan, 81; Daniel Brumberg, "Islam is Not *the* Solution (or *the* Problem)," *Washington Quarterly* 29 (2005): 101; Gustaaf Houtman, "Benazir Bhutto (1953-2007): A Conversation with Akbar Ahmed," *Anthropology Today* 24 (2008): 5; El Hassan bin Talal, *Continuity, Innovation, and Change* (Amman: Majlis el Hassan, 2001), 33; Davidson, 17; Marty and Appleby, *The Glory and the Power*, 149; Zeidan, 81. While most prominently associated with fundamentalism, literalism is also noted by authors who use the alternative term Islamism. See Anthony H. Johns and Nelly Lahoud, "The World of Islam and the Challenge of Islamism," in *Islam and World Politics*, eds. Lahoud and Johns (New York: Routledge, 2005), 11; Muhammad Ayoob, *The Many Faces of Political Islam* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2008), 7-8. Ayoob describes scriptural fundamentalism as a "rigid literalist and decontextualized version" of Islamism.

[63] Armstrong, 173. See also Armstrong, xii.

[64] On this point, Marty and Appleby assert that Islamic fundamentalists are "blessed with a sacred scripture that all believers adhere to literally" and that "no one within the believing community has suggested that it be read any way but literally." Marty and Appleby, *The Glory and the Power*, 46; 138.

the *mutashabihat* to very few cases. Significantly, however, those Muslims falling into this category are few in number and would not include many, if not most, of those who are considered fundamentalists. A more circumscribed characterization of fundamentalist literalism as pertaining not to textual exegesis, but to literal interpretations of certain formulations and concepts might be more promising.[65]

As for the stances of Khomeini and Mawdudi, the evidence is clear and thus may be treated summarily. The two were not merely non-literalist, but distinctly anti-literalist. Khomeini belonged to the anti-literalist *usuli* branch of Shi'ite jurisprudence, a term to which we shall return. Here, our concern is to note his assertion in works such as *The Revealing of Secrets* that full understanding of the Qur'an required not only cognizance of Shi'ite exegesis, which is scarcely literalist, but also the endowment of gnosis and mystical experience.[66] The Shi'ite notion of "unveiling" gnosis would not seem to lend itself very well to characterizations of fundamentalist literalism. Tellingly, it was Khomeini's non-literalism that girded his bold claim that the jurist, and therefore the state, may override the shari'ah. What distinguishes the jurist, and elevates him above the shari'ah, or at least the plain and received understanding of the shari'ah, is his simultaneous knowledge of *'ilm* and *ma'rifat*, exoteric and esoteric. That is, the gnostic ability to read beyond the literal sense of language (*'ilm*) and discover hidden truths (*ma'rifat*) empowers the jurist to override the shari'ah.[67] Here, Khomeini's view appears to depart radically from the model, according to which Islamic fundamentalists, in Almond, Appleby and Sivan's phrasing, "reify and preserve the absolutist character" of the shari'ah.[68]

Turning to Mawdudi, his approach to language is also hardly that of a literalist. In *Tafhim al-Qur'an*, his influential Urdu Qur'an translation and commentary, he eschewed literal interlinear translation for a freer and less constrained approach. Granted, Mawdudi's choice was not based solely upon a rejection of literalism, and he found some utility in existing literal translations. But at the same time, contrasting oral and written language, Mawdudi asserted that literal translations suffered from a number of limitations, especially in their inability to convey the full sense and nuance of Qur'anic Arabic. Hence, he observes that literalism entails a serious failure to grasp the quality – and meaning – of the original.[69] The Qur'anic usages of the word *kufr* are for Mawdudi a case in point. Literal and uniform interpretations of *kufr* as "unbeliever" run the risk of gravely injuring the text. Given this attitude, it is unsurprising that one of Mawdudi's interpreters finds him interpreting the Qur'an "with considerable freedom."[70] Finally,

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[65] Somewhat along these lines, Ruthven finds that the term "fundamentalist literalism" lacks utility. He retains the family resemblance through the alternative terms factualist and historicist. Ruthven, 52.

[66] Abrahamian, 14.

[67] Martin, 170.

[68] Almond, Appleby and Sivan, 96.

[69] Adams, "Abu-'l A'la Mawdudi's Tafhim al-Qur'an," 309.

[70] Adams, "Abu-'l A'la Mawdudi's Tafhim al-Qur'an," 310.

Mawdudi's stance may be seen in his comments on Qur'anic ambiguities or *mutashabihat*. Explicating Qur'an 3:7 – likely a challenging verse for a literalist – he comments: "It is...evident that the truths which lie beyond the range of human perception have always eluded and will continue to elude man; *no words exist in the human vocabulary which can either express or portray them*."[71]

If, then, there are those who may appropriately be described as fundamentalist literalists, Khomeini and Mawdudi are not among them. Examination of others who have been labeled fundamentalists, such as Qutb, would likely yield similar results.

Golden Age-ism

According to the model, fundamentalists reject the nation-state, secular democracy, the privileging of ethnic and linguistic homogeny over confessional homogeny, the devolution of religion from national cultures. In sum, fundamentalists reject the modern state's marginalization of religion. Specifically Islamic fundamentalists also resist the splitting of the ummah into geographically defined nation-states: Muslims should not be separated from each other by borders established, often under European direction, on the basis of European ideas, particularly the "polytheism" of nationalism.[72] In contrast, fundamentalists uphold "the sacred past," a "golden age" in which Islam was triumphant and Muslims' ethnic and linguistic differences were transcended by their common faith.[73] For Sunnis "golden age" might imply Medinese theocracy (622-32), caliphate (632-1258), and the classical expansionist "abode of Islam" (*dar al-Islam*). For Shi'ites "golden age" would likely be limited to the Medinese theocracy.[74]

Here, I suggest that while the discourses of Khomeini and Mawdudi are somewhat ambivalent, both clearly diverge from the model more than they conform to it. In *Islamic Government* Khomeini labels post-Ottoman states "artificially created."[75] But there is far more at play in his discourse than an appeal to a "golden age." Indeed, he appealed to an imagined future over a "golden" past, boldly claiming that that the Islamic Republic was not merely different to the Medinese theocracy, but superior to it: recall his disciple disavowing "the age of the donkey." Unlike the Republic, Khomeini averred, Muhammad's proto-state lacked sufficient recourses to meet all of the social challenges facing it. Further, Khomeini's vision does not embody a clear rejection of nation-state or nationalism. That is, in his imagined future, Muslim ummah is

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[71] Abu-'l A'la Mawdudi, *Towards Understanding the Qur'an,* Vol. I, (Leicester: The Islamic Foundation, 1988), 238. Italics added.

[72] Almond, Appleby and Sivan, 41.

[73] Almond, Appleby and Sivan, 92. Armstrong, 34, 37, 294; Zeidan, 47-48, 80; bin Talal, 34; Davidson, 6; Marty and Appleby, *The Glory and the Power*, 139-140.

[74] Shi'ism has accommodated but never recognized the caliphate. See Khomeini, 17, 23, 30, 32, 46, 48, 51.

[75] Khomeini, 24.

not unambiguously favored over Iranian nation. Rather, while the two exist in a tense relationship, nationalist and patriotic sentiments are palpable. Khomeini frequently upheld the importance and integrity of the "Iranian nation" and the "Iranian patriot." He vetoed Jalal al-Din Farsi's presidential candidacy due to the candidate's Afghani ethnicity. Khomeini argued that Iranians must uphold their distinct cultural integrity, and while he certainly saw Iranian culture as Islamic, he also saw it as having a national character, namely, one differing from those of non-Iranian Muslims. The Republic, then, was conceived as an Islamic state *and* a national state. Together with the rhetoric of pan-Islam, Khomeini forcefully upheld Iranian statehood as safeguarding a distinct national culture, one conceived as both Iranian and Shi'ite.[76]

To an extent, then, and belying the model, Khomeini was a nationalist. While his program was certainly that of a Shi'ite cleric, it was also that of an Iranian national, one that cannot be fully comprehended independently of its distinctive national context. He desired a strong and centralized modern state, funded through taxation, and protecting its territorial borders with a modern army. Similarly, Khomeini saw non-Iranian Muslims as engaged in their own national struggles. Appealing to nationalist sentiments enabled Khomeini to ally with non-religious opponents of the shah: leftists, liberals, secularists, and Marxists.[77] These alliances were likely facilitated by Khomeini's public reticence on juristic rule and the Islamic character of the envisioned state. Beyond *Islamic Government* these themes had generally remained unpublicized and not widely known in the years leading up to the revolution. Nationalist sentiment, then, significantly enabled the revolution, and is likewise reflected in the Constitution, which unambiguously establishes Iranian nationhood. The nation's sovereignty, language, script, history and flag are all affirmed. While the Constitution also reflects the vision of a wider ummah, it is clear that for Khomeini deference to pan-Islam was not exclusive of nationalist sentiment. In any case, the integration of Iranian nation-state is beyond question. To be sure, Khomeini's reticence on juristic rule early in the revolution may have been disingenuous and cynical, a case of concealing his "true colors." But it is highly telling that nationalist sentiment endured and flourished well after the purging of his erstwhile leftist allies and the establishment of a repressive clergy-dominated state. Kurds, for example, remained marginalized, as they had been under Pahlavi rule.[78] The national character of Khomeini's revolution may have undermined his ability to export it, something in which he had little success.

In emphasizing Iran's territorial integrity, history, and culture to buttress his vision Khomeini had more than a little in common with his secularist counterparts. Where they drew on Phoenician, Mesopotamian, ancient Egyptian and other legacies to buttress Arab nationalisms, Khomeini drew on the Islamic

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[76] Abrahamian, 14-16; Martin, 166, 168-169.

[77] The leftist stance towards the revolution in its early stages is captured in the recent animated film *Persepolis* (2007, dir. Vincent Paronnaud and Marjane Satrapi).

[78] Martin, 109-112, 164, 171-73.

heritage. To be sure, he opposed secularist nationalisms. Yet it is difficult to see how his particular combination of tradition and modernity is any more contradictory, paradoxical, or ironic than those embraced by secularists. It is difficult to see, for example, how Khomeini's appeal to the legacy of the third Imam is more anachronistic or anti-modern than Saddam Hussein's appeal to the legacy of Nebuchadnezzar.[79] My observation here recalls the thesis of Vanessa Martin, who helpfully suggests that if Khomeini's traditional-modern vision is contradictory, it is no more so than that of Ba'thism.[80] This would appear to highlight a weakness of the model: what applies to Khomeini also appears highly applicable to Ba'thism, Nasrism, and various other secularisms. Yet, according to the model, Khomeini and Ba'thism embody emphatically different worldviews. This is a problem and, I suggest, one that has not yet been adequately addressed by the model's advocates.

Khomeini's program also diverges from the model in embodying third-worldist populism, as Abrahamian has suggested.[81] Here, its comprehension entails consideration of both religious tradition and the politics of modernity. On the one hand, Khomeini's supporters called him "Imam," a religious title carrying greater potency in Iran than in any other country. He did not object to the unprecedented appending of the title "Agent of the Imam" (*na'ib-i imam*) to his image, and was reticent on whether or not he was, specifically, the messianic "Twelfth Imam," a reticence seen by some as affirmation.[82] Khomeini was seen as embodying Imamic virtue – frugality, piety, purity, justice, gnosis (*ma'rifat, 'irfan*), and divine light – while he described his opponent as the Imam's enemy, as an illegitimate and un-Islamic despot (*taghut*), asserting, "it is the duty of all of us to overthrow *taghut*."[83] Much here might appear to conform to the model. The discourse seems distinctively religious, draws on much that is pre-modern, and offers a "black and white" choice between a false god and an Imam who is perhaps destined to play a singular role in an apocalyptic battle between good and evil.

On the other hand, apparent conformity with the model belies the integration of Shi'ite rhetoric with modern notions, particularly concerning Khomeini as a leader in a populist mold. Indeed, his stature derived more from popular recognition, his "popular touch," than from traditional rank. He was not universally recognized by other clerics, nor considered sole or pre-eminent "model for emulation" (*marja'-i taqlid*).[84] His status was more facilitated by his ability to identify and harness the resentment of the poor, who he labeled the "disinherited" (*mustazafin*), and project himself as embodying their interests. He

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[79] On this point, it may also be contemplated that elements in Iran's post-Khomeini leadership appear aware of the symbolic utility of the Persian Empire's legacy.

[80] Martin, 198.

[81] See Abrahamian's *Khomeinism*, especially chapter one.

[82] Blankinship, 432.

[83] Khomeini, 92.

[84] Martin, 165-66.

did so through a critique of the regime's profligacy, partiality towards Western interests, and failure to meet its people's basic needs, a critique that finds analogs in those of leftists who had more middle-class constituencies.[85] That is, it presented his opponent with a distinctly modern challenge, integrating social, political, and economic critique with religious trope.[86] In rallying those alienated from the benefits of modernization, Khomeini had indeed appealed to traditional memories, especially those of the first, third, and sixth Imams.[87] But rather than viewing this as fundamentalism, it might be more helpful to consider it as an embodiment of populism, as a leader appealing to a traditionally-minded audience through couching his discourse in what might be termed "indigenous rhetoric," the rhetoric of Shi'ism.

This feature is not particularly remarkable. Where leftists deployed Western notions, Khomeini's constituency would be more likely to respond to "Islam is for the poor," or "Islam enjoins taking from the rich and giving to the poor"[88] than to a call for "dictatorship of the proletariat." Khomeini's associated appeal to a traditional heritage, simply as such, does little to distinguish him as a "religious fundamentalist." Whatever else Khomeini's leadership may have embodied, its populism seems unavoidable. His movement gave voice to the will of a significant proportion of the populace, its religious symbolism rallying what was also a political movement analogous to other populisms. Following Khomeini's lead, the Iranian Constitution, together with its religious tropes, takes a populist tone in its economics and its treatment of national resources. Further, where Khomeini had earlier averred in *The Revealing of Secrets* that sovereignty "belongs to God alone," the Constitution unambiguously upholds popular sovereignty together with divine sovereignty.[89] Here then, Khomeini's movement resembles movements other than religious fundamentalisms, notably Marxism-Leninism and Latin American populisms.[90] In sum, the model appears of limited utility in illuminating Khomeini's views on the nation-state. While eclectic and integrating various Islamic and non-Islamic notions, they do not follow the lines delineated by the model.

Turning to Mawdudi, while his discourse on nation-state and the role of religion therein was framed by quite different conditions, it also belies the notion of fundamentalism. To be sure, as in Khomeini's case, Mawdudi's rhetoric might readily seem to conform to the model. Rejecting nationalism, he called not merely for a state for Muslims, but for an exclusively "Islamic state," organized around Islamic principles and dominated by the religious class. A Muslim state might incorporate diversity, but an Islamic state, as Mawdudi described it,

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[85] Khomeini, 31. Martin, 148.

[86] On this point, see also Abrahamian, 14-16.

[87] Khomeini, 11, 14, 44, 73-75. 66.

[88] Khomeini, 43.

[89] Martin, 164-65.

[90] On Khomeini's populism, also see Martin, 154, 157, 165.

would be monolithic.[91] Further, paralleling Khomeini's early notion (which, as noted, Khomeini later revised) Mawdudi averred that under an Islamic state, sovereignty is God's alone, rejecting democracy as un-Islamic. In all of this, characterization of Mawdudi's positions as fundamentalist might appear difficult to resist.[92] Such a characterization, however, insufficiently reckons with the peculiarity and formative influence of Mawdudi's environment. Further, and a little ironically, it entails reading Mawdudi more "literally" than did Mawdudi himself and also, perhaps, many of his subcontinental followers. Critical here is the manner in which Mawdudi's ideas obtained in the subcontinent, and how this differs from his legacy elsewhere. As noted, according to the model fundamentalism resists the Enlightenment worldview, and in colonized regions this is integrated with the struggle for independence. Mawdudi's discourse, however, was not one of anti-Enlightenment or anti-imperialism. In fact, he abjured what he termed "blind anti-imperialism."[93] Mawdudi was responding to a perceived threat. But that threat was one he perceived in the unique Muslim-Hindu demographics of the subcontinent, not post-Enlightenment modernity and its marginalization of religion. The West, particularly before partition, was a distinctly secondary concern.

Mawdudi's discourse was underlain by the imperative, as he conceived it, of rejecting traditionalist and secularist visions of Muslim independence. The former, represented by the Society of Indian Ulama, advocated a united India, while Muhammad 'Ali Jinnah (d. 1948) and his followers advocated a secular Muslim state. For Mawdudi both options were unviable. Given the stark demographic imbalance, neither would safeguard the Muslim minority from Hindu domination. Mawdudi's vision of Islamic statehood, then, is more grounded in subcontinental demography than in rejecting ideas originating in the enlightened cafes of Europe. Where the two are insufficiently separated, Mawdudi felt, a (Hindu) majority will inevitably marginalize a (Muslim) minority. A secular Muslim state, with guaranteed rights for Hindus, would provide India with a ready fifth column. Critically, as Vali Nasr has shown, it was Mawdudi's rejection of his opponents' views that led him to critique the underlying rationale and depict secular democracy as un-Islamic, heathen, and anthropocentric.[94]

Here, then, apparent conformity with the model belies underlying causes and concerns whose bases are matters of demography much more than matters of religion. Mawdudi's primary objective was the protection of Muslim rights in an independent state. Advocating a certain interpretation of Islam per se,

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[91] Adams, "Abu-'l A'la Mawdudi's Tafhim al-Qur'an," 322-323; Enayat, 104.

[92] For Appleby, subordination of civil institutions to shari'ah clearly embodies fundamentalism. Appleby, 325. While he problematizes some common perceptions about fundamentalism generally opposing nationalism, Ruthven finds Mawdudi's unequivocal stance illustrative of fundamentalism's theoretical opposition to nationalism. Ruthven, 84.

[93] S.V.R. Nasr, "Communalism and Fundamentalism," 126.

[94] S.V.R. Nasr, "Communalism and Fundamentalism," 134.

fundamentalist or other, was secondary. Given the peculiar and, for Mawdudi, dangerous demographic dynamic facing Indian Muslims, he found it necessary to argue for the exclusively Islamic character of the new state. This led him to the rhetoric that has come to be considered paradigmatic of fundamentalist discourse, encapsulated by his revision of *al-jahiliyyah* (the pre-Islamic "era of ignorance"), famously drawn upon and popularized by Qutb and others. Mawdudi deemed most of his Muslim contemporaries, and especially their leaders, ignorant of true Islam, distinguishing "pure" from "impure" Muslims. His party, Jama'at-i Islami, was conceived as a bastion of orthodoxy, providing leadership to a "pure community" (*salih jama'at*), uncorrupted by "un-Islamic" Sufi practice—notwithstanding his own Sufi lineage—and usury.

While such a black and white stance might seem describable as fundamentalist, that description obscures Mawdudi's specific intention to separate *Muslims from Hindus*. Finance was dominated by Hindus, while Sufism frequently bridged Muslim and Hindu practice. Mawdudi, then, did not enshrine Islamic purity to resist the nation-state and its marginalization of religion, or to uphold a golden age or an idealized Islam. The crux is that he was driven to action by a perceived Hindu threat, not by the encroachment of modernity.[95] Here, his program does not conform to the model, or align with the prevailing conception of fundamentalism. Rather, it exemplifies, in Nasr's wording, "radical communalism." Mawdudi's rhetoric was expressly designed to alienate Muslims from the "false promise" of a unified India or a secular Muslim state. Together with "no law but God's law" for Muslims, Mawdudi advocated the Laws of Manu for Hindu India.[96] The vision, then, was mutual separation of ideologically exclusive communities, a vision recalling those of communism and bolshevism.[97] Here too the model would not appear to elucidate Mawdudi's ideas very well, as according to it communism and bolshevism are not examples of fundamentalism.[98] In this light, the term fundamentalist would not seem to label Mawdudi very helpfully. It obscures critical factors, which are more aptly described as demographic or communalist, while inaptly connoting an overriding resistance to the nation-state.

This is further illustrated by Mawdudi's career after partition, as he came to find his fears of a fifth column generally unrealized.[99] In secular Pakistan democracy proved less dangerous than he had envisioned. This enabled him to read his own rhetorical dismissal of it less literally than did many of his followers, especially those outside the subcontinent and, it might be said, some of his interpreters.

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[95] Charles J. Adams, "Mawdudi and the Islamic State," in *Voices of Resurgent Islam*, ed. John L. Esposito (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983), 103.

[96] S.V.R. Nasr, "Communalism and Fundamentalism," 133.

[97] Adams, "Mawdudi and the Islamic State," 104.

[98] See for instance Almond, Appleby and Sivan, 15.

[99] The neat theoretical distinction between "Muslim" and "Islamic" less readily obtains in practice. For instance, while Pakistan was formed as a secular state, its "Islamic character" was noted in the Constitution of 1956, and in 1973 Islam was declared state religion.

Post partition Mawdudi came to accommodate the democratic processes of the nation-state. He acknowledged the legitimacy of a national parliament and submitted proposals for the Constitution of 1956, while his party participated in every national election up to his death in 1979, gaining some electoral support.[100] His elaborations, like Khomeini's, do draw on an eclectic variety of sources, Islamic and Western, yet it is difficult to read them as embodying a fundamentalist mentality. He did not call for a theocracy but for a "theodemocracy" or "democratic Caliphate," which would incorporate an elected president, parliament, and constitutional checks and balances.[101]

Mawdudi's project, then, shifted from the rhetoric of rejecting modern political conceptions to the pragmatics of accommodating them. That accommodation, while eclectic, is not the "modern while anti-modern" combination or contradiction suggested by the model. Mawdudi's vision assimilates modernity more than it contradicts it. His relationship with his audience – political need – entailed couching that assimilation in Islamic apologetics. This feature, I suggest, might be better comprehended through reckoning with conditions endemic to the subcontinent than through positing family resemblances or analogs, Muslim and non-Muslim, outside of it. As with Khomeini, the Islamic character of Mawdudi's discourse is not, in itself, particularly remarkable, and I would suggest that the model's advocates may have overdetermined its significance. Political expediencies have led secularists from Yasser Arafat to Syrian Ba'thists and Saddam Hussein to embrace Islamic rhetoric. And as, distinctly, a country that came into being *for Muslims*, this contingency applies with particular force in Pakistan.[102]

Finally, I would like to take Nasr's thesis a step further. What Nasr has shown, and in my view shown very effectively, is that Mawdudi's discourse on nation and state differs from what fundamentalist discourse is generally understood to be. I find this to be the case to such an extent that is questionable whether there remains any utility in continuing to identify it as such. The detonations of the term fundamentalist differ so substantively from what underlies and motivates Mawdudi's discourse that the term obscures more than it clarifies. Nasr suggests that, contrary to the prevailing view, Mawdudi's fundamentalist discourse was *rooted in communalism*. I suggest that, contrary to the model and the prevailing view, Mawdudi's discourse was communalist *rather than* fundamentalist.

Defending and Refining the Model

As noted, the model's advocates have acknowledged its critics, and attempted to defend it in light of problems such as those discussed above. A first general defense offered by Marty, Almond, Appleby, Sivan and others is that the model

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[100] Enayat, 102.

[101] S.V.R. Nasr, *Mawdudi and the Making of Islamic Revivalism*, 88.

[102] On this point, see Enayat, 99-101.

is "work in progress" whose imperfections will be ironed out over time.[103] This defense is somewhat immunized from criticism in the short term: it is difficult to critique the term fundamentalism for its *present* lack of concrete meaning when its leading advocates do not claim that it has such a meaning. Following Marty, then, problems with the model are to be resolved not now, but over an unspecified future period. The proposed solution, effectively, is patience. The presently problematic model will, in the goodness of time, become an unproblematic model. Those who deploy the term fundamentalism today may be somewhat uncertain as to its meaning and usefulness, but those who use it tomorrow will not feel such compunction. Here, I would suggest to the extent that this is an effectively untestable proposition, it may not be found adequate or sufficiently persuasive.

A second defense resembles the difficult reworking of terminology required by the model's lack of applicability to Asian religions: incongruity between idea and example, between signifier and signified, results in complex reformulation. Hence in the Buddhist context one speaks not simply of fundamentalism, but of "mixed," "synthetic," or "ethnonationalist" fundamentalism. Similarly, incongruity between the model's "family resemblances" or "fundamentals" and the "fundamentals" of such discourses as those examined above is addressed through reformulation, hopefully resulting in more precision. This involves refining or distilling the notions of "fundamental," "fundamentalist," and "fundamentalism." In this vein, Lawrence Davidson, who describes Khomeini and Mawdudi as fundamentalists in standard fashion, avers that fundamentalists are definable as those upholding "the ultimate fundamentals" of Islam.[104] I find this phrase of questionable utility. If fundamentals are divisible into ultimate and non-ultimate categories, what would be an example of the latter? Davidson does not offer sufficient guidance here, or show how the like of Khomeini and Mawdudi can be shown to uphold "ultimate fundamentals" rather than non-ultimate fundamentals. Along similar lines, others have distinguished "gradualist" or "pragmatic" fundamentalism from "stricter" fundamentalism, while Marty and Appleby have noted the "compromising face of Islamic fundamentalism."[105] This also appears to be a difficult formulation: fundamentals, by definition, are not subject to compromise. Marty and Appleby imply that a compromising fundamentalist is able to differentiate between fundamentals upon which compromise is possible and fundamentals upon which compromise is not possible. For this suggestion to be helpful, however, some guidance as to which fundamentals fall into which category would be required. In my view it has yet to be provided by the model's advocates.

A third defense deploys Islamic languages such as Arabic and Persian, and argues for certain linguistic equivalences with English. The argument here runs

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[103] Almond, Appleby and Sivan, 14-17.
[104] Davidson, 17.
[105] Marty and Appleby, *The Glory and the Power*, 136. On fundamentalism as divisible into "stricter" and "gradualist" or pragmatic categories, see Zeidan, 17.

as follows. Methodological problems with the English word "fundamentalist" are voided through its analogs in Arabic and Persian. That is, if there is an Arabic or Persian word translatable into English as "fundamentalist," then the English word must, in turn, *mean something*. Davidson subscribes to this argument, finding equivalence between *usuli* and fundamentalist, and between *usuliyyah islamiyyah* and Islamic fundamentalism.[106] Full equivalence here might also include that between *usul* and fundamentals: as a fundamentalist upholds "the fundamentals of religion" an *usuli* upholds *usul al-din*. The case for linguistic equivalence, however, is unpersuasive. In Islamic scholarly discourse in Arabic *usuli* does not mean "fundamentalist" but identifies "one who goes back to first principles," namely a scholar of *usul al-din*. More specifically, it refers to a scholar of *usul al-fiqh*, the principles of jurisprudence. *Usuli*, then, refers to an academic specialization. This differs greatly to the English fundamentalist, which refers to a religious response to modernity. In Shi'ism specifically, as noted above, *usuli* names a school of jurisprudence. Here, *usuli* is synonymous with "rationalist" and contrasts with *akhbari*, which names a rival school and means "traditionist." Significantly, these meanings of *usuli* are pre-modern. It is difficult to find equivalence between an Arabic term predating modernity and an English term denoting a response to modernity.

Beyond Islamic works, in modern Arabic discourse *usuli* generally identifies a legal expert, or connotes what is traditional, usual, and based upon or conforming to established norms. These meanings differ greatly from "fundamentalist." As noted, the traditional or traditionalist reading of Islam differs radically from what has been labeled fundamentalism. Granted, there has been a recent colloquial appropriation of *usuli* as fundamentalist in some Arab countries. This, however, is primarily a popular and journalistic usage with less currency in scholarly publications.[107] But this observation begs the more pertinent point: defending an English term through its colloquial appropriation in another language is to advance a circular argument. The Arabic *Islamiyyun* is a more promising term, but it does nothing to uphold "fundamentalist," correlating to "Islamists" not to "fundamentalists." Another suggested Arabic equivalent to fundamentalists is *sunniyyah* (cognate to *sunnah* and Sunni). Yet this term does nothing to address problems such as those noted above. In English it might be rendered "Sunnites," which would not appear any more precise than "fundamentalists." Another possibility is the Persian *bonaydgara*. Yet more than a little ironically, this is no more than a literal translation into Persian of the English "fundamentalist," necessitated by Khomeini's supporters failure to find a native Persian or Arabic equivalent to the term with which English speakers were labeling their leader.[108] Like *usuli*, then, *bonaydgara* would struggle to

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[106] Davidson, 16.

[107] On *usuli*'s equivalence (or non-equivalence) with fundamentalist, see also Zeidan, 73; Newman and Jansen, "Usuliyya," in *EI*; Armstrong, xii.

[108] On this point, see also Abrahamian, 13.

uphold the English term of which it is itself an appropriation. The same likely applies to the Persian *osulgara*, cognate to the Arabic *usuliyyah*.

Conclusion

The preceding discussion is framed by the notion that whereas all parties in the debate on fundamentalism note problems with the model, a point on which some of its advocates are strikingly candid, the notion of family resemblances remains valid. That is, however imprecise the term may be, however much the program of one fundamentalist may differ from that of another, all who are described as such can be seen to belong to the same family. This is seen to apply to all fundamentalists, but especially to Abrahamic fundamentalists. I have challenged this view. Through examining the discourses of Khomeini and Mawdudi across three family resemblances or "fundamentals of fundamentalism," I argue that the idea of fundamentalism is insufficiently supported by the examples that would illustrate it to be helpful. The discourses examined diverge from the model considerably more than conform to it. As Khomeini and Mawdudi are arguably the two most notable Muslims to be described as fundamentalists, this calls into question the model's application to Islam. If one removes the two from the picture, a very large piece is missing. Given the model's dependence on Islam, this in turn calls into question the notion of fundamentalism as a feature shared across the Abrahamic religions, if not across world religions generally. Further, while acknowledging efforts to defend the model in light of such criticisms as I make above, I find that they are, to date, inadequate.

This being so, consideration of alternative terms may prove fruitful. To be sure, these bring their own sets of imperfections and concerns. Applying a single term to individuals as complex as Khomeini and Mawdudi will always be an exercise in falling short. That said, I find that alternatives to fundamentalist are preferable. Of the broad alternatives that scholars have offered, Islamist and maximalist are worthy of further consideration and, where appropriate, might be used in conjunction with more specific terms such as populist, as for Khomeini, and communalist, as for Mawdudi. Granted, this might seem to entail a mere shifting of the terms from one all-encompassing or abstract "-ism" to others that are equally abstract and open to contestation. For instance, some have suggested that the term Islamism is no less disputable than fundamentalism.[109] Such concern is understandable and legitimate. I find, however, that some "-isms" are clearly more useful and less obfuscating than others. Whatever the deficiencies of Islamism and maximalism in terms of connoting *positive meaning*, they carry a distinct advantage over fundamentalism in that by and large they do not connote what is unhelpful, unsound, or misleading.

This point is perhaps best illustrated by comparing or contrasting fundamentalism with three other "-isms": nationalism, secularism and

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[109] See Richard C. Martin and Abbas Barzegar, eds. *Islamism: Contested Perspectives on Political Islam.* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2010.)

Mohammedanism. Is, following Marty, Almond, Appleby and Sivan, the term fundamentalist analogous to established terms like nationalism and secularism, or, following Varisco, is it rather analogous to a largely discredited term like Mohammedanism? The import of nationalism and secularism, while perhaps unclear early in the terms' histories, became established over time. Most scholars, I imagine, would view the task of distinguishing what is secularist from whatever is not a relatively uncomplicated one. The same cannot be said for fundamentalism as, indeed, many of the term's leading advocates candidly acknowledge. The question, then, is whether the term's present currency, such as it is, suffices for its ongoing usage, and for faith in the notion that in time it will follow the same trajectory as secularism, its vagaries to be clarified through continued usage. Alternatively, as Varisco suggests, the term Mohammedanism provides a different type of precedent, a once popular but now largely discredited term. Mohammedanism has largely fallen into disuse because of its inapt import. I find that fundamentalist muddies more than it illuminates, that its import is inapt more than apt. Thereby, it resembles a term like Mohammedanism more than a term like secularism.

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