# Introduction:
# Civic Quests and Bequests

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'Civil society is a Western dream, a historical aspiration', claims the eminent Turkish scholar, Şerif Mardin, and as such, 'does not translate into Islamic terms'.[1] Civility, a 'latent' aspect of civic culture, is a shared civilisational idea, he argues. But not civil society with its prizing of the rule of law, human agency, and the autonomy of society and individuals from the state. While the wellsprings of this dream can be traced to medieval Europe, Mardin – like most scholars – locates its more concrete forms in the post-Enlightenment age where the likes of Adam Smith, John Locke, Adam Ferguson and eventually Hegel, cast their economic, political and spiritual aspirations in terms of *institutionalised* solidarities and liberties. The original elements of that civic journey are felt to have survived the tides of history in the North Atlantic community, including the currents of fascism and genocide, to become 'the foundation ... of modern democratic theory'.[2] Indeed, so successful was the quest that the term 'civil society' all but fell into disuse, as Ernest Gellner has remarked[3] – even as 'democracy', to which it had given sustenance, became all the rage.

In stark contrast, the Muslim dream is said to be a yearning for 'social equilibrium created under the aegis of a just prince', in which the significance of the rule of law pales against the charismatic authority of the ruler. Human agency, so critical in the emergence of Western modernity, is likewise seen as a casualty in Muslim societies. For, while it was 'filled with its own rich, humanistic content, the dream, once anchored in Islam precluded the adoption of a concept concerning the gradual perfectibility of man through man's making of his own history'.[4] The primacy of social justice in Muslim tradition becomes, in this perspective, a harking back to an imagined epoch of perfection – and worse, as Mardin sees it, a substitute for the concept of freedom that has energised liberal modernity. But what of the autonomy of religious scholars, the ulama, and of the mercantile class, who so often defied the arbitrary power of sultans and caliphs? Was this not the equivalent of the church/bourgeois resistance that fuelled the rise of civil society in the West? Not so, we are told. The defiance of despotism was not girded by an enforceable social contract, in which property and individual rights were sacrosanct under a meaningful rule of law. At best, the tenuous autonomy of merchants and scholars could be seen as 'embedded in a "lifeworld" of religious discourse', congruent with that of the medieval West before the advent of liberal civil society.[5] And there lies the rub.

Contemporary Muslim societies, it is argued, may acquire the paraphernalia of Western modernity, including the political and economic institutions of capitalist democracy. Yet the bequests of 'Islamic collective memory' and of 'post-industrial society' leave intact the fact that the Muslim dream remains different from that of the West. Civil society is inextricably bound to the latter, while the former must be understood on its own terms, in which freedom amounts at most to mystical reveries of transcendence. This is true not only of individuals but also of what Carl Petry calls 'communal transcendence', in which solidarity groups (of which the umma itself is the exemplar *par excellence*) are the upshot of inequities inflicted by arbitrary power on hapless subjects, who band together and win esteem.[6] The individual liberty that is a key condition of effective citizenship and hence of civil society remains elusive in

practice – and, in any instance, undesired in principle. Or as Gellner puts it squarely, Islam 'exemplifies a social order which seems to lack much capacity to provide countervailing institutions or associations, which is atomised without much individualism, and operates effectively without intellectual pluralism'.[7]

There is enormous irony in those musings about the uniqueness of civil society's Western dreamers. They were, after all, voiced as part of the revival of interest among scholars, citizen activists, policy-makers, journalists and even the general public in the subject when the former-Soviet bloc in East-Central Europe found itself wanting to do more than dream about democratic institutions. John Keane, Gellner himself, Vaclav Havel, Jean Cohen, Adam Seligman, and a host of others directed their post-cold war writings at the practical and conceptual challenges of applying a civil society paradigm where decades of communism had left only vestiges of civic culture – without which, it was argued, mere electoral transitions were doomed to failure. Much the same thinking was being applied, if hesitantly, to issues of democratic consolidation in Latin America, East Asia, South Africa and beyond. Then, Robert Putnam and others directed their attention back to the prevailing civic deficits within the developed democracies themselves, on both sides of the Atlantic, after a hiatus that had consigned the idea to oblivion.[8]

If civil society is wedded exclusively to the particular unfolding of North Atlantic/West European history, why the readiness to acknowledge the prospect of Czech, Hungarian, Polish, Rumanian, Slovak ... Argentine, Brazilian, Chilean, Mexican ... Chinese, Philippine, South Korean and Vietnamese dreams of institutionalising the legal, economic and political frameworks of civic culture? Were not the collective memories of their publics as *sui generis* as those of the West – and why would they not content themselves with a commitment to civility in public life, drawing on Buddhist, Catholic, Confucian, Orthodox Christian and other civilisational bequests? Did those bequests treat individual freedom in the same way as did the Protestant traditions of Northern Europe, and if not, how could they dream of modern citizenship and its attendant cluster of political liberties?

It is not *bien pensant* academics alone who sought to apply the discourse of civil society outside its modern birthplace. So have a myriad of human rights and development activists within and beyond their national frontiers, artists and intellectuals in search of creative spaces, progressive government officials, and lenders and planners in international financial and political agencies (from the European Commission to the World Bank). What is it about the language and civic imagination of late eighteenth/early nineteenth-century Northern Europe that has come to appeal to such varied publics in our time?

It comes as no surprise – amid the burgeoning applications of the term in diverse contexts – that civil society has not quite turned from an *idée passé* to an *idée fixe*. Its usage ranges from straightforward descriptions of non-state institutions and associations that are regarded as critical to sustaining modern democratic participation, to the analytical expression of values – individual liberty, public solidarity, pluralism, nonviolence – that sustain a dyuamic civic culture. A reasonably lucid core of meaning obtains across the multifarious usages, the spirit of which is captured thus by Keane:

> [T]he exercise of power is best monitored and controlled within a democratic order marked by the institutional separation of ·civil society and state institutions. Seen from this power-sharing perspective, state actors and institutions within a democracy are constantly forced to respect, protect and share power with civilian actors and institutions – just as civilians living within the state-protected institutions of a heterogeneous society are forced to recognize social differences and to share power among themselves. A democracy, iu short, [is] … seen as a fractured and self-reflexive system of power in which there are daily reminders to governors and governed alike that those who exercise power over others caunot do anything they want, and that (as Spinoza put it) even sovereigns are forced in practice to recognize that they cannot make a table eat grass.[9]

The appeal, then, for citizens of former totalitariau as well as authoritariau regimes of the notion of limiting the state by empowering society and subjecting both to an effective rule of law –

which would also constrain the resurgence of subversive ideologies – seems obvious. Added to this is the capacity of civil society, when successful, to accommodate ethnic and cultural nationalisms unleashed by the weakening of coercive state institutions; the flip side of which is the rash of civil conflict in the post-cold war era. Accommodation, of course, is not the same as resolution. Plural societies experience plural tensions even when, indeed especially when, genuine participatory politics are feasible. Keane rightly refers to the various forces at play as an 'ensemble ... permanently in tension with each other'.[10] The term 'ensemble' reinforces a metaphor that I have come to attach to these dynamics – that of a jazz performance in which individual improvisation is not only integral but essential to the overall effect. Why jazz in particular? Because of its free-form energy, born of a history of resistance against political, economic and social oppression.[11] Not surprisingly, jazz became a conspicuous symbol of defiance against Moscow and its satellite governments in cities like Prague, Krakow and Warsaw.[12]

That metaphor also auimates another key aspect of civil society, namely the public sphere – what Jurgen Habermas calls 'a network for commuuicating information and points of view'.[13] He portrays it as a 'lifeworld' that harbours, but is not identical to, the more recoguisable forms of institutions, organisations or social orders. Nebulous as this may appear, it is none the less the locus of citizen experience, interpretation and expression of opinion that is also the life-blood of civil society as a modern construct.[14] Put differeutly, it is the space where our jazz ensemble performs in relation to an engaged audieuce (whose members might even venture to contribute improvisational riffs on the saxophone or piano). The public sphere today cau be conceived in postmodern terms as a series of 'imagined communities',[15] both within aud beyond national frontiers. As such, it comprises not only the more formal webs of associations of civil society, but also its more fluid commuuicative actions – *outside the direct mediation of the political (that is, formal state) sphere.* It is of the essence of civil society that the public sphere stands apart from the political sphere and yet, as Charles Taylor observes, remains 'normative for power',

meaning that it demands, or ought to demand, the attention of political decision-makers.[16]

Curiously, for Habermas the modern public sphere excludes the activities of the market economy, in pointed contrast to traditional Marxist analytical usage. He does not offer a coherent rationale for this insistence, given the empirical reality that it is in countries with more sophisticated market economies that civil society tends also to be most dynamic. This is not to deny some of the corrosive effects of the contemporary global economy on aspects of civic culture.[17] Rather, it is to recognise that the distinction between political and economic expressions of civic solidarity – of social capital, in the popular phrase – becomes increasingly untenable in complex societies.[18] To return to our metaphor, it is not persuasive to claim that a professional ensemble that entertains a paying audience ceases to constitute the public sphere, while the same ensemble giving a free performance does.

Where does all this leave us with respect to the claim about the West having a patented dream, so to speak, on civil society? Does the evidence support the notion that imagined communities with a desire for the rule of law, pluralism and individual freedom, fuelled and sometimes corroded by market energies, live – or can live – in the West alone? To insist that it does surely amounts to adopting a snapshot perspective on the evolution of civic culture. Writing in a context not entirely unrelated to the present, Janet Abu-Lughod has observed that '[c]ities are processes, not products', that they are subject to the tides of history rather than created by fiat.[19] The same would appear to be true of civil society: the question is whether the conditions in which it is cultivated are exclusive to the West, assuming that constructs like 'the West' (and hence its assorted counterparts) are meaningful in our time. Mardin's analysis, like Gellner's, while occasionally insightful, betrays the limits of a normative approach to the subject. If the rise of civic culture in the West was in fact the product of historical factors and choices that can inspire Eastern Europeans and Latin Americans and East Asians facing some of the same challenges of transition, then only a deterministic logic would compel the inference that they are bound to fail. Indeed, one is reduced to

arguing that those other cultures and societies have 'essentials' that militate against the adoption over time of institutions like the rule of law, of the values of human rights, and of the aspirations for effective citizenship. Such pessimism does not appear to afflict the *citizens* of those societies.

## Is 'Islam' Different?

We are still left with the claim, however, that 'Islam' is uniquely different in its resistance to the conditionsM or civil society, because – unlike, say, Latin America and Eastern Europe – its adherents inhabit a lifeworld that is tied inextricably to a religious discourse. Indeed, this argument has also been pressed into the service of the 'clash of civilisations' thesis championed by Samuel Huntington, in which the West is seen as somehow fated to collide with Islam because of irreconcilable differences embedded in history, culture and demography.[20] Perhaps not surprisingly, these claims have come to the fore since the events of September 11, 2001. 'Islam' is touted as the common denominator that 'explains' all manner of political militancy and violence, not least in terms of the concept of jihad that is accorded an all-encompassing primacy by its critics (as much as by religious extremists).[21] Then there is Martin Kramer's suggestion that the Middle East (except for Israel), irrespective of ethno-cultural and socio-economic variations, is undeserving of positive consideration as a locus for civil society because of prevailing authoritarian tendencies (except, in his view, for Israel) – and that American scholars of the Middle East did not anticipate the attacks of September 11 partly because they failed to recognise this reality. One of those scholars responds that Kramer might as well upbraid Harvard University's Robert Putnam for failing to anticipate Timothy McVeigh's massive terrorist bombing in Oklahoma City shortly after Putnam's work on 'bowling alone' in America earned him an invitation to the Clinton White House![22] The dystopian claims about Islamic or Middle Eastern exceptionalism imply that an affinity for Muslim values is inherently incompatible with, if not actively inimical to, modern civil society.

There are empirical as well as conceptual reasons to believe
that those arguments are grounded in dubious assumptions. A
common thread running through the responses offered below is
that critiques like those of Mardin and Gellner fail to come to
terms with the *implications* that flow from the diverse ethno-cul-
tural, historical and political realities of the Muslim world. One
recalls Edward Said's remark about the propensity in Gellner when
discussing Muslim politics and culture to expend 'thousands of
words without a single reference to people, periods, or events';[23]
it is a tendency that extends to the apologetic literature on civil
society and Islam. I propose to spell out both the scale and quality
of the plural realities invoked here, including those of the recently
emergent republics of ex-Soviet Central Asia and the Caucasus.
In addition, the Muslim diaspora in Western Europe and North
America – notably in France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands,
Portugal, Spain, the United Kingdom, Canada and the United
States – today has demographic and intellectual roots that affect
the evolving nature of citizenship and civil society within those
countries, even as they impact emerging discourses in their an-
cestral lands. This trend is clearly on the upswing, yet it tends to
feature more in assessments of national security than civic cul-
ture.[24] None of these characteristics taken alone is exclusive to
Islam and Muslims. Their aggregate effect is to remind us that
the conceptual inferences that stem from them militate against
reductive references to 'Islam' as a surrogate idea or usage for
unitary faith, history, or socio-economic condition. Such a confla-
tion is no more justifiable here than it would if applied to Christian,
Jewish or Hindu civilisational complexities.

## Social and Economic Islam

Of the more than 1.2 billion individuals who constitute the Mus-
lim world today,[25] the majority inhabit the four South-Asian
countries of Bangladesh, India, Indonesia and Pakistan. What is
generally conceived of as the 'Islamic heartland' in the Arabian
peninsula is in fact home to a small minority of the umma; even
within the Middle East (broadly conceived), the largest

concentrations of Muslims are in Iran and Turkey, rather than the Arab world. Within the latter, the most substantial communities are in the western reaches, in Morocco – where their numbers again pale in comparison with neighbouring West Africa, notably Nigeria. Arabic, the language of the Qur'an, is not the daily tongue of most Muslims. One of colonialism's bequests is that English, French and Russian are more widely understood across the Muslim world than are either of its most ancient languages, Arabic and Persian, or any of the myriad vernaculars. This pattern is accentuated by globalisation – of media and borders – including the presence of an increasingly established Muslim diaspora within the West and the Russian Federation. Applying the traditional 'centre-periphery' configuration in this context is simply not tenable, if it is intended to capture the contemporary dynamics of the relationship among the Arab, Persian, African, Asian, European and diasporic worlds within the Muslim universe.

In terms of the quotidian realities of life within that universe, the range of standards of literacy, education, urbanisation – of the material 'quality of life' – is as varied as the geo-cultural diversity. Brunei and a handful of other oil-rich Middle Eastern states rank among the world's relatively high-income nations, with a small number of others in the middle-income category. But of the more than forty Muslim-majority countries charted in Table 1 most evince a low level of economic and social development as measured by typical quantitative indicators. This is reflected in their rankings on the increasingly sophisticated if still imperfect 'human development index' (HDI),[26] on which the higher-income Muslim countries do not perform particularly well either. Technological attainment in Malaysia, Iran and Tunisia is comparatively good, but poor elsewhere. All in all, the countries charted here share, with important exceptions, the characteristic of belonging to the cluster of states commonly referred to as the 'developing world'. The rates of literacy, life expectancy and infant mortality are typical of that cluster. Evidently, those that have recently gained independence from European colonial dominance, that is, the ex-Soviet republics of Central Asia/Caucasus (Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan),

Table 1: Key Socio-Economic Indicators for Muslim-majority States*

| Population | Urban (millions 1999) | Male Population %, 1999 | Female Literacy %, 1999 | GDP per Literacy %, 1999 | Human capita (US$, 1999) | Technical Development (Index Rank, 2001**) | Achievement (Index Rank, 2001***) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Albania | 3 | 41 | 91 | 77 | 3,189 | 85 | - |
| Algeria | 30 | 60 | 77 | 56 | 5,063 | 100 | 58 |
| Azerbaijan | 8 | 57 | n/a | n/a | 2,850 | 79 | - |
| Bangladesh | 135 | 24 | 52 | 29 | 1,483 | 132 | - |
| Bahrain | 0.6 | 92 | 91 | 82 | 13,688 | 40 | - |
| Brunei | 0.3 | 72 | 94 | 87 | 17,868 | 32 | - |
| Burkina Faso | 11 | 18 | 33 | 13 | 965 | 159 | - |
| Chad | 8 | 24 | 50 | 32 | 850 | 155 | - |
| Comoros | 0.7 | 33 | 66 | 52 | 1,429 | 124 | - |
| Djibouti | 0.6 | 83 | 75 | 53 | 2,377 | 137 | - |
| Egypt | 67 | 45 | 66 | 43 | 3,420 | 105 | 57 |
| Gambia | 1 | 32 | 43 | 29 | 1,580 | 149 | - |
| Guinea | 8 | 32 | n/a | n/a | 1,934 | 150 | - |
| Indonesia | 209 | 40 | 92 | 81 | 2,857 | 102 | 60 |
| Iran | 69 | 61 | 83 | 69 | 5,531 | 90 | 50 |
| Ivory Coast | 16 | 46 | 54 | 37 | 1,654 | 144 | - |
| Jordan | 5 | 74 | 95 | 83 | 3,955 | 88 | - |
| Kazakhstan | 16 | 56 | n/a | n/a | 4,951 | 75 | - |
| Kuwait | 2 | 97 | 84 | 79 | 17,289 | 43 | - |
| Kyrgyzstan | 5 | 34 | n/a | n/a | 2,573 | 92 | - |
| Lebanon | 3 | 89 | 92 | 80 | 4,705 | 65 | - |
| Libya | 5 | 87 | 90 | 67 | 7,570 | 59 | - |

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Malaysia | 22 | 57 | 91 | 83 | 8,209 | 56 | 30 |
| Mali | 11 | 29 | 47 | 33 | 753 | 153 | - |
| Mauritania | 3 | 56 | 52 | 31 | 1,609 | 139 | - |
| Morocco | 29 | 55 | 61 | 35 | 3,419 | 112 | - |
| Niger | 11 | 20 | 23 | 8 | 753 | 161 | - |
| Nigeria | 111 | 43 | 71 | 54 | 853 | 136 | - |
| Oman | 3 | 82 | 79 | 60 | 13,356 | 71 | - |
| Pakistan | 138 | 37 | 59 | 30 | 1,834 | 127 | 65 |
| Qatar | 0.6 | 92 | 83 | 80 | 18,789 | 48 | - |
| Saudi Arabia | 20 | 85 | 84 | 66 | 10,815 | 68 | - |
| Senegal | 9 | 47 | 46 | 27 | 1,419 | 145 | 66 |
| Sudan | 30 | 35 | 69 | 45 | 664 | 138 | 71 |
| Syria | 16 | 54 | 88 | 59 | 4,454 | 97 | 56 |
| Tajikistan | 6 | 28 | 99 | 99 | 1,031 | 103 | - |
| Tunisia | 9 | 65 | 80 | 59 | 5,957 | 89 | 51 |
| Turkey | 66 | 74 | 93 | 76 | 6,380 | 82 | - |
| Turkmenistan | 5 | 45 | n/a | n/a | 3,347 | 83 | - |
| UAE | 3 | 86 | 74 | 78 | 18,162 | 45 | - |
| Uzbekistan | 25 | 37 | 93 | 84 | 2,251 | 99 | - |
| Yemen | 8 | 25 | 67 | 24 | 1,464 | 133 | - |

* Afghanistan, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Iraq and Somalia have not been included for lack of adequate data.

** The Human Development Index is an annual global composite measure of the 'quality of life' by the United Nations Development Programme.

*** The Technical Achievement Index is a global composite measure of technology creation, diffusion of new and old information technologies and human skills, compiled by the UNDP.

Missing rankings for particular states reflect the lack of sufficient data.

Source: United Nations Development Programme, Human Development Report 2001 (Oxford, 2001).

do not perform better on the global HDI. However, among those countries, Tajikistan does enjoy a literacy rate of first-world standards (99 per cent), shared equally among men and women.

Despite its designation, the HDI does not purport to reflect qualitative aspects of social development like the density of non-governmental organisations, the strength of community health and education services that are not state-controlled, and the presence of independent electronic and print media. All these are part of a richer picture of networks that constitute the public sphere and other facets of civic culture. The profile of 'political life' that is offered by the compilers of the HDI – but is not part of the index itself – essentially covers electoral frequency. Still less does the HDI reflect the more subtle aspects of social solidarity that are also part of that picture, especially in traditional contexts: these include communal and neighbourhood networks (of varying formality) that often play key roles in maintaining social, economic and even legal stability where the reach of state institutions is relatively fragile.[27] But the index does convey a sense of the formal infrastructural strengths and weaknesses that underpin transitions to socio-economic modernity, and thereby of capacity-building for mature civil society.

The empirical universe of states in Table 1, in all its geo-cultural diversity and economic deprivation, hardly lends itself to generalisations of the kind tendered by civic pessimists on 'Islam'. Certainly the correlation between poverty and weak state institutions, on the one hand, and the absence of dynamic countervailing institutions on the other, cannot be ignored – as in Gellner's leap to explain deficient social orders solely in terms of religion. In oil-and-gas-dependent societies, the severe economic and social distortions to civic cultures are a well-known 'price' of prosperity?.[28] Again, the impaired individualism that Gellner posits as a cultural issue wilfully overlooks the disempowering effects of underdevelopment on effective citizenship. Indeed, the Nobel laureate Amartya Sen has shown that 'capability deprivation' across a range of basic human (and civic) potentialities is an appropriate way to define underdevelopment – and analyse social exclusion – rather than the conventional focus on income deprivation

alone.[29] Or as John Kenneth Galbraith characteristically puts it, 'Nothing, it must be recognized, so comprehensively denies the liberties of the individual as a total absence of money. Or so impairs it as too little ... .'[30] Neither of these economists contends that deprivation in Muslim societies is subject to a uniquely different explanation from that in the rest of the world. When Mardin deigns to give empirical support to his argument about the controlling effects of religious discourse on civic culture, it comes in the form of an anthropological study about gender differentiation of labour in the Turkish town of Edremit in the mid-1970s; the evidence purportedly shows 'economic practices embedded in the separation of sexes structured by Islamic norms'.[31] Yet his evidence also indicates that the segregation worked to the economic advantage of the women – which fails to prompt him to ask the obvious question whether this had anything to do with their acquiescence in the division of labour. Nor does Mardin trouble to question whether such realities have much economic or social significance in Turkey's larger cities.[32]

Suffice it to observe that the sociology of diversity, poverty and demographic shifts (including migration and urbanisation) has not figured meaningfully in assertions about the 'fated' obstacles to civil society in the Muslim world. The latter shares not only 'Islam', but also the hard realities of underdevelopment and its negative impact on the conditions for civic culture. After all, explanations of the relative success of civil society in occidental contexts have routinely looked to the effects of the Industrial Revolution, the economic impulses of the 'Protestant ethic', and the impact of capitalism on the demand for a reliable rule of law framework.[33] Which is not by any means to suggest that economic factors alone can explain the dynamics of civil society.

## Civic Islam

The modern concept and praxis of civil society did not spring forth wholly-formed in eighteenth-century Europe and North America any more than modern democracy or human rights could be conjnred up in a single historical moment. Such ideas and

practices are, of course, products of complex historical processes and convergences that – *ex post facto* – can be identified as engendering the conditions for democratic, liberal or civic 'success'. More often than not, supposedly novel creations are what historians have come to regard as the reinvention of tradition.[34] To claim that civil society is 'a Western dream' cannot amount to asserting that such a vision was immutably held at any particular historical moment: for its components would, of necessity, have to evolve with the changing conditions in which the visionaries live. There would, in other words, have to be a plurality of aspirations that converge at what we subsequently deem to be moments of shared historical significance, in reinventing shared bequests as new quests and attainments. To sustain the claim that civil society is exclusive to Western traditions, it would have to be shown that such traditions are fortresses, impermeable to any external influence in the course of history. No civilisation, while it is alive, has such a record. Moreover, it was not long ago that the political performance of southern and east-central Europe, Latin America and the Philippines might have led to the inference that Catholicism impeded democracy and civil society – before the clergy turned into a major proponent of progressive change.[35]

Orientalist readings of Muslim history have commonly posited the absence of civil society as a key issue in the failure to engender indigenous democratic institutions. Broadly, as Bryan Turner summarises it, the argument is that 'Islamic society lacked independent cities, an autonomous bourgeois, rational bureaucracy, legal reliability, personal property and the cluster of rights which embody bourgeois culture'. In an echo of the claims by Gellner and Mardin, the absence of these institutional and cultural elements is seen to have left 'nothing in Islamic civilisation to challenge the dead hand of pre-capitalist tradition'.[36] Quite apart from the questionable implication that the modern development of the West itself was on a clear trajectory of post-feudal liberal freedom arising from civil society, one must ask: what cultural or civilisational underpinnings were there for these alleged differences? What was peculiarly 'Western' about functional bureaucracies and the rule of law, or 'Islamic' about their absence

or frailty? For that matter, Confucian civilisation was famous for
its scholar-bureaucrats or mandarins (who were not, contrary to
stereotype, expected to be blindly compliant with the Emperor's
wishes),[37] while the rule of law was surely linked to the mundane
demands of capitalism. By what logic can the historical contin-
gencies of a particular region (usually, in Orientalist readings,
selected Asian or Middle Eastern locales) be regarded as uniformly
representative of 'Islam'?[38] This is not merely a matter of appro-
priate semantics, of not using the term 'Islam' or 'Islamic' loosely;
it also about the essentialism that attends such analyses of history,
politics and change. It is a short step thence to claim, as Hunting-
ton has done, that entire civilisations are fated by their faith or
history to act in ways that conflict with contemporary notions of
pluralism, respect for the rule of law and individual freedom.

As it turns out, the evidence of civic institutional and cultural
*elements* in Muslim societies is substantial, even if the development
of civil society as understood today has lagged in those contexts.
The respective Arabic and Persian terms for civil society, *mujtama'*
*al-madani* and *jame'eh madani* have long evoked the sense of insti-
tutions organised along civic lines (*madani* being derived from
*medina* or 'city'); a more traditional reference is to *mujtama' al-*
*ahli*, which includes a wider array of communal and religious
institutions. If these notions are claimed to exist in the shadow of
religious discourse, Crone and Hinds have read the corpus of
religious law and practice as itself an expression of resistance to
political power: 'The scholarly conception of Prophetic sunna was
... a threat to caliphal authority from the moment of its
appearance'.[39]

In empirical terms, Ellis Goldberg has shown that medieval
societies of the Arab Mediterranean region developed a spectrum
of legal and political devices, primarily in mercantile practices
that ranged across frontiers, as well as urban markets and institu-
tions, whose autonomy from state control gave them a robustly
civic character.[40] Building on the work of Marshall Hodgson,
Goldberg sketches a rather different picture of the status of pri-
vate property, from endowments to arbitral mechanisms and debts,
as well as of cities, from the standard Orientalist accounts (or that

of Mardin). He rejects the claim that evidence of bourgeois au-
tonomy is to be found only in the bargaining capacity vis-à-vis
caliphs and sultans, or in their status under a sharia entirely con-
trolled by religious discourse. Rather, a large segment of medieval
law was 'a political instrument in the hands of private actors to
shield themselves and others from the demands of an absolutist
monarchy'. If the institutional context within which this occurred
differed from that of contemporary Europe, Goldberg is adamant
that the elements of civil society that prevailed then are pertinent
to the creation of 'liberal (and possibly democratic) regimes'.[41]
A similar argument has been advanced by Masoud Kamali with
regard to 'traditional' civic culture in Iran, reposing in webs of
'communities and institutions rather than individual citizens and
their associations'.[42] Typical of the former are the *bazaris* (mer-
chants) and ulama, seen as co-existing with nascent associations
of the latter kind in post-revolutionary society.

'Civic Islam' today, *qua* non-state controlled citizen action that
is directly germane to modern civil society, is manifest in what
Dale Eickelman and Jon Anderson have documented as 'the
emerging public sphere'. Driven by the energies of new media
that elude facile official regulation – from satellite television to
the Internet – this public domain has already become the locus of
a 'reintellectualisation of Islamic discourse', whereby the publics
that participate as well as the subjects they talk about have altered
radically from traditional realities.[43] The scope of the 'imagined
community' (discussed earlier) in this public sphere covers sub-
national, national and global domains, and challenges old
assumptions about gender, hierarchical authority and
inclusiveness. Yet the language of exchange is frequently 'Islamic',
as participants seek to redefine and re-appropriate old meanings
in new contexts. The ramifications are as far-reaching for the con-
tent as they are for the mode of discourse:

> [B]y looking at the intricate mnltiplicity of horizontal relation-
> ships, especially among the rapidly increasing numhers of
> beneficiaries of mass edncation, new messages, and new com-
> munication media, one discovers alternative ways of thinking
> about Islam, acting on Islamic principles, and creating senses

of community and public space. Such a realization among large
uumbers of people is a measure of the potential for a rapidly
emerging public sphere and a civil society that plays a vital role
within it.[11]

We thus have two sets of convergences: of civic and religious
dynamics, and of process and substance. The former is deeply
familiar within Muslim settings where the secular and sacred have
traditionally intertwined, in public as well as private domains. As
for the convergence of process and substance, it is clearly an in-
evitable outcome of citizen participation in the creation and
sustenance of the public sphere itself, where dialogical opportu-
nity meets quotidian concerns. Indeed, both sets of convergences
are envisaged in the 'discourse ethics' that Habermas has sketched
as a vital feature of modern public spaces.[15] Practical moral is-
sues are dealt with in such spaces through a process of dialogue
that validates (or refutes) and normatises agreement in a rational,
civil process.[46] Applied to the emerging Muslim sphere as de-
scribed above, Habermas's logic is compelling in its dual emphasis
upon the individual citizen as voluntarily participant, and the so-
cial/civic process that allows such deliberative action to occur with
the safeguards of the rule of law.

What has been called the 'digital umma'[47] is patently a far cry
from stereotypes of static 'Islamic' identities, capacities and aspi-
rations. Citizen demands for individual space, gender and minority
inclusiveness, political participation and the rule of law – but also
for ethical accountability in public life, and the freedom to rede-
fine the 'secular' limits of the public sphere – have prompted
fundamental political change in Indonesia and Iran, along with
less radical but important transformations in Turkey, Morocco and
Jordan. And they have triggered civil conflict in Tajikistan, Ni-
geria, Algeria and Afghanistan, with new expectations of
accountability to society by future governments. In the diasporic
Muslim public sphere – and that of its host societies in North
America and Europe – hierarchical challenges and calls for ac-
countability may have different targets but they have the same
impulses, abetted by easier access to the new media, as well as
more robust legal protections.[48] Nor should the diasporic context

be seen apart from those of Muslim-majority societies: the nature
of the Internet and cognate media engenders fluid avenues of
discourse across frontiers. The evidence is that regardless of
whether it was so in the distant or the recent past, civil society has
become a Muslim dream in our time. 'Historians', in any case,
'keep changing their ink', to quote Mohamed Berrada's great
postmodern narrative, *The Game of Forgetting*.[49] The riffs and
rhythms of the Muslim public sphere may differ from the jazz of
its Euro-American counterpart, recalling instead the vernacular
resonances of *gnawa, qawwali* and *rai* in their rich alchemy of secu-
lar and sacred; and that is testimony, surely, to the indigenisation
of civil society.

## Contemporary Muslim Perspectives

Depicting the full spectrum of civic life in the Muslim public sphere
– or rather spheres, given the obvious complexity and stretch – is
not the purport of this volume of essays, if such an undertaking
were practicable. A few years ago it may have entailed, to recall
our metaphor, providing a manageable listing of concerts by new
and old performers on the public stage, at least within specific
regional settings like the Middle East.[50] Today it would amount
to the Sisyphean task of describing a plethora of ever-growing
cacophonies – and happily so, for it underscores the vast multivocal
and pluricultural milieus on hand. Why, then, have we chosen to
take as our analytical setting the 'Muslim world', rather than
regions thereof? First, because there are conceptual and empirical
issues concerning the prospects for civil society in communities
and societies of Muslims that need to be addressed, and not only
in response to the kind of skepticism about 'Islam' that has been
outlined above. Muslim scripture, thought and praxis are potential
resources rich in their expressions of social solidarity, pluralism
and ethics, in the wider context of advocating a this-worldly fidelity
to notions of law, reason and equity. Undeniably, these bequests
have too often been squandered, and continue to be in our time;
but that is no reason to ignore them in appraising civic prospects
among Muslims today. Several of the essays here venture beyond

empiricism to looking at some of the underlying challenges of intellect and faith in the civic quest, and not by Muslims alone.

Second, we have chosen under the banner of 'the Muslim world' to range freely beyond the more traditional focus on the Arab Middle East (which also finds representation), and to look at Central Asia, the Near East and Pakistan both in regard to their indigenous socio-political realities, and the wider Islamic context just noted. Post-revolutionary Iran and Turkey offer at this time competing 'models' of civic choices for other Muslim states – not least the emerging republics of the former Soviet Union. The quotation marks around the word 'models' acknowledges the fact that both Iran and Turkey are in flux in this respect; they have the same difficult civic choices ahead as do other Muslim societies, notably on the role of religion in the public square. But they offer valuable snapshots in their respective stages of transition from the historic ruptures that they, like most of the post-colonial Muslim world, have endured

In a *tour d'horizon* of the social and intellectual terrain in which Muslims must locate their modern quests, Mohammed Arkoun warns here that the wrong approach would be to highlight the attributes and practices of Western civic cultures and apply them as tests or ideals for transitional societies of Muslims. This would lead us right past the indigenous particularities born of 'profound historical and sociological differences' that have everything to do with how civil society is actually lived. Nor will it do to embrace the reverse process, favoured by religious apologists, of singling-out specific attributes from Western societies and projecting them back onto an 'imagined Islamic Model' derived from a mythical reading of history. If civil society is about citizeus taking control of their destinies, then the reality they confront is of patrimonial states – or militant groups within them – taking control of 'Islam' and tailoring it to social and political agendas that have little to do with respect for the rule of law and individual liberty. Breaking out of ideological cages, whether of nationalism or religious orthodoxy, that impede plural ways of discovering and building individual 'truths' is, for Arkoun, the precondition for civil society. The best prospects for doing so lie in the emergence of a

'global civil society' with a larger, more encompassing collective memory.

Continuing this discourse of locating civic quests in Muslim engagement with modernity, Aziz Esmail argues that it would be just as false to expect an idiosyncratic 'Islamic civil society' as it would be to neglect the 'contextual importance' of Islam in the process. He draws on Michael Sandel's critique of the 'disengaged self' in liberal thought and its conception of civil society, which fails to recognise that historical traditions – Muslim, Hindu, Buddhist, Christian – strongly shape individual ideas of self and others. For Esmail, the alternative lies in seeing the duality of the self, both as the bearer of such traditions and also as a citizen with a 'universal individualism'. He is critical of multiculturalism as an antidote to the disengaged self, for it merely privileges group identity over that of the individual; and he faults it for passively nurturing parochialism rather than civic virtues. Ultimately, liberal sentiment will need to grow from '*within* particular historical identities'. Muslim societies themselves can build on potent moral intuitions and Islamic antecedents in their pursuit of modernity, while imbibing the lessons of liberal and other humanistic traditions – including an appreciation of secularism as distinct from its Western ideological interpretation.

Some very specific civic antecedents and intuitions are spelled out in Filali-Ansary's chapter on the Maghreb, and they have less to do with limiting the power of the state (as in the West) than with providing vital social services and the regulation of social activities. This is a historical universe parallel to the mercantile one sketched by Ellis Goldberg, noted earlier, in which weak states had a monopoly of violence but not much else. The result was what Filali-Ansary calls 'proto-civil society' with a strong creed as well as robust social solidarity – and here there are strikiug similarities as well as differences to our own time. The state in the modern Maghreb remains relatively weak, in part because of the larger forces of economic globalisation that have limited its power, which makes it fearful of society. Associative life has again flourished, if in significant measure by default, as gaps in social services are filled by non-profit organisations and movements. Like

Arkoun, Filali-Ansary sees creed as critically contested terrain, to be taken out of the control of the clerics, the state and extremist minorities. Maghrebi civil society today, like its antecedents, is seen as a work in progress, but with external economic and social forces increasingly playing a decisive role.

By contrast, the public sphere in Iran today is very much a domestically-contested space, especially when it comes to the issues of gender and press freedom, as Ziba Mir-Hosseini shows. The poignant tussles over these issues, in which personal liberties and livelihoods are constantly at stake, go to the roots of the discourse on 'Islam' and civil society. How far can women in a patriarchal setting exercise the right to influence laws that are discriminatory in their application, yet are claimed to have sacral status? Against the wider canvas of 'reformist' and 'conservative' trends in post-revolutionary Iran, the women's press has been 'player and pawn' alike in Mir-Hosseini's extensive surveys, which have included interviews with journalists, clerics and secular intellectuals in the country. Ironically, perhaps, she generally found the Shi'i clerics more forthcoming than the intellectuals on the ethics and politics of gender equity (both groups being overwhelmingly male in Iran). In a context of limited democratic freedom, the press has tended to serve as a surrogate for political parties, and the fate of the women's press signals the overall health of emerging civil society – and the rule of law. The evidence today suggests both an inexorable movement toward a more liberal society (with reformists handily winning every single municipal and national election in recent years), as well as severe periodic setbacks for free expression and other liberties.[51]

Among the insights offered by Mir-Hosseini is the vitality of ethical claims in the Muslim public sphere, as reformist women express their critiques of sacral law in terms of sharia-grounded tenets of fairness and equality. More broadly, 'civility' as a defining component of the public sphere eugages the imperatives of social ethics, the subject of my chapter. Contemporary liberalism has come to dichotomise civic and ethical norms in the public domain, preferring to privatise the latter and to give it a 'rational', amoral orientation. Although social ethics have long been a

normative feature of Muslim public life, their status has tended to
be subordinate to that of the sharia as a framework of law. The
pattern appears to be reversing itself in some contexts, notably of
transitional states where the frailty of the rule of law leaves ethical
norms to play a key part in sustaining public order. 'The law is
like a spiderweb', is the lament of a Tajik journalist, 'the strong
simply tear through it, but weak people get caught in it'.[52] There
is no substitute for the rule of law, of course; yet both strategic
and moral purposes are served by anchoring civic life in the re-
vival of ethical discourse, which in Muslim terms includes the norm
of legal observance on the part of governors and the governed
alike. Nowhere can that potential role be more critical than in
relation to the issue of political violence – which since the events
of September 11, 2001, has taken centre stage in public debates
within and outside the Muslim world.[53] After all, appeals to reli-
gions tradition already colour political militancy; engaging and
reshaping that discourse is a challenge that civic actors can ill
afford to ignore.

It did not, certainly, require the events of September 11 and
their aftermath to evince how incompatible the conditions for
civil society are with political violence. The post-independence
civil war in Tajikistan (1992–94) took an enormous toll both in
civilian casualties and the destruction of public and private
institutions and patterns of engagement, as Shirin Akiner outlines
in her contribution. Both state and society are weak, and the
proliferation of non-governmental organisations is sustained at
this juncture more by foreign goodwill than grassroots
commitment. As in Filali-Ansary's analysis, creed is seen here as a
key contested area between radical societal groups and the state
(promoting its version of 'good Islam'), while the legacy of
indigenous Sufi-oriented Mnslim traditions is pushed to the side-
lines. An exception to the overall picture is the situation of
Tajikistan's eastern, autonomous region of Gorno-Badakhshan,
where Akiner points to an ethos of self-help boosted by external
support from the Aga Khan Development Network, in a 'unique'
complementarity that has produced the makings of a bona fide
civil society. Elsewhere, though acknowledging that the 'nascent

pluralism' of the late-1980s could be perceived as an embryonic civic culture, she advocates an analytical focus on social ethics as a more reliable lens through which to look at contemporary Tajik society.

Within the wider context of ex-Soviet Central Asia, Olivier Roy is more sanguine about indigenous networks of solidarity – such as farm collectives (*kolkhoz*), neighbourhood associations (*mahalla*), and consultative groupings (*gap*, often among women for interest-free credit) – providing the building-blocks of modern civil society. While the Soviet ideological legacy may taint our view of such 'traditions', Roy argues that they are more substantial than the more formal, Western-type associations favoured by international aid agencies, which will only engender a 'window civil society'. Like Akiner, he is apprehensive abont the impact of militant religious groups, especially in the Ferghana Valley that straddles the republics of Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. Which, in tnrn, reinforces the issue of nurturing indigenous civic institutions rather than the external prototypes that Roy sees as both ineffective and corrupting in their creation of artificial social and economic hierarchies. Nevertheless, in so far as the interface of domestic and external elements of development is intrinsic to open societies, the implications for emergent Central Asia are complex – especially when it comes to cultural vectors such as networks to promote intellectual and artistic spaces, including an independent cinema.[54]

Our picture of religiosity and civic traditions in post-Soviet Muslim societies is enriched by remarkably detailed sociological evidence gathered by Tair Faradov on Azerbaijan, a country that also experienced violent conflict since independence (over the ethnic-Armenian enclave of Karabakh). Substantial majorities of Azeris continue to desire a more religiously-grounded life, usually but not exclusively Muslim, and to reject the once-ingrained stereotypes of religiosity stemming from Soviet ideology. Yet the new adherents seldom appear to have more than a rudimentary knowledge of Islam, or take the observance of elemental rituals seriously. Faradov's survey suggests that religion at large is taken to be as much an ethical and socio-cultural commitment as a

spiritual one. It therefore lends itself to constructions of Islam as linked to nationalism as well as the values of pluralism, tolerance and civic engagement, reminiscent of less successful state endeavours in this respect elsewhere in Central Asia. There appears to be strong support for official regulation of religious activism in the twin interests of national security and as part of an interpretation of Islam itself as 'handmaiden to the modern ethos of civil society', even if many citizens chafe at the more authoritarian tendencies of the present government.

Some may see in the Azerbaijani trends a receptivity to 'channels of Westernisation' en route to a 'secularised Islam';[55] but if contemporary Turkey is the exemplar, then political rather than civil religion becomes the paradigm.[56] Ersin Kalaycıoğlu's empirical analysis suggests that civic associations of the professional, entrepreneurial and certain social kind have flourished amid waves of democratisation since World War II. Yet Kemalist secularism and nationalism remain as deeply mistrustful of overt Muslim public activism as of ethno-cultural particnlarism (notably Kurdish and Alevi). Among other social movements, feminists who endorse the state's brand of secularism, along with environmentalists, find congenial spaces. The state is generally weak and far from effectual, contrary to the post-Ottoman stereotype. Still, society has not availed itself as robustly as might be expected of the ensuing public spaces, which Kalaycıoğlu explains in terms of low levels of trust outside traditional ties of kinship and solidarity. This appears to be changing, as shown in his intriguing account of the putative transformation of traditionalist women's demands for headscarves (*türban*) into a relatively modernist human rights movement. Old repositories of trust and solidarity, in other words, may find new avenues of associational life, including among nationalist groups that learn the language of civic rather than ethnic protest.[57]

An intense mélange of identity-politics, state suspicion of civic organisations, low levels of public trust, and sharp contests over the role of religion in public life is one face of contemporary Pakistan – but Iftikhar Malik is keen to show how resilient the other face has proven. Indigenous human rights organisations, independent media and professional civic groups remain highly visible

in the public arena, along with more traditional solidarity groups. A series of authoritarian regimes masks a weak state and rule of law, while a stubbornly frail economy has undercut public institutions. Yet Malik draws attention to recent opinion surveys that reveal an enduring commitment to 'renewal of civic life', including real gender and minority equity, and a deep attachment to moderation in nationalist as well as confessional sentiment. There may be further cause for optimism on that score in the wake of Pakistan's frontline engagement in the United States-led war on the Taliban in Afghanistan, as the state is emboldened to curb the religious militancy that it often actively endorsed in the past[58] – though human rights groups will want to be vigilant about state accountability in that regard to the rule of law. Meanwhile, in post-Taliban Afghanistan, a renewed quest for civic culture has already found expression in the emergence of independent news media (including by women), with appropriate legislative guarantees,[59] and in the revival of artistic life in both traditional and modern formats.[60]

If the foregoing synopses suggest that the contributors to this volume share a particular perspective on what the salient signifiers of civil society are – much less on where exactly to locate them and whether they exist in significant measure in a given Muslim context – then the reader will quickly be disabused on perusing the texts. As Filali-Ansary bemusedly observes, when it comes to civil society there is more than the usual scholarly protestation about the elusiveness of one's topic, the limits of one's format, and the provisionality of the conclusions that can be reached in a too-rapidly changing universe. The concept and its praxis have acquired an exceptional degree of slipperiness, and when applied to Islam and the Muslim world, the challenge of delivering coherent judgements is only exacerbated.

All this has not forestalled the willingness of policy analysts and policy-makers, social scientists and human rights lawyers, political activists and their targets in and out of government, from deploying just that combination of 'civil society' and 'Islam'. The coupling has served as more than a slogan for its invokers in city squares, university campuses and hallowed conference halls from

Tehran and Sarajevo to Jerusalem, Cairo, Algiers and Lagos. Indeed, the energetic discoursing *about* civil society in such contexts can itself be seen as contributing vitally to fostering the associational life and intellectual autonomy of modern civic culture.[61] My own earliest exposure to debates on civil society came not in the West but rather during field-visits to Malaysia, Indonesia and Singapore in the early 1990s. Then, as today, concerns were raised about importing Western modes of social organisation and individualism into fundamentally different civilisational settings. But as Arkoun points out, one can be mindful of these differences and yet search for shared meanings, not least in an age when national frontiers have shrinking significance. Indeed, Etzioni has extended his communitarian vision beyond those frontiers to citizen-based 'governance without government' on the transnational landscape.[62] This certainly holds out the cougenial prospect of extending democratic accountability, the rule of law and civility beyond sovereign confines. Prevailing Muslim diasporic realities, as noted earlier, accentuate these dynamics. Yet the idea of a global civil society is only meaningful in so far as ordinary citizens in less privileged and politically marginalised quarters partake of it. For the individual citizen, like civil society itself, needs deep if adventitious roots in the everyday context – the rhythms and resonances, the lifeworld – of local *terra firma.*

## Notes

1. Ş. Mardin, 'Civil Society and Islam', in J.A. Hall, ed., *Civil Society: Theory, History, Comparison* (Cambridge, MA and Cambridge, UK, 1995), pp.278–300, at pp.278–9.

2. Ibid., p.285.

3. E. Gellner, *Conditions of Liberty: Civil Society and its Rivals* (London, 1994), pp.12–13. As a result, social theory today 'starts out with the assumption of an unconstrained and secular individual, unhampered by social or theological bonds, freely choosing his aims, and reaching some agreement concerning social order with his fellows. In this manner, Civil Society is simply presupposed as some kind of inherent attribute of the human condition'. (p.13)

4. Mardin, 'Civil Society and Islam', pp.285–6.

5. Ibid., p.289.

6. C.F. Perry, *The Civilian Elite in Cairo in the Late Middle Ages* (Princeton, NJ, 1981), pp.322–3; cited in 'Civil Society and Islam', p.290.

7. Gellner, *Conditions of Liberty*, p.92.

8. While there were sporadic, exploratory writings on civil society in the early 1980s, the current debate only found momentum in the mid/ late 1980s and early 1990s. See, *inter alia*, V. Havel, et al., in J. Keane, ed., *The Power of the Powerless* (London, 1985); J. Keane, *Civil Society and the State: New European Perspectives* (London and New York, 1988); J. Cohen and A. Arato, *Civil Society and Political Theory* (Cambridge, MA, 1992); A. Seligman, *The Idea of Civil Society* (New York, 1992); K. Tester, *Civil Society* (London and New York, 1992); H. Koo, ed., *State and Society in Contemporary Korea* (London and Ithaca, NY, 1993); C. Taylor 'Invoking Civil Society', in *Philosophical Arguments* (Cambridge, MA and London, 1995), pp.204–24; A.R. Norton, ed., 'The Future of Civil Society in the Muslim World', special issue, *Middle East Journal*, 47, 2 (1993); R. Putnam, *Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Northern Italy* (Princeton, NJ, 1993), and 'Bowling Alone: America's Declining Social Capital', *Journal of Democracy*, 6 (1995), pp.65–78; D. Wank, 'Civil Society in Communist China? Private Business and Political Alliance, 1989', in Hall, ed., *Civil Society: Theory, History, Comparison*, pp.6–79; T. Yamamoto, ed., *Emerging Civil Society in the Asia Pacific Community* (Singapore, 1995); J. Linz and A. Stepan, *Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation: Southern Europe, South America, and Post-Communist Europe* (Baltimore and London, 1996); M. Monshipouri, 'State Prerogatives, Civil Society, and Liberalization: The Paradoxes of the Late Twentieth Century in the Third World', *Ethics and International Affairs*, 11 (1997), pp.232–51; M. Owusu, 'Domesticating Democracy: Culture, Civil Society and Constitutionalism in Africa', *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 39 (1997), pp.120–52; M.H. Ruffin and D.C. Waugh, ed., *Civil Society in Central Asia* (Seattle, 1999); S. Kaviraj and S. Khilnani, ed., *Civil Society: History and Possibilities* (Cambridge, UK, 2001).

9. J. Keane, *Civil Society: Old Images, New Visions* (Cambridge, UK, 1998), p.11.

10. Ibid., p.6. See also my *Pluralism in 'Old Societies and New States': Emerging ASEAN Contexts* (Singapore, 1994), pp.1–13.

11. See T. Giola, *The History of Jazz* (New York, 1997); T. Kirchner, ed., *The Oxford Companion to Jazz* (New York, 2000). Jazz also provided a metaphor for the identity of African-Americans in a heterogeneous society in *Shadow and Act* (New York, 1964), a collection of essays by one of the

United States' most celebrated writers, Ralph Ellison. See also N. Hentoff's broader explorations of the nexus between civic freedom and music in *The Nat Hentoff Reader* (New York and Cambridge, MA, 2001).

12. Among the most effective dissident gronps in the Soviet bloc states was the Jazz Section of the Mnsicians' Union of Czechoslovakia, which came to international prominence in the early 1980s. Earlier in Enrope, the Nazis in 1943 banned the very use of the word 'jazz'.

13. J. Habermas, *Between Facts and Norms: Contributions to a Discourse Theory of Law and Democracy*, tr. William Rehg (Cambridge, MA and Cambridge, UK, 1996), ch.8, at p.360.

14. Ibid., p.367.

15. As cast in Benedict Anderson's celebrated, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London, 1991).

16. C. Taylor, 'Liberal Politics and the Public Sphere', in *Philosophical Arguments*, p.257–87, at p.266. See further my discnssion of Taylor's analysis in my chapter on public ethics in the present volume.

17. R. Kuttner, *Everything is for Sale: The Virtues and Limits of Markets* (New York, 1997); J.K. Galbraith, *The Culture of Contentment* (Boston, 1992); J. Gray, *Enlightenment's Wake* (New York and London, 1995).

18. Keane expressly rejects Habermas's 'neo-Gramscian' analysis in this regard: *Civil Society: Old Images, New Visions*, pp.16–19. See also the elucidations – including the ambivalent roles of capitalism and industrialisation in fostering civil society – in J. Alexander, 'Introdnction', in J.C. Alexander, ed., *Real Civil Societies: Dilemmas of Institutionalization* (London, 1998), pp.8–10; and perspectives on civically responsible capitalism in A. Giddens, ed., *The Global Third Way Debate* (Cambridge, UK, 2001).

19. J. Abu-Lughod, 'The Islamic City', *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 19 (1987), pp.155–76, at p.172.

20. Samnel P. Hnntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (New York and London, 1997); and his 'A Clash of Civilizations?', *Foreign Affairs*, 72 (1993), p.22. I have discussed Huntington's thesis at some length in 'The Crescent in the Pnblic Square', *Islam in America*, 3 (1997), pp.1–7.

21. See, for example, Bernard Lewis, 'Islam in Revolt', *The New Yorker*, 19 November 2001, pp.50–63, and his *What Went Wrong? Western Impact and Middle Eastern Response* (New York, 2002). A review of the latter by Paul Kennedy uncritically espouses the same reductive and determiuistic logic: 'The Real Culture Wars', *New York Times Review of Books* (27 January 2002), p.9. Leaders of the Christian Right in the United States have repeatedly made public statements since September 11 to the effect

that Islam and Muslims are inherently prone to militancy and 'evil': see, for example, the news-report 'Islam is Violent in Nature, Pat Robertson Says', *The New York Times* (23 Febrnary 2002), p.A8; S. Sachs, 'Baptist Pastor Attacks Islam, Inciting Cries of Intolerance', *The New York Times* (15 June 2002), p.A9. Among the more sober analyses of the events of September 11 is that of F. Halliday, *Two Hours that Shook the World – September 11, 2001: Causes and Consequences* (London, 2002), and more broadly, Gilles Kepel, *Jihad: The Trail of Political Islam* (London and Cambridge, MA, 2002). See also generally, K.H. Karim, *Islamic Peril: Media and Global Violence* (Montreal, 2000), which draws attention to the role of civil society in articulating effectively the ethical and hnmanistic dimensions of Islam (p.180).

22. F.G. Gause III, 'Who Lost Middle Eastern Stndies? The Orientalists Strike Back', *Foreign Affairs*, 81 (March/April 2002), pp.164–8, at p.167, reviewing Kramer's *Ivory Towers of Sand: The Failure of Middle Eastern Studies in America* (Washington, DC, 2001).

23. E. Said, 'Scholars, Media, and the Middle East', in G. Viswanathan, ed., *Power, Politics, and Culture: Interviews with Edward Said* (New York, 2001), p.297. See also Said's 'Impossible Histories: Why the many Islams cannot be simplified', *Harper's Magazine*, Jnly 2002, pp. 69–74, on the continuing failure of commentators like Bernard Lewis and Panl Kennedy to come to grips with empirical complexity.

24. Some of the more egregious instances of which are noted in Halliday, *Two Hours that Shook the World*, at pp.104–13.

25. This commonly-cited global figure is in fact only a rough estimate, and probably an underestimate; it is, in any case, reflected in tabnlations in the *2001 Encyclopaedia Britannica Book of the Year* (London, 2001). The authoritative guide to global Muslim ethnic and national spread remains R.V. Weekes, ed., *Muslim Peoples: A World Ethnographic Survey*, vols. 1 and 2; 2nd ed. (Westport, CT, 1984); see especially the charting of ethnic and national groups at pp.882–930.

26. On the attempts by the human development index (HDI) over the years to more accurately reflect performance beyond the traditional 'standard of living' indices, see the methodological notes in the United Nations Development Programme's annual *Human Development Report* (New York and Oxford)

27. See, for example, the discussion in the text below of civic elemeuts in traditioual Muslim society.

28. As acknowledged in connection with Freedom House's (New York) latest report on global democratic trends: see A. Karatnycky, 'The 2001

Freedom House Survey: Muslim Countries and the Democracy Gap', *Journal of Democracy*, 13 (2002), pp.99–112, at pp.95–6.

29. A. Sen, *Development as Freedom* (New York, 1999), pp.87–110.

30. J.K. Galbraith, *The Good Society: The Humane Agenda* (Boston, 1996), p.4.

31. Mardin, 'Civil Society and Islam', pp.289–90; quote at p.290.

32. It is noteworthy that the city of Istanbul at the end of the nineteenth century, then capital of the Muslim world's most powerfnl entity, was sufficiently cosmopolitan as to have a non-Muslim majority population: see A. Maalouf, *In the Name of Identity*, tr. B. Bray (New York, 2000), p.56.

33. See the citations in n.8, above.

34. The classic account of which is the anthology, E. Hobsbawm and T. Ranger, ed., *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge, UK, 1983).

35. The same could be argued until even more recently about the influence of Orthodox Christianity in Europe. See Karatnycky, 'Tbe 2001 Freedom House Survey: Muslim Countries and the Democracy Gap', p.107.

36. B.S. Turner, 'Orientalism and the Problem of Civil Society in Islam', in A. Hussain, R. Olson and J. Qureshi, ed., *Orientalism, Islam, and Islamists* (Brattleboro, VT, 1984), pp.23–42.

37. When Confucius is approached by Zilu for advice about how to serve his prince, the reply is: 'Tell him the truth even if it offends him'. Again, while tact is deemed important, sound action enjoys primacy for Confucius: 'When the state has lost its way, act boldly and speak softly'. See *The Analects of Confucius*, tr. S. Leys (New York, 1997), pp.70, 66.

38. See H. Gerber's trenchant critique in this regard, *Islamic Law and Culture, 1600–1840* (Leiden and Boston, 1999), helpfully encapsulated at pp.144–8 ('Islamic Law, Civil Society, Capitalist Development and Democracy').

39. P. Crone and M. Hinds, *God's Caliph* (Cambridge, UK, 1986), p.94.

40. E. Goldberg, 'Private Goods, Public Wrongs and Civil Society in Some Medieval Arab Theory and Practice', in E. Goldberg, R. Kasaba and J. Migdal, ed., *Rules and Rights in the Middle East* (London and Seattle, 1993), pp.248–71.

41. Ibid., pp.249–50. See generally M. Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam: Conscience and History in a World Civilization* (Chicago and London, 1974), vols 1–3, especially his exploration of the roots of challenge to the 'absolutist tradition' in the 9th–10th centuries (vol. 1, pp.473–96).

42. M. Kamali, *Revolutionary Iran: Civil Society and the State in the Modernization Process* (Aldershot, UK, 1998), p.11.

43. D. Eickelman and J. Anderson, 'Redefining Muslim Publics', in D.E. Eickelman and J.W. Anderson, ed., *New Media in the Muslim World: The Emerging Public Sphere* (Bloomington and Indianapolis, IN, 1999), pp.1–18, at p.12.

44. Ibid., p.16. See also in the same volume, A.R. Norton, 'The New Media, Civic Pluralism, and the Slowly Retreating State', pp.19–28; J. Anderson, 'The Internet and Islam's New Interpreters', pp.41–56; and J. Bowen, 'Legal Reasoning and Public Discourse in Indonesian Islam', pp.80–105. The precise relationship between the public sphere and civil society still appears to be unsettled among scholars. Habermas refers to the 'interplay of a public sphere based in civil society' (*Between Facts and Norms*, p.371), while Taylor sees the public sphere as a 'form' of civil society ('Liberal Politics and the Public Sphere', p.259). Eickelman, on the other hand, in the quoted text, refers to civil society existing within the public sphere. I find the Habermas/Taylor view of an encompassing society more cogent, but more important perhaps is the consensus that the relationship is symbiotic.

45. J. Habermas, *Moral Consciousness and Communicative Action*, tr. C. Lenhardt and S.W. Nicholson (Cambridge, UK, 1992).

46. Ibid., especially pp.58, 68. See also V. Jabri, 'Textualising the Self: Moral Agency in Inter-Cultural Discourse, *Global Society*, 10 (1996), pp.57–68.

47. G. Bunt, *Virtually Islamic* (Cardiff, 2000), p.17.

48. See Y. Haddad, ed., *Muslims in the West: From Sojourners to Citizens* (New York, 2002); K.H. Karim, 'Muslim Encounters with New Media: Towards an Inter-Civilizational Discourse on Globality?', in A. Mohammadi, ed., *Islam Encounters Globalisation: Reaction and Adoption* (London, forthcoming). For a sample of the irreverence of the public sphere toward traditional religions/political hierarchies, across the diaspora-homeland divide, see Michael Lewis, 'The Satellite Subversives', *The New York Times Magazine* (24 February 2002), pp.30–5 (chronicling the rise of a Los Angeles-based satirical television show whose principal audience as well as political targets lie in Iran).

49. M. Berrada, *The Game of Forgetting*, tr. I.J. Boullata (Austin, TX, 1996), p.128; original titled *Lu'bat al-nisyan* (Rabat, 1987).

50. See, for example, A.R. Norton, ed., *Civil Society in the Middle East*, vol.1 (Leiden and New York, 1994) and vol.2 (Leiden and New York, 1996). Even for its time, that fine anthology fell well short of capturing

the welter of media, community and other less formal local and trans-frontier expressions of the public sphere among the particular countries covered.

51. According to Iran's deputy minister of culture and Islamic orientation, over 50 newspapers, including 24 dailies, have officially been shut down since March 2000; the figure does not include the student press: Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty Report, vol. 2:9 (1 March 2002); <http://www.rferl.org/mm/>. In what is perhaps a sign of the times, an Iranian film, Smell of Camphor, Fragrance of Jasmine, has the lead character (played by the director, Bahman Farmanara) voice his frustration at the constraints around him thus: 'When a filmmaker doesn't make films or a writer doesn't write, that is death. I am not afraid of dying. I am afraid of living a futile life.' Farmanara was only able to make the film after a 22-year directorial hiatus. On the other hand, the general vibrancy of the country's film industry is noteworthy: see R. Tapper, The New Irauian Cinema: Politics, Representation and Identity (London, 2002). For Abdolkarim Soroush, 'One of the effects of tyranny (religious or secular) is a loss iu the spirit of art. We need an art-loving God … A mundane, superficial religion leaves little room for art; but it's quite the reverse with mystical religion.' 'Reforming the Revolution', tr. Nilou Mobasser, *Index on Censorship* (London), January 2002, p. 77.

52. Muhibollah Siddiqzoda, speaking in the context of legal as well as economic and political obstacles in Central Asia's battle against narcotics trafficking across the frontier with Afghanistan: quoted in M. Orth, 'Afghauistan's Deadly Habit', *Vanity Fair*, 499 (March 2002), p.150, at p.165.

53. An estimated 3,054 individuals of various nationalities, including some 800 Muslims, died or are missing aud presumed dead from the attacks on that date in New York, Washington and Pennsylvania, together with the 19 hijackers of the planes used in the attacks: see 'Dead aud Missing', *The New York Times* (4 April 2002), p.A11. Many more have perished in the retaliatory aftermath of those attacks, centred on Afghanistan, including an indeterminate number of innoceut civilians. See generally, Halliday, *Two Hours that Shook the World – September 11, 2001*.

54. It is instructive that a leading book on the mixture of Russian, Western and indigenous influences in the new Central Asian cinema by the Kazakh scholar and film-critic, Guluara Abikeyeva, is available only in Russian: *Kino Centralnoi Azii, 1990–2001* (Almaty, 2001).

55. See L. Rzayeva, 'Azerbaijani Intellectuals during the Transition', *Central Eurasian Studies Review*, 1 (2002) pp.13–14. Civil unrest in the

capital region in mid-2002 was also sparked by perceived strictures against expressions of religious orthodoxy, including the wearing of headscarves by students: Konul Khalilova, 'Government struggles to defuse discontent in Baku suburb', *Eurasia Insight*, 18 June 2002: <http://www.eurasianet.org/departments/insight/articles/eavo61302.shtml>.

56. Wherein the political order under civil religion draws comfortably upon faith-traditions, while political religion (in the Kemalist vein) sacralises the political order: see M. Erdogan, 'Islam in Turkish Politics', *Critique – Journal for Critical Studies of the Middle East*, 15 (1999), pp.25–49, at pp.43–8.

57. Ironically, the reverse holds in Middle Eastern countries where NGOs are precluded by legislation from seeking 'political gains', and therefore act under the rubric of 'religious' work such as charity and *da'wa* (missionary activity). See Q. Wiktorowicz and S. Taji-Farouki, 'Islamic NGOs and Muslim Politics: A Case from Jordan', *Third World Quarterly*, 21 (2000), pp.685–99, concluding that the practical result of this circumstance may be to promote 'Islamic values and behaviour' more effectively than formal legal codes can. See also on the situation in Egypt (where religious groups are dominant among some 14,000 NGOs), M. Huband, J. Dempsey and R. Khalaf, 'Middle Eastern NGOs strain at the bonds of authoritarian government'. *The Financial Times* (London, 10 June 1999), p.7.

58. A willingness that appears to extend to the army's entanglements with militancy beyond its borders: Douglas Jehl, 'Pakistan Cutting its Spy Unit's Ties to Some Militants', *The New York Times* (20 February 2002), p.A1. Official moves against militancy in Pakistan's madrasas or religious schools and extremist networks, had in fact begun earlier – with limited success – in apprehension over growing sectarian violence: J. Miller, 'Pakistan Outlines Plans to Curb Militant Networks', *The New York Times* (10 June 2000), p.A6. A noted Indian writer, Pankaj Mishra, remarks that Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf's government has relied on public opinion that is 'overwhelmingly' opposed to extremism – though south of the border, illiberal sentiment 'seems to be finding a home in democratic India: 'Hinduism's Political Resurgence', *The New York Times* (25 February 2002), p.A23. Mishra's comment came before an outbreak of religious violence in India that claimed over 500 (mostly Muslim) lives, stemming from the campaign to build a Hindu temple on the site of the 16th-century Babri Mosque in the northern town of Ayodhya, demolished by zealots in 1992: C.W. Dugger, 'Hindu Justifies Mass Killings Of Muslims in Reprisal Riots', *The New York Times* (5 March 2002), p.A4.

See also the lament in this regard by the Indian writer and policy analyst, Shashi Tharoor, 'India's Past Becomes a Weapon' (Op-Ed article), *The New York Times* (6 March 2002), p.A25.

59. Michael Voss, 'Afghanistan Gets New Press Law', BBC World Service Report (9 February 2002): <http://news.bbc.co.uk/hi/english/world/south_asia/newsid_1810000/1810983.stm>; Kate Clark, 'Magazine gives Afghan women new voice', BBC World Service Report, 6 February 2002: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/hi/english/world/south_asia/newsid_1804000/1804255.stm>. However, media organisations have been critical of aspects of the legislation such as those that curtail non-state-controlled reporting: see <http://www.article19.org/docimages/1321.doc>, and <http://www.article19.org/docimages/1322>.

60. Andrew Solomon, 'An Awakening After the Taliban', *The New York Times*, 10 March 2002, Section 2, pp.1, 20–1 (detailing the energetic revival of painting, music, poetry and cinema in the aftermath of both Soviet and Taliban suppression of artistic freedom, amidst the ruins of post-war Afghanistan).

61. M. Kamrava, 'The Civil Society Discourse in Iran', *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, 28 (2001), pp.165–85, at p.184–5. As such, Kamrava notes, 'the civil society discourse has restored to intellectualdom the social role to which it had long aspired but had forcibly been sidetracked from, namely that of educating and informing the public through its writing and publications' (pp.184–5).

62. A. Etzioni, 'Beyond Transnational Governance', *International Journal*, 56, (2001), pp.595–610, notably at p.597. See more generally, H. Anheier, M. Glasius and M. Kaldor, ed., *Global Civil Society 2001*, (Oxford and New York, 2001); R. Falk, *Religion and Humane Global Governance* (New York and Basingstoke, UK, 2001); H. Kung, *A Global Ethic for Global Politics and Economics* (New York, 1998).