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Isaac Payne 4/18/2011

Secular Muslims and the Tapestry of Islamicate Secularity:

The Strands of a Contested Tradition

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Abstract

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This thesis inquires into Muslim perceptions and conceptions of political secularism in both Western and non-European societies. This study begins with an investigation of secularity in its Western context by writing about the philosophical, sociological, and political aspects of secularism; second, it surveys the case study of Egypt and Egyptian Sunni Muslim formations of political secularism in the 19th-21st centuries, highlighting the important themes of this debate that occur beyond strictly European experiences; third, it examines the writings of Tariq Ramadan and Yusuf al-Qaradawi and explains the most evident, though not the exclusive, characteristics and typologies of secular Muslims and Muslim views of political secularism.

This research asks several distinct questions that I address throughout my thesis. First, given the common references to "secular Islam" and "secular Muslims" in contemporary media sources, I ask: what does it mean to be a secular Muslim? And, similarly, what does being secular imply for how the individual and society define Islam and the role of Islam in that society?

My conclusions based on my research are that in examining the contested issues among political secularists and Islam, one must account for a diverse spectrum of topics that differ from Western discourses on secularism; namely, one must reflect on how these individuals view the *shari'a*, the state, positive law, and the nexus among these in regards to both a "public vision" of Islam and a secular *Weltanschauung.* I submit that Muslim conceptions of political secularism include (not exhaustively): the, at least, partial separation of Islam from the functions of the state and the larger political sphere, the *marginalization*, though not complete separation, of the *shari'a* from the legal structure and legal culture of a secularizing society, the rejection of a "hard" comprehensive Islam (*islam shamil*) as formulated by some "Islamists," and the association of secularism with a rational, autonomous, and universal mind-set.

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Preface

Reflections on Islam in the Maghrib

In the summer of 2010, I studied Arabic at Al-Akhawayn University, which is nestled in the mountains of the resort town of Ifrane, Morocco. Upon my initial arrival, against the interminable fatigue of international travel, I began to make some basic observations of the academic society, which was to be my home for the following eight-weeks. I noticed the typical features of a foreign environment—the unique flora and fauna, the gazes of incredulity concerning my strange, outward appearances—but most importantly, I observed the architecture, which is often a powerful descriptor and representative of the people and the times in which it is constructed.

The kings of Morocco and Saudi Arabia founded Al-Akhawayn, meaning "the two brothers," in 1993, and it was commissioned as an American-style university, similar to institutions in Beirut and Cairo. Though the university is *secular* in most senses of the term—it offers courses focused in commerce and computer science, the instructors teach these classes in English, and religious studies is not even available—the central building of the university is a mosque; it is by far the most outstanding edifice at the school and the most impressive stylistically. In my first morning walk to the campus cafeteria, I was struck by the elegance of this definitively religious construct. Within my first week, I questioned one of the facility workers about the building, and he responded, "Such a wonderful mosque, but where are the Muslims?"

The students on campus wore Western clothes from stores such as *GAP*, which is not traditional Islamic attire by any stretch of the imagination; only a small minority of

women donned the *hijab*, more often by the instructors and facility workers than by the students; the echoes of the call to prayer were conspicuously absent, as opposed to their near ubiquitous presence in most towns that I visited in Morocco; in the halls of the university, I encountered various conversations, primarily conducted in French and in English—the traditional language of Islam, *al-fusha* Arabic, was all but absent from the dialogue among the pupils. Secular lifestyles and worldviews seemed to permeate all aspects of the university. As I delved into my studies and my life there, however, I began to notice signs of religious identity and vitality.

I noticed workers on campus stop their occupations in order to pray the midday prayer (*dhuhr*). I observed students using their prayer rugs in their dorm rooms, and I heard, on numerous occasions, fiery discussions about religion in the local café on campus. Through all of these encounters, I began to comprehend the relevance of the debate about secularism and Islam that is currently taking place in the academy, in various societies, and in political discourses. The central questions, indeed, are: what *is* and what *ought* the role of Islam be in both the private life of the individual and the public spheres of society today? What should Islam's position be in governmental and legislative bodies? To what degree should individuals express or perhaps restrict religious symbols, references, and identities in "secular spaces"? These questions entail not merely religion's role in the official functions of the political sphere, the government and lawmaking institutions, but also the arguably more meaningful sectors of human life: the public sphere, the university, the market and office space, the everyday pulsations of human experience.

The diverse, normative prescriptions concerning the role of religion in society (particularly its politico-legal establishments), the variety of persons impugning secularism and those who advocate its diverse spectrum of principles, and the questions and dilemmas raised through such contestation are not mere theory but rather imbue the relations, interactions, discussions and politics of everyday citizens. In light of the religious, political, and even philosophical importance and relevance of secularism, I argue that this topic stands needing of further academic research. It is my hope that this thesis will address several significant issues regarding secularity and Islam.

The religious studies scholar can approach secularity from a variety of vantage points. This thesis investigates Muslim responses to the phenomenon of *political secularism,* which many individuals broadly categorize as the political separation of church and state, the marginalization of religion from the functions of government, politics in general, and legislation, the privatization of religion, and the limitation of religious symbols and reference in the public sphere. First, I will investigate secularity in its Western context; second, I will explore the case study of Egypt and Egyptian Muslim conceptions of secularity in order to highlight the important themes of this debate that occur beyond strictly European experiences; third, I argue that in the writings of Fouad Zakariyya, Tariq Ramadan and Yusuf al-Qaradawi, one encounters the most evident, though not the exclusive, characteristics and typologies of secular Muslims.

Introduction:

The Secular Significance

The term "secularism" is quickly becoming a facet of a variety of discourses about religion in general and Islam in particular. The debates and disputes relating to secularism, its proponents and dissidents, and secularists' contested relationship(s) with religion are impassioned and diverse. A superficial glance through popular media outlets, such as the *New York Times* or *Time Magazine*, reveals vibrant discussions, which adopt the rhetoric of *secularism*, *secularization,* and phrases such as "secular Muslim" and even "secular Islam."[1] In addition to being a trope in the media, numerous Muslim organizations, Muslim academics, and scholars of Islam are also investigating and employing the language of secularity.

The so-called "Culture Wars" in America—the debates regarding controversial societal topics such as abortion, bioethical issues, and religion—have recently highlighted the discussion on secularism, *qua* separation of religion and state, and Islam.[2] "State Question 755" is one manifestation of these "wars" among political conservatives and the Muslim-American population. Lawmakers passed this measure with seventy-percent of the vote in Oklahoma in 2010, and it sought to ban consideration and consultation of Islamic law by Oklahoma state judges.[3] Though a federal judge blocked this legislation

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[1] Myra MacDonald, "Pakistan and the Taboo of Secularism," *Reuters,* January 7, 2011, http://blogs.reuters.com/pakistan/2011/01/08/pakistan-and-the-taboo-of-secularism/.
Elaine Sciolino, "Debate Begins In France On Religion In The Schools," *New York Times,* February 4, 2004, http://www.nytimes.com/2004/02/04/world/debate-begins-in-france-on-religion-in-the-schools.html.
Robin Wright, "A Quiet Revolution Grows in the Muslim World," *Time Magazine*, accessed April 30, 2011, http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,1886539,00.html.

[2] James D. Hunter, *Culture Wars: The Struggle to Define America* (New York: Basic Books, 1992). Hunter does not, however, discuss these contemporary issues of Islam in this book.

[3] James Jr. McKinley, "Judge Blocks Oklahoma's Ban on Using Shariah in Court," *New York Times*, November 29, 2009, http://www.nytimes.com/2010/11/30/us/30oklahoma.html.

after it was initially passed, several other states have followed suit in attempting to prohibit the tenets of Islamic law (ambiguously defined by those attempting to thwart these tenets) in the U.S. legislative system.[4] The responses of Muslim-Americans to these measures reveal how isolating and potentially discriminating these legislative endeavors are perceived. For example regarding the current debate in Tennessee, Remziya Suleyman, who is a policy coordinator for the Tennessee Immigrant and Refugee Rights Coalition, reacted, saying, "This is an anti-Muslim bill that makes it illegal to be a Muslim in the state of Tennessee."[5] In the same article another Tennessee Muslim, Nadeem Siddiqui, says, "Shariah is how I know how to fast in the month of Ramadan; how I wash before my prayers. It also directs me in how much charity I need to give to the poor. It orders me to be honest and fair in my business dealings."[6] In Siddiqui's response, the obscurity surrounding the multiple definitions of the term *shari'a* is clearly part of the problem that complicates these bills. Are lawmakers attempting to control Siddiqui's ability to perform basic aspects of religious expression, or do they conceive of *shari'a* as a normative and established legal code? I suspect these lawmakers understand it as the latter. Both Muslims, however, believe that this bill unfairly discriminates against them and has the capability of limiting the expression of their faith.

Regardless of the legitimacy of these state proposals, they hit a vital nerve in America's contemporary culture wars, specifically the question: to what extent are religious individuals, particularly Muslims, capable of civilly existing in a society that

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[4] Lucas L. Johnson, "Tennessee Considers Bill That Makes Following The Shariah A Felony," *The Huffington Post*, April 1, 2011 http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2011/03/02/tennessee-considers-bill-following-shariah-felony_n_830101.html.

[5] Ibid.

[6] Ibid.

prides itself on "secular" principles, as expressed in the foundational American legal documents in the Establishment and Free Exercise clauses as well as in the general system of separation of church and state that prevails in the U.S.? More recently the *Park 51* controversy surrounding the establishment of an Islamic center near Ground Zero and Representative Peter King's congressional hearings in March of 2011, which are currently debating the "radicalization" of American-Muslims, highlight one of the central deliberations regarding secularism: the assorted, normative claims on the limits and freedoms of religious groups, particularly religions seen as alien to European roots, and their representations in secular societies. The centrality of secularity is patent in other forums of reflection in American public life.

"The Center for Inquiry," represented by its subsidiary group known as the "Institute for the Secularization of Islamic Society," is an interesting and unique expression of the larger conversations regarding secularism.[7] The Center's website domain—www.secularislam.org—is quite intriguing in and of itself. The title causes the student of religion to ponder: what is secular Islam? What values might it endorse and what types of people declare such a religion? How does secular Islam differ from other "Islams"? Seeking to further public discussion of these issues, the Center for Inquiry held a conference in 2007 entitled, "The Secular Islam Summit," echoing the website name and featuring several of the Center's prominent speakers.[8] The "St. Petersburg Declaration," signed April 5, 2007, is a document posted on this organization's website, which provides a description of this group's constituency, stating, "We are secular Muslims, and secular persons of Muslim societies. We are believers, doubters, and

[7] I would like to thank Richard C. Martin for indicating that this group would be relevant to this study.
[8] YouTube, "Secular Islam Summit Panel 1 Pt2," *YouTube,* March 5, 2007, http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iji1PwOvaqs. See Irshad Manji's speech on this site.

unbelievers, brought together by a great struggle, not between the West and Islam, but between the free and the unfree."[9] These statements raise important questions. What does it mean to be a secular Muslim? Can one be both secular and religious? And, similarly, what does being secular imply for how the individual and society define being religious and the role of religion in that society? The scholars and activists who participated in this group and who signed this document clarify some of these questions. For example, many of the signatures on the declaration are those of so-called "ex"-Muslims, who have left and criticized Islam (Egyptian activist Nonie Darwish for example). Wafa Sultan, an Arab-American psychiatrist, is also among those who signed this document. She has highly criticized Arab society and Islam as well. In an interview in 2006 on *Al-Jazeera*, Sultan stated, "I am not a Christian, a Muslim, or a Jew. I am a *secular* human being. I do not believe in the supernatural, but I respect others' right to believe in it."[10] If we take these non-religious people to represent all "secular Muslims," then this identity simply indicates Muslims who no longer believe in or follow the tenets of Islam; other individuals who signed this document, such as Tawfik Hamid, an Egyptian human rights activist, complicate this simplistic rendering because they consider themselves religious, and they struggle on behalf of what they call a revived or reformed Islam.[11] Given the complexity of "secular" Muslims, this thesis will explore and analyze several of the varieties of ways in which Muslims describe *the secular,* their experiences with secularism, and their understanding of secular Muslims.

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[9] Center for Inquiry, "The St. Petersburg Declaration," April 5, 2007. http://www.centerforinquiry.net/isis/.

[10] YouTube, "Al-Jazeera Wafa Sultan Discussion on Muslim Belief and Clash of Civilizations," *YouTube*, September 9, 2007, http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ISNpOkpcWqg.

[11] Tawfik Hamid, "Islamic Society for Liberty and Modernity," accessed March 31, 2011, islamforpeace.org.

Various 501(C)(3) organizations exist in support of ostensibly secular principles, and many of these groups have stated that their "mission" is to "[Spread] science and secular values," particularly in the "Muslim world."[12] Again, we must ask, what are "secular" principles? *Whose* principles are they, and what role do they play in political and religious life? Other organizations have entered the conversation on secularity's importance and relevancy to modern societies. For example, the "International Humanist and Ethical Union" has posted and supported "A Secular Muslim Manifesto" to its website, which claims to "reassert a living secularism" in the Islamic world.[13] Another interesting group that supports secularism is *Laique Pride*. This association advocates for the establishment of a secular state and society in Lebanon.[14] In April of 2010, around 2,000 members of *LP* marched through Beirut calling for a secular state to be represented by a secular government. One individual, in an interview with *Voice of America*, claims that, "[Secularism] is not against religion, it is not against [Muslims] practicing. Secularism will bring equality between all the Lebanese people."[15] In all of these cases, the scholar of Islam should notice and account for the fact that Muslims are discussing secularity, some are supporting "secular" agendas, and others are vehemently opposing secularism. Whatever the stance, it is a conversation that must not go unnoticed. These debates are certainly not limited to the Western world, as evidenced by the above *Laique Pride* movement and other contemporary events.

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[12] Project Reason, "Secular Islam," accessed March 29, 2011, http://www.project-reason.org/secular_islam/.

[13] International Humanist and Ethical Union, "A Secular Muslim Manifesto," November 17, 2004, http://www.iheu.org/node/1172.

[14] Voice of America News, "Demonstrators Call for a Secular State in Lebanon," April 25, 2010, http://www.voanews.com/english/news/middle-east/Demonstrators-Call-for-Secular-State-in-Lebanon-92050229.html

[15] Ibid.

The assassination of the "secularist" Egyptian thinker Faraj Fuda (1945-1992) highlights the magnitude of the debates on secularity in the Islamic world. Fuda, a publicist and aspiring politician, was a founder of both the *New Wafd Party* and the *al-Mustaqbal Party* in Egypt, both of which attempted to separate their political platforms from religious frameworks and sources.[16] He was highly critical of Islamists' calls to strictly and immediately implement the *shari'a*, or the divine law of Islam, in Egypt. As Meir Hatina writes, "According to Fuda, separating religion from politics would serve the priorities of the regime on the one hand, and at the same time preserve Islam as a cultural and moral component of society and eventually of Egypt's future secular identity."[17] In 1992, several Islamic fundamentalists from the "Islamic Jihad" group murdered Fuda for his support of "secularism" while he was entering his office in Cairo.[18] In the trial for Fuda's murder, a prominent Islamic scholar and member of the Muslim Brotherhood, Muhammad al-Ghazali (d.1996), argued that, "secularization was a capital sin that should be punished by death."[19] Al-Ghazali testified that attempting to separate Islam and the state was "unadulterated *kufr*," which means disbelief, and as such the "secularist" Fuda was an apostate from Islam.[20]

Though al-Ghazali's words have been mired in controversy and dispute, these debates about secularity in the early nineties have resonated into the 2011 revolutions

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[16] Meir Hatina, "On the Margins of Consensus: The Call to Separate Religion and State in Modern Egypt," *Middle Eastern Studies.* Vol. 36, No. 1. (Jan. 2000), 55.

[17] Ibid.

[18] Ibid, 60.

[19] Göran Larsson, "Yusuf al-Qaradawi and Tariq Ramadan on Secularization: Differences and Similarities," in *Muslim Societies and the Challenge of Secularization: An Interdisciplinary Approach,* ed. Gabriele Marranci and Bryan S. Turner (New York: Springer, 2010), 50.

[20] Fauzi M. Najjar, "The Debate on Islam and Secularism in Egypt," *Arab Spring Quarterly* (Spring 1996), 1.

William R. Baker, "Muhammad al-Ghazali," *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Islamic World*. Oxford Islamic Studies Online, Emory University, March 25, 2011, http://www.oxfordislamicstudies.com.proxy.library.emory.edu/article/opr/t236/e0272?_hi=0&_pos=1#match.

throughout the Middle East, particularly in Egypt. Policymakers in Washington apprehensively observe the unfolding upheaval in concern for "secular" rule in Egypt, and some anxious Egyptian citizens are accentuating and employing terms like "secular revolution."[21] Many people are likewise contrasting such secular formations and orientations with the "Islamists" and their agendas, primarily as exemplified by the Muslim Brotherhood.[22] Regardless of the ensuing revolution's stance or direction, secularity is an integral issue within these complex movements. A variety of academics have also scrutinized secularity and its implications.

An assortment of texts analyze and describe secularity, such as the tome, which the philosopher Charles Taylor recently produced in 2007, entitled *A Secular Age*, and Nazik Saba Yared's *Secularism and the Arab World*. One of the persistent problems of Western scholarship regarding *the secular* is that it provides Christian and Western-centered interpretations. Moreover, as Edward Said has written, "One of the major failures of most Arab and Western intellectuals today is that they have accepted without debate or rigorous scrutiny terms like secularism and democracy, as if everyone knew what these words mean."[23] I do *not* argue that Charles Taylor has not "rigorously scrutinized" secularism, but I do claim that many media sources, such as the aforementioned *New York Times*, often use these terms *as if* they had concrete or non-disputed meanings and references. In fact, many commentators in the religious blogosphere and online journals such as Haroon Moghul, a Muslim PhD candidate at

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[21] Khurram Hussain, "A Muslim Revolution in Egypt," *The Immanent Frame: Secularism, Religion, and the Public Sphere* (blog), February 24, 2011, http://blogs.ssrc.org/tif/author/hussaink/.
Michael Slackman, "Islamist Group is Rising Force in New Egypt," *New York Times,* March 24, 2011, http://www.nytimes.com/2011/03/25/world/middleeast/25egypt.html?_r=1&hp.

[22] Slackman, "Islamist Group," 1.

[23] Edward Said, "Dreams and Delusions," *Z Communications*, August 30, 2003, http://www.zcommunications.org/dreams-and-delusions-by-edward-said.

Columbia and writer for the Emory-based *Religion Dispatches*, have argued that extensive use of terms like "secular Islam" is ambiguous at best and even detrimental due to its imprecision. Moghul writes regarding the recent revolution in Tunisia,

> The New York Times' coverage of Tunisia's revolution [expresses] a deep concern for Tunisia's "secularity," a term that vexes me precisely for its imprecision. A secular Muslim society can be one whose government has no religion (in that sense, America is also secular), or it can be one in which religion itself goes mostly ignored (in that sense, America is not secular). The *Times* never really establishes if it means to convey the former, the latter, or both.[24]

This thesis seeks to clarify the "vexing" term secularity and to understand it in its Islamic context. The theories and definitions of secularism described by thinkers such as Taylor stand wanting of more detailed, context-specific examination. Taylor himself admits that his work requires further elaboration in research, which focuses on different religions and societies of the world besides his Western-oriented book.[25] Through investigation into secularity in different socio-political contexts, one can measure non-Western expressions of secularism, which differ among themselves, against the experiences of the West. Thus another aim of this thesis is to continue the examination into the "Islamic" experience with secularism by investigating both advocates and critics of secular movements, people, and ideals.

I have mentioned these different groups and writings for a specific purpose: to demonstrate the growing public concern for the components and ramifications of secularism. This is an effervescent debate, and it is one that, by its very nature, scholars of religion cannot—and should not—avoid. Indeed, Göran Larsson has written, "How to

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[24] Haroon Moghul, "Secular Good, Muslim Bad: Unveiling Tunisia's Revolution," *Religion Dispatches* (blog), January 15, 2011 http://www.religiondispatches.org/dispatches/guest_bloggers/4052/secular_good%2C_muslim_bad%3A_unveiling_tunisia%E2%80%99s_revolution/.

[25] Charles Taylor, *A Secular Age* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University, 2007), 21-22.

define and understand secularization and secularism is without question one of the most important issues in the modern study of religion."[26] I situate my research with other works that attempt to clarify the terms *secularism, secularization,* and *secularity*, particularly in relation to Islam, and this thesis adds to the current knowledge about secularity in a variety of ways.

First, I think that scholars like Taylor have provided unique and substantial analyses of secularism regarding the "conditions of belief," which they contend have led to the flourishing of the current state of secularity in the West.[27] As I previously mentioned, though, theoretical writings about our "Secular Age" need to be grounded and placed in perspective by observation of specific writings by Muslims about secularism. In this thesis, I focus on two paradigmatic Muslim thinkers, Tariq Ramadan and Yusuf al-Qaradawi, while delving into the larger discourses and implications within which I believe these intellectuals are operating. While focusing on secularism from the perspective of Muslim intellectuals, I also delve into their thoughts on philosophical and sociological secularity, attempting to provide a more complete picture for understanding "Islamicate" experiences with secularity.[28] To my knowledge, no works to date have sought to juxtapose Western expressions of secularity with a historical, Muslim-state case study, while also exploring the relevant works of important Muslim intellectuals from within this case study.

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[26] Larsson, "Yusuf al-Qaradawi and Tariq Ramadan," 48.
[27] Taylor, *A Secular Age*, 3-7. In Taylor's work, he develops the currents of culture, politics, philosophy, and theology, which he believes allowed for the condition of secularity to arise in the "Western" world,
[28] Marshall Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974), 3-7. The term "Islamicate" separates Islam as a religion from the cultural and societal products of predominantly Muslim cultures. I say Islamicate, rather than *Islamic* proper, because I am exploring Muslims' historical and contemporary positions regarding secularity, as opposed to exploring *strictly* the position or compatibility of Islam and secularity.

Second, as Larsson has also written, the study of the so-called "secular Muslims" has largely been neglected in academic works on Islam. I ask: what does it mean to be a "secular" Muslim? What do Muslims regard as secular views, secular lifestyles, and secular societies? While many articles and books assume definitions of secularism, I explore these definitions while also highlighting the characteristics that Muslims describe as secular or as pertaining to secularism by examining particular works and then moving to larger, analytical concepts to facilitate discussion about secular Muslims. Michi Knecht and Joerg Feuchter have written, "The secular is until recently a virtually unquestioned category in the studies on religion."[29] My thesis contributes to the understanding of this category by seeking to find answers to the questions which the eminent anthropologist Talal Asad asks: "How, when, and by whom are the categories of religion and the secular defined?"[30] In looking to Egyptian Muslims of the 19th-21st centuries, we will provide answers, in a few particular contexts, to these questions posed by Asad.

Third, another setback of contemporary literature that analyzes *the secular* is that it often focuses on narrow and "hard" definitions of political secularism as a foundation for the modern state.[31] For example, Hussein Ali Agrama's recent article "Secularism, Sovereignty, and Indeterminacy," equates secularism, wholly, with the power of the

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[29] Heike Bock Joerg Feuchter, and Michi Knecht eds, Introduction to *Religion and Its Other: Secular and Sacral Concepts in Interaction* (Frankfurt and New York: Campus Verlag, 2008), 9.
[30] Talal Asad, *Formations of the Secular* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003), 201.
[31] Nazik Saba Yared, *Secularism and the Arab World* (London: Saqi Books, 2002). She frames secularism as a "hard" denial of the supernatural. She also defines it as *exclusively* a Western formation, and she conflates *political* and *philosophical secularism*. Though related, these need to be kept analytically separate, as I will argue.
Hussein Ali Agrama's, "Secularism, Sovereignty, and Indeterminacy," *Comperative Studies in Society and History*, vol. 52, no. 3 (2010), 495-523.
While an insightful work, he also does not make this distinction.

modern state to shape, mold, and define religion.[32] Given the complexity and plurality of secularism(s) as both political and philosophical ideologies, we must explore the rich tapestry of secularity, which includes much more than the relationship of religion to the modern state. These secularism(s) involve the larger political sphere, epistemological and ethical claims, and noteworthy definitions and conceptions of religion by states and *individual thinkers* (both believers and non-believers). I view secularity as a tapestry that must be analyzed in terms of the interrelated aspects of politics, philosophy, and religion. This is another way that I provide a fuller knowledge of secular Muslims and Islamicate experiences with secularity.

To gain an understanding of secular Muslims, I follow the model described by Charles Taylor in his book *Sources of the Self*. Taylor's construction supports a vision of identity that does not essentialize the "self" in an "either/or" manner. He claims that humans are "selves" only in so far as they know where they *stand* on certain issues.[33] He expands on this notion when he argues that an individual's commitments and relations to issues and others in the world define the *framework* in which one identifies the "self." One determines that which is valuable, that which is worthy and admirable, as well as what *ought* to be, in terms of this "horizon" or framework. These frameworks (Muslim, Catholic, mother, father, anarchist, Republican, socialist, etc.) are "moral compasses," through which individuals come to conclusions about a variety of issues.[34] In Taylor's approach to identity, people can sustain multiple and even conflicting frameworks. This complexity emphasizes the untidy nature of understanding how humans conceive of the

[32] Asad, *Formations of the Secular,* 201.
[33] Charles Taylor, *Sources of the Self*: *The Making of Modern Identity* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989), 27.
[34] Taylor, *Sources of the Self,* 26-28.

"self." In developing a sufficiently complex analysis of the characteristics of secular Muslims and their support for secularism, I believe it is necessary to observe where a variety of Muslims "stand" on the issue of secularity. In this light, the two primary research questions that drive this thesis are: 1) What are the existing and overarching trends in Muslim discussions and understanding of secularity and 2) Are these trends susceptible to analytically clear and substantive ways of comprehending and discussing the various characteristics describing "secular" Muslims and their conceptions of political secularism?

In making these observations, the justifications and arguments against or in support of secularity provide insight into how to conceive of secular Muslims and Muslim perceptions of secularity. It is also important to ask and find responses to the questions: can these two *potentially* conflicting frameworks, the secular and the Islamic, coexist? Or are they mutually exclusive, as some conservative Muslims claim? I admit here that the formation of religious identity proposed by Taylor eschews strictly reductionist models, which promote essentialist understandings of the human "self," and we shall later see how some conservative Muslims support reading religion as a totalizing or comprehensive identity that renders the very idea of secular Muslims paradoxical and perhaps impossible.

For this thesis, I will focus my analyses on Muslim responses to political secularism. In such an endeavor, I do not aim to establish *the exclusive* Islamic view or attitude toward secularity, but rather, as Andrew March has written, to discover, "Islamic attitudes towards secularism *as manifested in particular discourses that are important to*

follow."[35] While highlighting and allocating space to other forms of secularism, particularly sociological and philosophical, I propose to restrict the scope of my thesis to finding and analyzing where Muslims "stand" in relation to elements which fall under the category of political secularism. The substance of my thesis follows.

First, there are three important strands to understanding what I shall call the tapestry of Islamicate secularity, though I do not contend that these are necessarily exhaustive.[36] In Chapter One, I argue that secularity can be understood in three primary ways. First, there is the sociological strand of the tapestry, which describes the straightforward decline of religious belief and practice, as well as the marginalization of religion from the societal and individual consciousness; second, there is political secularism as the separation of the political and religious spheres and the differentiation of autonomous social systems, such as the state, from religious authority; third, there is philosophical secularism, which encompasses theories of truth and epistemologies that support the autonomy of human reason from the constraints of religious influence and that asserts diverse ethics that are not necessarily grounded in religious sensibilities. In Chapter Two, I establish that political secularism for Muslims entails novel ways of conceiving the *shari'a*, the state, positive law, and the nexus among all three of these categories in supporting a "public vision" of Islam. In relation to political secularism, I argue in Chapter Three that Tariq Ramadan represents the typology of a *soft political secularist*, while he denies a strictly *secular comprehensivist* identity. Rather, he

[35] Andrew F. March, "Are Secularism and Neutrality Attractive to Religious Minorities? Islamic Discussions of Western Secularism in the 'Jurisprudence of Muslims Minorities' (Fiqh al-Aqalliyyat) Discourse," *Cardozo Law Review,* vol. 30, no. 6 (2009): 2827

[36] Richard C. Martin, "Hidden Bodies in Islam: Secular Muslim Identities in Modern (and Premodern) Societies," in *Muslim Societies and the Challenge of Secularization: An Interdisciplinary Approach*, ed. Gabriele Marranci and Bryan S. Turner (New York: Springer, 2010), 136.
I am indebted to Richard C. Martin's use of the "tapestry" metaphor in his "Hidden Bodies" essay as a structural devise in this thesis.

illustrates a *comprehensive authoritarian* perspective. I submit in Chapter Four that Yusuf al-Qaradawi, though likewise a *comprehensive authoritarian,* differs from Ramadan because he advocates a *soft political perfectionist* perspective. I argue that both of these intellectuals depend on justifications from within philosophical secularism (Ramadan bases his claims in support of some of these secular principles, while al-Qaradawi defines his stance in opposition to these secular premises) in order to bolster their respective positions. Finally, I argue that all of these descriptions of secularism ought to be contextualized within larger politico-religious discussions if the scholar is to come to a nuanced understanding of the meaning and implications of what being a secular Muslim entails.

The tapestry metaphor is apt at describing the complexity and rich variety of literature and thought surrounding these issues. In looking at three significant strands of this tapestry—the sociological, the political, and the philosophical—I will address the interconnections and intricacies of these strands. I propose that in focusing on one thread, the political, we will discover multifaceted "fibers" within this strand, which provide the foundational assumptions of each individual's views on political secularism. Let us now turn to secularity as it has been historically envisioned and experienced in the West.

Chapter One

Foundations of the Temple of Free Thought

Conceptualizing the Secular, Secularism, Secularization, and Secularity

This is the spirit in which we have wrought,
To build our little Temple of Freethought,
And mere Humanity, to us divine,
Above the deity of any shrine
—James Thomson[37]

We begin this analysis with an explanation of the terms *secular, secularism*, *secularization,* and *secularity*. It is my goal that this preliminary discussion will circumvent many of the ambiguities described in the Introduction by Edward Said and Haroon Moghul. I will argue that secularity can be understood sociologically, politically, and philosophically, and that in turn secular persons can be conceptualized in this manner. Additionally, I claim that rather than limiting secularity to a distinctive doctrine developed in one particular society or historical context, the scholar should investigate the prominent intellectual trends that create the tapestry, or Temple as described in the short poem above, of secularity. In short, I will demonstrate that these secularist "trends" consists of: (the philosophical) promotion of human epistemological independence and free-thought, emphasis on a morality separate from any one particular religion, (the sociological) this-worldly orientations and the marginalization of religion in one's life, and (the political) novel conceptions of religion and the citizen that are developed vis-à-vis a new, emergent entity, the "state." In this endeavor, I will first explore the etymological history of the adjective "secular." Second, I will discuss the ideological-

[37] James Thomson, "Address on the Opening of the New Hall of the Leicester Secular Society," in *The City of Dreadful Night*, ed. Bertram Dobell (London: Reeves & Turner, 1895), 103. This poem was recited at the opening of Secular Hall in Leicester, England, which is the home of the Leicester Secularist Society, in the late 19th century.

ization of *the secular* as it transforms into an expression of ideas concerning the "self" and the state in the form of secularism. Third, I will discuss secularization as a historical process and social scientific theory in the context of the modernizing, centralizing states in European societies post the signing of the 1648 Treaty of Westphalia, which ended the bloodshed of the Thirty Years' War and catalyzed the rise of modern states.[38] Through these descriptions, I will specify political secularism, its multiple and contested characteristics, so that the remainder of these chapters will speak perspicaciously to Muslim experiences with secularity.

Nader Hashemi best summarizes the difficulty in understanding these terms when he writes,

> What does the word "secularism" actually mean? What values does it promote and what problems does it seek to resolve? Does secularism imply anticlericalism, atheism, disestablishment, state neutrality and equidistance toward all religions, the rejection of religious symbols in the public sphere, the separation of the public and private spheres, the complete separation of religion from politics, or more narrowly the separation of the institutions of the state from the influence of religion?[39]

Secularism is a multivalent term, which is open to multiple levels of analysis and interpretation. In this regard, one cannot understand secularism effectively if it is addressed as a monolithic position or *Weltanschauung*.

In order to comprehend secularism, its root-word "secular" deserves examination. In observing the history of this term, we shall see that it, too, is multivalent and complex. Political theorist John Keane writes that while secularism is a "child" of the mid 19th-

[38] Dan Philpott, "Sovereignty," *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Summer 2010), ed. Edward N. Zalta, http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/sovereignty/.

[39] Nader Hashemi, *Islam, Secularism, and Liberal Democracy* (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 104.

century, *the secular* is a concept that is "far older."[40] In the *New Dictionary of Ideas*, Nikki Keddie, following many scholars, writes that the word secular is derived from the Latin *saeculum*, meaning "a generation or age." In this early framework, *the secular* signified Christian clergy, who did not belong to a monastic order or follow specific monastic rules.[41] In this sense, a religious context defined *the secular*, and it specified a particular way of being a priest, a particular type of religious life. Secular clergy were, though stories abound of the lascivious and unscrupulous lifestyles of many "men of the cloth," at least nominally religious or pious persons, and so this original meaning complicates modern understandings of the term. The fact that *the secular* was affiliated and associated with a typology of the Catholic clergy points to the complex nature of these categories (*the secular* and the religious, which are often described and used as polarities). For those who propose interpreting *the secular* as forthrightly non-religious or perhaps even anti-religious, this formative environment clearly works against such a formulation. Keddi writes that a secondary meaning is "of the worldly realm," which expands the meaning of *the secular.*

In describing the attribute "of this world," the secular operates adjectivally as, perhaps mundanely, that which is not definitively religious or is not defined by religious sensibilities. In this particular understanding, *the secular* stands in contrast to what scholars of religion such as Mircea Eliade and Emile Durkheim have labeled "the sacred."[42] Thus to be secular also meant to occupy one's time and life with concerns,

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[40] John Keane, "The Limits of Secularism," in *Islam and Secularism in the Middle East*, eds. Azzam Tamimi and John Esposito (London: Hurst & Company, 2000), 29.

[41] Nikki R. Keddie, "Secularization and Secularism," *New Dictionary of the History of Ideas*, ed. Maryanne Horowitz, vol. 5. (Detroit: Charles Scribner's Sons, 2005), 2194-2197.

[42] "Secular Adjective," *Oxford Dictionary of English*. ed. Angus Stevenson, (Oxford University Press, 2010), Oxford Reference Online. Emory University. 4 February 2011 http://www.oxfordreference.com/views/ENTRY.html?subview=Main&entry=t140.e0748660.

issues, or activities that were not grounded in religious frameworks. Complicating this perspective, Gary Laderman writes in his book *Sacred Matters* that there are many presumably secular activities and areas of "mundane" life, which in reality are grounded in religious dimensions, commitments, and even rituals.[43] Examples of such activities include music, science, sports, and other aspects of everyday human life; these are objects or activities that most people consider secular by their very nature. Of course the degree to which these activities can be called "secular," "sacred," or even "religious" assumes an operative definition of religion, a matter of dispute in the academic study of religion, but Laderman's analysis of the secular as the mundane or, as Durkheim claimed, the "profane," is important for any explanation of *the secular.*

In this meaning, *the secular* is that which is not imbued with overt or explicit religious significance or meaning. This is not to equate or conflate "the secular" with the "profane," but rather to indicate that both share similar characteristics as being conceived of as "the other" to religion, its opposite or, potentially more maliciously, its antithesis.[44] It is equally important to note that this meaning could merely imply *dispassion* and indifference toward religion, or it could indicate an *impassioned* attack on religion and its institutions. The attack on religion is a configuration of *the secular* that is often attached with Enlightenment critiques of the Christian clergy and the Church, but it should not be equated as the comprehensive definition of the term.[45]

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[43] Gary Laderman, *Sacred Matters*, (New York, London: New Press, 2009), XVI.
[44] Heike Bock, Joerg Feuchter, and Michi Knecht eds, Introduction to *Religion and Its Other*, 9.
[45] Here I do not aim to essentialize the Enlightenment as *holistically* opposed to religion. Such essentialization misreads Enlightenment thinkers, as some desired to reform their religion.

Elaborating on this notion of *the secular,* the word also implied, "to be oriented toward this age."[46] In this perspective, to be secular was tantamount to orienting oneself to *this world*, *this age*; the secular person—aside from the priest-definition or the secular's meaning as a category of events or objects that lack explicit religious significance—was someone for whom the questions of this world reigned supreme: science, the arts, mathematics. These secular people (some of whom were devout, others of whom were not) preferred this-worldly exploration and investigation to the questions of theology, or at least to what theology had to teach about the world. These people often marginalized the questions of the afterlife and the divine to the secular, the scientific and worldly inquires of life. In looking at the etymological foundations of *the secular*, these three meanings have unquestionably influenced the prominent perspectives of this word. Several intellectual movements have re-conceptualized these perceptions of *the secular* in a variety of contexts.

Political, religious, and scientific events during and after the 14th-21st centuries have re-conceptualized *the secular* into a larger analytical category, and in this meaning *the secular* should be, as Talal Asad argues, "Not conceived merely as what is left after the retreat or vanishing of religion, but as a much more specific 'configuration' of ideas and actions, a conception of the world as social and natural, a political and experience-based constellation that generates specific social formations, forms of selfhood, and ethical sensibilities."[47] In Asad's statement, we have departed the world of secular-as-

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[46]Mehrzad Boroujerdi, "Can Islam be Secularized?," in *In Transition: Essays on Culture and Identity in the Middle Eastern Society*, ed. M.R. Ghanoonparvar and Faridoun Forrokh (Laredo, TX: Texas A&M University, 1994), 55.

[47] Talal Asad, "Religion, Nation-State, Secularism," in *Nation and Religion: Perspectives on Europe and Asia*, eds. Peter van der Veer and Hartmut Lehmann, (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1999), 178-196.

type-of-priest, secular-as-mundane-life, and secular-as-opposed-to-religion definitions and moved to deeper waters and structures of *the secular*; it is a category that entails novel ways of understanding one's life, completely different conceptions of the goals, aims, and structures of society. It is this sense of *the secular*, as a category or "condition" in which humans live, which characterizes how modern scholars approach it. This is the sentiment and meaning about which the Canadian philosopher Charles Taylor writes in his *A Secular Age*, when he claims, "A secular age concerns much more than the question of church–state separation….It is really more about the question of the modern self."[48] Though my thesis will not directly engage the question of the "secular self" *contra* the "religious self" or any other philosophical conception of the "self," I will use Taylor's conception of "secularity" throughout the rest of this thesis to denote a category that encompasses all the loaded and admittedly imperfect phrases: *the secular,* secularization, and secularism. In this manner, I write heuristically of encounters with "secularity" as a general grouping. In order to understand this shift in the narrative of *the secular*, one must investigate its ideological-*ization*, which implies a study of the political and religious cultures of the 14th-21st centuries.

Many scholars agree that secularism, in terms of its Western origins, is an ideology that developed in the 19th century that involves both an emphasis on this-worldliness in contrast to other-worldliness—as represented in the focus of theological arguments or contemplation of the divine—as well as a general separation of church and state. Keddie writes, "Secularism involves a belief in the priority of this-worldly considerations, and an end to religious doctrinal influence on law, education and welfare,

[48] Taylor, *A Secular Age*, 3.

and the need for equal treatment of various beliefs and believers."[49] Though this thesis challenges her notion that secularism necessitates a definitive "end" to religion's influence in society, her description of the shift of significance and scope of the term secularism from *the secular* is quite important; *the secular*, *qua* secularism, generates a system of beliefs capable of sustaining theories of self, society, and government. In attempting to locate the historical processes that developed secularism, there are a variety of intellectual influences that must be taken into account. I agree with John Keane when he writes that the roots of this ideology are prolific and spread across many thinkers and time periods. The works of the aforementioned Yared and Asad elucidate Keddie's description of secularism.

Nazik Saba Yared characterizes the Western formation of secularism as a "refusal" to believe in external or supernatural forces as governing agents in either history or nature; she further writes that it is an ideology that "refuses" to allow religion to guide humanity in relation to political, social, educational, moral, economic, or other temporal or intellectual matters.[50] We should not, however, view secularism in this totalizing manner, particularly in requiring a *complete refusal* of religious guidance. This interpretation of secularism is steeped in the critiques of religion as superstitious and irrational proposed by some Enlightenment philosophers, and we shall encounter these critiques later in this chapter. In this definition, however, she points to another significant detail of secularism, namely that it is *ideological*. Secularism in Yared's explanation is ideological in so far as it takes on the collective definition of beliefs or ideas that express

[49] Keddie, "Secularization and Secularism," 2194.
[50] Yared, *Secularism,* 9.

the "interests and aspirations" of a people, society, or government.[51] This secular ideology governs normative frameworks through which individual persons, in the micro, or institutional legislative governments, in the macro, make decisions regarding the role of religion in their personal lives and larger societies. Framing secularism as a foundational philosophy for both life and government, there are potential comparisons among secularism and the 19th-20th century movements of Fascism, Marxism, and Communism.[52] Yared states that this ideology did not become influential in the Arab world until the 19th century, though I will address this claim in Chapter Two by dealing with the authenticity of secular principles in Islamicate societies.

Talal Asad has traced the roots of the term secularism to various 19th-century freethinkers in Northwestern Europe who introduced the idea to circumvent the label of atheism. Specifically, Asad claims that George Jacob Holyoake (d. 1906), an English activist and social reformer, developed this term in his book *The Principles of Secularism*.[53] In this work, Holyoake asserts that secularism is, "The study of promoting human welfare by material means…Secularism relates to the present existence of man, and to action, the issues of which can be tested by the experience of this life…[it supports] the ground of common unity for all who would regulate life by reason and ennoble it by service.[54] In his explanation, he emphasizes what Keddie has described as

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[51] "Ideology,"*World Encyclopedia*. (Oxford University Press, 2008), Oxford Reference Online,. Emory University, 5 February 2011, http://www.oxfordreference.com/views/ENTRY.html?subview=Main&entry=t142.e5668.

[52] Paul Froese, "I am an Atheist and a Muslim: Islam, Communism, and Ideological Competition," *Journal of Church & State*, v. 7 no 3 (Summer 2005), 473-501.
In this article, Froese explores the militant atheism and the Soviet Empire's extreme support for secularism in both its society and specifically in its government. I do *not* claim that each of these movements dealt with secularism in the same way. Likewise, if one desires to explore these connections, one ought to view them in relation to specific thinkers of specific countries to present them with their requisite sophistication.

[53] Hashemi, *Islam, Secularism, and Liberal Democracy*, 104-106.

[54]George Jacob Holyoake, *The Principles of Secularism*, 3rd ed. rev. (London: Austin, 1870), 11.

"worldly-focus" in his reference to "the present existence of man," as well as his insistence on empirically testing and improving society by reference to this life only, without dependence on theological considerations of the next life or God. This assertion draws on the definition of *the secular* as being oriented toward this age, particularly as seen in Keddie's explanation of the priority of "this-worldly considerations." In his other writings, he distinguishes secularism's principles from those of straightforward atheism, and this is a significant point that is frequently ignored by those persons who castigate secularism and secularists as denying fundamental religious principles. As the first intellectual to explicitly articulate a theory of secularism, Holyoake is an important but often overlooked figure in analyses on the historical development of secularism, and his debates with other theorists of secularity illuminate contemporary debates. His thought warrants the student of secularity's attention.

Holyoake's other literary works expand upon his notion of *the secular.* In 1881 he gave a speech at the opening of the "Secular Hall" in Leicester, England. Interestingly, this building is the home of the purported first secular society in the world: the Leicester Secular Society.[55] In this speech, the first and most emphatic secular principle that he explains is "Freethought."[56] He says, "Thought is that which makes the difference between the wise man and the fool. If we did not think, we should all be fools. And if thought were not free, there could be no improvement, and, therefore, no progress."[57] Holyoake continues, "Limited thought, such as the theologians permit, is but as the yellow flames we see now in the street. Freethought is the electric, ever-accumulating

[55] "Leicester Secular Society," last modified March 23, 2010, http://www.leicestersecularsociety.org.uk/secularhall.htm.
[56] George Jacob Holyoake, *Secularism: A Religion Which Gives Heaven No Trouble* (London: Watts & Co., 1882), 4.
[57] Holyoake, *Secularism: A Religion,* 4.

light of the human mind."[58] This promotion of free-thought is a recurring theme throughout his speech, and he stresses the contrast between the permissibility of freethinking allowed by the secularists with the restriction of freethinking that conservative theologians impose. He goes on to write, "[Secularists] care nothing for those who say that doubt is wicked or that thought is sin." Overall, he emphasizes that secularists value critical inquiry, free-thought, and a healthy skepticism.

It is significant to note that many of Holyoake's speeches and writings were in direct support for the English Parliament's attempt to establish a nationalized, secular education system. Many of those who opposed strictly secular education drew strength from the religious arguments of conservative priests and bishops, who claimed that to separate Christianity from education would necessarily result in an immoral society; analogously, conservative Muslim thinkers utilize a similar form of reasoning, which will become apparent in Chapter Four on Yusuf al-Qaradawi.[59] In Holyoake's explanation, he argues that society's education and ability to progress would be directly correlated with its emancipation from the confines of the parochial mindset of the clergy.[60] His treatment of secularism is also critical of the authorial claims of the Church.

Holyoake clarifies, "…The Churches administer a system of Foreign Affairs. Their concern is with another world. Theology is all 'abroad.' Secularism is the Home Rule of this world." Further research is required to discover if he advocated for a secularization of Christianity or simply the preference and priority of a co-existing

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[58] Ibid, 6

[59] Crispian Balmer, "Don't preach to us, Hamas tells the secular West," *Reuters,* October 28, 2010, http://uk.reuters.com/article/2010/10/28/uk-palestinians-hamas-interview-idUKTRE69R21120101028.
In this article, Hamas strategist Mahmoud Al-Zahar argues that since the West is not religious and has largely separated religious ethics from society, it has allowed grave iniquities, such as homosexuality and sexual promiscuity, to run rampant.

[60] Holyake, *Secularism: A Religion,* 6-10.

secular philosophy of life.[61] Regardless, worldly concentration, or at least a general apathy for other worldly contemplation, is a strong motif that recurs throughout his speech, as we have also seen in Holyoake's *The Principles of Secularism* and in the earlier definitions of *the secular*. He states that because theologians are only engrossed with the questions of the next life, they should not attempt to restrict human knowledge of this world, this life. He describes secularism as the "new religion of self help," whereby people focus on claims that are strictly testable in human experience, rather than on the questions of the soul or theology.[62] Regarding the secular lifestyle, he states, "Science and Utilitarian Morality are Kings in that country, and rule by right of conquest over Error and Superstition."[63] While these statements might seem to reflect an unbridled antagonism towards the clergy in particular and perhaps religion in general, Holyoake qualifies this potential animosity in other works.

He takes great care to separate his secular principles from pure atheism and antagonism towards religion. In "Secularism, Skepticism, and Atheism," which is a verbatim transcript of a debate between Holyoake and Charles Bradlaugh, both of whom were two of the most prominent figures of this free-thought movement in England, Holyoake claims, "That materialism, not atheism, is the truth at the bottom of secularism is what I, in this debate, undertook to show."[64] The essence of his materialism is that humans should propose solutions to the problems of this world through methods that are substantiated with the materials and rationality of "this life," not on abstract claims about

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[61] One possible meaning of this secularization would be to render religion less focused on theological debates of the "other-world" and more centered on this-life.
[62] Holyoake *A Religion,* 11.
[63] Ibid, 8.
[64] George Jacob Holyoake, *Secularism, Skepticism, and Atheism: A Verbatim Report of a Two Nights' Public Debate Between Messrs. G.J. Holyoake and C. Bradlaugh,* ed. George J. Holyoake and Charles Bradlaugh, (London: Austin & Co., 17, Johnson's Court, Fleet Street, E.C., 1870), III.

God, gods, or the next life. Throughout this debate, Holyoake reiterates that what he is championing is the case for free-thought and the right of every individual's consciousness to be liberated from the restrictive limits imposed by some Christian clergy. In distinguishing his position from that of his opponent's, Holyoake writes, "[Bradlaugh] takes the view of Dr. Magee, the Bishop of Peterboro, who holds that the secular is atheistic. I hold the opinion of Dr. Thirlwall, Bishop of St. David's, that the secular is not even irreligious."[65] Holyoake says that he deplores both atheism and theism because their subject—the existence of God—is based upon speculative and unknowable propositions, which can, "never be made the basis of a Secular philosophy of life, which is limited by time and regulated by human experience."[66] From these passages, secularism bolsters the strength and position of human reason and the possibility for secular moralities and ethics.

Holyoake explicitly mentions materialism, science, and utilitarian morality as the "kings" of the secular philosophy. In these terms, he indicates that humans need to work to solve the problems of this life by methods of human rationality and ethics that are not based on divine mandates, religious texts, or theological conceptions of the world. Though the extent to which Holyoake can be described as a utilitarian is debatable, his focus on establishing criteria for ethics that are not based on divine authority certainly resonates with utilitarian norms. Jeremy Bentham (d. 1832) and John Stuart Mill (d. 1873) developed and argued the major tents of utilitarian ethics.[67] In short, "Their basic idea is that it is *human welfare* or *happiness* that alone is intrinsically valuable and that the rightness or wrongness of actions depends entirely on how they affect human welfare

[65] Holyoake, *Secularism, Skepticism, Atheism,* V.
[66] Ibid, 43.
[67] Mark Timmons, *Disputed Moral Issues* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 7.

and happiness."[68] Though there are different articulations of utilitarian moral theories, its significance for philosophical secularity is that it opens up an ethics that need not be dictated in religious terminology, founded upon religious texts, or understood *exclusively* through reliance on the divine. In this sense, utilitarian ethics allow secular humans to understand ethics outside of *divine command theory*, which ethicist Mark Timmons summarizes as "What is right or wrong depends on God's commands in the sense that what *makes* an action right or wrong are mere facts about God's commands, nothing more."[69] The root of Holyoake's notion of materialism and utilitarianism is that his secular philosophy does not require knowledge of the divine. As I have asserted in the Introduction, I do not propose to restrict secularism as an ideology that is limited to any one individual's writings and conceptions; rather, I believe that to comprehensively grasp the statements advanced by Holyoake, one must search and reach further into the intellectual foundations of Europe's past.

John Keane has described secularism as an ideology that has "intellectual roots [that] run deep."[70] One historical trend that Keane believes is important to modern secularism is the divisive battles between the early and medieval kings and the Pope over who ruled supreme in the world of politics. He observes that the tension between temporal and spiritual power, for modern European civilization, seems to have an origin in the conversion by the Roman Emperor Constantine to Christianity in the 4th-century CE.[71] Keane writes that the strain between the power-claims of the Pope and various worldly authorities over both the temporal as well as the spiritual realms expanded in the

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[68] Timmons, *Disputed Moral Theories,* 7.
[69] Ibid, 33.
[70] John Keane, "Secularism?" in *Religion and Democracy,* eds. David Marquand and Ronald L. Nettler (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2000), 6.
[71] Keane, "The Limits of Secularism," 29.

14th century with the papal conflicts with intellectuals like John Wycliffe and William of Ockham.[72] Wycliffe and Ockham attempted to distinguish in their writings between political and legal institutions that were "civil, lay, and temporal…from others that were clearly religious or spiritual."[73] Other scholars point to earlier quarrels between the Holy Roman Emperor and the Pope as evidence of this conflict as well.[74] There are, however, other roots and foundations of secularism that do not merely reflect the struggle between the Catholic Church and temporal rulers.

Talal Asad argues that the "genealogy of secularism" must be traced back to "the Renaissance doctrine of humanism, the Enlightenment concept of nature, and in part to Hegel's philosophy of history."[75] Asad writes that Hegel (1770-1831) was himself an early proponent of the secularization thesis, which will be discussed in the next section on secularization. Hegel writes in his *The Philosophy of History* that in the transition from Reformation to Enlightenment to Revolution, the philosopher encounters the struggle of, "the recognition of the Secular as capable of being an embodiment of Truth; where it had been formerly regarded as evil only, as incapable of Good—the latter being essentially ultramundane."[76] In Hegel's thought, the world was in the process of reaching the "modern period," wherein truth could be sought (and found) outside the confines of theological discourse or conceptions of Truth. Hegel's description of this transition to the modern period strongly resonates with Holyoake's emphasis that humans ought to seek solutions to the problems of this life via a rationality that is not limited by theological

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[72] Nader Hashemi, *Islam, Secularism, and Liberal Democracy*, 107.
[73] John Keane, "Limits of Secularism," 30.
[74] Ursula Goldenbaum, "Sovereignty and Obedience," in *The Oxford Handbook of Philosophy in Early Modern Europe*, eds. Desmond M. Clark and Catherine Wilson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 501-502.
[75] Talal Asad, "Secularism, Nation-State, Religion," 193.
[76] G.F.W. Hegel, *The Philosophy of History* (Buffalo, NY: Prometheus Books, 1991), trasn. J. Sibree, 422. in Asad, *Formations of the Secular*, 192.

reflection or constraints. In both Hegel and Holyoake's writings, they present consequential epistemologies, and in this light it is important to understand the epistemological reformation that marks the transition of Europe from the Middle Ages and Renaissance into the Age of Enlightenment.

The Enlightenment is a period of Western history that "lasted" roughly between the middle of the 17th-century through the entirety of the 18th-century.[77] Dates are, of course, unkempt ambiguities, and essentializing the trends and developments of the Enlightenment in monolithic and categorical ways operates against the organic nature of this movement, its ideals and goals, and against the claims of some of its proponents, such as Immanuel Kant. In looking for the origins of the Enlightenment, many scholars point to the scientific revolution that took place in the 15th and 16th centuries. The *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* characterizes the Enlightenment as "a far-flung and varied intellectual development." In this "far-flung" project, intellectuals and *philosophes* from a variety of socio-political contexts contributed to this hazily defined endeavor. Near the end of the period traditionally conceptualized as the Enlightenment, Immanuel Kant offered a description and reflection of this process of Enlightenment, which he believed demanded further diligence for his (still) un-enlightened age. In Kant's essay, "An Answer to the Question: What is Enlightenment?" (1784), he defines,

> 'Enlightenment' as humankind's release from its self-incurred immaturity; [Kant writes], immaturity is the inability to use one's own understanding without the guidance of another. Enlightenment is the process of undertaking to think for oneself, to employ and rely on one's own intellectual capacities in determining what to believe and how to act.[78]

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[77] William Bristow, "Enlightenment," *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Summer 2010), ed. Edward N. Zalta, http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/enlightenment/.

[78] Bristow, "Enlightenment," 1.

It is clear from Kant's description of the Enlightenment that there are compelling similarities between this intellectual movement and the development of secularism as explained by Holyoake. One of these similarities is the entrenched notion that human beings must utilize their own reason to solve the problems of this life, uninhibited by the theological and religious constraints of the Church. The assumption is that human beings *have the ability* to autonomously reach the truth. This is a vision that Holyoake adamantly fights for in his *The Principles of Secularism* and in the other writings that have been analyzed.

The epistemological independence of humans from the constraints of traditional authority, particularly as represented by the clergy and the institution of the Church, is one of the hallmarks of the intellectual movement of Enlightenment thinkers. In the rise of modern science in the centuries before the Enlightenment, in figures such as Galileo and Kepler, science began its "modern journey" towards separation and autonomy from religious authority.[79] The controversies surrounding the theories put forth by these intellectuals were, as José Casanova writes,

> Not about the substantive truth or falsity of the new Copernican theories of the universe as much as it was about the validity of the claims of the new science to have discovered a new autonomous method of obtaining and verifying truth…Thus, the attempts of all the pioneers—Galileo, Kepler, and Newton—to enthrone the Book of Nature as a legitimate, separate but equal, epistemological way to God, along with the Book of Revelation.[80]

Encapsulating and verifying this independence, Enlightenment thinkers like Diderot (d. 1784) produced the intellectual project of the Enlightenment known as the *Dictionary*, which stood as both a testimony to secular, human knowledge and as a representation of

[79] José Casanova, *Public Religions in the Modern World* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 23.
[80] Casanova, *Public Religions*, 24.

the capabilities of the human mind.[81] Another "project" of some Enlightenment thinkers, primarily the more stringent French and "Radical" Enlightenment proponents, was a sustained attack on religion and its institutions. As William Bristow writes in the *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, "Though the Enlightenment is sometimes represented as the enemy of religion, it is more accurate to see it as critically directed against various (arguably contingent) features of religion, such as superstition, enthusiasm, fanaticism and supernaturalism."[82] These critiques are solidified in the writings of thinkers such as Voltaire, who called the Catholic Church "*l'infâme,"* and Baron d'Holbach, whose *System of Nature* (1770) presented the case for atheism.[83] It is important to recognize that not all Enlightenment thinkers took up the banner of destroying religion but that this criticism was an important theme in some of the texts produced in this time period.

The Enlightenment conception of nature mentioned by Asad proposes that nature is composed of "strict mathematical-dynamical laws" and decrees "the conception of [the human self] as capable of knowing those laws…through the exercise of our unaided faculties."[84] Though Descartes (d. 1650) founded his system of knowledge on the existence of God, later thinkers like Kant, through his "Copernican Revolution," placed the locus of knowledge in the mind itself, effectively rendering God, at the very least, marginalized to how humans could seek to discover knowledge of the world.[85] By indicating this shift, I do not maintain that these philosophers were necessarily anti-religious, for Kant, quite the contrary, often lauded Christianity.[86] Though one could

[81] Bristow, "Enlightenment," 1.
[82] Ibid.
[83] Ibid.
[84] Ibid.
[85] Ibid.
[86] Micahel Rohlf, "Immanuel Kant," *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Summer 2010), ed. Edward N. Zalta, http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/kant/#LifWor.

certainly look to other philosophers, even from times predating the Enlightenment, to substantiate this emerging view, those mentioned demonstrate this stance concerning the human capacity for attaining knowledge. This epistemological view represents a crucial facet of philosophical secularity, but it also comes to play an important role in political secularity as well.

In examining the political philosophy that permeated the time shortly before and during the Enlightenment era, Nader Hashemi illustrates how the thought of John Locke (1632-1704), the "father of modern liberalism," sought to find political and religious justifications for the institutional separation of religion, specifically Protestant Christianity, and the state in England.[87] Pre-modern, Western political theory was steeped in Christianity. Hashemi writes, "The rise of Christianity shifted the debate away from the ideal of an active citizen in the Greek polis to that of the true believer in the Christian commonwealth. A new conception of political community had emerged."[88] In Locke's political philosophy, he disputes these traditional Christian conceptions of the state and the citizen, which were largely based on the "canonical" works of Augustine and St. Thomas, in order to promulgate a new secular system, which provided a bulwark for tolerance and the end of civil strife.[89]

Two important politico-religious questions framed the life and writings of Locke. First, the "Exclusion Crisis of 1679-1681" highlighted the historical problems between temporal power and religious affiliation. In this dilemma, the English aristocracy sought to deny James II (the brother of Charles II) the throne of England because of his Roman

[87] Hashemi, *Islam, Secularism, and Liberal Democracy,* 67, 109.
[88] Ibid, 68.
[89] Ibid, 68. Hashemi cites Augustine's *City of God* and St. Thomas' *Summa Theolgica*.

Catholic faith.[90] Second the most prominent intellectual question of Locke's society, according to Hashemi, was the question of religious toleration.[91] In the aftermath of the Protestant Reformation and in the face of the English Civil War (1642-1660), many quarrels arose among Protestants and Catholics, as various Christians sought to impose their version of Christianity upon the members of their respective societies. Hashemi writes of this time period, largely basing his findings off of the profound study by Perez Zagorin entitled *How the Idea of Religious Toleration Came to the West*, "In an age of gross intolerance, most Christian denominations were interested in enforcing religious uniformity on their societies, each of them claiming exclusive knowledge of God's will on earth and warning of the dangers of social disorder if religious toleration were allowed to flourish."[92]

Locke's essay, *A Letter Concerning Toleration,* reacted to this politico-religious culture and attempted to formulate a systematic relationship between the state and the church that would establish tolerance for his troubled age. Though Locke changed his own opinion regarding the separation of church and state, later in his *Letter* he developed one of the most consequential arguments for the "sovereign individual and his or her subjective rights" and one of the most central tenets of political secularity, the separation of church and state.[93]

In his treatise Locke writes, "I esteem above all things necessary to distinguish exactly between the Business of Civil Government from that of Religion, and to settle the

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[90] Ibid, 69.
[91] Ibid, 70.
[92] Ibid.
[93] Ibid, 74. Locke originally agreed with the view of Thomas Hobbes that the ruler had to maintain political and religious sovereignty.

just bounds that lie between the one and the other."[94] Locke eventually concludes that the "union of church and state" ought to be undone.[95] The primary argument of this work is that religion *ought* to be separated from the state and that the citizens in such a state must have "moral sovereignty of individual conscience."[96] Kant and Holyoake's emphases on free-thinking and independence of consciousness from the constraints of religious authority echo Locke's arguments. As Hashemi demonstrates, Locke establishes novel interpretations and new conceptions of the "true" Christian and the "true" Christian church in order to institute the separation of church and the English state.[97] In this manner, "a reevaluation of religious norms with respect to government is the prerequisite to liberal-democratic development."[98] Though this thesis does not probe the question of the connections between democracy and secularism, as Hashemi's does, Locke's reinterpretation of Christianity is directly relevant to the broader support for political secularity, which emerged after his lifetime.[99]

In summary, Locke promoted a version of Christianity that favored tolerance of the plurality of religious doctrines in Christendom and freedom of choice in matters of religious affairs, including the right to leave or disavow a specific doctrinal community.[100] In Locke's account, true Christians must be tolerant and the true Church does not compulsively dictate adherence to its doctrines. It should be recognized, however, that Locke did not extend this tolerance towards atheists, and he did not think

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[94] John Locke, *A Letter Concerning Toleration* in *Two Treatises of Government and a Letter Concerning Toleration*, ed. Ian Shaprio (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), 218.
[95] Hashemi, *Islam, Secularism, and Liberal Democracy*, 77.
[96] Ibid, 78.
[97] Ibid, 73-75.
[98] Ibid, 69.
[99] Ibid, 76-77. Hashemi mentions that Locke's perspective was new and held by a minority of his fellow citizens.
[100] Ibid, 74-77.

Roman Catholics should be allowed to hold high offices in the English state.[101] Hashemi points out three important aspects of Locke's thought. First, Locke's writings support the idea that reason and revelation agree with his conceptions of religion and toleration. Furthermore, much of Locke's work tries to secure the compatibility of these two methods for comprehending truth.[102] This idea reiterates the epistemological focuses of the new science movements. Second, Locke's theories endorse the moral sovereignty of individuals, particularly when he writes, "A Church then I take to be a voluntary Society of Men, joining themselves together of their own accord, in order to the public worshipping of God, such a manner as they judge acceptable to him, and effectual to the Salvation of their souls."[103] The effect of this new perception of the church is quite important. Individuals *choose* to join or leave such congregations; they are completely sovereign in their religious affairs. Third, these new ideas were controversial for Locke's time period, as Hashemi notes that in this age charges of heresy could easily equate to execution of the accused heretic.[104] Though I do not intend to write a comprehensive evaluation of Locke's political philosophy, Hashemi's chapter on Locke's *Two Treatises of Government* illuminates one final, significant aspect: Locke's multi-methodological approach to arguing for political secularity—the scriptural/ revelatory and the rational/secular.[105]

Locke bases the first treatise on his reading of scripture, and he dresses his second treatise in more secular (not explicitly religious) terminology.[106] In the first treatise,

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[101] Locke, *A Letter Concerning Toleration*, 245. He writes that Catholics should not be allowed to be citizens because they would always be loyal to a "foreign prince," namely, the Pope.
[102] Hashemi, *Islam, Secularism, and Liberal Democracy*, 71, 76.
[103] Locke, *A Letter Concerning Toleration,* 221.
[104] Hashemi, *Islam, Secularism, and Liberal Democracy*, 77.
[105] Ibid, 80.
[106] Ibid, 79-80.

Locke engages the most prominent proponent, Sir Robert Filmer, of the divine right of kings theory, which argued that the state should be absolutist, it ought to be based on scriptural authority, and likewise that the king's legitimacy in governing was religious in nature.[107] In order to avoid a lengthy review of this debate, it will suffice to write that Locke disagreed with Filmer's interpretation of scripture and that Locke refuted Filmer's claims in scriptural terms. As Hashemi states, "Locke accuses Filmer of shoddy biblical scholarship, poor argumentation, and weak reasoning."[108] Locke's *Second Treatise on Civil Government* justifies his position in terms of natural right theories and on his reasoning regarding the rise of human societies from the "state of nature."[109] His ability to negotiate between definitively religious modes of argumentation and more secular lines of reasoning will play an important role in understanding Tariq Ramadan's positions in Chapter Three.

I agree with Hashemi when he maintains that though Locke's work embraces a myopic vision of tolerance in comparison to modern standards, his *Letter* was an attempt to legitimate an innovative configuration of the relationship among church, state, and citizen. Locke's writings cogently present the case for political secularity, basing his conclusions on both religious sources and secular rationalization, and they mark an important shift in Western political philosophy from the older Christian conceptions of the political community. Political secularity*, qua* state neutrality to different religious expressions and disestablishment of religion from the functions of the state, garners power and support with the rise of centralizing, modernizing states in Europe.

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[107] Ibid, 81.
[108] Ibid, 83.
[109] John Locke, *Second Treatise on Government* in *Two Treatises of Government and a Letter Concerning Toleration*, ed. Ian Shaprio (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), 101.

In tracing the trajectory of the rise of modern states, Daniel Philpott writes, "It was at the Peace of Westphalia in 1648 that Europe consolidated its long transition from the Middle Ages to a world of sovereign states."[110] Two fundamental concepts in this rise were sovereignty and authority. For the purposes of this thesis, we can define sovereignty as "supreme authority within a territory," and we can characterize authority, as philosopher R.P. Wolff writes, as "the right to command and correlatively the right to be obeyed."[111] The modern polity that emerges in this time period is characterized by being: "a single, unified one, confined within territorial borders, possessing a single set of interests, ruled by an authority that was bundled into a single entity and held supremacy in advancing the interests of the polity."[112] Though some scholars challenge its place as the mechanism for the formation of modern, sovereign states, the Treaty of Westphalia in 1648 ended the Thirty Years War (fought by Protestant rulers and their allies against the Roman Catholic dynasties and their respective supporters between 1618-1648) and provided for the conditions, which would eventually lead to the maintenance of sovereign states; the philosophies and theologies of reformers such as Martin Luther (d.1546) would likewise establish a bulwark and foundation for these states.[113]

Eschewing an in-depth review of the development of individual states, Philpott explains that the importance of the Treaty can be summarized in that states now had sole power of authority and sovereignty within their territories (other states could not interfere in matters such as religion) and the Catholic Church lost a majority of its temporal

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[110] Philpott, "Sovereignty," 1.
[111] R. P. Wolff, "The Conflict Between Authority and Autonomy," in *Authority*, ed. Joseph Raz (New York: New York University Press, 1990), 20-21.
[112] Philpott, "Sovereignty," 1.
[113] Hashemi, *Islam, Secularism, and Liberal Democracy*, 109.

powers (the Church could no longer interfere in the matters of the state).[114] As the modern state is sovereign in all matters and "monopolizes the means of violence and coercion," the Church could no longer legally enforce its rule.[115] Luther's theological writings, though predating the Treaty, likewise gave religious support to this new understanding of the modern polity. Luther divided the world into two, distinct orders: the realm of the spirit and the realm of world. Christ rules the soul in the first, and the secular state rules the citizen in the second.[116] Though Luther was not necessarily the progenitor of these divisions, his formation based on religious principles provided legitimacy to such classification.

These are the major trends that I believe influenced the formations, connotations, and implications of secularism that was more explicitly articulated as an ideology in the 19th century. It is integral to stress, however, that these trends have contributed to very different and unique forms of secularity in distinctive states. In order to retain a sophisticated analysis of secularity, it is thus crucial to focus on specific countries' historical experiences with these trends. It is consequently more accurate to speak of "secularisms."[117] In observing political secularity, the two prevailing paradigms in the West are the "Anglo-American" and the "French."[118] This thesis does not explore the specifics of these traditions, but recognizing the differences in disparate political experiences is crucial.[119]

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[114] Philpott, "Sovereignty," 1.
[115] Casanova, *Public Religions,* 22.
[116] Philpott, "Sovereignty," 1.
[117] Hashemi, *Islam, Secularism, and Liberal Democracy,* 111.
[118] Ibid.
[119] Ibid. Hashemi mentions the differences between the prevalent political philosophies in these countries as one reason for the development secularism(s).

Before an analysis of Islam and secularism can be sought, specifically in regards to its political nature, it is imperative to study *secularization*. Casanova explains the importance of the expansion of the modern state as well as the modern, capitalist economy when he writes,

> These two secular spheres, states and markets, now tended to dictate the principles for classification which served to structure the new modern system. In spatial-structural terms we may say that if reality before was structured around one main axis [religion or the institution of the Church], now a multiaxial space was created with two main axes structuring the whole.[120]

The establishment of this new "multiaxial space" plays an important role in the last section of this chapter, secularization. The secular ideology, Keane contends, radically modernized during the 16th century, and it came to signify the process by which the influence of religion was diminished and property once under the suzerainty of the Catholic Church transferred to secular institutions.[121] This "process" depicts secularization, which sociologists have variously defined in secularization theory.

Referring once again to Keddie's work, she writes that secularization includes, "Both increasing state control of spheres formerly controlled by religious institutions and the expansion and freedom from religious control of non-religious institutions, both state and private, and comprising education, social welfare, law, publication, and the media, and forums for the expression of belief and action."[122] In most accounts of secularization, scholars point to the Protestant Reformation and the Wars of Religion in Europe in the 16th-17th centuries as the catalysts that instigated the search for how Europeans could create governments that would provide for peaceful co-existence of different denominations; religious violence necessitated new foundations for a civil society. As

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[120] Casanova, *Public Religions*, 21.
[121] Keane, "Limits of Secularism," 30.
[122] Keddie "Secularism and Secularization," 2194.

Armando Salvatore explains, the Wars of Religion resulted in the secularization process, in which modernizing states attempted to formulate secular public spheres that would end the violence and discord.[123] Though this thesis does not seek to write a concise history of the development of secularization, these two seminal movements were quite significant for Western Christendom's experience with secularity.[124]

As we have described it, the rise of the "new science" fits this description in so far as its proponents sought to establish its methodologies as legitimate means for discovering truth separate from revelation and the church. Luther's writings likewise support a new "realm" from which individuals could view their lives, that of the state/citizen (as opposed to the strictly Christian). In describing the rise of the centralized states, one can clearly see the establishment of new, secular spheres that are free from the official authority of the church. Similarly, Holyoake's desire to establish a national, secular education system in England reflects his endeavor to free human thought and critical inquiry from the prohibitive nature of the church. In all of these cases, spheres emerge with their own rules and authorities, which are no longer strictly subject to the clergy or their theological opinions. Secularization is a highly debated problem in the social sciences, and it is more complex than the simple narrative of religion losing its influence over society.

In *Public Religions in the Modern World*, the prominent social scientist José Casanova explores the concept of secularization, which he believes must be kept

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[123] Armando Salvatore, "Power and Authority within European Secularity: From Enlightenment Critique of Religion to the Contemporary Presence of Islam," *Muslim World* v. 96 (October 2006), 558.

[124] Casanova, *Public Religions,* 11-40. Casanova argues that the Protestant Reformation, the formation of modern nation-states, the rise of capitalism, and the scientific revolution are the interrelated processes that instigated and framed secularization.

analytically separate from the social scientific "theory of secularization."[125] Casanova writes that historically secularization could refer to a "legal action" in the Canon Law of the church, wherein "A 'religious' person left the cloister to return to the 'world' and its temptations, becoming thereby a 'secular' person."[126] This is a definition that we introduced earlier in this chapter. Casanova also mentions the secularization that occurred due to the Wars of Religion (as in the transfer of property from the church to the state). The pre-requisite for this process is the medieval conception of the world as divided into two, separate spheres: the religious and the secular.[127] Though Casanova provides several examples of this classification, an important one was the tension between the "theocratic" claims of the church over temporal power and the power-claims of kings, who believed themselves to rule by divine right—thus essaying to incorporate the "spiritual sphere" into their own worldly power.[128] This is the same disputation mentioned by Keane earlier.

Casanova further complicates this division of *the secular* and the religious by discussing the temporal division (eternity versus temporality), the ecclesiological division (the Invisible Church and the Visible Church), and the political division (the City of God versus the City of Man). In the context of these divisions, secularization refers to the disestablishment of these "systems of classification," though it does not imply that all of these divisions necessarily disappear, e.g. many people today still believe in the division between temporal and eternal time.[129]

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[125] Casanova, *Public Religions,* 12.
[126] Ibid, 13
[127] Ibid.
[128] Ibid, 14
[129] Ibid, 19-25. Casanova writes that, rather, this process indicates a shift in perspective. For example, in medieval times the dichotomy between secular and religious was controlled from the perspective of the church. As other spheres began to develop their own systems with their own logic and autonomy, religion became just one of many systems in the world. A case-in-point is the development of capitalism. Though the church condemned aspects such as usury, interest flourished. Utilitarian worldliness burgeoned and

The "theory of secularization," however, is more semantically loaded and is different from the historical processes of secularization. This theory is, according to Casanova, a "Myth that sees history as the progressive evolution of humanity from superstition to reason, from belief to unbelief, from religion to science."[130] Thus the secularization thesis or theory is *teleological* in that it projects the "end" of religion, and we have already seen aspects of this thesis proposed by Hegel. Emile Durkheim and Max Weber were two modern proponents of this theory, and both posited that humanity would eventually escape the bonds of religious domination.[131] Casanova describes all of these early theories as entangled in the assessment by some Enlightenment thinkers that religion is irrational and superstitious and in the hope for its ultimate "death." The "resurgence of religion" in the 1960s-80s (represented in the rise of Christian fundamentalism, but also in the political rise of Islamism *á la* the Iranian Revolution in 1979) forced social scientists to re-evaluate this theory, particularly the two sub-theses that as societies modernized they would inevitability privatize religion and relegate it to a matter of personal/private belief and also that as societies modernized religion would begin to vanish.[132] Casanova does see utility in aspects of the theory, though, and he believes that the modern theories of secularization (for example Thomas Luckman's *The Invisible Religion*) that restrict their claims to the differentiation of "autonomous spheres" more accurately represent the realities of secularization.[133]

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economics began to free itself from the constraints of the church; indeed, its logic began to "penetrate and colonize the religious sphere" by subjecting religion to capitalism's principles, such as "commodification"

[130] Ibid, 17.
[131] Ibid, 18.
[132] Ibid, 11-12.
[133] Ibid, 19.

In reflecting on secularism, we have described a diverse set of characteristics. In one sense, political secularism is intricately tied to the rise of the modern, *sovereign* state, itself a product of the historical forces of secularization. Though the processes that led to the gradual separation of Christianity from the functions of the state varied from each historical situation to the next, in general this separation is one of the defining features of political secularism. A corollary to this aspect of political secularism is that the state, as the sole sovereign power with the ability to coercively enforce its rulings in its territory, has the ability to "draw a line" between politics and religion in its domain.[134] In drawing these lines, the state "[promotes] an abstract notion of religion [and defines] the spaces it should inhabit, authorizing the sensibilities proper to it, and then working to discipline actual religious traditions so as to conform to this abstract notion, to fit into those spaces, and to express those sensibilities."[135] Secularity in its political sense is thus a function of the state in prescribing the limits and permissibility of religion's role in a given society's political and legal institutions. As I have also mentioned in the Introduction and through my description of philosophical secularism, we should not limit political secularism to this macro level; individuals also define the role and limits of religion in their own political lives.

There are numerous connections among the rise of sociological and philosophical secularism and their political ramifications. As religion becomes marginalized in the majority of a given population, it stands to reason that one would discover a similar decline in religion's role in the state. This is not to be equated with a generalized acceptance of the "marginalization thesis" of secularization theory, but simply as a

[134] Hussein Ali Agrama, "Secularism, Sovereignty, and Indeterminacy," in *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, v. 3 (2010), 501.
[135] Ibid, 503.

remark that this is often the case with "secularized" societies and governments. Similarly, with the quantitative rise of citizens adhering to secular epistemologies and ethics, religion's role as a justificatory force for the policies and legislations of governments declines; once again, especially given the role of religion as a moral tradition that serves a potent function in debates concerning political institutions' rulings on "moral issues" (abortion being one example), I do not propose that religion is removed completely as a justificatory power. Rather, the increase of philosophically secular citizens simply highlights the issues of moral sovereignty of individuals and the societal need for John Rawls' "public reason," which will be discussed in Chapter Three. Political secularism is also established in the development of what Asad described as a new "configuration" of political community.

This new community is explicitly articulated in Locke's conception of the state as an entity that should be tolerant towards different expressions of religion and in his notion of the citizen as a morally sovereign individual, who can choose to leave or participate in any congregation he or she decides. These are the novel understandings of the citizen and religion. First, religion is a voluntary activity, which the state should let alone. Second, religion is the prerogative of the citizen and is not the basis of his or her political affiliation with a given community.

In this thesis, I argue that individuals who support aspects of these various characteristics are politically secular, though this does not necessitate a wholesale adoption of every tenet. It is most appropriate, then, to apply Ludwig Wittgenstein's "family-resemblance" theory in seeking to understand how we can use one, general term

(politically secular) to apply to and include a variety of entities and instances.[136] In describing an individual as politically secular, we are merely claiming that this person supports one, some, or possibly many of the aspects we have described as important for political secularity; in this method, there is considerable room for diversity and even conflict among those supporting political secularism.

For example, an individual might agree that the state should be tolerant towards different religions and yet still believe that certain religious expressions should *not* be tolerated as equally as others (e.g. Locke and his views on Catholics in high-positions in the state). More recently in the *Park 51* controversy mentioned in the Introduction, many Americans would, ideally, claim that *all* religions should be allowed to construct houses of worship; simultaneously, the same individuals might declare, as many do, that Muslims should *not* have this right in *this case*. Regardless of whether or not the Islamic center should be built, the point is that political secularity is negotiable and does not have to be a logically consistent system. This is an important point to keep in mind, since in looking at Muslim responses to secularity many of the characteristics of political secularism differ from their European counterparts, as the politico-historical and religious history of Muslims likewise differ considerably from Christian experiences with secularity in Europe.

In this thesis, I am primarily concerned with Muslim analyses and accounts of political secularism. In addressing the critiques and praises of this secularity, I delve into philosophical secularity, but I acknowledge that it is beyond the scope of this thesis to address it in a comprehensive manner. Thus far, I have developed notions of secularity in

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[136] L. Pompa, "Discussion: Family Resemblance," *The Philosophical Quarterly*, v. 17, no. 66 (January 1967), 63-65.

relation to Western formations and cultures. Though I would claim that Muslims *have dealt* with issues of secularity prior to interactions with the modern West, the majority of Muslim literary and political treatises dealing *explicitly* with political secularism emerged due to this interaction, primarily in the colonial experience and in the aftermath of the First and Second World Wars.[137] In writing about different Muslim encounters with political secularism, I will investigate the various disputations concerning the indigenous nature of secularity in the Islamic world. Before I begin my analyses of Ramadan and al-Qaradawi, I will address the broader topic of Islamicate societies' relationships with secular principles and movements vis-à-vis exploring the case study of Egypt.

[137] Munir Shafiq, "Secularism and the Arab-Muslim Condition," in *Islam and Secularism in the Middle East*, ed. John Esposito and Azzam Tamimi (London: Hurst & Company, 2000), 146-147. Shafiq presents an interesting argument that claims that there were certain "trends" in Islamic history that led to a gradual "gap" between the *'ulama'*/Islam and the state. In his opinion, the time of the Prophet Muhammad and the Four Rightly Guided Caliphs were the only moments in Islamic history where the best relationship between religion and the state existed; during the period of the Umayyads and after, a form of secularism began to arise, which was augmented with the colonial experience with the West. One of the structures that allowed for this process is that rulers would often side with scholars who supported the ruling elite's policies (and not with those scholars who "truly" abided by the *shari'a*).

Chapter Two

Introduction to Islam and Secularity:

The Egyptian Case Study

"Know that you can have three sorts of relations with princes, governors, and oppressors. The first and worst is that you visit them, the second and better is that they visit you, and the third and surest that you stay far from them, so that neither you see them nor they see you" —Abu Hamid Muhammad al-Ghazzali[138]

In this chapter, I will address and briefly examine the interactions of Muslims with secularity by dissecting the Egyptian case study (roughly the 19th-21th centuries). The historical context illuminates the writings of those intellectuals who are the main focus of this thesis: Tariq Ramadan and Yusuf al-Qaradawi. The aim of this chapter is not to delve into Egypt's history in its entirety, but rather to discover the leitmotifs that structure the debates on political secularism in Islamic societies; the discussion on Egypt is of utmost importance, since Ramadan and al-Qaradawi both speak, in differing degrees, from the Egyptian environment. I contend that the primary motifs forming the nexus of Islam and political secularism are: 1) distinctive approaches to the conception and role of *shari'a,* which stress a separation between the political and the religious in matters of government, 2) novel configurations of epistemology, law, and ethics, 3) debates concerning the authenticity of secular discourses in the Islamic tradition, and 4) a combination of these former categories in articulating a "public vision" of Islam for

[138] Casanova, *Public Religions,* 48. Casanova believes this statement reflects the typical attitude of the major monotheisms regarding the political world. Though I would add that al-Ghazali's own relation with political leaders might present an opposition to this statement. See Omid Safi's *The Politics of Knowledge in Pre-Modern Islam*, which describes al-Ghazali's relationship to the Seljuq State and ideology.

Islamicate societies and Muslim individuals.[139] First, I will focus on the articulation of secularism as experienced in the modernization and centralization of the Egyptian state and the legal changes in 19th-20th century Egypt, basing my conclusions largely on the research of Talal Asad. Second, I will discuss, in short, the thoughts on political secularism of three important Muslims of the 19th-20th centuries: Abd al-Rahman al-Kawakibi (1855-1902), Qasim Amin (1863-1908), and Ali Abd al-Raziq (1888-1966). I will then concentrate more thoroughly on the writings of Fouad Zakariyya (1927-2010). Third, I will discuss the translations of the word secularism into Arabic in order to understand how these Arabic words reflect the overall themes of this thesis thus far.

In confronting the complex relationships among Muslims, Islam, and secularity, it is difficult to discern precise historical events, epochs, or individuals who have shaped this experience. The diversity of cultures and societies in which Muslims live likewise complicates such an endeavor. It is this political and cultural diversity that persuades the researcher to examine discourses on secularity in specific contexts, focusing on specific individuals. This line of inquiry is also in accord with our conclusion in Chapter One that we must seek to explore the variety of *secularisms* that emerge in different societies. As a pre-cautionary measure, I must emphasize that the contents of my research reflect individuals who identify with Sunni Islam, particularly its historical manifestation in Egyptian society. The scope of these Muslims does not speak to the diversity of Islamic experiences in non-Arab societies such as Iran and Turkey, or with groups of Muslims like the *Shi'a*. In this light, one must be careful to not unduly extrapolate these findings and inductively apply categories like "secular Muslim" to individuals in other socio-historical contexts; indeed, this thesis seeks to demonstrate the complexity and intricate

nature of discussing what it means to be secular. Some scholars claim that a historical relationship between secularity and Islam does not exist.

For example, Ernest Gellner, an important figure in social theory, has famously argued that, "No secularization has taken place in the world of Islam."[140] According to Gellner's metric of secularity, the Islamic world has not instigated or undergone this process of differentiating or possibly removing religion from the political environment or other segments of civil society. The difficulties in traversing this conceptual landscape are likewise illustrated when Mehrzad Boroujerdi writes in his "Can Islam be Secularized?," "After all we can hardly find two words more seemingly antithetical to one another than 'Islam' and 'secularism.'"[141] Opposing Gellner and seeking to work through Boroujerdi's paradox, other scholars have argued that secularity and Islam can be understood if we shift our perspectives away from the Christian and Western-focused approach.

The German scholar of Islam Gudrun Krämer has claimed that in order to understand secularization and Islam, a conceptual shift is required if the bias and tendentious narratives of the West are to be avoided.[142] Krämer argues that secularization needs to be interpreted not in terms of a separation of the church and state, since nominally no such institution exists within Islam, but rather in terms of "*shari'a*, public order, and individual life-styles (Lebensführung)."[143] I would add the position and role of

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[140] Ernest Gellner, "Islam and Marxism: Some Comparisons," *Royal Institute of International Affairs* v.67, no. 1 (January 1991), 2.
[141] Boroujerdi, *Can Islam be Secularized?,* 55.
[142] Gudrun Krämer "Zum Verhältnis von Religion, Recht und Politik: Säkularisierung im Islam." *Säkularisierung*." in *Säkularisierung und die Weltreligionen*, ed. Hans Joas and Klaus Wiegandt (Frankfurt/Main: Fischer Taschenbuch Verlag, 2007), 172-193.
[143] Ibid.

religious authority to this list, and I will address this issue in my analysis on Fouad Zakariyya.

Egypt underwent vast transformations in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. In these cultural, political, and religious changes, there is palpable evidence for the Muslim struggle with *the secular*. Sadiq al-Azm, a contemporary Syrian professor of philosophy, writes of the "split personality" (the secular and the Islamic) of the Cairene Muslim that pervades Islam in his 1996 article "Is Islam Secularizable?"[144] In this work, al-Azm cites the twentieth-century Egyptian Nobel Laureate author Naguib Mahfouz, when Mahfouz writes of one of his Muslim protagonists:

> He leads a contemporary [i.e., "modern"] life. He obeys civil and penal laws of Western origin and is involved in a complex tangle of social and economic transactions and is never certain to what extent these agree with or contradict his Islamic creed. Life carries him along in its current and he forgets his misgivings for a time until one Friday he hears the imam or reads the religious page in one of the papers, and the old misgivings come back with a certain fear. He realizes that in this new society he has been afflicted with a split personality: half of him believes, prays, fasts and makes the pilgrimage. The other half renders his values void in banks and courts and in the streets, even in the cinemas and theaters, perhaps even at home among his family before the television set.[145]

The unrest of this bilateral division described above by Mahfouz reflects the notions of *the secular* that have been proposed in Chapter One. In Mahfouz's description, he illustrates the Muslim struggle to negotiate between existences inundated by the "mundane" and "this-worldliness" and the "sacred" life of Islam. This depiction also exemplifies the results of the Islamic experience with Western colonial powers and, more generally, modernity at large. As Talal Asad writes, secularism is best understood in Egypt when one dissects the developing elements of: 1) a modernizing, centralizing state

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[144] Sadiq al-Azm, "Is Islam Secularizable?", *Islam Watch*, last visited March 25, 2011, http://www.islam-watch.org/Others/Is-Islam-Secularizable.htm.

[145] Ibid.

in Egypt, 2) positivization and reformation of law, and 3) how these developments established and maintained "social spaces" and "conceptual changes" in which secularism could be become "thinkable" in Islamic discourses of government and society.[146] Reverberating these elements, Hussein Ali Agrama writes that secularism in Egypt should be analyzed, "…less [as] a separation of religion and politics than the fashioning of religion as an object of continual management and intervention, and the shaping of religious life and sensibility to fit the presuppositions and ongoing requirements of liberal governance."[147] In both Asad and Agrama's formulation, secularism is thus directly related to the establishment of the centralized state in Egypt. In both of these accounts, the colonial experience in Egypt and the ensuing legal reformation that developed during and after these influential times instigated these processes.[148]

In observing these elements and the description of Mahfouz, the following statement by Fauzi Najjar can be understood, "[Muslims] view most Western ideas, ideologies, and institutions as a threat to Islamic law, values, and culture. Among these foreign imports, secularism seems to represent the greatest danger."[149] Whether or not secularism can be exclusively characterized as a Western import, let us now turn to these integral moments and changes, which articulated this "great danger."

The common historical narrative concerning Egypt, though challenged by some scholars, is that the restriction of *shari'a* jurisdiction and the importation of European

[146] Asad, *Formations of the Secular*, 209.
[147] Agrama, "Secularism, Sovereignty, Indeterminacy," 499.
[148] Ibid. Asad notes that there was no equivalent in Arabic for the English term "secularism" prior to the late 19th century. He argues that though this negative does not prove the lack of the conception of secularism, it does indicate that the political discourse prior to the European encounter did not necessitate dealing with issues of secularism.
[149] Fauzi M. Najjar, "The Debate on Islam," 1.

legal codes are the primary catalysts that instigated the flourishing of secular discourses.[150] I agree with Asad that whether these changes were beneficial or exploitative (perhaps both), the arguments employed by important figures reflect "Reconfigurations of law, ethics, and religious authority."[151] Asad argues that modern, secular society requires specific conceptions of law, morality, the relationship between these two categories, and the role of religion in society. Our exploration of European secularity has confirmed these statements. In looking at the rise of secularity in England, we observed the articulation of secular ethics in the works of Holyoake. John Locke expressed a new conception of "true" Christianity as one that is tolerant and that promotes freedom of consciousness. In looking at the rise of modern states, the process of differentiation allowed the functions of the states and their laws to escape the claims of the church. Though there is more support for Asad's statements relating to the Western experience, examining the shifting nature of the legal system in the context of the modernization of the Egyptian state highlights these as well.

Since the early 16th century, the Ottoman Empire nominally controlled Egypt.[152] In the Empire, *shari'a* courts technically had jurisdiction over all Muslims, but in practice such jurisdiction had its limitations. For example, most urban Muslims were legal subjects of the *shari'a* courts; on the other hand, many rural tribes were allowed to follow their own, customary laws (known as *'urf*), and the Jewish/Christian communities were subject to the *milliya* court system.[153] In this sense, *shari'a* in its legal meaning did not administer the lives of all persons (even all Muslims) during the reign of the Ottoman

[150] Asad, *Formations of the Secular*, 208.
[151] Ibid, 209.
[152] Yared, *Secularism and the Arab World*, pp. 13.
[153] Asad, *Formations of the Secular*, 210.

Empire. The French invasion of Egypt (1798-1801), the neglect of this region by the Ottoman ruling powers, and then the reign of Muhammad Ali (1760s-1849) are all central events that lead to the formation of modern Egypt.[154] The continual importance of Western influence is clear in the policies of Muhammad Ali. For example, Ali attempted to reform Arab society along Western criteria and methods. He constructed the first "secular" schools in the Muslim world, and he sent numerous students to Europe to train in Western educational contexts.[155] In the latter part of the 1800s, Egypt began to import and adopt Western legal codes, searching to reform the legal system. In this framework, the *shari'a* courts began to lose much of the legal jurisdiction that they had once administered, but, more importantly, the conception of the *shari'a* in relation to government also began to change.

From 1850 to 1863 (after the reign of Muhammad Ali), the Ottoman Empire enacted legal reformation (known as the *tanzimat*), adopting facets from European, specifically British and French, legal systems.[156] In this era, the Empire began to apply the European codes in administering the functions of the state (Commercial Code in 1850, the Penal Code in 1858, the Commercial Procedure Code in 1861, and the Maritime Commerce Code in 1863).[157] The Ottomans attempted to codify the *shari'a* from 1870-1877 (this codification was known as the *majalla*) in order to maintain its effectiveness in light of the shifts occurring throughout the Empire.[158] European powers in Egypt, however, asserted a powerful influence on the legal system, and this persuasion

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[154] William B. Raymond, "Egypt," in *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Islamic World*, Oxford Islamic Studies Online, accessed March 3, 2011, http://www.oxfordislamicstudies.com/article/opr/t236/e0213.
[155] Yared, *Secularism and the Arab World,* 13.
[156] Asad, *Formations of the Secular*, 210.
[157] Ibid.
[158] Ibid.

curtailed much of the application of the *majalla*. In 1876, for example, European legislators introduced a civil legal structure based on the Napoleonic Code to the Mixed Courts in Egypt; this institution was independent of the *shari'a* courts, and it settled all disputes between European citizens living in Egypt and indigenous Egyptian citizens (the judges, in fact, were European also).[159] Concomitantly, in 1882, the British quelled a military revolt and occupied Egypt.[160] Due to this direct involvement, the British altered the legal code of the Mixed Courts and applied it to the National Courts in Egypt. [161]

During this time frame, the *shari'a* courts were restricted to the pious endowments (*awqaf)*, and family law; the secular courts (or those based on the European code) adjudicated criminal and commercial law.[162] Simultaneously, the *shari'a* courts were reformed along Western principles, such as the creation of an appellate system. As Asad writes, "Law began to disentangle itself from the dictates of religion."[163] As Islamic legal scholar Wael Hallaq has demonstrated, classical and pre-modern Islamic jurisprudence was, on the whole, independent of the state or state regulation.[164] In 1897, by contrast, the Egyptian state authorized and employed Egyptian judges through education and certification.[165] Ultimately in 1955 under the regime of Gamal Abdel Nasser, this "dual-system" was abolished, and the *shari'a* courts no longer adjudicated with coercive force. The story of Egyptian legal reformation reflects Casanova's differentiation theory within the larger process of secularization, particularly in the sense

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[159] Ibid, 211.
[160] Baker, "Egypt, 1.
[161] Asad, *Formations of the Secular*, 211.
[162] Ibid.
[163] Ibid, 211-212.
[164] Wael Hallaq. *A History of Islamic Legal Theories* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 208.
[165] Asad, *Formation of the Secular*, 32.

that the *shari'a began* to lose its legal significance, and law became a system with its own authorities, rules, and logic, which were separate from Islam.

The impact of these series of reformations was quite significant. First, and perhaps most apparent, the *shari'a* became marginalized and limited in terms of its practical jurisdiction. Second, the centralizing state in Egypt vastly expanded its authority (e.g. it now certified its lawyers, most of whom were steeped in the Western legal tradition) over the *shari'a.* In this sense, religion now became one of many aspects of the lives of Egyptian citizens that the government sought to assign a specific role and position in the social stratum. Thus this emerging modern state began to necessitate a specific role and typology of Islam: namely, 1) Islam ought to be a private matter (as evidenced by the relegation of *shari'a* to the private life of the family), and 2) Islam and religion in general ought to have no powers of coercion in the public sphere. This is not to say that Islam had no place, however, in the public domain during this time. In fact, this new relationship between the state and religion now entailed the "re-entering" of religion into the public sphere vis-à-vis the *right* of freedom of expression.[166] This does not mean, however, that this right is unlimited or uncontroversial. By relegating the *shari'a* courts to matters of what it considered "personal morality," the main goal of this shift, Asad argues, is to separate the personal moralities of the citizens from the positive state regulations that the Egyptian state created and enforced.[167]

These legal changes represent the transformation of what Asad calls the virtue ethics of the *shari'a* towards the rule-based ethics of the new positive law, which had

[166] Ibid, 205.
[167] Ibid.

begun to entangle the lives of all Egyptians.[168] Religion (along with its rituals and beliefs) became placed in the private sphere of Muslim individuals' lives, while positive state law became the domain of the public sphere, controlling the ethics of human-human interactions. Baber Johansen illustrates the point that the general separation of the law from morality, however, was not unique to the modern period of Egypt, but rather classical and medieval Muslim jurists made similar distinctions.[169] The difference between the pre-modern and the modern distinctions, as Asad illustrates, is the *reasoning* behind this differentiation. Law and morality were now distinguished as rules, which entailed markedly different punishments. While law was to be conceived of as obedience to a state sovereign (which punishes one temporally in this world), morality was now subject to the moral autonomy of the human conscience.[170] It is in this change and reconstruction in the fabric of the Egyptian legal sphere that Asad contends that the new moral subject arises in Egyptian life and legal culture.

Jakob Skovgaard-Petersen has argued that in this time period the notion of "self-regulation" became integral for Muslims in Egypt, and the spread of this normative ideal greatly impacted the Muslim population.[171] The consequences of this spread are that, first, individual Muslims become "more free" from religious authority in general, which expands the options available for diverse ethical systems in life. Second, Muslims' "commitments" to religion are based on a more subjective judgment.[172] I agree with Asad that the concept of *subjectivity* has been present in Islam longer than Skovgaard-

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[168] Ibid, 38.
[169] Baber Johansen, *Contingency in a Sacred Law: Legal and Ethical Norms in the Muslim Fiqh* (Leiden, Boston, Köln: Brill, 1998), 57, 71.
[170] Asad, *Formations of the Secular*, 239.
[171] Jakob Skovgaard-Petersen, *Defining Islam for the Egyptian State: Muftis and Fatwas of the Dar al-Ifta* (Leiden, Boston, Köln: Brill, 1997), 23-24.
[172] Ibid.

Petersen's conclusions would allow, but I also concur that the true impact of this time period is in the construction of "A new *kind* of subjectivity, one that is appropriate to ethical autonomy and aesthetic self-invention."[173] The emphasis on moral sovereignty is reminiscent of Chapter One's discussion of Locke's ideal for the Christian citizen. Though the extent to which this subjectivity can be said to have spread and solidified in the consciousness of Egyptian Muslims is debatable, so, too, it was in Locke's time with his contemporary co-religionists. Regardless of this "new subjectivity's" immediate effects, the legal culture promoted by the Egyptian state provided a forum for its establishment and spread. The relationship between Islam, the state, and *shari'a* is, still today, a complicated one that does not merely reflect the overall marginalization of Islamic law by any means.

The story recounted by Asad cannot be extrapolated to complete secularization of the Egyptian state or the complete transition to rule-based ethics. As Meir Hatina writes, Egypt has never fully renounced the "age-old fundamental unity of religion and state or the dominance of the *shari'a* in determining personal status."[174] She evidences this by citing the 1980 amendment to the Egyptian constitution that reaffirmed that the "...principles of the *shari'a* [are] the state's primary source of legislation."[175] Other research into the legal culture of Islam in Egypt complicates the narrative of the ensuing reduction of *shari'a* and its new conception by the centralized state. An important legal case that illustrates the contested relationship of Islam and the Egyptian state is that of Abu Zayd. In 1996, Nasr Abu Zayd, who was then a professor of Arabic and Islamic Studies at Cairo University, was brought to the highest level of the Egyptian civil court

[173] Asad, *Formations of the Secular*, 225.
[174] Meir Hatina, "On the Margins of Consensus," 35.
[175] Ibid.

system, by Islamists, who claimed that he was an apostate because of his writings concerning Islam.[176] The Islamists relied on the concept of "commanding the good, when it has become neglected, and forbidding the evil, when its practice becomes manifest," known in Arabic as *hisba*.[177] The court ruled in favor of the Islamists, who stated that Abu Zayd *must be forced* to divorce his wife according to the *shari'a* law that non-Muslim men cannot marry Muslim women.[178] As Hussein Ali Agrama explains, this ruling questioned the entire "integrity of a private domain of rights" because "*anyone*" could bring *hisba* to justify interfering in the private affairs of another's family.[179] Agrama writes, "Indeed, both Islamists and secular liberals opposed the legislation, Islamists, because it reserved the power of *hisba* for the secular state and restricted their religious rights as private citizens, and liberals, because it recognized the legitimacy of a religious principle for public decision-making."[180] This ruling reveals the ambiguous and "indeterminate" nature of defining what the *criteria* are for a "secular" state.[181] In examining the voices of other Muslim scholars during this time of great change, the aspects of secularity in Islamicate societies are clarified.

Some scholars have pointed to the work of Abd al-Rahman al-Kawakibi (d. 1902), a Syrian Arab nationalist who spent much of his life in Egypt, as being among the first Muslims to suggest a general separation of religion and the state.[182] In al-Kawakibi's works, there is abundant support for separating the concerns of Islam from the state. For example, in his *Umm al-Qura* (published in 1898), he writes that, "Religion is one thing

[176] Agrama, "Secularism, Sovereignty, and Indeterminacy," 496.
[177] Ibid, 496.
[178] Ibid.
[179] Ibid.
[180] Ibid, 497.
[181] Ibid.
[182] Yared, "Secularism and the Arab World," 25.

and royalty another," and he continues by writing that the current Ottoman sultans are malfeasant in claiming religious authority, since the interests of the state, which contains people from many religions and ethnicities, are what ought to occupy their time.[183] Regarding the authentic nature of this division between temporal and religious authorities, he argues that religion has always been separated from the state in Islamicate societies, with the important exception of the "rightly guided" caliphs (*Rashidun*) and sporadic times during the Umayyad and Abbasid reigns.[184] He continued this motif of separating the temporal from the spiritual in his *Taba'i al-Istibdad*, or "The Characteristics of Tyranny," where he argues that religion ought to be separated from both education and politics.[185] As Yared has illustrated, al-Kawakibi believed that if a caliphate was necessary, then it should be a "purely spiritual one," and the sultans and princes should deal with matters of the state. From these lines of thought, he advocated that Muslims could obey any form of government, with the caveat that they revolt against an unjust or tyrannical one. Due to his harsh critiques of the Ottoman Sutlan Abdülhamid, he was imprisoned but managed to flee to Egypt, where he lived until his death.[186]

Another aspect of his literature that is in accord with secularist principles is his, what might be called, "anti-clericalism," excusing the Christian-biased terminology. In Chapter One, the anticlericalism of the secularists such as Holyoake against the Roman Catholic Church was important in justifying the rational autonomy of European civilians. Similarly, Yared writes of al-Kawakibi, "[He] accused the *shari'a* judges of accepting bribes, and the rulers of being flattered by the '*ulama* who misinterpret religion in order

[183] Abd al-Rahman al-Kawakibi, *Um al-Qura* (Aleppo: al-Matba'a al-'Asriyya, 1959), p. 228.
[184] Yared, "Secularism and the Arab World," 25.
[185] Ibid, 26.
[186] Ibid.

to gain money and position."[187] He critiqued the '*ulama* for being ignorant of "secular subjects," such as history and science. But al-Kawakibi cannot be described by what I shall later refine and refer to as a *comprehensive secularist* (in the sense of denying a religious framework or identity in life) for he supports the "principles of [Islam]," which he believes are immutable.[188] One central theme in his works is that he is critical of despotic rulers and the tyranny of despotism, and thus his thought should not be separated from this discourse. In essence, I place al-Kawakibi in the tradition of the *tanwir*, meaning "enlightenment," movement in Egypt, particularly since he supports portions of the "liberal-secularist" trends of 19th-20th century Egypt; in fact, modern citizens of the "Egyptian Enlightenment Association," a contemporary organization that seeks to strengthen the "the secularist conception of the nation-state," cite works such as his as a crucial part of their tradition.[189] Another influential Muslim in the debates on secularity is Ali Abd al-Raziq.

The Egyptian judge and scholar Ali Abd al-Raziq (1888-1966) is often cited as one of the first Muslim proponents of secularism in the form of the separation of religion and state.[190] He was born into a moderately wealthy and politically active family (his father was the first president of the *Umma Party*, which was the precursor of the Liberal Constitutionalist Party) in Egypt.[191] He studied at both the traditional Islamic al-Azhar University and also at Oxford University, where he pursued coursework in economics

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[187] Ibid, 65.
[188] Ibid, 111.
[189] Fauzi M. Najjar, "Ibn Rushd (Averroes) and the Egyptian Enlightenment Movement," *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, vol. 31, no. 2, (November 2004), 196.
The *Jam'iyyat al-Tanwir* was founded in 1992, and it consists of Egyptian "scholars and intellectuals." They hold seminars and lectures, and they also publish a bulletin, *al-Tanwir*, to spread their ideas.
[190] Yared, *Secularism and the Arab World*, 36.
[191] Hatina, "On the Margins of Consensus, 38.

and politics.[192] After returning from his studies abroad, he attained a judgeship in the *shari'a* court of Mansura, and in 1925 he published his "Islam and the Sources of Political Authority" (*al-Islam wa Usul al-Hukm*) in which he advocates that Islam is "purely" a religion and not a specific type of government; similarly, he writes that the political order in Muslim societies does not require the assimilation of religion into the temporal functions of the government.[193] Al-Raziq claims, "Islam [is] a religion and not a state, a message not a government, a spiritual edifice, not a political institution."[194] Additionally, he asserted the contentious claim that the Prophet Muhammad was a purely spiritual and not a worldly leader or a political king.[195] He further clarifies this trope by writing, "Muhammad, peace be upon him, was a Messenger of a religious call, full of religiosity, untainted by a tendency to kingship or a call for a government, and that he did not have a government, nor did he rule, and that he, peace be upon him, did not establish a kingdom…"[196] The results of publishing this work were quite consequential for al-Raziq. The "citadel of religious conservatism," as some scholars have dubbed al-Azhar, produced incisive criticism of his work. Those same critics rescinded his religious scholar certification (*'alim*) and inevitably forced him to resign from his judgeship in Mansura.[197] Al-Raziq's arguments were not, however, issued in politically or religiously vacuous environments.

He published *al-Islam wa Usul al-Hukm* in response to two larger events of his lifetime. First, many Egyptian nationalists and some of their European counterparts were

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[192] Ibid.
[193] Ibid.
[194] Larsson, "Yusuf al-Qaradawi and Tariq Ramadan," 50.
[195] Ali Abd al-Raziq, "Message Not Government, Religion Not State," in *Liberal Islam*, ed. Charles Kurzman (New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 29.
[196] Ibid.
[197] Hatina, "On the Margins of Consensus," 38.

attempting to separate politics as a "secular autonomous area of activity from theological consideration" (as we have seen in the discussion on legal reformation). Second, in 1924 Mustafa Kemal Ataturk (d. 1938), the founder of the Turkish Republic, abolished the caliphate.[198] In his effort to address these important issues, al-Raziq wrote that the caliphate was not a necessary political organization because it had no sound basis in Islamic doctrine; furthermore, the caliphate had been, according to him, a corrupt political formation and as such Muslims ought to embrace the prevailing political customs of their respective states—if possible the institution of liberal democracy that al-Raziq favored.[199] Charles Kurzman locates al-Raziq in the "silent *shari'a*" tradition, which says that the *shari'a* is silent on specific topics (such as the direct form of political community in which Muslims must live) and thus allows Muslims to live in democratic societies.[200] The controversial nature of this book forced him to defend his thesis.

In order to do so, he and his supporters (mostly prominent members in the Liberal Constitutionalist Party) cited the 1923 Egyptian Constitution, which in Clauses 3 and 12 ensured "full equality and freedom of religion," and he also cited the Qur'an, the *Sunna*, and his reading of Islamic history to substantiate his views on Islam's relation to the state.[201] By arguing from within religious sources as well as from premises steeped in the new constitutional system, al-Raziq's arguments reflect Locke's maneuver in 18th-century England, in which he accessed both religious and secular modes of argumentation. Interestingly and speaking to the immense pressure that his book

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[198] Ibid, 39. It is necessary to note here that the Turkish model of secularity is a very important one, indeed. I will discuss this model briefly in Chapter Three, but a larger project on Muslim responses to secularity would need to address this issue in depth.
[199] Ibid.
[200] Charles Kurzman, *Liberal Islam*, 14.
[201] Hatina, "On the Margins of Consensus," 36.

generated, al-Raziq recanted his position in 1955.[202] Regardless of his ultimate commitment to his original views, the importance of his writings is that they instigated widespread debate in the Muslim world—al-Qaradawi responds to them as we will see in Chapter Four—about one important feature of political secularism, namely the separation of Islam from the state.

Another leading voice regarding secularity and Islam was Qasim Amin (1865-1908). Amin was an Egyptian publicist, who fought for the emancipation and rights of Arab women.[203] His two most notable works, which sought reform of the family laws that allowed for polygamy and divorce via repudiation by the male, were "The Liberation of Women" and "The New Woman." One aspect of Amin's discourse regarding secularity was situated in his "anticlericalism." Amin, like al-Kawakibi, charged the '*ulama* with many iniquities. He criticizes the repression of knowledge that the '*ulama* supported by regretfully musing that "what a few legislators had laid down was the eternal truth, [and] nobody had the right to oppose it."[204] In essence, Amin, along with other reformers, critiqued the '*ulama* by accusing them of ignorance, of having knowledge of only religiously oriented subject matter (i.e. Islamic jurisprudence, linguistics, etc.). He wrote that these Islamic scholars were in need of knowledge of secular subjects—such as history and science—in order to make claims that normatively prescribe ethical standards for life *in this world* as a Muslim.[205] Once again, there are similarities between these Muslims' anti-'*ulama* sentiments and the criticisms leveled by Holyoake against the

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[202] Ibid. 40.
[203] U. Rizzitano, "Qasim Amin," *Encyclopedia of Islam, Second Edition*, ed. P. Bearman, Brill Online, accessed March 15, 2011, http://www.brillonline.nl.proxy.library.emory.edu/subscriber/uid=1906/entry?entry=islam_SIM-3985&refine_editions=islam_islam&result_number=1&search_text=Qasim+Amin#hit.
[204] Yared, *Secularism and the Arab World,* 63.
[205] Ibid.

clergy in England. All of these thinkers desired to move beyond the limiting and provincial claims of their respective religious scholars.

Amin believed that in order to progress Muslim societies had to provide for the flourishing of "freedom and independence of will."[206] Additionally, he makes the stronger argument for the autonomy of human reason from the constraints of tradition and even religion itself. He justifies his conclusions through the classical "two-truth" argument. The idea of the "two-truth" claim predates Amin's time, and one important advocate of this view was the famous Andalusian Muslim philosopher Ibn Rushd (d. 1198).[207] Briefly, one interpretation of this position is that though religion and science are both valid means for attaining the truth, they are subject to different rules, logical laws, and thus should not impose on one another.[208] Amin states that science is the foundation for truth and knowledge, and he writes that, "The new scientific discoveries in Europe liberated human reason from the power of delusion, assumption and superstition and made reason its own guide…culminating in the abolition of the power of the clergy."[209] He also notes that religion should be separated from the realm of reason and science. In this manner, Amin hopes to circumvent the potential conflicts between Islam and contemporary scientific knowledge, such as evolutionary theory.[210]

It is in this light that Amin writes, "The independence of man's will is the most important moral factor in his advancement."[211] This is assuredly a sentiment with which

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[206] Ibid, 139.
[207] Oliver Leaman, "Ibn Rushd," *Oxford Encyclopedia of the Islamic World,* Oxford Islamic Studies Online, accessed March 11, 20011, http://www.oxfordislamicstudies.com.proxy.library.emory.edu/article/opr/t236/e0342?_hi=1&_pos=1.
[208] Ibid.
[209] Yared, *Secularism and the Arab World*, 99.
[210] Ibid, 46.
[211] Ibid, 67.

Holyoake would have agreed. The last Muslim intellectual that I will discuss is Fouad Zakariyya, and his support for secularism best illustrates all of the concerns of the aforementioned thinkers.

Fouad Zakariyya was born in Port Said, Egypt in 1927. He received his PhD from ‘Ayn Shams University in Philosophy, and he taught there until 1974. Zakariyya left ‘Ayn Shams to assume a professorship at Kuwait University, where he taught until 1991. Ibrahim Abu-Rabi describes Zakariyya as a supporter of Arab “self-criticism,” and he has also been called “one of the most famous secularists in the contemporary Arab world.”[212] Zakariyya’s thoughts concerning secularity are most evident in his book *Myth and Reality in the Contemporary Islamist Movement*.

He published this work after the assassination of Egyptian President Anwar Sadat in 1981 by Muslim extremists and in the wake of the Islamic Revolution in Iran in 1979. There are four, central arguments of this book. First, he believes that religion must be de-politicized if it is to avoid exploitation at the hands of the state and extremists. Second, political secularism *qua* separation of religion and the state is the optimal solution to the current societal problems that are prevalent in the Arab world, and this form of secularism must permit expression of religious identity in the public sphere. Third, secularity in the form of the tradition of theological rationalism has always been important in Islamic history. Zakariyya cites the works of the Mu’tazilites, Ibn Rushd, and al-Farabi as evidence of this importance. He also states that Muslims must be cautious of adapting the Western paradigms of secularity, while maintaining those

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[212] Zakariyya, Fouad, *Myth and Reality in the Contemporary Islamist Movement*, trans. Ibrahim Abu-Rabi. (London, Ann Arbor: Pluto Press, 2005), VIII-IX.
Bing-Bing Wu, “Secularism and Secularization in the Arab World,” *Journal of Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies in Asia*, vol. 1, no. 1 (2007).

aspects that are unique to their own experiences. Fourth, the Islamists' call for the implementation of the *shari'a* is misguided and has led to severe political, economic, and social problems in the Arab world.[213]

In chapter two of Zakariyya's book, entitled "Secularism: A Civilizational Requirement," he makes no pretense regarding his support for secularism. In this section he writes, " 'Secularism' has become the most important current term, used not only in Arab cultural circles but also in political circles, religious platforms, and in almost every book dealing with any aspect of life in the contemporary Arab and Muslim worlds."[214] He qualifies this statement by observing that it is likewise one of the most misunderstood concepts in Muslim societies. In his initial reflection, he addresses the concern of translating secularism into Arabic. I will discuss these issues in the last section of this chapter, but he ultimately supports the use of *zamaniyah* and *'almaniyah* meaning "temporality" or "time" and "worldly," respectively.[215] He supports this interpretation by citing the Latin source of *saeculum*, which has been discussed at length in Chapter One. In this same section, he writes that though secularism has its roots in the European experiences of the Renaissance and Enlightenment and can be understood as the call to separate the state, politics, and religion, ultimately it is a "universal mindset" that is directly correlated to progress, development, and the flourishing of the human life and intellect. He does, however, demarcate two historical periods of secularist thought in the Muslim world, both of which revolve around the Muslim encounter with the West.

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[213] Zakariyya, *Myth and Reality*, IX.
It should be kept in mind that the "Islamists" hold *vastly* diverse political and theological views, though Zakariyya tends to group them all together monolithically. The term itself (*Islamism*) is highly debated, and "Islamists'" views should not be perceived as homogenous. For two great studies on this issue that point to the complexity within Islamism, see Richard Martin's *Islamism* and Carrie R. Wickham's *Mobilizing Islam*.
[214] Ibid, 13.
[215] Ibid, 14.

He claims that the first stage of secularism in Egypt began with reformist policies of governmental officials like Muhammad Ali, whom I mentioned earlier in this thesis. This "camp" of secularists was enamored with the West and its technological superiority, and they attempted to reform Islamicate societies according to Western criteria; they thus adopted Western societal models, and these reforms were mostly in the arena of "praxis," i.e. education, politics, and economics.[216] After the Muslim achievement of independence from colonial powers, Zakariyya believes a new camp of secularists arose.[217] This new camp did not correspond to a specific political ideology, but rather its proponents rallied around a negative definition, namely they opposed and defined themselves in opposition to the "Islamists," who Zakariyya describes as those Muslims who attempt to subjugate all sectors of human life to religious authority and who aim to "Islamize" all of these sectors as well.[218] In this sense, the new secularists identified diversely as nationalists, leftists, or liberals, but they all denied the goals and aims of the Islamist movements. In this manner, Zakariyya describes political secularism as the objective of denying the Islamist political solution.

He desires to correct the misinterpretations that he thinks imbue Muslim discourses of secularism. He labels the critiques of secularism into two groupings, the "rhetorical critique," which fundamentally misunderstand secularist principles, and the "semi-scientific" criticisms, which, though more logically sound, still do not withstand his scrutiny. One rhetorical critique is labeling secularism as *la diniyyah*, or "no religion."[219] Though perhaps the Islamists' most "powerful weapon," Zakariyya believes

[216] Ibid, 15.
[217] Ibid, 17.
[218] Ibid, 16-17.
[219] Ibid, 23-24.

that this attack egregiously misunderstands secularism. He counters that, rather, many secularists abide by marriage contracts construed in religious terms; they gain inspiration from their religious scruples, which affect their ethical and spiritual lives; and they maintain all of these aspects while supporting secularism as a foundation for society—though Zakariyya admits that some secularists are atheists.[220] In this way, atheism and irreligion are not essential to the tents of secularism, as its opponents would frame it in a red-herring type of logic.

The "semi-scientific" critiques are more potent and intellectually engaging. They claim that secularism is only linked to one particular moment in the historical experience of Europe. If proponents of this thesis are correct, then secularism cannot be authentic to Muslim-majority societies, which did not undergo the political, social, religious, or scientific events of Europe's past. These opponents of secularism accuse this doctrine of being a Western plot against Islam, and they believe that Muslims who support it are either "willing participants" or "naïve tools."[221]

But Zakariyya does not define secularism as limited to any one historical context, nor to a mere a politico-religious doctrine, which seeks only to separate religion and politics. In attempting to understand secularity as a universal experience and concept, Zakariyya focuses on the authenticity of secularist principles in Islamic societies. He admits that one of the factors that led to the development of secularity was the conflict between scientific intellectuals and the repressive clergy of the institutionalized structure known as the church in Medieval Europe.[222] In this way, he recognizes how adversaries claim that since Islam never had such an official institution, the Islamic historical context

[220] Ibid, 25-26.
[221] Ibid, 29.
[222] Ibid, 34.

is simply not analogous to that of the West. Zakariyya counters that those who support this view misread Islamic history. In his opinion, it was the broader issue of religious authority, not just in the single form of the Catholic Church, which was at the heart of the matter that catalyzed the development of secularity in Europe. In his analysis, Islam has always had religious authority, which has at times conflicted with the various Muslim political powers and which has often been exploited by those same powers as well. Since Islam contained this comparable authority, it too was subject to the conditions of secularity. He mentions that representatives of this authority included Al-Azhar University in Cairo, the Egyptian Ifta' Council, as well as the '*ulama*, men who specialized in religious texts and matters, of every Islamic region.[223] He also writes that these conditions are more prevalent in *Shi'a* Islam, but this is another topic in and of itself.

A corollary of this type of opposition to secularism is that while Christianity is not "comprehensive," Islam is, and it affects every sector of Muslims' lives, whether it is political, social, or economical. Zakariyya writes that, on the contrary, "Catholic" means "universal," and at the time of the growth of secularity, the Catholic Church struggled to maintain its authority and universal control over these same areas.[224] He adds that even in Islam there has been conflict between the '*ulama* and scientific intellectuals, and thus religious authority has attempted to subjugate worldly-knowledge, evoking the clashes between scientists and the church in Europe. In these examples, he develops his position that Islamicate societies contain the same conditions that can lead to the secularity that the West has experienced, though he is careful to mention that Muslims should not adopt

[223] Ibid, 35.
[224] Ibid, 35-36.

"wholesale" every experience that the West has had. He also seeks to establish support for secularity as a universal experience, which falls under what we have defined as philosophical secularism.

Zakariyya asks: why do Muslims reject the fact that good ideas can be applied anywhere, regardless of their origin?[225] He cites the concept of democracy, which he supports, and he argues that though it is Greek in origin, it is still applicable to all areas of the world. The main tenet of his philosophical secularism is its opposition to what he calls the "Medieval Mind," or any form or method of thinking that relies on claims of absolute truth based on a religious text or that subjugates reason, logic, and critical thinking; secularism can be reduced, in this account, to the support for the autonomy of the human mind and the rejection of "authoritarian thinking." In this vein, he writes, "Secularism reflects a constant intellectual necessity on the part of any society trying to break from authoritarianism and move towards autonomous reason."[226]

He argues that one of the central claims of Islamists is that secularists are simply imitating and aping the West. Zakariyya believes quite the opposite is true. Since the essence of secularist discourse is independence and autonomy, secularists must not blindly accept Western models, but rather must seek to integrate that which is good and develop their own systems, which are authentic to their situations. He explicitly states that secularity promotes an epistemology that is similar to that of European secularists such as Holyoake: there are multiple paths to truth and humans must rely on their autonomous reason to discover these truth-values.[227]

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[225] Ibid, 37.
[226] Ibid, 41.
[227] Ibid, 10.

By framing secularity in this manner, Zakariyya illustrates its organic nature in the Islamic experience. He believes that many Muslims have supported this concept and epistemology; he writes that the importance of rationality, logic, mental independence, and criticism are found in the Islamic tradition, and he suggests, "Contemporary secularists in the Muslim world need not be carbon copies of modern Western thinkers, but rather an extension of the rational tradition of the Mu`tazilites, al-Farabi, Ibn Rushd, and Ibn al-Haytham." [228] By linking secularity to an Islamic tradition and a universal, human mindset, Zakariyya establishes the permissibility and even the necessity of developing more explicitly this foundational governing philosophy, both for individuals' lives and the functions of government.

Three of Zakariyya's most stern rebuttals against the various Islamist positions are his adamant denial of the viability of implementing *shari'a* (even its possibility), his insistence on the failure of state-experiments that have attempted to apply *shari'a* with coercive laws, and the negative effects of the Islamists' "total" Islam (*islam shamil*). First, Zakariyya argues that the main goal of Islamists is "an immediate implementation of the *shari'a*."[229] Their reasoning is that while positive law is human—ergo fallible—the *shari'a* is "divinely ordained." The choice for these Muslims regarding which law is superior is, in this regard, a manifestly facile one. Zakariyya rejoins, "Are we really in a position to choose between divine jurisdiction and human legislation?"[230] Zakariyya investigates the history of Islam and decides that only in the lifetime of the Prophet Muhammad did Muslims encounter laws that were implemented in a "divine nature," since the messenger of God oversaw this process; fallible human beings made every

[228] Ibid, 41.
[229] Ibid, 129.
[230] Ibid, 130.

ruling, interpretation, and implementation thereafter.[231] In this way, he problematizes the Islamists' claim by seeking to show that divine law can never truly reign. The objection, however, to his maneuver is that (most) scholars of *fiqh*, which is human interpretation of Islamic law, admit that their search for legal rulings are *attempts* at understanding and applying divine law; most would confess their fallibility. Regardless, Zakariyya moves on to the question of the viability of implementing *shari'a*, failed experiments in the Sudan, Pakistan, and Saudi Arabia, and how these two aspects merge to demonstrate the need for a different understanding of the *shari'a.*

He poses the pragmatic question: *how* do we implement the *shari'a*?[232] He mentions that there are two broad aspects of the *shari'a*, the negative and the positive. The negative facets are represented in the *huddud*, or penalties for transgressions, such as cutting off the hands of thieves, flogging drunkards, and stoning prostitutes.[233] Zakariyya suggests that these punishments are limited to the wicked, and that, rather, Islamists ought to more clearly formulate the positive aspects of *shari'a*, which will guide the lives of the righteous. He remarks that in the examples of the states that uphold *huddud*, the *shari'a* fails to amend the social problems and evils that exist. He believes that since society has become infinitely more complicated since the times of the revelation, Muslims must look to the general principles of the *shari'a*, if they are to effectively address societal problems.

He writes, "Has even one reader heard of one program sponsored by a religious movement that would ameliorate our economic crisis, or take responsibility for our natural resources, our balance of payment, the relationship between the private and public

[231] Ibid, 133.
[232] Ibid, 134.
[233] Ibid, 198.

sectors, and our heavy financial debt?"[234] Perhaps Zakariyya's statements unfairly represent the contributions of religious persons in Egyptian society, but his point is clear: Muslims must look to the general principles of Islam and then establish methods that are steeped in an understanding of the nuances and complexities of modernity. In mentioning the "general principles" of Islam, Zakariyya alludes to the *maqasid al-shari'a*, which is a "controversial discourse within premodern Islamic jurisprudence, which argues that Islamic law can be derived not only from textual interpretation but also from conjecture about which basic aims and interests God intends to protect through law."[235] As an example, he cites the Qur'anic notion of charity (*ihsan*). Though there are many ways to implement charity, he advocates that Muslims need an adequate understanding of modern economies if they desire to change and reform the prevailing systems. Lastly, Zakariyya disagrees with the idea of "total" Islam, or *islam shamil,* that the Islamists propose, and in doing so he advocates for a different "public vision" of Islam.

The essence of the debate among modern Islamists and secularists, according to Zakariyya, is the vision for a totalistic or complete-form of Islam.[236] Zakariyya opposes *islam shamil* with two explanations. First, he believes that *islam shamil* creates a "conceptual seclusion" between the world of Islam and the world of the "other." This view is represented in the classical Islamic division of the world as the *daar al-Islam* and the *daar al-harb*—the "abode of Islam" and the "abode of war."[237] The logical conclusion of the "hard" version of *islam shamil* is that any "non-Islamic" system cannot

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[234] Ibid, 125.
[235] Andrew March, "Reading Tariq Ramadan: Political Liberalism, Islam, and 'Overlapping Consensus'" *Ethics & International Affairs*, vol. 21, no. 4 (Winter), 407.
[236] Zakariyya *Myth and Reality*, 143.
[237] Richard C. Martin and Mark R. Woodward, *Defenders of Reason in Islam. Mu'atazilism from Medieval School to Modern Symbol* (Oxford: Oneworld, 1997), 232.

be accepted or integrated into the "Islamic" system. Zakariyya points to two examples of "systems" that he thinks the Islamic world *ought* to embrace, but which historically have been controversial among some Muslims—Greek philosophy and art forms such as sculpture and statues. Given Zakariyya's educational and vocational background in philosophy, the first should come as no surprise. He also takes issue with Muslims who reject these art forms when he asks, "Why [would] we deny ourselves the appreciation of a sublime art that cultivates our tastes and adds beauty and harmony to our lives?"[238] Because a "hard" interpretation of *islam shamil* secludes Islam and Muslims from the benefits of universal values and institutions, Zakariyya ardently opposes it.

Andrew March writes that, "It is, of course, well known that amongst world religions, Islam has perhaps the most unequivocal claim to a public, political vision."[239] This claim is supported by other research, such as that of the famous Wilfred Cantwell Smith's *The Meaning and End of Religion,* in which he argues that Islam, of all religions, seems to entail and prescribe the most "organized" and "systematized" expression of religion.[240] Smith writes, "Islam, it could be argued, may well in fact be characterized by a rather unique insistence upon itself as a coherent and closed system, a sociologically and legally and even politically organized entity in the mundane world and an ideologically organized entity as an ideal."[241] Since Islam is prone to developing these different visions—political, social, legal—Zakariyya believes that the shape that it ultimately takes will be very important for Muslim-majority societies.

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[238] Zakariyya, *Myth and Reality*, 143.
[239] Andrew March, "Are Secularism and Neutrality Attractive to Religious Minorities?," 2828.
[240] Wilfred Cantwell Smith, *The Meaning and End of Religion* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991), 84.
[241] Ibid, 84.

He expresses his concern for Islam's "public vision" in his writings. Though he does not render a specific, clear vision of how Islam ought to operate in the socio-political fabric of his Egyptian society, Zakariyya unambiguously opposes his Islamist rivals. He thinks that Muslims must start with the general principles of Islam (as per his example *ihsan*) and then move to the specifics of transforming these ideals into a reality. He believes that the immediate application of *hudud* is *not* efficacious in terms of solving the present iniquities in Muslim societies, and he argues that Muslims must view the *shari'a* as more than a legal code and beyond these punishments. In essence, he criticizes "totalistic Islam" by claiming, "Wouldn't the strict and rigid application of the principle of 'total Islam' lead to the…drawing of a heavy curtain between us and the currents of thought, literature, and art so widespread in the contemporary world?"[242] The result of totalistic Islam is the "monolithic mind," which he considers intolerant, narrow-minded, and resentful of both rationality and logic.[243]

What we can infer about his public vision of Islam is that it must allow for freedom and independence of thought, the permissibility of dissention from strict religious authority, the dissolution of the classical formation that Islam is both *din wa dawla* (Religion and State), and the de-politicization of Islam, since both political figures and Islamists have exploited religion for their own ends.[244] He thinks that this reconsideration of Islam's place in society must mold the contours of his contemporary Egyptian political scene by prohibiting individuals and groups to claim that "heaven" or

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[242] Zakariyya, *Myth and Reality*, 143.
[243] Zakariyya, *Myth and Reality*, 19.
[244] Nader Hashemi, "Secularism," *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Islamic World*, Oxford Islamic Studies Online, accessed February 15, 2011, http://www.oxfordislamicstudies.com.proxy.library.emory.edu/article/opr/t236/e0714?_hi=0&_pos=1#match.

"God" is on their side and in doing so render all other opinions "atheistic" or "evil." He writes, "[social conflicts] must take place on a human platform," expressing his desire that humans address social problems by social means. Zakariyya would be comfortable with American philosopher Richard Rorty's (d. 2007) critique of religion as a "conversation stopper," by which he meant that religion presents an impediment to democratic communication when its supporters equate their opinions with God's own, which automatically stops any possibility for negotiation, debate, and compromise.[245] The analyses of Zakariyya's thought have underscored many of the themes present in Chapter One.

Zakriyya's writings are in accord with Holyoake's description of free-thought and the priority of "this-world." His support for the separation of religion and the state resonates with the *Letter* written by Locke, in that it seeks to establish freedom of consciousness and tolerance for heterogeneity of knowledge systems. In concluding, I will focus on one final point that Zakariyya accentuates: the authenticity of secularity in Islamic societies.

The issue of the authenticity of secularist principles and ideals in Islamicate societies is an important one indeed. Azzam Tamimi, Director of the Institute of Islamic Political Thought in London, insists that secularism is both a Christian product as well as an ideology that the West introduced during colonial times; this ideology, he explains, developed within the context of the European colonial regimes and was used by these colonial powers within an assemblage of discourses, including modernization and westernization.[246] In Asad's work, the foreign-birth of secularism is unmistakable

[245] Richard Rorty, *Philosophy and Social Hope* (New York: Penguin, 1999), 169, 173.
[246] Azzam Tamimi, "The Origins of Arab Secularism," in *Islam and Secularism in the Middle East*,

because he argues that secularism is *only* conceivable within the framework of the modernization of the Egyptian state, which by its very nature incorporated the influences of the Western colonial powers. Other Middle Eastern scholars confirm this idea. Wu Bing-Bing, an Islamic Studies scholar at Beijing University, agrees with this position, writing, "Secularism emerged in the Arab world under the Western influence."[247] I have already mentioned Nazik Saba Yared's book *Secularism and the Arab World*, which supports this notion as well.

As Abdou Filali-Ansary has written, "In the Muslim world, secularization is preceding religious reformation—a reversal of the European experience in which secularization was more or less a consequence of such reformation."[248] According to Filali-Ansary, and Hashemi for this matter, if secularist principles are to succeed in the Muslim world, then organic, indigenous religious reformation must likewise appear—the Muslim world stands in need of thinkers such as Martin Luther, according to this system of thinking. From the different analyses in this thesis, however, I am wary that we can attribute religious reformation as *the* key for establishing secularity, as this essentializes the rise of secularity in a way that misses the complexity of the necessary, interrelated social, political, and scientific events that led to this rise. The proponents of secularism counter these claims by attempting to demonstrate that aspects of secularity have always been present in the historical Islamic tradition.

We have seen how al-Kawakibi contended that the separation of religion and the state has been part and parcel of the historical Islamic experience, with the possible exception of the Rashidun caliphate. In claiming this, al-Kawakibi tried to remove his

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(London: Hurst & Company, 2000), 13-14.

[247] Bingbing Wu, "Secularism and Secularization," 55.

[248] Nader Hashemi, *Islam, Secularism, and Liberal Democracy,* 70.

statements from the colonial confines to which his opponents would attach them. Similarly, al-Raziq went as far as to claim that the Prophet himself was a spiritual leader, who did not dictate the specific form of a political community or wield worldly, political power. In this account, the caliphate was not necessary, and Muslims were free to accept a government founded on secular principles. Zakariyya located secularity in the tradition of theological and philosophical rationalism, which he found in the history of Islamic thinking. The scholar of Islam should look to the nature of the historical relationships among sources of religious authority, such as the '*ulama*, and the officials of the various Islamic states to see if such aspects of political secularism have existed in Islamic history. One can ask objective questions such as, "Has there been some form of split, division, or functional differentiation among worldly, political powers and manifestations of religious authority like the '*ulama* or al-Azhar?"

As Angel Rabasa has argued, "That politics was not coterminous with religion was true not only in the Western European tradition but also in the lands of Islam."[249] Leaving aside the contested formative era of the Islamic dynasties, if one looks to the Turkish Seljuq (c. 1037-1194) and Ottoman Empires (1299-1923) the political and religious leadership was split between the sultanate, possessing political power, and the caliphate, wielding political legitimacy and religious authority.[250] The vying and sometimes embattled nature between these institutions is similar, though certainly *not* identical, to the feuds mentioned by Keane and Casanova among political rulers in Medieval Europe and the Pope. The caliphate was *not* the same as the papacy, but it nonetheless represented an institutionalized, religious authority, which served to

[249] Angel Rabasa, "Ideology, Not Religion" in *Islamism*. *Contested Perspectives on Political Islam*, ed. Richard C. Martin and Abbas Barzegar (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2010), 111.
[250] Ibid, 224.

legitimize, contest, and sometimes be exploited by the political might of the various sultans. The authenticity of secularity is an integral question that must be asked by both Muslim proponents of secularity and scholars attempting to understand its history with Islam.

As I have presented secularity, one should not confine it in the parochial manner in which many of its opponents do. In so far as we define secularity in terms of the political secularism, I agree with thinkers like Asad. It would be anachronistic and poor intellectual history to contend that Islamic societies developed such forms of government in the past, just as it would be false to make a parallel claim about European societies before the historical experiences described in Chapter One. But this does not imply, then, that Muslims have never experienced and struggled with aspects of secularity prior to colonialism. Muslims have always lived "in this world," and the challenges presented by this life are natural for religious persons, the struggle between living in the "sacred" and the "secular" worlds. Similarly, the tradition of theological rationalism embodied by Muslim theologians (*mutakallimun*) in schools like the Mu'tazila offer evidence of important strands of secularity, which have been present in Islam since pre-modern times. It is beyond the scope of this thesis, however, to exhaustively address this issue. In the last section of this chapter, I explore the translations of secularism into Arabic.

Though the scope of this thesis is not historical-linguistic, the different renditions of "secularism" into Arabic are, in themselves, quite revealing. For example, one Arabic word used to represent secularism is *'ilmaniyah*, from the Arabic *'ilm*, which means "science" or "knowledge."[251] Thus, secularism has been associated with the natural sciences, which are not distinctively or by their definitions "religious." In this case,

[251] Tamimi, "The Origins of Arab Secularism," 13.

secularism is associated with the "mundane" or natural (not supernatural) functions of the universe. Another expression used to define secularism is *'almaniyah*, which is derived from the Arabic word *'alam*, meaning "world."

The term *'almaniyah* did not enter the Arabic lexicon until the middle of the 19th century, and Asad uses this fact to argue that the concept of secularism was not required or needed in political debates in the Arab world until this time period, which coincided with the expansion of European colonial powers in places like Egypt.[252] Another interesting understanding of '*almaniyah* is that it implicated, in some contexts, knowledge of Islam—that is to say '*almaniyah* as opposed to *jahil*, or ignorance and paganism.[253] Asad points to the intriguing situation in which the word '*almaniyah* developed when he claims that the verb *'almana* (which means "to secularize") was "invented" by extrapolating from the abstract noun *'almaniyah*; this is a unique process as most Arabic abstract nouns are derived from the root verbal form.[254] Asad expands on this notion that, additionally, the term secularization was understood in a rather strictly legal sense, referring to the transfer of property. [255]

Asad writes that the verb *'almana* literally meant, "the transfer to worldly purposes of endowments and properties pertaining to worship and religion."[256] Thus in this sense, secularization referred to the process whereby monies originally utilized for "religious" projects (Asad gives the example of constructing a mosque) are, rather, used for "non-religious" purposes, such as building hospitals or secular schools. Furthermore, the Badger's *English-Arabic Lexicon* (published in 1881) includes two translations for

[252] Asad, *Formations of the Secular,* 206-209.
[253] Ibid.
[254] Ibid.
[255] Ibid.
[256] Ibid. 207

the English word "secular."[257] These terms are: *'almaniyy* and *'ammiyy*, which connote "lay, not clerical." But these words carry more baggage. For example, secondary meanings are: "common," "vulgar," "popular," and "ordinary."[258]

Two final meanings are *dunyawiyah*, meaning, "that which is worldly," and *la diniyah*, meaning "no religion or non-religious."[259] These terms reflect controversial interpretations of secularism. *Dunyawiyah* is in contrast to the spiritual, and *la diniyah*, as Zakariyya explained it earlier, is a "weapon" used by some Muslims to argue against and reject secularism as a foundation for society. The question remains: what do these elements of Islam and secularity presented in this chapter indicate for how scholars should analyze, categorize, and write about the political secularism of secular Muslims?

As Zakariyya mentioned, one simple way of defining secular Muslims is theological: they are the atheists or the anti-religionists. Secular Muslims in this system are those Muslims who have left Islam or deny its primary tenets. Secular Muslims have, in this sense, extirpated the first half (the religious identity) of Mahfouz's description of the Cairene Muslim that I highlighted in the beginning of this chapter. Undoubtedly this is one method of understanding secular Muslims' relation to secularity, and I do not deny that atheism is one framework that secular Muslims and, more generally, secular persons proclaim. But this is an unsophisticated and presumptuous model that is imbued within a theological sub-text, which we shall see in Chapter Four. Generalizing all secularists in this manner is hardly the content of an academic analysis.

In the conclusion of Chapter One, I defined politically secular as a relative term that indicates one's support for some aspect of political secularism. In observing the legal

[257] Ibid.
[258] Ibid.
[259] Keane, "The Limits of Secularism," 35.

changes in 19th-20th century Egypt, one could argue that the secular Muslim, in this environment, was the individual who championed the cause of the secular legal system. Applying this conception to modern times, some secular Muslims might support the importation (or at least the reformation of their legal systems along secular criteria) of Western secular systems of government, society, and education, the separation of *shari'a* from the legal system, or at least its marginalization. In al-Kawakibi's writings, the secular Muslim might have endorsed the abolishment of the caliphate, the separation of a purely spiritual caliphate from a politically and worldly oriented sultanate, or, in today's political environment, the flourishing of other types of secular governments in Muslim societies.

Ali Abd al-Raziq provides another model for Muslim visions of political secularism. In this context, secular Muslims might support the view that Islam is *not* a state, *not* a government. They might support the general separation of Islam and the state. Qasim Amin's descriptions reach further in that he advocated for the freedom of the human mind and will from religious authority. This is a secularist principle in line with its description in Chapter One. In this context, the secular Muslim might join Amin in declaring his or her rational autonomy from religious constraints or theological conceptions. Zakariyya presented the most nuanced and engaged reflections on secularism.

In reviewing Zakariyya, we have seen that the issue of secularism is more complex than the theological definition allows. He associates secularism with rational autonomy and independence of thinking (portions of what we have called philosophical secularism), support for the separation of religion and state and the de-politicization of

religion (aspects of what we have called political secularism), and the denial of the Islamist totalistic project and their public vision for Islam. Zakariyya views the *shari'a* as the general principles of Islam, which cannot be reduced to the *hudud*; in fact, the call for implementation of these laws is not only misguided but has utterly failed, in his opinion, in the states to which he alludes: the Sudan, Pakistan, and Saudi Arabia. While claiming to be a secularist, he does not deny the ethical and spiritual values of Islam. This model of secularism, which accounts for philosophical, religious, and political formations, more realistically and sophisticatedly represents the claims and normative ideals of many secular Muslims than does the simple equation of secularism with atheism. In observing Muslim conceptions of secularism in Zakariyya's thought, secular Muslims could adhere to his pluralistic epistemology, rational independence, or his vision of Islam as a spiritual and ethical, but not *legal*, force in Islamicate societies.

One final point to consider is that we must be wary of imputing the model, described by Amir Hussein, of "good Muslim"/"bad Muslim" to the "secularist"/"Islamist" dichotomy.[260] One should *not* equate secularism, in general, with beneficent or ethically righteous government or society. Historically, there have been many examples of "secular" regimes or governments that have ruled under the auspices of secularism and which have engaged in grave atrocities.[261] The toppling of "secular" regimes in Egypt and Tunisia reminds us of the fact that these formations of government do not necessarily promote the liberal-democratic values that many believed they would.

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[260] Martin, *Islamism*, 6.

[261] Tamimi, "The Origins of Arab Secularism," 27.
Challenging the link between secularism and democracy, Azzam Tamimi writes that "enforced secularization" actually destroys the principles of democracy (such as individual liberty and free and fair elections); he cites, for example, the success of the Islamic Salvation Front in Algeria. In this case, the secularists used the army to subdue the "Islamists." Tamimi writes, "They cheered as tanks crushed the ballot boxes and as thousands of citizens were apprehended and jailed in detention camps set up in the desert." He mentions that the massacre of Islamists in Hamma, Syria is another example.

The motifs described in this chapter are also underscored in research on one of contemporary Islam's most famous thinkers: Tariq Ramadan.

Chapter Three

Tariq Ramadan—A Soft Political Secularist

From Chapters One and Two, it is clear that there is not one simple sense in which Muslims can be secular in their general outlook, or even in their specific perceptions of secularism. There are, however, at least two broad categories, which typify qualities of politically secular Muslims. Applying the political philosophies of the earlier mentioned Andrew March and Nader Hashemi, I propose two unique typologies of political secularism. In one sense, there is "*soft political secularism*," which is a doctrine of social and political cooperation, which, similar to political liberalism, "seeks to elaborate the most reasonable public conception of justice and citizenship for free and equal persons, given the existence of disagreement *on the ultimate meaning of life and the epistemological foundations for discovering it*. [emphasis added]"[262] Due to the religious plurality that characterizes modern societies, this form of secularism claims that governmental systems should not be based on any one, comprehensive doctrine, be it comprehensively secular or religious. The other analytical category is "*hard political secularism*," which asserts that the secular metaphysical system is true and epistemologically valid, thus authenticating its propagation as a political system that attempts to purge various forms of religious expression from society. Two converse responses to these typologies are: 1) the Muslim-Brotherhood affiliation and 2) the *Salafi*-rhetorical tradition, but we will not examine these until Chapter Four on Yusuf al-Qaradawi and others.[263]

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[262] March, "Reading Tariq Ramadan," 401.

[263] March, "Islamic Discussions of Western Secularism," 2825. I am adapting these categories from the political theory of this scholar. He distinguishes between *political liberalism* and *political perfectionism*, in

Tariq Ramadan's Stance

Tariq Ramadan is an important Muslim figure in the debates regarding secularity. I claim that he exhibits a *soft political secularist* position in his writings because, while asserting himself to be a devout Muslim who follows the traditional practices (*'ibadat)* and traditional beliefs (*usul al-din*), he likewise advocates for the separation of religion and state, freedom of a plurality of religious expressions, and an "overlapping consensus" with people of both secular and religious systems. His secularist attitude does, however, allow for Islam to claim an important role in the "public sphere," including both the political *decision-making* institutions of European societies and in the diverse *open-discussion f*orums as well. I will clarify these aspects of the public sphere in my discussion on John Rawls, the American philosopher of liberal-democratic theory.

It is advantageous to know Ramadan's background—religious, cultural, and nationality(s)—before delving into his work and thought on secularity. Ramadan (b. 1962) is the grandson of Hasan al-Banna (d. 1969), who founded the Muslim Brotherhood, and he is the son of Said Ramadan (d. 1995), who was expelled from Egypt by the regime of President Nasser because of his activities with the Brotherhood.[264] As such, his family is (in)famously involved in the issue of Islam and politics. In an interview with Anthony McRoy, Ramadan responds to a question about his identity, "Now I don't have only one identity. I have what I call multiple identity. Muslim by religion, I am Swiss by nationality and connected to the Swiss political and civil reality. I

his "Hidden Bodies" essay mentioned earlier, Richard C. Martin distinguishes between "hard" and "soft" versions of secularism.

[264] Larsson, "Yusuf al-Qaradawi and Tariq Ramadan," 54.

am Egyptian by heritage…its deep inside me that I am nurturing this multiple identity."[265]

Ramadan was born in Switzerland and attained a PhD in Arabic and Islamic studies from the University of Geneva, though he wrote his dissertation on Friedrich Nietzsche.[266] After this university education, Ramadan undertook a twenty-month stay in Egypt, during which time he says he attempted to "cover a five-year university curriculum," and he writes that he studied with a private scholar (*'alim*) for intensive amounts of time during this stay.[267] In 2004, he accepted a tenured professorship at Notre Dame University in the United States, but the Bush Administration revoked his visa, citing that he had donated monies to "terrorist organizations."[268] Through the dedicated efforts of the ACLU and other organizations, the U.S. State Department overturned this decision in 2010, and Ramadan was allowed entrance into the U.S., though he remains—at the time of this thesis—barred from six Muslim countries, including Saudi Arabia, Syria, and Egypt.[269]

In various interviews, he has been referred to as the "Muslim Martin Luther" and the "John Locke" of Islam.[270] Whether or not these labels are warranted or if the historical situations of these different intellectuals are truly analogous, these appellations highlight Ramadan's centrality to the Islamic discourse on secularity. Additionally, his

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[265] Anthony McRoy, "The Multiple Identity of Tariq Ramadan: European Muslim" *Christian Century*, August 21, 2007, 30.
[266] Joseph A. Kechichian, "Ramadan, Tariq Said," *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Islamic World*, Oxford Islamic Studies Online, accessed March 20, 2011, http://www.oxfordislamicstudies.com/article/opr/t236/e0914.
[267] Tariq Ramadan, *What I Believe* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 12-13.
[268] Kechichian, "Ramadan, Tariq Said," 1.
[269] YouTube, "Riz Khan-Tariq Ramadan," *YouTube*, May 1, 2010, http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3S-7sgbOt3k&feature=related
[270] YouTube, "Tariq Ramadan Interview with Laura Wells, Part 1," *YouTube*, June 25, 2009, http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KllgL0xWjD4.

"multiple identity" imparts him with a distinctive perspective, since he has unique access and understanding of both his world of historical heritage—Egypt—and his contemporary world of political citizenship—Switzerland. Indeed, as Larsson claims, the most integral objective of Ramadan's work and publications is to provide a framework and identity for Muslims who live in the West that both integrates the "good" aspects of non-Muslim cultures and embraces traditional Islamic values, ideals, and ethics.[271]

In his recent book *What I Believe*, Ramadan states that Muslim perceptions of the tenets, meanings, and fundamentals of secularism have greatly influenced their actions and attitudes towards the West.[272] Qualifying this statement, however, he believes that most Muslims are misguided and have largely misinterpreted what these principles of secularism are. For most non-Muslims in the West, secularism is tantamount to freedom, democracy, and religious pluralism, but, conversely, for many Muslims secularism is indicative of quite the opposite; for most Muslims, secularism is associated with tyrannical despotism, colonialism, de-Islamization, and outright opposition to religion in general and Islam in particular.[273] In an interview on the Qatar-based news agency *Al-Jazeera* with Riz Khan, Ramadan says that the colonial experience in the Middle East is the reason that Muslims have this negative association. In support of this colonial-centered interpretation, he cites the translation in Arabic of secularism as *la diniyah*, or "no-religion."[274] This term is one that we encountered in Chapter Two, but it is, of course, tilted towards a polemical view of secularism. Ramadan contends that Muslims need to re-evaluate the tenets of secularism, if they desire to meaningfully *contribute* to

[271] Larsson, "Yusuf al-Qaradawi and Tariq Ramadan," pp. 54.
[272] Ramadan, *What I Believe*, 30.
[273] Ibid, 31.
[274] "Riz Khan and Tariq Ramadan."

European society and not merely adapt to the Western world.[275] He seeks to establish a normative definition of secularism, which will allow for Muslims to engage the political societies in which they live (which are highly secular) and simultaneously remain faithful to the Islamic sources that govern their religious lives, i.e. the Qur'an and the Sunna.[276] This is the political context of Ramadan's theoretical works.

Ramadan writes that political secularism insures and protects the equality of all religions by regulating both their presence in the public sphere and by separating religion from the lawmaking bodies of the state.[277] He maintains that the most fundamental principle of secularism is the neutrality of the state from all religions, so long as this neutrality respects freedom of religion and religious expression. In an interview at the PEN American Center, entitled "Secularism, Islam, and Democracy: Muslims in Europe and the West," Ramadan argues that two other critical features of secularity are 1) a distinction between the power and authority of the state and religion and 2) the emphasis and importance of the private sphere as an area in which humans have the freedom of choice.[278] Secularism, however, must not force Muslims into what he calls a "total absence of religiosity."[279] Ramadan's message is clear: he rejects the *hard political secularism* of some regimes, which seek to purge religion and religious expressions. He writes, "…the neutrality of the public space in secularized societies has often been taken to mean a total absence of religiosity (even a categorical rejection of it), or the primacy of

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[275] Tariq Ramadan, *Western Muslims and the Future of Islam* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 77.
[276] Ibid, 3-5.
[277] Ramadan, *What I Believe*, 32.
[278] YouTube, "Secularism, Islam, Democracy: Muslims in Europe and the West," April 16, 2010, http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z1y1YWSpub4http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z1y1YWSpub4.
[279] Ramadan, *Western Muslims*, 70.

an atheistic ideology that does not call itself by that name."[280] There have been many studies concerning this form of *hard political secularism,* ranging from the Soviet Empire's militant atheism to Ataturk's Turkey, though it is beyond the scope of this thesis to cover such manifestations of secularism exhaustively.[281] The example of Ataturk's Post-WWI Turkey suffices to demonstrate the aspects of political secularism that Ramadan critiques and disavows, though this is not to say that he is entirely against the secularization project of Turkey.

In E. Fuat Keyman's article, "Modernity, Secularism, and Islam: The Case of Turkey," he distinguishes between objective and subjective secularization.[282] Objective secularization entails the removal of religion's influence from societal and governmental institutions, while subjective secularization attempts a similar process in the personal lives of individuals. Drawing from the work of the prominent sociologist Peter Berger, Keyman elaborates that in objective secularization, "Religion is removed from the authority and legitimacy of the state."[283] In subjective secularization, however, religion's influence is marginalized in the consciousness of the citizens of a secular state. Keyman compares this subjective secularization to Michel Foucault's notion of "governmentality," whereby "Secularism is used by the state as an 'effective technology of the government of the self' by creating a boundary between the public sphere and the private sphere, in which religious claims to identity are confined as private, individualistic, and particular."[284] Ramadan is strongly against this subjective

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[280] Ibid.
[281] Froese, "I am an Atheist and a Muslim," 473-501.
[282] Fuat Keyman, "Modernity, Secularism, and Islam: The Case of Turkey," *Theory, Culture, and Society*, v. 24, no. 2, (2007), 217.
[283] Ibid.
[284] Ibid, 219.

secularization, particularly if it is enforced by a centralized state. He writes that soft political secularism is amenable to Islam so long as Muslims can avoid the threat of a "colonization of the inner self."[285] The distinction between objective and subjective secularization accents several important points about Ramadan's notion of political secularism.

First, Ramadan believes that if Muslims desire to remain faithful to Islam as a "universe of reference" or to cultivate a truly Islamic identity, then they must avoid subjective secularization.[286] He admits that many Muslims have accepted subjective secularization, and he refers to these Muslims as "cultural Muslims," a sociological definition of secularism as we have defined it.[287] The difference between the objective and the subjective is illuminated in political philosophers' distinctions between "comprehensive [secularism]" and "political [secularism]."[288] According to Andrew March, "comprehensive [secularists] value rational autonomy, critical scrutiny of tradition, skepticism, and experimentation…Comprehensive [secularism] is often associated with the worldviews of Voltaire, Kant, [and] J.S. Mill."[289] *Secular comprehensivism* is a *Weltanschauung*, which promotes a secular lifestyle based on the characteristics described by March, rational autonomy from religious tradition or authority, and also those aspects of secularity described in Chapter One. Thus to be a *secular comprehensivist* is to support subjective secularization in one's own life, but not

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[285] Ramadan, *What I Believe*, 28.
[286] Ramadan, *Western Muslims*, 9.
[287] Ramadan, *What I Believe,* 46.
[288] March, "Reading Tariq Ramadan," 401.
March refers to "liberalism," but for this thesis I modify this to "secularism." There is certainly a relationship between these two concepts. Hussein Ali Agrama writes in his article that I have cited throughout this thesis that liberal rights and their promulgation in a given society "[depend] crucially upon how the line between religion and politics is drawn." Liberalism and secularism, however, should be kept distinct.
[289] Ibid.

necessarily in the lives of others. These individuals are the secular Muslims, who do not enter the political arena or the public sphere *as Muslims*; Islam for these individuals does not play an important role as a universe of reference, as Ramadan would put it. But there are further distinctions to be drawn.

Individuals can be *secular comprehensivists* in their personal lives without requiring others to adhere to their metaphysical systems. March argues in his "Reading Tariq Ramadan" that *comprehensive authoritarians,* in opposition to *secular comprehensivists,* believe in a "revealed truth of morality," but, if they are *political secularists*, then they will not seek to force the state and its citizens to adhere to their doctrines.[290] In pluralistic societies with both *secular comprehensivists* and *comprehensive authoritarians*, the utility of the doctrine of political secularism is particularly evident. As Ramadan envisions, by separating religion from the state—adhering to a soft political secularism—governments can promote the freedom of all religions. This separation is an explicit acceptance of the doctrine of political secularism. The danger, according to March, is when citizens promote *political perfectionism*, which entails, "[Thinking] they *know* that their metaphysical (religious or secular) beliefs are true and that this justifies using public authority to transform society and the consciousness of its members."[291] We shall return to *political perfectionism* and its implications in the next chapter on Yusuf al-Qaradawi and other opponents of secularism. I have described Ramadan's notion of political secularism in its broadest brushstrokes, but it is important to observe how he faces specific issues within political secularism.

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[290] Ibid, 401.
[291] Ibid.

In advocating for the separation of all religions from the state, Ramadan argues that humans cannot change God's law, but that the law of the state always prevails in this world.[292] I will say more about the differences between Ramadan's writings relating to Muslims living in the West in comparison to Muslims living in the Middle East near the end of this chapter (this touches on the complaints of his critics who say that Ramadan employs "double-speak"), but first his writings must be explored regarding the Western context. In a debate in 2003 with the then Interior Minister Nicolas Sarkozy, Ramadan argued that *huddud* (the corporal punishment for certain crimes, which the *shari'a* explicitly condemns) should be subject to a "moratorium."[293] Walking a delicate line, he asserted that though God's law is valid, positive law reigns and prescribes punishments in secular societies. Ramadan has also stated, however, that,

> Personally…I'm against capital punishment, not only in Muslim countries, but also in the U.S. But when you want to be heard in Muslim countries, when you are addressing religious issues, you can't just say it has to stop. I think it has to stop. But you have to discuss it within the religious context. There are texts involved. I am not just talking to Muslims in Europe, but addressing the implementation of *huddud* everywhere, in Indonesia, Pakistan and the Middle East. And I'm speaking from the inside to Muslims. Speaking as an outsider would be counterproductive. [294]

I will investigate this theoretical maneuver later in this chapter by investigating John Rawls' "public reason," but suffice it to say here that Ramadan desires to establish an *Islamic justification*, i.e. one that engages the Qur'an and *Sunna*. He develops this rationale in order to change the minds of Muslims, who seek religious foundations and reasons for this abolition of the *huddud*.

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[292] Olivier Roy, *Secularism Confronts Islam* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007), 25.
[293] Ibid.
[294] Ian Buruma, "Tariq Ramadan has an Identity Issue," *New York Times*, February 4, 2007, 4, http://www.nytimes.com/2007/02/04/magazine/04ramadan.t.html?_r=3&pagewanted=4.

In his interview with Riz Khan, Ramadan discusses his views on several issues pertaining to the visibility of Islam in public spaces, an important issue in Europe's highly secular societies.[295] He begins the conversation by reiterating a common stance of his, which he supports in his work *What I Believe*. Ramadan claims that first and foremost Muslims must abide by the "Three L's."[296] These "L's" are law, language, and loyalty. He argues that for Muslims to be able to contribute positively and substantially to European communities, they must speak the language of their respective societies, abide by the laws, and demonstrate their loyalty to their countries. The relationship between Muslims and secular laws, according to Ramadan, becomes problematic when these very laws discriminate against Muslims or promote other forms of injustice. In the interview, Ramadan takes up the subject of the Danish cartoons depicting Muhammad, as well as a recent episode of the popular American television program *South Park*, which cast the figure of the Prophet Muhammad as a living "teddy-bear." Quite candidly, Ramadan claims that these shows have the legal right to air these images of the Prophet; he decries the violent reactions of many Muslims, and he says that, rather, Muslims must respect the democratic right of the freedom of expression. He argues that the proper response should be for Muslims to engage others in dialogue about *why* these depictions are hurtful, wrong, and sacrilegious according to Islam. He states that the largest problem with such illustrations is the creation of a multifaceted mistrust.

First, the violent reactions of Muslims declaring "blasphemy" informs others that Muslims cannot be trusted to react civilly to these controversies. In a speech at the *Austria Center* regarding the issue of being a European Muslim, Ramadan articulates the

[295] "Riz Khan-Tariq Ramadan."
[296] Ramada, *What I Believe*, 138.

view that Muslims must cultivate a "critical mind" in response to these types of controversies.[297] He declares that Muslims must be critical of themselves and of Muslims who act, nominally, in the name of "Islam" to support misogyny, racism, or terroristic violence. On the other side of this mistrust, when non-Muslims produce programs or laws that conspicuously discriminate against Islam, Muslims feel that they are isolated and do not belong to the societies that express prejudice against their religion. Ramadan repeats this stance when he discusses the issues of the Islamic veil and the banning of minarets in Switzerland.

Fighting against the aforementioned subjective secularization, Ramadan argues that the veil issue should be considered a question of the freedom of religious expression.[298] He claims that the choice to wear the veil is the preference of the individual Muslim female; people and laws, regardless of their origins, should not force Muslim women to wear the veil, or restrict them from representing themselves spiritually in public. Once again, the issue is that of discrimination. Muslims, like other religious persons, *ought* to be able to express their religiosity, as this is their fundamental right of religious freedom. As one might expect, Ramadan establishes a similar logic regarding the November 2009 referendum in Switzerland, his country of birth, which banned the building of Islamic minarets in the country. He repeats his position that by restricting the presence of Islam in the public space, giving way to subjective secularization, Western governments are creating an environment that is imbued with this sense of mistrust, which operates bi-laterally. In banning the minarets, the Swiss people are saying, in

[297] YoutTube, "Tariq Ramadan, European Muslims part 3 of 3," April 19, 2010, http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NzdL85WZyQI&feature=related.
[298] "Riz Khan-Tariq Ramadan."

effect, Muslims and Islam do not belong in Swiss civil society, and this, contends Ramadan, is a problem for the future of European Muslims.

He admonishes Muslims living in the West to be active in the political societies in which they live. In *Western Muslims*, Ramadan acknowledges that some Muslim thinkers from conservative Islamic trends—the scholastic traditionalists, *salafi* literalists, and the *salafi* political literalists as he labels them—discourage the political participation of Muslims in non-Islamic countries.[299] At the extreme spectrum of these more conservative groups is the Liberation Party (*hizb al-tahrir*) movement, many members of which openly reject the integration, assimilation, or participation of Muslims in Western contexts and political environments.[300] Ramadan emphatically rejects the claims of these Muslims, and he develops persuasive reasoning for why Western Muslims ought to participate in their secular, civil societies. I will investigate the reasons for which Ramadan supports this participation, but I do not think that one can say his rationale and justification are strictly secular. Rather, Ramadan attempts to formulate an *Islamic response* for why Muslims should feel both at home in Western, secular culture, as well as in Western political societies. In this endeavor, one must traverse what I will call the various "fibers" of the strand of Ramadan's political secularism, which is only one part of the larger tapestry that is the Islamic experience with *the secular*. Before we turn to these fibers, examining one more specific element of debate in secularity is important: Islam's position concerning secular economic systems.

Ramadan devotes an entire chapter in his *Western Muslims and the Future of Islam*, to the question of the compatibility of Islamic economic principles with Western

[299] Ramadan, *Western Muslims*, 25-27.
[300] March, *Reading Tariq Ramadan*, 406.

society, which is founded on what he labels the "neoliberal capitalist system."[301] He problematizes this relationship when he writes, "Islamic teachings are intrinsically opposed to the basic premises and the logic of the neoliberal capitalist system, and Muslims who live 'in the system's head' have a great responsibility…to propose solutions that could create a way out and lead to a more just economy and more equitable trade."[302] While Islamic ethics and some secular economic foundations are seemingly antithetical, Ramadan clears the theoretical ground for how Muslims ought to respond to life in such an environment.

He writes that Islam does not allow for the economic view of humans as *homo economicus*; he continues, "It is impossible, from [the Islamic] perspective, to conceive of people as cogs in a machine, definable without any reference to any ethical qualities, motivated only by their own interests, either producing or consuming, their actions assessed only quantitatively."[303] Ramadan establishes a moral responsibility on the part of the human being via his elaboration of the fundamental principles of Islamic ethics relating to economics. He writes that there is no "Islamic economy," but rather there are a "series of principles," which lie at the heart of Islamic ethics.[304] By writing of the fundamental principles, Ramadan is citing the *maqasid al-shari'a*, which we examined with Fouad Zakariyya. In this way, Ramadan "conjectures," in a similar manner as we saw Zakariyya do in regards to charity (*ihsan*), that the goals of Islamic ethics in relation to economic interactions are: dignity, justice, fraternity, and welfare.[305] Ramadan quickly

[301] Ramadan, *Western Muslims*, 177.
[302] Ramdan, *Western Muslims*, 177.
[303] Ibid.
[304] Tariq Ramadan, *Radical Reform: Islamic Ethics and Liberation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 242.
[305] Ibid, 244.

moves to two specific aspects of Islamic economic theory, which are at the heart of much debate today.

Ramadan explains that the two most important Islamic economic principles are: 1) an obligation, which is the *zakat*, or the third pillar of Islam that is an obligatory tax on possessions and income, and 2) a prohibition*,* which is the *ribaa*, or the proscription against interest or usury.[306] His discussion of *zakat* is important, but for Islam and secularity, I shall focus on *ribaa*, as it is one of the most conspicuous, potential conflicts between Islamic ethics and the prevalent economic systems in the West. In explaining *ribaa*, he notes that its definition has multiple interpretations, but that generally the '*ulama* agree that it means, "any rate of interest or usury…*ribaa* is one of profit that is not in exchange for any service rendered or work performed: it is a growth of capital through and upon capital itself."[307] In the Islamic demand that Muslims not engage in this "morally deficient" practice, there exists the potential difficulty that Muslims will not be able to participate in Western economic systems, which utilize interest.

Indeed, Ramadan mentions that some '*ulama,* the literalists and the "traditionalists," argue that no departure from the prohibition on *ribaa* is allowed; thus, these scholars proscribe Muslim participation in economies that permit *ribaa*.[308] He acknowledges two alternatives to this stringent admonishment, and then he proposes a third approach. The first option, largely supported by scholars from the European Council for Research and Fatwa (an Islamic institution in Europe that issues *fatwas* on important issues for Muslims living there), claims that due to need (*haja*) and necessity (*darura*), Muslims are permitted to engage in economic activities that allow interest. In this case,

[306] Ramadan, *Western Muslims,* 182-185.
[307] Ibid, 185.
[308] Ibid, 190-191.

because Muslims are living as a minority community in countries that are not "Islamic," they are permitted the exception of being able to participate in these societies' economies.[309] The second response is that of the Hanafi school (*madhab*). Abu Hanifa (d. 767), the founder of the school, wrote that *ribaa* was permissible in the *daar al-harb*, or the "abode of war," which is political territory controlled by non-Muslims.[310] This dualistic rendering of the geopolitical world is an integral concept to which we shall return, but Ramadan critiques both of these responses.

He believes both rationales miss the fundamental goals or principles of Islamic ethics, which were mentioned in Ramadan's invocation of *maqasid al-sharia*. Ramadan writes that the main catalyst for the authorization of the *ribaa* by the European Council is to enable Muslims to purchase houses and private property through loans from Western banks.[311] He describes this rationale as "disturbing" because though the issue of *ribaa* is important and in an ideal world it would not exist, the real problem, according to Ramadan, is the "dominant economic system," in which the rich exploit the poor.[312] The issue Ramadan takes with the *salafi* approach is obvious, for it undermines his entire project if Muslims must simply withdraw and isolate themselves from the systems in which they live. His opinion is clear: Muslims should participate in secular economic systems using *ribaa* so that they can gain economic stability and autonomy, but while acquiring these essentials they should promote the general principles of Islamic ethics and engage Westerners in debate in order to bring about reform in their prevailing, iniquitous systems.

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[309] Ibid, 190-191.
[310] Ibid, 190.
[311] Ibid.
[312] Ibid.

Ramadan cites an example from 1965, which occurred in South Africa, to support his view. In this instance, scholars from the *daar al-ulum* in Deoband, India, led by the *mufti* Ahmad Muhammad Siddiqu, officially declared that Muslims in South Africa were justified in participating in *ribaa*, so long as this usage was only with non-Muslims and so long as it served to protect the interests (economic, social, and political) and justness of economic relations of the Muslim community there.[313] Ramadan writes that this approach is different than, and preferable to, the European Council's because it promotes the greater principles of Islamic ethics rather than simply focusing narrowly on *ribaa*, but he qualifies this statement when he writes, "…it is not appropriate…[to] open wide the doors for the involvement of Western Muslims in the capitalist system on the assumption that the prohibition has been lifted with no other consideration."[314] Essentially, Muslims cannot restrict themselves to withdrawing from the economy, but rather must work to insure that their economic systems align with the ultimate principles of Islam. In order to understand Ramadan's positions, we must now examine the fibers of this strand.

Unraveling the Fibers of the Strand:

Foundations of Ramadan's Political Secularism

In addressing Muslims who desire to remain authentic to their Islamic identities, Ramadan establishes his political secularism by relying on Islamic references. He bases all of his writings on the idea that Islam is a universal and comprehensive message, but he uses this very fact to support an "overlapping consensus" with his co-religionists, the non-religious, and even anti-religious persons of different societies. In a close-reading of Ramadan's understanding of political secularism, it is necessary to explain the fibers of:

[313] Ibid, 196.
[314] Ibid, 196-197.

1) his conception of *islam shamil*, or comprehensive Islam, 2) his specific understanding of the *shari'a*, and 3) his use of these two facets in supporting the authenticity of political secularity, specifically in Western societies but perhaps abroad as well.

Ramadan writes that Islam is a comprehensive message, *islam shamil*, which addresses "the self, the family, and others."[315] The concept of a comprehensive Islam has been introduced in my analyses of Fouad Zakariyya, and it was this totalistic vision of Islam that Zakariyya believed to be the locus of the debates between the Islamists and the secularists. Zakariyya went so far as to define secularists as those who rejected this vision of Islam. Though Ramadan writes, "[Islam] touches all the aspects of existence," his vision of the comprehensive nature of his faith is markedly different than the totalistic one that Zakariyya criticizes.[316] Ramadan's notion of the holistic nature of Islam reinforces his arguments against the neoliberal formation of the global economy. The economy, by definition, touches on the relationships of humans in a given society, and since economic relations are always of this nature, this entails a "social commitment."[317] Ramadan argues that Islam dictates that the economic sphere is a moral sphere. According to him, Islam always entails ethical sensibilities regarding any social commitment. Drawing on the theological notion of *tawhid*, or the oneness of God, as well as the Qur'anic concept of vicegerenc (*khilafa*), he argues that God is the only "owner" of the world, and that humans have the duty to obey His laws of justice.[318] The differences between his *islam shamil* and the Islamists' concept that Zakariyya chastises are clarified through an investigation into Ramadan's conception of the *shari'a*.

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[315] Ramadan, *Western Muslims*, 34.
[316] Ibid, 243.
[317] Ibid, 181.
[318] Ibid, 182.

Ramadan notes that many opponents of Islam, as well as conservative Muslims, use this comprehensiveness to argue that Muslims cannot integrate into "secularized societies."[319] Those who support this claim would say, "There is no difference, for [Muslims], between the private and public, religion and politics: Islam encompasses all areas."[320] Ramadan provides a nuanced understanding of this comprehensiveness to bolster his position on the advantages of the secular system. This unique approach includes: a particular perspective on the *shari'a*, the support for the *authentic* process of differentiation in early Islamicate societies, and a search for Islam's coinciding values with other religious and secular systems.

The *shari'a* has been an important concept throughout this thesis. It is equally important for Ramadan's support of political secularism. He translates the *shari'a* in several ways, but he constantly refers to it as "the Way."[321] He insists that Muslims must understand the *shari'a* as more than "establishing rules," and that they must comprehend the deeper realities and importance of the *shari'a*; this importance lies in the fact that the it is, "the path that leads to the spring," and that it demonstrates, "how to be and remain Muslim."[322] Ramadan builds on this definition of the *shari'a* by claiming that it entails two important, though different, aspects that Muslims must understand: the rituals and practices of Islam ('*ibadat*) and the social affairs of Islamic societies (*mu'amalat*), both of which rely on fundamental Islamic principles that the *shari'a* establishes in the Qur'an and *Sunna*.

[319] Ramadan, *Western Muslims*, 34.
[320] Ibid, 34.
[321] Ibid, 31.
[322] Ibid, 32.

In his *What I Believe*, Ramadan writes that Islam is one, monolithic, and practically immutable in relation to its creed (*'aqidah*) and the practices and rituals (*'ibadat*).[323] As far as these essential elements of Islam are concerned, the *umma*, or Muslim community, is singular. The *'ibadat* are derived solely from the sacred texts, and this aspect of Islam is, as he states, open to only a minuscule amount of interpretation.[324] The *'ibadat* include the non-political aspects of the *shari'a*: almsgiving, prayer, fasting, and the core beliefs of Islam. It is here that one encounters his denial of *secular comprehensivism* and his support for a *comprehensive authoritarianism,* since he believes in and practices Islam; religion is of utmost importance for his identity. Ramadan, however, states that the diversity in Islam cannot be denied.[325] This diversity exists on the level of the *mu'amalat*, which are the "social matters" or "human and social affairs."[326] Ramadan conveys two examples to explain the *mu'amalat*.

The first social "contingency" is political, and it involves the example of the city of Medina during the life of the Prophet Muhammad. It is important that the *form* of the city's government be distinguished from the *principles* with which the Prophet ruled this town.[327] These principles were: "the rule of law, equality, freedom of conscience and worship," but the form is open to historical contextualization and thus to change. Ramadan writes, "Faithfulness to principles cannot involve faithfulness to the historical model because times change, societies and political and economic systems become more complex, and in every age it is in fact necessary to think of a model appropriate to each

[323] Ramadan, *What I Believe*, 41.
[324] Ramadan, *Western Muslims*, 35.
[325] Ibid, 41.
[326] Ibid, *Western Muslims*, 20-21, 35.
[327] Ibid, 35.

social and cultural reality."[328] In looking to the principles (his reliance on the *maqasid*) rather than the form, he echoes Ali Abd al-Raziq's arguments from the 20th century. Though Ramadan might disagree about the al-Raziq's conclusions regarding the results of the Prophet's establishment of a political community, he agrees that "form" is capable of changing with the increasing complexity of humanity and human societies.

The second example is of the Prophet himself, and this instance speaks to the social or cultural aspect of *mu'amalat*. Ramadan explains that Muslims should not be concerned about the *form* of the Prophet's clothes (what he physically wore) but rather should concern themselves with the *principles* according to which the Prophet clothed himself, "decency, cleanliness, simplicity, and modesty."[329] While the principles of religion (*usul al-din*) and '*ibadat* are static, Muslims ought to embrace dynamic *mu'amalat*, so long as these changes support the basic principles of Islam. In this dual structure of '*ibadat* and *mu'amalat*, Ramadan attempts to illustrate that there is a distinction in Islam between the religious (human's relationship to God as exemplified in the *'aqidah* and the '*ibadat*) and the social/political, which is represented by the *mu'amalat*. His insistence, however, on *islam shamil* refuses to allow these two distinct spheres to remain completely asunder. Through such an understanding, we see the fallacy when scholars such as Gören Larsson assert that Ramadan thinks secularization is contrary to Islam.[330] Ramadan would agree that subjective secularization is against Islam, but he supports its objective form. In fact, he also argues for the authenticity of Casanova's nuanced comprehension of secularization as the process of autonomous differentiation, which I analyzed in Chapter One.

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[328] Ramadan, *Western Muslims*, 36.
[329] Ibid.
[330] Larsson, *Yusuf al-Qaradawi and Tariq Ramadan*, 54.

Ramadan writes, "Muslims have no particular problem with the principle of distinguishing the various orders of things…because they find these distinctions articulated in the first works of categorization of orders carried out by the '*ulama* as early as the eight to ninth centuries."[331] This division occurs not only in the earlier mentioned '*ibadat* and *mu'amalat*, but also within the Islamic sciences themselves. Between the 10th-11th centuries, Ramadan argues that the Islamic sciences (*ulum al-Qur'an, ulum al-hadith, ilm al-'aqida, ilm usul al-fiqh*, and others) developed different methodologies that varied due to the disparate, but connected, content of their research-objects.[332] Also, Muslims of these time periods recognized the different natures of the Islamic sciences and the natural sciences; these differences, however, did *not* imply that Muslims did *not* seek to understand the natural sciences in light of Islamic principles.

Ramadan states that the Qur'an and the *Sunna* inspired Muslims to understand natural phenomena; also, since the Islamic sciences relied on scientific discoveries to elaborate some of their theological and religious notions (e.g. through astronomy), Islam embraced scientific research; lastly because Islam is comprehensive religion, Ramadan thinks that Muslim scientists had to be concerned about the ethical implications of their discoveries, and thus Islam was an important reference.[333] The relationships among Islamic principles and these "differentiated spheres" leads to the two most important notions in Ramadan's thought: integration and contribution.

In paying attention to this differentiation, Ramadan seeks to demonstrate that this division is authentically Islamic, and that it is not a modern distinction, which is imposed by colonial or neo-colonial forces—from the Western, Christian context. Likewise,

[331] Ramadan, *Western Muslims,* 145.
[332] Ibid, 34.
[333] Ibid, 56.

Ramadan goes to great lengths to describe what the Islamic principles are, and how historically Muslims have utilized jurisprudential tools to accomplish dynamic changes in the *mu'amalat*, while remaining faithful to the core '*ibadat*. The *modus operandi* of this transformation and change are: "public interest" (*maslaha*), "independent scriptural reasoning" (*ijtihad*), and "an opinion on a point of [Islamic] law given by a *mufti*" (*fatwa*), which can result in the "process of integration."[334] While these three former terms are precise legal tools, I will focus on the holistic "process of integration" because it most clearly elucidates Ramadan's support for secularity, while the legal terms are the means to accomplishing this "process" from within an Islamic framework.

He writes that, "[integration is] making one's own all that people have produced that is good, just, and humane—intellectually, scientifically, socially, politically, economically, culturally, and so on."[335] But Ramadan is quick to add that integration should not be conflated with *adaptation*, meaning that he is not asking Muslims to adopt or adapt to every facet of European life while rejecting their Islamic sources. Rather, Islam is a source of ethical resistance against unjust particulars of Europe, as we have seen in Ramadan's understanding of Islamic economic principles. In his book *Radical Reform*, he argues that the *mu'amalat* aspect of the *shari'a* requires more sources than just the revealed texts and *Sunna* as per his—and Zakariyya's for this matter—argument that the *mu'amalat* must change with the increasing complexity of human life. He writes that in order to reform and progress, Muslims must take context (*waqi*) into account, and the textual '*ulama* must constantly consult '*ulama waqi*, who are trained in the social and

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[334] Ibid, 31. and E. Tyan, "Fatwa," *Encyclopedia of Islam, Second Edition*, Brill Online, accessed February 20, 2011, http://www.brillonline.nl.proxy.library.emory.edu/subscriber/uid=1906/entry?result_number=1&entry=islam_COM-0219&search_text=fatwa&refine_editions=islam_islam#hit.

[335] Ramadan, *Western Muslims*, 5.

natural sciences, in order to instigate the necessary legal reform.[336] One interesting implication of this approach is that the Islamic system, in this model of integration, takes *secular knowledge* into account—secular knowledge becomes one of the bases for the *mu'amalat*, for the *shari'a*.

He believes that many aspects of European cultures are "Islamically based," though of course not explicitly, or at the very least align with Islamic values because of shared, universal human ideals between Europe and Islam. He thinks that these values can and ought to be integrated into the Islamic system.[337] In short, the notion of integration directs Muslims to look to the principles of Islam and to seek and find cultural ways of manifesting these principles, but not to confuse the two; this is the methodology behind Ramadan's earlier claims and examples, such as the clothes of the Prophet and the principles of his politics. He makes sure to emphasize that Muslims must not only integrate the good aspects of European societies, but they must also bring their Islamic values to contribute to the political communities in which they live.

If Muslims are allowed to establish their religious identity and avoid subjective secularization, then they will be able to contribute to the advancement of European society. Ramadan writes in his *To Be A European Muslim*, "They can provide Europe with more spirituality, and a greater sense of justice and brotherhood along with greater involvement in solidarity."[338] In speaking about the most influential Muslim philosophers in relation to their effects on his thought—Muhammad Abduh and Jamal al-Din al-Afghani of 19th century Egypt—Ramadan says, "They saw the need to resist the West,

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[336] Ramadan, *Radical Reform*, 4-5. This is the central theme of the whole work, but refer to his introduction.
[337] Ramadan, *Western Muslims*, 5, 54.
[338] Tariq Ramadan, *To Be a European Muslim: A Study of Islamic Sources in the European Context* (Leicester: The Islamic Foundation, 2004), 189-190.

through Islam, while taking what was useful from it."[339] Elaborating on this Islamic capacity for resistance and solidarity with other religious-resistance principles, Ramadan says, "The liberation theologists in Brazil were very important, resisting in the name of religious principles. I was at home with this discourse."[340] Muslims in Europe must integrate the positive aspects of European society, as Muslims have done throughout history with the concept of integrating *'urf*, and while simultaneously championing Islamic principles. These principles are a means for combating the injustices produced by the prevailing economic system, which entails malfeasance and exploitation, and the dominant political system, which in some states systematically attempt to repress the ability of Muslims to express their religiosity.

Though he does not articulate his position explicitly in these terms, his description of European Islam's role within the socio-political fabric of liberal democracies lends itself to a Rawlsian analysis. Rawls' notion of "public reason" is integral to this model of integration and Islam's ability to promote liberal democratic debate and discussion regarding the creation of coercive laws. In explaining Rawls' conception of public reason, Charles Larmore writes, "Public reason is not one political value among others. It envelops all the different elements that make up the ideal of a constitutional democracy, for it governs 'the political relation' in which we ought to stand to one another as citizens."[341] Larmore continues, "We honor public reason when we bring our own reason into accord with the reason of others, espousing a common point of view for settling the

[339] Buruma, "Tariq Ramadan," 2.
[340] Ibid.
[341] Charles Larmore "Public Reason" *The Cambridge Companion to Rawls*, ed. Samuel Freeman (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press), 368.

terms of our political life."[342] The origin of the necessity of this public reason is that in each society there inevitably exists a multiplicity of "comprehensive" ethical, philosophical, and religious doctrines, which often promote conflicting conceptions of justice and the good.[343] In constructing laws that bind citizens coercively, Rawls believes that public reason must construe the terms of political debate regarding the fundamental issues within a society. Significantly, Rawls explains that this type of reason is to be employed in the official "organs" of the political sphere—the Supreme Court and Congress for example—and not necessarily in other sectors of the public sphere, such as the university or other areas of society.

In clarifying this distinction, Lamore writes that one ought to distinguish between *open-discussion* and *decision-making*. In *open-discussion*, people can make arguments construed in the terms of their comprehensive doctrines; in *decision-making*, where people come together to create coercive laws, though individuals might see common principles between their comprehensive doctrines and the legally binding decisions that they are producing, they must "see the need for a common perspective and be able to justify their decisions within its terms."[344] One fundamental aspect of this position is that the *kind* of reasons that people employ in making laws must not be expressed entirely in the terms of their respective comprehensive doctrines. In these official settings, individuals must "set aside" these ultimate conceptions in order to create laws that are just and agreeable to a society comprised of religiously pluralistic individuals.[345] There

[342] Ibid, 368.
[343] Ibid, 377.
[344] Ibid, 381.
[345] Ibid, 384.

are of course different readings and interpretations regarding the extent to which individuals must, or even are fully capable, of setting these doctrines aside.

Lamore takes the stringent stance that, "In the forum where citizens officially decide the basic principles of their political association and where the cannons of public reason therefore apply, appeals to comprehensive doctrines cannot but be out of place."[346] More simply, arguments with religious premises cannot establish official laws through the legislative institutions of the state. Rawls, dissenting from Lamore's position and revising some of his own earlier arguments, writes that citizens are justified in citing their convictions in either *open-discussion* or *decision-making*, so long as, "in due course public reasons, given by a reasonable political conception, [must be] presented sufficient to support whatever the comprehensive doctrines are introduced to support."[347] In other words, relying on premises derived from one's religion or other comprehensive doctrines is permissible so long as public reasons accord with, support, and arrive at the same conclusions.

Ramadan embraces Rawls' conception of the compatibility of comprehensive doctrines in both *open-discussion* and in *decision-making*. To demonstrate this, he writes, "Islam makes us open to human universality and by its nature creates bridges with men and women of other faiths, and even with the humanists, agnostics, and atheists who are concerned about human values, ethics, and respect for the universe."[348] This promotion of finding shared values and supporting them from a common perspective is the substance of Rawls' "overlapping consensus."

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[346] Ibid, 387.
[347] Ibid, 386.
[348] Ramadan, *Western Muslims*, 124.

Through his various depictions of Islam's role in Europe, Ramadan expounds a public vision of Islam that accords, in several ways, with that of Zakariyya's model. Similar to Zakariyya, he seeks to subdue the classical worldview of the *daar al-Islam* and its antithesis the *daar al-harb*. His primary example is economics. He claims that states that are supposedly the most Islamic in terms of law and government, such as Saudi Arabia, expose a flagrant hypocrisy by concurrently sustaining the "most economically integrated into the neoliberal system, which is based on speculation and interest-bearing transactions."[349] The driving force behind the need to change this outdated worldview is the rise of globalization, and in this light he proposes a fundamental shift in how Muslims view the truly "Islamic" state and the *shari'a*.

He argues that Europe should be seen as the *daar al-shahadah*, or the abode of testimony, and that Muslims should witness to Islam, but not proselytize or attempt to convert others. He writes that the abode of Islam is wherever Muslims have freedom of religion, freedom of consciousness, and the full rights of citizenship.[350] Ramadan's notion of "testifying" is, in addition to bringing Islamic ethics to *open-discussion* and *decision-making,* quite unique. He confirms Zakariyya's sentiments when he states that the *shari'a* is more than a set of rules, laws, or punishments, but he expands by writing that it also entails being an active citizen and respecting the constitution of a state in so far as it does not require Muslims to give up their religious identity.[351]

As we have already seen, Ramadan divides the *shari'a* into the *mu'amalat,* which are contingent and dynamic, and the '*ibadat,* which are virtually immutable. By looking to the principles of Islam, as Zakariyya did with *ihsan*, Ramadan establishes a similar

[349] Ibid, 175.
[350] Ibid, 176.
[351] Ibid, 31-32.

method for fighting against the totalistic, exclusionary vision of some conservative Islamists, while still promoting *islam shamil*, or comprehensive Islam. Ramadan also defines how Muslims are to live out the *shari'a* in a unique way. He writes in his *To Be A European Muslim*,

> Islamic law and jurisprudence *order* a Muslim to submit to the framework of positive law in force in his country in the name of the tacit moral covenant, which underlies his very presence. To put it differently*, implementing the Sharia*, for a Muslim citizen or resident in Europe, is explicitly to respect the constitutional and legal framework of the country in which one is a citizen.[352]

Zakriyya's critiques of the Islamists' call to "implement" the *shari'a* seem to have missed or not considered this definition of implementation.

In writing that this form of implementation is requisite for *European Muslims*, the clear question that many of his interlocutors put forth is: is the secular model compatible or feasible for implementation in the "Muslim world?" In response to this question, Ramadan writes that many of the laws in Europe promote religious freedom and integral human rights, and he conversely states that in the Middle East many countries incontrovertibly deny these very liberties.[353] He is also critical of the concept of the "Islamic State," as we have seen in his disdain for the classical *daar al-harb* contra *daar al-islam* paradigm. In the interview with Ian Buruma, Ramadan says that Muslims should not seek to build a "parallel system" to Western democracy nor should they seek to build a Muslim state, though this claim might refer to the construction of a Muslims state *within* Europe.[354] Though Ramadan is never, in so far as I have researched, explicit about the adoption of a secular model of government in the Islamic world, his general methodology supports the possibility, though not the necessity; the *mu'amalat* are always

[352] Ramadan, *To Be a European Muslim*, 171-2.
[353] Larsson, *Yusuf al-Qaradawi and Tariq Ramadan*, 55.
[354] Buruma, "Tariq Ramadan," 1.

contingent. What is important in his account is that the general principles—freedom of consciousness, care for the poor, freedom of expression, etc—are supported by the state. From these premises, the central idea is that the form of government is not important so long as the essential principles of Islam are upheld. What remains to be demonstrated is whether or not systems of government that claim to be religious or that explicitly implement the *shari'a* are able to promote and encourage these principles.

We have described political secularism as a framework or process that involves "drawing lines" between politics and religion; in terms of Islam and political secularism, these "lines" revolve around the issues of the *shari'a* and Islam's public vision. In discussing his initial views, Ramadan supported the separation of religion and the state, state neutrality towards religion, the freedom of religious expression, and an "overlapping consensus" among believers and atheists. In looking into the "fibers" of his perspectives on secularism, we discovered how he justified these stances in an Islamic framework, which allowed him to maintain his religious identity.

According to Ramadan, his notion of the *shari'a* supports integration, but not total adaptation, to secular systems of government and society. We have seen that he actually advocates incorporating *secular knowledge* into an understanding of the *shari'a* by insisting on the importance of context (*waqi*). His public vision of Islam does not dictate that societies strictly implement or base all of their laws on the *shari'a;* in fact, Ramadan proposes a new way to view what the implementation looks like—it is to obey, within reason, the laws and contract's of one's community, to actively participate in one's political society, and to remain true to the core of the *shari'a*, which is the general principles and the '*ibadat*. At the heart of the issue of secularity lies Zakariyya and

Ramadan's perception of Islam's role in political societies, which clashes with the conservative *islam shamil* that thinkers like al-Qaradawi advocate.

Vincent Cornell explains this conservative worldview as *shari'a fundamentalism*, and we reserve this analysis for Chapter Four on Yusuf al-Qaradawi. Through this excursion into the world of thought of Tariq Ramadan, the fact that secular Muslims do not necessarily have to abandon Islam is more clearly understood. He exemplifies the position of a *soft political secularist* through his explanation of the role of Islam in secular societies. In order to more comprehensively understand Ramadan's position, it is beneficial to turn, now, to a distinctly opposing perspective: Yusuf al-Qaradawi's stance.

Chapter Four

Objections to Secularism and Secular Muslims:

Yusuf al-Qaradawi

The Muslim theologian and jurist Yusuf al-Qaradawi is another important figure in the debates on secularity. I present al-Qaradawi as a contrary to the views of Tariq Ramadan by juxtaposing his writings and contrasting his conclusions with Ramadan's. Where Ramadan exemplified a *soft political secularist* stance, Yusuf al-Qaradawi criticizes most principles that one might call secular, specifically regarding the separation of religion and the state. In this sense, I place al-Qaradawi in the *Muslim Brotherhood affiliated perspective*, and, more specifically, he represents March's *political perfectionism,* which denies both *soft* and *hard political secularism*.

As in the case of Tariq Ramadan, it is helpful to know some of al-Qaradawi's background in order to understand his work and influence. The book *Global Mufti* describes him as perhaps the best known, if not the most popular, "Muslim preacher-scholar-activist" of the 21st century.[355] Born in 1926 in Egypt, many Sunni Muslims consider him the most pre-eminent jurist of the modern age.[356] In 1939, he enrolled in the al-Azhar school system, and he began to participate in Islamic activism. In his first year at school, he met Hasan al-Banna, Ramadan's grandfather, and he claims that al-Banna's thoughts "deeply impressed" him.[357] He became active in the Muslim Brotherhood and

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[355] Bettina Gräf and Jakob Skovgaard-Petersen, *Global Mufti*: *the Phenomenon of Yusuf al-Qaradawi* (London: Hurst & Co., 2009), IX.

[356] Peter Mandaville, "Yusuf al-Qaradawi," *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Islam*, Oxford Islamic Studies Online, Emory University, accessed March 10, 2011. http://www.oxfordislamicstudies.com.proxy.library.emory.edu/article/opr/t236/e1230?_hi=0&_pos=1.

[357] Samuel Helfont, *Yusuf al-Qaradawi: Islam and Modernity* (Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv University Press, 2009) 35-36.

was even arrested for his participation in this group in 1948.[358] In 1957, he enrolled at al-Azhar Universtiy to begin his collegiate career in the Faculty of Theology. Al-Qaradawi has made it a point in his life to engage the world through the various mass media outlets. In 1996, he began appearing on his now world-famous television program *Shari'a and Life*. Additionally, he founded two websites, one entitled *qaradawi.net* and the other *islamonline.net*.[359] Though he lives and works in the Middle East, he is no stranger to the political and social environments of the West. He is one of the founding members of the European Council for Fatwa and Research, based in Dublin, Ireland.[360] In reaction to the rise of secularists such as Fouad Zakariyya, al-Qaradawi has responded to the issues of secularism with resounding disapproval.

Yusuf al-Qaradawi's Stance

In critiquing secularity, al-Qaradawi writes in his work "Islam and Secularism" that, "The division between *dini* (religious) and *ghayr dini* (non-religious) is un-Islamic, rather Western in origin…Secularism is antithetical to Islam. It has never succeeded in Muslims societies."[361] If we refer back to Chapters Two and Three, we will recall that al-Qaradawi's vision is built on an idealistic perception of Islam, which claims that Islam has always organically remained unified with the state. We will also recall that this claim is, in many regards, ahistorical. Though one must pose the obvious question: what does al-Qaradawi mean by secularism? He explains his interpretation of secularism when he writes,

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[358] Ibid, 36.
[359] Ibid, 45.
[360] Larsson, *Yusuf al-Qaradawi and Tariq Ramadan*, 51.
[361] Muhammad Khalid Masud, "The Construction and Deconstruction of Secularism as an Ideology," *Asian Journal of Social Science,* v. 33, no. 3 (2005), 371.

> Secularism may be accepted in a Christian society but it can never enjoy general acceptance in an Islamic society. Christianity is devoid of a *sharia* or a comprehensive system of life to which its adherents should be committed. The New Testament itself divides life into two parts, one for God, or religion, the other for Caesar, or the state: "Render unto Caesar things which belong to Caesar, and render unto God things which belong to God" (Matthew 22:21).[362]

From this description, he believes that secularism is the separation of religion and the state, and he thinks that Christian societies permit such division on a scriptural basis. In critique of his claims, many Christian intellectuals, particularly followers of liberation theology, would contest his belief that Christianity justifies and permits the state to flourish and pass legislation without any consideration of Christian principles.[363] What is important, however, is to understand that he believes this conception of society cannot be reconciled with Islam. This incompatibility is due to the Islamic "necessity" that Muslim societies be founded upon the *shari'a* law, the divine guidance.

He confirms and expands this conception of secularism when he says that, "[The Western secularists'] objective was only this: religion which existed in the form of church and clergy must not be allowed to interfere in government, economics, education, culture, and social aspects of life."[364] He extends the secularists' mission now to include both the state and other areas of the public sphere. One of his oversights that should be evident due to Chapter Two is that he does not differentiate between *soft* and *hard* forms of secularism. Rather, he comprehends and describes secularism in broad, monolithic terms. Though al-Qaradawi's claims are valid regarding some secularists, one must not

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[362] Yusuf al-Qaradawi, *Al-Hulul al-Mustawrada wa Kayfa Janat 'Ala Ummatina* (1971), 113-114 quoted in Andrew March's "Islamic Discussions of Western Secularism," pp. 2828.

[363] See Walter Rauschenbusch, *Christianity and the Social Crisis.* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1908). It gives a variety of examples of the connections among democracy, Christianity, and issues of social justice.

[364] Yusuf al-Qaradawi, *Islam and Secularism* (1997), 76, quoted in Muhammad Khalid Masud's "The Construction and Deconstruction of Secularism as an Ideology in Contemporary Muslim Thought," 372.

conflate these various types of secularity. Al-Qaradawi's perspective on secularism departs even further from that of Tariq Ramadan's regarding Islam's role in the political sphere.

Earning his title of "global *mufti*," al-Qaradawi often accesses the Internet in order to reach a broad audience and disseminate his views on various topics regarding Islam. When a questioner from Algeria asked about the Islamic stance towards secularism, al-Qaradawi responded with a message that tellingly expounds his view of secularism and the role of Islam in the political sphere. He explains, "[Islam] is a state and a religion, or government and a nation; it is a morality and power."[365] In essence, the reader discovers a point of view quite opposed to that of Ramadan's. While Ramadan supports a *soft political secularist* agenda and looks to the principles rather than to specific forms (in the examples of the Prophet's government and clothes), al-Qaradawi equates Islam with the state, with a specific type of government.

He desired to refute Ali Abd al-Raziq's view that Islam did not necessitate a single vision of state for Islamic societies with his publication "Islam and Secularism."[366] His response proposes that, conversely, Islam is both a state and a religion. Though he does not establish the specifics of this state, he believes the Islamic government must be based explicitly on the *shari'a* and propose legislation that enforces the permitted (*halal*) and forbidden (*haram*) points of the *shari'a*.[367] It is possible to propose that since he does not specify the *form* of government, he could use Ramadan's method of looking to the

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[365] Yusuf al-Qaradawi, "How Islam views Secularism," *IslamOnline,* accessed March 5, 2011, http://www.islamonline.net/servlet/Satellite?pagename=IslamOnline-English-Ask_Scholar/FatwaE/FatwaE&cid=1119503545396.

[366] Masud, "The Construction and Deconstruction," 371.

[367] Helfont, *Yusuf al-Qaradawi,* 110.
For example, he argues that Islamic societies could adopt democracy, but it must be Islamic in nature. By Islamic, he explains that the state must base its laws on the *shari'a* and that these laws cannot conflict with Islamic legal principles.

principles of Islam to establish any form of government. Proponents of liberal-democracy will be disappointed, however, when he problematizes the democratic system by saying that it is far too permissible of immortality and the whimsical desires of human nature. In a *fatwa* entitled, "*Shura* and Democracy," he writes,

> Democracy is a system that can't solve all societal problems. Democracy itself also can make whatever it wants as lawful, or prohibit anything it does not like. In comparison, the *shari'a* as a political system has limits…Our society should abide by what have been made lawful by Allah and also what have been made unlawful by Him.[368]

In this example, his views of the *shari'a* directly inform his disapproval of secular formations of government, which do not rely on the revelation of the Qur'an. In requiring Muslim societies to establish their laws *directly* in support of the *shari'a*, the form of "Islamic" democracy that al-Qaradawi suggests is far from the basis of a liberal-democratic regime that March has described in his depiction of political liberalism. He goes further in describing his anti-secularist views in other works.

In his "On the Jurisprudence of the State in Islam" (*Min Fiqh al-Dawla Fil-Islam),* he writes that it is a basic principle that Muslims are forbidden from actively participating in non-Islamic governments, but that there are certain situations and warrants for making exceptions to this principle.[369] These "grounds" are: 1) reducing evil and injustice to the extent that one can, 2) committing the lesser of two harms, and 3) descending from the higher example to the lower reality.[370] From these "grounds," he permits Muslims to engage their secular political and economic systems, but it must be kept in mind that these are emphatically *exceptions* to the norm. The notion of exception plays a critical role in al-Qaradawi's ethical prescriptions for the life in the West. In order

[368] Ibid, 110-111.
[369] Yusuf al-Qaradawi, "*Min Fiqh al-Dawla Fil-Islam*," (Cairo: Dar al-Turath, 1997), 180.
[370] March, "Islamic Discussions of Western Secularism," 2838.

to understand al-Qaradawi's injunctions, one must understand the coinciding political discourse that we examined with Tariq Ramadan: Islamic life in the West.

Andrew March situates much of al-Qaradawi's thoughts in the *fiqh al-aqalliyat al-muslima* legal literature, which is "the jurisprudence of Muslim minorities."[371] Islamic legal scholars, such as al-Qaradawi, formulate these ethical and legal doctrines in response to Muslims living in "non-Islamic" communities.[372] A key assumption of this type of legal literature, as Vincent Cornell demonstrates, is that it proposes that only Muslim-majority societies are *normative* for Muslims; life outside of these countries is life in "the other" or "non-Islamic" world.[373] Another *modus operandi* of this legal discourse is *taysir*, which means "facilitation."[374] This "facilitation" allows Muslims to engage in actions that under normal circumstances are not allowed. Two controversial examples that al-Qaradawi has ruled on are allowing Muslims to pursue economic interactions with interest (*ribaa)* and allowing Muslims to serve in foreign armies, even if they are fighting against Muslims. This context explains how al-Qaradawi deems Muslim participation in secular systems—be they governmental or economic—permissible, but, ultimately, *the* exception.

It is in this tradition that al-Qaradawi writes as a scholar who often sides with the position that March calls the "Muslim Brotherhood [affiliation]."[375] This literature spreads across a wide gamut of views and interpretations (an investigation of which could certainly fill another thesis), but two of the larger influences in such legal writings are the

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[371] Ibid, 2824.
[372] Ibid.
[373] Vincent Cornell, "Reasons Public and Divine: Liberal Democracy, shari'a fundamentalism, and the Epistemological Crisis of Islam" *Rethinking Islamic Studies*, eds. Carl W. Ernst and Richard C. Martin (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2010), 44.
[374] March, "Islamic Discussions of Western Secularism," 2826.
[375] Ibid, 2825.

salafi-rhetorical tradition and the *Muslim Brother hood-affiliation*, which were mentioned at the beginning of this chapter.[376] It is in contrast to these views that one can more fully comprehend Ramadan's arguments and support of *soft political secularism.*

In essence, the *salafi perspective*, in its most conservative and literalist forms, demands that Muslims remain a segregated community that needs to struggle to remain "uncontaminated" by non-Muslim societies.[377] The term *salaf* refers to the Companions of the Prophet and the several generations of Muslims immediately following his death, and the *salafis* are those individuals who invoke the principles and examples of these early Muslims in their own political or religious sentiments.[378] Though the Muslims within this grouping hold considerably various political views, March's heuristic use of this term is helpful for categorizing these diverse thinkers. Tariq Ramadan himself claims to be a *salafi reformist*, though his political views are as diametrically opposed to some of the most conservative representatives of this group as one could imagine.[379] It is in this tradition that many scholars of Islam place Muslims as wide-ranging as Osama bin Laden to Sayyid Qutb (d. 1966), the notorious Islamist pundit from the Muslim Brotherhood.

Qutb has infamously argued that Muslims must avoid living in "infidel" lands, if this is at all possible. Qutb writes, "A Muslim is required to show tolerance in dealing with the people of earlier revelations, but he is forbidden to have a relationship of alliance or patronage with them. His path to establish his religion and implement his unique system cannot join with theirs."[380] He reiterates and emphasizes the Islamic "system" (*al-*

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[376] Ibid.
[377] Ibid.
[378] Ramadan, *Western Muslims*, 25. Ramadan specifies within this group: *salafi literalists, salafi reformists, political salafi literalists*.
[379] Buruma, "Tariq Ramadan," 2-3
[380] Sayyid Qutb, *In the Shade of the Qur'an*, trans. M.A. Salahi and A.A. Shamis (Leicester: The Islamic Foundation, 1999), 144.

nizam al-islami), which necessitates a separation from other systems of belief. In this manner, Qutb advocates the totalistic *islam shamil* that Fouad Zakariyya believes is in direct opposition to the secularist attitude. This *salafi-rhetorical* position argues that Muslims cannot, in any way, separate Islam from political life because the *shari'a* is not only the divine guidance, but it is also *the* natural law of the universe; any human attempt to "create" laws separate from, but in accord with, the *shari'a* will fail and exemplifies an extreme ignorance (*jaahl*) on the part of that society.[381] As such, participation in a society that recommends and even enforces separating religion from the political sphere is not possible and is forbidden. The notion of "civil society"—one in which religion is not fundamental or is at least highly marginalized to the policies and legislation and where political identity rather than religion dictates one's ability to participate in society—is precisely what Osama bin Laden and Qutb castigate.[382] Al-Qaradawi takes a slightly less reactionary and more moderate position from the extreme *salafis*, but he still represents a *political perfectionist* attitude.

Andrew March has defined political perfectionists as people who, "[think] they *know* that their metaphysical (religious or secular) beliefs are true and that this justifies using public authority to transform society and the consciousness of its members."[383] Qutb fits this ticket quite well. The resonance with al-Qaradawi's political thought is apparent, too. Scholars in the Muslim Brotherhood-affiliation refer to non-Muslim majority lands as the *daar al-da'wa*, or the "Abode of Proselytizing," softening the classical "Abode of War" (*daar al-harb*) or "Abode of Disbelief" (*daar al-kufr*) labels. His division still insists, however, on the necessity of Islamization and conversion of non-

[381] Cornell, "Reasons Public and Divine, 28.
[382] Ibid.
[383] March, "Islamic Discussions of Western Secularism," 2822.

Muslims.[384] Islamic scholars in this "camp" use the *fiqh al-aqilliyat* in order to make life easier for Muslims living in the West, but they still insist on an *islam shamil* that is quite similar to the *salafis'* vision. The ramifications, political and religious, of these views will be explored near the end of this chapter.

Al-Qaradawi furthermore associates a notion of disbelief or atheism with secularity. He concedes that secularism does not *necessarily* entail atheism when he writes, "*Ilhad* [atheism] means denying the existence of God…but as far as secularism is concerned it is not necessary to deny God. The secularists in the West did not deny God. They only denied the church's right to interfere in matters of science and in daily life."[385] Even though in this writing al-Qaradawi denies the connection between secularity and disbelief, in other writings this idea is manifest. For example, in his, "How Imported Solutions Disastrously Affected Our Ummah" (*Al-Hulul al-Mustawrada wa Kayfa Janat 'Ala Ummatina*), he writes,

> The acceptance of secularism means abandonment of *sharia*, a denial of the divine guidance and a rejection of God's injunctions. It is indeed a false claim that the *sharia* is not suitable to the requirements of the present age. The acceptance of legislation formulated by humans means a preference for humans' knowledge and experiences over the divine guidance: "Say! Do you know better than God? (Q. 2:140). For this reason, the call for secularism among Muslims is atheism and a rejection of Islam. Its acceptance as a basis for rule in place of *sharia* is clear apostasy.[386]

From this perspective, one can draw the inference that he does equate *the secular* system with atheism, even though he denied this position earlier. The answer to this paradox lies in al-Qaradawi's proposal that, while for Christians secularism does not entail a denial of God, the opposite is true if Muslims embrace this world-view and socio-

[384] March, *Reading Tariq Ramadan*, 408.
[385] Yusuf al-Qaradawi, *Islam and Secularism*, 372.
[386] Yusuf al-Qaradawi, *Al-Hulul al-Mustawrada,* 113-114.

political system. He writes, "For Muslim societies…Islam is a comprehensive system of worship (*'ibada*) and legislation (*shari'a*)."[387] Interestingly, he defines *shari'a* in the limited, legalistic sense that both Zakariyya and Ramadan discourage. This excerpt demonstrates many of the central claims to al-Qaradawi's critiques of secularity. His thought accords with Qutb's because he thinks law that is not *explicitly* grounded in the *shari'a* is ignorant and in fact arrogant. When the secularists call for a "public reason" or the separation of Islam and the state, such ideas counter the fundamental beliefs of Muslims like al-Qaradawi. The secularists' laws and ideals "deny" the *shari'a*, and in doing so they earn the controversial title "apostate."

Al-Qaradawi undoubtedly places himself outside of the secularist "camp" when he declares that though Islam promotes freedom of expression, this does *not* mean that Islam allows for apostasy or the right to disavow Islam. Freedom of thought, particularly *contra* religious authority, has been shown to be one of the most fundamental of the secularist principles. In mentioning this "freedom" in a sermon from Qatar, al-Qaradawi describes the difficulty in cultivating interfaith dialogue (though he consistently supports some form of this dialogue) when he says, "[Christians] said that the subject was religious freedom. We accepted the subject of freedom but they interpreted freedom the way they wanted. To them, freedom is the freedom of disavowing Islam, the freedom of apostasy."[388] In other words, "freedom" has its limits, and we see these boundaries in the manner in which al-Qaradawi writes about the 2006 Danish cartoon incident. He expresses that the, "Islamic nation [should] express anger." and should "boycott" those

[387] Ibid.
[388] Helfont, *Yusuf al-Qaradawi*, 101.

who, "disdained our sanctities and committed aggression against our prophet."[389] He renounces the extremist actions of some Muslims over these controversies when he writes, "We called for reasonable wise anger, and when some churches and embassies were burned, we condemned those incidents."[390] In this case al-Qaradawi's "wise anger" is admittedly ambiguous; in other scenarios we see that he prohibits harsh denials of Islam—this does not mean, however, that he is not at home critiquing his own tradition.[391]

Al-Qaradawi further elaborates the perimeters on freedom in his response to Wafa Sultan—one of the signers of the St. Petersburg Declaration, who I noted in the introduction to this thesis—and her interview on *Al-Jazeera* in 2006. He recounts the numerous, dismayed calls that he received from many Muslims about this interview with Sultan, and he describes that in this interview Sultan leveled a vast array of insults and accusations against Islam, the Prophet Muhammad, and Muslim nations at large.[392] He says,

> She did not omit anything. She was insolent and stopped at nothing. She said unbearable, ghastly things that made my hair stand on end. She had the audacity to publicly curse Allah, His Prophet, the Qu'ran, the history of Islam, and the Islamic nation….She did not omit anything sacred. How was she allowed to appear on Al-Jazeera TV? I place the blame on Al-Jazeera…for allowing such a woman to appear on their channel and say such things.[393]

Though assuredly Sultan's statements enraged many religious persons, al-Qaradawi's response indicates his proscriptions on blaspheming or disparaging Islam, a

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[389] Ibid, 103.
[390] Ibid.
[391] Yusuf al-Qaradawi, *The Lawful and the Prohibited in Islam*, trans. Kamal El-Helbawy, M. Moinuddin Siddiqui, and Syed Shukry, (Plainfield: American Trust Publications, 1994).
In this work, he attempts to establish Islam as the "middle-way." He renounces extremism and other "mis-interpretations" of Islam.
[392] YouTube, "Re: A 'crack in the wall'-Wafa Sultan on the mohammed cartoons," *YouTube*. March 16, 2008, http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q9n34wKHogo&feature=related.
[393] Ibid.

right that is embedded in secularists' conceptions of the freedom of expression and consciousness. When al-Qaradawi writes, "She did not omit anything sacred," he delimits what aspects of human life are subject to denial and rejection from those that are untouchable: the religious or, more specifically, the Islamic. While Ramadan agreed that acts such as the Danish cartoons are hurtful and sacrilegious, he reaffirmed the legal right of freedom of expression. No such affirmation can be seen in al-Qaradawi's reactions, and on the contrary he explains that "such a woman" should never have been allowed to articulate her opinions on these matters in the first place. To al-Qaradawi's credit, however, he did condemn the violent reactions of the extremists. In order to understand his stark stance against secularism, it is necessary to observe the "fibers" of his position, the fundamental views that provide the bulwark for his anti-secularity, in a similar manner as the analysis on Ramadan.

Unraveling the Fibers of the Strand:
Foundations of al-Qaradawi's Opposition to Political Secularism

Al-Qaradawi's writings bring up significant conflicts with a variety of aspects philosophical and political secularity that have been presented throughout this thesis. One such divergence is apparent in his epistemological stance. One need only revisit his first passage in the beginning of this chapter: "The acceptance of legislation formulated by humans means a preference for humans' knowledge and experiences over the divine guidance." If Muslims desire justice, peace, and civility, as are the ideals and goals of most societies, then they must base their societies on the *shari'a*, since only in this way can they reach the truth. Any attempt to separate the state from this basis for discovering truth would result in misguidance and failure. To support this concept of epistemology,

he cites the Qur'an 2:140: "Say! Do you know better than God?" His reply is an unmistakable "No," humans do not understand better than God does. He emphasizes the necessity of humanity's dependence on the *shari'a* for just legislation in one of his most famous works *The Lawful and the Prohibited in Islam*.

In this book, he writes that humans have no authority to "declare what is lawful and what is prohibited."[394] This statement has significant implications for both ethics and the legislation of the state. In one sense, humans cannot establish an ethics that secular thinkers like Holyoake promoted. Holyoake advocated that humans eschew theological questions altogether, which, for al-Qaradawi, would result in the complete and utter misguidance of humanity. In al-Qaradawi's formula, only through knowledge of God's prohibitions and mandates (attained through the revelation in the Qur'an) can humans live the "good life" in both their political and individual existence. He ardently insists that to promote this ethical and political vision, Muslims must "[wage a war] against all belief-systems which originate in man's ignorance of the divine guidance."[395] This "war" is not a physical *jihad*, but rather a spiritual one in which Muslims must testify to their faith in the wake of disbelief and "ignorance." In supporting the rule of "God," he, though not explicitly in the writings reviewed in this chapter, relies on a seminal doctrine supported by Qutb: the sovereignty of God (*hakimiyya*).

In his commentary *In the Shadow of the Qur'an*, Qutb defines *hakimyya* in opposition to ignorance (*jahiliyya*). In commenting on Q. 5:50, he writes, "The meaning of *jahiliyya* is defined by this text. *Jahiliyya*—as God describes it and His Qur'an defines it—is the rule of humans by humans because it involves making some humans servants of

[394]Yusuf al-Qaradawi, *The Lawful and the Prohibited*, 21.
[395] Ibid, 238.

others, rebelling against service to God, rejecting God's divinity (*uluhiyya*) and, in view of this rejection, ascribing divinity to some humans and serving them apart from God." As William E. Shepard explains, Qutb equates *jahiliyyia* with idolatry, since humans living in this condition reject the sovereignty of God; only God is worthy of sovereignty, and denying the *shari'a* denies this sovereignty, according to Qutb.[396] The issue of "sovereignty" was important in Chapter One, and it certainly complicates the compatibility of Muslims adhering to Qutb's notion of *hakimiyya* and their ability to remain loyal citizens of their respective secular states. The modern, secular state demands complete loyalty to its laws and sovereignty. For this very reason, John Locke's fellow citizens mistrusted the potential reign of a Catholic king because they believed he would be loyal to the Pope and not the English Kingdom. The issue of loyalty is an implicit subtext in many of Tariq Ramadan's writings: Muslims must be *fully* loyal to their home-countries, and this is why he had to reformulate what implementing the *shari'a* means. Qutb's stance questions the very possibility of democracy and elucidates his position on why Muslims cannot live under secular legal systems.

Qutb writes that ignorance is the "rule of humans by humans." Paradoxically, this is one of the most insightful ways to summarize the "materialism" and "this-worldliness" of the intellectuals presented in Chapter One. Holyoake championed the "Secular philosophy of life" precisely because it *only* promoted a "rule of humans *by humans* [emphasis added]." As far back as the 14th-century, Marsilius of Padua had argued that the Holy Roman Emperor's *sovereignty* resided in *the people*.[397] Though not a justification for democracy, Marsilius locates the locus of political legitimacy of the

[396] William E. Shepard, "Sayyid Qutb's Doctrine of *Jahiliyya*," *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, v. 35 (2003), 524.
[397] Goldenbaum, 'Sovereignty and Obedience," 501.

Emperor in the *people*, not the scripture or revelation. Without needing to cite other proponents of social-contract theory, Qutb and al-Qaradawi's dissent is clear: sovereignty *cannot* lie in the people, but rather most lie in God, specifically in the *shari'a*. Though Tariq Ramadan affirms the omnipotence of God, he defines the *shari'a* in a very different way than Qutb and al-Qaradawi do. Vincent Cornell calls this conservative trend in Islamic thinking and epistemological perspective *shari'a fundamentalism*.

Cornell illustrates this conservative attitude in his article "Reasons Public and Divine" when he writes, "This outlook denies the autonomy of human reason and sees ultimate truth as accessible to the human being only through divine guidance."[398] This epistemological perspective contradicts many of secularity's tenets. In Chapter One, Holyoake argued that the most important secular principle was freethinking, which is enmeshed in the notion that rather than focusing on theological questions, humans should focus on questions of this life; these questions did not require theological consideration, and they should not be restricted by the claims of theologians. Al-Qaradawi's epistemological premises clash with these secular precepts. His ideas likewise disagree with Rawls' concept of public reason and its place in the *decision-making* process of the state.

Though public reason has its different interpretations, it is paramount for the liberal-democratic system, which is intertwined with secularity. In a society that contains disparate perspectives on issues like religion and the ultimate reality of the world, public reason attempts to insure that laws are just for *all* citizens. Al-Qaradawi, however, opposes the very use of reason that is not based on divine guidance. These views on public reason are incommensurate. In a similar manner, his position diverges from

[398] Cornell, "Reasons Public and Divine," 26.

Hegel's description of the "modern period," wherein humans search for the truth outside of theology and, ultimately, are capable of discovering it in this way. Kant's—echoed by Zakariyya's much later—illustration of the necessity of rational autonomy, perhaps one of the most important aspects of Enlightenment thinking, also conflict with al-Qaradawi's positions. Cornell's definition of *shari'a fundamentalism* clarifies some of the most important issues of al-Qaradawi's thought, and in this explanation we see how al-Qaradawi's stance deeply conflicts with political secularity.

Cornell cites Bruce Lawrence's work *Defenders of God* to describe *shari'a fundamentalism*. Lawrence writes, "Fundamentalism is the affirmation of religious authority as holistic and absolute, admitting neither of criticism nor reduction; it is expressed through the collective demand that specific creedal and ethical dictates derived from scripture be *publicly recognized and legally enforced* [emphasis added]."[399] Cornell places the views of Muslims like bin Laden and Qutb within *shari'a fundamentalism* because they "reify" the *shari'a* as the "locus of divine authority," which allows them to "[see the sharia] as an idealized expression of the divine will and the locus of truth for human society," encompassing both law and scripture.[400] Such views often avoid the reality of debate, dissent, and "uncertainty" that characterize the differences of opinion in the multiple schools of Islamic law and likewise rely on literalist interpretations of scripture.[401] Additionally, this fundamentalist discourse conflates religion and culture and "ghettoizes" Muslims into the *daar al-islam.*[402]

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[399] Bruce Lawrence, *Defenders of God: The Fundamentalist Revolt against the Modern Age* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1995), 27.
[400] Cornell, "Reasons Public and Divine," 26-27.
[401] Ibid.
[402] Ibid, 33.

Cornell writes that there are important political implications of this fundamentalist epistemology. He writes that the fundamentalist perspective, if followed to its logical political conclusions, advocates the *milla* or the Ottoman *millet* system, which is "a self-contained and legally demarcated religious community that exists concurrently with but in separation from other *milla* communities of the same type."[403] In this system, Muslims are confined to "enclaves" that separate them from other communities on the basis of spiritual identity. At best, Cornell writes that this system allows for Muslims to have a *modus vivendi*, an arrangement that allows for peaceful co-existence of groups with severely conflicting interests, with non-Muslims.[404] The proposal of the necessity of the *milla* system by *shari'a fundamentalists* like bin Laden, Cornell argues, signifies an "epistemological crisis."[405]

Cornell describes this "epistemological crisis" by relying on the work of one of contemporary philosophy's most famous thinkers, Alasdair MacIntyre. Cornell claims that this "crisis" occurs,

> When a historically founded tradition confronts a new and alien tradition, it may be that some of the original traditions claims to truth will no longer be sustained…A feeling of crisis may be precipitated by the challenge of a completely new epistemology, or it may occur when social and historical conditions change such that the claims of a rival tradition provide newly cogent and illuminating explanations of why one's own tradition has been unable to solve its problems or restore its original coherence.[406]

Cornell cites one example of a historical epistemological crisis as the introduction and challenge of Greek philosophical thought to the Islamic system, in which some Muslim theologians sought to "Islamicize" and utilize the terms of this foreign system to

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[403] Ibid.
[404] Ibid, 45.
[405] Ibid, 29.
[406] Ibid, 30.

express Islamic ideas in the "logical formulations of Greek thinkers."[407] Without spending too much space on this crisis, the rise of secularity and its epistemological system that emphasizes the autonomy of human intelligence from religious premises is conspicuously opposed to the strict epistemological conception of *shari'a fundamentalists.*

In this framework, I situate al-Qaradawi in the *shari'a fundamentalist* group for a variety of reasons. First, his writings emphasize his reliance on the classical *daar al-islam/ daar al-da'wa* paradigm. He advocates that the only normative environment in which Muslims can live is one that is Muslim-majority and based explicitly on the *shari'a*. This is the precise definition of the *milla* that *shari'a fundamentalists* support. In this light, he conceives of Muslims living outside of such environments as a minority and an exception. Second, he lucidly argues against the philosophical secularity described in Chapters One and Two. The idea that societies might operate and create coercive laws on a "public reason" cannot, on al-Qaradawi's account, result in just laws or laws that are in accord with God's injunctions. Regarding political secularism, there can be no doubt that he dissuades Muslims from participating and supporting such regimes. He also has classified Islam as a state and a religion, which places him outside of secularist conceptions of the modern state, which require a distinct separation of the two. His thoughts and works entail several distinctions for how scholars can define secular Muslims and their conception(s) of secularity.

Similar to the reflections on Zakariyya and Ramadan, the scope of secular Muslims must be extended beyond the association and equation with atheism. Polemically, al-Qaradawi defines secular Muslims as those who support a separation of

[407] Ibid.

Islam and the state, and he quickly adds that such individuals are apostates. This invective questions their status as "true" Muslims. The scholar of Islam, however, is not one to decide controversies like the authenticity of an individual's faith. Analogously, he believes secularism is anti-Islamic and denies the *hakimiyya* of God. Another method for understanding the secularity of secular Muslims is in the description of those individuals who have encountered the "epistemological crisis" described by MacIntyre (perhaps due to life in modernity or interactions with the West), and have sought to overcome this crisis by adopting the "second language" of secularity.[408] In other words, some typologies of secular Muslims can be defined as such because they adhere to a philosophically secular epistemology. Another layer of interpretation for secular Muslims is that they are not *political perfectionists* in relation to Islam, like al-Qaradawi is, because they do not attempt to assert their metaphysical system as the *only* true doctrine that thus warrants coercive enforcement by the state.[409] In looking at al-Qaradawi's *shari'a fundamentalism*, his positions have clarified some of the key issues regarding Islam and secularism by demonstrating opposing views to political secularism.

[408] Ibid, 30.

[409] Some secular Muslims might indeed be *political perfectionists*, as was the case with Mustafa Kamal Ataturk. One might meaningfully call Ataturk a "secular" Muslim because of his *political perfectionist* attitude, which sought to enforce the subjective secularization mentioned in Chapter Three.

Chapter Five

Conclusion: Towards the Post-Secular?

In his speech at the PEN American Center in 2010, Tariq Ramadan made an insightful remark: just as religious persons must seek to know more about their religion, so, too, secularists must critically look to the history of secularity. In asking the questions, "What does it mean to be a secular Muslim?" and "How does being secular affect how Muslims define Islam's role in their respective political communities?," we have encountered a variety of attempts to answer them, which have required a considered analysis of Islamicate relationships with secularity. One central purpose of this thesis has been to reveal the complexity and profundity of asking and seeking answers to these ever-important questions. I conclude this study with a statement of its limitations and a consideration of the issues yet to be resolved.

As I mentioned in Chapter Two, this thesis explores Sunni Muslim thinkers, primarily within the Egyptian historical context. Both Tariq Ramadan and Yusuf al-Qaradawi, however, are adept and knowledgeable of the Western context as well—Ramadan as a Western-educated, Swiss civilian and al-Qaradawi as a founding member of the European Council for Fatwa and Research. In seeking a sophisticated and sufficiently complex comprehension of Muslims' relationships and experiences with secularity, more research is needed within different socio-historical contexts.

This study has not dealt with non-Arab and, perhaps more importantly, non-Sunni experiences. As Fouad Zakariyya mentioned, *al-Shi'a* tradition, with its different structures of authority and political legitimacy, would offer diverse emphases and encounters with secularity that this study of Sunni thinkers has not highlighted. Similarly,

in looking into the different national experiences with secularity, whether the Turkish or the Iranian or others, one would certainly come across different interpretations and complications. Research into Sufi thinkers' writings and thoughts on secularity would also provide important information into this complex issue. A more comprehensive study will have to deal with these issues.

Another potential difficulty is that though this thesis touched on the issue of authenticity, there is certainly more room for exploring the historical relationship among Muslims, religious scholars, and various Islamic rulers and states. I cited and analyzed statements regarding the authenticity of secularity by those Muslims who opposed and those who critiqued secularity; an unbiased, in-depth exploration into the topic (one not attempting to support any of the associated political agendas) would beneficially expose and provide answers to this highly relevant problem. Though I have presented a short section on the matter in Chapter Two, supported by some historical insights by scholars of Islam, this question begs for more exhaustive research.

Revisiting March's proposal in the Introduction—namely that we are seeking to understand "Islamic" conceptions of secularism in *specific* and *important* discourses—we must concede that these conceptions run across a wide and diverse gamut; this does not mean, however, that there are no general trends to be gathered. First, while in the Western context the separation of church and state was an important theme of secularism, this perspective, as Krämer proposed, needs to be shifted in order to comprehend Islamicate and Muslim experiences with secularity. I contend, along with Krämer, that the discussions and perceptions of secularism by Muslim thinkers need to involve an examined reflection on how these individuals view the *shari'a*, the state, positive law,

and the nexus among these in regards to a "public vision" of Islam. This framework, while including the state's relationship to Islam and religious authorities, also exemplifies the "micro" level of how Muslims view the tenets of Islam in relation to their own private and/or public, political lives. The "secular" view of Islam's role includes many facets.

In Zakariyya's works, we discovered that being secular could involve denying the necessity of establishing a state that explicitly requires Islam as the religion of the state or that proposes the *shari'a* as the foundation for legislation. He explained that while at first secularists supported the importation of Western legal, educational, and societal norms, after the independence from colonial regimes the "new" secularists sought to not merely imitate the West; rather, these Muslims wanted to deny the Islamist political goals and aspirations. His public vision of Islam required that the state should *not* enforce the *huddud*. He decried the classical *daar al-islam* and *daar al-harb* paradigm, and clarified secularism as a "universal mindset" that fought against the "monolithic mind." Moreover, he defined secularism as promoting rational autonomy of Muslims from traditional religious authorities. He did, however, admit that some secularists were likewise atheists. In this discussion on secularism, then, we are certainly dealing with more than religion's role in the state, though the separation of religion (Islam) from the state is still an important feature of Muslim formations of political secularism.

The second general trend, found in both Zakariyya and Tariq Ramadan's works, is that Muslim conceptions of secularism are intricately tied into the colonial experience; this is an important aspect to keep in mind, since Western paradigms of secularism are not historical importations from foreign political cultures. Though both sought to distance their visions of secularism from these colonial discourses, they likewise addressed the

issue. Zakariyya clearly favored his "second camp" of secularist thinkers, since they work to incorporate what is good from the Western experience, while simultaneously supporting the individuality and independence of Muslims in non-Western political contexts. Ramadan, though admitting that most Muslims associate secularism with despotism and colonialism, labored to correct the "misinterpretation" of secularism as the sole product of Western imperialism. He supported separating religion from the state, the neutrality of the state from all religions, an overlapping consensus among religious and non-religious citizens, the integration of secular systems vis-à-vis taking context (*waqi*) into account, and "implementing" the *shari'a* by obeying the positive laws of one's societies. In this manner, Ramadan's public vision is quite similar to Zakariyya's. Islam still remains a spiritual and ethical force, but it does not *have* to be the explicit basis of a society's legal structure. It is important to note, however, that their visions allot a role to Islam that still provides for political impact. Al-Qaradawi's writings, though in opposition to secularism, likewise highlighted similar motifs.

In looking for Muslim conceptions of secularism, al-Qaradawi offered several answers. He defined secularism as the separation of religion from the state, but wrote that it is a Western importation that has no authenticity in Islamic societies. He explained that Islam is both a state and a religion, and that Muslims who deny this claim are secularists, but this likewise implies that these individuals are apostates. In his conception, secularism is an "ignorant" belief system, which denies the sovereignty of God (*hakimiyya*). Though Ramadan and Zakariyya would argue against these statements, they are nonetheless important for a scholarly understanding of Islamicate perceptions of

secularism. The third general "trend" that all of these Muslims have discussed is secularism *qua* a general *Weltanschauung*.

Zakariyya, as mentioned earlier, associated secularism with a "universal mindset." In his definition, secularism fought against the "monolithic mind" by incorporating non-Islamic systems, such as Western philosophy and Western art, into the Islamic worldview. Ramadan made a similar maneuver. His support for secularism fits this description in so far as it allows for the "integration" of one's context (*waqi*), which requires that Muslims take *the secular* into account for their conceptions of how to implement the *shari'a.* Though he opposed such a worldview, al-Qaradawi likewise associated secularism with "this-worldliness" and the political "hubris" of secularists, who think that human societies can exist without explicit reliance on the divine. It is this *Weltanschauung* that I believe the theoretical writings of thinkers like Asad and Agrama miss in their analyses of secularism.

It is crucial to revisit a question raised in the Introduction: can one be secular and religious, secular and Muslim? I propose a "yes" and "no." As this thesis has suggested, the limitations and boundaries between "religion" and "the secular" are complicated. In some ways, being "secular" can conflict immensely with religious commitments and sensibilities. If we define the secular as the anti-religious, the *la diniyah*, then conflict seems inevitable. This is not to argue, however, that anti-religious people necessarily will have no attachment to their religious heritage or will disdain all aspects of their former religious identity. If we take a nuanced approach to defining secularity more broadly, then vistas open for how individuals can remain true to their religious traditions while simultaneously supporting "secular" agendas. Tariq Ramadan is a case in point for this

framework. Both secularity and religiosity consist of a diverse spectrum of principles and definitions, and this thesis has proposed several ways for conceiving of and thinking about these values and their respective identities. One important issue that I have not exclusively accentuated is a principal phrase currently spreading through the academy: the "post-secular."

Jürgen Habermas, perhaps Germany's most acclaimed contemporary philosopher, writes in his article "Notes on a Post-Secular Society," that, "The description of modern societies as 'post-secular' refers to a *change in consciousness* that I attribute to three phenomena."[410] The first of these phenomena is the common mentality and assumption by many Europeans that they already live in a secularized society in which religion no longer plays a "destructive" or "dangerous" role. These citizens thus believe that society no longer requires the removal of religion in order to advance scientifically, socially, or politically. In this mentality, the critique of some Enlightenment thinkers of religion is no longer seen as necessary. I seek to problematize this claim by asking: does it limit itself to the European perception of *Christianity*? Furthermore, is Islam and are Muslims an *exception* to this mentality, as might seem evident in the 1989 Rushdie affair, the 2005 French communal riots, the murder of Theo Van Gogh in the Netherlands by a Muslim radical, and countless other examples? Regardless of these objections, Habermas explicates two more reasons for the label "post-secular."

Habermas writes that religion is beginning to take a more prominent position as a "moral institution" in the public sphere in debates such as abortion, euthanasia, bioethical issues, and climate change. In providing potentially useful and cogent moral rationalities,

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[410] Jürgen Habermas. "Notes on a Post-Secular Society," *Blätter für deutsche und internationale Politik* (April 2008), 20.

many contemporary citizens are acknowledging the legitimate presence of religion in the public sphere. In this sense, Habermas thinks we are "beyond" the claims of thinkers like Hegel and even Sigmund Freud, who posited that religion must be removed from human consciousness, since it inhibits the search for truth, freedom of thought and a robust rationality.[411]

The third reason he gives is the immigration of "guest-workers" and refugees in European societies. This influx of heterogeneous cultures has established an important "confessional schism" and supported a "pluralism of ways of life." Thus, Habermas says, this increase in foreigners and foreign cultures is establishing the permissibility of differences in worldviews. Just as European societies have moved into the post-colonial age, so too they are breaking away from the necessity of secular discourses. Habermas mentions, however, that the phrase "post-secular" can only be applied to countries like Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Europe, and, perhaps, America. The question, then, is *could* this terminology apply to Islamicate societies? To Muslim citizens in Europe and abroad? Have we moved beyond the need for secularism as a foundation for civil society in these countries as well? For those closely observing the unfolding events across the Middle East, these questions seem relevant in the wake of these revolutions.

These are questions about the post-secular that I have not directly addressed through my research on several Muslim intellectuals, but they would need to be approached in a larger project on Muslims' encounters with secularity. Though my research has highlighted some of the most important motifs of Islam and political secularism, there is still the need for dedicated investigation into the problems that I have

[411] Sigmund Freud, *The Future of an Illusion*, trans. James Strachey (New York, London: W.W. Norton & Company, 1961).

presented. The academic venture of defining and understanding secularity will certainly occupy the time and writings of scholars of Islam in the future. I hope that in this study I have clarified some important aspects of the problems surrounding Muslims and secularity.

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