MStudies, The International Relations of the Modern Middle East

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Dr. Roxane Farmanfarmaian

Lecture 5, Identity, Ideology and Political Islam

Main themes

1. How did people in the Middle East construct identity in the past? How did this change with the shift into modernity and the division of peoples into modern states?

2. How is ideology in the Middle East used to organize the polity, and legitimate states?

3. Why has Political Islam become the dominant theme, and what does it mean to the people of the Middle East?

I. First, as always, a definition. 1.) Identity: The relationship of the individual to society – ie, self-image

   2.) Ideology: The relationship of the individual to the polity.

   a) Both reflect the distinction between ascribed and acquired identity – the former being without choices – it is what you are born with, such as being male or female; the other, that is, acquired identity, you have a conscious choice, and you decide to accept become a certain type of person, such as a supporter of a movement.

b) For our purposes, changes in identity and ideology reflect the transition of societies and polities.

c) The question therefore arises, How did people locate themselves in the past, because that informs the legacies of today.

II. In the pre-colonial period,

1. Identity reflected the persistence of patterns of location and self and had an unbroken lineage – such as being part of a tribe or region – until they were consciously redefined (through nationalism, for example, or the imposition of dividing borders, so that those in Lebanon or Palestine, for example, were no longer part of greater Syria). Identity could also be delineated according to:

   a) The family – which reflected a hierarchy, replicating the submission of the wider society as a community to God.

   b) Rural versus Urban – and the tribe, all powerful sources of identification.

   c) Minority affiliation an important component (an ascribed identity) and was: a) ethnic; b) confessional, or both. These included, for example, the Kurds – which included Sunni, Shia and Yazidi versions of Islamic belief, and regional affiliation with both Persia and the Ottoman empire; the Berbers of Morocco, and the Copts of Egypt.

   d) Even so, because of certain practices under Ottoman rule, these affiliations could often be complex. For example, young Christian men of the Balkans were collected by the authorities, often with the strong encouragement of their families, who received benefits therefrom. These young men were taught Islam, and made a part of the powerful professional military contingent called the Janissaries, or inducted into the administrative class of the empire. This was the cause of the strange ethnic groupings in

seemingly very foreign parts that characterizes the Muslim world to this day. Albanians and Circassians, for example were part of this programme, acquired Muslim identities, and settled in regions far from their homelands, retaining their minority characteristics, but establishing deep roots in their adopted homes. Albanians (the line of Mohammad Ali, for example), settled in Egypt, the Circassians in Jordan and Syria. Another instance of this social complexity is the Kolughli in North Africa, which grew out of the intermarriage between the dominant Ottoman caste and elite members of the local population, called *bildi* (from country). This created a dominant minority, which still retains its elite stature today.

2. In comparison, ideology in pre-colonial time was uncomplicated, as it was Islamic, that is, the individual was inside a society ordered according to Islam.

III. In the colonial period, as international borders were drawn, and people divided, an awareness of the multiple, complex hierarchies of identity open to the individual became more acute. It was now possible to define yourself in regional, tribal, locational and religious terms. This was made particularly clear in the responses to the demand by the colonial authorities for everyone to adopt a surname for purposes of registration. It is for this reason that a majority of names in both the Arab world, and in Iran, end in 'i', which is the normative form. Thus, it became, Mohammad Bidawi, Mohammad the Peasant. Or, Mohand Masmoudi, Mohand from the Masmoudi tribe. Or, Ruhollah Khomeini, Ruhollah from the town of Khomein. **The result:** modern identities were frozen in response to colonialism.

IV. With the dawn of independence, identity and ideology underwent a metamorphosis. The ideological issue rose to the surface. This took two often complimentary forms: a) collective identity became a defining feature outside the realm of Islam,

and instead, came to relate how the individual was located inside the state (and not just society). b) The institutionalization of the state led to manifestations of nationalism as an acquired identity. In both cases, one impetus was the European paradigm of individual liberties and of a nationalistic framework that legitimized the state. However, in both cases, a competing Arab – as well as Persian and Turkish - paradigm, that instrumentalized the three patterns of identity ascription – wataniya (patriotism, from 'homeland'), qawmia (cultural nationalism, from 'tribe') and ummiya made the process particular and unique.

V. **In Iran, the word *vatan*** likewise evoked a territorial construct that was defined by established frontiers and which mythologized the Iranian nation as composed of many tribes and peoples; in fact, in Persian, this was described as the 'united nations of Iran'. The *ummah* as a factor of Iranian identity was less important than in the Arab word until the explosion of the Islamic Revolution in 1979; unlike the Arabs in the wake of the Ottoman breakup, Iranians did not experience the wrenching apart of their nation and social linkages, having never been formally colonized. What is more, the Shia interpretation of the prospect of *ummah* focused on purely localized experiences in Shia terms – the martyrdom of suffering under the abuses of monarchy; or institutionalizing clerical contributions to governance and social order, a factor of the constitutional uprising of 1906. It did not, until Khomeini, experience nationalism as an ideology of export, with the *ummah* being the object of that export, and the Shia tinting of that export taking second place to the larger conception of establishing an Islamic community as an alternative to capitalist or communist community. This in fact, was why the export of Iran's revolution and concept of ummah was deemed so threatening, particularly by the Gulf states. It was not only because Iran could appeal to their large Shia

populations, but because it conceived of the Islamic ummah an encompassing the Sunni contingent as well in a regional Islamic 'nationalism'. This was a way of empowering the Middle East against the West – giving it a shared rhetoric of community identity that could counter the rhetoric of the West – and deny that the Middle East was fragmented and failing. It is this component of a revolutionary regional Islamic ummah that makes Iran not only a viable partner for Hamas, but a regional threat to Israel – a point I shall discuss further later on.

VI. But to return to cultural nationalism - this was less institutionalized as a political driver than in the Arab world, primarily because Iran never experienced the border divisions that broke peoples apart territorially, and which then focused on linguistic, historical and cultural linkages as the elements that could bind them together. Iran, by contrast, was populated by various ethnic groups that spoke various languages , and so had to draw on their shared historical heritage, and the concept of the bounded nation to cement its diverse peoples together into a single, imagined community.

VII. In Turkey, concepts of nationalism had percolated as early as the mid-19th century with the Young Ottomans, and then AbdulHamid II's *osmanlik*. *Osmanlik*, connoting patriotism, was adopted by the Young Turks who turned it initially into a secular mechanism for nationhood, and a way to bind diverse populations in what remained of the empire – whether Kurd, Circassian, Arab or Turk – together without a religious overlay. However, this was hotly challenged by the ulama, who argued that the progress of the nation depended on traditional values to underpin the development and centralization necessary for modernization, forcing the Young Turk government to re-integrate Islamic polemics into the concept of patriotism. However, the religious encouragement to develop was itself couched

in a nationalism inspired by Mohammad Abdu, the Grand Mufti of Egypt, and the ulama of Damascus, for example, who warned the Young Turks that 'whoever does not work to advance the economy strays from Islam.' (Gelvin: 233). When, in turn, Mustapha Kemal took over in Istanbul after WWI , secularism was re-introduced, and Kemalism became a nationalism of specific linguistic and cultural significance that Turks could rally to, and which was interpreted as a Turkification of Western paradigms. It served as a form of nationalist protection against the intervention of the European 'other'; likewise, efforts at national self-definition transmuted into a grisly mechanism of ethnic consolidation against the Armenians and Kurds – two groups which Turkey dealt with brutally. Finally, it developed as a secularist creed to distance the Turkish identity from Muslim seduction. Ramadan was banned, the call to prayer could not be delivered in Arabic, mosques were allowed to fall into disrepair, and religious instruction was expunged from the school curriculum.

VIII. At this point, before further investigating the spread of nationalisms throughout the Middle East in the aftermath of World War I, and the eventual entrenchment of certain forms of nationalism into interpretations of the state that became rigidified, it is important to spend a moment on what nationalism is, and what made its impact unique in the Middle East, where its appearance coincided with the *creation* of nations, rather than the political modernization of existing national self-conceptions, as it did elsewhere.

1. All nationalisms can be defined as having certain characteristics: Gellner the father of nationalism – before him, nationism, or pre-industrial ethnic history.

A) Gellner associated nationalism with a break in human development based

on industrialism, and the connection between a common, shared linguistic vernacular across a given territory, which created a common 'high' culture.

B) Culture, rather than roles defined the people, creating, what Benedict Anderson called, a common national imaginary. IE not all people in a country know each other, but the shared national imaginary links them to the nation.

2. Thus, the common characteristics of nationalism are:

a) the link of a people to a particular piece of real-estate;

b) the focus on national distinctiveness according to shared linguistic, ethnic, religious, literary or historical traditions which are seen to be linked across time, regardless of the nature of government. That is, regimes may change, but nations retain their specific characteristics.

c) in the modern world, nationalisms are predicated on the view that government must assure the common interest of the nation, and this can only be achieved through self-government.

d) According to Gelllner, nationalism is expressed as sentiment, movement and ideology

e) each brand of nationalism perceives itself as destined to succeed because it represents the authentic identity and aspirations of a given people. They have a tendency therefore to be dogmatic and rigid, seeing alternative approaches as wrong, and their approach as representing the only 'right' way.

f) nationalism arises in opposition to a perceived nemesis, whether internal or external – that is, as a movement to counter a perceived 'other'.

g) because all nationalisms share these common characteristics, it is relatively easy for adherents to switch from one to another, and therefore, one can see

that nationalisms come and go, even though the prime pillar of nationalism – that all people belong to a nation – remains unchanged.

3. Some political scientists define nationalism as an ideology, although it can better be viewed as a container of ideology in that it couches political dogmas and creeds within a nationalist based polemic.

    a) Nationalism that deals with assumptions about the organization of the state or society in a particular territory, however, can be revolutionary, and if successful, can transform subjects into citizens and citizens into the cogs that drive the modern state to achieve the purpose of creating the 'common good'.

    b) Thus, nationalism provided the modern state with the grounding for legitimacy and purpose, even as the modern state showed itself capable of harnessing the social power of its citizens more efficiently than any of its precursors.

IX. Turning to **Arab nationalism,** therefore, it was an ascribed identity in which a sense of universal common experience was based on a shared language, ethnicity and history. This history hearkened back to the great Muslim civilization, which was idealized, and instrumentalized as a concept of nation. Arab nationalism was not overtly about a shared religion – since at the time of its 'awakening', Christians and other religious groups constituted more than 10% of the population. However, many of the symbols used were religious, and this is demonstrated by the rhetoric of the PLO, which is a secular organization, but which reveals how Islam always lurks behind Arab nationalism.

1. Importantly, and as noted before, Arab nationalism reflected aspects of being larger and smaller than the state, and instead, underscored the Islamic concept

of *towhid*, or unity. Thus, there was always conflict between territorial nationalism – that is, Lebanese, or Egyptian, for example, and pan-Arab nationalism that was not state-based, and instead, cross-border.

2. The origins of Arab nationalism are obscure, and three arguments have been advanced as to how it came about.

A) That it was a consequence of Western influence in Middle East education – particularly as a result of the struggle between France and Russia in the Levant, as they each sought to rally constituencies of Christians – the French acting as the 'church' of the Lebanese, and the Russians as the home of orthodox Christianity appealing to Christians in Jerusalem and the Palestinian territories. Thus, they forwarded the European concept of nationalism, which, particularly in the Cafe Society of Lebanon, led to an intellectual movement developing among the bourgeoisie that saw the Arab world as different from the Ottoman Empire. By 1910, this had formed into a coherent movement that emphasized a shared Arab language because they were Christian, and a shared history of a lost world of the Arabs.

B) The alternative argument puts the development much later – just before WWI, as a response to the Ottomanism of AbdulHamid's *tanzimat* and the Young Turks effort to purify the empire in Islamic terms. In this instance, the Young Turks wanted to make the Turkish culture the primary one, to the exclusion of the Arabs. This interpretation suggests that pan-Arabism was a consequence of the fragmentation of the empire, and the way in which Arab elites differentiated themselves from Turkish military officers through a homogenizing process of military service.

C) A third argument puts the beginning in 1913 at the Arab Congress in Paris. All delegates were from Greater Syria (which as you know at the time included the Levant) and were members of secret, anti-Turkish societies that flourished because the Young Turks had eased repression in the Arab provinces. They included members of a society called Qahtaniya, established in 1909 and composed of army offices, and another similar one convened in 1911, called Fatat, of exiles in Paris. The Congress brought together both the Christian and Muslim strands, and was convened with the purpose to demonstrate they were different than the Turks. Whichever sourcing you choose, three elements of the movement are clear:

3. A) It was not a mass movement, but initially, an elite movement.

B) It was a movement about recovering civilizational identity

C) It developed quickly as a response to colonialism during the mandates. The first great articulation during the mandate period was by Sati al-Husri, director of education in Iraq in the 1930s. This built on a previous Egyptian expression of wataniya that hearkened to resuscitating the greatness of the Pharaohnic Age, which had been promulgated almost a century earlier by Taha Hussein, and in Syria in the 1860s, aware of its distinction to the Ottomans, and finally, in Morocco, where its sense of its own uniqueness contributed to a proto-nationalism.

5. The outbreak of World War I enabled this opposition movement to put its ideas into action. The Ottoman empire responded badly by upping the repression. Mass reactions led to a renewed awareness of the distinction between Arab and Turk, and the idea of an Arab state to replace the Ottoman Empire became widespread. This is what inspired the Sharif of Mecca to muster the Arab

Revolt, with the purpose of setting up a single Arab state, a plan scotched by the British, and the French.

6. Arab nationalism got a new lease on life, however, with the creation of a Jewish Homeland. This was fed by three new thinkers who articulated a more complex form of Arab nationalism:

1) Sa'ad Zahloul, and Egyptian, who pushed the idea of Egypt as the embodiment of the Arab purpose;

2) a Lebanese, Rashid Rida, who conceived of Islam as the cornerstone of Arab nationalism, widening it out of the Christian dimension; and

3) Shakib Arslan, another Lebanese, who saw the movement as predominantly Arab, and also linking it to religion. The common elements were that it was:

a) holistic,

b) it rejected a class analysis – that is, it was not communist or socialist;

c) it was linguistic, and drew on agnatic solidarity – that is, on patterns of descent, or common origin;

d) it was anti-Zionist, which began to put pressure on the large communities of Jews inside the Arab world, who were associated now with Zionism; and finally,

e) it assumed a religious solidarity without consciously excluding Christians.

IX. Post WWII

1. Nationalism moved away from the Lebanese-Syria axis to a new one based in Egypt. The ideologies constructed focused on two factors, one general the other specific.

A) Generally, it centred on the growth of anti-colonialism in the 1940s, and the run-up to independence.

B) Specifically, it was a response to the creation of Israel in 1948.

2. Nasser's takeover in 1954 from General Naghib, who had led the Young Officer's Coup ousting King Farouk in 1952, marked the real beginning of Arab Nationalism. The Nasserist version of Arab nationalism insisted on the unity of the Arab world based on Egypt. As such, it was a statement about *wataniya* – territorial patriotism, despite its claim to represent *qawmia* – the broader Arab civilization. Nasser had a vision of Egypt as the centre of three circles: a) Islam; b) the Arab world; c) Africa.

3. The point about Nasser's vision of Arab nationalism was that it depended on Egyptian success to maintain its structure. But Egypt, appearing initially to triumph, constantly failed.

   a) First, Nasser's nationalisation of the Suez Canal, and encouragement of Libya's independence from Italy, garnered huge support and adulation from the Arab world as gestures rejecting the European powers and illustrating Arab independence. But, Nasser's takeover of the Canal provoked, the Tripartite invasion in 1956. Although Britain, France and Israel failed to oust Nasser, as they intended, and he initially experienced a strengthening of his personal position, the effect of the war on Egypt's self-perception as a military power was negative.

   b) Second, in 1958, Egypt and Syria joined in a common union, the United Arab Republic (UAR) – but this did not last, and in 3 years collapsed. Egyptian arrogance centred the UAR in Cairo, sidelining the Syrians and giving them the impression they'd lost sovereignty over their territory, rather than gained power in confederation. The Iraqis rejected invitations to join – primarily for domestic reasons, as the

non-Arab Kurds indicated they'd split off if Iraq merged with Egypt and Syria.

c) Third, in 1964, Egypt and the Arab League created the PLO, as a mechanism to control the Palestinians. Here two different narratives were in operation. A formal narrative proclaimed the Arabs as confronting Israel and its Iron Wall policy – the policy which acted as a constant moral deterrent to Israel taking any diplomatic initiative with the Arabs. The informal narrative, by contrast, expounded a discourse of Arab accommodation with the fact of Israel's existence. This informal narrative sought areas of compromise. However, as the Israelis didn't compromise, and the Palestinians stood in the way of Arab efforts, Egypt's inability to find common ground led to further failure.

d) Finally, Egypt was defeated in the 6-Day war and Nasser resigned. Here's the important point about this: although Nasser was recalled by popular demand, Nasserism and by association Arab nationalism had stopped being a viable ideology. When he died in 1970, it died with him.

VII. Another version of Arab nationalism had meanwhile taken root, however, and had a longer run than Nasserism: **Ba'athism**. In 1936, it emerges in Syria as a result of anti-Turkish demonstrations in response to Turkey's annexation of Alexandretta on the border. Thus, this version of Arab nationalism inculcated from the beginning the idea of reclaiming lost territory and adopted as a cornerstone of its ideology the concept of *towhid*, unity. Based on ideas promoted by a Sunni thinker called Salah-edin el-Bitar, and a Christian, Michel Aflaq – main party

ideologue, while students in Paris, where they developed doctrine that combined nationalism and socialism. Returned to Damascus as teachers, attracting significant following.

A) Syrian nationalism produced a form of cultural revivalism symbolically creating a renaissance of the great Medieval Abbasid Caliphate based in Damascus, though in socio-political terms, not in religious ones.

B) The Ba'ath –which means Renaissance or Resurrection – party was a very small group indeed, but in 1952, it merged with the Arab Socialist Party, its ideology of Arab nationalism becoming more complex with the addition of a class analysis element, a socialism of economic organization. This conglomerated party saw itself as a vanguard, with the bourgeoisie the driver of economic and social change.

C) However, vanguard parties can go one of two ways. Which raises the question: Did this development promote a socialist revolution – that is, a class-based ideology, or fascism, that is, corporate statism, in which everything – capital, labour, politics - is coordinated for the aggrandizement of the state? The incubation period for Ba'athism took place during the attempts by Syria to coordinate with Nasser, a project that failed in 1961, although it did not arrest Syria's desire to attempt further unions with other Arabs, which it continued to do for several more years in different guises.

D) With the demise of Nasserism, Ba'athism becomes the alternative vision of Arab nationalism, and gains in popularity. Iraq's adoption of Ba'athism strengthens this view, and for a brief moment, it appears the answer to different national interpretations. However, in 1963, a major split takes place between Syrian and Iraqi Ba'athists. Syria saw the socialist component as being the most important; the Iraqis saw the nationalist component as

trumping the rest, and a critical part in integrating the whole Arab world into a unique Arab nation.

E) At this point, both interpretations of the movement become different, though with similar outcomes. Both become militarized as their officer corps come to dominate the party. Politics is now instrumentalized not as a mechanism to modernize and expand the state economically, but to maintain the power of the military elite, who themselves are the property of other elites inside society.

F) In Syria, the takeover of power in 1971 by Airforce Commander Hafez Assad cemented the military junta at the head of the party to the Alawi, an ethnic religious splinter group. Assad saw Syria as able to pose a strategic challenge to Israel, and as enjoying parity with it. Thus, he challenged Israel for dominance of the region, and in wanting to reclaim the Golan Heights. The failure to effectively confront Israel, and the focus on propping up the Alawi elite as its primary domestic objective led Syria to become both a fierce and a shadow state, and focused on statism. The military, initially a force for change becomes a force of stratification, and repression. It buys in the Sunni merchants and Christian minorities, developing a bulwark elite through patrimonialism and inter-marriage. Its major foreign supporter is the Soviet Union, which provides it arms, trade and aid. Its primary opposition comes from the Muslim Brotherhood, primarily based in the outlying cities of Aleppo, Homs and Hama. This reaches its apogee in 1982, when a coup is attempted against Assad's military from a militant MB arm in Homs. Assad moves to crush the insurgency by levelling Hama, destroying the movement in Aleppo and Homs, and killing over 20,000.

G) In Iraq, the process was more of a hopscotch, in that the Ba'ath coup that ousted the communist government in 1963 (which itself had pushed out the post-revolutionary government that came to power in 1958), lasted only 6 months, giving way to a military take-over based on Arab nationalist reaction. It has been mooted that the first Ba'ath coup was supported by the CIA, because the communist government that it overthrew had been about to nationalize Iraqi oil, much like Mossadeq had done a decade earlier, in Iran, and with a similar result. In any event, it was only with the Ba'ath return in 1968, and the ensuing rise of Saddam, that the military elite becomes coincident with the elite of the town of Tikrit. Saddam's assumption of the Ba'ath leadership, and his accession to the presidency took place because he was Tikriti. But with his ascent, Ba'athism became Fascism, with power no longer distributed across the group of Tikritis, but centred in one man (and his family). Like Syria, Iraq too was a fierce state with a shadow component, that exercised repression and exploitation of its population in order to maintain power.

H) The mobilized hostility between Syria and Iraq served to legitimize both Assad's and Saddam's positions, but in the process, it destroyed the last vestiges of Arab nationalism. Although Pan-Arab nationalism continues to inspire social elites – particularly its cultural unity aspect – its failure in Egypt in 1967, and its failure in Syria and Iraq in the 1990s, have rendered it a moribund and unserviceable ideology.

I) What is more, it did little to avert either the first or second Arab Cold Wars which have pitted radical, revolutionary states against traditional or moderate ones, first during the Cold War period in the form of proxy stand-offs between

US and Soviet allies, and second, in the current period of American hegemony, in which states allied to the West are pitted against non-aligned or Islamist states.

X. Political Islam

I. As usual, we shall begin with a definition and some background, first of political Islam

What I understand to be Political Islam can be defined as the manipulation of religious doctrine for political legitimation and/or the definition of a political order.

A) Islam has always had a dimension of social order and social justice, which began in Mohammad's time as a mechanism to develop society for the ideal realization of Islam and its practice. This leads to the relationship with the state.

B) Essentially modern political Islam has five characteristics:

i) It is a holistic ideology, that is, it is revealed, and hence, unchallengeable. This is not unlike Christianity, when it had a political dimension in Europe.

ii) In the modern age, it has been instrumentalized as a political doctrine with the failure and collapse of Arab nationalism in 1967 – and in Iran, with the failure of nationalism after Mossadeq in 1953. Indeed, political Islamic doctrines from that time can be seen to have gained popularity. But Islam as a political movement, was not new, either then, or now, as it has always been a critical aspect in the organization of society within the Muslim world, re-emerging more recently because the opportunity arose for it to become a dominant ideology.

iii) It offers an essential touchstone of authenticity, reflecting culture and belief. In other words, it represents how Muslims see themselves in the

larger political order. It is both familiar, and associated with positive, social, often civic order and service.

iv) The real reason for its success it that it is seen as a way to address the basic crises of the region – secularism, economic development, the Arab-Israeli dispute, and the sense of Muslim failure in the face of continued Western dominance.

v) It is a modernist response to regional crisis . This not only reflects it application to modern tensions and processes, but its own internal changes as a result of modern developments over the past two centuries. (see Robinson's article, 'Crisis of Authority, Crisis of Islam?').

C) Modern political Islam is a very complex phenomenon. It has multiple manifestations with various targets, including secularism, and sectarianism. Yet, all share a common basis – the intention to define socio-political forms through revelation, and to draw on *sharia*.

D) It is therefore a reflection of an idea, a looking back to an ideal of a Golden Age – the beginning of Islam, specifically the time of the Prophet in Medina, when Islamic order and social justice was established (and thus, not the Mecca period). This is not, in fact, so different than what occurred during the Civil War in Britain, when people looked back on the legal structure of the Norman period as a Golden Age. The point is, you look back for a definition of your future by drawing on an idealized past. The sources of political Islam therefore draws on the *Qoran*, but also on the *Sunna* – the ways and sayings of the Prophet, since the Prophet is conceived of as having been immaculate – and the *Sharia*, the code of Islamic Law. It reflects the modern re-interpretation of Islamic authority, which blames traditional scholarship as corrupting practices that diverted Islam from its ideal, and thus responsible for the Middle East's ills. Instead, political Islam as

a working modern doctrine draws on a purified, originally sourced Islam to create a new template for the present.

E) The crucial issue is where you locate and how you apply sovereignty, because that legitimizes power. And the purpose of power is to order society into a polity. Political Islam addresses this problem of sovereignty by looking back to the Rashidian period – the rule of the first four Caliphs – Abu Bakr, Umar, Osman and Ali – which is considered the ideal of Muslim rule – despite the often bloody and contentious events marking their rule.

F) Several elements contribute to the building up of this ideal picture:

   1) The Constitution of Medina – a document drawn up by Mohammad first to develop practices of order and justice among his followers, the Ansar, and second, to develop codes to govern the Ansar's relationship with the surrounding tribes. The Constitution of Medina laid down the pattern of relations between the Muslim world and other worlds.

   2) The development within that community of **contractual** legitimation of power. The idea of there being a God-given world – an *ummah* – which itself is unique and single, that is, united.

   3) Delegation, as discussed previously. As the Islamic world expanded, the concept of the single ruler became unwieldy and a new concept was developed of delegation. Each new delegated centre of power had to respond like the caliph or Sultan and embody the same contract of consultation with the community, acting as the 'shadow of God on Earth' – that is, practicing social governance for the ideal realization of Islam. (Technically, if those practicing leadership failed in this endeavour, they could be removed by the community. However, the doctrine of *fitna,* served increasingly to militate against

removal of the leadership, as order was considered more important than disorder, and even if the leadership failed in leading well, the disorder of removal worked against change. It is here we see the importance of *jihad*, which has two forms, the greater *jihad* being the purification of self; the lesser *jihad* being the active – or violent – purification of community. The greater *jihad* was and is the form emphasized through history, and encouraged as a way to attain righteousness, even in adverse circumstances, such as in a society of unjust rule). This contractual agreement between ruler and community operated as a form of constitutionalism inside Islam.

vi) The fundamental characteristics of modern political Islam, therefore can be seen as:

a) Against established order of interpreters of Islam and their justification of the current order;

b) Democratic, that is, open to anyone who accepts it;

c) The reification of the divine, and the import into a secular world of a divine order

d) Purification – getting rid of the accretions of past practice, both within society and within the individual.

e) On the margins, the use of jihadi violence.

In the next lecture, we will look at the Shia interpretation of political Islam as a driver of the Iranian Revolution, and the Iran-Iraq War – and eventually, to the labelling of the Shia Arc of Crisis.