

**THE IDEOLOGY OF ISLAMIC FUNDAMENTALIST GROUPS  
IN ALGERIA, SUDAN AND SOUTH AFRICA: A POLITICAL  
ANALYSIS**

by

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## **SUMMARY**

### **THE IDEOLOGY OF ISLAMIC FUNDAMENTALIST GROUPS IN ALGERIA, SUDAN AND SOUTH AFRICA: A POLITICAL ANALYSIS**

**by**

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Islamic fundamentalism is a hotly debated and contested issue in the global arena and is often depicted as having replaced communism as the predominant threat to the West in the post-Cold War world. This study analyses the ideologies espoused by Islamic fundamentalist groups in Algeria, Sudan and South Africa by means of the dialogic model of interpretation in order to arrive at a more thorough, less judgmental understanding thereof.

The study begins with an in-depth analysis of various definitions of the concept Islamic fundamentalism. This is followed by a critical discussion of rationalist approaches to Islamic fundamentalism as well as reference to their shortcomings in order to justify the use of the dialogic model of interpretation. This model aims to critically evaluate Islamic fundamentalist ideas through interaction with their respective originators, thereby questioning the validity of a single Western rationalist-inspired version of the truth. Structural factors, the political, cultural and socio-economic conditions in Algeria, Sudan and South Africa, are also accommodated by the model.

Consequently, the rise of Islamic revivalism is discussed within the historical context of the increasing influence of the West in the world of Islam and the introduction (and eventual failure) of secularist ideologies in the post-independence era. The focus is on different strands

of Islamic political thought, Islamic fundamentalists, Islamic traditionalists, Islamic modernists and Islamic pragmatists.

The country case studies, Algeria, Sudan and South Africa are then approached by means of an in-depth analysis of the ideologies of prominent Islamic fundamentalist groups, as well as a consideration of structural (political, economic and social) factors. In the case of Algeria, a detailed discussion of the ideology of the *Front Islamique du Salut* (FIS - Islamic Salvation Front) is placed in the context of the rise of Islamic fundamentalism and the dynamics of the current civil war. When it comes to Sudan, the ideology of the ruling National Islamic Front (NIF) is discussed, and is also placed in the context of the rise of Islamic fundamentalism in that country, as well as a discussion of government policies since 1989, with specific reference to the Sudanese civil war and the current crisis in the Darfur region. In terms of South Africa, the focus is on the ideology of People against Gangsterism and Drugs (PAGAD), which is placed in the context of the urban terrorist attacks that characterised the Western Cape a few years ago.

The final chapter looks at what has been learned from using the dialogic model of interpretation (with an additional evaluation of structural factors) as a theoretical approach. Recommendations are made with regard to each of the respective case studies which may be potentially useful for a future resolution of the conflicts in Algeria and Sudan, and, in the case of South Africa, may help ensure continuing stability as far as Islamic fundamentalism is concerned.

## **KEY CONCEPTS**

Islamic fundamentalism  
Islamic extremism  
Ideology  
Dialogic model of interpretation  
Front Islamique du Salut  
National Islamic Front  
People Against Gangsterism and Drugs  
Algeria  
Sudan  
South Africa

## **OPSOMMING**

### **DIE IDEOLOGIE VAN ISLAMITIES FUNDAMENTALISTIESE GROEPE IN ALGERIË, SOEDAN EN SUID-AFRIKA: 'N POLITIEKE ANALISE**

**deur**

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Islamitiese fundamentalisme is 'n hoogs aanvegbare en kontroversiële kwessie in die globale arena en word dikwels as die nuwe bedreiging vir die Weste uitgebeeld, wat kommunisme in die post-Koue Oorlog wêreld vervang het. Hierdie studie analiseer die ideologieë van die Islamitiese fundamentalistiese groepe in Algerië, Soedan en Suid-Afrika deur van die dialogiese model van interpretasie gebruik te maak om hierdie kwessie op 'n deegliker en minder veroordelende manier te verstaan.

Die studie begin met 'n in-diepte analise van verskeie definisies van die konsep Islamitiese fundamentalisme. Hierna volg 'n kritiese bespreking van rasonale benaderings tot Islamitiese fundamentalisme asook hulle tekortkominge, met die doel om die gebruik van die dialogiese model van interpretasie te regverdig. Hierdie model streef daarna om fundamentalistiese idees krities, deur middel van interaksie met die denkers wat dit ontwikkel het, te evalueer. Verder bevraagteken dit die geldigheid van 'n enkele Westers-rasioneel geïnspireerde weergawe van die waarheid. Die model sluit ook strukturele faktore soos die politieke, kulturele en sosio-ekonomiese omstandighede in Algerië, Soedan en Suid-Afrika in.

Daarna volg 'n bespreking van die groei van Islamitiese fundamentalisme wat binne die historiese konteks van die toenemende Westerse invloed op die Islamitiese wêreld en die

bekendstelling (en mislukking) van sekulêre ideologieë in die post-onafhanklikheids era plaasgevind het. Die fokus is op verskillende strominge van Islamitiese politieke denke: Islamitiese fundamentaliste, Islamitiese tradisionaliste, Islamitiese moderniste en Islamitiese pragmatiste.

Die gevallestudies, Algerië, Soedan en Suid-Afrika word dan deur middel van 'n in-diepte analise van die ideologieë van prominente Islamitiese fundamentalistiese groepe, asook 'n fokus op strukturele (politieke, kulturele en maatskaplike) faktore benader. In die geval van Algerië vind 'n deeglike bespreking van die ideologie van die *Front Islamique du Salut* (FIS - Islamic Salvation Front) binne die konteks van die groei in Islamitiese fundamentalisme en die huidige burgeroorlog plaas. Daarna volg Soedan waar die ideologie van die regerende *National Islamic Front* (NIF) bespreek word, weereens binne die konteks van die groei van Islamitiese fundamentalisme, met verwysing na regeringsbeleide sedert 1989, die burgeroorlog en die huidige krisis in Darfur. In terme van Suid-Afrika is die fokus op die ideologie van *People against Gangsterism and Drugs* (PAGAD), binne die konteks van die stedelike terreur aanvalle wat 'n paar jaar gelede in die Wes-Kaap plaasgevind het.

Die laaste hoofstuk handel oor wat 'n mens deur die aanwending van die dialogiese model van interpretasie (en die addisionele evaluering van strukturele faktore) kan leer.

Aanbevelings word gemaak met verwysing na elk van die gevallestudies, wat moontlik nuttig kan wees vir toekomstige vredesplanne vir die konflikte in Algerië en Soedan, en om Suid-Afrika se volgehoue stabiliteit sover dit Islamitiese fundamentalisme aangaan moontlik te help verseker.

## **KERNBEGRIPPE**

Islamitiese fundamentalisme  
Islamitiese ekstremisme  
Ideologie  
Dialogiese model van interpretasie  
Front Islamique du Salut  
National Islamic Front  
People Against Gangsterism and Drugs  
Algerie  
Soedan  
Suid-Afrika

## **CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 THE RESEARCH THEME**

The dissertation analyses the ideologies<sup>1</sup> espoused by Islamic fundamentalist groups in three specific country case studies, which are elaborated on later. Islamic fundamentalism is a hotly debated and contested issue in the global arena. Rationalist approaches to Islamic fundamentalism are usually conducted from an allegedly objective point of view and tend to pit Islamic fundamentalism as the reactionary opposite to progressive Western elements such as secularism, science and technology. Also, rationalist approaches tend to see Islamic fundamentalism as little more than a reaction to political and socio-economic circumstances, thereby neglecting the aspect of ideology when it comes to Islamic fundamentalist groups. This is problematic in that ideology is crucial in understanding the reasoning behind the existence of Islamic fundamentalist groups, including the actions that they engage in. Adopting a more open-ended approach (the dialogic model of interpretation, which is explained later), this dissertation makes the ideologies of Islamic fundamentalist groups in Algeria, Sudan and South Africa its focus, with the aim of arriving at a more thorough, less judgemental understanding thereof. Islamic fundamentalism as the key concept of this dissertation is dealt with at length in Chapters two and three both in terms of several differing definitions, as well as in terms of the ideas espoused by influential Islamic fundamentalist figures in Muslim history.

This dissertation is relevant to the field of political science in its aim to provide a deeper analysis of the ideologies of Islamic fundamentalist groups in Algeria, Sudan and South Africa than rationalist approaches to Islamic fundamentalism may be able to provide. A more in-depth ideological picture of these Islamic fundamentalist groups may also contribute to a better understanding of the respective political situations in the countries that are examined. These include violent opposition by Islamic fundamentalist groups against the secular regime in Algeria, an abating civil war between the Islamic fundamentalist dominated government and the non-Muslim south in Sudan, as well as the crisis in the Darfur region, and attacks

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<sup>1</sup> Ideology, according to the definition in the Oxford Concise Dictionary of Politics, is here taken to mean “any comprehensive and mutually consistent set of ideas by which a group makes sense of the world”. Islam is stated as an example. Furthermore, according to this definition, an ideology needs to explain how things have come to be as they are at present and indicate where they are heading (provide a guide for action). An ideology also needs to provide criteria for “distinguishing truth from falsehood and valid arguments from invalid and some overriding belief, whether in God, Providence, or History, to which adherents may make a final appeal when challenged by outsiders” (McLean 1996).

launched in the Western Cape region in South Africa by a vigilante movement with alleged strong Islamic fundamentalist influences.

It should be taken into account here that the concept “political” is given a broad meaning. This can be linked to the postmodernist rejection of neat positivist definitions and allows sections of the research that may appear to fall under other disciplines to still be considered as forming part of the field of political science. So, for example, a “political” analysis of the ideologies of Islamic fundamentalist groups in the different countries which are discussed is not limited to an analysis of political factors. In fact, it also includes an analysis of ideology, as well as other structural, namely economic and social factors, characterising the situations in the respective countries.

The research theme is relevant to both the fields of political science and international relations. The immediate focus of the study is on the ideologies of Islamic fundamentalist groups within Algeria, Sudan and South Africa, three individual domestic case studies, and thus political science orientated. However, the research theme is also important for international relations. This is because the Islamic groups in the states which are looked at here are influenced by ideas espoused by Islamic fundamentalist thinkers, such as those of Sayyid Qutb (representing the Sunni branch of Islam), which address the global community of Muslims or *umma*. These ideas have to be seen in the context of the relationship between the world of Islam and the West. It is also important to consider some Islamic fundamentalists’ strong criticism of, for example, the introduction of the state in the world of Islam, which they view as an “imported solution” and which has failed to meet the challenges of promoting economic growth and establishing institutions for political participation. The research undertaken is significant, because it rejects a simplified, possibly prejudiced view of Islamic fundamentalism, often posited by rationalist approaches and rather aims to come to a deeper understanding of it.

## **1.2 THE RESEARCH PROBLEM**

The dissertation aims to examine the question: What are the ideologies of Islamic fundamentalist groups in Algeria, Sudan and South Africa? As is explained in more detail when justifying the use of the proposed theoretical framework for this dissertation, the dialogic model of interpretation, there is a need for a richer, less condemnatory understanding of Islamic fundamentalism. In the case of this dissertation, a more detailed

account of the ideologies of Islamic fundamentalist groups in the case studies may also help provide a better understanding of the socio-political circumstances in the states in question.

A sub-theme connected with the research problem would place the dissertation in the global context of the prominence of Islamic fundamentalist rhetoric and influences in the world of Islam. Here one can argue that a deeper understanding of the ideology espoused by Islamic fundamentalist actors in the three states which are dealt with could also help to better address questions affecting the world's Muslim community as a whole, for example that of the link between religion and politics. The question of the scope of the dissertation also ties in here. While it is restricted to three African case studies, its relevance goes beyond the continent because the ideas of Islamic fundamentalism, which impact on the ideologies of domestic Islamic fundamentalist actors, often pertain first and foremostly to the global Muslim community.

The key concept in this dissertation is Islamic fundamentalism<sup>2</sup>. The dialogic model of interpretation which is used is based on an approach of intercultural communication, where the aim is not to come to a final, universal version of the truth (as rationalist approaches in general tend to claim), but rather to reach a deeper, richer understanding of the matter at hand. Therefore, an equally open-ended approach is followed regarding the examination of the concept of Islamic fundamentalism. The aim is not to come to a final definition, but rather to explore the ways in which the concept has been defined and employed by others. This will be useful when looking at the ideologies of Islamic fundamentalist groups in Algeria, Sudan and South Africa. The dissertation is not entered into with a single fixed definition of Islamic fundamentalism that the ideology would have to conform to, but rather a range of possibilities is at hand with which in mind the research problem can be more closely examined.

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<sup>2</sup> The term Islamic fundamentalism as used here is not to be understood as "radicalism" or "extremism". As a point of departure it (along with Christian and Jewish fundamentalism) is said to have three crucial elements. According to Euben (1999), firstly it is political in nature and refers to the attempts of contemporary religio-political movements to return to the community's scriptural foundations and excavate and re-interpret these to apply them to the contemporary social and political world. Tibi (1998) refers to Islamic fundamentalism as a political ideology and also talks of the politicisation of religion. Secondly, Islamic fundamentalists tend to reject the authority of past religious commentaries on the *Quran* and instead adhere to what the text "really says" (though this is an act of interpretation itself). This makes them subject only to divine authority and allows them to determine once and for all how "true" Muslims are to authentically live in a community. Thirdly, Islamic fundamentalism according to Lapidus (in Euben 1999) is not only a reaction to modernity, and especially its neglect of spiritual values, but also an expression thereof.

The time frame of the political analysis of the ideologies of Islamic fundamentalist groups in Algeria, Sudan and South Africa has its main focus on contemporary events and developments in those states. It is, however, also necessary to discuss the historical rise and growth of Islamic fundamentalism in each of the respective states and to situate the Islamic worldviews to be discussed in the context of the rise of Islamic fundamentalism in the world of Islam as a whole.

### **1.3 LITERATURE SURVEY**

A diversity of literature has to be looked at in order to successfully analyse this topic. Firstly it is necessary to come to a comprehensive understanding of the concept Islamic fundamentalism. Authors who have written on the subject include Armstrong (2000), Tibi (1998), Choueiri (1997), Euben (1999) and Roy (1994). It is also necessary to look at some modern rationalist approaches to Islamic fundamentalism in order to critique these and justify the use of the dialogic model of interpretation. Some of the authors who are looked at here are Lerner (1958), Sivan (1985), Norval (2001), Becker (in Euben 1999), Hechter (1997), Brennan (1997), Fukuyama (1989) and Huntington (1996). Euben's (1999) work on the dialogic model of interpretation will form the theoretical basis of the study.

The next step is to move onto influential Islamic fundamentalist worldviews and other forms of Islamic revivalism, because of their influence on the ideology of Islamic fundamentalist groups in the case studies. Authors on the subject include Fuller (2003), Husain (1995), Armstrong (2000), Esposito (1991), Halliday (1996, 2002), Noorani (2002), Choueiri (1997) and Ahsan (2002).

Once the theoretical framework has been established, and the general background of Islamic fundamentalist thought has been explained, it is necessary to look at the specific case studies. Sources discussing Algeria include Stone (1997), Takeyh (2003), Spencer (1996), the Europa World Year Book (2003), Pierre and Quandt (1995) and Adamson (1998). The situation in Sudan is discussed by, among others, Zwier (1999), O'Fahey (1996), the Europa World Year Book (2003), Sayeed (1999), Lesch (1998, 2001) and Collins (1999). When discussing Islamic fundamentalist influence in South Africa useful references include Boshoff, Botha & Schonteich (2001), Le Roux (1997) and Burmeister (2000).

Primary sources also contribute to the study. With reference to Algeria, statements made by the Front Islamique du Salut are looked at. These include the official FIS programme of 1989, interviews that were conducted between Denaud (1996) and two members of the FIS leadership, Ghetami Abdelkrim and Ould Adda Abdelkrim, and the FIS's Platform for the Salvation of Algeria. With reference to Sudan, the Constitution of the Republic of Sudan 1998 is included, as well as an interview held with Turabi in the summer of 1994 in Khartoum (in Hamdi 1996). With regard to the South African case study, information containing People Against Gangsterism and Drugs' (PAGAD) aims and objectives (1996) is consulted, as well as statements made by the South African government regarding the vigilante movement.

#### **1.4 METHODOLOGICAL ASPECTS**

When looking at methodological aspects, one needs to consider what approach to adopt and which methods to employ to address the research problem. Use is made of the dialogic model of interpretation as the proposed framework for the study. A brief explanation follows.

The dialogic model of analysis, as advanced, for example, by Euben (1999), attempts to evaluate Islamic fundamentalist ideas by means of interaction with their respective originators. The idea is to reject the possibility of a final Western rationalist-inspired version of the truth, and rather to aim, through dialogue, to meet the respective Islamic fundamentalist thinkers on their own turf. Put differently, this model questions the validity of a single universal truth and the tendency to dismiss non-Western points of view all too easily. It does not, however, preclude criticism.

In this way, by means of becoming a participant in a dialogue rather than claiming to stand outside the situation with an allegedly neutral, objective point of view, one can come to a richer, more thorough, less judgemental understanding of Islamic fundamentalism. Simultaneously, this approach enables the analyst to grasp the particular attraction that Islamic fundamentalist ideas hold for their followers, rather than merely dismissing Islamic fundamentalism as irrational and its followers as nothing more than rising up in protest against socio-economic depravities or repressive state policies.

Structural factors, the political, cultural and socio-economic conditions in the respective country case studies, are accommodated by the dialogic model of interpretation as well and are looked at in terms of their

impact on the ideology of Islamic fundamentalist groups in Algeria, Sudan and South Africa. Ideology can here be viewed as both a dependent and independent variable. It is partially dependent on and heavily influenced by the material conditions it emerges from, but at the same time ideology can also be seen as an independent variable, a force with dynamics of its own, which influences the groups which espouse it and by implication the very surroundings from which it emerges.

The research method primarily used is that of careful critical analysis. When referring to research methods, the means by which information is collected needs to be indicated, as well as whether qualitative or quantitative methods are used and whether the study is inductive or deductive. A broad literature survey is the main source of information for the study. This includes academic and newspaper sources and primary documents.

The research method is qualitative rather than quantitative, making use of careful and critical assessment of the sources which feature. According to Leedy (in Struwig & Stead 2001: 20) various guidelines exist to following either a quantitative or qualitative method when conducting research. Amongst others these include believing in “multiple constructed realities”, having an audience which is “familiar with and supportive of qualitative studies”, an “exploratory and interpretive” research question, “limited or missing literature”, a research focus involving “in-depth study”, a “relatively long time period available”, “a high ability or desire to work with people” and “a low desire for structure”. In the case of this research problem a single, Western-inspired version of the truth is rejected; the likely readers will be more familiar with quantitative than qualitative studies and the research question aims to delve into and interpret the ideology of Islamic fundamentalist groups in Algeria, Sudan and South Africa, an action which is also exploratory in the sense that the dialogic model has not yet been extensively used in this specific context. The “in-depth study” required for the research focus ties in here; the research has been completed in one and a half years and the dialogic model is rather open-ended and does not stress the aspect of “structure” too much.

The research method used is deductive rather than inductive. The inductive method of moving from observations (in a variety of contexts) to generalisations which then form the basis of laws and theories (Struwig & Stead 2001: 239) would not go together well with the dialogic model, which as mentioned before, is based on a more open-ended approach. Use can however be made of the deductive method, where conclusions are drawn from certain arguments. Critically looking at the ideology of Islamic fundamentalist

groups in Algeria, Sudan and South Africa allows for premises to be put forward from which certain deductions can be made.

## **1.5 THE STRUCTURE OF THE DISSERTATION**

Chapter one serves as an introduction and indicates the research theme, the research problem, the literature survey, methodological aspects and the structure of the dissertation. The structure of the rest of the dissertation is as follows.

Chapter two consists of a discussion of different approaches to the concept Islamic fundamentalism. This is followed by a critical discussion of some rationalist approaches to Islamic fundamentalism as well as reference to their shortcomings to justify the use of the dialogic model of interpretation as a tool to politically analyse the ideologies of Islamic fundamentalist groups in Algeria, Sudan and South Africa. The dialogic model is consequently discussed.

In Chapter three influential Islamic fundamentalist worldviews are described and discussed, because of the influence of these ideas on the ideologies of Islamic fundamentalist groups in Algeria, Sudan and South Africa. They are situated in the context of the rise of Islamic fundamentalism in the world of Islam as a whole. Particular attention is paid, for example, to the differences between the Sunni and Shi'ite schools of Islamic thought, the opposition to the international system of secular states and the notion of the establishment of an Islamic state.

Chapter four deals with Algeria, where the secular state is being violently opposed and challenged by a range of Islamic fundamentalist groups. Attention is paid to the history of Islamic fundamentalism in Algeria and the chapter also includes a detailed discussion of the conflict up to date. The main focus is an analysis of the ideologies of different Islamic fundamentalist groups in Algeria, with particular emphasis on the *Front Islamique du Salut* (FIS- Islamic Salvation Front), taking into account the influence of structural factors in Algeria and Islamic fundamentalist worldviews on this ideology. The dialogic model of interpretation forms the theoretical framework of this analysis.

A similar approach as above is used in Chapter five for the discussion of Sudan, where an Islamic fundamentalist dominated government has been waging a prolonged civil war against the opposition Sudanese People's Liberation Movement/Army (SPLM/A) representing the non-Muslim south. While peace negotiations between the government and SPLM/A have been progressing, a new and frighteningly violent conflict has erupted in Sudan's western region of Darfur. Again a historical discussion helps contextualise the role of Islamic fundamentalism in Sudan. As with Algeria, the dialogic model of interpretation is used to analyse the ideology of the National Islamic Front (NIF), paying attention to the influences that structural factors in Sudan and Islamic fundamentalist worldviews have had on it.

Chapter six deals with the last case study which is dealt with, namely South Africa. The ideology of People against Gangsterism and Drugs (PAGAD) as a vigilante group with strong Islamic fundamentalist influences and support is discussed here on the basis of the dialogic model of interpretation. Structural factors in South Africa that have led to the rise of PAGAD are also be considered.

Chapter seven concludes the dissertation and provides a final examination and overview of the findings of the analyses of the ideologies of Islamic fundamentalist groups in the three case studies. A tentative hypothesis may be that the diversity of Islamic fundamentalist groups in the three states underlines the need for a deeper understanding not only of ideologies, but also of Islamic fundamentalism in general. By means of an analysis of a combination of ideological and structural factors in the different countries, it is possible to make a number of recommendations that could assist in bringing about future resolutions of the conflicts in Algeria and Sudan, and in the case of South Africa, help contain the threat of urban terrorism that has thus far successfully been placed under control.

## **1.6 SUMMARY OF CHAPTER ONE**

Chapter one presents the introduction to this dissertation. It firstly focuses on the research theme, which is a section in which it is pointed out that the topic of the dissertation is approached by making use of the dialogic model of interpretation. The aim of this model is to arrive at a more thorough, less judgemental understanding of the ideologies of Islamic fundamentalist groups in Algeria, Sudan and South Africa, which is what the research problem, the second section in the introductory chapter, also deals with. In addition to aiming to come to a richer, less condemnatory understanding of Islamic fundamentalism, a more detailed

account of the ideologies of Islamic fundamentalist groups in the case studies may also enable a better understanding of the socio-political circumstances in the states in question. A literature survey then gives an idea of the sources which have been consulted for the writing of this dissertation. The fourth section, dealing with methodological aspects, summarises the functioning and importance of the dialogic model of interpretation. The idea here is to reject the possibility of a final Western rationalist-inspired version of the truth, and rather to aim, through dialogue, to meet different Islamic fundamentalist thinkers on their own turf, without precluding criticism. Structural factors, the political, cultural and socio-economic conditions in the respective country case studies, are also accommodated by the dialogic model of interpretation and are examined in terms of their impact on the ideology of Islamic fundamentalist groups in Algeria, Sudan and South Africa. Finally, a chapter by chapter overview gives an idea of what the dissertation's different chapters deal with.

## **CHAPTER 2: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

### **2.1 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter explains the theoretical framework behind the political analysis of the respective ideologies of Islamic fundamentalist groups in Algeria, Sudan and South Africa, which is the subject of this dissertation. The chapter starts off with a broad discussion of the concept Islamic fundamentalism. This particular section deals with the characteristics associated with Islamic fundamentalism, why the term Islamic fundamentalism is controversial and ends with a discussion of Islamic fundamentalism in practice.

From here the focus shifts to a critique of modern rationalism, detailing the latter's historical development and describing its characteristics. This is followed by a critical evaluation of several rationalist interpretations of Islamic fundamentalism which are discussed below under the following headings: "Islamic fundamentalism as a reaction against modernity", "Islamic fundamentalism as the only alternative political channel", "Islamic fundamentalism: backward and irrational" and "Islamic fundamentalists – irrational rational actors". Here it is shown how these rationalist interpretations provide incomplete explanations of Islamic fundamentalism, partly because of neglecting the ideas and worldviews influencing Islamic fundamentalists.

Next, there is a discussion of postmodernism and anti-foundationalism in particular. This section starts off with an analysis of the consequences that the predominance of rationalism has had on the contemporary world, followed by a discussion of the postmodernist reaction to rationalism. Afterwards the focus shifts to an account of the problems presented to the analysis of political events rich in foundationalist activity. These problems are exemplified in Fukuyama (1989) and Huntington's (1996) interpretations of the contemporary world, as they pay little attention to the presence of foundationalism in contemporary political practice.

Finally, the dialogic model of interpretation as espoused by Euben (1999) in her work *Enemy in the mirror: Islamic fundamentalism and the limits of modern rationalism, a work of comparative political theory*, to be used as the theoretical basis for this dissertation, is explained and use thereof justified.

## **2. 2 ISLAMIC FUNDAMENTALISM – DISCUSSIONS AND DEFINITIONS**

### **2.2.1 When and why do fundamentalist movements form?**

The key concept in this dissertation is Islamic fundamentalism. The dialogic model of interpretation to be used as the theoretical framework is based on an approach of intercultural communication, as is explained in detail below, where the aim is not to come to a final, universal version of the truth, but rather to reach a deeper, richer understanding of the matter at hand. For this reason, an equally open-ended approach is followed when looking at the concept Islamic fundamentalism. The aim is not to come to a final definition, but rather to explore the ways in which the concept has been defined and used by others. This forms the basis for the examination of the respective ideologies of Islamic fundamentalist groups in Algeria, Sudan and South Africa. The study is thus not entered into with a single fixed definition of Islamic fundamentalism that the respective ideologies would have to conform to, but rather a range of possibilities is at hand. In this section, then, there is a general discussion of the concept Islamic fundamentalism, and a justification for the use of this particular term (as opposed to alternatives such as re-Islamisation) is also presented.

According to Armstrong (2000: 164-165) the Western media often creates the impression that “the embattled and occasionally violent form of religiosity known as fundamentalism” is a purely Islamic phenomenon. This, however, is not the case. Fundamentalism has surfaced in every major faith in response to the problems and crises of modernity. Although every form of fundamentalism develops independently and has its own symbols and enthusiasms, all fundamentalisms nonetheless seem to belong to the same family. What is interesting to note is that fundamentalist movements are not knee-jerk reactions which arise as soon as modernity is introduced into a society. Rather, fundamentalism only emerges when the modernisation process is already considerably underway. At first there is usually an attempt by religious people to reform their traditions so as to reconcile these with modernity. When this does not work, however, some people resort to more extreme methods. This is how fundamentalist movements arise. Of the three monotheistic religions, Christianity, Judaism and Islam, Islam was the last to develop a fundamentalist strain. This happened in the late 1960s and 1970s.

Fundamentalist movements in all faiths have certain characteristics in common. All are deeply disappointed and disenchanted with the implementation of modernity, which has not delivered everything that it originally

promised. They are all also afraid that the secular establishment is determined to wipe them out (Armstrong 2000: 165). Another important and more recent trend which further explains the rise of fundamentalism is globalisation, which has brought with it an increasingly fragmented world. Though the system of states has been expanded to cover the entire world, a “universal” outlook, based on Western norms and values, has not been simultaneously exported to non-Western cultures. Islamic fundamentalists view states as “imported solutions” and hence comes their mission to contest and, ideally, replace them (Tibi 1998: 6-7).

Fundamentalism thus arises as the modernisation process takes root in society and people, noticeably in developing countries, become increasingly disillusioned with what the state initially promised, but, in many cases, has failed to deliver. This is aggravated by the globalisation process, which has, despite creating a more interconnected world, resulted in a larger gap between the world’s developed and developing countries. At the same time, populations all over the world, but especially in non-Western countries, feel that their traditions and cultures are being threatened by the “so-called” universalist liberal worldview, which is increasingly infiltrating their societies. This happens in the form of an export of Western culture, in the form of music and consumer products, amongst other things. Another way in which the West influences developing countries is by means of the International Financial Institutions (IFIs) which often force them to adopt typically Western economic policies. With the threatened erosion of local tradition, culture and language comes the added threat of the undermining (and possible destruction) of religious establishments and practices. A move away from religion seems to be the trend in several Western states. France is a prime example with its policy of *laïcité*, which involves a strict separation between the religious and secular spheres of life. The United States (US), on the other hand, is an exception to this trend, as can be seen in leaders’ use of Christian rhetoric when publicly addressing political issues, as is shown later on.

### **2.2.2 The essence of fundamentalism - protesting modernity and secularism**

Fundamentalists look back at the “golden age”, the time before the imposition of modernity. This does not, however, mean a return to the Middle Ages (Armstrong 2000: 165). Choueiri (1997: 64) describes this complicated relationship with the past. He talks of a “nostalgic yearning for past glories and bygone achievements” and says that a reactivation of the past is necessary in order to realise a futuristic vision, propelled by the problems and shortcomings of the present: “the historical golden age is used as a

springboard for accomplishing a leap into a new world, while the present exerts its influence in illuminating both the past and the future”.

Fundamentalist movements are also characterised by the fact that they are all intrinsically modern and could not have emerged at any other time than our own. They are all also distinctly innovative, as well as often radical in their re-interpretation of religion. The general trend seems to be that wherever modernity takes root, a fundamentalist movement will spring up in reaction to it. Often, fundamentalists express their discontent with modern development by overemphasising the elements in their own tradition which refute certain modernist elements. So, for example, all fundamentalist movements, even those in the US, are highly critical of democracy and secularism (Armstrong 2000: 165-166).

Fundamentalists also nearly always feel as if the liberal or modernising establishment is attacking them and as a consequence of this their views and behaviour become more extreme. The more severe the secularist attack on religion becomes, the greater the fundamentalist reaction. Fundamentalism thus reveals a rift in society between those in favour of secularist culture and those who feel threatened by it. As time goes by, there is seldom any *rapprochement* between the two camps. Rather they become increasingly unable to understand each other (Armstrong 2000: 166)

How does fundamentalism “evolve”? Initially it begins as an internal dispute, where fundamentalists oppose liberalisers or secularists in their own state or culture. So, initially, Islamic fundamentalists, for example, often oppose their own fellow citizens or fellow Muslims who are more accepting of modernity. From there it is usual for many fundamentalists to withdraw from the mainstream culture and to create “an enclave of pure faith”. Afterwards there will sometimes be an offensive with the aim of bringing the mainstream back to the right path and re-sacralising and re-enchanting the world. Because all fundamentalists see themselves with their backs against the wall, they feel that they need to fight in order to overcome the odds that the secular establishment has stacked against them. This frame of mind therefore leads some fundamentalists, on rare occasions, to resort to terrorism. The majority, however, try to revive their faith in more conventional and lawful ways (Armstrong 2000: 167).

As is seen later on, in Euben’s (1999) discussion of fundamentalism, there are strong political undertones to fundamentalists’ attempts to revive their faith. This, it can be argued, goes hand in hand with the origin of

fundamentalism in response to modernity and the perceived threat which secularism poses to religion. Any struggle to re-enchant society and go back to the fundamentals of one's religion would necessarily have to be political to combat an inherently political institution: the secular state.

Tibi (1998: 3) takes Armstrong's argument, which deals with fundamentalists' protest against the secular state one step further. He focuses on Islamic fundamentalism, specifically, and sees it as a "powerful challenge to the existing order of the international system of secular states", thus taking the protest against secularism from a local to a global level. Also, because the secular state is Western in origin, Islamic fundamentalism is, at the same time, a "revolt against the West". Tibi thus starts his definition at the point where fundamentalists have, according to Armstrong, passed the stage of protest or revolt against fellow citizens or believers who have a more positive view of modernity, and where they have moved on to identifying an external threat, in the case of Islamic fundamentalism: the West.

How do leaders in the world of Islam view Islamic fundamentalism and what are their suggestions for dealing with it? Here it is interesting to look at the way in which a prominent Muslim leader, the late king Hassan II of Morocco (in Tibi 1998: 4), viewed fundamentalism. He saw the fundamentalist challenge not as the next challenge to the West to replace communism, as former North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) Secretary-General Willy Claes perceived it, but rather as a political challenge. This is also the reason why it cannot be countered with ordinary war technology, "I do not think NATO was created to fight fundamentalism, but to fight Soviet guns and missiles...Anyway, if fundamentalism is to be engaged in battle, it would not be done with tanks. Fundamentalists don't have armoured divisions, they have no Scud missiles, and not an atomic weapon".

This is a rather controversial statement given the accusations of the US government against Saddam Hussein's Iraqi government allegedly being a producer of Weapons of Mass Destruction and similar allegations that have been levied against the Islamic Republic of Iran. Nonetheless, considering the mode of attack of September 11<sup>th</sup> or the recent attacks in Istanbul, for example, it is a valid point that fundamentalists, when they do resort to violence, do so in ways other than direct and open warfare.

The Moroccan king (in Tibi 1998: 4-5) was also of the opinion that fundamentalism is not a religious renaissance, "on the day that I see a fundamentalist who preaches religion for the love of God then I'll say,

fine, let's listen. But so far I haven't heard that..." To him, then, fundamentalism is a behavioural question, a psychology that cannot be fought with armadas, but [only] with other ideas". The view here is thus of Islamic fundamentalism as a political phenomenon that needs to be "fought" on the level of a convincing set of ideas, rather than conventional arms. The Moroccan king also makes a point of separating Islamic fundamentalism from Islam as such, moving the focus from the religious to the political, as Euben has done.

Fundamentalists have been successful in the sense that they have managed to make religion one of the central focus areas of international affairs again. In the Islamic world this has certainly been the case since the mid – 1970s. On the other hand, however, the desperation and fear that fuel fundamentalists also tend to distort religious tradition and to accentuate its more violent aspects. This often diverts attention from those who preach toleration and reconciliation (Armstrong 2000: 167).

In applying Armstrong's argument to the Islamic world, Tibi (1998: 2) is once again relevant here as he argues that in their attempts to replace the discredited Western system of secular states, Islamic fundamentalists can "engineer frightening levels of terrorism and otherwise throw streets into turmoil...", thus resorting to violence in order to achieve their ends. This does not mean that they will be successful in overthrowing the current world order. They are too fragmented to do so. However, these movements are able to create disorder within their own countries (and in other countries, through terrorist activities), which can be sufficient to, in the long run, create disorder on a regional and global scale: a new world disorder.

### **2.2.3. Fundamentalism – a term fraught with controversy**

Muslims generally object to use of the term fundamentalism. They point out that it was coined by American Protestants as "a badge of pride" and that it does not have a useful translation into Arabic. The term that corresponds to such a translation most closely is *Usul*, which refers to the fundamental principles of Islamic jurisprudence. As all Muslims agree on these, they could all therefore be said to subscribe to *usuliyyah* (fundamentalism), which, of course, adds confusion to the use of the concept. There have been arguments that the specifically Western origin of the term fundamentalism, together with the negative connotations attached to it by both academics and journalists who oppose the phenomenon, make it a term that "almost guarantees misunderstanding". Esposito (in Euben 1999: 17), for example, argues that "it tells us everything and yet, at the same time, nothing." He sees it as illogical that a term derived from Western origins should be

able to describe fundamentalist-related incidents in all faiths across the world. For this and other reasons, several pre-eminent authors on the subject of fundamentalism avoid use of the term altogether. Kepel (in Euben 1999: 17) talks of “movements of re-Judaising”, “re-Christianisation” and “re-Islamisation”. When writing on Islamic activism in 1985, Kepel preferred the term “Muslim extremism”, while Sivan (in Euben 1999: 17) opted for “radical Islam”. Other authors have made use of alternatives ranging from *intégrisme*, to “revivalism” to “Islamism”.

Juergensmeyer (1993: 4-6) is another writer who objects to the use of the term fundamentalism for three reasons. Firstly, he sees it as pejorative, saying that it is “less descriptive than it is accusatory”, reflecting a negative attitude towards people more than describing them. Secondly, “fundamentalism is an imprecise category for making comparisons across cultures”. Thirdly, he argues that the term fundamentalism does not have any political connotations. “To call someone a fundamentalist suggests that he or she is motivated solely by religious beliefs rather than by broad concerns about the nature of society and the world.” Instead, Juergensmeyer proposes the concept religious nationalism for the study of people who combine their religious perspectives with a broad prescription of their nation’s political and social destiny.

Tibi (1998: 12-15) repudiates Juergensmeyer’s objections against the term fundamentalism. He makes mention of the Fundamentalism Project of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences which nullified all three of Juergensmeyer’s claims. Firstly, he argues that it is necessary to free the concept fundamentalism of its loose and sensational use, but that, at the same time, it is exactly the politicisation of religion which fundamentalism addresses. (By implication, thus, the term can still be used for the purposes of examining how religion is politicised, but needs to be used with the understanding that it is not employed in a pejorative sense.) Secondly, as part of the Fundamentalism Project, area-studies experts engaged in a comparative study of fundamentalisms in all major world religions, which, according to Tibi (1998: 13), shows that the concept fundamentalism is the right framework for “making comparisons across cultures”. Finally, fundamentalism does not address religious beliefs, but, rather, is concerned with propagating a socio-political worldview: a broad concern about the nature of state, society and world politics, though this may be articulated in the form of religious symbols.

So far then, Tibi’s reasoning as to why the term fundamentalism is useful. What do other writers, in favour of the term, have to say about it? Euben (1999: 17) sees it as a useful heuristic device. She looks at the term

“fundamentalism” and from it evokes the literal meaning of the word: fundamentals, origin, foundations. Fundamentalism thus refers to contemporary religio-political movements which try to go back to the scriptural foundations of the community and try to excavate and reinterpret these foundations in order to apply them to the contemporary social and political world. This ties in with Armstrong’s discussion of fundamentalism as an attempt to re-invigorate those religious principles and traditions which are threatened by erosion through the increasing influence and power of secularism and modernity. Tibi (1998: 13) adds another dimension. He does *not* see fundamentalism as an expression of religious revival, but, rather, as a pronouncement of a new order where fundamentalists want to replace existing structures with a comprehensive system which emanates from religious principles and which embraces law, polity, society, economy and culture – fundamentalism therefore has within it a totalitarian impulse. Euben and Armstrong’s point of view may seem in conflict with Tibi’s at first glance, but all Tibi really does is to emphasise the attempt to impose a completely new order in order to replace the existing one. Both points of view, however, stress the use of religious principles in order to do so.

Furthermore, Euben (1999: 19) posits that there are three elements to the term fundamentalism. Firstly, it is political in nature. Salvation is only possible by participating in the institutions of the world, albeit in opposition to them (Euben 1999: 17). Tibi (1998: 2) supports this view, saying that fundamentalism (though he makes particular reference to Islamic fundamentalism) is a political ideology and, as he emphasises time and time again, “not the religion [Islam] so cynically linked with that ideology”. Islamic fundamentalism is an ideology which is not the cause of the current crisis in the world, but both an expression of it and a response to it. It does not, however, present a solution, but, rather, is one of the pillars of an emerging new world disorder. Clearly then, the term fundamentalism, and Islamic fundamentalism, in particular, refers to a political more than a religious phenomenon.

Secondly, fundamentalists tend to reject the authority of past commentaries on their sacred foundational texts, be they the *Torah*, the *New Testament* or the *Quran*. Instead they claim to adhere to what the text “really says” (though this is an act of interpretation itself), stating that the text’s authority is guaranteed by its divine author and is therefore beyond contestation (Euben 1999: 18). Hoveyda (1998: 126) quotes Appleby as saying:

For the fundamentalist, the sacred text is a blueprint for socio-political action as well as a guide to spiritual life...In fact, the supernatural character of revelation is particularly important to the

fundamentalist sense of identity in that it connotes a way of knowing and a source of truth superior to those of the secular scientist or philosopher. Belief in things unseen is considered unreliable in secular pursuits; fundamentalists make it the central tenet of their identity; what is not in line with the sacred book is sacrilegious.

Belief in the uncontested authority of the sacred text makes fundamentalists subject only to divine authority and allows them to determine once and for all how all “true” Muslims, Jews and Christians are to authentically live in a community (Euben 1999: 18). Roy (1994: 85) talks of fideism, a reliance on faith and a belief that everything that Islam says is true and rational, which characterises neofundamentalism (his term for the phenomenon of fundamentalism) instead of intellectual research.

Thus we see a tendency where sacred texts are interpreted in terms of what they “obviously” say, which, ironically enough, still means that the reader interprets them in a way that suits him or her. This particular interpretation is then credited as true, rational and the only way of reading the text. This could be problematic if, for example, an Islamic fundamentalist and an “ordinary” Muslim were to differ on their respective interpretations of the *Quran*. Who is right? Most likely those with greater political power would be able to enforce their views on the rest of society, views, as is seen later on when the practices of the former Taliban regime of Afghanistan are discussed, at times violate the precepts and principles of the *Quran*.

Thirdly, fundamentalism is characterised by its complex relationship with modernity. To repeat Armstrong’s arguments above, fundamentalism arises as a result of the modernisation process having taken root in a society and the perception by fundamentalists that secularism is threatening to wipe out religion. What is key to this relationship between fundamentalism and modernity, however, is that modernity is necessary for fundamentalism to arise. Fundamentalism is a uniquely modern phenomenon and as Lapidus states “may be understood as a reaction against modernity, but more profoundly (fundamentalists) are also an expression of modernity”. Rather than merely “reacting to modernity”, one can argue that “fundamentalism is profoundly critical of as well as constituted by assumptions regarding the requirements of modernity and modern politics” (Euben 1999: 18).

#### **2.2.4 Islamic fundamentalism in practice**

The former Taliban regime in Afghanistan, which came to power in 1994 (and was deposed after the US-led invasion into Afghanistan following the September 11<sup>th</sup> attacks in 2001) was determined to return to their interpretation of the “original vision of Islam”. The government was ruled by the *ulama* and practices such as the veiling of women, strict censorship and Islamic punishments such as stoning and mutilation were reintroduced (Armstrong 2000: 170). Roy (1994: 82) talks of similar practices, if less extreme, enforced by Islamic neofundamentalists in general, underlining their obsession with the corrupting effects and influences of Western culture. “Compromise with the West is forbidden: neckties, laughter, the use of Western forms of salutation, handshakes, applause.” This “Puritanism” is also characterised by the rejection of all distraction, such as music or theatre, as well as the desire to eradicate places of pleasure and leisure such as cafés, video and dance clubs, cinemas and certain sport clubs. Pleasure is only legitimate as long as it neither transgresses the *Sharia* nor the superior goals of man (Roy 1994: 80).

It is important to point out, however, that the Taliban was in many ways violating crucial Islamic principles. An example was the discrimination of the Taliban, mostly members of the Pashtun tribe, against non-Pashtuns. This goes against the principles of both the Prophet and the *Quran*. The *Quran* also clearly forbids the harsh treatment of minority groups and the Taliban’s discrimination against women, equally, does not conform either to the precepts of the Prophet or the first *umma*. The Taliban are typically fundamentalist when it comes to their highly selective vision of religion, which “perverts the faith” and turns it into the opposite direction of that for which it was intended. Like (some of the) fundamentalists of all major faiths, (some) Muslim fundamentalists, in their struggle to survive, make religion a tool of oppression and even of violence (Armstrong 2000: 170-171).

Most Sunni fundamentalists have, however, not been as extreme as the Taliban. An example is the fundamentalist movements that were formed in the 1970s and 1980s to bring religion back into their societies. The feeling was that Muslims had failed, especially under secularist policies, to be true to their religion. While fundamentalists could see that secularism and democracy had been very successful in the West, these practices had only benefited an elite in the Islamic world and had done nothing for ordinary Muslims. Throughout the Islamic world then, students and factory workers started changing their immediate environment by, for example, setting up welfare societies with an Islamic orientation to demonstrate that

Islam worked better for people than secularist governments did. Activities like these can be seen as attempts to give back to Islam some of the importance that secularist society had taken away from it (Armstrong 2000: 171).

The return to Islamic dress follows the same principle. When people are forced to dress in Islamic style against their will, as was the case with the Taliban, this is likely to create quite a virulent reaction against such coercion. However, many Muslim women see veiling as a symbolic return to the pre-colonial period, before the destructive influences of modernity on their society. This does not mean that they are stuck in time. For some women who come from a rural background and enter urban life for the first time, Islamic dress provides continuity and makes their encounter with modernity less traumatic. In joining the modern world on their own terms, they assert their identity. Veiling can be interpreted as a subtle critique of modernity as well. As opposed to Western culture, where people flaunt their youth or attempt to appear young by means of wearing revealing clothing and dressing elegantly, the shrouded Islamic body is a symbol of transcendence. Divinity is of greater importance than life on earth, and the uniformity of dress abolishes differences in class. A sense of community, rather than the Western notion of individuality, is thus emphasised (Armstrong 2000: 172).

People have often used religion as a way of making modern ideas and enthusiasms comprehensible. An example is when during the 1960s Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini managed to initiate and lead a revolution that would overthrow the powerful regime of Muhammad Reza Shah in Iran. Khomeini identified the Shah with a typically unjust ruler in Shii Islam: Yazid, the Umayyad caliph who had been responsible for the death of Husain at Kabala. He successfully called on Muslims to fight such tyranny. They responded because this call fitted in with their deepest traditions. (A call to protest with a socialist motivation would, most likely, have fallen on deaf ears). Khomeini managed to offer a Shii alternative to the secular nationalism of the Shah and seemed to the Iranian people more and more like one of the *imams*:

Like all the *imams*, he had been attacked, imprisoned and almost killed by an unjust ruler; like some of the *imams*, he was forced into exile and deprived of what was his own; like Ali and Husain, he had bravely opposed injustice and stood up for true Islamic values; like all the *imams*, he was known to be a practising mystic; like Husain, whose son was killed at Kerbala, Khomeini's son Mustafa was killed by the Shah's agents (Armstrong 2000: 173).

In this instance religion proved to be so powerful a force that it brought down the Pahlavi state, which had seemed the most stable and powerful in the Middle East.

Hoveyda (1998: 56) points out another reason why Islamic fundamentalist leaders can be hugely successful when it comes to influencing Muslim populations. He attributes this success to the basic “fundamentalist” character of contemporary Islam. An example of this is the fact that, according to Hoveyda, Muslims see their faith as predestined to rule the entire planet and generally would respond more than willingly to slogans such as “Islam is in danger”, which has been used by Khomeini in Iran and other fundamentalist leaders elsewhere in the world.

Hoveyda’s argument should perhaps be juxtaposed with similar calls which have been made by leaders in other countries. President George W. Bush’s call for a “war on terrorism”, which garnered substantial support from Americans in the aftermath of September 11<sup>th</sup>, is a case in point. Similarly, Americans, and Westerners in general, also tend to believe in the superiority of liberal democracy and Western values, so that the phenomenon of believing in one’s culture is by no means unique to Islam.

Having discussed an instance of a controversially re-interpreted form of Islamic practice in Afghanistan, instances of less drastic Islamic fundamentalist practice in Islamic societies and ways in which religion can be used to further political campaigns, it now becomes appropriate to look at how the Islamic world drifted towards neofundamentalism, as Roy (1994: 75) terms it, during the 1980s. He focuses particularly on the process of re-Islamisation from below, militants promoting the return of the individual to Islam and says that with their pro-*Sharia* campaign, they “resemble the traditional fundamentalist *mullahs* from whom they are now distinguished only by their intellectual origins, professional insertion in modern society and involvement in politics.” What becomes clear here, once more, is the link between fundamentalism and politics, clearly defining it as a political activity.

Another particular characteristic of neo-fundamentalism, which Roy (1994: 76) refers to, is the tendency to deeply penetrate into society, before starting to question the state. A practice that has been retained from the Islamist movement is to address all of society, with neofundamentalists’ actions extending to all levels: canvassing preachers, organizers of various associations, union or grassroots organisers. As a group they aim to influence society, not the state and their aim is to do so by means of social action at grassroots level.

Roy (1994: 85) also points out neofundamentalists' aversion to science and technology and their critique of its "perverse effects", a characteristic which goes hand in hand with a retreat from modernity, rather than its adoption. Tibi (1998: 24) makes the distinction between cultural modernity and institutional modernity that is useful here. Cultural modernity refers to an attitude where an individual is defined as "an individual of free will, capable of determining his/her own destiny and changing the social and natural environment." This thus very much fits in with the rational view of humankind, which is discussed in greater detail later on in this chapter. Institutional modernity, on the other hand, takes "science and technology as its instrumental achievements." Often, Tibi argues, it is the institutional modernity which takes root in non-Western civilisations, without the concomitant acceptance of cultural modernity. This can explain what may perhaps seem a paradoxical phenomenon: why those Islamic fundamentalists who turn to violence in their fight against modernity and secularism use the essentially modern tools of technology and science.

The attempt in this section of the chapter has been to provide a detailed discussion of fundamentalism, in general, and Islamic fundamentalism, in particular. Various different points of view have been incorporated to allow for a broad interpretation of the concept Islamic fundamentalism and to include several of the elements which authors associate with it. The discussion now moves to a critique of modern rationalism and, more specifically, modern rationalist interpretations of Islamic fundamentalism.

## **2.3 MODERN RATIONALISM – A CRITIQUE**

### **2.3.1 The development of rationalism**

Approaches to explaining Islamic fundamentalism are numerous, including modernisation theory, structural-functionalism, class analysis and rational actor theory. While this suggests a diversity that may be able to deliver insightful analyses when it comes to Islamic fundamentalism, Euben (1999: 20) argues that instead these approaches agree on Islamic fundamentalism as being "reactive, defensive and nativistic, its appeal a function of its efficacy as a conduit for the fury, fear, insecurity, and alienation that are the concomitants of trying socio-economic conditions and political circumstances in the modern world". Additional elements, when looking at these descriptions of Islamic fundamentalism, include frustration at the failed attempts at modernity in the Middle Eastern region and the resultant emergence of a particular class with specific

reactionary, conservative ideological tendencies. These tendencies would be the result of a failure of leftist regimes and “alien” ideologies imposed on the Middle East, as well as due to a lack of alternative channels for political expression because of state repression.

From this point of view Islamic fundamentalism is thus reduced to a mere “reaction” against a variety of problems facing Middle Eastern countries, ranging from socio-economic disparities to political repression of Islamic groups to the failure of regimes adopting leftist or other ideologies. Furthermore, this “reaction” is made out to be something negative. Instead of potentially being able to solve the problems mentioned above by presenting a viable alternative, Islamic fundamentalism is presented as backward and conservative.

Euben (1999: 21) attributes this agreement to the result of the intellectual inheritance of the discourse of modern rationalism. Here the language of science, objectivity and universality is exhibited, but at the same time political life is interpreted by means of placing the notions of rationality and irrationality opposite each other. The Western world at specific moments in its history came to celebrate reason “as the means by which to know and thus master the world; as the opposite of the authority of religion, tradition, habit and faith”. At the same time the increasing role of instrumental rationality, when it comes to all aspects of human life, is seen as constitutive of “modernity”. Taylor (in Gray 1995: 160) describes the modern conception of “reason” as follows. He refers to

The picture of an agent who in perceiving the world takes in “bits” of information from his or her surroundings, and then “processes” them in some fashion, in order to emerge with the “picture” of the world he or she has; who then acts on the basis of this picture to fulfil his or her goals, through a “calculus” of means and ends.

Everything that an individual does can thus be put down to a matter of acting in order to achieve one’s aims. In this way he/she is depicted as almost robotic, a calculating entity who carefully and strategically weighs up options against each other and chooses the best possible one to facilitate goal achievement.

There are various “rationalisms” in the history of Western thought, but most important here is the “progress of reason”, articulated in the European Enlightenment and 19th century theories of rationalisation, which first linked the expansion of rationality to the progress of Western culture and later the advance of all civilisation (Euben 1999: 21). How, when and why did this particular rationalism emerge? Throughout the

Middle Ages, knowledge, metaphysics, logic, ethics, politics and economics had all been held together by theology. This changed, however, when nationalistic and intellectual forces increasingly began to challenge the Church's authority during the Reformation between the 15th and 17th centuries. Because the Church was unable to successfully cope with this challenge, another method of discovering knowledge had to be found. Thus the focus shifted to the autonomy of the individual. Temple (in Hallowell & Porter 1997: 285-286) describes this development:

But if the Church and its system were repudiated, what could take its place? If a man's thought and purposes were no longer to take their start from the only tradition available, where could they begin? And the only possible answer was "with himself." If a man was not going to start as a member of a system, accepting that system and his own place in it, then he must start with his isolated self. Of course he would submit to the authority of conscience, but it would be his conscience. He would submit to the Voice of God as he heard it, but it would be as he heard it. So the modern movement was bound to be a movement of individualism. We owe to it the distinctive blessings of modern life, but also its distinctive ills.

The primary characteristic of modern philosophy is thus a focus on the individual as the source or medium of authority (Hallowell & Porter 1997: 287). According to this modernisation narrative, then, what facilitated modernisation was "the retreat of an authoritative transcendental order from the public realm" and at the same time "the eclipse of the epistemological, historical and political certainties such an order was thought to have sustained". The only way for rationality to become a dominant force in public life was if the "divine order" was no longer in the forefront (Euben 1999: 21).

Another important element underlying this rationalist tradition is the superiority accorded to science. As the status of the individual gained in significance during the Renaissance period, science, at the same time, promised to, ultimately, penetrate the mysteries of life and provide humans with the necessary tools to assert their independence. It was hoped that science would "unleash the power that would make us [humans] masters and possessors of nature" (Hallowell & Porter 1997: 294).

This focus on science has had effects in terms of, firstly, the intellectual tradition and, secondly, when it comes to how human beings view and treat the natural environment. To clarify the first point it is important to look at the tradition of analytic philosophy, which is closely linked to the Enlightenment project. Here the methods employed in the natural sciences are crucial in accounts of what constitutes knowledge and how it is acquired. One of the consequences of attaching importance to natural-scientific methods as a

regulative ideal for rational enquiry is that analytical philosophy does not encompass received traditions of enquiry, whether derived from religions or political traditions like Marxism or nationalism. Like for the Enlightenment project, the focus is thus on the individual, and traditional sources of authority, such as the metaphysical, are discredited (Kelly 2000: 226-227):

Using canons of reason and justification derived from the natural sciences, the analytical tradition either undermines moral reasons and authority altogether, or else provides alternative explanations of moral claims in naturalistic terms, identifying them for example as emotive ejaculations or irreducible desires or preferences (Kelly 2000: 229).

In terms of the scientific focus's impact on the intellectual rationalist tradition, any actions which are not easily explained through natural sciences method enquiry and are based on metaphysical or traditional influences are thus discarded as simply emotional or irrational. This closely ties in with rationalist explanations of Islamic fundamentalism, which are discussed later on.

In order to illustrate how the focus on science impacts on how human beings view and treat the natural environment, it is important to look at Gray's (1995: 158) conception of modernity. One of the primary tenets of the modernist worldview is an understanding of science as "the supremely privileged form of knowledge", enabling humans not only to understand the natural world, but also to master and control it. The conception of the natural world as "an object of human exploitation and of humankind as the master of nature" forms a vital part of the modern worldview and of Westernisation more specifically. By implication this same conception has also been passed "lastingly and destructively" onto non-Western cultures through the spread of Western culture and values. Though it is difficult to pin down this development historically, it is closely linked to the Christian conception of the unique status of human beings as "loci of infinite worth". Ultimately then, as part of the modernist worldview, the natural world needs human beings in order to have some value and "the proper relations of humans with the natural world are relations of domination and exploitation".

In terms of this second point, the effect of according such importance to science has in fact been to penetrate the mysteries of life and has allowed human beings to "possess" nature, just as it was hoped during the Renaissance era. The side effect of dominating nature, however, has meant an ever-greater destruction of it, as well as a spread of this destructiveness to traditionally non-Western societies.

It is this attitude, one of “reason” and “science” being superior to “metaphysics” and “tradition” which underlies rationalist interpretations of Islamic fundamentalism. Instead of delving into the ideology of Islamic fundamentalists from a point of view open to insights and new understanding, Islamic fundamentalism is conceived as different and opposite to rationality, in other words, as irrational, from the onset.

Ultimately it is necessary to understand rationalist interpretations as both “expressing” Western conceptions of “truth, political fears and cultural unease”, while at the same time describing what fundamentalism “really is”. This argument is partially based on ideas expressed by Foucault, who states that discourses considered to be scientific are constituted and expressed in rules and institutions that control and centralise knowledge, while at the same time discarding other, competing sets of knowledge as inadequate. Certain sets of knowledge are thus classified as “inferior” by those who have the monopoly on interpreting the world in a certain way. Another contributor to the argument above is Said. He states that Orientalism, rather than being a “valuable and truthful discourse about the Orient itself”, is a European “production” of the Orient by an Orientalist who claims to stand outside the Orient. The object of study, in this case the Orient, is thus manufactured by, as well as reflected in the scholarly endeavour of Orientalism (Euben 1999: 22-23). The point made here by Euben is thus that rationalist interpretations of Islamic fundamentalism, while claiming to be objective, with the analyst being “removed” from the subject, in reality incorporate the prejudices and fears the analyst may feel towards Islamic fundamentalism while giving a so-called “neutral” description of its nature. Such descriptions can thus be rather one-sided accounts.

Another problem with rationalist accounts of Islamic fundamentalism is that they assume it to be a mere “reflex reaction” to certain political or socio-economic circumstances. This implies that it would thus not be necessary to pay much attention to “a fundamentalist system of ideas as a substantive vision of the world”. The focus is thus not on how Islamic fundamentalist actions are the result of a “system of meanings”, but “a scientific study of correlations among urbanisation, expanding of education, commercialisation, industrialisation, and alienation that ‘produce’ Islamic revival”. What is therefore considered of primary importance is the *function* that religion plays in society, not the *substance* of ideas underlying it. Islamic fundamentalism is presented as irrational in this way, as it is seen both as a “by-product” of and a “reaction against modernity”, specifically against the “rationalisation of society, economy and politics”. What is interesting in this view, however, is that, while Islamic fundamentalism opposes changes taking place as a

result of modernisation, it is at the same time regressive: “The refuge of the antidemocratic, the frustrated, the antirational, irrational or at the very least archaic, fundamentalism thus represents the regrettable but ultimately transient birth pangs of a culture entering the modern world”. The Islamic fundamentalist is portrayed as the “irrational rational actor”: rational enough to turn toward an ideology that presents an alternative to the Western route of modernisation, but irrational in the sense that this ideology is not progressive, but instead carries “pathological reactionary sentiment”. What is suggested, furthermore, is that such a view of Islamic fundamentalism not only neglects the importance of Islamic fundamentalist ideas, but, worse than this, misrepresents and distorts them (Euben 1999: 24).

What becomes important now is to examine some examples of above-mentioned rationalist approaches, in order to illustrate to which extent Islamic fundamentalism is portrayed as a reactionary reflex reaction against modernity and Islamic fundamentalists as irrational rational actors.

### **2.3.2 Islamic fundamentalism as a reaction against modernity**

In his 1958 work, *The passing of traditional society*, Lerner (in Euben 1999: 26) analyses modernisation in the Middle East. What does political modernisation entail? Firstly, the state is ruled by a single, secular, national political authority, replacing various authorities that may have preceded it. Secondly, modernisation means that new political functions are differentiated and that specialised structures are developed to perform those functions. Thirdly, political modernisation entails increased participation in politics by social groups throughout society. What thus distinguishes modern politics from antecedent politics is rationalised authority, differentiated structure and mass participation. Lerner sees modernisation as the introduction of a “rationalist and positivist” spirit which Middle Eastern societies need so that they are no longer locked in “an increasingly unstable paralysis born of tensions endemic to late-developing traditional societies”. Early fundamentalist movements are depicted as reacting against and providing an obstacle to the process of modernisation. The perceived situation is one of inherent tensions between the entrenched power of the traditional patterns of governance – hierarchical, patriarchal and patrimonial – and the rising expectations of a class which is increasingly better educated and expects to somehow benefit from the process of modernisation, yet at the same time faces rising unemployment.

Instead of leading the modernisation process, this over-educated, under-employed class moves towards the “extremes of political action, attracted toward the instruments of propaganda, agitation and violence, by which they hope to disrupt the settled order and to speed their way toward a more satisfying way of life”. The focus is not at all on Islamic fundamentalist ideas, but, instead, these are perceived as simultaneously expressing and obscuring what is the real source of the problem: modernisation and disenfranchisement taking place simultaneously, rapid urbanisation among limited resources, improved and extended education going hand in hand with rising unemployment, increased literacy within an exclusionary regime and rising expectations of the populace, though living in the context of grim socio-economic prospects. The functional side of Islamic fundamentalism is thus represented here in terms of its effectiveness as a channel for material discontent. At the same time it also represents the last flare-up of archaic impulses at the moment that the transition to modernity takes place (Euben 1999: 26-27).

What is clear from the above interpretation of Islamic fundamentalism is the distinct labelling of it as reactionary and unable to benefit from modernisation for various reasons. By implication it almost seems that the Middle East is inferior to the West in that an anti-modern reaction is shown: protest against modernisation rather than an embrace of it. Also, this interpretation may be labelled somewhat superficial, as the ideas underlying Islamic fundamentalism are cast aside in favour of the “real causes” for the “revolt against modernisation”. It thus becomes evident how this interpretation supports Western notions of “superiority” toward a less-developed “Other”, while at the same time supposedly giving an objective description of Islamic fundamentalism.

### **2.3.3 Islamic fundamentalism as the only alternative political channel**

In Sivan’s (1985) *Radical Islam*, Islamic fundamentalism is seen as a reaction against modernity, as a result of the failure of a series of liberal, socialist and nationalist regimes to cope with the social and economic difficulties currently facing several Middle Eastern states.

*Radical Islam* is primarily a history of ideas, but Sivan also depicts the strength of Islamic fundamentalism as a reflection of the failure of leftist intellectuals and progressive regimes to offer a successful alternative to what fundamentalists have to offer. Furthermore, Islamic fundamentalism helps its supporters associate with the familiarity that traditional Islamic beliefs hold for them, rather than embracing “foreign” belief structures

such as socialism or liberalism (Euben 1999: 29). A related concern expressed by fundamentalists, according to Sivan (1985: 10), is the “open-door” policy of the 1970’s, opening up the Middle East to Western investment. This would, firstly, integrate the Islamic world into the system of multinationals, which is totally alien to Muslim concepts of interest, insurance and taxation. Hence, this would risk the latter’s complete eradication and virtually eliminate any chances of reintroduction. Secondly, investment implicitly would bring with it a large foreign contingent and the need to cater for these foreigners would be likely to corrupt those who work with them as well as the *nouveaux riches* wanting to emulate them. Thirdly, in addition to whatever moral defects consumerism may hold, one of the biggest problems associated with it is “creating new needs and raising expectations that the economy cannot deliver”.

This is especially relevant in a global system of relative deprivation where the “have-nots” are only too aware of their relation in status to the world’s “haves”. One sees this trend not only on a global level (developing countries perceiving their financial shortcomings *vis-à-vis* developed countries), but also on a local level. The result, as Sivan points out, is the destruction of local traditions and culture, increased emulation of Western mindsets, values and practices by the Middle Eastern upper class and increased needs and expectations by all, which a modernising economy most likely will not be able to deliver. This points out the difficulty of dealing with modernisation, not only in terms of the undoubted danger it would present to traditional Islamic values (hence the fundamentalists’ need to challenge it), but also in terms of the populace’s increased expectations inherent in an “opening up” to Western influences, yet at the same time, the state not being able to fulfil these.

Euben (1999: 29) mentions that similar interpretations have appeared in several influential articles published in the *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* in the 1980s. Four reasons can thus be found for the appeal of Islamic fundamentalist ideas: failures of leftist regimes, unavailability of alternative political channels, Islam as an indigenous ideology and Islam fulfilling a “de-alienating” function rival political movements cannot match. Ultimately, however, these explanations, although moving away from defining Islamic fundamentalism as nothing more than a “reflex” reaction to modernity, are still based on the importance of modernisation and its related developments presenting challenges to Middle Eastern regimes, who consequently are unable to cope. Again, thus, there is not sufficient focus on the importance of the ideas of Islamic fundamentalism, on the contrary, these are all but ignored.

### **2.3.4 Islamic fundamentalism: backward and irrational**

An example can now be given of an account which is typical of depicting Islamic fundamentalism as backward, irrational and the enemy of the West. Norval (2001) in his book *Triumph of disorder: Islamic fundamentalism, the new face of war* deals with the threat of Islamic fundamentalism to the West. Norval (2001: 38) talks of the world entering a period of “warfare between ethnic, cultural and nationalistic groups”, where “religious attitudes, beliefs and fanaticism of the warring groups will play a larger role in the motivation of armed conflicts than it has since the counter-reformation three-hundred years ago”. He attributes the popularity of Islam to “most people in the world (not being) pacifists” and therefore people in many parts of the world finding Islam attractive, “because it is prepared to fight”. Throughout the book, an image is created of Islamic fundamentalism being the unquestionable enemy of the West, an enemy to be feared and hated. This can be seen in the way in which Islamic fundamentalists “view the enemy”.

According to Norval (2001: 33):

The enemy must then, in some way, be dehumanised, degraded to less than full human status. The infidel – those who aren’t Muslims – fit the bill for the militant Islamic fundamentalist. In the minds of the radical fundamentalist, if one isn’t enlightened enough to see the righteousness of Islam, that person is a subhuman being. The infidel is pictured as evil and loathsome, deserving to be killed as an enemy of God.

What becomes clear from this account is the tendency of rationalist approaches of Islamic fundamentalism to depict this as inferior, irrational and almost insanely incomprehensible when pitted against the rational secular logic of the West. This presents a picture of Islamic fundamentalism which is bound to fill Western readers with fear and hatred, not making Islamic fundamentalist ideas any more comprehensible, but rather making them seem threatening and irrevocably different. Having looked at the shortcomings of three different “views” of Islamic fundamentalism, the discussion now turns to rational actor model interpretations of Islamic fundamentalism.

### **2.3.5 Islamic fundamentalists – irrational rational actors**

Rational Choice Political Theory (RCPT) has only recently begun to focus on religious action, and fundamentalist action in particular, but it is still worth mentioning, as it aims to explain all political action. Becker (in Euben 1999: 31) assumes that people engage in maximising behaviour, which Monroe (in Euben

1999: 31) breaks down into seven assumptions: “(1) actors pursue goals; (2) these goals reflect the actor’s perceived self-interest; (3) behaviour results from conscious choice; (4) the individual is the basic unit of analysis; (5) actors have preference orderings that are consistent and stable; (6) if given options, actors choose the alternative with the highest expected utility; (7) actors possess extensive information on both the available alternatives and the likely consequences of their choices”. Hechter (1997: 148) argues that the hallmark of rational action lies in its instrumentality. People are rational to the extent that they pursue the most efficient means they have available to attain their most preferred ends. These ends can be either material or non-material. People, on the other hand, are irrational when they pursue a course of action regardless of its consequences. It is irrational to “value for its own sake some ethical, aesthetic, religious, or other form of behaviour, independently of its prospects of success”. Thus, as long as people have a specific aim in mind when making choices to pursue particular courses of action, they can be characterised as rational.

Islamic fundamentalism can then be analysed by filling in the blanks. The goals of Islamic fundamentalists could be defined as a need for belonging or security, making membership itself a self-interested goal. Different from the approaches discussed above, dealing with fundamentalism as a revolt against modernity or the most ideologically “comfortable” alternative to failed regimes in the Middle East, RCPT focuses on the intrinsic appeal of fundamentalism. Yet, this appeal does not rest on the moral power of fundamentalist worldviews, but merely on the “advantages” they seem to hold for people. So, even martyrdom can be construed as rational self-interested behaviour, as the result it leads to, namely salvation, is worth the self-sacrifice.

Most peculiar about the RCPT model is the insistence that all behaviour can be explained simply by classifying each action as rational behaviour and thus making it “intelligible to market logic”. What does not make sense here, as Diesing (in Euben 1999: 31-32) states, is to pose an economic question such as “How much is salvation worth to you?” This is what you would have to ask to understand Islamic fundamentalism in terms of the market logic espoused by RCPT. The problem here is that an adherence to the divine and actions associated with it is reduced to a set of economically justifiable actions, where every action can ultimately be labelled “rational” as a result of the actor achieving his or her ultimate goal, for example salvation. Neitz and Mueser (1997: 107) suggest a useful revision of the concept of rationality. They argue that rationality should rather be seen as part of a sense-making activity and should be more concerned with

the *processes* people use to arrive at their choices, which are tied to their attempts to understand who they are and where they are, than with, as is posited by rational choice theorists, *outcomes*. This is evidently a shift in focus and arguably fits in more closely with Euben's call to examine Islamic fundamentalist worldviews and ideologies, rather than merely looking at an ends/means kind of analysis.

Much of the RCPT literature which pertains to religion looks at issues such as how much time is allocated in religious participation, the calculus by which one religion is chosen over another and the economic position of fundamentalists (Euben 1999: 32). Interpretive accounts of participants' behaviour are thus also usually overlooked and rather the focus is on the attributed needs and benefits that would make such behaviour conducive to market logic. An example would be Azzi and Ehrenberg referring to an "afterlife consumption" (Euben 1999: 32). This statement suggests that what is "invested" during one's lifetime, in terms of contributions to religious organisations, time spent worshipping, volunteering for religious-related projects and so on, will ultimately "pay off" in an afterlife, where one is to reap the rewards of one's religious efforts on earth. Therefore adherents to a particular faith put in a certain effort with the expectation that this will benefit them somehow in the afterlife.

There is still another dimension to RCPT's view of fundamentalists. Monroe (in Euben 1999: 32), for example, suggests that RCPT tends to depict fundamentalists as "risk averse" and too immature and unintelligent to cope with the stresses that modernisation and secularisation entail. What RCPT interpretations seem to portray in addition to all actions being reducible to "market logic" is that fundamentalism is a form of "escapism" from the realities of a modernising world, a retreat into what is security-and comfort-inspiring: the divine. As is clear from the examples given above, fundamentalists' behaviour can be construed as rational through the use of RCPT, but only after fundamentalists have been imbued with certain characteristics, which one could possibly call weaknesses of character, such as "insecurity, immaturity, or intolerance of risk" (Euben 1999: 33).

Hechter (1997: 150) points out some difficulties when it comes to applying RCPT to religion. Firstly, he raises doubts about the viability of talking about "religious markets", which Iannaccone (1997: 27) widely makes use. Iannaccone argues that just as in other markets, where sellers have to market their goods in order to ensure a steady supply of buyers, religions "have little choice but to abandon inefficient modes of production and unpopular products in favour of more attractive and profitable alternatives". Hechter

questions this equation of an economic marketplace with a market where different religions vie for people's support, and ultimately souls, and poses the question of how markets can ever arise for inscrutable goods, those goods of which it is impossible to determine the value. How would "consumers" choose between different churches (or, to some extent, even religions), all of which claim to "produce" the same goods – salvation? Another problem is that the promised product itself is intangible. This means that "the accuracy of many promises made by a priest cannot be checked readily, since they often refer to events taking place in the hereafter."

Secondly, Hechter (1997: 151) points out that rational choice models work with the assumption that religious goods are highly substitutable. To some extent this is true – goods offered by religious groups seem to be close substitutes for goods offered by political and social groups, such as welfare, entertainment, prestige and relief from loneliness. Hechter's problem is, however, that rational choice models provide little insight into how substitutable the various goods are that are produced by different religions. What kind of goods, for example, does Islam offer as opposed to Catholicism, and would someone convert from the one to the other because he or she can attain greater instrumental benefits by doing so?

One's allegiance to a religion is on average stickier than loyalty to a particular brand of coffee. Disputes over religion are far more likely to breed violence than disputes over health care initiatives; people are more wont to give up their lives for their religion than for their firm. All told, religious commitments are sometimes far more intense and salient than secular social communities (Hechter 1997: 151).

These questions thus deal with what one religion offers as opposed to others and why and when people would turn to another religion. The focus is also on what it is that makes religious commitments so much more intense than, for example, economic, and, at times, even nationalistic or political commitments. In the context of Islamic fundamentalism an approach that deals with more than "market logic", but also focuses on the ideas and worldviews that influence adherents of Islamic fundamentalism, would be crucial to determine why specific acts are committed and with what aim in mind.

Thirdly, Hechter (1997: 152) identifies the tendency of many rational choice models to assume that people's values are "both stable over time and homogeneous across individuals" as problematic. Hechter views this assumption as limiting. Rather, more attention should be paid to people's values and beliefs, in order to understand their religious behaviour. It becomes clear from Hechter's criticism that it is imperative that an

attempt be made to closely examine people's values and beliefs, especially as far as religion is concerned, rather than assume that these remain constant over time and are the same for different individuals.

To elaborate on the arguments above, Brennan's (1997: 89) discussion of Rational Choice Political Theory (RCPT) and the viability in its application to political processes is briefly dealt with. RCPT deals with applying the analytic methods and techniques of modern economics to the study of political processes in order to, firstly, make political science one aspect of a single over-arching social theory and secondly, to provide a "rational basis for the normative assessment of political arrangements in the context of the economist's theory of the state".

Brennan (1997: 106) refers to four particular critiques of RCPT and its ability to adequately interpret political processes. The first is the "universalist" critique, which states that RCPT is aimed at 19th- and 20th-century Western political practice and is thus not amenable to different cultures or political systems in other historical periods. Brennan (1997: 167) sees it as unlikely that RCPT analysts would "think that actors' own theories about the nature of what they were doing in participating in politics (that is, what *we* identify as politics) would be of fundamental explanatory power - ..."

The "universalist" critique usefully adds on the critique of RCPT above. It can be considered problematic to apply theories developed in a Western context to other cultures, specifically the world of Islam. This has already become evident in the tendency of rational choice theorists to put down all behaviour of fundamentalists to so-called "market logic", a term originating in Western political systems with little reference to those predominantly adhering to traditional Islamic beliefs. As also becomes clear from Brennan's statement about RCPT analysts not attributing much explanatory power to actors' own interpretations of their participation in politics is the problem of a neglect of Islamic fundamentalist ideas. Actions are thus explained in terms of the "benefits" (from the point of view of market logic) that actors are thought to attain through their actions, with no attention being paid to the ideas underlying these actions.

The second critique is "imperialist", and charges RCPT with looking at political processes excessively through an economic lens and with appealing too much to market analogies. Brennan (1997: 107) concedes that rational choice models need to be applied in several ways to apply to politics. This critique ties in with what has been argued above, namely that "market logic" is used to explain the actions of fundamentalists.

The third is the “exclusivist” critique, which claims that RCPT sees rational choice theory as the only “proper way” of doing political analysis. Brennan (1997: 107) explains that RCPT will eliminate one of two rival explanations of a social phenomenon, as according to RCPT it will be impossible for both to be correct. If, however, there are two different, yet compatible explanations, RCPT will do its best to accommodate both. This seems fair enough, provided that accounts different from Western ways of reasoning are not automatically rejected on the basis of their difference.

The fourth critique is called “heterogeneous”, which refers to actors responding to the same apparent stimulus in directly opposite ways. An example would be an increased police presence in some cases leading to an increase in criminal activity on the streets, while in others the level of criminal activity decreases. Brennan (1997: 108) here argues that allowance needs to be made for a tolerably rich motivational structure in rational choice analysis and that within that structure there needs to be room for some motivational heterogeneity. This comment ties in with the need to look beyond “benefit maximising” motifs when it comes to Islamic fundamentalism, but to, more importantly, study Islamic fundamentalist ideas as well.

RCPT thus has considerable shortcomings when applied to the study of religion and Islamic fundamentalism in particular. There needs to be a move away from merely reducing fundamentalists’ behaviour and actions to “market logic” and, rather, the focus needs to be broadened to incorporate the Islamic fundamentalist ideas and worldviews which influence them. Now that modern rationalism has been discussed in detail and several rationalist interpretations of Islamic fundamentalism have been touched on, the discussion turns to the postmodernist reaction to both modernity and rationalism. Particular attention is paid to one of the key elements of postmodernism, namely anti-foundationalism, and the problems this, according to Euben, poses for political theory when it attempts to explain the increasing prevalence of foundationalist practice in contemporary political life.

## **2.4 POSTMODERNISM AND ANTI-FOUNDATIONALISM – A DISCUSSION**

### **2.4.1 Some consequences of rationalism’s influence on society**

As has been seen in the discussion above, a key characteristic of the Enlightenment project is that it adheres to an “extreme form of rationalism.” Moral practices, conventional norms of behaviour and traditional

claims of authority and knowledge are all justified by means of applying impartial reason to judge them. Reason is able to arbitrate claims to truth, authority and justification once rid of its traditional and conventional fetters. There are however thinkers, ranging from Kant through to contemporary communitarians and anti-foundationalists who argue against this concept. This is because reason cannot be separated from its cultural context. Enlightenment rationality is therefore only one particular form of enquiry, “in which the canons of natural scientific explanation are raised to an absolute authority as criteria of knowledge”. The problem here is that when searching for foundations thinkers end up “exposing the groundlessness of the Enlightenment’s own canons of truth, reasonableness and justification”. Enlightenment rationality is simply groundless and represents only one historical version of the attempts of human beings to render their existence transparent. The consequence is nihilism, a loss in religious and moral values (Kelly 2000: 230-231). The problem thus clearly is one of where rationalism, which only presents one particular way of perceiving life, claims absolute superiority over alternative viewpoints and enforces itself on both Western and non-Western societies.

Gray (1995) elaborates on one of the consequences of rationalism’s influence when he states that “within Western cultures, the Enlightenment project of promoting autonomous human reason and of according to science a privileged status in relation to all other forms of understanding has successfully eroded and destroyed local and traditional forms of moral and social knowledge...” Gray links this to the irrecoverable displacement of traditional “foundational” and “primordial” forms of knowledge and understanding, such as humanism, the Christian tradition and the logocentrism of Greek philosophy (Gray 1995: 145-146). This tendency of an erosion of traditional ways of life has also spread to many of those non-Western cultures or polities which have been under the influence of the Enlightenment project. The reaction has been the rise of “counter-projects of re-enchantment of the world, via fundamentalist religion or a reversion to pre-modern forms of thought or community”, which is exactly what this dissertation is concerned with. Gray suggests an attempt to find a middle ground by combining modernity and tradition. Where traditional cultural forms are still practised and adhered to, it is sensible to aim to “nurture” them, to shelter them from modern technologies which would destroy them and to develop new technologies which serve human needs while preserving traditional communities and cultural forms (Gray 1995: 146).

Another consequence of rationalism’s influence is the tendency, perceived both by Gray and MacIntyre (in Kelly 2000: 231), that nihilism is spilling over into the wider public sphere. MacIntyre, for example, talks

about the “emotivist culture of protest” as a consequence of Enlightenment modes of thinking. Public debate, for him, becomes a form of protest, where participants merely express their preferences and emotions. They are no longer able to engage in debates about fundamental values, for example, because these are beyond the scope of “philosophy or rational deliberation”. This ties in with the above section where rationalist interpretations of Islamic fundamentalism were examined. The suggestion is that behaviour or values with a divine influence do not conform to rationalist enquiry and can thus easily be misunderstood and condemned both by (rationalist) political theorists and, according to MacIntyre, the general public in societies which are exposed to a rationalist way of thinking.

The last consequence of the rationalist influence to be discussed here is the erosion of metaphysical faith, especially when linked to modern science. The metaphysical faith, which science is originally based on, has ceased to be available to human beings, as a result of Christianity fading more and more in Western culture. Science is thus responsible for a disenchantment of the world and the view of science remains as nothing more than “that of human nature whose goal is to control nature”. Nietzsche (in Gray 1995: 166) feels that Western culture, through adopting a “radically experimental methodology of science” has displaced all transcendental faiths, including that which animated science itself. There is no longer the idea of an absolute point of view on things. The consequence has been emptying the world of metaphysical meaning and importance. In this view, therefore, human beings, especially in societies no longer according any importance to religion, have to face a meaningless existence, in which science has taken a decisive step backwards from its initial purpose of uncovering nature’s mysteries to controlling and destroying it. As Gray (1995: 166) puts it, all that remains is “the expansion of human productive powers through the technological domination of the world”.

The paradoxical situation in which we find ourselves now, in which Westernisation has become in one decisive respect nearly universal at just the historical moment when the hollowing out of Western civilisation by nihilism is virtually complete, and in which non-Occidental cultures are asserting themselves against the West while accepting its legacy of a nihilist relationship with technology and the earth is one which no form of Western thought that is traditional or reactionary in its orientation can begin to grasp (Gray 1995: 178-179).

Now that some of the negative consequences that the rationalist influence has had on contemporary society have been discussed, it becomes important to look at the postmodernist reaction against it.

### **2.4.2 The postmodernist reaction to modern rationalism**

In the last quarter of the 20th century, the concept postmodernism became a principal topic of discussion in philosophy, cultural analysis and social and political theory. One of the cornerstones of the postmodern tradition is the delegitimation of “grand narratives” as espoused by Lyotard (in Dews 2003: 343-344) in *La condition postmoderne*. Lyotard argues that the “grand schemata of historical progress and social development” which stems from the Enlightenment had at the end of the 20th century lost all credibility. Universal stories of modern advancement are now being received with a considerable measure of distrust following the “political horrors and moral catastrophes” of the 20th century. Modern scientific knowledge has also contributed to this tendency, as, instead of being regarded as the tool to discover the universe’s mysteries and help humankind assert its independence as during the Renaissance era, it is now self-avowedly characterised as “provisional and instrumental”. Lyotard also argues against the notion of “the progressive triumph of liberal democracy” and refers to it as merely another “grand narrative”. The future, he argues, would have to be characterised by more modest local narratives, which abandon the idea of a generally shared consensus.

Foucault (in Dews 2003: 352), influenced by Nietzsche (1844-1900), produced a body of work representative of all of the fundamental postmodern influences. Two of the lessons learnt from Nietzsche are the following. The first is to distrust the “immediate evidence of experience on which phenomenology relies”. It is more important here to look at the background structures, the structures that underlie what appear to be intuitively obvious meanings. The second is to distrust “all notions of development, direction and purpose in the analysis of social and historical processes”. More generally speaking, Nietzsche’s influence on Foucault was an encouragement for the latter to treat the heritage of the Enlightenment era with suspicion and to realise the damage caused by the “rationalisation and instrumentalisation of the modern world”.

Postmodernism is thus concerned with a critical approach toward modern rationalism, the influences it has had on the modern world and the way in which dominant rationalist narratives relate both historical and contemporary developments.

The dominant themes that characterise the postmodernist movement are:

1. 1 Anti-foundationalism: “a conviction that moral norms and political principles cannot be given an ultimate metaphysical grounding, and that all knowledge claims are relative to linguistic, social and historical contexts” (Dews 2003: 352).
2. 2 The critique of the “subject”: “a rejection of the notion that human beings can be essentially defined as rational, reflective subjects of experience and as consciously self-determining agents or initiators of action, a notion assumed to be central to the modern philosophical tradition.” Instead, subjectivity is viewed as “divided, internally conflictual, and shaped by the opaque workings of unconscious desire”(Dews 2003: 352). This ties in with the critique, mentioned above, of interpreting Islamic fundamentalists as “irrational rational actors” who engage in rationalising, calculating behaviour, for example martyrdom, in order to achieve a specific goal, for example salvation. As can be seen from Euben’s discussion of this particular interpretation of Islamic fundamentalism, for example, their behaviour is more complicated and cannot merely be reduced to such a simplistic “means-end” scenario. External influences, such as ideology, arguably also play a part in impacting on actors’ behaviour and may, to some extent, shape the actors “unconscious desire”, as suggested by Dews above.
3. 3 Acknowledgement of difference, and the claims of the “Other”: “a conviction that universalistic moral and political discourse inevitably rides roughshod over cultural, ethnic, gender and other differences between human beings, excluding or marginalising subordinate groups and dissident voices. From this perspective, Enlightenment rationalism and universalism appear as a metaphysically disguised Eurocentrism” (Dews 2003: 352). A proponent of this theme is Connolly (in Dews 2003: 359). He focuses on the exclusionary features of political and social identities: “Identity requires difference in order to be, and it converts difference into otherness in order to secure its own self-certainty”. The problem then is that groups that are politically marginalised and excluded can only achieve equality by being recognised for their distinct identity. This identity, however, is marked by intrinsically constraining or repressive features, which makes it difficult for these groups to assert their identities and achieve equality. Even if they manage to do so their achievement is undermined, because they are perceived as inherently inferior to politically dominant groups. At the same time, however, Connolly does not suggest that the liberal project of acknowledging difference

and individuality should be abandoned. Rather, he suggests adopting an “alternative militant liberalism” based on a “multifarious politicisation of difference”.

### **2.4.3 Why anti-foundationalism is problematic**

As mentioned earlier, the theoretical framework of this dissertation is based on the dialogic model of interpretation, as espoused by Euben. When considering the dominant themes of postmodernism, as listed above, the second and the third fit into what Euben has to say about rationalism quite well (i.e. refusing to accept individuals as rational, reflective subjects of experience and acknowledging the claims of the “Other”). It is with the first postmodernist theme, anti-foundationalism, that Euben has a problem. What are some of the main ideas behind anti-foundationalism and why does Euben perceive it as problematic?

To repeat Dews (2003: 352) definition of anti-foundationalism; it is a “a conviction that moral norms and political principles cannot be given an ultimate metaphysical grounding, and that all knowledge claims are relative to linguistic, social and historical contexts.” This implies a refusal to accept that it is necessary for human beings or the political rules or institutions according to which they function to believe in or be inspired by a metaphysical or divine entity. Another important element here is that a critique of metaphysical foundationalism does not imply any specific difficulties for liberal democratic values, nor does it provide any deep challenges to contemporary society (Dews 2003: 358).

Rorty (in Dews 2003: 358), a well known proponent of anti-foundationalism, argues that the search for an ultimate truth should be abandoned in favour of an open-ended conversation between divergent points of view. He also argues that the knowledge that our beliefs (including moral and political) lack metaphysical foundations does not imply that we should despair. “Since reason, truth and justice simply *are* what a given community defines them as being, since there is no more ultimate court of appeal, we have no reason to abandon the beliefs of the community to which we already belong”. This means, for example, that the principles of liberal democracy remain both valid and possibly even superior to the principles of other traditions for those who propagate them. The problem here is not one of justifying liberal democracy, or any other form of government for that matter. What is problematic, however, is that one particular set of values, i.e. those of liberal democracy, can, by means of denying the existence of metaphysical foundations as a basis to our moral and political beliefs, be seen as superior to other political forms. If one “point of view” is accorded superior status to others then this undermines Rorty’s idea of “an open-ended conversation

between divergent points of view”. What also needs to be taken into account here is the history of domination of both Western accounts of history and the imposition of Western ways of life on originally non-Western cultures. Related to this is the destruction of local traditions and culture, as well as environmental destruction through the introduction of modern technology.

To soften the criticism of Rorty, it is necessary to mention that he seems to have in mind an evolved, progressive form of liberalism. He states that a post-modern liberalism would not see the lack of foundations as a deficit; indeed the search for foundations means a lack of self-confidence on the part of liberal cultures. Rorty (in Gray 1995: 170-171) summarises his project as the attempt:

To reformulate the hopes of liberal society in a nonrationalist and nonuniversalist way – one which furthers their realisation better than older descriptions of them do...in its ideal form, the culture of liberalism would be one which was enlightened, secular, through and through. It would be one in which no trace of divinity remained, whether in the form of the divinised world or a divinised self...The process of de-divinisation...would, ideally, culminate in our no longer being able to see any use for the notion that finite, mortal, contingently existing human beings might derive the meanings of their lives from anything except other finite, mortal, contingently existing human beings.

What problem does Euben have with anti-foundationalism? She argues that this particular theme of postmodernism refers to the perception that it is no longer necessary for a well-ordered society to strive toward a “metaphysical conception of the good”. This is especially the case in post-Enlightenment theoretical discourse, where arguments in favour of metaphysical foundations are considered anachronistic. Generally there seems to be a feeling of “unease” among certain theorists when it comes to the concept of transcendent foundations. Thus, taking into consideration that certain strands of contemporary political theory are characterised by what could be termed an anti-foundationalist approach, there exists the problem of “how to construct a just society without the transcendent foundations thought to have previously sustained it” (Euben 1999: 3-4).

This development is ironic in the sense that while political theory tries to explain community in terms of no longer experiencing a need for metaphysical truths, this attempt takes place in a world where political practice is increasingly being driven by foundationalist certainties and where efforts are constantly made to “remake political, cultural and economic power in accordance with these”. One example of how political actors are driven anew by foundationalism in the Western world is a meeting of former US Vice President

Dan Quayle with religious-right activists in Florida, where he pledged allegiance to “the Christian flag, and to the Saviour, for whose Kingdom it stands, one Saviour, crucified, risen and coming again, with life and liberty for all who believe” (Euben 1999: 4). This seems to contradict Rorty’s idea that liberal democracy’s moral and political values are no longer based on metaphysical foundations. Though this may be the case for most West European states, the US can be viewed as an exception as, according to Gray (1995: 145), it remains strong both in terms of fundamentalist religion and fundamentalist affirmations of the Enlightenment project. The crucial point here is that given the US’s dominant political and military position in the world, it would be rather short-sighted to overlook its adherence to foundationalist claims, when it comes to how it justifies itself both politically and morally.

Other examples of the overriding presence of foundationalism dealing with the world of Islam, include the Islamic governments of Iran and Sudan, the American embassy bombings and the establishment of a shadow system of medical clinics and banks by Islamic groups in Egypt (Euben 1999: 3). The events of September 11<sup>th</sup> provide an additional example, as well as the refusal afterwards of Afghanistan’s Taliban regime to succumb to Western states’ pressure and hand over Osama bin Laden, the suspected mastermind behind the attacks. What is also important here is the importance that fundamentalists, in general, and Islamic fundamentalists, in particular, attach to the literal interpretation of sacred texts. As was discussed earlier in the chapter under the section of Islamic fundamentalism, previous interpretations of holy texts, such as the *Quran*, are rejected in favour of what the text “really” says. This also implies introducing religious practices, as found in the *Quran*, to everyday life. In the context of Islamic fundamentalism it is important to remember that sometimes interpretations of the *Quran* are distorted to suit the political agendas of leaders. An example is the former Taliban regime in Afghanistan, which, as mentioned earlier, discriminated against non-Pashtuns. In other instances more moderate attempts have been made to resacralise ordinary life. An example here is setting up facilities for people to pray at places of work. Clearly thus foundationalism plays an important part in everyday life in the Islamic world.

This, then is the problem which an anti-foundationalist method of enquiry is faced with. Even more disquieting is the fact that it is classed as one of the three themes of postmodernism, which implies that it plays a major part in contemporary political theory. Here it becomes necessary to look at some interpretations of Islamic fundamentalism which have disregarded the importance of foundations and to point out their shortcomings.

#### **2.4.4 Fukuyama's "end of history" thesis – Western triumphalism without any substantial challenges ?**

An example of how approaches that do not pay attention to foundations have failed to explain political events in the contemporary world is Fukuyama's "end of history" thesis. This claims that "the total exhaustion of viable systematic alternatives to Western liberalism"<sup>3</sup> (Fukuyama 1989: 3) has taken place and that humankind has reached the endpoint of its "ideological evolution" which means "the universalization of Western liberal democracy is the final form of human government" (Fukuyama 1989: 4).

Although liberal democracy for the moment only dominates the ideological world, Fukuyama (1989: 4) argues that there are "powerful reasons for believing that it will govern the material world in the long run". How does Fukuyama see the role of Islamic fundamentalism in the contemporary world? With the neutralisation of fascist and communist challenges to liberal democracy, religion is left as one of its remaining challengers (the other being nationalism), in particular the revival of religious fundamentalism within the Christian, Jewish and Muslim traditions. This is the result of the broad unhappiness of the "impersonality and spiritual vacuity" associated with liberal consumerist societies. Fukuyama consequently quotes Islam as the only religion offering a political alternative to liberalism and communism in the contemporary world in the form of a theocratic state. This he follows by saying, however, that the doctrine has little appeal for non-Muslims and that "it is hard to believe that the movement will take on any universal significance"(Fukuyama 1989: 14).

Fukuyama ends off his essay by arguing that in a "posthistorical" world, nationalist, ethnic and religio-political conflicts and ideologies still exist, but will ultimately be worn out together with the actors "still stuck in history" responsible for them. The end of history is described as a very sad time, which will mean that "the struggle for recognition, the willingness to risk one's life for a purely abstract goal, the worldwide ideological struggle that called forth daring, courage, imagination and idealism will be replaced by economic

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<sup>3</sup> Liberalism is characterised by a commitment to the concepts of equality, liberty, individuality and rationality. This involves that everyone should have the right to an equal opportunity in life within the context of an extensive amount of individual liberty, including religious and economic freedom. The rationality element comes in where views in the public domain have to be open to critical scrutiny to test and affirm their validity (Bellamy 1994: 24-25).

calculation, the endless solving of technical problems, environmental concerns, and the satisfaction of sophisticated consumer demands” (Fukuyama 1989: 18).

Despite Fukuyama’s optimism, it has become clear that the contemporary world does not show the predominance of Western liberalism without any challenges to it, but that, instead, there is an abundance of people and movements who are very much opposed to it (Euben 1999: 5). This statement of Euben’s could be criticised in so far as Fukuyama does make provision for possible conflict between those states “still in history and those at the end of history” (Fukuyama 1989: 18). He does thus not dismiss the possibility of opposition to liberal democracy, but questions the viability of the challenges posed by religion and nationalism now that fascism and communism have become defunct. Nonetheless, Euben (1999: 4) raises a valid point when she labels as problematic Fukuyama’s support of Western triumphalism and his related omission of important distinctions between, for example, Islam, Islamic fundamentalist ideas and Islamic fundamentalist militarism. Islam, for example, refers to the religion as a whole and is not to be confused with the political ideology of Islamic fundamentalism. The militaristic aspect of Islamic fundamentalism comes in where violence is used by some Islamic fundamentalists to achieve specific goals.

It is important to recognise Fukuyama<sup>4</sup> as part of a broader grouping of post Cold War writers, who represent, according to Barber (1995: 35), the paradigm of Western triumphalism. This view emerged at the end of the Cold War, when US President George Bush proclaimed that the ideas and ideals of “the free world” had triumphed over those of the “evil empire”. The Western Triumphalist approach, more generally, is based on the following assumptions:

- 1 International behaviour is mainly determined by the internal nature of the states that make up the international system;
- 2 Liberal democracy has proved that it is superior to other forms of government and has successfully defeated the challenges of authoritarian regimes, for example fascism and communism;

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<sup>4</sup> Other writers representative of this stream are Welsh of the University of Cape Town, who states that even if one does not accept Fukuyama entirely, one can still recognise the current situation that liberal democracy is not faced by any serious ideological challengers. In future, he argues, debates will mostly centre on the institutional embodiments of liberal democratic principles, what restraints should be placed on market forces and how comprehensive welfare systems should be. Strobe Talbott, wrote in 1995, as adviser to President Clinton, that “democracy brings prosperity to its peoples and peace to his neighbours” (Barber 1999: 37).

- 3 The economic, social, political and cultural foundations on which liberal democracy is built, offer the individual and the community, as a whole, greater freedom, security and prosperity;
- 4 Liberal democracies compete, but do not fight each other. This is because they realise that co-operation is more profitable than conflict;
- 5 Internal barriers keep some states and societies from adopting liberal democracy; and
- 6 Although liberal democracies are not aggressive, they have to defend their interests against other types of states.

One can ultimately argue that Fukuyama's "end of history" thesis is not able to explain political practice characterised by a foundationalist nature, as in his view Islamic fundamentalism is merely dismissed as most likely not being able to take on any "universal significance". Though it has to be taken into account that Fukuyama wrote this essay in 1989, before any of the recent political saliency of Islamic fundamentalism had emerged, it is clear that the notion that religion, in this case Islamic fundamentalism, only poses a limited challenge which will be ultimately defeated, is a rather simplistic one which does not explain the "daring, courage, imagination and idealism" which Islamic fundamentalist ideas currently seem to inspire in a large number of adherents. This is despite Fukuyama's argument that these qualities are meant to be progressively replaced by "economic calculation, the endless solving of technical problems, environmental concerns, and the satisfaction of sophisticated consumer demands", inherent in the triumph of liberal democracy.

The lack of ability to account for or explain the foundationalist nature of political practice can be extended to the Western triumphalism approach as a whole. When looking at its general characteristics it becomes evident that the main focus is on the superiority of liberal democracy when compared to other forms of government and it is implied that those states who do not readily embrace it must be faced with certain "internal barriers" that keep them from doing so. Finally, there is an implicit justification for liberal democracies to "defend their interests" against "other" states, using force, if necessary. The US's recent attack on Iraq, despite being fraught with controversy, may, in this view, be construed as such a "defense".

The tendency to want to “globalise” liberalism as espoused by neo-liberal internationalists (a variant of liberalism identified by Dunne (in Baylis and Smith 1997) virtually identical to the “Western Triumphalism” described above) can be criticised in various ways.

Firstly, neo-liberal theorists, like Fukuyama and one of the main proponents of the Democratic Peace theory, Doyle<sup>5</sup>, are complacent about the extent to which their own society may be characterised as liberal and are prone to overestimate the number of stable liberal democracies in the world. In reality this number is rather limited – only about 24 out of 180 states in the world are liberal democracies, according to Halliday (in Dunne 1997: 156).

Secondly, the defeat of Stalinist-type communism does not mean that liberalism has triumphed over all other ideologies. Social democracy remains important in Northern Europe and non-liberal constitutionalism is a dominant factor in Asia, for example (Dunne 1997: 156). With relevance to this chapter and the dissertation as a whole, one can also mention the increasing popularity of Islamic fundamentalism. In the context of September 11<sup>th</sup>, “The War on Terrorism” and the continuing unrest linked to Islamic fundamentalist activity; it is evident that liberal democracy has not unequivocally triumphed. As Bellamy (1994: 45) puts it, “(liberalists) ignore the significant pockets of dissent from liberal values by nationalist and religious groups...” He also mentions the “liberal incomprehension at the continued appeal of fundamentalist religion”, as liberalists apparently overestimate the possibility of fundamentalist views being encompassed into a common framework with liberalism.

Thirdly, Western states have done little to counter the point of view (shared by increasing sections of their own populations) that spreading liberal values is merely a convenient way for promoting Western firms’ commercial interests (Dunne 1997: 156). This underlines the idea of the liberal doctrine being marketed as “superior”, as the “best” possible form of government; but, at the same time, this doctrine being used to mask the related exploitation of local populations, the destruction of the natural environment in the countries in which these Western firms invest and the progressive erosion of local traditions and culture. This

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<sup>5</sup> Doyle is one of the main proponents of the Democratic Peace thesis, which claims that liberal states do not go to war with other liberal states. This does, however, not mean that they no longer engage in conflict with non-democratic states. Doyle had an important influence on Neo-Liberal Internationalists, Fukuyama in particular (Russett, Layne, Spiro & Doyle 1995: 164 – 184).

argument ties in with what has been mentioned in the discussion of the postmodernist reaction to rationalism earlier. With the ever-widening gap between the world's rich and poor, Bellamy's (1994: 45) argument that liberalists in favour of spreading liberal democracy overlook "the continuing sources of social tension from deprivation and inequalities arising from a number of structural factors both within and between states" fits in here. This can be related to both the divide between elites living in luxury and their deprived populations in developing countries, as well as the North-South divide.

The final, rather ironic development linked to the spread of economic liberalism and good governance is that this inevitably comes into conflict with the norms of sovereignty and self-determination and more importantly interferes with the relationship between governments and their populations. The result is anything but conducive to modern liberal forms of representative democracy (Dunne 1997: 156).

What these criticisms against the "globalisation" of liberalism suggest, is how this ideology claims to be the inevitable result that all of the world's cultures will end up with. There seems to be a kind of arrogance here. Difficulties are merely overlooked or swept aside with assumptions that what has worked so well for little more than 24 states in the world, must necessarily be the ideal solution for the rest. Not to be forgotten is the political drive behind exporting the world hegemon's ideology and, of course, its economic and, lately especially apparent, security interests. Ultimately, however, the Western triumphalism or neo-liberal institutional approach does little to clarify the resurgence of Islamic fundamentalism in an era when liberalism is meant to have triumphed, and, if not yet completely so, is definitely meant to be on its way to an unquestionable victory.

#### **2.4.5 Huntington's "clash of civilisations" - The West vs. the Rest**

Huntington's thesis (in Euben 1999: 5) describes Islamic militancy as a clash between "the West and the Rest", presenting the final evolutionary stage of international conflict. He defines the West in terms of a commitment to "individualism, liberalism, constitutionalism, human rights, equality, liberty, the rule of law, democracy, free markets, the separation of church and state" and argues that often, opposing identities and movements are pitted against it. These can be labelled as "agents of disorder" – "an expression of particularisms and differences over universality and equality". Huntington argues "this is no less than a clash

of civilisations – the perhaps irrational but surely historic reaction of an ancient rival against our Judeo-Christian, heritage, our secular present, and the world-wide expansion of both”.

Huntington sums up the reasons for the “clash” between Islam and the West as follows: “The underlying problem for the West is not Islamic fundamentalism. It is Islam, a different civilisation whose people are convinced of the superiority of their culture and are obsessed with the inferiority of their power. The problem for Islam is not the CIA or the US Department of Defense. It is the West, a different civilisation whose people are convinced of the universality of their culture and believe that their superior, if declining, power imposes on them the obligation to extend that culture throughout the world. These are the basic ingredients that fuel conflict between Islam and the West.” (Huntington 1996: 217-218). Huntington’s thesis, according to Euben (1999: 6), captures the prevailing mood in the West, one where Islamic fundamentalism is presented as “*the* threat to the New World Order”, having replaced the “Red Menace” of Cold War discourse.

What Huntington (1996: 215) depicts as well is the growing Western concern with the “Islamic threat” that has paralleled growing Muslim anti-Westernism. He argues that Islam is seen as a source of nuclear proliferation, terrorism and (when it comes to Europe) unwanted migrants. Also, both Western publics and their leaders share these concerns. He quotes an example which says that 61 percent of a 1994 sample of 35 000 Americans interested in foreign policy said “yes” when asked if the “Islamic revival” posed a threat to US interests in the Middle East. Only 28 percent answered “no” to the question. In the same year when asked to identify critical threats to the United States, 72 percent of the public and 61 percent of foreign policy leaders mentioned “nuclear proliferation”, while 69 percent of the public and 33 percent of leaders said that “international terrorism” was a threat – two issues which Huntington says are widely associated with Islam. Similar concerns were expressed by other Western political leaders, with the secretary general of NATO declaring in 1995 that Islamic fundamentalism was “at least as dangerous as communism” had been to the West and a “very senior member of the Clinton administration” pointing to Islam as the global rival of the West.

Here it becomes important to look at more recent statistics on the matter, especially in the aftermath of September 11<sup>th</sup>. According to a poll conducted by the Chicago Council on Foreign Relations and the German Marshall Fund of the United States in 2002, the US public has undergone some major changes in terms of

rising international awareness, concern and activism. In a post September 11<sup>th</sup> environment, the percentage of members of the US public which sees international terrorism and related “threats” as critical to US vital interests has understandably increased. So, for example, 91% of Americans view “International terrorism” as a critical threat (as opposed to 84% in 1998). “Chemical and biological weapons”, arguably linked to Islamic fundamentalism in the public eye, rank second as a critical threat with 86%, as opposed to 76% in 1998. In terms of military force to combat terrorism, 87% (up from 74% in 1998) favour US air strikes to take out terrorist training camps, 84% favour ground troops (57% in 1998) doing the same. (It is important to realise here, however, that 88% of Americans also support “working through the UN to strengthen international laws against terrorism and to make sure UN members enforce them”. There is thus not only support for a violent solution to the problem of international terrorism) (Harris Interactive 2002).

Finally, and of crucial importance to this dissertation, is how the American public perceives Islam. According to the poll, there is an increased wariness of Islam. After September 11<sup>th</sup> 61% view Islamic fundamentalism as a critical threat to the US’s vital interests (up from 38% in 1998). 76% of Americans also feel that after September 11<sup>th</sup> it has become necessary to restrict the immigration of Muslims and Arabs into the US, while 21% of Americans view the September 11<sup>th</sup> attacks as representative of “the true teachings of Islam “ to a great degree”, 18% “to some degree”, 17% “not very much” and 40% “not at all”. Despite this increasing distrust of Muslims and Arabs, and possibly Islam in general, a large majority of the US public rejects the idea of the “clash of civilisations”. Only 27% believe that Muslim religious, social and political traditions are incompatible with Western ways and that a conflict between the two civilisations is inevitable. 66% believe that common ground can be found between the Islamic and Western world and that violent conflict is therefore not inevitable (Harris Interactive 2002). Thus, while Huntington’s statistics are to some extent repeated here, with a substantial percentage of Americans expressing distrust of Islam, a fear of Muslim and Arab migrants and most obviously international terrorism, it is important to note that Huntington’s pessimistic predictions of a clash between Islam and the West are only supported by 27% of Americans.

Fuller (2003: 145) argues that Huntington’s writings on the “clash of civilisations” identify culture or civilisation as “a key source of future international friction in the coming century”. The key flaw in this thesis, according to Fuller, is that Huntington confuses the *vehicle of conflict* with *the source of conflict*. As he puts it,

All societies prefer to ennoble their conflicts through justification at the highest level of moral cause. Thus, few will go to war in the name of capturing territory, destroying a rival, exacting revenging [sic], gaining geopolitical hegemony, or seizing economic assets. Instead, war is waged in the name of Christian values, the proletarian revolution, the master race, the war to end all wars, the free world, the forces of history, manifest destiny, or whatever. The banner raised is not really the actual cause of conflict; it rather springs from quite concrete issues, grievances that are more susceptible to solution than lofty abstract concepts about “clashes of civilisations”.

To find abstract explanations for the causes of conflicts like “clashes of civilisations”, and “Islam versus the West” and “they hate our values” is in a sense a way of conveniently shifting responsibility to primordial forces beyond one’s control. If one cannot take responsibility for a conflict for the reasons implicit in the “clash of civilisations” thesis, this effectively means that the United States would not need to engage in any measure of self-examination of its own responsibilities. Fuller (2003: 146) opposes this notion and argues that in order to understand and deal with sources of conflict it becomes necessary to examine real, concrete, grounded and workable issues on both sides, including psychological legacies. The idea of delving deeply into causes of conflicts, specifically situational factors such as economic and political conditions coupled with ideology, ties in with the dialogic model of interpretation which is introduced in detail later on in this chapter.

What is striking about Huntington’s arguments in his discussion on “Islam and the West” (1996: 209-218) is the reciprocal distrust the West and the Islamic world bear each other, each being characterised as the “Other” respectively and therefore not open to either mutual understanding or co-operation: “So long as Islam remains Islam (which it will) and the West remains the West (which is more dubious), this fundamental conflict between two great civilisations and ways of life will continue to define their relations in the future even as it has defined them for the past fourteen centuries” (Huntington 1996: 212). This thus evidently presents somewhat of an opposition to Fukuyama’s “end of history” thesis where Islamic fundamentalism is depicted as a sort of irritation to Western liberal democracy, not presenting any concrete challenge to it and ultimately doomed to failure. Huntington perceives the “clash” between “Islam and the West” as both inevitable and, more importantly, dangerously so. Again, as with Fukuyama, there is insufficient focus on the foundationalist ideas underlying Islam fundamentalism, with “Islam and the West” merely being pitted against each other as extreme opposites.

The question that now needs to be asked is what these two theses have in common. Euben (1999: 7) says that neither of the two discusses the status of the truth nor the tension between politics and metaphysical conceptions of the good, but that both are attempts at depicting the world “as it is and will be” in a persuasive and realistic way. Fukuyama does so with a certain optimism, fuelled by a belief in the triumph of Western liberal democracy, while Huntington’s is a rather more pessimistic account, based on the inevitable occurrence of conflict between “Islam and the West”. The one takes the challenge of Islamic fundamentalism too lightly, while the other focuses primarily on the inevitable fault line predisposing “Islam and the West” to a conflictual relationship. Euben argues that finally they seem to be “unable to encounter the content of import of such political practices (an example being fundamentalism) in a meaningful way”. This thus ties up with the point raised earlier, where it is stated that contemporary anti-foundationalist political theory is not able to explain the increasing importance of foundationalism in contemporary political practice. Another characteristic of both these theses is the idea of religio-political movements being pitted against the West in a relationship of the “particularistic, irrational and archaic” in relation to the “universalistic, rational and modern”. Ultimately political Islam is defined as a “menace” and a threat to “modern, legitimate politics” that needs to be overcome.

The scene has thus been set to explain and justify use of the dialogic model of interpretation, as espoused by Euben. Shortcomings of rationalist approaches to Islamic fundamentalism have been pointed out and the problems of accounts that do not pay attention to the foundationalist character of contemporary political practice have been explained as well. The need to focus on the ideologies of Islamic fundamentalist groups is central to the dialogic model of interpretation and will now be explained.

## **2.5 A DIALOGIC MODEL OF INTERPRETATION**

### **2.5.1 Explanation and justification**

As argued in detail earlier on, rationalist interpretations of Islamic fundamentalism have severe limitations, specifically in terms of their neglect of the ideologies of Islamic fundamentalists. A dialogic model of interpretation is useful in providing a “better” understanding of fundamentalism. Rationalist interpretations of Islamic fundamentalism can help provide an idea of the socio-economic and political conditions prevalent in the case studies which are examined, Algeria, Sudan and South Africa, but more importantly, as is

explained, it is also necessary to look in detail at the ideologies of Islamic fundamentalist groups in these states, in order to come to a deeper, less condemnatory understanding of Islamic fundamentalism.

Euben (1999: 36) refers to Heidegger and Gadamer specifically when mentioning the tradition behind the dialogic model of interpretation, though it involves numerous other debates within and about hermeneutics as well. Gadamer (in Euben 1999: 36) argues that language is the basic premise of human existence and that an interpreter will therefore see all objects of interpretation from the point of view of his or her own worldview, beliefs, norms and practices. The notion of a neutral observer or “a point of view outside the experience of the world in language from which it could become an object” is thus abandoned. This at the same time involves a move away from a positivist epistemology that sees understanding as discovering “the final and objective truth”. Instead, understanding would be the result of a dialogue between two horizons of meaning, neither of which is able to claim a monopoly on what “the truth” consists of. The idea here is to have all participants, in this case the analyst and Islamic fundamentalist groups, enter into a dialogue. The analyst would not “claim” to be in the right from the outset, but, rather, would be open to new interpretations and insights that could be gained through mutual participation in this dialogue.

Habermas (in Dews 2003: 360-361), another postmodernist who could be added here, proposes “communicative reason” instead of pursuing a “totalising critique of reason”. This implies not limiting rationality to “a drive for instrumental calculation and control”, but also making room for the ability of human beings to “raise, respond to and assess validity claims”, for example claims to truth raised in linguistic communication. This ability needs to include identifying oneself with or putting oneself in the place of the interlocutor or “Other”. It is by developing this ability that reflective subjectivity emerges. The idea of communicative reason overrides the assumption that reason is inevitably dominating and exclusionary, because the “rational goal of achieving consensus” depends exactly on recognising what the “Other” claims as potentially more valid than what you yourself claim. Again, thus, the idea prevails of not forming a preconceived notion of the “Other”, based on the idea of the superiority of rationalist enquiry, but of attempting to identify oneself with the “Other” in order to come to a more comprehensive understanding of what the “Other” has to say.

Levinas (in Dews 2003: 362-363) argues that our ethical relation to the “Other” implies a sense of boundless responsibility. Simple, naked being for Levinas constitutes the *il y a* (or “there is”) as anonymous, neutral,

oppressive and horrifying. The only way to escape this claustrophobic pressure of being, is by interacting with the “Other”. Only here is it possible to catch a glimpse of the divine. This potential perception of divinity does not, however, mean an embrace of metaphysical foundations or “the elusive trace of the divine [which] is disclosed through our ethical response to the human Other”. Although there is a suggestion of anti-foundationalism here, which, for Euben poses serious problems to enquiry into contemporary political events, because (as explained earlier) many are in fact characterised by a strong foundationalism, what Levinas stresses in particular is the importance of interacting with the “Other” to overcome the “horrifying” reality of mere existence.

What is important here as well, is that the conditions of the dialogue – the participants, the traditions to which they belong, the prejudices, which they bring to the conversation – form part of the claims that are brought forward and mediated. Understanding is thus not seeing things from an external “objective” point of view, but involves a “fusion of horizons”. Gadamer argues that the hermeneutic orientation involves the analyst being “a partner in dialogue with others in the past and present”, discarding a monopoly on truth and at the same time enjoining an openness to other meanings (Euben 1999: 36).

Another characteristic associated with the dialogic model of interpretation is that the analyst needs to acknowledge his or her own prejudices so that “disparate understandings” can ultimately be transformed into “mutually intelligible meanings”. This requires the analyst to be willing to enter into a transformative process where one’s own status and that of the other are continuously renegotiated. This would discard the idea of different cultural practices as locked away in separate boxes of meaning and at the same time challenge the possibility that there is “a transcendent position from which to see the one-to-one correspondence of truth to linguistically naked facts in the world”. A key related idea here as well is that of the “inexhaustibility” of the meaning of texts (Euben 1999: 37).

Very important, as can be seen from the argument above, is thus the idea of acknowledging one’s prejudices, but doing this with the aim of incorporating what the other participant in the dialogue has to say. Prejudices are thus not necessarily limiting, as they can potentially help one continuously adapt one’s point of view as the dialogue progresses. Using the dialogic model of interpretation thus counters the temptation of separating different cultures and their related idea-structures so as to keep them unintelligible to each other, and that of imposing a single, Western-inspired version of the truth on an interpretation of Islamic fundamentalism.

Habermas (in Euben 1999: 39-41), in a critical discussion of Gadamer's dialogic model of understanding, which reduces social inquiry to a dialogic explication of meaning, points out that one also needs to take into account the ways in which language can distort and conceal, but also express the social, political and economic conditions of life. Language can thus also function as a medium of domination and social power. Furthermore, according to Habermas, what is important, is that the dialogic model of interpretation makes possible both evaluation and critique. The dialogic model of interpretation thus, in this way, does not endanger objectivity, but rather challenges a particular positivist standard of objectivity, which advocates a final, transcendent notion of the truth. What one finds when employing the dialogic model of interpretation is a standard of compatibility that exists between the interpreter and the understandings of the participants. This includes the possibility of being distanced sufficiently from the participants' own meanings to allow room for critique of how they understand their own ideas and, more specifically, for the possibility that participants can misunderstand or misrepresent aspects of their own behaviour.

It is this element of the dialogic model of interpretation that prevents it from being too uncritical and accepting about what the participants have to say about their own ideas. This would, in a way, present the opposite of a Western rationalist-inspired condemnation of Islamic fundamentalism, as there would be a somewhat too unconditional acceptance of the ideas of Islamic fundamentalists.

A final cautionary note is necessary when discussing the dialogic model of interpretation. Euben (1999: 41) states that these "dialogues" across cultures often take place under conditions which are characterised by substantial levels of inequality – between "centre" and "periphery", for example. This is exacerbated by the fact that modernisation and globalisation, processes originating in the West, often confront peripheral or post-colonial states not with greater parity, but with higher levels of inequality. One thus needs to attend to the "cultural, economic, and political inequalities that shape the conditions and terms of the dialogue" when entering into cross-cultural conversation. The dialogic model of interpretation is not invulnerable to the inequalities of power of the participants, but is useful in the sense that it is open to and aware of these. "If it is imperative to seek understanding, and to seek the best understanding possible, we are paradoxically perhaps, best served by methods attentive to the finitude of our capacity to understand complex matrixes of meaning in part constituted by systematic inequalities of power".

The dialogic model of interpretation makes it possible to differentiate between “better” and “worse” interpretations. “Better” interpretations involve the possibility of attaining a “fusion of horizons” which would make room for the fundamentalists to voice their opinions as well. Instead of advocating a final, objective, positivist-inspired notion of the truth, “better” interpretations would be aware of their own conditionality and open to distortions that may be the result of substantial inequality in the postcolonial world. Finally, “better” interpretations focus on an explanation of the subject’s meanings, while still allowing the interpreter to distance him or herself from the subjects to such an extent so as to be able to criticise their accounts of their own experiences (Euben 1999: 44-45).

Having established the usefulness of the dialogic model of interpretation in analysing the ideologies of Islamic fundamentalists, it now becomes important to point out how rationalist interpretations may prove useful when using the dialogic model of interpretation, despite the criticisms levelled against them above.

Firstly, rationalist analyses are useful in that they express the power of a dominant discourse by assuming that there is an objective reality outside the subject of Islamic fundamentalism. From here the concept can be both described and at the same time infused with certain characteristics (for example, “irrationality” or “backwardness”) and thus, in a way, created. Secondly, rationalist analyses of Islamic fundamentalism are useful in that they help illustrate the socio-economic conditions which may lead to the emergence of discontent and disaffection, often accompanying the growth of revolutionary movements. Modernisation, urbanisation, industrialisation, rising unemployment, yet increased levels of illiteracy at the same time do partially explain the “urge to challenge prevailing conditions and the powers and processes that produced them”. It is crucial to understand, however, that merely painting a picture of the political, economic and social conditions in Middle Eastern countries is not sufficient to explain why Islamic fundamentalists are drawn to a fundamentalist ideas rather than any other set of ideas (Euben 1999: 47).

The dialogic model of interpretation is adopted in the political analysis of the ideologies of Islamic fundamentalist groups in Algeria, Sudan and South Africa. Reasons for use of this model have been given above. The aim is to move away from rationalist approaches to Islamic fundamentalism, which tend to reduce Islamic fundamentalism to a reflex reaction against modernity and place it in irrational opposition to the rational West. Rather, this dissertation attempts to come to a “better” understanding of Islamic fundamentalism in the states which are examined by means of analysing the ideologies underlying Islamic

fundamentalist groups in Algeria, Sudan and South Africa, but also by means of incorporating some of the useful elements of rationalist analysis, for example taking into account structural factors: political, cultural and socio-economic conditions. Structural factors are significant in terms of their impact on the ideologies of Islamic fundamentalist groups in Algeria, Sudan and South Africa. This implies predominant use of the dialogic model of interpretation, but without disregarding what rationalist analyses of Islamic fundamentalism can contribute.

### **2.5.2 Practical implementation of the dialogic model of interpretation – some ideas**

In terms of practical implementation considerations, Gray (1995) proposes some ideas. He argues that a more modest, but also more hopeful prospect than revolts against modernity (eg Nazism or religious fundamentalism), would be political forms arising in truly post-Enlightenment cultures to shelter and express diversity. This would imply allowing different cultures, worldviews and ways of life to co-exist in peace and harmony (Gray 1995: 155). It is important here to give up certain conceptions of morality, science and religion (not as a vessel for a particular way of life, but rather as the bearer of truths possessing universal authority). The same goes for the humanist conception of humankind as a privileged site of truth (Gray 1995: 155). This ties in with the dialogic model of interpretation in the sense that this approach would necessitate co-operation between different cultural groups and, more importantly, for Western societies to renege any claims to superiority. This is a rather idealistic notion, however and far from realisation.

Gray (1995: 156) elaborates on the above idea by saying that liberal states need to learn how to live with non-liberal states. In the same way, liberal and non-liberal cultural forms need to start co-existing peacefully and harmoniously. Nothing in liberal practice is “central, foundational or indispensable” and liberal life contains nothing that is fixed or exempt from questioning. Liberal policies and projects such as the policy of global free trade embodied in the Global Agreements on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) project need to be reconsidered and rejected because they attempt to dissolve “distinctive ways of life” in the context of “the all-consuming commensurability and homogeneity of the global market”. Again this is rather optimistic, considering the fact that it is the world’s industrialising states who set up the GATT agreement in the first place. It is highly questionable whether they would be willing to give up the benefits they are gaining through these agreements, for example additional markets for their surplus goods, in favour of allowing different cultures to live together in harmony and preventing their traditional ways of life from being

destroyed. Gray's (1995: 180) optimism becomes apparent in his argument that the universalising project of Western cultures must be surrendered and replaced by a willingness to share the earth with cultures which are distinctly different from the Western one. The aim here is not to achieve absolute sameness, but an expression of openness to cultural difference.

A similarly idealistic suggestion comes from Iranian president Mohammad Khatami and his proposal for a "Dialogue among Civilisations." He refers to "necessity and significance of dialogue" and what is necessary to facilitate this: "rejection of force, promotion of understanding cultural, economic and political fields, and strengthening of the foundations of liberty, justice and human rights." Also, "if humanity at the threshold of the new century and millennium devotes all efforts to institutionalise dialogue, replacing hostility and confrontation with discourse and understanding, it would leave an invaluable legacy for the benefit of future generations" (Khatami 2001: 18). He elaborates on this by talking about the need to "bring hearts together" and the necessity for "minds to be brought closer together". In order to achieve this, it is necessary for the "great thinkers of the world to make a special effort to understand the main concepts in the thoughts of others and then to communicate these to their own people" (Khatami 2001: 26).

The overly idealistic and optimistic nature of these suggestion is all too clear. Wonderful as it sounds to bring people's hearts and minds together, there is little evidence in the world that such efforts are currently being made or will be made in the short to long term. How does President Khatami envisage this "dialogue among civilisations?" Some of the suggestions he makes is to introduce reform into the United Nations Security Council, combat terrorism (which he identifies as a particular prerogative for the government of the Islamic Republic of Iran), rid the world of "the nightmare of nuclear war and weapons of mass destruction" and halt the "systematic devouring of nature", instead preserving the environment, which, "as the common natural heritage of [hu]mankind, constituted the most important priority of the coming century" (Khatami 2001: 18-21). He also suggests the formation of a World Culture, which ought not to overlook the characteristics and requirements of native local cultures and, more importantly, should not aim to impose itself on them (Khatami 2001: 32). This is different from the Western culture which is penetrating more and more traditionally non-Western cultures, but, despite substantial attempts to the contrary, is not succeeding in making its norms and values part of these cultures, as is pointed out earlier in the chapter. Another important point raised by President Khatami (2001: 33) is the possibility of aiming at "meta-historical discourse", which would attempt to illuminate such eternal human questions as the ultimate meaning of life

and death, or goodness and evil. “Without a discussion of fundamentals, and by simply confining dialogue to superficial issues” not much progress would be made.

When superficial issues masquerade as “real”, “urgent” and “essential”, and no agreement - or at least mutual understanding – concerning what is truly fundamental is obtained among partners to dialogue, misunderstanding and confusion are proliferated at the cost of empathy and compassion

This, of course, underlines one of Euben’s main prerogatives, as is pointed out earlier, the criticism of anti-foundationalism and the need to make room for a model that will be able to deal with increasingly foundationalist political practice as found in contemporary life. The fact remains, however, that important and relevant as such a “dialogue of civilisations” may be to promote peace, it will be difficult to realise and will require more than large amounts of idealism to achieve.

Having justified the use of the dialogic model of interpretation, it becomes necessary to situate influential Islamic fundamentalist worldviews in the global historical context from which they have arisen and to afterwards describe them, because of their influence on the ideologies of Islamic fundamentalist groups in Algeria, Sudan and South Africa. In this way, a more complete picture will emerge of the difficulties facing Muslim populations in the contemporary world as a whole, as well as those in the states to be discussed.

## **2.6 SUMMARY OF CHAPTER TWO**

Chapter two deals with the theoretical framework behind the dissertation. A broad discussion of Islamic fundamentalism is entered into in order to provide a range of possible understandings of the concept. Fundamentalisms, including Islamic fundamentalism, have arisen alongside the development of modernity in all major faiths, and show similar characteristics across the world’s major religions. These include a disenchantment with modernity, which has not delivered what was expected of it, as well as a certain degree of fear that the secular establishment wants to wipe out religion. While there is no doubt that the phenomenon of Islamic fundamentalism is a force to be reckoned with, use of the term itself is controversial and disputed. Nonetheless, according to Euben (1999), it is the best term to use. Also, she argues that it is relatively clear-cut as it has a political, rather than exclusively religious, dimension, claims to have *the* authoritative reading of what the *Quran* really says, and has developed alongside, rather than merely in reaction to, modernity. Islamic fundamentalism has also taken on many forms in practice, including the

notoriously dictatorial Taliban regime in Afghanistan, but also less radical Islamic fundamentalist initiatives at socio-economic upliftment in Islamic countries.

When wanting to justify the dialogic model of interpretation, it first becomes important to criticise rival ways of approaching the phenomenon of Islamic fundamentalism. While rationalist analyses may certainly prove helpful in terms of looking at structural (political, social and economic) factors in Islamic societies, they nonetheless lack the crucially important focus on Islamic fundamentalist ideas, which distinguishes the dialogic model of interpretation. In addition, rationalist analysts often claim to be neutral and to stand outside the situation they wish to examine, thereby ultimately producing rather one-sided accounts and reducing Islamic fundamentalism to no more than an irrational reflex reaction and by-product to modernity. Postmodernism has provided a critical challenge to rationalism, in terms of criticising the existence of a monopoly on the truth, but at the same time shows the shortcoming of not according enough importance to the foundationalism or need to strive for a higher metaphysical good in society that characterises many Islamic societies.

The dialogic model of interpretation aims to combine the advantages that rationalist analyses hold with the postmodern rejection of a single, universalist version of the truth. The idea is that the analyst enter into the situation he/she aims to analyse and to engage in dialogue with the participants involved, rather than claim to stand outside it. This does not, however, exclude the possibility of criticising the participants' ideological justifications. There have been suggestions about how to realise the dialogic model of interpretation, in terms of fostering understanding and co-operation between world's different countries. While these are noble and certainly worth striving for, they are nonetheless highly idealistic and probably unattainable in the short term.

## **CHAPTER 3: ISLAMIC POLITICAL THOUGHT**

### **3.1 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter commences with the history of the relationship between the world of Islam and the West. The once dominant and powerful Islamic civilisation became increasingly subject to Western influence and this development eventually culminated in Muslim states becoming colonies of the West. Attention is paid to how Muslims perceive and explain their loss of global political and intellectual influence, as well as to several other causes which may have contributed to the decline of the Islamic world. This discussion is then taken further in order to illustrate how the contemporary relationship between the world of Islam and the West is perceived by commentators from both sides, what the shortcomings and dangers of these views are and what needs to be done in order to improve relations. The aim is to link the historical discussion of the interaction between the West and Muslim states to the present and to deal with how Muslims view their history and their relationship with the West, but also how the West has viewed and treated Muslims.

Next, the effects of the imposition of secularist and nationalist ideologies on the newly independent Muslim states are discussed. The secularisation process promoted by the post-independence regimes throughout the Muslim world has not resulted in development, but instead in the transplantation of alien Western institutions, laws and procedures that have eroded the traditional system of Islam and have created a serious identity crisis which Muslims all over the world suffer. In addition, many Muslim states are characterised by economic and political instability.

The focus then turns to Islamic revivalism, a phenomenon which is characterised by Muslim populations' increased interest in Islam as a political system, and, simultaneously, Muslim governments' realisation that invoking Islamic symbols and values in political programmes, though not necessarily intending to establish an Islamic system, is a promising way of gaining popular support. Islam is thus closely linked to both political aspirations of the future (the establishment of an Islamic system) and political necessities of the present (ensuring support for current regimes). This is followed by a discussion of four categories of revivalists: Islamic fundamentalists, Islamic traditionalists, Islamic modernists and Islamic pragmatists in order to clarify differences between the different forms of Islamic political thought. Particular attention is paid to Islamic fundamentalists, as it is Islamic fundamentalism that is dealt with in the following chapters

when it comes to analysing the ideologies of Islamic fundamentalist groups in Algeria, Sudan and South Africa.

## **3.2 WESTERN HEGEMONY IN THE MIDDLE EAST**

### **3.2.1 The rise of the West**

The Muslim world's and impressive history of territorial and intellectual expansion, spanned more than 1000 years. Fuller (2003: 1) cites the Israeli scholar Kramer:

In the year 1000, the Middle East was the crucible of world civilisation. One could not lay claim to true learning if one did not know Arabic...An Islamic empire, established by conquest four centuries earlier, had spawned an Islamic civilisation, maintained by the free will of the world's most creative and enterprising spirits...[T]here could be no doubt that the dynasties of Islam represented the political, military, and economic superpowers of the day...The supremely urbane civilisation cultivated genius. Had there been Nobel prizes in 1000, they would have gone almost exclusively to Moslems.

By the ninth century, the world of Islam had attained impressive proportions, ranging from the Indus River in the east to the Atlas Mountains in the west. Christian Europe saw the consistent infiltration of Islam into its territories: The Muslim world held Spain, Southern France, a part of Italy, as well as the islands of Crete, Corsica, Sicily and Sardinia. The Islamic world also led the world in science, art, mathematics and military might. Both intellectually and politically, its supremacy was at this point unequalled (Husain 1995: 158).

No other culture in the history of the world equals Islamic civilisation in terms of the duration of its extensive influence and the geographically diverse and vast region of the world it covered. As Fuller (2003: 2) puts it: "This civilisation formed the heart of the world order far longer than Western civilisation has, and over a far broader region." Fuller's statement merits a closer look at what lay behind this prolonged achievement of Islamic civilisation. For many Muslims it is unnecessary to speculate about the reasons for their predecessors' success. Islamic civilisation created an enduring system of belief, governance and social order, incorporating a substantial variety of regions, cultures and peoples, because of the strength of Islam which lies in the fact that it is the message of God as revealed to the last of His prophets: Muhammad. Islam, as religion, thus becomes important in Muslim history as a source of "deep sustenance, support, and

guidance” and its spiritual inspiration and related vision of societal organisation can be seen as a reason for its permanent acceptance by such a diversity of cultures and peoples over such a long period of time. In fact, rarely in history has any Muslim culture been supplanted by another religious culture. To sum up then, even Westerners, however they may view Islam, cannot ignore the fact that it, in both a political and social sense, has prevailed over a greater part of the world, for a longer period of time and has included more diverse cultures than any other religion. This impressive historical record suggests that Islamic civilisation represents a powerful cultural force, capable of meeting the social, ethical and moral needs of diverse cultures for long periods of time under differing historical and regional conditions (Fuller 2003: 2-4).

However, despite their impressive record of dominance in several important spheres, Muslims were unprepared for a shift in the balance of power and creativity away from them, something that started around the 15th century. “The rise of the West is unparalleled in world history”, Armstrong states (2000: 141). For centuries the countries north of the Alps had been viewed as backward. By the 12th and 13th centuries these European countries had more or less caught up with the dominant cultures of the time, and by the 16th century a process of major transformation and development had begun that would result in the West’s domination of the rest of the world. This unique developmental achievement would even surpass the position the Islamic empire held during the ninth century (Armstrong 2000: 141).

At the beginning of the 18th century several parts of the Islamic world had become subjected to the impact of the economic and military challenge of an emerging modernising West. A key development that took place was a reversal in the power relationship between the Islamic world and the West. Whereas the former had held an offensive, expansive position *vis-à-vis* the West, it was now forced to take on a defensive posture. Islam’s dominant role in world history was replaced by that of Christian Europe, which “as experiencing a prolonged period of outstanding creativity which was to prove historically decisive for all the world” (Esposito 1991: 42).

### **3.2.2 Colonisation of the Islamic world**

European modernisation would impact seriously on the Islamic world. The constant progress made by the modernised states and their industrialised economies, in both Europe and progressively also its American colonies, meant that there would have to be continual expansion in order to tap new markets, as those in the

home countries had been saturated. A process of colonisation began, with the aim of drawing agrarian societies into Europe's commercial network (Armstrong 2000: 143). By the late 19th and early 20th centuries European colonialist penetration of the Islamic world extended from Morocco to Indonesia<sup>6</sup>. A military and economic presence often resulted in foreign political domination or rule: the French in North, West and Equatorial Africa, as well as the Levant (now Lebanon and Syria); the British in Palestine, Transjordan, Iraq, the Arabian Gulf and the Indian subcontinent; the Dutch in South-East Asia. Even where Muslims retained self-rule, as in the Ottoman Empire and Iran, they were nonetheless forced into a defensive posture against Western political and economic expansionism (Esposito 1991: 42).

European interest in the Middle East was until the 20th century mainly strategic. Throughout the 19th century the "Eastern question" had involved Russia and Britain competing for influence in the region and control over communications at the expense of the Ottoman Empire. The end of World War One saw a dramatic shift of focus in terms of the "Eastern question". An important development was the dismemberment of the Ottoman Empire: its heartland became Turkey, while its former Arab dominions were divided into seven separate states or colonial entities. Two of these new entities (Lebanon and Syria) were now ruled by France, three (Iraq, Jordan and Palestine) by Britain, and two (Saudi Arabia and North Yemen) became independent Arab monarchies (Halliday 1996: 23). According to Armstrong (2000: 148) this was seen as an outrage or, more strongly, as a betrayal, as the European powers had promised independence to the Arab provinces of the Ottoman Empire. Another factor that contributed strongly to the Muslims' feeling that they had been betrayed was the Arab provinces' support for the Allies in the First World War against the Ottoman Empire which had sided with Germany.

Halliday (1996: 23) explains that with the division of the Ottoman Empire, a redefinition of the strategic rivalry in the region took place. Just prior to World War One substantial quantities of oil had been discovered in and near the Persian Gulf, which meant that the Middle East, which had thus far been of geo-strategic importance, now took on an intrinsic economic significance. Also Western Europe would increasingly have to deal with rival powers in the form of the US, which had entered the Middle Eastern arena for the first time (in the early stages mainly in the form of oil companies) and Communist Russia after the 1917 Bolshevik revolution.

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<sup>6</sup> More specifically: France established itself as a colonial power in Algeria (1830), Tunisia (1881) and Morocco (1912); Italy in Libya (1911) and Britain in Egypt (1882), Sudan (1898), in South Arabia (1839) and in the string of coastal Persian gulf states (late nineteenth century to 1914) (Halliday 1995: 22-23).

As the Middle East took on more and more significance, one Muslim country after another came under Western control. The colonised countries consequently provided raw materials for export to the European states which had colonised them, and would receive cheap manufactured Western goods in return, usually ruining the prospects of a successful local industry (Husain 1995: 158). Modernisation along Western lines would also take place; financial and commercial life would be transformed to conform to a Western system, and at least some of the “natives” needed to familiarise themselves with the modern ideas and ethos that they had now become permanently exposed to (Armstrong 2000: 144). Husain (1995: 158) also mentions the introduction of Western secular education and explains how the indigenous elite, simultaneously impressed and antagonised by European power, both emulated and cooperated with their colonial masters. Embracing Westernisation and secularisation, they internalised Western attitudes, lifestyles and ideologies and were thus poised to take power following independence.

The introduction of modernisation in the Muslim world is dealt with by Esposito (1991: 43) who discusses how the Ottoman Sultan Mahmud II (1808-39) and his vassal in Egypt Muhammad (Mehmet) Ali (1805-49) tried to emulate the West in the 19th century. It is interesting to note that these leaders went to great lengths to reform their societies along Western lines, even though, at this stage, their territories were not yet under colonial rule. This underlines their fervent desire to selectively adopt modern developments in the hope that this would result in material improvements. It is important to note here that early 19th-century modernisation efforts were not extended to all areas of society, but had their primary impact on the military-bureaucratic institutions of the state. Change was adopted by the state and implemented by a small political elite, which was responding to the external threat of European expansionism and not to internal, societal pressures for social change. Watt (1968: 116) adds an interesting point in that he says that often, but in especially in the case of the Ottoman Empire in the 19th century, “a show was made of taking over European institutions in order to impress on European statesmen that Islamic countries were rapidly transforming themselves into ‘modern’ states.”

This initial piecemeal modernisation introduced by Mahmud II was later developed and systematised by his son Abdulmejid through an ambitious series of reforms known collectively as the Tanzimat (reorganisations). State-supported, modern, European-inspired institutions soon challenged their Islamic counterparts: new secular schools were established to train not only the military but a new bureaucratic

corps; land reforms were introduced, as well as new legal codes and courts to regulate civil, commercial and penal affairs. A significant characteristic of these reforms was the increasing secularisation that the Islamic state was becoming subject to: religion was separated from the institutions and functions of the state. Ultimately, however, the effects of modern reforms, both in the Ottoman Empire and elsewhere in the Muslim world, did not filter through to all sections of the local populations. The Islamic basis of Muslim states had been altered by a progressive secularisation of society, in which the ideology, law and institutions of the state were no longer of an Islamic nature but were indebted to imported models from the West. This resulted in a bifurcation of Muslim society, which was evident in both its educational, as well as its legal system. The coexistence of traditional religious and modern secular schools, each with its own constituency, trained two classes with divergent perceptions: a Westernised elite minority and a more traditional, Islamically oriented majority (Esposito 1991: 44-46).

Armstrong (2000: 145) makes a similar point. She argues that the process of Westernisation was not embraced by the entire populations of agrarian colonies, who, instead, experienced it as “invasive, disturbing and alien”. Modernisation took place only superficially, as, what had taken Europe three centuries to develop, had to be achieved at top speed in the colonies. Whereas all classes of European society had had the opportunity to deal with modern ideas, usually only the upper classes in the colonies would receive a Western education and come to terms with the dynamics of modernity. A division thus took place in society, between those who had had the opportunity to embrace modernisation and those who had been left behind to continue functioning according to an agrarian way of life (this can be seen to include not only long-established modes of production, but also a traditional way of thinking and adherence to a fixed set of cultural practices). Those who had been excluded from the modernisation process suddenly had to deal with seeing their country become totally alien to them; suddenly they were ruled according to secular foreign law codes, which hitherto they had been unfamiliar with.

It is here where it becomes necessary to consider the impact that such drastic changes had on the populations of Muslim countries. What had been the causes for the decline of the world of Islam? How would Muslims react to these; how would they explain them? What would be the impact of modernisation and the introduction of modern secular institutions on the political, economic and social conditions in Muslim states and how has this impacted on conditions in these states today? Most importantly, for the purposes of this dissertation, what would be the impact of modernisation on Islamic political thinkers, specifically

fundamentalist thinkers? All of these questions are pertinent and need to be addressed in order to set the scene for a thorough and successful analysis of the ideologies of Islamic fundamentalist groups in Algeria, Sudan and South Africa, which is what the next chapters deal with.

Muslims started posing several questions about what it was that had led to the decline of the Islamic world and why it is that Western civilisation that had once lagged so far behind the world of Islam had managed to not only take over but also dominate it. These questions are not only of relevance to the period immediately following the West's infiltration of the Islamic world (as has been discussed so far), but are also important in light of the West's ever-increasing cultural, economic and political hegemony today, as personified by the US and its values, and Islamic thinkers' and activists' reactions to this (as is dealt with in detail later on). For a number of Islamic thinkers the moral and spiritual decline of Muslim societies is the primary source of the problem. Fuller (2003: 4) elaborates on this statement and the additional complex issues that it raises:

What is it that Islam provided that has been lost? Precisely what element of a straying from Islam was most responsible for that subsequent decline? Lack of rightly guided – that is good – leadership? Poor governance? Withering of just societies? Loss of moral values by the masses of the population? Weakness stemming from loss of direction? Even if these failures are acknowledged, specifically what mistakes were committed? Does it simply boil down to non-observance of the *Sharia* (Islamic law)? Or a broader loss of faith (*Iman*)?

The above gives some insight into an Islamic perspective on the decline of the world of Islam. The crucial role of Islam in peoples' political, social and spiritual environment is central to an understanding of such a perspective. If Muslims saw the success and strength of Islam as the reason for the dominance of Islamic civilisation in the past, in terms of both Islam's religious and social capacity, it follows that a decline in Islamic civilisation would be linked to a view that Muslims have somehow strayed from the path of Islam. As Fuller (2003: 2) puts it: "Thus many Muslims attribute the past achievements and durability of Islamic civilisation to the very message and implementation of Islam itself. Logically then, any apparent straying from the faith may be perceived as a direct source of decline and failure." It is important to take into consideration this particular viewpoint, as one may posit the argument that if the strength and influence of Islam went hand in hand with the successes of Islamic civilisation in the past from the point of view of Muslims, a revival of Islamic values may be necessary to re-invigorate the position of Muslim countries (*vis-à-vis* the West) in the world today. The precepts of Islamic political thinkers with a range of differing ideas and proposals on the subject are discussed in detail later on.

Fuller (2003: 5-7) also posits a few other significant causal factors, other than moral and spiritual decline, that may be viewed as reasons for the loss of power of the Islamic world. The first of these factors is what he refers to as “the death of Islamic intellectual vigour and curiosity”, which resulted in a decline of creative thinking in the fields of Islamic theology, philosophy, science and technology. This also meant that gradually it became forbidden to critically scrutinise Islam’s own texts and sources of authority, as had been possible in earlier centuries. The stagnation of Muslim intellectual vigour became evident in the collapse of Muslim sciences and even a general passivity toward later scientific and technological development in the West, until it became impossible to ignore the increasing importance and challenge of Western civilisation. Even in the face of the West’s challenge, most Muslim reformers primarily saw the West as the origin and producer of technology, without coming to grips with other crucial elements of Western civilisation, such as democracy and liberal values, that made it all function. Noorani (2002: 33) makes an interesting point: “Muslims would do well to reflect why Europe, which had borrowed a lot from them, forged ahead, while Muslim states stagnated.” It is also important to note that historically the intellectual stagnation experienced by the world of Islam preceded Western colonialism and thus made resistance to it very difficult. The fact that the Muslim world, which had once been at the forefront of intellectual and scientific achievements, stagnated and soon lagged far behind the West partially explains not only why Islamic civilisation decreased in importance, but also why it was unable to meet the challenges of the West, namely colonialism and modernisation.

In terms of external factors, Fuller (2003: 5) also argues that recently in Muslim history it has been colonialism which has been a factor in impeding the development of Muslim states across the world. As already discussed earlier, traditional institutions were replaced by secular alternatives, which, however, did not always successfully take hold in Muslim societies. Muslim states are still concerned with external domination today, even if it no longer takes the form of control and domination by the colonial powers.

Another factor that can be linked to the decline of the Muslim world is environmental degradation. Diamond (in Fuller 2003: 6) argues that over the centuries the Fertile Crescent increasingly started showing signs of deforestation, dessication, as well as a decreased availability of animal and natural resources. The argument goes that although Western Europe contributed little to world civilisation until the late Middle Ages, its fertile land and emerging creative and intellectual vigour led to the eventual emergence of a new and powerful West. European civilisation was founded to a substantial extent on the successes and knowledge of past societies, such as those of the Islamic world, whose environments were no longer as productive. It also

has to be taken into consideration that Europe was rich in coal, hydropower, timber and iron ore at the time of the final collapse of the Ottoman Empire, which were essential for the industrialisation process and crucial for Western political and economic development, to take hold. The Middle East, on the other hand, was marked by a growing aridity, and was at this point in time not aware of its considerable oil riches which would only be discovered later on under European colonial control.

A number of factors thus contributed to the weakening of the Muslim world's dominant position in the world. In the eyes of Muslims these may predominantly take the form of a straying from the path of Islam, which had for centuries been closely linked to the political and intellectual successes of Islamic civilisation. In addition, a number of other causes, both internal and external, seem to have played a role in making the Islamic world more vulnerable to penetration and ultimately colonisation by the West. It now becomes important to give a detailed analysis of the feelings that Muslims harboured towards the West and *vice-versa* and how these attitudes impact on the relationship between the Muslim world and the West today.

As a result of the colonisation process, the Islamic world was quickly and permanently reduced (like virtually all of the developing world) to a dependent bloc by the Western European powers. The colonists openly showed hostility towards Muslims, as they, being so focused on their modern ethos, were appalled by what they perceived as the backwardness, inefficiency and corruption of Muslim society (Armstrong 2000: 146). Noorani (2002: 29) cites Minou Reeves' work *Muhammad in Europe* on the hostile attitude of European colonists toward Islam. Reeves (in Noorani 2002: 29) describes this as follows:

On his arrival in Jerusalem [1917] General Allenby made a historic remark which indicated that the long-standing animosity between Christendom and Islam was not over and that the crusading mentality was still alive. Speaking in public, he announced that the crusades were now finally completed [because of Britain's successful occupation of Palestine]. And three years later in 1920, when French troops occupied Damascus, their commander marched up to Saladin's tomb in the Great Mosque and cried: "*Nous revenons, Saladin*" (We are back, Saladin). The deep-seated contempt for Islam had long displayed itself amongst the French colonialists as a sense of vindictiveness towards the Muslim populations of the former Ottoman Empire.

Another example which illustrates the colonists hostility towards the inhabitants of the Muslim countries they occupied is the opinion of British Foreign Secretary A.J. Balfour on the subject of British occupation of Palestine: "The four Great Powers are *committed* to Zionism, and Zionism, be it right or wrong, good or bad, is rooted in age-long tradition, in present needs, in future hopes, of far profounder import than the desires

and prejudices of the 700 000 Arabs who now inhabit the ancient land”. This statement needs to be considered in light of the fact that there were only 60 000 Jews in Palestine at the time, as opposed to the 750 000 Muslims, mostly Arabs, who lived there. Reeves takes Western colonial dictates and Zionism as being the factors that triggered the modern conflict between Muslims and Jews. In this way Islam was radicalised and severed from its “mother-faiths” Judaism and Christianity, as had happened in the Medieval Ages.

Westerners assumed that European culture had always been progressive, but lacked the historical perspective to see that all that was “wrong” with Muslim society was that it was pre-modern and agrarian, exactly what Western Europe had been a few centuries earlier. The colonists also often assumed that Westerners were inherently and racially superior to “orientals” and expressed this contemptuous notion in a variety of ways. As is to be expected, this treatment of the Muslim populations by their Western European colonisers had serious consequences. Western people are often at a loss to understand the hostility and anger that many Muslims feel for the Western culture, a culture which Westerners associate with liberation and empowerment. This very same culture is, however, associated with very different ideas by the Muslim populations on which it was forcefully imposed (Armstrong 2000: 146). Thus, while for Western Europeans and US citizens industrialisation and its related developments resulted in a betterment of economic conditions and political liberties overall, for Muslim people the imposition of secular Western political and economic institutions on their Islamic culture was seen as a threat to religion, morality, tradition. It also did not, as is seen later on, bring political and economic empowerment to Muslim states as the local elites had hoped. This was because, as was the case with most former colonies, colonial powers would not allow for the colonised countries to become too developed under colonial rule; the idea was to benefit from them, not create potential competitors.

The Muslim response is not bizarre or eccentric when seen in light of the fact that because the Islamic world was so widespread and strategically placed, it was the first to be subjected, in a determined and systematic way, to the colonisation process in the Middle East, India, Arabia, Malaya and a significant part of Africa. The Muslim reaction to the modernisation process imposed by the West was *the* paradigmatic reaction shown by other colonised populations too (Armstrong 2000: 146).

### **3.2.3 “Islam” and the “West”**

Here it becomes necessary to critically examine how the relationship between the West and the Muslim world is viewed by writers and thinkers from both sides and also how these perceptions impact on the

general public in Europe, the US and Muslim countries respectively, in order to link the historical discussion of the interaction between the West and the Muslim world, which has taken place so far, to the present. Such a discussion is also important because it sets the scene for the section on Islamic revivalism to follow, pointing to some important elements that characterise the relationship between the West and the Muslim world.

Halliday (2002: 14) states that whether the discussion has been about relations between Muslim states and non-Muslim countries, or relations between non-Muslims and Muslims within Western countries, the tendency on both sides (with some exceptions) has been one of alarmism and simplification. A simplification by Westerners of Muslims involves many obvious issues: terrorism (thereby assuming that most Muslims are terrorists or most terrorists are Muslims); the degree of aggressiveness found in the Muslim world; the extent to which Muslims are responsible for this and the unwillingness of Muslims to allow for diversity, debate and respect for human rights. The sensationalist media in the West expounds such ideas, as do writers who are aware of the current anxieties of the reading public: Samuel Huntington's "clash of civilisations" thesis (which has been dealt with in the second chapter of this dissertation) is a case in point. Muslim simplification of Westerners involves, on the one hand, a stereotyping of the West, on the other, the assertion of a unitary identity for all Muslims, and of a unitary interpretation of text and culture. Fuller (2003: 146) adds to the list of Western grievances: proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, Israel's security, oil and strategic instability. Western imperialism, an American-dominated hegemonic world order, Western interventionism, US indifference to democracy in the Arab world and indiscriminate US support for Israel are items added to the list of Muslim grievances.

Western denigration of Islam goes back centuries and is closely linked to the threat which Western Europe saw in the erstwhile dominance and superiority of Islamic civilisation for hundreds of years. Reeves (in Noorani 2002: 30) points out how "over the course of no less than 13 centuries a stubbornly biased and consistently negative outlook had persisted, permeating deep levels of European consciousness... Churchmen, historians, orientalist, biographers, philosophers, dramatists, poets and politicians alike had sought to attribute to Islam and especially to Muhammad fanatical and disreputable, even demonic characteristics". As was pointed out earlier already, this attitude was carried over to the period of colonisation by the West of the Islamic world, which Western European leaders and officials generally saw as a continuation of the Crusades (a series of seven had been launched against Muslim rulers from 1095

to 1270), a rightful assertion of Western prowess *vis-à-vis* the Islamic world. Though the persistently derogatory view of Islam has to some degree been tempered by more balanced pictures of Muhammad and his religion which have begun to appear in Western writings, entrenched in the minds of many Westerners are images of a radical, anti-Western and violent Islam that bears the characteristics of age-old prejudices.

Furthermore, there are several problems with the notion that “Islam” is the enemy of the West. As Halliday (1996: 107) puts it, the image of an “Islamic threat” presupposes that those people who are “Islamic”, in some general religious and cultural sense, adhere to beliefs and policies that are strictly described as “Islamist” or “fundamentalist”. This also suggests that most Muslims seek to impose a political programme, supposedly derived from their religion, on their societies. The fact that most Muslims are not supporters of fundamentalist movements is obscured, and the conditions under which some Muslims do turn to fundamentalism are overlooked. Thus, everything is far too simplistically ascribed to Islam and its general influence. As with other political myths the fact that certain ideas about them are propagated gives them a distinct reality – “for those they are designed to mobilise, but also for those against whom they are directed” (Halliday 1996: 107).

Noorani (2002: 36) elaborates on this point by referring to instances where reputed Western scholars of Islam, as opposed to the sensationalist media or public opinion, have equated everything that has to do with the Muslim world with “Islam”. He quotes Said’s view on this issue (in Noorani 2002: 36) in the latter’s *Covering Islam*:

Why is it that a whole range of political, cultural, social, and even economic events has often seemed reducible in so Pavlovian a way to “Islam”? What is it about “Islam” that provokes so quick and unrestrained a response? In what way do “Islam” and the Islamic world differ for Westerners from, say, the rest of the Third World and, during the Cold War, the Soviet Union?

One author who deserves special notice in terms of projecting the stereotypical image of Islam and Muslims as menacing militant fundamentalists is Lewis, a British writer who has dealt with the subject matter of the Arabs and Islam for over half a century and has become a renowned academic in both Britain, and more recently, the US. His essay “The Roots of Muslim Rage” is according to Noorani (2002: 38) “a crude polemic devoid of historical truth, rational argument, or human wisdom”, which “attempts to characterise Muslims as one terrifyingly collective person enraged at an outside world that has disturbed his almost primeval calm and unchallenged rule”. This is dangerous as it presents the essentially peaceful and tolerant

Islamic faith as a “subversive”, “dangerous” phenomenon out to seek revenge against Western domination and *all* Muslims as equally “enraged” at having been exposed to the modern world and not being able to deal with it. To once more emphasise this point: Said noted that in the works he studied “Islam” was not only dealt with inaccurately, but there was also an abundance of “expressions of unrestrained ethnocentrism, cultural, and even racial, hatred, deep yet paradoxically free-floating hostility”. All of this was present in what is generally presumed to be a fair, balanced and responsible coverage of Islam (Noorani 2002: 39).

Another reason why conflating “Islam” with all the issues and problems in Muslim countries is problematic is because although a substantial percentage of the grievances voiced by Muslims in any society may relate directly to religious matters (on issues such as the school curriculum, dress and diet), much of what is presented as the Islamic critique of the West has little or nothing to do with religion. Support for Palestine, denunciations of Western hegemony in the oil market, solidarity with Iraq, opposition to Soviet involvement in Afghanistan, denunciations of cultural imperialism and protests at double standards on human rights are all part of “Muslim” protests against the West, but are not necessarily religious in content, or specific to the Muslim world. The Chinese condemnation of Western human rights interference, on the grounds that it violates sovereignty, mirrors the Iranian one (Halliday 2002: 25). Again then, reducing issues in Muslim countries that somehow involve the West to a predominantly religious-inspired, fanatical “Islamic threat” obscures the existence of concrete political, economic and social grievances that Muslims may have. If all Muslim complaints against the practices of Western governments are classed as religion-inspired, it becomes much easier for the latter to (pretend to) be ignorant of why many Muslims find Western policies in the Middle East upsetting.

Also, the analysis within the West of attitudes toward Islam and Islamic tradition cannot be divorced from what is going on *within Muslim societies themselves*. It is crucial not to deny those Muslims who are suffering human rights abuses at the hands of other Muslims the right to protest. (The victims may range from political prisoners to trade unionists, journalists and women, as well as members of those ethnic groups within Muslim countries who are denied recognition and group rights.) “Islamophobia”, Halliday (2002: 26) argues, can easily be used to silence critics of national states and elites, because from this premise there can only be one Muslim voice, which would preclude the possibility of Muslims protesting against the practices of other Muslims.

On the other side of the coin, it is also important to consider the dangers of overly simplified views that some Muslims hold of the West, what Fuller (2003: 149) terms the *jihadist* view of the West and which ties in closely with the radicalist branch of the Islamic fundamentalist contribution to Islamic revivalism which is discussed in later on. The modern *jihadist* ideology reinterprets the concept of *jihad* against unbelief as central, indeed essential to the practice of Islam. (It is important to note that *jihad* is divided into greater and lesser variants. The former comprises a greater struggle within oneself against evil impulses that must be overcome to lead a pious life, while the latter represents the defence of the Muslim community against non-Muslims, or an external war against unbelief (*kufir*) under various conditions.) The *jihadist* ideology places a great deal of emphasis on lesser *jihad* and also seeks the reestablishment of a unified *umma*. The division of the *umma* into states that has taken place directly contravenes the intent of Islam and is hence illegitimate. In this view, according to Fuller, the struggle between Islam and the West is viewed as implacable; it genuinely embraces the concept “clash of civilisations” and rejects all efforts at compromise and reconciliation as being no more than attempts to compromise, divide and weaken Islam.

Halliday (1996: 110) supports this statement by citing Khomeini, Ghannouchi (exiled from Tunisia), al-Turabi (in Sudan) and al-Madani (in Algeria) as examples of Islamic fundamentalists who make use of much the same themes that are found in anti-Islamic propaganda in the West. These include a rejection of Western values of secularism, democracy, the rule of civil law, equality between men and women, and between Muslims and non-Muslims. Ironically enough, certain Muslims in their rhetoric willingly reinforce the stereotypes some Western writers are so quick to enforce on the Islamic world. The idea of a perennial conflict with the “West”, which could revive with the end of the Cold War, is not only an invention of European or American demagogues. In fact, some Muslims, at the end of the Cold War, affirmed that they would indeed replace Bolshevism as the major challenge to the West and that they would do so more effectively, because their challenge is inspired by God. In January 1989 Ayatollah Khomeini wrote an open letter to the USSR’s leader Gorbachev, urging him to abandon materialism and engage in a serious study of Islam.

Similarly, the idea that there exists a “historically determined, essential ‘Islam’”, which is supposedly able to account for all that Muslims say, do, and should say and should do” is not only a Western invention”. Ultimately then, myths and stereotypes about Islam do not only originate from Western fear and prejudice, but are also strongly propagated by certain Muslims.

An issue which is crucial to the understanding of why many Muslims feel resentment and anger toward the West is, as Fuller (2003: 152) puts it, “the problem of the creation of Israel”. It is important to keep in mind the political sensitivity surrounding the subject and that any discussion of the realities of the situation could easily be read as a subtle argument against the existence of Israel. Fuller acknowledges the right of all people to a homeland, but also argues that this recognition does not preclude the necessity for a thorough examination of the question of Israel and how this has impacted on Muslim perceptions of the West. For Muslims the creation of Israel was exceptional and extraordinary: never before in *modern times* had Europeans (European Jews) consciously created an ideology, then a permanent colony and finally established an independent Western-style state on territory with primarily non-European inhabitants. (Similar cases like that of South Africa go back several hundred years). The impact of the creation of Israel was not only limited to a single event, but has ultimately resulted in the most prevalent and ongoing international conflict since the Second World War. Also, this was not merely a matter of a state having been established by Europeans on lands under Muslim rule. The new Israeli state, in defending itself against immediate Arab attack, kept enlarging its territory, in the process driving out large numbers of Palestinians from their homes, thereby creating a substantial refugee problem which most Arab states have done little to alleviate.

Fuller (2003: 153) sums up the situation as follows:

In simplest terms, the Arab world has not let this aspect of the colonial period fade into past memory; Israel for most Arabs is a living symbol and product of the British colonial order that facilitated the creation of Israel while Arab states were still under colonial control. The continued existence of the Palestinian question as an open wound helps maintain anti-Western views at a higher and fresher level than any other political issue in the world, continuously humiliating Arabs in their military impotence and their sense that the Palestinians have been deprived of basic justice.

While an eventual peaceful settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict would remove some of Muslim grievances towards the Jews, such a possibility seems far removed at present. An additional factor which makes the question of Israel a major cause for Muslim anger at the West is the considerable power of the pro-Israeli lobby and the Christian right in US politics, which heightens paranoia among Muslims about Israel’s ability to influence or manipulate all US policy toward the region.

Fuller (2003: 156-159) also mentions other factors which are contributing toward an anti-Western and, more specifically, anti-American feeling in the Muslim countries. One of these is the essential role that the Middle East plays in supplying the US (and other countries) with oil. The US uses this to justify its military presence in the Middle East (with the aim of facilitating its broader strategic purposes) under the pretext of “safeguarding the free flow of oil”. The result has been long-term regional hostility – the military presence in Saudi Arabia was, for example, the immediate cause of Osama bin Laden’s resentment toward the US. Another problematic issue is that of terrorism, which will remain a constant source of tension between the US and the Muslim world for the foreseeable future, especially as the US led “War Against Terrorism” strengthens anti-American sentiments among Muslim populations, possibly leading to further acts of terrorism.

What has become evident from the discussion above is that the relationship between the Muslim world and the West is problematic not only in terms of perceptions from quarters on both sides, but also in terms of the causes for the tensions and animosity between the two sides. Halliday (1996: 131) argues that in practice Western Europe would have to develop a two-sided, balanced policy towards issues enclosed in the term “Islam”. There needs to be a greater awareness and condemnation of racist attitudes and general ethnic-religious prejudice that Muslim immigrants in Western European societies and the inhabitants of Muslim countries are often subjected to. Furthermore, it should be recognised that Western Europe has often permitted and indulged the oppression of Islamic peoples, whether in Palestine or Bosnia. Over and above these changes in behaviour it becomes essential for the West to develop a long-term policy of economic interaction with Muslim countries in order to help them develop.

Halliday (1996: 129) also explains in more detail the challenges that face economic and social development. The capital generated by the flow of oil revenues, if channelled along productive lines, could be of great benefit. What is problematic is that many Islamic countries have a record of diverting economic resources, however generated, into consumption or the purchase of arms for various forms of “security”. Also, many of these countries have social and economic structures that undermine economic development. An example is the rise of export-oriented industrialisation which has led no Middle Eastern country (with the exceptions of Turkey and Tunisia) to greater economic development. In fact, if oil revenues are factored out, the economic record of Muslim states is one of the poorest in the world, matched only by parts of Africa. Muslim states also do not offer the same attractions to potential investors when compared to South-East

Asia, Latin America and Eastern Europe. The lesson that the Islamic world thus needs to learn is that in order for it to be successfully integrated into the wider non-Islamic four-fifths of the world, it will have to engage in economic competition, as opposed to a recourse to competition for military supremacy.

Fuller (2003: 163) adds another perspective. He argues that Muslims need to believe that their states have an important role to play in “some greater global process” rather than be the victims or objects of its whims. US unilateralism, which Fuller views as a major part of the problem, would have to be addressed, as otherwise a continuing sense of Muslim “world impotence” may very well lead to increasing violence and terrorism that would exacerbate an already serious gap. An example of an issue that needs particular attention is the Israel-Palestine situation, which requires the US making a serious effort to bring forth a just settlement, something which up to now has not been the case. He suggests that in this respect it would be necessary for the US to engage not only with friendly pro-US autocrats, but to also direct their attention at Muslim social leaders who enjoy widespread respect within their society even though, or possibly because, they are outside the ruling circles of those societies. Democratisation is also of crucial importance. Again, the US is well positioned to play an important part here but has so far been quite unwilling to do so for fear of the election of anti-US voices. Democratisation would involve far more than merely free and fair elections. It would mean for example more open societies to break the “totalitarian hold of the state over the life of its citizens”. It also involves encouragement of freedom of speech, media, association and the rule the law. At the level of Muslim state society and economy there is a great deal the US could do – education being a key field that needs development and where the US has already had much experience in its work through AID (Agency for International Development). The curricula could be broadened and high quality state-sponsored or private secular education (now often poor or limited) could be supported. This is of course a highly sensitive cultural area in which unpopular broader US regional policies can lead to a high degree of defensiveness among Muslim educators although they know that a problem exists. The US would be wise to work on these projects through other Western countries or international institutions that carry far less baggage.

Now that the relationship between the Muslim world and the West has been dealt with to some extent, it becomes important to move on to the conditions that prevail in Islamic states and the extent to which these have been effected by the failure of secularist ideologies which were largely implemented after the Muslim countries gained independence. In this way the basis will be laid for a thorough discussion of Islamic revivalism, which deals with the multifaceted responses from Muslims to the growing influence from the

Western world and the related modernisation they became exposed to. For the purposes of this dissertation it is essential to come to a balanced, well-rounded understanding of the different strands of Islamic political thought (to counter the notion that a hate-filled, revenge-seeking anti-Western world view characterises all of Islamic revivalism) and, most importantly, to thoroughly examine what is termed as Islamic fundamentalism. This in turn will set the scene for the analysis of the ideologies of the Islamic fundamentalist groups in Algeria, Sudan and South Africa which follows in subsequent chapters.

### **3.2.4 The failure of secular ideologies**

After the final dismemberment of the Ottoman Empire had taken place and the *Caliphate* had been abolished, disappointed Muslims ended up with one tyrant replacing another. Even the Western-favouring elite in the colonies became increasingly disappointed with the colonial rulers and despaired of their own stagnation. Anti-colonial sentiment started spreading throughout the Muslim world. After the Second World War had taken place, the West, which had been exhausted both spiritually and economically, started with the process of decolonisation, hoping to detach itself from its “increasingly troublesome and strife-filled colonial possessions” (Husain 1995: 159). The idea of nationalism proved useful in the anti-colonialism struggle, as the colonialist powers found it difficult to object against the Muslim colonies’ right to “national self-determination”, especially in the post World War Two context. Once independence was attained, however, nationalism gave little guidance for how the respective newly-independent Muslim states were to consequently develop (Watt 1968: 117).

Instead of promoting the unity Muslim post-independence leaders had hoped for, nationalism further divided the Muslim world. In the interests of realpolitik, Muslim leaders often placed the interests of their own states before those of the *umma* and failed to come to the aid of fellow Muslims in other parts of the world: the starving populations of Ethiopia and Somalia, for example (Husain 1995: 161). The question of nationalism also proved problematic in the sense that it was difficult to suddenly create a national spirit, as some of the new states had been created in such a way, that tension among their citizens was inevitable. Sudan, for example, was made up of a predominantly Christian southern part, with the north being Muslim. A common Sudanese nationalism was therefore difficult to conceive, especially as Muslims had been used to define their identity in religious terms. In other states, such as Syria, Egypt or Iraq, nationalism would be followed by the elite, but not by the more conservative masses. In Iran, the Pahlavis’ nationalism was directly hostile

to Islam, as it tried to cut the country's links with Shiism and, instead, based itself on the ancient Persian culture of the pre-Islamic period (Armstrong 2000: 159-160).

Nationalism and secularism coincided in the Western ideology of secular nationalism, usually with a socialist tinge to it, that most Third World states, including Muslim states, adopted after gaining independence. Although the first generation of independent leaders had often tactically co-operated with religious forces during the national liberation struggle, they were themselves heavily influenced by Western values, many of them having been schooled in the Western metropole. The Western model of state building thus formed the basis for the newly independent states. Unfortunately, however, independence in most cases failed to solve many of the key national problems, creating new ones instead, which were characterised by the authoritarianism, incompetence, corruption and internal strife of the new regimes. These new regimes, generally based on secular nationalism, invariably looked to the transformative and even coercive power of the state for fulfilment of their agenda. The abstract all-European state, not the people, thus became the symbol and representative of the nation (Fuller 2003: 69-70). The aim of post-independence regimes was thus to transform the predominantly rural, traditional and, as they saw it, "backward" Muslim world into modern urban nation states by pursuing modernisation, Westernisation and secularisation initiatives (Husain 1995: 160). From the above it becomes evident that the Muslim leaders in the immediate post-independence era approached the process of governing their newly formed Muslim countries from a Western perspective. This, of course, would prove problematic, as the Western colonial regimes and their policies had been unpopular, so that carrying on in the same vein was bound to eventually cause instability.

Predominant characteristics of these newly independent Muslim states were poverty and political fragility. In the midst of Cold War politics, those Muslim states who needed aid and were hostile to atheist communism became allies of the anti-socialist, anti-communist Western bloc. A much smaller number of Muslim states looked to the socialist camp, whereas the rest became non-aligned. This created dependence on foreign aid, drew the Muslim world into geopolitical conflicts and also divided its leaders on a national and ideological basis (Husain 1995: 159-160). Thus, despite the colonial era having ended, dependence both on political ideas and economic aid persisted. Much like in other former colonies, outside the Muslim world, the post independence period initiated an era of unresolved political and economic crises, which in several cases contributed to political instability or even civil unrest.

Within a few decades the credibility and legitimacy of the post-independence governments had waned considerably. Even though some Muslim countries did experience rapid economic growth, this did not significantly benefit the impoverished majority, as any economic gains have almost exclusively been to the advantage of the wealthy elite. Muslim leaders merely adopted Western ideology and industry rather than adapting it to the particular needs of their respective populations. Similarly, the modernisation process, which took place very rapidly, did not allow for sufficient economic, political and social development to take place<sup>7</sup> (Husain 1995: 161).

A significant post-independence promise which Muslim leaders failed to keep was that of implementing liberal parliamentary democracy. Instead, most regimes in the Muslim world are authoritarian and dictatorial, some to the extent of their countries' former colonial regimes (Husain 1995: 161). One of the reasons for the failure of parliamentary democracy was the presence of a patron-client system in most newly independent Islamic states, which not only undermined the functioning of democratic institutions and processes, but also resulted in political and socio-economic inequality. Here follows a description of the functioning of a patron-client network. Most Islamic countries adopted democracy in the form of liberal constitutions and parliamentary systems of government, after having achieved full or partial independence. This democracy, however, was not based on the emergence of a strong middle class, nor did it result from pressures exerted by trade unions and the peasantry. Instead, liberalism in countries such as Egypt, Syria, Iraq, Pakistan and Indonesia was run by the upper classes consisting of, amongst others, large merchants, absentee landlords, urban lawyers and civil servants tied to commercial interests. As a result, a system of patronage prevailed where the majority of the population was treated as an anonymous conglomeration of clients. A system of patronage is characterised by a vast network of power exerted by political bosses, who pay little attention to what constitutions or liberal laws have to say and thereby implicitly also violate the existence of citizens' legally protected rights. This means that the civil service, as well as the economy and organs of the state, are reduced to mere extensions of informal power bases found in urban quarters and village communities, as well as at regional level. The client is drawn towards the patron and hopes to receive

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<sup>7</sup> Development, as opposed to modernisation, includes the relative welfare of a state's population. In the West, development was able to take place as modernisation has benefited a growing middle class. In the Muslim world, however, only the elite has benefited economically, whereas the masses still languish in underdevelopment. Political development refers to the formation of political institutions to improve popular participation in government and allow for political competitors. Political development also signifies the capacity of government to both sustain and adapt to the pressures of modernisation and to direct the course and rate of economic, social and political change. Modernisation has undermined and overwhelmed existing political institutions in most Muslim countries, and though political development is usually expected to go hand in hand with Western secularisation, the latter is often labelled as the major cause of underdevelopment (Husain 1995: 163-164).

certain favours, like being admitted to an educational institution, being appointed at a city firm or bank or getting a loan from a financial company. In return the patron demands unswerving loyalty, electoral support and gratitude. This results in a relationship of inequality and insidious coercion, where the client is continuously expected to offer renewable services in return for benefits and rewards whose realisation depends on the whims and moods of the patron (Choueiri 1997: 47-48).

As the liberal regimes failed to tackle the political, economic, cultural and defensive problems Islamic societies were faced with, parliamentary democracy crumbled as a vehicle for national development. A system gradually emerged where various parties, associations, clubs and professional institutions were formed which started espousing the new ideologies of socialism and nationalism. They hoped that these would bring the solutions parliamentary democracy, partly as a result of the debilitating patron-client network it was restricted by, had not been able to provide. These parties had clear social and economic programmes and, interestingly, drew a large percentage of their membership from the armed forces which had risen in importance during this crucial period between 1919 and 1950 (Choueiri 1997: 49-50).

As already explained above, however, these ideologies also failed to bring development and progress to Muslim states. Muslim leaders never made good their post-independence promise of genuine independence and sovereignty either. Modernisation reinforced dependency on the West, rather than breaking it (Husain 1995: 161). Armstrong (2000: 145) raises an important point in this regard. She mentions the fact that Western societies had also found it difficult to adjust to the modernisation process. For almost 400 they had been characterised by revolutions, reigns of terror, wars of religion, genocide, the destruction of the environment, substantial social upheavals, exploitation in the factories, spiritual malaise and profound anomie in the urban areas. These “side-effects” of modernity characterise developing countries today, culminating in an extremely difficult passage to modernity for them. Though this is what Western and developing states have in common, namely difficulties on the way to modernising their societies, there is a fundamental difference in the “spirit of modernity” that took hold in the West, as opposed to the one characterising developing states. Whereas in Europe and America modernisation went hand in hand with innovation and autonomy, in the developing world modernity has meant a loss of independence and national autonomy. Instead of adopting a culture of innovation and technology, developing countries can only modernise by imitating the West, which by this stage is so far advanced that catching up with it is a near impossibility. Also, since the modernising process has not been the same, it is unlikely that the final product of modernity will look the same in developing countries as it does in the West.

It is perhaps relevant to elaborate on these points. The loss of independence and national autonomy was a result of the colonisation process. Entire populations became subjugated to foreign rule and were instructed to modernise, whilst being restructured according to, what was to them, an alien political system. What is important to remember here, and what has already been touched on, is that these colonies were never meant to develop to such an extent to challenge the colonisers politically or economically. They were established merely as suppliers of raw materials and consumers of goods that the industries in the colonising states were no longer able to sell to their already saturated markets. Hence a relationship of both political and economic dependency developed, with the “mother countries” taking good care that the colonies only developed to such an extent as would serve the industrialised world’s purposes. From this then follows the inability of the colonies’ industries to develop a culture of innovation, partly because of being centuries behind the Western process of modernisation, but also because of facing competition in the form of cheap imports from the colonising states’ industries. This becomes evident when looking at some development figures in Muslim countries in terms of the United Nations Development Programme’s (UNDP) Human Development Index (HDI) which is calculated every year for each country, as discussed in Ahsan (2002: 183-185). HDI is an aggregate value of life expectancy, adult literacy, mean years of schooling and per capita income. The findings for the Muslim countries are not encouraging. According to the *Human Development Report 1998* as many as 40 out of 50 Muslim countries had a lower value of HDI compared to the world’s average. The report also shows that the four countries (Mali, Burkina Faso, Niger and Sierra Leone) which were at the bottom of the list of 174 countries belong to the Organisation of Islamic Countries (OIC). The World Bank’s statistics indicate that out of 50 Muslim countries, 24 were in placed in the “low income” category, 13 in the “lower middle income” category and seven were counted as “upper middle income” countries. Only five small Muslim states (Brunei, Kuwait, Lebanon, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates) fell into the category of “high income” countries. It is estimated that dependency on foreign loans is disproportionately high in Muslim countries and the proportion of debt to Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is nearly double that of developing countries in general. This indicator highlights how vulnerable Muslim countries are with regard to the interest rate and exchange rate mechanisms, especially in a globalising world of narrow economic linkages. The above demonstrates how the past development experience of Muslim countries has failed to inaugurate a new era of substantial growth and social welfare.

The secularisation process promoted by the post-independence regimes throughout the Muslim world has thus not resulted in development, but instead in the transplantation of alien Western institutions, laws and

procedures that have eroded the traditional system of Islam and have created a serious identity crisis which Muslims all over the world suffer. One of the reasons for this crisis is the inherent clash between the *umma* and nationalism. The term *umma* refers to “the nation or brotherhood of Muslims”. This means that all Muslims are “brothers and sisters”, regardless of history, region, culture, colour, language or socio-economic and political status. A Muslim’s identity in terms of the *umma* thus goes much further than the boundaries of a single state and is based on religious affiliation. Nationalism on the other hand attempts to engender solidarity amongst different groups living within the territorial boundaries of a single state. The problem comes in with the demand that both the notions of *umma* and nationalism exact from Muslims: both demand the prime loyalty of their followers, as both are linked to people’s sense of group identity and loyalty due to shared heritage (Husain 1995: 166). Muslims thus face a dilemma. To whom they should profess loyalty to in terms of their identity: their state, based on the call for nationalism, or the global religious community of Muslims, based on the precept of the *umma*? This would naturally be a difficult and confusing decision to make as both the concepts *umma* and nationalism demand 100 percent dedication from those who adhere to either. Favouring loyalty towards the *umma* over one’s country would mean compromising a sense of belonging to a specific nationality and sharing this with one’s fellow citizens, whereas choosing to be loyal in a nationalistic sense would mean compromising one’s spiritual and religious identity.

A point that ties in here is the perceived conflict between ethnicity and Islam in the Middle East, which Voll (1982: 280) elaborates on. The Middle Eastern countries have often been described as a mosaic of peoples and cultures where the smaller units maintain special identities while being integrated into a larger social framework, the state. Because of the universal implications and aspirations of the Islamic message, Islam is often considered as an opponent of ethnicity, though Voll argues that the relationship is more complex than that. For most major ethnic groups in the Islamic world, religion is one of the key features in the definition of a special ethnic identity. In this way, no Kurd, Malay, Azeri, Turk or member of any of the many groups would envisage a definition of their special identity that would exclude Islam. A conflict does not take place between Islam and ethnic loyalty, but rather between the latter and differing identifications and interpretations of Islam, as expressed by different rulers. When Kurds were opposing the Khomeini regime in Iran, this was because they were opposing a particular form and interpretation of Islam, not Islam as a whole. They remained vigorously Islamic at the same time and their faith continued to play an important role in the assertion of their special ethnic identity. Islam thus forms a very important part of Muslims’ identity, no matter which ethnic group they belong to, or, to take it one step further, which state they live in. Such a strong religious identity would explain the disenchantment Muslims felt at the lack of delivery of the post-

independence rulers and their nationalist agenda. It would also explain why Muslims would consequently turn to Islam: in the hope that this would provide solutions to problems of development that the secularist ideology had failed to resolve. As Voll (1982: 282) puts it: “What [many] Muslims want[ed] [was] a faith and programmes that [did] not sacrifice their fundamental Islamic identity to a secularising modernisation nor adhere to old forms so that an authentic modernisation [was] impossible.” A balance between the two is what has been searched for especially by Islamic modernists in the context of Islamic revivalism which is discussed in detail below.

In conclusion then, Islam’s glorious political and cultural past was reversed by European colonial rule, yet political independence had also not significantly improved political and socio-economic conditions in Muslim countries. European colonialism was replaced by American neo-colonialism, which manifests itself in America’s foreign policies, military presence and multinational companies. Also, as already touched on above, political leaders have failed to establish a legitimate, effective public order and to effectively address the profound socio-economic inequalities in terms of wealth and class in most Muslim countries. For the religiously oriented the problem had always been evident: a departure from the path of Islam would have to be doomed to failure. The disillusionment with the post-independence era proved most unsettling for those Western-oriented elites and intellectuals who had embraced the West both as an ally and a model for modern development and whose loyalty was increasingly facing challenges such as the establishment of Israel, continued massive American economic and military aid for Israel, support for regimes like that of the shah of Iran, as well as the failures of Muslim governments. The complete and decisive nature of the Arab defeat at the hands of Israel in 1967 shattered faith and confidence in the West and Arab nationalism. This defeat was the most vivid confirmation, in Muslim eyes and before the world, of their political and military impotence (Esposito 1991: 154-155).

As Westernisation and secularisation have disappointed, Islam as a solution has become increasingly attractive to the Muslim masses, while Islam revivalism has become the focus of opposition to regimes in Muslim states: “The self-criticism and disillusionment with the West has been accompanied by an increased emphasis on the need for greater self-reliance, a desire to reclaim one’s past and to root individual and national self-identity more indigenously, to find pride and strength in an Islamic past and cultural tradition that had once been a dominant world civilisation” is how Esposito (1991: 155) puts it. Many Muslim leaders have been well aware of the increasing popularity of Islam and have made use of Islamic rhetoric and

symbolism in domestic and foreign policy to bolster wavering support. This has backfired somewhat as Islamic revivalism has been legitimised, secularisation programmes have been undermined and many Muslim leaders are perceived as hypocrites and opportunists not to be trusted, rather than as the devout “born-again Muslims” they present themselves as (Husain 1995: 162).

The year 1973 proved decisive in that Muslims believed that their fortunes were finally changing. The Arab-Israeli war of 1973 and the Arab oil boycott became major sources of Muslim pride. For Arabs, the ability and success of the Egyptian forces in the 1973 October war against Israel were all decisive even if the final victory was thwarted by massive American assistance to Israel. The war and the “victory” were both placed in an Islamic context, as Islamic symbols and slogans were emphasised. For many the “victory”, coupled with the oil boycott’s demonstration of Arab economic power, instilled a new sense of pride and meant a renewed commitment to their Islamic identity. The return of power and wealth, which had been lost during the colonial period, seemed a sign from God and a revival of Islamic ascendancy (Esposito 1991: 155).

### **3.3 ISLAMIC REVIVALISM**

#### **3.3.1 A discussion of Islamic revivalism**

The global revival of Islamic revivalism (also known as political Islam) is easily detectable in the modern world. At times it is reactionary, at times revolutionary or even reformist. Always, however, it is prominent and has become an influential force in international relations, which the West cannot afford to ignore, to discount or to misunderstand. The media and certain governments’ sensationalist approach to the most radical, militant and reactionary aspects of Islamic revivalism, usually represented by its fundamentalist branch, has led to the demonisation of Islamic revivalism as a whole, though it also contains forms that are not essentially adverse to the West. The West seems to equate political Islam with an inherently anti-Western fundamentalism and narrow-minded fanaticism that must be contained, neutralised and, if possible, eradicated. While all fundamentalists are necessarily concerned with the revival of Islam, not all thinkers concerned with this revival are fundamentalists. (Husain 1995: 1).

An Islamic revival<sup>8</sup> can be defined as “the reawakening of interest in Islamic symbols, ideas and ideals subsequent to a period of relative dormancy”. Dessouki (in Husain 1995: 4) defines Islamic resurgence as

An increasing political activism in the name of Islam by governments and opposition groups alike...Islamic groups have assumed a more assertive posture and projected themselves in many Arab and Islamic countries as contenders for public allegiance and political loyalty...Thus, Islamic resurgence refers to the increasing prominence and politicisation of Islamic ideologies and symbols in Muslim societies and in the public life of Muslim individuals.

Two elements of these definitions can be elaborated on. Firstly, it is important to understand the narrow link between Islam and politics. A way of explaining this link would be by understanding Islam as “a comprehensive scheme for ordering human life”, while politics is “an indispensable instrument to secure universal compliance with that scheme”. Religion as a mere spiritual influence on its followers is therefore not sufficient; it is necessary to realise the precepts of religion in everyday political life. This does not mean that all political attitudes and institutions in Muslim states have had religious sanctions; often the reverse has been true. For the greater part of Islamic history, Muslim leaders have merely observed the *Sharia* to the extent that it would legitimise their power in the eyes of the faithful. Another way in which the link between Islam and politics becomes obvious is in the definition of politics as “the art of living and working with others”. Four of the five pillars of Islam: prayer, fasting, alms-giving and pilgrimage contribute substantially towards promoting group solidarity amongst its followers. Also, when looking at politics as “a struggle for power”, it becomes clear that Islam can be linked to this definition too. It is never content with merely exposing its ideals, but constantly seeks to implement them. Power is an essential means to achieve this. Thus, if Muslims live under a regime that is hostile to Islam, they should work to overthrow it, only accepting a government that is devoted or at least favourable to Islam. This ties in with what Muslims view as the most important of their set of “collective duties”: “enjoining the good and forbidding the evil”. Finally, if politics is considered in terms of the questions “Who should rule?” and “Why should we obey the

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<sup>8</sup> In this dissertation, the term “Islamic revival” is explored as a gradual response to Western influences in the Islamic world, starting with the writings of Islamic political thinkers in the late eighteenth century. Although Islamic revivalists have perhaps had a particularly striking impact on the world in the last few decades, one needs to see this as part of the historic development of an Islamic awareness and response to the West. One also has to take into account that Islamic resurgence is maybe all the more pertinent today, as the improved communication and technology systems, which developed as part of the globalisation process, have facilitated the spread of ideas and the ability to influence and communicate with other. If one wants to gain a through understanding of political Islam and, specifically, for the purposes of this dissertation, fundamentalism, it is not feasible to only focus on the last thirty years of Islamic resurgence and ignore the important foundations that were laid in the decades before.

rulers?” it is clear that Muslims would have to pose these questions constantly, especially when subjugated to alien rulers, as has often been the case during the past four centuries (Enayat 1982: 1-2).

From the points made above, one would expect Muslims to be both politically active and assertive. This, for most of their history, has not been the case, however, as Muslims have seldom benefited from the freedoms of speech, assembly and action under their often repressive regimes. There is also a methodological reason why independent political thought was hampered for many centuries. Traditionally, politics was rarely studied in isolation from other disciplines. Problems such as the nature of the state, the varieties of government, the qualifications and limitations of the rulers and the rights of the ruled were all usually discussed within the framework of jurisprudence and theology, all within the unassailability of the *Sharia*. Only as European military, political, economic and cultural encroachments started infiltrating the Muslim world, did Muslim elites start writing separate works which dealt specifically with Islam’s political side (Enayat 1982: 2-3). This then illustrates a second element in the definitions of Islamic revival or resurgence given by Husain (1995) above, that of “the reawakening of interest in Islamic symbols, ideas and ideals subsequent to a period of relative dormancy”. It is thus important to realise that a part of the powerful influence of Islamic revivalist movements lies in the fact that they came in response to disturbing changes that had taken place in the Islamic world, as a result of the ever-increasing Western presence.

Manifestations of the Islamic revival include an increasing public interest in and support for an Islamic system. This has been accompanied by the formation of grass roots or populist Islamic movements involving certain segments of Muslim populations and students and government-sponsored Islamic programmes that reassert religion as a primary ideological force. These programmes are introduced for a variety of reasons ranging from the government’s sincere religious beliefs, to a need to acquire funds from rich Muslim countries (Husain 1995: 4).

The overall tendency thus seems to point to Muslim populations’ increased interest in Islam as a political system, and, simultaneously, Muslim governments’ realisation that invoking Islamic symbols and values in political programmes, though not necessarily intending to establish an Islamic system, is a promising way of gaining popular support. Islam is thus closely linked to both political aspirations of the future (the establishment of an Islamic system) and political necessities of the present (ensuring support for current regimes).

Since the 1970s, the Islamic revival has shown five additional prominent features. Firstly, Islam has spread from homes, *masjids* (mosques) and *madrasahs* (Islamic schools) into the mainstream of the socio-cultural, legal, economic and political spheres of modern day Muslim states. The majority of Islamic revivalists (except the Islamic pragmatists) have stressed the observance of the five *faraidh* or pillars of Islam: *shahdah* (belief in one god), *salat* (prayer rituals), *sawn* (Ramadan fasting), *zakat* (giving alms to the poor) and *haj* (making a religious pilgrimage to Mecca and Medina). They have also focused on modesty in dress for all, the *hijab* (veil) for women and, wherever possible, the segregation of the sexes. The Islamic fundamentalists, traditionalists and modernists within these movements have pressured their respective governments to ban alcohol, gambling, nightclubs, prostitution, pornography and other corrupting influences. They have also demanded the formulation of an Islamic constitution and the implementation of the *Sharia*, the comprehensive and divine Islamic law, which includes severe penalties for a broad range of crimes. As noted before, governments, in response to these trends, have often made a point of displaying their Islamic credentials by, for example, constructing and funding more mosques and *madrasahs* (Islamic schools). An increased number of Muslims of all walks of life have also attended Friday prayer services and made the pilgrimage to Mecca and Medina (Husain 1995: 10). As Esposito (1991: 155) puts it, there has been an increasing need to “return to Islam” in order to restore a lost identity, moral purpose and character. The discussion above also ties in with the belief that religion is integral to politics and society because Islam is both religion and government.

Secondly, there has been widespread discussion and debate of Islamic issues in the mass media, which has led to the publication of many books and articles on Islamic theology, history, jurisprudence, culture and civilisation. Various attempts have also been made to reformulate and revise Islamic theory and practice to be relevant to the contemporary era. Islamic modernists, especially, have been concerned with this through *ijima* (consensus) and *ijtihad* (independent reasoning and judgement). *Ijima* involves the *ulama* (learned theologians) and Islamic experts of various schools of thought making important information available to the public so that an enlightened consensus can result from informed public opinion. *Ijtihad* requires *mujtahids* (*ulama* who practise *ijtihad*) to provide relevant solutions to contemporary problems (Husain 1995: 10). Modernist efforts to reconcile Islam and modernity are discussed in more extensive detail later on.

Thirdly, there has been an emphasis on Islam’s focus on socio-economic equality and justice, because of the considerable socio-economic disparity between the affluent elite and the impoverished masses in Muslim

countries (Husain 1995: 10). This may well have been in reaction to the political and economic mismanagement of many regimes in Muslim countries, which has been a major contributing factor to the current desperate situation of large parts of Muslim populations all over the world.

Fourthly, while the relevance of the religious (Islamic) approach to solving contemporary problems has been asserted, Islamic revivalists have also criticised the dominant materialist values from the West. The inappropriateness of transplanted, imported Western models of political, social and economic development has been recognised. There has also been a need to get rid of Western political and cultural domination, which fosters secularism, materialism spiritual bankruptcy (Esposito 1991: 155). Secularism, for example, has been denounced by Islamic fundamentalists and traditionalists as “un-Islamic”, because it relegates God to the private sphere of people’s lives and, by implication, excludes him from the state’s political, economic and socio-cultural spheres. Where many revivalists have been keen to accept modern scientific methods and technology from the outside world, they adamantly reject whatever may be “un-Islamic” or harmful to the *umma* (Husain 1995: 10). As has been touched on earlier, Islam and politics are inextricably linked and relegating Islam to the private sphere as no more than a spiritual influence for people has often been unpopular with Muslim populations. Atatürk, the ruler of Turkey, for example, took the secularist experiment to an extreme, compared with other Arab states. He closed down all the *madrasahs*, suppressed the Sufi orders and made it compulsory for men and women to wear modern Western clothes. This did not mean that Islam in Turkey disappeared; it merely went underground (Armstrong 2000: 158).

Finally, Islamic revivalist movements have had strong anti-imperialist and anti-colonialist undercurrents. They have called for an end to dependence on the West (and, during the Cold War, the communist/socialist bloc) and instead champion the development of a united Islamic bloc of fraternal Muslim states, which could become an influential force in international affairs to the benefit of the *umma* (Husain 1995: 11). This idea is similar to that of South-South co-operation (between the world’s developing states) in the face of political and economic dominance by the industrialised states. Strength in numbers is meant to make up for a lack of political or economic clout in the global arena. The extent to which such co-operative efforts will enable developing states, both within and outside the Muslim world, to make industrialised countries listen to their demands remains to be seen.

### **3.3.2. Islamic revivalism and globalisation**

In every sphere of life the 20th century has brought rapid changes to the world, especially the globalisation processes which have meant that the degree of interdependence and interconnection within the world economy has increased dramatically (Ahsan 2002: 178). The universal spread of Islamic revivalism in the contemporary era can best be understood in the context of globalisation and related concepts such as “transnational relations” and “global interdependence”. Nye and Keohane (in Husain 1995: 13) define transnational relations as “the movements of tangible or intangible items across state boundaries when at least one actor is not an agent of a government or an intergovernmental organisation”. Some of the many participants in transnational relations are the non-governmental, religio-political organisations that operate across the international boundaries of a number of countries. The Muslim Brotherhood, for example, was founded in Egypt in 1928 and in due course established branches in several Arab countries, including Syria, Jordan and Sudan – a distinct transnational characteristic. It was also reported to have received financial assistance from the regimes of Saudi Arabia and Libya during the 1970s.

Another interesting point is that although, according to Ahsan (2002: 179), many sociologists have put forward the notion that religion in the contemporary Western world has become increasingly privatised and that as a result of the process of secularisation in the modern world traditional religion is primarily an individual rather than a collective matter, this has not been the case “in the East”. He quotes Pasha and Samatar (in Ahsan 2002: 179) as arguing that here the situation is different,

The insertion of a new Islamic consciousness into the daily political life of many Muslim societies is increasingly becoming an incontestable fact. In countries like Iran, Sudan and Afghanistan [pre September 11], state power has been captured by Islamic movements. For others, such as Algeria, Egypt, Tunisia and Turkey, there is deadly intensity with high stakes as numerous civil associations define themselves as Islamic and, as a result, violently challenge the legitimacy of political authority. Even in less contested countries (e.g. Morocco, Pakistan, Indonesia), Islamic consciousness assumes a more prominent place in the articulation and making of political life.

Thus Islamic revivalism seems to counter the Western notion, strongly influenced by globalisation and its related values that give prime importance to the individual, that religion should be relegated to the private sphere. Instead there has been an increased focus on the return of religion to public life in order to

compensate for the perceived spiritual and moral decline that secularisation has effected in Muslim countries.

The revolution in mass communications has meant that news of any major adversity, defeat or victory experienced by Muslims anywhere in the world is broadcast through the mass media and is grieved or celebrated respectively by Muslims worldwide the very same day. Events that have caused the *umma* worldwide to grieve were, for example, Israel's invasion of Lebanon in the summer of 1982 and the genocide of Bosnian Muslims by Serbs and Croats in the former Yugoslavia in 1992. On the other hand, moments of ecstasy were the periodic summit meetings of Muslim leaders and Ayatollah Khomeini's triumphant return to Iran in February 1979 (Husain 1995: 21). Globalisation has thus meant that the effect of Islamic revivalism has been widespread and that links between Muslims all over the world have become very strong, which may well ensure its continued potency and influence in the future.

Now that Islamic revivalism has been discussed in detail, it becomes necessary to define what an Islamic "revivalist" is. Husain (1995: 11) defines such a person as "anyone who has contributed significantly to the revival of Islam." This means that Islamic revivalists, in their perception of "true" Islam, will often, if not always, promote the creation of an "Islamic state" by teaching, preaching, and/or writing. Sometimes, in extreme cases, they will even resort to force. Four broad categories make up the Islamic revival, which, it is important to understand, is not a monolithic movement under a single leadership: Islamic<sup>9</sup> fundamentalists, Islamic traditionalists, Islamic modernists and Islamic pragmatists. This classification scheme, like any other, is not perfect, but does assist in giving idea of the different forms Islamic revivalism incorporates. Fuller's (2003: 47) categorisation of Islamist thought fits in here too. He defines an Islamist as "anyone who believes that Islam has something important to say about how political and social life should be constituted and who attempts to implement that interpretation in some way". Both religious and secular movements differ in terms of the extent to which they accept or reject violence, the urgency with which they insist that change must come, the degree to which they are politically engaged within the system, the institutions they build and operate from, their preference for either an elite or a mass structure, their ideological or pragmatic nature, their degree of flexibility in attaining goals, and the degree of transparency and democracy in their internal proceedings. Fuller, like Husain, concedes that in any classification of Islamist movements one

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<sup>9</sup> For the sake of keeping the terminology constant that is to be used throughout this dissertation, use is made of the term "Islamic" when it comes to describing fundamentalists, traditionalists, modernists and pragmatists, even though Husain (1995), from whose work this particular categorisation is drawn, uses the term "Muslim".

needs to be aware that terms will overlap or even be imprecise. The general idea of such a classification should be to suggest something of the range of schools and ideas evolved, especially at the two ends of the spectrum – fundamentalist and liberal (modernist) Islam.

### **3.4 ISLAMIC FUNDAMENTALISM**

Islamic fundamentalists form the first category of Islamic revivalists. As discussed in Chapter two of this dissertation, the term “fundamentalism” signifies conservative movements among most of the world’s major religions, including Christianity, Judaism, Hinduism and Islam. Fundamentalists of all faiths have certain characteristics in common: authoritarianism, a messianic spirit, the subordination of secular politics to their religious beliefs, a belief in the infallibility of holy scripture, a belief in supernatural, charismatic leadership and enforced moralism. Taken together, these characteristics form a political vision which fundamentalists hope to achieve through, possibly aggressive, political action. Islamic fundamentalists advocate rigid adherence to the fundamentals of their faith, as literally interpreted from the *Quran* and the *Sunna*, and campaign to impose the *Sharia* on society to purge those influences they feel detract from or demean the fundamentals of Islam. This means that most fundamentalists crusade against prostitution, pornography, the selling or use of alcohol and drugs, gambling, Western music, singing, dancing, wearing ornaments of gold and silver, palm reading, astrology, fortune-telling, fatalism and superstition (Husain 1995: 45).

Fuller (2003: 48) adds to this that Islamic fundamentalists usually seek to establish an Islamic state, though, as will be seen in the discussions below, the exact form of such a state (beyond the acceptance of Islamic law) is not at all clear. Most fundamentalists eschew violence, although some very radical ones employ it. They also place a great deal of emphasis on the law as an essential component of Islam, leading to an overwhelming emphasis on jurisprudence, usually narrowly conceived. A high degree of social conservatism is also pursued. On the other hand, fundamentalists are also selective in those features of Islam that they seek to emphasise as part of their political agenda and tend to be closely associated with fundamentalism’s strictest form, Wahhabism, as discussed below, which claims to embody the faith of the founding fathers of the Islamic community. Thus the fundamentalists place “emphasis on the Arabic language as the language of revelation, the illegitimacy of local political institutions (as usurpers of God’ sovereignty), the authority of the (fundamentalists) as the sole qualified interpreters of Islam, sometimes drastic expression of personal piety, and the revival of practices from the early period of Islam.” Another important characteristic of Islamic fundamentalism is the stark interpretation of what constitutes being a valid Muslim. In radical Wahhabi thinking, for instance, acceptance of 99 percent of Islamic teachings but deliberate rejection of one

percent constitutes unbelief. This stringency of interpretation contrasts with Islam which states that one Muslim may not judge the validity of the private belief of another Muslim, as this judgement remains the right and duty of God alone.

In order to see how the characteristics of Islamic fundamentalism have manifested themselves within the Islamic revival, the lives and thought of some of the most important Islamic fundamentalist figures are now discussed. Husain (1995: 45) sees them as “revolutionaries”.

### **3.4.1 Muhammad ibn Abd al –Wahhab**

Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab (1703-92) was the son of a learned jurist and theologian and was educated in Mecca and Medina in *Hanafi* and *Shafii* law. He became disillusioned by the moral laxity and spiritual malaise of the times and therefore set out to reform his society and to return it to the practice of the Prophet, calling upon the people to abandon various popular religious beliefs and practices that he compared to pre-Islamic Arabian practice – the period of ignorance. In particular he attacked the, what he perceived as, superstitious and idolatrous practices of Sufism which he labelled “innovations” or unwarranted deviations from true Islam. He also called for a literal interpretation of the *Quran* and *Sunna*, the general idea being that Muslims must return to the pure Islam of the first generation of Muslims (Esposito 1991: 36).

What are the predominant features of Wahhabism? Like expected of fundamentalist movements, it aims to purify Islam by returning to the fundamentals of religion – the *Quran* and the *Sunna* (an additional, important source detailing Islamic faith and practice). A very strict line of thinking is followed in its attempts to reconstruct society and government on the basis of divine *tawhid* (oneness of God) and the doctrine of *al-Salaf al-Salih* (good ancestors). What is important here is the reluctance of the ancestors to engage in philosophical or intellectual argumentation. Instead, they adhere rigidly to the basic texts without any major effort to reinterpret the principles of Islam. They focus more on the spiritual and ethical aspects of Islam, while leaving political matters to politicians and traditional elites (Moussalli 1999: 113). Interestingly enough, this rigid adherence to the *Quran* does allow Muslims to interpret the *Quran* according to their own knowledge of Islam, rather than according to the interpretation of an *alim* (religious scholar). A certain amount of freedom in the form of the right to an individual interpretation of the text thus seems a strange contrast to the overwhelmingly puritanical spirit of the remainder of the doctrine. The adherence to *tawhid* is, according to Husain (1995: 46), carried so far as to denounce all ceremonies, rituals and customary traditions that were absent during the classical period of Islam, considering them to be additions that defile

the purity of the faith and contribute to the decline of Islam and of Muslim societies. Wahhabism, as already mentioned above, requires adherence to the actual words of the *Quran* and the *Sunna*, while denouncing Sufism, mysticism, fatalism and other superstitions. The idea is thus to return to the simplicity, austerity, purity and piety of Islam's classical period. This includes praying five times a day, fasting during the holy month of Ramadan, and waging *jihad* against infidels, which to Wahhabis include not only non-Muslims, but also Muslims who do not rigorously adhere to their faith. Wahhabis also demand strict and scrupulous adherence to the *Sharia* and, by implication, its severe punishments for crime and transgressions. What do they prohibit? The consumption of alcohol, smoking, singing, listening to music, dancing, wearing silk, wearing ornaments of gold and silver, drawing and painting animate objects, palm reading, astrology, fortune-telling, and all forms of divination.

From the above description, it becomes clear how Wahhabism conforms to fundamentalist characteristics. What is obvious (perhaps to the extreme) is the veneration of Islam's classical period, to the extent that everything that came or developed afterwards is rejected, and the need for a very literal interpretation of its classical texts.

A reason for Wahhabism's admiration and imitation of early Islam may be that the two, when one looks at their early histories, have a great deal in common. Both denounce the evils of injustice, corruption, tribalism, adultery, idolatry and indifference to the suffering of widows and orphans. Monotheism and the brotherhood of all Muslims, regardless of their situation in life, are also promoted by both. Wahhabism and Islam under the Prophet both expanded to the detriment of unbelievers, and both movements created an energetic and united political front. The major difference was the fact that Wahhabis fought holy wars not only against admitted unbelievers, but also against "wayward" Muslims. Al-Wahhab also, in contrast to the Prophet, was only a spiritual leader; political affairs were under the auspices of ibn Saud (Husain 1995: 47). Al Wahhab respected tradition but rejected an uncritical following of past authority. All postprophetic tradition, including Islamic law, were subjected to selective criticism since the law itself had taken on un-Islamic customary practices. The starting point was thus to return again to a purified Islam (Esposito 1991: 36).

Al-Wahhab joined forces with a local tribal chief Muhammad ibn Saud and from this alliance the so-called Wahhabi movement was born. Soon the tribes of Arabia were subdued and united in the name of Islamic egalitarianism. Just as Muhammad in Mecca had cleansed the Kaba of the tribal gods, so al-Wahhab insisted on the prohibition of popular religious practices which he felt symbolised idolatry, for example saint

worship, pilgrimage to sacred tombs and devotional rituals. Because many of these practices were attributed to Sufism, this was suppressed; its shrines, tombs and sacred objects were destroyed, ironically enough even the tombs of Muhammad and his early companions which were labelled idolatrous shrines. Wahhabi forces also destroyed Karbala, a major Shiite pilgrimage site in Iraq, which housed the tomb of Hussein. These actions have never been forgotten by Shii Muslims and have contributed to their negative attitude towards the Wahhabi of Saudi Arabia (Esposito 1991: 36). The Ottoman sultan reacted to the destruction of tombs, mausoleums and shrines by the Wahhabis by persuading his governor in Egypt, Muhammad Ali, to stop them. After eight years of war (1811-1818), the Wahhabis were overwhelmed and sent back to central Arabia. A hundred years later, though, Abd al-Aziz ibn Abd al-Rahman al-Saud succeeded in imposing Wahhabism throughout the Arabian peninsula. The greatest impacts of al-Wahhab and the Wahhabi movement have been both the reintroduction of Islamic fundamentalism in the Arabian peninsula, as well as the spreading influence of Wahhabism to India, North Africa and throughout the Muslim world (Husain 1995: 47-48).

### **3.4.2 Muhammad Ahmad Abdallah al-Mahdi**

Muhammad Ahmad Abdallah al-Mahdi (1843-1885) is known for the launch of the *Mahdiyyah* movement in the Sudan. It was formed in response to social decay, political oppression and economic decline and culminated in the establishment of a puritanical Islamic state that would inspire Muslims throughout the world. The Mahdi, as al-Mahdi was known, was revered as a knowledgeable, pious and ascetic sufi and was also perceived as a principled *mujaddid* (renewer of the faith). He openly accused the Turco-Egyptian regime of corruption, injustice, hedonism and disbelief (Husain 1995: 51).

Unlike Wahhabism, the Mahdi did not wish to eradicate Sufism, which, because of its openness and flexibility regarding indigenous African beliefs and practices had often been criticised for “opening the door to idolatrous superstition and an attitude of passive withdrawal which resulted from an otherworldly orientation”. Instead, the idea was to reform Sufism in order to bring it more in line with Islamic law and place the emphasis on this-worldly activist Islam, rather than the otherworldly mysticism it originally represented. The socio-political dimension of Islam was reintroduced as African Islamic movements, one of these being that of the Mahdi, led by Sufi brotherhoods, fought to establish Islamic states. Prayer and political action thus joined forces in the earthly pursuit of God’s will (Esposito 1991: 38).

Like al-Wahhab the Mahdi also united his followers against fellow Muslims, in this case the Turks – Ottoman Egyptian rulers, whom he declared infidels. He blamed the corruption of Sudanese society on the adoption of foreign (Turko-Egyptian and local non-Islamic) influences and practices: prostitution, gambling, tobacco, alcohol and music. As a solution the Mahdi strove for the establishment of a theocratic state, which would re-create the ideal, early Islamic community/state. Like other reformers, the Mahdi thus called for a purification of Islamic belief and practice, as this had been corrupted by alien, un-Islamic customs and beliefs (Esposito 1991: 40). What distinguished the Mahdi from other Islamic fundamentalists, however, is the fact that he did not advocate the exercise of *ijtihad*, though he himself exercised it. Instead, he claimed direct inspiration from God and Muhammad in the interpretation of the *Quran* and the *Sunna* (Husain 1995: 51).

In 1885 the Mahdist movement successfully defeated the Sudan's Egyptian occupiers. The Mahdi became the undisputed ruler of Sudan, now a theocratic state ruled by Mahdist religious ideology. He died a few months later. His successor, Abdullahi al-Ta'ashi was disposed in 1898, when Anglo-Egyptian armies took back control of the Sudan (Husain 1995: 52).

Though not many Muslims knew the Mahdi's writings or his idea of an Islamic state, he still commanded a lot of inspiration and respect in his impressive expulsion of Anglo-Egyptian colonialists and the establishment of a sovereign Islamic state (however temporary this may have been). He thus influenced various anti-colonialist Islamic revivalist movements in several parts of the world (Husain 1995: 52).

Wahhabism and Mahdism contributed to the legacy for twentieth-century Islam in terms of both their ideology and their methodology:

Firstly, they brought into sharp focus the weakened and disorganised condition of the community. Secondly, both a diagnosis and a cure was provided for this precarious state of affairs: a return to Islam. Thirdly, they stressed the belief that Islamic monotheism meant the unity and totality of God's will for both the individual Muslim and the Islamic community. Fourthly, Islamic reform meant that it was necessary to critically look at tradition, rather than just to blindly accept it. The corpus of Islamic law, for example, included non-Islamic historical accretions. Fifthly, they stressed that in order to restore true Islam, it would be necessary to allow for personal interpretation that was based on the sole authoritative foundations of Islam – the *Quran* and prophetic practice as found in the early community. Finally, the belief was emphasised that the socio-moral revival of Islamic society would require political action. This would necessitate *jihad*, exerting moral self-

discipline to realise God's will, and when necessary, engaging in military combat or warfare to achieve the same end (Esposito 1991: 40-41). A discussion now follows of Muslim fundamentalist thinkers in the 20th century in order to show the extent to which they were influenced by the themes of Wahhabism and Mahdism.

### **3.4.3 Hassan al-Banna**

Hasan al-Banna (1906-49), as a young Egyptian schoolteacher, brought the ideas of the Muslim intellectuals to the masses, by forming the Society of Muslim Brothers. The ideology of this movement spread throughout the Middle East and was the only one that could appeal to all sectors of society (Armstrong 2000: 155). The reason for the formation of the Muslim Brotherhood was al-Banna and his colleagues' (at the public elementary school in Ismailiya) outrage at the inequality that existed between the privileged foreigners as opposed to the exploited Egyptian workers. As the leader of this fundamentalist movement, al-Banna declared that Egyptian poverty, powerlessness and lack of dignity was the result of the government's neglect of Islamic values and culture and the fact that it had opted for the Western alternative instead. Al-Banna believed that Islam was the answer to all of Egypt's, and all of mankind's ills (Husain 1995: 53). Unlike Islamic modernists, however, who looked to the West and provided an Islamic rationale for the appropriation of Western learning (as is elaborated on later on in this chapter), al-Banna emphasised the perfection and comprehensiveness of Islam and the fact that it was therefore self-sufficient. Like al-Wahhab and the Mahdi, al-Banna called for a return to the *Quran* and the *Sunna* of the Prophet as the primary sources for the reestablishment of an Islamic system of government. Al-Banna also differed from the general tendency of the *ulama* to rely on their medieval formulations of Islam. Again, in line with al-Wahhab and the Mahdi, al-Banna called for Muslims to return to their historical origins, namely the formative period of Islamic history where Muslims were ruled by the Prophet and, following him, the first caliphs of Islam (Esposito 1991: 133).

Although the Muslim Brotherhood's message was mostly concerned with the establishment of an "Islamic order", there is little doubt that the establishment of an Islamic state was a major component of that order, as in al-Banna's understanding, Islam and politics are narrowly linked. Before the establishment of an Islamic state could take place, however, the people's moral sphere would have to be developed. Al-Banna is quoted as saying (in Ayubi 1991: 132) that "the formation of nations, the education of people, and the realisation of hopes and principles, requires of the nation that strives for them or at least the group that calls for them, a tremendous psychological power". What ties in here is the notion of adherence to a clear Islamic

methodology, which, al-Banna believed, would be able to address issues ranging from the family, to nationalism, internationalism, socialism, capitalism, Bolshevism, war, the distribution of wealth, relations between the producer and the consumer, as well as other social and political concerns. Thus, initially, the more immediate task would lie with reforming souls and enlightening minds. Government would follow in due course and would suggest a corporate type of system, characterised by a one-party state, inspired by Islamic ethics and grounded in a just “moral” economy. Moussalli (1999: 109) elaborates on this by stating that, according to al-Banna, Islam aims at setting up a “good nation with a message of unity and sacrifice”. This would also involve establishing a just Islamic government, without tyranny or authoritarianism, designed to serve the Muslim people. A government like this would help to establish a virtuous society.

A Muslim society, if following Islamic precepts and values, would thus ready itself for the formation of an Islamic state with an Islamic government and contribute to the latter’s efficient and “moral” functioning. Simultaneously, the Islamic state, once established, would reinforce the moral and scrupulous behaviour of Muslims, by embodying all that is good and honourable about Islam.

What would an Islamic state, as envisioned by al-Banna and the Muslim brothers look like? He called for a constitution based on the *Quran*, the *Sunna*, and the traditions of the first four rightly guided caliphs. Furthermore, secular laws would be abolished and, instead, the *Sharia* would be imposed as the state’s official law. Related practices would include the collection and distribution of *zakat* among the needy, the prohibition of usury and monopolies; the enforcement of daily prayers and fasting during Ramadan, the segregation of the sexes; the banning of prostitution, gambling, alcohol and nightclubs and, finally, the prohibition of all customs, dress, languages, books, magazines, plays, movies and songs not conforming to Islamic principles. While not wholly opposed to Egyptian nationalism and pan-Arabism, ideologies popular in Egypt at the time, he saw these only as a first step to his overriding aim: the realisation of Muslim unity. In addition, al-Banna was no lover of Western liberal democracy. Instead, he insisted, the *Sharia* should be used to answer all questions that might arise with regard to law and justice (Husain 1995: 53).

Though al-Banna’s concept of an Islamic state was never realised in Egypt, he nonetheless managed to realise his ideology in various ways. A social or political effort (*jihad*), rather than a mere reassertion of religious doctrine, which is frequently the way that Christians respond to the challenge of modernity, was initiated to combat the socio-economic disparities in Egyptian society. Al-Banna’s aims were based on the idea that religion could not be confined to the private sphere. The Society of Muslim Brothers tried to interpret the *Quran* to meet the spirit of modernisation, to unify Islamic nations, raise the standard of living,

achieve a higher level of social justice, fight against illiteracy and poverty and to liberate Muslim territories from foreign domination. Social initiatives included, apart from training the Brothers and Sisters in the rituals of prayer and *Quranic* living, the construction of schools, a modern scout movement and night schools for workers. In addition, clinics and hospitals were built in the rural areas and factories were opened where Muslims received higher salaries, and better health and vacation benefits than in the state sector. They were also taught how to defend their workers' rights, by learning modern labour laws (Armstrong 2000: 155-156).

The secular government of Egypt's King Farouk, unsettled by the political activism and growing popularity of al-Banna and the Muslim Brotherhood, started cracking down on the organisation. The Muslim Brotherhood had tried to operate like a legitimate political party in order to change Egypt within the legal confines of the political system. However, government corruption, cheating at the polls and the persecution of Muslim Brothers convinced al-Banna that revolutionary struggle would be necessary to effect Egypt's transformation into an Islamic state. Islamic militants thus took to urban guerrilla warfare, which led to the government banning the Muslim Brotherhood in 1948. As a retaliatory measure, the Muslim brothers assassinated Egypt's Prime Minister Muhammad Nuqrashi. The government, as a response, assassinated al-Banna on 12 February 1949. This, however did not put an end to their activities. Despite frequent government crackdowns on the Muslim Brotherhood, it remains intact and is still a potent force for Islamic revivalist change in Egypt (Husain 1995: 54).

Here it is perhaps relevant to refer to the contemporary Muslim Brotherhood in order to see whether its ideas have changed over the past decades and if so, how. According to Sullivan and Abed-Kotob (1999: 65) the Muslim Brotherhood still believes in efforts focused on applying the Islamic *Sharia* to Egypt's social and political system with the major goal being the establishment of an Islamic state governed by Islamic jurisprudence. Even though this goal is alien, and perhaps even threatening, to Western political thought, it is significant to note that the *contemporary* Brotherhood's vision of an Islamic state encompasses other, less alien objectives. These are, firstly, the imposition of democratic ideals such as liberty, representation and accountability, and, secondly, the pursuit of socio-economic justice. Furthermore, the Muslim Brotherhood has become totally focused on constitutional channels in order to institute the changes they envision. Although the government has attempted to curb access to both parliament and professional associations, it is worth observing that the Brethren still continue their efforts to gain constitutional access to the political system. Very critical here is the official policy of the Muslim Brotherhood which absolutely renounces

violence as a strategy. *Jihad*, for example, is not interpreted by them as an armed struggle against the state, which is often what Westerners assume, but rather it is a personal and collective struggle employing social justice, mercy and communication so that an Islamic state will be built from the individual upward.

It is true, however, that although the Muslim Brotherhood itself is non-violent, acts of violence have been committed either by individual members or groups whose membership may have originated from the Muslim Brotherhood. The reason for this, according to the Brotherhood, is its inability to control its followers as a result of the restrictive policies of the state and the latter's perpetual refusal to recognise it, which leads to a lack of opportunities for members, especially the youth, to have general meetings and debates in order to clarify misunderstandings and direct their frustrations and complaints via legitimate channels of political action (Sullivan & Abed-Kotob 1999: 61). Sullivan and Abed-Koto (1999: 66-67) thus argue that the Muslim Brotherhood, as a group advocating a policy of non-violence and a commitment to pluralism and constitutionalism should be allowed to function as a legitimate outlet for the grievances of the Egyptian masses and thereby mitigate the growth of support for the radicals. By bringing the Muslim Brotherhood into the folds of governmental representation, the state will have given those segments of the population which demand Islamist representation a legitimate alternative to the use of violence.

It thus becomes evident that the Muslim Brotherhood has adapted the stringently fundamentalist prescriptions for the functioning of an Islamic state to an alternative, which includes liberal-democratic elements. What is worrisome is the repression of an organisation which in outlook is moderate and willing to embrace constitutional channels in order to play a part in the political process and include its views, which reflect the opinions of a large percentage of the Egyptian population, in the governing of the country. This may be attributed to the government, as well as Western countries' fear of an Islamic-oriented party at the head of a democratic government, an attitude which provokes militant groups to further acts of violence as they term the government as anti-Islamic. This is a phenomenon that is examined in more detail in the following chapters.

#### **3.4.4 Sayyid Abul a'la Mawdudi**

One of the early fundamentalist ideologues was Mawdudi (1903-1979), who also founded the *Jamaat-i Islami* in Pakistan. He perceived the "mighty power of the West" as preparing to "crush" Islam. Muslims, he argued, would therefore have to band together and fight the encroaching secularism to ensure the survival of their religion and culture. Mawdudi defied the whole secularist ethos and called for an Islamic liberation

theology, a universal *jihad*. Just as the Prophet had fought *jahiliyyah* (the “ignorance” and barbarism of the pre-Islamic period), it was now up to Muslims to fight the *jahiliyyah* of the West. He even made *jihad* into one of the five Pillars of Islam, an innovation which he justified on the grounds of the threat that was presently facing Islam. Thus, the stress and fear of cultural and religious destruction had led to the development of a more extreme and potentially violent distortion of the Islamic faith (Armstrong 2000: 168).

Mawdudi perceived Westernisation as a great flood about to sweep away the Muslim world into oblivion. In order to warn Muslims against this danger, he therefore started writing about this threat with two particular aims in mind. The first was to expose the nature of *jahiliyyah* and all the “evil it contains” especially in its Western form. The second was to present the Islamic way of life in a reasoned, argued, demonstrated and systematic fashion. In practical terms, this was to involve criticism of Western civilisation, an examination of the various schools of Muslim thought and their shortcomings. Also included would be detailed discussions of certain basic issues in Islamic theology, such as *aqaid* (beliefs) and *imaniyat* (faiths), Islam’s understanding of the nature of man, as well as the fundamental principles of the civilisation it aims to create (Adams 1983: 101).

After World War One, Mawdudi participated in the *Khilafat* movement, which aimed to save the Ottoman Empire and the *Khilafat* from Western influences, as well as in the *Hijrat* Movement, which urged Muslims to migrate from the *dar al-harb* (abode of war) in India to the *dar al-Islam* (abode of Islam) in Afghanistan, which was governed by Muslims instead of British colonialists and Hindus. Mawdudi was initially opposed to the idea of the formation of Pakistan as an independent Muslim homeland on the Indian subcontinent. He perceived this as an initiative of un-Islamic Westernised secularists who were aiming to mislead the Muslims of South Asia with the equally un-Islamic ideology of nationalism. Once Pakistan had been founded, however, Mawdudi settled there and began a tireless effort to transform the country into an Islamic state (Husain 1995: 55).

Mawdudi’s programme of reform was based on a particular vision that he held of Islam, one that emphasises the social dimension of faith. This is embodied by the relationship between God and man being one of submission and sovereignty, which would be attained by applying divine rules to a social context. From this it follows that submission to God necessitates the establishment of an Islamic order that embodies the spirit of *tawhid*. The Islamic state then constitutes an important condition of actualising the faith. This means that

religion is not only concerned with knowledge about God, but also with organising its adherents and inspiring them to act (Ismail 2003: 587).

Mawdudi saw Islam's ultimate goal as being the creation of a world state where there would be no more racial and national prejudices and where mankind would enjoy genuine civil rights. Like all Islamic fundamentalists, however, Mawdudi opposed the notion of Western democracy and the idea that power rests with the people. Sovereignty, according to him, belongs to God alone. Mawdudi proved important for Islamic fundamentalism as his publications and political activities would provide an intellectual foundation, as well as a clear understanding of the functioning of an Islamic state. His legacy has also been perpetuated by the *Jamaat-i Islami*, which is dedicated to the formation of an Islamic state based on Mawdudi's model (Husain 1995: 55-56).

#### **3.4.5 Sayyid Qutb**

The real founder of Islamic fundamentalism in the Sunni world, however, was Sayyid Qutb (1906-66), who was influenced by Mawdudi to a great extent. Qutb had not originally been opposed to the West and had even joined the Muslim Brotherhood in 1953 with hopes of giving Western democracy an Islamic dimension so as to avoid the drawbacks of a wholly secularist ideology. In 1956, however, Qutb was imprisoned by al-Nasser for being a member of the Brotherhood, and while in a concentration camp, he became convinced of the incompatibility of religious people and secularists in the same society. He saw al-Nasser's policies of torture and execution of Islamists with the aim of casting religion into a marginal role in Egypt as being synonymous with *jahiliyyah*, which he defined as "the barbarism that was for ever and for all time the enemy of faith" and which Muslims were therefore bound to fight to the death. Qutb went a step further than Mawdudi, not only limiting use of the term *jahiliyyah* to non-Muslim societies, but stating that Muslim societies were prone to the same phenomenon. Even though a ruler like al-Nasser outwardly professed Islam, his behaviour and policies proved that he was really an apostate and that Muslims had the duty to overthrow such a government, just as the Prophet Muhammad had forced the pagan establishment of Mecca into submission (Armstrong 2000: 169).

The violent secularism of al-Nasser had led Qutb to espouse a form of Islam that was true neither to the *Quran* nor the Prophet's life. Qutb told Muslims to do as the Prophet had done: to separate themselves from mainstream society and fight a violent *jihad*. Muhammad had however finally achieved victory through a policy of non-violence; and the *Quran* is adamantly opposed to force and coercion in religious matters, and

is, instead, in fact, in favour of toleration and inclusion. Qutb insisted that it would only be possible to apply tolerance, as preached by the *Quran*, after the political victory of Islam had taken place and a true Muslim state had been established. This can possibly be attributed to the deep-seated fear that is at the core of fundamentalist religion. Qutb was executed on al-Nasser's orders in 1966 (Armstrong 2000: 169-170).

Qutb's prominence seems to be a generally accepted fact amongst scholars of Muslim fundamentalism. Euben (1999: 54-55) quotes Haddad as claiming that "few Muslim thinkers have had as significant an impact on the reformulation of contemporary Islamic thought as has Sayyid Qutb". This view is supplemented by, amongst others, Akhavi and Amin (in Euben 1999: 54-55), both of whom argue that Qutb's influence on contemporary Islamic fundamentalist groups has far surpassed that of Aytollah Khomeini. Though Qutb's writings have to be understood in the context of those of earlier Muslim thinkers, such as al-Banna and, more specifically, Mawdudi, whose work many of his precepts are based on, there are three essential areas in which he has added new dimensions to the Islamic debate: the legitimacy of authority, the nature and necessity of political activism and the characteristics of the just community.

Qutb (in Euben 1999: 57) defined modern *jahiliyya* as a conscious usurpation of God's authority, linked essentially to the other ills presented by modernity:

We are today immersed in *jahiliyya*, a *jahiliyya* like that of early Islam, but perhaps deeper, darker [*azlam*, more unjust]. Everything around us expresses *jahiliyya*: people's ideas, their beliefs, habits, traditions, culture, art, literature, rules and laws. Even all that we have come to consider Islamic culture, Islamic sources, philosophy and thought are *jahili* constructs. This is why Islamic values have not taken root in our souls, why the Islamic worldview [*tsawwur*] remains obscured in our minds, why no generation has arisen among us equal to the calibre of the first Islamic generation.

The essence of *jahiliyya* is thus a refusal to submit to God's sovereignty when it comes to belief, worship and law, by denying his existence, restricting his authority and diluting his sovereignty with "false gods". Instead, humans claim the right to create values and legislate rules for collective behaviour, which undermines and negates God's power and authority (Euben 1999: 57). As has already been stated, it is important to notice that Qutb's notion of *jahiliyya* differs from that of Mawdudi, who first resurrected the concept, in that not only non-Muslim societies are "infected" by it. The world of Islam also shows distinct signs of *jahiliyya* and drastic measures are required to reverse this situation. Before discussing the ways in which *jahiliyya* is to be combated, it is important to examine the "just" community that Qutb envisaged, as well as clarifying what he understood under political authority.

Qutb emphasised that the *Quran* is the only source which can answer questions pertaining to political authority and the “just” community. Because faith consists of belief in the unity (*tahwid*) and sole authority of God, any compromise to man-made authority becomes simply unacceptable, illegitimate and indistinguishable from tyranny. If God is the sole sovereign of an Islamic society, the *Sharia* is its sole legal system. As the *Sharia* covers all aspects of life, the citizens of an Islamic state are moral by virtue of being members of it and by adhering to it simultaneously adhere to God’s will (Euben 1999: 61-62). As is stated in Ismail (2003: 588), an important consequence of the above is that every Muslim becomes a juridical subject: one who obeys God’s law. This underlines the narrow link between Islam and politics. Institutions like the government and the law are not merely limited to the domain of secularism, but, in the context of God as the sovereign of the state, extend into the divine.

Furthermore, Qutb’s “just community” is based on the freedom and equality of each one of its members. Freedom can be understood both in the “from” and “to” senses. On the one hand, the notion of freedom implies being free from obedience to tyrannical rule. Qutb defined tyranny as the absence of restraint on the part of the sovereign, which he saw as an intrinsic characteristic of human sovereignty. On the other hand, the right to freedom also implies the freedom to submit to membership of God’s community and to thereby become fully human. Equality is not to be understood in terms of Locke’s conception of everyone’s natural right to life, liberty and property, but rather means that everyone is equal, because everyone is equally subject to God’s law. Economic and social equality can be added to this. Qutb argued that once sovereignty is established in its proper scope, social justice, equality and freedom will be the natural result (Euben 1999: 61-64).

In terms of political action, what is central to Qutb’s view of the realisation of an Islamic way of life, is the concept of *‘aqidah* (doctrine). This is not merely to be understood as a set of beliefs and values, but as a mode of being and of realising the individual’s liberation from subjugation to other human beings. *‘Aqidah* is a dynamic way of relating to the world and asserting one’s submission to God, with the result of achieving both emancipation and freedom. It should be noted, however, that this emancipatory and evolutionary vision of the text does not quite correspond with Qutb’s notion of scripturalism which states that the meanings of texts are fixed and inherent. By asserting *‘aqidah*, he opted to bypass the body of interpretations that existed in the tradition and instead provided his own “inspired” reading of the *Quran*. He also sought to develop an interactive method of reading (Islamic envisioning). Though this may make Qutb look like an enlightened interpreter, it similarly “opens the way to claims based on visionary access to truth” (Ismail 2003: 589).

'*Aqidah* includes all aspects of an individual's life and is particularly important in the realm of politics. Qutb argued not merely for a renewal or (re)affirmation of faith, but wanted Muslims to actively participate in the realisation of the Islamic way on earth. So, Qutb stated that God's will alone establishes the fate of the *umma*, but that it is necessary for human beings to coordinate their activities with those of divinity. The first important step is an inner struggle to overcome worldly temptations, whereafter Muslims are able to start changing the world they live in. It is important to remember here, however, that this struggle, both in its internal and external form, does not guarantee rewards either in this life or in the afterlife. This should not be the primary concern of Muslims in the first place. They should rather focus on striving to destroy *jahilyya* wherever it may be visible in the world, by means of *jihad*. This operates on two levels. The first involves the ideological, where tactics are employed in the realm of ideas and beliefs, whereas the second is the practical level: the realm of the sword. Both types of effort aim to remove the political, social and economic obstacles to the establishment of an Islamic community. Qutb justified violence by referring to sections from the Prophet's life, as well as the Quran, but also by stating that this form of opposition becomes necessary to fight the nature and mechanisms of power in the secular state (Euben 1999: 73-75).

Qutb's ideology thus centres around the fact that society should be under the jurisdiction of God, rather than human beings who are prone to turn it into one of *jahilyya*, especially given the influences of Westernisation. To achieve this ideal, an Islamic state governed by the sovereignty of God and the *Sharia*, *jahilyya* needs to first be fought on an ideological and practical level, by making use of *jihad*. Though the notion of adhering to the sovereignty of God, instead of the sovereignty of human beings, seems a fair enough aim in an age of increasing spiritual paucity, it is interesting to ponder about the realisation of such a society. Human beings as rulers, as Qutb pointed out on numerous occasions, are prone to "tyrannise" their populations, by not being able to restrain their power. How then, given this "weakness", would it be possible to realise an ideal Islamic state?

Interestingly enough, Qutb insisted that there cannot be a specific theory of an Islamic state because, although the Islamic community develops in accordance with an unchanging worldview, this worldview nonetheless allows for variation in application, depending on differing circumstances and needs. He argued that only once a society had submitted to God's law, could the development of a system of rules and regulations become possible. Furthermore, Qutb refused to go into the debate of what an Islamic state should look like on the grounds that it would be degrading to Islam to insist that it should be cast in the same terms as man-made theories of sovereignty. The only, rather vague, allusions as to what the political institutions of

an Islamic state would possibly look like, are located not in Qutb's major work *Signposts along the Road*, but in one of his earlier works *Social Justice in Islam* (in Euben 1999: 80-81). As all human activity is regulated by divine law, government is no longer the source of legislation but merely of administration. So, the purpose of government is simply to enforce pre-existing rules and regulations, which, when clear, are "beyond human question and interpretation". These include rules related to prayer and worship, prohibitions against usury, monopolies, gambling, drinking and prostitution, punishment of thieves by cutting off their hands, excommunication of rapists and public stoning to death of adulterers. As opposed to a democratic system, there is no political contract. The responsibility of the ruler to the rules and *vice versa* is mediated by adherence to Islamic law: as long as its rules are scrupulously implemented, the ruler is doing the ruled a great service. The ruler, who is only a representative of God and adheres entirely to the *Sharia*, thus has no claims to hereditary succession, special privileges or elevated status. The only case in which he has some freedom is where there are no guiding precedents. Here he is allowed to act in the public interest, yet again, only if his actions can be justified in terms of the *Quran* and the *Sharia*. When it comes to economic and social spheres, the Islamic government is expected to act only in the interest of the community. Thus, for example, while people are allowed to own property, the government has the right to claim and redistribute this, if this will benefit the community. Similarly, provision is to be made for the establishment of minimum wages, social security and the provision of free medical care and education – all in the interests of the community too (Euben 1999: 80-81).

In terms of the social sphere of an Islamic state, the Muslim Brotherhood, of which Qutb was a member and which was heavily influenced by his ideas, believed that the family lies at the heart of Muslim society. The role of women was of special concern to them. Women were viewed as equal to men before God, but different. This meant that because they believed men to be generally endowed with superior mental ability and emotional stability, men exercise political and social leadership and are responsible for women and the family, while women's primary sphere of activity is home and family. In terms of education then, the Muslim Brotherhood termed separate education for the sexes preferable to coeducation, as women should be trained in their roles as wives and mothers. Women may have careers in engineering, medicine and law, where necessary; but special care must be given to a woman's dignity and modesty and should not impact negatively on her prime duty as a mother and wife (Esposito 1991: 142).

For the Muslim Brotherhood economic reform was essential, both to ensure Islamic social justice and to repel the forces of imperialism. The idea was that an Islamic economic order was to be established, which

would be based neither on unfettered individualism nor state socialism, but on Islam's integration of the material and spiritual aspects of life. As with the political sphere of life, God is the point of origin and all wealth and power belongs to Him. This means that Muslims do not enjoy an absolute, unfettered right of ownership and wealth as this belongs to God alone. Certain means of acquiring wealth, such as usury and gambling, are prohibited, as are hoarding and monopolising natural resources. Although the Muslim Brotherhood acknowledged that there would be differences in wealth based on personal initiative, hard work and an individual's natural skills and talents, Muslims still have the social obligation to assist fellow Muslims who are in need. *Zakat*, wealth tax on capital and on profits, is not simply a discretionary charitable act, but is based on the right of the poor to assistance from their more fortunate co-believers. Thus the Muslim Brotherhood maintained that Islam provided its own distinctive approach and basis for a social revolution that would bring about true social equality (Esposito 1991: 143).

One of the main problems that comes to mind when one looks at the political, economic and social elements of Qutb's suggested structure for an Islamic state discussed above, is how easily such a system could be abused. There seem to be no guarantees for a government not to, for example, appropriate property for its own benefit under the guise of having done so in order to benefit the poor. Though the idea of social welfare initiatives sounds promising, their realisation would necessitate substantial economic resources, a percentage of which may be provided by the *zakat*, but again the question arises – could a government be trusted not to use this tax for self-enrichment purposes? All in all, Qutb's arguments, for all their insistence that prescribing rules for a system based on divine rules is an audacity, seem meagre and unconvincing.

Qutb's modern day significance lies in the fact that he has influenced the rationale and ideological foundation of many Islamic radicals. Although not all Islamic fundamentalists can be classified as radical, all Islamic radicals are fundamentalists. This means that they, like fundamentalists, accept narrow, literal interpretations of Islam, though most go a step further in either promoting utopian visions of a pan-Islamic state or in advocating violent action. Islamic radicalism only occupies a small segment of the Islamist intellectual and political spectrum, but is very important due to its militancy and the violence, which can include major acts of terrorism, a still smaller group of activists is willing to carry out. For this reason radicals naturally attract a great deal of attention from both the states they operate in, as well as the international order (Fuller 2003: 52).

A major ideological principle of the radicals is the concept of *jihad* as a "sixth pillar" of Islam. This thesis urges Muslims to undertake direct *jihad* (either violent or non-violent) against its enemies in order to strive

for the creation of a unified *umma*. Sometimes the struggle is directly against the impure Muslim state and sometimes the US is declared the enemy of the Muslims. Islamic Jihad in Egypt initially fought strictly against the Egyptian state, whereas Osama bin Laden saw the US as the root source of the survival of the corrupt Saudi state. Radicals believe that failure to fight a *jihad* and to thereby strengthen the Muslim world is the primary reason for Muslim weakness today. It is important to stress the fact that not all transnational Islamist movements are necessarily violent or radically pan-Islamic in their rejection of existing states. Some like the Muslim Brotherhood, as already discussed above, and its South Asian sister organisation Jama'at-i Islami are represented in a variety of Muslim countries, yet are mainstream among Islamists and do not practise violence. (An exception is Hamas in Palestine, which has its origins in the Muslim Brotherhood and is engaged in a national liberation struggle against foreign non-Muslim occupation, in which case violence is widely perceived by all Muslims as justified) (Fuller 2003: 53).

### **3.4.6 Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini**

Before focusing on the political thought of Khomeini, it is important to point out that he, as opposed to the fundamentalists discussed so far, was an adherent to Shi'ism. A brief discussion of the differences and commonalities between Shi'ism and Sunnism is necessary to understand his doctrine more fully.

#### **a) Shi'ism and Sunnism – how they differ and what they have in common**

The Muslim world is divided into several sects of which there are two principal groups: the Sunnis and the Shi'ahs. The Sunni sect is the larger of the two and makes up 85 percent of the *umma*, whereas the minority Shi'ahs make up the remaining 15 percent (Husain 1995: 7). The Shi'ahs distinguish themselves from the Sunnis in that they firmly believe that the Prophet designated his son-in-law and cousin Ali to be his successor. Their belief in Ali's rightful succession is not only based on his personal qualities; they also assert that it is inconceivable, given God's justice and benevolence towards human beings, that he should have left the question of leadership undecided. Linked to this is the idea that only a sound and thorough knowledge of the true meaning of the *Quran* and the Prophetic Tradition would enable the young Muslim community to prosper – Ali, and after him his eleven male descendants, would have this knowledge, as he had been close to the Prophet. The Sunnis, on the other hand, believed that the Prophet had deliberately left the question of succession open in order to let the community decide by itself who would be the most competent person to assume its leadership (Enayat 1982: 5). Ali did eventually become Islam's fourth caliph, but was preceded by Abu Bakr, Umar and Uthman. Thus, while Sunnis acknowledge and admire the first four "rightly guided"

or “pious” caliphs, Shi’ahs usually reject the legitimacy of Ali’s three predecessors and all his successors. It is this difference in belief which has proved a major obstacle to Shi’ah and Sunni reconciliation and reunification (Husain 1995: 7).

In addition, Sunnis insist that the Prophet Muhammad was illiterate and a normal human being, chosen by God to reveal his message (as recorded in the *Quran*). The Shi’ahs, on the other hand, revere the Prophet as literate, infallible and semi-divine, because he possessed the *Nur-i-Elahi* (divine light), like all of God’s prophets. The Shi’ahs also argue that semi-divine attributes were passed down the Prophet’s line of descendants through his daughter Fatimah and her husband Imam Ali. The Sunnis disagree with this notion (Husain 1995: 8). Enayat (1982: 35) elaborates on the Sunni criticisms of the Shi’ahs by referring to the work of Ibn Taymiyyah, *The Way of the Prophetic Tradition in the Critique of the Theology of the Qadari Shi’ism* (1328). In this book Taymiyyah elaborates on the Sunni opposition to the Shi’i view that Ali and his descendants inherited *ilm* from the Prophet, a special branch of knowledge, which would allow them to perceive the “branches” or subsidiary rules of religion. This ties in with what has been said above about the Shi’ah’s belief in the semi-divine and infallible qualities of the Prophet and his descendants. Taymiyyah argues that at the time of the Prophet’s death only his son-in-law Ali would have been of an appropriate age to acquire sophisticated religious knowledge from the prophet. Ali’s sons were still minors at the time. This means that Ali’s descendants could only have inherited the same knowledge in one of two ways, either by receiving it from their elders (in which case any Muslim could have received it from the same source), or through revelation – an impossibility, as this is a privilege exclusive to the prophets. Shi’ahs claim that Ali’s descendants attained the knowledge by means of diligence and hard work. The Sunni response is that there were many Sunni Muslims who were just as diligent and hard-working and that some of them were even more knowledgeable than Ali’s descendants.

Another one of Taymiyyah’s major criticisms against Shi’ism is his condemnation of the latter’s institution of the *Imamat*, which stipulates the divine right of Ali and his male descendants to lead the *umma*. In terms of political theory the *imam* is conceived as an autocratic ruler who owed nothing to election by the people, but was given the *Imamat* by the “designation” (*nass*) of his predecessor and can thus be viewed as having a kind of “divine right”, which also included the right to rule over all Muslims (Watt 1968: 113). According to Husain (1995: 8), the Twelver Shi’ah sect is closely linked to this institution. Adherents believe that the twelfth apostolic *Imam* who disappeared in A.D. 873 will reappear as the *Mahdi* (the divinely guided or messianic saviour) and that his return will usher in a golden age of Islamic justice, equality and unity of the

*umma*. Taymiyyah does not agree with the Shi'i claim that the *Imamat* is one of the pillars of religion, especially as the *Mahdi*'s disappearance has rendered him "useless" and unable to be of service to Muslims. The centuries long absence of the Imam and the anticipation of his return has brought nothing but false hopes, sedition and corrupt practices among certain groups of Muslims. He also criticises the fact that Shi'ahs expect Muslims to obey a hidden *Imam* whom no-one can hear, see or communicate with and argues that the *Imamat* in this way is attempting to create a regime which is impossible to achieve (Enayat 1982: 35).

It is thus clear that the Sunnis and Shi'ahs fervently disagree when it comes to the question of the succession of the Prophet Muhammad. Shi'ahs base a large part of their doctrine on their belief that Ali was singled out as the Prophet's rightful successor and thus attribute extraordinary qualities to Muhammad, Ali and his line of descendants. Similarly, according to Enayat (1982: 24), the anticipated return of the *Mahdi* has inspired the Shi'ahs to believe that Muslim history is moving towards, rather than away from (as is the Sunni's view), an ideal state. The Sunnis, on the other hand, have a more mundane view of Muslim history. They attribute no "special" qualities to Ali and his descendants, nor do most of them believe in or await the return of the *Mahdi*. The idea of Muslims being ruled by earthly rulers without specific spiritual sanctioning is thus what sets Sunnis apart from Shi'ahs, who believe that only those whose right to rule has been spiritually pre-ordained should be allowed to rule.

There are other differences between the Sunnis and Shi'ahs, which will now be briefly discussed. When it comes to the realm of *fiqh* (Islamic jurisprudence), Sunnis adhere to four schools or rites (the Hanafi, Hanbali, Maliki and Shafi'i sects), whereas Shi'ahs have only one major *madhab* (sect), which was codified by the sixth Shi'ah Imam, Ja'faral-Sadiq (died A.D. 765). Shi'ahs promote the exercise of *ijtihad* (independent reasoning and judgement) by experienced *mujtahids* (learned theologians or *ulama* entitled to exercise *ijtihad*), and reject the Sunni concept of *qiyas* (deduction by analogy) as the fourth source of Islamic law after the *Quran*, *Sunna* and *ijima* (consensus). Differences also exist between the Sunnis and Shiah's when it comes to the laws of marriage, divorce and inheritance and the practice of daily liturgical prayers and other religious traditions. Twelver Shi'ahs, for example, take very seriously the deaths of Hussein ibn Ali (Prophet Muhammad's grandson) and his followers, who became martyrs on the battlefield of Karbala when they were killed by the Umayyad Caliph Yazid's army. Whereas Sunni Muslims merely revere Hussein and lament his martyrdom, the Twelver Shi'ahs engage in mourning processions, *ma'atam* (breast-beating) and self-flagellation to commemorate Hussein's tragic death and demonstrate their regret for not

having rescued Hussein and his clan from martyrdom. The reason behind this elaborate and masochistic display is the Twelver Shi'ahs belief in its unforgettable instructional impact on Muslims and non-Muslims alike. They also believe that Hussein will act as intercessor on their behalf on the Day of Judgement and will help them enter into heaven. Sunnis, in their more realistic guise, do not approve of the “inappropriate” cult that has been created around the personalities of Hussein and his father Ali (Husain 1995: 8-9).

As a final point in this discussion of Sunnis and Shiahs, it has to be pointed out that despite differences between the adherents of these two sects, as well as the adherents of the four Sunni sects, all Muslims nonetheless agree that they have a lot in common. They share the most fundamental religious beliefs and the devout Muslims of the respective sects also agree that Islam provides answers and guidance, even in the political sphere. This explains why Muslims of all sects are sharing in the Islamic revival (Husain 1995:9).

In the face of a perceived Western threat to Islam, it makes sense that all Muslims should unite. This unity becomes obvious when one looks at the significant (though contested, as will be seen below) impact that Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini has had on the Arab fundamentalist movements, Sunni and Shi'ah, throughout the Muslim world.

### **b) Khomeini's fundamentalism**

Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini (1902-89) engaged in reading a revolutionary message into Islamic traditions. This tendency was also characteristic of a number of other Shi'i and Sunni thinkers. Khomeini sought a resolution to the problem posed by the absence of the *Mahdi*. Rather than leave government to corrupt rulers like the Shah, Khomeini saw it as necessary to invest the means to rule in the jurist. This was an innovation in the sense that the jurist would not only be an expert in religious law, but would act as a designate of God and the Imams in both religious and political affairs. A single jurist, possessing the necessary knowledge and moral rectitude, would therefore rise to the position of “supreme jurist”, holding authority over the people. In practice, under Khomeini, the supreme jurist acquired absolutist powers (Ismail 2003: 592-593). As Ayubi (1991: 151) puts it, the logical conclusion of Khomeini's theory of the guardianship of the supreme jurist is that this guardianship will be absolute, even if it is in conflict with the *Sharia's* stipulations. The government (not the *Sharia*) is thus supreme, similarly it is the state (not the ideology) that determines how people are to lead their lives.

Although the supreme jurist's rulership is defined and justified by religious values and necessities, its absolutist nature lends itself to a possible abuse of power. Though this may be seen as a way of realising God's sovereignty in the confines of an Islamic state, it may be equally dangerous to give too much power to one single interpreter of God's will, who may be prone to abuse it.

Another aspect of Khomeini's rulership by a single jurist is the role of the *ulama* and more specific the *mujtahids* (experts in the interpretation of Islamic law) who are given sole rights to interpret the law by the Usuli school (established in the mid-eighteenth century and dominant since the mid-nineteenth century). Prominent *mujtahids* have the task of providing believers with interpretations relating to basic practice. They would, of course, be subservient to the supreme jurist (Ismail 2003: 592-593). Khomeini's views that the clergy should have a right to participate in the political process and to govern are espoused in the lectures which he delivered in 1971 in his *dars-i kharej* (the highest level of classes in the seminary system) which were published as *Islamic Government: Guardianship by the Clergy*. Here he argues (in Fischer 1983: 157) that although a textual demonstration from the *hadith* literature is not conclusive, the supervision of politics by religious scholars is logically self-evident from the nature of Islam. He supports this claim by referring to the examples of the Prophet and the imams and to the joint consideration of a series of *hadith*, none of which individually is unambiguous, but which, taken together, present a clear stand on the issue. He blames the tendency to question the political supervision of religious clerics on "the Jews and the imperialists" who suggested otherwise, thereby propagating the view that religion and politics should be separated, that Islam is not a comprehensive system of social regulation covering every possible topic, that it demands no specific form of government, and that while Islam may have a few ethical principles, it is mainly concerned with ritual purity.

Ayubi (1991: 146) argues that what is unique about Khomeini's doctrine is that it consists of old, dormant ideas which have been revived. What are the features of Khomeini's unique mixture of the modern and the traditional? Khomeini's doctrine states that the large income received from the various financial levies required by Islam should not only be used to "feed the poor or support people with blessed ancestry (*sadah*)". Rather, the money should be used to effectively run an Islamic state with the requirement that the supreme jurist would have to be its head of government. The "logic of Islam" dictates this. It is important to note that by shifting the emphasis from the *Sharia* to the supreme jurist, the latter would be able to define any act of rulership he pleases as Islamic. This also ultimately means that the emphasis is on the political: religious and secular concepts and practices are blended in such a way that an Islamic legitimacy could still

be claimed to the way in which the state is being governed. For example, under Khomeini, although public sovereignty was embodied in the parliament, the latter's legislative powers were subject to approval of the supreme jurist and his council of Guardians (Ayubi 1991: 150-151). Here we thus have a combination of a secular concept, that of public sovereignty, with a religious concept, that of a supreme jurist. The latter's religiosity derives from the fact that he rules as a result of his religious knowledge, and in his capacity as a representative of God and the *Imams*.

### **c) The impact of Khomeini's doctrine on Islamic political thought**

The success of the Iranian revolution was very well received in the Arab world, as it represented a defeat of the unpopular Shah and a victory over Western hegemony at the same time. It also proved that an Islamic revolution was realisable and not just a far-fetched dream. Though the popularity of Khomeini's regime waned as there were increasing accounts of a reign of terror in Iran, and also as a result of the continuing Iran-Iraq war, some of the Iranian religio-political terminology continues to influence the writings and parlance of Islamic thinkers in the Arab world today (Ayubi 1991: 152).

Though the Iranian revolution and Khomeini's doctrine effected something of a Sunni and Shi'ah *rapprochement* on the political and popular level, its impact on Sunni Islamic intellectual thought is more controversial. Ayubi (1991: 153) attributes this to Sunnis trying to deduce the Islamic State from the *Sharia*, where Shi'ahs base the legitimacy of the state as a "political phenomenon", "a continuation and escalation of the work that the Prophet had started at a certain stage of the life of humanity".

This becomes clear when comparing Qutb and Khomeini's doctrines with regard to which functions they envision for the rulers of an Islamic state. Qutb is clear about the ruler merely being an administrator of the *Sharia*, with none of the privileges the leader of a state may usually have. Only when there is no legal precedent in the *Sharia* is he allowed to make a decision, based on the welfare of the *umma*. Khomeini, on the other hand, gives his ruler *carte blanche* as the unrefuted representative of God and the *Imams* on earth. With such opposing views on how a ruler is meant to govern an Islamic community, it is not surprising that Sunni political thinkers have been ambivalent towards Khomeini's doctrine.

'Imara (in ayubi 1991: 154), an Egyptian Islamic political writer, regards the political thought of the Iranian revolution as "pioneering". He has a few reservations though. Firstly, he finds Khomeini uncritically faithful to the idea of the *Imamat*, which Sunnis in general criticise for its attaching a divine rather than human

character to political authority. Secondly, he accuses Khomeini of putting “revolutionary values and progressive objectives into an old and conservative, even a reactionary, container”. (This is an interesting adaptation of the view, mentioned earlier, that Khomeini’s doctrine is a “marriage” of tradition and innovation, and that he reawakened dormant ideas to apply them to the context of the Iranian revolution). Thirdly, ‘Imara is critical of the concept of rule by the supreme jurist and considers this a non-Islamic innovation with strong anti-democratic implications. Finally, he questions its validity for Islam in general, seeing it as only relevant to Iranian Shi’ahs.

Huwaiti (in Ayubi 1991: 155), another Islamic Egyptian writer, is somewhat more sympathetic towards Khomeini and his doctrine. In Huwaiti’s view, Khomeini’s main achievement is that he brought to the fore the fact that it was imperative for Shi’ahs to implement an Islamic government without delay, rather than to shelve this indefinitely while waiting for the hidden *Imam* to reappear. In general, Huwaiti is appreciative of the general religious and political significance of the Iranian revolution and Khomeini’s doctrine, though he is equally aware of its specifically Shi’i and Khomeinist elements and hence the limitations of its application to Muslim states with a Sunni majority.

Thus it can be concluded that though Sunni Muslims appreciate the significance that the Iranian revolution has had for the world of Islam, there are problems and shortcomings in absorbing Khomeini’s thought into Sunni political doctrine. As was explained above, this is mostly as a result of Sunni and Shi’i thinkers having different expectations of how much authority and power a ruler is allowed to have.

Overall, one can argue that Khomeini’s main theoretical contribution was to offer an innovative, if not completely novel, approach to the Shi’i practice of boycotting government on the basis of waiting for the hidden *Imam* to re-appear. His impact is all the more substantial, as his theory of an Islamic state was realised (though, arguably, with limited success). Despite this, Khomeini’s concept of the guardianship of the juriconsult remains controversial, especially in the Sunni world. This could mean that Shi’i and Sunni radical movements may have to pursue their own revolutionary paths – in isolation from each other (Ayubi 1991: 155).

### **3.4.7 Some of the major themes running through Islamic fundamentalist thought**

#### **a) God's sovereignty**

This concept goes beyond the mere affirmation of God's existence. The aim is to assert his authority in the daily life of his creatures and servants. The universe is thus judged to be a single organic unity - this unity mirrors the absolute oneness of God (Choueiri 1996: 22). Husain (1995: 64) elaborates on the importance that *tahwid*, the oneness of God, holds for fundamentalists. Many Sunni fundamentalist, for example, he states, denounce any agent mediating between man and God as *shirk* (ascribing partners to God as sharers of his divinity). In their view, such an intermediary undermines and compromises the principle of *tahwid*. Some of the practices that such puritanical Muslims would undermine are the veneration of the Prophet Muhammad, *Imams*, saints, martyrs and *pirs* (spiritual guides) and the sacrifice of animals, sanctification of water, lighting of candles, donation of money or distribution of food in honour of those venerated with the expectation of special favours. Wahhabism, as discussed above, is the practical application of the strict, puritanical adherence to *tahwid*.

Islam, then is a harmonious cosmic order, where similar messages are handed down to a chain of Prophets ranging from Adam to Muhammad. Without God's guidance, *jahiliyya* becomes the state humankind is forced to exist in. The *jahiliyya* of today is even worse than that preceding the arrival of Islam, as it is characterised by a general lack of spirituality, which turns humans into "brutish animals." Islam provides a solution in the sense that it represents knowledge. Whereas human reason is limited by space and time, divine revelation is universal and absolute. Ultimately, God's attributes – divinity, lordship, omnipotence, omnipresence and omniscience – are dependent on both Islamic theology and Greek philosophy. Though there seems to be an inherent paradox here, namely the combination of the religious with the political. The reasoning behind this combination becomes clear when one looks at contemporary Islamic thought which holds "the sound instinct of man to be essentially religious". Thus, the contradiction is eliminated by means of redefining religion to encompass all aspects of life, particularly that of political organisation (Choueiri 1996: 23-24).

## **b) Nationalism and the Islamic state**

As Lady Bracknell states in Oscar Wilde's *The Importance of Being Earnest*: "Those two things rarely go together". (She, of course, not being well acquainted with anything much beyond Victorian societal gossip, does not use it in the same context). As is seen above, Islamic fundamentalists ascribe to the notion of God's sovereignty, as well as his oneness. This implies reinstating Islam as a political system (something which has already been touched on above, in the discussion of specifically Mawdudi, Qutb and Khomeini's desire to establish an Islamic state). The idea of an Islamic state, governed by the *Sharia*, however, does not correspond to that of a secular state, where rulers implement their own laws and consider religion a spiritual affair or national heritage. Nationalism (and implicitly the idea of a secular state) is thus rejected by fundamentalists as pagan. Another shortcoming that fundamentalists see when it comes to nationalism is that it bases itself on notions of race, colour and language, whereas Islam unites people on the basis of belief and overlooks all other differences (Choueiri 1996: 26).

Husain (1995: 76) elaborates on Mawdudi's vehement opposition to secular nationalism which the latter saw as the enemy of "Islamic universalism". Mawdudi believed that the alien, secular and territorial nature of nationalism would divide and weaken the *umma* by allowing national interests to prevail over global Islamic interests.

Islamic fundamentalists, specifically Qutb, have also spoken out virulently against secular pan-Arabism. Qutb pointed out, for example, that Arabs did not succeed in "conquering kingdoms and destroying thrones" until they started overlooking, for the first time in their history, their Arab identity and started seeing themselves as Muslims. He therefore rejected Arab nationalism on the basis that Arabs had nothing concrete to pride themselves on. God had chosen Arabia as the destiny of his final message, not because the inhabitants there were Arabs, but because it was more likely that the message would take root there, given Arabia's absence of state structures and political coercion (Choueiri 1996: 27).

Thus it becomes clear that nationalism is rejected by Islamic fundamentalists on the basis that loyalty based on ethnicity, race or language, counteracts the uniting qualities of Islam as a religion which overlooks these differences.

If secular nationalism is unacceptable to Islamic fundamentalists, the alternative is the creation of an Islamic state. Ideas relating to this have already been discussed to some extent, though it is worth summarising some of the underlying trends here. Fundamentalists reject the church/state dichotomy, as they believe that a government without the ethical foundation of Islam is unjust and easily corrupted. There seems to be little agreement among Sunni theorists about what an Islamic state should look like. Two major groups of theorists can be distinguished. The first believes that the *Sharia* provides a wide scope of adaptability to changing historical and social contexts. For these theorists, then, a state model is Islamic as long as it achieves the supreme Islamic values and adheres to certain general Islamic principles. In this case it does not matter what the specific character of such a state would be, nor are the specific systems, institutions and offices of importance. As long as the *Sharia*'s ultimate purposes, namely justice, liberty for all, equality, mutual consultation and government accountability are realised, it is acceptable to employ human reason to decide the precise form of the state, provided that the techniques that are adopted to run the state do not incorporate any un-Islamic values (Taji Fakouri 1996: 36).

Another group of theorists has a more rigid definition of the *Sharia* as "a comprehensive set of norms and values regulating human life down to the smallest detail". This definition implies that there is a more or less rigidly defined archetypal Islamic state form that any modern state that claims to be Islamic must adhere to. This rigidly defined kind of Islamic state should not only strive to achieve the *Sharia*'s general principles, but it should also adhere in its systems and institutions to forms precisely defined by the *Sharia* itself. This then articulates an ultra-conservative ethos, which has as its aim a total separation from Western state theories (Taji-Farouki 1996: 37).

Thus it is clear that there is little agreement about the structure and functioning of an "ideal" Islamic state. Overall, the adherence to the *Sharia*, either in a very strictly or in a less prescriptive manner seems to underline what Sunni theorists have to say about the concept of an Islamic state. The Shi'i understanding, as was discussed under Khomeini's thought, tends more towards the power of the supreme jurist, and, implicitly then, suggests a move away from the *Sharia*.

An example of an attempted realisation of an Islamic state in practice has been the Islamic reforms that General Zia-ul-Haq instituted in Pakistan after he came to power in 1977. A few days after becoming Pakistan's ruler, Zia-ul-Haq introduced a number of *Sharia*-based punishments, including public flogging

for murder, rape, theft, drinking of alcohol, fornication, prostitution, adultery, bearing false witness and destroying government property in demonstrations and riots. This was meant to intimidate the opposition and instil fear of God in the society's criminal and disruptive elements. Other reforms, affecting the women (they were told to dress modestly and cover their heads) and education (it had to comply with Islamic standards of morality and ethics), for example, followed (Husain 1995: 71).

Then, in 1978, Zia-ul-Haq started dedicating himself officially to the Islamic transformation of Pakistan. His ultimate goal was to make the *Sharia* the basis of all law in Pakistan. In February 1979 special *Shariat* benches were established, which were the equivalent of law courts and would decide cases on the basis of the *Sharia*. Each *Shariat* bench consisted of five judges who were advised by competent *ulama* in matters of classical Islamic law. Another function of the *Shariat* benches was to allow cases to be brought forward by any citizen to question the degree to which a law was Islamic or not. This was a big step toward granting supremacy to the *Sharia* over the secular Anglo-Saxon law inherited from the British. Though these reforms did not quite live up to the comprehensive Islamic system that Zia-ul-Haq had wanted to implement, they nonetheless formed part of his effort to incorporate Islam more fully into Pakistan's daily life through a series of sociocultural, judicial, economic and political reforms (Husain 1995: 71).

George (1996: 72) points out an obstacle to the realisation of Islamic statehood that is often overlooked by Islamic fundamentalists. This is the fact that the international state system is the embodiment of perfect secularisation. Within Muslim states, fundamentalists aim to implement the *Sharia*, thereby replacing the secular legal system. On the international level, however, states are corporate, legal personalities and are therefore expected to conform completely to the international system's purely secularist principles. All religion has been eliminated, which means that the other states in the world would not look kindly on states run by the *Sharia*, a legal order based on divine law. The creation of an Islamic state is for the moment then a sheer impossibility, as the Islamic system and the secular are mutually exclusive. Therefore the problem of establishing an internal Islamic order in a Muslim state is augmented, as the only option would be to replace the present world order with an alternative Islamic one – *pax Islamica*.

Though apparently there have been relatively few reactions by Islamic fundamentalists to the secularisation of the modern international order, Khomeini came up with some ideas on the concept of the *pax Islamica*. This new order, according to Khomeini, would only begin in its full and final form on the *Mahdi*'s return to

earth. Until then, the world is locked in a bitter and nearly interminable struggle between the oppressors and the oppressed. Though this, on a superficial reading, seems equivalent to the traditional Islamic division of the world into *dar-al-harb* and *dar-al-Islam*, Khomeini does not equate the oppressed with Muslims only. Equally, the oppressors are not only unbelievers. Instead, the oppressors, in Khomeini's view, are the world's political and economic exploiters, who can range from the rich upper classes or regimes in Muslim states to Western states exploiting the developing world and its populations. Similarly, the category of the oppressed does not only refer to economically and politically suppressed Muslims, but includes all of the Third World (as it was still referred to in Khomeini's time). Oppression, then, also carries an element of exploitation, and so, the term includes political oppression, socio-economic deprivation and exploitation and finally those circumstances that limit an individual's cultural and educational development. What does this struggle look like and what are the chances of the *pax Islamica* being realised? Khomeini talks of an ostensibly peaceful revolutionary struggle (though there should be at least an element of doubt about this). Although the conversion to the envisaged Islamic order would then apparently not take place according to the *Sharia*'s provisions for warfare and truce, in other words, an armed *jihad*, it is nonetheless to be expected that, once established, the order would be structured according to purely Islamic laws and principles. It is, however, highly questionable whether such an overthrow could take place, especially given the West's economic and military dominance of the world. Thus, an Islamic world order, regulated exclusively by Islamic laws and principles does not seem feasible for the moment (George 1996: 83).

From the above discussion it thus becomes clear that nationalism (and implicitly secularism) and the notion of an Islamic state are incompatible. Whereas nationalism differentiates between people on the basis of characteristics such as colour or language, Islam treats all Muslims as equals. Governments in secular states enforce "man-made" laws, whereas an Islamic state would adhere to the notion of God's sovereignty and would implement this by making the *Sharia* its legal code. This inherent tension between secularism and the realisation of an Islamic state is then also evident when one looks at the purely secular character of the international system of states. The only way in which Islamic states could fully exist, would be if an Islamic world order, based on Islamic laws and principles, were to come into existence. For the moment, the realisation of such an order seems to be an impossibility.

### c) The five *faraidh* and *ijtihad*

Islamic fundamentalists zealously promote the obligatory practice of the five *faraidh* (pillars of Islam), namely *shahadah* (confession of the faith), *salat* (ritual prayers), *sawm* (fasting during Ramadan), *zakat* (payment of alms to the poor) and *haj* (pilgrimage to Mecca and Medina) (Husain 1995: 72). Qutb focused on the specific features of Islam as a political system, namely its focus on social solidarity, mutual obligations and security. The religious tax, known as *zakat*, has the aim of eliminating poverty and economic misery, making the Islamic economic system an *enlightened* form of capitalism. Similarly, Mawdudi saw *zakat* as a way of eradicating extravagance in spending, hoarding and accumulation (Choueiri 1996 25).

Another characteristic of Islamic fundamentalists is their adherence to the dynamic notion of *ijtihad* and their rejection of the dogma of *taqlid*. While *taqlid* entails blind and unquestioning adherence to the legal rulings (of one or more schools of Islamic jurisprudence), *ijtihad* involves Muslims striving to exert themselves intellectually in order to draw independent conclusions and judgements on legal and other issues with the assistance of the *Quran* and the *Sunna* (Husain 1995: 73).

Most Muslims wholeheartedly agree with Shah Waliullah (1702-1762), a Muslim fundamentalist and one of the greatest Islamic revivalists on the Indian subcontinent, who argued that the major cause for Muslim rule in the world was that traditionalists had stopped using *ijtihad*, and instead chose to adhere to *taqlid* (Husain 1995: 74).

### d) Leadership and *jihad*

Contemporary Islamic fundamentalist thought gives a pivotal function to political struggle and power. Qutb, Khomeini and Mawdudi all placed a great deal of emphasis on the question of leadership. Where Qutb called for the emergence of “a Muslim vanguard”, composed of resolute individuals and turning itself into a “living organism”, Khomeini focused on recruiting a corps of young clerics and students who would dedicate their lives to political action. In the Islamic Republic of Iran, representatives of religion would have a permanent role, whereas the jurist would have absolute powers. Mawdudi saw the question of leadership as more important than all other political issues. His aim was to have a pious God-fearing elite in power, which would impart its virtues to various sectors of the population. In order to achieve this, a well-organised, self-

disciplined, hardened group that relied on faith and material power would have to be formed to overcome the enemies of Islam. Mawdudi's idea, later adopted by Qutb, was to form an "International Revolutionary Party" to wage *jihad* against tyrannical governments to bring about an Islamic revolution (Choueiri 1996: 27-29).

Muslims would have to treat the world as having been plunged into a constant state of war, made up of two distinct spheres *dar-al harb* and *dar-al Islam*. The first includes every country in which the legal judgements of Islam are applied; as long as the leaders in those countries are Muslim and adhere to Islamic law and principles, conversion is not required. The second sphere refers to those countries where Islamic law is not applied, irrespective of what rulers or inhabitants may claim. In the *dar-al Islam*, property, life and the public order are sacred and will be protected according to Islamic law. Similarly, full employment would be guaranteed and financial help given to disadvantaged members. Anyone who violates the public order would be treated as a criminal deserving the severest punishment. The *dar-al harb*, on the other hand, would be treated as an open territory, Muslims would be free to conquer. Its inviolability would not be guaranteed, unless it signed a treaty with the *dar-al Islam* for a brief and prescribed period. Qutb was well aware of the fact that this dichotomy has become obsolete in the contemporary world as no Islamic government exists anywhere in the world. Consequently, the entire world has become a Land of War for any true Muslim. In terms of *jihad*, this would have to be waged on a spiritual, financial and military level, though the highest and most honourable aspect would be engaging in military *jihad* (Choueiri 1996: 30-31).

Khomeini, as has already been discussed earlier, was not as precise as Qutb or Mawdudi about his definition of a *jihad*. He simply contended that political authority in Islam belonged to the jurists and that all other forms of government were therefore illegitimate. He believed that this straightforward message would create its own momentum and mobilise millions so that eventually the Shah and the two Satanic powers, the United States and the Soviet Union, would falter (Choueiri 1996: 31-32). This theory proved to be realistic, as the Islamic revolution in Iran did succeed in overthrowing the Shah's regime.

Radical and fundamentalist views in both intellectual and practical terms fail to come to terms with contemporary thought and offer few solutions for the problems faced by Muslims. Though they inevitably face marginalisation among Muslim communities that seek genuine workable answers to their problems, this does not mean that in the interim their ideas may not appeal to embittered and frustrated Muslims. Thus,

these views could become the vehicle for their grievances and expression of political impotence, eventually leading to potentially serious violence. Some conservatives argue that it is their duty to struggle against the liberal formulations of Islam that reformists and many Westerners propose, insisting that the only way for Islam and the *umma* to prosper is if they closely adhere to the fundamentals of Islam and oppose the modernist, secularising and globalising trends of the world that are designed to weaken Islam. Furthermore, they ask whether it is appropriate for religion to strive to conform to the realities of contemporary Western societies, if those societies are perceived to be morally degenerate or failing (Fuller 2003: 53-54).

Now that some of the key Islamic fundamentalists have been mentioned and the characteristics of Islamic fundamentalism have been discussed in detail, it becomes necessary to look at the other categories of Islamic revivalists.

### **3.5 ISLAMIC TRADITIONALISTS**

#### **3.5.1 Some of the major themes running through Islamic traditionalist thought**

Islamic traditionalists form the second category of Islamic revivalists. They are often drawn from the ranks of the devout and learned *ulama* and are therefore typically Islamic scholars. It is incorrect to equate traditionalists with fundamentalists, merely because both are religiously conservative and disapproving of the West. To do so would be to misunderstand and misrepresent Islam and Islamic revivalism (Husain 1995: 80).

Fuller (2003: 47) argues that traditionalists basically accept Islam as it has evolved historically in each local culture. This also means accepting pre-Islamic influences in the daily practice of faith, as long as these are not openly anti-Islamic in character. Strictly speaking, traditionalists cannot be considered Islamists in that they have no specific agenda of political change and generally accept existing political authority as a reality of life. As Voll points out, the traditionalists seek to “hold the lid down on too rapid change” and present a force of conservation and preservation, as well as a form of cultural and community coherence and continuity in times of turmoil. This does not mean, however, that political involvement is totally out of the question. When necessary, traditionalists will play their part in keeping Islam alive.

Below follows a brief discussion of some of the major characteristics of Muslim traditionalists

**a) Medieval Islamic traditions**

Whereas fundamentalists oppose and suppress the traditions and practices of periods subsequent to that of classical Islam and label them “un-Islamic”, traditionalists conserve and preserve the Islamic beliefs, customs and traditions practiced both during the classical period of Islam and in subsequent Islamic periods. Traditionalists believe that it is important that Muslims do not only see Islam as “a set of abstract and utopian principles”, but that they view it as a comprehensive and living belief system that interacts with historical and cultural traditions. If one weakens traditions, they argue, one also suppresses a popular form of devotion of the Muslim majority. “Folk Islam” or “popular Islam”, in the form of Sufism, mysticism and numerous local and regional customs and traditions, then, is tolerated by traditionalists as a healthy expression of religion. They see anything traditional as appropriate to Islam (Husain 1995: 80-83).

**b) General apolitical pacifism**

Another difference between fundamentalists and traditionalists is their attitude towards political action. When fundamentalists are not in power, they often play the part of an aggressive opposition. Traditionalists, however, do not like political activism and generally see themselves as detached, apolitical scholars, teachers and preachers. Because of this non-violent and apolitical attitude, it is often the case that traditionalists are co-opted by Muslim regimes to support the status quo. There is no guarantee, however, that traditionalists will keep quiet during times of political upheaval. An example is the Islamic Revolution in Iran, where the traditionalist *ulama* joined the anti-Shah opposition, which eventually toppled the Pahlavi regime (Husain 1995: 84).

**c) Taqlid**

As opposed to fundamentalists, most Sunni traditionalists reject *ijtihad* (which encourages independent thought in legal matters) and accept the dogma of *taqlid* (unquestioning conformity to prior legal rulings). The reason for this is that traditionalists believe that *ijtihad* is a form of attack on traditional values and practices and therefore undermines Islam (Husain 1995: 90).

#### d) **Fatalism**

Traditionalists, like all Muslims, believe that God is omnipotent, omnipresent, just and merciful. A person is no more than an *abd* (obedient servant) of God and God retains absolute sovereignty over his creation. His commands are always just and right and all determinations of rights and wrong are embodied in the *Quran*. In taking these beliefs to the logical extreme, many traditionalists believe that people do not have the right to take a stand against God's will. Rather, they have to submit to it fully – hence their fatalistic attitude. Fundamentalists do not agree with this notion. They believe that God expects people to fight injustice, thus laying the foundation for *jihad*, *ijtihad* and political and social activism. While fundamentalists also adhere to the ultimate authority of God, they do believe that God gave people free will – the right to choose between right and wrong, belief and disbelief. It is important to realise, however, that when Islam is being attacked or when a strong Islamic revival is in progress, traditionalists will not stand idly by, but will protect and defend the *umma* from aggression (Husain 1995: 91-93).

#### e) **Anti-modernisation**

Traditionalists, though extremely well-versed in Islamic law and history, are often naive, if not ignorant, when it comes to modern natural and social sciences. Should they be exposed to modern scientific theories, they will automatically accept or reject these on the basis of how they correspond to the *Quran* and the *Sunna*. Traditionalists are also generally unaware of the complexities, institutions and processes of modern governments and international relations in an interdependent world. They do not perceive this as a shortcoming, though. Rather, they are convinced that Islam is the perfect religion and that it contains all truths that are necessary to help resolve the internal crises and external threats facing Muslim societies throughout the world (Husain 1995: 93).

Despite other differences with the fundamentalists, traditionalists are strongly opposed to modernisation, secularisation and Westernisation, all of which they see as the equivalent of the *dar al-harb*, and a serious threat to the very foundations of Islam. This explains the demands for an educational system focusing predominantly, if not exclusively, on Islamic disciplines. In the legal sphere, traditionalists and fundamentalists both demand an Islamic constitution based on the *Quran*, *Sharia* and *Sunna*, while when it

comes to economic matters, the institution of Islamic taxes is strictly advocated. Socially, among other demands, the segregation of the sexes is promoted, and related to this, women are enjoined to adopt *pardah* (veiling and segregation) (Husain 1995: 94).

Traditionalist then are reluctant to adapt Islam to the contemporary era, as they feel that Islam cannot and should never change, as it has been founded on God's comprehensive and immutable words and laws. They also disagree with Muslims who condemn them for their stagnant approach, as they believe that the decline of the Muslim world should not be blamed on the immutability of the traditionalists, but has to do with the fact the Muslims have not steadfastly followed their religion (Husain 1995: 94).

### **3.6 ISLAMIC MODERNISTS**

#### **3.6.1 Some of the major themes running through Islamic modernist thought**

As opposed to traditionalism and fundamentalism, modernists sincerely try to reconcile differences between traditional religious doctrine and secular scientific rationalism, between unquestioning faith and reasoned logic and between the continuity of Islamic tradition and modernity (Husain 1995: 95). As Ismail (2003: 579-580) elaborates, Islamic modernists at the turn of the twentieth century were also very much concerned with the problem of civilisational stagnation and wished to articulate a renaissance project in reaction to the encounter with the West in the modern period. The key questions involved here were the causes of deterioration and backwardness of Muslim communities, as well as which conditions were necessary for achieving progress. This culminated in an attempt to reconcile Islam and modernity.

##### **a) *Itjtihad* and reform of Islamic thought and practice**

Modernists, like fundamentalists, strongly disagree with the Sunni traditionalist belief in the dogma of *taqlid* (unquestioning conformity to prior legal rulings). The modernists believe that the primary reason for the decline of the Islamic culture and power has been the result of the inhibition of independent, creative and critical thought, as well as the lack of vigorous discussion of Islamic laws and issues. This boils down to a belief that dynamic change in Islam is not only possible, but, more importantly, desirable. Therefore, according to most modernists, Islamic laws should be carefully revised in order to have sufficient flexibility

and adaptability to incorporate modern political, social, economic, cultural and legal conditions (Husain 1995: 95-96).

Related to the modernist view of a need to adapt Islamic laws and practices to modern conditions is the desire of modernists to bring together the West and the East, both scientifically and religiously. According to Moussalli (1999: 33), the modernists should be credited for their open-mindedness and for Islamising essential concepts such as democracy and pluralism. He argues that the revival of the intellectual atmosphere in the modern world is due to the efforts of the modernists and their underlying belief that Islam and the West are compatible.

Fuller (2003: 54) elaborates on this point. A modernist and pluralist Islamist approach accepts the near-universal values of democracy, human rights, pluralism and vibrant civil society as fully compatible with Islam and inherent in Islam's own original multiculturalism. The problem was that it was impossible for these values to emerge in the Muslim world while the theological and power structures were in the hands of authoritarian regimes that interpreted Islamic law to their own benefit. The primary goal of Islamic modernists is to reinterpret texts to create a modern understanding of Islam compatible with most contemporary political values based on the importance of advocating intellectual freedom. While liberal or modernist Muslims ideally aim to generate new political ideas out of the Islamic framework itself, they do recognise that Western experience is worthy of close examination since it already has a solid body of political thinking developed over the centuries, which is accompanied by an equally rich body of pragmatic experience in its institutional application. In addition, they argue that this body of thought and experience addresses many of those problems that Muslims themselves are grappling with and that there is no reason why Muslims cannot combine Western and Islamic thought in order to find Islamic pathways to the same goals that they admire in Western governance.

Another key element for Islamic modernist thought is the concern that modernisation would have to be internalised in Muslim states and that it would not be enough to merely import certain elements, such as technology, for example, and discard the rest, such as democratic political institutions. The Egyptian scholar Mudammad Abdu (1849-1905) was a deep thinker with a more moderate approach. He believed that education, not revolution was the approach the Muslim world should be taking. Although Abdu had been devastated by the British occupation of Egypt, he loved Europe and was quite at ease with Europeans, as

well as Western science and philosophy. He had great respect for the political, legal and educational institutions of the modern West, but did not believe that it would be possible to merely import and implant these in a deeply religious country such as Egypt, where modernisation had been too rapid and had excluded the majority of the population. Instead, he thought that it would be necessary to graft modern constitutional and legal innovations on to traditional Islamic ideas the people could understand. The Islamic principle of *shura* (consultation), for example, could help Muslims understand the meaning the democracy. Similarly there was a need for educational reform. *Madrasah* students should study modern science to help Muslims enter the new world in an Islamic context that they would understand. This would however also mean that the *Sharia* would need to be brought up to date; both Abdu and his contemporary Rashid Rida (1865-1935) were aware of the complexity of this process. Rida was alarmed by the fact that Arab intellectuals and pundits were becoming increasingly secular, sometimes scorning Islam as they believed that it was holding back the Muslim people. This kind of thinking, Rida believed, could only weaken the *umma* and make it even more vulnerable to the West. Rida was one of the first Muslims to call for the forming of a fully modernised, but fully Islamic state, based on the reformed *Sharia*. He wanted to establish a college where students would combine Western subjects, such as international law, sociology, world history, the scientific study of religion and modern science with traditional study areas such as *fiqh*. He believed that this would ensure the development of Islamic jurisprudence in a truly modern context, combining the traditions of East and West, and make the *Sharia*, an agrarian law code, compatible with the new type of society that had evolved in the West (Armstrong 2000: 153-154).

As opposed to the traditionalists, modernists are not ignorant of Western political and scientific theories. Rather, they are keen to embrace those ideas which they believe could be beneficial to the progress and prosperity of Muslim societies. Modernists imaginatively bring together Islamic and Western ideas and have produced a reasonable and relevant reinterpretation of Islamic thought, characterised by cosmopolitan, liberal and realistic perspectives. They also believe that a tolerance for diversity and a willingness to adjust rapidly to a changing environment contributes to the emancipation of individual Muslims and to the progress of Muslim societies (Husain 1995: 109-110).

Something which closely ties in with the need for the progress if Muslim societies is the modernist aim to reconcile the differences between the Sunnis and Shi'ahs. Sayyid Jamal ad-din Al-Afghani (1838-1897), one of the most well-known Islamic modernists, spent his entire adult life advocating pan-Islamism and trying to

minimise the differences between Sunnis and Shi'ahs, while stressing what they had in common. Similarly Ali Shariati (1933-1977) did his most to promote the *umma* and advocate the reconciliation and acceptance of various schools of Islamic *fiqh* to promote unity. He especially emphasised that both the Sunnis and Shi'ahs have valid arguments when it comes to the question of the Prophet's succession (Husain 1999: 112-113).

### **3.7 ISLAMIC PRAGMATISTS**

#### **3.7.1 Some of the major themes running through Islamic pragmatist thought**

What is particular about Islamic pragmatists is the fact that most of them were originally secularists, but by manipulating Islamic symbols and rhetoric, willingly or unwillingly unleashed Islamic revivals both at home and or abroad (Husain 1995: 114). They usually hold positions of leadership in the influential institutions of their country and are wealthy and powerful. They are also well-represented in the mass media, educational institutions, the business community, among landlords and in a variety of professions. Pragmatists keep up to date with events happening in their country and in the world, and make up the most assertive and vocal segment of their societies (Husain 1995: 123). The four most prominent pragmatists, according to Husain (1995) are Muhammad ali Jinnah (1875-1948), the founding leader of Pakistan, Zulfikar ali Bhutto, another important Pakistani politician, Muhammad Anwar al-Sadat (1918-1981), an Egyptian president, and Saddam Hussein (1937- ), Iraq's former leader.

##### **a) Nonreligious Muslims and secular politicians**

The Islamic pragmatists, Muhammad ali Jinnah, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and Saddam Hussein, can all be characterised as non-practicing Muslims, who subscribe to nothing more than a few basic ethical, moral and spiritual principles they derive from Islam, such as equality, justice, liberty, freedom, honesty, integrity, brotherhood, tolerance and peace. Devout Muslims disagree with this and label the pragmatists "wayward souls", or even "unbelievers". It is usually only in moments of personal crisis, or when they find it necessary to conform to social or political pressure that pragmatists would return to a faithful observance of religious practices (Husain 1995: 114-115).

Something that ties in with a disregard for traditional Islamic religious practices is the pragmatists' knowledge and admiration of Western intellectual thought. Instead of viewing classical and medieval Islamic doctrines and practices as what Islam should aspire to, they see these as anachronistic, reactionary and impractical when seen in the contemporary context. They thus wish to modernise their societies along the lines of Western societies and believe that secularisation is not only inevitable but also desirable (Husain 1995: 115).

**b) Separation of religion and politics, yet shrewd promotion of Islamic policies and programmes**

Islamic pragmatists emphasise that it is necessary that there should be a separation between religion and politics in an Islamic society. They are opposed to the *ulama* being anything more than a provider of religious guidance to the affairs of the state and are very wary of the formation of any privileged class (including a priestly one) that might foster elitism and encourage inequalities. The pragmatists' final view then is that the *ulama* have no right to enforce their viewpoint when it comes to economic, political, technical, international and non-Islamic legal matters (Husain 1995: 121). Esposito (1991: 275) argues that another reason why pragmatists prefer to limit Islam to the private sphere of life is because they view appeals to Islam in politics as retrogressive or inappropriate to modern and social realities

Ironically, however, despite their secularist worldview and their firm belief that religion should be strictly private, Islamic pragmatists have often found it both useful and necessary to promote and implement Islamic programmes and policies in order to capture the support of the Muslim masses. This they do with the aim of enhancing their legitimacy, integrating and uniting their fragmented societies, and, finally, mobilising their people (Husain 1995: 123).

Ultimately, however, despite the fact that the Islamic symbolism and rhetoric used by the Islamic pragmatists has spurred an Islamic revival in their respective countries, they have not received the support of Islamic groups, who have denounced them as "un-Islamic" hypocrites (Husain 1995: 148).

To illustrate some of the above characteristics of Islamic pragmatists the case of Egyptian President Anwar al-Sadat will now be discussed. Sadat, who came to power in 1970, unlike Islamic pragmatists in general, had a reputation for personal piety and appropriated the title "The Believer-President". This he used to his

advantage as in his own way he was continuing Nasser's (his predecessor) use of Islam to enhance his political legitimacy. For example, he increased Islamic programming in the media and Islamic courses in schools and universities. In Cairo, a city with approximately 40 000 mosques, the government built an additional 1000 mosques. Also, importantly, the bastion of "official Islam", al-Azhar University, became an object of special financial support, undertaking an expansion programme that included new buildings and satellite provincial campuses. Sadat's control of religion was enhanced by the creation of the position of deputy premier for Religious Affairs and of the Ministry of Religious Endowments and al-Azhar Affairs, which administered religious endowments, paid salaries for some religious functionaries and, in time, tried to control the topic and content of mosque sermons (Esposito 1991: 213). Sadat then, by the late 1970s, had established a close relationship with Egypt's religious establishment, working together rather than alienating this influential sector of society, but still being careful to retain control over its decisions and actions.

By 1974, however, the Sadat government began to feel the strains of politicising religion, in terms of, for example, the debate over the implementation of the *Sharia* and the antigovernment activities of Islamic militants. The government's extensive use of Islam had not brought with it greater control of Islamic issues and organisations. It had in fact led to more discussion and agitation for an increased application of Islam in state and society, something the Sadat government was not able to deal with effectively. Drawn-out discussions in the National Assembly about the feasibility of making the *Sharia* the law of the land, which the Muslim Brotherhood and younger Islamic militant organisations saw as the first and essential step in establishing an Islamic state in Egypt, showed no results, as the government refused to go this far in terms of its Islamisation strategy. From 1977 onward Islamic criticism and opposition to the Sadat government grew, as the president's appeal to religion and support to Islamic organisations began to backfire when they started to take on a life of their own. They increasingly asserted their independence and pressed for substantive Islamic changes, while at the same time they condemned what they judged an opportunistic control and use of Islam by the Sadat government. In response the Sadat government became more and more autocratic, and finally, in September 1981, arrested and imprisoned Muslim Brothers and other members of militant Islamic organisations, university professors, political opposition leaders, Muslim preachers, journalists and writers. In total approximately 1500 people were detained and both secular political and Islamic opposition publications were banned. Similar to the Shah in Iran, Sadat combined autocratic rule with an identification of Egypt with his personality and will, leading to even greater popular discontent and opposition among

moderate Egyptians. All of this culminated in the assassination of Sadat on 6 October 1981 (Esposito 1991: 215-222).

This chapter, then, has dealt with the question of the Western influence on the Islamic world and the different kinds of Islamic political thought that have been formulated in response to this, specifically within the context of the Islamic revival. The aim has been to go into fundamentalist thought in particular in order to provide a background for the study of the ideologies of Islamic fundamentalist groups in Algeria, Sudan and South Africa which the coming chapters deal with.

### **3.8 SUMMARY OF CHAPTER THREE**

Chapter three deals with Islamic worldviews in the context of historical events and developments. Islamic civilisation, which had for many years been dominant and powerful, increasingly became subject to the economic and military challenges posed by the West, which also eventually culminated in the colonisation of the world of Islam. The colonisation process resulted in Islamic countries being exploited economically and only partial modernisation and education along Western lines taking place (thereby excluding the majority of the local population). Over the years, many Muslims have viewed the decline of the world of Islam, which also includes intellectual stagnation and environmental degradation, as somehow being linked to a straying from the path of Islam. This particular view has also fed into the way in which Muslims view the West and *vice-versa*. The tendency here seems to be one of alarmism and simplification, where the “Other” is all too easily reduced to the enemy. Instead, it is necessary to cultivate greater awareness of difference and to condemn racist attitudes.

The post-independence imposition of secular and nationalist ideologies has not brought with it development, but has instead resulted in increased authoritarianism, incompetence and corruption on the part of secular regimes. These ideologies have meant a high rate of poverty and political fragility in Islamic countries; they have also eroded the traditional system of Islam and have created a serious identity crisis. In response to these developments, an Islamic revivalist movement has emerged, which may be defined as the reawakening of interest in Islamic symbols, ideas and ideals after a period of relative dormancy. This goes hand in hand with an increased interest in Islam as a political system and political leaders’ use of Islamic symbols and values as a way of gaining popular support. Globalisation has also meant that Islamic revivalism is felt and experienced throughout the Islamic world.

In terms of Islamic revivalism, four categories of Islamic thinkers can be identified. The first is those of Islamic fundamentalists, who accord great importance to God's sovereignty in daily life, see Islam as incompatible with nationalism and the secular state, advocate the five pillars of Islam and *ijtihad* (independent reasoning), have distinct ideas on the ideal form of leadership in an Islamic state and believe in waging *jihad* against those who threaten or oppose Islam. Such views propose no real solutions to the problems faced by Muslim states, but instead have become a vehicle of expression for embittered Muslims. The second category of Islamic thinkers comprises those of Islamic traditionalists who represent a force of conservation and preservation of Islamic traditions in modern times. They believe in *taqlid* (unquestioning conformity to prior legal rulings), have a fatalistic attitude towards life (in that one should never oppose or question God's will) and can be described as largely apolitical and anti-modern. Islamic modernists, who make up the third category, on the other hand, try to reconcile the differences between traditional religious doctrine and secular scientific rationalism, thereby aiming to revise Islamic laws so as to allow these to fit into modern life. Their primary goal is to reinterpret Islamic texts in order to create a modern understanding of Islam compatible with most contemporary political values based on the importance of advocating intellectual freedom. The fourth category of Islamic thinkers consists of Islamic pragmatists, who, though only marginally religious, nonetheless manipulate Islamic symbols and rhetoric in order to capture the support of the Muslim masses. They have, however, not been entirely successful in this endeavour, as they are often condemned by their populations for their hypocrisy and lack of devoutness.

## **CHAPTER 4: A POLITICAL ANALYSIS OF THE IDEOLOGIES OF ISLAMIC FUNDAMENTALIST GROUPS IN ALGERIA**

### **4.1. INTRODUCTION**

As has been argued in detail in Chapter two of this dissertation, rationalist interpretations of Islamic fundamentalism are limited, specifically in terms of their neglect of the ideologies of Islamic fundamentalists and/or the groups they adhere to. While socio-economic and political conditions, which rationalist interpretations of Islamic fundamentalism predominantly focus on, are useful when it comes to the analysis of Islamic fundamentalist groups, the dialogic model of interpretation posits that it is *also* necessary to look in detail at the ideologies of Islamic fundamentalist groups in order to come to a deeper, less condemnatory understanding of Islamic fundamentalism. The country case studies, Algeria, Sudan and South Africa, which constitute the following three chapters, are thus approached by means of an in-depth analysis of the ideologies of prominent Islamic fundamentalist groups, but will also consider structural (political, economic and social) factors.

Briefly again, as has already been discussed at length in Chapter two, the dialogic model of interpretation rejects the existence of a neutral, objective point of view from which the analyst can observe a particular situation and from which he or she is able to discover “the final and objective truth”. Instead, the analyst is open to new interpretations and insights that can possibly be gained through mutual participation in a dialogue with the ideas of Islamic fundamentalist groups. This ultimately involves a “fusion of meanings”, consisting of the conditions of the dialogue, the participants, the traditions to which they belong and the prejudices which they bring to the conversation (Euben 1996: 36).

A crucial aspect of the dialogic model of interpretation is that although it strives towards a standard of compatibility between the analyst and the understandings of the participants, there is also the possibility of being distanced sufficiently from the participants’ own meanings so that there will be room for critique of how they understand their own ideas and, more specifically, for the possibility that participants can misunderstand or misrepresent aspects of their own behaviour (Euben 1999: 39-41). It is this element of the dialogic model of interpretation that prevents it from being too uncritical and accepting about what the participants have to say about their own ideas. This would, in a way, present the opposite of a Western

rationalist-inspired condemnation of Islamic fundamentalism, as there would be a somewhat too unconditional acceptance of the ideas of Islamic fundamentalists.

The dialogic model of interpretation then forms the theoretical framework of the political analysis of the ideologies of Islamic fundamentalist groups in Algeria in this chapter, and is also used in the following chapters which deal with Sudan and South Africa. The focus is on the ideologies of the Islamic fundamentalist groups that are studied, but also incorporates some of the useful elements of rationalist analysis, for example taking into account structural factors: political, cultural and socio-economic conditions and evaluating their impact on the ideological frameworks of the respective groups.

## **4.2. AN OVERVIEW OF ALGERIAN HISTORY<sup>10</sup>**

Algerians engaged in a serious struggle for autonomy from their French colonists starting on 1 November 1954 when the armed revolutionary groups, the Front de Libération Nationale (FLN – National Liberation Front), was formed under the leadership of Ahmed Ben Bella. The FLN's activities led to a full scale war of independence, extremely bloody in nature, which culminated in the deaths of 300 000 people and lasted almost eight years (Political Overview, Algeria Country Review 2004).

Ben Bella was elected as president in 1963, heading the FLN as sole party. In June 1965 the Minister of Defence, Colonel Houari Boumedienne, toppled Ben Bella in a bloodless coup and in 1975 managed to consolidate the regime's power and enhance his personal status by means of adopting a National Charter which enshrined both the creation of a socialist system and the maintenance of Islam as the state religion. Boumedienne died in 1978 and Colonel Ben Djedid Chadli was appointed as his successor (Europa World Year Book 2003: 442).

The 1980s proved to be a decade of political and economic turmoil in Algeria. Chadli's hesitant steps towards economic liberalisation, which considerably worsened Algerians' living conditions, as discussed in

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<sup>10</sup> Only the most central events and developments are pointed out here to give a general background picture of the situation in Algeria. The rest of the chapter provides a more in-depth analysis of political, economic and social factors contributing to the rise of Islamic fundamentalism in Algeria and characterising the current conflict. The ideology of the *Front Islamique du Salut* (FIS - Islamic Salvation Front) is discussed in detail, and the principal radical Islamic fundamentalist groups are also briefly looked at, within the overall political and economic context of the Algerian conflict.

more detail in the following section, prompted a series of protests, which became more frequent from 1985 onwards and culminated in the events of “Black October”. From 4 to 7 October 1988 as many as 5000 youths went on the rampage in Bab el-Oued, an overcrowded and impoverished suburb of Algiers. The riot spread to many other cities across the country and the army was eventually given permission to shoot on sight. It is estimated that between 200 and 500 people were killed. As a result of the magnitude of these events and ensuing demands by opposition groups – students, trade unionists, communists and Islamists – the Algerian regime set about reforming the state apparatus (Stone 1997: 63-64).

The predominant beneficiary of the new multiparty constitution which was adopted in early 1989 seemed to be the Front Islamique du Salut (FIS – Islamic Salvation Front) which managed to attract the support of adherents of several trends of thought and activism and use to its advantage the importance of Islamic expression which had played an important part in earlier periods of Algerian history (Spencer 1996: 93). Municipal elections were consequently held in 1990, which would usher in a decisive, if exceedingly unstable and violent, phase in Algerian politics. At municipal level the FIS managed to garner 4.3 million votes out of a possible 12.8 million. An even greater upset was caused in December 1991 when the FIS captured 188 out of 430 seats in the first round of the legislative elections (Takeyh 2003: 68).

The FIS’s electoral successes were never to be consolidated however. On the eve of the second round of legislative elections which had been planned for January 1992, the military stepped in to cancel the electoral process. Those members of the military who had prevailed in this decision believed that if the FIS were to hold an absolute majority in parliament this would result in a political disaster and would jeopardise the achievements that the country had attained over the past thirty years. Of course, an FIS-dominated parliament would also signify an end to the military’s privileges, which was another reason why they wanted to rid themselves of the FIS (Stone 1997: 79). Shortly afterwards Chadli was made to resign and a state council took power, thereby ending Algeria’s liberal period and signalling the start of a civil war which was to consume over 100 000 lives and institutionalise violence as a means of resolving disputes (Takeyh 2003: 69).

The new government consisted of a five member High Council of State (HCS) that would act as a collegiate presidency until at the latest, it claimed, December 1993 (Europa World Year Book 2003: 443). Having declared a state of emergency, the HCS demonstrated its hostility against the Islamic fundamentalists by

opening detention centres in the Sahara where up to 6000 opponents of the regime were being held under reportedly harsh and unsanitary conditions. On 29 June 1992 Muhammad Boudiaf, the chairperson of the HCS, who was strongly determined to eradicate corruption and had ordered the release of 2000 FIS adherents from detention, was assassinated, reportedly by the “special intervention unit”, linked to the military. Boudiaf had made himself very unpopular by taking an official stand against the exceedingly high level of government corruption. Boudiaf was thus almost obliged to publicly address the problem, in order to win back some measure of credibility for his administration. This attitude was evidently not appreciated by the military, with fatal consequences for Boudiaf (Stone 1997: 108).

Meanwhile, violence between radical Islamic fundamentalists and state security forces, which had begun when the 1992 elections were cancelled, persisted unabated. The Armée Islamique du Salut (AIS – Islamic Salvation Army), which constituted the military wing of the FIS, predominantly targeted members of the military backed regime and armed forces. On the other hand, the other major actor at this stage, the *Groupe Islamique Armé* (GIA – Armed Islamic Group), was held responsible for the more horrific killings, and specifically also those directed at intellectuals and prominent civilians (Spencer 1996: 94-95). On the political front, Liamine Zérroual, a retired general, was inaugurated as President on 31 January 1994 for a three year term. The HCS’s promise to disband at the end of 1993 had thus been reneged (Europa World Year Book 2003: 443). During August 1994 progress appeared to be under way when a series of negotiations appeared to be heading in the direction of including the FIS in a process of national dialogue. In September 1994, the two main FIS leaders, Abassi Madani and Ali Belhadj, who had been sentenced to twelve years of imprisonment in July 1992 for conspiracy against the state, were released from prison and placed under house arrest. The attempt at negotiations failed, however, as the regime was not willing to allow the FIS to convene a full meeting of its executive council to discuss an official negotiation position. The Algerian government at this stage evidently did not want to deal with any “terrorists” associated with the FIS, in other words, radical FIS members belonging to its armed wing, the AIS. As a result, the initiative was returned to the military hardliners who had always opposed any form of agreement with the FIS (Spencer 1996: 95).

In November 1994 representatives of several of Algeria’s major parties, including the FIS, the FLN and the Front des Forces Socialistes (FFS – Socialist Front), met in Rome under the auspices of the Sant’ Egidio Catholic community to discuss the crisis in Algeria (Europa World Year Book 2003: 444). The resulting

Rome Accords proved to be a remarkable compromise between secular and religious forces. Here the FIS, as well as the other parties involved in the negotiations, pledged its support for the renunciation of violence as a means to achieve or retain power, the rejection of dictatorship, the recognition of the right of the people to defend their elected institutions, respect for both the regulated transfer of power through the popular vote and political, cultural and ethnic pluralism and the guarantee of both individual and collective fundamental freedoms. There was also a call for the non-interference of the army in political affairs, as well as the release of imprisoned FIS leaders (Shahin 203: 134). Unfortunately, however, the military's angry rejection of the accords meant a marginalisation of all moderate forces and an even more pronounced return to violence between the military eradicators and radical Islamic fundamentalist groups (Takeyh 2003: 70).

The military-backed regime made several attempts to consolidate its position by garnering popular support. Presidential elections were held in November 1995. Despite an appeal by the FLN, FFS and FIS for voters to boycott the election, official figures showed that Zéroual achieved an outright victory, attaining 61 percent of the votes cast. At parliamentary level, legislative elections took place in June 1997. Still, however, despite demands by other opposition parties, the FIS had been excluded from participating. Amid allegations of electoral fraud the Rassemblement National Démocratique (RND – Democratic National Rally), which had hastily been formed a few months beforehand to support Zéroual's military backed regime, attained an impressive 156 out of the National People's Assembly's 380 seats. Then, in April 1999, seven candidates were declared eligible by the Constitutional Council to contest the presidential elections. It was suspected that, despite the military's assurances of neutrality, Abdelaziz Bouteflika had the support of the military establishment. Shortly before the election Bouteflika's six rivals withdrew their candidacy following allegations of massive electoral fraud in Bouteflika's favour. Despite official results stating that Bouteflika had won 73,8 percent of votes cast, the credibility of the poll was greatly compromised (Europa World Year Book 2003: 445).

After clandestine negotiations between the government and FIS representatives, the AIS announced a cessation of hostilities against the government. Bouteflika's plans for national reconciliation were embodied in a Law of Civil Concord, implemented in July 1999, whereby an amnesty was announced for members of radical Islamic fundamentalist groups who surrendered within a six-month deadline and who were not implicated in mass killings, rape or bomb attacks on public places. When the deadline expired in January 2000 it was estimated that some 1500-3000 AIS members had been granted a full pardon under the Law of

Civil Concord, some of whom declared themselves willing to aid the security forces in apprehending members of the GIA and of one of its break away groups the *Groupe Salafiste pour la Prédication et le Combat* (GSPC – Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat). Despite the progress made, violence persisted and in July 2000 the daily *Jeune Indépendant* claimed, citing unofficial sources, that 1100 civilians and an estimated 2000 radical Islamic fundamentalists had died since the expiry of the general amnesty deadline (Europa World Year Book 2003: 445).

In November 2000 the regime asserted that 6000 radical Islamic fundamentalists had been granted amnesty, but violent actions by the GIA and GSPC continued. Instability in Algeria showed and still shows few signs of abatement as the potential for and actual occurrence of violence continues to remain high. While there had been a temporary cessation of violence in cities since September 2001, Algiers in particular was rocked by bomb attacks. Violence also increased in the run up to the May 2002 legislative elections, though this was not solely as a result of the clash between radical Islamic fundamentalist groups and the regime. There was also a great deal of instability in the Kabylia region, where massive protests (500 000 people in the Berber capital Tizi Ouzou and 300 000 people in Algiers) had taken place the year before and had been met by brutal police repression. The protests centred on the Berber population's dissatisfaction with police brutality and government neglect in the Kabylia region and included demands for a greater focus on human rights, economic opportunities and cultural recognition. The government made a limited concession in terms of granting the Berber language Tamazight the status of an official language, but this was not seen as sufficient, and culminated in a boycott by the Berber parties of the 2002 legislative elections and continuing widespread anti-government violence. (Political Overview, Algeria Country Review 2004).

Algerians went to the polls on 30 May 2002 for the legislative elections, although these were characterised by a very high abstention rate – 50 percent. The results can be described in terms of a resurgence of the FLN (199 out of 389 seats), a noticeable drop in support for the RND (from 156 seats in 1997 to 47 seats in 2002), the endurance of the Moderate Islamic current in the form of Djaballah's *Mouvement pour le Réforme National* (MRN – Movement for National Reform) with 43 seats and the emergence of the Workers' party at the head of the secular democratic opposition with 21 seats (International Crisis Group 2002).

In 2003 isolated incidents of attacks on civilians and security forces by the GIA and GSPC continued to be reported, although Algerian officials maintained that fewer than 1000 radical Islamic fundamentalists remained active (Europa World Year Book 2003: 447). On 8 April 2004 Bouteflika was re-elected as President of Algeria with 85 percent of the vote, followed by various charges of alleged fraud behind his victory. In his speech concerning the plans for his new five year term, Bouteflika said that the focus should be shifted to the economy now that radical Islamic fundamentalist activity had, according to him, been reduced to “a few pockets of resistance”. He also noted, however, that links had been established between the radical Islamic fundamentalist groups and international terrorist organisations, and that the fight would have to continue (Meftahi 2004).

### **4.3 WHY PEOPLE TURNED TO ISLAMIC FUNDAMENTALISM**

“Algeria’s modern history is one of excesses. The colonial period was unusually harsh, the war of independence was particularly costly, the nationalisation of the economy was especially far-reaching after independence, the insistence on one-party rule was initially unwavering, and the projects for industrialisation were overly ambitious” (Pierre & Quandt 1995: 132). This quote gives an idea of the economic, political and social turmoil Algerians have had to experience throughout their history. It now becomes necessary to delve into some of the factors alluded to above and also to examine the rise of Islamic fundamentalist activism so as to better grasp the appeal that the FIS, arguably Algeria’s historically and politically most significant Islamic fundamentalist group, and its ideology held for a substantial portion of the Algerian electorate. A discussion of these structural factors will be followed by a thorough and critical analysis of the FIS’s ideology along the lines of the dialogic model of interpretation. The ideology of the FIS, whose rise, development and significance has been followed and documented in detail by various authors on the subject of Algeria, forms the central focus of this chapter. The ideologies of the radical Islamic fundamentalist AIS, GIA and GSPC, on which only limited information is available due to the often uncoordinated and scattered activities of the groups’ various cells, will be discussed thereafter within the political and economic context (thus again underlining the importance of taking into account structural factors) of the Algerian conflict as a whole.

Algerians, under the French administration, were discriminated against specifically on the grounds of being Muslims. It is particularly ironic that the French, though they have equated citizenship with nationhood and

have advocated the principles of liberty, equality and fraternity since the time of the French Revolution, denied the majority of Algerians the right to citizenship, without which they effectively had no political representation. The main problem was that to acquire citizenship one had to make a declaration of intent to belong to the nation of France and this would mean having to abandon one's personal religious status as a Muslim (Adamson 1998: 53). This effectively meant that only 2500 Muslims acquired citizenship between 1865 and 1934 (Adamson 1998: 55).

Thus it is not surprising that the majority of Algerians, having been deprived of political representation for so long and having had their religious status threatened by the French secular colonialist regime, should embrace the FLN's calls for a war of independence. The FLN's wartime ideology was largely based on Islam as a call to unity and *jihad*. Algerian fighters saw themselves as "brothers in faith" even before they classed themselves as "comrades in arms". Faith propelled them and their reliance on their belief that "God is Great" and their Islamic courage, which meant that they were prepared to die for their cause, were greater than any philosophy based on a left-wing model of revolutionary warfare would have been (Derradji 2002: 76-77). Equally important was the support of the Algerian population who saw it as their common objective to promote national independence for Algeria and their individual freedom. Linked to this was a love of the motherland, an integral part of the Islamic faith. Thus, providing support to the liberation army meant fighting the French infidels and fulfilling one's Islamic duty. Islam, as a dynamic force during war, was perceived as a fundamental component in the formation of the personality of the Algerian people (Derradji 2002: 78). Islam as a mobilising factor was thus used to great effect by the FLN during the war of independence. Particularly, an appeal was made to Algerians to recapture the importance of Islam in Algerian society, something which the French colonial administration had deliberately ignored.

Subsequently, however, Algerian presidents went back to undermining the status of Islam in Algerian politics and society. Boumedienne attempted a fusion between socialism, nationalism and Islam, thereby trying to moderate the cultural conflict between Francophones and Arabophones. The idea was to build a new Algerian identity based on Arab and Islamic roots, but within a secular context (Dekmejian 1995: 205). The problem here was that "Islamic socialism" owed little to either Islam or socialism and failed at both. Ultimately, the population was alienated by the government's intense focus on the Western ideology of socialism as an engine for rapid development, while Islam, though being advocated as a common reference point for both the regime and the population, did not receive the same degree of attention (Stone 1997: 149).

The regime thus monopolised Islam and also limited the activities of non-political Islamic political groups such as al-Qiyam<sup>11</sup> and Ahl al Da'wah. In an attempt to Arabise society, Egyptian Islamist teachers and clerics who had sought refuge from Nasser's persecution of the Muslim Brethren were imported. As such teaching was pursued in an Islamic, rather than secular context, however, what began as Arabisation in the 1960's had transformed into grass-roots political Islamic political action by the 1980s (Dekmejian 1995: 205-206).

Chadli's open rejection of Boumedienne's policies and his simultaneous unravelling of Algeria's socialist institutions created a policy vacuum of which the Islamic fundamentalists could take full advantage: in the absence of any other political alternative, they became the fastest-growing and most dynamic political movement in Algeria in the 1980s. The younger generation especially had begun to resent the government and its imported ideologies, as these had failed to realise the ambitious promises that had been made since independence had been attained<sup>12</sup> (Stone 1997: 155). Also, those who had received their education in Arabic had little chance of finding employment in the French speaking production and administrative sectors, something which contributed to the young people's anger and resentment at the state (Sonkosi 1998: 202). One important way in which Islamic fundamentalists spread their influence was by means of making use of mosques to discuss the wider issues facing Algeria, an activity which began to supplant normal forms of preaching. It was not until 1980, however, that the various Islamic fundamentalist-orientated factions started merging into something resembling an organised movement (Stone 1997: 161).

The Chadli government began its first major crackdown against Islamic fundamentalists in reaction to increasing attacks on women wearing Western dress and confrontations on university campuses between pro Islamic fundamentalist and pro Marxist students (Dekmejian 1995: 206). In 1984, Chadli adopted elements

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<sup>11</sup> Al-Qiyam was an Islamic cultural organisation which had been created in 1964 by al-Hachemi Tijani, Mohammed Khider and Malek Bennabi and had the objective of proclaiming the supremacy of Islamic values over "national-populism". As the first real manifestation of political Islam, it also sought to respond to "colonialism and decadence" and called on the government to impose the *Sharia*. Al-Qiyam also called for the state to enforce Islamic customs, such as the closure of shops during hours of prayer and occasionally mounted campaigns against "immodestly dressed women" (Stone 1997: 150).

<sup>12</sup> An interesting study was undertaken by Merzouk (1997), who interviewed five young university-educated men from Oran in order to determine why they support the FIS. He concludes that in the absence of efficient state structures and increasingly unstable family relationships young people rally towards activist Islam as an alternative ideology. Young educated Algerians also see themselves and their beliefs as superior to those of their parents as they can read and understand the *Quran* directly and are not reliant on an oral transfer of knowledge and culture like previous generations of Algerians.

of the Islamic fundamentalists' agenda in a new family code in an attempt to outflank them. He also released Madani, Sahnoun and 21 other prominent Islamic fundamentalists who had been detained and later in the same year opened the ambitious Emir Abdelkabar University of Islamic Sciences in Constantine, an institution which has subsequently played a central role in the development of the Islamic fundamentalist movement in Algeria. Although there is no concrete evidence showing that the Islamic fundamentalists actually initiated the riots in October 1988, the unrest provided them with their first real opportunity of influencing the actions of the Chadli government, by means of projecting themselves as the unofficial leaders of the uprising in its last days (Stone 1997: 162).

One of the main reasons for the rise and popularity of Islamic fundamentalism was economic. As already mentioned, Boumedienne made use of a socialist ideology, closely coupled with a policy of industrial and agricultural nationalisation. Although considerable wealth was amassed in the 1970s thanks to the sales of natural gas and petroleum and the Algerian government was able to successfully establish a social welfare system for its population, these successes proved to be short-lived (Sonkosi 1998: 201). As Takeyh (2003: 63) puts it, "the poor planning that favoured underproducing heavy industry, a neglected agricultural sector, and a bloated and corrupt bureaucracy went unnoticed as the petrodollars continued to mask the economy's deep-seated structural flaws". In the 1980s, when the oil market suddenly experienced a serious decline, the regime was faced with an enormous foreign debt, diminished revenues, as well as a population who was seriously disillusioned by the failures of state socialism.

The economic crisis which would culminate in the "Black October" riots of 1988 can be traced back to the policy mistakes made in the 1960s and 1970s, but more specifically has its origins at a meeting of Organisation Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) countries in Geneva in 1985, where a decision was taken against the maintenance of low production quotas. As a result there was a fall first in the price of oil and then in the price of gas, which culminated in Algeria's hydrocarbon earnings falling by 40 percent and its foreign debt surpassing \$24 billion. In reaction the regime, which refused to default on its debt obligations, introduced a wide ranging austerity package. It was forced to reduce subsidies on foodstuffs, had to order inefficient co-operative farms to sell off land, drastically cut back on imports and impose a freeze on wages (Stone 1997: 66). The government also moved towards liberalisation and deregulation which entailed the cancellation of many social-welfare services. Both the urban working class and the poor suffered under these measures and resentment grew with the increasing gap between rich and poor (Takeyh

2003: 66). While ordinary Algerians suffered economically, party and state officials were allowed access to special state shops and continued to ostentatiously parade their wealth. It was the practice of corruption, though probably not higher in Algeria than in other Arab states, that particularly disgusted Algerians, who had developed a strong sense of egalitarianism during the war of independence. Demographic factors also played a part here. By 1988 the Algerian population had doubled to around 23 million and as approximately 65 percent of Algerians were younger than 25, this proved an immense strain for the country's education system and infrastructure. Immigration from rural to urban areas meant that up to eight family members lived in one room in unsanitary conditions. This went hand in hand with a rising unemployment rate and a scarcity of basic food items, due to a depletion of the rural population, ineffective management and repeated droughts (Stone 1997: 66-67).

In reaction to the economic and political crises, and particularly the "Black October" riots, Chadli embarked on the road of political liberalisation and democratisation. Algerians now had 60 parties to choose from (Sonkosi 1998: 205). Also, while the situation remained explosive, initially benefits such as a relatively free political atmosphere with a flourishing press, competitive political parties and intense debate over the direction in which the state was heading were visible. At the same time, however, the presence of the spectre of economic decline and a prominent military hierarchy uneasy with any changes to the status quo remained. "Algeria's liberal interregnum was bound to be short-lived, as the forces of radicalism would soon be plotting to reclaim the political landscape" (Takeyh 2003: 66).

As already mentioned earlier, the focus on ideology in this chapter, and the remaining ones, is supplemented by an analysis of some of the useful elements of rationalist analysis, namely structural factors in the form of political, cultural and socio-economic conditions which, in this case, led to the rise of Islamic fundamentalism in Algeria and eventually also contributed to the eruption of the Algerian conflict. An economic crisis impacting severely on the living standards of Algerians, coupled with the Arabised, politicised youth's frustration at not being able to find employment in the predominantly French-speaking job sector and general unhappiness with the repressive and inefficient political elite had readied the Algerian electorate for a political alternative. It now becomes important, keeping in mind the importance of an Islamic identity for Algerians and the rise of Islamic fundamentalism as discussed above, to examine the ideology of Algeria's most prominent Islamic fundamentalist group: the FIS.

## **4.4 THE IDEOLOGY OF THE FIS**

When Boudiaf was appointed as president by the HCS, he immediately denounced the FIS for claiming a monopoly on religious belief. His stance seems to have culminated in a belief that Islam did have its place in society, but that there should be a definite distinction between the public political and private religious spheres. “In Islam, tolerance, understanding and modesty can go together with democracy” he announced to the world’s press in February 1992. However, he also stated that “a closed Islam, which harks back to 13 or 14 centuries ago cannot work with democracy ... Islam should not accept extremism. Mosques should be a place of preaching, or rest and moderation. Religion has its place but democracy is a march towards modern society which includes political pluralism” (Adams 1992: 21).

### **4.4.1 The official FIS programme of 1989**

What then did the FIS’s ideology in terms of its political and economic tenets look like in 1992 and why did secularists<sup>13</sup> perceive it as such a threat? The two major themes in the Algerian Islamic fundamentalists’, and more specifically the FIS’s, propaganda were that Algeria had been infiltrated by a number of ideologies that had brought atheism in their wake and the general feeling that the Algerian revolution had been made to stray from its initial path. The solution to these two central problems as perceived by the FIS in particular was to call for the creation of an Islamic state which would also automatically entail being cleansed of the superstitions and impiety built up over the centuries “by colonialism and its instruments within the country”. Islam was perceived as “an inexhaustible fount for references for religion, myth, metaphysics and civilisation” which meant that Islamic fundamentalists had no desire to turn to any other ideologies to supplement their views. Although Western models were rejected, this did not mean that the benefits of science and technology were equally done away with. The uses thereof were willingly accepted. The *Quran* served as the source of the absolute truth that could not be doubted (Rouadja 1996: 71-72). The perceived threat of alternative ideologies and modernity, the view of an Islamic state as a solution to this threat, and the exalted position of Islam in a cultural as well as political context fit in with the general characteristics of

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<sup>13</sup> Apart from ideological reasons why Algeria’s secularists would perceive the FIS as a threat, it is also important to remember the vested interests of the military in the top echelons of government who would necessarily have seen the rise of an oppositional power, especially one strongly denouncing government corruption as the FIS did, as a major threat.

Islamic fundamentalism, as discussed in the previous chapter of the dissertation. These are: authoritarianism, a messianic spirit, the subordination of secular politics to their religious beliefs, a belief in the infallibility of holy scripture, rigid adherence to the fundamentals of the Islamic faith as literally interpreted from the *Quran* and the *Sunna*. They also include a campaign to impose the *Sharia* on society to purge those influences which are felt to detract from or demean the fundamentals of Islam; a belief in the supernatural; charismatic leadership and enforced moralism (Husain 1995: 45). Simplistically put then, Islamic fundamentalism in Algeria arose as a result of disillusionment with the secularist government's attempts at introducing modernity to Algeria, which had resulted in socio-economic chaos and high corruption characterising the political and military elite. This had gone hand in hand with or was even preceded by a perceived drop in the level of morality when it came to social and other conduct.

How exactly did the FIS then propose solving these problems on an economic and political basis? Three central principles form the backbone of the FIS's programme, which was announced in 1989. These include the aim to:

- 1 "Keep to the Islamic *Sharia* and its fair, moderate and exhaustive method, which alone allows the treatment of all questions" and conforms to the divine word.
- 2 "Use all scientific resources in a methodical way for a healthy approach to questions in abeyance and in order to better define problems, to analyse and then resolve them; take advantage of diverse techniques to put into practice the essentials of our activity as it is true that competence and experience are the necessary conditions for any healthy, beneficial and committed enterprise".
- 3 "Conform to the aspirations of the Muslim people of Algeria who wish to advance and break free from the shackles of colonialism for good and get rid of the multifaceted burden of underdevelopment, armed with their faith, strong in their Muslim convictions and confident in God the Almighty". The FIS's proposal is to be put into practice knowing "nothing other than the popular will of the people" (The Islamic Salvation Front of Algeria 2000: 276).

The principles are rather vague and though seemingly straightforward do not go into the finer details of how they are meant to be realised, something which one would expect the FIS's "political plan of action", the next part of the programme, to cover.

The ideological framework of the FIS rests on the fact that the "Algerian people are a Muslim people" whose "Islamic nature is as ancient as it is true". This, according to the FIS, justifies its use of Islam as "the framework and ideological reference point for political action that embraces all aspects of life". In a world in crisis, Islam is proving itself to be the most reliable ideology on which to found a political plan (The Islamic Salvation Front of Algeria 2000: 277). There is thus no doubt that Islam is the ideological reference point for the FIS, based on the Algerian people's adherence to it as a religion and on the failure of competing ideologies. This is distinctly reminiscent of the kind of ideology used to mobilise people during the Algerian war of independence, though in this case the idea is not merely to engage in a struggle against the status quo, but to present a feasible alternative to the secular system in place.

The following section, which overall deals with the FIS's domestic policy, focuses first of all on its political axis. Politics, according to the FIS, is legitimate, characterised by advisory freedom, the existence of co-ordination and a focus on dialogue, with the aim of arriving at "a reasoned, realistic, just commitment and at moderate views along a trustworthy path". Two other important notions are those of the FIS policy being adopted out of choice without coercion, and a focus on *shura* (mutual consultation) to prevent any tyranny, though this is not elaborated on any more. The FIS's political axis seems to be specifically based on the notion of ending any form of tyranny or corruption at regime level, along with opening up the possibility of "equality of opportunity", in other words, appointment on the basis of merit rather than connections on social, economic and political levels. This would also entail working closely together according to the general will of the *umma* and promoting its well being, as well as encouraging the spirit of collective work to exterminate individualistic tendencies and selfishness. Freedom of speech and self-criticism would also be encouraged by setting up systems of economic, political and administrative accountability at all levels along with a policy of informing people and making them feel responsible to the principles espoused by the FIS (Derradji 2002: 263-264).

The above appears to be a moderate view with an extensive focus on equal opportunity and merit so as to do away with tyranny and abuse of power. A strategy by means of which abuse of power is to be countered

seems to be the focus on a collective spirit which is meant to override individual ambitions and inspire a sense of mutual dedication to and responsibility for the FIS principles. This point of view can be understood when placed against the corrupt practices of the FLN regime's political and military elite.

A number of ways are consequently suggested in which the FIS proposes to "correct" the political system. One of these is making political legislation subject to Islamic *Sharia* law. What seems of crucial importance to the FIS is the reform of the military establishment in order to promote the protection of the country and people. Security policy is also to be reformed in order to free it from the taint of tyranny or coercion and to ensure that it conforms to the *Sharia*, while reform of the information sector is planned in order to protect Algeria from cultural dependency and cultural conquest (Derradji 2002: 264-265). While these reforms are to a large extent logical and reflect the need to reconstruct the workings of Algerian politics, certain criticisms can be levied. Reference to the *Sharia* is persistent, but vague. No effort is made to explain exactly what a subordination of political legislation to *Sharia* law would entail and how this would be of benefit to Algerian society. In terms of the reform of the information sector which sounds somewhat like introducing censorship of foreign influences one might argue that cutting off Algerians from other cultures would not necessarily only be beneficial in terms of preventing "cultural dependency and cultural conquest" but could lead to young people's misconstruing the way they see other cultures, specifically those of the West, and result in misunderstandings and prejudices.

Additional reforms include those of the judicial system "by implementing judicial immunity as determined in the *Sharia* law in order to prepare for an environment of divine justice, far removed from injustice and oppression". In addition a review of the voting system is mentioned, which aims at establishing a free and fair electoral system so as to allow people "real participation in managing the state of affairs and getting legitimate representatives in political, executive and legislative assemblies" (Derradji 2002: 266). Again an explanatory gap exists specifically in terms of the reform of the justice system. There is no additional explanation as to what "judicial immunity" and "divine justice" entail, which limits the noble sounding precept of the absence of injustice and oppression.

When it comes to the economic axis, the FIS focuses on the economic dimension as ultimately aiming to achieve the elevation of mankind "and his happiness here or in the after-life". It is with this objective in mind, which apparently combines the spiritual and divine with a mundane matter like the economy, that the

FIS approaches agriculture, industry, commerce and monetary policy. A number of points are listed which the FIS proposes in order to bring about a more efficient agricultural policy. These include using the most advanced technology to work the land, presupposing that the land has been distributed in accordance with the *Sharia*, without any form of nepotism and corruption. In addition, there is to be a focus on “breeding” so as to allow Algeria to move away from importing basic foodstuffs, mention is made of the need to encourage small and medium-sized production units, as well as of the necessity of planning for the country’s long-term needs. Furthermore, it is recommended that the level of the quality of agricultural teaching be raised and that Algeria’s agricultural sector become internationally competitive, though it remains a priority to satisfy local needs before embarking on international trade (The Islamic Salvation Front 2000: 281-283). Although again the role of the *Sharia* is only mentioned in passing here, the suggestions address the neglect and failure of past regimes when dealing with the agricultural sector and offer some valid ideas in addressing these. Of course, further judgement would have to be reserved for potential future programmes of action and actual policies of implementation and their practical functioning.

When it comes to industry the FIS argues that development of this sector is essential for a renaissance in Algeria, but equally stresses that “human values and dignity must not be sacrificed to the machine”. Similarly as with the section dealing with agriculture the FIS programme then moves on to a list of recommendations dealing with the industrial sector. These include encouraging the existence of small and medium-sized businesses in order to reduce unemployment, but at the same time ensuring that Algeria is not reliant on foreign help, which would amount to economic dependence. Furthermore, the importance of teaching is stressed, as well as the development of research plants in order to produce highly qualified experts and technicians in various scientific fields and increase Algeria’s international industrial competitiveness. Collective responsibility is also advocated along with a concern for the dignity and rights of the worker by ensuring good mental and physical health and social conditions. The existence of an Arab and Islamic common market, as well as greater inter-African trade is advocated as well in order to reduce economic dependency on industrialised states. There is also an emphasis on the need to limit state intervention in the industrial sector, so as to protect the workings of the private sector, while at the same time making sure, however, that the private sector does not develop into a monopoly and encroach on public interests (The Islamic Salvation Front 2000: 283-285). Again, there are a number of solid ideas here, which recognise the importance of industry for Algeria, but at the same time see the rights of human beings as equally important. An interesting observation is the FIS’s almost frantic reiteration of wanting to avoid

dependency, be it economic or technological, at all costs through independent research and a trade with developing rather than developed countries. Though this can be explained in terms of a fierce sense of Algerian independence and a desire to protect society from corrupt foreign influence, one needs to consider whether such a policy is actually feasible. The FIS's stance on this particular matter seems to have shifted to some extent in later years though, when in a letter to the US State Department in 1995, it stated its intention to, should it come to power, participate fully in the global economy, to make foreign trade a priority and to attract foreign capital in order to revitalise the economy (Shahin 2003: 135).

The FIS programme consequently shifts its focus to both commerce and finance. In terms of commerce, the focus is on reforming the commercial system by means of the abolition of monopolies and all criminal activities, such as fraud. Emphasis is also placed on the need to move towards the decentralisation of businesses. Standards are to be reviewed in line with the *Sharia*. When it comes to external trade, great care is taken to emphasise that this should never take precedence over internal trade and that any imbalance between imports and exports is to be prevented, even if this means resorting to autarky. Export serves the role of Algeria making its mark on the world market, as well as the ability to “fulfil our duty toward humanity through the propagation of peace in the Islamic sense, of justice, and by the support of oppressed peoples and nations that are victims of colonial policy” (The Islamic Salvation Front 2000: 285-287). The focus then seems to be on decentralisation and maintaining a careful balance between imports and exports. Again, as in previous cases, only passing mention is made of the *Sharia* with no additional explanations. Briefly, the financial sector focuses on the creation of a social solidarity and credit fund, conforming to the *Sharia* and aimed at helping citizens in the case of economic and social crisis. Prosperous Algerians and Muslims abroad are encouraged to invest in Algeria and the banking system is to be reformed to protect the assets of the citizens and facilitate their participation in the enrichment of the country through investment (Islamic Salvation Front 2000: 287-288). Again the emphasis seems to be on a fiercely protective stance when it comes to Algeria's financial dealings, with a preference being expressed for Algerians and Muslims to invest in the country, while nothing is said about Western investors.

Ciment (1997: 153) argues that the basic intention of the FIS's economic programme appears to be a rapid and thorough privatisation of the economy, which goes hand in hand with a hostility to socialism and socialist ideas. Ultimately, the FIS's policy is an attempt to balance the need for human laws and institutions with a reliance on God as the determiner of a just economic order, which leads critics to argue that this

cannot possibly result in a realistic economic programme. The FIS does not engage itself with economic theory, nor does it analyse specific economic problems such as the causes of inflation, surplus value and the like. Instead, economic programmes are based on the notion of individual virtue and a moral order derived from the revealed word of God. As Roy (in Ciment 1997: 155) puts it, “The idea of building a modern economy that would function only through the virtue of the economic actors is an illusion” and because of this, in the absence of virtue, the opposite of the fundamentalist ideal will emerge: abuse of power, speculation and corruption. On a cautionary note it could be argued that the FIS in its 1989 programme does present ideas that engage directly with Algeria’s socio-economic woes, though these, in terms of their focus on privatisation and the need to attract foreign policy, are not necessarily all that different from the policies proposed by the Algerian regime and might not prove more effective than the regime’s policies currently in place.

The FIS’s social policy hinges on the importance on two basic precepts. The first is the right to existence which views man as “the creator of civilisation” and therefore opposes the notion of birth control. Instead, the community must find a way to protect all newborn children and guarantee equal opportunities for everyone. The second is the right to protection and care. It is here where the right to education is of prime importance as it simultaneously instils both notions of right and duty in children (The Islamic Salvation Front 2000: 289). The FIS’s views about birth control can be understood from a religious perspective, nonetheless one needs to critically take into account the demographic situation in Algeria which has led to a population explosion and a vast increase in the country’s youth and the feasibility of being able to care for and provide employment to all newborn children.

Education is seen as very important by the FIS and is, not surprisingly, focused on the precepts of the *Sharia*, including the segregation of the sexes and good values. The ultimate aim is to lower the education “deficit” and put an end to graduate unemployment, while simultaneously finding ways of giving those who have failed academically a second chance to be reinserted into society. A theme already picked up earlier runs through the FIS’s education policy too – there is a strong focus on eliminating external influences contrary to Islamic values and on ensuring that no help from abroad is required to turn out top-quality graduates. Teacher training, as well as adequate financial compensation, is of crucial significance because of the teacher’s additional role of instructor of exemplary behaviour and moral values. Socialisation is also important within the educational system, which is meant to figure as a microcosm of the *umma* as a whole

(The Islamic Salvation Front 2000: 289-291). Again, a number of good ideas are present here, specifically targeting problems faced by Algerian society due to the policies of the FLN regime. As with the other policies, however, there are no specifics as to how these would be implemented. A problem could be seen in the importance that is attached to the notion of morality when it comes to the FIS's educational policy. This opens up the possibility of enforcing one particular and definitive interpretation of what is considered moral, in other words, the FIS's reading of the Islam, which precludes the possibility of other options. Dekmejian (1995: 207) argues that judging from Madani's educationalist background a stress on Islamic education is understandable, though by far not sufficient for the establishment and rule of an Islamic state. This, he argues, also points to the fact that the FIS is far more adept at political mobilisation and philanthropic work than ideological development.

Two points that consequently receive particular attention in the FIS programme are the right to vote and a strong emphasis on the Algerian family structure. The right moral and behavioural credentials qualify "man" to vote and to stand for election, which will mean that he is responsible to God and the entire community. The Algerian family has long been the victim of adverse influences under colonialism and neo-colonialism. Various suggestions are made to help rebuild its importance. These include guaranteeing work for the father of the family, providing adequate housing, making an effort to ensure the return of emigrants, and taking care of the mother who is raising the children. Motherhood is perceived as a veritable profession and should be rewarded with "maternity allowance". Women, because of the important part they played in the golden age of Muslim civilisation in the spheres of thought, literature, *fiqh*, politics and medicine, and because of their crucial contribution to the war of independence, form an integral part of Algerian society, according to the FIS. In addition, women are seen as an irreplaceable force on a psychological, social and cultural scale which is why their potential needs to be channelled constructively to contribute to the development of Algerian civilisation. It is recommended that the faith and good morals of women are re-enforced, that women are guarded from all repression and that the slackening of morals and blind imitation is fought against and that society is enlightened about the crucial role and mission of women. "In fact, Islam was and remains the religion that makes no distinction between the woman and the man, her brother". Provision is also made in the FIS programme for families who do not earn enough to survive, provisions for the elderly and reassessment of the prison policy to ensure that prisoners can one day be successfully reinserted into society (The Islamic Salvation Front 2000: 292-295). The main point of contention here seems to be the FIS's attitude towards women. It is not, for example, made clear that women have the right to vote and stand

for elections, nor whether they are allowed to work, other than in their educational capacity at home. The fight against “the slackening of morals and blind imitation” which the FIS advocates when it comes to women is also prone to misinterpretation and the possibility of abuse, as a Muslim woman wearing Western clothing or asserting her right to work could be accused of being amoral or “blindly imitating” the West.

The little that is said in the FIS programme about its foreign policy can be summarised as a need to uphold Algeria’s international prestige, its moderate position and its willingness to support any just cause and help any destitute nation, within the framework of the *Sharia* (The Islamic Salvation Front 2000: 290). When the FIS 1989 programme was published, the FIS still perceived itself as having a fair chance of coming to power, as was proved in the 1990 local elections and the 1991 legislative elections when it won an impressive majority of votes. It was only after 1992, when the FIS had been banned from Algerian politics that it had to start reformulating its foreign policy and become clearer in terms of its objectives, as well as show increasing signs of reconciliation towards the West. This becomes evident in a 1996 outline written by the FIS which is somewhat more detailed than the 1989 programme and includes a commitment to treaties signed before the take-over of the military backed regime in 1992, non-interference in the domestic affairs of other states and withholding support for Islamic movements there, and finally a willingness to co-exist peacefully with the West (Shahin 2003: 129).

The FIS views the European-inspired state system as potentially unstable and destructive because it is based on interests and power rather than justice. One of the main negative aspects of the West is the legacy of colonialism which continues to persist. While Western culture is not viewed as singularly evil by the FIS, it is still perceived as going through a crisis. Therefore, the FIS is of the opinion that Islam, as a set of values and a civilisation, should be looked at in order to ensure justice, equality and freedom and also to uphold moral political principles at the domestic and international levels (Shahin 2003: 125).

The FIS, in addition, considers secular regimes in Arab and Muslim countries illegitimate and therefore temporary. Therefore, the establishment of an Islamic state and eventually the restoration of the caliphate is necessary for Muslims to reconcile their values with their societies. The basic precepts of this model include the restoration of human dignity through freedom (which is not absolute but restricted by justice), the recognition of God’s sovereignty, the protection of property, the freedom of opinion, belief, thought and opposition to tyranny, the right of people to elect their leaders and hold them accountable and the enjoyment

of equal opportunities, education and welfare. Furthermore, the Islamic political system is based on collective leadership and the collective responsibility of society to ensure pluralism and individual initiative (Shahin 2003: 126-128). The FIS's foreign policy then has evolved to become more pragmatic and seeking closer co-operation with other states, especially in its struggle to increase its international viability as an opposition movement capable of providing a peaceful and politically and economically solid alternative to the current Algerian regime. Its precepts fit in with its domestic policy, based on the necessity of accepting Islam and the *Sharia* as a basis for civilisation and also serve to expound why this is the case, namely as a result of the FIS's disillusionment with Western ideologies and their inability to run societies that are morally intact.

In accordance with Islamic fundamentalist thought, notably the ideas of Qutb, as discussed in the previous chapter, the FIS does not specify what an Islamic state would look like, nor how it would function. According to Qutb, an idea also adhered to by the FIS, the development of a system of rules and regulations only becomes possible once a society has submitted to God's law. Because divine law is the only law that is valid, the government has more of an administrative than a ruling function, enforcing pre-existing rules and regulations, which, when clear, are "beyond human question and interpretation". These include rules related to prayer and worship, prohibitions against usury, monopolies, gambling, drinking and prostitution, punishment of thieves by cutting off their hands, excommunication of rapists and public stoning to death of adulterers. As opposed to a democratic system, there is no political contract. The responsibility of the ruler to the rules and *vice-versa* is mediated by adherence to Islamic law - as long as its rules are scrupulously implemented, the ruler is doing the ruled a great service. (Euben 1999: 80-81). The FIS in its 1989 programme thus makes valid suggestions to address various aspects of Algeria's political, economic and social life that had been mismanaged or neglected by the FLN government. Nonetheless, the programme does not provide concrete measures for implementation of the at times only vaguely enunciated ideas, nor does it give an indication of the political and economic structures that an Islamic state would possess. The argument underlying this "oversight" is that an Islamic society first has to become sufficiently moral before an Islamic state, whose rules and regulations would be developed over time if and when the need arises, can be implemented. This "moralisation of society" was the approach followed by the FIS when it had won a majority in the local elections. Though the changes enforced are in accordance with what Islamic fundamentalists generally advocate, there are nonetheless some discrepancies between the apparently

moderate nature of the FIS programme, as elucidated above, and the regulations it introduced at local government level.

#### **4.4.2. Rhetoric vs practical implementation – some discrepancies**

It is when one considers the limited practical implementation that there has been of the FIS's 1989 programme at the local political level that one realises that the FIS's "moderate", yet vague rhetoric about a society based on the *Sharia* can lead to enforcements of morality that those who had to comply with had trouble labelling "moderate". Roy (1994: 76) explains that neo-fundamentalists, as he terms Islamic fundamentalist groups like the FIS, still very much adhere to the populist "return to Islam" theme but take this onto a new ultra-conservative level and replace a discourse on the state with a discourse on society. The aim furthermore is to create certain "Islamised spaces" or, differently put, Muslim micro-societies, which, once established, serve as "models" for what the whole of society is supposed to look like one day. The main aim then is to implement the *Sharia* and purify mores while the political, economic and social realms are only challenged in words.

This reflects the emphasis that Islamic fundamentalists place on a narrowly-conceived reading of the law as an essential component of Islam, as discussed in Chapter three of this study. A high degree of social conservatism is pursued, whereby the FIS, in accordance to what general fundamentalist practice professes, crusade against prostitution, pornography, the selling or use of alcohol and drugs, gambling, Western music, singing, dancing, wearing ornaments of gold and silver, palm reading, astrology, fortune-telling, fatalism and superstition. The idea is thus to return to the simplicity, austerity, purity and piety of Islam's classical period. This includes praying five times a day, fasting during the holy month of Ramadan, and waging *jihad* against infidels, which for the Wahhabi school of thought, which has greatly influenced many Islamic fundamentalists, include not only non-Muslims, but also Muslims who do not rigorously adhere to their faith. Furthermore, a strict and scrupulous adherence to the *Sharia* is demanded and, by implication, severe punishments for those who transgress it (Husain 1995: 45-46).

There were a number of ways in which the FIS went about increasing society's morality and ridding it of its "sins" during the summer of 1990. The directives that were applied included banning men from wearing shorts on the beaches, outlawing *rai* music, prohibiting alcohol and the operation of brothels and setting up a moral police in places to ensure that these measures were adhered to. Algeria's citizens did not comply with

these new regulations without protest. The town of Bechar came up with a strong letter of protest which centred on the argument that the prohibition of alcohol would ruin the tourism sector and that if not allowed alcohol young people might be tempted to turn towards drugs and methylated spirits instead, which would be even more destructive to their health. The authors of the letter of protest ultimately made the observation that the FIS “is solely obsessed with its crusade against everything that offends its totalitarian conception of life: alcoholic drinks, the condition of women, the mixing of the sexes, singing music etc ... as if the existence of these things constitutes a certain impediment to the blossoming and prosperity of Algeria” (Rouadjia 1996: 87-90). Roy (1994: 80) terms this kind of practice “Puritanism”, which is characterised by the rejection of all distraction, music, theatre and the desire to eradicate places of pleasure and leisure. All that is permitted and deemed acceptable is a return to religious practice and fear of God, which Roy argues is actually rather far from traditional Islam where pleasure is legitimate as long as it does not transgress either the *Sharia* or the superior goals of man, an argument mirroring the quote from Bechar’s concerned citizens above. In addition, Roy (1994: 82) argues that neofundamentalists are obsessed with the corrupting influences of Western culture, another reason why “pleasurable” activities specifically of Western origin may be deemed immoral or corrupting influences. The protective attitude towards Algerian culture, as seen above, plays an important part in the FIS’s political programme.

As discussed earlier on, the FIS programme focuses on the importance of the role of women in Algerian society and also mentions that they are equal to men. There is a definite discrepancy, however, when one regards the treatment of women at the hand of FIS members during their brief reign at local government level, where women were increasingly pressured to wear the veil, mixed beaches were designated where women were forbidden to wear two-piece bathing suits, and incidents of physical aggression against women in bathing attire were reported, though the FIS denied having anything to do with the latter. Despite the FIS’s apparently considerate and appreciative attitude towards women in its 1989 programme, a strong focus on morality nonetheless led the FIS to staunchly refuse to accept a Western value system that on the juridical level grants women more or less the same rights and freedoms as are granted to men. Allowing women freedom is equated with allowing them the right to “take liberties”, which would result in lowering the dignity of men (Rouadjia 1996: 86-87).

Roy (1994: 83) substantiates this argument by pointing out the fact that the women’s organisations linked to the FIS are singularly silent, that the FIS opposes women’s right to work and to vote (something that is

neither alluded to nor clearly stated in the 1989 programme) and that when it comes to questions of personal status (wives, family, divorce) a literal reading and application of the letter of the *Sharia*<sup>14</sup> is favoured.

Brumberg (1997: 16-17) provides some useful insights into why the FIS adopted a deceptively moderate rhetoric in its 1989 programme, focusing on notions like “choice rather than coercion” and freedom from tyranny and undertaking to follow nothing but “the popular will of the people”, while the practical implementation of its version of what an Islamic state should morally constitute at local level did not necessarily correspond to this tone. He discusses reformist fundamentalism, which upon closer examination seems to suggest elements of the FIS political agenda. Reformist fundamentalism is fuelled by a utilitarianism that views politics and the state itself merely as a vehicle for realising the collective moral will (in the form of an Islamic state). This model does not bode well for democracy, as it only embraces liberal notions such as gradual political liberalisation and the strengthening of civil society in order to arrive at a unified ethical order which effectively precludes the basis of forging a “democratic bargain”. The closer this model gets to realising its ultimate goal, the more it threatens the vital interests of ruling elites, thereby hindering a transition to pluralist politics. Ciment (1997: 133-134) elaborates on Brumberg’s scepticism about the compatibility of democracy with the idea of an Islamic polity. The presence of a leader who qualifies to be God’s vice-regent on earth, according to Islamic law, undermines the notion of democracy, as a system of checks and balances would necessarily fall away if sovereignty emanates from God alone. An elected assembly would only have the power to counsel His vice-regent on earth, not to legislate. Finally, how is it possible for those who believe that they represent the will of God on earth tolerate opposition parties? Logically, they cannot.

Brumberg (1997: 18), in addition to his discussion of reformist fundamentalism, focuses on tactical modernism. This entails the selective use of modernist themes to advance a fundamentalist agenda.

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<sup>14</sup> While the *Quran* explicitly focuses on the equality of rights between men and women concerning marriage and divorce, Islamic scholars have in later centuries interpreted it in such a way as to place women in subjection. In addition, the father exercises absolute authority over his wife and children, rules apply which permit a man the right to uncontested divorce, but deny it to women, and the veil has been transformed from a means of protection to a sign of ownership by men. Furthermore, men largely control property and Islamic law largely favours men over women in matters of marriage, divorce and inheritance (Ciment 1997: 69).

When Islamic fundamentalists address political allies who might adhere to a more secularist agenda they will integrate ideas, symbols and themes drawn from the democratic repertoire<sup>15</sup>, whereas political allies with similar views to theirs will hear the undiluted version of what an Islamic state is to entail. This may to some extent explain the concessions made to pluralism and democracy by the FIS in its rhetoric, while the practical implementation thereof, though only of limited duration and extent, indicated a definite authoritarian tendency.

#### **4.4.3 FIS ideology after 1992**

The question that needs to be examined now is how the FIS's ideology has evolved and progressed in the years since its banishment from political affairs. Attention is briefly paid to the FIS's stance at the Rome accords, before moving on to selected statements in interviews with members of its leadership conducted in 1996 and to its recent political platform as announced in 2002. The Rome Accords, which were also signed by the FIS leadership, proved to be a remarkable agreement between Algeria's secular and religious forces (Takeyh 2003: 70). All signatories agreed to the renunciation of violence as a means to achieve or retain power, the rejection of dictatorship, the recognition of the right of the people to defend their elected institutions, respect for both the regulated transfer of power through the popular vote and political, cultural and ethnic pluralism and the guarantee of both individual and collective fundamental freedoms. They also called for the non-interference of the army in political affairs, as well as the release of imprisoned FIS leaders (Shahin 2003: 134). The fact that the FIS leadership agreed to the above principles and put its name to them suggests that it is moving in a democratic direction, a significant observation when one takes into account the doubts about the democratic nature of the FIS as discussed earlier on. It now becomes essential to examine more closely what the FIS leadership itself had to say in 1996 about its ideology.

In an interview conducted in 1996 with Ghemati Abdelkrim and Ould Adda Abdelkrim, two members of the FIS leadership, Denaud (1997: 67-69) posed questions about the FIS, its history, organisation and political thought. Ghemati Abdelkrim said that the FIS did view itself as democratic, as they accept the "ballot box

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<sup>15</sup> The FIS stance on pluralism and democracy is not easily pinned down. Support for democracy, pluralism and power rotation seemed to form a key part of Madani's principles when the FIS was still a legal political party. However, there was always a segment within the FIS that was determinedly opposed to such "heretical" thoughts. Belhadj vociferously opposed democracy or any governing framework that detracted from the religious mission of the state and had the potential of subverting the divine order. In this view it was blasphemous to suggest that God's will should submit to the popular will in the governance of the country (Takeyh 2003: 68).

verdict” (*le verdict des urnes*), the principle of power transfer, the existence of a parliamentary life and a political life, all of which are essential elements of a democracy. Furthermore, Ould Adda Abdelkrim insisted that it is important not to confuse the FIS’s wish to introduce an Islamic state (*un Etat islamique*) with the introduction of a theocratic state (*un Etat théocratique*). The model proposed by the FIS will not be theocratic, but instead its fundamental principles will be grounded in the teachings of Islam. This does not involve cutting human beings off from modernity. Ghemati Abdelkrim added here that their vision of an Islamic state means establishing a civil state based on Islamic principles and the notion of consultation with its people. This would also include an elected president, an elected parliament, an independent justice system and opposition parties. In addition, people should be able to choose their societal project within the confines of a democratic system.

Whereas the views espoused by the two FIS leaders interviewed definitely contain democratic elements and thus mirror what was discussed at the meeting in Rome, references to the exact role that “Islamic teachings” and the *Sharia* are to play in the envisaged Islamic state remain vague. When asked about how implementing the *Sharia* in all spheres of life, including imposing the veil on women could be deemed compatible with the FIS’s support for a multiparty system and democracy, Ould Adda Abdelkrim answered that the *Sharia* itself would not be able to resolve all the problems in a society as complex as the Algerian one. Nonetheless, its application would be naturally realised (*trouvera une realisation naturelle*) in a just and purified society. Furthermore, as the people have been given the chance to choose a particular project for society out of a range of different options, in other words as they have chosen the Islamic project through democratic means, this would also mean that the *Sharia* has been chosen and can therefore not be “imposed”. The minority who has not chosen this particular option will have to wait for the next elections. In addition, the Islamic project is economic and social above everything else and in terms of individual liberties above all wants to educate and to convince. This does not mean to insist on a particular kind of behaviour, but to create a climate to ultimately convince people to adhere to the FIS’s project of society (Denaud 1997: 74-75).

Though this is suavely put and the argument about majority rule making it obsolete to talk about the notion of imposition is cunning, the practices of “educating” and “convincing” people to adhere to an Islamic way of life envisaged by the FIS could quite easily turn into threats and coercion. It seems that in 1996 elements of the FIS leadership still or again advocated an adherence to democratic principles, though these, for several reasons as discussed above, are by no means incontestable. Having delved into some of the FIS’s earlier

proposals to ameliorate political, social and economic conditions in Algeria, this chapter now takes a look at elements of the FIS's Platform for the Salvation of Algeria (*Plate-forme du FIS pour le Salut de l'Algérie*) as drawn up at the internal "Congress of the Martyr Abdelkabar Hachani", a prominent FIS leader who was killed, in 2002.

In its Platform, the FIS points out that the Civil Concord policy has failed and that Algeria's political, economic and social crises have been aggravated instead of ended. Its aim is therefore to end the oligarchic military's hold on the state and society, to give back sovereignty to the Algerian people and to reconstruct Algeria, turning it into an Islamic country, where peace, justice, liberty and prosperity are accessible to everybody. The FIS's three major objectives to achieve said aim are to a) dismantle the system of military hierarchy, b) transfer power to the Algerian people and c) restore truth, justice, peace and memory (Front Islamique du Salut 2002: 2-3).

The FIS's first objective, to dismantle the system of military hierarchy, is to be achieved by replacing officers of the old school with those younger officers who have refused to become involved in the Algerian conflict and are therefore the only ones who can regain the respect and trust of the Algerian population. There is specific emphasis on the notion that the military should remain apolitical at all costs and occupy itself solely with functions such as defending the country against external threats. Military education should be reformed in line with this notion, and there is also a call for all counter-insurrectionist activities which the military has been engaging in to be abandoned (Front Islamique du Salut 2002: 9-11). This objective offers an important rectification to Algerian political life which for decades has been dominated by a military elite, which has benefited from corruption and economic malpractices both before and during the current Algerian conflict. A future political dispensation, if sincerely aimed at uplifting the living conditions of Algerians, would do well to restrict the military's power.

The FIS's second objective, the transfer of power to the people, includes demands for lifting the state of emergency and restrictions on the individual's right to expression, movement and association. The FIS and other political parties should also be allowed to compete politically, restrictions on the press should be lifted, political prisoners should be released and protection promised to Algerian exiles and refugees who want to return home. Those who had the courage to "fight against injustice and defend the choice of the people" should be recognised and rehabilitated, and elections should eventually be held (Front Islamique du Salut

2002:11). Again, the suggestions seem of great importance in bringing peace to Algeria and eventually bringing about a more liberal dispensation. The idea of recognition for those who had the courage to fight injustice and defend the people's choice is rather one-sided and could potentially be problematic, if one takes into consideration the possibility of human rights violations having been perpetrated even by the most moderate of armed Islamic fundamentalists.

The FIS's third objective is aimed at restoring truth, by means of the establishment of both human rights and economic commissions of enquiry to establish where abuses have been perpetrated. The restoration of justice is also envisaged, through the judicial pursuits, judgement and punishments of those responsible, on both the government and Islamic fundamentalist sides, for serious war and economic crimes. Peace is to be restored by means of demobilising all parties involved in the war and confiscating, destroying and prohibiting the circulation and traffic of arms. Here it is also important to mention the FIS's calls for the rehabilitation and compensation of victims. Reports are requested from both the military leadership and that of the extremist Islamic fundamentalists, recognising acts committed against civilians, assuming responsibility for these and apologising for them. Reparation programmes for the victims of human rights abuses and their families are also to be put in place. The next point is that of restoring Algeria's collective memory which would involve declaring a day of commemoration and building monuments symbolising the national struggle for Islam, justice, dignity and human rights and paying witness to the atrocities suffered during the Algerian conflict. Other measures include launching a search for Algeria's 17 000 (according to a source quoted by the FIS) missing people, and finding ways to excavate bodies which have been hastily dumped and reburying them in a dignified manner. There is also specific emphasis on calling in international experts who specialise in discovering the identity of dead bodies. In addition, children at schools are to be taught a balanced version of Algerian history, including the post-1992 period (Front Islamique du Salut 2002:12-16).

Again, some very important points are raised here by the FIS, specifically the idea of Algeria coming to terms with the conflict and dealing constructively with the frightening and contentious issues of war crimes and human rights violations, somewhat reminiscent of the South African post-apartheid experience. The idea of calling in international experts to try and identify thousands of dead bodies, some of who died in the conflict years ago, seems rather ambitious and somewhat unrealistic.

The FIS believes that negotiations are crucial to achieving peace provided that efforts are characterised by sincerity on all sides involved and that its conditions are met. These include a respect for the fundamental rights of human beings, which can be summarised as a demand for the cessation of all forms of human rights violations, the release of detainees and the establishment of expert commissions of enquiry to bring to account all perpetrators of violent acts. Politically, the FIS demands that it be allowed to reunite its leadership, that all militias financed by the government be disbanded and that the military withdraw from the political scene. Mediation is also an option, provided that the mediator(s) are politically neutral. Negotiations are meant to pave the way for a transitional period and a government of national unity. This would then evolve into a National Conference, whose members would be elected by the people and who would have the aim of writing a constitution in line with the principle of universal suffrage. This provisional government would consequently organise local and national elections (Front Islamique du Salut 2002: 22-25).

The idea of a transitional government sounds sensible as this could provide a slow and thorough preparation for elections to take place. The FIS's negotiation demands are fair and realistic; negotiations cannot go ahead without conditions of relative peace and co-operation having been established between the different groups.

#### **4.5 THE ALGERIAN CONFLICT – DYNAMICS AND ACTORS**

The discussion now moves on to some of the extremist Islamic fundamentalist groups involved in the Algerian conflict: the AIS, now reportedly largely disbanded, the GIA and the GSPC. Attention is paid to their respective ideologies and actions, and this is analysed within the political and economic dynamics of the Algerian conflict as a whole. As already stated earlier, an analysis of the ideologies of these particular groups is necessarily more limited than that of the FIS because the often uncoordinated and scattered activities of these groups' various cells make it much more difficult to obtain relevant and valid information on them. Nonetheless, they are dealt with, and this discussion takes place within the political and economic context (thus again underlining the importance of taking into account structural factors when evaluating ideology according to the dialogic model of interpretation) of the Algerian conflict as a whole.

The MIA (Mouvement Islamique Armé), which had suffered fierce clampdowns from security forces and had been forced to withdraw from various strongholds which were increasingly being challenged by the

GIA, was transformed into the AIS<sup>16</sup> in 1994. The FIS leadership enthusiastically welcomed the formation of the AIS, which was determined to present more of a challenge to the brutal and extremist ideology of the GIA (Stone 1997: 186-187). The AIS viewed the chaos caused by the GIA as extremely dangerous and furthermore accused the GIA of having been infiltrated by members of the military in order to commit atrocities which were consequently blamed on Islamic fundamentalists and turned popular support to the government (Martinez 2003: 169-170). The AIS turned its attention to giving an explicitly political content to its violence, of which the ultimate aim would be the re-legalisation of the FIS. A very important distinction between the AIS and the GIA is that the former vehemently distanced itself from the GIA's strategy of all-out violence: "The apostate regime today attributes to the *jihad* certain abominable operations ... These untruths led the AIS to reply that it is innocent of all those acts and has never given an order to attack a woman, to burn a school or a hospital, or for any other operation contrary to our religion." The AIS thus hoped to salvage the image of the *jihad* which had greatly been sullied by the actions of the GIA, and noticeably the behaviour of the latter's local leaders or *emirs* who represent self-enrichment and hatred and therefore tarnish the general image of the *Moudjahidin* (freedom fighter) (Stone 1997: 201-204). Instead of targeting civilians in order to benefit economically, its targets were limited members of the security forces and special forces (Solomon & Swart 2004: 34). The AIS has reportedly largely disbanded, following the Bouteflika regime's Law of Civil Concord which offered amnesty to armed Islamic fundamentalists who had not been involved in major acts of violence.

The GIA was formed in 1993 as a result of the regime's oppressive practices, which radicalised the extremist fringes of the Islamic fundamentalist movement and led to disillusionment with the idea of political discourse (Solomon & Swart 2004: 38). Membership consists mainly of the illiterate and unemployed whose hopelessness and desire for social revenge is greater than any concern about whether or not they are being manipulated (Tahi 1995: 216). Its philosophy is as simple as it is self-defeating. The failure of the FIS to claim power was put down to a lack of resolution in pursuit of the *jihad* and as a number of GIA leaders had fought against the Soviets in Afghanistan the argument arose that armed force was necessary to bring down an "illegitimate", infidel regime (Takeyh 2003: 69-70). The GIA is generally classified as a radical Islamic fundamentalist group which aims at violently overthrowing the Algerian secular regime and replacing it with

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<sup>16</sup> The AIS formed a complementary branch of the FIS structure and was in contact with the leadership, though it retained responsibility for its actions, according to Ould Adda Abdelkrim. While the FIS supported the AIS in its military initiatives against the state and its structures, it vehemently condemns the GIA which, according to the FIS, only knows violence and in this way wants to forcefully install a radical Islam by targeting all sectors of society, including civilians (Denaud 1997: 104-106).

an Islamic state. It is opposed to all gestures of reconciliation and its activities include frequent attacks against “symbols of the state”, in particular security personnel, government functionaries, civilians, journalists, intellectuals and foreigners. Ways of carrying through its operations include cutting victims’ throats, launching bomb attacks, setting up roadblocks and conducting kidnappings. The GIA hijacked an Air France flight *en route* to Algiers in 1995 and is also suspected of being responsible for a series of bomb attacks in France in 1995 and one in 1996 (Groupe Islamique Armé 2004).

As the conflict has evolved, the GIA has moved farther and farther away from its “acclaimed piety” and professions to create a virtuous order, by pressing small merchants, entrepreneurs and petty bourgeoisie for funds and operating well-developed racketeering schemes. Its various affiliates seem to have turned into violent street gangs (Takeyh 2003: 70). This violence is situated in the context of the parallel or *trabendo* economy, which has progressively moved in to replace the state, whose ability to control political and social life has declined after 1988 as privatisation measures have taken hold. The informal parallel economy, which is principally run by the country’s burgeoning youthful population and involves smuggling, initially provided a new mechanism to organise collective life in the absence of the state. It was at first under the relatively organised control of the FIS but after 1992 has been increasingly replaced by violent coercion and has become an intrinsic part of the violence that has swept through Algeria since 1992. The violent workings of the parallel economy, which have included large scale massacres, are especially evident in the peripheral regions of urban settlement and, although they are dignified by their appeal to an Islamic fundamentalist rhetoric, are really largely related to economic benefit<sup>17</sup> (Joffe 2002: 43-44).

It is these activities that Kalyvas (1999) builds on in his attempt to discover “the logic of massacres in Algeria”. In his study he asks why any political organisation would slaughter, decapitate and mutilate hundreds of men, women and children, including babies and, though he admits that the Algerian civil war is a war “concealed by layers of darkness” making it very difficult to find reliable sources, deems finding an answer to this both gruesome and fascinating question important. Kalyvas’s central thesis is that massacres can be understood as part of a rational strategy which aims to punish and deter civilian defection under specific constraints (Kalyvas 1999: 243-245).

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<sup>17</sup> The Algerian conflict has been of considerable benefit to a number of local leaders of the extremist Islamic fundamentalist groups. These *emirs* know that their future lies in the continuation of the *jihād* which alone can bring maximum returns on their initial investments (Martinez 2000: 232-233).

The massacres in Algeria, mostly attributed to the GIA, first appeared in 1996, became a recurrent pattern in 1997 and waned in 1998. The number of victims ranged from ten to 400 and most of the massacres took place in “the triangle of death”, an area of about 150 square kilometres south of Algiers. The massacres typically occurred at night, and were carried out by groups of armed men whose main objective was the systematic killing of civilians. The attackers broke into houses in small towns and villages and killed families in their entirety by means of the most brutal of methods, usually hacking them to death or slicing their throats, using knives, machetes and axes. In some cases corpses were mutilated, houses set on fire and women abducted to be raped and then killed (Kalyvas 1999: 247).

Though a possibility for explaining this behaviour would be by means of the GIA’s ideology, the problem is that “ideological discourse is a fluid and contested field of meaning, amenable to a multiplicity of interpretations: one can derive multiple courses of action from the same ideological tenet”. Also, solely looking at the GIA’s ideology to explain the massacres its members have been guilty of is problematic for another reason. The GIA did not change its ideology between 1994 and 1997, yet there were no massacres in 1994, but a great number took place in 1997. Civil wars rely on civilians as their key element of support. Competing political actors, both incumbents and insurgents, will therefore need to attract and maintain civilian support both by providing benefits (such as land distribution) and sanctions (such as attaching a high cost to defection to the opponent). During periods of intense military conflict, political actors are likely to resort to terror, in the form of well-planned, individually targeted and selective killings, to shape civilian behaviour and reduce the probability of defection. Because civilians value their own survival, they will usually respond by cooperating with the political actor who makes the most credible threats (Kalyvas 1999: 251).

From the premise that killings are not indiscriminate it follows that the victims of the GIA belonged to three groups: a) local opponents, especially members of the security forces, informers, or those joining government-backed militias; b) people supporting competing guerrilla organisations, such as the AIS and c) former sympathisers who either switched sides, refused to help the rebels or were about to do so.

Ultimately, “the goal is to punish and terrorise the civilian populations<sup>18</sup> accused of disloyalty to the holy cause”. Whereas a relative peace (in other words the absence of massacres) had prevailed when certain “liberated” areas were under rebel control, where a mix of consent and coercion was used to ensure the support of local populations, this radically changed when the military aggressively began to reclaim the rebel-held areas starting with Mitidja. Soon afterwards the massacres began, as the incumbents’ return dislodged the rebels but failed to eliminate them and a massive programme of militia formation generated mass defections<sup>19</sup>, which, as already mentioned above, is one of the major reasons for the massacres having taken place. Civilians faced an impossibly difficult choice in having to decide who to support in a situation where neither the GIA nor the military had full control over the specific areas. Openly advocating support for either party meant retribution by the other, and, in the case of the radical Islamic fundamentalists, this very often meant death to one’s entire family (Kalyvas 1999: 254-267).

Ultimately, the point of Kalyvas’s study (1999) is to propose that the GIA’s actions were not irrational or senseless, but in fact predicated upon self-interested behaviour which was perhaps directed more at benefiting from its hold on the local civilian populations than at achieving its objective of implementing by force an Islamic state in Algeria.

Whatever motives GIA members may have harboured in massacring civilians, ultimately the level of violence perpetrated by them reached such levels that break-away groups were formed, among which the GSPC, who did not want to be associated with the atrocities committed by the GIA any longer. This is understandable when one considers some of the official statements made by GIA leaders. *Agence France Presse* in a news report of 31 March 2002 quotes Tourab, one of the more recent *emirs* of the GIA, reportedly killed later on in the same year, as saying that their ideology involves “neither truce nor dialogue, nor reconciliation, nor security, but blood, blood, destruction, destruction”. Full out war is waged by the remaining GIA cadres: “We will continue to destroy their harvests, to take their goods, to rape their women,

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<sup>18</sup> The relationship between the extremist Islamic fundamentalists and the local populations generally moved from a situation of consent to coercion. Whereas at the beginning civilians believed these groups to be an underground version of the FIS and wanted to help them build a more just society, they soon became disillusioned. According to a Rais resident: “80 percent of the villagers were against [the guerrillas], but we had no choice. During the evening, when they came to your place you had to give them money, clothes or lend them your car ... We were living in a nightmare” (Kalyvas 1999: 262).

<sup>19</sup> Militias play a major part in the Algerian conflict and in addition to guarding their villages from attacks they are becoming increasingly involved in full-fledged military operations as auxiliary corps of the army (Kalyvas 1999: 265).

to decapitate them in the cities, the villages and the deserts.” Any Algerian not with the GIA is automatically labelled an infidel and an apostate and hence prone to punishment.

The GSPC is one of the few extremist Islamic fundamentalist groups still active in Algeria. It constitutes a break-away wing from the GIA, formed in 1998, whom it sees as having destroyed the foundations that had been laid by the FIS from 1989-1991. Its attentions officially are focused solely on attacks against the Algerian regime and it denounces violence against civilians. Reportedly, the GSPC has declared its allegiance to Osama Bin Laden, thereby taking the Algerian conflict to the international level (Martinez 2003: 171-173). Internal disagreements over whether or not to negotiate with the Algerian government led to the formation of splinter groups, who had apparently shared the desire of the GSPC’s former leader, Hattab, who was assassinated in 2000, to co-operate with the government. On 20 June 2004 government troops reportedly killed the most recent GSPC leader Nabil Sahraoui (The Associated Press Service 2004). It remains unclear whether negotiations between the GSPC and the Algerian government will take place in future, especially considering that the GSPC has made it on to the US State Department’s list of terrorist organisations.

The crisis in Algeria also needs to be examined in terms of the role that the Algerian regime has played in it. The arbitrary political power exhibited by the Algerian regime is paralleled by the considerable control that the unaccountable elites and army leadership exercise over the economy. A close relationship thus exists between the refusal of the regime to concede power through transparent economic reform, despite numerous efforts that have been made at reforming the economy, and the corruption that inhabits the government (Joffe 2002: 29).

The violence in Algeria – both that of the regime against Islamic fundamentalists and that of Islamic fundamentalists in urban areas – could only have prospered in the context of a state that was essentially dysfunctional. The Algerian regime’s claim to revolutionary legitimacy to mark the arbitrary power of the army has meant that in the post-1992 period the fundamental interests of the ruling elites, the *mafia*, have not been threatened. Economic reforms, instead of redistributing some of the country’s wealth, have resulted in the private sector becoming tributary to the state itself, depending on it for inputs and for a domestic market in which it could operate (Joffe 2002: 30).

In addition to benefiting from privatisation reforms, the Algerian government has also made very good use of a highly unfavourable internal situation to get several international actors to help it bear the costs of its security operations. The International Monetary Fund's seal of approval for Algeria's market economy from 1994 onwards has meant that the international community in 1994 alone gave the Algerian regime 40 billion francs (approximately 6 billion Euros) in the form of loans, credits, gifts and other financial agreements. Additional financial support has come from the French government and international oil and gas companies, such as British Petroleum, Exxon and Repsol, who have continued investing in Algeria. To allay fears of attacks by the GIA, companies were offered additional security by hiring "mercenaries". The international oil companies, along with the IMF and favoured economic partners such as France have through their investment in Algeria become partners in the restoration of state authority. Military leaders too have benefited from the Algerian conflict, which has in many respects restored their authority and ensured profits for them, thereby marginalising their erstwhile rivals, the FIS (Martinez 2000: 229-232). Therefore, it is clear that both extremist Islamic fundamentalists and members of the Algerian government have acquired military benefit from the ongoing Algerian conflict, and have their reasons to indefinitely postpone negotiations. The Algerian populace, on the other hand, has suffered gravely in numerous respects. The first is economic.

While most economic commentators view Algeria's economy as standing on the threshold of economic revival, as by now the elements of a liberal, free market economy have been put in place and because its access to oil and gas revenues, as well as opportunities in other sectors, should attract investors, the micro-economic reality looks much bleaker. Foreign investment has stubbornly remained at an annual \$ 500 million, 450 000 workers have lost their jobs because of privatisation in the past century, wage levels are low (overall consumer prices have risen by 66 percent since 1995, while wages have only risen by 44 percent over the same period), housing is poor and inadequate and standards are worsening (Algeria has one of the world's highest occupancy rates at 7,5 people per housing unit) (Joffe 2002: 35-38). For the average Algerian, therefore, living conditions are abysmal. This situation is exacerbated by the continuing violence civilians experience, not only at the hands of radical Islamic fundamentalists, but also in the form of state terrorism.

State terror can be defined as "internal, within a state, between rulers and their subjects, and is a technique of ruling". It is also "the purposeful act or threat of violence to create fear and/or compliant behaviour in a

victim and/or audience of the act or threat”. The Algerian regime has a considerable number of armed elements, including, as quoted in 2001, its armed police force of 50 000, its professional army of 125 000 and a civilian militia of around 60 000 patriots. One of the techniques used by the Algerian regime to instil fear in people is the policy of affecting disappearances. Sources which contain testimonies of former Algerian police officials place the number of “disappeared” Algerian men and women at approximately 12 000. Although most of the people who “disappear” are opponents of the state, a number of disappeared people are nonetheless reported to be politically indifferent. By making people “disappear” the Algerian regime is guilty of both breaking international agreements it has ratified, as well as certain of Algeria’s domestic legal codes. Generally the Algerian authorities have not been helpful in dealing with enquiries about “disappeared” people; Amnesty International alone has compiled 3000 dossiers on such cases. The “disappearance” strategy is a particularly effective but also frightening form of terror as it strikes at one of the most basic of human needs – the need for physical safety (Sandhu 2001: 4-5).

Another strategy used by the Algerian government is that of torture, usually applied to detainees. Despite a myriad of complaints by detainees who reported being tortured, not a single judicial investigation has been carried out. This behaviour by the Algerian government has contributed to protect the torturers from legal action and has left the victims of torture, as well as their families and lawyers feeling more and more sceptical and hostile towards the Algerian administration of justice (Sandhu 2001: 5-6). The Algerian regime has thus also played a considerable part in inflicting pain and suffering, not only its opponents, but on the Algerian population as a whole, simultaneously rather overtly benefiting from the spoils of war.

Algeria’s future remains highly uncertain. Today, Bouteflika’s dispensation is still to a large extent under the control of the military, which is divided between a wing that urges conciliation with the Islamic fundamentalists and another that presses for their eradication. After more than 100 000 people have died it has become clear that the radical Islamic fundamentalists are not capable of replacing the regime and that likewise the military cannot rid themselves of their opponents. The cycle of violence can only be ended when all parties recognise that Algeria has to become a democratic state which provides for individual sovereignty while at the same time accepting moderate political Islam as a part of the political landscape (Takeyh 2003: 71). Whether it will be the FIS who plays the part of the moderate actor representing Islam remains to be seen. As has been established, it is not always necessarily the case that rhetoric mirrors practical intent. The FIS will have to prove its ability to better the conditions of the Algerian population by

means of coming up with effective and feasible economic and political solutions to Algeria's crisis. The political platform, which recognises the need for Algerians to come to terms with their troubled past before being able to move on, is definitely a step in the right direction.

The dialogic model of interpretation is thus used in this chapter to attempt an open-minded, yet critical analysis of the ideology of the FIS and, to a lesser extent, that of extremist fundamentalist groups in Algeria. In addition, structural (economic, political and social) factors are taken into account to, among other things, help explain the importance of Islam and, more specifically, its role in the political mobilisation of the Algerian people during the war of independence and afterwards. This, as well as an understanding of the severe economic crisis of the 1980s and the political scene, which, at the time, was characterised by a short-lived liberal interregnum, but nonetheless was dominated behind the scenes by the overpowering might of the military, helps provide an explanation for the rise of Islamic fundamentalism in Algeria. This information serves as an essential background for an analysis of the ideology of the FIS, (no ideology can be understood in isolation from the environment from which it has emanated), and, to a lesser extent, for the ideologies of radical Islamic fundamentalist groups which have played or still play a part in the Algerian conflict. The ideologies of those radical Islamic fundamentalist groups actively engaged in the conflict is again discussed within the context of structural factors, particularly those which are relevant to the war itself. This chapter then aims at providing a deeper understanding of the ideology of the FIS and, to a more limited extent, that of other radical Islamic fundamentalist groups engaged in the conflict. This discussion centres on ideology, but also takes into account an analysis of structural factors. The latter is imperative for a thorough understanding of the complexity and seriousness of the situation in Algeria, and particularly the role played by Islamic fundamentalism. The concluding chapter of this dissertation deals more specifically with the findings of this chapter and attempts at making recommendations for a way forward to resolve the conflict.

#### **4.6 SUMMARY OF CHAPTER FOUR**

Modern Algerian history has been characterised by turmoil and violence, commencing with the extended and bloody war of independence against the French colonial power, continuing through a series of military coups, the 1988 "Black October" riots, in response to the dire economic situation, and culminating in an unpredictable and violent civil war from 1992 onwards. The popularity of Islamic fundamentalism, and notably the FIS, rose due to a lack of popular support for Algeria's military elite, as well as in reaction to less than favourable economic circumstances.

The FIS espouses a relatively moderate yet also conservative ideology, which entails a rejection of secularism and a focus on Islam as a potential state system filled with possibility and promise. Politically speaking, this entails a focus on advisory freedom, co-ordination and a focus on dialogue, choice without coercion and collective work towards the collective good. This moderate rhetoric, however, found a less than moderate practical application when after the victory the FIS had gained in the 1990 municipal elections, it started implementing its policies. In terms of what the FIS has to say about the current volatile situation, however, some of the points it makes are of substantial importance and relevance. These include the need to distance the military from politics, to lift state of emergency regulations and to aid Algerian people to come to terms with their violent past. Nonetheless, the situation in Algeria remains uncertain and volatile and it is imperative that long-term solutions be found to the political and economic problems facing the country.

## **CHAPTER 5: A POLITICAL ANALYSIS OF THE IDEOLOGY OF THE PREDOMINANT ISLAMIC FUNDAMENTALIST GROUP IN SUDAN**

### **5.1. INTRODUCTION**

The dialogic model of interpretation forms the theoretical framework for the political analysis of the ideology of the predominant Islamic fundamentalist group in Sudan, its ruling party. This party is still mostly referred to as the National Islamic Front (NIF), though it has officially changed its name to the National Congress Party (NC). For the sake of simplicity and to minimise confusion, NIF will be used throughout the dissertation when Sudan's ruling party is referred to. The focus in this chapter is on the ideology of the NIF, but also incorporates some of the useful elements of rationalist analysis. Structural factors (political, cultural and socio-economic conditions) are taken into account and an attempt is made to evaluate their impact on the ideological framework of the NIF, the rise of Islamic fundamentalism in Sudan, as well as the current situation in the country. The ideology of the NIF is thus discussed in detail within the overall political and economic context of the reportedly improving but still volatile relations between the Sudanese government and its long time opponent in Sudan's civil war, the Sudanese People's Liberation Movement / Army (SPLM/A). Attention is also paid to the disastrous situation in Sudan's Darfur region.

### **5.2 AN OVERVIEW OF THE HISTORY OF SUDAN<sup>20</sup>**

In 1820 Egypt conquered and unified the northern part of Sudan into a collection of small independent states, but was unable to effectively control the southern part of the country. After a nationalist revolt in 1880, Sudan experienced a brief period of independent rule under the Mahdists, a movement that was initiated by Muhammad Ahmad ibn al-Sayyid abd Allah who claimed to be Islam's long-awaited Mahdi (Sudan Country Conditions, Background 2003). The Mahdists were eventually defeated by a combination of British and Egyptian troops in 1898 and a year later an Anglo-Egyptian Condominium or "joint domain" was set up, though it was really the British, rather than the Egyptians, who governed Sudan (Zwier 1999:

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<sup>20</sup> Only the most central events and developments are pointed out here to give a general background picture of the situation in Sudan. The rest of the chapter provides a more in-depth analysis of political, economic and social factors contributing to the rise of Islamic fundamentalism in Sudan and characterising current developments. The ideology of the NIF is discussed in detail within the overall political and economic context of the relations between the Sudanese government and its long time opponent in Sudan's civil war, the Sudanese People's Liberation Movement / Army (SPLM/A). The focus is also on the disastrous situation in Sudan's Darfur region.

39). While Britain was in the process of handing over power to the northern Sudanese elite, southern elements in the army began a mutiny in 1955. This rebellion, which would culminate in Sudan's First Civil War (1956-1972), reflects Sudan's deepest social divide, between the dominant Arabic-speaking, predominantly Muslim population of the north, and the impoverished, black, largely animist or Christian population of the south (Sudan Country Conditions, Background 2003). During the war neither side was strong enough to defeat the other and the leadership of the southern forces was very much divided. In addition, the conflict was hardly ideologically articulated. Southern spokesmen vaguely talked of the legacy of the slave trade (northerners defended themselves against such notions by referring to European involvement in it) and the danger of Arab-Islamic domination (which northern liberals denied as they argued for Arabic as a neutral national language). "In sum, the southerners blamed the northerners, the latter the British" (O'Fahey 1996: 264). Sudan eventually gained independence on 19 December 1955 with Ismail al-Azhari of the National Unionist Party (NUP) as prime minister (Zwier 1999: 44).

This regime was not to last for very long and was overthrown in a military coup in November 1958. A Supreme Council of Armed Forces that would rule until October 1964 was consequently established (Europa World Year Book 2003: 3723). General Abboud became Sudan's new ruler and was supported by the north's conservative forces, who hoped to impose an Arabic and Islamic identity on the southern regions (Sayeed 1999: 116). Such aspirations culminated in policies that would bring southern discontent "to the boiling point". As from 1962, the government disallowed expressions of religious and cultural differences in the south and introduced measures aimed at arabising all of Sudan, such as forcing Christian missionaries to leave, and instructing teachers to only teach in Arabic, which most southerners could not speak. In addition, the government increased its military presence in the south. These policies led many southerners to join opposition groups and partake in Sudan's first civil war (Zwier 1999: 45-46). Apart from southern resistance, the military regime's moves and policies also provoked reactions from communists, the Muslim Brotherhood (to be discussed in greater detail later on) and students. Amidst guerrilla activity in the south and student demonstrations and railway strikes in the north, Abboud was forced to resign and the military regime gave way to a civilian government in 1964 (Sayeed 1999: 116).

Despite initial hopes that the new government would resolve the country's civil war, disillusionment soon set in. The Umma Party (UP) leader Muhammed Ahmad Mahjub, who led the parliament, sent troops to southern Sudan, shortly after taking power. By the late 1960s 500 000 Sudanese had reportedly died and

hundreds of thousands of others had fled into flooded refugee camps and neighbouring countries. Sudanese leadership under prime minister Sadiq al-Mahdi eventually crumbled when another military coup was staged in May 1969 and Colonel Jafaar Mohammed Nimeiri came to power (Zwier 1999: 47).

Under Nimeiri, who was proclaimed president in 1971, all existing political institutions and organisations were abolished and supreme authority was placed in the hands of the Sudanese Socialist Union (SSU). A peace agreement with the southern opposition South Sudan Liberation Movement (SSLM) was signed in Addis Ababa in March 1972, under which the three southern provinces (Bahr al-Ghazal, Equatoria and Upper Nile) were to be governed as a single unit and the southern region was given a degree of autonomy (Europa World Year Book 2003: 3723). Furthermore, it was agreed that rebel forces would gradually merge with the Sudanese army. The agreement succeeded in ensuring relative calm in Sudan for the next ten years (Sudan Country Conditions, Background 2003).

In the meantime, the establishment of a National Assembly broadened the government's power base, although the army continued to play an important role in the country's affairs. The Addis Ababa accord progressively collapsed as Nimeiri became increasingly autocratic. Apart from abolishing Sudan's democratic institutions, he weakened the southern regional government, started piping oil from the south to the north and neglected southern development (Sudan Country Conditions, Background 2003). In April 1983 Nimeiri was re-elected for a third six-year term and in a surprise move, he imposed *Sharia* law (an action which provoked anger in the non-Muslim south, was seen by many as an excuse to quell political dissent and strained relations between Sudan and its allies, Egypt and the USA) (Europa World Year Book 2003: 3723). In addition, imposing the *Sharia* on all of Sudanese society resulted in Sudan's second full-scale civil war breaking out in the south. The southern forces united under John Garang's Sudanese People's Liberation Movement/Army (SPLM/A), which managed "huge military operations" (Zwier 1999: 49-50).

In order to be in a better position to quell the unrest, Nimeiri divided the south into three smaller regions, each with its own assembly, (which constituted a violation of the Addis Ababa agreement according to which the south was to be governed as a single unit) and in April 1984 proclaimed a state of emergency (Europa World Year Book 2003: 3723). Nimeiri, in his shortsightedness, failed to see that the Sudanese population, with its heterogeneous make-up, would not be keen to embrace an Islamic national identity. In remaining oblivious to the country's political and socio-religious realities, he eventually paid the price

(Sayeed 1999: 121). Public protests began on 26 March 1985, a day before Nimeiri flew to the United States for consultations. Prices for bread, petrol and public transport had just doubled (most public schools in the capital had been closed as a result of this), a quarter of the population was affected directly by drought and thousands had died in the countryside, as a result of a lack of food and water. On 3 April a massive demonstration took place, during which people called for “bread and liberty”. The grand result was another military coup which took place on the night of 5-6 April 1985 and brought to power Suwar al-Dhabab (Lesch 1998: 62).

The new regime suspended Nimeiri’s constitution and disbanded his political organisation, the SSU. After free elections prime minister Sadiq al-Mahdi and his Umma Party formed a government. Again, however, democracy was not to last. Over the years al-Mahdi’s government failed to resolve the civil war in the south as well as Sudan’s economic difficulties. The prime minister also proved unwilling to make Islam the prevailing law in the country. All of this seriously displeased the military which initiated yet another military coup on 30 June 1989 and established a Revolutionary Command Council (RCC), headed by General Omar Hassan al-Bashir. Immediately political parties were outlawed and Islamic law was re-imposed in the northern states (Sudan Country Conditions, Background 2003). It was widely understood that the Islamic fundamentalist intellectual and lawyer Hassan al-Turabi, whose National Islamic Front had co-operated closely with Nimeiri for much of the latter’s reign, but had distanced itself from him shortly before he was deposed, played the “king-maker” role and provided the ideological underpinnings of the government (Lobban 2001: 116).

In March 1991 the Criminal Act of 1991, a new penal code, instituted harsh punishments nationwide, including amputation and stoning. Although southern states were officially exempted from these Islamic prohibitions and penalties, the act nonetheless provided for the possible future application of Islamic law in the south (Sudan Country Conditions, Background 2003). In the meantime, the civil war had been continuing, despite abortive attempts at negotiations in 1990. In August 1991 the SPLM/A split into several factions due to disagreement over whether the southern opposition should fight for a united Sudan under secular leadership (which is what Garang’s faction was in favour of), or for an independent south (as proposed by Riek Machar’s faction, initially known as SPLA-Nasir) (Zwier 1999: 56). This schism benefited the regime as it was able to play off the two wings of the SPLM against each other. The government signed a ceasefire with SPLA-Nasir in January 1992, which enabled the government’s army to cross the area

controlled by the dissidents in Upper Nile in order to attack SPLA positions further south. Inter-tribal warfare also increasingly took place as Nuer adherents of Machar's faction launched raids on the Dinkas (largely in support of Garang) (Lesch 2001). The Khartoum government increasingly became convinced that military victory against the south, which had mysteriously eluded all Sudanese governments since 1956, was imminent. Garang, who was weakened by disaffection and desertions, had no choice but to negotiate with the government (Collins 1999: 114).

Nigeria hosted two rounds of talks in the summer of 1992 and the spring of 1993. These negotiations showed the key differences between the SPLM/A and the government. The government argued that the Muslim majority had the right to establish the constitutional system that it preferred. Religious diversity would be honoured by exempting the south from the severest of bodily punishments under the *Sharia*, the *hudud*. The government's version of a federation meant retaining the central government's authority over policymaking related to religion, education, and the economy, including natural resources. The SPLM/A differed from the government on every issue. It advocated secular democracy and equality before the law, opposing the proposed religious and racial assimilation and implied marginalisation of non-Muslims. The SPLM/A also argued that unity was possible and desirable if all citizens were given the same constitutional rights, but that the government's insistence on an Islamic state would force the SPLM/A to call for self-determination. The result might either be the south's secession or a loose confederation in which the north and the south would have different legal and political systems (Lesch 2001).

Despite Sudan's increasingly desperate situation as it was subjected to international isolation in the form of, for example, criticism by the US for its alleged involvement in terrorism and United Nations sanctions for human-rights violations, the major warring parties would not co-operate to resolve their differences. In 1994 The Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD), made up of Kenya, Ethiopia, Uganda, Eritrea, Somalia, Sudan and Djibouti, arranged a meeting for the Sudanese regime and its opponents. A Declaration of Principles (DOP) was set up by the mediators which stipulated the separation of religion and politics and stated that the government should allow other political parties to be strong enough to offer some competition to the NIF in Sudan's political system. The SPLM/A was elated about these developments, while the Khartoum government rejected them. Again, both sides stood by their positions and would not budge (Zwier 1999: 59).

In March 1996 elections were held to appoint members to a 400 member national assembly (which had replaced the RCC). Members of the NIF won most of the seats (Sudan Country Conditions, Background 2003). Turabi, secretary-general of the NIF was made president of the national assembly and Bashir, who was reportedly opposed only by token candidates, obtained 75,7 percent of votes cast to become president. Both sets of elections took place among allegations of corruption (Europa World Year Book 2003: 3725).

In 1997 relations between the major players in the Sudanese civil war took an unexpected turn when the NIF government signed a peace agreement with Machar, Akol, and other southern warlords who opposed Garang's SPLM/A faction. This charter included a provision for self-determination, a concept which the signatories did not agree on. While the southern delegates interpreted it as allowing for secession, the government insisted that self-determination would have to take place within a geographically united country. When negotiations resumed in July 1997 under IGAD, Bashir felt obliged to sign the 1994 Declaration of Principles (DOP - mentioned earlier), since he had already conceded the right of self-determination in the Political Charter. Bashir, however, emphasised that the DOP was not legally binding and that the government would never accept secularism or a confederation. This was made clear in the 1998 constitution (discussed in more detail later on), which unambiguously states that Islamic law underpins Sudan's political and legal system. Further IGAD meetings from October 1997 through 2000 failed to achieve a consensus between the government and southern opposition points of view. One of the possible reasons for a lack of consensus is that each side felt that it had a hold over the other. The government believed that it could attain a military victory over the SPLM/A and rule the south through its southern allies (the signatories to the 1997 agreement), while the SPLM/A believed that its alliance with the National Democratic Alliance (NDA), the northern opponents of the government, and assistance from African governments could ward off defeat and perhaps even overthrow the regime (Lesch 2001).

On 13 December 1999 Bashir declared a state of emergency and suspended the legislature following a power struggle with Turabi and in June 2000 Bashir expelled Turabi from his duties as leader of the ruling National Congress Party (NC – formerly the NIF). Turabi reacted by forming a new party, the Popular National Congress (PNC) (Sudan Country Conditions, Background 2003). It is important to mention here that while a split has occurred between al-Bashir and Turabi, this was largely as a result of a power struggle. Ideologically speaking, Bashir's party has retained Turabi's political thought. In fact, the NC is nothing more than the NIF renamed, and is still very much in power, following the same ruthless policies as

beforehand, noticeably in Darfur (Turabi still powerful 2000: 13984). Presidential and legislative elections were held concurrently in December 2000 although they were boycotted by the main opposition parties. In the new 360 member National Assembly. In February 2001 Turabi and several other members of the PNC's leadership were arrested after it was announced that the PNC and SPLM/A had signed a memorandum of understanding in Switzerland which urged the Sudanese people to participate in "peaceful popular resistance" against the government (Europa World Year Book 2003: 3727).

In early July 2001 the government announced that it would accept a peace initiative put forward by Libya and Egypt that included provisions for an immediate cease-fire, the establishment of a transitional government and a number of constitutional reforms (Sudan Country Conditions, Background 2003). At the same time, however, Bashir adhered rigidly to his previous position, insisting that he would not support any proposals that would involve the separation of state and religion or the partition of the country. The NDA, the other party involved in this issue, concurrently reiterated that southern states should be granted the right to self-determination (Europa World Year Book 2003: 3728). Key positions of the main players involved in the conflict had thus still not changed.

In October 2001 US President Bush appointed former Senator John Danforth as special envoy to Sudan, which marked the start of a more direct US role in the Sudanese peace process. On 22 January 2002 the government and SPLM/A signed a limited cease-fire agreement to allow emergency food supplies to be delivered and the south-central Nuba region to be reconstructed. This move prompted the European Union (EU) to resume financial assistance to Sudan (Sudan Country Conditions, Background 2003). The cease-fire however did not last long, as the National Congress government launched a massive air and ground offensive in oil-rich Western Upper Nile, followed by an attack on Bieh village on 20 February, while the United Nations World Food Programme was delivering food. This prompted the US to abandon its mediation efforts in Sudan. Significantly, the same month saw a reconciliation between Garang and Machar, which would prove an additional challenge to the government (Oilfield, battlefield: the opposition regroup and threatens Khartoum's control of the oilfields 2002). In March 2002 Garang's meetings with US and EU officials resulted in US and Swiss mediators brokering another peace agreement which provided for a cease-fire in the Nuba Mountains, a halt to aerial bombardments and the creation of zones of tranquility to make possible the delivery of aid to civilians (Sudan Country Conditions, Background 2003).

Despite IGAD-sponsored talks between the government and SPLM/A which commenced in June 2002 in Machakos, Kenya, fighting between the two sides continued, resulting in heavy civilian casualties. Nonetheless, the talks resulted in a breakthrough agreement, the Machakos Protocol, which was signed on 20 July 2002. The protocol makes provision for a six year period of autonomy for the south, to be followed by an internationally monitored referendum to determine whether or not the south wants to secede from Sudan. The protocol also stipulates that Sudan's Constitution is to be rewritten so as to ensure that *Sharia* law will not be applied to non-Muslim southerners (Europa World Year Book 2004: 3965). There has been considerable criticism regarding the content of this protocol, however. The NC appears to be determined to ensure that southerners do not vote for independence, "should referendum day ever dawn". Paradoxically, however, the protocol rejects the one thing that would possibly make southerners want to remain a part of Sudan – a secular constitution. While *Sharia* is not to be applied to non-Muslim southerners, it will be applied to the at least five million non-Muslims who live in the northern part of Sudan (Muddying Machakos: the gap widens between interpretations of last month's peace agreement 2002).

For the rest of the year discussions were periodically interrupted as the two sides accused each other of breaking the cease-fire which they had agreed to. A number of issues also remained unresolved. In May 2003 it became apparent that a final settlement would not be reached by June, as international mediators had hoped. A number of key issues, including that of wealth- and power sharing remained unresolved. In September a key security agreement was signed which specified that the SPLM/A's and government's armed forces were to be kept separate, but also provided for a joint force whose members would be deployed in various parts of the country. In December, talks resumed in Khartoum and discussions focused on the division of water and oil resources, the application of *Sharia* law in Khartoum, the distribution of ministerial and civil service posts and the boundary between the north and the south of the country. Reportedly, a preliminary agreement had also been reached on the distribution of tax revenues and the role of the new central bank. On 7 January the two sides signed an accord on wealth and revenue sharing, which also provided for the establishment of two separate banking systems for the north and the south, as well as a new national currency on the signing of a final peace agreement. Nonetheless, there was no progress on other matters and by mid-April the two sides had still not concluded a definitive peace agreement. There were also reports of renewed fighting in the south which had forced the UN to suspend relief operations (Europa World Year Book 2004: 3965). On 26 May 2004 The Naivasha peace deal was signed by the government and the SPLM/A. This consists of three protocols, entitled On Power Sharing, On the Resolution of Conflict –

in Abyei and On the Resolution of Conflict in Southern Kordofan/Nuba Mountains and Blue Nile States. Details of the implementation of the issues are yet to be agreed on and the rush in which the agreement has been concluded has obscured many of the crucial finer points (A good deal missing 2004). Turabi, who had been released in October 2003, was re-detained in March 2004 as the government accused the PNC of plotting a coup against the government and arming rebel movements in Sudan's troubled Darfur region. Mid-September 2004 saw more arrests of PNC members. The party denies all charges laid against it (Sudan coup plot evidence 'a lie' 2004).

Another crucial issue that has emerged in Sudan is the highly precarious situation in Darfur. Two rebel groups, the Sudan Liberation Army (SLA) and the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) began attacking government targets in February 2003, claiming that the government is oppressing black (Muslim) Africans in favour of Arabs (Q & A: Sudan's Darfur Conflict 2004). The rebel groups furthermore demanded an end to chronic economic marginalisation, power sharing within the Arab ruled Sudanese state and government actions to end the abuses of their rivals, Arab pastoralists who had been driven onto African farmlands by drought and desertification, which led to conflict (Darfur destroyed: ethnic cleansing by government and militia forces in western Sudan 2004: 1). While Turabi's PNC reportedly agrees with the rebel movements' ideology in terms of the belief in the decentralisation of power and wealth, the party is not in favour of their armed resistance (Sudan coup plot evidence "a lie" 2004). Refugees from Darfur have reported that following air raids by government aircraft, the Arab Janjaweed militias, who are accused of trying to "cleanse" large pieces of land of black Africans, ride into villages on horses and camels, slaughtering men, raping women and stealing whatever they can find (Q & A: Sudan's Darfur Conflict 2004). This is apparently the way that the Khartoum government has chosen to deal with the problem, by targeting the civilian populations from which the rebels were drawn. The government's policy of dealing with the Darfur issue has resulted in up to 50 000 deaths and more than 1 000 000 civilians, mostly farmers, fleeing into camps and settlements in Darfur where they live on the very edge of survival and are hostage to Janjaweed abuses. More than 100 000 people have also fled to neighbouring Chad (Darfur destroyed: ethnic cleansing by government and militia forces in western Sudan 2004: 1). Peace talks held in September in Nigeria between the Sudanese government and the rebels have ended without agreement. The talks are to reconvene in October. The rebels refused to sign an accord on greater access for aid agencies, saying the pro-government militias must disarm first (Sudan talks break up with no deal 2004). A UN resolution was passed on 18 September 2004, calling for Secretary General Kofi Annan to set up a commission to investigate

whether the events in Darfur amount to genocide. The resolution also threatens measures against Sudan's oil industry if the government fails to fulfil its pledge of disarming pro-government militias. The Sudanese government has grudgingly accepted the conditions of the resolution, although it has labelled the threat of sanctions as "unfair" (Sudan grudgingly accepts UN vote 2004). To date though the Sudanese government has responded to international pressure to end the violence by sending in thousands of extra police officers to Darfur, and calls have been made by African Union (AU) president Obasanjo for funding to enlarge the AU's mediation force in Darfur, people are still felling attacks, which they blame on the Janjaweed (Sudan rebels hit outside Darfur 2004).

### **5.3 THE RISE OF ISLAMIC FUNDAMENTALISM IN SUDAN**

This section focuses on the rise of Islamic fundamentalism in Sudan and the ways in which the NIF strove to consolidate its power before eventually becoming the force behind the military government of al-Bashir. The Muslim Brotherhood, which the NIF started out as, made use of its political clout and tactical ingenuity both to attract a mass following and to irrevocably infiltrate the social, economic and political structures of Sudan.

Even though Sudan is very close to the Arabian Peninsula, it was only from the 14th century onwards, and especially between the 16th and 18th centuries, that the generally peaceful Arabisation and Islamisation of northern Sudan took place. The impact of Islam on the inhabitants of the Nile Valley, living between Aswan and Khartoum, and those living in the Gezira between the Niles and to the east and west in the savannas, collectively known as the riverain northern Sudanese who would ultimately make up Sudan's Islamicised political elite, was complex. The dominant state of the region between 1500 and 1800 was the Funj Sultanate of Sinnar, which was considered as both an African "divine kingship" state, as well as an Islamic polity. Under its jurisdiction, specialised holy clans emerged, who mediated a Sufi-based Islam to the communities they served, and who increasingly usurped the functions of the state. The first colonial period (1820-1881) coincided with the spread throughout the northern Sudan of new Sufi brotherhoods which linked together the established holy families into supra-ethnic organisations and introduced a more "complex" form of Islam. These brotherhoods were also important in that they laid the basis for the Mahdist movement, which was simultaneously an anti-colonial rebellion and social revolution (O'Fahey 1996: 259-260).

The Mahdist movement would prove important for the legacy of Islamic fundamentalism in Sudan because of the strong influence that it would have on the NIF's national as well as international political aspirations. As discussed in more detail in Chapter three of the dissertation, Muhammad Ahmad ibn al-Sayyid abd Allah who claimed to be Islam's long-awaited Mahdi launched a revolution in 1880, in response to social decay, political oppression and economic decline, which resulted in the establishment of an independent Islamic state under his successor, the Khalifa Abdullahi (Woodward 1997: 95). Unlike Wahhabism, the Mahdi did not wish to eradicate Sufism, which, because of its openness and flexibility regarding indigenous African beliefs and practices had often been criticised for "opening the door to idolatrous superstition and an attitude of passive withdrawal which resulted from an otherworldly orientation". Instead, the idea was to reform Sufism in order to bring it more in line with Islamic law and place the emphasis on this-worldly activist Islam, rather than the otherworldly mysticism it originally represented. The socio-political dimension of Islam was reintroduced as African Islamic movements, one of these being that of the Mahdi, led by Sufi brotherhoods, fought to establish Islamic states. Prayer and political action thus joined forces in the earthly pursuit of God's will (Esposito 1991: 38).

This state survived until it was overthrown by the Anglo-Egyptian army at the Battle of Omdurman in 1898. The rise of the Mahdist state then saw the adoption of the *Sharia* and perceived itself as a force to cleanse the Islamic world and tried, without succeeding, to invade Egypt as well as to fight its Christian neighbour, Abyssinia. It is this legacy which the NIF backed government has appropriated for itself, though not without criticism from its numerous Sudanese opponents (Woodward 1997: 95-97).

A consciously Islamic polity in Sudan, however, did not automatically evolve from the days of the Mahdist state onwards, but is in fact a British invention. The British were obsessed by the fear of a rerun of Islamic messianism in a country whose conquest had taken them three years (1896-1899), in contrast to their effective and swift annexation of Egypt in 1882. They thus lent their support to either one or another group of Sudanese Muslim leaders, depending on the political situation at a given time. In the early years of colonial rule, the Mahdists, under Sayyid Abd al-Rahman al-Mahdi (a son of the original Sudanese Mahdi), were seen as suspect and thus received little support from the British, who instead turned their attention to another group of Sufi leaders, the Khatmiyya.

In later years, however, the situation changed, as the Khatmiyya turned to Egypt in order to provide a counter-balance against both the Mahdists and the British. This led the colonialists to shift their support to

the Mahdists. In order to consolidate their control, the British also institutionalised a particular legal system in Sudan. This stipulated that when it came to Muslims in terms of personal matters, pertaining to marriage, divorce, inheritance etc. the *Sharia* would be applied, while criminal matters were subject to state or secular law. The implementation and institutionalisation of Islamic law in Sudan thus has a number of precedents in Sudanese history, which proved all the more important when one takes into consideration the fact that the Islamicised and Arabicised northern Sudanese considered their culture and way of life to be the “norm” for a combined Sudanese identity which they were determined to spread throughout Sudan. Furthermore, since independence, Sudan’s political actors, whether part of a civilian or military regime, have almost all been members of the western-educated riverain elite, comprising various ruling groups. This of course has proved to be very unpopular with the southern Sudanese and was also the reason for the eruption of Sudan’s First Civil War in 1956 (O’Fahey 1996: 261-262).

It is important to elaborate on the position and attitude of the southern Sudanese here with regard to the growing prominence of the northern elite. Until the establishment of the Anglo-Egyptian Condominium, southern Sudan had never been an integral part of the north, in terms of the extent to which effective government control was established over its territory. In reality, neither the Turco-Egyptian (1820-1881) nor the Mahdiyya (1881-1898) regimes were able to substantially infiltrate southern Sudan, which remained a hostile environment to foreign explorers and intruders. The non-unification between the north and the south was reinforced by the fact that the British decided to treat the northern and southern regions of Sudan completely differently in terms of administrative policies, thereby becoming the main culprit in terms of the inherent divisiveness between the two regions. The northern Sudanese elite generally condemns the British for having created the cultural, religious and political division between the south and the north in the first place. However, at the same time they maintain that because the British handed Sudan to the northern political elite as a united territory, this unity now has to be maintained at all costs. In addition, Arab culture and Islamic religion, which were once curbed from the south by the British, must now be imposed on southerners by all available means. On the other hand, southerners accuse the British of lumping them together with the northerners without allowing for any political or economic guarantees when the British themselves had purposefully sheltered the south from northern Arab-Islamic exploitation for 57 years. The basic view of the southern Sudanese then is that the unity that was imposed on the Sudan is artificial and that it urgently needs to be transformed to accommodate the interests of the southerners as well. If this is not possible, the south should be allowed to separate from the rest of the country. Both sides have rigorously

adhered to their respective positions, thereby proving a massive obstacle to the fundamental issue of nation-building (Wakoson 1998: 51-52).

During the 1930s and 1940s a number of political movements appeared among the northern Sudanese, which were based on supra-ethnic avowedly Islamic organisations. Although these movements derived their strength from Islamic sentiments of solidarity, they did not put forward specifically Islamic-inspired political programmes, but articulated basically secular nationalist positions instead. The resultant discontinuity between mobilisation at grass-roots level and the policies that were articulated by the leadership was to provide an opening for the Muslim Brotherhood, which would later become the NIF (O'Fahey 1996: 261). The Muslim Brotherhood's influence started growing considerably after World War Two. Hassan al-Turabi in particular played an important part in promoting its political character. Initially, however, the Muslim Brothers stayed on the periphery of the political system and their influence remained confined mainly to the student sector. They did, however, simultaneously start becoming more vocal in their highly emotive and ultimately successful campaign to ban the Communist Party of Sudan and afterwards became even more controversial when they started promoting the adoption of an Islamic constitution – an issue that was to remain at the core of Sudanese politics for many decades to come (Sidahmed 1996: 181).

Nimeiri's military coup in 1969 put a temporary end to such aspirations, however, and caused many of the Brotherhood's leaders to seek refuge abroad, from where they tried to destabilise the regime (Woodward 1997: 99). Initially, the Muslim Brotherhood formed part of the National Front, a group of opposition parties with the common goal of ousting Nimeiri. The general understanding was that if and when these groups had achieved their aim, there would be a policy of power-sharing on the basis of a political programme based on Islam. The Muslim Brotherhood, however, soon realised that once Nimeiri's government had been defeated, it was likely that they would be reduced to a negligible minority in any emergent power arrangement, or even completely excluded. It therefore decided that it wanted to adopt a strategy which would allow it to grow as an independent and influential political force competing for power in its own right. This would necessitate better relations with Nimeiri's government, however, so as to enable it to function normally without restrictions. The result was that the Muslim Brotherhood was able to turn itself into a formidable force by the end of the Nimeiri era in 1985 in a number of ways. On a purely political level, its new-found freedom of action and participation in power enabled it to expand its ranks by means of engaging in unhampered propagation and discreet political activity. Furthermore, Muslim Brotherhood members started

infiltrating the political system as ministers, members of parliament and members of the ruling political organisation, the SSU, thereby providing the movement with experience on how to govern and enabling it to penetrate two of the most crucial state structures: the army and the security bodies (Sidahmed 1996: 183).

It was not only on the political front that the Muslim Brotherhood had strengthened its position, however. It was now also able to build its support behind the scenes. A growing constituency was small business. The establishment of Islamic banks, which the Muslim Brotherhood supported, created the idea that there was an Islamic alternative to the existing, only marginally successful economic order (Woodward 1997: 99). Furthermore, the growth and proliferation of Islamic financial institutions gave the Muslim Brotherhood substantial access to financial and economic resources. This proved especially important for its thus far most substantial group of supporters: northern Sudanese students. They had initially been attracted to the ideology of the Muslim Brotherhood, partly as many of them were bitter about the fact that it was increasingly difficult for them to find employment in a declining economy (Woodward 1997: 98). As a result of the expanding influence of the Muslim Brotherhood, they could now progressively be employed in Islamic institutions and private enterprises. In this way, Turabi was able to cement the credibility of his movement, particularly among its younger support base. The Muslim Brotherhood's increased freedom of action and participation of power coupled with its enhanced financial resources also enabled it to penetrate other sections of society. Islamic missionary and relief organisations were created to come to the aid of and simultaneously influence the multiplying groups of rural people who had moved to urban areas and use was made of the local student unions to advance the Muslim Brotherhood's influence in the rural areas via student tours and other forms of extra-campus activities (Sidahmed 1996: 183). The Muslim Brotherhood also prepared the important political role that it would take on as the NIF by means of a variety of other strategies. It infiltrated cultural associations with great success and was also able to make use of the mass media to manipulate a variety of newspapers in order to support its agenda (Ali 1995: 198).

An additional reason for the success of the Muslim Brotherhood in Sudan is the fact that it managed to evolve into an open, popular and comprehensive national front which comprised many Sudanese Islamic trends and ethnic groups. Furthermore, it deliberately focused on tackling new social and political issues in Sudan; in sum, it ended up being more "pragmatic than dogmatic or scripturalist, and more activist and practical than intellectualist or theoretical", a characteristic that ultimately proved to be of considerable advantage in terms of its political evolution (Ali 1995: 191).

Very importantly too, the Muslim Brotherhood's cooperation with the Nimeiri government resulted in the latter's gradual reliance on Islam as a source of ideology and inspiration. The peak moment of this development came in September 1983 when Nimeiri suddenly announced that the *Sharia* was to be implemented in the whole of Sudan in an effort to outmanoeuvre the Brotherhood. Turabi's movement, however, decided to treat the implementation of Islamic law as a reward and fully supported the move. Nimeiri started realising that the Brotherhood had become too politically powerful to be retained as a minor partner in government and therefore in early March 1985 imprisoned most of its leaders amid accusations that they had plotted to overthrow the regime. Ironically, a military coup, deposing Nimeiri, followed shortly afterwards, and the Brotherhood, because of having split with Nimeiri, was able to distance itself from the Nimeiri government's dubious legacy. It transformed itself into the NIF and did very well in the general elections of April 1986, presenting the official opposition to the coalition government which was made up of the Umma Party and the DUP. The NIF tried its utmost to consolidate the gains it had made during its collaboration with the Nimeiri regime by means of emphasising the preservation of the *Sharia* laws or their replacement with yet another "Islamic alternative". It also advocated a tough militarist stance against the southern opposition (the civil war had by this time broken out again) in an attempt to promote itself as the only authentic representative of Arabo-Islamic culture in Sudan. This policy paid off and in early 1988, after barely two years in opposition, the NIF was called to join the Umma Party and the DUP in the government's coalition. One immediate result of this was the production of a Criminal Law Bill based on the *Sharia* to replace Nimeiri's 1983 laws. This, however, only led to an intensification of the civil war in the south. After a number of government reshuffles, the NIF found itself in opposition again in 1989, while the Umma Party led Sudanese government had by this time agreed to seriously negotiate with the south (Sidahmed 1996: 184-186). As speculation grew that Sadiq al-Mahdi's government would abandon the *Sharia* in favour of peace with the south, the NIF quietly started planning the coup of 1989 that was to irrevocably change Sudanese history. This crucial move was made possible by the NIF's careful planning over the years and the fact that it had for a long time encouraged its supporters to infiltrate various arms of the state, where they were largely "sleepers", waiting for their moment to act (Woodward 1997: 100). This moment was the 1989 coup.

## **5.4 THE IDEOLOGY OF THE NATIONAL ISLAMIC FRONT**

It now becomes important to look at some of the ideas expounded by Hassan al-Turabi, which have shaped (and continue to shape despite his split with the party in 1999) the NIF's ideology. These ideas are reflected in Sudan's 1998 Constitution, which is looked at here as well. The aim is to come to a better understanding of the ideology underpinning the NIF dominated government. This is followed by an analysis of the NIF backed regime's actions since its ascendance to power, in order to determine how said ideology has been implemented in practice. In terms of the analysis of Turabi's ideology, use is again made of the dialogic model of interpretation, while the sections on the respective conflicts also include an analysis of structural factors.

When it comes to Turabi's political thought, the most basic and universal idea underpinning the concept of an Islamic state is the metaphysical principle of *tahwid* or unity of God and human life. Many 20<sup>th</sup> century Islamic thinkers have interpreted *tahwid* as being the unifying force among various aspects of human life, such as the social, religious and the political. A unification of the political and the religious implies that public (or political) life and religious life cannot be separated and from this it follows that secularism denies the rightful role of religious faith and God in the governing of human affairs. According to Turabi, *tahwid* in the political realm means the ascendancy of Islamic law over the rulers. Thus, God is considered supreme or sovereign, while the *Sharia* provides connections between God's followers and the will of God and preserves His sovereignty (Morrison 2001: 153-154).

An Islamic state necessarily has to cater for a combination of the political and ethical aspects of *tahwid*. Politically speaking, the state may have to provide education, health and other social services, as well as to collect taxes and to maintain internal and external order and stability. This is not where its responsibility ends, however. When it comes to the ethical side of things, it is expected of the state to provide the conditions under which its citizens can lead faithful and pious Muslim lives. Turabi argues that the extent of government intervention will differ from society to society, but that in all cases the ultimate aim is to secure certain rights for the individual, who "has the right to his physical existence, general social well being, reputation, peace, privacy, to education and a decent life". *Tahwid* also influences which kinds of political forms Turabi deems acceptable. While Turabi rejects the concept of nationalism *per se*, on the basis that allegiance is to be owed to God and not the state, he nonetheless accepts the notion of the state as a territorial

national entity as a given fact (Morrison 2001: 154). In fact, Turabi argues that it is crucial that Muslims let go of their historical negativity towards the state if they are to cope with the contemporary challenges of modernity. He believes that the modern state has become so enmeshed in society that it has taken over certain responsibilities that once belonged to the family, such as transmitting culture and education to younger generations. The state's responsibilities, which furthermore include protecting its citizens against intruders and being accountable both to the people and ultimately to God, therefore, according to Turabi, are too important to be left to secularists. Islamic fundamentalists reclaiming the state would be equal to their reclaiming an educational institution – an imperative measure (Ibrahim 1999: 205).

Turabi thus conforms to general Islamic fundamentalist doctrine in terms of his adherence to the concept of *tawhid*, as well as his rejection of the doctrine of nationalism. It is important to note, however, that unlike some other Islamic fundamentalists, noticeably those who adhere to the Wahhabi doctrine, Turabi adopts a pragmatic rather than perfectionist approach. This is evident in the interpretive method which Turabi employs. As already mentioned in Chapter three of this dissertation, the respective ideologies of Wahhabism and Qutb both aim to purify Islam by returning to the fundamentals of religion – the *Quran* and the *Sunna*. This is done by means of following a very strict line of thinking in an attempt to reconstruct society and government along the lines of returning to the simplicity, austerity, purity and piety of Islam's classical period on the basis of *tawhid* and the doctrine of *al-Salaf al-Salih* (good ancestors). Wahhabis believe in adhering rigidly to the fundamental religious texts, without any major effort to reinterpret the principles of Islam. They thus focus more on the spiritual and ethical aspects of Islam, while leaving political matters to politicians and traditional elites (Moussalli 1999: 113). A certain amount of freedom in the form of the right to an individual interpretation of the text is allowed, yet ultimately the doctrine reverts to a stringent and puritanical interpretation of Islam, where the adherence to *tawhid* is, according to Husain (1995: 46), carried so far as to denounce all ceremonies, rituals and customary traditions that were absent during the classical period of Islam, considering them to be additions that defile the purity of the faith and contribute to the decline of Islam and of Muslim societies.

Similarly, according to Qutb, the *Quran* is the only source, which can answer questions pertaining to political authority and the “just” community. Because faith consists of belief in the unity (*tawhid*) and sole authority of God, any compromise to man-made authority becomes simply unacceptable, illegitimate and indistinguishable from tyranny. If God is the sole sovereign of an Islamic society, the *Sharia* is its sole legal

system. (Euben 1999: 61-62). Nonetheless, Qutb did develop a way to present his particular view of the *Quran* as the most valid. He made use of the concept '*aqidah* (doctrine) to denote an emancipatory and evolutionary vision of the text, which, according to him, bypassed the body of interpretations that existed in the tradition. Though this may make Qutb look like an enlightened interpreter, it similarly opens up the possibility of enforcing one particular interpretation of the *Quran* on others, justified by means of "claims based on visionary access to truth" (Ismail 2003: 589).

Turabi, while also advocating a return to Islam's fundamental texts, does not believe that it is useful to adhere to a literal interpretation of them, as they may be anachronistic, incomplete and ambiguous. Rather, it is necessary to develop a way in which they can be applied to the conditions and circumstances found in a modern state. Turabi's interpretive method also entails a rejection of all former interpretations of and commentary on Islam's core texts, partly because of the use that was made of the Greek formal logical and philosophical method, which, according to him, has resulted in importing foreign and corrupting influences into Islam. The two core concepts that thus tie in with Turabi's call for a new interpretive method are those of *ijtihad* (independent reasoning) and *tajdid* (renewal or revival). In a nutshell then, new issues that arise "have to be tackled with new thinking and fresh expression of religious rules and principles, appropriate to the new situation" (Morrison 2001: 155).

A specific area where Turabi's call for *ijtihad* and *tajdid* is of great importance is when it comes to the concept of *ibtala*, which means "experiencing life as a perpetual challenge posed by God to test a Muslim's faith". Turabi equates this concept with modernity, which he sees as a test for contemporary Muslims, and, more significantly, as a corridor to God. Urbanisation, for example, urges Muslims to humanise the conditions in cities through "recognising difference, imparting civility to the madding crowd, and soothing loneliness with peace of mind". Rather than distancing themselves from modernity because of its evils, lure and materialism, and nostalgically looking back on a familiar rustic rural life, Muslims are told to embrace modern life as a challenge, which God has sent to them so as to test their love for him (Ibrahim 1999: 202).

Turabi's adherence to these two concepts has particular consequences for the political doctrine he advocates. The Quranic expression which Turabi makes use of here is the notion of *shura* (which he defines as the selection of and consultation with the government) and, linked to this, that of *ijima* (consensus). The basic difference between democracy and *shura* is the locus of sovereignty. Whereas in a democratic set-up the

sovereignty lies with the population of a country, Turabi argues that if one adheres to the notion of *tahwid*, God is the only possible sovereign. Furthermore, Turabi points out that there is no conflict between *shura* and the *Sharia*, as the latter “represents the convictions of the people and, therefore, their direct will”. *Shura*, then, for Turabi, is an indication of “the equality of people before God, and provides the basis for or rather the requirement of respect for their political freedom. In principle, all believers, rich or poor, noble or humble, learned or ignorant, men or women, are equal before God, and they are his viceregents on earth and the holders of his trust”. The egalitarianism that Turabi imputes to *shura* also implies that he sees the minority/majority character of Western democracy as undesirable. Similarly, the conflictual, fractious nature of the Western party system to him represents the failure to satisfy the responsibility that individual Muslims have to God and the *umma* (Morrison 2001: 154-156).

In his political scheme Turabi sees no place for the figure of a Mahdi. One of the objections that he levies against Mahdism is that in seeking legitimacy, a Mahdi would have to claim to be in direct communication with the Prophet. This, Turabi sees as untruthful and unnecessary for renewing religion in our day and age. In addition, Turabi perceives Mahdism as cultural procrastination licensed by tradition, a luxury which Muslims cannot afford when faced by the current challenge of *ibtala*. Similarly, Turabi objects to the authority of clerics as worthy leaders to confront the challenges of modernity. Rather, the fact that they have been shying away from and ignoring *ibtala* has resulted in an almost unbridgeable gap between the usable *fiqh* and the mounting challenges of modern life. According to Turabi, the clerical class usurped the right to monopolise decisions about what is “good religion”, by taking advantage of the historically decadent nature of the Islamic state and the fact that over the centuries, Muslims have been subjected to oppressive dynasties and regimes. He also argues that restricting the duty of thinking and practising religion to an elite class runs counter to the principles of Islam, which state that each Muslim has the right to participate in bringing religion to life, share his or her experiences by “interacting with the least as well as the most knowledgeable, in the spirit of advisement shorn of elitism or rif-raffing”. In order to eliminate the power of the clerics, Turabi, significantly, calls into question the existence of the golden age in which they anchor their authority. He argues that looking back on the time of the Prophet and his companions as a Muslim golden age is the result of generations of Muslims skirting *ibtala* by means of taking this pious detour to an original time in the past after which, they believe, all the good and noble in Muslims has been exhausted. This has led to a belief that Islam devolves over time and an excuse to turn away from the challenges of *ibtala* and contemporary realities under the pretext that it is more important to protect the *baqyat al-din* (the remnants of Islam) from

the ravages of time (Ibrahim 1999: 206-209). Thus, though Turabi's thought is grounded in Islamic fundamentalism (as he believes in returning to an analysis of the fundamental texts of the *Quran* and the *Sunna*, adhering to the notion of *tahwid* and rejecting the idea of secularism and nationalism), he nonetheless in several respects reflects elements of general Islamic modernist ideology. This is evident in his attempts to harmonise Western ideals concerning democracy and human rights with Islamic concepts such as *shura* and a desire to critically re-examine political and legal history and received wisdom in light of modern developments and values (Morrison 2001: 156). Turabi's approach, while staying true to the basic precepts of Islamic fundamentalist thought, thus also ties in with the primary goal of Islamic modernists which, according to Fuller (2003: 54), is to create a modern understanding of Islam compatible with most contemporary political values based on the importance of advocating intellectual freedom.

Morrison (2001: 156-158) levies a number of criticisms against Turabi's political ideas. While he agrees that these are attractive, because of their ability to adopt democratic methods while still retaining the capacity to legitimise such methods and ideals by means of an Islamic discourse, they are by no means faultless. Firstly, Turabi is said to underestimate the urgency of finding at least provisional agreement by means of which the *Sharia* can be adapted and applied to the requirements of an Islamic state. The problem is not only the scope of the *Sharia*, but also its multifarious quality which calls for an interpretation that needs to be consistent with the notions of *shura* and political participation, both of which are advocated by Turabi. Thus far, he has not advanced any such method of interpretation. In addition, the *Sharia* has only been accorded a rather vague and indefinite meaning, which generalises its importance to the political system as a whole. This lack of clarity makes it virtually impossible to differentiate between legitimate and illegitimate government actions. Secondly, there is the problem of imposing the *Sharia* on non-Muslims. This policy has had disastrous consequences in Sudan, notably the continuation of the civil war. From a constitutional perspective applying the *Sharia* to religious minorities is unacceptable, as this could easily result in the denial of basic liberties to non-Muslims. Related to this is the problem of wanting to impose an Islamic identity on the whole of Sudan, irrespective of the country's minority groups. Instead, it is necessary to at least attempt to come up with an alternative identity, or, if this proves to be impossible, to make an effort to address the specific concerns and complaints of minority groups, rather than making sweeping statements about commitments to freedom and liberal values. If this is not done, scepticism and hatred towards the ruling group will prevail. Thirdly, it can be argued that Turabi's political theory fails because he does not present a sufficiently developed institutional framework that is to realise his suggestions about Islamic

thought to present circumstances. For instance, the *Sharia* is taken to be accepted by the people and, even more extravagantly, to embody their collective will. While some part of Sudan's population may support the *Sharia* in principle, this is a long way away from all of the population supporting all of the particularities which the *Sharia* entails. It is therefore imperative that some means of revising and re-examining the *Sharia* be developed to make provision for the kinds of deliberation, compromises and resolutions which collective decision-making would require.

To sum up, Turabi's ideas are certainly promising in that they reflect a willingness to adapt Islamic political thought to the realities of the modern world without compromising the importance that religion holds for Muslim people, especially in contemporary times, fraught with insecurity and change. Mechanisms to facilitate the realisation of these ideas, however, have not yet been fully developed, which evidently undermines their feasibility. In addition, it is important to keep in mind that Turabi's political framework is aimed at the whole of Sudan, even though almost 30 percent of its citizens are non-Muslims, and historically violently opposed to being subjected to the imposition of political Islam.

In order to come to an even deeper understanding of the ideology espoused by Turabi, one can consider what he himself has to say in defense of certain elements of his doctrine. In an interview conducted with Turabi in Khartoum in the summer of 1994, the latter was asked various questions pertaining to the topic of "renewal and reform in Muslim thought and societies". At the time of the interview, Turabi emphasised the international attention that Islam had been getting, which he attributed to God's will. Furthermore, he stated that he was very pleased that God had allowed him to operate at an international level and that his ideas and opinions had found favour with a number of Muslims around the world. It also seemed to be of particular significance to Turabi that his movement had evolved into a "fully-fledged programme for the whole of the Sudan as a state, with evident international implications"(Turabi in Hamdi 1996: 36). The mood here seems to be one of exhilaration and enthusiasm about the attention that the NIF had gotten, both locally and internationally. Somewhat more questionable, as is examined in greater detail later on, is whether this attention has been the result of Turabi's modernist and liberal ideology, or the dubious human rights record exhibited by the Sudanese regime since its take over of power in 1989.

On the question of Turabi's attitude towards the various criticisms levied against his calls for reform of Muslim thought (both from Islamic fundamentalists who viewed him as too liberal and Western analysts

who viewed him as militant), he re-emphasised the need for “comprehensive, far-reaching and total” reform in the face of religion’s unprecedented decline and loss of appeal and influence in the contemporary world. While adherence to religion is to remain constant, it is nonetheless imperative that when new issues arise, these are to be “tackled with new thinking and fresh expression of religious rules and principles, appropriate to the new situation” (Turabi in Hamdi 1996: 37). This underlines Turabi’s attitude towards *ibtila* and the crucial role he attributes to the adaptability of religion in confronting the challenges of modern life. Such reform, Turabi then continued to argue in the interview, should not take place by violent revolutionary means. Revolutions, according to him, happen “when change and freedom of expression are totally suppressed”, dissatisfaction rises and pressure builds up underneath the surface “until the old is no longer able to sustain it and revolutions explode”. Instead of violent change, in the interview Turabi advocated a peaceful invitation toward reform, which might “be a slow process and take longer to get us where we want to go”, but which simultaneously is “more profound and enduring”. If during such peaceful reform initiatives one is attacked and deprived of one’s freedom of expression or contact with the public, then, and only then, one has the right to resist and defend oneself. In terms of the real meaning of Islamic revival required in the modern world, Turabi gave a rather idealistic response, which may be summarised as the aim to unite humanity, thereby eliminating the borders set by nationalism.

Our present objective is, therefore, to spread Islam and bring people closer together. Our firm belief is that mankind is one community, and people can co-operate in the field of science and knowledge, and exchange ideas and achievements. National resources of different countries and regions of the world should be pooled, and co-operation and sharing between the wealthy North and the poor South – the former with its financial wherewithal and the latter with its manpower – everyone will benefit. The West cannot continue to subjugate the rest of the world and exploit it for its own prosperity (Turabi in Hamdi 1996: 44).

Though beautiful, this vision is rather vague in terms of how the spread of Islam is meant to take place and furthermore by means of which mechanisms humanity is meant to ultimately co-operate and share its resources, whether material or intellectual, in an open and unselfish manner. The final point to be discussed here is the question posed to Turabi in terms of the possible pitfalls of implementing Islamic political doctrine, particularly as “Muslim groups tend to be closer to claiming a monopoly in the sacred truth”. Here Turabi again emphasised the need for moderation and toleration, in terms of, for example, the point of view that politics should take place by means of consultation rather than the Western concept of majority rule. The dangers of an abuse of power, he admitted, are real enough and need to be carefully guarded against (Turabi in Hamdi 1996: 46).

Turabi, then, in the above-mentioned interview basically restated his ideology of moderation, gradual reform and tolerance. To what extent this has or has not been realised in Sudan is discussed in detail later on. First, however, it is necessary to take a look at parts of the 1998 Constitution of the Republic of Sudan in order to determine how this fits in with the NIF rhetoric in general.

Predictably, the Constitution states that God is the guiding legislator of society. This conforms to Turabi's adherence to *tahwid* and related rejection of secularism and nationalism. Part one of the Constitution is remarkably liberal and supportive of the rights of all of Sudan's ethnic and religious groups. Article 1 emphasises the State of Sudan's focus on racial and cultural harmony as well as religious tolerance and acknowledges the fact that while Islam is the religion of the majority of Sudanese people, Christianity and traditional religions also have a large following. In Article 2 the government of the Federal Republic is given the responsibilities of ensuring participation, consultation (*shura*), mobilisation and respect for justice in the division of power and wealth (Constitution of the Republic of Sudan 1998). Again here, this gives the impression of what should be (judging from the Constitution) a remarkably free and just society. Whether or not the Federal Republic would be able to fulfil its responsibilities would of course depend on the presence of adequate and efficient institutions. Article 4 again reflects Turabi's thought in that here supremacy and sovereignty are said to lie with God (Constitution of the Republic of Sudan 1998). The inevitable question of course is whether this means that Islamic law is to apply to Muslims as well as non-Muslims, assuming that the Sudanese state functions according to an Islamic political framework. In terms of economic issues, the Constitution states in Article 8 that it is essential to provide for the well-being of the Sudanese by means of providing work, promoting a free-market system in order to prevent monopoly, usury, cheating and also to ensure national self-sufficiency, abundance, blessing and establish justice among Sudan's various states and regions. Similarly, Article 11 advocates justice and social solidarity in order to provide the highest standard of living for everybody and also to ensure a fair distribution of national income. Social issues are dealt with in Articles 12, 14 and 15 which focus on education and the promotion of scientific research and co-operation, as well as the care of children and the youth, and the family and women respectively. Particular attention is paid to the rights of pregnant women, to the need to alleviate injustice against women and to the promotion of the roles of women in family and public life (Constitution of the Republic of Sudan 1998). This again suggests that this is the legal framework of a state whose government is keen to facilitate and promote research, thereby embracing those aspects of modernity which are useful and important to the

social, political and economic development of Sudan, but also which is concerned about the well-being of its citizens.

When it comes to the kind of moral conduct which the Constitution views as desirable, some ambiguity is present, especially in terms of how such behaviour is to be realised. So, for instance, according to Article 16, the state “will seek by laws and directive policies to purge society from corruption, crime, delinquency and consumption of alcohol by Muslims” (Constitution of the Republic of Sudan 1998). These sound like fair prerogatives, though the last point is debatable, in terms of the extent to which Muslims should be allowed to diverge from traditional religious customs, seeing as, according to the Constitution as is discussed later on, they have the right to freedom of religion. The ambiguity is really evident in the following part of the Article, according to which the state is to encourage its citizens to “adopt good customs, noble traditions, righteous manners, protect the unity of the country, the stability of the government”, as well as to develop Sudanese civilisation in conformity with “admirable ideals” (Constitution of the Republic of Sudan 1998). These moral prerogatives are open to several interpretations and could easily amount to one particular point of view of what constitutes “admirable ideals”, for instance, being enforced on Sudan’s heterogeneous population. In addition, protecting “the unity of the country” is rather a delicate issue, in view of Sudan’s long-standing and deeply entrenched differences between the northern elite and its southern opponents. Article 18 focuses on the Constitution’s prerogative that people should worship God in their daily lives, that Muslims, in particular, should adhere to the *Quran* and the ways of the Prophet, and that Sudanese citizens, in general, should preserve the principles of religion. This policy of respecting and adhering to religion should be reflected in various areas ranging from laws and policies to political, economic, social and cultural actions with the ultimate aim of achieving justice and righteousness and the salvation of the kingdom of God (Constitution of the Republic of Sudan 1998). Such a strongly religious discourse is problematic in a society in which a multitude of spiritual beliefs makes it unfeasible to prescribe one particular religion which should be adhered to. Here too the possibility of enforcing one particular interpretation of life, possibly Turabi’s and by implication that of the NIF, on the entire Sudanese population visibly exists.

Seemingly in an effort to counter the very objection made above, the Constitution continues with a number of articles which adamantly express various freedoms which Sudanese people are guaranteed of. These include the right to liberty and life which implies that no one shall be held in slavery, servitude, be degraded or tortured (Article 20); the right to equality before the law (Article 21) and, importantly, Articles 24 and 25

which refer to the right to religion or conscience and freedom of opinion and expression respectively. In terms of Article 24, everyone has the right to disseminate and manifest their religious belief in a number of ways provided that these coincide with the law and do not harm the public order or others' feelings. Simultaneously, no one is to be coerced to profess a faith or believe or perform rituals or a certain kind of worship that he or she does not voluntarily accept (Constitution of the Republic of Sudan 1998). On the surface of things, this seems to cancel out the danger of imposing one particular religion or way of life on the Sudanese population. In a similar vein, Article 25 focuses on people's rights to seek any knowledge or adopt any faith in opinion or thought without being coerced by the authorities. This goes hand-in-hand with a policy of freedom of expression and freedom of the press, interestingly, with the understanding that these are subject to restrictions necessary to security, public order, public safety and public morals and in accordance with the law (Constitution of the Republic of Sudan 1998). These restrictions could again be rather easily manipulated by the government if and when it seeks to curb potential popular resistance or criticism.

Finally, two articles which are of particular interest are Articles 27 and 30. The first of these guarantees minority and cultural rights and allows every sect or group in Sudan the right to keep its particular culture, language and religion (Constitution of the Republic of Sudan 1998). Such a provision seems to cater for minority groups and seems to ensure that they are protected against any potential domination or enforcement of one particular culture. Article 30 ensures that no one is to be arrested, detained or imprisoned except in accordance with the law that will prescribe a charge, the maximum time limit for which someone could be held without having been charged, and the conditions for treatment while in detention (Constitution of the Republic of Sudan 1998). This suggests respect for and adherence to one of the most fundamental human rights.

Now that the original, tolerant and moderate (though by no means perfectly developed) ideas of Turabi and the way that they are reflected in the 1998 Constitution have been examined, it is necessary to see how this ideology has been applied in practice since the NIF-backed regime's ascendance to power in 1989.

## **5.5 GOVERNMENT POLICY AFTER 1989 – DISCREPANCIES WHEN COMPARED TO ITS MODERATE IDEOLOGY**

Among the key concepts put forward by the Sudanese government have been those of “Islamic social planning” and “the comprehensive call to God”. Islamic Social Planning “means a continuing revolution for the remoulding of the human being and the institutions in society in accordance with Quranic guidance”. Its aims closely resemble those stated in the Constitution and are also similar to the views expressed by Turabi. They are:

1. A complete and comprehensive remoulding of the Islamic personality, simultaneously envisioning a living, honest and conscious characterisation of Islamic concepts, values and teachings.
2. Building and reconstructing all state institutions on principles derived from the *Quran*.
3. Establishing an Islamic society on the basis of Islamic principles and rules without coercion.
4. Establishing an Islamic state to promote right, justice, spread peace and security in all fields and actualise solidarity, compassion and support among all people, especially Muslims.
5. Establishing an international civilisation and a new international order based on justice and fairness and the recognition of the cultures of others and their cultural, religious and ethnic distinctions.

While such an alternative project is attractive in many ways to Muslims who have experienced the failures of Western political and economic models first hand in Africa and the Arab world, it is nonetheless problematic to apply these particular ideas to Sudan. “Islamic social planning” presupposes an idea of “community” or “society” that assumes no diversity and that requires consensus around a wide set of values. Sudan does not conform to these prerequisites, as it has a highly heterogeneous population with a number of different religions, including different varieties of Islamic belief, such as Sufi traditions. The project of an Islamic state and its implications, such as Islamic social planning, suggest at best the promotion of a particular point at the expense of others, and at worst the imposition of a politicised, extremist ideology. Sudanese society has experienced the latter, where the Islamic fundamentalist project has become a charter for war, repression

and human rights abuses, whereby the lofty principles of the enterprise itself have become discredited (de Waal 2001: 121-122). This point of view has been backed up by a number of analysts who have studied the situation in Sudan and who have concluded that the Sudanese government's policies, while geared towards the aim of realising an Islamic state which is to function according to reportedly noble principles, have constituted a great deal of human rights violations and, significantly, behaviour that runs contrary to the precepts of the largely peaceful religion of Islam. These policies started after the Sudanese government had gained power in 1989, have continued throughout the civil war and still persist, specifically in the context of the crisis in the Darfur region, even though the government and the SPLM/A signed a peace deal in May 2004, which, though it is by no means exhaustive, still deals with a number of crucial issues.

The NIF-backed military rulers have been practising a form of vanguardism since coming to power in 1989 that has a number of dimensions. The first of these has been the takeover of the state. The army itself has been extensively purged and attempted coups have been ruthlessly crushed, while simultaneously a number of security networks have been established and an atmosphere of suspicion and repression has developed. Arbitrary detention and torture leading to mutilation and death have been authoritatively recorded by Sudanese and international human rights organisations. In addition, the regime has established its own Islamic force, the Popular Defense Force, numbering up to 150 000, to defend the National Salvation Revolution, while the judiciary, the civil service and education have seen extensive resignations and purges (Woodward 1997: 101). These actions are completely opposed to the spirit of the Sudanese Constitution and the vision expressed by Turabi. Instead of promoting equality and a recognition of the diversity of the Sudanese people, as the government's ideology officially advocates, it appears that a policy of repression has been used to attempt to forcibly introduce an Islamic culture on the whole of Sudanese society.

In terms of civil society, sustained attacks have taken place on those referred to in Sudan as "modern forces". These include professional organisations and trade unions, which have long managed to contribute to a relatively free, pluralistic and tolerant atmosphere in the country. In addition to a number of dismissals and detentions that have taken place, many thousands of professionals and others have also gone into exile, together with many former politicians. The regime has encouraged alternative bodies in the place of those organisations that have been banned, often claiming that these are independent, even if this is not really the case. Similarly, the previously free media has been totally commandeered and used for the government's propaganda purposes (Woodward 1997: 102).

On the policy front there has been an evident commitment to the *Sharia*, with a revised version of the 1983 laws being introduced in 1991. This also implied a major drive towards Arabisation and Islamisation at all levels. Concomitantly, there was a crackdown on women at work in the name of defending the Islamic understanding of the family, and hence the number of women actively engaged in a professional life dropped sharply. A conservative dress code for professional women and students was consequently also enforced, and some women were harassed in public places. The free movement of women was also restricted and depended on the permission of a male guardian or relative, if not his actual accompaniment (Woodward 1997: 102). In addition, many women have been subjected to detention, ill-treatment and torture again because of the government's hard-line Islamic fundamentalist policies. Whipping has also been introduced by the state as a punishment, and women have been specifically targeted for this harsh treatment. A number of laws have also been enacted which undermine women's rights in the name of Islam. These for instance include The Law of Public Order (1991) in which Chapter 3 on women's prudence states that "every woman who appears in the place of work or the street without the legal dress will receive punishment not exceeding 25 lashes, a penalty of LS 500 or both". Another case in point is "The Law of Personal Affairs" which, for example, in Article 40 legalises early marriage from the age of 10 according to the guardian's will and interest. In addition, Articles 51, 75, 91 and 167 which deal with polygamy permit this practice, but ignore the wife's right within the framework of polygamy in Islam. In turn, the husband is given all the rights regarding the relation (Eltigani & Khaled 1998: 222-223).

The stipulations and practices regarding the role of women in society clearly contradict both Turabi and the Constitution's apparently moderate stance as far as the position of women in Islamic society is concerned. Instead, women are deprived of the most basic of rights under the pretext that this is necessary in order to establish an Islamic system, ironically enough, the very same Islamic system, which, according to Turabi's rhetoric, embraces the equality of the sexes and recognises and promotes women's position in society.

The way in which successive Sudanese governments, but particularly Bashir's regime, have treated the people in the Nuba Mountains serves to illustrate another particular case where Islamic social planning has proved to be harmful and destructive to a large percentage of the Sudanese population.

Government hostility towards the Nuba began in 1986 under the elected government of Sadiq al-Mahdi, which already exhibited many Islamising tendencies. The government found it particularly irksome that the

Nuba people persistently rejected assimilation into the common “Sudanese” culture it was trying to impose, by continuing to adhere to many customary practices, which ran counter to its Islamisation project, including intermarriage with followers of other faiths and the consumption of alcohol. The real reason for the ensuing repression of the Nuba, however, was the fact that SPLA forces had entered the Nuba mountains in 1987 and were proving to be a real military threat. The SPLA had also gained the support of the Nuba, who perceived them as liberators. In 1992 the government declared *jihad* against the Nuba population, a decision which was directed not only against Christians and traditional believers, but also targeted Muslims. The *jihad*, which lasted for a number of years, meant that government forces resorted to randomly destroying churches, as well as mosques and Islamic books. This is highly ironic as the government claims to represent Islam. Simultaneously the motive of the *jihad* was arguably that of genocide. The destruction of the mosques was a manifestation of a far-reaching brutality and abuse with the aim of destroying Nuba culture and dismantling Nuba society. The government, for instance, planned to relocate most of the Nuba population away from their homeland, and even encouraged rape as a means of tearing Nuba society apart and creating a new generation of non-Nuba people, who would arguably be more willing to embrace the government’s Islamisation project. While the government later on abandoned its social engineering project in favour of the pursuit of a military victory in the Nuba Mountains, the fate of the Nuba people still hangs in the balance as a result of the effects of the humanitarian crisis that has been the result of the prolonged war (de Waal 2001: 131-132).

The case of the government’s actions in the Nuba Mountains thus again exhibits substantial discrepancies between Turabi, and by implication the NIF’s, moderate rhetoric and its policies. The desire to create and enforce a homogeneous Islamic society in Sudan necessarily involves “changing” those who are different in order to “integrate” them, by force, if necessary. What appears to be highly contradictory is the fact that the avowedly Muslim government declared *jihad* against both non-Muslims and Muslims and even resorted to allowing the destruction of sacrosanct Islamic symbols such as mosques and religious texts. This evidently contradicts the government’s supposedly God-fearing ideology, as do the brutal and unjustifiable actions of rape, destruction and forcible relocation. Interestingly, as is discussed in more detail later on, the government has engaged in similar practices in the Darfur region. De Waal (2001: 120) convincingly sums up the situation in Sudan when stating that “in the multi-ethnic, plural Sudan, a homogenous Islamist enterprise can ultimately only be implemented by coercion, and coercion is always ugly”.

According to the Human Rights Watch World Report for Sudan (2003), though substantial progress had been made in terms of a peace agreement with the SPLM/A, human rights abuses persisted on a variety of fronts. In December 2001, the National Assembly, for instance, which is dominated by the ruling NIF, approved the extension of the state of emergency, which effectively gave it the right to continue to deny political rights to opposition parties, notably to the PNC. Repressive measures were also exerted against moderate students, whose protests resulted in mass arrests and attacks by the security forces and police in October 2002. There were also reports that those who were consequently detained by the security police were subjected to torture. Sudan's media suffered at the hands of the state as well. Journalists and editors were detained and questioned about the contents of their publications, and often editions of papers were confiscated because of articles the censors did not like, although all papers were subjected to prior censorship. Emergency tribunals, as established under the 1998 State of Emergency Act, continued to hand down stringent sentences without respecting the standards usually associated with a fair trial. As a result, summary executions and brutal punishments such as cross amputations for crimes such as robbery and the unlicensed possession of firearms, took place. Sudan's precarious human rights situation was of course exacerbated by the ongoing civil war. So, for example, the Sudanese government in 2002 continued to displace and kill civilian populations, particularly in the oilfield areas of Western Upper Nile/Unity State. In the same area, women and children were also abducted and raped by local Arab militias, who were also suspected of enslaving those whom they abducted. In the same year there were several reports of intentional aerial bombing of civilian targets by government forces, while the government was also accused of recruiting high school students to fight against the SPLM/A. The war not only saw abuses on behalf of the government. The SPLA was also guilty of various human rights violations, including an attack on the village of Tuhubak, with a population of 970 people, in March 2002 during which 173 homes were burned and at least 25 civilians killed. As with the government, the SPLA was also guilty of recruiting underage soldiers (Human Rights Watch 2003).

It is this record of human rights violations of which the Sudanese government has been convicted, which has prompted the development of a description of Turabi's ideology, which is rather different from the moderate and liberal characteristics he himself ascribes to it. Wakoson (1998: 47) argues that "it is the politico-ideological dynamics" of the situation where the northern Arabicised-Islamic ruling elite has been following a policy of wanting to impose its ideology on all Sudanese, despite resistance from southerners, which has ultimately led to the country's civil war and has "impeded the country's potential to develop lasting political

institutions, a stable political environment, and a peaceful national democratic society”. He then continues to polarise Sudan’s two main competing ideologies (that of the ruling government as opposed to that of the opposition), by saying that the former adheres to “racialist theocraticism”, while the latter follows “national democratic secularism, which is also associated with the establishment of a democratic system based on the rule of law, without one single group dominating the government or a single religion guiding the national political and socio-economic activities of the country”. It is interesting to note that the way in which Wakoson describes the ruling government’s ideology, which he terms “Islamism”, is very different from the values espoused both by Turabi and by the Sudanese Constitution. “Islamism” is said to consist of:

- 1 Absolutism
- 2 Unitary theocratic totalitarianism
- 3 Monolithism
- 4 Exclusionist government
- 5 Imposed national unity
- 6 Coercion in resolving issues
- 7 Militarism – *jihad* on opponents
- 8 Cultural homogeneity
- 9 Suppression of other religions
- 10 Arab identification
- 11 Being intolerant of other racial groups (Wakoson 1998: 59)<sup>21</sup>.

While points like “cultural homogeneity” and “Arab identification” could be seen to reflect Turabi’s ideas of *tahwid* and embracing the challenge of *ibtala*, it is significant to note that, according to Wakoson, the

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<sup>21</sup> It is important to point out here that Wakoson (1998: 59) uses a rather strong dichotomy when placing the Sudanese government and the SPLM/A opposite each other. The government, as is evident from the list of characteristics he attributes to “Islamism”, is said to almost exclusively embrace negative and totalitarian ideological notions. On the other hand, the SPLM/A is also said to adhere to a given ideology, which the author describes as “Africanism” and the list of concepts he presents as characterising this ideology is presented from a very favourable and optimistic point of view. Without exception, these concepts are said to focus on liberalism and democracy and include “constitutionalism”, “secular democratic federalism”, “consensual unity in diversity or secession”, “cultural diversity”, “freedom of religion” and “racial tolerance”. While such notions are doubtlessly desirable for the future of a peaceful and liberal Sudan, the SPLM/A, as has briefly been mentioned earlier, has also been guilty of a fair amount of human rights violations during the civil war. While the SPLM/A may oppose the ruling government’s policies and favours a more liberal alternative, it is by no means clear that, should it ever come to power, it would necessarily institute these ideas. A more cautious approach to the ideology opposing that of the Sudanese government should perhaps be followed.

Sudanese government has appropriated the right to impose its particular belief system on others, which makes a mockery of the decidedly broad-minded and liberal attitude the Sudanese government claims to possess in theory.

What aggravates the above-mentioned human rights abuses is the fact that these have been taking place in the midst of an ongoing civil war, that between the Sudanese government and the SPLM/A, whose belligerents have only very recently come to a rather tenuous and by no means conclusive resolution. The potential future relief the Naivasha agreement, signed in May 2004 and based on the Machakos Protocol, may hold for certain groups of the Sudanese population who have previously suffered under the civil war, is easily offset by the disastrous situation which has been emerging in Darfur, while the peace talks between the Sudanese government and the SPLM/A have been going ahead. Some dynamics of the north-south conflict and its effects on the Sudanese population are discussed, before moving on to an analysis of the events in the Darfur region.

Three factors constitute the main root causes of the Sudanese conflict and have to be addressed in order for the war to be conclusively and permanently resolved. The first is the cultural, religious, historical, ethnic and political diversity between the north and the south. The south sees itself as African, mainly Christian, and as historically distinct from the north which sees itself as an Arabicised Muslim entity, where the majority of the population is linked to Arab culture and Muslim religion (Nyot Yoh 2001: 28). Ironically, this “Arabness” is called into question, especially by real Arabs, which has resulted in the Sudanese regime’s use of Islam and Arabic as instruments for validating their superficial Arabness. Their task is that of creating more Arabs, which essentially boils down to de-Africanising the people in the south of Sudan (Yongo Bure 1994: 207). As for those Sudanese, especially southerners, who have resisted the government’s policies of unification, they have become the target of an extermination policy by the Sudanese government through methods such as starvation or denial of socio-economic development (Yongo-Bure 1994: 213). The second factor is the fact that under the colonial administration, Sudan’s northern and southern regions were administratively developed as separate entities and very little was done to forge any meaningful political integration of the two regions. While the north was treated as part of the Middle Eastern world, the south was administered as part of the British East Africa territories. The third factor which has contributed to Sudan’s civil war is the fact that the south, for various historical reasons, is economically underdeveloped compared to the north, where the colonial administration concentrated its main economic projects. However,

oil was discovered in the south in the 1980s and the region also has promising water reserves and fertile agricultural lands, all of which influence the south's status within Sudan (Nyot Yoh 2001: 29).

The discovery of oil in Sudan's south has caused the government to view the centuries-long inhabitants of the southern oilfields as a security threat to its development ambitions, especially as a result of the SPLM/A's questioning government ownership of the south's natural resources. The abuse most closely linked to oil development in southern Sudan has been forcible displacement, by military means, of tens and perhaps hundreds of thousands of residents of the areas' Nuer and Dinka residents, in order to provide space for international oil companies to launch their operations. A particularly controversial oil company that has been active in Sudan is Talisman Energy Inc., Canada's largest independent oil and gas producer. When it entered the Sudanese market in 1998, it also introduced superior technology and experience and drastically increased the success of oil production in Sudan, which at the time greatly benefited the war-stressed and cash-poor Sudanese government. In fact, since Talisman first started producing oil in Sudan in 1999, oil export has amounted to 20 to 40 percent of all government revenues. Controversially, Talisman's tenure in Sudan was besieged by a number of complaints related to its complicity in human rights abuses, which were made by church groups, nongovernmental organisations (NGOs), UN rights officials and some governments. While the oil company initially rejected these accusations, it finally, after months of pressure from the Canadian government, signed the International Code of Ethics for Canadian Business, thereby committing itself, among other things, to the "value" of "human rights and social justice" and "not to be complicit in human rights abuses". Talisman justified its presence in Sudan by saying that it became involved in community development programmes for the (increasingly diminishing) population. It also claimed that development would eventually bring peace. However, even though Talisman did make charitable contributions to several communities, the money spent on these nonetheless only amounted to one per cent of Talisman's pre-tax revenue (Rone 2003: 504-505).

Ultimately, the activities of international oil companies in Sudan did not produce the improvements originally predicted by companies, especially as far as human rights were concerned. The war became increasingly focused on the oilfields and became more brutal as the government bought new weapons with its oil resources and started using these in order to displace the civilian population. By 2002, the government was able to deduct enough money from Sudan's oil income to purchase more helicopter gunships and armaments in order to enable it to target a specific area, clear out the population and secure the next oil

concession area with roads and garrisons. This strategy, it appears, might be reproduced successively until all oil areas and transport corridors could be cleared of southerners and brought under heavy government guard. According to the UN special rapporteur on Sudan who reported to the March/April 2002 session of the UN Commission on Human Rights, “oil has seriously exacerbated the conflict while deteriorating the overall situation of human rights”. In addition, it was estimated that as of March 2002 approximately 174 200 civilians remained displaced as a result of the conflict between the government, its proxies and rebel factions in the oilfields of Western Upper Nile/Unity State. International pressure on oil companies to stop collaborating with or at least allowing the Sudanese government to displace communities and use its oil revenues to further the conflict, did have some effect. On 30 October 2002 Talisman agreed that it would sell its Sudanese interests to a subsidiary of India’s national oil company and at this point it was generally agreed that human rights pressure had forced Talisman out of Sudan. Other oil companies, Lundin, however, continue to operate in Sudan (Rone 2003: 506-508).

It is of course also important to look at the Sudanese conflict in terms of the precarious economic situation which characterises the country. Although Sudan is endowed with rich natural and mineral resources such as abundant arable land, as well as the largest river in the continent, the Nile, it also features a number of extremely complicated socio-economic difficulties, such as poverty, urbanisation and unemployment. In addition, the economy is characterised by a macroeconomic imbalance that is reflected in high rates of unemployment and inflation, excessive balance of payments deficits and a heavy debt burden. According to statistics, the total population of Sudan increased from 14 million people in 1970 to an estimated 30 million in 2002. Moreover, an estimation of the age structure in 1998 shows that 45 percent of the population are in the age group of one -14 years, 53 percent in the age group of 15-64 years and the remaining three percent are above 65 years. While Sudan’s labour force should technically constitute those in the age group of 15-64, in other words approximately 53 percent of the population, it is nonetheless important to point out that at the same time 66 percent of Sudan’s total population is non-productive. This ultimately means that about 8 million people make up the active labour force and that these are the ones who support more than three times the number of children, women and older people. In a nutshell, there are about 19 million people in Sudan who form an economic dependency burden (Mohsin 2002: 85-87).

In addition, urbanisation has proved to be a massive problem, especially during and since the last decade. The migration from rural to urban areas partly took place because of the economic problems that reached

exacerbating levels in the middle of the 1980s and the drought problem, which affected both the northern as well as the western regions. The urban population thus increased from 4,2 million in 1984 to 11 million in 1998, and is expected to increase further to 20 million by 2015. The effects of urbanisation are manifold. On the one hand, this has meant reduced production in the agricultural sector, as the rural labour force has decreased. The government has thus had to import more food, which in turn has put a greater strain on the economy. Furthermore, the increase in the number of people in the urban areas creates an enormous demand for new infrastructure facilities, such as water supply, electricity, housing, and social services, such as health care and education, in addition to providing jobs for those who have newly migrated. The result of these trends has been that Sudan's population has the highest percentage of people living in poverty in the world. In 1994/1995, in fact, it was estimated that about 85 percent of the total population were living in poverty. Though the last decade has shown some improvement in the GNP per capita, the human development index (HDI), life expectancy at birth and access to safe water are still very low when compared to other countries. Coupled with the increasing levels of poverty in Sudan is the fact that people have stripped most wooded areas around towns to either sell the wood or use it for cooking purposes. Desertification has also been caused by turning large areas of forests into farmland and overgrazing. The result has been the loss of trees, forests and shrubs which ordinarily act as buffers against dry weather and the absence of which can result in severe droughts (Mohsin 2002: 88-90).

Some of the economic problems discussed above are the direct result of Sudan's heavy debt burden. Sudanese governments started borrowing large amounts of foreign capital in the 1970s as they were aiming to develop Sudan's agricultural sector in order to make the country economically self-sufficient. At the same time, however, the industrial sector was largely neglected. It was estimated that by the end of the year 2000 Sudan would have a total external debt of US\$ 20 billion, due to the increase of interest on loans and of imports of equipment for refining oil, in addition to funding development programmes such as constructing new highways, improving the railways and the airport and building more hospitals. The war, of course, has also had an immensely negative impact on the Sudanese economy, and has led to the destruction of most of the resources in the south, as well as rendering entire communities homeless (Mohsin 2002: 90-93).

From the arguments discussed above it thus becomes evident that the post-1989 situation in Sudan has been highly precarious, and has not only seen the continuation of a bloody and protracted civil war and concomitant economic problems, but has equally been characterised by brutal government policies aimed at

divesting certain areas of their original residents. This may have the purpose of creating space for oil exploration to take place, as has been the case in southern Sudan, or of repopulating an area with Arabised Sudanese in order to fulfil the government's aims of creating an Islamic state. As has already been established, one area where such a policy has been pursued is the Nuba Mountains. Another, most topical and contentious, is Sudan's western Darfur region.

As has already been discussed, the Darfur crisis first emerged when two rebel groups, the Sudan Liberation Army (SLA) and the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM), began attacking government targets in February 2003, claiming that the government is oppressing black (Muslim) Africans in favour of Arabs (Q & A: Sudan's Darfur Conflict 2004). The rebel groups furthermore demanded an end to chronic economic marginalisation, to be included in power sharing within the Arab ruled Sudanese state and that government should end the abuses of its rivals, Arab pastoralists, who had been driven onto African farmlands by drought and desertification, which led to conflict with the inhabitants of Darfur. In reaction, the government of Sudan adopted a policy of "ethnic cleansing" in Darfur, and together with Arab "Janjaweed" militias has launched numerous attacks on the civilian populations of the African Fur, Masalit and Zaghawa ethnic groups. The aim is thus apparently to target and punish the civilian populations from which the rebels were originally drawn. Government forces have thus not only overseen, but also directly participated in massacres, summary executions of civilians (including women and children), burnings of towns and villages, and the forcible depopulation of considerable areas of land long inhabited by the Fur, Masalit and Zaghawa people (Darfur destroyed: ethnic cleansing by government and militia forces in western Sudan 2004: 1). Refugees from Darfur have reported that following air raids by government aircraft, the Arab Janjaweed militias, who are accused of trying to "cleanse" large pieces of land of black Africans, ride into villages on horses and camels, slaughtering men, raping women and stealing whatever they can find (Q & A: Sudan's Darfur Conflict 2004). The government's policy of dealing with the Darfur issue has resulted in up to 50 000 deaths and more than one million civilians, mostly farmers, fleeing into camps and settlements in Darfur where they live on the very edge of survival and are hostage to Janjaweed abuses. More than 100 000 people have also fled to neighbouring Chad (Darfur destroyed: ethnic cleansing by government and militia forces in western Sudan 2004: 1).

In addition to the destruction of villages and civilian property, the Sudanese government has also engaged in the systematic destruction of mosques and the desecration of Islamic articles in Darfur. The African Fur,

Masalit and Zaghawa people of Darfur are Muslims (unlike the people of southern Sudan), just as the Sudanese government and the affiliated Janjaweed militias purport to be. In the past year, government and Janjaweed forces have resorted to killing *imams*, as well destroying mosques, prayer mats and *Qurans*. A case in point is Dar Masalit, a village in which government forces burned at least 65 mosques and killed scores of people in mosques. As a local resident puts it, “the government wants to kill African people, Muslim or not Muslim, so as to put Arabs in their places. They are not good Muslims” (Darfur destroyed: ethnic cleansing by government and militia forces in western Sudan 2004: 27). Here yet another contradiction between government rhetoric and practice emerges. Not only are the gross human rights violations in direct contrast with the supposedly moderate ideology of Turabi and the Sudanese government, but again, as with government actions against the Nuba people, this is a situation where brutal attacks are carried out by Muslims and are directed against Muslims. It would thus appear as if the government policy in practice, even if not necessarily espoused in theory, has diverted from that of mere Islamisation, the spread of Islam regardless of race, to one of Arabisation, with the aim of creating populations that are as “purely” Arab as possible. This is ironic, as members of the Sudanese elite itself are often dark-skinned and are Arabs as a result of their cultural and religious affiliations, rather than their biological makeup. According to Human Rights Watch (Darfur destroyed: ethnic cleansing by government and militia forces in western Sudan 2004: 40-42), the government’s policy is one of ethnic cleansing where the attacks directed against civilians, the burning of their villages, the mass killings of persons under their control, the forced displacement of populations and the destruction of their food stocks and livestock are aimed at removing these ethnic groups from large areas of the region and redistributing the population mainly into the vicinity of government controlled towns where they can be concentrated, confined and controlled. Additional evidence of the fact that the government is conducting a policy of ethnic cleansing is that clear patterns were followed and coordinated and planned operations were carried out when attacking and looting villages. These attacks followed similar patterns (aerial bombings and reconnaissance by the Sudanese airforce followed by ground attacks by government forces and Janjaweed militias) and were repeated until the population was finally driven away. In addition, government-supported militia forces have been deployed in and around destroyed villages to prevent displaced populations from returning. Apparently, militias continue to attack displaced civilians after they escape into camps and settlements, beating, raping and sometimes killing women and children who attempt to leave the settlements in order to collect firewood and basic foods. Men in these camps have been tortured and killed.

Peace talks held in September in Nigeria between the Sudanese government and the rebels have ended without agreement. The talks were said to reconvene in October. The rebels refused to sign an accord on greater access for aid agencies, saying the pro-government militias must disarm first (Sudan talks break up with no deal 2004). A UN resolution was passed on 18 September 2004, calling for Secretary General Kofi Annan to set up a commission to investigate whether the events in Darfur amount to genocide. The resolution also threatens measures against Sudan's oil industry if the government fails to fulfil its pledge of disarming pro-government militias. The Sudanese government has grudgingly accepted the conditions of the resolution, although it has labelled the threat of sanctions as "unfair" (Sudan grudgingly accepts UN vote 2004). To date, though the Sudanese government had responded to international pressure to end the violence by sending in thousands of extra police officers to Darfur, and calls have been made by African Union (AU) president Obasanjo for funding to enlarge the AU's mediation force in Darfur, people are still subject to attacks, which they blame on the Janjaweed (Sudan rebels hit outside Darfur 2004). A likely reason for this is that the Sudanese government has been, rather than disarming the Janjaweed militias, giving them uniforms and merging them with the security forces. This, the International Crisis Group, a campaigning charity, says, leaves them "free to operate as servants of the state by day and Janjaweed by night, to the double peril of civilians" (Crunch time in Darfur 2004).

Sudan's prospects for future peace and stability are by no means secure. The Darfur crisis, though perhaps moving somewhat more towards increased government adherence to international demands, nonetheless remains a humanitarian disaster and could easily escalate again, unless the situation is resolved satisfactorily. Chapter seven of the dissertation deals with some recommendations on the matter. In terms of the agreement signed to end the north-south conflict, it remains to be seen whether this is actually stable enough to hold. Though the Machakos Protocol on which it is based is the most promising peace initiative yet, the real challenges lie not only in resolving tangible and negotiable issues, such as power- and wealth sharing, but also intangible ones which are rooted in the more abstract and interpretative dynamics of history, psychology, culture, values and identity (Nantulya 2003: 8). The resolution of the conflict thus depends on whether and how the tangible and intangible factors can be reconciled. As already mentioned earlier, the Machakos Protocol makes provision for a six year period of autonomy for the south, to be followed by an internationally monitored referendum to determine whether or not the south wants to secede from Sudan. The protocol also stipulates that Sudan's Constitution is to be rewritten so as to ensure that *Sharia* law will not be applied to non-Muslim southerners (Europa World Year Book 2004: 3965). Autonomy for the south

means that the people of southern Sudan will have the right to participate fully in the political and economic governance of their region, as well as at the national level. The protocol also offers a solution that enhances social, political and economic justice, which respects the fundamental human and political rights of all the Sudanese people. There has been considerable criticism regarding the content of this protocol, however (Nantulya 2003: 11). The NIF appears to be determined to ensure that southerners do not vote for independence, “should referendum day ever dawn”. Paradoxically, however, the protocol rejects the one thing that would possibly make southerners want to remain a part of Sudan – a secular constitution. While *Sharia* is not to be applied to non-Muslim southerners, it will be applied to the at least five million non-Muslims who live in the northern part of Sudan (Muddying Machakos: the gap widens between interpretations of last month’s peace agreement 2002).

There are also other significant differences and difficulties that characterise the Machakos Protocol, of which a few key ones are discussed here. No definite agreement was reached on the crucial issue of separating the state from religion, which has remained unresolved for decades. The Machakos Protocol, in fact, is the result of concessions made by the SPLM/A and does not explicitly refer to this issue, though it does stipulate a number of other religious freedoms. Another area where the highly contentious issue of the separation of state and religion is present is in terms of the status of the national capital. In discussions the government maintained that Khartoum needs to be retained as the national capital and that it should remain Islamic. The SPLM/A, on the contrary, proposed that the national capital needs to be secular and accessible to all religions, in the spirit of the peace process. The question remains unresolved and shows just how far apart the parties still remain on the issue of religion and state. In terms of wealth sharing, the position of the Sudanese government is that land belongs to the state, whereas the SPLM/A insists that it belongs to the community and that each community must participate in the processes which will determine how the wealth of their land will be allocated. This has resulted in the government suspecting the SPLM/A of an attempt to undermine it, as most of the strategic resources are located in the south. This is where the issue of self-determination comes in. Again, the government suspects the SPLM/A of wanting to break-away from the rest of the country in order to deny the ruling elite control over natural resources, including oil. Also, up until the referendum for self-determination takes place, it is accepted that northern Sudan will retain its Islamic character, while the south will remain secular. While this appears to be a realistic compromise, it may be much more difficult to implement in practice. Related issues are those of what law is to be applied to

southerners living in the north and whether it is in fact feasible to create parallel legal systems for minorities living in the north and south respectively (Nantulya 2003: 10).

When it comes to power-sharing, significant differences also remain. These pertain to what role the SPLM/A will have as part of the executive and judicial arms of state, and what the composition of parliament should be in terms of the representation of the south and the north. Another crucial issue is that pertaining to Abyei, the Nuba Mountains and the Southern Blue Nile areas. Though these areas have been a part of the north since independence, they are ethnically and linguistically part of the south and have participated in successive southern-based liberation movements, including the SPLM/SPLA. In the October 2003 session of negotiations, representatives from the government of Sudan and the three areas presented position papers. The SPLM/A argued that during the six year interim period, the Nuba Mountains and Southern Blue Nile would be governed under SPLM/A control and accorded autonomy within a decentralised government of southern Sudan. Importantly, the regions would also, among other things, be awarded resources for reconstruction and rehabilitation to ensure that they were on the same developmental level as other regions, owing to their historical marginalisation. In terms of the region of Abyei, the SPLM/A insisted that this be returned to the southern province of Bahr el Ghazal, or, if this did not materialise, at least have the right to participate in the referendum in order to determine which part of Sudan it would be part of in future. The government denied all these requests and insisted that the areas were to remain part of northern Sudan, although it did make the concession of allowing them special resources in order to overcome their underdevelopment and neglect. This position has been rejected by the SPLM/A and thus the parties still remain divided. What is of particular interest in terms of these three areas is that they present a microcosm of the wider conflict of nationalist visions in Sudan. In fact, the feelings of nationalism, self-identification and cultural preservation are particularly strong here. Thus, these areas could either serve as cultural melting pots, where interaction and reconciliation between the different cultures could take place, or they could turn into places of violent conflict, in which those identities would continue to compete for self preservation. No definite agreements on these matters have as yet been reached, and what is also important to realise is that the parties are being guided by fundamentally opposed ideological and philosophical outlooks about how Sudanese society should be managed. Thus again, it needs to be reiterated that power-and wealth sharing are not the only issues to be addressed. It is crucial that core ideological, cultural and philosophical issues are dealt with as well, if peace in Sudan is to be lasting (Nantulya 2003: 11-13).

The dialogic model of interpretation is thus used in this chapter to attempt an open-minded, yet critical analysis of the ideology of Turabi as the chief ideologue of the NIF, as well as the ideas expounded in the Sudanese Constitution. In addition, structural (economic, political and social) factors are taken into account to, among other things, help explain the importance of Islam for Sudan's northern elite, and the rise of Islamic fundamentalism in Sudan. This information serves as an essential background for an analysis of the ideology of Turabi, which has influenced and continues to closely inform the current Sudanese government, (no ideology can be understood in isolation from the environment from which it has emanated). How this ideology has been applied to Sudan's political life is consequently discussed, within the context of structural factors. This chapter then aims at providing a deeper understanding of the ideology that informs the Sudanese government, while also taking into account additional structural factors in order to better understand the complexity of the situation in Sudan. The concluding chapter of this dissertation deals more specifically with the findings of this chapter and attempts to make recommendations for a way forward to resolve the conflict.

## **5.6 SUMMARY OF CHAPTER FIVE**

Sudan is characterised by the divide between the country's northern and southern parts, which has manifest itself in repetitive conflicts and disputes – both physical and intellectual. The persistent civil war has continued despite many peace agreements, as none thus far have managed to decisively address the inherent differences in belief structures between the Sudanese north and south. The Machakos Protocol which has led to the signing of the Naivasha agreement in 2004 appears a hopeful step in the right direction, though the signing was rushed into and many finer points remain unresolved. While the north-south conflict has now finally shown some signs of abating, another crisis has emerged: the humanitarian disaster in Darfur which will require substantial effort by the international community, the UN and the Sudanese actors involved if it is to be resolved conclusively.

The main ideological force behind the Sudanese ruling party the NIF has been Turabi who has advocated an ideology characterised by a combination of Islamic fundamentalist and Islamic modernist rhetoric. While religious and political life are not to be separated, Islamic texts are nonetheless to be reinterpreted so as to become relevant to modern life and developments. Along the same lines, technology and science should be embraced, not rejected. Such notions are also reflected in the Sudanese Constitution of 1998, which in theory should provide for a free and prosperous society. In practice, however, things have looked very different in

Sudan. The government has over the years been culpable of serious human rights violations and restrictions of personal liberties, very much in contrast to its professed ideology. It also has to be taken into account that all of this has happened in the context of a continuing civil war, which of course further has increased the suffering of the Sudanese people. If the situation in Sudan is to stabilise, it is important that far-reaching and long-term solutions be found to the massive political and economic problems that the country faces.

## **CHAPTER 6: A POLITICAL ANALYSIS OF THE IDEOLOGY OF THE PREDOMINANT ISLAMIC FUNDAMENTALIST GROUP<sup>22</sup> IN SOUTH AFRICA**

### **6.1 INTRODUCTION**

As with the previous case studies, the dialogic model of interpretation is made use of here and in this case forms the theoretical framework of the political analysis of the ideology of the predominant Islamic fundamentalist group in South Africa. The focus in this chapter is thus on the ideology of People Against Gangsterism and Drugs (PAGAD), as well as the Islamic fundamentalist organisation Qibla, whose leadership reportedly infiltrated the PAGAD structure in 1996. Structural factors (political, cultural and socio-economic conditions) are also taken into account in order to determine the reasons behind the formation of PAGAD, its initial popularity, as well as the controversial measures it engaged in during the first few months of its existence in order to promote its anti-gangsterism and anti-drugs agenda. These included marches to the houses of known gang leaders and drug lords in the greater Cape Town area, demanding that they change their ways or else face the wrath of the “people”. Attention is also paid to the covert and decidedly more notorious side of PAGAD and its likely involvement (though not proven beyond doubt) in several incidents in a series of bomb attacks and drive-by shootings that shook Cape Town between 1996 and 2001. Interestingly, in terms of this particular case study, what is important is the apparent success of the police and security forces in clamping down on the PAGAD leadership, by means of a number of arrests and trials that have taken place over the last few years, thereby bringing the spate of urban terrorism in Cape Town under control. It is, however, imperative that such short-term measures be backed up by a serious and effective effort on the government’s behalf to address the severe socio-economic problems faced by the populations of the townships of the Cape Flats area in order to counter both gangsterism and drug abuse, which, as PAGAD has justifiably argued, have proven to be major destabilising factors in the region.

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<sup>22</sup> Here it is important to point out that the ideological orientation of People Against Gangsterism And Drugs (PAGAD), the group to be explored in this chapter, is by no means clear-cut. While the group professes itself to be a multi-religious, multi-racial organisation, the overriding majority of its membership is Muslim. Furthermore, there are indications that its leadership was largely infiltrated by members of Achmid Cassiem’s Islamic fundamentalist group Qibla in 1996 and, furthermore, that the result of this alleged infiltration has been the formation of a military faction in PAGAD, the G-Force, which has been implicated in a number of urban terror attacks in Cape Town. Despite this apparent link with Qibla, however, PAGAD’s professed ideology is distinctly anti-crime, rather than advocating Islamic fundamentalist ideas. The somewhat confusing ideological character is looked at in more detail below.

## **6.2 AN OVERVIEW OF THE HISTORY OF AND EVENTS LINKED TO PAGAD<sup>23</sup>**

### **6.2.1 Muslims in South Africa**

According to historical evidence, Muslims first arrived in South Africa from three different directions and during three different periods. The first group, consisting of labourers, political exiles or prisoners and slaves, came from various parts of the East and arrived in South Africa either in the company of or shortly after the first colonists landed in the Cape in 1652. In the Cape, this community gradually started comprising a sub-group of the “coloured community” and is characterised by an essentially working or professional social class base. The second group of Muslims to arrive in South Africa came in 1860 and consisted of indentured labourers of Indian origin. The descendants of this group today mostly live in the northern provinces of Gauteng, North West, Mpumalanga, Northern and Kwa-Zulu Natal. A minority is located in the Cape, in areas such as Gatesville and Cravenby. The third group of Muslims consisted of 500 liberated slaves who were brought to Durban between 1873 and 1889 and settled there (Esack 1996: 7). Muslims in South Africa are divided into two groups. The majority of Muslims in the Western Cape and South Africa as a whole are Sunni Muslims (99 percent of Muslims in the Western Cape), while Shi’a Muslims make up only some one percent of the Muslim community in the Western Cape (Botha 2001: 39). This demographic factor may well explain why Qibla, which is an Islamic fundamentalist group based on the ideological principles of the Shi’ite Iranian revolution, has not garnered a large support base in South Africa. Instead, as several commentators argue, it was necessary for Qibla to infiltrate the less ideologically extreme PAGAD in order to increase its support base and thereby create a more effective instrument to realise its objectives.

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<sup>23</sup> In this section of the case study, the most central events and developments related to PAGAD’s activities and incidents of urban terrorism linked to the organisation in the Western Cape are pointed out to give a general background picture of the situation that characterised Cape Town and its surrounding areas at the height of PAGAD’s campaign. This chapter thus differs from the preceding case studies on Algeria and Sudan, as it does not deal with the key events of post-independence South African history as a whole (such a comparatively broad focus would be inadequate here), but only focuses on the period since the formation of PAGAD (while at the same time of course also taking into account historical factors, such as the history of the Muslim community in the Western Cape, who make up majority of PAGAD’s support base). Furthermore, as a result of this narrower focus, it is also possible to immediately include a more in-depth analysis of political, economic and social factors contributing to the rise of PAGAD and by implication its Islamic fundamentalist-inspired military wing (rather than deal with this issue in a separate section, as was done in the preceding chapters). A closer look is also taken at the ideologies of both Qibla and PAGAD, as well as, importantly, the measures the South African government has taken to bring the threat of urban terrorism under control.

It is important to note that despite only constituting 2,5 percent of South Africa's population, Muslims nonetheless have a very important part to play in the country's socio-economic and political affairs. Here follow a few examples: in 1996 more than ten percent of all members of Parliament and Cabinet were Muslims. In addition, among the many Muslims in influential positions have been Mandela's legal advisor, autobiographer and political adviser, the head of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Amnesty Committee, the secretary of the South African Police Services, the director general of the Constitutional Assembly, the deputy president of the Constitutional Court and the director general of the National Intelligence Service (Esack 1996: 7).

Overall, the Muslim population's role in South African society has been overridingly positive. As Muslims have been a part of the country for 340 years, they are generally not regarded as alien or foreign. In addition, their contribution to South Africa has been substantial in the fields of law, health, education and business (though in terms of the last sector, Muslims have been the object of resentment by many black people, particularly in the northern parts of the country). Also, Muslims in South Africa have seldom, if ever, used their privileged position in society to bring others "of their kind" into positions of power, nor has religion ever played a significant part in their political positions. The Muslim community then, while arguably being one of the most religious and traditional in the country, can certainly not be classified as fundamentalist. Importantly, however, and relevant to the existence of PAGAD and the vehement protests by the Muslim community at the arrests and detention of its members during the period marked by urban terrorism, is the fact that while many Muslims in South Africa do not strictly live according to the tenets of Islam, most are prepared to die for their religion (Esack 1996: 8).

An emergent South African Islamic discourse began in the 1950s, and was first formulated by teachers and professionals in the Western Cape. It derived its religious inspiration from modern movements in Pakistan and Egypt, and its South African political dimension from a variety of local political movements and trends. The religious dimension of this discourse empowered members of South Africa's Muslim youth who sometimes challenged the religious leadership's practices in relation to its complicity or silence when it came to the apartheid state, and sometimes, more conservatively, demanded a more rational organisation of Muslim society. As South African society approached the dawn of democracy in 1994, two broad political tendencies started to emerge among South Africa's Muslim population. The first was represented by the Call of Islam (established in 1983) and the Muslim Youth Movement (established in 1970), both of whom joined

the larger democratic movement and were in favour of the new dispensation. The approach of these two groups, which could be described as nationalist, was linked to an intensive critique of traditional Islamic political thought, which they regarded as utopian, un-South African, and completely inadequate to address real social and political inequalities in South Africa. The second was represented by Qibla, an Islamic fundamentalist group established by Achmat Cassiem in 1980. Cassiem rejected the negotiated settlement between the former apartheid government and liberation movements, and instead called for Islamic unity and exclusivism, often employing the universal discourse of an Islamic state. Qibla's calls for Muslim unity and a pure Islamic solution seemed increasingly attractive to members of South Africa's Muslim population, as it soon became apparent that the new South Africa was facing immense socio-economic challenges. The Western Cape in particular faced the prospects of drastic cuts in education and health, and subsequently also faced rising levels of dissatisfaction among the coloured constituency, a substantial percentage of whom are Muslims (Tayob 1996: 24).

### **6.2.2 PAGAD and its initial anti-crime initiatives**

PAGAD was formed in 1995, in response to popular dissatisfaction with the high crime rate in the Western Cape (and in the country as a whole) and the perceived inability on behalf of the government to address this disconcertingly large problem that has characterised South Africa in the post-1994 era. In 1996 the country's crime record was labelled one of the worst in the world: 45 out of every 100 000 South Africans were murdered each year, eight times the international norm of 5.5 (Canada 2.0; New York City 26.5), a woman was raped every six seconds and nearly 200 armed robberies were committed on a daily basis. Tourists were hit regularly, and foreign investors were increasingly losing confidence (Erasmus 1996: 24). How has the government managed to cope with such alarming statistics? The answer is, not very well at all. In 2001, for instance, according to the Institute for Security Studies in Pretoria, the police opened 2.3 million criminal cases, of which only 562 821 were taken to court. Of the cases which made it to court, only 257 391 were prosecuted, from which only 202 000 convictions resulted. A total of 1 269 077 cases thus still remained unresolved. This lack of efficacy, as far as the South African criminal justice system is concerned, a belief that the law protects criminals instead of punishing them, lack of feedback on cases under investigation by the police, police corruption and inefficient delivery in the criminal justice system have thus resulted in many people turning to vigilantism, which is how PAGAD's initially high levels of popularity can be explained (South African Press Association 2001).

PAGAD's initial stated primary objective was to serve as a broad anti-crime front. Under its banner a variety of organisations and concerned citizens of a range of ideological, political and religious persuasions made it their aim to combat criminal gangs and drug dealers who had for many years posed a massive problem to the impoverished communities of the townships of the Cape Flats area on the outskirts of Cape Town (Botha 2001: 38). During the apartheid years, the government relocated the coloureds to what is known as the Cape Flats outside Cape Town. The resulting disruption of family life contributed to the rise of gangsterism, which originated from what was originally a form of community self-protection. While during the apartheid days, many gangs were broken up and their members detained by government forces, the introduction of political freedom in South Africa has meant the reorganisation of gangs with greater militance and their increasing involvement in murder, extortion, drug dealing and armed robbery. This has resulted in a situation where money and well-connected gang bosses preside over vast business empires (Hawthorne 2000: 31). Between 35 000 and 80 000 gang members are active in the Cape and make up the membership of 137 gangs. Effectively, rape, drug abuse, murder and crime are the daily experience of South Africans living in these townships (Haefele 1998: 10). A particular tendency that can be linked to the formation and rise of PAGAD is the fact that the consumption of drugs and involvement in the sale of drugs among young Muslims in the Western Cape (Muslims make up the overriding majority of PAGAD's membership) has increased considerably over the last two decades. In fact, it is commonly accepted among the Muslim youth that while drinking alcohol is expressly forbidden according to Islamic practices, it is practically more acceptable to smoke marijuana (and from there on most likely to experiment with other drugs), which is perceived as the lesser of the two evils. The rise of drug consumption and abuse by young Muslims has thus probably meant an increased concern on behalf of parents and the more traditionally religious members of the Muslim population in the Western Cape (Pillay 2002: 62). Furthermore, PAGAD appealed to the Muslim middle class (to which many parents of drug-abusing young Muslims would belong), as it proposed to reverse the perceived moral decline that was said to be one of the root causes of much of the gang activity and crime plaguing the greater Cape Town area (Botha 2001: 38).

According to the PAGAD website, the early periods of its existence were exclusively dedicated to raising awareness about its aims and objectives, namely the fight against gangsterism and drugs in Cape Town. From 30 December 1995 to 30 April 1996, a series of awareness programmes, public meetings and placard demonstrations dealing with PAGAD's anti-crime agenda took place. In addition, pamphlets were

distributed, candle light vigils and door-to-door conscientising took place, while panel discussions were held on Radio 786, Voice of the Cape, Bush Radio and Radio C-flat. On 6 March 1996 PAGAD organised a march to the then Minister of Justice Dullah Omar's house, in order to request him to take harsher actions against gangsters and drug merchants. According to PAGAD, the reason for this was that previous consultations with the minister had ended inconclusively. In addition, PAGAD claimed that the media took two weeks to report the incident, and did so in a rather unbalanced way, implying that the march had taken place to threaten the minister and harm his family. The next crucial event that PAGAD engaged in was a mass march to Parliament to deliver a list of demands to all ministers. This list gave the government 60 days to respond to PAGAD's demands and to show its willingness to rid the country of drugs and gangsterism. If no decisive action was taken, the people would have to take the law into their own hands. As there was no reaction from the government, PAGAD members started taking action themselves. This took the form of marches to the houses of drug merchants and gangsters, who would be given a 24-hour ultimatum to stop their illegal activities, or otherwise "face the mandate of the people". A series of marches followed, including one to London Road, Salt River on 4 August 1996, which would signal the start of intense media coverage of PAGAD. According to PAGAD, upon arrival at Hard Livings gang leader Rashaad Staggie's house to present an ultimatum, marchers were fired on from inside the house. As a result, ten PAGAD members obtained gun-shot injuries. Staggie himself unexpectedly appeared on the scene and was subsequently killed (PAGAD 1996). The story has been treated from a decidedly different angle by the South African press and other commentators. The *Daily Mail and Guardian*, for instance, in its "catalogue of Cape Town's reign of terror" describes the event as Rashaad Staggie having been "lynched" during the demonstration "in the presence of police, media and emergency workers" (A catalogue of Cape Town's reign of terror 2000). The incident was described in *Macleans* as follows, "in early August, 1500 supporters stormed through Cape Town streets, pulled notorious gang leader Rashaad Staggie from his car, threw a flaming Molotov cocktail into his lap and shot him dead" (Erasmus 1996: 24). It is thus evident that caution has to be exercised in the analysis of reports of events which involve or have involved PAGAD. While PAGAD apparently wants to defend itself and claim to be innocent of any acts of urban unrest or terrorism, the media might at times want to sensationalise an event. It can thus be rather difficult to establish a balanced account of the incidents that PAGAD has been implicated in.

According to PAGAD, the march to Staggie's house was followed by closer co-operation between itself and the police, as justice minister Dullah Omar responded to the events of 4 August with the following

statement: “the tragedy of what happened in Salt River has suddenly mobilised the community and it can have good results. Suddenly communities and authorities including the police were sitting up and planning how to combat crime”. This tendency toward closer co-operation manifested itself in a meeting held on 10 August 1996 to discuss a mass rally which PAGAD had planned for 11 August. The result was the “formation of partnership between police and PAGAD”. The mass rally consequently took place at the Vygieskraal Stadium in Athlone and was attended by approximately 20 000 people, after which PAGAD continued to march to Hanover Park. However, (despite the apparent rapprochement between PAGAD and the police) a strong police presence characterised the march and teargas, birdshots and live ammunition were reportedly fired into the crowd. Simultaneously, PAGAD members were fired on by gangsters who marched from Hanover Park towards PAGAD. The police, allegedly, did nothing to stop them. In total, seven PAGAD marchers as well as a press photographer were apparently injured and the police was consequently criticised by PAGAD for having opened fire “on peaceful marchers including women and children” (PAGAD 1996). Here it has to be pointed out, however, that according to *Africa Research Bulletin*, PAGAD leaders had agreed not to visibly display weapons during the rally. Later, however, members of the crowd did produce weapons and groups left the rally and continued to march to the homes of drug dealers. It was as a result of this unforeseen, and potentially dangerous, turn of events, and not simply because of hostility towards PAGAD as the organisation suggested in its report, that police and troops attempted to stop the PAGAD marchers by opening fire with tear gas and rubber bullets (South Africa: PAGAD 1996).

The rest of August 1996 was characterised by ongoing marches and demonstrations by PAGAD, and the delivery of ultimatums to the houses of various drug lords. Support figures apparently rose, until a split in the leadership of PAGAD took place on 20 September 1996. Ali Parker, until then one of the key leaders of PAGAD, reportedly released a press statement to the *Cape Times* in which he made the following allegations against PAGAD:

- 1 Qibla members within PAGAD were trying to assassinate him
- 2 Qibla was responsible for hijacking the PAGAD movement as they had a “hidden agenda”
- 3 Qibla members were guilty of blackmail and extortion of businessmen in order to raise funds
- 4 Qibla was trying to overthrow the government
- 5 Qibla members encouraged people to burn down mosques in order to “gain momentum for the cause”

This statement resulted in the suspension of Parker from the movement on 21 September 1996, a move that was reportedly the result of consultation with thousands of people present at a meeting held at the Gatesville Mosque. A few days later, approximately 7000-10 000 people marched onto parliament from the Muir Street Mosque in District Six, which PAGAD claimed was proof enough to show that the masses were not in favour of Parker's "treacherous" statements. The split within PAGAD deepened, when on 29 September 1996 Ali Parker, Farouk Jaffer and Nadthmie Edries held a meeting at the Habibia Mosque. It was during this meeting that Parker alleged that PAGAD was under the control of Qibla, which reportedly was responsible for the militancy within PAGAD. No evidence of these allegations was provided. PAGAD pointed out the irony of the media's sudden turn of attitude, including re-labelling Parker, who had earlier called for a holy war and suicide bombs, a moderate. In addition, a so-called "top-secret" document marked "Islamic militancy in South Africa" was made public. According to this document, which apparently made up the minutes of a cabinet committee meeting on security and intelligence affairs held on 15 August 1996, PAGAD itself, as an organisation with legitimate concerns should not be stigmatised; however, militant elements within PAGAD should be isolated. These included organisations such as Qibla and the Islamic Unity Convention – which, as is evident from the above, had recently been "identified" by Parker as having "hijacked" the PAGAD movement (PAGAD 1996).

Assuming that Qibla did infiltrate the PAGAD leadership (the likelihood of which is discussed in more detail below), it would appear that the organisation started grouping itself around two major ideological poles after the internal split had taken place in 1996. These constitute the militant Islam of Qibla, effectively underlining the strong anti-gangster, anti-drug stance manifest in PAGAD's official objectives. Similarly, the militant strand of PAGAD, as represented in the G-Force, seems to embrace para-military style, cell-based operations, as well as urban guerrilla tactics, as possibly also manifest in the urban terrorist attacks in the Western Cape (Pillay 2002: 65). Botha (2001: 44) underlines this point by arguing that the radical faction coalesced under the leadership of Abdus Salaam Ebrahim, who was in favour of confronting gang leaders in a violent manner, and even eliminating some of them. The more "democratic" strand, on the other hand, argued for PAGAD protests to operate within the state's law, demonstrating displays of popular support through marches and mass gatherings (Pillay 2002: 65), and also advocated co-operation with the police in crime prevention functions, while rejecting militant strategies.

### **6.2.3 Urban terrorism – PAGAD involvement?**

PAGAD's initial focus on drug dealers from the Cape Flats was allegedly expanded later on to include government structures, clerics, security force personnel, restaurants and other business interests, as the organisation became increasingly more militant. Qibla's take-over of PAGAD's core leadership meant that calls for the establishment of an Islamic state were increasingly being introduced and also resulted in accusations that the South African society and government were immoral. The establishment of PAGAD's security wing, the G-Force, later apparently propelled the organisation into the phenomenon which for several years was to plunge the Western Cape into a state of instability and unpredictability: urban terrorism. In 1998, 225 people died and 475 were wounded in 728 incidents involving pipe bombings, drive-by shootings and arson attacks in the Western Cape. Of these incidents, however, only 200 were linked to PAGAD; the remaining ones were attributed to gangsters. In 1999, the number of such attacks dropped to 371, as the focus progressively shifted to Cape Town's police stations, restaurants, bars and gay venues. In 2000, this particular focus seemingly intensified, as incidents of urban terrorism targeted shopping centres, gay bars, the US Consulate, Cape Town International Airport and magistrates and policemen who were involved investigation of PAGAD-related court cases (Briefing on urban terror in the Western Cape: a PAGAD perspective 2000).

A chronology of the most prominent incidents of urban terrorism reads as follows. On 26 June 1998, a bomb exploded outside the Mowbray police station. No one was injured and no arrests took place. A few days later, on 6 August 1998, a building housing the police task team investigating PAGAD was bombed, killing a street vendor and injuring another. This was followed by another incident on 25 August 1998 in which two people were killed and at least 25 injured when a pipe bomb ripped through Planet Hollywood restaurant on Cape Town's Waterfront. Although three PAGAD members were detained for questioning, they were all released. On 18 December 1998, a pipe bomb exploded outside the Wynberg synagogue during Chanukkah celebrations. No one was injured and no arrests were made (Shaw 2000: 6).

The government responded to this situation by amending the 1992 Criminal Law Second Amendment Act in January 1999. This amendment outlawed military or paramilitary actions by non-governmental groups, including PAGAD. It also prevented members of political or paramilitary organisations from publicly displaying weapons. The Department of Justice stipulated that members of any organisation would no longer

be allowed to carry weapons, plan campaigns of a military or paramilitary nature, train for operations or manufacture, construct or use any weapon, ammunition, explosive or explosive devices (Chandler 1999: 3).

Incidents of urban terrorism continued throughout 1999, starting on the first day of the year. Two people were injured when a pipe bomb hidden in a car parked in the parking lot at the Victoria & Albert Waterfront in Cape Town exploded. Later on that month, on 28 January 1999, at least 11 people were injured when a pipe bomb placed in a car outside the Woodstock police station exploded during lunch hour, just days before Operation Good Hope, the state's latest anti-urban terrorism initiative, was to be launched. No arrests took place. On 30 January 1999, a woman was slightly injured when a pipe bomb placed in a car outside Woodstock police station detonated. No arrests were made. A few months later, on 9 May 1999, a pipe bomb placed in a car outside the Athlone police station exploded. No one was injured and no arrests were made. Later on in the year, on 6 November 1999, nine people were injured in a bomb blast at the gay Blah Bar in Green Point, central Cape Town. This was followed by another attack on 28 November 1999, when a bomb exploded at St Elmo's Pizzeria in Camps Bay, injuring 48 people and triggering a strengthening of the anti-urban terrorism campaign, Operation Good Hope, which had previously been scaled down. On 24 December 1999, a bomb triggered remotely by a cell phone injured seven police officers at Green Point (Shaw 2000: 6). The St Elmo's bomb blast came as a particularly nasty shock to police authorities who had been under the impression that they had managed to contain the urban terror threat to a considerable extent through the arrest and refusal of bail to key PAGAD members linked to bombings, drive-by shootings and the manufacture of pipe bombs. They were therefore starting to down-scale Operation Good Hope which was meant to stop functioning by mid-December 1999 (Merten 1999: 10).

It was also in 1999 that PAGAD and Qibla were placed on the US State Department's list of emerging terrorist groupings, because it was believed by authorities in both South Africa and the United States that these two organisations may have been behind the Planet Hollywood bombing at the Victoria & Albert Waterfront in 1998, as stated in a US State Department report. The same report also stated that PAGAD was suspected of conducting 170 bombings and 18 other violent actions in 1998 alone. In reaction, PAGAD spokesperson Cassiem Parker lashed out at the US government, denying all allegations on the basis that these were "totally subjective and utterly untrue". He also denied that PAGAD was involved in any terrorist attacks (Washington Correspondent and Staff Reporter 1999: 4).

Incidents of urban terrorism persisted throughout 2000. On 12 January 2000, a bomb attached to a motor cycle exploded outside the Wynberg magistrates court, injuring one person. A few months later, on 22 May 2000, police managed to deactivate a bomb outside a popular Sea Point restaurant, the New York Bagels and Sitdown. They were not equally successful shortly afterwards, however, as on 10 June 2000, three people were injured when a car bomb exploded outside the same restaurant. On 18 June 2000, a bomb placed inside a dustbin at Cape Town's International Airport exploded. No one was injured. Less than a month later, on 11 August 2000, two people were injured when a bomb exploded outside the Constantia Village shopping centre in Cape Town. On 19 August 2000, one person was injured when a car bomb exploded outside the Bronx Nightclub in Green Point and on 29 August 2000, seven people were injured when a car bomb detonated in Adderly Street, central Cape Town during rush hour (Shaw 2000: 6). On 7 September 2000, Magistrate Piet Theron, one of the judicial officers presiding over urban terror related cases involving members of PAGAD, was fatally wounded outside his residence in Plumstead, in a drive-by shooting (Briefing on urban terror in the Western Cape: a PAGAD perspective 2000). On 8 September 2000, a car bomb exploded outside the OBZ café in Main Road, Observatory, a suburb close to central Cape Town. This was followed, a few days later, on 12 September 2000, by a bomb explosion in a tree outside a meeting hall, injuring seven and narrowly missing the Premier of the Western Cape, who was about to address a political meeting at the venue (Shaw 2000: 6). On 18 October 2000, a blast occurred outside the Something Fishy eatery in Kennilworth, injuring four people. The explosion took place near the offices of South Africa's official opposition party, the Democratic Alliance. On 3 November 2000 a bomb was defused at the Keg and Swan pub in Bellville. This event was followed by the assassination, on 26 December 2000, of Yusuf and Fahiema Enous, who were enrolled in the witness protection programme. Both were key state witnesses in the trial of alleged PAGAD members, Faizel Waggie and Nazeem Davids, who had been charged with terrorism and attempted murder for placing an explosive device at the Keg and Swan pub in Bellville (Botha 2001: 57). During the period of urban terrorism discussed above, pipe bombs also exploded at the homes of University of Cape Town (UCT) academic Ebrahim Moosa and former Muslim Judicial Council president, Sheick Nazeem Mohammed. In addition, the homes of several businessmen were attacked. Among those killed were Adam Vinoos and his son Faizel, shot dead in two separate drive-by shootings, as well as Rafieq Parker, who was killed in the driveway of his home. A number of top city gang leaders were also killed in various drive-by shootings (Briefing on urban terror in the Western Cape: a PAGAD perspective 2000).

The urban terror incidents which took place in 1999 and 2000 were perceived by many as an outright attack on the state and caused the government to re-think the fast-tracking of new anti-terror legislation, in order to augment the powers of the Security Forces. Among other measures, this legislation would provide for the detention of suspects for longer than the 48 hours allowed by the Criminal Procedure Act; authorities would be allowed to stop and search both people and vehicles, and people suspected of withholding information relevant to terrorist acts, could be interrogated. To date, this legislation is still pending and has received criticism from various quarters, as the measures suggested are reminiscent of the anti-terror legislation employed during the apartheid era, which was and remains notorious for the human-rights abuses and maltreatment of “terrorism” suspects that it gave rise to. The criticism that has been levied against the proposed anti-terror legislation is discussed in more detail in the concluding chapter of the dissertation. Importantly, it has to be noted that there is no proof beyond doubt that PAGAD was solely responsible for the urban terror experienced in the Western Cape. There are, however, certain indications that implicate the group. So, for example, the contents of slogans shouted during trials of PAGAD members was anti-government and aimed at the judges and police investigators involved in these cases, for example, “one prosecutor, one bullet; one policeman, one bullet”. Court trials of PAGAD members were soon, if not simultaneously, followed by bomb explosions. Drive-by shootings and assassinations of police investigators and magistrates who handled PAGAD related investigations took place as well. Also, reportedly, numerous state witnesses in PAGAD trials, as well as police investigators, who investigated PAGAD members for their involvement in urban terror incidents, were intimidated and received death threats. In addition, PAGAD has not denounced the urban terror attacks that took place in the Western Cape between 1998 and 2001. A number of PAGAD members have been jailed, though not for bomb attacks, but instead for murder, attempted murder and the illegal possession of firearms or pipe bombs. Additional convictions have ranged from intimidating a policeman to illegally possessing firearms or pipe bombs. Controversy still surrounds the involvement of PAGAD members in the urban terror incidents, and simultaneously it must be borne in mind that some gangs in the Western Cape also have the capacity to make use of explosives and have in fact been responsible for bomb blasts in the past (Briefing on urban terror in the Western Cape: a PAGAD perspective 2000).

Four distinct operations were launched by security forces to counter the urban terrorism plaguing the Western Cape. The first was Operation Recoil, which was launched on 23 October 1997 in order to counter growing insecurity among the population of the Western Cape. The operational concept defining Operation

Recoil was based on an intelligence-driven factor, a high-density crime prevention factor, investigating task groups and co-ordination and visible force levels. The success of Operation Recoil lay in the latter's principle of conducting visible high-density operations so as to flush out criminals at particular flashpoint areas. Furthermore, this strategy improved the SAPS's ability to synchronise and focus high-density employment in flashpoint areas, on the basis of weekly crime pattern analyses. The result of the visible high density contingent of Operation Recoil was that by 22 January 1998, a total of 7 437 arrests had taken place (Boshoff 2001: 70-74).

Operation Saladin replaced Operation Recoil, as by early January 1998 it seemed that the specific focus of PAGAD had changed and that pipe bomb attacks and drive-by shootings aimed at the police, drug dealers and Muslim businessmen were on the increase. The state thus engaged in a more intelligence-driven operation, Operation Saladin, which was formed within Operation Recoil and was aimed at detecting and monitoring the perpetrators of acts of urban terrorism in both gangs and PAGAD. Operation Saladin was aimed at monitoring suspects and, once a movement indicating a possible attack was detected, to inform the Joint Operation Centre (JOC) in Cape Town, which in turn would, as soon as possible, send forces to the area concerned. There was also a quick reaction force, which would be directed to intercept suspected potential perpetrators before they reached their target or, if this was not possible, to do so once the perpetrators returned from their target. In addition, the "high-density" element of Operation Recoil was made use of in order to act as an additional deterrent to would-be perpetrators to frustrate them, to hamper their access to intended targets and thus to also deny them the opportunity of going about their illegal activity unhindered. The successes of Operation Saladin lay in the latter's role as a deterrent to prevent acts of urban terrorism and gang-related violence, and also led to the arrest of people involved in acts of terrorism (Boshoff 2001: 74-76).

Between December 1998 and January 1999 the nature of the threat of urban terrorism changed in emphasis and target, however. PAGAD spokespersons started making threats against members of both the intelligence and security forces, and an increasing number of attacks were increasingly aimed at the security forces and at businesses – the pipe bomb attacks at the Cape Town police station and the Victoria & Albert Waterfront are two cases in point. An initiative with a different focus was thus required: Operation Good Hope. This operation required an immediate increase in security force levels, which ultimately included more than 1200 members. It contained an intelligence-driven aspect, aimed at focusing on both tactical intelligence and

gathering, but also included an investigative aspect, focusing on urban terrorism, actions resulting from crowd management and other cases, regarding identified suspects. Protection tasks for political and other targets were also organised by the national and provincial protection services. Reportedly, this strategy, in place from January 1999 to January 2000, resulted in a major decline of acts of urban terrorism in the Western Cape, as well as numerous arrests of individuals involved in such acts. PAGAD-related incidents were at a low number of 22, with fifteen arrests having taken place. The success in Operation Good Hope thus mostly lay in the integrated approach, combining intelligence and investigation (Boshoff 2001: 76-80).

Operation Crackdown followed Operation Good Hope and, like the latter, adopted the concept of multi-disciplinary interventions. Crackdown's operational concept was based on a two-pronged approach, on the one hand a serious and violent crime/geographical approach, focused on geographical "hot spots", clustered into crime combating zones; and on the other an organised crime approach, focused on the identification of syndicates who had the highest impact on organised crime. In high crime areas, multidisciplinary interventions would take place to ensure that the social sector would concentrate its socio-economic development and crime prevention efforts in the same areas as the security forces. Operation Crackdown, like its predecessors, also achieved noticeable successes (Boshoff 2001: 80-82). Nonetheless, despite these reportedly substantial successes, it has to be remembered that most of these operations only contained the urban terrorist threat for a short time, until the focus of the threats changed and adaptations had to be made to the different strategies. In terms of Operation Good Hope for instance, a number of high profile bombings in Cape Town at the end of 1999 revealed the strategy's prime weakness: it was unable to identify and effectively destroy the groups or cells responsible for these acts of terror (Schonteich 2001: 143). In addition, a particularly serious problem faced by those engaged in the fight against urban terrorism was the fact that under South Africa's very liberal Constitution it is required that those who come forward as witnesses have to submit sworn statements in order to ensure that the transparency and accountability of the legal system are upheld. As the urban terror campaign worked on the basis of intimidation, however, those witnesses willing to testify in court, inevitably placed themselves and their families in grave danger. In addition, the witness protection programme left much to be desired and did not provide adequate protection to people (Ensor 1999: 2). Also, such operations do not address the core basis of the problem which in essence necessitates substantial socio-economic development and education initiatives in order to counter the threat of gangsterism and drug-related crimes.

Despite the shortcomings of the government's anti-urban terror initiatives, these have nonetheless largely managed to bring the threat of urban-terror attacks under control, mostly, it would seem, as a result of the arrests and prosecutions of a number of leading PAGAD G-force members. A low-point for PAGAD was the harshest prison sentence yet handed down in a South African urban terror case, when the Cape High Court sentenced PAGAD member Mansoer Leggett to 11 life terms, plus ten years for each of seven attempted murders in March 2001. Leggett was convicted of carrying out a series of murders over a period of five months in 1999 and, incidentally, all those murdered were either suspected drug users or dealers or members of Cape Town gangs. What is important to note here is that despite the large number of charges against PAGAD members, the authorities have succeeded in securing only a small number of actual convictions. This has been due to the fact that key witnesses have either been murdered or forced to stay silent, and many potential witnesses have gone into hiding to avoid being subpoenaed. Prosecutors argue that their ability to prove cases against PAGAD members is limited by the public's fear of testifying against them. Also, several witnesses or members of their families have been shot dead in the past few years. Nor, as has already been mentioned, have the police been able to concretely prove that PAGAD has been solely responsible for the bombings. In the case against Leggett, for example, the conviction was based solely on ballistics and forensic evidence, as, according to the State prosecutor, Helen Booyens, "witnesses simply failed to appear in court". Other lengthy sentences that have been handed down as far as PAGAD members are concerned, were those of PAGAD member Dawood Osman, who was sentenced to 32 years, and Ismail Edwards, who received a 25 year sentence (South African PAGAD vigilante sentenced to 11 life terms 2001).

Mogamat Isaacs was given jail terms adding up to 180 years for three murders and related offenses on 21 October 2002, after having escaped from custody on 19 September and having been re-arrested in an incident involving shooting. The police had to intervene using pepper spray in order to quell outraged PAGAD supporters, who were yelling slogans and religious chants, outside the Cape High Court where the case was being heard. Isaacs was convicted of three counts of murder and eight of attempted murder in connection with an attack on a group of people at a braai in Hanover Park on 12 June 1999. The state alleged that Isaacs and fellow PAGAD members Faizel Samsodien, Abubakar Jacobs and Gamiedoel Abrahams had opened fire on the group, apparently in revenge for the murder of Isaac's brother-in-law, Reza Heuwel, son of the leader of PAGAD's Tafelsig G-force cell, Abdul Heuwel (Schroeder 2002). Other PAGAD trials that received substantial media coverage were those of Ebrahim Jeneker and Abdullah Maansdorp, both of whom were found guilty in the Cape High Court of multiple charges of murder, robbery and the illegal possession

of firearms and ammunition on 17 December 2002. Jeneker was found guilty on 17 of the 52 charges that remained against him, after he had been acquitted of 77 other charges at a previous hearing. The 17 charges included three murder counts, one of attempted murder, five of armed robbery, seven of illegal possession of firearms and ammunition, and one for pointing a firearm. Maansdorp, who had been cleared of 126 other charges at a previous hearing, was found guilty on 18 counts, including three of murder, one of attempted murder, six of armed robbery, three of kidnapping, four of illegal possession of firearms and ammunition and one of pointing a firearm (Kemp 2002). In October 2002 it was reported that 45 PAGAD members were in jail, while 15 had been killed since 1996 (Rise and fall of PAGAD 2002).

To date, it is generally accepted that the threat once posed by PAGAD has been largely “contained”, as most of the leadership is currently behind bars on cases relating to the spate of bombings and murders in the Western Cape since 1997. Nonetheless, the organisation reportedly, according to South Africa’s national intelligence, continues to be divided between those who want to continue the terror campaign as their objectives have not been met, and those who are in favour of negotiating an amnesty with the government (Michaels 2003: 4). PAGAD, as usual, continues to deny that it was involved in a “terror campaign” at any point in its existence. Rather, its spokesperson, Cassiem Parker, has stated that the government’s attitude towards PAGAD and its hindering of PAGAD’s initiatives to fight gangsterism and drugs, shows how little the government is interested in addressing the country’s crime situation (Smith 2003: 4).

It now becomes important to look at the ideologies of both Qibla and PAGAD, in order to determine the reasoning that informs the existence of the respective organisations and, importantly, again assuming that PAGAD’s leadership has been infiltrated by Qibla, the reasoning that may lie behind the urban terror attacks that PAGAD’s G-force has been implicated in.

### **6.3 THE IDEOLOGY OF QIBLA**

Qibla emerged in South Africa in the 1980s as a militant pro-Shi’ite fundamentalist force, which took its inspiration from the 1979 Iranian revolution. Its creation was aimed at promoting the aims and ideals of the Iranian revolution in South Africa, and, furthermore, at propagating, defending and implementing the strict Islamic principles associated with said revolution among South African Muslims, thereby transforming the country into a fully-fledged Muslim state (theocracy) under the slogan, “One Solution, Islamic Revolution”.

During the apartheid struggle, Qibla simultaneously lent its support to the black consciousness movement in South Africa, in particular Pan Africanism, and the notion of an Islamic revolution in the country. Qibla's close relationship with the PAC and Azanian People's Organisation (AZAPO) continued throughout the 1990s. Though the objectives of Qibla are not clearly spelled out, due to a lack of information, it can be assumed that the organisation's ultimate goal is the possibility of launching an Islamic revolution in South Africa. Much speculation exists about the extent of Qibla's involvement in PAGAD. Although both the Islamic Unity Convention (IUC) (Cassiem played an instrumental role in its establishment in the mid-1990s) and Qibla have repeatedly distanced themselves from PAGAD, there are many in the Muslim community who are of the opinion that PAGAD is fully under the control of Qibla. According to one commentator, "Whatever Cassiem's involvement with PAGAD, he remains – as the South African originator of a radical agenda based upon a revolutionary reading of the *Quran* – the movement's ideological father" (Botha 2001: 40-41).

Qibla's members are generally perceived as outspoken supporters of the Islamic *jihad* and the movement is able to capitalise on issues such as South Africa's abnormally high crime rate and the government's apparent inability to deal with this as legitimate reasons for its militant actions in favour of Islamic laws and values. Qibla furthermore sees itself as the true protector of orthodox Islamic values in a decaying Western orientated society and world. Muslims, according to Qibla, owe it to their faith to oppose any corrupt and inefficient state. In the long term, the movement aims to assist pro-Islamic fundamentalist countries in the Middle East, such as Libya and Iran, in the establishment of an Islamic (theocratic) Republic in South Africa. This aim is based on the notion that Western capitalism cannot be reformed or improved, which therefore means that it must be totally destroyed so as to ensure an improvement in the position of the "dispossessed masses". This, in Qibla's view, necessitates a replacement of capitalism with a policy of nationalisation without compensation, an idea which is also supported by South Africa national-socialist organisations such as the PAC, AZAPO and others that form part of the Pan-Africanist, Black Consciousness and Black Power movements. In terms of socialist principles then, the "dispossessed masses" represent the only true vehicle for the complete destruction of capitalism and consequently the introduction of an egalitarian state ruled according to the principles and the laws of the *Sharia* (Le Roux 1997: 55). It is interesting to note how Qibla has merged Islamic fundamentalist rhetoric with the socialist ideology, dating back from Cold War times, propounded by movements such the PAC. The idea of redistributing the country's wealth among its citizens and thereby establishing an egalitarian state that will be able to destroy

the unjust and unbalanced legacy of capitalism seems idealistic, as well as unrealistic for several reasons. Firstly, national-socialist ideology has been largely discredited in the post-Cold War era, especially as far as a policy of “nationalisation without compensation” is concerned, which, in the South African context especially, is highly unfeasible, taking into account the painful legacy of highly unequal land distribution. Secondly, again in the South African context, it is unrealistic to talk of the possibility of the establishment of an Islamic state, especially as only 2,5 percent of the population is Muslim and as most of these reject Islamic fundamentalist rhetoric.

Because of its affiliations with the political left in South Africa, Qibla rejects the ANC-led government as it believes the latter to be committed to the “transformation” rather than the perceived necessary “destruction” of apartheid and the “redistribution” of land and wealth. Qibla believes that South Africa’s new dispensation will eventually lead to an economic policy that will be under the exclusive control of the West and its white capitalist interests. An additional argument is that although the government has in the short term managed to create the positive idea of having “liberated” the country, its close association with the capitalist West will in the long run lead to the impoverishment of the masses (Le Roux 1997: 55). Qibla thus seems to be characterised by a decidedly anti-Western rhetoric, which also suggests an element of insecurity and fear at the thought of being a marginalised minority in a country largely open and responsive to Western values and ideas.

Since PAGAD’s establishment in 1995, there have been numerous allegations by the media and members of the Cape Muslim Community that Qibla has infiltrated PAGAD and is using it as a vanguard organisation for mobilising its objectives (Botha 2001: 40). In fact, PAGAD’s formation in 1995 has been directly linked to Qibla’s inability to develop into a mass organisation in order to promote the Islamic fundamentalist values it represents, a problem that was partially aggravated by Qibla leader Achmad Cassiem’s lengthy imprisonment of 11 years on Robben Island and continued subsequent restriction of a further 11 years. Since his release from prison, however, Cassiem has made every effort to form a mass organisation representing the ideals of the Iranian Revolution, an aim which has arguably largely been facilitated by the formation of the IUC in 1994 and PAGAD in 1995. It is thus believed by many, despite Qibla’s persistent denial of any ties with PAGAD, that the latter is the military arm of the IUC and that it has the predominant aim of mobilising support by means of displaying Islamic principles and protecting ordinary citizens. According to this presumption, it could thus be argued that due to the government’s inability to effectively deal with South

Africa's escalating crime situation, both Qibla and the IUC have found a very legitimate reason around which to mobilise support for their Islamic fundamentalist cause, under the guise of PAGAD's fight against gangsterism and drugs (Le Roux 1997: 61).

As has already been argued, however, the above rests on speculation rather than concrete proof and Qibla has continuously denied any involvement with PAGAD. In addition, the secretive nature of Qibla's organisation and its related reluctance to divulge details about its structure and membership, makes it extremely difficult to establish the truth behind any such claims (Botha 2001: 40). At the height of the urban terrorist campaign in February 1999, Qibla leader Achmad Cassiem once again distanced himself from PAGAD, stating that his organisation was not in favour of "isolated bombings and incidents of violence" that did not "involve the masses of the people". Instead, he propagated something akin to a revolutionary armed struggle, such as the Iranian revolution against the Shah which ushered Ayatollah Khomeini into power. He also said that Qibla had publicly condemned many bombings that had taken part over the years and that such condemnations logically included condemnations of terrorism, of whatever nature. Again, he distanced himself from PAGAD, saying that Qibla dealt with the root causes of the problem (presumably that of crime), while PAGAD merely dealt with its symptoms. He did, however, concede that PAGAD's anti-drug and anti-gangster agenda formed part and parcel of Qibla's ideal notion of a society where alcohol and drugs have no place (Mgxashe 1999: 1).

Qibla's decisively Islamic fundamentalist ideology, coupled with its preference for national-socialist ideas could thus be behind the actions of the militant PAGAD faction that reportedly was formed as a result of the split that took place within the PAGAD leadership. This could partially help explain the targeting of state structures and businesses that exude "Westernisation" and "capitalism", such as Planet Hollywood. It now becomes important to look at PAGAD's ideology in order to determine how this differs from the Islamic fundamentalist ideology propounded by Qibla, and how, in this way, PAGAD leaders have continuously managed to deny any links with Cassiem's movement and its rather more "radical" agenda.

## **6.4 THE IDEOLOGY OF PAGAD**

The supposed covert and militant dimension of PAGAD is not necessarily evident in its general press releases and aims and objectives, which resound with morality and “doing the right thing”. The official PAGAD website states that PAGAD has the following aims and objectives:

- 1 To propagate the eradication of drugs and gangsterism from society.
- 2 To co-operate with, and to co-ordinate the activities of people and people’s organisations, who have similar aims and objectives.
- 3 To make every effort to invite, motivate or activate and to include those people and people’s organisations that are not yet part of the PAGAD campaign.
- 4 To raise funds to realise the foregoing aims.

These objectives are meant to contribute to PAGAD’s vision of bringing about “a just social order, devoid of the evils of gangsterism and drugs”, by means of “ raising the consciousness of the people, mass mobilisations and mass action”. PAGAD’s mission statement underlines both its vision and its objectives and states that PAGAD is a “caring people’s movement, proceeding from a foundation of truth, unity, justice and fearlessness, with the ultimate aim of eradicating the evil scourge of gangsterism and drugs from society”, in accordance with “the Divine Will of the Creator”.

It is also interesting to note the reasoning behind the formation of PAGAD, which boils down to disillusionment with the fact that after almost a year in office (in 1995) the new “democratic government” had not yet addressed any of the issues that had won them the elections. What was particularly worrying was the sudden escalation in the level of crime after the new government was inaugurated, as well as the “inability of the police and justice systems to effectively deal with this increase in crime”. South Africa, in the post-apartheid era, had reportedly also become a house for international drug smuggling, which had resulted in communities living in a permanent state of fear. Simultaneously, as a result of increasing levels of police corruption, people no longer perceived the police as their protectors, but instead it became a well-

known fact that many policemen were on the pay rolls of gangsters and that gangsters were progressively playing a prominent role in the post-apartheid era, working as police informers. In addition, a definite level of mistrust prevailed, as the police force had retained many of the officers who had been high-ranking apartheid personnel and were thus associated with human rights violations committed under the apartheid regime. According to the PAGAD website, the initial strategy adopted was one of consultation with government and its various departments, which, when unsuccessful, became one of confrontation with the drug merchants and gangsters themselves. An education and drug rehabilitation programme was also put into action. Thus, PAGAD claims, its success can be attributed to the fact that the organisation consists of people who are committed to bringing about a new social order based on truth, justice and morality (PAGAD 1997a).

PAGAD's primarily overt function therefore is that of an anti-crime structure which has the aim of combating and eradicating crime, gangsterism and drugs. As seen above, PAGAD classes its actions as the natural responses of citizens who daily experience the failure of the state to protect them, which after all is one of the state's most basic, yet also most important prerogatives. In addition, a PAGAD founding member has argued that in contemporary South African society, a non-confrontational approach is simply no longer viable as those who have the mandate to confront gangsterism and drugs, simply do not satisfactorily fulfil their duties. PAGAD thus arose with an agenda that included both confrontation and force, the latter being equated with extreme pressure and therefore not necessarily being violent. From this resulted PAGAD's two-pronged strategy to combat crime: confrontation directed at the government, and confrontation directed at those who perpetrate crime (Botha 2001: 46).

PAGAD has reportedly also engaged in some important and constructive socio-economic initiatives, such as, for example, its National Conference held in March 1997 that dealt with education in the Western Cape. According to the memorandum of this conference, particular attention should be paid to the need to provide children with counselling when it comes to sexual abuse, which, in turn, often goes hand-in-hand with the misuse of drugs or alcohol. Other issues which were addressed at the conference were the high levels of retrenchment of teachers, an action which apparently took place with very little consultation with the parties involved, the government's refusal to grant free education to senior pupils and other general practical shortcomings faced by schools, such as a shortage of books and classrooms (PAGAD 1997b).

Another initiative which PAGAD has been involved in is a Drug Counselling Centre which was officially opened on 20 February 1999 and offers a drug rehabilitation programme (PAGAD 2000d).

PAGAD has furthermore categorically denied its involvement in the bombings in the Cape Town area, an accusation which is seen as “an attempt to discredit the PAGAD campaign”. This was especially PAGAD’s reaction to comments made by former president Mandela in his 1999 Address to Parliament, where he reportedly accused PAGAD of being involved in “a murderous offensive against ordinary citizens and law-enforcement agencies” and also said that PAGAD’s campaign had “assumed a form of terrorism”. PAGAD replied by stating that its campaign was aimed at ensuring the safety and security of all the citizens of the country, as well as ensuring effective government. PAGAD also stated that it was not, as the government accused it of being, responsible for the fact that police resources were being used to fight its activities, rather than to combat criminals. While it was indeed true that the government was increasingly targeting PAGAD, it could be said at the same time that the government had never made the necessary effort to counter crime and gangsterism in South Africa. PAGAD also accused the government of being guilty of violating the constitutional rights of PAGAD members by means of interrogating and torturing them (PAGAD 1999). A related accusation against PAGAD has been that the organisation has been demanding protection money from businessmen, something which it also strongly refuted. Instead, PAGAD vehemently opposes such policies, stating that business people involved in drug trafficking or related activities have to make sure that whatever money they have acquired in this way must be ploughed back into the community to uplift the situation of innocent victims of drug abuse and drug addiction. These funds have to be used to ensure the rehabilitation of addicts, compensation to families who have suffered loss as a result of the social evil, and psychological treatment for those who have been emotionally affected. PAGAD has also stated that if any one of its members should illegally or unlawfully demand money from business people, this person would be exposed, as well as dealt with in an appropriate manner (PAGAD 1998).

PAGAD has furthermore repeatedly accused the government, and more specifically the police, of treating PAGAD members suspected or accused of terrorism unfairly. So, for example, Dawood Osman, who in December 1999 was sentenced to 32 years in prison, was moved from the Helderstroom Maximum Prison in Caledon to Pretoria Maximum Security Prison in the middle of the night while reportedly having been given false information in terms of being told that he was being transferred to Victor Verster Prison in Paarl. PAGAD alleges that he is being held in a “torturous and degrading inhumane manner” in Pretoria (PAGAD

2000a). Other PAGAD members have apparently also suffered in prisons, which has led some of them to go on hunger strikes to protest their situation. Reasons given are the overcrowding of police cells, public strip searches, being held in a confined space for 23 hours a day, overcrowding in trucks when being transported between prison and court, being allowed only one telephone call per week, and not being allowed any contact visits (PAGAD 2000b).

PAGAD's ideology is thus based on a strongly moralistic anti-crime, anti-drug stance, aimed at fulfilling those functions in society which the government apparently has not been able to fulfil. It has furthermore become involved in a number of constructive initiatives, such as the drug rehabilitation centre, to address the problems which it has identified in South African society. There is thus little in PAGAD's official rhetoric that is reminiscent of the Islamic fundamentalist ideology espoused by Qibla, which has made it possible for PAGAD to refute any accusations against it of involvement in urban terror attacks. Nonetheless, as has already been mentioned, there is some evidence that links PAGAD to a number of the attacks that have occurred in Cape Town, which, in turn, reinforces the probability of Qibla involvement in PAGAD's leadership.

Throughout its existence PAGAD has adopted a dual strategy which on the one hand focuses on "overt" or largely legal activities, such as the drug rehabilitation centre or criticisms levied against the Western Cape education system, as mentioned above, but on the other hand also includes a series of "covert" activities which are both violent and illegal. The leadership of PAGAD, again as also mentioned before, categorically denies the involvement of PAGAD in violent actions against drug lords and gangsters, but, at the same time does not condemn "people within the organisation" who might resort to such attacks. In fact the PAGAD leadership has given people the go-ahead to engage in any kind of measures that "will get rid of crime ... If the people should decide to take the law into their own hands, we wish them the best of luck". What evidence is there of PAGAD's involvement? From 1996 onwards, numerous suspected drug dealers and members of gangs were given ultimatums by PAGAD, telling them to cease their illegal activities. When the ultimatums were not complied with, "follow-up" actions took place in the form of violent assaults and attacks on the homes and vehicles of such suspected drug dealers and gang members. Also, some of the victims of such attacks have identified their attackers as active PAGAD members. In addition, a number of explosions have been linked to PAGAD and it has also been established that the bombs which were located at the Blah Bar, St Elmo's and Mano's restaurants, as well as at the Wynberg magistrates' court were all

detonated by means of the use of cellphones. Forensic tests also revealed that the bombs consisted of a combination of pipe and petrol bombs, bound together with cable ties. Shrapnel, consisting of triangular bits of metal and chopped-off nails, was also found at the scene of all these bombings. Furthermore, there have been bomb attacks at court appearances of several PAGAD members (Botha 2001: 58-60).

Islamic fundamentalists, presumably part of Qibla, have thus apparently used the issues of gangsterism and drugs to garner popular support for PAGAD and even if the government should eventually find ways to combat gangsterism and drugs, it is likely that these fundamentalists will continue to find other issues with which to bolster public support for their violent opposition to South Africa's liberal-democratic order. PAGAD, despite its likely involvement in acts of urban terrorism and violence, nonetheless has a valid point in raising the issue of gangsterism and drugs, which poses a substantial problem in the poorer areas of greater Cape Town, fostering turf wars between rival gangs, assassinations, kidnappings, murders and general high levels of crime. It also needs to be pointed out here that gang violence is more responsible for instability in the Western Cape than PAGAD and that at the heart of this phenomenon lie large socio-economic problems (Botha 2001: 62-63). Thus, while the threat of urban terrorism has been contained for the moment, lasting solutions need to be found in order to counter the crime problem which is detrimental not only to South African Muslims, but to the South African population as a whole. As long as the government appears not to be able to cope with the crucial challenge of making South Africa safer for the average citizen, the possibility of the re-emergence of vigilante groups who decide to take the law into their own hands, as the government does not present a viable law-enforcement alternative, is ever-present.

The dialogic model of interpretation is thus used in this chapter to attempt an open-minded, yet critical analysis of the respective ideologies of Qibla and PAGAD, the organization whose leadership the former has reportedly infiltrated to a large extent. In addition, structural (economic, political and social) factors are taken into account to, among other things, help explain the role of Islam in South Africa and, more specifically, the reasons for the formation of PAGAD. The precarious gangsterism and drugs situation in the Western Cape has been crucial to the initial enthusiasm and popular support for PAGAD before its apparent take-over by Qibla. Ultimately, then, it is necessary for the government to find lasting solutions both in terms of containing threats of urban terrorism, as well as in terms of addressing the immense socio-economic disparities characterising the South African population. It is only through education and socio-economic development that the roots of the crime problem can permanently be addressed, which would enable organisations such as PAGAD to focus more on the positive initiatives that have already been launched, such

as drug rehabilitation. As far as urban terrorism and relatively isolated Muslim extremists are concerned, a number of initiatives can be put in place to effectively continue controlling the situation. These are dealt with in more detail in the dissertation's concluding chapter.

## **6.5 SUMMARY OF CHAPTER SIX**

PAGAD was initially formed in reaction to the high crime rate in South Africa and the police and government's inability to effectively combat this destabilising problem. Its initial actions included marches to the offices of government officials, as well as to the houses of well-known and notorious drug lords. PAGAD members demanded that gangsters stop their activities and said that if they failed to do so they would face the wrath of the people. After the 1996 split within the PAGAD leadership, it was increasingly rumoured that PAGAD had split into a moderate and a more radical faction and that the latter was under the control of Qibla. This is an Islamic fundamentalist organisation which advocates a mixture of Islamic fundamentalist and socialist rhetoric and is decidedly opposed to the system of Western capitalism which it argues needs to be replaced by an egalitarian state ruled according to the principles of the *Sharia*.

PAGAD, whose official rhetoric show little or no resemblance to that of Qibla, the former being primarily concerned with its fight against crime, refused to admit any involvement in the spate of urban terrorist attacks that hit South Africa from 1996 to 2000. It is interesting to note, however, that bomb attacks often followed the trials of PAGAD members, that anti-government slogans were shouted by PAGAD members during trials of their compatriots and that a number of attacks were made on policemen involved in the handling of PAGAD cases. Whether or not PAGAD is to be held responsible for the incidents of urban terror that once shook the Cape is still only a matter of speculation. What is much more important is for the South African government to find ways in which to alleviate the socio-economic crises that characterise the Cape Flats area and to thereby effectively address the issues which PAGAD professes to make its business: gangsterism and drugs.

## **CHAPTER 7: CONCLUDING REMARKS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

In conclusion it is possible to look at what has been learned from using the dialogic model of interpretation as a theoretical approach (with an additional evaluation of structural factors) to analyse the ideologies of Islamic fundamentalist groups in Algeria, Sudan and South Africa. What recommendations can be made with regard to each of the respective case studies which may be potentially useful for a future resolution of the conflicts in Algeria and Sudan, and, in the case of South Africa, may help ensure continuing stability as far as the threat of urban terrorism, is concerned?

From the analysis of structural factors, that has accompanied the dialogic model of interpretation throughout the discussion on Algeria, some significant observations regarding Algeria's current situation can be made. The solutions thus far presented by the Bouteflika government have not managed to resolve the conflict in Algeria. Although, according to the government, the number of radical Islamic fundamentalists has been drastically reduced, (in 2003 it was announced that fewer than 1000 radical Islamic fundamentalists remained active) (Europa World Year Book 2003: 447), violence and unrest persist and there is the potential that the situation may become even more volatile in future. This may especially be argued when one takes into consideration the dire economic circumstances that every-day Algerians find themselves in, as elaborated on in Chapter four. Young men who have not had much of an education and have no prospects for employment find it so much more lucrative to engage in the profitable, but violence- and coercion-ridden parallel economy that forms an integral part of the Algerian conflict. Thus, although the AIS has largely been disbanded and in addition thousands of radical Islamic fundamentalists belonging to other groups have reportedly surrendered, this has not meant a sudden and complete end to the violent attacks by those radical Islamic fundamentalists who are still active. Simultaneously, and again as mentioned in Chapter four, the military and government elites also have an economic stake in the continuation of the conflict. There have also been strong signs of dissatisfaction with the government from other quarters, notably Algeria's Berber population which has launched violent protests against its unfavourable treatment by the government.

The FIS thus has a point when it states in its 2002 political platform, which is dealt with in detail in Chapter four, that the Law of Civil Concord policy, which over a limited period granted amnesty to radical Islamic fundamentalists who were not guilty of serious war crimes, has not been [entirely] successful. Instead, the FIS states that abuses against its membership and leadership continue and that Algeria's political, economic

and social crises have been aggravated (Front Islamique du Salut 2002: 3). This statement is justified in that the core problems underlying the Algerian conflict and the grievances of Algeria's population, including Islamic fundamentalists, have not been addressed. The FIS has not been re-admitted politically, which would be a crucial reconciliatory gesture on behalf of the government, nor have multi-party negotiations which include all of Algeria's pertinent political actors been organised.

President Bouteflika's made a potentially significant comment before his re-election in April 2004. In an interview he stated,

I am a man of peace and the purpose of all my efforts is to bolster the Algerian people's cohesion and urge the Algerians to end the antagonism and unite so as to revive the spirit of tolerance and concern for the nation's supreme interest. This is the principle on which I based the policy [the Law of Civil Concord] so far and will continue it if the Algerian people renew their trust in me (Sulaymani 2004: 4).

If Bouteflika is to realise the aims expressed in this statement, it will be necessary for the Algerian government to engage in productive dialogue with the FIS, as well as other political actors. Although some negotiations with the FIS have taken place, which resulted in its leaders Madani and Belhadj being released from house arrest in 2003, this was done under the condition that neither be engaged in any political activity whatsoever. Belhadj consequently refused to sign the agreement stipulating these preconditions (La Voix des Opprimés 2003). This kind of "reconciliation" conducted by the Algerian government that continues to withhold basic rights such as that of political engagement or activity from its interlocutors is not a long-term solution to the Algerian crisis. It is bound to breed resentment not only among the leadership of the FIS, but also among its supporters lower down. In addition, ways have to be sought to bring those radical Islamic fundamentalist groups still involved in the conflict to the negotiation table. As pointed out already, this will by no means be easy as the GIA is adamantly opposed to any kind of reconciliation with the government and as its members benefit economically from the ongoing conflict. Nonetheless, if peace is to be returned to Algeria and if there is to be economic and political development, negotiations and co-operation are the only solution.

It is here where the dialogic model of interpretation, in its predominant role of a theoretical tool for the analysis of ideology, which has been employed in evaluating the FIS, proves to be useful. In its 2002 Political Platform the FIS makes a very relevant and important contribution in addressing some of the core

issues that underlie the Algerian conflict. As already discussed in Chapter four, the FIS's first objective, to dismantle the system of military hierarchy, offers an important rectification to Algerian political life which for decades has been dominated by a military elite. Military officers have benefited from corruption and economic malpractices both before and during the current Algerian conflict. If the living conditions of Algerians are to be improved, a future politically more inclusive Algerian government would do well to restrict the military's power. The FIS's second objective which deals with the transfer of power to the people is also very important to a post-conflict dispensation in Algeria, as it seeks to restore basic political rights and liberties, such as the right to expression, movement and political association, to all Algerians. Such measures would be essential to restore the self-respect of Algerians as well as open up the political arena to parties of different political persuasions. The desired next step would be free and fair elections, of which the results would be upheld, regardless of the outcome. The FIS's third objective is aimed at restoring truth, by means of the establishment of both human rights and economic commissions of enquiry to establish where abuses have been perpetrated. The restoration of justice is also envisaged, through the judicial pursuits, judgement and punishments of those responsible, on both the government and Islamic fundamentalist sides, for serious war and economic crimes. In addition, victims of the war are to be compensated and steps are to be taken to restore Algeria's collective memory by means of declaring a national day and building monuments symbolising the national struggle for Islam, justice, dignity and human rights and paying witness to the atrocities suffered during the Algerian conflict. It is crucial that Algerians come to terms with their troubled and bloody past and that the thousands of families who suffered are compensated. It will of course be a very delicate matter not to posit "the defenders of Islam" against "the apostates", which might easily cause sentiments of reconciliation to be replaced by resentment. A number of lessons could be learned from South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission process in this regard.

The FIS in its 2002 Political Platform thus presents some realistic and highly important suggestions to be applied in a potential post-war scenario. Some criticisms can be levied as well, such as, for example, as already mentioned in Chapter four, the rather unrealistic notion of excavating and identifying tens of thousands bodies in order to give them a decent burial. This is one of the gruesome realities Algerians would have to accept and learn to deal with in more practical ways, by means of memorial services or by constructing monuments. In general though, the FIS's suggestions here are sound.

The FIS also advocates the all-important factor of negotiations which are meant to pave the way for a transitional period and a government of national unity. This would be followed by a National Conference, whose members would be elected by the electorate and who would write a constitution in line with the principle of universal suffrage. This provisional government would consequently organise local and national elections (Front Islamique du Salut 2002: 22-25). The idea of a transitional government sounds feasible as this could provide a slow and thorough preparation for elections to take place. The FIS's negotiation demands are fair and realistic; negotiations cannot go ahead without conditions of relative peace and co-operation having been established between the different groups.

The FIS then presents a set of crucially important points in its 2002 Political Platform, all of which the Bouteflika regime may do well to consider if peace is to be fully restored in Algeria and if economic and political development is to take place. The dialogic model of interpretation has however also served to underline some of the basic shortcomings in the FIS's Political Programme of 1989 and consequent statements that have been made with regard to its attitude towards democracy and to what degree this would be present in an "Islamic state". It is not sufficient for the FIS to present only a vague outline of the political and economic reforms it aims to implement. Merely pointing out what previous regimes have done or are still doing wrong is not sufficient. It is important that the Algerian state be built on solid democratic structures which ensure that people, specifically Algerian women, retain their individual rights. It is this notion, after all, which the FIS agreed to support when it signed the 1995 Rome Accords. Religion is and remains an integral part of Algerian society and any future dispensation would have to acknowledge and respect this and provide a significant role for Islam in its laws and functioning. How exactly this is to be done, of course remains a very problematic question. Reference can here be made to the Islamic modernists discussed in Chapter three, and their efforts to reconcile Islam with modernity and democracy.

To briefly recap, a modernist and pluralist Islamist approach accepts the near-universal values of democracy, human rights, pluralism and vibrant civil society as fully compatible with Islam and inherent in Islam's own original multiculturalism. The problem so far has been the impossibility of these values to emerge in the Muslim world while the theological and power structures were in the hands of authoritarian regimes that interpreted Islamic law to their own benefit. This of course applies to successive Algerian governments and, to a certain extent, also to the FIS. The primary goal of Islamic modernists is to reinterpret texts to create a modern understanding of Islam compatible with most contemporary political values based on the importance

of advocating intellectual freedom (Fuller 2003: 54). Modernists then imaginatively bring together Islamic and Western ideas and have produced a reasonable and relevant reinterpretation of Islamic thought, characterised by cosmopolitan, liberal and realistic perspectives. They also believe that a tolerance for diversity and a willingness to adjust rapidly to a changing environment contributes to the emancipation of individual Muslims and to the progress of Muslim societies (Husain 1995: 110). A future Algerian government of national unity might do well in considering modernist Islamic thought in writing up a constitution and laws that reflect the spirit and tradition of Islam, but at the same time do not impose practices that may compromise individual liberties.

In the case of Sudan, an analysis of structural factors suggests enormous socio-economic difficulties for the country, whatever future political dispensation may be adopted in future. As discussed in Chapter five, these include poverty, urbanisation and unemployment, while at the same time the economy is characterised by a macroeconomic imbalance that is for example reflected in high rates of inflation, excessive balance of payments deficits and a heavy debt burden. These immense problems have of course been aggravated by the long and bloody Sudanese civil war, as well as the recent catastrophe in Darfur, both of which have meant the destruction of property and resources, malnourishment, and the displacement of hundreds of thousands of Sudanese people. The government's policies of displacing communities in order to secure areas for oil exploration in Sudan's southern regions, and its policy of ethnic cleansing and forced displacement in Darfur have also served to exacerbate the situation. It is thus important to realise that any attempt to create a political set-up in Sudan which has a chance of being stable and lasting, requires that the country's severe humanitarian crisis be addressed and that mechanisms are created to ensure the recovery and development of regions such as Darfur, which have suffered severely adverse effects as a result of sustained conflict. Socio-economic underdevelopment as a result of the government's neglect of the Darfur region was after all one of the reasons why the rebel groups began attacking government targets in the first place. If, as is stated in the Machakos Protocol, the southern regions of Sudan are given autonomy during the six year interim period before the referendum on the question of self-determination is to take place, it is of course also crucial that the national wealth, for instance the country's substantial oil revenues, should be divided so as to enable the leadership of the south to launch and carry through much-needed development projects.

In terms of the Machakos Protocol, various shortcomings have already been pointed out in Chapter five. To briefly summarise, these include the fact that no definite agreement has yet been reached on the crucial issue

of separating the state from religion, as is particularly evident in terms of the thorny question of the future of Khartoum. Another problematic issue is that of wealth sharing, which, as has been argued, is fundamental in enabling the socio-economic development and autonomous political functioning of Sudan's southern states during the six year interim period before the referendum on the question of self-determination for the south is to take place. As has been pointed out, the government suspects the SPLM/A's argument that the land in the south belongs to the respective communities there, which should hence have a say in determining its future, as being an attempt to undermine its access to most of Sudan's strategic resources which happen to be located in the south. Similarly, in terms of the issue of self-determination, the government suspects the SPLM/A of wanting to break-away from the rest of the country in order to deny the ruling elite control over natural resources, including oil. There is also the question of the kind of political system that is to be followed in north and south Sudan respectively during the interim period. It has been accepted that northern Sudan will retain its Islamic character, while the south will remain secular. While this appears to be a realistic compromise, it may be much more difficult to implement in practice. Related issues are those of what law is to be applied to southerners living in the north and whether it is in fact feasible to create parallel legal systems for minorities living in the north and south respectively. When it comes to power-sharing, significant differences also remain. These pertain to what role the SPLM/A will have as part of the executive and judicial arms of state, and what the composition of parliament should be in terms of the representation of the south and the north. Another crucial issue is that pertaining to Abyei, the Nuba Mountains and the Southern Blue Nile areas. Thus, the real challenges lie not only in resolving tangible and negotiable issues, such as power- and wealth sharing, but also intangible ones which are rooted in the more abstract and interpretative dynamics of history, psychology, culture, values and identity. The resolution of the conflict thus depends on whether and how the tangible and intangible factors can be reconciled.

In terms of the situation in Darfur, various problems persist in hampering the resolution of the conflict there. The rebels have so far refused to sign an accord on greater access for aid agencies, saying the pro-government militias must disarm first. Despite the UN resolution that was passed on 18 September 2004, which calls for Secretary General Kofi Annan to set up a commission to investigate whether the events in Darfur amount to genocide, and which threatens to take measures against Sudan's oil industry if the government fails to fulfil its pledge of disarming pro-government militias, which the Sudanese government has grudgingly agreed to, the situation in Darfur remains highly unstable. Though the Sudanese government has responded to international pressure to end the violence by sending in thousands of extra police officers to

Darfur, and calls have been made by African Union (AU) president Obasanjo for funding to enlarge the AU's mediation force in Darfur, people are still subject to attacks, which they blame on the Janjaweed.

This is where the dialogic model of interpretation, which has been used to analyse some ideological formulations associated with the Sudanese regime, is useful when evaluating possible future policies for durable conflict resolution in Sudan. In terms of governing Sudan during the six year interim period before the referendum on self-determination for the south takes place, it is crucial to satisfactorily resolve those issues which remain as crucial to the future of a peaceful Sudan, as they are problematic. The first is that of the relationship between religion and the state, where some form of consensus has been reached in the Machakos Protocol. To avoid further disagreement between the parties, no direct reference is made to the exact status that religion has in Sudan, though protection of basic religious freedoms and diversity is guaranteed. Such guarantees are also present in Article 24 of Sudan's 1998 Constitution, where it is stated that everyone has the right to disseminate and manifest their religious belief in a number of ways provided that these coincide with the law and do not harm the public order or others' feelings. Simultaneously, no one is to be coerced to profess a faith or believe or perform rituals or a certain kind of worship that he or she does not voluntarily accept (Constitution of the Republic of Sudan 1998). These guarantees are crucial in Sudan's future political dispensation, especially in a situation where, as expected, the north is to remain under Islamic rule, and the question of whether *Sharia* law is to be applied to the non-Muslims living there remains unresolved. The same could be seen to apply to Muslims who in the future could be living under autonomous rule in the south. A mechanism therefore has to be found whereby minority groups will be guaranteed of the freedoms stipulated in the Constitution and will no longer, as in the past, continue to be subjected to the imposition of one particular religion. Similarly, it could be argued that Muslims too should be ensured of a respect for their individual rights under the *Sharia*. This presupposes that the *Sharia*, as Turabi suggests, should imaginatively be adapted to modern circumstances in order to enable Muslims to cope with modernity, and also to ensure a respect for and adherence to the near-universal values of democracy, human rights, pluralism and vibrant civil society as fully compatible with Islam. This reflects the view of Islamic modernists. Turabi's ideology in several respects conforms to that of Islamic modernists who bring together Islamic and Western ideas and have produced a reasonable and relevant reinterpretation of Islamic thought, characterised by cosmopolitan, liberal and realistic perspectives. They also believe that a tolerance for diversity and a willingness to adjust rapidly to a changing environment contributes to the emancipation of individual Muslims and to the progress of Muslim societies (Husain 1995: 110).

It is also important that the remaining problematic issues which form part of the dispute surrounding the Machakos Protocol be resolved. Reference has already been made to the imperative of coming to a conclusive agreement regarding the necessity of wealth-sharing in order to secure sufficient resources for the south to make up for the underdevelopment that it has been characterised with as a result of the war. The socio-economic development of Sudan's southern regions is crucial for their future, whether they form part of a united Sudan in future, or whether they will eventually become an independent state. Such development would do well to reflect the provisions made in the Constitution, which includes Article 8's statement that it is essential to provide for the well-being of the Sudanese by means of providing work, promoting a free-market system in order to prevent monopoly, usury, cheating and also to ensure national self-sufficiency, abundance, blessing and establish justice among Sudan's various states and regions. Similarly, Article 11 advocates justice and social solidarity in order to provide the highest standard of living for everybody and also to ensure a fair distribution of national income. Social issues are dealt with in Articles 12, 14 and 15 which focus on education and the promotion of scientific research and co-operation, as well as the care of children and the youth, and the family and women respectively.

This leads to another important question that has to be addressed, namely whether or not the government and SPLM/A will work towards national unity during the interim period. Yoh (2001: 31) argues that there is a definite need to develop a consensus regarding a foundation upon which national unity could be achieved or maintained. This would also reflect the Constitution's call for national unity and particularly Article 6 which states that the "state and society shall work together to foster the spirit of reconciliation and national unity among all Sudanese people, to guard against religious parties, political sectarianism and to eliminate ethnic prejudice". Should the parties be striving for national unity, the concept of a confederation may prove to be a viable form of state, as it may be able to reconcile the problematic relationship between the government's demands for an Islamic state and those of the SPLM/A for a secular state, while allowing Sudan to remain a single international legal entity. While the south would be allowed to take full control of its security, the oil revenue would be shared equitably between the north and the south. In terms of power-sharing, mechanisms have to be established in order to ensure that during the interim period and afterward, power is distributed in such a way so as to avoid the domination of Sudan by one particular group, which in the past has been the northern elite. This is of particular importance to respect the autonomous position of the south and in order to prepare its leaders to effectively address the southern regions' massive social and economic problems in a

post-interim set-up. Finally, as has already been discussed in more detail in Chapter five, a consensus has to be found regarding the Abyei, Nuba Mountains and Southern Blue Nile regions which are particularly prone to become flashpoints of violent confrontations between opposing groups of Arabs and southerners. As Nantulya (2003: 14) argues, though the mediators have managed to bring the peace talks far enough so as to ensure the signing of a peace agreement, “the daunting challenge of confronting the deeper issues, and reformulating a new and flexible formula for nation-building and national cultural accommodation will remain”.

In terms of the crisis in Darfur, a number of recommendations have been made by Human Rights Watch, regarding a permanent resolution to the crisis. It recommends that the government of Sudan should immediately instruct its armed forces and government-supported Janjaweed militias to cease their campaign of ethnic cleansing and attacks on civilians and civilian property in Darfur. These groups should also be disarmed, disbanded and removed from those parts of Sudan which they have occupied from 2003 to the present. In order to restore some measure of justice, prompt, impartial and independent investigations should be launched to investigate the crimes perpetrated by the Sudanese government forces and the Janjaweed militia. Alleged perpetrators should be prosecuted and brought to trial in accordance with international fair trial standards, and reparations should be provided for the victims of such abuses, including the recovery and return of looted property (Darfur destroyed: ethnic cleansing by government and militia forces in western Sudan 2004: 3). To date the government has apparently ceased its campaign of ethnic cleansing. Nonetheless, the inhabitants of Darfur still live in fear as attacks by Janjaweed militias, now having been given uniforms in order to legalise their status, continue. Similarly, inhabitants reportedly find it close to impossible to return to their villages, as these are guarded and even have been taken over by the Janjaweed. It is important that the perpetrators of human rights abuses be brought to justice and that the people of Darfur should receive some form of compensation for the suffering in terms of loss of lives and property, not to mention the physical and emotional trauma that they have endured. Human Rights Watch also recommends that the government of Sudan and the opposition SLM/A and JEM should facilitate full, safe and unimpeded access of humanitarian personnel and the urgent delivery of humanitarian assistance to people in need in Darfur. Furthermore, people should be allowed to return to their homes in safety and dignity, and finally, a UN Human Rights Monitoring Mission and an international Commission of Experts should be set up to investigate and reach conclusions regarding crimes against humanity, war crimes, and other violations of international humanitarian law that have been committed by the parties involved in the conflict in Darfur in

2003-2004. A Ceasefire Commission should also be set up by the AU which is to ensure that all violations of the ceasefire agreement are periodically publicly reported, including parties' compliance with international law. It should be up to UN member states to contribute personnel, equipment, other resources and funding to the AU ceasefire monitoring mission, to contribute to the economic and social reconstruction of Darfur and to support international humanitarian assistance and human rights monitoring and investigations in Darfur. A crucial part should also be played by UN humanitarian agencies and humanitarian nongovernmental organisations in order to promote the protection of civilians while being responsible for the distribution of humanitarian assistance. It is also important that aid distribution should be spread out rather than concentrated in only a few areas (Darfur destroyed: ethnic cleansing by government and militia forces in western Sudan 2004: 4). These then are some of the steps that need to be taken in order to deal with the humanitarian crisis in Darfur. Long-term actions need to supplement these emergency measures and would include addressing the grievances of the rebel groups that led to the outbreak of the conflict in the first place. Notably, it is necessary to ensure that socio-economic development takes place and that the region's political representatives be included in national government so as to have a say when it comes to the administration of Darfur. This issue thus adds an additional burden to the already challenging situation of finding a lasting solution to the north-south conflict and ensuring the effective functioning of administrative organs during the interim period.

In terms of South Africa, as has already been mentioned in Chapter six, an analysis of structural factors demonstrates that the country is suffering from an extraordinarily high crime rate which has caused members of the Cape Muslim community, and more specifically PAGAD, to start taking the law into their own hands. While it is very important for the government to engage in socio-economic development initiatives to combat the root causes of vigilantism and the possibly related phenomenon of urban terrorism, the threat of the latter remains for the moment. Therefore, it is important that the South African government improve its capacity to deal with the threat of urban terrorism, should there be a re-emergence thereof in the future. This is particularly the case as initiatives such as Operation Good Hope were characterised by a variety of shortcomings, including the lack of capacity to ensure the protection of witnesses or legal and police personnel involved in PAGAD trials and their families. People will only come forward with what they know about a particular criminal case, if they know that they can trust the police and that their safety and that of their family is ensured.

Lasting solutions to combat the urban terrorism associated with PAGAD can thus only be achieved through an increased level of trust between local communities, who suffer at the hands of criminals, and the police. Some short to medium-term solutions could include an improved service delivery by the police and courts to the communities they serve, which would mean providing professional assistance to complainants and also giving feedback in terms of the progress that has been made regarding complaints. It would also be constructive for the police to engage with the community in ways other than making arrests, such as, for instance, providing information on how the system functions and where and how communities would be able to constructively engage with it. A shorter court processing time could demonstrate to communities that arrests do yield results, be they acquittals, suspensions or convictions. The inclusion of local government in efforts to ensure that proper services and infrastructure are in place could also yield benefits in terms of greater community trust in the government. Simultaneously, the government could encourage home owners to take measures to protect their homes, thereby “hardening the target” (Sekhonyane 2003: 12).

In addition, to counter urban-terror related threats, the planning of anti-terrorism actions can be executed in two phases: pre acts-of-terrorism reduction and post acts-of-terrorism recovery. The first element relates to prevention, which can only be obtained if intelligence is available. The steps characterising this phase are relatively simple and straight-forward and involve isolating the target from the terrorists (or the terrorists from the target), or sabotaging their plans. Consequently, the terrorists should be arrested as soon as all possibilities of determining their plans, associates and supplies have been exploited. The second element relates to mitigation in order to ensure that terrorists have fewer resources and information available in terms of training, weapons and explosives. This is possible, for instance, by means of executing high density and targeted operations aimed at weapon caches. Finally, in order to be prepared, personnel must be trained and willing to use immense investigation resources in order to investigate any terrorist events targeting South Africans. Prosecutions should also be linked to investigations, in order to ensure a high number of successful prosecutions. The post acts-of-terrorism phase, on the other hand, relates to contingency planning in the case of assassinations, shooting incidents, bomb explosions, hostage situations, sabotage and kidnapping taking place. This phase thus relates to those actions executed after acts of terrorism have occurred (Boshoff 2001: 83-84).

A number of factors influence the state’s operational effectiveness in combating terrorism and therefore need to be addressed in order to ensure maximum effectiveness. The first is its intelligence capacity. The state

necessarily has to be able to collect accurate evidence and intelligence to counter a terrorist threat. The second refers to detection and prosecution skills. Here it is important that the police develop adequate skills in order to take complete and accurate statements from witnesses so as to ensure the successful prosecution of guilty parties. In South Africa, the investigation of crimes by the South African Police Service is largely inadequate, partly because the average workload of a detective is the investigation of 140 cases simultaneously, making any proper and thorough investigation impossible. The third factor that needs to be addressed is that of resources both for the training of police officers as well as providing adequate salaries for state prosecutors, a number of whom have left the South African prosecution service due to the very low salaries they received. The fourth factor, as elaborated on earlier, is the necessity of public cooperation in order to ensure that the community trusts the police sufficiently to want to come forward with information on questions of crime, which includes providing for a functioning and secure witness protection programme. Finally, it is important that the police and the government do not create unrealistic expectations by promising the immediate resolution of a particular crime-related situation, if such a promise cannot be kept. Such statements may lower public morale and enhance the status of terrorists who could continue operating under the impression that the state's senior representatives are powerless in their efforts to combat crime (Schonteich 2001: 137-150).

There is also the possibility of introducing special terror legislation to curb urban terrorism, noticeably in the form of an anti-terrorism bill that has been the subject of heated debate in the South African Parliament for a number of years. The draft anti-terrorism bill proposes that anyone who commits a "terrorist act" will be liable, upon conviction, for life imprisonment. The bill's definition includes an act which "does or may endanger the life, physical integrity or freedom of any person, or causes or may cause damage to property" and is calculated to "intimidate, coerce or induce any government, persons or the general public; disrupt any public service, the delivery of any essential service to the public or create a public emergency; or create unrest or general insurrection in any state". The bill's definition of what constitutes a "terrorist act" has understandably been criticised as being too broad. To put it bluntly, even a group of young people who destroy a Post Office letterbox would be guilty of committing an act of terrorism as defined by the bill. As Amnesty International has argued, "if the definition remains vaguely or too widely worded, then the danger exists that the provision of the law will be open to abuse or used for repressive purposes". In addition, the bill also seeks to punish those who provide material, logistical or organisational support, knowing or intending that such support will be used in the commission of an offense in terms the bill. This could lead to

a period of imprisonment of ten years. In addition, anyone who conceals a person knowing that said person intends to commit or has committed an offence in terms of the bill, also commits an offence. Another major problem that has been identified in terms of the bill is its proposition that anyone who is a member of a “terrorist organisation” has already committed an offense, merely because of being a member. If found guilty on this charge, one could spend up to five years in prison. The bill broadly defines a terrorist organisation as “an organisation which has carried out, is carrying out or plans carrying out terrorist acts”. Judging from the definition of what constitutes a terrorist act, such a provision could of course be used to criminalise the actions of a large variety of people (Schonteich 2001: 129-131).

An aspect related to the bill that has raised a lot of debate is the question of detention. According to the bill, a judge may issue a warrant of detention when “there is reason to believe that any person possesses or is withholding from a law enforcement officer any information regarding any offense” contained in the bill. The bill proposes that a person can be detained for interrogation until a judge orders his release, is satisfied that all questions under interrogation have been answered, or that no lawful purpose is served by further detention. The detention period is not allowed to last longer than 14 days. The areas of concern regarding the bill are obvious. For instance, if brought into action, the bill could easily “turn detention without trial into a blunt instrument capable of being effectively deployed against political opponents – as was the case in the past”, when under the General Laws Amendment Act of 1966, a 14 day detention period was eventually increased to 90 days, 180 days and finally to an indefinite period. Because in the past, detention and torture were often narrowly linked, there are those who believe that that the re-introduction of a detention without trial law carries the grave risk of a repetition of past patterns of human rights violations. A related concern is that a person standing trial on any charge under the bill can be released on bail only if “exceptional circumstances exist which in the interests of justice permit their release”. Again, this provision seems rather harsh, given the broad range of offenses that the bill seeks to create (Schonteich 2001: 131-136).

PAGAD itself, not surprisingly, has strongly objected against the proposed Anti-Terrorism Bill, which it sees as “no better than the ‘detention without trial’ law that existed during the apartheid years”. It argues that the provisions of the Bill are draconian and must be opposed vehemently by all serious citizens of the country. In addition, these provisions, according to PAGAD, are dangerous as they give police the opportunity to force suspects to make confessions or statements in the absence of their attorneys (PAGAD 2000c). PAGAD has a point in that the South African government has to exercise extreme care so as not to

repeat the human rights abuses of the country's apartheid past. Legislation that gives the government too much of a free reign and opens up the possibility for an even greater restriction of individual freedoms does not bode well for the future of a democratic South Africa. While it is of course essential to combat urban terrorism effectively, every precaution has to be taken to ensure that suspects who may turn out to be innocent or only guilty of minor offenses, such as in terms of the hypothetical Post Office letterbox incident, do not suffer at the hands of the law. In terms of the dialogic model of interpretation, a number of things can be learned from the South African case study, and, specifically the official ideology espoused by PAGAD. It is essential that the government should take its citizens' fears and concerns regarding the country's immense crime rate seriously and should be seen to actively engage in efforts preferentially in consultation with the public and community organisations to launch a collective effort to combat one of South Africa's most destructive problems. It is essential that co-operation replace a situation where groups believe that they have no choice but to take the law into their own hands.

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